



# அரண்

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**Importance of Sāhityam and the Influence of the Great composers in  
the musical compositions**

Ms. Janaki Sadagopan

தெலுங்கும் தமிழும் தித்திக்கும் கலைவடிவம் பாகவதமேளா  
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## Importance of Sāhityam and the Influence of the Great composers in the musical compositions.

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### Abstract

The History of Indian classical music starts from the Vēdic period. We all know that our music has its origin from Sāma vedā. The growth of music from the vēdic period till date is quite fascinating. The vast history from the Grantham and its manuscripts shows us how our music has traveled. With the view of this musical line, we come to know that there are three main aspects of our Indian music. That is Sāhityam (lyrics), tālā (rhythm) and rāgā (melody).

The Sāhityam, or the lyrics is the main part where a composer can express their thoughts or emotions. To bring out these emotions, different rāgās are used which helps to bring out and helps the composer to showcase their thoughts. Like rāgā hamsadwani brings out the happy feeling. There are different types or patterns of sāhityams that are followed by the composers and these patterns follow as a great influence by their disciples or other composers which helps them to compose in the same way. Following the pattern in the way of the structure of the song, depicting bhakti through the compositions and many more can be showcased only by the medium of the lyrics. In this article, I am going to show some of the influence which can be seen in the songs by the composers and by the disciples of those composers.

**Introduction:**

Music stands out as one of the most profound forms of art, offering beauty and connection that resonates deeply within us all. Indian music has a rich and diverse history, deeply intertwined with culture and religion. The history of the music system that prevailed in India from ancient times goes back to the vĕdās. The earliest treatises we have on music is the Nātya Śāstra of Bharata. Other treatises of music after Bharata such as Sangīta Ratnākaram, Brihaddesi, Chaturdandī Prakāśika and so on provide us fund of information about the different aspects of music and its development during the periods.

The ancient tamils of south india had also developed an highly evolved system of music with its swarams, sruthi, melā, rāgā, tālā etc. A number of instruments were also used to accompany the song and dance. The Tamil classics like Tolkāppiyam, sangam literature, silappadhigāram etc, contains the description of the music of that period, then Saivite and Vaishnavites saints of 7-10 century serve as resource material for knowing musical history.

The course of evolution of Indian music has the emergence of two different sub systems as Hindustani classical music and Carnatic classical music. They are two distinct styles. Both the systems of music received their nourishment from the same original source, whereas the music of the south ( Carnatic) continued to develop along its own original lines. It is said that South Indian music flourished and took shelter in the Carnatic empire of Vijayanagar under the reign of krishnadevarāyā. In the field of South Indian music it had a succession of brilliant and prolific composers who enriched the art with more compositions. Carnatic music compositions has two elements one is musical and the other is what is conveyed in the compositions through sāhityams. In another hand South Indian music can be classified under two heads

1. Kalpita Sangita
2. Manodharma sangitam

In kalpita sangitam the musician reproduces the compositions that have been already composed by different composers. It consists of all the compositions. The manodharma sangitam the music is improvised on the spot without any set of thoughts that are already set.

In Kalpita sangitam a musical composition is a piece that is set to rhythmic time beat. A musical picture of a particular raga to a chosen rhythm. Pieces like ślōkās, chūrṇikās, and viruttams are not set to a time beat but are sung in a rāgā. The embellishments used in ornamenting a rāgā brings up a different grace to the composition. The composers who compose a musical compositions is called a vāggēyakārā. ‘Vāg’ means words, ‘geyam’ means music. I.e., who writes the sāhitya and also tunes it is called a vāggēyakārā.

In addition to the rich musical experience each compositions brings out the knowledge and personality of the composer. The words are as important as the musical element itself. The musicians are expected to understand what was conveyed by the composer in various languages and musical phrases that act to create the effect that was intended by the composers in their compositions.

There are many musical forms which have their own peculiar compositional structure. In every musical compositions the sāhityam must merge with the music. There are compositions having sāhityās and also without sāhityās. Purandaradāsa formulated the system used for teaching Carnatic music I.e., starts their practice by mastering basic lessons from Sarali varisai, Jandai Varisai, Dhāttu Varisai, Hechusthāyi varisai in māyāmālvagowḷa rāgā, ādi tālam after that suḷādi sapta tālā alankārās. For these basic lessons we don’t have sāhityās. Next gitams. I.e. a short piece introduced with a simple sāhitya set to a simple tune. Next swarajatis with sāhityā and basic elements of rāgā, tāla Intend to provide a basic understanding of the art form. Next varṇams having an incredibly complex structure. Than kṛti, kīrtanai, padam, jāwālī etc. In the musical compositions sāhityam can be further classified under different headings as follows:

1. Sāhityam in praise of deity.
2. Sāhityam in praise of patrons who supported the musicians
3. Sāhityams where the composers have taken the divine entities as their spiritual teachers. In this aspect there have been disciples who have composed songs praising their own gurus according to their lineage And there are compositions sung in praise of the other composers.

There are many other varieties in the sāhityams like Lyrics depicting the human emotions, like padams. Sāhityam depicting the theoretical aspects. In this article I would like to show the patterns

and the contributions given by the musicians and composers on the above mentioned 3 types of the sāhityās.

### 1. Sāhityam in praise of deity:

In many cultures, literature and poetry were used as a means of praising and worshipping deities. The tradition of composing sahityams or hymns to worship gods is widespread. Starting from Thevārams, thirupugazh, thiruppāvai, divya prabandās which are considered as the sacred hymns by Saivites and Vaishnavites, till the later versions like geethams, varnams, krithis and keerthanai, The worshippers or the composers express their devotion through songs, verses and poems. These works often invoke the names and attributes of the deities and ask for blessings, protection or spiritual knowledge.

### 2. Sāhityam in praise of patrons who supported the musicians:

South Indian music flourished in the Vijayanagara Empire during the reign of King Krishnadevarāyā. It is said that there were sangitashastra navarathna or a group of 9 musicological treatises written during the reign of the Vijayanagara empire. In the same way, there were Tanjore kings and Mysore Kings who supported the musicians, and we can find many compositions in their praise. We can find the names of śri Tulajendra and Srabhoji Maharaja in the Thodi raga atta tala varnam 'Kanakāngi'. One more famous dharu varnam in khamās rāgā by Shri Harikeshanallur Muthaiya Bhagavathar praises the Mysore king śri Krishna Rajendra.

One of the powerful kings of Nayaks in Tanjore, Raghunatha Nayak is very famous for his patronage of literature and other scholarly research. He was a gifted scholar in Sanskrit, Kannada, and Telugu languages, as well as a talented musician himself. In the field of music, King Raghunatha created new rāgās, melās, and tālās. Like Jayantasena rāgā, Raghunātha melā and Rāmānanda talam. He has composed kāvyās and dance dramas like pārijāthapraharana, vālmika charitra kāvyā, and many more. We can also see the patrons who were musicians and great vāggēyakārā themselves. Maharaja Swathi Thirunāl (19<sup>th</sup> CE) who ruled the kingdom of Travancore, was a great musician and composer of more than 400 compositions in both Carnatic and Hindustani. Some of his famous compositions are

Deve Deva (Mayamalawagowla), Sarasījanābha (thodi), and Padmanābha pāhi (Hindolam). It is said that he was fluent in many languages like malayālam, Sanskrit, Marathi, Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, and Bengali to name a few. His famous thillānā in rāgā dhanashi is composed in Hindi.

**3. Sāhityams where the composers have taken the divine entities as their spiritual teachers. In this aspect, there have been disciples who have composed songs praising their own gurus according to their lineage And there are compositions sung in praise of the other composers.**

Oothukadu Venkatakavi has composed 16 songs that describes Lord Krishna as his guru. Muthu Swamy Dikshitar took Lord Murugan as his guru and kept his mudra as ‘guruguha’. Saint Tyāgarājā wrote 5 songs depicting the greatness of Nārada muni taking him as his guru and as a thanks giving for giving him the grantam ‘swarānavam’. All these compositions are on the deities as their guru. This pattern can also be seen in thirupugazh. Where the composer Aruṇagirinādhara sings lord muruga as the guru.

உருவாய் அருள்வாய், உளதாய் இலதாய்

மருவாய் மலராய், மணியாய் ஒளியாய்க்

கருவாய் உயிராய்க், கதியாய் விதியாய்

குருவாய் வருவாய், அருள்வாய் குகனே.

Also we find sāhityams where the composers have praised their guru. These songs depicts the greatness of their teacher/ guru from whom they have learnt. There are many krithis, ashtotharams, slokams, mangalashtakams. One of the 12 Āzhvārs Shri Madhurakaviyāzhvār has written only one prabandam ‘kaṇṇinun siruthāmbu’ which is in praise of his guru Shri Nammazhvār. The guru bhakthi that can be seen in this prabandham is so precious that composing this one prabandham has given him the status of Āzhvār. The slokam ‘Toṭakāstakam’ which is in praise of Shri Ādi Shankarācharyā is composed by his disciple Shri Toṭakācharyā. There are songs in praise of Shri Purandaradāsa by Vijayadāsā. Like ‘Guru Purandaradāsare’, ‘Adigali dwandhibe purandaraguruve’. ‘Shri pathiya nambikamalathi’ a song by Shri Purandaradāsa where he gives the names of his guru lineage. We find

ennumbers of compositions that are composed in praise of Saint Tyāgarājā by his disciples. Shri Wālājāpetai Venkataramana Bhāgavatar has composed mangalāshtakam ‘Kākarla vamsha’ on his guru. Bangalore Nāgaratnāmbāl composed ‘Tyāgarāja Ashatakam’. His disciple lineage is so vast that almost all the disciples have composed songs on their guru Shri Tyāgarājā. We can also find compositions by other composers who are not from his disciples lineage. Like Koteeswara iyer ‘Ini namkkoru’ in bilahari ragam, ‘Nādha brammā’ by misu krishnaiyar in the ragam nādha brammā. ‘Tyāgarāja swāmi sadguruvani’ in hindolam rāgā by Shri Harikeshanallur Muthaiyya Bhāgavatar. The list goes on.

There are songs composed on Shri Ādi Shankarar, Ramānujācharyā, Guru Shri Ragavendrā, Bodhendra Sathguru Swāmi, Sadāshiva Brammendrā, Annamācharyā, Muthu Swāmy Dikshitar, Shyāmā Shāstri, and many more either by their direct disciples or by other composers.

### Conclusion:

The Influence that these great composers/ gurus have given to their students/ disciples has given us an ocean of compositions. The influence can be seen through the pattern of the compositions, rāgā, mudrās, expressing bhakti, and many. These patterns that are followed by the composers give way for the new upcoming composers to compose many songs with the same influence that they followed.

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# அரண்

பன்னாட்டுத் தமிழாய்வு மின்னஞ்சல்

## அறிவிப்பு / Announcement

அன்பான தமிழ்ச் சொந்தங்களே

வணக்கம்.

வரும் 2025, ஏப்ரல் மாதம் வெளிவரும் அரண் பன்னாட்டுத் தமிழாய்வு மின்னஞ்சலுக்கான ஆய்வுக் கட்டுரைகள் ஆய்வாளர்களிடமிருந்து வரவேற்கப்படுகின்றன.

கட்டுரை வந்து சேர வேண்டிய கடைசி நாள்- ஏப்ரல் 10. அதற்கு பின் வரும் கட்டுரைகள் ஏப்ரல் இதழில் இடம்பெறாது என்பதை தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறோம்.

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