INTRODUCTION

Tillana, the most scintillating and the liveliest of musical forms, belongs to both music and dance genre. This charismatic item impresses the audience and keeps them spell bound as if in a trance. Tillana is performed as the concluding item in both music and dance concerts. Whereas in music concerts, tillana is sung without any improvisation, ie, ragalapana, niravel or kalpanaswara; in dance concerts it is performed with improvisation. The dancer’s skill in footwork and rhythm is well-exhibited in the performance.

The thesis entitled “A study on tillanas with special reference to 19th century composers” is an attempt to trace the evolution of tillana from the earliest kaivāḍa prabandhas to its present form and to collect the tillanas of prominent composers especially of the 19th century.

Melattur Virabhadrayya who was a contemporary of Pratapa Simha Maharaja of Tanjore (1739-1763) and who was one of his court musicians is considered the pioneer of tillanas. The only tillana composed by him was in Pantuvarali raga, Adi tala. However, tillanas blossomed into a beautiful musical form only in the 19th century. The royal composer Swati Tirunal and the Tanjore
Quartette- Chinnayya, Ponnayya, Sivanandam and Vadivelu are regarded as the earliest composers of tillana in its present shape and form. Among them, the tillanas of Swati Tirunal constitute the initial stage of development. Of the six tillanas composed by him, five have jatis only. The one in Dhanasri only has sahitya. The tillanas of Swati Tirunal are indicative of the process of evolution of tillanas to its present form. Other prominent 19th century composers include Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar, Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer, Pallavi Seshayyar, Patnam Subramanya Iyer, Veena Seshanna and Muthaiyya Bhagavatar. From the 19th century, composers started penning down music-oriented or dance-oriented tillanas according to their preference or according to necessity. Since the 19th century compositions are representative of fully developed tillanas, they are selected for detailed study in this thesis, even though modern compositions have also been mentioned.

**Review of earlier works on this topic**

Studies have been made earlier in the field of tillanas in the following cases

1. **Tillana – Dissertation submitted by Sarada Panchapakesan - Madras University**
   This study deals with the origin and evolution of tillanas and other salient features. Reference to prominent composers and notations of a few tillanas are also given. The study is of a general nature without giving priority to a specific period or a specific composer. Choreography of tillanas and its application on the stage have not been a subject matter of this dissertation.
This book deals with the origin and evolution of tillanas in a precise form and a few prominent composers of the musical form. Text and notation of a few tillanas are also given; but not comprehensively. The book is written in Tamil and is therefore of use only to a particular state or group of people.

This is a study of musical forms in general and tillana is only one among the subjects of study. The book contains a short description of the evolution of tillana. There is a mention of the different varieties of tillanas. A list of tillanas with the name of raga, tala and composer is also given, but without notations.

Apart from the three items mentioned above, there are some published articles giving characteristic features of tillanas, although in a precise manner.

2. ‘The tillana and some of its well known composers’ by Sulochana Pattabhiraman – Journal of Madras Music Academy (Vol: LVI)
3. ‘Tillana – A sparkling art form by Dr. Gowri Kuppuswamy & Dr. M. Hariharan – Shanmukha (Vol. VIII, Number I)
Methodology adopted

The topic demands study of both theoretical and practical aspects, the latter demanding closer attention. Textual analysis has been helpful in tracing the evolution of the musical form and its development to the present stage and also in locating slokas and quotations in support of the conclusions arrived at in the thesis. Details of life history and achievements of the various composers were also made available through textual study. Informal interviews and discussions with famous musicians, musicologists and other personalities have been carried out. Tillanas have been taken down from audio tapes, live performances and text books. Technical aspects of choreography of tillanas and their performance on the stage were discussed with renowned dancers.

An audio CD containing the six tillanas of Swati Tirunal and another composition of Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer and a Video CD showing the dance performance of four selected tillanas by the research scholar herself are submitted along with the thesis.

Chapterisation

The thesis is divided into seven chapters.

Chapter I – Historical background
   a. Musical forms in general
   b. Tillana – definition and interpretation of syllables
   c. Origin, evolution and development of tillana to its present form
   d. The form and its special features
   e. Tarana – equivalent form in Hindustani music
Chapter II – Tillana – its applications
   a. In musical concerts
   b. In dance concerts
   c. As an entertainer
   d. As a tool for learning
   e. As a research material

Chapter III – Tillanas of prominent 19\textsuperscript{th} century composers
   a. Early composers
   b. 19\textsuperscript{th} century composers
      (i) Swati Tirunal
      (ii) Tanjore Quartette
      (iii) Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar
      (iv) Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer

Chapter IV – Tillanas of other composers
   a. Other prominent composers
      (i) Kuttikunji Tankachy
      (ii) Pallavi Seshayyar
      (iii) Patnam Subramanya Iyer
      (iv) Kunrakkudi Krishnayyar
      (v) Veena Seshanna
      (vi) Muthaiyya Bhagavatar
      (vii) Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar
      (viii) Madurai.N.Krishnan
   b. Contemporary composers
      (i) Dr.M.Balamuralikrishna
Chapter V – Varieties of tillanas

a. Marati tillanas
b. Tillana daru
c. Lakshmisa tala tillana
d. Ragavardhini tala tillana
e. Simhanandana tala tillana
f. Hanumatkumbha tala tillana
g. Tirukkural tillana
h. Kambaramayana tillana
i. Grihabheda tillana
j. Jātibheda tillana

Chapter VI – Choreography of tillanas

Conclusion

Appendices

d. Ragalakshanam
e. Photographs of prominent composers
f. Photographs of dance sequences

Enclosures

b. Audio C.D containing tillanas of Swati Tirunal and another composition of Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer
b. Video C.D showing dance performance of four selected tillanas

Bibliography
The aim of the project

The project construes a detailed study of the origin, evolution and development of tillanas and their salient features and the life history of prominent tillana composers. It involves collection of texts of as many tillanas as possible, giving them notations and analysing their prosodical beauties.

A few tillanas are choreographed and performed on the stage. On the whole, the thesis is expected to serve as a guide to the students of music, dancers, choreographers and the art-loving public-at-large.