CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Music has a prominent role in the precious heritage of South India. South Indian music comprises different types of compositions noted for their quality and variety. The great composers of South Indian music were highly imaginative. They could evolve an array of extensive musical forms with different functional schools. An in-depth study of these musical forms in their technical, historical and developmental aspects is indispensable to any student of music.

South Indian music is extremely rich in musical compositions comprising not only concert forms, but also systematic graded exercises and practice pieces. The all round development of various musical forms has been rendered possible by the yeoman services of the eminent composers of the pre-Tyagaraja period, the glorifying Trinity-Tyagaraja, Muthuswamy Dikshitar and Syama Sastri and the post-Trinity composers.

A musical form or composition is one which reveals the characteristics, nature and movement of a raga in a compact manner. The existing musical forms can be broadly categorized under two heads—Kalpita Sangitam and Manodharma Sangitam. Kalpita sangitam comprises the forms that are already composed and set to music by a composer, like Geetam, Swarajati,
Varnam, Kriti, Kirtanam, Padam, Javali, Tillana, etc. Manodharma sangitam contains forms sung on the spot as per the musical knowledge and experience of the singer, which includes ragalapanam, tanam, niravel, swara prastaram etc. Kalpita Sangitam is considered to be the older of the two.

On the basis of the usage of musical forms coming under concerts and education, they can be classified under the two categories – Sabha Ganam or concert form and Abhyasa Ganam or technical form. The basic swara exercises like Saralivarisai, Janda Varisai and forms like Geetam, Swarajati etc come under Abhyasa Ganam while Kriti, Padam, Javali, Tillana etc are concert forms. Varnam comes under both the classifications.

Based on the thematic content, musical forms can be broadly classified as Sacred and Secular forms. The highly religious sacred forms are mainly used in temple rituals and ceremonies. Secular musical forms are used on all occasions including national and regional festivals and in concerts of various types.

Musical forms are also classified under two groups—Pure musical forms and Applied musical forms, on the basis of the relative importance given to Dhatu (music) and Matu (sahithya). In pure musical forms, importance is given to musical features. Sahitya is used only as a medium to carry the musical phrases and bring out the ragabhava in an abundant manner. The melodic richness and visages of raga and swara embellishments are portrayed in an exhaustive manner. Kriti, Pallavi, Tillana, etc, are pure musical forms. In applied musical forms, more stress is given to sahitya.
Music is used only as a vehicle for conveying the ideas underlying the pieces. Kirtanam, Padam, and Javali can be grouped under this.

**Tillana – Definition and interpretation of syllables**

Tillana is a prominent musical composition either of the dance or concert repertoire. It is one of the most attractive and lively musical forms performed as the last item in both dance and music concerts. It makes extensive use of cholkettus and employs meaningless syllables expressing rhythm. Tillana is composed with a view to create a sense of enthusiasm and joy on account of its medium tempo, curved swara phrases and the presence of jatis.

The word ‘Tillana’ does not appear to have any derived or attributed meaning. According to some musicologists, tillanas are mostly constituted of jatis like Tom, Tari, Taka, Kīna, Jhanu, etc, and hence their name. The eminent Bharatanatyam guru and choreographer Sri Uduppi Laxmi Narayan has opined that ‘Ti’ in tillana indicates ‘Sakti’ or ‘Fire’, ‘La’ stands for ‘Lakshmi’ and ‘Na’ for ‘Navukkarasi’ or ‘Saraswati’ and that, possibly, tillana refers to “Siva dancing (na) in tillai”. Another view expressed by him is that tillana means “Tein pol titikkum lasyam”, ie, lasya that is as sweet as honey (from an interview published in Sruthi Issue 167, August 1998, P.No:34)

As stated by Dr.V.P.K. Sundaram in his book, “The Art Of Drumming”, the sound words Ta, Ti, Tom, Nam, are considered to be the fundamental
sound expressions, which go into an astonishing variety of combinations giving birth to subtle, captivating rhythmic patterns. Among these fundamental sound words, the first tonal ‘Ta’ is borne of Sivan’s foot striking the earth first in his ‘Tandava dance’, the other three following in succession.

The divine nature of the drum gets a further re-orientation with the four tonals being associated with the four prime celestials. Sivan embodies ‘Ta’, Parvathi ‘Ti’, Tirumal ‘Tom’ and Piraman ‘Nam’.

It can be derived from the above observations that the syllable ‘Ti’ of tillana is borne of “Siva’s tandava dance” and the syllable ‘La’ represents the “lasya nritta of Parvathi”. The syllable ‘Na’ of tillana indicates “natana”. The syllable ‘Ti’ also embodies ‘Parvati’. On the whole, the word ‘Tillana’ represents the “TANDAVA LASYA NATANA OF SIVA AND PARVATI”.

**Origin, Evolution and Development of tillana to its present form**

Tillana as a musical form came into vogue and attained tremendous popularity during the Post-Trinity period. Almost all the present musical forms were derived from the prabandhas of the medieval period. Tillana is not an exception.
As a prelude to the detailed study of tillanas, it is therefore necessary to go into the origin, evolution and special characteristics of prabandhas.

*The ‘Sangitha ratnakara’ of Sarangadeva defines ‘geetam’ as a combination of swaras presenting a pleasing sound picture. Geetam is of two kinds – Gandharva and Gāna. Gandharva represents a tradition derived from divine sources (gandharvas) and Gāna represents the compositions aimed at popular appreciation and enjoyment. Gāna has two branches – Nibaddha (structured or composed) and Anibaddha (improvised or uncomposed). Nibaddha gana falls into three categories – Prabandha, Vastu and Rūpaka.

The evolution of prabandha is picturised in the following form.

```
Geetam
  /\  \
Gandharva  Gana
    /\        /\ \
Nibaddha  Anibaddha
      /\    /\    /\    /\ \
Prabandha Vastu Roopaka
```

The word ‘Prabandha’ literally means anything well-knit or well fitted. But, in music, it came to be used, in a restricted sense to refer to a composition that is set in four sections and six integral parts. The four sections are Udgraha (the first section), Melāpaka (the joining section), Dhruva (the

*R.Rangaramanuja Iyengar-Sangita Ratnakaram-A study(p.no:152) - Wilco Publishing House - 1978*
indispensable section) and Abhoga (the concluding section). All prabandhas need not necessarily have all these four sections. There are prabandhas without melapaka and/or abhoga.

Prabandha generally has six angas, namely
1. Swara------solfa passage
2. Pada--------words
3. Paṭa—the rhythmical sounds associated with certain drums, conch, etc.
4. Tala--------the rhythm
5. Biruda-------exclamation or words of praise
6. Tēna--------auspicious phrases

It may not be out of place to define “Paṭa”, the most prominent anga of Tillana. It is the term denoting instrumental sounds - ‘vādyākshara’.

*According to their source of origin and manner of production, pāṭas are classified as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of Pata</th>
<th>Instruments from which emanated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tandribaddha Pata</td>
<td>Stringed instruments such as Rudra vina Ta Ka Ta Na etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sushirodbhava or</td>
<td>Wind instruments such as Conch, Kahala Tula Tuga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukodbhava Paṭa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muraja Paṭa</td>
<td>Percussion or skin covered instruments like Mridangam, Ghatam or Muraja Dhim ta dhim ta ki na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dr.S.Seetha – Tanjore As a Seat of Music (p no : 273-274) University of Madras Publication - 1981
Patas are also classified into ‘Sārthaka pata’ having specific meaning and ‘Ardhaheena pata’ devoid of any meaning. Another classification of patas into ‘Suddha’ and ‘Misra’ is also in vogue. Suddha pata represents the sounds produced by percussion instruments. When the rhythmic sounds of the percussion instruments are mixed with those of wind instruments, it results in ‘Misra pata’. Misra patas are also formed when swaras get interspersed with jatis.

Patas are again classified into ‘Swara pata’, which are rhythmic sounds probably sung and ‘Kara, Hasta or Tala pata’ which refers to the rhythms produced, by hands, palms or fingers.

On the basis of the number of integral parts or angas they contain, the prabandhas are grouped into five-

1) Medini – containing all the six angas
2) Anandini – containing five angas
3) Deepani – containing four angas
4) Bhāvani – containing three angas
5) Tharāvali – containing two angas

According to another mode of classification, there are three types of prabandhas – Sudda, Ali and Viprakeerṇa. The first one, Sudda prabandha, has eight varieties – Ella, Karana, Dhēnki, Vartana, Jhōmbaḍa, Lambha, Rasa and Ekatali. The second one, Ali prabandha, is of twenty four types – Varna, Varnasāra, Gadya, Kaivāḍa, Ankachārini, Kanda, Turagaleela, Gajaleela, Dvipādi, Chakrāvala, Kraunchapāda, Swarārta, Dhvanikuttini, Ārya, Gātha,
Dvipathaka, Kalahamsa, Tōtaka, Ghata, Vrutta, Mātruka, Rāgakadamba, Panchataleswara and Tālārnava. The Karana prabandha coming under Sūḍa and Kaivāḍa prabandha classified under Ali have close resemblance to the later musical form Tillana, and hence, may be considered as its fore-runners.

Karana prabandha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Constituents of udgraha</th>
<th>Constituents of dhruva</th>
<th>Constituents of ābhōga</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swara karāṇam</td>
<td>swaram</td>
<td>swaram</td>
<td>padam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pāṭa karāṇam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Regular order</td>
<td>swaram</td>
<td>hasta pāṭas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reverse order</td>
<td>hasta pāṭas</td>
<td>swaram</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandha karāṇam</td>
<td>swaram</td>
<td>muraja pāṭas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pada karanam</td>
<td>swaram</td>
<td>padam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biruda karanam</td>
<td>swaram</td>
<td>biruda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tēna karanam</td>
<td>swaram</td>
<td>tēnaka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chitra karanam</td>
<td>swaram</td>
<td>murajapātas, pada</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misra karanam</td>
<td>swara, pāta, tenaka</td>
<td>swara, pāta, tenaka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Kaivāda prabandha**

| पाटे: स्यालां ध्रुवोद्ग्रहोऽ केवादेन्यसनं ग्रहे। |
| सायकेर्येंहीनश पाटे: स दिविषो मतः। |
| स ग्रुद्धोपुमिनित्रते: पाटे: ग्रुद्धो मिश्रं इति दूविषयं। |
| इति केवाद प्रबन्धः। |

*Sangeeta Ratnakara (199 - 200b)*

Both the udgraha and dhruva are composed of pāṭas and the second section ends in udgraha. There are two varieties of Kaivāda prabandha – one containing meaningful pāṭas and the other involving meaningless pāṭas. Meaningless pāṭas are again divided into two – suddha and misra, the former containing pāṭas alone and the latter containing pāṭas mixed with swaras or any of the six angas.
Before Sarangadeva, Matanga in his work Brihaddesi, defined Kaivāda prabandha as that which is sung properly with pātas alone.

According to the book Sangeeta Sudhakara authored by Haripaladeva who lived after Sarangadeva, the first two sections of Kaivāda prabandha are sung with hastha pātas and the third section ābhōga consists of padas.

The above mentioned definition of Kaivāda prabandha, as one containing three sections, very much suits to the structure of modern thillana.

Venkitamakhi speaks of Kaivāda prabandha in his work Chaturdandiprakasika with examples. He has given an example of kaivāda prabandha in Narayanagoula raga set in Matya tala. Subbarama Dikshithar in Sangeeta Sampradaya Pradarsini has given it with solfa notation, in the 18th century.
It has four sections, namely,

1. Pañava khanda-------rhythmic jatis
2. Jāvada khanda-------rhythmic jatis
3. Alāpa khanda--------text with vowel extension
4. Mudra khanda--------text containing the vaggeyakara mudra and prabandha mudra with more rhythmic and swara syllables.

*Ragam : Narayanagoula
Talam : Matya

**Patava khanda**

```
s    s    s,    n    s    n    n    d    p |
tod  gi  nam  dhi  mi  dhi  mi  ki  ta|
m    p    n,  d    n    s,  s,  |
ton  -  gi  nam  -  gi  nna   |
    r,  n    s,  s    n    g    r    s  |
tat  ta  dhin  gu  na  ka  ki  na   |
    s    r    n    s    n    d    p    d    p    m  |
nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  nga  ngh
```

*Subhadra Chaudhary – Translated into English by Hema Ramanathan – Time Measures and Compositional Types in Indian Music (p. no: 341 – 343) Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi - 1997*
-19-

Javata khanda

s s s s r r m m p,
m p d, m, p m g r

ta d dhi nnum dhi mi ki ta
p m m p m g r g r s

kut ta ki ta kit na ta ha ki ta
s, n d n, s, s,
ku rra t ta kkin nam
n n s, n s n n d p

ku kun dat ta gun da dhi kun da
d, m, p, n, d,
jham trajh jham - tra
n n n s, s n g r s

ta dhim - dhik ku dhim - ku ku
s, n n s, s,
jham ta - rit tta
s r n d p d m p, p

ta na ki na ta ri dha ne ku
n d n s s r n s, s

jha jha ki na ta ri dha re ku
n r, r n s, s s,

-19-
r m p d m, p;
jham - ta ri kun ta
s, r, m g r g r s
ta ham dhi mi dhi mi ki ta
r m m p n d n s n d
ta ku dhi ku tom - gi nam - gi
p d m p m g r g r s
jga jga jga jga jga jga jga jga jga

Alapa khanda
s n n s r m; g; r; r g r s; n s n; s r s;
kum bha ko - o - ne - - - ma - - - - - - -
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
p p; p, s s s; n d d, d n p; pm pm p sn
jha ra nityaniva - su re -- - a ba rt -
d n n s s; s n s r m; p d m' g r r g r s s;
- i yya - - a - - - - - - - - - - - - - - a
s n; r s; g r; g r s n s r s n, r s n d,
pta sa - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
d, d n, d p,; p pm pm p n d n s s;
- - - - ran ga pa n i - - - re

Mudra khanda
r, m p n d p d, d
san ka ra mu ni ma ta pra
The last section Mudra khanda has Vaggeyakara mudra and Prabandha mudra with pataas set for two cycles of tala. This form is concluded with singing the first line of the first section. This prabandha, as defined by Venkitamakhi, is considered to be the predecessor of the thillana form of Karnatic music. The tillanas have the same structural pattern having the first two sections pallavi and anupallavi with pata or rhythmic syllables and the third section charanam with the text containing vaggeyakara mudra and the
name of the composition. It is concluded with two cycles of pāṭa or rhythmic
syllables at the end of the third section.

Thus, the new form tillana emerged with some modifications on the Kaivāḍa
prabandha. Even though Uttukkadu Venkata Subbier has written some
compositions with cholkettu swaras and jatis resembling the form tillana
sometime during the first half of the 18-th century, Merattur Virabhadrayya,
the court musician of Tanjore King Pratapa Simha(18-th century), is said to
have been the first composer of tillana. This tillana is composed in
‘Pantuvarali’ raga set in ‘Adi’ tala with the mudra ‘Achyuta varada’.

A portion of the sahitya of the piece runs like this:-

*“Dani tillillana tana tandari nadir dirina tana tandiri
dirinam tillillana---dattillana tirinam dari tillana tirinya---------
Elukora jila jila jila manuchun---tāmigaligēnu idugo
Sarasanika iḍupu Achyuta varada nannu”

The earliest available tillanas are those composed by Swati Tirunal and the
Tanjore Quartette----Ponnayya, Chinnayya, Sivanandam and Vadivelu.
While the Tanjore Quartette have composed a number of tillanas, mostly
conforming to its definition, Swati Tirunal has composed only six tillanas
out of which only a single tillana conforms entirely to its definition. Out of
the remaining five, four have neither sahitya nor sections, while the fifth
have only two sections, but without any sahitya. When Swati Tirunal started

*Dr.S.Seetha – Tanjore As a Seat of Music (p no : 337) University of Madras Publication - 1981
composing tillanas, it was not a popular musical form. Inspired by the
“cholkettu sampradaya”, he started composing tillanas only with jatis and in
due course of time, added sahitya to it and blossomed it to normal shape. Prominent composers like Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer, Ramnad Srinivasa
Iyengar, Patnam Subramanya Iyer, Veena Seshanna etc have served the
cause of tillanas, over the years.

The tillanas composed till the end of the 19-th century are almost similar;
but have slight modifications from those of the times of Virabhadrayya. Tillanas at its present form have undergone several changes. In the modern
musical world, there are tillanas, which can efficiently illustrate musical
principles like Grihabheda.

**The form and its special features**

Tillanas are short, lively and invigorating compositions. Tillana consists of
three sections---Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam. The pallavi and
anupallavi comprise swaras (solfa syllables) and jatis (rhythmic syllables). Charana has two parts, the first consisting of sahitya, usually devotional in
nature, and at times in praise of a particular patron. It also contains the
signature of the composer and the name of the musical form. The second
part of charanam contains rhythmic syllables interspersed with swara or
solfa letters.

Tillana is an indispensable and attractive item in music as well as dance
concerts. In the former, it provides a grand finale after the heavy Ragam
Tanam Pallavi or a main Kriti. In the latter, it comes as a lively change with its quick tempo following the leisurely abhinaya for the drawn-out padam. Tillanas composed for music concerts are designed to emphasise the melodic aspect, where as, those meant for dance performances have the jatis arranged in such a way as to give scope for display of a variety of footwork.

**Tarana- Equivalent form in Hindustani Music**

According to the musicians of both North and South India, ‘Sāmaveda’ is the origin of the systems of music. Sāma verses are still chanted in North and South India, although in slightly different ways. Upto around the 14-th century, there was no difference between the North and South Indian systems of music. After this period, some characteristic forms and styles developed, mainly attributed to the musicians patronised by different Muslim emperors and their feudal chieftains.

The ‘Tarana’ in Hindustani music is the counterpart of ‘Tillana’ and is considered to be a classical item. It is a traditional form of Hindusthani music. It is a form with a set of syllables that usually have no specific meaning, like Na, Ta, Dhim, etc. Some scholars opine that these are the adaptations of the mnemonic signatures of the ‘Tabla’ and ‘Sitar’ strokes. Along with the drum syllables, some taranas use poetic lines, which have their origin in ‘Persian’ or ‘Urdu’ and these are known as “Sufi taranas”.

The main features of this form are its emphasis on the purity of the raga and perfection of laya or rhythmic patterns.
It is “Amir Khusro”, the courtier of Allaudin Khilji, who is said to have promulgated the Tarana style of singing, as confirmed by ‘Wajid Ali Shah’ in his ‘Saut-el-Mubarak’ and ‘Abdul Fazal’ in his ‘Ain-I-Akbari’. There are two legends regarding the origin of Tarana, both involving ‘Gopal Nayak’ and ‘Amir Khusro’. In the first legend the Muslims took Gopal Nayak away to the North as a prisoner where he endeared himself to his captors through his musical talents. He is considered to have taught the Karanā prabandha to Amir Khusro who drew inspiration from this prabandha, and using the syllables employed in Indian vocalizing together with Persian words, paved the way for the musical form TARANA.

The second legend refers to a musical competition between the two in the court of Allaudin Khilji, which Amir Khusro won. He was enamoured of a very fast song in Sanskrit rendered by Gopal Nayak and sang it for himself substituting Sanskrit words with those in Persian. The various words used are ‘Tu dāni’, ‘Nādir dāni’, ‘Odāni’ the meanings of which are indicated below.

**Tanana dāra – Enter my body**

- He knows
- You know
- You are the complete wisdom
- I am yours, I belong to you

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**V.Raghavan(General Editor) – Cultural Leaders of India – Composers (p.no : 71) Publications Divn : Ministry of Information and Broadcasting – 1991**

This was the prelude to the advent of Tarana in the world of Hindustani music.

Like tillana, tarana is also used in both dance and music performances. Eventhough tillana and tarana are similar musical forms, there are certain differences between the two. While Tillana has three sections—Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam, tarana has only two—Sthayi and Antara. This speciality of tarana enables it to have a strong comparison with the Kaivaḍa prabandha mentioned by Sarangadeva, as both of them have two sections each. Moreover, the extensive improvisations performed upon tarana makes it a part of classical Hindusthani music and this can be noticed from the fact that it is sometimes sung immediately after the major Khyal. On the other hand, improvisation plays no part in tillana, and it is rendered as the last item in a musical performance.

For effective performance on the stage, tarana requires skill in rhythmic manipulation and the ability to sing syllables rapidly. Nissar Hussain Khan, the late Amir Khan and Krishna Rao Sankar Pandit are particularly well-known for the performance of tarana.