

VARNA MANJARI

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Dr. Pavani Duddu



Varna Mañjari
(First Volume)

వర్ణాణ మంజరీ (ప్రథమ భాగము)
ABHYĀSA GĀNAM / అభ్యయస
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Varṇam

‘**Varṇam-s**’ are one of the most important structured lessons in 'Abhyāsa Gānaṃ'. These are scholarly compositions and elaborate melodies replete with rāga bhāva, containing several important, unique, unusual and appealing phrases of the rāga. So, it requires dexterity, knowledge, technique and good musicianship to sing a varṇam. **Varṇam** is not only an advanced study piece but a fine concert opener too. In a way, Varṇam-s are a bridge between the Learning stage and the Performing stage.

Significance of Varṇam-s

‘Varṇam’, literally means colour. In the context of varṇam as a musical form, it denotes the various shades of melodic movements – sthāyi, ārohi, avarōhi and sañcāri. Varṇam-s lay the foundations of rāga-s and gamaka-s - which are the essence of rāga-s.

The study and practice of varṇam -s are of utmost importance both to the vocalist and instrumentalists, as they facilitate voice culture and enrich finger techniques. The svara passages are a good basis for the performer to learn the technique of kalpana svara-s. Also practicing varṇam-s in multiple speeds gives one a good, steady sense of rhythm. The more a person learns and practices a number of varṇam-s, more is the expertise one acquires for Manōdharma and finesse of public performance.

Types of Varṇam-s

Varṇam-s are of different types like – Tāna Varṇa-s, Pada Varṇa-s, Daru Varṇa-s, Rāgamālika Varṇa-s.

- 1) **Tāna Varṇam** - Normally performed in music concerts in the madhyama kāla, the Tāna Varṇam has plenty of vowel extensions in the lyrics and the words are generally in praise of God or a Guru (teacher) or patron (usually Kings) or in the Nāyika-Nāyaka bhāva. It has lyrics only in the pallavi, anupallavi and the caraṇam. Tāna Varṇa-s are known for their ‘Tānaṃ’ like progressions of svara-s which enhance the rhythmic qualities of the composition.

Example: Ninnukōri - Mōhana rāga - Ādi tāḷa

- 2) **Pada Varṇam** - These are mostly featured in dance performances, although some Pada Varṇam-s are rendered in music concerts. Also, known as Cauka Varṇam-s, these are normally sung in a very slow tempo in order to depict the emotions. The theme of sāhitya here is generally love, but may also be devotional or in praise of a patron. In the Pada Varṇam, all sections have lyrics.

Example: Pankajākṣi - Kāmbhōji rāga - Ādi tāḷa

- 3) **Daru Varṇam** - This is a special type of Varṇam in which the pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇa sections have the svara and sāhitya part as in any other tāna varṇam but the Mukṭāyi Svaram has jati and also sāhitya for its svara part. Jati-s are composed for the Caraṇa svara-s also. These are also mostly featured in dance performances.

Example: Mātē Malayadhwaja - Khamās rāga - Ādi tāḷa

- 4) **Rāgamālika Varṇam** - This is more like a Tāna Varṇam but consists of a garland of rāga-s, featured in all the sections of the Varṇam.

Example: Valaci Vacci - Navarāgamālika - Ādi tāḷa

Theme of Varṇam-s

Varṇam-s have been composed in several evocative rāga-s, usually expressing romantic or devotional sentiments or in the praise of a God or a patron or in the Nāyika-Nāyaka bhāva.

Tāḷam

Varṇam-s have been set to various tāḷa-s like Ādi, Aṭa, Jhampe, Rūpaka, Khaṇḍa Jāti Tripuṭa and such other long Tāḷa-s and the mode of reckoning the tāḷam of a varṇam is 4 akṣhara-s per each kriya.

Structure

The varṇam consists of two halves:

- a) **Pūrvāṅga** - the first half consisting of three sections, namely, the pallavi, the anupallavi and the muktāyi svaram.
- b) **Uttarāṅga** - the second half consisting of the caraṇam and the ettugaḍa / caraṇa svara-s.

The pallavi and anupallavi, usually consisting of two āvarta-s each, are sung consecutively, followed by the muktāyi svara, which may be of two / four āvarta-s. One then goes back to the pallavi to render the whole Pūrvāṅga in multiple speeds before going on to the Uttarāṅga.

The Caraṇa of a varṇa is also known by other names as ettugaḍa pallavi, upa pallavi and ciṭṭa pallavi having only one āvarta with lyrics followed by four or more caraṇa svara-s. The Caraṇa is repeated at the end of each caraṇa svara. Usually, caraṇa svara-s are passages which progressively increase in length and complexity. The first caraṇa svara is usually of the length of one āvarta containing dīrgha svara-s. While the second caraṇa svara may also be of the length of one āvarta, the subsequent caraṇa svara-s may be longer with a combination of dīrgha svara-s and hrasva svara-s. The last caraṇa svara is the longest and may be of two or more āvarta-s. The Uttarāṅga is also to be rendered in multiple speeds.

Languages used : **Telugu, Tamil and Sanskrit**

Popular Composers

Govindasāmayya is considered to be the first composer of varṇam-s and Paccimiriyaṁ Ādiappayya is known as 'Tāna Varṇa Mārgadarsi'. Other composers of Varṇa-s are - Pallavi Gōpāla Ayyar, Vīṇa Kuppayyar, Tiruvottiyūr Tyāgayyar, Paṭṇam Subrahmaṇya Ayyar, Mysore Vāsudēvācārya, Rāmnāḍ Śrīnivāsa Ayyaṅgār, Vīṇa Sēshanna and many more. The Tanjore Quartette have composed many Pada Varṇa-s. Some of the modern day composers are Tiger Varadācāri, Muthiah Bhāgavatar, G.N. Bālasubramaṇyaṁ, Dr. M. Bālamuraḷi Kṛṣṇa, Lālgudi G. Jayarāman etc.

Special feature of Varṇam

In earlier days, a section called 'Anubandham' existed after caraṇa svāra-s in which the sāhityam of the muktāyi svāram would be sung followed by the pallavi. The anubandham used to link the end of the varṇam back to the pallavi.

Examples:

- i. Viribōṇi - Bhairavi Rāga - Aṭa Tāḷa (Paccimiriyaṃ Ādiappayya)
- ii. Nīvē gatiyani - Kaḷyāni Rāga - Triśra Maṭhya Tāḷa (Śyāma Śāstry)

* * * * *

This book, second in the series of 'Abhyāsa Gānaṃ', aims at acquainting the student with a good knowledge and vocabulary of melodic phrases in various Rāga-s before he proceeds to learn the advanced lessons of 'Sabhā Gānaṃ'. These lessons have been written in a simple and easily understandable format with diacritical marks, which enable the students pronounce the Sāhitya accurately.

We very much hope this book will be beneficial for all students of Music and serve the purpose of teachers and students alike.

I am ever indebted to my Parents and Gurus in Music and take this opportunity to convey my regards to them.

'Sangeetacharya' Dr. Vyzarsu Balasubrahmanyam

TABLE OF DIACRITICAL MARKS

The system of transliteration adopted in this book has been represented by the following diacritical marks.

Vowels:

a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	ṛ	ṛī
अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ॠ
అ	ఆ	ఇ	ఀ	ఁ	ఁ	ఱ	ఱ

e	ē	ai	o	ō	au	aṃ	aḥ
ए	ए	ऐ	ओ	ओ	औ	अं	अः
ఎ	ఁ	ఱ	ఁ	ఁ	ఁ	అం	అః

Consonants:

ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅa	ca	cha	ja	jha	ña
क	ख	ग	घ	ङ	च	छ	ज	झ	ञ
క	ఖ	గ	ఘ	ఙ	ఛ	ఞ	జ	ఝ	ఞ

ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa	ta	tha	da	dha	na
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण	त	थ	द	ध	न
ట	ఠ	డ	ఢ	ణ	త	థ	ద	ధ	న

pa	pha	ba	bha	ma
प	फ	ब	भ	म
ప	ఫ	బ	భ	మ

ya	ra	la	va	śa	ṣa	sa	ha
य	र	ल	व	श	ष	स	ह
య	ర	ల	వ	శ	ష	స	హ

ḷa	kṣa	ra
ळ	क्ष	र
ళ్	క్ష	ఱ

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1.	Ninnu Kōri	Mōhana	Ādi	Rāmnāḍ Śrīnivāsa Ayyaṅgār	2
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