

Korvais seen in Suladi Sapta Jatisvarams of Madurai T. Srinivasan

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Abstract:

This study is dedicated to highlighting the extraordinary accomplishment of Madurai T. Srinivasan in composing Arudi Korvai within the framework of 35 Suladi Sata Tala Jatisvarams. It aims to shed light on the artistic brilliance and rhythmic elegance inherent in this distinctive musical form.

Keywords: Arudi, Korvais, Jathis, Patterns, Rhythm

Introduction:

Carnatic music has had a continuous development from early times. It includes many compositions, noted for their quality and variety. It consists of methodical graded exercises, practice pieces, and concert forms, as prescribed in many musical texts. Musical forms in Karnatic music may be grouped under two divisions - Abhyasa ganam and Sabha ganam. Abhyasa Gana is a technical form, and the Sabha Gana is a melodious or concert form. The forms which are already composed and set to music and tala by a composer come under Kalpita sangitam. Jatisvaram is one such musical form which is part of Kalpita Sangitam. There are a few musical forms that are common to both art music and dance music. For e.g., forms like Swarajathi, Jatisvaram, Javali, and Tillanas. Jatisvaram can be widely seen in dance performances. The Jatisvaram composition form can be simple or complex, with very intricate rhythmic patterns and karvais.

Jathi patterns in Jatisvarams:

Jatisvaram is a musical form sung with svaras or solfa syllables comprising a variety of jati patterns. The names jatisvara and svarajati as such, imply the inclusion of rhythmic syllables called sollukkattu. Given the grand musical conception and rhythmic loveliness, these dance pieces were taught to vocal and instrumental music students to understand the concept of tala. While composing Jatisvaram, it is believed that the jatis are composed first, and the svaras are set to those jatis later. The svara phrases in Jatisvaram are in varied rhythmic patterns of Tisra, Chatusra, Khanda, etc., as Thakita, Thakadhimi, Thakatakita, etc.

Talas used in Jatisvaram:

Most of the Jatisvarams are composed in Adi tala, Rupaka Tala, Chapu Tala, and Triputa Tala. Some are composed in Ata Tala and Sankirna Adi Tala.

Suladi Sapta Talas:

Tala is fundamental to Carnatic music because it provides the rhythmic foundation. The Suladi Sapta Tala is the most used tala system in Carnatic music. Talas consists of three essential components: Laghu (I), Anudrutam (U), and Drutam (O). These Suladi Sapta talas named Dhruva, Matya, Roopaka, Jhampa, Triputa, Ata, and Eka form the basis for exercises like Sapta Tala Alankaras, which are essential in the training of classical music students.

Suladi Sapta Tala encompasses seven tala families, and within these families, there are five Jatis - Tisra (3 aksharas), Chatusra (4 aksharas), Khanda (5 aksharas), Misra (7 aksharas), and Sankeerna (9 aksharas) giving rise to a total of 35 talas in Carnatic music. These talas can vary in length, spanning from 3 to 29 aksharas.

Madurai T. Srinivasan as a composer

Within the realm of accomplished composers, Sri Madurai T. Srinivasan distinguishes himself among Jatisvaram composers for his outstanding achievement in skilfully crafting these rhythmic masterpieces including a total of 35 Suladi Sapta Talas. He has also composed music in a diverse array of forms, including - Varnam in 9 different ragas and 9 different talas, Navaragamalika varnas, Kirthanas, Sri Ragavendra Dasagana songs, and Tillanas for vocal music. In the realm of Bharatha Natyam, he



masterminded Allarippu in 35 Suladi talas, Shabdams, Pada Varnams, and Tillanas.

Furthermore, in his expertise with the Mridangam, he innovatively devised: 35 Jatis, 35 Tala Mohars, 35 Tala Korvais, and 35 Tala Arudis.

Structure of Madurai T. Srinivasan's Jatiswaram:

Sri T. Srinivasan has composed a remarkable collection of 35 Jatisvaras in Suladi Sapta Talas, each with its unique structural format. While Jatisvaras traditionally follow a pattern of Pallavi, Anu Pallavi, and Charana Svaras, Srinivasan's compositions deviate from this norm. In his Jatisvaras, Srinivasan introduces a distinctive section—"Arudi Korvai" mostly after the last charana svara. He has given importance to "Arudi Korvai" in his jatiswaram reflecting his profession-Mridangam.

"Korvai" is a rhythmic phrase that is known for its mathematical precision and complex rhythmic patterns. "Arudi Korvai" is typically placed at the end of a musical section or composition, adding a sense of closure and excitement to the musical form. The mastery of creating and executing Korvai patterns is regarded as a fundamental aspect of Carnatic music education. In addition to being a teaching tool for students to develop their rhythmic skills, Korvai brings a sense of complexity and creativity to the rhythmic structure. These elements present challenges not only to percussionists but also to the accompanying musicians, enriching the overall musical experience.

Special features seen in the Jatiswarams :

1. **Eduppu Svaras:** Most of the jatiswaram commences with tara sthayi sadja with two to eight matra karvais, with avaroha krama and ends with aroha krama of the particular raga, which gives the insight into the raga scale.

- a. Andolika raga jatiswaram set in Sankeerna Dhruva tala-
(š, ; ; n, d, p, m, g, r, | s, ; ; | r, g, m, ; p, ; m, p, d, n, l)
- b. Malayamarudam raga jatiswaram set in Kanda Eka tala-
(š, ; ; n, d, p, g, p, g, r, ls, ; s, r, g, r, g, p, d, n, l)

Eduppu svara of the Jatiswarams in Poorvikalyani raga, set to Kanda Dhruva tala and raga Pantuvarali set in Misra Rupakam tala and Bahudari raga set in Sankeerna Matya tala commences in "Panchamam." Eduppu svara of the jatiswaram in raga Sallabam (Suddha Hindolam) set in Misra Matya tala is "Madhyamam."

2. In some Jatiswarams few svara passages are composed in such a way that a particular svara falls on samam of different angas of the tala with different karvais like doing korraippu in kalpana svara rendering.

a. In Todi raga jatiswaram set in Kanda Jampa tala, it can be noted that in the third charana svara passage, a particular note dhaivata is placed in such a way that it falls on the samam of different angas of the tala which adds beauty to the rhythm.

(d, ; ; d n š ř š n d m g r s r g m | d, ; ; mg m, d n l
d, ; ; m d n d, g m d m, s r g m d, |, p d n d ; d n š d, l
, n š n d ; š ř š d, ř š n d ; g | ř š d ; m g m d n š, l)

b. In the first Charana Svara of the Mohana raga jatiswaram set in Tisra Rupakam tala, panchamam falls on the samam on different angas of the tala-

3. **Sthayi relationship** – the same set of svaras are seen both in mandra sthayi and tara sthayi in the same avarta. –

a. Hamsanadam raga jatiswaram set in kanda Ata tala – In the third charana svara passage - (m r n r) – (ṁ ř n ř) is seen in both mandra and tara sthayi.

b. Nattakurunchi raga jatiswaram set in Misra Ata tala–(m, g s)-(ṁ, ġ š) seen in both madhya sthayi and tara sthayi in the fourth charana svara passage.

4. **Srothovahayathi patterns** are handled beautifully in some Jatiswarams-





- a. Kamas raga jatisvaram set in misra Jampa tala has Srothovahayathi patterns in the first avarta of the fourth charana svara passage – [(ś ; ;) – (d n ś ; ;) – (p d n ś ; ;) – (m p d n ś ; ;)].
- b. Vasantha raga jatisvaram set in Chatusra Triputa has Srothovahayathi patterns in the second charana svara passage – [(m d,) - (g m d,) – (s g m d,) – (n s g m d,)].
- c. Hamsadhvani raga jatisvaram set in Tisra Dhruva tala has Srothovahayathi patterns in the second charana svara passage – [(p, ; n,) - (g, p, n,) – (r, g, p, n,) – (s, r, g, p, n,)]
5. **Gopuchayathi patterns** are noted in the Arudi korvai of Vasantha raga jatisvaram set in Chatusra Triputa tala – [(g m d n ś,) – (m d n ś,) – (d n ś,) – (n ś,)].
6. **Dhatu prayōgas**–
 - a. In Suddha Dhanyasi raga jatisvaram in chatusra Ada tala, the second charana svara passage has dhatu prayōga – [(m, g, - p, m, - n, p, - ś, n, - ġ, ś, - m, ġ, - ś, n,)].
 - b. Dhatu prayōga is brilliantly incorporated in the first avarta of the first charana svara in Hamsadhvani raga jatisvaram set in Tisra Dhruva tala – (p g – n p – ś n – r ś).
7. **Janta prayōga** -The entire fourth charana svara passage of Malayamarudam raga jatisvaram set in Kanda Eka tala was composed in Janta svara prayōga with or without karvais.
(ś, ś ś, n, n n, d, d d, n d ; - n, n n, d, d d, p, p p, -.....)
8. **Tirmanam** is seen in the second or third charana svara passage in most of the Jatisvarams –
 - a. Shanmugapriya rag jatisvaram set in Kanda Triputa has a tirmanam of 21 matra and korvai in the third charana svara passage in the pattern of -(5+3 -5+3- 5)
[(ġ r ś n d – n ; - r ś n d p – d ; - p m p d n)]
 - b. In Amirthavarshini raga jatisvaram set in Sankeerna Jampa tala, a tirmanam of 24 matra korvai is brilliantly incorporated in the second charana svara passage in the pattern of -(3+6- 3+6- 6)-
[(ś ġ, -m ġ ś n ; -p n, -ś n p m ; - s g, m p n).

Besides these salient features, he has also introduced Arudi Korvais in a few of his Jatisvarams, which is a special ending that makes the composition sound grand and impressive. It is usually quite intricate and exhibits the skill of the performer in handling such complex rhythmic patterns. The ending gives the music a sense of completion and adds an artistic touch that the audience remembers.

Distinctive Characteristics of the Jatisvarams:

One of the distinctive characteristic features of this musical form Jatisvaram is its rhythmic patterns. The patterns found in these Jatisvarams include tisram (3s), chatusram (4s), kandam (5s), and misram (7s). Most of the patterns are seen with karvais.

Patterns of tisram (3s):

- In Saramathy – Chatusra Dhruva Tala
m p d n ś r ġ ġ, ś ś, d d,
- In Todi – Kanda Jampa tala
ġ,, r,, ś,, ġ r ś n,,
- In Kanada raga – Chatusra Rupakam Tala
m g m d m d n d n ś, n

Patterns of chatusram (4s):

- In Hamsadhvani raga – Tisra Dhruva Tala
(s r g, - r g p, - g p n,)

Patterns of Kandam (5s):

- In Andolita raga – Sankeerna Dhruva Tala
(s r m p n - m p n d m - n d m p n)
- In Poorvikalyani raga – Kanda Dhruva Tala
(ġ r ś n d - r ś n d m - ś n d p m)





- In Malayamarudam raga – Kanda Ekam Tala
(ġ ṙ ś n d - ṙ ś n d p - p g p d n)

Patterns of Misram (7s):

- In Hamsadhwani raga – Tisra Dhruva Tala
Patterns of (2+2+3) and (4+2+1) – (s , r , g , , - r , g , p , , - g , p , n , , - ś n p g p , n)
- In Sankarabharana raga - Kanda Rupakam Tala
Grouping of svaras in 7s Misra – (4+3) and (2+2+3)
(ś n d p d , , - n d p m p , , - d p m g m , , - g , m , p d n).

- In Suddha Hindolam raga – Misra Matya Tala
Grouping of svaras are in the patterns of (5+2) and (2+2+3)-
(ś , ġ , ṁ , , - n , ś , ġ , , - d , n , ś , ,) – (ṁ ġ ś d n , - ġ ś n d m d ,)

Patterns of Sankirnam (9s)

- In Bahudari raga in Sankeerna Matya tala the grouping of svaras is seen in the patterns of (3+7) –
(d , , - n , ś , ṁ ġ ś) – (n , , - ś , n , p m g) – (m , , - g , m , p d n).
- In Arabi raga, set in Tisra Ata tala jatisvaram the grouping of svaras are found in the patterns of
[(2+2+2)+3] – [(s , r , m , m g r) – (r , m , p , d p m) – (p , d , ś , d p d)].

Mostly in the Arudi Korvai, the grouping of the svaras is seen in the same kalapramanam, but in the Misra Ata tala jatisvaram set in raga Nattakurinji, the korvai in the fourth charana svara is interspersed with vilamba and durita kala svaras for two avartas, which is really challenging. It is seen in the format of
 $\{[(5+2+1)+(5+2+2)+(5+3)] \times 2\} + [(5+2+1)+(5+2+2)+5] = 72.$

[(ṁ ġ ś n d - ś , - d n - ś n d m g - m , - m g s n - s g m d n - ś , ,)
 5 2 1 5 2 2 5 3

The jati pattern seen in the korvai is (**tha ka tha ki ta – tham , - ta ka – tha ka tha ki ta – tham , - tha ka dhi mi – tha ka tha ki ta – tham , ,**)

The author has beautifully interwoven the tisram patterns in chatusra nadai tala adding beauty to the melody and rhythm. Similarly, in Sankarabharana raga jatisvaram set in Kanda Rupaka tala, the grouping of svaras is found in chatusra and tisram patterns – (4+3 - 4+3 - 4+3 -4+3), which enhances the beauty of the Laya present.

The presence of the use of a korvai within the samam of the tala, which gives stress to the samam, contributes to the rhythmic beauty of the jatisvaram.

- Hamsadhwani raga -Tisra Dhruva tala
g , r , | s , , r | , s , n | , , ś , | n , p , | , ġ , ṙ | , ś n p | n , ṙ , | ś , n , | , ś , n | , p , , |
- Kanada raga – Chatusra Rupakam
ġ ṁ ṙ ś | n ś , , | , , n | ṙ ś n p | m , , | , , m g || m d n ś | , , , | ,

Conclusion

One of the distinctive features of Sri T. Srinivasan's Jatisvara compositions is the incorporation of Arudi Korvai. While he originally composed these Arudi Korvais for percussion instruments, their skilful use has the potential to elevate the overall aesthetic appeal of a musical composition. The Jatisvarams is a testimony to the authors' laya knowledge. The usage of different jathi patterns in various Talas exhibit the author's laya control and his vast experience as a Percussion artist is seen evident in the compositions. The different jathi patterns incorporated in the Jatisvarams act as a learning tool for aspiring music students to use them and benefit vastly.



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