

# LESSER-KNOWN JANYA RĀGA-S OF THE MĒĻA DHĪRĀŚAṆKHARĀBHARAṆAM

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## ABSTRACT

*Dhīrāśaṅkharābharaṇam is one of the prominent mēḷa-s in the 72 mēḷakarta scheme. The rāga Śaṅkharābharaṇam by itself is a major rāga having many janya rāga-s. While some of the janya rāga-s like Ārabhi, Bēgaḍa, Bilahari, Athāṇa, Pūrṇacandrika are popular and commonly handled, there are many number of rare and lesser known janya rāga-s mentioned in various sources. Some of the rāga-s are made to survive with one or two compositions although many of them stand alone with just the names. This paper shall focus on the few lesser known janya rāga-s of Dhīrāśaṅkharābharaṇam, that have been made available through very few compositions that are seen in select Tamiz publications. The musical forms such as Gīta, Varṇa, Kīrtana and Tiruppugaz songs have been chosen for the study based on the availability of notations in publiactions.*

**Keywords:** Dhīrasankharabharanam, Janya, varja, vakra, musical forms, prayogas.

## Introduction

The mēḷa Dhīrāśaṅkharābharaṇam is the 29<sup>th</sup> mēḷakarta among the 72 mēḷakarta scheme. The prefix ‘Dhīra’ is added to the rāga Śaṅkharābharaṇam to suit the Kaṭapayādi sutra. Śaṅkharābharaṇam is one of the prominent rāga-s in almost all the systems of music such as Karnāṭak music, Ancient Tamil Music as Pazam Pañcuram, Hindustāni music (Bilāval thāt), Western music (C Major scale) and so on. The musical intervals, in this rāga widens the scope for the exploration of melody and from the listener’s point of observation, this is pleasing to hear and considered to elevate the mind and soul. The svarasthānas of this rāga are ṣaḍja, catuśruti ṛṣabha, antara gāndhāra, śuddha madhyama, pañcama, catuśruti dhaivata and kākali niṣāda.

## Materials and methods

In Karnāṭak music, Śaṅkharābharaṇam is considered a significant rāga for the numerous compositions and the consideration that there is ample scope for manodharma aspects. Further, this is also one of the major rāga-s having substantial amount of janya rāga-s, which are born out of the mēḷa Dhīrāśaṅkharābharaṇam. This paper is an attempt to analyse the melodic aspects of the lesser known janya rāga-s of Dhīrāśaṅkharābharaṇam. The only way to look into the characteristics of any rāga shall be the accession to the number of compositional forms in that particular rāga. The selection of janya rāga-s for this study is not exhaustive. However, the chosen janya rāga-s of Śaṅkharābharaṇam are from various publications, Tamiz publications in specific, that serve as an important source and basis for the study. Only one kṛti or kīrtana is identified for some rāga-s. The forms such as Gīta-s, Varṇa-s and Tiruppugaz songs are identified apart from the Kīrtanas.

## Research Methodology

This paper involves the historical study by looking into the evolution of the rāga-s in the available texts and the publications, analytical study which incorporates a thorough understanding and conceptualisation of the treatment of rāga-s in various compositional forms and a comparative study of the rāga-s with similar names but with varied melodic framework.

## Rāga descriptions in various texts

Saṅgīta Candrikāi of Māṇikka Mudaliyār (SC-M) is one of the earliest publications in Tamiz that was published in the year 1902. This work lists 42 janya rāga-s under the mēḷa Dhīrāśaṅkharābharaṇa. Some of the lesser known rāga-s from the list include Julāvu, Nāgadhvani, Māhuri, Jayasindhu, Dhīramati, Śuddha vasanta, Kōkilabhāṣiṇi, Vilāsini, Sindhumandāri, Surānandini, Hamsavinōdini, Pūrvaḡauḷa, Nāgabhūṣaṇi, Dūrvāṅgi, Vivardini, Śambhukriya, Līlātaṅgiṇi, Āhirināṭa, Sindhu, and Kōlāhalaṃ.

It is indeed difficult to ascertain that there are compositions in all the above said rāga-s. Some of the rāga-s are known by their name only. The other important publication Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarṣiṇi (SSP) published in the year 1904, also lists few of the above mentioned rāga-s such as Śuddha vasanta, Pūrvaḡauḷa and Nāgadhvani. These rāga-s are identified as upāṅga rāga-s and have a sāñcāri and a gīta each. There are no kṛti-s or any other forms in SSP for the below mentioned rāga-s.

Rāga	SC-M	SSP	Remarks
Śuddhavasanta	s r g m p d n ś ś n d m d p m g r s	s r g m p d n ś ś n d p m r s	Gāndhāra is varja in avarōha in SSP
Nāgadhvani	s r s m g m p n d m p n d n ś ś n d n p m g s	s r g s m g m p d n ś ś n d n p m g r g s	Riṣabha is varja in the avarōha of SC-M
Pūrvagauḷa	s r m g p d n ś ś n d p m g r s	s g r g s s r m p d n ś ś n d p m g r s	The vakra movement is emphasized in SSP

This table clearly shows the different interpretations in the movement of the svāra-s of each rāga. These subtle changes also contribute to the whole melodic entity of the rāga. For example, the vakra phrases like ś n d m d p instead of ś n d p m (as in śuddha vasanta) bring a new dimension to the rāga.

The three gīta-s in the rāga-s Śuddha vasanta, Nāgadhvani and Pūrvagauḷa are composed by Vēṅkaṭamakhi. They have sections marked as antara and jāvaḍa and are set to jhampa tāḷa. Subbarāma Dīkṣitar gives a very brief lakṣaṇa at the commencement of each rāga in SSP. Subbarāma Dīkṣitar quotes the lakṣaṇa ślōka of Vēṅkaṭamakhi and also suggests the viśēṣa prayōga-s for each rāga. The gīta-s exhibit lot of jaṅṭa prayōga-s incorporating the prominent phrases for each rāga.

The other less popular janya rāga-s such as Nārāyaṇi, Nārāyaṇadēśākṣi, Sarasvati manōhari (Completely, different from the rāga with the same name handled by Tyāgarāja for the composition ‘Entavēḍuko’, where this is handled as the janya of 28<sup>th</sup> mēḷa Harikāmbhōji) are mentioned in SSP.

It is noteworthy to mention that some of the above mentioned rāga-s such as Nārāyaṇi, Śuddha vasanta and Nāgadhvani are seen in the rāgamālika ‘Pūrṇa candra bimba vadanē’ attributed to Muddusvāmi Dīkṣitar. This rāgamālika set in Rūpaka tāḷa is dedicated to the janya rāga-s of Śaṅkharābharaṇam, the sequence commencing with Pūrṇacandrika, Nārāyaṇi, Sarasvati manōhari (same as mentioned previously), Śuddha vasanta, Hamsadhvani and Nāgadhvani.

The book, Rāgapravāham (RP) of Dr M N Daṇḍapāṇi and Smt D Paṭṭammāl, lists 275 janya rāga-s. Out of these, almost 245 rāga-s are lesser known. It is also a fact that more than 100 rāga-s do not have any composition. The Tamiz Isaippaḍalgal (TP) series of Annamalai University, (Vol X-1946) lists few janya rāga-s in each mēḷa. Under the rāga Śaṅkharābharaṇam, eighteen rāga-s are listed as janya rāga-s that include the following rare rāga-s such as Pramuditavana, Gāyakaraṅjani, Vilāsini, Hamsavinōdini, Tōmaradāriṇi, Nāgabhūṣaṇi, Badragāndhāri, Barōḍā, Vasantakōṣi (Vasantatōṣi?), Ḍākam, Tāṇḍavam and Dāmalaki.

These are the few sources, that mention many of the lesser known janya rāga-s of Śaṅkharābharaṇam. There are few other sources and publications, that talk about the janya rāga-s. However, the sources cited above are pertinent to the discussion in this paper. Some of the rāga-s mentioned above are taken for individual study in the following segments.

## Rāga Vilāsini

This rāga, is a dhaivata varja rāga having the ārōha and avarōhaṇa s r g m p n ś - ś n p m g r s. This seems to resemble the rāga Kēdāra. Although the avarōhaṇa phrase is exactly the same, the phrase s r g m is not frequently heard in the rāga Kēdāra. It is either s g m p n ś or s m g m p n ś. This minor change in a phrase results in a new rāga Vilāsini. The rāga Vilāsini seems to be a new creation probably in the early part of 20<sup>th</sup> century. No details of the lakṣaṇa are seem to be available for this rāga. Two compositions were identified in this rāga from two different publications. The first composition is Mārimuitta Piḷḷai’s ‘Viḍum ambalamāgi’ set to tune by T N Svāminātha Piḷḷai. The other composition is ‘Enṇu nin tēr varum’ of Periyasāmi Tūran set to tune by N Sivarāma Bhāgavata.

The rāga seems to have a limited scope. The melodic movement of the rāga is scalar and forms a rigid framework with just the ārōha and the avarōha. This has scope only in the madhya sthāyi. Interestingly, both the compositions have the same graha svāra for the pallavi, anupallavi and the caraṇa. The graha svāra of the pallavi section is madhya sthāyi gāndhāra. The graha svāra for the section anupallavi and the caraṇa is madhya sthāyi pañcama.

## Rāga Tāṇḍavam

The rāga Tāṇḍavam is an auḍva – auḍava rāga with the ārōha and avarōha s g p d n ś - ś n d p g s. Riṣabha and madhyama are varja in this rāga. There is a possibility that this can also be a janya of the mēḷa Kalyāṇi. However, this rāga is treated as a janya of Śaṅkharābharaṇam. The composition is “Kaḍavuḷai maravādē” set in Ādi tāḷa, a composition of M M Daṇḍapāṇi Dēsigar.

This composition, is simple with the usual pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇa structure. The pallavi starts with the phrase p d n ś, highlighting the pūrvāṅga component of the ārōha krama. The pallavi has four saṅgati-s highlighting ascent and descent of the

rāga. The second line of the pallavi reaches mantra sthāyi niṣāda. Niṣāda seems to be handled as a prominent note, as the phrases rest mostly on the niṣāda in the composition. The graha svara is also centered around the niṣāda with the anupallavi starting on madhya sthāyi niṣāda and the caraṇa commencing on the mantra sthāyi niṣāda. The tempo of the composition is in madhyamakāla, with the eḍuppu after ½ mātra-s in one kaḷa.

### Varṇam in a rare rāga Śrījay

There are few varṇa-s in the rare janya rāga-s of 29<sup>th</sup> mēḷa Śaṅkharābharaṇa. One such rāga is Śrījay handled by the Nāgasvara Vidvān Darumapuram Gōvindarājan. The varṇa is set to Khaṇḍa cāpu tāḷa which is also a unique feature. The āroḥa and the avarōha of the varṇa is as follows: s g p n ś - ś n p m g s. This is an svarāntara – auḍava rāga. The scope for melodic improvisation is not that high when compared with other rāga-s. But the composer has beautifully handled the rāga, with ease and brilliantly choosing the tāḷa Khaṇḍa cāpu, that does not need more melodic extension and the kālapramāṇa can also be maintained in the madhyamakāla. The svara patterns such as ‘p g s g p g p g s , g s p g’, ‘s , , g s p g n p ś’, and rhythmic patterns like ‘n ś ḡ ḡ ś n ḡ n ś , p n ś ś n p ś p n , g p n n p g n g p , s g s p g n p ś n ḡ’ are notable prayōga-s that helps as exercises in achieving a good proficiency in svarathāna perfection.

### Tiruppugaz

The Annamalai University publication containing the Tiruppugaz songs, incorporates the following janya rāga-s of Śaṅkharābharaṇam. These rāga-s are handled by Chittūr Subramaṇya Piḷḷai for setting tunes to Tiruppugaz.

### Rāga Kōlāhala

The Tiruppugaz ‘Timiravudadi’ is set in this rāga Kōlāhala. The ascent and descent of this rāga is as follows s p m g m p d n ś - ś n d p m g r s. From the āroḥa and avarōha, it is observed that there is a pattern of three beat; s p m – g m p – d n ś. Chittūr Subramaṇya Piḷḷai has logically used this tīśra pattern for the Tiruppugaz which also has a canda pattern in Tīśra naḍai, tanana tanana tanana tanana tanana tanatāna. The tāḷa is catuśra tripuṭa in tīśra gati. The ascent and descent of the rāga is noticeably handled for the first line of the Tiruppugaz.

s p p	m g m	p d n	ś ś ś	ś n d	p m g	m p śn	<u>dp mg rs</u>
ti mi ra	vu da di	ya nai ya	na ra ga	se na na	ma da nil	vi ḍu vā	. yēl .
r g m	p d d	p d n	ś ś ś	ḡ r ś	n d p	ś ś śn	<u>dp mg rs</u>
se vi ḍu	ku ru ḍu	va ḍi vu	ku ṛai vu	si ṛi ḍu	mi ḍi yum	a ṅṅu gā	. mal .

### Rāga Śivakāmbhōji

The next rāga is Śivakāmbhōji, with the āroḥa and avarōha s r g m n , ś - ś n p m g r s. The niṣāda seems to be an elongated svara in this rāga. The Tiruppugaz ‘Tōlembu’ is set in the rāga Śivakāmbhōji and catuśra tripuṭa tīśra gati, similar to the previous Tiruppugaz. The canda pattern of this Tiruppugaz is tāna tanda tāna tanda tāna tanda tāna tanda tāna tanda tāna tanda tanatāna. As like in the previous Tiruppugaz, this canda pattern also has a laya pattern suggesting tīśra naḍai.

s r g	m , m	r , g	m , m	n , n	n , n	ś , ś	ś , ś
tō . le	lum . bu	sī . na	ram . bu	pī . lai	tun . ru	kō . lai	poṅ . gu
n , n	p , p	m , m	g , g	m g ,	r , ,	s , ,	, , ,
sō . ri	piṅ . ḍa	mā . yu	ruṅ . ḍu	va ḍi .	vā . .	na . .	. . .

### Rāga Kusumavicitra

There is one another rare janya rāga of the 29<sup>th</sup> mēḷa known as the Kusumavicitra. The āroḥa and the avarōha of this rāga is mentioned as follows: s g r g m p n p d n ś - ś d n d m g p m r g r s. There seems to be a kind of symmetry in the usage of phrases in the ascent and descent viz s g r g m p - ś d n d m g. Though this is not a varja rāga, the vakra phrases are observed to be more prominent in this rāga. The prayōga-s such as s g r g - m g p m - n p d n - ś d n d - m g p m - r g r s. are highlighted in this rāga. This Tiruppugaz is set in the tāḷa Khaṇḍa cāpu. The canda pattern of the Tiruppugaz is tanatanana tanatanana tattatta tattatana tanatanana tanatanana tattatta tattatana tanatanana tanatanana tattatta tattatana – tanatāna. The melodic movement is as follows:

s , g , p , p , p , |  
mo . gu . mo . ge . na .

p m g , m , r , r , |  
na . rai . koṇ . ma . lar .

ṇ , , , r , , , r , |  
vaṛ . . . kat . . . ti .

ṇ , r , m , g , r , ||  
laṛ . . . pu . ḍai . ya .

r , m , m , m , m , |  
mu . la . ri . ma . yi .

g , p , p , p , p , |  
la . nai . ya . var . gaḷ .

m , , , d , , , d , |  
neyt . . . tuk . . . ka .

p , , , p , p , p , ||  
ṛut . . . tu . ma . zai

s , p , s , p , p , |  
mu . ki . la . nai . ya .

g , d , g , d , d , |  
ku . zal . sa . ri . ya .

p , , , n , , , p , |  
vok . . . kak . . . ga .

n , , , ś , ś , ś , ||  
nat . . . tu . va . la .

m , p , n , , , , |  
ra . di . pā . . . . . |

ś , , , , , , , ||  
ra . . . . . . . . . ||

## Rāga-s with similar names but having different melodic framework

There are instances of rāga-s having similar name but different in their melodic identity. Such examples are seen with the few janya rāga-s of Dhīraśaṅkharābharaṇam. The rāga Nirañjani and the other rāga Ḍakka are taken for the present study.

### Rāga Nirañjani

A rāga by this name Nirañjani is seen in the TP Series of Annamalai University. Veteran flautist, T N Svāminātha Piḷḷai has handled this rāga, by tuning a kīrtana of Mārimuttā Piḷḷai ‘Un mugam pārttu’. In this publication, the rāga Nirañjani is treated as the janya of 10<sup>th</sup> mela Nāṭakapriya, with the ārōhaṇa and the avarōhaṇa s r g m p d ś - ś n d p m g r s. However, another publication Tānavarṇa Tarāṅgiṇi (TVT) has given the notation of a varṇa in the rāga Nirañjani in the second volume. This Nirañjani is treated as the janya of Dhīraśaṅkharābharaṇam. In addition to this, T A Sambandamurti has handled this rāga Nirañjani as the janya of Dhīraśaṅkharābharaṇam with the ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa s r g p d n ś - ś n d p g r s. It is observed that the rāga with the same name is handled differently for compositions.

### Rāga Ḍakka/Ḍāka/Ḍakam

Similar, to the previous rāga, this rāga also seems to have some multiple identities. A rāga Ḍakka is seen handled by Tyāgarāja as the janya of Māyāmāḷavagauḷa. There is a janya rāga with the similar name but prescribed under the mēḷa Dhīraśaṅkharābharaṇam. However, RP mentions a rāga Ḍaka under the 29<sup>th</sup> mēḷā and another rāga Ḍakkā prescribed under 9<sup>th</sup> (Dhēnuka), 15<sup>th</sup> (Māyāmāḷavagauḷa), 29<sup>th</sup> (Dhīraśaṅkharābharaṇam) and 39<sup>th</sup> (Jhālavarāḷi) mēḷa-s. The rāga Ḍaka and Ḍakka mentioned under the 29<sup>th</sup> mēḷa Dhīraśaṅkharābharaṇam have the same ārōha and avarōha s g m d n ś - ś n d m g s. According to the work, RP, both these rāga-s are mentioned in the Saṅgīta Svara Prastāra Sāgaram of Nādamuni Paṇḍita.

Rāga	Janya of	Ārōha - Avarōha	Source as per Rāga Pravāham
Ḍakka	9 <sup>th</sup> mēḷa Dhēnuka	s r m g m p d n ś ś d p m m g r g s	Rāgakōśam of R R Kēśavamūrṭi
		s g p m d n ś ś n d p m g r s	Rāgakōśam of R R Kēśavamūrṭi
		s g m p m d n ś ś n d p m g r s	Saṅgīta Svara Prastāra Sāgaram of Nādamuni Paṇḍita
		s g p m d n ś ś n d p m g r s	Pālaiyāzhi of B M Sundaram
Ḍakka	15 <sup>th</sup> mēḷa Māyāmāḷavagauḷa	s r s g m g p m d n ś ś n d m g p m r s	Rāgakōśam of R R Kēśavamūrṭi
		s r g m g m d n ś ś n p m g m p r g s	Rāgakōśam of R R Kēśavamūrṭi
		s r s g m g m p m d d n n ś ś n d m g s m r s	Rāgakōśam of R R Kēśavamūrṭi
		s g m d d n d ś ś d m g r g s	Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśiṇi of Subbarāma Dīkṣitar
		s g m p m g m d n ś ś n d m p m g m r g s	Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśiṇi of Subbarāma Dīkṣitar
Ḍakka	39 <sup>th</sup> mēḷa Jhālavarāḷi	s g m p m d n ś ś n d p m g r s	Rāgakōśam of R R Kēśavamūrṭi

The above table clearly shows how a rāga takes a different identity with the combinational patterns of svaras. This is a clear reflection of the importance of the phrases and the prayōga-s that makes any rāga different from the other allied rāga-s. The work RP also mentions that the Kauśika dhvani of Hindustani music is equivalent to Ḍakka of 29<sup>th</sup> mela.

## Results and Discussion

Janya rāga-s are formed either by omitting one or more svaras either in the ascent or descent or both.

Vakra phrases play a major role in creating new melodic structures thereby giving rise to new rāga-s.

Some janya rāga-s such as Hamsavinōdini, Nirōṣṭa are handled by some artists in concerts and there are quite number of audio video references for the same. However, the number of compositions in these rāga-s are very less.

Musical forms such as Gīta, Varṇa, Kīrtana and Tiruppugaz songs are identified in some of the rāga-s discussed above. This list is not exhaustive and the compositions identified are based on the Tamiz publications in particular.

Rāga-s with known melodic structure, but known with a different name are also seen as in the case of a rāga named Vēdaṇḍagamana. This rāga has the ārōha and the avarōha s g m p n ś - ś n p m g s. There is a varṇa ‘Vanajākṣa nī’ of Vīṇa Venkaṭagiriappā set to Ādi tāḷa in the work TVT (Vol 4). This is similar to the rāga Gambīranāṭṭai although it is accepted that Gambīranāṭṭai is the janya of 36<sup>th</sup> mēḷa Calanāṭṭa.

Rāga-s with the same name but with different melodic framework are also observed. The sources of such rāga-s like Nirañjani and Ḍakka are also identified.

Coming to the number of compositions, the proportion is very low. Some of the rāga-s do not have any kind of melodic identity in the form of compositions. Only the ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa is available in various texts.

Some rāga-s have just have a minimal melodic exposition, while some rāga-s have gained distinctive melodic identity with the brilliance of the composers who have handled these rāga-s.

There also seems to be some kind of deliberation in creating compositions in these very rare rāga-s. The Tamil Isai Movement has seen such creations, wherein many of these rāga-s have gained some melodic identity with sole compositions.

## Conclusion

The janya rāga-s which are less popular in the field of Karnāṭak music are standing examples of the possible rāga contours and framework that can be derived from any parent scale or a mēḷa. The melodic improvisation may be marginal but they have been given an identity with the efforts of some composers who have composed credible musical forms in those rāga-s. The scalar movement may not offer that much scope for manōdharmā components. But there were and still there are many musicians, attempting to explore such rāga-s and experimenting the possible ways to present in a better way thereby showcasing their inevitable prowess. These above mentioned rāga-s would come to light over a period of time, if they are presented in concerts or any other platform either by means of thematic concerts or lecture demonstrations and other means of presentation of South Indian music.

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