



A MUSICAL INSIGHT ON ŚRĪ MUTTUSWĀMY DĪKṢITAR'S
MĪNĀKṢI MĒ MUDAM DĒHI COMPOSITION

With Special Reference to Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśiṇi

Dr. Shivashankari. J

Musician and Research Scholar, Bengaluru

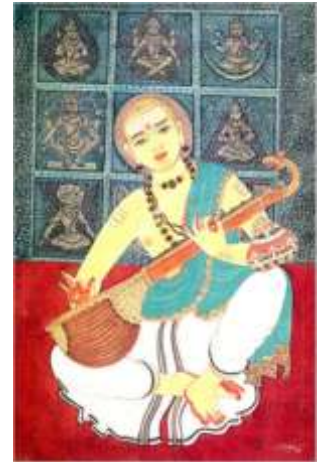
Abstract

India is a nation with rich cultural , spiritual and philosophical tradition . There are many paths to depict these values and Indian Classical Music stands foremost among them . Karnāṭak music composers composed many compositions with this background focusing on different *kṣetra*-s and deities. They uplifted Indian tradition and acted as a cultural ambassador in the Universe . Śrī Muttuswāmy Dīkṣitar , youngest of the Karnāṭak music trinity , was a great saint composer of eighteenth century who created his unique style and contributed many compositions to this field which are immortal even to this day. The present article gives a detailed analysis on the musical aspects found in one of his *kṛti*-s portraying Goddess Minaksi of Madurai.

Key words : Śrī Muttuswāmy Dīkṣitar , *Gamakakriyā*, *Mīnākṣi mē mudam dēhi* , Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśiṇi, Karnāṭak Music Analysis.

Introduction

Śrī Muttuswāmy Dīkṣitar , youngest of the Karnāṭak music trinity, was born in 1775 in Tiruvarur. The three saint composers created their own styles and Dīkṣitar's compositional style is known as '*Nārikelapāka*'. His compositions are in Sanskrit and his *aṅkita* is *Guruguha*. Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśiṇi is an earliest authentic source for giving notations to Muttuswāmy Dīkṣitar's compositions with gamaka symbols, written in Telugu, which was published in the year 1904. The author of this magnum opus text is Subbarāma Dīkṣitar, grandson of Muttuswāmy Dīkṣitar . The current article musically analyzing one of Dīkṣitar's *kṛti* , *Mīnākṣi mē mudam dēhi* in the *rāga gamakakriyā* set to *adi tāla* is based on the notations provided in Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśiṇi.



Rāga lakṣaṇa

Muttuswāmy Dīkṣitar has composed *Mīnākṣi kṛti* in the *rāga Gamakriyā* which is the 53rd *rāgāṅga* *rāga* of *Veṅkaṭamakhi mēḷa* tradition . Subbarāma Dīkṣitar defines this as a *sampūrṇa*

rāga, ṣaḍja graha, rakṭi rāga, dēśīya rāga, niṣāda varjya in ā rōhaṇa and suitable for singing at all times.

“*Gamakakriyā rāgōyaṃ sarvakālē pragīyatē*” is the rāga lakṣaṇa ślōka given by Veṅkaṭamakhi in his Caturdaṇḍi Prakāśikā.

Ārōhaṇa: s r g m p d ś - **Avarōhaṇa:** ś n d p m g r s

Subbarāma Dīkṣitar says gāndhāra is the jīva swara and this rāga is also known as ‘Pūrvikalyāṇi’.

Summary of the Composition

|| **P** || Mīnākṣi mē mudam dēhi mēcakāṅgi rāja mātaṅgi ||

Oh! Mīnākṣi, fish-eyed Goddess, bless me with happiness. You are dark-hued Raja Mātaṅgi, the daughter of sage Mataṅga.

|| **A.P** || Māna māṭṭr mēyē māyē marakata çāyē śiva jāyē ||

You are the measurement, measurer and the measurable one and also of illusion. You are the consort of Lord Śiva and glowing with emerald ornaments.

|| **M.S** || Mīnalōcanī pāśamōcanī māninī kadambavana vāsinī ||

Oh! Mīnalōcani, the Goddess with fish-like eyes, you are the one who liberate the beings from this Universal bondage. You are the noble one residing in the *Kadamba* forest.

|| **C** || Madhurāpuri nilayē maṇivalayē malayadhwaja pāṇḍya rāja tanayē ||

You are the Goddess whose abode is the Madhurāpuri or Madurai (in Tamilnadu), wearing gem-studded bangles and the daughter of Pāṇḍya king Malayadhwaja.

|| Vidhu viḍambana vadanē vijayē vīṇā gāna daśa gamakakriyē ||



Your face shines as bright as moon. Oh! Vijaye, the victorious one, you are the embodiment of the ten types of *gamaka*-s explored through singing and playing Vīṇa.

|| **M.S** || Madhu mada mōḍita hr̥dayē sadayē Mahādēva sundarēśa priyē ||

|| Madhu muraripu sōdari śātōdari vidhi guruguha vaśaṅkari śaṅkari ||

Oh! The beloved of Lord Sundarēśwara, Mahādēva, your heart delights in the nectar of honey. You are the sister of Viṣṇu who slayed *Madhu* and *Mura* demons. Oh! Śaṅkari, you have a slender waist who fascinates Brahma and *Guruguha*.





Musical Analysis

Mīnākṣi – pallavi of the kṛti begin beautifully with three akṣara dīrgha ādhāra ṣaḍja and is followed by phrasing two swaras below and above, reflecting the shape of the fish, i.e, from sa to mandra dhaivata to sa to madhya gāndhāra.

Mē mudam dēhi – when Dīkṣitar requests to bestow happiness , the phrase lands in ādhāra ṣaḍja from madhya pañcama depicting the humbleness in requesting a favour.

pallavi

$\text{S} \text{ , } \text{r} \text{ s } \text{ s } \text{ d} \quad \text{S} \text{ , } \text{r} \text{ g} \quad \text{g} \text{ r} \text{ g}$ | $\text{/p} \text{ m} \text{ M} \text{ /p} \text{ g} \text{ g}$ | $\text{d} \text{ m} \quad \text{g} \text{ /m} \text{ g} \text{ r} \text{ s}$ ||

mī nā kṣi mē mu daṁ dē hi

Mēcakāṅgi rāja mātaṅgi – in the second line of the pallavi, Dīkṣitar describes Goddess Mīnākṣi in mēcaka colour and portrays her as Rāja mātaṅgi , the ninth among *Daśa mahā vidyā* -s. Rāja mātaṅgi or Rāja Śyāmaḷa in ŚrīVidyā tradition is said to be the *mantriṇi* or minister of the eternal Lalitā Mahātripurasundarī representing the aspect of knowledge and music . Since, true knowledge is tough to attain , the swaras here focuses more on the second half of mandra sthāyi and the first half of madhya sthāyi.

The pallavi extends to third āv arta for just one syllable ‘gi’ from the phrase ‘rāja matangi’ to uplift her majestic character.

$\text{S} \text{ , } \text{r} \text{ s } \text{ d} \text{ n} \text{ D} \text{ , } \text{s} \quad \text{s} \text{ p} \text{ d}$ | $\text{S} \text{ , } \text{r} \text{ g} \text{ g}$ | $\text{m} \text{ r} \text{ g} \text{ /p} \text{ m} \text{ /p} \text{ m}$ ||

mē ca kā m gi rā ja mā taṁ

$\text{m} \text{ p} \text{ G} \text{ G} \text{ R} \text{ R}$ | $\text{S} \text{ S} \text{ S}$ | $\text{S} \text{ S} \text{ S}$ ||

gi

Māna mātr mēyē mātē - in the anupallavi, the swaras ranges in all three sthāyis . The first āvarta conveys a very high philosophical message which depicts the eternal truth , i.e, the three - dimensional approach towards any Universal aspects , like, karaṇa, kāraṇa, kartā or pramāṇa , pramēya, pramata. The same philosophical concept when represented musically, it can be said as teacher, music, student; composer, composition, kṣētra/deity; musician, concert, audience and so on. Another best example from the literature point of view, the connection between a subject and an object is derived through cases/verbs/actions which is called as vibhakti-s. The current analysis of the composition also has three-dimensional approach, i.e, lyrical-philosophical-musical.

In the ŚrīVidyā tradition , the sṛiṣṭi krama starts from a *bindu* representing Māyā sahita Parabrahman and then emerges as a *trikōṇa* or a triangle. From this, one can say that the exact



same principle is being denoted here. She is the *māyē* or the *bindu* arising as the measurement, measurable and the measurer. *Māna* is *Pramāṇa* and *Vēdas* are said to be a *pramāṇa* for all the ancient Indian scriptures. So, here *Dīkṣitar* says that Goddess is playing the act herself by creating this entire Universe which is then termed to be an illusory fact. This is the eternal truth every man in his life has to realize which is the main principle of *Vēdas*. These supreme facts when delivered in a delicate manner is understood clearly and hence, *Dīkṣitar* constructs the musical phrases in a way that is perfectly conveyed to any artist, i.e, he placed those phrases with only the first half of *madhya sthāyī* swara-s predominantly so that the secret is maintained to the seeker alone.

marakata cāyē śiva jāyē – the next *āvarta* travels from the second half of *madhya sthāyī* and reaches *tāra ṣaḍja* where *Dīkṣitar* is portraying Goddess as the one shining with emeralds and is the beloved of Lord *Śiva*.

anupallavi

$\begin{array}{c} m \ p \ m / \tilde{d} \ \tilde{m} \ g \ r \ g \ \tilde{g} \\ \text{mā} \ \text{na} \ \text{mā} \ \text{tr} \ \text{mē} \end{array} \quad / \tilde{p} \ m$	$\begin{array}{c} m \ \tilde{p} \ g \ \backslash \ r \ r \ \tilde{s} \ \tilde{n} \ d \\ \text{yē} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} s \ r \ g / m / P \\ \text{mā} \ \text{yē} \end{array}$	
$\begin{array}{c} m \ d \ p \ m \ \tilde{g} \ \tilde{m} \ p \ d \ \tilde{D} \ \tilde{d} \ \tilde{s} \ n \\ \text{ma} \ \text{ra} \ \text{ka} \ \text{ta} \ \text{cchā} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} d \ \tilde{p} \ \tilde{p} \ d \ \tilde{p} \\ \text{yē} \ \text{śi} \ \text{va} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} \tilde{s} \ \tilde{s} \\ \text{jā} \ \text{yē} \end{array}$	

Mīnalōcanī pāśamōcanī māninī kadambavana vāsinī – the *madhyamakāla sāhitya* coming in the anupallavi is a transient phrase that he heard during his last breath at the time of attaining the Lotus feet of Goddess. Here, the *sāhitya* depicts the similar fact of *māyē* or the illusory effect, as *pāśa mōcanī*, i.e, liberating oneself from *samsāra sāgara* or the materialistic bondages. Hence, this phrase starts from *tāra sthāyī* and ends in *mandira dhaivata*, depicting the character of descendance. Though on the outward, it seems that since pallavi starts in *ṣaḍja* and hence the previous phrase ends in a note above or below, here, the phrase *kadambavana vāsinī*, depicting the forests, represents the *prthivī tatva* and hence is phrased in the first half of *madhya sthāyī* swaras with denoting its vastness and that, eternal *māyā śakti* descending down to earth as a Goddess and blessing the devotees. Here, the kadamba trees also signify the *sthala vrkṣa*.

$\begin{array}{c} \tilde{s} \ \tilde{s} \ \tilde{s} / \tilde{r} \ \tilde{s} \ n \ \tilde{D} \ d / \tilde{s} \ \tilde{n} \ d \ P \\ \text{mīna} \ \text{lōcanī} \ \text{pā} \ \text{śa} \ \text{mō} \ \text{canī} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} m \ p \ m \ G \ r \ G \\ \text{mā} \ \text{nī} \ \text{nī} \ \text{ka} \ \text{daṁ} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} d \ p \ m \ \tilde{g} \ \tilde{m} \ \tilde{g} \ R \ s \ d \\ \text{m} \ \text{ba} \ \text{vanavā} \ \text{sini} \end{array}$	
---	--	--	--

The whole *carāṇa* is full of adjectives describing Goddess with various attributes ranges in all three *sthāyīs*. In the whole composition the phrase, *viḥayē*, denoting victory, is placed in *tāra sthāyī gāndhāra* with *dīrghatva* and this is the highest note found in this composition. The other place touching the *tāra gāndhāra* is when *Dīkṣitar* describes about *Viṣṇu* as *mura ripu* but is handled with an *ēṭra jāru gamaka* and does not hit the swara directly. The phrase denoting about



the music, beautifully traverse from tāra ṣaḍja to ādhāra ṣaḍja giving the special sañcāras of the rāga gamakakriyā perfectly blending with lyrical aspect – rāga mudrā.

caraṇam

s ḍ S s r s d s r ma dhu rā pu ri ni la	g r g g/ p m yē ma ni	g r G va la yē	
g d \M g / p m /P ma la ya dhva ja pām	m g /d \m g dya rā ja	m g /m g r s ta na yē	
○ s g m p D ś n d p vi dhu vi ḍam ba na	ś ś n D va da nē	ś r G vi ja yē	
Ś Ś r ś n D p m g vī nā gā na da	m d \m g śa ga ma ka	○ g \r Ś kri yē	

The madhyamakāla sāhitya beautifully travels from ādhāra ṣaḍja to tāra sthāyi phrases and coming back to madhya sthāyi which is a unique , significant and distinctive feature of Dīkṣitar's composition.

Madhu mada mōḍita hrdayē sadayē - the delightful character *mōḍita* is shown in the upwards sañcāra - s r g and *sadayē* or compassion is shown in descending pattern – g r s. Again, as in śiva jāyē in the anupallavi , here, mahādēva sundarēśa priyē is given in the ascending pattern landing in tāra ṣaḍja showing the highest love of Mīnākṣi and Sundarēśwara . The step -by-step descending swaras in the second āvarta of madhyamakāla sāhitya is beautifully phrased where Dīkṣitar places Lords Viṣṇu and Brahma in tāra sthā yi – *madhu muraripu* and *vidhi* and slides down depicting the drawing power of Goddess with her charming beauty – *vaśaṅkari śaṅkari* . The phrase *śātōdarī* with the swaras Ś N d d is a perfect depiction of the shape . He places his aṅkita *guruḡa* with d d n d which is a special sañcāra of rāga gamakakriyā.

s /r s ḍ S r g / p m G g r S madhumada mōḍita hrda yē sadayē	s R g p m g d ma hā dē va suṁ	\m g /m P d Ś da rē śapriyē	
ś r / g r s d Ś d /r Ś N d d madhu muraripu sōdāri śātōda ri	/r n d d / n d m g vi dhiguru guhava śaṁ	○ g d \M g /m g \r ka ri śaṁ kari	§

Aesthetical aspects in the Composition

Swarākṣaras are a highlight in Dīkṣitar's compositions where the syllable in the sāhitya perfectly matches with swaras . In this composition , both śuddha and sūcita swarākṣaras are



found. The syllable *ma* is placed in the madhyama swara in six different places – **memudam** and **mātaṅgi** in pallavi; **māna**, **marakata** and **māninī** in anupallavi; **gamaka** in caraṇa. Syllable *sa* in the madhyamakāla sāhitya of anupallavi vā **sinī**. In the caraṇa, the syllable *dha* and *ri* in **madhurāpuri**, syllable *pa* in **pāṇḍyarāja**. In the madhyamakāla sāhitya of caraṇa, the syllable *sa*, *ri* and *dha* in **mada**, **mura**, **sōdari**, **śātōdari** and **śaṅkari**.

Yamakālaṅkāra is a decorative aspect where a word that repeatedly occurs in a composition in different context. In this kṛti, the word *madhu* is the *yamaka* that occurs in three places – **madhurāpuri**, **madhumada** mōḍita and **madhu** muraripu. The first one denotes the name of the place, the second denotes honey and the third denotes the name of the demon.

Yati is the type of pattern where it is based on the measurement of the *akṣaras* or the syllables. In the composition the phrases **mēyē**, **māyē**, **ṇāyē**, **jāyē** in the anupallavi form the *sama yati*. In the madhyamakāla sāhitya of caraṇa the last phrases also incorporate gopucṇa yati in vāś **aṅkari** **śaṅkari**

Prāsas are the rhyming syllables in a composition which is based on the range of a pāda, i.e, one meaningful sentence. In this composition, an āvarta makes one pāda (half āvarta in madhyamakāla sāhitya) and *ādi* or *dwitīyākṣara*, *antya* and *anu* prāsas are found accordingly.

Simha prāsa in caraṇa – **madhurāpuri**, **vidhu** vidambana and **madhu** mada mōḍita

Anu prāsa – **mēcakāṅgi**, **rāja mātā ṅgi** in pallavi; **mīnalōcanī** **pāśamōcanī** in Anupallavi; **madhurāpuri** **nilayē** **maṇivalayē** **rāja tanayē**, **vijayē**, **daśa gamaka kriyē**, **hṛdayē** **sadayē** **priyē**, **sōdari** **śātōdari** **vāśaṅkari** **śaṅkari** ||

Antya prāsa in caraṇa –

|| **C** || **Madhurāpuri** **nilayē** **maṇivalayē** || **malayadhwaja** **pāṇḍya** **rāja tanayē** ||

|| **Vidhu** **viḍambana** **vadanē** **vijayē** || **vīṇā** **gāna** **daśa gamakakriyē** ||

|| **M.S** || **Madhu** **mada** **mōḍita** **hṛdayē** **sadayē** | **Mahādēva** **sundarēśa** **priyē** ||

|| **Madhu** **muraripu** **sōdari** **śātōdari** | **vidhi** **guruguha** **vāśaṅkari** **śaṅkari** ||

In the pallavi and anupallavi since there is absence of *ādi* prāsa and *antya* prāsa, prāsa yati with variations of *ma* syllable can be found.

|| **P** || **mīnākṣi** **mē** **mudam** **dēhi** || **mēcakāṅgi** **rāja** **mātāṅgi** ||

|| **A.P** || **māna** **māṭṭ** **mēyē** **māyē** || **marakata** **ṇāyē** **śiva** **jāyē** ||

|| **M.S** || **mīnalōcanī** **pāśamōcanī** | **māninī** **kadambavana** **vāsinī** ||



Conclusion

Mīnākṣi mē mudam dēhi , is a highly philosophical composition conveying the eternal, supreme and ultimate truth which is the root cause of happiness and this theme is introduced in the pallavi itself. In the rest of the kṛti, Dīkṣitar has expressed that there are many causes to realize until one attains that true and pure happiness, which he is requesting Goddess to bestow upon. The whole composition depicts the knowledge aspect. Especially the connection between Mīnākṣi and Rāja Mātangi could have a wonderful interpretation in terms of ‘jñāna’. Pārvati took an incarnation of Pandya King of Madhurāpuri kṣētra and later united with Lord Śiva . Here, Dīkṣitar, who himself was a jñāni , portrayed Mīnākṣi as Mātangi to depict that when one’s ignorance is destroyed , knowledge can enter the mind. Hence, he gives an enlightening statement in the anupallavi as She, who is the complete embodiment of the Universe, is the *māyā* herself.

Usually there are no saṅgati -s found in Dīkṣitar’s composition and is meditative in nature in terms of rāga and laya or the pace . This composition is in sambōdhana or eighth vibhakti and Goddess is being addressed directly and has an anecdote connected with it . During his last days, he stayed in Ettayapuram as per the Maharaja’s wish . Though Dīkṣitar denied to be as an Āsthāna Vidwan , he stayed in a nearby place to the court . One day he was rendering this kṛti along with his students and Dīkṣitar told them to repeat the same composition for the second time. While his disciples were singing the phrase ‘*mīnalōcanī pāśamōcanī*’ he left his mortal body and attained the Lotus feet of the Goddess . This shows that his kṛtis are not just a chain of words but a garland of true inner experience . Thus, rendering this kṛti as per the Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśini notation elevates to the ultimate reality musically.

References

- A.Sundaram Iyer,. S.Venkatesan, Dr. R. Thiyagarajan.2006. *Sri Dikshita Kirtanamala*. Chennai: Music books publishers.
- Aiyar, Venkatarama.T.L. 1968. *Muthuswami Dikshitar*. New Delhi: National Book Trust, India.
- Ananthakrishna Sharma, Rallapalli (ed). 1973. *Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśini* . Hyderabad: Andhra Pradesh Sangeet Natak Academy
- Archana.M.V. 2014. *Karnataka Sangeethada rachanagalalli Sri Vidyaya ullekha* – ondu Adhyayana (1700-1945). Bengaluru: Archana Prakashana.
- Asha.R. 2013. *Concepts, Contexts and Conflations in the Kṛti -s of Śrī Muttuswāmi Dīkṣita* . Chennai: Author © Dr.R.Asha
- Ayyangar Rangaramanuja.R. 1993. *History of South Indian (Carnatic) Music*. Bombay: Vipanc(h)I Cultural Trust.
- Bhagyalekshmy.S. 2011. *Lakshanagranthas in Music*. Nagercoil: CBH Publications.
- Bhagyalekshmy.S. 2015. *Ragas in Carnatic Music*. Nagercoil: CBH Publications.
- Bharanidharan. 1988. *Dheekchidhar Paadia Thiruthalangal*. Madras: Kalaignaan Pathipagam.



Govind, Apte Vasudev. 2002. *The Concise Sanskrit - English Dictionary*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass

Iyer, Sundaram.A. 1988. *Sri Dikshita Kirtanamala* (I to XV). Madras: Music Books Publishers
Narayanaswami.P.P, Vidya Jayaraman (ed). 2008. *Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśini* . English web version: <http://ibiblio.org/guruguha/ssp.htm>.

Narayanaswami.P.P. 2008. A Statistical analysis - *Diacritics of Muttuswami Dikshitar Compositions*.

Narayanaswamy.P.P. 2006. *Śrī Muddu Venkaṭamakhi viracita Rāgalakṣaṇam*. Web edition: Music Research Library

Narayanaswamy.P.P. 2007. *Śrīmad Venkaṭamakhi vi racita Caturdaṇḍiprakāśikā*. Web edition: Music Research Library

Ramakrishnan.T.S. 1970. *Sri Subbarama Dikshitar and his Contributions*. The Journal of the Madras Music Academy – Vol.XLI. 194-207.

Ramaswamy.M.S. 1988. *The ambrosia of Muthuswamy Dikshithar*. Madras: Music Academy.

Rao, Govinda.T.K. 2003. *Compositions of Muddusvāmi Dikshitar* . Chennai: Ganamandir Publications

Sathyanarayana.R. 1978. *Chaturdandi Prakasika*. Bangalore: Bangalore University.

Shivashankari J. 2022. An Analytical Study of Śrī Muttuswāmy Dīkṣitar's Samudāya Kṛti-s With Special Reference to Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśini. Jain University

Sita. S. 1976. *Muthuswamy Dikshitar and Venkatamahkhin's Tradition*. The Journal of the Madras Music Academy – Vol. XLVII. 116-150.

Sridharan.R. 2008. *Guruguhā Śrī Muttuswāmy Dīkṣitar kṛtigaḷ*. Chennai: Swarnapuri Trust

Subramanya Sastry.S, T.V.Subbarao and T.L.Venkatrama Aiyar. 1986. *The Chaturdandi Prakasika of Venkatamahkhin* – Sanskrit Text with Supplement. Madras: The Music Academy.

Sundaram.B.M. 2018a, 2018b, 2018c. *Divinity of Music and Dance*. Pudukkottai: Kala Pariseelana.

https://www.allmultidisciplinaryjournal.com/uploads/archives/20220625111249_C-22-132.1.pdf

<https://www.scribd.com/document/420826249/Meenakshi-Amman-temple>

https://youtu.be/_N78LrcvOTM?si=UeojDYM11ojkT7Ay