



A Study of ApūrvaRāgās of ŚrīŚyāmaŚāstrī with special reference to
Notational Aspects

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Abstract

Rāga is a fundamental concept in our Indian Classical music system.

“Yoyamdhvanivīśēṣastusvaravarṇavibhūṣitāha
rañjakojanacittānāmsarāgahakathitobudhaih¹” ||

Mataṅga in his treatise “Bṛhaddēśī” describes about Rāga as one that is decorated by Svara and Varṇa (gamakas) and which brings happiness to the listeners as mentioned in the above ślōka. Rāga is in existence even much before the time of Matanga who has coined the term Rāga. Rāga was earlier known as Jāti. During the course of evolution, rāga has been variously classified and categorized by lakṣaṇakāras and vāggeyakāras for several reasons. One of such categories is the rare or Apūrvarāgas.

The term Apūrvarāga is of recent origin but its existence in the past by different names cannot be ruled out. This term “Apūrva” can also be correlated to the term “AdhunāPrasiddharāgas” or “PrākPrasiddharāgas” coined by Śaraṅgadēva in his treatise SaṅgītaRatnākara. The word Apūrva in Sanskrit means one which is not present in the past, and is new as the saying goes as- *Na pūrvamiti Apūrvam*. 'Apūrvarāga' refers to a rāga which is not very popular in the music fraternity, not frequently heard of in music concerts or that which has very little scope for improvisation, having unique structure in terms of svarasañcaras, way of rendition etc

The usage and practice of apūrvarāgas can only be seen from past 2 -3 centuries. Many of these are mostly purely textual, or have only a single composition for practical rendition. Most of them are mainly Janyarāgas. Rāgas from different classifications such as ŚuddhaMadhyama, PratiMadhyama, Bhaṣāṅga, Upāṅga, Vakra are observed in apūrvarāgas. There are several great vāggeyakārās who have composed in these rāgas, ŚrīTyāgarāja, Dikṣitar, ŚyāmaŚāstrī, PatnamSubrahmanyaIyer, MuthiahBhagavata etc. to mention a few. The depth of such apūrvarāgas are yet to be unearthed. Rāgas like Supōṣini, Garuḍadhvani, Sindhurāmakriyā, Manōhari, Cittarañjani, Kumudakriyā, Cintāmaṇi, Vasantavarāli, Gopikāvasanta etc are examples of such rare or apūrvarāgas.

ŚrīŚyāmaŚāstrī, the eldest among the Trinity was a great devotee of Goddess Kāmākṣi and his compositions were mostly in praise of Dēvi. His compositions are replete with the natural pathos and tenderness of a child crying out to reach its mother. They are of a scholarly nature and are in intricate time measures. He employed rhythmic beauties, svarākṣara patterns along with aṭīta and anāgata complexities. His kṛtis feature abundant use of vilōmachāpu. His compositions are mostly in common and ancient rāgas, except for a few of them. The apūrvarāgas available in his kṛtis are Cintāmaṇi, Kalgaḍa, Māñji, Gauḷipantu and KarṇāṭakaKāpi.

This paper intends to analyze and compare the musical notations of ŚrīŚyāmaŚāstrī's compositions in below ApūrvaRāgas:

- i) **Cintāmaṇi**
- ii) **Kalgaḍa**
- iii) **Māñji**
- iv) **Gauḷipantu**

These rāgās are analysed on various musical aspects like rāgalakṣaṇa, svarasancārās, rāgabhāva, the style of the composition, and rhythmic beauties. For the purpose of analysis the two data sources –

¹Acharya DwaramBhavanarayana Rao (2001), *Brihaddesi*, Telugu translation, Dwaram Publications, Visakhapatnam, p-157



Śyāmaśāstri's Compositions by Vidya Shankar and *Compositions of Śyāmaśāstri* by TK Govinda Rao are considered.

i) Rāga Cintāmaṇi

ŚrīŚyāmaśāstricomposed the kṛti 'Devi BrōvaSamayamide' in the rāgaCintāmaṇi set to Ādi tāla on the goddess Kāmākṣī. This kṛti is composed in the language Telugu. There is an interesting incident or story behind this composition. It is said that Bobbili Kēśavayya, a great musician, who gave the title himself as BhūlōkaCāpacutti, challenged Thanjavur court musicians to defeat him in a musical competition. The Vidwans of court came and begged Śyāmaśāstri to take up Kēśavayya's challenge and defeat him as he was the only match for him. ŚrīŚyāmaśāstri sang 'DēviBrōvaSamayamidēAtiVēgamēVacci' inCintāmaṇiRāga, which is his own innovation and proceeded to the Royal Court. When Bobbili Kēśavayya sang a pallavi in rare Simhanandana Tala, Śyāmaśāstrī, in reply not only sang it successfully but also created a new Tāla called Śarabhanandana, and challenged him. Kēśavayya showed his clear inability, accepted his defeat by surrendering his titles, and begged for forgiveness.

Musical Aspects:

The rāgaCintāmaṇi is termed as janya of 56thmēlaŚaṅmukhapriyā having the svarasṢaḍja, CatuḥśrutiRṣabha, SādhāraṇaGāndhāra, PratiMadhyama, Pañcama, ŚuddhaDhaivata and KaiśikiNiṣāda. It is a vakrarāga. But in current practice, this rāga is also rendered with the anyasvaraCatuḥśrutiDhaivataoccurring occasionally making it as a Bhāṣāṅgarāga.

This kṛti has pallavi of 2 āvartas and 3 caraṇas, each of 4 āvartas. Rhythmic groups of fivesyllables such as – samayamidē, ativēgamē, karunimcavē, lōkajanani, dāsudagāda, dayaceyavē, krupajuḍavē are employed in this kṛti. Śyāmaśāstri addresses Dēvi as Śaṅkarī, Kāmākṣī, Lōkajanani, Kalyāṇī, Kaumārī, Bimbādharī, Gaurī, Lalitē, consort of Ekāmrēśvara etc. The kṣētra mudra is also mentioned in the phrase *ŚrīKāñciVihāriṇiKalyāṇī*. Dvitiyaakṣaraprāsa can also be observed in this kṛti. Few examples are

- Lōkajanani - Ekāmrēśvaruni
- Śyāmakriṣṇuni-Kāmākṣī etc.

The kālapramāṇa of this kṛti is said to be vilambagati.

Data Source – Śyāmaśāstri's Compositions by Vidya Shankar

In this data source, this kṛti is mentioned to be a Janya of 56thmēlaŚaṅmukhapriyā, ārōhaṇa&avarōhaṇa being SGRGM-GRGPM-PDNS- SNDPMGRGS². This is a Karuṇārasa rāga and a bhakti-pradhānarāga. The musical notation of the kṛti depicting gamakas symbolically is provided in this source. Pallavi commencing with the lyrics **Dēvibrōva** starts on the beat of tāla (samam) with the svaraGāndharadenoted byKampitagamaka. It then proceeds in descending order with svaraRṣabha and lands in the ĀdharaṢaḍjaand continues in madhyasthāyīsañcāras for the rest of the āvarta. Fivesaṅgatis in pallaviare mentioned specifically in the area – **vēgamēvacci** distributed over the svarasmadhyasthāyīRṣabha to tārasthāyīṢaḍja. The Anupallavi portion **nāvetalu** starts with the ādhāraṢaḍjaascending to the svaraDhaivata with Ētrajārugamaka(/) and continues in madhyasthāyīsañcāra. Two saṅgatis are provided for this section.

The caraṇa**lōkajanani** starts with the svaraRṣabhaand ascends to Pañcama with Ētrajārugamaka. The sañcārasrange from the lower (mandrasthayi) Dhaivatatill upper (Tarasthayī) Gāndhārasvaras in the caraṇa section. Svarākṣara pattern is observed in the phrase – **Dāsudagāda** as shown below. Different types of gamakas like kampita, spurita, nokku, Ētrajāru, ravaietcare indicated in the notation provided in this data source.

Data Source – Compositions of Śyāmaśāstri by TK Govinda Rao

This source describes this kṛti to be janya of 56thmēlaŚaṅmukhapriyā, ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa of this rāga being mentioned as SRP

D, N S G S R,	ya
Dā- SuḍaGā- da	vi,

²Shankar Vidya(1989), *Syamaśāstri's Compositions*, Parampara publishers, Madras, pp:186-187

³Govind Rao, T.K.(2009), *Compositions of Śyamaśāstri*, Ganamandir Publications, Chennai, pp:89-90



Anupallavi and caraṇa sections start with the svarasPañcama, ādhāraṢaḍja and Ṛṣabha similar to that of Vidya Shankar. Tāla also starts on samam in coherence with that of Vidya Shankar. Gamakas are represented marginally for ascending and descending notes. But there are no saṅgatis available either for pallavi, anupallavi or caraṇa sections.

ii) Rāga Māñjī

ŚyāmaŚastri composed 'Brōvavammātāmasamele' in the rāgaMāñjī set to Miśrachāputāla on the Goddess Kāmākṣī. This kṛti is composed in the language Telugu. It has pallavi, anupallavi and 3 caraṇas. Antyaprāsa 'birāna' is used prominently. Dvitīyaakṣaraprāsa can also be observed in this kṛti. Example – śyāmakṛṣṇa ,ī mahilō etc. The kālapramāṇa of this kṛti is said to be vilambagati.

Musical aspects:

This is a BhāṣāṅgaJanyarāga of 20th Mēla, Natabhairavi. It has the svarasṢaḍja, CatuṣṛutiṚṣabha, SādhāraṇaGāndhāra, SuddhaMadhyama, Pañcama, ŚuddhaDhaivata and KaiśikiNiṣāda. The kālapramāṇa of this kṛti is said to be vilambagati.

This rāga is allied to rāgasBhairavi and Husenirāgas. Jaṅṭi and Dāṭuprayogas are not employed prominently in this rāgas that of the rāgaBhairavi.

Data Source – Śyāmaśastri's Compositions by Vidya Shankar

The ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa of this rāga in this source is mentioned as SRGMPD*NŠ-ŚNDPMGRS, where D* denotes the anyasvaraCatuṣṛutiDhaivata⁴. The kṛti starts on anāgataedupu(oneakṣarakala) in pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇa sections. Pallavi commences on the svaramandrasthayiNiṣāda with kampitagamaka progresses towards ādhāraṢaḍja and then to Ṛṣabha in ascending order. Two saṅgatis are available for the opening line – *Brōvavammātāmasamēle*.

The sāhitya of next line in pallavi *Devi Tāḷalēnē* starts with the madhyasthāyīNiṣāda, thus both lines of pallavi have difference of an octave in the starting notes. Musical notes progress in descending order starting from madhyasthāyīNiṣāda. A set of 6 saṅgatis are available for this phrase. Anya svaraChatusrutiDaivataprayoga is found in this phrase as given below:

,N* D * <u>DS,N</u> ND
De - vi----- ta-

Anupallavi&caraṇa sections start on prakṛtiPañcamasvara and has four saṅgatis for the phrase *Nirvahimpavaśama*. Different gamakas like kampita, rava, nokku, Ētra&Errakkajāru, sphuritametcare indicated for this kṛti.

Data Source – Compositions of Śyāmaśastri by TK Govinda Rao

The ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa mentioned in this source is SRGMPDNŠ- ŚNDPMGRS⁵ which is inline with that of Vidya Shankar. In this source, kṛti starts on anāgataedupu(twoakṣara kala) in pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇasections. Pallavi commences on ādhāraṢaḍja. Two saṅgatis are available for the opening line – *Brōvavammātāmasamēlē*. The sāhitya of next line in pallavi *Devi Tāḷalēnē* starts with the madhyasthāyīNiṣāda in line with that of Vidya Shankar. Multiple saṅgatis are available for this portion. Anupallavi&caraṇa sections start on the prakṛtisvaraPañcama and has Five saṅgatis each respectively. However there is minimal representation of Ētrajāru and Errakkajārugamakas.

iii) Rāga Kalgaḍa

ŚyāmaŚastri has composed a kṛti in this rāga '*Parvati ninnu ne neranammiti*' in the language Telugu. This kṛti has pallavi, anupallavi and 3 caraṇas each spread into two avartas. Dvitiyakṣaraprāsa is used in this kṛti. Rhythmic groups of 5 syllables like neranammiti, padasārasa, sangītalōlē, nikhilasākhi, sugunajālē etc are employed in this kṛti. ŚyāmaŚastri addresses Goddess Kāmākṣi by the names such as Pārvati, Susilē, Gīrvāni, Nīrajākṣi, Nikhilasākṣi, śukapāni, Induvadana etc. The kālapramāṇa of this kṛti is said to be vilambagati.

⁴Shankar Vidya(1989), *Syamaśastri's Compositions*, Parampara publishers, Madras, pp:292-295

⁵Govind Rao, T.K.(2009), *Compositions of Śyamaśastri*, Ganamandir Publications, Chennai, pp:53-55



Musical aspects :

This rāga has two styles or versions in practice. One regarded as Janyarāga of 13th mēlaGāyakapriyā⁶and other as a janyarāga of 16th mēlaCakravāka⁷. In both the versions of practice, it is a Madhyamavarjyarāga.

Source – Śyāmaśāstry's Compositions by Vidya Shankar

In this source, the kṛti is stated to be Janya of 13thmēlaGāyakapriyā and set to Tisra Eka tāla. The ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa of this rāga is SRGPDŚ-ŚNDPDNDPGRS⁸. This rāga has the svarasṢaḍja, ŚuddhaRṣabha, Antara Gāndhāra, Pañcama, ŚuddhaDhaivata and ŚuddhaNiṣāda. The pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇa sections start on the sama of the tāla. The ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa of this rāga is SRGPDS – SNDPDNDPGRS. This is Madhyamavarjyarāga. The pallavi of the kṛti 'Pārvatinnu' starts on prakritisvaraPañcama with Ētrajārugamaka from Gāndhāra. Svarākṣara patterns are observed for phrases Pārvati and Ninnu as given below:

P;PDG, P D N D P,
Par ----- vatininune

Three saṅgatis are provided in this data source for pallavi portion. Anupallavi starts with Daiyatasvara having kampitagamaka while the caraṇa starts with the Gāndhāra. Jaṅṭiprayogas like DDPG, NDD, DPP, SGGP, GRRS, PDDR etc can be found in this composition. The svaraprayogas range from lower octave Pañcama to higher octave Gāndhāra.

Data Source – Compositions of Śyāmaśāstri by TK Govinda Rao

This source describes this kṛti to be janya of 16thmēlaCakravāka. This rāga has the svarasṢaḍja, śuddhaRṣabha, Antara Gāndhāra, Pañcama, catuḥśrutiDhaivata and kaiśikiNiṣāda. Madhyama is varjya in this rāga. The sections pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇa commence on the notes Pañcama, Dhaivata and Gāndhāra similar to that of Vidya Shankar. There is one akṣara kala eduppu in the caraṇa provided in this source. The ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa of this rāga is SRGPDNS – SNDPGRS⁹.

Svarākṣara pattern is observed in the phrase Pada sarasa as in :

G R S, R S
Pada Sa rasa

iv) Rāga Gowlipantu

The compositions of Śyāmaśāstri in this rāga are

Sl.No	Composition	On Deity	Kṣētra	Language	Tāla
1	Tarunamīdamma	Kāmākṣī	Kanchi, Tanjavoor	Tamil	Mīśrachāpu ¹⁰ / Ādi ¹¹
2	Puraharajāye	Kāmākṣī	Kanchi, Tanjavoor	Sanskrit	Mīśrachāpu
3	Nannubrovarada	Akhilandeswari	Tiruvanaikkaval	Telugu	Mīśrachāpu

Musical aspects :

This rāga has two styles or versions in practice. One regarded as Janyarāga of 51stmēlaKāmavardhini¹²with the ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa as SRMPNŚ-ŚNPDMGRS. Another being

⁶According to *Syamasastri's compositions* by Vidya Shankar

⁷According to *Compositions of Syamasastri* by T K Govinda Rao

⁸Shankar Vidya(1989), *Syamaśāstry's Compositions*, Parampara publishers, Madras, pp:225-227

⁹Govind Rao, T.K.(2009), *Compositions of Śyamaśāstri*, Ganamandir Publications, Chennai, p:35

¹⁰Shankar Vidya(1989), *Syamaśāstry's Compositions*, Parampara publishers, Madras, p:124

¹¹Govind Rao, T.K.(2009), *Compositions of Śyamaśāstri*, Ganamandir Publications, Chennai, p:17



regarded as a janyarāga of 15th mēlaMāyāmālavagauḷawith the ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa as SRMPNŚ-ŚNDPDMGRS¹³. Dvitiyākṣaraprāsa is observed in common among the threekṛtisof ŚyāmaŚastri. The kālapramāṇa of these kṛti is said to be vilambagati.

i)Kṛiti -Tarunamīdamma

Pallavi and Anupallavi of this kṛti is spread across 4 avarthas and caraṇa with 16 avarthas.

Data Source – Śyāmaśastri'sCompositions by Vidya Shankar

This source mentions this rāga to be janya of 51stmēlaKāmavardhini with the ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa as SRMPNŚ-ŚNDPDMGRS. It has pallavi and anupallavi commencing on ĀdhāraṢaḍja. Three sections pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇa start on anagataedupu of one akṣara kala. Pallavi starts with ĀdhāraṢaḍja with sphuritam and kampitagamakas, then traverses in ascending manner to ŚuddhaṚṣabha and to lower octave Niṣāda. Eight saṅgatis are provided for pallavi section. caraṇa of the kṛti starts on Pañcamasvara. This kṛti is set to Miśrachāputāla.

Data Source – Compositions of ŚyāmaŚastri by TK Govinda Rao

This source provides the notation with pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇa sections with anāgataedupu of two akṣara kāla, the tāla being set to Ādi. Thisrāgais given to be janya of 15thmēlaMāyāmālavagauḷa. While Pallavi commences on ĀdhāraṢaḍja spanning with 3 saṅgatis, anupallavi starts with Niṣāda and caraṇa starts with Madhyama.Theārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa of this rāga are SRMPNS-SNDPDMGRS.

ii)Kṛiti-Puraharajaye

In this kṛti, ŚyāmaŚastriaddresses her as ocean of compassion (karunānidhi), free of diseases (nirāmayi), māye, Bhavānī, Pāvānī, śarvāṇi, Kāmākṣi, Kalyāṇi, śrilalitā, Sōmamukhi, Purāṇi, Sundari, Kaumāri, śailarājakumāri etc. Pallavi is distributed over 4 āvartas, anupallavi over 8 āvartas and caraṇa being 16 āvartas. Dvitiyaprāsa and Antyaprāsa are found in this kṛti.

Examples of Dvitiyaprāsa are caraṇāmbuja,Karunanidhe etc.

Antyaprāsa – Pāvānī,śarvāṇi,

Gunaśīlē,Manimālē etc.

Data Source – Śyāmaśastri'sCompositions by Vidya Shankar

In this source, the three sections pallavi ,anupallavi and caraṇa have anāgataeduppu (2 akṣara kala for pallavi and caraṇa). Pallavi of this kṛti starts on tārasthāyīṢaḍja with Ētrajrūgamaka and has 4 saṅgatis. Anupallavi also starts on upper sthāyīṢaḍja. Multiple saṅgatis are given here also. caraṇa starts on Pañcamasvara. Datuprayogas like RS-MR-PM-NP-SN ; MR-PM-NP-SN-RS; PM-NP-SN etc are employed in this kṛti.

Svarākṣara patterns observed are

P,; N;N; M; Pa la ya

N;R; M;M Ni ram aye

S;N GRRSS, Sar vani

Data Source – Compositions of ŚyāmaŚastriby TK Govinda Rao

This source also follows that of Vidya Shankar in both tāla and musical aspects. Both the sources specify the tāla to be Miśrachāpu. However Vidya Shankar mentions to be a janya of 51stmēla while TKGovinda Rao mentions to be that of 15th Mela.

iii)Kṛiti –Nannubrovarada

In this kṛti, ŚyāmaŚastriaddresses Goddess Akhilāṇḍēśvari as Kāruṇyamūrti, Kaumāri, Gaurī, Rakṣakī, Śaṅkarī, Mṛdubhāśini, Rājarājēśvari, Bhavabhayabhaṅjani, Raṅjani, Pārvati, Bhavānī etc. Both Dvitiyaprāsa and Antyaprāsa can be observed in this kṛti.

Examples :

Dvitiyaprāsa – Nannubrovarada ,Vinunamoralanuetc

¹²Shankar Vidya(1989), *Syamaśastri'sCompositions*, Parampara publishers, Madras, pp:124-126

¹³Govind Rao, T.K.(2009), *Compositions of Śyamaśastri*, Ganamandir Publications, Chennai, pp:17-19



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Antyaprāsa – Akhilandeswari, Purani, Alikulaveni, Bhavabhayabhanjani, Ranjani, Bhavani. Etc
Pallavi and Anupallavi is distributed over 4 avarthas each while carāṇa is of 16 āvartas.

Data Source – Śyāmaśāstry's Compositions by Vidya Shankar

In this source, pallavi, anupallavi, and carāṇa sections start with Anāgataeḍuppu. Pallavi starts on ĀdhāraṢaḍja, traverses in ascending order reaching upper sthayaṢaḍja and then descends. The svarasañcāra of pallavi and anupallavi is similar to that of ārōhaṇa SRMPNS. A set of around 6 saṅgatis are provided for pallavi in this source. carāṇa starts with svāraPañcama. Few examples of Svarakṣara pattern observed are :

- | | | |
|----|-------------|------------------|
| a) | N, D, P, mm | S,rM,M, P, DM R, |
| b) | Ni Dasudanu | Kowmari Gowri |

It is interesting to note that for all the three kṛtis pallavi, anupallavi start either with ādharaṢaḍja or upper sthayaṢaḍja while carāṇa starts with Pañcama. Thus consistency of starting notes is observed.

Data Source – Compositions of Śyāmaśāstri by TK Govinda Rao

This source has the notation similar to that of Vidya Shankar. Both the sources mention the kṛti set in Misrachaputāla.

Conclusion

In this article, musical notations of various compositions of Śyāmaśāstri in Apūrvarāgas are analyzed and compared. The data sources – *Compositions of Śyāmaśāstri* by TK Govinda Rao and *Syamasāstri's compositions* by Vidya Shankar are considered for analysis. It is observed that the data source authored by Vidya Shankar provides the notation of these kṛti along with multiple saṅgatis including their respective gamaka symbols when compared to the other data source. This helps the learner/artist to comprehend the rāgalakṣaṇa and bring out the rāga bhava effectively. However suitable saṅgatis from other data sources can be added to enhance one's repertoire in music.

References

1. Acharya Dwaram Bhavanarayanarao (2001), *Brihaddesi*, Telugu translation, Dwaram Publications, Visakhapatnam.
2. Govind Rao, T.K. (2009), *Compositions of Śyāmaśāstri*, Ganamandir Publications, Chennai.
3. Shankar Vidya (1989), *Śyāmaśāstry's Compositions*, Parampara publishers, Madras.