

Appreciating Carnatic Music
Dr. Lakshmi Sreeram
Indian Institute of Science, Madras

Lecture 70
Percussion Korvai and Thani Avartanam

Before making a final presentation of all of us together I would like to talk about important aspect called korvai which is very important for all of us, all percussion instruments. There are lots of korvai's - lot of dimensions of korvais. We will now take a ... what is a korvai? the korvais a rhythmic pattern which has two halves the first half and the second half. In Tamil we will call it as PURvAngam and UttarAngam we will start it and end it.

PURvAngam is the first part UttarAngam is the last second part. So there are different ranges of korvais. First we will all take a simple korvai and I will tell the korvai and each of us will play it in our instruments respectively and finally we will play together. So, you will see the difference in the tonal musical tones of each of the instruments.

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 01:11)

The first half of the korvai is;

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 01:23)

The first half korvai ends there. It is like reducing the korvai, this korvais of reducing type the Gopuccha yati type this is the PURvAngam, the first half. The second half starts;

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 01:43)

That is very, very simple for all of us, first we are taught in our respective schools, reducing your eliminate the second half goes up.

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 01:55)

So, we will play once in each of the instrument separately and you can see the how it sounds - the same korvai how it sounds. The language is the same but how it sounds and we will finally play together once and in the next one we go on to a complex korvai and each of us will play a different dimensional korvais of our own creativity.

And when he mentioned Gopucch Yati, it is basically a structure that is present in the korvai. Gopuccha yati basically a reverse cone that is obtained when I say

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 02:24)

It is like two bars of rhythmic pattern

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 02:39)

And then when I say;

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 02:42)

It reduces and then

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 02:43)

Then half of that then again then so it is basically a reverse cone and then when you get to the second part of the korvai it is increasing cone. You eliminate two syllabus syllables of each in the first half and you increase it by two in the second one, yes. So, the second half is;

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 03:06)

Basic mathematics that is six, that is 8 so logically obviously six eight has to be ten. So, will now he will now play it on the mridangum first.

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 03:21)

That was the simplest of the korvais which we played separately and all together.

Now we move on to advanced level of korvai. Each of us have been taught in a particular school and heard masters play and it also know as what we call as kelvi Gnanam, listen to the great masters plays, so the creativity part comes there. So, each of us will play a different dimensional korvai.

Though the korvai which we played earlier was for Porvagam and Uthrangam that was the basic thing. Now he will play a korvai - it is called; it is a long phrased, you will take a pattern, the phrase and he will develop it, develop on that and play korvai. And it is called a solkattu korvai in Tamil that is we play long rhythmic pattern and he will improvise on it and he will play a big korvai in it.

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 05:05)

So, what he played was a very different dimensional korvai. he took a phrase, he developed it and that korvai was you know played creatively like that. It is again a representation of cone when I say the first phrase that I played is;

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 06:54)

Which is 11 in number when I say;

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 07:01)

So, the next thing has to be either 10 or 12, so I have taken 10, so;

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 07:10)

Here is the second one

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 07:15)

This is nine; he is cutting each and every syllable by 1, when I say

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 01:21)

8 it is 6, I was reducing 2 syllables there, now I have reducing one syllable and I say;

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 07:29)

11

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 07:32)

10

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 07:35)

9

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 01:37)

Eight, so I have reduced it to eight and then comes next portion

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 07:44)

Which is 13, so, a pattern can, not only be a progression it can also be a constant thing. So, I have just played this 13 thrice and giving a kaarvai in between. The kaarvai in between here is six. So, when I say;

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 08:01)

The kaarvai is the gap which he gave, so this forms the whole math of it and the whole sums up to 96 and that is why I started in the middle of the; because we took the Adhi thalam that is chathurruasia thripata thalam in two kalai then each we put twice. So, since he is playing the one, the round of one whole round takes 96, it constitute of 96 Mathra's, 96 aksharams. He had to take it at the half.

Because one cycle is $32 + 32$, 64 so if you play for the two rounds it is 128, you had to play - 32 and play for the next rest of the 96. So, this is one of the one type of korvai. We four of us you play different dimensions of korvai and show it. He played in chathurruasia that is the basic 4 tempo like that dimensional. There can be two progressions at Uttharaangam and Porvangam. Like for instance I have an example like,

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 09:09)

So, when I talked about the PUrvangam you have two progressions going in parallel; is five, Thaku dhin is 3 and 2. So, 5 3 2, 5 3 2 and then I go to 4, since we had 5 now I am going to 4; 2 and 2 it was three and two earlier, now it is 2 and 2. And then when I say the next pattern is it is 3 here, so, it is 3 here and 1 2, so, you have two parallel patterns running and these patterns need not you know coincide with each other or correlate with each other.

It can be too you know separately sustaining patterns, so that is one kind of you know a new age concept that is been; you can just take one phrase that Tha Dhi Kita Thom, 5 we know you can do a lot of things in that, yeah;

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 10:12)

So, first what it is was three gap in between; 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3 makes it doubles 1 2 3 4 5 6, 1 2 3 4 5 6; next becomes 9, the same applies to any chol this is only for; you can play for Tha Dhi Kita Thom, we can play any gap you can give any number of korvais provided it is aesthetic, the values there. You cannot just give 23 gap and it does not sound good, it all depends, yeah.

So, he chooses 11 that has its aesthetic value. Somebody can tell why cannot I choose 29, you can, provided it is musically sounds good and aesthetic. So, everything has that thing.

So, now I will play a korvai it is called a Kaarvai korvai, lot of kaarvais in between in the PURvangam.. no in the Uthrangam. PURvangam is I will reduce it,

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 11:29)

So that in Porvangam is just innovation of;

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 13:36)

We just reducing everything, it is basically a very famous korvai of Mani Iyer

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 13:51)

So, the second to use to remain this constant, so I have reduced the second one and just the base of the korvai is the same. So, what happens is the second half is I have taken Tha Dhi Ki Ta Thom five syllabus with a gap of 6 in between Tha Dhi Ki Ta Thom if that is a question the replay to this;

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 14:20)

Mel kaalam, the faster speed of it with one aksharam gap. the next phrase if that is A the B becomes; 4 with a gap of 6 that becomes that 3 7 1 karvai. The question for the C is Tha Dhi Kita Thom the 6 karvai remains constant. 3 the design from 5 to 4 to 3 reduces and finally it becomes 9 that is the first portion, first variety. The PURvangam of all the three varieties I have played are the same.

The Utharangam from the design 5 it reduces to 4, A becomes the 4, 2A now becomes 4 Tha ka dhi Na 6 karvai is the same the response to that is 7 3 7's. That 2B becomes 3 from 4 it becomes 3, swarupum of three design. The reply to that is 9 - 3 9's is 1 karvai and reduces by 2, the C, 2C becomes 2, Tha Ki that is all. Because were 4 3 2, here it goes to 11. The last round becomes the first Porvangam is the same. The last round starts with 3A becomes Tha Ki Ta, three we only have 3 after 5 4 3 starts with 3. The response to that is 3 9's with 1 kaarvai, 3B becomes Tha Ka, you only have 2, 6 karvai that becomes 11, 1 karvai the last sequence is 3C, Tha that is all, we will leave it, that is the end 6, 13 end. This is the natural

progression. So, we move on to Prasanna who he will play a different dimensional korvai and he will talk about it.

So, I will play a korvai which has 4 nadais, so the base is the chatusra nadai and that pattern will repeat in different nadais in the PUrvangam and Uthrangam will have 3 different nadais okay. The same nadais which are repeated the top of the first half yeah, I will start the korvai.

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 16:38)

Of you want to see the first half of the chathusram, the korvai which he played is chathusram 5, the design of 5 was in chathusram and kandom. The design of 6 was in chathurasam and thisrum. Design of 7 was in chathurasam and mishrum. The chathurasam was the base but it got converted to 5 kandom, 6 thisrum, 7 mishrum and the Uthrangam was kandom first, thisrum second and mishrum in the last.

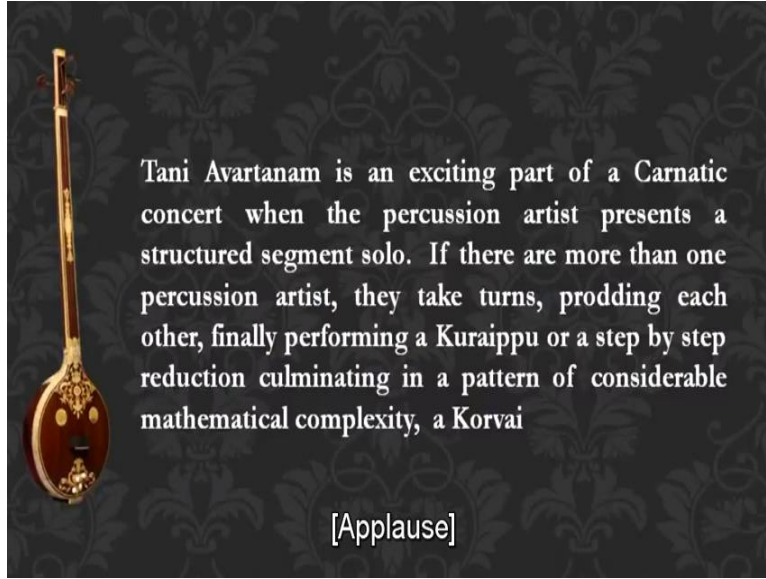
So, in between karvai was 5, 6 and 7, so, this is a different dimension of korvai representing different nadais. Now we go on to Krishnan sir, he will play it, the same one actually PUrvangam I will change it and then Utharangam I will play like that, in between some karvai is there, shall I play. You will playing the chathushram nadai, chathusram and then khandam and then tisram. Chatusram, khandam and thisram okay. So, that is 4 5 6 tempo changes to;

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 19:46)

That is called 8 + 8 16 like that 3 times and then 3 8's 4 karvai and then kandum ten, that is I will play in khanda nadai I will convert as khandam and then as thisrum that is it will convert as thisrum, 8 he is playing an chathurasam, ten it becomes khandam tempo changes, 12 it becomes thisram in between 4 ,4 according to the korvai. I think end our presentation by playing the very exciting koraippu that is a reduction round.

And we all play Mohara korvai which is the finale to any percussion ensemble or Tani avarthanam.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:23)



That there are different structures of Tani avarthanam it depends on the creativity of the artist and the time given and the space. So, if say ...there is no particular standard structure an artist might start with the chathurasam nadai and go on to 1 of the 5 nadais whichever he feels comfortable. And say if there is 1 or more 2 or more percussion instruments Like what we are now. The most exciting round will be in the koraippu for laymen and for anybody else. Because that is where the most extempore and reflexes happens because there will be one avarthnam one round half, half of that, half of that so it comes to even 1 unit, 1 Mathra, 1 aksharam. So, you have to be very sharp in doing that. So, there is no particular structure for a Tani avarthanam or lavanyasm it is absolutely depends on each individual creativity. You can start with khandam, you can start with Mishra nadai, you can start with tishram.

It is an ability of an artist if this wrong yeah but the constant thing is the Koraippu, Mohra and korvai. The Mohra and korvai is there, there are a lot of varieties but Mohara is there, korvai last in place for three times and after that if it is a cutchery, the concert, the composition the vocalist takes the composition or the instrumentalist takes the composition or if it is laya-vinyasam or only percussion instrument we end it with that.

We will be playing from the reduction round we start we are taking the Adhi thalam two kalai which is 64 for 1, 64 acharams for 1 avarthanam. we will be playing a mishra korappu that is 56, 7 Misha karuppu is based on 7 multiples and permutation is combination of 7 each will be playing our own whatever feel like. It will be an absolutely extempore thing. We have only fixed it as 56 but whatever you feel like in 56 you to our ability we will play.

So 56 gets reduced to 28, 28 to 14, 14 to 7 you cannot play 3 and a half so after 7 we reduce you to 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 we come till then we will join together and we will pay the mohara and korvai when you finish.

(Musical Demonstration Start Time: 25:03)

Thank you very much.