

The Rāga Lakṣaṇa of Maṅgalakaiṣiki: A Study Through Gīta and the Kīrtana of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar

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Abstract

In history karnātak music, the rāga Maṅgalakaiṣiki had existed form 15th century and attained its popularity during the Nāyak Period (AD 1532 to 1673). The musicological works such as Rāgalakṣaṇa attributed to Muddu Vēṅkaṭamakhi (AD1680-1730, contemporary of King Sahaji), gives the lakṣaṇa of this rāga Maṅgalakaiṣiki. King Śhāhaji in his work Rāgalakṣaṇamu gives the description of maṅgalakaiṣiki and its classifications. He also quotes the example of a gīta and its prayōga-s, and states that it was prevalent even before his time. Meanwhile, Subbarāma Dīkṣita in his work Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśiṇi, 1904 had documented the musical forms such as, gīta of Vēṅkaṭamakhi, kīrtana of Muddusvāmi Dīkṣita and his sañcāri in the rāga Maṅgalakaiṣiki. Subbarāma Dīkṣita also states a note on the importance of the usage of the gīta-prayōga-s as mentioned by Śhāhaji in his Rāgalakṣaṇamu.

Looking on the description by Śhāhaji and the observations made by Subbarāma Dīkṣita, this available musical form gīta seen in the rāga Maṅgalakaiṣiki stands as the testimony in understanding the rāga. This paper proposes to understand the form of the rāga Maṅgalakaiṣiki with the available textual sources and the notations.

Key words: Maṅgalakaiṣiki, Vēṅkaṭamakhi, Śhāhaji, Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśiṇi, Rāgalakṣaṇamu.

Introduction:

Maṅgalakaiṣiki is an upāṅga janya of the rāgāṅgarāga, mālavagauḷa (15th mēḷa) of the present day. The lakṣaṇa or the description of the rāga can be traced from various textual right from the 15th century C.E. such as, Svaramēḷakalānidhi of Rāmamātya (1550 CE), Rāgalakṣaṇamu of Śhāhaji (1684–1712 CE), Saṅgītasārāmṛta of King Tulaja (1732–1735 CE) and Rāgalakṣaṇa of Muddu Vēṅkaṭamakhi (around 1700 CE).

Meanwhile, the Kṛiti ‘Śrī bhārgavi bhadram’ of Muddusvāmi Dīkṣita is the only composition that is available in the rāga Maṅgalakaiṣiki. Also, there is a gīta in this rāga that is found in the work

Sangīta Sampradāya pradarśini (here after, SSP). The work SSP authored by Subbarāma Dīkṣita of 1904 is one of the most important publications that have recorded the notations of various musical forms and are arranged in the sequential order of Seventy-two rāgāṅga rāga-s and their corresponding janya rāga-s.

In this work Subbarāma Dīkṣita claims that he follows the tradition of Vēṅkaṭamakhi and gives the notations of the musical forms such as, gīta of Vēṅkaṭamakhi and kīrtana of Muddusvāmi Dīkṣita that are available in the rāga Maṅgaḷakaiṣiki are taken up for the present study.

King Śāhāji in his work Rāgalakṣaṇamu gives the description and classification of the rāga. He quotes the example of the prayōga-s used in the caturdaṇḍi form gīta and its prayōga-s, and states that it was prevalent even before his time. Meanwhile, Subbarāma Dīkṣita mentions a note about the gīta given in SSP and states its prayōga usages are as mentioned by king Śāhāji in his Rāgalakṣaṇamu, provides the scope of the study. The prominence of this rāga, its prayōga-s from the Caturdaṇḍi form gīta of the Nāyak traditions until the 18th century can be studied from the available sources.

Based on the lakṣaṇa details mentioned by king Śāhāji and the observations made by Subbarāma Dīkṣita, this available musical form gīta seen in the rāga Maṅgaḷakaiṣiki stands as the testimony in understanding the rāga. This paper aims to understand the lakṣaṇa and prayōga-s of the rāga Maṅgaḷakaiṣiki from a historical perspective, through an analysis of the kīrtana of Muddusvāmi Dīkṣita with the gīta of Vēṅkaṭamakhi and as found in SSP.

Lakṣaṇa of the rāga Maṅgaḷakaiṣiki from various sources:

The svāra-s employed in the rāga Maṅgaḷakaiṣiki appear to have remained the same from the period of Rāmamātya to Muddu Vēṅkaṭamakhi.

It is the janya of the mālavagauḷā mēḷa, takes śuddharṣabha, antara gandhara, śuddhamadhyama, pañcama, śuddhadhaivatha and kākāḷiniṣāda.

The brief chronological descriptions or the lakṣaṇa of the rāga Maṅgaḷakaiṣiki, its classifications, its prayōga-s and the mūrccana found in various musicological works are seen in following.

Rāgalakṣaṇamu of King Śāhāji¹

In this work King Śāhāji states that rāga maṅgaḷakaiṣiki is the sampūrṇa rāga and takes mēḷa mālavagauḷa. It is been classified under gana and naya rāga. King Śāhāji quotes the āyitta, tāna

¹ RL-S. pp.38-40

and the gīta prayōga of the caturdaṇḍi forms as the examples of the rāga for the understanding of the svara movement. The following are the prayōga-s listed below.

- **Āyitta prayōga-s:** ‘sa. rri ri sa ni. dha dha. ri ri’, ‘ga ga ri ga ma. m’, ‘dha ri ri ga ga ri ga’, ‘pa ma ga ma ga ri’, ‘ri sa ni. i i i sa. ssa’.
- **Tāna prayōga-s:** ‘sa. ssa ni dha pa ma pa ma ga mam mma’, ‘sa. ri ga ma pa dha ni dha pa ma. Pa.’, ‘ppa ma ga ga ri’ ‘ri. ri. ga. ga.’, ‘ppa ma ga.....’.
- **Gīta prayōga-s:** ‘ddrr’

Saṅgītasārāmrita of King Tulaja:

King Tulaja in his work has not described the rāga in detail, although he has listed it under the mālavagauḷa mēla.

Rāgalakṣaṇa of Muddu Vēṅkaṭamakhi:

The work rāgalakṣaṇa attributed to Mudduvēṅkaṭamakhi, which is appended to Caturdaṇḍiprakāśika(CDP) gives the lakṣaṇa of Maṅgaḷakaiṣiki. Mudduvēṅkaṭamakhi lists this rāga among the upāṅga rāga-s under 15th mēla and classifies as rākthi rāga. He also states that this rāga takes cyutapañcama where the pañcama seen in the rāga is slightly lesser than its original Śruthi in devious ascent and it descent it is sampūrṇa.

Lakṣaṇa details mentioned by Subbarāma Dīkṣita:

in SSP, Subbarāma Dīkṣita gives two mūrccaṇa or the scale for this rāga Maṅgaḷakaiṣiki, as ‘sa ri ga ma pa ma ga pa dha ni sa / sa ri ma ga dha pa sa, and ‘sa ni dha pa ma ga ri sa’. he mentions the classification of the rāga upāṅga and rakthi rāga. Also, Subbarāma Dīkṣita states that cūta-pañcama occurs in a vakra phrase in both ascending and descending movements. He also gives the phrase ‘ga ma pa ma ga’ incorporating cyuta-pañcama and also mentions the usage of the phrase ‘dha dha ri ri’ should be used in this rāga². The following are the observation on the lakṣaṇa of the rāga Maṅgaḷakaiṣiki from various textual sources.

1. The rāga Maṅgaḷakaiṣiki has been placed as the janya of mālavagauḷa mēla by musicological works such as, Rāgalakṣaṇamu of King Śāhāji, SS of Tulaja, Rāgalakṣaṇa of Muddu Vēṅkaṭamakhi and Lakṣaṇa details mentioned by Subbarāma Dīkṣitar.
2. Svaramēlakalānidhi mentions the rāga as the ‘adhama rāga’ but the lakṣaṇa details are not mentioned
3. Sangītasudha and caturdaṇḍiprakāśika does not mentions about this rāga

² SSP, p. 177

4. The work Rāgalakṣaṇamu of King Śāhājī and the lakṣaṇa of Subbarāma Dīkṣita gives the details of the prayōga-s used in the rāga. These musicological works provides the illustrations of the rāga and serves as the major scope in understanding the rāga Maṅgalakaiṣiki.

Gīta- ‘Rē rē śri Rāmabhadra’:

The notation of the gīta ‘Rē rē Śri Rāmabhadra’ in Dhruva tāla of Vēṅkaṭamakhi is found in the work SSP. Subbarāma Dīkṣita mentions this gīta as the muktapadagrasta³ and the sāhitya is in praise of lord Rāma. The gīta is seen with two sections, dhruva and jāvaḍa respectively. Here are some observations.

- SSP 1904 does not specify the section heading ‘dhruva’ for gīta and prabhandas. Since, in the discussion of gīta and prabhandas by Vēṅkaṭamakhi in his work CDP, probably the term dhruva has been mentioned as the first section in the recent editions.
- Vāggeyakāra mudra is not seen in this composition. Although, Subbarāma Dīkṣita states that composer as Vēṅkaṭamakhi, the works CDP of Vēṅkaṭamakhi does not mention is rāga. But the lakṣaṇa Ślōka is found in the work rāgalakṣaṇa which is appended to CDP.
- The prayōga ‘sa ri ga ma da pa sa- śa ni da pa ma ga ri sa’ is seen at the end of the jāvaḍa section. This phrase has a variance on seeing the mūrchanā⁴ given by Subbarāma Dīkṣita. Probably, this could also be another pātāntara or variation that is seen only in the gīta.

ś	ī	ḡ	m̐	ḍ	ṇ	ś	n̐	ḍ	ṇ	m̐	ḡ	ī	ś	
ra	ṇa	raṇ	-	-	ga	bhī	-	-	ma	ca	ṇu	rē	-	

- The prayōga, ‘ga ma pa ga ma’ is seen only in the gīta. The occurrence of the cyutha-paṇcama is compressed or flattened and it is not increased from its position.
- The prayōga-s seen in the rāga adheres to the reference given by Śāhājī, Muddu Vēṅkaṭamakhi and Subbarāma Dīkṣita are seen in the composition.

Kīrtana- ‘Śri bhārgavi bhadram mē dīśatu’:

The kīrtana ‘Śri bhārgavi bhadram’ is the composition of Muddusvāmi Dīkṣita, set to miśra ēka. This composition is in praise of the goddess Śri Raṅganāyaki, consort of śri Raṅganātha in śri Raṅgam. The composition has pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇa. The madhyamakāla sāhitya is seen

³ Muktapadagrasta is also called as the Andhadhi in tamizh, where the last word of the stanza serves as the first word of the next stanza

⁴ Here the mūrchanā refers to the scale of the rāga

at end of the caraṇa and refrains to pallavi. The mudrā of vāggēyakārā and the rāgamudra is seen in the composition.

Observation:

- The phrase ‘ga ma pa ma ga’ is seen only in the composition of Muddusvāmi Dīkṣita. Here, this phrase suggests the usage of ‘pa’ in middle of ‘ga ma pa ma ga’ must be taken as the cyuta- pañcama.
- The composition commences on the madhyama and is been elongated for ten akṣarakāla. Also, the madhyama is seen as the dīrga svara at many phrases of the composition. This indicates the significance of śudda madhyama in this rāga.
- The phrase ‘da, ri ri’ is observed in the pallavi, at the end of the caraṇa, and at the beginning of the madhyamakāla sāhitya. Additionally, the usage of the phrase ‘ga ma pa ma ga’ is also identified.

Analytical Observations on Maṅḍalakaiṣiki:

Historical Aspect -

Historically, the svarasthāna-s of Maṅḍalakaiṣiki have remained the same across the musicological sources from the 15th to the 18th century CE. Interestingly, the gīta is found repeatedly in the unpublished manuscripts of the Saraswati Mahal Library. The pāṭha, or versions, remain the same across the manuscripts, and the composer is predominantly identified as Vēṅkaṭamakhi. Probably, we can consider this Gīta which could have been a popular composition of Nāyak period. The same gīta is seen in the SSP while it has the sthāyi indications. In the case of the Kīrthana Śrī bhārgavi bhadrām’ the SSP notations stand as the primary source of the composition.

Rāga prayōgā-s -

The rāga Maṅḍalakaiṣiki can be understood through prayōga-s rather than scale/ mūrchanā. The phrases, ‘ddrr’, ‘d,rr’, and ‘ddr’ are seen in gīta and the kīrtana. This is seen in particularly on the ārōhaṇa or ascending movement. It can be inferred as the characteristic prayōga-s or the identity of the rāga. Interestingly, the gīta is seen with the prayōga as “ga ma pa ga ma,” while the kīrtana of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita uses the vakra or the zig-zag movement as “ga ma pa ma ga.” Subarāma Dīkṣita also mentions the note that the cūta pañcama should be understood as a slightly lowered form of pañcama instead as an augmented or raised madhyama (prati madhyama). Therefore, the “pa” found in the middle of “ga ma pa ma ga” in the ascending movement may be interpreted as a flattened pañcama. This indicates how Dīkṣita was careful in preserving the gamaka-oriented identity of the rāga without uplifting the pañcama beyond its sthāna or the position.

Musical Alignment -

The gīta presents the essential melodic outline of the rāga or the mūrccana through the movements “sa ri ga ma dha pa sa” and “sa ni dha pa ma ga ri sa,”. This portrays the picture or rāga-rūpa and the progression of the melodic movement. The same melodic movements are also seen in Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita’s kīrthana, particularly in the phrases “sādhana madhye mahālakṣmī” and “samajahema kumbhāsana,” where the ascending or ārōhaṇā and descending or avarōhaṇa patterns closely resembles of those found in the gīta. This suggests that Dīkṣita has maintained the melodic framework preserved in the gīta tradition. The incorporation these phrases are seen in the melodic movements of carana before the madhyamakāla passage. It reflects Dīkṣita reverence to the tradition of Vēṅkaṭamakhi (parama guru). It strongly indicates the important role played by the gīta in shaping the melodic structure of the kīrtaṇa.

Conclusion:

The study of the rāga Maṅgalakaiṣiki has not any changes over years. It remains the janya of Mālavagaula. Gita of Vēṅkaṭamakhi "rē rē śri rāma bhadra" and the kīrtana "Śri bhārgavi" of Muddusvāmi Dīkṣita stands as a testimony for the rāga Maṅgalakaiṣiki. It can be considered that, the gīta stands as the forerunner to understand the melodic aspect in a structural manner. Interestingly, the impact of this melody is observed in the Kīrtana of Muddusvāmi Dīkṣita. The notation seen in SSP serves as the primary source of this kīrtana and it retains the important prayōga-s of the rāga. Now, in the 21st century, this kīrtana ‘Śri bhārgavi’ have been rendered in the concert platform based on the notation preserved in the SSP.

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