

# Pithukkuli Murugadas's Bhani of rendering Oothukadu Venkata Kavi's 'Krishna Ganam'

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**Abstract** : 'Krishna Ganam' is one among the prominent operas composed by Oothukadu Venkata Kavi. Compositions like Taye Yashoda (Todi), Pal Vadiyum (Nattakurinji), AdathuAsangathu (Madhyamavathi), Madhura Madhura (Athana), Nada Murali (Hamir Kalyani) and so on are a part of this. PithukkuliMurugadas had his own Bhani (style) of rendering these compositions. The aim of this paper is to explore the uniqueness of his sangatis and other musical aspects in rendering these Krishna Ganams. We do this by studying the recordings of his Pal vadiyumukham (Nattakurinji) and AdathuAsangathu (Madhyamavathi).

**Index Terms**—Krishna Ganam, Sangatis, Nattakurinji, Madyamavathi.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Oothukadu Venkata Subbaiyyer (1700-c.1765) also known as Oothukadu Venkata Kavi was born in Tamilnadu and has composed Kritis, Tillanas, Javalis and Operas in Sanskrit and Tamil on almost all the Hindu deities. He was a pioneer to the Carnatic Music trinity. His Krishna Ganam was popularized by Needamangalam Krishna Murthy Bhagavathar, Pithukkuli Murugadas and many artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among these artists Pithukkuli Murugadas had his own unique bhani or style of singing the songs of Krishna Ganam. The distinctive feature of his bhani is the clear pronunciation of the sahitya and the rendering of sangatis or improvisations or ornamentations to enhance the bhava of the composition. An analysis of his rendering of the following 2 compositions from Krishna Ganam is taken up to explain this. Notations of his unique sangatis are alone explained in this paper.

<b>Song</b>	<b>Raga</b>	<b>Tala</b>
Adathu asangAthu	Madhyamavathi	Adhi
Pal Vadiyum Mukham	Nattakurinji	Adhi

## II. Adathu asangAthu

This song is set to Madhyamavathi raga and Adhi tala. The scale of the raga and the sahitya of the song is :

Arohana : S R<sub>2</sub> M<sub>1</sub> P N<sub>2</sub> Ś  
Avarohana : Ś N<sub>2</sub> P M<sub>1</sub> R<sub>2</sub> S

Pallavi:	AdAthu asangAthu vA kaNNa, un Adalil, Irezhu bhuvanavum asaindu asaindhAduthe- enave
Anupallavi:	Adalai kANa tillai ambalathu iraivanum than Adalai vittu inge gokulam vandAr, Adhalinal siru yadhavane , oru mA mayil iragani mAdhavane nI
Charanam:	Chinna chiru padangal silambolithidume, adai sevi madutha piravi manam kaLittidume pinniya sadai sattre vagai kalaindhidume, mayil peeli asaindu asaindu ,nilai kalaindhidume panniru kai iraivan eru mayil onru than pasum thogai virithAdi parisalittidume pAdi varum azhagA unai kANa varum adiyAr yeparAyinum kanaga maNi asayum unadhu thiru nadanam kaN pattu ponAl manam puN pattu pogume.

This composition is also rendered by Pithukkuli Murugadas in 2 kalai, while many other artists sing it in 1 kalai. We shall discuss some of his unique sangatis in this song.

The pallavi begins in Tara Shadja. The phrase 'srs nsn p' is sung depicting the dance of Lord Krishna. The durita sangati 'rm, pnsnpm' for asaindhaduthe denotes the speed of Krishna's dance.

śrśn śnp, mp, nppmrs | r;;, p m | r; pm, pn ||  
 A da .thu asan gAthu | vA kaN | Na nI . . . ||

. . . . . | mmrr ppm nnpp mm r | r;, s; s ||  
 A da .thu asan gAthu | vA . . . . . kaN | Na un ||  
 r, r r mm, m m p p p , p p m | rm, pnśnpm pn | s;, pmpn ||  
 Adalil Irezhu bhuvanamum .asaindhu | asaindha du | the enave

śrśn śnp, mp, nppmrs | rśś rīnn śśnn pmr | r;;, s ||  
 A da .thu asan gAthu | vA . . . . . kaN | Na un ||  
 r; r r r r; r r m r ś , s ś s | nś n p p p; pr | r;; r r r ||  
 Adalil Irezhu bhuvanavum asaindhu | asaindhA du | the asaindhu ||  
 ś r, ś n n, n r r; ; ś ś n | p n , s; n, | s;, p m p n ||  
 asaindha duthe asaindhu | asaindha du | the enave ||

The anupallavi ‘Adalai KaNA’ begins after 3 mathras (3/4 idam) in Tara sthayi Rishabha, in order to inform Lord Krishna at a higher note, the consequence of his dance that his dance is deviating and inviting Lord Shiva from his dance at Thillai. The Sangatis for the words ‘kAna thillai’ has patterns of 4 (chatusram) and 3 (tisram) as ‘rśś –nsnn’ and ‘rśś –nsn –pnp –mpm’.

;, r, r r, r, śrm, r, ś, | ;, ś, ś ś, | npp, p n r r, ||  
 ...Adalai kANa thillai | ... ambala | thu iraivanum ||

;, r, r, rśśnsnn, pr, | ;, śrmrś, | npp, pn rś , ||  
 Adalai kANa thillai | ... ambala | thu iraivanum ||

;, r, r, rśś nsn pnp mpm mpns | r; rpmrś, | npp, pn rś , ||  
 Adalai kA Na thil lai . . . . | ... ambala | thu iraivanum ||

n p , prīś, ś, nrsnpm pn ś, | ;, n, p m , | r;, r, s, ||  
 than Adalai vittu . . . . inge | gokulam | vandAr ||

;, r, r, ś, ś, rpmr r, | ;, n r ś n , | nnpm pnsr śnn, ||  
 Adalai vittu .in ge | .. gokulam | van dAr ||

Since the song is rendered in 2kalai, ‘Adhalinal’ is sung in 2 speeds – Vilamba and Durita

m;, r, r, p;, ;mp | n;, ;mp | n;, ;pn ||  
 A dhali nal siru | ya dhava | ne, oru ||  
 ś; n, p, ;, ś śnp, | ;, ś, n p, | s;, p, pm ||  
 mA mayil iragini | mAdhava | ne kaNNa ||

m, pmpm rm mpp m p, r r | mr pm np ś n | r ś r n śp pn ||  
 A dhalinal siru ya dhavane oru | mA mayil ira gini | mAdhavane nI ||

The Charanam of the song begins at Panchamam after 3 mathras (3/4 idam). Since it describes the sound of anklets, it is tuned to a rhythm –

**tha, tha, tha dhIm, tha dhIm dhIm**  
 Chin nan chi ru pa dan gal

To depict the anklet’s jingling sound while running, the words ‘silambolithudume’ is rendered as a durita sangati – ‘pnpmpm rmrśś nsrm’

;, p ,m p,r; mp , p, | ;, rm p n,|p, m, r;||  
Chinnanchiru padangal|..silamboli|thidume||

;, mr pm np sn r s n p, | ;, r m p n , | pnpm pmrm rs rs nrm ||  
Chinnanchi ru padangal|.. silamboli |thi du me . . . . .||  
mr, r m p n, nppmm,r, |s ; m r; p| m; npmp, ||  
adai sevi madutha piravi |.. manam ka| Li ttidume||

Pithukkuli Murugadas uses a DhAtu prayogam – ‘pr’ to depict the swift spreading of feathers by peacock and uses a different rhythmic phrase to describe the dance of ‘Panniru kai iraiyan’ Lord Murugan’s peacock.

n p, p r, s,r; n s, n, | s; p n s n, | sn sn s;||  
than pasum thogai virithA|di parisali | tti dume||

**tha dhIm tha, dhIm, tha dhIm tha, dhIm,**  
pa sum tho gai vi rit thA di

He renders the sahitya as ‘Adi varum azhagA’ and ‘pAdi varum azhagA’. The phrase ‘**mpnp;**’ for ‘azhagA’ is sung in such a way that it narrates the manner, the author cossets Lord Krishna. These lines and ‘unai kANa varum adiyAr yevarAyinum’ are rendered in Vilamba and Madhyama kalam. While the next few lines – ‘kanaga maNi asayum unadhu thiru nadanam kaN pattu ponAl manam puN pattu pogume’ are rendered in Vilamba kala, Madhyama kala, Durita kala and Tisra nadai.

s; , snmp s; ; p p | s; ; ; | ; ; ; pp ||  
A di va rum azha| gA. . . . unai||  
r ; , r s np r; ; p p | r; ; ; ns | r, mr r s s ,||  
kANa va rum adi |yAr eva| rA yinum||

;, s rm r, s s; n s , s , | ;, s n p, n | s; n r s s ,||  
..kanaga maNi asaiyum|.. unadhu thi| ru nadanam||  
; , p , r, s, r , n, s n, | ;, n , p, m | r; , r, s , ||  
..kaN pattu ponAl manam|.. puN pattu| pogume||

*Madhyama kala*

p, pm pm **mpnp;**, rm | p n n n n, pp| s, pn s, s s ||  
A divarum **azhagA** unai| kANa varum adiyAr evarAyinum||

*Tisram*

s s s, s, s, m r s, ;s n p, n s n s s , | ; r s sr n s ns r s | nsn s r s ns n s s , ||  
kanaga maNi asaiyum unadhu thiru nadanam|. kanaga maNi asaiyum|unadhu thi ru nadanam||

*Madhyama kala*

r r r r r rm r s , s s s, sn np n n s | , p r s r n s n p , | , n , pm r r r s ||  
kanaga maNi a saiyum unadhu thi ru nadanam| kaN pattu ponAl manam|puN pattu pogume||

*Durita Kala*

p,p m pm r m p; ; mp n , n n n , p n s, pn s , s n | r r r r r m r s s s s n p n n s |  
Adi varum azhagA unai kANa varum adiyAr evarAyinum|kanaga maNi asaiyum unadhu thiru nadanam|  
s r, n n s s p n p,m rm pn ||  
kaN pattu ponAl manam puN pattu po gume||

**III. Pal Vadiyum Mukham**

This song is set to Nattakurinji raga, a Rakti raga and Adhi tala. The scale of the raga and the sahitya of the song is :

Arohana : S R<sub>2</sub> G<sub>3</sub> M<sub>1</sub> N<sub>2</sub> D<sub>2</sub> N<sub>2</sub> P D<sub>2</sub> N<sub>2</sub> Ś

Avarohana : Ś N<sub>2</sub> D<sub>2</sub> M<sub>1</sub> G<sub>3</sub> R<sub>2</sub> S

Pallavi: pAl vaDiyum mukham ninaindu ninainden uLLam  
Paravasa migha vAgudE kaNNA

Anupallavi: nIlak-kaDal pOlum nirattazhagA  
Endan nenjam kuDikoNDa anrumudal inrum  
Enda poruL kaNDum cintanai selAdozhiya

Charanam: vAna mughaTTil saTru manam vandu nOkkinum  
mOna mukham vandu tONUdE  
teLivAna teNNIr taTattil en cintanai mArinum un  
siritta mukham vandu tONUdE shaTru  
gAnak-kuyil kuralil karuttamaindiDinum angum un  
gAnak-kuzhal Osai mayakkudE

karutta kuzhalODu niratta mayilira kirukki amaitta tirattile  
gAna mayilADum mOnak-kuyilpADum nIla naiyODum vanattile  
kural mudal ezhishai kuzhaiyavarum ishaiyin kuzhalODu miLirina karattile  
kadirum matiyumena nayana vizhigaLiru naLinamAna calanattile  
kaLinga sirattile kaditta padattile en manattai irutti  
kanavu nanavinODu piravi piravitorum kaninduruga varandaruga param karuNai

PithukkuliMurugadas renders this song in 2 kalai Adhi tala, while many other artists render it in 1 kalai. The pallavi – ‘Pal vadiyum’ starts at tarasthayiShadja. Though the first two sangatis in the pallavi are normal, he makes his signature in the third.

..... |..... |D; nndd śśnrśnd|| nnddM  
pA l vaDi yum mukham| ni naindu ni|nain den uL. Lam || .....

He often uses the phrase ‘GMPGRS’ in the song. One such example is

..... |..... | d , nndd , m g ; ||  
... ninaindu ni|nainden uLLam||  
;g mp gr s s , nndd, dn | s... .. |..... ||  
pa ra vasa migha vA gu |dE .... |..... ||

He starts the anupallavi - ‘Nilakadal polum’ after 3 mathras (3/4 edam) at tara sthayi shadja. The madhyama kala sahitya of anupallavi – ‘endan nejam kuDi koNda’ is also sung in the same 2 kalai slow pace by PithukkuliMurugadas. We can see many sangatis of his bhani in the charanam. ‘VANamugaTTil’ begins at daivatham and the sangati follows

..... |..... |; dn ś ś Ś| nrśndndd d m M||  
vA na . taN Neer ta dattil en|. cin tanai| mA rinum ||  
; , m ś N d D; m M , |  
un si ritta mukham vandu|

He tries to sound like Kuyil or Cuckoo as he sings the lines ‘gAnak-kuyil kuralil karuttamaindiDinum’. Also we are able to find a Swaraksharam in ‘gAna’

; , d nśś, ś; , n dd, | ;, d n ś n , | d, n, ś, d n || ś,  
 ...gA nak-ku yil kuralil ...karuttamain|di Di num (kan||na)

ś , m̄ ḡ s ś m̄ ḡ s, m̄ ḡ s, ś ś n, | ;, d n ś n , | d, n, ś, d n || ś, r̄ ḡ  
 gA nak-ku yil kuralil | ...karuttamain| di Di num (kan||na)

ḡ m̄ ḡ s, ś m̄ ḡ s, m̄ ḡ s, m̄ ḡ s, || n; d d n ś n , | d, n, ś, ||  
 gA nak-ku yil kura lil ||... karuttamain|diDi num||

Since the entire song is sung in 2 kalai, the lines :

Karutta kuzhalODu niratta...  
 .....  
 .....kaninduruga varandaruga param karuNai,

are treated as Madyam kala Sahitya and are rendered in both Vialmba and Durita kalas.

#### IV. Conclusion

Amidst a number of performing artists who rendered Oothukadu Venkata Kavi's 'Krishna Ganam' in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Pithukkuli Murugadas had his own bhani of rendering these songs with so much sahitya bhava , raga bhava and laya variations. In this study we have analyzed this through notations of 2 such renderings from his recordings.

#### REFERENCES

[1] Pithukkuli Murugada's audio albumns – Devotional songs on Lord Krishna and Swagatham Krishna

