Bharatanāṭyam Repertoire and its Female Performers in Early Indian Cinema

Dissertation

zur

Erlangung des akademischen Grades

Doktor der Philosophie

in der Philosophischen Fakultät

der Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen

vorgelegt von

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aus

Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, Indien

2020

Gedruckt mit Genehmigung der Philosophischen Fakultät

der Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen

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Mitberichterstatterin: Prof. Dr. Karin Polit

Tag der mündlichen Prüfung: 23.07.2020

Abstract

This thesis is an exposition of the overlapping interrelationship between two powers – Bharatanāṭyam and Indian cinema – during a highly entropic period in the Indian society between the 1930s to 1950s characterized by social reform movements, arrival of sound in Indian cinema, developments in the status of women, freedom struggle, Indian independence, nationalistic agendas, colonial politics and so on. At the apex of reform and revival movements of a dance form piloting towards its transfiguration as Bharatanāṭyam, Indian cinema was infusing Bharatanāṭyam into its early films. This has left a lasting impression on both, Indian cinema and Bharatanāṭyam. This study seeks to examine the evolution of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema and the permeation of its female performers, dance masters, and their characteristic styles in Indian films. Further, it evaluates the representations of Bharatanāṭyam in the Indian cinematic space based on a case study. This work is a mirror of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema during the 1930s to 1950s, albeit one of many.

A reconstruction of the past and modelling of the 'flux period' (1930s–1950s) facilitates the perception of the underlying forces. To validate the Bharatanāṭyam items that were showcased in Indian films of this period, a clarification of the fundamental standards is furnished. Tools like movement analysis, music notation, concepts of philology and Indian aesthetics are utilized for validation. Beside the analysis portion carrying attention and visibility to the work of female performers of India and their outstanding contributions made as dancers in early Indian films, it contains an in-person interview with a celebrated Bharatanāṭyam dancer and actress. Additionally, this research displays a sample reflection that Indian cinema entertained through Bharatanāṭyam concerning the prevailing social norms in the Indian society. While this work is intertwined in dance anthropology and sociology, by and large, this thesis is an attempt to push the envelope of research in areas of performance studies and dance studies.

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Note on transliteration

All Sanskrit words are in italics and transliterated based on IAST (NLAC) standard for their *devanāgirī* equivalents (example: *nṛtta, rāga*). Words from Tamil and Telugu are in italics and transliterated based on ISO 15919 standard (example: *kūttu, āṭal*). The same rules apply for phrases, sentences, and songs. The plurality of these words is denoted with an '*s*' in the end, also in italics.

The names of texts are in italics and transliterated according to the standards as mentioned above (example: *Nāṭyaśāstra*). Name of authors and persons who lived before the 20th century have diacritics but are not in italics (example: Nandikeśvara). Names of authors and persons who lived after the 20th century do not have diacritical marks and are not in italics (example: Balasaraswati). Names of gods or deities are also not in italics but have diacritical marks (example: Śiva). The names of places, cities, and towns are indicated in standardized form taking only the English equivalent (example: Tanjore, Chidambaram). A similar method is followed for kings and dynasties taking just their English equivalent without transliterations (example: Cholas, Pallavas). For common words like Tamil, Sanskrit, etc. the English equivalent is taken. The term 'Bharatanāṭyam' is written with diacritics but without the use of italics throughout the thesis.

Note on copyright

This is a short note on the rights for publication. The thesis analyses in detail three film clips that belong to the year 1956 and one film clip that belongs to the year 1953. For description and explanation, I use the film clips and screenshots from the film clips. The Indian Copyright Protection Law under section 14, that protects literary works, dramatic works, musical works, artistic works, cinematograph films and sound recordings came into effect in the year 1957 (Copyright Office 1957: Section 14). Therefore, it is safe to publish screenshots and video clips of films prior to this year. For screenshots and film clip that is extracted from a TV channel broadcasting (TeluguOne), the publishing rights have been obtained from the channel.

Acknowledgements

degree programme that I completed with Sastra University, Tanjore. She and the entire faculty at this Master programme were doctorates who had done noble and noteworthy work in the field of dance and fine arts. My various theoretical and practical classes under Padma Subrahmanyam and her faculty, have been a great source of inspiration for me to do academic research.

I am very thankful to Prof. Dr. David Shulman of Hebrew University, an expert of South Indian languages and an extremely busy and kind person for aiding in the translation and transliteration of Telugu songs for this thesis. Kalaimamani Nandini Ramani, a dance scholar, and critic who writes regularly for *The Hindu* newspaper, gave me valuable feedback on my translation of Telugu songs. Shri. Bhamidipati Suryanarayana Murty from Hyderabad who retired as a secretary to the Government of India from telecom department and his daughter G.V. Ramani also assisted me in translating and transliterating the Telugu songs. I thank my friend, Aneesh Menon for the fantastic effort he took to verify and correct my music notations.

The most important people in my life without whom this work is impossible are my husband, my mother, and my father. My husband, Abhinav Ram, had constantly been encouraging me to do this doctoral study for a long time. He has been a pillar of support for this entire period. He was fully involved with the work and progress, continuously motivating me. He is also a great connoisseur of art giving me additional insights through many discussions. I am what I am today because of my mother, Vijayalakshmi and my father, K.G. Suresh. They have instilled enthusiasm, passion, and zeal to do the best in whatever I take up. My mother, being a lover of art, has provided continual support in my dance career right from my very young age. She has always been there whenever I needed her. My daughter, Agni, was born during my doctoral study. She has been a very easy baby, giving me all the time I needed for my work. I want to acknowledge the help I received from my mother–in–law, Poorna Bhuvaneswaran, with the Tamil script and translations. I also wish to thank my aunt, Lakshmi Ramesh, who is a musician, for reviewing the music notations for this work. And of course, I owe a great deal to my sister, my in–laws, and extended family for all their good wishes.

Introduction

The undertaking of this work is to comprehend the growth of Bharatanāṭyam[1] in Indian cinema[2] during the 'flux-period'[3]. The flux-period faced tensions in the social, political, and economic fronts witnessing concurrent developments in Bharatanāṭyam and Indian cinema. A revolt against the forerunner of Bharatanāṭyam gained momentum in the initial decades of the 20th century backed by nationalistic agendas, navigating to an abolishment of the dancers and the dance form by the mid 20th century. Simultaneously, a group of revivalists who held the dance form close to their hearts, cocooned and salvaged it, for it to be reborn as 'Bharatanāṭyam' in the 1930s. The dawn of the 20th century also marked the birth of Indian cinema. With the onset of 'films with sound' in 1931, Indian cinema became a conduit for imagining and popularizing almost anything that it showcased, due to its extensive reach across the entire nation, and its consumption by the people of the Indian society.[4] The engagement of Bharatanāṭyam with Indian cinema intensified after the revival in the 1930s.[5] The entropy of the flux-period amplified with India attaining independence in 1947 along with social reform movements attaining fruition and an improvement in the status of women in the Indian society. This work is positioned at this fluid historical juncture in India. The evolution of Bharatanāṭyam in early Indian cinema neither has been systematically studied, nor has

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[1] Bharatanāṭyam is a form of South Indian 'classical' dance that has a composite structure with continuously varying reinforcements. It is a homogeneous dance form that has had a heterogeneous past. Although the dance form was practiced for several centuries, the term 'Bharatanāṭyam' was coined only around the 1930s (Transfiguration of a traditional dance 2011: 34–36; Meduri 2005: 198).

[2] Indian cinema refers to the films produced in the nation of India. The words cinema, film, and movie mean "motion picture". Film clip refers to a strip of motion picture. (Merriam Webster 2019) The focus of this thesis is on full-length films or feature films of India. Feature films have a minimum runtime of forty minutes (British Film Institute 2019).

[3] I define the flux-period between the 1930s to 1950s when several events like the arrival of 'talkies' in Indian cinema, reform and revival movements for dance, ideas of nationalism, freedom movement, a change in status of women, and Indian independence unfolded in the Indian society. A detailed description of these events is undertaken in chapter 1.

[4] Right from the inception of Indian cinema, songs and dance have been part of the movies owing to the fame and status these art forms enjoyed for many centuries in India. *Raja Harischandra* (1913: 36:09–37:10), India's first full-length movie has a small sequence where the men dance. *Andhare Alo* (1922) has a courtesan's dance. *Kalyan Kajina* (1924) is a film where a man does the role of a dancing girl. Like this, there are several examples of dance sequences available from the silent era in Indian cinema. (Rajadhyaksha & Willemen 1998: 244, 246)

[5] After the revival, Bharatanāṭyam sequences can be found in Indian films like *Raitu Biddda* (1939: 00:42:27–00:47:20), *Thyagabhoomi* (1939: 02:03:34–02:04:23), *Sri Valli* (1945: 01:18:27–01:21:50), *Thyagayya* (1946: 00:12:23–00:14:28), *Kanniga* (1947: 00:00:55–00:04:59) and so on.

been documented or critically analyzed on a broad scale; whereas some beginnings of this sort of study have been made.[6]

A study of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema during the flux-period offers a direct invitation to seek critical engagement with the hereditary dancers,[7] non-hereditary dancers,[8] and the dance masters (naṭṭuvanārs)[9]. The reform and revival movements saw the replacement of female hereditary dancers by the non-hereditary dancing community not only in the dance fraternity but also in the dance sequences in Indian films.[10] The popularity of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema increased massively with the entry of female non-hereditary dancers as actors and dance performers, and the naṭṭuvanārs as dance directors in films.[11] By encompassing a combination of female hereditary and non-hereditary performers in Indian films, this study endeavors to ascertain if Indian cinema subscribed to the existent social norms in terms of the characterization of its female dance performers. While Bharatanāṭyam was taking shape after the revival, different styles or bānis[12] in Bharatanāṭyam originated. The naṭṭuvanārs who commanded the

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[6] The available research at the interface of Bharatanāṭyam and Indian cinema is furnished under state of the art.

[7] The dance form that was later called Bharatanāṭyam was practiced for several centuries by a female hereditary community of dancers in India. This community of dancers dedicated their lives to the art form. Customarily, they were associated with the temples. Devadāsī or a temple dancer is the most common name for a female hereditary dancer. (Gaston 1996b: 61–86)

[8] Non-hereditary dancers came after the revival of the dance form as Bharatanāṭyam. Primarily, they belonged to the 'high-class' Brahmin community. (Brahmins belong to the high caste with high social standing and are said to have a cultivated intellect and taste [Merriam-Webster 2019]). The non-hereditary dancers did not rely on dance for a living unlike the hereditary dancers (Gaston 1996b: 67).

[9] The dance masters also belong to the hereditary community of artists. A hereditary dance master who can play on the cymbals or naṭṭuvāṅgam is called a naṭṭuvanār. The dance master, apart from training the dancer, is also the conductor of the orchestra.

[10] Until the 1930s, many hereditary dancers performed in films. Pati bhakti (1922) had an 'obscene' dance sequence that was demanded to be removed by the Madras Censorship board. Fankdo Fituri (1925), Kulin Kanta (1925), Mojili Mumbai (1925), Gunsundari (1927), and Prapancha Pash (1929) are some examples of films that had dance sequences performed by hereditary dance artists (Rajadhyaksha & Willemen 1998: 243–251). The presenters at the 2013 International Conference on "Dance, Music, Politics and Gender in the early Indian cinema" held in Paris addressed the presence of hereditary dancers in early Indian films before the revival. The appropriation of hereditary dancers by non-hereditary dancers in Indian cinema is a subject that has been addressed explicitly by Hari Krishnan (2013) in his paper titled "Celluloid classicism: Intertwined histories of South Indian dance revival and early Indian cinema".

[11] The popular female non-hereditary dancers of Indian cinema include Vyjayanthimala Bali, Kamala Lakshman, Lalitha, Padmini, E.V. Saroja. Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai, Dandayudhapani Pillai, Muthuswami Pillai, and Muthukumara Pillai are well-known naṭṭuvanārs of the Indian cinema industry.

[12] Bāṇi means dancing style in Bharatanāṭyam. Its root lies in Tamil where it is translated as pāṇi, meaning "style". It is sometimes referred to as "tradition". It is also colloquially called vaḻi in Tamil. Vaḻi means "way". Recently, people refer to bāṇis as different schools that exist in Bharatanāṭyam. Lakshminarayanan (2010: 29) defines bāṇi as a "way of teaching, using movements in a certain way". A recognizable technique or repertoire developed by a teacher that is also perpetuated by his students. The name of a bāṇi

bānis were not only the gurus of the female non-hereditary dancers but also their dance directors in films. This work endeavors to examine the permeation of *bānis* in the Bharatanāṭyam performances of Indian films. In conjunction with this, two conflicting Bharatanāṭyam styles advocated by two legendary female non-hereditary dancers are probed.

To realize the development of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema it is also vital to recognize its depth of inclusion. This inquiry is pertinent because – the representations of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema can be seen until today.[13] But largely, these representations are either highly fragmented or are entirely adapted for the respective films. There is barely any connection in terms of music and dance to the repertoire of Bharatanāṭyam[14] that is performed on-stage. Owing to this, a sizeable portion of the Bharatanāṭyam fraternity who are in the on-stage performative realm including dancers, musicians, administrators, teachers, and organizers consider Indian cinema to have diluted the dance form. On the other hand, the mass audience who are avid viewers of Indian cinema but do not know what Bharatanāṭyam is, could assume these fragmented representations of Bharatanāṭyam as comparable to what is performed on-stage.[15] Therefore, it is significant to understand from the archives, how Bharatanāṭyam was transferred or handed over to early Indian cinema. Were the Bharatanāṭyam sequences merely adapted for the cinema fraternity or did early Indian cinema provide space for Bharatanāṭyam to ascribe to its technique? Did the Bharatanāṭyam dancers and dance

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is usually derived from the region where the dance teacher hails from. Khokar (2010: 23) says, "the teachers are the rivers and *bāṇis,* its tributaries".

[13] Fragments of Bharatanāṭyam can be seen in dance sequences of the following recent films – *Mahamayee* (1991: 00:43:30–00:49:44), *Kamaladalam* (1992: 01:27:50–01:30:00), *Manichitrathazhu* (1993: 02:18:09–02:23:10), *Sangamam* (1999: 01:59:12–02:02:41), *Chandramukhi* (2005: 02:33:00–02:36:43), *Periyar* (2007: 01:27:44–01:30:21), *Raavanan* (2010: 00:36:55–00:39:20), and many more.

[14] The Bharatanāṭyam repertoire is eight–fold consisting of the following items: *alārippu, jatisvaram, śabdam, varṇam, padam, jāvali, tillāna,* and *ślokam.* This has been in vogue from the late 18th and early 19th centuries until today.

[15] Ann David in her article, "Beyond the Silver Screen: Bollywood and Filmi dances in the UK" throws light on the Bollywood style of dance that has a mixture of several different dance forms including the 'classical' Bharatanāṭyam and Kathak (a form of dance from north India). It is worth mentioning the very famous dance choreographer in films, Saroj Khan's words in her article – "Film dances must entertain audiences of many thousands at a time. Film dances must please everyone. You can't have a dancer standing stiffly and moving her neck [she demonstrates] because audiences know nothing about classical dance forms—Kathak and Bharatanatyam…" (David 2007: 11). Hemamalini, a Bharatanāṭyam dancer–actress who came into the films in the 1970s says – "I came in during the transition phase when new dance forms were coming into films with classical format taking a back seat. In films, my dancing talent and training was underutilised." (Ravi 2018).

masters showcase the outstanding Bharatanāṭyam repertoire in films by adhering to the standards[16] in technique? Were the representations of Bharatanāṭyam in early Indian cinema constructed in dialogue with the aesthetic of the reinvented dance?

Intrinsically, the technique of Bharatanāṭyam is highly complex. *Nṛtta*[17] and *abhinaya*[18] form the nucleus of the Bharatanāṭyam technique. In the repertoire of Bharatanāṭyam, some items focus on the aspect of *nṛtta* and some items focus on the aspect of *abhinaya.* The underpinning theory for *abhinaya* is in classical Indian aesthetics. *Bhāva*[19] and *rasa*[20] are central concepts of classical Indian aesthetics.[21] The concept of Indian aesthetics is still used today in theatre, dance, music, literature, and the visual arts, and has also left its mark on Indian cinema.[22] The *śṛṅgāra rasa*[23] or the erotic sentiment was viewed under a magnifying lens during the flux-period. The revival movements came with the idea of

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[16] Bharatanāṭyam has, as a form of standardised dance, a typical basic structure, technique, and grammar. Although like any other dance form, Bharatanāṭyam has been constantly evolving, it has always retained a certain set of basic elements that made and still make it 'Bharatanāṭyam' – which is what I call the 'standard'. This 'standard' technique of Bharatanāṭyam is explained in detail in Chapter 2.

[17] *Nṛtta* refers to abstract or pure dance sequences made up of *aḍavus* (fundamental units) in Bharatanāṭyam. They consist of bodily movements and patterns of dance that practically convey no meaning. Rhythm and music are indispensable components for *nṛtta*.

[18] *Abhi* is a prefix to verbs and nouns expressing "to", "toward", and the verbal root *nī* means "to lead", "direct" or "guide". Thus, *abhinaya* translates as "leading towards". In the context of Indian aesthetics, it means, "leading the audience towards an emotional experience". (Monier Williams 2008) It is the art of carrying forward or communicating an idea or emotion to the audience (Rao, 1980: 1).

[19] *Bhāva* translates to "emotion", "way of thinking or feeling", "manner of acting", or "intention" (Monier Williams 2008). It relates to the psycho–physiological states, moods, and feelings of the performer. Simply put, it is a kind of "emotional trigger" that the performer uses on stage to create a *rasa* experience for the audience.

[20] *Rasa* refers to sentiment. The literal Sanskrit meaning is "essence" or "juice" or "sap". It can also mean "flavor", "taste", or "soup" (Monier Williams 2008). It describes, among other things, the mental and emotional state of joy and fulfilment that the viewer experiences when enjoying a successful performance.

[21] The dramatic means described in theory derives from semiotics of emotional expression. The oldest variant of the *bhāva-rasa* theory can be found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, a guide to the stage arts (dates between 500 BCE and 500 CE). This was commented on and expanded in the 11th century by the philosopher Abhinavagupta in his commentary *Abhinavabhāratī*, towards the psychology of art perception. (Ghosh 1951; Shastri 1971).

[22] In "Is there an Indian way of filmmaking*"*, Lutgendorf (2007) talks about the relevance of Indian theater for film theory and comments that the link between Indian theatre and latest Hindi and Tamil melodrama goes beyond stylistic similarities. He argues that the performance of actors, the technique of acting, the music, dance, background score, and even the emotions portrayed by the audience is based on Indian aesthetic principles. Ikbar (2015: 82–83) claims that the performance of actors in Indian cinema is inspired by *rasa* theory as against Russian Stanislavsky's theory, that insisted on the actors becoming the characters themselves. Popular Tamil actor, Sivaji Ganesan exhibited an acme of perfection in expressing emotions according to the principles of *Nāṭyaśāstra.* Padma Subrahmanyam presented a set of video clips to prove this at the international Chavelier award instituted in France. (Subrahmanyam 2014d: 1)

[23] Among the nine *rasas* used in Bharatanāṭyam and other dance forms, *śṛṅgāra rasa* is the dominant of them all. It is brought out by the cardinal emotion of love. It portrays the mystic union of the human with the divine. This type of dance number usually has a heroine playing the central role.

purging the erotic sentiment from Bharatanāṭyam items as it was regarded as a symbol of the dance form's degradation.[24] It is also noteworthy to examine if the *śṛṅgāra* items of Bharatanāṭyam were welcomed by the Indian cinema industry during the flux-period.

The answers to the questions put forth in the preceding paragraph lies in validating the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire items that appeared in Indian films against the 'standard'[25] technique of Bharatanāṭyam. To get a balanced and a holistic picture of the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire items in Indian films, two items based on *nṛtta* (*alārippu*[26] and *tillāna*[27]), and two items based on *abhinaya* (*padam*[28] and *jāvali*[29]), are selected as a case study. Fascinatingly, I discovered an *alārippu* performed by Vyjayanthimala Bali[30] in the movie *New Delhi* (1956: 00:34:54–00:37:23), and a *tillāna* performed by Kamala Lakshman[31] in the movie *Chori Chori* (1956: 00:39:38–00:42:23); Vyjayanthimala Bali

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[24] A variety of works deal with this subject. Examples – "Traditional' Indian dance and the making of interpretative communities" (Shea 1998: 45–63), "The Sanskritized Body" (Coorlawala 2004: 53–56).

[25] The dance form of Bharatanāṭyam has been evolving over several centuries. Hence, its technique and repertoire have been quite fluid. However, a systematization resulted around the 19th century and has been retained fairly until today. Several works emerged post the revival, illuminating the technique of Bharatanāṭyam (Kothari 1997; Sarabhai 2000; Subrahmanyam 1979; Gaston 1996b; Vatsyayan 1974). This has been adopted as the 'standard' technique of Bharatanāṭyam for this work.

[26] *Alārippu* is the first item in the repertoire of Bharatanāṭyam. It generally suggests the idea of blossoming of a flower. The word *alaru* in Telugu means "tower" or "blossom" (Krishnan 2008: 76). The word *alar* in Kannada means "flower" while the word *ippu* means "lowering" or "bringing down", suggesting the blossoming forth of both the dance and the dancer before the spectators (Kothari 1997: 93–96).

[27] *Tillāna* is the last item in most Bharatanāṭyam recitals. It is a fast–paced *nṛtta* item performed with the help of dance movements and bodily postures.

[28] The word *padam* was initially used by Bharata, the author of *Nāṭyaśāstra* in the sense of *sāhitya* (lyrical part for which the dancer gesticulates), or a song, employed for *abhinaya.* It started being used loosely in musical parlance after the 13th century. The term *padam* is now come to mean a song in slow tempo, soaked in *śṛṅgāra rasa* (emotion of love), surrounding a *nāyikā* (heroine) as the main motif. (TSP 1998: 160–161)

[29] *Jāvali* is usually performed after the *padam* in the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire. It is a genre of poetry with bright, attractive, and catchy music. It is faster, and considered to be erotic in style. The word *jāva* means "speed" or "quickness" in Telugu. In Marathi, *jhāvali* means "gesture of the eyes in the language of love". In Kannada, it means "a song of lewd poetry". In Kannada, *je, pode* or *vode* means "striking the bow-string" with the finger while in Sanskrit *jye* means "bow-string". (Chennakesavaiah 1974: 156)

[30] Vyjayanthimala Bali is a Bharatanāṭyam dancer and actress, belonging to the non-hereditary community of dancers. She underwent rigorous training in Bharatanāṭyam initially under Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai and later under Dandayudhapani Pillai. Her dance is technically suave and graceful, with exceptional rhythmic precision. She has worked in several films and in many languages. She gained popularity in the movie industry primarily because of the Bharatanāṭyam pieces that she performed in films. She has always been remembered as a dancer who made a mark in the Indian cinema fraternity during the period of Bharatanāṭyam revival. (Janaki 2010a: 14–17)

[31] Kamala Lakshman was called the superstar of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema, and her journey to stardom was rapid. She trained under Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai who was also the dance choreographer for many of her films. Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai put Bharatanāṭyam on the map during the revival along with Kamala, and made it enjoyable among the film audience. Kamala is known for her speed and perfect sense of rhythm with absolute control over her body, and Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai rose to fame because of his star disciple, Kamala. (Raman 2012a: 14–16)

and Kamala Lakshman were iconic female non-hereditary Bharatanāṭyam dancers of the mid 20th century India belonging to two contrasting styles[32] of Bharatanāṭyam. The assessment of the *nṛtta* items is performed using movement analysis and music notations. The results of the study are substantiated by a personal interview with the eighty-five-year-old actress, Vyjayanthimala Bali. For the *abhinaya* items, a Kṣetrajña's[33] *padam* from the Telugu movie *Devadasu* (1953: 01:27:20–01:30:53), and a *jāvali,* also from a Telugu movie *Muddu Bidda* (1956: 01:20:45–01:25:10), are chosen. This part of the analysis deals with *śṛṅgāra rasa* and the various *nāyikā-bhedas*[34] associated with it. It necessitates an entry into the aspects of philology concerning Telugu literature and offers a perspective on the female hereditary dancing community in Indian films.

In recent years, there has been a trend in the field of Indology/South Asian studies, with a small group of researchers who can approach the research subject from two sides: as a scientist and at the same time, as fully trained practicing artists; situating their works at the interface of Indology, ethnology, and performance studies. My own supervisor, Heike Oberlin is a typical example. She learned *Kūṭiyāṭṭam* and *Naṅṅyār-Kūttu* from Kalamandalam P N Girija and Kalamandalam Rama Chakyar in Kerala Kalamandalam in India and performed regularly there and in Europe. She heads the department of Indology at the Tübingen Universität and all her scholarly works have a solid footing from her training, performances, and familiarity with traditional artists, combined with historical philological methods. Ayla Joncheere (Jonsheere 2016) wrote her doctoral dissertation on *Kālbeliyās* after spending years of training in the dance form and spending time with the community. Saskia Kersenboom (Bharatanāṭyam), Sharmila Bansal Tönz (Bharatanāṭyam), Philip Zarilli (Kathakaḷi and Kaḷarippayaṯṯ) are other scholars who are/were also performing artists. Fully trained performers who take up

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[32] Vyjayanthimala Bali was known for the Pandanallur *bāṇi* of Bharatanāṭyam and Kamala Lakshman for the Vazhuvoor *bāṇi* of Bharatanāṭyam. They are two contrasting styles which holds conflicting opinions in the Bharatanāṭyam realm.

[33] Kṣetrajña was an outstanding composer and musician of Telugu literature who lived during the 17th century. He was extremely famous for his love (*śṛṅgāra*) *padams.*

[34] *Nāyikā-bheda* refers to the classification of heroines based on their nature, behavior, moods, situations, their experience in love, and many more. It forms part of the technique of performing *abhinaya* items of Bharatanāṭyam. Many scholars have done a systematic classification of these heroines (Ghosh 1951; Randhwa & Bhambri 1981; Raghavan 1951; Dahejia 2003).

serious scholarly work may be called 'artist-scholars'[35]. My journey has been quite similar with an enduring training along with performances in Bharatanāṭyam.[36] This plays a central role in the foundation for this thesis and specifically the evaluation[37] of film clips against the technique of Bharatanāṭyam. Therefore, I aim to integrate the 'artist' in me with scientific research, and hence I position myself as an 'artist-scholar' in performance studies under the broad umbrella of Indology.

To earn a perspective on the practice and development of the dance form that is now called Bharatanāṭyam, it becomes imperative to reconstruct its past and understand the multifarious forces of the flux-period. This is furnished in the first chapter of this thesis. The primary focus is on the antiquity of Tamil[38] land, the southernmost state in India. The account starts from five hundred years before the common era. The surviving Sanskrit and Tamil texts from those periods stand testimony to the practice and benefaction of dance art. For more than twenty centuries, the dance form and the dancers seemed to have enjoyed patronage by realms of kings like the Pallavas, Cholas, Nayaks, and Marathas[39]. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the art form faced a sudden backlash from the society. It was stuck in a vicious loop with varying social, economic, and political agendas. Unfortunately, the only way to break free was to get rid of the dancers and the dance form. A simultaneous revival took place in the 1930s when the dance form was reborn as Bharatanāṭyam marking this time as a significant milestone for the dance form. Subsequently, Bharatanāṭyam became globally wide-spread and a highly prevalent

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[35] Ayla Joncheere in her dissertation to study *Kālbeliyās* situates herself as an 'artist-scholar' because of her training in the dance form, her association with the *Kālbeliyā* community, and her university degree in Indian languages (Joncheere 2016: 21; 22). Also in other fields, mainly in musicology, significant interactions between performers and scholars take place. A growing number of cross-disciplinary ways of bringing together materials of artistic and theoretical research in the expanded field of performance can be observed (see, for example, www.performance-research.org).

[36] My training in Bharatanāṭyam started when I was five years old under the renowned *naṭṭuvanār* and guru, K.J. Sarasa. I learned my basics and several Bharatanāṭyam numbers from her. I had my *araṅkēṟṟam* (see glossary for definition) in the year 2003. Owing to her old age, I continued my training under her senior–most student, Lavanya Sankar. From then on, I started performing *mārgams* (see glossary for definition) and even choreographed many. I have continued my practice and performances for almost 26 years. When I pursued my Masters in Fine Arts from Sastra University under Padma Subrahmanyam, my interest and inspiration for Bharatanāṭyam research was born.

[37] As a dancer, it is natural for me to be aware of my own body in movement and my 'lived experiences' while analyzing and interpreting the data (Given 2008: 184).

[38] David Shulman (2016) in his book, *Tamil, A Biography* gives a comprehensive cultural history of Tamil language, literature, and civilization.

[39] Pallavas, Cholas, Vijayanagara Nāyaks and Marathas were rulers who lived during different time periods in southern India. All of them were great patrons of art.

dance form. Today, Bharatanāṭyam is a form of South Indian 'classical'[40] dance that has comfortably settled into the structures and systems of the modern world. This dance form is always flanked with the word 'classical'[41] because it is viewed as something that is poised and dignified, charting a set of rules that have been developed over a very long period.

One of the principal objectives of this study is validating the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire items in Indian films against the 'standard' technique of Bharatanāṭyam. Thus, a thorough knowledge of the 'standard' technique is vital. The second chapter elucidates the key aspects of the 'standard', detailing the terms, definitions, and various concepts attached to the technique of this dance form. Dance in India brings together movement, gestures, emotions, music, rhythm, poetry, literature, religion, mythology, and philosophy causing its technique to be complex with several attached layers. Bharatanāṭyam has a direct connection with the dance techniques put forward in the early Sanskrit and Tamil texts. The second chapter addresses five significant concepts relating to Bharatanāṭyam: 1. *nṛtta* (aspect of abstract dance), 2. *abhinaya* (communicative aspect), 3. *bāṇis* (different styles of Bharatanāṭyam), 4. *bhāva-rasa* (emotion–sentiment) and specifically *śṛṅgāra rasa* (erotic sentiment)*,* and 5. *nāyikā-bheda* (different types of heroines). The validation of *alārippu*, *tillāna*, *padam,* and *jāvali* performances in Indian films is not feasible without a detailed research of these compositions and clarifying a baseline for these items. The third chapter probes the origin, structure, composers, and compositions for the selected repertoire items and contextualizes the way they are performed, and musical intricacies, if any.

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[40] The word 'classical' is considered as something that is part of a long, formal tradition that has lasting value. Classical means – "conforming to a pattern of usage sanctioned by a body of literature rather than by everyday speech" or "of or relating to a form or system considered of first significance in earlier times" (Merriam Webster 2018). In 'classical' art, there is a necessary principle, method, technique, and apparatus in its framework. It is developed systematically and comprehensively. A 'classical' art form is seen to be very sophisticated and needs training, knowledge, and cultural background. The genesis of this type comes from the need for a magnified expression of an aesthetic experience. (Sathyanarayana 1969: 99–101)

[41] Here I would like to mention the well-known difficulties in understanding of the terms like 'classical', 'folk', 'traditional', and 'authentic'. Such words tend to have a variety of different meanings and a plurality of culturally bounded assumptions. These words also have a wide range of nuances in meaning and implications according to their social and historical significances. "Does authenticity matter? The case for and against authenticity in the performing arts, in analysing performance" (Rubidge 1996: 219–233), "Tales Tunes Tell: Deepening the dialogue between 'Classical' and 'Non-Classical'" (Allen 1998), "Authenticity Revisited" (Baugh 1988) are some works that address this issue.

The fourth chapter gives background information on the investigation of Bharatanāṭyam repertoire items in Indian cinema during the flux-period. The occurrences of such items in Indian cinema are uncovered and assessed to select the most appropriate set of items for the detailed analysis and validation that is presented as part of chapter five. The fourth chapter furnishes information on the reasons for selection of items that appeared in movies, a brief introduction and storyline of the movies, and an account on the interplaying factors that brought out the Bharatanāṭyam style in the dancer. The fourth chapter is divided into four sections in the following order – *alārippu*, *tillāna*, *padam,* and *jāvali* in Indian cinema. The focus of the fifth chapter is to validate the selected *alārippu*, *tillāna*, *padam,* and *jāvali* film clips from the movies against the 'standard' technique and repertoire of Bharatanāṭyam. For the *nṛtta* based items – *alārippu* and *tillāna,* an analysis of the movements of the dancer is performed with the help of music notations, notations for rhythm, and video annotations. This section on *nṛtta* exposes the conflicting *bāṇis* of Vyjayanthimala Bali and Kamala Lakshman, and rationalizes the presence of a '*bāṇi* battle' within the Indian cinematic realm backed by an in–person interview with the eighty-five-year-old actress, Vyjayanthimala Bali. A translation and transliteration of lyrics for the Telugu songs is carried out for the *abhinaya* based items – *padam,* and *jāvali,* since the communicative aspect is in the spotlight. Further, the technique of performance is validated by scrutinizing the portrayal of *nāyikā-bheda*. Thus, with this thesis, I attempt to provide the first impetus to the impression of the treatment of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema.

State of the art

The 'standard' technique of Bharatanāṭyam bears founding in various **primary works**. Manmohan Ghosh has brought out the popular translation of two works: *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Ghosh 1951) and *Abhinayadarpaṇam* (Ghosh 1957)*,* that are historical works on aspects of the technique like *nṛtta, abhinaya, bhāva-rasa,* and *nāyikā-bheda. The Mirror of Gesture: Being the Abhinaya Darpaṇa of Nandikeśvara* (Coomaraswamy & Duggirala 1917) is a translation of *Abhinayadarpaṇa. Saṅgīta Sārāmṛtā* by V. Raghavan is a vital primary work for the description of the fundamental units of *nṛtta* (Raghavan 1942). *Srngaramanjari of Saint Akbar Shah* (Raghavan 1951), *The Daśarūpa: A treatise on Hindu Dramaturgy by Dhanaṃjaya* (Haas 1912), *Rasikapriya: Ritikavya of Keshavdas in Ateliers of Love* (Dahejia 2013), and *Basohli Paintings of The Rasamanjari* (Randhwa & Bhambri 1981) are notable works used for *nāyikā-bhedas.* Two translations for *Saṅgītaratnākarā* (Raja & Burnier 1976; Shringy 1978) also elaborate on the technical aspects of this dance form.

Sunil Kothari, Kapila Vatsyayan, Padma Subrahmanyam, Mrinalini Sarabhai, V. Raghavan., Kalanidhi Narayanan, and Anne Marie Gaston are some of the **principal authors of secondary works** that I have used throughout this thesis to describe, explain, and interpret the technical aspects of Bharatanāṭyam. The two books, *Indian Classical Dance* (Vatsyayan 1974) and *Classical Indian Dance in Literature and the Arts* (Vatsyayan 1978) by Kapila Vatsyayan give a thorough version of *nṛtta* and *abhinaya.* Padma Subrahmanyam has several works to her credit in this area, a significant one is *Bharata's Art: Then and Now* (Subrahmanyam 1979). Sunil Kothari in his book, *Bharata Natyam* (Kothari 1997) delineates these aspects in a bright, pictographic yet condensed style. Mrinalini Sarabhai's two books; *Understanding Bharatanatyam* (Sarabhai 2000) and *The Eight Nayikas: The heroines of the classical dances of India* (Sarabhai 1965) illuminates on all aspects of the technique, in a typical textbook style. Raghavan has been a prolific writer in *The Journal of Music Academy, Madras* and has dealt with Bharatanāṭyam (Raghavan 1974) and *nāyikā-bhedas* (Raghavan 1935–37, 1963) comprehensively. Kalanidhi Narayanan, a well-known *abhinaya* exponent, in her book, *Aspects of Abhinaya* (Narayanan 1994) gives an exhaustive and in–depth treatment of this aspect. Anne Marie Gaston's books and articles (Gaston 1996a, 1996b) have an

explanation of the various *bāṇis* and performances during the revival period. The work also contains a detailed account on the hereditary and non-hereditary dancing community. The *Shanmukha* (2010) journal's series on *bāṇis* provides an outlook contributed by different dancers and scholars, which is an essential source. Works from other languages like Tamil and Telugu are also referred – "Abhinaya Sara Samputa" (Raghavan 1932, 1935–37), "Thillana" (Narayanacharulu 1959), *Cilappatikaram of Ilangoatikal* (Seshadri 2001), *Pañcamarabu* (Goundar 1975), *Tolkāppiyam* (Veḷḷaivāraṉṉār 2001), *South Indian Inscriptions* (Volumes I, II, III, VII, XXIV), and *Kshētrayya Padamulu* (Rao 1950).

Parimal Phadke's book, *The Concept and the Core of Alāripū: From Varied Tāla–s to Varied Interpretations* (Phadke 2016) that elaborates on *alārippu*, Hari Krishnan's account on the origins of *alārippu* in his paper that was published as part of the book, *Performing Pasts, Reinventing the Arts in Modern South India* (Krishnan 2008), are significant while explaining the first repertoire item, the *alārippu*. Kalakriya's videos on *alārippu* and *tillāna* (*Bharatanatyam invocatory items* 2011; *Thillana* 2011*),* along with my training and performances, guide well while writing. S. Pattabhiraman is a notable author who has dealt with *tillāna* and its various composers (Pattabhiraman 1985). The research, theories, conjectures, and conclusions of Vissa Appa Rao (Rao 1950) and Rajinikantha Rao (Rao 1982) on Kṣetrajña and his *padams,* form a bedrock in elucidating the *padams'* section. Andal's and Aruna's doctoral dissertations focus specifically on the *abhinaya* aspect of Kṣetrajña's *padams,* and hence become useful for this study (Andal 1995; Aruna 1995). Davesh Soneji, Arudra, and Lakshmi Viswanathan are authors who have done impressive research on *jāvalis* (Soneji 2010, 2012; Arudra 1986; Vishwanathan 1999*).* Davesh Soneji has worked with hereditary artists who extensively performed the *jāvalis* (Soneji 2010, 2012). Arudra gives a remarkable account of *jāvali* composers (Arudra 1986), while Lakshmi Viswanathan approaches her exploration from a performative point of view (Vishwanathan 1999).

Apart from this, a vast amount of study is existent about the flux-period when the art form was salvaged and revived for posterity. Several books, journals, and articles talk about how the art form faced criticism (Soneji 2012; Jordan 2003; Reddi 2010; Madras Devadasi Association 2012; Srinivasan 2010), about individuals like Rukmini Devi

Arundale, E. Krishna Iyer, T. Balasaraswati who were involved in saving the art form (Transfiguration of a traditional dance 2011; Rukmini Devi 2012; Meduri 2005; Meduri 2005; Vishwanathan 2005, 2006; T. Balasaraswati 2013; Ohtani 1991; Coorlawala 2004), the changes that emerged because of the revival (Malathi 2008; Venkatraman 2005; Coorlawala 2004; Ramnarayan 2005; Allen 1997; Gaston 1996b; Shea 1998), the politics that existed (Srinivasan 2010; Shea 1998; T. Balasaraswati 2013), the stage performances during this period (Gaston 1996a, 1996b; Transfiguration of a traditional dance 2011; Sriram 2016), and so on.

There is very little **research available on how Bharatanāṭyam developed in Indian cinema** during the flux-period,[42] the actors who made it happen,[43] the *naṭṭuvanars* who came in as dance choreographers in films,[44] the permeation of *bāṇis* in Indian films, and the value given for performance techniques. The above are certain areas that have not been probed much by researchers, and thus, needs investigation and study. Despite several works that exist on the various aspects of the technique and *bhāva-rasa* theory,[45] there have been no attempts to connect the representation of these in theatre and dance forms, with textual sources and Indian films. By presenting this combination, new ground is broken in this research.

Hari Krishnan in his recent book *Celluloid Classicism* (Krishnan 2019) argues for a new and critical reading of the South Indian history that considers the shared records of Bharatanāṭyam and Tamil cinema between the 1930s to 1950s which according to him has received no serious scholarly attention. He reasons how they were both mutually invented with reciprocal exchange of knowledge between screen and stage versions. He explores how, despite the technological, moral, and visual complexities, Indian cinema

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[42] This is briefly addressed by Hari Krishnan (Krishnan 2013) in his paper titled "Celluloid Classicism: Intertwined histories of the South Indian 'Dance revival' and early Tamil cinema" at the international conference held in Paris on "*Danse, musique, politique et genre dans les debúts du cinéma de l'Inde du Sud*".

[43] Some of the famous Bharatanāṭyam artists who came into the Indian film industry as actors in the mid 20th century were Vyjayanthimala Bali, Kamala Lakshman, Lalitha, Padmini, E.V. Saroja.

[44] The 40s and 50s also saw several *naṭṭuvanārs*, the hereditary community of dance teachers choreographing for film songs. Vahuvur Ramiah Pillai, Dandayuthapani Pillai, Muthukumara Pillai, and Muthuswami Pillai were some of them.

[45] There are numerous works on Indian aesthetics and *bhāva–rasa* theory. For example: *Indian Aesthetic Theory: A Development from Bharata to Jagannatha* (Barlingay 2007), *Rasa in Aesthetics* (Patnaik 2005), "The Concept of Emotion in Classical Indian Philosophy" (Tuske 2011). In "Exploring Hindu Indian Emotion Expressions: Evidence for Accurate Recognition by Americans and Indians" (Hejmadi et al. 2000), the authors have dealt with culturally specific subtleties and distinctions of emotions.

bears heavily upon Bharatanāṭyam. He indicates the appropriation and replacement of hereditary dancers by the 'high–class' non-hereditary dancers even in the cinema industry. The author bases his arguments from archival collections that include print materials, song books, and magazines from a private collector in Chennai along with interviews with dancer–actress, film historians, and scholars. Davesh Soneji, while studying the life and journey of Telugu *jāvalis* performed by hereditary artists from Andhra Pradesh, elucidates the appearance of one of them in the movies (Soneji 2010, 2012). He argues how *jāvalis* indexed a major cultural transition from the intimate salon performances of Madras to artefacts of mass audience. Nevertheless, he does not go into the literary aspects nor the technical matters of the song and dance. Even though his work is very close to the dancers' community, he does not delve into the qualities of *nāyikā-bhedas* associated with the technique of performance. His research is focused primarily on the study of the dancers' community rather than the performative aspect.

In the year 2013, Davesh Soneji organized an international conference in Paris titled, *Dance, music, politics and gender in early South Indian cinema*. The conference focused on representations of dance and music in early South Indian cinema from its beginnings in the second decade of the 20th century until the 1950s. As part of the conference, Hughes (2013) argues how live stage dramas also called company dramas have contributed to the making of Tamil cinema in the 1930s; Leucci (2013) claims that Tamil cinema provided the dancers and dance masters an alternative space to continue their own artistic professions at the apex of abolitionist campaigns; Baskaran (2019) debates that Tamil cinema is intimately linked to members of the *Devadāsī* community who switched from being drama artistes to working on the strength of their skills in music and dance, that literally gave rise to the song-dance routine that continues to be popular even today.

A doctoral thesis that contains an extensive database of all the Bharatanāṭyam performances that appeared in South Indian films is available (Soundarya 2010). Yet, the commentary given by the author for the dance performances appears very casual. A vociferous blogger[46] who writes immensely on Bharatanāṭyam, the dancers', and the *naṭṭuvanars'* appearances in movies, is quite extensive. Since the information is in the

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[46] This blogger named Cassidy writes in the blog titled "*cinemanrityagharana*".

form of blog posts, the data is most times not backed with proper sources. Priyanka Basu (Basu 2018: 138–158) discusses the issues of feminine space and its presence in other media like television and films. Further, she conceptualizes feminine space within dance by inquiring existing literature and validates through examples of women who appeared in Indian films. Nevertheless, this paper does not address the dance form of Bharatanāṭyam nor does it delve into the aspects of its technique.

Accordingly, **this research work is original and unique** because of the following reasons: firstly, it comprehends the growth of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema during the flux-period using a sample study. An in-depth technical analysis and validation of Bharatanāṭyam repertoire items from the selected film clips is accomplished for the very first time to appreciate Bharatanāṭyam's depth of inclusion in Indian cinema. Secondly, the styles of two iconic female figures of the film industry Vyjayanthimala Bali and Kamala Lakshman, who belonged to two conflicting *bāṇis* of Bharatanāṭyam, are introduced and explained, thus giving a perspective on *bāṇis* of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema. The life and influence of *naṭṭuvanārs,* who were teachers and dance choreographers for these artists, are examined. Thirdly, by encompassing a mixture of female hereditary and non-hereditary performers in Indian films, this work attempts to establish if early Indian cinema subscribed to the existent social norms in terms of the characterization of its female dance performers. Lastly, the analysis and interpretation of dance on screen is supported by my perception of the film clips as a 'artist-scholar'. My life and learnings as a performing dancer aid in this regard. Furthermore, the thesis proves a bidirectional influence[47] of Bharatanāṭyam and Indian cinema. Consequently, this work strives to bridge performance studies, dance studies, dance anthropology, sociology, and Indology, by working with/on primary and secondary texts, films, performances, and, last but not the least, my personal experiences as a dancer.

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[47] This topic, "dance into films, films into dance" has been popular in recent times. A conference held by DSA (Dance Studies Association) in Malta in the year 2018, had a panel dedicated to this topic. I was part of that panel. DSA is an international association of researchers, dance scholars, and artists formed as a joint entity of the popular SDHS (Society of Dance History Scholars) and CORD (Congress on Research in Dance).

Boundaries of the thesis

This thesis, although probing into the Indian cinematic space, restricts itself only to the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire items that appeared in Indian cinema during the flux-period (1930s to 1950s). A brief account of the identified occurrences followed with a detailed analysis and validation of the selected film clips is accomplished. I recognize that there could be other appearances of the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire items or Bharatanāṭyam-like dance sequences in Indian films in the flux-period or otherwise that are not considered part of this work.

For the validation of Bharatanāṭyam technique for the selected repertoire items which were featured in films, I confine myself only to the portion between the beginning and end of the song (dance sequence). Though the storyline of the movie is briefly provided, it is not truly consequential with regards to the validation. Hence, my principal focus is only on dance studies rather than media studies or film studies. Likewise, the validation section considers just the extensive technique of Bharatanāṭyam and excludes technicalities related to the art of film-making[48].

Even though the repertoire of Bharatanāṭyam comprises many items, I have considered only four items for the analysis as a sample set (case-study) – two based on *nṛtta,* and two based on *abhinaya.* This work is a stepping stone for more comprehensive research on other repertoire items, *naṭṭuvanars,* and Bharatanāṭyam dancers, who were part of films. The *abhinaya* items could be based on various emotions or sentiments (*rasas*). Nevertheless, the spotlight is only on the so-called "king of *rasas*"[49], the *śṛṅgāra rasa* because of the attention it received during the flux-period.

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[48] The art of film-making examines two areas; 1. Form that concerns with overall patterning of film and 2. Style that inspects techniques like mis-en-scene, use of cameras, editing, sound effects (Bordwell & Thompson 2013: 3).

[49] The recent *Nāṭya Kala* Conference 2017 that offered insightful explorations into "*śṛṅgāram*" hailed this *rasa* as the "king of *rasas*".

Methodology

The primary aim in this section is to a position myself within a broader perspective and discuss the different methodologies and frameworks that will be applied for this dissertation, to study the progress of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema. The research question entails a validation of the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire items in Indian films. The analysis of *nṛtta* based items is distinctly different from the analysis of *abhinaya* based items using entirely different methods. Even so, I decided to explore both in detail to enrich perspectives and have a holistic view on the growth of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema. Thus, owing to the complexity involved, this research is situated within a multidisciplinary field utilizing diverse approaches and methods.

My position as a 'artist-scholar' plays an essential part throughout this thesis. In the last two decades, a new category termed **auto-ethnography**[50] has emerged, where the life and learnings of the researcher become a conscious part of what is being studied. Compared to the well-known fieldwork based on the popular participant–observation technique[51], auto-ethnography is based on the self-reflexive idea of observation of participation. (Given 2008: 48) My regular Bharatanāṭyam sessions, lessons taken during the study of Masters in Fine Arts (MFA), the workshops that I have attended, several discussions with my gurus, experience of performing at various institutions dedicated to the fine arts, conversations with the accompanying musicians, and visits to various temples over the past 26 years, has enriched my life and the research that I have undertaken. The 'field' in this auto-ethnographic work can be referred to the circle of Bharatanāṭyam dancers, gurus, *naṭṭuvanārs,* the training methods and performance spaces. The analysis of *nṛtta* items demands an assessment of the Bharatanāṭyam technique as well as a judgment of the differing dance styles (*bāṇis*). The analysis of *abhinaya* items requires an interpretation of the various characteristics of the heroine in the song, interpretations of her hand gestures, body postures, and facial expressions in

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[50] "Autoethnography: An Overview" (Ellis et al. 2010: Art. 10) quotes – "Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience." Another article by Mariza Méndez (Méndez 2013), "Autoethnography as a research method: Advantages, limitations and criticisms" is available.

[51] Participant observation technique is one type of method for field research. Here it involves the researcher to prepare and take part in the field to develop an understanding of a particular setting. The researcher can participate as an 'outsider' or as an 'insider'. Nevertheless, the observations are made for the sake of the research. (Burgess 1984: chapter 4)

the corresponding film clip that is being examined. Interpretations from my own experience performs an important role in the reasoning.

"Text, which in its broadest sense is anything in written form, constitutes the basic medium through which most qualitative analysis is carried out" (Given 2008: 863).[52] **Text-based research** constitutes a broad umbrella including journals, newspapers, conference proceedings, literature (written and oral), doctoral theses, and even online blogs. Several primary texts and their translations have been examined along with dependable secondary sources in this dissertation.[53] Among them are books, journals, and compositions in Tamil and Telugu. Identifying, analyzing, and synthesizing available documents in the relevant area has helped in building a strong foundation of understanding with respect to Bharatanāṭyam technique and the repertoire items. This acts as robust support for the analysis section. It has also helped in building theoretical frameworks. For the analysis of *abhinaya* items, texts are used for exploring a philological perspective of the song. Here, a lyrical analysis is carried out by transliterating and translating a Telugu *padam* and *jāvali*.[54]

Broadly considering performance, **performance studies** is inclusive of any performative or dramatic form – storytelling, dance, music, street theater, and video. Performance studies are dynamic and wide–ranging, drawing theories from fields like anthropology, sociology, psychology, literary theory, linguistics, and theater studies. Thus, it is very interdisciplinary and intercultural, with a set of interrelated yet emerging approaches. (Given 2008: 607; Schechner 2013: 1)[55] "Dance can be content and/or form, process and/or product, in relation to qualitative inquiry. It may serve one or more of a variety of roles such as the subject matter for research, an aspect of methodology, and the format for presentation of findings" (Given 2008: 183). As part of dance studies, dancers, dance or dancing is usually researched using an interdisciplinary approach as it can either be a

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[52] "Text–Based Approaches to Qualitative Research" by Sara McKinnon (McKinnon 2013) and *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research* by Norman Fairclough (Fairclough 2003) are some works that delineate the aspects of textual based research.

[53] "References" section lists all the primary literature, secondary literature, and filmography used during the study and writing of this thesis.

[54] Refer to "*padam* analysis" and "*jāvali* analysis" under chapter 5.

[55] *Performance Studies: An Introduction* by Richard Schechner (Schechner 2013), *The Performance Studies Reader* by Henry Bial (Bial 2004), *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader* by Alexandra Carter (Carter 1998), and "Body-Movement-Change: Dance as Performative Qualitative Research" by Pirkko Markula (Markula 2006) are some available literature on performance and dance studies.

bodily experience or a social or a cultural process (Given 2008: 183). The three points that make performance studies special as delineated by Richard Schechner (2013: 1–2) are: extensive use of archival material for analysis, the importance of scholars being artists themselves or the integral part of 'studying performance' and 'doing performance', and fieldwork or 'participant observation' as a method. This work works with archival material, along with my position as a 'artist-scholar' or auto-ethnographic work. Hence, this thesis has a great influence on performance studies. Dance is the subject matter of research; the analysis is through dance, and I also examine dancers as part of it.[56] Hence, this work has a profound impact on dance studies as well. **From a greater scientific context, I position myself as an 'artist-scholar' in performance studies under the broad umbrella of Indology**.

Anthropology is "the study of human beings and their ancestors through time and space and in relation to physical character, environmental and social relations, and culture" (Merriam Webster 2018). It is an activity that takes place in different social contexts (Thomas 1995: 3). Anthropology can be extended to dance because, dance is a cultural form which is transient in nature, has a structured content, and is a visual manifestation of social relations (Kaeppler 1978: 32).[57] Thus, dance anthropology treats dance as a cultural behavior by investigating the socio-cultural factors that relate to it. "Dance is a socially learned behavior and therefore cannot be studied in isolation from its cultural environment. It is an ongoing behavioral and conceptual process and not a static composition of movements" (Youngarman 1975: 124).[58] "Choreographers, dancers, and viewers of dance are socially and historically placed individuals who operate according to socio-cultural conventions and aesthetic systems" (Kaeppler 2000: 116).[59] [60]

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[56] Suzanne Youngerman in the article, "Theory in Dance Research: An Anthropological Approach" explains four categories that dance research must cover (Youngerman 1975: 117). These four categories are covered in this work.

[57] Andrienne L. Kaeppler in the article, "Dance in Anthropological Perspective" clearly articulates how the study and understanding of dance, which is a conspicuous part of any culture, assists in understanding the deep structure of a society and culture. This is because author regards dance as part of the social structure and as a surface manifestation of deep structure. (Kaeppler 1978: 32. 47)

[58] Suzanne Youngerman in the article, "Theory in Dance Research: An Anthropological Approach" argues how dance notation system is not merely a means of documentation but produces source material for further research. The author urges the readers to view dance as a cultural behavior. (Youngerman 1975: 119, 120, 124).

[59] In the article on "Dance ethnology and the Anthropology of dance", Andrienne L. Kaeppler addresses the difference between Western and non-Western dance traditions. He says, unlike Western dances, most

The revival period for Bharatanāṭyam was the result of societal rejection, problems, and complexities associated with the dance form. Thus, the dissertation has impacts in **dance anthropology and sociology**. Positioned at the heart of the flux-period concentrating on the societal problems and functioning of dance societies, the work takes a step in the direction of dance sociology. A performative encounter of stage and screen is realized, pursued with an insight into the development of dance (Bharatanāṭyam in this matter) societies in Indian cinema, thus having effects in the field of dance anthropology as well. The analysis section looks at the contribution and growth of *naṭṭuvanārs,* female non–hereditary, and female hereditary dancers in Indian cinema. Remarkably, the selected film clips for the *padam* and *jāvali* are in the form of salon and private performances[61] – those that were stigmatized before the revival, thus enhancing perspectives of this research.

The study and validation of *nṛtta* based repertoire items, *alārippu,* and *tillāna,* necessitates an examination of *nṛtta* and/or the *aḍavus*[62] (basic units of abstract dance). In Bharatanāṭyam, *nṛtta* cannot exist without the components of melody and rhythm. It is the core of *nṛtta,* and *nṛtta* becomes immobile without the aspects of melody and rhythm. Thus, for the analysis, I have used **movement analysis**[63] and **music notation**[64] as a

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of the native or non-Western dance forms are not just entertainment, but are seen an integral part of a total way of life. Later in the article he discusses how movement analysis and movement studies become interesting and an important study for anthropologists. (Kaeppler 2000: 116–121)

[60] In the chapter, "Formulating a Sociology of Dance", Helen Thomas gives a systematic explanation of how sociology could include the study of dance. (Thomas 1995: Ch. 1)

[61] Salon performances were regarded as performances in sexually charged spaces where there is a lot of interaction with the audience. Private performances were usually done for a patron, landlord, or an elite group. The salon and private performances change the nature of the dance form that is usually viewed as temple–based and religious.

[62] *Aḍavus* are fundamental dance units used in Bharatanāṭyam *nṛtta.* It forms the vocabulary of movements with hands, feet, eyes, and other parts of the body, moving in a highly-coordinated manner. There is a systematic classification of *aḍavus.* The term *aḍavu* in Tamil language means *cērkkai* or "joining", since it combines steps and gestures. (Kothari 1997: 41–43) *Aḍavu* might have been derived from *adu* which means "beating of the foot" in Telugu language. The words *aduvu* and *adugu* mean "feet" in Telugu. (Devi 1972: 50)

[63] To aid movement analysis or to study dance movements, a notation system for dance was developed in the west. Labanotation is a method of notating, analyzing, and recording human movement. It contains a systematic vocabulary and methodology for describing movement. *Labanotation* by Ann Hutchinson Guest (Guest 2005) and *Labanotation for Beginners* by Ann Kipling Brown (Brown 2008) are some works on Labanotation. Another popular notation system is the Benesh Movement Notation (*An introduction to Benesh movement–notation: dance* (Benesh & Benesh 1969). The above Western notation systems are many times not applicable for non–Western dances (Youngerman 1975: 119). Padma Subrahmanyam has attempted a notation system specifically for the *aḍavus* of Bharatanāṭyam in Sunil Kothari's *Bharata Natyam* (Kothari 1997: 48–77). It is based on the lines of staff of Western music and some of its principles. This notation helps to indicate the type of *aḍavu* used, the feet positions and variations. Another notation

method. Movement being the heart of dance and a common language facilitating communication and indicating description, is valuable for dance research (Bartenieff et al. 1984: 3–4). Movement analysis is a method and style for describing, visualizing, interpreting, and documenting human movement. Since the *aḍavu* system forms the vocabulary and grammar for Bharatanāṭyam, it is appropriate to use this system for movement analysis. The various hand gestures, postures, and movement of feet together constitute an *aḍavu.* After some initial attempts using *aḍavu* notation system put forward in Sunil Kothari's *Bharata Natyam* (Kothari 1997: 48–77) using lines of staff of western music, and another *aḍavu* notation system set forth by Rathna Kumar (Kumar 1975) based on stick figures, and inspired from the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, I have not used any notation system for analyzing the dance movements or the *aḍavus*. The reasoning behind this – it was not only highly time–consuming but also did not add value to the work as the notations are nothing but a reproduction of the existing video clips in a different format. Thus, I decided to utilize a descriptive method for explaining the dance movements and/or the *aḍavus* that in turn would add value. Since a description of the *aḍavus* along with a reference to the song structure enable a better understanding, I have used notations for music. Notations can be a valuable research tool as they are clear and concise, providing possibilities to detect changes in dance structures over time (Youngerman 1975: 120). Music notations help in visually representing music based on rhythm, over time. The South Indian Carnatic[65] music tradition that utilizes concepts of

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system for *aḍavus* has been devised by Rathna Kumar (Kumar 1975) based on stick figures, and inspired from the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics.

[64] *Music Notation* (McGrain 1986), "Essential Dictionary of music Notation" (Gerou & Lusk 1996) are works on the Western staff notation for music. *The Grammar of Carnatic Music* by Vijaykrishnan (Vijaykrishnan 2007), "Comparative Study of Tala Systems of Hindustani and Karnatik Music" by S. N. Ratanjankar (Ratanjankar 1967), "The role of Laya in Music" by T.S. Parthasarathy (Parthasarathy 1982) give an insight into the notation system of South Indian Carnatic music.

[65] Carnatic (or *Karnāṭik*) is a system of music commonly associated with southern India. It is one of the two subgenres of classical music; the other one being Hindustani music from the north. "Indian Classical Music – A Bird's Eyeview" (Parthasarathy 1993), *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy* (Subramanian 2006) give a historical perspective on the South Indian Carnatic music tradition. *The Grammar of Carnatic Music* (Vijaykrishnan 2007), "Comparative Study of Tala Systems of Hindustani and Karnatik Music" (Ratanjankar 1967), "The role of Laya in Music" (Parthasarathy 1982) give a very detailed insight into the notation system of South Indian Carnatic music. The above notation system is very complex and demands a study of its own. For this thesis, I have utilized a very basic form of Carnatic music notation. I have followed the book *Gānāmrutha Bōdhini* by A.S. Panchāpakēsa Iyer (2014) for the music notations.

rāga[66] (melody) and *tāla*[67] (rhythm) using basic sol-fa syllables[68] for music notation, has been utilized.

"Interviews are a common source of qualitative data because they are an effective means to learn from participants about their perceptions of and experiences with a study's topic" (Given 2008: 432). An **in-person interview** also termed as a face-to-face interview takes place with the participant and the researcher in the same location. If the interview is scheduled at the participant's site, the interviewer can observe individual contexts and better develop a rapport with them. (Given 2008: 432) An interview with the eighty-five-year-old actress, Vyjayanthimala Bali was conducted at her residence for this work. The conversation took place for about half an hour and happened to be informative for the research. This interview was undertaken essentially to better understand her performance of *alārippu* in the selected movie *New Delhi,* and obtain her perspective on her adopted dancing styles (*bāṇis*) in the films.

Philology can be understood as (Webster)[69] "the study of written records, especially literary texts in order to determine their authenticity, their meaning, etc" among other definitions (Ziolkowski 1990: 6).[70] It also refers to a system of language analysis and "making sense of texts" (Pollock et al. 2015: 114).[71] It is a term that has wide coverage and involves complexity (Thomas 1990: 69).[72] In the context of analysis of *abhinaya* items, I deal with a *padam* and a *jāvali* in the Telugu language. Tracing these in texts,

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[66] The combination of notes into a unique and individual structure is called a *rāga*. The word *rāga* in Sanskrit translates into several meanings: "hue or color", "passion or desire", "love", "beauty", "melody", "harmony", "musical note" (Monier Williams 2008; Britannica 2018). This form the essence of Indian music with emotional characteristics. A musician uses the individual structure of a *rāga* to express different melodic types (Sarabhai 2000: 109–110).

[67] All Indian arts, be it music, dance, sculpture or painting, is based on the fundamental principles of *tāla* meaning "metrical cycle" or "rhythm" (Vatsyayan 1968: 380; Monier Williams 2008). *Tālas* are nothing but the many varieties of time measure.

[68] More details on this in chapter two, section 2.3.3.

[69] Due to the difficulties in definition, I give a broader definition and not go into the details.

[70] Jan Ziolkowski in the article, "What is Philology?" goes deep into understanding the umbrella of Philology and what it encompasses. He debates on the existing definitions of the word, Philology and discusses why it is important to consider this matter (Ziolkowski 1990: 5, 6).

[71] The fifth chapter from the book on *World Philology* is titled "What Was Philology in Sanskrit" (Pollock et al. 2015: 114–136) This chapter gives a comprehensive account of Sanskrit Philology that in the broad sense would not only address grammar but also lexicography, metrics, rhetoric, and hermeneutics (Pollock 2015: 115). They specifically address the secular Sanskrit literature or what is termed as *kāvya* (poetry) (Pollock et al. 2015: 116–118).

[72] In the article "Past and Future in Classical Philology", Richard F. Thomas discusses the definition of the term 'Classical Philology' and deliberates on its past and future (Thomas 1990).

understanding the meaning, and transliterating and translating them, is part of the philological process. Unless their lyrical meaning is understood accurately, it is difficult to further analyze the performances.

Pollock says aesthetics in India refers to that experience of entering another dimension of life while watching a play or reading a novel. He further affirms that this experience is the core concept of what it means to be human. No matter whether it is sad or happy or terrifying, if a spectator experiences a real unreality, it elevates them as a person. (Pollock 2016: 1) This is what is called *rasa* in the Indian aesthetic theory, an underlying factor for all *abhinaya* items of Bharatanāṭyam. This aesthetic theory is applied to all Indian arts including music, dance, architecture, literature, paintings, and sculptures (Gupta 2017: 1).[73] Since the selected *abhinaya* items are based on *śṛṅgāra rasa* (the emotion of love), this analysis illuminates the area of Indian aesthetics.

For easier understanding of the film clips and as an assistance while reading the analysis/validation section under chapter 5, all the four the dance clips from the films have been **annotated** using a software ELAN and are attached with this dissertation. ELAN is a manual multimedia annotation tool. This software that was primarily made for linguists, allows one to create, edit, visualize, and search, annotations for video and audio files. Documentation of endangered languages, research in gesture and sign language, and collaborative annotation are the areas where this tool is widely employed. It can be used for several other analytical goals apart from linguistic studies as this tool allows one to time-align the annotations for the video and audio. (Brugman 2004: 2065–2066; Tachetti 2018) The annotations refer to the music notations and movement analysis for the section on *nṛtta,* and to the lyrics and its translation for the section on *abhinaya.*

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[73] Refer to the footnotes in the state of the art section for some sources available in the field of Indian aesthetics.

1 Tracing the antiquity of Bharatanāṭyam

The long-standing South Indian dance form of Bharatanāṭyam carries the burden of its past. A reconstruction of Bharatanāṭyam's history and understanding the underlying forces of the flux-period that transformed the dance form to a national heritage is crucial, because the impression of Bharatanāṭyam appearances in early Indian films have also been in the context and memory of its past. It is not only enigmatic to study the chronicles of the dynamic dance form of Bharatanāṭyam, but also enthralling to see its high visible presence in the society, throughout history. This art form cannot be seen as a separate entity but is an amalgam of other art forms like music, poetry, literature, and sculpting. It has trodden various terrains that were both fostering and knotty. The history and development of this dance form can be deciphered through several sources like literary texts, sculptures, inscriptions, musical compositions, travelogues from European travelers, journals, and news articles.

1.1 500 BCE to 500 CE

After the discovery of a figurine at the Mohenjo-Daro site, that is often interpreted as a dancer, some theories date dance to be as old as the Indus Valley civilization.[1] Recent texts on dance speculate on how dance could have been part of their lives and culture (Vatsyayan 1968: 312). However, the earliest extant literature on dramaturgy that is until today, the encyclopedia for theatre arts including music, dance, and drama, is the *Nāṭyaśāstra* ascribed to the Saint, Bharata Muni, dates between 500 BCE to 500 CE[2].

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[1] The ancient Mohenjo–Daro city (now in Pakistan), belongs to the Indus valley civilization that existed in 2500 BCE. It is well–known for its well–planned street grid and a very elaborate drainage system. The miniature bronze statuette that was discovered by the archaeologists in 1926 was named the 'dancing girl' (Roach 2018). But, this is subject to controversies, where some state that she was named a dancer, only to 'invent' a tradition (Menon 2017). Padma Subrahmanyam clarifies this with a comparison of this figurine to an Egyptian female painting, belonging to 1500 BCE. She identifies this posture with a *karaṇa* (fundamental units of dance in early India – more on this later in this chapter). (Subrahmanyam 2003: 68–69)

[2] Based on the researchers' approaches using rhetoric, metrical approaches, and other interpolations, the dating spans for about a thousand years. Nair (2014: Notes [4]) presents a detailed summary of the researchers' approaches, principles, and opinions regarding the dating of the *Nāṭyaśāstra. Bharata: The Natyasastra* (Vatsyayan 1996: 6), "Ancient Indian Dramaturgy: A Historical Overview of Bharata's Natyashastra" (Das 2015: 133–134), *Karanas: Common Dance Codes of India and Indonesia* (Subrahmanyam 2003: 7) address this dating problem. *A historical and cultural study of the Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata* (Pande 1996: Ch. 1) devotes a complete chapter to the dating problem. Interestingly, Padma Subrahmanyam discusses Indian chronology and the Indian system of writing time. She calculates and

This noteworthy text propounds theories about the origin of drama, feelings, emotions, techniques for dancing, techniques for music, styles of presentation, and regional tastes. The text runs for about thirty–six chapters, and the original is said to have about thirty–six thousand verses. All the other works on dance, drama, and music that came after Bharata pay tribute to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. This is true for all arts throughout India. Bharata mentions his disciple Kohala in chapter thirty–six and says that he would continue writing from where he had left. The work by Kohala is however lost, and not available to us. (Subrahmanyam 2014a: 1; Ghosh 1951)

The next significant landmark for dance arts is the Caṅkam (between 300 BCE to 300 CE) and the post Caṅkam period that has some of the largest collection of Tamil poems, epics, and texts that are treasured until today. Few of the treatises on arts are *Pañcamarapu, Intirakāliyam, Kūttanūl,* and *Paratacēṉāpatīyam. Pañcamarapu* is a text on the five–fold elements of dance and music. The word *pañca* means five and *marapu* means tradition. Aṟivaṉār, the author of this text has explained the aspects of music and dance under the following categories: *icai marapu* (tradition of music), *vākkiya marapu* (tradition of speech), *nirutta³ marapu* (tradition of dance), *avinaya⁴ marapu* (tradition of expression), and *tāla marapu* (tradition of rhythm). This work praises King Pandiyan Thirumāran and is ascribed to the 9ᵗʰ century. (Subrahmanyam 2014b: 2–3; Goundar 1975 & Kersenboom 1998: 29) The part on *nirutta marapu* acknowledges Bharata and retains the Sanskrit words from *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Goundar 1975). This part on *nirutta marapu* is further subdivided into *nirutta vakai* (types of dance), *cati⁵ varalāṟu* (dance history) and *tāṇṭava* (heroic dance). (Kersenboom 1998: 29) *Indirakāliyam* is a Caṅkam period work that was never found. But through other references, it is known that such a work which dealt with music and possibly dance under the chapter, *Nāṭaka Tamiḻ,* existed (Subrahmanyam 2014b: 3). *Kūttanūl* was recovered in the mid–sixties and is said to be a work by Cātaṉār, who was a contemporary of Tolkāppiyar. However, *Tolkāppiyam,* the work on Tamil grammar by Tolkāppiyar deals with eight types of

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suggests with suitable proofs, a mind–boggling time of more than two million years since the *Nāṭyaśāstra* was conceived. She calls it the "*yuga* puzzle". (Subrahmanyam 2003: 7–10)

³ The Tamil version of the term *nṛtta* is written as *nirutta.*

⁴ The Tamil version of the term *abhinaya* is written as *avinaya.*

⁵ *Cati* is a complex rhythmic pattern that forms part of the *nṛtta* in Bharatanāṭyam. It is also referred to as *jati* or *jathi* in certain books. Even in this thesis, I have used the term *cati* and *jati* interchangeably, since these words are used both in Sanskrit and in Tamil texts.

Cuvai (feelings), while a part of *Kūttanūl* deals with nine types of *rasās* (sentiments). The latter text seems to have some influence from *Bharatārṇava* (Gairoli 1978) and *Abhinayadarpaṇa* (Ghosh 1957), which belong to post 10th century. Hence, it is not clear if *Kūttanūl* really belonged to the Caṅkam period. *Tolkāppiyam* talks about dance, and music entertainers, called *paraṭṭaiyārs* in the courts of kings, nobles, and chieftains. (Vishwanathan 1991: 13) *Kūttanūl* is sub–divided into many parts: *Cuvai nūl* is a part on aesthetic tastes, *tokai nūl* is a dictionary on dance forms, *vari nūl* is about the folk dances, *karaṇa nūl* is a treatise on dance sequences, *tāla nūl* is on time measure, and *icai nūl* is a part on music. *Paratacēṉāpatīyam* is quoted by Aṭiyarkkunallār, who gave an annotation to the great Tamil epic of *Cilappatikāram.* This text is believed to have a great deal content about *Nāṭyaśāstra.* (Kersenboom 1998: 30; Subrahmanyam 2014b: 4) *Cilappatikāram* (the story of the anklet), is one of the greatest Tamil epics written by Iḷaṅkovaṭikal in the 4th–5th centuries. Some scholars assign the text to a period of the 2nd century (Jaffna 1987: 78). This book introduces a court dancer named Mātavi, who is a versatile genius in dance, music, and arts. Her maiden performance before the Chola King, Karikāla Coḻan Peruvalattan, is brought out in the chapter *Araṅkēṟṟukātai,* for which she undergoes rigorous training for seven years in dance, visual poetry, rhythm, melody, and body language. Iḷaṅkovaṭikal in this great epic describes the structure of the auditorium and technical details of the instruments used like *yāaḻ* (a kind of string instrument), flute, and drum. He says that the dance starts with a wind instrument, followed by a string instrument, and finally, a percussion instrument. (Seshadri 2013: 2; Gautam 1991: 34; Roshne 2017) Before *Cilappatikāram*, the female bards who gave importance to the king's fame, strength, and erotic life were called *viṟali* and *pāṭiṉi*. With time, these female bards seemed to have transformed into more sophisticated artists like Mātavi, who was both a dancer and a singer in the king's court. These courtesans were called *gaṇikās,* a well–known term from the Sanskrit literature. The Caṅkam literature also uses the terms *āṭumakal or āṭukalamakal,* for referring to female dancers. (Subrahmanyam 1980: 89) Even though Mātavi is said to have belonged to the *gaṇikā* type; she was a thorough Tamil artist rooted in the Dravidian[6] soil. She received after her

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[6] Dravidian language is "a language family of India, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan that includes Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam" and people speaking these languages are termed Dravidians
(Merriam Webster 2018). Dravidian is known to be an ancient set of languages (Kolipakam et al. 2018).

performance, gold, and garland from the king and was conferred the title "*talaikkoli*"[7] by the king. (Kersenboom 1998: 16; Jaffna 1987: 78) Despite being a court dancer, Mātavi was never projected by the author with any blemish. This illustrates the respect that was offered to court dancers of that time (Roshne 2017). Mātavi is described to be a woman who is an adept dancer and singer, with immense beauty. She is seen to be performing the 'eleven types of dances'[8] in the chapter, *Araṅkērrukātai*. Iḷaṅkovaṭikal refers to the term "*maṇṭala*" when describing Mātavi's performance and the dance types:

"*kottuiraṇtu uṭaiyatōr maṇṭilam ākak*

kattiya maṇṭilam patiṉoṉru pōkki" (Seshadiri 2001: Ch. 3, Verses 144–145)

Again, in another verse he says, she beautifully dances the piece with the help of five *maṇṭalas*. The term *maṇḍala* has been explained in the Sanskrit text *Nāṭyaśāstra* as two different concepts. One is the posture or the *maṇḍala sthāna,* and the other is *maṇḍala* that comes as a combination of various *karaṇas*[9]. Another interesting item in her performance was "*pañcatāla pirapantam*", which was a musical form consisting of five *tālas*. (Viswanathan 1991: 21) There is a phrase in this chapter where Ilaṅkovaṭikal says, "*nāttiya naṉṉūl naṉku kataippiṭittu*" (Seshadiri 2001: Ch. 3, Verse 40). Here "*nāttiya naṉṉūl*" may be referred to Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The above sentence could mean to say that Mātavi's performance in front of the king was completely in accordance with Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra.* (Gautam 1991: 34; Vishwanathan 1991: 21; Subrahmanyam 2013b: 6) *Cilappatikāram* is a monumental work that has comprehensive information about the performing arts that existed during the Caṅkam period. This was also an age when the fame and prowess of the king were considered extremely important. Hence the Caṅkam period is filled with eulogizing bardic activity. The role of the bards included fortune telling, dancing, and playing instruments inside and outside of the king's courts. (Kersenboom 1998: 28–30; Viswanathan 1991: 19–25)

The earliest inscription relating to dance dated between 200 CE – 250 CE, was found in Arachalur cave. This inscription was found in a low natural cavern which was utilized

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[7] The word *talai* in Tamil means "head" and *kol* means "measuring unit". *Talaikol* was a decorated bamboo stick placed at the center of the stage for ceremonial purposes. As a preliminary ritual before the commencement of the performance, this bamboo stick was placed on the dancer's head. The title *Talaikoli* or "the chief dancer" comes from this. (Viswanathan 1991: 20–22)

[8] Iḷaṅkovaṭikal makes a specific reference to the 'eleven types of dances' performed by Mātavi in the chapter, *araṅkērrukātai* (Viswanathan 1991: 30).

[9] *Karaṇas* are fundamental units of early dance in India. They can be equated to *aḍavus* of modern Bharatanāṭyam. A detailed explanation of *Karaṇas* is addressed in chapter two.

for the resort of monks. T.N. Ramachandran, who discovered this inscription in 1962, concluded that it was a Jain monk who lived there. It is in Tamil *brāhmī* script[10] and belongs to the Caṅkam period. (Subrahmanyam 2013c: 4) This inscription has a series of rhythmic syllables called *sollukaṭṭu*[11] in Bharatanāṭyam parlance. It relates to footwork in dance and reads as follows:

"ka ta ti ta ti   ta tai ta tai ta
 ti ta ka ti   tu tu tu tu tu
 ta ki taa   tai ti   tai taa
 ta ta ti ta tai   tita tita tai ta " (Madhavan 2012)

Most of these syllables are still being used in Bharatanāṭyam *nṛtta*. This inscription is vital because, it displays continuity in traditions, and the technique relating to dance.

In short, the dance form during this period was highly stylized, with numerous technicalities. The rhythmic aspect of dance, or the *tāla,* appears to have been well evolved. The artists seemed to have adhered to the grammar of dance as put forward in Sanskrit and Tamil texts of those times. The terms *āṭal* and *kūttu*[12] seem to have been used to denote dance during this period. Before the time of *Cilappatikāram*, one can see the existence of dancers as bards. During and after *Cilappatikāram,* she was a popular courtesan, or *rāja gaṇikā or rudra gaṇikā* or *āṭumakal* or *paraṭṭaiyār,* like Mātavi in the courts of Tamil kings. They were also economically and socially stable, receiving aids from the kings. (Viswanathan 1991: 23, 29; Kersenboom 1998: 16)

1.2 500 CE to 1300 CE

With the coming of the *bhakti* (devotional worship) movement in the 6th century, the spiritual aspect of dance or dancing for 'god' took prominence. This era was marked by absolute devotion to god with the temples becoming the abode of fine arts, especially for dance and music. *Śaivite* poets (a group of people who worshipped Lord Śiva) called *nāyaṉmārs,* and *vaiṣṇavite* poets (a group of people who worshipped Lord Viṣṇu) called

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[10] The *brāhmī* script is one of the oldest writing systems used in ancient India, South and Central Asia. Tamil *brāhmī* is a variant that was used to write the Tamil language. (Encyclopedia Britannica 2018)

[11] *Sollukaṭṭus* are used as a recitation in rhythmic *nṛtta* sequences of Bharatanāṭyam. They are recited by the *naṭṭuvanār* or the dance master. They have been used in both Tamil and Sanskrit texts. *Sollu* in Tamil means "to say" and *kaṭṭu* means "to construct". Hence it involves constructing the mnemonics for dance.

[12] The term *kūttu* was used to refer "dance" in ancient Tamil. There existed various types of *kūttu* right from the *Caṅkam* period. (Viswanathan 1991: 23–26)

āḻvārs, gave some soul–stirring devotional compositions which were a huge contribution to the twin arts of dance and music. The most famous of the sixty–three *nāyanmārs* were Appar, Cundarar, and Tiruñāṉacampantar, who lived between the 7ᵗʰ to the 9ᵗʰ century. The compositions of Appar, Cundarar, and Tiruñāṉacampantar are called *"tevāram".* Māṇikkavācakar, a famous *śaivite* poet of the 9ᵗʰ century, composed the *"tiruvācakam".* *Periyapurāṇam,* a text written by Cēkkiḻār has a detailed account of the lives of all the sixty–three *nāyanmārs* in thirteen chapters. This text describes in detail, the extreme steps that the *nāyanmārs* took to express their devotion to Lord Śiva (Rangachari 1997). In one of his hymns called *tiruporcuṇṇam* (that means "sacred dust of gold"), Māṇikkavācakar refers to the dancing girl as *maṅkai.* He describes them to be of twelve to thirteen years of age; with bracelets, bosoms adorned with pearls, shoulders smeared with sandal–paste, carrying garlands and incense, singing auspicious songs, and taking part in the preparation of a temple festival. (Kersenboom 1998: 23) So, by the time of Māṇikkavācakar (i.e.) 9ᵗʰ century, the 'dancing girl' had become a part of the temple ritual. Tiruñāṉacampantar and Cundarar address the dancing girls of the temples in their hymns as *"tēvaraṭiyār"* (Jaffna 1987: 79). The devotional hymns written by the twelve *vaiṣṇavite* saints are recorded in *"nālāyirativyapirapantam".* Out of the twelve *āḻvārs,* only Āṇṭāl was female. Her poems are called *"tiruppāvai".*

I had the rare opportunity of learning dance for some impeccable compositions composed by the *nāyanmārs* and *āḻvārs,* choreographed by the dance exponent, Padma Subrahmanyam: *"tiruaṅkamālai"* by Appar, *"siṟaiyāṟu maṭakkiliyē"* by Tiruñāṉacampantar set in the city of Seerkazhi*, "āḷantāṉ ukantu amutu ceytāṉai"* by Cundarar in praise of Ekambareshwarar in Kanchipuram, *"kātāṟ kuḻaiyāṭa"* by Māṇikkavācakar in praise of Chidambaram Natarāja*, "maṇpukaḻ kōsalaitaṉ"* by Kulaṣētra Āḻvār set in the city of Kannapuram, and *"ciṟṟañciṟukālē"* by Āṇṭāl. Each of these songs is so deep and powerful that it is so easy for the dancer or the spectator to set sail into a world of spirituality.

It appears to have been a common practice for the Jain monks to inhabit the hills, sleep in rock–cut beds and observe austerity. When they lived there, they made inscriptions, paintings, and beautiful frescos. Sittannavāsal cave in the Pudukottai region contains many paintings in the pillars, ceilings, and in reliefs. One of the pillars in the

ardhamaṇḍapa[13] features a dancer in the striking *añcita*[14] pose of Bharatanāṭyam (Figure 1.1). The exact dates of the paintings are not available. However, they have been assigned to a period not later than 800 CE. (Baskaran 1992: 5,15)

Figure 1.1 Danseuse on the left pillar in Sittanavasal cave in the *añcita* pose of Bharatanāṭyam
(Baskaran 1992: 22)

An inscription ascribed to the Pallava king Rājasimman (700 CE – 730 CE) is found at Salluvankuppam near Mammallapuram, which has a reference to Bharata Muni, the author of *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The inscription reads, "Who will be able to understand the music of Kālakāla, if it were not Vidhātri (*Brahman*), Bharata, Hari, Nārada or Skanda". (Hultzsch 1890: No. 21) This indicates that the 8th century Pallavas were knowledgeable about the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. An epigraphical record along the east coast of South India that has the earliest mention of dancing girls came from Nandivarman Pallavamalla, the Pallava king who ruled between 731 CE to 796 CE. There is a mention of thirty–two dancing girls among other employees in the temple at the Kukteśvara temple inscription. (Arnold & Roger 2011: 168)

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[13] A common term in temple architecture. It is a porch through which the worshippers enter the *maṇḍapa* (main hall) to pray/see the Lord or deity.
[14] This is a term initially used in the *Nāṭyaśāstra,* that refers to the position of either the head and neck, or the foot. In this posture, the head and neck are turned upwards and the foot is placed on the heel with the toes raised. (Rao 1980: 5)

In the Mahāliṅkasvāmin temple of Tiruvadaimardur, there is an inscription record dated on the fourth year of Parakēsarivarman's rule (907 CE – 955 CE). This has a mention of the term *āriyakūttu* by Kirttimāraikkāndan. (Hultzsch & Krishna Sastri 1929: No. 202) A Tanjore inscription by Rājarāja I (985 CE – 1014 CE) also has a mention of two types of *kūttu*; *āriyakūttu* and *tamiḻkūttu* (Hultzsch 1891: 299). These two terms *āriyam* and *tamiḻ*, have also been mentioned by Iḷaṅkovaṭikal in *Cilappatikāram* and are recognized as the two varieties of *kūttu* (Seshadiri 2001: Ch. 3, Verses 12–25). From the Tanjore inscription, it is evident that the dances performed for Sanskrit songs were called *āriyakūttu*, and the ones performed for Tamil songs were called *tamiḻkūttu*. This illustrates their mastery over the two languages. There is also a mention of another form called *śāntikūttu*. A commentator of *Cilappatikāram*, Arumpata Uraikarār explains *śāntikkūttu* as that which is performed by a hero in a composed mood, and includes all the one hundred and eight *karaṇas*. (Seshadri 2013: 1) This inscription by Rājarāja I details the shares of the gift received by different artists. The artists include dancers, dance masters, flute players, *uṭukkai* (a small drum) players, *vīṇā* (a type of lute) player, drummers, conch players, singers, and musicians. (Hultzsch 1891: 297–300; Jaffna 1987: 84)

The Chola rule between the 10th and the 14th centuries saw opulence of wealth, expansion of political as well as geographical power. The kings established their authority through two avenues – temples and courts. The temples and courts became their social, cultural, and economic centers, and places of employment for their people. The inscriptions from this period prove that there were two types of dancers during this period – temple dancers and court dancers, both of whom enjoyed high respect from the people of society. Donations to temple dancers were in the form of land, while the dancers would, in turn, take care of the temple by supplying oil, lamps, and donating gold. The court dancers' valuable donations can be found in some epigraphical records which are addressed in the next paragraphs. Aṅukkiyār Paṟavai Naṅkaiyār was one court dancer who was very famous for her donations to the temple of Tiruvarur. She is known to have donated large quantities of gold, jewels, lamps, and plating for the doors of the temple. (Kersenboom 1998: 27–30)

The inscription at the Brihadīśvara temple at Tanjore is absolute proof to the patronage and importance provided for performing arts by the king, Rājarāja Coḻa I (985 CE – 1014 CE). The inscription has a mention by name, of over four hundred dancing girls who were brought to the temple from various other *śaivite* and *vaiṣṇavite* temples of Tamilnadu. Along with their names, the inscription also mentions the temples from which they came. A second part to this inscription has a list of male temple artists which includes dance–masters, musicians, drummers, singers, tailors, accountants, and so on. (Hultzsch 1891: 259–260; Nagaswamy 2010) The inscription mentions that gifts, paddy, and land were presented by the king to the four hundred dancing girls. Rājarāja Coḻa I gave land grants, houses, and sometimes even a share in the temple, as income to the dancing girls. An example is furnished by K. Satyanarayana in his book, *A Study of History and Culture of Andhra* where he talks about the '*kopparam* grant' dated 1115 CE,

> "We find that the temple trustee was given 10 khandikas (portions) of wet land and 5 of dry one; the priest got 2 khandikas of wet land and 5 of dry one; the dancing–master received 4 khandikas of wet and 6 khandikas of dry land, while the dancing mistress got 6 and 12; the dancing girl received 3 and 5 khandikas and the female musician another 3 and 5; the flute player got 3 and 5 khandikas" (quoted from Varadpande 1987: 174).

The dancing girls in temples and courts have been referred to by various names during this period. The chief dancer who served in the temple of Tiruvarur was called *patiyilār*. Many Sanskrit works use the term, *rudra gaṇikā* to refer to a dancing girl. *Māṇikkam* was an official term used for women who perform *ārati* (pot–lamp) in temples. Later, the term *māṇikkam* became derogatory. The name *devadāsī*[15] was used only later, presumably during the Chola and Maratha times (17th–19th centuries), and during the revival period. (Vishwanathan 1991: 14) However, the term *devadāsī* is used by majority of recent texts and journals[16] to denote a hereditary dancing girl before the revival of Bharatanāṭyam, that took place in the 1930s. According to inscriptions, *talaikkoli* was a

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[15] The word *deva* means "god", and the word *dāsī* means "servant" (Monier Williams 2008).
[16] *Dance Dialects of India* (Devi 1972), *Bharata Natyam: From Temple to Theatre* (Gaston 1996b), "Why should the Devadasi Institution in the Hindu Temples be Abolished" (Reddi 2010), "The Humble Memorial of Devadasis of the Madras Presidency" (Madras Devadasis Association 2010) are some works that use a generic term *devadāsī* to refer to hereditary dancers. There are several more of such works.

title that was conferred to many dancing girls. (Kersenboom 1998: 28; Subrahmanya Aiyer 1931: No. 231)

A 12th century inscription that belongs to Kulottunga III (1178 CE – 1223 CE) in the Pudukkottai district mentions the endowments and titles granted to the *devadāsīs* (Srinivasa Ayyar 2002: No. 162). The earliest reference to this was '*māṇikkam*', a title that was in vogue in this district (Vishwanatha 1991: 40). Another fascinating fact about this inscription is that it has a mention of the four types of dances; *tiruppāṭṭaḍaivu, meikāṭṭaḍaivu, tiruvālaṭṭi,* and *tirucchūlam.* Padma Subrahmanyam (Subrahmanyam 1979: 77–79) offers a detailed interpretation of these four types of dances. She says, the first two can mean specific dance numbers. *Tiruppāṭṭaḍaivu* can be understood as *abhinaya,* and *meikāṭṭaḍaivu* can be understood as *nṛtta* because the word *mei* means "body". Further, she goes on to say that these two could have been the forerunners of *avinayam* and *meikūttu* of Aṭiyarkkunallār days. *Tiruvālaṭṭi* could have meant waving the pot–lamp or *ārati. Tirucchūlam* could have been a dance form connected with Lord Śiva.

Figure 1.2: *Karaṇa* sculptures from Chidambaram (Vatsyayan 1968: Figures 116–119)

The sculptures of this period are a repository of dance poses and movements. The sculptors of this period have done a wonderful job of capturing the dynamic movements of the dancer into static sculptures. The Indian sculptures are a visual representation of the dances of those times. Though the sculptures at Mamallapuram Shore temple are gigantic, they contain female figurines with delicate modeling. The Pallava period was a time when there was a distinctively new feature in sculpting: the torso taking complete

control. For instance, there is a sculpture of a lady who is standing with her leg crossed (in the *agratalasañcāra* position), with hand gestures held in both her hands. This looks very close to the postures of today's Bharatanāṭyam. (Vatsyayan 1968: 318) Bharata talks about the one hundred and eight *karaṇas* in the fourth chapter of *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The Cholas have beautifully sculpted these dance movements in the form of sculptures generously throughout the Tamil land. The *karaṇa* sculptures have been identified in Tanjore, Kumbakonam, Chidambaram (Figure 1.2), Tiruvannamalai, and Vriddhachalam temples. Not all temples have the entire suite of the one hundred and eight *karaṇas.* There is an identification for the respective *karaṇas* in *brāhmī* script at some temples. The basic details of the *karaṇas* at these temples are tabulated in Table 1.1. Fifty–three of these *karaṇa* sculptures have also been found in the Prambanan temple in Indonesia. Thus, *karaṇas* were the common dance codes not just for India, but for a major part of South Asia. (Subrahmanyam 2003, 2013b: 4, 7)

After the 3rd century, there seems to be a gap of more than five hundred years in dance and music literature. There are many Sanskrit works written by great scholars post the 8th century. The concepts of *mārga* and *deśī*[17] are mentioned for the first time in Mataṅga Muni's *Bṛhaddeśī* (Sastri 1928) dated between the 8th and the 9th century. The text says that the theory as put forward by Bharata is called *mārga,* and every other regional form that is adapted according to their own tastes and preferences is called *deśī. Daśarūpaka* (Haas 1912) by Dhanañjaya belonging to the 10th century is a work on the ten different types of plays. It also mentions other vital elements like *bhāva–rasa*, and types of heroes and heroines. Abhinavagupta, a Kashmiri Śaivite Saint who lived in the early 11th century wrote *Abhinavabhāratī* (Shastri 1971)*,* a commentary on *Nāṭyaśāstra* which is most valuable for understanding the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in depth. *Saṅgītaratnākara* (Raja & Burnier 1976) is the next truly important work on dance and music. It belongs to the 12th century, authored by a Kashmirian, Śārṅgadeva who was also a *rāja gaṇikā* (could mean singer here) in King Singhaṇa's court. This text is fundamentally on music, but the

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[17] The words *mārga* or *mārgam* can mean "path", "created space", "track", or "a proper way" (Monier William 2008). In the post Bharata period, the work by Bharata came to be referred to as *mārga. Deśī* is another term that is always used alongside *mārga*. The word *deśī* means "regional" or a dance form that traditionally inherits regional tastes. (Subrahmanyam 2003: 52) These terms were continuously used by all writers from the time of Bharata. One can say that these two terms were the counterparts of 'classical' and 'folk' that was used in the 20th and 21st centuries. (Ganesh 2014b: 3–4) In many cases, *mārga* is referred to as 'high–style' and *deśī* as 'popular style' (Subrahmanyam 2003: 54).

seventh chapter deals with dance. The next great work is *Nṛttaratnāvalī* by Jayappa Senāpati around the 12–13ᵗʰ centuries. This work has detailed descriptions of *deśī* dance forms, technique of *āṅgika abhinaya*, *cārīs*, *maṇḍalas*, *karaṇas*, *aṅgahāras,* and *recakas.*[18] *Bharatārṇava* (Gairoli 1978) by Nandikeśvara provides details on the dance elements from *Nāṭyaśāstra* and describes the most important dances of that period (between the 10ᵗʰ and the 12ᵗʰ centuries). An inscription by a Pallava chieftain has one of his titles as *"bharatārṇava karaṇa turēran"* (Subrahmanyam 2013c: 8). This displays the author's popularity among the kings. *Abhinayadarpaṇa* by Nandikeśvara is a complete and detailed text on dance. It is not very sure if it was the same Nandikeśvara who authored *Bharatārṇava*. However, *Abhinayadarpaṇa* was written not later than the 14ᵗʰ century. (Ghosh 1957) It was the same time when *Saṅgīta Darpaṇa* and *Nāṭya Darpaṇa* were written. Thus, the time between the 9ᵗʰ century and the 14ᵗʰ century has been rich in dance related Sanskrit literature. (Subrahmanyam 2014a: 1–7; Vatsyayan 1968)

To summarize, this period was taken over by devotion and religion with prolific writers, poets, and sculptors. Every activity in the society converged at the temple. Temple became the nucleus of art, architecture, poetry, rituals, and customs. Artists banked on the temples for their daily work. Thus, one can see dancers or the so–called *devadāsīs* attached to the temples. They were called by names such as *maṅkai, naṅkaiyār, māṇikkam, patiyilār,* and *tēvaraṭiyār*. There seems to be evidence of the existence of some court dancers too. The dance of this period was commonly referred to as *kūttu.* This goes to confirm that the Pallavas and Cholas who were propelled by *śaivite* principles and *bhakti* cult, were ardent patrons of art.

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[18] Terms like *cārīs*, *maṇḍalas*, *karaṇas*, *aṅgahāras,* and *recakas* are explained as part of chapter two under *"nṛtta"*.

Table 1.1: Details of the *karaṇas* identified at different temples (compiled by author from [Subrahmanyam 2003])

	Tanjore	Kumbakonam	Chidhambaram	Tiruvannamalai	Vriddhachalam	Indonesia
Temple	Brihadīśvara	Sārṅgapāṅi – Viṣṇu temple	Lord Naṭarāja	Arunachaleśvara	Vriddhagiriśvara	Prambanan Śiva temple
Constructed in	11th century	Later 12th century	13th – 16th centuries	16th – 17th centuries	17th century	9th century
Constructed by	Rājarāja Chola 1	Rājarāja II (The *karaṇa* panels belong to Dharāsuram– Śiva temple, which got transferred to this temple)	Kopperuncinga, Rājarāja III or Rajendra III, Kṛṣṇa Deva Rāya	Kṛṣṇa Deva Rāya	Post Kṛṣṇa Deva Rāya time	
***Karaṇas* location**	front tier of *vimāna*	In the base of it's east facing *gōpura* (tower– gate of a temple)	all four *gōpuras*	east *gōpura*	all four *gōpuras*	
Total number of *karaṇas*	81, starting from *talapuṣpapuṭa* – oldest & most authentic	108	108 in all *gōpuras*	108	102 in each *gōpura*	53 identified as *karaṇas*
In serial order	Yes	No	yes, in east, west and south *gōpuras*	Yes	No	No
Deity in the *karaṇa*	Śiva with four hands	Śiva	female figures	Śiva (not identified clearly)	Śiva (not identified clearly)	Śiva
Identification	no identification	serial no and names	*sūtras* (definitions) from *Nāṭyaśāstra* in east & west *gōpura* in serial order			
Height of sculpture	2 feet	1 feet (made of granite stone)				

1.3 1300 CE to 1850 CE

In the beginning of the 14ᵗʰ century, South Indian lands were ferociously invaded by the Muslim forces. This invasion saw not just massacre of people, money looting, cruelty, and ruthlessness, but a huge threat of wiping out the entire cultural memory in South India. Terror spread throughout the nation in 1325 CE with Muhammad Bin Tughlakh taking over the throne in Delhi. The Vijayanagar rulers came as saviors and defenders of native culture. An inscription ascribed to Kampana II (1361 CE – 1374 CE) speaks of how he brought an end to Muslim rule and established an orderly government. Some inscriptions of his period mention that *patiyilārs* were a community of dancers who were a class above the *tēvaraṭiyārs.* (Srinivasan & Narasimhaswamy 1982: No. 287) The Vijayanagara reign attained its peak when Kṛṣṇa Deva Rāya ascended to the throne in 1509 CE.

The significant impacts of Vijayanagar kings were threefold: firstly, they defended the indigenous culture against the Muslim penetration; secondly, they centralized political power at the Vijayanagar city with Telugu and Kannada ministers taking care of Tamil lands; thirdly, they placed tremendous value to Sanskrit traditions. Thus, Tamilnadu was inevitably drawn towards several other cultures of South India. (Kersenboom 1998: 31) The Nayak period saw more caste distinctions, with Brahmins taking up higher administrative and political positions. Their urgency to save the South Indian culture caused great rifts between North Indian Muslims and South Indian Hindus.

Today, the cultural memory of Bharatanāṭyam rests on the journey of music and dance that began in the Nayak period. The evolution of what was called *catir*[19] dance until the revival, starts from Nayak dances. The Nayak kings were not just exuberant patrons of dance and music, but were themselves great composers, musicians, and poets. This period saw a rise in kings taking to art, and becoming the 'subjects' of the poetry themselves. They became the *nāyaka* or 'the hero' in literary works. All the famous *padams* and poetry during this period were showcased as dance and music repertoires in their courts. To create a cultural identity, the kings who were both the 'subject' and the

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[19] *Catir* was the name used to refer to today's Bharatanāṭyam up until the early thirties of the 20ᵗʰ century. This name was changed to Bharatanāṭyam only to erase the taboo and the cancerous deterioration that had set in the content of the art. (Subrahmanyam 1979: 75) The word *sadir,* when transliterated from Tamil is *caṭir*. The word *sadir* is used more commonly in several books.

creator of the poetry, watched their own stories being sung and danced every day. They were called *"abhyudayams"* – songs that technically describe the king's daily life. (Ganesh 2016a) The Nayaks epitomized themselves to have come from a divine lineage of Lord Maṇṇāru Rājagopāla, and declared to be belonging to the *"maṇṇāru gotra[20]"* clan. This period also witnessed a strong employer–employee relationship between the patron and the artist. Kings and noblemen of higher castes were patrons. In most cases, the artists belonged to lower castes. All works of art would revolve around the king or the patron, his lives, his emotions, and his personal stories. (Ganesh 2014b: 6–7)

One of the most significant features of this period is the king himself becoming a pillar in art productions. For instance, King Raghunātha Nayak (1600 CE – 1634 CE) has written a treatise on dance and music titled *"Saṅgīta Sudha"*. He provides definitions for many dance terms, their techniques, and *tālas,* including the meaning of the terms – *mārga* and *deśī*. This textbook reveals in–depth the knowledge of King Raghunātha in arts. (Ganesh 2016a) The court composer Ramabhadrambha wrote extensively to record the events of his era (Vishwanathan 2014a).

Telugu influence on Bharatanāṭyam came primarily from the time of the Nayaks. These kings brought the art forms to a more secular and cosmopolitan audience. By the 16th century, the European travelers became a regular in the King's courts. Hence their lifestyles, food habits, and costumes were altered to bring in newer fashions. Along with these, the music and dance were tailor–made by imbibing multicultural and other regional ideas. There was a generous sharing of ideas and culture. Great strides were made in luxury of life, building bigger temples, and in art forms like dance, music, painting, textiles, and sculpting. (Ganesh 2014a) The cultural life, the standard, the respect, and high esteem held by female artists in this period is quite evident from the travelogues written by the European traveler, Domingo Paes (1510 CE). He mentions the encouragement presented to the female dancers belonging to the temples as well as the courts. The daily activities, lifestyle, and the adornments, of the palace and temple dancers, are described by him. (Kersenboom 1998: 35–37) During the rule of King Raghunātha Nayak, a sailor–soldier, Jon Olafsson wrote about the *devadāsīs* and the *naṭṭuvanārs* in his memoirs (Soneji 2012: 27). From these travelogues, it was known that

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[20] *Gotra* means "lineage", "family", "race" in Sanskrit (Monier Williams 2008). It associates a person with his ancestral roots.

the kings constructed special halls for the practice of dances. A Venetian traveler named Marco Polo and an Italian traveler named Nicolò dé Conti were other Europeans who accounted for the dancing girls in their works (Bor 2010: 14–15).

Compositions by outstanding poets add value to the performing art forms. Arunakirinātar, Purandaradāsa, Kṣetrajña, and Annamācārya were some of the great composers of the 14ᵗʰ–17ᵗʰ centuries. Arunakirinātar was a Tamil poet who composed hymns on Lord Muruga called "*tiruppukaḻ*". The later part of Vijayanagar period saw a shift from *śaivite bhakti* to *vaiṣnavite bhakti*. The theme of their musical compositions changed from *śaiva bhakti* to *madhura bhakti* (means devotional *śṛṅgāra*). Purandaradāsa composed several poems in *madhura bhakti* theme with Lord Kṛṣṇa as the hero. *śṛṅgāra* was used as the prime emotion by many poets. Kṣetrajña who lived under the rule of Vijayaraghava Nayak in 1634 CE – 1673 CE, composed songs under the signature "*muvva gopāla*". The *padams* of Kṣetrajña were famous for its erotic character. Purandaradāsa and Kṣetrajña have made immense contributions to the Telugu and Sanskrit literature. (Rao 1950; Soneji 2012)

The period of the Nayaks is known to have had the greatest number of female dancers of all time. The *devadāsīs* were the hereditary dancers dedicated to the temples and were said to be married to god. They underwent a process through which they became a *nityasumaṅgalī* (an ever–auspicious woman). (Kersenboom 1998) Apart from the temple dancers, some courtesans performed regularly in the courts, as well as secular artists who were organized as guilds called *mēḷams* (Soneji 2012: 3). The chronicle on Śrīraṅgam temple called "*śrīraṅgam kōyil oḻuku*" has a mention of *devadāsīs* dancing in front of deities in temples. The diversity and multicultural activities have been reflected in the compositions of their times. (Kersenboom 1998: 38) Since the female dancing artists played the role of both the temple women and of the courtesans, the boundaries between the two (temple dancers and court dancers) appears to have faded. Some women were assigned as mistresses, wives, or even as queens in the Nayak courts. (Soneji 2012: 30)

The Nayak dance repertoires were in general very large. Swarnamalya Ganesh has identified the history, context, musical style, movements, and costumes of over thirty

different repertoires items. Many of these repertoire items are still intact while some of them have changed names. But the form remains unbroken. *Adibaratamu*, a Telugu Nayak manuscript offers the major constituents of a '*śuddha mārgam*'. Some of the Nayak dances adopted from other cultures are 1. *jakkiṇī,* that was influenced by Persian and Farsi languages[21], 2. *dandalatika,* a regional variation of *kōlāttam,* and 3. *prenkhani,* that evolved from a minor drama form. (Ganesh 2014b) Due to Muslim invasions, there had been some amount of Islamic influence in the dance that was performed as part of the repertoire in the courts of Hindu kings. A reconstruction of this repertoire primarily requires reconstruction of music, before the dance. The words "*elilam elilam lāle*", a repeatedly occurring phrase in the *jakkiṇī* poetry has been deciphered to have influences from Farsi lexicon. These words in Farsi meant "Oh Lord, Oh Lord". Whirling movements were common in *jakkiṇī* dance. A Nayak painting in Ramanathapuram which features a dancer doing whirling movements further proved the above fact. These whirling movements seem to have possessed some resemblances to Sufi[22] movements. (Ganesh 2014a)

The *padams* and *śabdams* of the *catir* or Bharatanāṭyam repertoire trace its origins from the Nayak period. Another work, *Rājagopāla Vilāsamu* by the court poet, Cengalvakala Kavi who belonged to the court of King Vijayarāghava Nayak, presents a literary picture of the dance forms. The chapter on *sabhanāṭyavāraṇa* furnishes the names of the repertoire items – *caupada, śabda cintāmani, jakkinī, koravu, navapadam, deśī, darupadam, and perani.* (Radhika 2011: 21) Texts like *Sangīta Muktāvali* of the 15th century by Devanacārya, and *Sangīta Dāranam* of the 16th century by Catura Dāmōdara Paṇḍita, mention a sequence of items that were being used in female dancing repertoires (Raghavan 1974: 245).

The Maratha Kings succeeded the Nayaks. The Tanjore Maratha Empire (1565 CE – 1856 CE) had profound western influences due to the British rule in India with a massive influx of European traders. The cultural practices only grew more and more hybrid. The cultural progressions in Tanjore happened under the rule of three Maratha kings: Tulaja

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[21] Persian and Farsi languages came to India along with the Muslim invaders in the 14th century. These languages originated from the Iranian region.
[22] Sufi whirling or Sufi turning is a form of physically active meditation. A Sufi is a member of an Islamic (Muslim) religious group that tries to become united with god by praying and meditating (Merriam Webster 2018).

(1729 CE – 1735 CE), Serafoji II (1798 CE – 1832 CE), and Sivaji II (1832 CE – 1855 CE). The milestone revolution in Carnatic[23] music is attributed to the 'Tanjavur music trinity' – Śyāma Śāstrī, Saint Tyāgarāja, and Mutthusvāmi Dīkṣitar who lived during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. (Neela & Ambrosia 2016) They put together some invaluable compositions that are treasured and used even today. This period also witnessed a desire to preserve and classify the songs of the dance repertoire in the form of written texts. The advent of print technology further aided this. Tamil, Telugu, Sanskrit, and Marathi languages came together in their writings. In the later years of the Maratha empire, English was also added.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, the South Indian court dance was called by different names such as *catir kaccēri*[24], *ciṉṉa mēḷam, mejuvani,* and *kēḷikkai. Catir kaccēri* and *mēḷam* were used by people from Tanjore and surrounding areas, while *mejuvani* and *kēḷikkai* were used in Andhra Pradesh. There were temple dancers, court dancers, and guild performers by this time. All dancers received high patronage from the Maratha kings. Some historical records point out the fact that the courtesans were bought and sold during wedding ceremonies of kings like commodities or presents. Some dancers also occupied positions like concubines, mistresses, or second wives of the kings. *Catir* dance reached the north and west of India through Baroda, which acted as a hub. When the king of Baroda, Sayajirao Gaekwad III married a Tanjore princess, a troupe of dancers and musicians were sent along as dowry. (Khokar 2014; Krishnan 2008; Soneji 2012: 3)

King Serafoji II was pivotal in writing the popular Marathi texts called *nirūpaṇas*. The repertoire of *nirūpaṇa* was the forerunner of the court repertoire of *catir,* and had the following items: 1. *jaya jaya*, an invocatory piece on Lord Kṛṣna, 2. *saranu*, a eulogizing hymn on Lord Kṛṣna, 3. *alārū,* a piece that had rhythmic syllables like the *alārippu* of Bharatanāṭyam. It appeared in a section called *śerva*, which forms a part of the text, *Kumārasambhava Nirūpaṇa*, 4. *sollu*, a musical mnemonic passage in three paragraphs

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[23] Carnatic (or *Karnāṭik*) is a system of music commonly associated with southern India. It is one of the two subgenres of classical music; the other one being Hindustani music from the north. "Indian Classical Music – A Bird's Eyeview" (Parthasarathy 1993), *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy* (Subramanian 2006) provide a historical perspective on the South Indian Carnatic music tradition.

[24] Court *kaccēri* in the colloquial sense means proceedings in the court. With respect to dance and music, it means a performance.

along with a short *jati*, 5. *śabda*, an item that could be equated to Bharatanāṭyam's *śabdam*[25], 6. *varṇam*, an item that could be equated to Bharatanāṭyam's *varṇam*[26], 7. *pada*, an *abhinaya* item that was popular from Nayak times until today, and contained a *svara*[27] passage, 8. *svarajati*, akin to *varṇams,* but had alternating *svara* and *sāhitya*[28] passages, 9. *abhinaya pada*, a *padam* with *pallavi, anupallavi,* and *caraṇam*[29] in *śṛṅgāra rasa*, 10. *tillāna*, an item that could be equated to Bharatanāṭyam's *tillāna*, 11. *abhinaya pada*, 12. *jakkiṇī*, existent from Nayak times and had *svara*, *sāhitya,* and *sollukaṭṭu*, 13. *gīta,* that had interwoven *svara* and *sāhitya*[30] passages, 14. *prabandha*, a form like the *gīta,* 15. *tripuṭa*, a *prabandha* type composition that had three parts, 16. *śloka varṇa*, verses set to certain *rāgas*, 17. *kautta*, the penultimate item in a *nirūpaṇa,* that was quite similar to a *kautvam*[31]*,* 18. *maṅgale*, a benedictory song that ended the performance (Radhika 2011: 120–141). A fascinating fact here is that all the items of the *nirūpaṇa* repertoire had the same *rāga* and the same *tāla,* with a single theme (for example – on Lord Kṛṣna) (Subrahmanyam 2014c: 1–2). The temple repertoire of the *devadāsīs* during the Marathas was different and consisted of ritual items like *puṣpāñjali* (offering of flowers), *stotra* (praise poem), *tālāttu* (lullaby), and *kautvams* (Soneji 2012; Kersenboom 2010: 59–63). *Puṣpāñjali, kautvams,* and *stotras* are performed even today.

The art form underwent a significant metamorphosis to evolve into the solo dance form, that was extensively practiced in the Maratha court during the time of the Tanjore Quartet (late 19th and early 20th centuries). The Tanjore Quartet were the four brothers –

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[25] *Śabdam* is usually performed as the third item in the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire, and it introduces the aspect of miming along with *nṛtta.* It is a song of eulogy that praises a deity or the king for his qualities, feats, and achievements. (Vatsyayan 1974: 22; Gaston 1996: 264, 265)

[26] *Varṇam* is the most complex of the repertoire items which has complicated *nṛtta* and versatile *abhinaya.* It is very long and goes on for almost an hour. It is also intricate with a variety of substance.

[27] The word *svara* means "a note of the musical scale", "recitation", "accent", or "tone in recitation" (Monier Williams 2008). The sol–fa syllables or the octave notes of Carnatic music (S R G M P D N Ś) are called *svaras.* A musical melody within a *tāla* structure sung to sol–fa syllables of Carnatic music is also called a *svara.* A *svara* is the successive steps of an octave in various permutations and combinations. (Vatsyayan 1968: 380–382; Panchāpakésa Iyer 2014: 20)

[28] It refers to the lyrical content of the song. *Abhinaya* is done for these lyrics.

[29] The structure of a song like a *padam* usually consists of a *pallavi, anupallavi,* and two to three *caraṇams.* The first stanza of the song is referred to as the *pallavi,* the second as *anupallavi,* and the rest are called *caraṇams,*

[30] The word *sāhitya* in Sanskrit translates to "rhetoric", "poetry", or "union with" (Monier Williams 2008). In dance parlance, it means the lyrics for which the dancer gesticulates.

[31] *Kautvam* forms part of the temple repertoire of hereditary dancing community. A *kautvam* has rhythmic syllables intertwined with lyrics of the song. It consists of both *nṛtta* and *abhinaya.* (Kersenboom 2010: 59–63)

Ciṉṉaiyya, Poṉṉaiyya, Sivāṉandam, and Vaṭivēlu who came from a lineage of musicians. They are known to have lived in Tanjore from the time of the Nayaks. Several *jatisvaram*[32] and *tillāna* compositions are attributed to Poṉṉaiyya. The Tanjore brothers employed three *devadāsī* dancers for their experiments relating to the systemization of the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire. They were Kamamuttu of Tiruvarur, Sarasāmmal of Tanjore, and Mīnākṣi of Mannargudi. They were performers at the Maratha court. The repertoire of *catir* by the Tanjore quartet resulted by weaving together pieces of olden dance forms, *nirūpaṇa* sections, compositions of court–poets and kings. (Krishnan, 2008: 72) Tanjore Quartet used the best and the most sophisticated of all repertoire items to construct the new *'mārgam'* or the harmonious concert program that consisted of the following items: *alārippu, jatisvaram, śabdam, varṇam, padam, jāvali,* and *tillāna.* A detailed overview of these items is presented in the third chapter. Many items of this newly formed repertoire were amalgams of the olden Nayaks'. The kings and ministers of these periods helped temper and shape the dance form to a beautiful taste. (Ganesh 2014b; Subramanian 2006: 9; Kersenboom 1998: 44) The repertoire underwent a quantitative change with a large reduction in the number of items from the *nirūpaṇa* format with very little dilution in quality. It adopted the concept of having different themes for the items with different *rāgas* and *tālas.* (Radhika 2011: 165–166)

Several Tamil works on dance came up post the 17th century. *Mahābhārata Cūḍāmaṇi* (Visvanathaiyar 1955) is a Tamil text belonging to post 17th or 18th century. It is a work on dance and music. The *naṭṭuvanārs* during this time have also written prolifically. In the 19th century, Pañcāpakēsa naṭṭuvanār authored *Apinaya Navanītam,* which is a Tamil translation of *Abhinayadarpaṇa.* Two Tamil texts – *Saparañjita Cintāmaṇi* and *Naṭaṉa Tivātya Rañjaṉam* have been authored by Gankaimuttu naṭṭuvanār. The earlier is a handbook on the concepts and words used in *padams.* The latter is a book that details the *jatis* used for dance, variety of *śabdams* and *kautvams* relating to different temples. (Subrahmanyam 2014b: 5) A Tamil work titled *Apinayasārasamputam* by Cetlūr Nārāyana Ayyaṅkār deals with technique, theories, and practices of *abhinaya* giving word–for–word meaning to the *padams.* A Telugu text written by Devulapalli

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[32] *Jatisvaram* is the second item in the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire. The item is called so because it has a *jati* and introduces the melodic component called *svara.* It is an item that contains only *nṛtta.*

Vīrāghavamūrti Śāstrī is *Abhinaya Svayambodhini*. This text has four sections – the first one deals with concert music songs, the second on *padavarṇams*, the third is dedicated to Kṣetrajña's *padams,* and the fourth with theory and technique of dancing. (Krishnan, 2008: 79–84) King Sivaji II authored a Marathi text on drama, *"Natēsa Vilāsa"*. Sivānandam, one of the Tanjore brothers composed several *jāvalīs, padams, varṇams, śabdams* under King Sivaji II's patronage. (Bhonsle 2017)

Some prominent Sanskrit works emerged post the 17th century. *Saṅgīta Sārāmṛtam* (Raghavan 1942) by King Tulaja I alias Tukkoji of the Maratha dynasty of Tanjore (1729 CE – 1735 CE) is a notable work on *aḍavus* (the fundamental units of Bharatanāṭyam). This text is of great historical relevance and proves a strong connection between today's Bharatanāṭyam and *catir kaccēris* during the Maratha period. (Kothari 1997: 41–43; Krishnan 2008: 73) Tulaja has written this work in Sanskrit, Tamil, and in Marathi. Other Sanskrit texts of this period include *Bālarāmabharata* of Mahārājā Bāla Rāma Varmā, *Nāṭyaśāstra Saṅgraha,* and *Saṅgītamakaranda* (Subrahmanyam 2014a: 3). Cinnaiya wrote *Abhinaya Lakṣanamu,* which is a rework of Nandikeśvara's *Abhinayadarpaṇa* (Krishnan 2008: 74–75).

The four main transformations during the Nayak rule were – the changed 'subjects' of poetry and literature (from gods to kings); the kings becoming poets, composers, and writers; the boundaries between the court dancers and temple dancers fading away; and an upsurge of erotic sentiment in songs. The Maratha period was marked by the development of concert repertoires, their systemization, and standardization. This era also witnessed an abundance of written texts in dance and music. Further, the Carnatic music tradition of Tamilnadu came from the Tanjore Marathas.

1.4 1850 CE to 1930 CE

The triggers for the 'flux' commences at this juncture. The dance repertoire became resilient because of the Marathas and their court composers. But the cultural predisposition of the people and artists became fragile. In 1855 CE Tanjore city came under the annexation of the British. This annexation set off a decline in cultural and religious traditions. The music and dance culture withered away in Tanjore and moved to colonial Madras, and to smaller courts like Mysore, Ramnad, and Travancore. A huge

migration transpired when many musicians, temple dancers, and courtesans left Tanjore to move to Madras. The performing troupe that was called *catir kaccēri* acquired a new English brand, the '*nautch*' party. Commonly, this troupe consisted of a small band of dancing girls accompanied by musicians, *naṭṭuvanārs* (dance masters), and other instrumentalists. All of them belonged to a hereditary non–Brahmin community called the *icai vellalā*. (Subramanian 2006: 6–28)

The beginning of salon performances in the 19th century also paved the way for the demise of *catir*. Salon performances were private '*nautch*' performances in the homes of the elite patrons and private parties. The presentation culture and style of *catir* changed considerably after the rise of salon performances in Madras. There was a radical swing in culture as the dancers went from a temple and court atmosphere to a truly urban environment. The dancers were used for economic, political, and sensual profits by the native elite men and the British administrators. Europeans were equally supportive of the salon performances as the troupes offered many avenues of entertainment. Colonial Madras and these *nautch* parties acted as routes to reinforce relations between the Indian elites and the Europeans. (Soneji 2012: 3–11) Rich men from Brahmin, Ceṭṭiar, Mutalliar, and Pillai communities became patrons for the dancers in large cities. The aesthetics and dignity of the art form was compromised for the whims and fancies of these men. With the temples disenfranchising the *devadāsī*[33] women, more and more of them traveled to urban cities to make their livelihood. These women could easily access connections with officials and elite men because of their education and status that they held in an earlier period. (Venkatraman 2015: 14; Subramanian 2006: 122) Some *nautch* dancers even traveled abroad during the late 19th century to perform. Augustin's Daly's[34] show, "*Zanina*" had many *nautch* dancers performing in New York stages. They featured as the "oriental dancing girl" and "bayaderes[35]" in European cities like Paris and London. (Srinivasan 2009: 3–6)

Tizianna, an artist and professor from France who had close connections with the *naṭṭuvanār*, Muthuswami Pillai, has recorded his comments about his life and the dance

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[33] Even though there were several names to indicate a hereditary dance artist, I use the term *devadāsī* from now on. This is the norm that has been followed by texts and journals. Refer footnote in page 36.
[34] Augustin Daly was an American dramatist and a theater manager.
[35] Bayaderes was a term used by Europeans to refer to a dancing girl from India.

form in a French article. This article provides first–hand information from the hereditary dance master about how the dancers suffered the disenfranchisement,

> "When the institution was abolished, lands that had been left in the hands of the *devadāsī* were confiscated by the state, and people laughed at us saying that before they took money from the notables, it was the government that took it away. There was no respect for our art. I remember that in the late 1930s, the ceremonies of consecration of young girls in the temple began to be prevented. Previously, Rāja [king] and zamindars [rich landowners] patronized the dancers, and those who entertained the *devadāsīs*, were respected and envied, but since the institution began to be despised, honor was changed to shame. Before, the bosses who were chosen by the *devadāsī* considered themselves lucky. Today, the dancers run behind the ministers and the men of power, as after the organizers of shows. The situation is therefore simply reversed." (Tizianna 2008: 48–76)

With the advent of photographic technology, the '*nautch*' parties were extensively captured as pictures in Madras and surrounding areas. There are many paintings that depict the dancers and her accompanying musicians. Some paintings present a *catir* artist in a dance posture along with the *naṭṭuvanār, mṛidaṅgist, flutist, violinist,* and *tūtti* player[36]. (Soneji 2012: 77) These photographs and paintings of the 19th and early 20th centuries are rarely seen in temple settings. They were inlayed in a purely urban setting. The Europeans who wrote several memoirs about the *devadāsīs* in temples continued writing about them in urban environments. Besides, the British rulers joined them. King Edward VII recorded a performance that he watched in the suburb of Madras. He describes the hall, the musicians, the dancers, and then goes on to talk about their dance. But, this write–up could come across as somewhat distorted and bizarre. The salon dances can be seen to be documented in many Tamil and Telugu literary works. *Cennapurivilāsamu* and *Sarvadevavilāsa* are Telugu texts that describe the private scenes

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[36] A *naṭṭuvanār* plays on the cymbals or the *naṭṭuvaṅgam,* and recites the *sollukaṭṭu* to maintain rhythm. A *mṛidaṅgist* plays on the *mṛidaṅgam* (a percussion instrument). *Mṛidaṅgam* plays a sizeable role in the rhythmic aspect. A flutist plays on the flute. A flute is a wind instrument used for the melodic aspect. A violinist plays on the violin, a string instrument that came into vogue in Bharatanāṭyam during the period of the Tanjore Quartet. *Tūtti* was an instrument used mainly in *catir kaccēris* to maintain the pitch. (Gaston 1996a: 172; Higgens 1993: 19–21)

in the homes of social elites in South India. Nārāyanī of Kumbakonam, Maṅkai of Tanjore, and Mīṉakṣi of Salem are some of the dancers mentioned in these texts. *"Vārakānta"* or *"The Nautch Girl"* is a Telugu novel written by a *zamindar* (landowner), that depicts the *mejuvani*[37] practices. Most of these textual works describe the 'sexual boldness' and the 'deceitfulness' of the *devadāsī* women who were accused of having lured the men. (Soneji 2012: 73–95)

The above print materials in the form of texts, photographs, and novels represented the *devadāsī* women in a new urban setting with sexuality as the most common route to their economics. The *devadāsī* women could have sexual relationships with the upper–classmen and were hardly restricted by any norms. These non–conjugal sexual relations, along with their professional legitimacy and ownership of lands brought about a debate among some of the social reformers, triggering the 'notorious' "anti–nautch movement". (Soneji 2012: 113–123) The late 18th and early 19th centuries were a time of morals, law, and social reform. It was also alleged that some women who belonged to the hereditary community in the society, engaged in practices like buying girls who were downtrodden so that they could continue making more money. The young age at which the girls were dedicated to the temple was another argument of the debate. This community of people was hence accused of affecting the morality, health, and well–being of the entire society at large. (Reddi 2010: 116) The "anti–nautch movement" took off at an elevated pace to remodel and amend the social problems. The reformers had a one–pointed goal – to eliminate and clean up the public system according to its moral tone. Thus, they paid absolutely no heed to the art forms.

The "Anti–Nautch" movement started as an 'altruistic' act by a woman, Muthulakshmi Reddi, from the *devadāsī* community. She treated the *nautch* performers as 'victims', and wanted to bring about reform so that they can become 'good, pure and respectable women'. She also wanted to bring an end to the practice of dedicating girls to the temples. Most of the cases filed against these women labeled them as 'prostitutes', 'degraded women', 'queer and uncivilized', and so on. (Soneji 2012: 113–123) Muthulakshmi Reddi justified her stance by saying,

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[37] A term used in Andhra Pradesh to denote dance performed by hereditary dancers.

"Still some of us who have both education and enlightenment knowingly or unknowingly, tolerate a system by which young and innocent children of those communities, who if left alone or removed to better environments, would become virtuous and loyal wives, affectionate mothers and useful citizens, are slowly introduced into an evil life which subjects them to very painful, very deliberating, disfiguring and contagious diseases in addition to all the horrors of prostitute's life." (Reddi 2010: 117)

It is saddening to learn that a beautiful art form that was once conceived differently took a wrong turn to become a form predominantly used for entertainment, sexuality, and moneymaking. Reddi's demand to the Federal court to downright eradicate the practices of the dancing community so that they can be "loyal wives and affectionate mothers" seems quite harsh. The fundamental philosophy by which a *devadāsī* functions is by self–dissolution. In this course, she was dedicated and devoted to performing services for the temple deity to whom she was married. Condemning this practice as unlawful was unfair to the community. Further, an art form that took several years to attain mastery over was on the brink of extinction. Muthulakshmi Reddi's claims saw a huge opposition from the "Madras Devadasi Association". They protested all the claims that were filed at the supreme court of justice. They pleaded for their right to live, their right to practice their beliefs, and their right to property that they had received as a gift for their services to the temples. (Madras Devadasi Association 2010: 128–133)

The Anti–Nautch movement was caught in a political spiral with the support of Congress Party politics and the non–Brahmin Self–Respect movement[38]. For the Dravidian parties, this abolition movement became a powerful political cause. This was backed by self–respect campaign started by Ramaswami Naicker in 1925. The "British East India Company" did not favor the patronage and protection offered to the temples by the government. The British severed all the help and services that the temples received. The Christian missionaries joined forces. (Srinivasan 2010: 141–153; Srinivasan 1985: 1869) Mahatma Gandhi wrote an article in 1925 in the *Young India* magazine supporting the idea of Muthulakshmi, to bring about a "euphemism for the prostitutes". For almost a

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[38] The Non–Brahmin Self–Respect movement was a political movement launched in the 1920s that had a profound impact on the Tamil culture and caste system. It was interconnected with the local Dravidian politics. (Alagirisamy 2016)

hundred years, these debates and deliberations continued in the judiciary. Yamini Purnatilakam and Muvalur Ramamirttammal were the other two *devadāsī* women who fought to put an end to the *devadāsī* tradition. The "Devadasi Abolition Act" was filed in 1927, which urged the government to criminalize their practices. (Soneji 2012: 113–123)

Devadāsī women were excellent singers. Despite their hardships, the arrival of the gramophone recording gave them great possibilities to become stars. This new technology that arrived in the early 20th century democratized the dance and music space. The gramophones were the first interface for technology and entertainment. There were almost five hundred women who were recorded for their voices all over India. All of them belonged to the salon dancing and courtesan community and were called by different names like *baijis, tawaifs, kalāvant,* and *murli.* (Shah 2016: 6–8) *Devadāsī* artists like Selam Papa, Bangalore Thayi, Bangalore Nagaratnam were enthusiastic about these recordings, while some others like Veena Dhannammal and Nayana Pillai refused to record (Subramanian 2006: 109). Gramophone recording was very popular among Tamil audiences between the 1910s and the 1920s. They bridged the gap between Tamil dramas and Tamil cinema. They were also responsible for the popular "music boom" in the 1920s when songs became a huge cultural aspect of society. (Hughes 2007)

When the switch was made from silent films to "talkies" in 1931, the Tamil and Telugu film industry adopted the stage drama companies with trained artists and ready–made presentations, directly as part of their films (Baskaran 2013). The male actors in early Tamil films came from the drama companies. S.G. Kittapa, M.K. Thyagaraja Bhagavathar, and P.U. Chinnappa were some examples. They were also extraordinary singers. (Subrahmanyam 1979: 10) Right from the start, every film had as many as fifty songs, with dance becoming an imperative element in cinema and thus giving several opportunities for the dancers (Pandiyan 1996). There was a concise period between silent films and the emergence of "talkies" when live dance performances thrived in film festivals and cinema halls (Hughes 2013). Many *devadāsī* women entered the cinema industry which was a new and promising conduit for their profession and living. Some of them were, T.R. Rajakumari, Sayi–Subbulakshmi, S.P.L. Dhanalakshmi, N. Rajalakshmi, and Tirunelveli Papa. Even in this medium, when the downtrodden *devadāsīs* entered the field, they were showcased as 'escorts'. (Soneji 2012: 22)

The Anti–Nautch movement began in 1892 when journals started attacking the hereditary dancing community. In 1927, a bill was filed at the Madras legislative council, to put an end to the practice of dedicating girls to temples. The bill sated that the dedication had, in turn, resulted in the immoral lives of *devadāsī* women. In 1947, the "Devadasi Abolition Act" came into effect which detached the entire *icai vellala* or the hereditary dancing community from the society. (Hubel 2010; Srinivasan 2012: 1872; Jordan 2003: 110)

1.5 How *catir* became Bharatanāṭyam

Even though the result of this age–old dance tradition appears to be tragic, it wasn't a sad story after all. The revival of *catir* as Bharatanāṭyam happened in the 1930s. Within thirty years, Bharatanāṭyam had taken a new avatar in South India. It gained respectfulness, dignity, and public appeal. It grew into the most sought after dance form in the state of Tamilnadu, especially among the urban elites. It turned out to be a pride for the nation and an envoy of India's cultural heritage. How did this miracle ensue? A complex scenario existed during the 1930s with say, three different types of forces. I try to call the first one as "not–for–art" forces – the forces that were trying to suppress the art form, the second one as "pro–art" forces – the forces that were trying to retain or rather revive the art form from extinction, and the third one as "parallel" forces – the forces that were not directly related yet had some influence on the art form.

The "not–for–art" forces were the primary causes of the "anti–nautch movement". These forces were interrelated, came one after the other, with the latter forces often due to the former. The British rule, loss of power and wealth at the temples that were initially funded by the kings, migration of artists into urban environments, Victorian morals,[39] Indian social reformers trying to save Indian culture, British protestant missionaries' schemes, and dearth of economic, social, and political support for the artists were some of the "not–for–art" forces fueling the revolution against the art form and the performers. The result was the abolishment of the *devadāsī* system. During the same time, an honest and concentrated effort to save the dance form was achieved by revivalists like E. Krishna Iyer and Rukmini Devi Arundale, institutions like the Madras Music Academy,

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[39] Victorian morals came from the Victorian era that occurred in England under Queen Victoria in the 19th century. It had a set of principles that defined the moral climate of the society. (Victorian Era 2018)

journal writers like V. Raghavan, and a *devadāsī* artist herself, T. Balasaraswati. Their coalesced efforts gave a new life to the art form and saved it for posterity. They can be called the "pro–art" forces. Indian cinema, other social reform movements like child marriage, dowry, the journey of music from *periya mēḷam*[40] to Carnatic are some other factors that impacted and influenced the reform and revival process. They can be called "parallel" forces. Since I have already dealt with the "not–for–art" forces in the previous section, I shall examine in depth, the "pro–art" forces and the strongest of the "parallel" forces (Indian cinema), in this section.

The word *catir* came with an attached blemish. So, the revivalists had to find an alternative name to solve this problem. The usage of the name Bharatanāṭyam surely gave a new guise to the art form. There is confusion about how the art form was renamed from *catir* to Bharatanāṭyam.[41] Some claim that the name was initially used by E. Krishna Iyer in the 1932 conference at Madras music committee which was later picked up by V. Raghavan in the article titled "Bharatanāṭyam Classical dance – The South Indian Nautch" in 1933. (Transfiguration of a traditional dance 2011: 34–36) Rukmini Devi assigns a nomenclature to the word Bharatanāṭyam explaining what each of the syllables stands for; the essential elements of dance – "*bha*" for *bhāva*, "*ra*" for *rāga* and "*ta*" for *tāla*. The name could have also come about as the dance of Bhārat[42], the country. Padma Subrahmanyam argues that though Rukmini Devi's nomenclature has created the desired effect of social acceptance, it is still a very dry definition devoid of the poetic value. For her, the name Bharatanāṭyam could have come about to attribute the art to Bharata Muni. But this does not mean that it is the oldest and the purest style. It is far removed from the technique of Bharata. (Subrahmanyam 1979: 76–77; Rukmini Devi 2012: 17) Meduri claims that it was Venkatarami Sastri who used the name Bharatanāṭyam for the first time in the early 1930s. Even though it is unclear on who started using the name Bharatanāṭyam first, it is a known fact that everyone in the artistic

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[40] In the early 20th century, *periya mēḷam* was a term used to refer to a music troupe and *ciṉṉa mēḷam* was a term used to refer to a dance troupe.

[41] Although several articles, journals, and books claim that the word Bharatanāṭyam was coined only in the 1930s, interestingly there is an article that came out in *Sruti* recently, titled "Bharatanatyam: who named it so?" that counters and negates these claims. According to this article, the words "bharatam", "bharatanateyam", "bharatanattiyam" and many more, existed in several inscriptions and travelogues right from the 12th century. (Sundaram 2017)

[42] India as a country is also referred to as Bhārat or Bhāratā.

community used the term Bharatanāṭyam from the 1930s to eradicate the stain that was attached to *catir*. (Meduri 2005: 198)

The Madras Music Academy stood as one of the strongest among the "pro–art" forces. It was an institution that was formed in 1929 after the congress committee passed a resolution. The resolution summoned the formation of an institution that would be a platform for cultural arts and help in reviving India's rich heritage of music and dance. From 1929, the Academy started playing an active role in conducting music concerts, annual conferences, collecting and preserving manuscripts, publishing journals, and encouraging scholars and musicians. (Rangaswamy 2008)

E. Krishna Iyer, the founder secretary of the Music Academy, navigated the project of Bharatanāṭyam renaissance along with some scholars, genuine thinkers, and music experts (Vishwanathan 2006). He was a lawyer, social activist, and a freedom fighter. His devotion and interest in the South Indian art of Bharatanāṭyam played a huge role in restoring and regenerating it for posterity. E. Krishna Iyer was not just a passionate revivalist but also an active participant in various plays. He even learned the art form of *catir* in his early days. He held a controversial debate with Muthulakshmi Reddi in December 1932 about the *nautch* abolishment. (Transfiguration of a traditional dance 2011: 10, 37–47) He sincerely worked to convince people to present the *devadāsī* artists at the Music Academy in the 1930s. This resulted in the Academy encouraging performances by *devadāsī* artists. For the first time two dancers Rajalakshmi, and Jeevarathnam (known as Kalyani daughters) presented a recital in 1931. This unwrapped the beauty of Tanjore court repertoire in a new avenue, for a new audience. These performances continued for almost a decade. In 1932, Mylapore Gowri Ammal, the *devadāsī* of Kalaleeshwar temple in Madras and an *abhinaya* expert, performed. A young Balasaraswati followed and performed at the Academy in 1933. Balasaraswati continued her stint with the Academy by running a dance school there for a long time. Varalakshmi, Saranayaki, Bhanumathi, Nagarathnam, and Sabharanjitham who were students of Guru, Pandanallur Meenakshisundaram Pillai, performed many times between 1933 and 1936. These artists presented their *catir* repertoire at these recitals. (Vishwanathan 2006; Sriram 2016; Rangaswamy 2008; Transfiguration of a traditional dance 2011)

The strongest among the "pro–art" forces that "made history" and was "made by history" was Rukmini Devi Arundale (Venkataranam 2005). Rukmini Devi was born into a Brahmin family, and at a very young age, she got acquainted with the Theosophical Society in Madras led by Annie Besant. Subsequently, she married an Englishman, George Arundale, who was then the president of the Theosophical Society. After her marriage, she traveled far and wide around the world. During her travels, she met Anna Pavlova, the famous Ballet dancer who inspired Rukmini to learn Ballet. The above experience in Rukmini's life urged her to think about India's culture in the context of the entire world. She went on to become a teacher, dancer, guide, educator, mentor, theosophist, an artistic visionary, builder of institutions, and a beacon light for many. (Meduri 2005)

In 1933, E. Krishna Iyer invited Rukmini for a performance recital by the *devadāsī* artists, Jeevarathnam and Rajalakshmi, students of Pandanallur Meenakshisundaram Pillai at the Madras Music Academy. After watching them dance, she was filled with motivation to learn the beautiful dance form. She did not follow the custom of learning from just one guru. She learned *nṛtta* from Meenakshisundaram Pillai, and took separate *abhinaya* lessons from Mylapore Gowri Ammal. In 1935, she gave her debut or her *araṅkēṟṟam* at the Theosophical Society, after which she established a school for teaching classical dance, the Kalakshetra Foundation. The Kalakshetra Foundation had a galaxy of eminent scholars and musicians from multidisciplinary fields to teach arts.

During this process of revival, the art form underwent many changes. Rukmini Devi put together both, very conventional and innovative concepts to bring about a new dimension to Bharatanāṭyam (Venkatraman 2005: 138). It is said that to attach purity and furnish validation, Bharatanāṭyam was linked with the *śāstras*[43] and other authoritative texts without giving due respect to the preceding developments or traditions. Rukmini Devi gave a quintessential status to Bharatanāṭyam, as the only form directly connected to the *Nāṭyaśāstra;* while the other forms like Kathakali, Manipuri, and Kuchipudi were called the offshoots of Bharatanāṭyam. This appeared to be a skewed concept because Bharatanāṭyam is a regional *deśī* form of Tamilnadu which has taken up certain elements

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[43] The word *śāstra* translates to "teaching", "instruction", "command", "body of teaching", "scripture", "any instrument of teaching" (Monier Williams 2018).

from the *Nāṭyaśāstra,* just like how Manipuri is another *deśī* form belonging to the Manipur region. (Coorlawala 2004: 53)

Until this point, dance was a live tradition where the hereditary dancer would have a dance master or a *naṭṭuvanār* who would wholly train her in the art form. Kalakshetra foundation introduced a different model of teaching. For the first time, a 'dance school' or an 'institution' was formed for teaching dance, which also included an academic curriculum. The art of Bharatanāṭyam was not restricted to a specific community anymore; it was made democratic. Due to this 'institutionalized' teaching, the hereditary dance teachers or the *naṭṭuvanārs* lost control over the art. In the 1940s, the dancers themselves started learning the art of *naṭṭuvāṅgam* in Kalakshetra replacing the hereditary artistic community in a massive way. The *naṭṭuvanārs* had to find other means of using their skills. They signed up for recording and choreographing in films. (Coorlawala 2004: 54) Allen looks at this as a two–stage revival process by Rukmini Devi that led to the appropriation of hereditary artists. The first stage was replacing the *devadāsī* community with the upper–class dance community and the second stage consisted of removing the services of hereditary dance masters (Allen 1997: 65–66). The changing of dance communities was one of the chief reasons for Bharatanāṭyam to gain respect in the society. Until 1936, the Music Academy stage was dominated by dancers from hereditary communities. Dancers from Brahmin or non–hereditary communities slowly replaced the hereditary dancers from 1937. Balachandra, Lakshmi Sastri, and Kalanidhi were first among the non–hereditary community. (Transfiguration of a traditional dance 2011: 16)

After the late 1940s, Rukmini's attention shifted to dance dramas based on Sanskrit texts. *Bhāgavatha melā nāṭakam, rāmāyaṇam, kutrāla kuravañci, sīta svayamvaram, sabari mokṣam* are some of her dance dramas directed and choreographed at the Kalakshetra foundation (Vishwanathan 2005: 140–144). These dramas focused on reinventing the lost traditions. They were based on mythology, aesthetic, and ethical values. (Ramnarayan 2005: 147)

A new design of the stage resulted from Rukmini Devi's aesthetic imagination. She brought the temple to the stage by placing a Naṭarāja icon on the side of the stage and introducing a temple backdrop. She created excellent light control with the help of

Conrand Woldringh, Alex, and Mary Elmore. She relocated the *naṭṭuvanār* and the musicians from the back of the dancer to the side of the stage during performances. She eliminated the use of instruments like clarinet and harmonium and replaced them with flute. With the help of an Italian seamstress, she designed a costume for Bharatanāṭyam which is used until today. She created beautiful lighting systems for the stage using concepts adopted from the western world. (Rukmini Devi 2012: 28; Gopal 2003) Apart from designing for solo Bharatanāṭyam, Rukmini also contributed to designing costumes for humans, non–humans, gods, animals, and birds for their group productions. There was much aesthetic sense in her designs. Pure silk and cotton handloom fabrics were mostly used to assign importance and value to the handloom artisans. (Ramnarayan 2005: 149, 158) Hereditary *catir* artists like Smt. Kumbakonam Bhanumati embraced these changes and adopted them for her performances. While other hereditary artists like Balasarawati suggested that they all go back to wearing the 'traditional' *catir* costume. (Ragothamanyennamalli 2013)

Rukmini Devi sincerely believed that she could bring back the respect, and reverse the idea of all the "not–for–art" forces only when the dance purges off its 'sensuality'. Thus, she forbade including any *śṛṅgāra* (love sentiment) in the repertoire and replaced such lyrics with *bhakti* (devotion). She gave increasing importance to geometry, pure lines, and vigor in performance. This was due to her influences with ballet. She had regular ballet sessions that helped her students perfect their execution of *aḍavus*. Consequently, *nṛtta* was bestowed tremendous importance. For instance, while introducing characters in plays she would use profuse *nṛtta*. She discouraged the use of hip deflections (*tribhaṅga*)[44] since she associated them with eroticism. (Coorawala 2004: 55–56; Shea 1998: 54) The common hero or *nāyaka* of a *padam* genre which has a romantic theme is usually either Lord Muruga or Lord Kṛṣṇa. After the revival, Lord Naṭarāja, who had more of a spiritual resonance became the patron deity for dance. The repertoire of Bharatanāṭyam increasingly started including many compositions on Lord Naṭarāja like "*naṭanam āḍīnār*" during the period of revival. The concept of having the Naṭarāja statue placed on the side of the stage was also for the same reason (Allen 1997: 79; Gaston 1996b; Meduri 2005: 12)

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[44] This posture is usually seen in female figurines of temple sculptures.

Balasaraswati hailed from a family of musicians and dancers who had performed at the Tanjore Maratha courts. Her grandmother was Vīnā Dhanammal, a musician par excellence in the Maratha courts. Her mother Jayammal, was a singer who accompanied her for dance concerts. She started learning Bharatanāṭyam (*catir*) at a very early age under Kandappa Pillai. She performed not only in the south of India but also in northern cities like Calcutta and New Delhi. (Ohtani 1991) She was the brave *devadāsī* artist who fought for the revival of *catir*. She was well–known for her pure and serene *abhinaya* and could convey a variety of emotions and feelings in a very subtle manner. If E. Krishna Iyer supported and encouraged Rukmini Devi in reviving the art of Bharatanāṭyam, V. Raghavan was a strong pillar of support for Balasaraswati. (T. Balasaraswati 2013) She made Bharatanāṭyam popular in the United States and other countries as well.

Balasaraswati advocated the use of 'traditional' repertoire as put forward by the Tanjore Quartet. She asserted that the spiritual aspect of dance is revealed through the corporeal when the correct sequence of order is followed in a recital. According to her, a beautiful aesthetic is weaved and depicted when a dancer performs the following items – *alārippu, jatisvaram, śabdam, varṇam, padam, tillāna,* and *śloka*. Balasaraswati had constantly demonstrated her disapproval to the revivalists' efforts[45] towards 'purifying the art' or 'cleaning up the profane elements'. In the first thirty years of the revival of Bharatanāṭyam, both in the dance and music concerts, artists refused to perform *śṛṅgāra padams* of poets like Kṣetrajña and the *jāvalis*. Balasaraswati had a disagreement with Rukmini's perception of *śṛṅgāra* in dance. (Shea 1998: 57) Balasaraswati in her various debates with Rukmini explained how *śṛṅgāra,* right from early Tamil traditions has tried to portray the connection between the inner and outer life of a man. She was frequently unhappy with the idea of replacing *śṛṅgāra* with the concept of *bhakti.* (T. Balasaraswati 2013)

Bharatanāṭyam has survived the test of time and is available to every part of the world today because of the "pro–art" forces. There was another force, that was traveling alongside these forces that predominantly reflected the happenings in the society like a seamless mirror – the Indian cinema. Indian cinema, being an entertainment for the

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[45] Here, revivalist specifically refers to Rukmini Devi Arundale.

masses, was one of the central figures to broadcast the image of Bharatanāṭyam versus the forerunner of this form, *catir*. Indian cinemas have commonly been musicals with several songs and dance sequences, thus offering enormous opportunities for the dancers. The hereditary dancers entered the film industry in the early 1930s as it was a promising avenue given their social and economic situation. The storylines for movies, especially in Tamil films, acted as an advertisement for the "Anti–Nautch" movement. The *devadāsī* community was portrayed in a repressive way in the cinemas of the 1930s and 40s. They were cast as a community that should be done away with. (Kaali 2013: 51) The 1930s saw a handful of *devadāsī* women dancing in films. The *devadāsī* artists were portrayed in degraded roles or as women who were available for sexual pleasure. However, their presence in cinema was obscured with the entry of dancers from the Brahmin community in the 1940s and 50s. (Krishnan 2013) Slowly in the 1940s, the non–hereditary dancers or the new Brahmin community of dancers entered the film industry as heroines or 'good, ideal women'. The films depicted their dances as beautiful, aesthetic, and divine. This resulted in the appropriation of hereditary artists even in the cinema industry.

The 1940s and 50s also saw several *naṭṭuvanārs*, the hereditary community of dance teachers choreographing for film songs. They all left their village to travel to Madras which became a major attraction for their economic well–being. (Gaston 1996b) Thus, the Tamil and Telugu film industry became a place where the Bharatanāṭyam dancers and *naṭṭuvanārs* turned to between the 1930s and 50s. Kamala Lakshman, Vyjayanthimala Bali, Padmini, Hemamalini were some of the non–hereditary Bharatanāṭyam dancers who made a mark in the cinema industry. They went on to become stars. They learned Bharatanāṭyam from hereditary *naṭṭuvanārs* who eventually became choreographers for movies. Vazhuvoor Ramaiah Pillai gained great popularity because of his disciple Kamala Lakshman who was a megastar in the movies. Dandayuthapani Pillai, Muthukumara Pillai, Muthuswami Pillai were other *naṭṭuvanārs* who were well–known dance masters in films in the mid 20th century. Thus, Indian cinema played a huge part in shaping the perception of Bharatanāṭyam against *catir* in the first few decades after the revival.

Within 30–40 years after the revival, there were hundreds of dancers in Madras city. There emerged several *bānīs* or styles in Bharatanāṭyam depending on the region from where the *naṭṭuvanārs* hailed from. Some of the *bānīs* were Vazhuvoor, Pandanallur, Kalakshetra, Tanjore, and Mysore. Each of them had their styles in technique, rendering, and presentation. Even though these *naṭṭuvanārs* existed from before and during the time of revival, the identification of separate styles or different *bānīs* came only a few years later. Today, Bharatanāṭyam has become a cultural identity of South India. It is world famous, offering a plethora of opportunities for numerous dancers hailing from diverse classes.

1.6 Conclusion

The magnificent journey of South Indian dance and finally, the birth of Bharatanāṭyam, is available to us today because of the innumerable literary texts, sculptures, inscriptions, and music compositions surviving from the early eras. The dancers of the Tamil land were known differently in every period. The female bards who were called *viṟali* and *pāṭiṉi* became *āṭumakal or rāja gaṇikā or rudra gaṇikā* in the Caṅkam period. During the Chola and Pallava rule, they were referred by terms such as *maṅkai, naṅkaiyār, māṇikkam, patiyilār,* and *tēvaraṭiyār.* The name *devadāsī* must have evolved later from the term *tēvaraṭiyār.* The dance form itself was called by different names. It was *āṭal* in the Caṅkam period, *kūttu* in Chola and Pallava times, and eventually became *catir* or *ciṉṉa mēḷam* during the Marathas. Post the revival, the dance form was called Bharatanāṭyam. This new name helped locate the art form from the national perspective.

During the Caṅkam age, the dancers were courtesans who entertained the kings. After the 4th and 5th centuries, the *bhakti* movement sparked a new way of living with changed beliefs and customs. Temples gained significance, and dance became a part of temple rituals.[46] The Nayak and Maratha period witnessed the prosperity of both temple and court dancers equally. Additionally, the boundaries between the two became lighter. The concept of *śṛṅgāra* in poetic compositions was on the upsurge, and eulogies of kings were mostly the subject of poetry. The Maratha rule standardized and systematized the dance repertoire of court dancers. The fall of the Marathas was followed by a huge

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[46] In this period, gods were treated as kings, and thus had to be entertained with dance and music.

migration of artists from Tanjore to Madras city. This gave birth to the disintegrated salon performances. The dance form known as *catir* underwent a cancerous deterioration because of political, social, and economic unacceptance. The aesthetics of art was lost, and it became a social taboo. It was caught in a web and needed a sharp break to recover and save the dance form. Some dancers principally started performing for sexual pleasure. This, in turn, urged an immediate suspension of the art form. Alarmed by this drastic move, a group of revivalists decided to devote their lives towards reforming and reviving this art. The process of revival was manifold. The revival gave new life to the art form, thus "reviving" it. It replaced one community of dancers (hereditary *devadāsīs*) by another community (Brahmins), thus "re–populating" the art. The dance recitals went from temples and courts to proscenium stage, thus "re–situating" it. The repertoire, choreography, and techniques were altered, hence "re–constructing" the dance form. It created a simultaneous "restoration" of tradition along with new innovations (Allen 1997: 63). Bharatanāṭyam and Indian cinema were at crossroads during the revival period and emerged concurrently. While the films of this period encompassed Bharatanāṭyam and the dancing community, the two powers transpired separately post the 1950s. Bharatanāṭyam became a dance form associated with spirituality and divinity. It gathered reverence and admiration, growing to be one of India's leading cultural identities.

2 Technique of Bharatanāṭyam: elucidating the standards

The practice of Bharatanāṭyam has been dynamic because it is the descendent of a long tradition. Although nowadays, the technique and performance of Bharatanāṭyam has diversified, during revival period, it chiefly trailed the paths set forth by the *naṭṭuvanārs*. In this chapter, I define the 'standard' system from various textual sources utilized to perform Bharatanāṭyam that, in turn, will facilitate in validating the Bharatanāṭyam performances showcased in Indian films. The following five aspects of the technique will be addressed in this chapter: *nṛtta, abhinaya, bāṇi, bhāva–rasa,* and *nāyikā–nāyakā bhedās.*

The technique of Bharatanāṭyam is primarily based on two distinct aspects: *nṛtta* and *abhinaya*. *Nṛtta* refers to pure or abstract dance with music and rhythm forming its breath or lifeline. *Abhinaya* refers to the art of communication or gesticulation. The etymological root for the word *abhinaya* lies in Sanskrit – *abhi* is a prefix to verbs and nouns expressing "to", "toward", and the verbal root *nī* means "to lead", "direct", or "guide". Thus, *abhinaya* translates as "leading towards". In the context of Indian aesthetics, it means, "leading the audience towards an emotional experience". (Monier Williams 2008). It is the art of carrying forward or communicating an idea or emotion to the audience (Rao 1980: 1). *Abhinaya* consists of four branches: *āṅgika abhinaya* or the physical expressions conveyed through hand gestures, body movements, or postures; *vācika abhinaya* or the communication through music, prose, or poetry; *āhārya abhinaya* or the communication through external elements like costumes, make–up, or lighting; and finally, *sāttvika abhinaya* or the communication through mental involvement (Subrahmanyam 1979: 4–5).[1]

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[1] There can be different ways of performing *abhinaya*. They are called *dharmīs* or modes of presentation. It is the depiction of observations made from behaviour and practices in the real world, on stage. When there is a lot of grammar and stylization involved while presenting *abhinaya* on stage, it is called *nāṭyadharmī*. When the *abhinaya* very close to how it is done in real life, it is called *lokadharmī*. Depicting tears with gestures, a single dancer playing several roles, transition of time and space, acting as though not hearing something uttered in proximity, are some examples of *nāṭyadharmī* mode of presentation. Natural and instinctive gestures, familiar costumes, jewellery and conventions close to ordinary life, are employed in *lokadharmī* style. Thus, *lokadharmī* has a much better appeal amongst the audience. *Nāṭyadharmī* is mostly based on gesticulation of ideas, while *lokadharmī* engages a lot of mental involvement. (Subrahmanyam 1979; Kothari 1997: 86; Vatsyayan 1968)

The different styles of Bharatanāṭyam called *bāṇis* came up after the revival period. The *bāṇis* vary based on the way the *nṛtta* and *abhinaya* are performed. The enjoyment in any performance comes from the psychological basis that is referred to as the *bhāva–rasa* theory; *bhāva* being the feeling, and *rasa* being the result of that feeling. Based on these emotional conditions, a classification of *nāyikās* and *nāyakās* exists. The above aspects of the technique have been put forward first, in the earliest extant literature on dramaturgy, the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. [2]

2.1 *Nṛtta*

Nṛtta refers to pure, abstract dance movements that are primarily meant for aesthetics and decoration. Its foundation lies on two main components of *vācika abhinaya* – time measure and rhythm. (Kothari 1997: 41,42) Using precise geometric patterns like curves, angles, and lateral movements of the hands along with continuous footwork, *nṛtta* gives form to the language of rhythm (Devi 1972: 50). Kapila Vatsyayan compares the *nṛtta* technique to sculpting because of its emphasized poses and stance. *Nṛtta* in Bharatanāṭyam appears almost static, yet it is connected continuously by a metrical cycle. (Vatsyayan 1968: 30) Some texts put forward the theory that, *nṛtta* aims at only creating patterns in space while it has no emotion attached to it; which means there is an absence of *bhāva–rasa* when performing *nṛtta* (Kothari 1997: 41–43; Gaston 1996b: 258; Coomaraswamy & Duggirala 1917: 14). However, Padma Subrahmanyam does not agree to the fact that *nṛtta* could be devoid of *bhāva–rasa*. She asserts that *nṛtta* is as capable as *abhinaya,* to produce *rasa.* (Subrahmanyam 1979: 27)

The design and construction of Indian dance are widely different from western dance forms like Ballet. Firstly, *nṛtta* technique is perceived to be in alignment with the laws of human movement, that conceives a dancer's movement in relation to the pull of gravity. Hence, Bharatanāṭyam avoids for most parts, huge leaps, and heavy movements in the air. Within a boundary of limitations, Indian dance has explored the fullest possibilities

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[2] Here, it is also important to understand the term *nātya*. The word *nātya* translates to "dancing", "mimic representation", or "dramatic art" (Monier Williams 2008). According to Padma Subrahmanyam, *nātya* refers to "drama" only. It is based on the technique of *nṛtta* and *abhinaya,* but has some additional elements. It consists of speech in *vācika abhinaya* and different characters in the play as against Bharatanāṭyam which is solo dancing. It is very stylized with character–based *āhārya abhinaya.* It includes *karaṇas* as building blocks for *nṛtta* as against *aḍavu*s which form the building blocks of Bharatanāṭyam. Thus, she says that even though the term 'Bharatanāṭyam' has the word *nātya*, it is not *nātya*. (Subrahmaniam 2003: Ch. 3)

but does not emphasize the continuous movement in limitless space. Secondly, the dance form draws attention to its joints and bone structure rather than to the individual characteristics of its muscles. (Vatsyayan 1968: 30–31) Thus, early texts on Indian dance and drama have made a detailed analysis of the movements of various joints of the human body. The *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the earliest extant literature on dramaturgy classifies the body into major limbs and minor limbs: the *aṅgās* and the *upāṅgas*. *Aṅgās* include head, hands, chest, waist, hips, and feet while the *upāṅgas* comprise of the eyes, eyebrows, eyeballs, nose, lips, chin, and mouth. They are elaborated in the eighth, ninth, and tenth chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra.* (Ghosh 1951: 148–196) Later texts like the *Abhinayadarpaṇa* (Ghosh 1957: 26) and *Saṅgītaratnākara (*Raja & Burnier 1976) have another category called *pratyaṅgās* which analyze the movements of the knees, ankles, and toes of the feet. However, Bharata, the author of *Nāṭyaśāstra* uses *upāṅgas* and *pratyaṅgās* synonymously. Vatsyayan mentions the knee, hip, and shoulder as the basic joints from which movements originate, and the neck to be the pivot for all head movements (Vatsyayan 1968: 30).

Karaṇas shaped the basic units of *nṛtta* for many thousands of years. The fourth chapter of *Nāṭyaśāstra* is devoted to *karaṇas*. *Karaṇas* are formed by combined movements of feet and hands – "*hastapādasamāyogāḥ nṛttasya karaṇam bhavet*" (Natyashastra 2019: Ch. 4, verse 30). The term *karaṇa* has its root in the word *kṛ* meaning "action" (Subrahmanyam 2003: 74). The *Nāṭyaśāstra* discusses the three main elements of a *karaṇa*: the movements of legs (*cārīs*), hands (*nṛtta hasta*), and posture of the body (*sthāna*). There are one hundred and eight *karaṇas* in total.[3] Combinations of *karaṇas* and *cārīs* gives rise to more complicated movements called *maṇḍalas*, *aṅgahāras,* and *piṇḍibandhas*. These are discussed in chapters eleven and twelve (twelve, thirteen and fourteen in some versions) of the *Nāṭyaśāstra. Recakas* are those that give beauty and aesthetics to *nṛtta* (Vatsyayan 1968: 31; Ghosh 1951: 197–212; Subrahmanyam 2003: 92, 93).

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[3] *Karaṇa* sculptures can be seen at Brihadīśvara temple in Tanjore, Sārṅgapāṅi temple in Kumbakonam, Naṭarāja temple in Chidambaram, Arunachaleśvara temple in Tiruvannamalai and Vriddhagiriśvara temple at Vriddhachalam (Subrahmanyam 2003: Ch. 6). This has been discussed in detail in chapter 1.

The form of Bharatanāṭyam as we know it today does not make use of the *karaṇa*. The *nṛtta* of Bharatanāṭyam is primarily made up of fundamental units called *aḍavus* (Gaston 1996b: 260). They are the building blocks of Bharatanāṭyam just like how *karaṇas* were, many centuries ago. The structural composition of the *aḍavu* is same as that of a *karaṇa* because the *aḍavus* are also made up of three elements: foot movement, decorative hand gestures, and stance of the body. Dance being a dynamic art undergoes constant changes and hence, it is possible that the *aḍavus* might have evolved from the age–old practice of *karaṇas*. The term *aḍavu* in the Tamil language means *cērkkai* or joining since it combines steps and gestures. (Kothari 1997: 41–43) *Aḍavu* might have been derived from *adu* which means "beating of the foot" in Telugu language (Devi 1972: 50). The words *aduvu* and *adugu* mean "feet" in Telugu. Precise, coordinated motion of the hands, feet, and body of the dancer form the primary units of dance patterns, the *aḍavus*. *Aḍavus*[4] are conceived as different cadences in a time cycle that harmonize with a musical mode and a rhythmic phrase. (Vatsyayan, 1968: 383) Rhythmic mnemonic syllables called *sollukaṭṭu* are recited for an *aḍavu* by the *naṭṭuvanār* to which he is accompanied by the *mṛidaṅgam*. Each set of *aḍavus* is identified by specific *sollukaṭṭu* (Sarabhai 2000: 26–27). The term *aḍavu* has been referred in the Tamil text *Kūttanūl* as early as the Caṅkam period (Seshadri 2013). The terms *tiruppāṭṭaḍaivu* and *meikāṭṭaḍaivu* have also been found in inscriptions of Kulottunga III (1178 CE – 1223 CE) from the Pudukottai state. The old Tamil work, *Paratacēṉāpatīyam* has a mention of the term *aḍavu*. (Kothari 1997: 41–44)

The systematic method of classification and teaching of *aḍavus* (which form the vocabulary of movements in Bharatanāṭyam) has been passed down by the kings and dance masters, who belonged to the royal courts and temples of South India (Devi 1972: 50). The most important work on *aḍavus* until today is *Saṅgīta Sārāmṛtam* by King Tulaja I alias Tukkoji of the Maratha dynasty of Tanjore (1729 CE – 1735 CE). He was the third son of Ekoji after Sahaji and Sarabhoji. In the chapter that is devoted to dance in *Saṅgīta Sārāmṛtam*, the author first describes the subject of dance, then moves on to

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[4] *Aḍavus* are the most important set of dance steps that must be perfected by the dancer as soon as he/she begins learning (Devi 1972: 50). They are also the first set of lessons that are taught by the dance teacher. The versatility of the dancer is evident only when he/she can execute complex *aḍavu* patterns in a precise and effortless manner, along with beautiful aesthetics (Kothari 1997: 41–43; Sarabhai 2000: 26–27).

some miscellaneous topics, followed by a detailed write–up about the topic – *śramavidhi* or practice. This portion features the tradition's connection to *catir,* and gives Sankrit names and their Tamil and Telugu equivalents for all *aḍavus,* along with guidelines to perform them. They are also referred to as *pāda kuṭṭanam*, the term *kuṭṭanam* meaning "striking the ground with the foot" in Sanskrit. The author also gives the *sollukaṭṭu* (mnemonic syllables) that can be used for every *aḍavu* (Raghavan 1942: 23; Kothari 1997: 41–43). For example; the first *aḍavu* is mentioned as *taṭṭaḍavu*. The author mentions that the *aḍavu* should be performed at different speeds like *vilambita* (slow), *madhya* (middle), and *dṛta* (fast). Then, he provides the *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* – "*theiyathei iti*". Lastly, he gives the hand gesture that should be used (*patākā*) and the foot movements (*tāḍanam* or beating of the foot). Further, he provides the Sanskrit equivalent of the term *aḍavu* (i.e.) *khanatpādakuṭṭanam.* (Raghavan 1942: 36) Many *aḍavu* patterns in Tulaja's broad classification of *aḍavus* have in recent times become obsolete (Kothari 1997: 45). In the late 19th and early 20th century, even though the system of *aḍavus* remained the basis of Bharatanāṭyam, the classification of *aḍavus* varied based on every family tradition or the *bāṇis* (Vatsyayan 1974: 19).

Saṅgīta Sārāmṛtam seems to be an amalgam of local traditions and ancient Sanskrit traditions. The author also cites works like *Saṅgīta Muktāvalī* of Devanacārya and *Nṛttaratnāvalī* of Jayappa in this work. Even though the text does not mention the *karaṇa,* it is still a work of immense historical relevance to today's form of Bharatanāṭyam. (Krishnan 2008: 73–74) The classification and guidelines on *aḍavus* given by *Saṅgīta Sārāmṛtam* will be discussed in detail below. *Naṯana Tivātya Rañjaṉam* and *Saparañjita Cintāmaṇi* are works of Gankaimuthu Naṭṭuvanār which contain many *sollukaṭṭu* for dance but has no reference to *aḍavus* (Kothari 1997: 44).

The basic stance or posture in Bharatanāṭyam is called *araimaṇḍi* (*ardhamaṇḍali* or *ukkāramaṇḍali* as referred to by some authors) (Vatsyayan 1968: 17). In Tamil, *arai* means "half" and in Sanskrit, *maṇḍi* means "knees". This stance has an outward bend of the knee, thigh, and foot. (Kothari 1997: 41–43) The body of the dancer is neither too relaxed nor highly stiff. All the other movements originate from and are built from this position. When the arms are outstretched in this posture with *patākā* hasta, it is called the *nāṯyarambha* position. Any *nṛtta* sequence starts from this position. Vatsyayan says, the

nāṭyarambha position can be further described by splitting a dancer's body into three different triangles. The first triangle is formed with the line joining the two knees in the *araimaṇḍi* posture with the apex at its heels. The second with the line joining the knees as the base and the waist as the apex. The third triangle is formed with the outstretched arms and the vertical median. (Vatsyayan 1968: 17) The torso is mostly upright and is not frequently used while the basic *nāṭyarambha* position is earthbound (Gaston 1996b: 258–259).

2.1.1 Classification of *aḍavus*

Padma Subrahmanyam in her essay on *aḍavus* classifies them into thirteen categories by defining – feet positions like *sama* (facing front), *pārśva* (turned to the sides), *tryśra* (in a V shape) and *svastika* (crossed); feet variations like *kuṭṭanam* (stamping with sole), *tāḍita* (stamping with toes), *mardita* (bruising), *añcita* (toes held up); postures of the body like *sama* (body erect), *maṇḍala* (akin to *araimaṇḍi*), *ālīḍha* (when one leg is stretched out), *pratyālīḍha* (reverse of *ālīḍha*); and decorative hand gestures like *patākā, alapadma, kartarīmukha, śikhara, kaṭakāmukha,*[5] and so on. All these terms have been defined in ancient Sanskrit texts like *Abhinayadarpaṇa* (Ghosh 1957), *Saṅgītaratnākara* (Raja & Burnier 1976), and *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Ghosh 1951). Subrahmanyam also gives the *sollukaṭṭu* variations for every *aḍavu*. In this essay, she has furnished a notation for the feet movements of every *aḍavu* based on the lines of staff notation of western music. (Kothari 1997: 48) Mrinalini Sarabhai in her book *Understanding Bharatanāṭyam* classifies the *aḍavus* into fourteen different categories based on their basic functions. This classification is somewhat different and has certain new names for the *aḍavus*. (Sarabhai 2000: 26–27) Vatsyayan in her book on *Classical Indian Dance* classifies the *aḍavus* into nine groups based on their *sollukaṭṭu*. A detailed description of how the *aḍavu* is executed and its variations are given in textual form. (Vatsyayan 1974: 18–19) Rathna Kumar has used Egyptian hieroglyphics as a notation method to describe the *aḍavus* in her handbook (Kumar 1975). Mohan Khokar has furnished the descriptions of the *aḍavus* along with time measure for the *sollukaṭṭu* (Khokar 1979). In general, the number of categories of *aḍavus* varies between nine to fourteen with about six to ten

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[5] Detailed description of hand gestures will follow in the section on *āṅgika abhinaya*.

different variations in each of them, and when combined, may result in endless variations of *nṛtta* patterns (Devi 1972: 51; Gaston 1996b: 260).

At this juncture, I give a more detailed outlook on each category in the classification of *aḍavus*. The four different classifications put forward by Padma Subrahmanyam (Kothari 1997: 50–77), Mrinalini Sarabhai (Sarabhai 2000: 26–28), Kapila Vatsyayan (Vatsyayan 1974: 18, 19) and King Tulaja (Raghavan 1942: 36–39) is used for defining the *aḍavus*. However, Padma Subrahmanyam's classification is taken as the base, since it has a very detailed portrayal of the *aḍavus* considering the variations of foot positions and movements, body positions, and hand gestures. It is also very pertinent to what dancers of today learn. I have received personal training from this great doyen in the execution of *aḍavus*. The *aḍavus* can be classified into fourteen different categories. They are first executed in the right foot followed by the left foot to form symmetrical patterns in choreography. Each of the *aḍavu* is performed in three different speeds: *vilambita* (slow), *madhya* (middle) and *druta* (fast).

1. *taṭṭaḍavu* – The word *taṭṭa* in Tamil means "to beat" or "strike". This *aḍavu* involves striking the floor alternately with the sole, while the body is in the *araimaṇḍi* posture. There are in total, six to eight rhythmic or metrical variations under this category. The *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* are '*tai yā tai yā*'. When they are choreographed as part of the repertoire, they can be executed in relation to various *tālas*.

2. *nāṭṭaḍavu* – The word *nāṭṭu* in Tamil means "to stretch". The dancer from the position of *araimaṇḍi* stretches one leg outward, striking the floor with her heel, and then, it is brought back to the original position of *araimaṇḍi* by beating the floor with the sole. The other variations include stretching the leg in front of the body, or by placing one foot behind the other with the toes raised. The *nāṭṭaḍavu* also has respective hand and torso movements. The hand gestures used are *kaṭakāmukha* and *alapadma*. The *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* are '*tai yuṃ ta tā tai yuṃ tā hā*'.

3. *taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavu* – The words *taṭṭu–meṭṭu* in Tamil means "to strike and then to beat". Striking is done by keeping the heel raised with only the toes touching the floor. And then the heel is brought back to its flat position by beating. This is

usually performed in five different beats (*tālas*): *tiṣra* (*'ta ki ṭa'*), *catuśra* (*'ta ka di mī'*), *khaṇḍa* (*'ta ka ta ki ṭa'*), *miśra* (*'ta ka di mī ta ki ṭa'*), and *sankīrna* (*'ta ka di mī ta ka ta ki ṭa'*).

4. *kuṭṭaḍavu* – In this *aḍavu*, the feet strike the floor alternately. Both the feet are raised on its balls with a slight jump followed by one foot coming back to the flat (*taṭṭa*) position, while the other is still balanced on its toes. The body is in *araimaṇḍi* throughout. This *aḍavu* is performed in several permutations and combinations. The *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* are *'ta tai tā hā'*. Sarabhai mentions this *aḍavu* under the category of *eṭṭaḍavu*. *Eṭṭa* here means, "to reach out". This may be because the hands are moved in the fully stretched position with *tripatākā* hasta. However, all the variations of this *aḍavu* have no leg extensions.

5. *kuḍiṭṭumeṭṭaḍavu* – In Tamil, *kuḍiṭṭu* means "to jump" and *meṭṭu* means "to strike". In this *aḍavu*, both the feet are raised on its toes by jumping, followed by striking the floor with the heels. This *aḍavu* uses *alapadma*, *kaṭakāmukha,* and *tripatākā hastas*. The variations of this *aḍavu* are done using different hand movements (extended or closed arms). The common *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* are *'tai ha tai hi'*.

6. *mardita aḍavu* – This is also called *'tā tai tai tā' aḍavu* by many dance teachers. *Mardita* means "to bruise" or "to strafe". This *aḍavu* is performed by bruising the floor with the one foot moving to the right while the other foot goes behind the first foot.

7. *sarukkal aḍavu* – The word *sarukkal* means "to slide". The dancer performs this *aḍavu* in the *sama pāda* position. In this *aḍavu*, one foot is stretched sideways and is made to slide without raising the foot from the ground, while the other foot follows the first foot by sliding. Both the feet are then brought to the *sama pāda* position, and then, they are raised on their heels followed by beating of the floor with a slight jump. Some varieties include using toe–heel movement instead of heel–toe movement. The *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* are *'tai ha tai hi'* or *'ta tai tā hā'*.

8. *sutru aḍavu* – The word *sutru* means "to turn" or "whirl". Any swirling movement in the choreography belongs to this category. Here the dancer turns

with one foot raised by balancing her body on the other foot. Some dance teachers also call this the *bhramarī aḍavu.*

9. *paical aḍavu* − The word *paical* means "to leap" or "to jump". This *aḍavu* consists of leaps and jumps. They are more silent in nature and are done gracefully. The *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* are '*dha lāṃ gu ta ka'.*

10. *maṇḍi aḍavu* − The word *maṇḍi* means "knees". This *aḍavu* consists of movements where the entire body rests on its heels, jumping on the toes, and the knees are moved by touching the floor alternately. This *aḍavu* has many more variations where the dancer stretches one leg outwards while resting her body just on one heel. The *hastas* used here are *śikhara* and *patākā.*

11. *śimir aḍavu* − The word *śimir* means "to open". This *aḍavu* is performed by opening the hands and legs away from its central position. The hands move outwards like they are opening something. Sarabhai mentions *kaṭṭaḍavu* which is the forerunner of *śimir aḍavu.* They form the starting positions of *śimir aḍavu* and have arms positioned very close to the body as if enclosing. The *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* are '*tai yā tai hī'.*

12. *tirmāna aḍavu* − This is the most important *aḍavu* for the *nṛtta* part of Bharatanāṭyam. It is also called *makuṭa aḍavu.* The words *tirmāna* or *makuṭa* means "ending" or "climax" or "to conclude". This is mostly used for the final part of rhythmic sequences like *kōrvais* or *jatis.* This *aḍavu* generally leads to a group of movements that are repeated thrice, providing a cadence for the climax. There are a wide number of variations for this *aḍavu.* The permutations and combinations for this *aḍavu* can be very complex too. The movement of the arms can be either frontal or in circular patterns. This *aḍavu* involves an intense movement of the torso (twisting of waist), hands, and legs. The *hastas* used for this *aḍavu* are generally *patākā, alapadma, and tripatākā.* The *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavus* are '*dhi dhi tai', 'tai dhi dhi tai',* and so on.

13. *kōrvai aḍavu* − The word *kōrvai* means "to join" or "to connect". Many *aḍavus* put together in a sequence make a *kōrvai aḍavu. Taṭṭaḍavu, nāṭṭaḍavu, maṇḍi aḍavu, sarukkal aḍavu* can be woven together to form the *kōrvai aḍavu.* The starting *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* are '*ta tai tāṃ'.*

14. *mei aḍavu* – *Mei aḍavu* is a very old *aḍavu* that is hardly performed in today's Bharatanāṭyam. *Mei* means "body". This *aḍavu* shows the flexibility and the mobility of the entire body using the relevant hand, foot, and body movements.

Apart from these fourteen categories, there are a few other *aḍavus* mentioned by authors. Sarabhai mentions *periya aḍavu, vīsi aḍavu,* and *pakka aḍavu. Periya aḍavu* is used to cover large distances of space. Hand gestures like *alapadma* and *kaṭakāmukha* are used here. The *sollukaṭṭu* are '*tai yuṃ ta tā'*. In Tamil, *vīsi* means "to throw". Hence the author states that any movement that involves throwing the arms and legs into space or describing an arc with the leg should come under this category. Kothari mentions an *aḍavu* called *pakka aḍavu* which may be related to this one. The word *pakka* means "side". So, Sarabhai cites that any movement that involves the movement of the hands to the sides of the body or diagonal, to be categorized under these.

A combination of *aḍavus* joined together along with rhythmic *sollukaṭṭu* form a *jati*. A *jati* has a *tīrmānam* for which *tirmāna aḍavus* are executed. Once the *jati* is over, a small sequence of rhythmic ending phrase called *aruḍi* is performed. *Jatis* are performed with no melodic accompaniment, with only the *sollukaṭṭu* recited by the *naṭṭuvanār*. The way the *sollukaṭṭu* are recited for *aḍavus* in a *jati* sequence varies, depending on the type of *aḍavu*. Hard sounding syllables like '*ta din gin ṇa toṃ'* are used for movements that involve direct percussion instruments. For *paical aḍavu* or *sutru aḍavu*, softer sounds like *loṇgu* are used. (Gaston 1996b: 260)

2.2 *Āṅgika abhinaya*

Āṅgika abhinaya is one of the most important aspects of Indian dance. Subrahmanyam (1979: 5) says, "Physical expression is part of human nature. The connection between the psyche and physic is so intrinsic, that even the minutest vibration of the mind gets easily reflected through the body in daily life". The principles of *āṅgika abhinaya* are integral to and govern dancing, just as they govern the miming aspect of *nāṭya* or Indian drama. In colloquial Bharatanāṭyam, they are simply called *abhinaya*. When this aspect of Bharatanāṭyam is disregarded or eliminated, then the character of Indian dancing itself is lost. (Vatsyayan 1968: 26, 34) This is the reason why they are always intertwined with the emotional aspect of *bhāva–rasa* (Kothari 1997: 84). In order to attain a particular

state of *rasa*, Indian dance follows a systematic application of a series of laws that develops from the simplest unit of movement into a complex whole (Vatsyayan 1968: 36). The artist, through *abhinaya,* projects the *bhāva,* which is perceived as *rasa* by the spectators. The link between *abhinaya* and *bhāva–rasa* came about mainly because Indian dance is an adjunct of Indian drama, which states quite clearly that *nāṭya* aims to achieve the state of *rasa.* (Gaston 1996b: 262)

Every movement of the body is conceived keeping visual aesthetics, psychological effect, and spiritual enhancement of a human in mind. Physical to be raised to the spiritual has always been the message every Indian art has strived to achieve. Thus, gestures of the body used for communication is given the utmost thought and followed strictly. (Sarabhai 2000: 56) The world of Indian dance is guided by principles of suggestion rather than principles of imitation. The dancer never strives to show things as they are but makes use of grammar and artistic stylization through the use of gestures and emotions (Vatsyayan 1968: 34).[6] Gestures were first used by primitive people as a language of communication. Even now, certain words cannot be explained without action. Even though gestures look like they are symbolic and artistic, they are still natural and simple. They are quite easily used in social activities. (Ghosh 1957: 25) Gestures have been used from Vedic times (*Yajur Veda* uses symbolic formulae) as symbols to perform ceremonial acts and to invoke spiritual moods. Thus, gestures which form the core of Indian dancing are also the primary elements used for communication. (Devi 1972: 44)

Human body being the first and foremost instrument of expression; the early dance scholars devoted extreme care to every aspect of it and developed a unique vocabulary of movements which were consequently codified in the texts. A detailed analysis of movements of the *aṅgās* (major limbs of the body), *upāṅgas* (minor limbs of the body) and *pratyaṅgās* (other parts of the body) was performed and documented. (Coomaraswamy & Duggirala 1917; Ghosh 1957; Ghosh 1951; Kothari 1997: 84) Just like the notes of music in each *rāga,* the different parts of the human form are used analogously. With respect to *āṅgika abhinaya,* the *nṛtta* portions emphasize the major

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[6] By gesticulating through a series of variations of *āṅgika abhinaya, sañcāri bhāvas* are formed. They pertain mainly to the lyrics. (Vatsyayan 1968: 34)

limbs (*aṅgās*) like the head, chest, waist, hips, thigh, and feet while the *abhinaya* (mime) portions lay more emphasis on minor limbs (*upāṅgas*) like the eyebrows, eyelids, eyeballs, nose, lips, chin, and mouth. (Vatsyayan 1968: 382)

2.2.1 Classification of *āṅgika abhinaya*

Āṅgika is associated with the entire human body. The major limbs called the *aṅgās* automatically utilize the *upāṅgas* or the minor limbs when they are in movement. For example; the arm which is a major limb when moved, utilizes the elbows, the wrists, and the fingers. Despite the given classification, every limb of the body plays a fundamental role. (Sarabhai 2000: 34) Vatsyayan even prescribes specific movements of the limbs for specific *bhāvas* and *rasas*. Starting from the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Ghosh 1951: Ch. 8–10)*,* there have been several texts like *Saṅgītaratnākara* (Raja & Burnier 1976)*, Abhinayadarpaṇa* (Ghosh 1957)*, Bharatārṇava* (Gairoli 1978) that deal with the classification of *āṅgika abhinaya* in general. Nevertheless, there is some dissimilarity in the classifications and the number of movements specified for every limb. (Vatsyayan 1968: 44–45)[7]

After explaining the four kinds of *abhinaya, Nāṭyaśāstra* goes on to give the various movements of the body and their uses under *āṅgika abhinaya.* It gives thirteen different movements for the head, thirty–six different kinds of eye glances along with the specifications for specific *sthāyi bhāvas* and *rasas,* nine different movements for eyeballs, nine for eyelids, seven for eyebrows, six for nose, six for cheek, six for lower lips, seven for chin, six for mouth, and finally nine kinds of movements for the neck. Then the text moves on to hand gestures or *hastas* explaining twenty–four single–hand gestures, thirteen double–hand gestures, and twenty–seven *nṛtta hastas.* (Ghosh 1951: 148–167)

Abhinayadarpaṇa classifies *āṅgika abhinaya* into three categories: the *aṅgās,* the *upāṅgās,* and the *pratyaṅgās.* The *aṅgās* constitute the head, hands, chest, waist, sides, and feet. The *upāṅgas* constitute eyes, eyebrows, pupils, cheeks, nose, jaws, lips, teeth, tongue, chin, face, and head. The accessories to these are the ankles, toes, fingers, palms, and insides of the feet. The *pratyaṅgās* constitute the shoulders, shoulder–blades, arms,

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[7] *Abhinaya* in Bharatanāṭyam utilizes most importantly, the gestures of hands (*hasta abhinaya*) and movements of face (*mukhaja abhinaya*).

back, thighs, and calves along with wrist, elbows, and neck. Sarabhai (2000: 56) follows the same classification as that of *Abhinayadarpaṇa.* (Ghosh 1957: 24–28) Nandikeśvara in *Abhinayadarpaṇa* gives along with their uses, nine movements of the head, eight glances of the eye, four movements of the neck, twenty–eight single–hand gestures, and twenty–four double–hand gestures. The book lists in detail, gestures for representing gods, the ten avatars of Lord Viṣṇu, different castes, relations, and various planetary deities. The importance of *abhinaya* is offered by comparing it with painting, sculpture, ritual, recitation, folk–arts, and mysticism. The life and times of Nandikeśvara, is still unclear and cannot be said with any certainty. He is also said to have authored another text *Bharatārṇava*, in which he lists only twenty–six single–hand and sixteen double–hand gestures. (Ghosh 1957: 26–32; Coomaraswamy & Duggirala 1917) Bharatanāṭyam especially after the revival, methodically follows the *Abhinayadarpaṇa.*

Saṅgītaratnākara by Śārṅgadeva classifies *āṅgika abhinaya* as follows: *aṅgās* which include the head, two hands, chest, sides, hips, and the two feet; *pratyaṅgās* which include the neck, two arms, back, belly, two thighs, and two shanks; and *upāṅgas* that include eyes, eyebrows, eyelashes, pupils of the eye, cheeks, nose, breath, lips, teeth, tongue, chin in the face. Heels, ankles, fingers, toes, and soles of feet are that of the other limbs. Their detailed descriptions along with the uses include fourteen gestures of the head, twenty–four single–hand, thirteen double–hand, five chest movements, five movements of the sides and hips each, thirteen foot poses, five movements of the shoulders, nine neck movements, sixteen arm movements, three belly movements, five thigh movements, ten shank movements, five wrist movements, and seven knee movements. Again, the *upāṅgas* have their elaborate classification and use thirty–six eye glances, seven movements of the eyebrows, and so on. (Raja & Burnier 1976)

2.2.2 Hasta abhinaya

Out of the entire span of classification of *āṅgika abhinaya,* gestures of the hands are like the alphabets in a language. In Bharatanāṭyam, they remain the focal point around which everything else revolves. The endless possibilities of movements for the fingers and hands have been fully explored. These movements are classified into two main categories: *asaṃyuta hastas* or single–hand gestures, and *saṃyuta hastas* or double–hand

gestures. (Vatsyayan 1968: 35; Kothari 1997: 38) They form the building blocks of both *nṛtta* (*aḍavu* system) and *abhinaya* of Bharatanāṭyam. There is another category called *nṛtta hastas* which forms the decorative and beautifying aspect of the *karaṇas,* but are very rarely used in Bharatanāṭyam (Kothari 1997: 38). The single–hand and double–hand gestures can be used for imitation or suggestion. They can represent, interpret, and describe about things, concepts, and objects. They can explain abstract things like beauty and truth; they can convey emotions or can be used as symbols. They cover almost all aspects of human life and the universe. Distances between objects, the relationship between two objects, and passage of time can be shown using the *hastas.* (Vatsyayan 1968: 35; Kothari 1997: 38)

At this point, I delve in detail about the various *hastas* and their uses. The uses are many (Coomaraswamy & Duggirala 1917: 26–41), and hence, all of them are not listed down. Sarabhai's *Understanding Bharatanatyam* is followed for the classification, description, and uses. The description is also supported by pictures for better understanding.

Asaṃyuta hastas (Sarabhai 2000: 67–80)

patākā – All the fingers are held together and extended with only the thumb bent. *Patākā* means flag. It is used in *nāṭyārambha* position, to show clouds, horse, and forbidden things.

tripatākā – The third finger from the *patākā* is bent. It is used to show a crown, tree, or flames.

ardhapatākā – The little finger from the *tripatākā hasta* is bent. It is used to show the bank of a river, showing 'two' or 'both', or a small knife.

kartarīmukha – The forefinger and the middle finger are crossed from the *ardhapatākā hasta.* It is used to shows scissors, creepers, or separation of husband and wife.

mayūra – The thumb from the *tripatāka hasta* is joined with the ring finger, and the other fingers are extended. It is used to show a peacock or curls of the forehead.

ardhacandra – The thumb from the *patāka hasta* is stretched out. It is used to show moon, spear, or caught by the throat.

arāla – The first finger from the *patāka hasta* is bent. It is used to show strong wind, drinking poison, or nectar.

śukatuṇḍa – The third finger from the *arāla* is bent. It is used to show a plough, releasing an arrow, or throwing a spear.

muṣṭi – The four fingers of the palm enclose the thumb by bending. It is used to show grasping hair, holding an object, or wrestling.

śikhara – The thumb from the *muṣṭi* is raised. It is used to show a patron, husband, bow, or bell.

kapittha – The forefinger from the *śikhara* hand is bent over the thumb. It is used to show Goddess Lakṣmī, milking cows, or cymbals.

kaṭakāmukha – The forefinger and middle finger from the *kapittha* hand are joined while the other two fingers are raised. It is used to show plucking flowers, necklace, or wearing a garland.

sūcī – The forefinger alone is raised while others are bent and held by the thumb. It is used to show the number one, world, or city.

candrakalā – The thumb is separated from the *sūcī hasta.* It is used to show crescent moon, or face.

padmakośa – The fingers are stretched out, and the palm is bent to a hollow. It is used to show fruit, breasts, or rounded ball.

sarpaśiras – The *patāka* from the top fingers are curved. It is used to show a snake, or slowness.

mṛgaśīrṣa – The thumb and the little finger are extended, and the other three fingers are perpendicular to the palm. It is used to show cheek, or calling the beloved.

siṃhamukha – The middle finger and the ring finger are joined with the thumb while the other fingers are extended. It is used to show an elephant, or deer.

kāṅgula – The ring finger from the *padmakośa hasta* is bent. It is used to show jasmine, stones, or a handful of something.

alapadma – All the fingers a from the *padmakośa hasta* are extended and separated. It is used to show flowers, lotus, full moon, or face.

catura – The forefinger from the *siṃhamukha hasta* is also bent and joined to the thumb. It is used to show gold, copper and other metals, wet, or eyes.

bhramara – The forefinger is circled and bent, the thumb and middle finger touches while the other fingers are extended. It is used to show a bee, or horn.

haṃsāsya – The forefinger and the thumb are joined while the other fingers are extended. It is used to show a swan, drawing a picture, wisdom, or truth.

haṃsapakṣa – The thumb from the *mṛgaśīrṣa hasta* is extended. It is used to show the body, covering, or arrangement.

sandaṃśa – Closing and opening of the *padmakośa hasta*. It is used to show the number five, or giving offerings.

mukula – All the fingers from the *padmakośa hasta* are joined together. It is used to show waterlily, or mouse.

tāmracūḍa – The forefinger from the *mukula hasta* is bent. It is used to show crane, cock, or crow.

triśūla – All fingers are extended with the little finger and the thumb joined together. It is used to show number three, or a three–headed spear.

The *saṃyuta hastas* or the double–hand gestures are *añjali, kapota, karkaṭa, svastika, ḍolā, puṣpapuṭa, utsaṅga, śivaliṅga, kaṭakāvardhana, kartarīsvastika, sakaṭa, śaṅkha, cakra, sampuṭa, pāśa, kīlaka, matsya, kūrma, varāha, garuḍa, nāgabandha, khaṭva,* and *bheruṇḍa.* They are shown in pictures along with their respective names. (Sarabhai 2000: 80–84)

Figure 2.1 *Asaṃyuta hastas* (Picture: by author)

patākā | tripatākā | ardhapatākā | kartarīmukha | mayūra | ardhacandra | arāla | sukatuṇḍa | muṣṭi | śikhara

kapittha | kaṭakāmukha | sūcī | candrakalā | padmakośa | sarpaśiras | mṛgaśīrṣa | siṃhamukha | kāṅgula | alapadma

catura | bhramara | haṃsāsya | haṃsapakṣa | sandaṃśa | mukula | tāmracūḍa | triśūla

Figure 2.2 *Saṃyuta hastas* (Picture: by author)

añjali | kapota | karkaṭa | svastika | dolā | puṣpapuṭa | utsaṅga | śivaliṅga

kaṭakāvardhana | kartarīsvastika | sakaṭa | śaṅkha | cakra | sampuṭa | pāśa | kīlaka

matsya | kūrma | varāha | garuḍa | nāgabandha | khaṭva | bheruṇḍa

2.3 *Vācika abhinaya*

According to the texts like *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Saṅgītaratnākara,* which focus on both dance and dramaturgy, *vācika abhinaya* includes aspects like proper pronunciation, modulation of voice, accent, and rhythm (Ghosh 1951: 149; Raja & Burnier 1976: 3). Nandikeśvara in *Abhinayadarpaṇa* remarks that *vācika abhinaya* takes the first position in a play, as it is an important determinant of the other three branches of *abhinaya.* The meaning and the number of guidelines existing for *vācika abhinaya* is much more extensive than just the rules of dramatic delivery. (Ghosh 1957: 14) In *nāṭya,* the actors themselves use speech, while the *vācika abhinaya* in dance is only the musical accompaniment. *Nṛtta* in Bharatanāṭyam uses *tāla*[8] (rhythm), and improvisations on the basic *tāla* as the musical accompaniment. Poetry, lyrical or a narrative, set to a *rāga*[9] (melody or musical mode) within a specific *tāla* is utilized for *abhinaya* portions. The solo dancer in Bharatanāṭyam portrays several interpretations for the lyrics, which are called *sañcāri*[10] *bhāvas.* A series of variations in *āṅgika abhinaya* interprets every word of the poetry in many ways. (Vatsyayan 1968: 34) The expression also comes from the way the words are sung by the main singer. Clarity of voice is essential since the audience will have to hear and comprehend every word of the song.[11] (Sarabhai 2000: 35)

The musical compositions specifically made for a dance recital differ widely from the compositions used in a pure musical recital. For a musical recital, the importance lies on sheer musical values (*rāgas),* while for the music that accompanies a dance recital, three factors are given high weightage – musical modes, rhythmical content, and *sāhitya*[12] or the literary content. (Kothari, 1997: 132) The above three factors are stressed differently at different points during the dance recital. When all the three are combined, for instance

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[8] The literal meaning of the term *tāla* has been given in section 2. It will be addressed again later in this chapter.

[9] The literal meaning of the term *rāga* has been given in section 2. It will be addressed again later in this chapter.

[10] *Sañcāris* are elaborations for the *sāhitya* (lyrics for the song). It could be through different interpretative gestures or through stories.

[11] There are two ways of expressing *abhinaya:* 1. *padārtha abhinaya* means the expression of word–to–word meaning, 2. *vākyyārtha abhinaya* is the communication of the general idea of a sentence or the mood (Subrahmanyam 2003: 34).

[12] The word *sāhitya* in Sanskrit translates to "literary or rhetorical composition", "poetry", "association" or "connection" (Monier Williams 2008*).*

in the *varṇam*[13]; it becomes the highlight of the recital. (Puri 2004: 53) The movement sequences of the dancer are dependent on the type of music rendered. For lyrical content, the dancer interprets the words with her/his hands and face, even though she/he may keep rhythm by variations of the feet. When there are no lyrics, the dancer uses the entire body to keep the rhythm. Thus, lyrical content always takes precedence over musical mode or rhythm from the perspective of a dancer. (Puri 2004: 53)

The music in Bharatanāṭyam is not superficial but has an outer and an inner meaning – the literal meaning, and the meaning that one can interpret from the lyrics. Besides, irrespective of the words, it has a lot of ups and downs, curves and glides, pauses and frills in the melody. Thus, the dancer must be in alignment with the spirit of music and the song before she gesturally weaves them. (Guhan 1991: 12–14) There is also a reverse effect of dance on music through which certain musical compositions acquire a distinctive character. *Ṭhumarī, bhajans, jāvalis,* and *pada varṇas* are some musical forms that were conditioned by dance. (Vatsyayan 1968: 381)

2.3.1 Importance of *vācika abhinaya* in dance

Kapila Vastsyayan (1968: 380) quotes,

> "To place a commonplace analogy, sculpture and dance seems like two sisters of the same family; literature and dance the background and foreground of the same picture; music and dance the two limbs of the same human form. The relationship of these two arts is so intimate that at certain moments it is difficult to distinguish one from another in the final artistic product."

Even though the dancer is supported by an ensemble of musicians, he or she must also be trained in the branch of music. Markendeya, the author of *Viṣṇdharmottara Purāṇa* told King Vajra to learn the art of dance before he learned the art of icon–making; to learn the art of music before he learned the art of dance; and above all, to master the art of *tāla* before he attempted to learn music (Kramrisch 1928: 31–32). This remains the fundamental principle of Indian arts. The interrelationship between the Indian arts like

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[13] *Varṇam* is the most complex of all items in the repertoire. It has aspects of complicated *nṛtta* and versatile *abhinaya*. The item is very intricate, with a lot of substance. It goes on for about an hour (longest item of the repertoire) giving full scope for the dancer to improvise. (Gaston 1996b: 273, 274; Vatsyayan 1974: 22)

sculpture, literature, music, and dancing has been recognized not just on the aesthetic level but also on the level of technique (Vatsyayan 1968: 380). There can be music without dance but no dance without music. Hence, music is an integral part and forms a solid foundation for the fortress of dance to be built on (Kothari 1997: 132).

The *śāstras* in India have confirmed that dance is an embodiment of music in visual form and an individual who is pursuing dance must be equally dedicated to music. At a point in history, around the 9th century, *gīta* (vocal music), *vādya* (instrumental music), and *nṛtta* (dance) came to be considered homogeneous and mutually dependent (Subrahmanyam 2003: 32). Even then, Śārṅgadeva in *Saṅgītaratnākarā* (Raja & Burnier 1976) stresses on the predominance of music that guides dance. *Saṅgītaratnākarā* is a book that was influenced by *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Ghosh 1951)*, Dattilam* (Sastri 1930), and *Bṛhaddeśī* of Mātaṅga Muni (Sastri 1928). *Bṛhaddeśī* was a landmark text in the field of music. It was the earliest extant text to describe *rāga*, introduce the 'sā rī ga ma' notations[14], and to establish the concept of *mārga* and *deśi*[15]. (Subrahmanyam 2003: 55, 56; Subrahmanyam 2014a; Rao 1992: Ch. 2) Apart from the Sanskrit texts, there are examples of Tamil texts that have held dance and music in balance. *Pañcamarapu* by Aṟivanār gives us in black and white, the tradition relating to the five–fold elements of dance and music; *isai* or music is his first element (Goundar 1975: 17–24). The art of South Indian Carnatic (*Karnāṭik*) music and Bharatanāṭyam were nurtured by the Maratha kings of Tanjore. The illustrious trinity: Tyāgarāja (1800 CE – 1850 CE), Mutthusvāmi Dīkṣitar (1776 CE – 1835 CE), and Śyāma Śāstri (1762 CE – 1827 CE) of South Indian Carnatic music, whose compositions have been luxuriously used for Bharatanāṭyam, also lived there. Some *naṭṭuvanārs* like Gankaimuttu, Subbarayan, and Chidambaram who lived in the late 18th century, sang songs like *tevāram*[16] in the temples and performed *abhinaya* for them (Narayan 2010: 105). Balasaraswati, the dance legend argues that ideally the songs must be sung by the dancer as she/he dances, which was the case in earlier times. This means that the dancer must be well–versed with aspects of

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[14] 'sā rī ga ma pa dha ni sā' are the seven notes used successively in an octave of Carnatic music system, (also written as S R G M P D N Ṡ). A *svara* is formed by permutations and combinations of these sol–fa syllables.

[15] The concepts of *mārga* and *desi* have been addressed in chapter 1, page 40.

[16] The compositions of the *nāyaṉmārs* – Appar, Cundarar, and Tiruñāṉacampantar, are called "*tevāram*".

music as well. But in Bharatanāṭyam that we know of today, the dancer is supported by a singer in the accompanying orchestra. (Guhan 1991: 12–14)

2.3.2 Instruments used in Bharatanāṭyam

The ancient texts on dance and drama have detailed the kinds of instruments that can be used (All India Radio 1948: 19). The instruments used in a Bharatanāṭyam recital in today's time include *mṛidaṅgam*, *naṭṭuvāṅgam* (cymbals), violin, and sometimes flute. The *mṛidaṅgam* is a percussion instrument that is very critical for the *tāla* aspect of Bharatanāṭyam. A pair of cymbals called a *naṭṭuvāṅgam* is used by the *naṭṭuvanār,* or in most cases the dance master. A dance master is one who is extremely proficient in music and rhythm. He is the conductor of the orchestra and can understand the intricacies of *vācika abhinaya.* He chants the rhythmic mnemonic syllables called *sollukaṭṭu* which are profusely used for the *nṛtta* aspect of Bharatanāṭyam. Violin is a foreign instrument introduced into the dance recitals in the 19th century by Vaṭivēlu, one of the Tanjore brothers. (Puri 2004: 52; Narayan 2010: 105) This was also during the period when Tanjore became an annexation of the British Empire. The dances of *devadāsīs* from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries had a clarinet and a tambura (or harmonium, a drone instrument) (All India Radio 1948: 19). However, this was removed and replaced with flute by Rukmini Devi during the revival of Bharatanāṭyam in the 1930s. Some texts also mention the use of *vīṇā*, a stringed instrument, and *ghaṭam,* a percussion instrument, for Bharatanāṭyam. (Kothari 1997: 135)

2.3.3 Tāla

All Indian arts, be it music, dance, sculpture or painting, is based on the fundamental principles of *tāla* meaning "metrical cycle" or "rhythm". Thus, every form of Indian art is preoccupied with time on different levels. (Vatsyayan 1968: 380) At this point, it is important to understand some basic technical terms and the *tāla* system. *Tālas* are nothing but the many varieties of time measure. To add more clarity to the time measures, six *aṅgās* (limbs) have been put forward: *laghu, dṛtam, aṇudṛtam, guru, plutam,* and *kākapādam.* The last three are rarely used, and hence they shall be ignored. A *laghu* (l) is performed by one beat of the hand and three (or more) counts of the fingers starting from the little finger towards the thumb. A *dṛtam* (O) is performed by

one beat of the hand and one wave of the hand in the air. An *anudṛtam* (U) is performed by one beat of the hand. (Parthasarathy 1982: 162; Subrahmanyam 2013a: 1,2; Panchāpakésa Iyer 2014: 13)

The *laghu, dṛtam,* and *aṇudṛtam* are used differently in the seven basic *tālas*: *druva, matya, rūpaka, triputa, aka,* and *eka.* For example; *tripuṭa tāla* has one *laghu* and two *dṛtams* (lOO). But the *laghu* in every *tāla* changes according to five different types of *jātīs* or rhythmic beats: *tiṣra* (3 beats) *catuṣra* (4 beats)*, khaṇḍa* (5 beats), *miṣra* (7 beats), and *sankīrna* (9 beats). For example; *tripuṭa tāla* executed in *catuṣra jātī* is called *ādi tāla* which is most commonly used in dance compositions. Thus, the seven different types of *tāla* executed in five different types of *jātī* gives thirty–five *tāla* varieties. These thirty–five different *tāla* can, in turn, be executed in five different types of *gatī* or units of time, giving in total – one hundred and thirty–five varieties of *tāla.* The most commonly used *tāla* for Bharatanāṭyam are *ādi tāla* which has a total of 8 beats, and *rūpaka tāla* which has a total of 6 beats. (Sarabhai 2000: 110–111; Ratanjankar 1967: 113–129; Panchāpakésa Iyer 2014: 13) There exists a system of notation in South Indian Carnatic music. The *svaras* or the basic sol–fa syllables of Carnatic music are – S R G M P D N Ṡ. Each of these notes, in turn, have five octaves, also called *sthāyī.* Out of the five, three are more commonly used.

S – note in the normal (middle) octave

Ṡ – note in the higher octave

Ṣ – note in the lower octave

For example, the basic sol–fa syllables in Carnatic music set to *ādi tāla* are notated as follows:

S , , ,   R , , ,   G , , , ,   M , , , , |

P , , ,   D , , , | N , , ,   Ṡ , , , , ‖

The above notation is for one cycle of *ādi tāla.* The first line is the *laghu* that is set to *catuṣra jātī* (4 beats). In a *catuṣra gatī*, every beat, in turn, has four *mātrās* (i.e.) one beat of the hand has four internal beats. The internal beats without a note is denoted by a

comma. If a note appears, the note (for example: S) takes the place of one internal beat. The end of the *laghu* is marked by the sign |. The second line consists of two *dṛtams*; they are separated by the sign |. The sign ‖ denotes the end of the *tāla*. The sign – is used to indicate the splitting of *svaras* (they are not sung continuously). The above complete sequence of *ādi tāla* makes one *āvartana*. (Parthasarathy 1967: 117; Sambamurti 1940: 60, 61; Panchāpakésa Iyer 2014: 13, 20–23)

The three factors – musical modes, rhythmical content used for abstract dancing, and literary content (*sāhitya*) used for gesticulation, are based on *tāla*.[17] However, *tāla* is most emphasized in the *nṛtta* portions; which is also the most physically challenging, with highly intricate patterns of footwork and hand movements. There is a set of rhythmic syllables called *sollukaṭṭu* recited by the *naṭṭuvanār* along with rhythm maintained by the *mṛidaṅgam*. These *sollukaṭṭu* (example: *ta ka ta ri gi ṇa tom*) impart beauty and liveliness to the performance which is not present in other music civilizations around the world. (Kothari, 1997: 134) The *sollukaṭṭu* for the five different *jātīs* are *ta ki ṭa* (3 beats), *ta ka di mī* (4 beats), *ta ka ta ki ṭa* (5 beats), *ta ki ṭa ta ka di mī* (7 beats) and *ta ka di mī ta ka ta ki ṭa* (9 beats). These are also called *jātī aḍavus* or *taṭṭimeṭṭu aḍavus* (Devi 1972: 55).

By combining these rhythmic patterns for several *āvartanas*, a *jati* is formed in Bharatanāṭyam. Rhythm and speed form the backbone of a *jati*. It is generally executed in three speeds: *vilambita kāla*[18] (slow), *madhya kāla* (middle), and *dṛta kāla* (fast). The counts in the slow speed are doubled for middle and quadrupled for fast speed. *Jatis* are recited by the *naṭṭuvanār* who is accompanied by the *mṛidaṅgam*. The dancer's anklet (called *salaṅgai*) keeps rhythm. Every *jati* ends with a rhythmic pattern being repeated thrice called the *tīrmānam*. Different *aḍavus* are choreographed for the *jati* sequences, and creativity plays a crucial role here. *Tīrmānams* facilitate in giving cues for the musicians to anticipate the end of the rhythmic passage. Thus, they can start the song exactly when the *jati* concludes. These intricate links in *tāla* between the rhythmic passages and the start of musical mode (*rāga*) requires immense training of the dancer

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[17] The musical modes which are usually referred to as the *svara* will have the 'S R G M' notation, the rhythmical content will have *sollukaṭṭu*, and the literary content will have the lyrics itself fitted into this *tāla* cycle.

[18] The word *kāla* means "period of time", "measure of time", "for a certain time", "part" or "measure" (Monier Williams 2008).

and the accompanying orchestra. Highly accomplished performers can execute *jatis* in cross–rhythms that are devised in different time measures. For instance, a song composition which is in *catuṣra jātī* (4 beats) is converted to a *tiṣra jātī* (3 beats), while performing the rhythmic passage with *sollukaṭṭu;* and it is reverted to the original four beats when the song resumes. These rhythmic passages are unique to dance recitals and are never used in typical music recitals. (Gaston 1996b: 260; Devi 1972: 55)

2.3.4 *Rāga*

The combination of notes into a unique and individual structure is called a *rāga*. This forms the essence of Indian music with emotional characteristics. The word *rāga* in Sanskrit translates into several meanings: "hue or color", "passion or desire", "love", "beauty", "melody", "harmony", "musical note" (Monier Williams 2008; Britannica 2018).[19] A musician uses the individual structure of a *rāga* to express different melodic types (Sarabhai 2000: 109–110). *Śruti* refers to the pitch, while a *svara* is the successive steps of an octave. Thus, a *svara* is built from *śruti*. The ascending and descending scales in a *svara* are called *ārohaṇam* and *avarohaṇam*. When notes in the ascending and descending scales of the *svara* are emphasized in a specific way, a *rāga* is born. A *rāga* gives rise to an emotional mood depending on how the musician treats the notes in the *svara* (emphasizing, ignoring, lingering, or running through). (Vatsyayan 1968: 380–382; Parthasarathy 1993: 85) Thus, it is very closely attached with *bhāva–rasa* technique because there are specific *rāgas* that evoke certain *rasas,* and are to be sung at certain hours of the day (Sarabhai 2000: 109–110; Rao 1992). In a Bharatanāṭyam recital, both the *rāga* and the *tāla* elements must be in balance for the seamless evocation of *rasa*. In recent times, more emphasis is being given for the rhythmic aspect that leads to the neglect of *rāga* resulting in a performance with very little emotional weight (Guhan 1991: 12–14).

Svaras are commonly used in Bharatanāṭyam within a *tāla* structure. They are either sung to the Carnatic music sol–fa syllables or could just be played by instruments like the *vīṇā*, flute, or the violin. At other times, the melody or the *rāga* is sung to lyrics or words. These are the *sāhitya* passages where the dancer communicates a specific

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[19] *Acoustical Perspective on Raga–Rasa Theory* (Rao 1992), *The Rāga's of Northern Indian Music* (Daniélou 2007) and *Grammar of Carnatic Music* (Vijaykrishnan 2007) are some works on *rāga*.

meaning to the audience through *āṅgika abhinaya. Padams, jāvalis, śabdams,* and *varṇams* have a lot of lyrical passages that have immense potential for expressive gestures along with establishing the right *bhāva.* Thus, it is important even for a spectator of Bharatanāṭyam to have heightened knowledge about the art form. (Kothari 1997: 132; Puri 2004: 52–53)

At the beginning of every item or a song in a dance recital, the musicians start with a prelude that enables them to set the *rāga.* After this, the *mṛidaṅgist* and the *naṭṭuvāṅār* set the right *tāla* speed for the item. The dancer weaves abstract dance sequences or *aḍavus* for the purely metrical rhythmic patterns, and she/he uses her/his stylized gestural language, or aspects of *āṅgika abhinaya* to interpret the words of the poem or the lyrics of the song. The dancer uses her/his entire body as an instrument to interpret and communicate. A song structure in Carnatic music is made up of three or more stanzas: *pallavi, anupallavi,* and one or more *caraṇams.* It is essential for a dancer of Bharatanāṭyam to take a single line of poetry and be able to interpret it in an innumerable number of ways. The dancer explores and improvises different ways in which the line could be interpreted. This depends on their skill and proficiency. (Puri 2004: 54; Gaston 1996b: 260–261; Vatsyayan 1968: 383) For instance; "*bāro kṛṣnayya*" is a song sung by Yaśoda (Lord Kṛṣna's mother) to Kṛṣna. In the *anupallavi,* Yaśoda says, "come, show me your face". A dancer[20] could interpret this in so many ways. She could show a gesture where she asks Kṛṣna to show his face. She could say his face is beautiful. She could call him and lift him to see his face closely. She could take him to a river and compare the reflection of the moon on the still water to his face. Likewise, there could be so many different imaginations that can be pursued by the dancer, which, sequentially help in establishing the *bhāva* for the musical composition.

There is a progressive build–up of musical patterns in the sphere of rhythmical, musical, and lyrical passages in a Bharatanāṭyam recital. They, in turn, are used for *nṛtta* and *abhinaya.* Items like the *varṇam* have both, *nṛtta* and *abhinaya* in very complex levels. Further details about the song and rhythmical structure for individual items will be addressed separately in the next chapter.

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[20] Although a dancer can be a male or a female, I assume the dancer is a female in this context.

2.4 *Āhārya abhinaya*

According to the Sanskrit texts on Indian drama, *āhārya abhinaya* consists of costumes, make–up, lightings, backdrop, and weapons or other props carried by the artist. With *āhārya abhinaya*, the artist can reveal his/her character, social position, or class in the play. (Raja & Burnier 1976: 3; Ghosh 1957: 14) The costumes used in drama varies based on the region, time, and mood of the dance. Based on the temperament of the characters, specific face colors or dress codes are mentioned (Ghosh 1951). For example; a character that is ferocious and evil will have his face painted in red color. This technique is being followed in Kathakali dance form of Kerala even today. (Sarabhai 2000: 35) However, in Bharatanāṭyam, the solo dancer portrays several characters in the same costume. The costume has no connection with the character that the dancer portrays. *Saṅgītaratnākara,* a Sanskrit treatise on Indian dancing describes the appearance of a solo dancer. He says the dancer should have her hair oiled and worn up in a chignon or as a plait that is decorated. Her entire body should be smeared in sandal paste. The costume is to be made from silk cloth, and jewelry to be worn as necklace and rings. The make–up should consist of eyes darkened and lined with *kājal* (eye–liner) with a *tilak* mark[21] on the forehead along with musk and sandal paste. (Sarabhai 2000: 35)

The costumes, jewelry, and make–up would have differed from one era to another in history. Before the revival in the 1930s, the *catir* artists wore a saree along with a pajama and a piece of muslin cloth that hung in front like an apron (or a fan). This fan–apron had several golden tassels hanging that gave it a grand look. Figure 2.3 shows a picture of *catir* artists wearing this kind of costume. The ornaments consisted of a disc (*rakodi*) on the back of the head; headset in the front that consisted of *chuṭṭi*, *caṅdran* (moon) and *sūryan* (sun); a serpent ornament on the plait; nose ornaments called *nathu*, *bullāku*; a necklace close to the neck; a longer necklace (*māṅga hāram*); and a waist belt called *oḍyāṇam*. Most of these ornaments were used even after the revival period except for the serpent ornament on the plait. (Devi 1972: 50)

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[21] This mark is known as *biṅdī* or *poṭṭu* in certain parts of India. It is a mark that is sported between the eyebrows by women.

Figure 2.3: *Catir costume* from the late 18ᵗʰ and early 19ᵗʰ centuries (Ilangovan 2013)
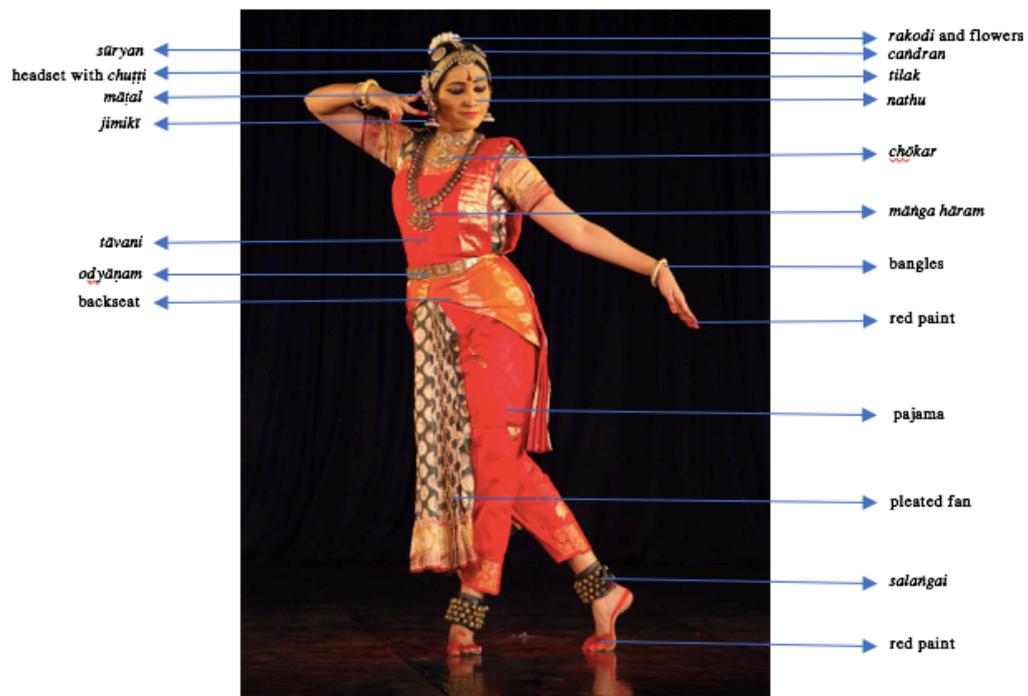
Figure 2.4 Bharatanāṭyam costume (Picture courtesy: Lavanya Sankar)

The most common costumes and jewelry worn today were designed during the revival period. During the 1930s, Rukmini Devi redesigned the costume used by the earlier *catir* artists. She created the very famous pajama–style 'stitched' costume designed by an Italian seamstress, Madame Cazan. Rukmini used this costume in white and gold for her debut performance in 1936. She gave much importance also to the jewelry. Most of her costume and jewelry designs were inspired by the temple sculptures that made a splendid stage presence. (Gopal 2003; Yennamalli 2013)

Today, the Bharatanāṭyam dancers wear a silk saree that is pre–stitched into a pajama costume with a beautiful pleated fan in the front as shown in Figure 2.4. Sometimes there is another variation called the skirt costume where the pajama–pant and fan are replaced by a silk skirt with a pleated fan. The jewelry consists of a headset with *chuṭṭi, caṅdran* (moon) and *sūryan* (sun), *rakodi* at the back of head, hair made into a chignon or plaited with flowers, necklace close to the neck (*chōkar*) and a longer *māṅga hāram,* waist–belt, earrings (*jimikī* and *māṭal*), bangles, and *salaṅgai* (ankle bells) on the feet. The facial make–up consists of red *tilak* on the forehead, darkened eyebrows and eyes, and lipstick. The dancer's hands and legs have red paint around the edges which make the *hasta abhinaya* more discernible. The various parts of the costume and jewelry for a Bharatanāṭyam dancer have been labeled in Figure 2.4.

2.5 *Sāttvika abhinaya*

This branch of *abhinaya* is based on the mental state of the dancer. The idea of communicating something through mental involvement is called *sāttvika abhinaya.* This type of *abhinaya* should be felt by the artist and is one that cannot be taught. (Subrahmanyam 2003: 37) A natural emotion, when expressed in art, can be depicted in a particular state of mind or mental condition (Sarabhai 2000: 36). The internal emotions of the actor that is also reciprocated by the spectators can be termed as *sāttvika. Sāttvika abhinaya* is related to the states of emotion or the eight psychic principles that govern the art of Indian drama. They are *sthamba* (motionlessness), *sveda* (perspiration), *romāñca* (horripilation), *swarasāda* (change of voice), *vepathuḥ* (trembling), *vaivarṇya* (change of color), *aśru* (shedding tears), and *palya* (fainting). Each one of them consists of specific hand gestures to represent them. (Raja & Burnier 1976: 3) But the difference between

āṅgika abhinaya and *sāttvika abhinaya* is that the earlier is mostly focused on external elements, while the latter represents feeling and emotions of the psyche. Even though the borders between the two are not discernible; they still form a separate branch of *abhinaya*. Nevertheless, there is every possibility that when *sāttvika abhinaya* is portrayed without internalizing the feelings it could be downgraded into *āṅgika abhinaya.* (Ghosh 1957: 14; Subrahmanyam 2003: 37)

2.6 *Bāṇis*

The nuances in the technique of performing *nṛtta* and *abhinaya* vary based on the styles of Bharatanāṭyam called *bāṇis* or *vaḻis*, which have come up in the last few decades. The basic structure and technique remain the same, while there are minor variations in execution and embellishments. (Gaston 1996b: 260) *Bāṇis* are different dancing styles. The root of the word lies in Tamil, where it is translated as *pāṇi,* meaning "style". It is sometimes referred to as "tradition". It is also colloquially called *vaḻi* in Tamil. *Vaḻi* means "way" or "method" or "manner". (akarāti 2016) Recently, people refer to *bāṇis* as different schools that exist in Bharatanāṭyam. Lakshminarayanan (2010: 29) defines *bāṇi* as a "way of teaching, using movements in a certain way". Khokar (2010: 23) says, "the teachers are the rivers and *bāṇis,* its tributaries". The name of a *bāṇi* comes from the region the dance teacher or the *naṭṭuvanār* hails from. *Bāṇi* has a recognizable technique and repertoire that is developed by the *naṭṭuvanār* and perpetuated by his students.[22] The imagination, creativity, and artistry of the *naṭṭuvanār* can be affecting factors that determine a style (Kothari 1997: 44). The different *bāṇis* in Bharatanāṭyam came up post its revival period when the hereditary dance teachers migrated to urban cities and started teaching. 'Vazhuvoor *bāṇi'* made famous by Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai; 'Pandanallur *bāṇi'* made famous by Pandanallur Meenakshisundaram Pillai, 'Tanjavur *bāṇi'* propagated by K. Kalyanasundaram, Kittapa Pillai, Dandayudhapani Pillai, and T. Balasaraswati; 'Kattumannarkoil *bāṇi'* from Kattumannarkoil Muthukumara Pillai; 'Kalakshetra *bāṇi'* from Rukmini Devi Arundale; and 'Mysore *bāṇi'* from Jatti Thayamma are some of the well–known *bāṇis* in Bharatanāṭyam.

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[22] A new perspective came up at a panel discussion titled "Caste, Gender, Privilege and their roles in the Bharatanatyam landscape" which transpired at the Natya Kala Conference 2018 titled "Aneka" on 27th December. A member of this panel was a performer of the hereditary lineage, Nrithya Pillai. She contested on the popular notion of *bāṇi* being always linked to a *naṭṭuvanār* or a hereditary dance master. For her, the forgotten *devadāsīs* or the hereditary dancers played a greater role in the origin of the different styles.

2.6.1 *Aḍavu* variations according to different *bāṇis*

With respect to *nṛtta*, there can never be a definite way of performing an *aḍavu.* The *aḍavus* vary from one style to another. Some *bāṇis* use kicking movements while many do not accept this. Usage of space differs based on the lineage of the guru. Turning the back to the audience is allowed just for a brief period in certain *bāṇis*. The stress on *aṅgaśudha* (body lines); grace and softness; importance given to *tāla* are some factors that change based on the specialization of every *bāṇi*. The Pandanallur *bāṇi* focusses on diverse *aḍavu* vocabulary, geometrical lines and precision, symmetry, and harmony of rhythmic permutations. (Valli 2010: 18) Kattumannarkoil Muthukumara Pillai's *bāṇi* emphasizes on continuous flow without evident breaks while performing a series of *aḍavu* patterns (Khokar 2010: 25–26). The Vazhuvoor *bāṇi* pays attention to having fast–paced *jatis*[23] with powerful *sollukaṭṭu*. Certain intricacies on *aḍavu* execution are clearly visible. For example; while executing the *tirmāna aḍavu* with the circular movement of the arm, importance is given to the *araimaṇḍi,* and hand touching the floor when the *aḍavu* is complete. (Lakshminarayanan 2010: 29, 31) Tanjavur *bāṇi* of Kalyanasundaram is marked by the perfect alignment of limbs along with both *aḻuttam* (firmness) and alluring grace (Mohan 2010: 36). While Tanjavur *bāṇi* of Kittapa Pillai choreographs less complex *jatis* in middle pace (Chapekar 2010: 44). Dandayudhapani Pillai's *bāṇi* has many differences in the way certain *aḍavu*s are executed. For example; *taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavu* is done with knees in the front. In *mardita aḍavu,* the feet are brought back to *samapāda* position instead of *araimaṇḍi*. In *sarukkal aḍavu,* only a single heel goes up before it strikes the floor. (Satyanarayanan 2010: 49) Mysore *bāṇi* is popular for its flowery hand gestures like *alapadma* and *kaṭakāmukha* rather than straight ones like *patākā* or *tripatākā* (Srinivasan 2010: 65).

2.6.2 *Abhinaya* variations according to different *bāṇis*

The way *abhinaya* is rendered differs based on the *bāṇis*, the *naṭṭuvanār,* and the style of the dancer. Music, lyrics, and the meaning behind the lyrics are a connected whole in Pandanallur style. In this style, importance is given to the *nāṭyadharmī* mode of

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[23] By combining these rhythmic patterns for several *āvartanas,* a *jati* is formed in Bharatanāṭyam. Rhythm and speed form the backbone of a *jati*.

presentation rather than *lokadharmī,* for the evocation of mood and emotions.[24] Just like in *nṛtta*, the clarity of *hasta abhinaya* (hand gestures) is given emphasis. The very famous *kulukku naṭai* (walk with a jerk) formed a substratum layer which was used in all *abhinaya* portions. (Valli 2010: 19) Muthukumara Pillai stressed on laying weight to knowing the direct and indirect meaning of the song which would create a feeling within, through which expressions could ultimately flow. He would teach by demonstrating the *hasta abhinaya* (hand gestures) and *mukhaja abhinaya* (facial expressions). (Khokar 2010: 26) Vazhuvoor Ramaiah Pillai and Dandayudhapani Pillai were poles apart in rendering the *sañcāris* (gesticulation of variations in *āṅgika abhinaya).* Vazhuvoor Ramaiah Pillai called attention to storytelling and elaborating the *sañcāris,* while Dandayudhapani Pillai liked to have just one or two variations of *abhinaya* for a line in *sañcāris*. It was just *padārtha abhinaya* (expression of the word–to–word meaning) by Dandayudhapani Pillai with almost no elaboration with a very *nāṭyadharmī* style while Vazhuvoor Ramaiah Pillai loved to use a lot of *lokadharmī* mode with varied abhinaya. (Lakshminarayanan 2010: 29; Satyanarayanan 2010: 49) Guru Mahalingam was another *naṭṭuvanār* who advocated *nāṭyadharmī* over *lokadharmī,* and was well–known for his very fine *abhinaya* in *padams* and *jāvalis* (Mohan 2010: 35). Mysore school of dance paid importance to precise and stylized hand gestures leading to a more *nāṭyadharmī* mode of presentation (Srinivasan 2010: 67). All *naṭṭuvanārs* from the Tanjore style seem to have given importance to the musical and emotional aspect of dance. Balasaraswati from Tanjore considered facial expression to be an extension of gestural expression which subsequently is the reflection of intricacies of music. She would train her students by singing various *svaras* and look at how the nuances of music are interpreted through *hastas* by them. (Poursine 1990: 162) Kittapa Pillai from Tanjore style blended all the musical nuances beautifully into a pattern of *abhinaya*. Words and emotional content of the song were given priority over nuances in music. (Chapekar 2010: 44)

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[24] The concepts of *nāṭyadharmī* and *lokadharmī* are available in footnotes in the introduction to this chapter.

2.7 *Bhāva–rasa* and *śṛṅgāra rasa*

The word *bhāva* translates to "emotion", "way of thinking or feeling", "manner of acting", or "intention" (Monier Williams 2008). It relates to the psycho–physiological states, moods, and feelings of the performer. Simply put, it is a kind of "emotional trigger" that the performer uses on stage to create a *rasa* experience for the audience. The aim of any performance has been to achieve in the minds of the spectators, the state of *rasa*. The literal Sanskrit meaning is "essence" or "juice" or "sap". It can also mean "flavor", "taste", or "soup" (Monier Williams 2008). It describes, among other things, the mental and emotional state of joy and fulfilment that the viewer experiences, when enjoying a successful performance. The importance of mental and emotional feeling was recognized by early Indian authors like Bharata and Abhinavagupta.[25] This was extended to all Indian arts like music, literature, painting, sculpture, dance, and drama. Relishing fine work of art was one of the main theories behind Indian aesthetics. The feeling or emotion portrayed by the dancer is called *bhāva,* and the result of the feeling experienced by the audience is called *rasa.* Thus, one can say that the emotion that is expressed by the dancer creates a sentiment in the minds of the audience. The difference between an emotion and sentiment is that emotion is mostly individual and personal, while sentiment is universal and unbiased. (Kothari 1997: 84; Sarabhai 2000: 38; Patnaik 2005: 13; Tuske 2011; Hejmadi et al. 2000: 183).

There are eight kinds of psychological states for humans which tend to have a durable effect. They are called *sthāyi bhāvas.* The causes or determinants for the *sthāyi bhāvas* are called *vibhāvas.* The consequences of *sthāyi bhāvas* are called *anubhāvas.* Apart from these, there are some transitory states of emotions called *vyābhicāri bhāvas.* Each of these *sthāyi bhāvas* has its respective *rasa.* The eight *bhāvas* along with their respective *rasas* are as follows: *ratī–śṛṅgāra* (love), *hasa–hāsya* (laughter*), karuṇa–śoka* (sorrow), *krodha–raudra* (anger), *utsāḥ–vīra* (enthusiasm), *bhaya–bhayānaka* (fear), *jugupsa–bībatsa* (disgust), and *vismaya–adbhuta* (surprise). For instance; to create *karuṇa rasa* (sympathy or compassion), the *sthāyi bhāva* is *śoka* (sorrow). The *vibhāvas*

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[25] The oldest variant of the *bhāva–rasa* theory can be found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, a guide to the stage arts (dated between 500 BCE and 500 CE). This was commented on and expanded in the 11th century by the philosopher Abhinavagupta in his commentary *Abhinavabhāratī,* towards the psychology of art perception (Ghosh 1951, 1957).

for this could be separation from dear ones, loss of wealth; the *anubhāvas* could be represented through tears, loss of voice, heavy breathing, weeping, lamentation; the fleeting emotions or *vyābhicāri bhāvas* in this situation could be depression, fear, and anxiety. Like this, the ancient treatises put forward for every *bhāva* and *rasa;* the kinds of determinants, consequences, and fleeting emotions. In Bharatanāṭyam, the emphasis is always laid on *śṛṅgāra rasa.* The spiritual meaning associated with this is that an individual *jīvātma* (soul) seeks to unite with the *paramātma* (universal consciousness). This is depicted through *varṇams* and *padams* where the heroine seeks to unite with the lord. (Kothari 1997: 84; Barlingay 2007; Tuske 2011; Ghosh 1951: Ch. 7)

Love (*śṛṅgāra)* has been a theme of perennial interest for most of the scholars and poets for over many centuries. It is not an abstract sentiment (*rasa*) but the most intriguing and complicated. Being instinctive most times, it is simple but takes up a myriad of various shapes. These varied set of feelings change from person to person in its approach and expression. That continuing interest for writers in this area comes because of its infinite variety and inexhaustibility. (Raghavan 1963: 125) *Śṛṅgāra* hailed recently as the "king of *rasas*" at the Natya Kala Conference 2017. It was celebrated in all its glory at this conference. Being a dynamic expression between the artist and the spectator, it is capable of constant innovation and exploration. The *sthāyi bhava* is *ratī* through which the *śṛṅgāra rasa* is established with a harmonious blending of *vibhāvas, anubhāvas,* and *vyābhicāri bhāvas.* Devdutt Patnaik in his presentation at the Natya Kala Conference 2017 quoted, "the journey of separation and union is what *śṛṅgār* is about" (Patnaik 2017: Day 1). The beauty of union comes only after a prolonged separation. It is something that takes away the division or rather, what is binary becomes singular. Because of its imaginative depiction, even artists in the field of sculpture and painting have taken refuge in this sublime *rasa.* (Patnaik 2017: Day 1)

Love in union is called *sambhoga śṛṅgāra* and love in separation is called *vipralambha śṛṅgāra.* These dual possibilities enable the superiority and commanding contribution of this sentiment to a multitude of probabilities, that in turn, facilitate versatility in the presentation. The recapitulation of the union and the longing for the reunion can be compared to a bridge that contains a series of transient emotional flashes. This bridge seems spicy for the poets because of its varied fleeting moods and responses. Thus, a

multitude of facets can be dealt with in unfathomable depths in case of *vipralambha śṛṅgāra,* making it a soul–giving force for many poets. (Vishwanathan 1991: 28) *Sambhoga śṛṅgāra,* on the other hand, implies fulfilment or quality of an ending, thus providing very little scope for elaboration. When there is a void in the love affair or when the desire is unfulfiled, disappointment or frustration kicks in. Thus, the visual scope for expression is high in the case of *vipralambha śṛṅgāra.* (Narayanan 1994: 34)

The primal import of a love song is usually the longing of the *nāyikā* for union with her lover. However, it has a spiritual dimension attached to it. The spiritual import of the song is the *jīvātma* (individual soul) seeking union with the *paramātma* (universal soul). The ardent desire for the union of man and god is the basis of love–making in India. The passion of the *nāyikās* in these love poems can be likened to the passion of a seeker. Love depicted in poetry, sculpture, and paintings were extolled as a means of achieving this union with God. The characters of Rādha and Kṛṣṇa have been dealt with in this manner for several centuries. The *aṣṭapadis* of Jayadeva (12th century) and the *padams* of Kṣetrajña (17th century) are standing examples of this kind of poetry. When performing such numbers, the dancer should display devotion to the art with total involvement and with a lack of self–projection. For the portrayal to be spiritually elevated, the dancer's mind should be fixed on the characters portrayed in the song. The *śṛṅgāra* is brought out in the subtlest form if the aesthetic presentation is given focus. (Kothari 1997: 86; Narayanan 1994: 27; Aruna 1995: 151)

Until the early 20th century, the expression of *bhakti* itself had been largely through *śṛṅgāra* based items. During the period of Bharatanāṭyam revival in the 1930s and 40s, there was a long–standing debate between the two revivalists: Rukmini Devi Arundale and Balasaraswati about the inclusion of *śṛṅgāra* and *śṛṅgāra* based items in the recitals. Rukmini Devi Arundale excluded songs and gestures that were erotic. The perception and the attitude among people varied depending on the origin of the dancer (hereditary community or otherwise). These dancers used *śṛṅgāra* based items in their salon or private performances for their patron. Rukmini Devi did not like giving the same deference when addressing a deity and a patron. (Gaston 1996a: 174–177) She has been known to have 'purified' the art form eliminating such items. On the other hand, Balasaraswati had an opposing view. She stressed on the fact that *śṛṅgāra* is grounded in

bhakti and can never be carnal. It stands as the supreme emotion that is capable of reflecting the mystic union of the human with the divine. Unfortunately, for almost thirty to forty years these items failed to receive the kind of importance it should have received. Kalanidhi Narayanan has spoken of the urgency for such items to be revived. (Narayanan 1994: 25; Guhan 1991: 14) The *Natya Kala Conference 2017* had its complete focus on presenting this *rasa*. Love is a very complex manifestation with many different types that arise due to the interplay of several factors. This basic understanding of the elusive *rasa* is essential before moving on to describing the different types of heroines, their moods, and temperaments.

2.8 *Nāyikā bhedas*

A reminisce of the primary and secondary literature in the field of *nāṭya* proves the irrepressible flair that Indian writers had for the analytical segmentation of every possible nuance of a given subject, giving rise to precise subdivisions and classifications. A detailed system of classification of the various *nāyikā bhedas,* that gives significant insight into human psychology and particularly female psychology, has been revealed in the ancient texts. (Higgens 1993: 14) These, in turn, reflect the life in their societies as they are developed based on keen observation. It demonstrates the presence of different kinds of women in the world. However, this classification is no barrier to free aesthetic appreciation and expression. (Narayanan 1994: 38)

The first set of classifications or the foundation for analyzing and classifying heroines and heroes was first put forward in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra.* This was later continued more thoroughly with a well–defined approach in *Kāvyaśāstras* (literature on poetics). The *Nāṭyaśāstra* classifies types of women based on physical and psychological characteristics. The book not only links women to a divine, semi–divine, human, and subhuman natures but also to several specimens of the animal world. But the most important classification is that of the *aśtanāyikās* which is a very interesting and an exhaustive topic. Until today, *aśtanāyikās* form the edifice of *abhinaya* items like *padams* and *jāvalis. Aśtanāyikās* are the classification of eight types of heroines based on the situations they are in. Bharata classifies them as the heroine dressed up for union (*vāsakasajjā*), the heroine distressed by separation (*virahotkhaṇḍitā*), the heroine having her husband in subjugation (*svādhīnabhartṛka*), heroine separated by quarrel

(*kalahāntaritā*), the enraged heroine (*khaṇditā*), the deceived heroine (*vipralabdhā*), heroine with a sojourning husband (*proṣitabhatṛka*), and heroine moving to her lover (*abhisārikā*). The *Nāṭyaśāstra* recognizes the importance of a woman's grace or ornamentation to be the support of sentiments in a play. (Ghosh 1951: 454–469)

The 10th century work, *Daśarūpaka* by Dhanañjaya is the next text that deals with the *nāyikā bhedas* in a more detailed way in one of its chapters'. The author classifies the *nāyikās* into three types: the hero's wife (*svā*), a woman who is another's (*anyā*), and a common woman (*sādhāraṇastrī*). The hero's wife is further classified as a *mugdhā* (inexperienced), *madhyā* (partly experienced), and *pragalbhā* (experienced) based on their experience in love and love–making. The experienced and the partly experienced is divided into *dhīrā* (self–controlled), *adhīrā* (fully lacking self–control), and *madhyadhīrā* (partly self–controlled) depending on how they show rebuke towards their men. Another classification is *jyeṣṭhā* (older) and *kaniṣṭhā* (younger). Then there is the classification of *aśtanāyikās* that Dhanañjaya refers to as the classification based on their relationship with their lovers. He also suggests the classification of different types of messengers and heroes. The relative supremacy of the characters is also given based on three groups: higher, middling, and lower. The author of this text holds great reverence for Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* and adheres to his rules and terminologies. This work although regarded as authoritative, later became cumbersome for ordinary use. (Haas 1912: 48–57)

The first text that treated the *nāyikā bhedas* for its own sake is *Rasamañjarī* written by Bhanudutta in the late 15th century. After him, this subject became a favorite amongst the writers, poets, and painters who based their work on *Rasamañjarī*. This has a unique place for itself in Sanskrit poetry. *Rasamañjarī* was originally a long poem, but for convenience, the translators and commentators have divided this into nineteen chapters and related them to the paintings. Bhanudutta classifies the *nāyikās* into three types: *svīya* (one's own), *parakiya* (another's) and *sāmānya* (anybody's). *Svīya* is divided into *mugdhā* (artless), *madhyā* (adolescent), and *praudha* (mature). *Mugdhā* has some further divisions based on how conscious the *nāyikā* is, about her youth. The division for *madhyā* and *praudha* is *dhīrā* (does not express anger), *adhīrā* (expresses anger bitterly), and *dhīrādhīrā* (expresses anger ironically). *Parakiya nāyikā* has about eleven sub–categories based on their intelligence, discovery of their love affair, etc., while the

sāmānya nāyikā has no further divisions. Depending on the preference of the hero, *nāyikās* are divided as *jyeṣṭhā* (one who is loved more) and *kaniṣṭhā* (one who is loved less). The author also defines two types of *nāyikās* based on their pride in their lover's love (*prem garvita)* and of their own body (*rūpa garvita*). Lastly, he delineates *mana* which is the separation of lovers because of their jealousy, pride, coldness, the impropriety of speech, and conduct. *Mana* may be low (*laghu*), middle (*madhyama*), or high (*guru*). (Randhawa & Bhambri 1981)

The subsequent text following *Rasamañjarī* is *Rasikapriya* authored by Keśavdās who seemed to have lived in the 16th century.[26] This comes under the *Kāvyaśāstras* and is in the dialect of *braj* (a western dialect of Hindi). Many Rajasthani and Pihari miniature paintings are illustrative of this and are inspired from the verses in this text. This text has an elaborate set of classifications of both *nāyikās* and *nāyakās* based on their behavior, moods, and situations. (Dahejia 2013: 7–13) The latter half of the 17th century comprised of a work in Telugu by Saint Akbar Shah called *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* which was based on *Rasamañjarī,* and its commentary called *Amoda.* This is an elaborate review and a critique of the earlier works on *nāyikā bhedas.* It has certain additions in case of the *aśtanāyikās,* where there are some types that do not fall under any of the already discussed categories. (Raghavan 1951) *Apinayasārasamputam* by Cetlūr Nārāyana Ayyañkār also deals in detail with *nāyikā–nāyakā* classification along with examples from several *padams* (Raghavan 1932).

After the revival period, many have spoken and written about the classification of *nāyikās* that are more relevant to today's Bharatanāṭyam. Kalanidhi Narayanan, a rare artist and an exemplary guru of our time has given her classification in the book titled *Aspects of Abhinaya.* Here one finds *svīya, parakiya,* and the *sāmānya* classified further into *mugdhā, madhyā,* and *pragalbhā* based on the experience of love and love–making. The classification based on experience is applicable for all three types of *nāyikās,* unlike the earlier texts which did not apply for *parakiya* and *sāmānya.* There are no *dhīrā, adhīrā,* and *dhīrādhīrā* in the author's classification. The *jyeṣṭhā–kaniṣṭhā* classification along with *uttama* (superior), *madhyama* (middling), and *ādhama* (inferior) characters

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[26] The first chapter, "The Life and Times of Keshavdas" in the text, *Rasikapriya* (Dahejia 2013) deals with the author's lifetime. Although with some disagreement, the consensus among scholars about his date of birth seems to be 1555 CE (Dahejia 2013: 8).

are given. The author gives a very detailed explanation of *aśtanāyikās* along with examples from various *padams* and *jāvalis.* (Narayanan 1994) Mrinalini Sarabhai, a Bharatanāṭyam exponent, gave her classification in the book, *Understanding Bharatanāṭyam* (Sarabhai 2000) and delineated it with examples in a journal on *Dance perspectives* (Sarabhai 1965). V. Raghavan dealt with the infinite *nāyikā* varieties, highlighting the point that it is up to the performer to demonstrate the subtleties of the interplay between the various moods. By permutation and combination of the various types, a total of three hundred and eighty–four different combinations can be realized. Such is the complexity of the topic of the *nāyikā bhedas* and *śṛṅgāra* literature. (Raghavan 1963)

The above texts also deal with the different types of *nāyakās* (heroes) and *sakhīs* (female confidante, messenger). The composer of songs usually mentions the name of the hero, or the patron, or the deity. However, in most performances, the dancer depicts only the *nāyikā* while the *nāyakā* remains unseen. Additional attention in poetry, drama, and painting has been devoted to the female types, while the hero's behavior is usually implied from the heroine's behavior. The *sakhī* is the person who facilitates the reconciliation, or meeting between the two lovers through messages. She also comes in a variety of types, in some cases succumbs to the lover's attention herself. (Higgins 1993: 17)

With this account on the existing literature, a detailed examination of each type of *nāyikā* will ensue. Based on the different situations and the moods of the heroine, the *nāyikās* are classified into eight types, called the *aśtanāyikās.* They are *svādhīnapatika, vāsakasajjā, virahotkhaṇḍitā, vipralabdhā, khaṇḍitā, kalahāntaritā, proṣitabhatṛka,* and *abhisārikā.*

Svādhīnapatika is a *nāyikā* who is extremely confident and proud of her relationship with her beloved. She is a picture of gratification. She believes that he is a very faithful man, and thus no one can shake that faith in her. She worships him. She sometimes even comes across as arrogant about her confidence and faith. Kalanidhi Narayanan says that since the word *svādhīnapatika* has '*pati*' in it, this type always refers to the husband. Her husband in this situation tends to her and is always by her side. He is well–behaved,

entirely devoted, and in complete subjection to her will. (Narayanan 1994: 55; Sarabhai 2000; 51; Raghavan 1963: 127; *Ashtanayikas* 2011; Haas 1912: 54) The *nāyikā,* in turn, takes pleasure in it. Kalidāsā, in the 13th canto of his great Sanskrit classic *Raghuvamśa* describes the flight of Rāma and Sīta from Lanka after the defeat of Rāvana, which is an ideal example of *sambhoga śṛṅgāra* (love in union)*.* Rāma is the faithful husband, and so is Sīta's love for him. Hence this situation is a perfect example of a *svādhīnapatika nāyikā.* As Kalidāsā describes the landscape, the skyscape, and the seascape, their love is evident in every aspect of nature. When they fly over an ocean that has so many tributaries joining it, Sīta says, "Oh Rāma*,* look*.* This ocean has so many wives. Thank god I am the only one for you." For this, Rāma replies, "Yes, I had promised that". This portrays the situation of this type of *nāyikā* very beautifully. (Nirupama & Rajendra 2017: Day 2)[27]

A *vāsakasajjā nāyikā* is one who is waiting very anxiously for her beloved to return home or come to her. She is fully preparing for his arrival. She is decorating herself and readying the sandal paste. She prepares her bedchamber by arranging leaves or flowers. She arranges for the choicest food and drinks and makes flower garlands. She seems quite happy and is seen being playful with her *sakhīs* who tease her. In some situations when the lover is about to return home, she has already decorated herself pleasingly and keeps looking out from the threshold of her house. Occasionally, she is confused by his delay, which makes her speculate about it. This might sometimes seem similar to a *virahotkhaṇditā nāyikā* (*viraha* means separation), but the 'wait' here is evident in the song, instead of sadness that comes because of *viraha*. (*Ashtanayikas* 2011; Higgens 1993: 16; Raghavan 1932: 142) A song by composer Muttutāṇṭavar, "*teruvil vārāno*", is an example of a *vāsakasajjā nāyikā* – "[w]ill he not come down the road and will he not give me a glance? Will he not stand at my door and speak a few words to me?". (Narayanan 1994: 52)

Viraha being the touchstone of many poets, a great amount of attention and detailing has been given to love in longing. A *virahotkhaṇditā nāyikā* is a lady pining for her lover. After having waited for him for a long time, she is now starting to get anxious about his

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[27] Nirupama and Rajendra presented "Hues of Shringara in Kathak" on the second day of *Natya Kala Conference 2017.*

return. She gets distressed, becomes exhausted, and tearful while expressing her anxiety. She is sometimes seen trembling, shedding tears, lamenting, and becoming thin. She is disturbed and has several conjectures about her lover even though he may not be at fault. (Sarabhai 2000: 50; Narayanan 1994: 53) A very famous Kṣetrajña's *padam* picturing this *nāyikā* is "*ayyayo vegatāyana*". The padam goes like this – "[a]las! Is he tired of me, my Lord? The Lord who lay against my *pallu*[28], alas! Is he tired of me?" (*Ashtanayikas* 2011). In this song, the *nāyikā* recalls her past with her lover, but the basic emotion is still sorrow and pain, due to the pangs of separation. The main difference between a *virahotkhaṇḍitā* and a *vāsakasajjā* is that, a *virahotkhaṇḍitā* is not sure of her lover's return. It is more pain, than disappointment and sadness.

A *vipralabdhā nāyikā* is upset with her lover for cheating on her. She is greatly offended that her lover did not arrive at the appointed place. He might be a character who is not true to his word, and he dupes her. She feels deceived, but she is not yet angry with him. She is only upset. She shows disappointment, anxiousness, sorrow, depression. She sighs often, becomes tearful, and sometimes even faints. (Raghavan 1963: 127; Higgens 1993: 16; Haas 1912: 56) A captivating *padam* in Tamil*, "neṭraṉti nēratile"* portrays a *vipralabdhā nāyikā.* Here, the *nāyikā* has seen her lover with another woman, and she questions him about her. The *nāyikā* is tormented by the situation and is forlorn. Despite being hurt, she longs for him because his absence is only saddening her further. "*Neṭraṉti nēratile*" means "yesterday, during dusk". (*Ashtanayikas* 2011) Just this first sentence can be depicted in so many ways: by showing sunset, showing the arrival of darkness, showing the birds going back to their nests, and the animals retreating from the rivers. Thus, the creativity that one can bring about in this song is voluminous.

A *khaṇḍitā nāyikā* is enraged and filled with jealousy upon discovering the signs of sexual relations of her lover with another woman. She is extremely angry with him, and she sends him away. In this type, the *nāyakā* could have spent a night with another woman. The *nāyikā* is furious at her disfigured lover. Her activities include breathing deeply, being indifferent, restless, fearful, and speaking words of abuse. (Haas 1912: 55;

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[28] The long trailing part of a saree (an outfit worn by the Indian women) that can be draped around and across the shoulders.

Raghavan 1932: 142) The best example for this type of *nāyikā* is *"itai vida",* a composition by Subbarayar in *rāga sāverī.* Here, the *nāyikā* asks him,

> "[w]hat more proof do I need than these tell–tale marks? You come here offering a dozen different excuses. Please go away! You have been dallying with the sly one. The smell of turmeric and the marks of the eye–liner are enough evidence. Say a dozen things, but I have no ear for all that. By now, she must be searching for you all over. Get going…" (*Ashtanayikas* 2011)

Here, the *nāyikā* is blinded by jealousy and frustration. Hence, she finds it hard to forgive her lover. Therefore, she curses him and accuses him with harsh words.

A *kalahāntaritā nāyikā* is probably the next stage, after *khaṇḍitā.* She is remorseful about the fight that she had with her lover. She repents for sending him away. She is one who, owing to jealously is estranged from her lover. She has repulsed her lover due to a quarrel. She is seen to be sighing deeply, restlessly wandering about lamenting about her willfulness. She is filled with grief and is ashamed of her pride when he is no longer beside her. (Sarabhai 2000: 51; Narayanan 1994: 60) The Kṣetrajña's *padam "maname bhūśanamu"* is a good example of this, where the repentance is apparent from the lyrics.

> "Self–respect is a woman's ornament. Once that is lost, what is the use of this life? Oh friend, I foolishly turned away my Lord without speaking a word. What am I to do now? Listening to the poisonous words of my neighbors I sent him away. Only now do I realize my love for him. Oh sakhī, why did I do such a thing?" (Narayanan 1994: 60)

A *proṣitabhatṛka nāyikā* is undergoing prolonged separation from her lover or the hero, because of his long travels. She is unable to bear this separation as it happens for intolerable lengths of time. Here, she is sure of his return, unlike *virahotkhaṇḍitā* where the *nāyikā* is unsure about her lover's return. For a *proṣitabhatṛka nāyikā,* many times the lover is her husband himself. Her wait has become long drawn as her husband, or her lover has been traveling abroad or on business in a distant land. She becomes sleepless, emaciated, inactive, neglectful of her appearance, and starts counting the days of his return. (Raghavan 1951: 82; Randhawa & Bhambri 1981: 97; Haas 1912: 57;

Ashtanayikas 2011) This is the definition given in most of the primary and secondary literature discussed at the beginning of this section. However, there could be two other situations – 1. a lover who will start on his long journey, 2. a lover who is starting on his long journey. *Rasamañjarī* by Bhanudutta has classified these two under a separate heading called *pravatsyatpatiā nāyikā,* one who is anticipating separation (Randhawa & Bhambri 1981: 97). *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* criticizes this by saying that one could include these in *proṣitabhatṛka* itself (Raghavan 1951: 82).[29] Nonetheless, for the analysis, I look at all three situations: a lover who will leave, a lover who is leaving, and a lover who has left, under this type of *nāyikā.* A popular Kṣetrajña's *padam* in this type is "*ninnu guchi",* where the heroine says, "four to five months have passed having seen you". Here, the *nāyikā* is desperate for her lover's return as she is not able to bear his absence anymore. (*Ashtanayikas* 2011)

The last type in this set of classifications is *abhisārikā nāyikā,* one who very bravely goes out on her own to meet her beloved. She is so much in love with him that she is ready to break all accepted norms in society. She does not care about what people talk behind her, and sets out either in broad daylight or at night, under cover. She is so love–sick that she cannot wait. She goes to him before he can come to her. She frequently encounters situations where she might feel harassed by the people of the society; especially with the womenfolk gossiping about her behavior. She looks anxious and is timid and shy by nature. But she comes across as the fearless one who is not arrogant. Painters have held this type of *nāyikā* as a favorite.[30] They loved depicting her walking in the forest all alone at night, with snakes hiding in the grass, and the animals roaming about. (Sarabhai 2000: 52; Narayanan 1994: 53; *Ashtanayikas* 2011)

This ends the classification of *nāyikās* based on the situations they are in. *Nāyikās* classified based on their behavior are of three types: *svīya, parakiya,* and *sāmānya. Svīya* is one who is married and is faithful to her husband. She is of 'upright and good' character who can relate love only to her husband. A good example of this type is Sīta,

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[29] Raghavan (1951: 83) quotes, "the *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* proceeds grammatically to prove that *Prosita* can comprehend the closely proximate moments of the present and future too; from the grammatical viewpoint again, the *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* shows that, instead of proposing a fresh emendation of the name *Pravāsa–patika,* the word *Prosita* itself can be understood as meaning *Pravāsa.*"

[30] Some paintings depicting this type of *nāyikā* are available in the text, *Basaholi Paintings Of The Rasamanjari* (Randhwa & Bhambri 1981: 93, 94).

the lawfully wedded wife who can only think of Rāma all the time. When Rāma is about to leave to the forest, she says, "[o]h Rāma, with you it is heaven, but without you it is hell. Be assured of my deep love and let me go with you" (Sarabhai 2000: 48). A *parakiya nāyikā* may be married or unmarried, but longs for, or is in love with another man. *Parakiyas* are classified further based on their marital status, their intelligence, and the discovery of their secret love affairs. But I will not delve deep into this classification. The *gopīs* (cow–herding girls) of Brindavan are ideal examples of *parakiya nāyikās.* Even though they are married to their husbands, they are constantly in love with Lord Kṛṣna, who enraptures them with his charm and bodily magnetism. A *devadāsī* is one who is lawfully married to the deity in a temple. When she falls in love with another man, then she is also considered to be a *parakiya.* A *sāmānya nāyikā* is a courtesan who is available for any man. She is capable of accepting any man without any restrictions. She can be well versed in the art of love. She is portrayed to be cunning, possessed of boldness and selfishness, who is waiting to grab all the money from the men. But *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* criticizes this, and says that there can be real love even for a courtesan. Bhanudutta states that even in real love, material considerations have played a major role in the beginning. (Sarabhai 2000: 48–49; Higgens 1993: 14–15; Narayanan 1994: 39; Raghavan 1951: 73–75; Randhawa & Bhambri 1981: 9–28) The best example is the *jāvali, "itu sāgasamulu"* where the *nāyikā* is a very young girl, but a *sāmānya* (*Javali Jalam* 2011). Here, even though she belongs to the courtesan family, she is withdrawn and shy.

Nāyikās can be classified as *mugdhā, madhyā,* and *pragalbhā* based on their experience in love and love–making. In texts like *Daśarūpaka* and *Rasamañjarī*, this classification essentially comes under *svīya* (Randhawa & Bhambri 1981: 12–27; Haas 1912: 49, 50). But there can also be a *sāmānya nāyikā* who is a *mugdhā* like in the case of the *jāvali, "itu sagasamulu"* (*Javali Jalam* 2011). Furthermore, Kalanidhi Narayanan has handled this classification independently rather than placing it under the umbrella of *svīya* alone (Narayanan 1994: 35, 36). Hence, I shall treat this as a separate classification. A *mugdhā nāyikā* is one who is young, tender, with the desire of new youth. She is coy in love and expresses anger very gently. She is new to love experiences and expresses qualities of shyness. A *madhyā nāyikā* is slightly older and is a little more experienced in love. She might show desire and shyness, both at the same time. (Sarabhai 2000: 48, 49; Higgins

1993: 14–15) She will seem intoxicated by her lover like in "*indukemi setunamma*", a Kṣetrajña's *padam* that deals with a *madhyā.* The *nāyikā* in this *padam* is a *proṣitabhatṛka,* who remembers the times when she got into a passionate embrace with her lover. In the second paragraph she says, "[o]h bright–faced one, he could not remain even a minute without sipping the nectar of my lips." (Rao 1981: 42–43) Such is her experience of love. A *pragalbhā nāyikā* is very experienced in love and possesses extreme desire. She is intoxicated and clinging to the physical body of her lover. She lacks modesty, and the gradually unfolding interest that a *madhyā* would show. She is instead, very mature with the free expression of her feelings. (Sarabhai 2000: 48, 49; Higgins 1993: 14, 15) A Kṣetrajña's *padam, "paradesamuna",* portrays a *pragalbhā nāyikā* who is a *svīya.* In this *padam,* the *nāyikā* defends her lover's love for her to her *sakhī,* who has just revealed that he is an adulterator. She talks of the 'other' lady and says, "[a]ddressing him as the charming sweet lord and alerting him that he shouldn't be alone, she would have perhaps asked him to get up, follow her, and sleep in her apartment". (Rao 1981: 59–60) This is the level of knowledge the *nāyikā* possesses in the matters of love.

The next classification is based on the display of rebuke a *nāyikā* shows towards her beloved, in situations of *virahotkhaṇḍitā, vipralabdhā,* and *khaṇḍitā.*[31] They are *dhīrā, adhīrā,* and *dhīrādhīrā.* This classification comes under *madhyā* and *pragalbhā* excluding *mugdhā* in primary texts like *Daśarūpaka* and *Rasamañjarī.* (Randhawa & Bhambri 1981: 12, 20–24; Haas 1912: 50–52) However, a *mugdhā,* even though inexperienced in love, can show rebuke in subtle ways (Raghavan 1951: 75). Therefore, I treat this as a separate classification. A *dhīrā* is self–controlled with regards to her anger or sorrow and greets her husband who has deceived her with indirect comments and bitter words. She becomes indifferent to the pleasures of love and pretends to show respect. A *dhīrādhīrā* is only partly self–controlled. She shows more sarcasm and alternates between being prudent and constant. When she shows her anger, she is sometimes tearful. An *adhīrā* scolds her husband very harshly and goes to the extent of striking him. She completely lacks self–control. (Ghosh 1951; Sarabhai 2000: 49)

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[31] A display of rebuke cannot be shown in the other situations of *svādhīnapatika, vāsakasajjā, kalahāntaritā, proṣitabhatṛka,* and *abhisārikā* as the *nāyikā* is not angry with her lover in these cases.

Based on their nature, *nāyikās* are classified as *uttama, madhyama,* and *ādhama* by primary texts like *Nāṭyaśāstra, Śṛṅgāramañjarī,* and *Rasamañjarī* (Ghosh 1951: 487; Raghavan 1951: 84–90; Randhawa & Bhambri 1981: 103). *Uttama* is a *nāyikā* with a superior character, who is balanced and good to her lover; however, he may behave. She treats him well even though he may be blameworthy. She talks pleasantly to him although he may have erred. She does not show jealousy; she may cover up his faults and has no long–standing anger. A *madhyama nāyikā* retaliates in the way her *nāyakā* behaves. She is a bit jealous, quick to anger and haughty, but can be easily pacified. An *ādhama* is one who shows extreme indignation and jealousy. She might be furious with him for no valid reason and even curses or insults him. (Higgens 1993: 16; Randhawa & Bhambri 1981: 103)

Nāyikās can be either *jyeṣṭhā* or *kaniṣṭhā* based on the relationship with their lover. *Jyeṣṭhā* is the preferred one, or the one who is loved more by the *nāyakā. Kaniṣṭhā* is the one who is loved less by the *nāyakā.* (Randhawa & Bhambri 1981: 25; Narayan 1994: 36) Some of the later texts talk of *jyeṣṭhā* and *kaniṣṭhā* as the older and younger (Higgens 1993: 15; Sarabhai 2000: 49). However, I ignore this definition for the analysis as primary texts adopted the former definition. Also from the definition of *mugdhā, madhyā,* and *pragalbhā,* one can easily identify the older and the younger *nāyikā.*

Treatises on dramaturgy like *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* (Raghavan 1951: 84–90) and *Rasamañjarī* (Randhwa & Bhambri 1981: 114) describe three types of *nāyakās*: *pati* or the one who is properly married, *upāpati,* an adulterator or the one who violates marriage and spoils his reputation, and *vaisika* or the one who takes pleasure in courtesans. Four further distinctions are made for a *pati* or a husband. He may be an *anukūla* or a faithful husband who is in love, only with his wife; a *dakśina* or the one who shows equal love to all ladies; a *dṛśta* or a shameless husband who pleads with his wife for his committed offence even after she refuses to return to him; and a *satha* or a deceitful husband who carries out many entanglements with other women without the knowledge of his wife. (Higgens 1993: 17; Sarabhai 2000: 54–55; Narayan 1994: 73)

Garvita means pride. A *nāyikā* who is proud of her beauty is a *rūpa–garvita nāyikā.* One who is proud of her husband's love for her is a *prem–garvita nāyikā.* A perfect example

of lyrical poetry for this is in *Rasamañjarī* by Bhanudutta. A *rūpa–garvita nāyikā* says, "[o] *sakhi,* how should I treat my Lord who compares the beauty of my eyes with that of lotus flowers and the sweetness of my speech only with that of nectar?". (Randhawa & Bhambri 1981: 43–44) In *"paradesamuna",* Kṣetrajña's *padam,* the *nāyikā* defends the love of her lover, even though he is the one who has wronged. Here the *nāyikā* shows signs of *prem–garvita.* (Rao 1981: 59–60) Figure 2.5 depicts a holistic picture in the form of a tree diagram for the classification of *nāyikās.*

2.9 Conclusion

The venerable and long–standing history of Bharatanāṭyam has a great influence over its evolved technique. The mechanics and intricacies involved in performing this art form are multi–layered. Due to this, the art form needs to be learned and practiced for several years to gain mastery over it. The definition of terms, the various technical aspects and their usage in Bharatanāṭyam have been expounded in this chapter to form a base for the analysis section that will be part of chapter five.
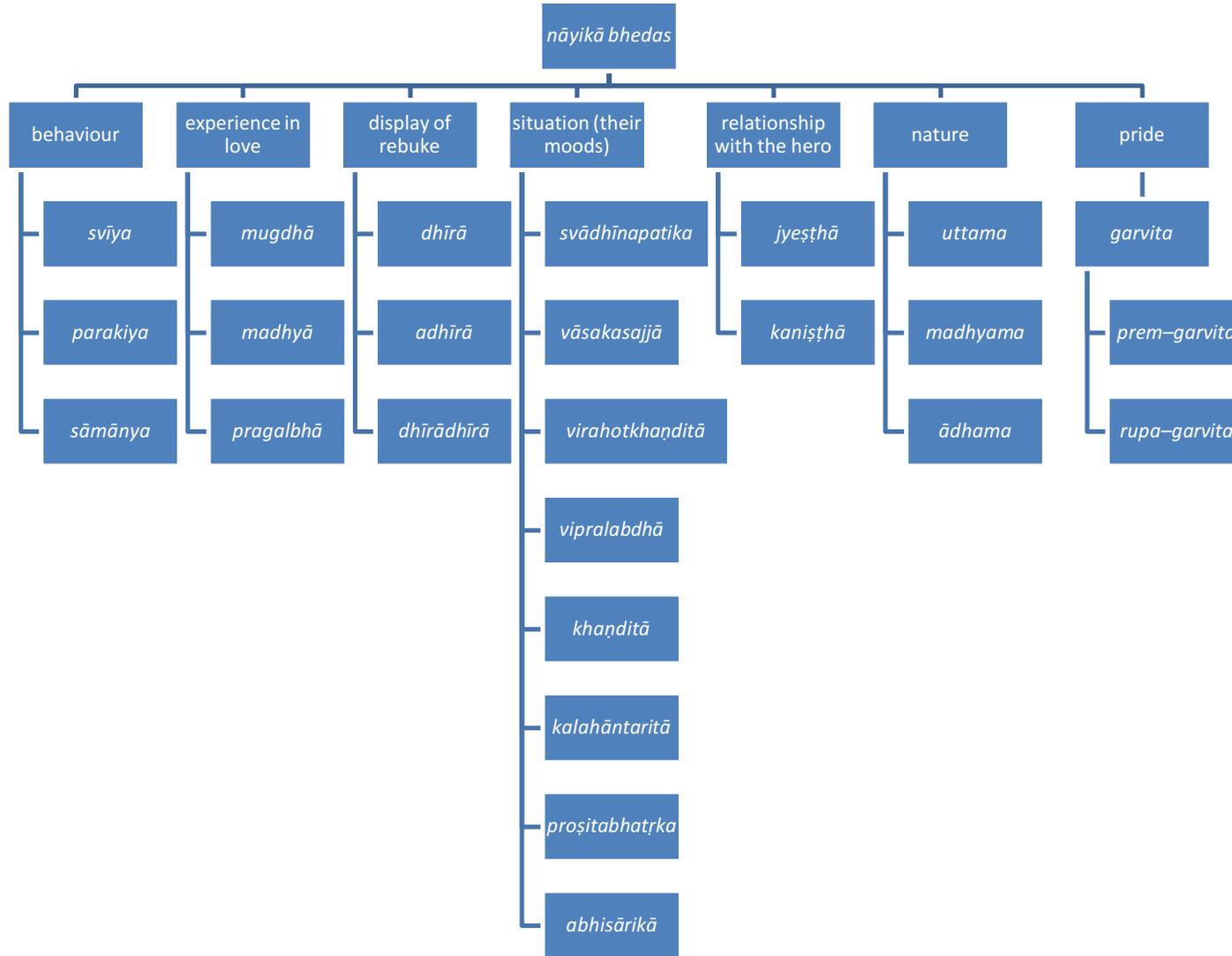
Figure 2.5 *Nāyikā–nāyakā bhedas* (Figure: by author)

3 Repertoire of Bharatanāṭyam: elucidating the standards

The traditional repertoire (also called a *mārgam[1]*) for a Bharatanāṭyam recital includes the following items: *alārippu, jatisvaram, śabdam, varṇam, padam, jāvali, tillāna,* and *śloka* until today. This format has been weaved and put together by the famous Tanjore brothers: Ciṉṉaiyya, Poṉṉaiyya, Sivāṉandam, and Vaṭivēlu who lived during the time of King Serafoji II (1798 CE – 1832 CE). During this time, both temple dancing and court dancing followed the format of the traditional repertoire. (Kothari 1997: 90) These repertoire items also had influences from the Nayak repertoires (15th–17th centuries) and the *nirūpaṇas* of early Marathas (16th–18th centuries). This blend of items is not only beautiful from an aesthetic point of view but also has a well–balanced mixture of *nṛtta* and *abhinaya* (Guhan 1991: 10). T. Balasaraswati has compared this sequence of repertoire to the structure of the Brihadīśvara temple at Tanjore. She says:

> "We enter through the gopuram (outer hall) of alarippu, cross the ardhamandapam (halfway hall) of jatiswaram, then the mandapam (great hall) of sabdam and enter the holy precinct of the deity in the varnam. This is the space which gives the dancer expansive scope to revel in the music, rhythm, and moods of the dance. The varnam is the continuum which gives ever expanding room to the dancer to delight in her self–fulfillment, by providing the fullest scope to her own creativity as well as to the tradition of the art. In dancing to the padams, one experiences the contentment, cool and quiet of entering the sanctum from its external precinct. It is akin to the juncture when the cascading lights of worship are withdrawn, and the drum beats die down to the simple and solemn chanting of sacred verses in the closeness of god. Then the thillana breaks into a movement like the final burning of camphor accompanied by a measure of din and bustle." (Guhan 1991: 10)

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[1] *Mārgam* refers to the entire suite of the eight–fold Bharatanāṭyam repertoire. It is performed in a particular order only. (Gaston 1996b: 262; Guhan 1991: 10) The word *mārgam* or *mārga* has several meanings in Sanskrit: "proper course", "route", "right way", "track", or "road" (Monier Williams 2008). Here, it refers to a full definite course where the items of the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire are performed in a fixed order.

Alārippu

Alārippu[2] takes the first position in the traditional Bharatanāṭyam repertoire and has deep roots in the pedagogic system of Bharatanāṭyam. Almost every performance from the 1930s to the 50s at the Madras Music Academy opened with an *alārippu.* (Gaston 1996b: 307, 308) *Alārippu* is the first item in the repertoire of Bharatanāṭyam. This item is based on rhythm only, with no musical (lyrical) accompaniment. The charm of *nṛtta* or abstract dance is brought out in the *alārippu*. This choreographical presentation has no *sāhitya*[3]. (Satyanarayana 1966: 99) The various movements starting from the eyes, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, the torso followed by the legs and feet not only relax the mind and body of the dancer but also prepares her for the rest of the recital (Vatsyayan 1974: 20). The highly intense rhythmic movements increase the concentration of the mind and coordination of the limbs for the dancer. Balasaraswati, in her temple analogy, compares the *alārippu* to the *gōpura* (tower–gate of a temple). She says, "[t]he dancer takes leave of her subjective consciousness in the *alārippu* and identifies with the universal consciousness in the *jatisvaram*" (Guhan 1991: 11). Thus, the *alārippu* gives an auspicious beginning to a recital, invoking the blessings of the divine and sanctifying the body of the dancer and the performance space with the highly repetitive metrical rendering of text (Gaston 1996b: 270, 271).

Jatisvaram

Jatisvaram[4] is an item that is performed after the *alārippu*. This is also a simple *nṛtta* item without any *abhinaya* or lyrical passages (*sāhitya*). The *nṛtta* is executed in the form of *kōrvais* (combination of *aḍavus*), and *tirmānams* (ending rhythmic patterns). However, this item introduces, apart from the *sollukaṭṭu*, a new melodic component called the *svara.* (Kothari 1997: 96) *Jatisvaram* begins with a *jati* where the *naṭṭuvanār* recites the *sollukaṭṭu*. This is followed by the passages of *svaras* to which the dancer performs *kōrvais* of varying complexity, each one coming to a climactic end. However, the music has very little elaboration. Between each of these *svara* passages, there is an

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[2] The word *alārippu* suggests the blossoming of a flower. More detailed description on the meaning and origin of the word in section 3.1.1 of this chapter.

[3] The lyrics for which the dancer gesticulates.

[4] *Jatisvaram,* as the term suggests, is a combination of *jati* and *svara* patterns. It follows the rules of a 'svarajati', an item found from the time of the Nayak repertoires (Vatsyayan 1974: 20).

interlude where the dancer walks from side to side, and performs the *śimir aḍavu*[5]. (Gaston 1996b: 264) The *jatisvaram* is set to a specific *rāga* and *tāla*. The most popular *jatisvarams* are in *rāgas – kalyāṇi, todi, śankarābharaṇam, sāveri,* and *vasantā*. When the nuances of these *rāgas* are brought out by the dancer, this item becomes a delight to watch. Various rhythmic arrangements within the structure of the *tāla* are explored. The *jatisvaram* can be set to any of the following time units (*jātīs*)[6]: *tiṣra, catuṣra, miṣra, khaṇḍa,* and *sankīrna.* (Kothari 1997: 96) There is a note to note synchronization between the musical passages, and the *aḍavus* performed by the dancer. This item gives ample opportunity for the dancer to explore improvisations and innovations in *nṛtta*. (Vatsyayan 1974: 22)

Śabdam

Alārippu has only *sollukaṭṭu, jatisvaram* introduces the component of melody, while the *śabdam*[7] introduces the aspect of miming along with *nṛtta*. But the miming aspect (*abhinaya*) is fundamental with direct interpretation of lyrics. Thus, this item serves as a bridge between the classic *nṛtta* items like the *alārippu*, *jatisvaram,* and items that have a lot of *abhinaya* like the *varṇam*, *padam,* and *jāvali.* (Vatsyayan 1974: 22) The rhythmic and musical patterns for this item are quite simple. The common *rāgas* used for the *śabdam* include *kāmbodi* and *rāgamālikā*. It is usually in the *miṣrachapu tāla*. Some *śabdams* are long narratives. Usually, the *śabdam* is a song of the eulogy that praises a deity or the king, for his qualities, feats, and achievements. This item is very famous for its "*salāmure*" or "*namostute*" that comes at the end. It is an act of salutation to the king or the deity being praised. (Kothari 1997: 96, 97; Gaston 1996b: 264, 265)

Varṇam

Varṇam[8] is the most complex of all items in the repertoire. It has aspects of complicated *nṛtta* and versatile *abhinaya*. The item is very intricate, with a lot of substance. It goes on for about an hour (longest item of the repertoire) giving full scope for the dancer to

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[5] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.1.1 for details on *aḍavus*.
[6] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.3.3 for details on *jātīs* and its types.
[7] The word *śabda* in Sanskrit translates to "word" or "sound" (Monier Williams 2008). Since the item introduces the lyrical aspect for the first time in the repertoire, it could have been named so.
[8] The word *varṇa* in Sanskrit translates to "color", "beauty", "form", "praise", "the order of arrangement of a song or poem" (Monier Williams 2008).

improvise. The literary content mostly revolves around a deity with the *nāyikā's* (heroine's) deep yearning for her lover's love, or in other words, their union. The structure of the *varṇam* has a *pallavi, anupallavi,* and a *caraṇam*[9]. In colloquial terms, there are two halves for the *varṇam* called the first half and the second half. (Gaston 1996b: 273, 274; Vatsyayan 1974: 22, 23; Higgins 1993: 82–105)

The first half starts with a *trikālajati* (*jati* in three speeds) and ends with the *tirmāna aḍavu,* followed by an *aruḍi*[10] to which the *pallavi* is sung. An exact synchronization between the dancer, *mṛidaṅgist,* singer, and *naṭṭuvanār* is extremely crucial here. This is followed by the first line of the song to which *abhinaya* is performed. The dancer starts by performing the *padārtha abhinaya* (gesticulations for the direct meaning of the song) followed by *vākyārtha abhinaya* (gesticulations for the inner meaning of the song). She then does a *sañcāri* (story) that might be related to the line. There are usually four lyrical lines sung in the first half of the *varṇam.* In between these lines, *jatis* are introduced. Then comes an ending *svara* to which complex *korvais* are executed, followed by lyrical lines for this *svara.* The first half ends by repeating the first *pallavi* line. All the *abhinaya* sections consist of miming along with *taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavus,* which is one of the challenging parts for the dancer.

The second half of the *varṇam* starts with a *jati* followed by the first line of the *caraṇam.* Then follow four to six *svara* sequences depending on the *rāga* of the *varṇam.* Each of the *svara* pattern is followed by plain miming, and miming with *taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavu.* The first half is slow and cautious, while the second half reaches a crescendo. Throughout this item, the dancer has all the space for varied interpretations by utilizing her/his imaginative faculties. This item has a high potential to establish the *sthāyi bhāva* (emotions that have a durable effect). The dancer's command over *nṛtta, hasta,* and *mukhaja abhinaya* (hand gestures and facial expressions), her/his ability to evoke *rasa* (moods) through *bhāva* (emotional triggers), and her/his stamina is easily revealed in this item. In later years after the revival, *varṇam* became a yardstick to judge a performance (Gaston 1996b: 257).

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[9] A song structure in South Indian Carnatic music is made up of three or more stanzas: *pallavi, anupallavi,* and one or more *caraṇams.* The first stanza is called the *pallavi,* the second one is called the *anupallavi,* and all the stanzas that come after are called *caraṇams.*

[10] Rhythmic patterns performed by stamping of the feet and accompanied by the song is called an *aruḍi* (Rao 1980: 13)

Padam

Padams[11] are *abhinaya* items that are performed to songs or musical melodies. The dancer interprets the direct and indirect meaning of the lyrical poetry through *padams*. *Nṛtta* can be rarely seen here. The song structure has a *pallavi*, *anupallavi,* and two to three *caraṇam* passages. The central theme of the *padams* typically consist of a *nāyikā* (heroine) who is in love with her beloved. She is either in pain (because of the separation from him), or is overjoyed (expecting union). The symbolic or inner meaning of this situation can be traced back to the *bhakti* times, where the human being is seen as the lady–love who wants to be united with the divine. Thus, due to the presence of intense allusions, these items must be executed with sufficient depth and proficiency, and not superficially. Even though, the compositions for *padams* are dominated by love themes, devotional and descriptive poems have also been used, especially after the revival of Bharatanāṭyam. Bharatanāṭyam *padams* have augmented and are now being performed in several languages – Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Sanskrit, Malayalam, and sometimes in even in Hindi, Marathi, or Gujarati. (Kothari 1997:102; Gaston 1996b: 266; Vatsyayan 1974: 24)

Jāvali

Jāvalis[12] are a genre of poetry that are characterized by earnestness, light–heartedness, and capsule–like brevity with bright, attractive, and catchy music. They are performed as the seventh item in the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire. These songs could be easily interpreted by the dancer because of their earthiness and directness of appeal. The fast–paced *jāvalis* are sung towards the end of a performance which helps in enlivening the entire concert. (Rao 1964: 224) The *nāyikā* (heroine), *nāyakā* (hero), and the *sakhī* (her friend) constitute the chief actors in a *jāvali*. The sensuality in *padams* is usually layered, while *jāvalis* have a more intense treatment of sexual imagery. The maximum number of *jāvalis* can be found in the Telugu or Kannada language (Rao 1964: 225, 226). But since many composers were from Tamilnadu, their Telugu language was simple and mixed

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[11] The literal meaning of the word *pada* in Sanskrit translates to "step", "portion of a verse", "footing", "a sign". Sometimes, the word *pada* is used instead of the word *padam.* More detailed description on the meaning and origin of the word in section 3.3 of this chapter.

[12] Detailed description on the meaning and origin of the word *jāvali* in section 3.4 of this chapter.

with humor (Viswanathan 1999: 92). This item particularly faced a lot of repercussions during the revival because of its sexual imagery.

Tillāna

In most recitals, *tillāna*[13] is the concluding item. It is a fast–paced *nṛtta* item with *pallavi*, *anupallavi,* and a *caraṇam*. This item has a very high tempo and is in complete contrast to the slow *padams*. It has *sollukaṭṭu* that are sung by the singer to a specific *rāga* and *tāla,* accompanied by the *naṭṭuvanār* on the cymbals. The *caraṇam* has some lyrics to which *abhinaya* is performed, with appropriate *hastas* and facial expressions. Here the composer usually interlaces his name (*nāmamudrā*) or the name of the deity or patron. The space on the dance floor is used liberally in this item. The floor choreography consists of triangles, rectangles, diagonals, straight lines, and even semi–circles. *Periya aḍavus* are quite common in the *tillāna*. Intense footwork, sculpturesque poses, and varied patterns of movement mark this item. There are several *aruḍis* or *tirmānams* (ending rhythmic patterns) included. The dancer ends the *tillāna* either with a pose or by a quick exit out of the stage. The composer Svāti Tirunāl, who lived in the 19th century in the princely state of Travancore, has composed numerous *tillānas* that are today being used as part of both the dance and the music repertoires. (Kothari 1997: 102, 103; Gaston 1996b: 267; Vatsyayan 1974: 24)

Śloka

Śloka[14] is usually solemn with a lot of gravity. It is either in Sanskrit or Tamil, and involves slow *abhinaya* invoking the gods in their peaceful or serene moods. Sometimes, when it is sung in Tamil, it is called a *viruttam*[15]. A *maṅgalam*[16] is sung after the *śloka,* and it marks the end of the recital. In the *maṅgalam,* the dancer pays obeisance to her guru, the accompanying orchestra, and the audience. (Kothari 1997: 102, 103; Gaston 1996b: 267; Vatsyayan 1974: 24)

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[13] The *tillāna* consists of a basic set of rhythmic syllables that are repeated and elaborated continuously throughout the item. The word *tillāna* itself consists of the rhythmic syllables, "*til–lā–na*".
[14] The word *śloka* in Sanskrit translates to "a hymn of praise", "a stanza", "a proverb", "a call or voice (of the gods)" (Monier Williams 2008).
[15] *Viruttam* originates from the Sanskrit word *vṛtta,* which means "a kind of metre" (Monier Williams 2008).
[16] The word *maṅgala* comes from Sanskrit and it means "auspicious", "prosperity", or "anything fortunate" (Monier Williams 2008).

Today, there are other items like *puṣpāñjali*[17] and *kautvam*[18] that also form a part of the repertoire.[19] Post the revival period, *naṭanam ādinar,* a song on Lord Naṭārāja became very famous in the recitals (Gaston 1996b: 306–310). Thus, it is certain that with time, the repertoire undergoes constant revitalizations even though the basic skeleton remains the same. Such revitalizations either revive old forms or are either innovations or inventions.

I shall now discuss in detail, the four main items that are central to the analysis section – two *nṛtta* based items: *alārippu* and *tillāna,* and two *abhinaya* based items: *padam* and *jāvali.* Here, it is important to remember that *nṛtta* based items do not mean they are devoid of the four types of *abhinaya.* As seen in chapter 2, *nṛtta* is lifeless without *vācika abhinaya.* In *nṛtta* based items*,* the importance is placed on the rhythmical content and musical melodies instead of the lyrics. In *abhinaya* based items, the meaning of the lyrical content is communicated with the help of gestures or *āṅgika abhinaya. Āṅgika abhinaya* with respect to body postures and hand gestures are also very much present in *nṛtta.* Every performance displays *āhārya abhinaya* and *sāttvika abhinaya.* Thus, one can say that *nṛtta* based items are those that are focused on the abstract movements (*aḍavus*), and *abhinaya* based items are those that are focused on the communication of the lyrical meaning.

3.1 *Alārippu*

Alārippu, a short and simple item performed as the first item in a Bharatanāṭyam repertoire, became a frequently performed item in stage recitals after the revival (Gaston 1996b: 307–309). It has also been an item used by dancers when representing India in other countries in the mid–fifties (Net Film 1954). This item performed to the rhythm of a *mṛidaṅgam* (percussion instrument)*,* usually opens a Bharatanāṭyam recital. Being the first number, it is in the form of an invocation paying obeisance to the gods and the audience. *Alārippu* is executed through a number of concentrated rhythmic syllables

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[17] The word *puṣpāñjali* comes from the root words – *puṣpa* meaning "flower" and *añjali* meaning "offering" or "benediction". Thus, *puṣpāñjali* is an offering of flowers.

[18] *Kautvam* forms part of the temple repertoire of hereditary dancing community. A *kautvam* has rhythmic syllables intertwined with lyrics of the song. It consists of both *nṛtta* and *abhinaya.* (Kersenboom 2010: 59–63)

[19] Items like *puṣpāñjali* and *kautvam* existed from the time of the Nayaks and were performed by the hereditary artists (Radhika 2011: 120–141).

intoned by the *naṭṭuvanār*. The rhythmic patterns remain elemental. *Alārippu,* being a perfect example of *nṛtta* or pure abstract dance, acts as a prelude to the entire recital. It is like a warm–up dance employing the movements of all major and minor limbs of the body. This item is embellished with graceful movements of the neck and eyes, cadences of the shoulders, arms, and hands along with beautiful postures. It is performed in three different tempos – slow, middle, and fast, making it an intensely rhythmic dance. (Vatsyayan 1974: 20; Kothari 1997: 93–96; Devi 1972: 50)

3.1.1 Origin of *alārippu*

There are various interpretations to the meaning of the word *alārippu*. *Alārippu* generally suggests the idea of blossoming of a flower. The word *"alaru"* in Telugu means "flower" or "blossom" (Krishnan 2008: 76). The word *"alar"* in Kannada means "flower", while the word *"ippu"* means "lowering" or "bringing down", suggesting the blossoming forth of both the dance and dancer before the spectators (Kothari 1997: 93–96). This dance number shows parallels to a flowering bud, by opening the various limbs of the body sequentially. This, in turn, warms up the body for the rest of the items. (Krishnan 2008: 76) The Telugu word *alarimcu* means "to please". In North India, *alārippu* is known by other names like *addi* or *mohara* (stamp). *Alārippu* is referred to as an invocatory piece by many authors because, in the beginning, the dancer offers her obeisance to the gods, her/his guru, and the audience in front. (Ramachandran 1982: 166; Satyanarayana 1966: 99; Higgens 1993: 35; Phadke 2016)

Traditionally, the *alārippu* was taught before learning the *aḍavus*. It was to perform for a religious ceremony called *cērvai*[20] that took place on an auspicious day. But after the revival, *alārippu* is being taught after with the practice of *aḍavus,* as there is no such religious ceremony in vogue anymore. (Devi 1972: 62) Paying obeisance to god before commencing a recital has been common to all dance styles of the country. (Vatsyayan 1974: 20).

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[20] *Cērvai* could have come from the Sanskrit term called *śerva,* that is translated as *"sabhai vaṇakkam"* or "song of greeting to the audience" by the Tamil editors of the text named *Kumārasaṃbhava Nirūpaṇa* (Krishnan 2008: 76). The term *śerva* has been used in the following paragraphs.

TEXT 2

Kumarasambhava Nirupana
(attributed to Serfoji Maharaja II, r. 1798-1832)

Sherva

Raga Bilahari   Aditala

Tattakara—tathayyai thai dattatta

Alaru

tam tam thaikita taka II tam tam thaikita taka (3x)
tam tam thaikita taka II tatdhi dhalangutaka tadhimginathom
takatdhi dhalangu takatadhimginathom tatdhi dhalangu takatdhidhalangu
dhalangutaka dhikitalca tadhimginathom JJ tadhimginathom
tam digi digi digi
dhiki taka taka dhiki taka taka dhiki taka dhalangutaka dhiki taka
tadhimginathom

Aditya

tam taka jhomtatta jhomta jhomtatta jhom jhamtari jagataku kumdata
kumdari tadhimginathom

Figure 3.1 *Śerva* under the text named *Kumārasaṃbhava Nirūpaṇa* (Krishnan 2008: 76)

The *alārippu* is said to have originated during the time of the Tanjore Quartet[21] when they envisioned and standardized the court repertoire for the solo dancers. While the four brothers were knitting together various parts of the repertoire, they worked with a set of Marathi texts called *nirūpaṇas.* (*Bharatanatyam invocatory items* 2011[22]) These *nirūpaṇas* written by King Serafoji II (1798 CE – 1832 CE) offered some important fragments to the dance repertoire. A genre called *śerva* under the text named *Kumārasaṃbhava Nirūpaṇa* has three sections: *taṭṭakara, alaru,* and *āditya* in the *bilahari rāga* and *ādi tāla*. Figure 3.1 shows the original notations for the three sections. These three sections of the *śerva* look exactly like the version of *alārippu* developed by the Tanjore Quartet which is performed even today. The first section *taṭṭakara[23]* consists of a recitation of a single line of rhythmic syllables called *sollukaṭṭu*. They sound very similar to the first line or the opening phrase of the *alārippu.[24]* The configuration of *alaru* or the second section is akin to a part of the *alārippu* which has the '*dhṛgaḍtaka*'

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[21] The Tanjore Quartet (late 19th and early 20th centuries) were the four brothers – Ciṉṉaiyya, Poṉṉaiyya, Sivāṉandam, and Vaṭivēlu who came from a lineage of musicians.
[22] Explained by C.V. Chandrashekar, a Bharatanāṭyam dancer and a scholar in the Kalakriya video.
[23] This is a word that was popular amongst the descendants of the Tanjore Quartet (Krishnan 2008: 76–77).
[24] This is explained in the next section on structure of *alārippu*.

sollukaṭṭu.[25] *Āditya* or the third section seems to bear a resemblance to the concluding sequences or the closing phrase of the *alārippu.*[26] (Krishnan 2008: 76–77)

3.1.2 Structure of *alārippu*

Alārippu is one of the simplest compositions in the entire repertoire of Bharatanāṭyam, and lasts for about five minutes. The basis of this musical composition lies on a set of mnemonic syllables called *sollukaṭṭu* that are recited by the *naṭṭuvanār*. The structure of the *alārippu* is closely related to the musical and rhythmic aspects that come under *vācika abhinaya*[27] which, in turn, form the basis or the foundation for *nṛtta*. The *tāla* (rhythm or time measure) is the predominant element in *alārippu,* and hence, the percussion instrument (*mṛidaṅgam)* that is fully integrated to the *tāla,* plays a crucial role. *Mṛidaṅgam* and *naṭṭuvāṅgam* (cymbals) are played along with the *sollukaṭṭu.* (Gaston 1996b: 263–264) The musical composition of an *alārippu* can be looked at in detail by taking an example of *tiṣra jātī, eka tāla.*[28] *Eka tāla* has one *laghu*[29]. Hence, a *tiṣra jātī eka tāla* has three rhythmic beats, and every beat, in turn, has four *mātrās* (internal beats); hence totaling to twelve units for one *āvartana. Āvartana* is one complete cycle of a single *tāla,* in this case: *tiṣra jātī, eka tāla.* Every beat, in turn, has four internal beats and ends with the symbol ⎸. The end of the *tāla* cycle or the end of the third beat is denoted by the symbol ‖. The musical notations, along with the different sections for this *alārippu* are given below. They are the *sollukaṭṭu* recited by the *naṭṭuvanār* to which the dancer performs. The numbers in curly brackets at the end of each section denote the number of repetitions for that section.

opening phrase:

dha lāṃ , gu ⎸ ta ka ta di ⎸ gi ṇa toṃ , ‖

tat , , , ⎸ tai , , , ⎸ tai , yuṃ , ‖

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[25] This is explained in the next section on structure of *alārippu.*

[26] Ibid.

[27] The concept of *vācika abhinaya* has been explained in chapter 2, section 2.3.

[28] There are seven basic *tāla*s: *druva, matya, rūpaka, triputa, aka,* and *eka.* Every *tāla* changes according to five different types of *jātī*s or rhythmic beats: *tiṣra* (3 beats) *catuṣra* (4 beats), *khaṇḍa* (5 beats), *miṣra* (7 beats), and *sankīrna* (9 beats). Also explained under chapter 2, section 2.3.

[29] A *laghu* is one of the six *aṅgās* (limbs) of a *tāla*. It is performed by one beat of the hand and three (in this case) counts of the fingers starting from the little finger towards the thumb.

tat , , , │ *tām* , , , │ *ki ṭa ta ka* ‖ {2}

vilambita kāla (slow speed):

tām , , , │ , , , , │ *dhit* , , , ‖

tām , , , │ , , , , │ *ki ṭa ta ka* ‖

tai , , , │ , , , , │ *tat* , , , ‖

tai , , , │ , , , , │ *ki ṭa ta ka* ‖ {2}

madhya kāla (middle speed):

tām , , , │ , , *dhit* , │ *tām* , , , ‖

tai , , , │ , , *tat* , │ *tai* , , , ‖ {4}

dṛta kāla (fast speed):

tām , , *dhit* │ *tām* , *tai* , │ , *ta tai* , ‖ {8}

jati:

ta , *ri ta* │ *ki ṇa jhaṃ* , │ *ta* , , , ‖

ta ta ri ta │ *ki ṇa jhaṃ* , │ *tai* , , , ‖

ta di gi ṇa │ *toṃ* , *ta ka* │ *ta di gi ṇa* ‖

toṃ , *ta ka* │ *di ku ta di* │ *gi ṇa toṃ* , ‖

tām , , , │ , , , , │ , , , , ‖

dhṛgaḍtaka phrase:

dhṛ gaḍ ta ka │ *di gu ta ka* │ *di gu ta ka* ‖ {3}

closing phrase:

dha lāṃ , *gu* │ *ta ka ta di* │ *gi ṇa toṃ* , ‖

tat   ,   ,   , | tai ,   ,   , | tai ,   yuṃ , ‖

tat   ,   ,   , | tāṃ ,   ,   , | ki ṭa ta ka ‖ {2}

The *alārippu* is performed in three different speeds (slow, middle, fast): *vilambita kāla, madhya kāla,* and *dṛta kāla.* The *sollukaṭṭu* for these three *kāla*s remain the same. Customarily, the *vilambita kāla* is performed for two cycles and eight *āvartanas*; *madhya kāla* for four cycles and eight *āvartanas;* and *dṛta kāla* for eight cycles and eight *āvartanas.* The three speeds or *kāla* cycles are repeated three times – once when the dancer stands with feet together (*samapāda*), once when the dancer is in the full–sitting posture (*muḻumaṇḍi),* and once when the dancer does *kuṭṭaḍavu.* Then, there is a combination of *sollukaṭṭu* only in the *dṛta* phase when the footwork moves from *vilambita* to *madhya* to *dṛta kālas.* This is followed by a small *jati* that lasts for five *āvartanas.* The opening and closing phrase for the *alārippu* is similar. This phrase is repeated twice, once before the first cycle of the *vilambita kāla,* and later, at the end after the *jati.* (Phadke 2016)

With the above explanation on rhythmical notations, I now elucidate how a dancer performs the *alārippu.* The dancer begins the *alārippu* in the standing posture with the *añjali hasta*[30]*,* followed by *aṭṭamīs* – the side to side neck movements along with perfect coordination of the eye. At this point, the hands are stretched outwards in *patākā hasta* while the feet remain together. After the opening phrase, the *vilambita kāla* begins, for which the dancer performs a coordinated movement of the eyes, neck, shoulders, and hands. The simultaneous play of the various parts of the body in unison is called *recakās.* This is continued for the other two *kālas* as well. The dancer gets to the *araimaṇḍi* or the half–sitting position for the fast speed. After this, the dancer repeats this whole cycle of the slow, middle, and fast speeds in the full–sitting posture. Many times, the *dṛta kāla* is extended for another eight *āvartanas,* specifically in the full–sitting posture. This is followed by a complete repetition of the three speeds while the dancer performs the *kuṭṭaḍavus.* As the movements proceed sequentially from the eyes, neck, and shoulders to the torso, there is increasing use of performance space. The subsequent footwork in the three speeds is done with *ardhapatākā hasta.* The vibrant footwork is succeeded by

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[30] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.2.2 for details on *hastas* (hand gestures).

the *jati*. There is a *dhṛgaḍtaka* phrase for four *āvartanas*, where the dancer moves back, and then leaps forward. The dancer finishes in *araimaṇḍi* with the arms stretched out in the *patākā hasta,* and with a final touch of *recakā* movements for the closing phrase. (Pandya 2003: 354; Rangashree 2008). Pandya (2003: 355–401) has done a labanotation[31] for this *alārippu.*

With a quiet start, the dance reaches the climax by gradually building up the tempo of bodily movements. Even though the item looks very simple and spontaneous, tremendous thought has been invested for its creation. There is perfect repose, and an attitude of perfect equilibrium throughout the dance number. The movements of all the major and minor limbs are weaved in a straightforward format. The dancer Balasaraswati, suggested performing the *alārippu* with perfection and discipline without unnecessary movements. She also stressed the importance of opening a recital with this item. (Vatsyayan 1974: 20; Kothari 1997: 93–96; Anjali 2010)

3.1.3 Types of *alārippu*

An *alārippu* can be performed to different *jātīs* or rhythmic cycles. They are *tiṣra, catuṣra, khanda, miṣra,* and *sankeerna* with three, four, five, seven and nine beats respectively. When the speed of an odd number is doubled or quadrupled, it results in complex fractions. Thus, performing a *tiṣra, khaṇḍa, miṣra,* or a *sankīrna alārippu* becomes exciting for the dancer due to its complexity. (Ramachandran 1982: 166; Higgens 1993: 36; *Bharatanatyam invocatory items* 2011) Thus, based on the *jātī,* the permutation and combination of sequences vary in infinite variety along with the juxtaposition of the *recakās* or beauty embellishments. The notations for different variations of the *tāla* have been done by Parimal Phadke in his book on *alārippu* (Phadke 2016).

There have been innovations over time, and *alārippu*s are performed in three different ways. First is in the conventional method, where the *naṭṭuvanār* is reciting the *sollukaṭṭu.* Second is when the singer sings a song along with the *naṭṭuvanār* reciting the *sollukaṭṭu.*

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[31] Labanotation is a method of notating, analyzing, and recording human movement. It contains a systematic vocabulary and methodology for describing movement. *Labanotation* by Ann Hutchinson Guest (Guest 2005) and *Labanotation for Beginners* by Ann Kipling Brown (Brown 2008) are some works on Labanotation.

The most common song is a *tiruppukaḻ* of the 15th century composer, Arunakirinātar. However, there is no *abhinaya* done for the *tiruppukaḻ*. Third is when the *alārippu* itself is sung like a song. (*Bharatanatyam invocatory items* 2011[32]) *Nāṭṭai* is the common *rāga* used for the *tiruppukaḻ,* or when the *alārippu* is sung like a song. Other *rāgas* like *haṃsadvanī* and *gaṃbīranāttai* are also mentioned in some texts. (Pandya 2003: 354) A recent innovation in the past decade is the *mayūra alārippu* choreographed by the dancer, Rama Vaidyanathan. The choreography for the entire *alārippu* is interpreted like a peacock dancing in joy, by using only the *mayūra hasta*. (Venkatraman 2016)

3.2 *Tillāna*

A Bharatanāṭyam performance is usually rounded off with a bright, lively, and joyous number called the *tillāna* (Parthasarathy 1998: 165). The slow tempo of the *padams* is broken when *tillāna* breaks into various patterns of movement akin to the burning of camphor accompanied by rustle in a temple. This brisk item at the end of the concert takes the audience back to the pure and abstract rhythmical compositions like the *alārippu* and *jatisvaram* performed at the beginning. The item is governed by crisp *svaras* and *jatis*, thus restricting the dance to only *nṛtta*. It does not strive to convey any meaning or theme. A very simple and basic rhythmic pattern builds up to gradually develop into complex patterns. Thus, rhythm remains the predominant component in this item, and it seldom contains *sāhitya* (lyrical) passages. (Vatsyayan 1974: 388; Kothari 1997: 102, 103; Guhan 1991: 11) *Tillāna,* just like *alārippu* became a frequent and widespread repertoire item during the revival period. The music academy dance recitals by both hereditary and non–hereditary dancers included this item. (Gaston 1996b: 307, 308) They were also taken as a music and dance number in many films in the Indian cinema.[33]

The song for the *tillāna* consists of a basic set of rhythmic syllables that are repeated and elaborated continuously throughout the item. The lyrics or *sollukaṭṭu* include words like '*dhīṃ nādhṛ dhīṃ*', '*dhīṃ tillāna*', and so on. The word *tillāna* itself consists of the rhythmic syllables, "*til–lā–na*". Rarely, there is a *sāhitya* passage at the end of the item

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[32] Sujatha Vijayaraghavan, a professor focusing on folklore studies, oral literatures, and postcolonial studies, explains types of *alārippu* in the Kalakriya video.
[33] More details on the inclusion of *tillāna* items in films in the next chapter.

in praise of a god or a king. The rhythmic mnemonic syllables are set in a specific *rāga* and *tāla.* A brilliant extract of the dancer's artistic finesse is presented with contrasting rapid and slow movements, poses, and exquisite play of different movements of the body. At every moment, the dancers' bells are in perfect synchronization with the *sollukaṭṭu* or the mneumonics. (Devi 1972: 57; Anjali 2012; Vatsyayan 1974: 24) A seamless fit with the other items is necessary when selecting a *tillāna* for a dance concert. It is also imperative to keep the type of audience space in mind when choosing this last piece, since it would have a lingering effect on them. *Tillāna* is one number that is common to both Bharatanāṭyam and South Indian Carnatic music. Both the concerts culminate with a colorful and melodic *tillāna.* Even in a musical concert, this number comes as a refreshing breeze after the long drawn musical pieces. The *svaras* and *jatis* in a *tillāna* are usually sung in very high speeds with clarity, thus requiring good training for not only the dancer but for also the singer and other musicians. (*Thillana* 2011; Pattabhiraman 1985: 149–150)

3.2.1 Origin of *Tillāna*

Tillāna originated from the *tarānās*[34] of North Indian Hindustani music and later seeped into the South Indian Carnatic music system (Pattabhiraman 1985: 149–151; Higgens 1993: 173).[35] *Tarānā* is a sprightly classical music form that relies on 'meaningless' *bols*[36] that are rhythmically set. *Bols* like *dhā, tir, kiṭ ṭak, dirdir toṃ* that are used in *tablā* and *sitar,*[37] are used to craft a composition in each *rāga.* Other vocabulary includes *ta, noṃ, nā, de, re, oḍāni, tanoṃ, yalali,* and so on. The *bols* are devoid of lyrical meaning and are maintained in a balanced pattern. Thus, the practice of using 'meaningless' lyrics or *sollukaṭṭu* has been quite common both in North and South India. This *tarānā* form of Hindustani music is believed to have evolved from the legend, Amīr Khusrau[38]. Khusrau had provided earnest and patient efforts to create many such Hindustani forms like the

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[34] *Tarānā* is a song composed of meaningless syllables (Jairazbhoy 1995: 17).

[35] "Points of affinity between Hindustani and Karnatik Music" (Ratanjankar 1950) and "Influence of Western Music and Hindustani Music on Carnatic Music" (Rajagopalan 1965) are articles that discuss the North Indian influence on South Indian music.

[36] The mneumonic syllables (like the *sollukaṭṭu* of Bharatanāṭyam) for North Indian dance forms like Kathak are called *bols* (Kothari 1989: 59).

[37] Hindustani music uses a percussion instrument called *tablā,* and a string instrument called *sitar.*

[38] Amīr Khusrau (1253 CE – 1325 CE) was a musician, poet, and scholar from the North India. He is credited with introducing Persian and Arabic into Indian music. (Jairazbhoy 1995: 17)

tarānā. The song is sung from middle to fast tempo by singers called *khyāls.* (Jairazbhoy 1995: 17; Indianetzone 2008) Sometimes even the *tarānā* has a *sāhitya* (lyrical) passage that is borrowed from Persian couplets. In the north, *tarānās* are used for both music and dance as it requires great skills in rhythmic manipulations. (Pattabhiraman 1985: 149–151)

The period when the North Indian form of *tarānā* entered the Carnatic music tradition and thereby Bharatanātyam is ambiguous. Vīrabhadrāya, who lived during the 17th century Maratha ruler, Pratāpasimha, is supposed to have merged the *tarānās* into Carnatic music. This was later predominantly used during Tulaja's reign (18th century). Tulaja is also known to have been praised for his *taitai tillāna* by a North Indian musician. (Pattabhiraman 1985: 151) But Gaston argues that the *tarānā* form might have entered the dance repertoire at the beginning of the 19th century, during the time of Svāti Tirunāl. Svāti Tirunāl was not only a ruler in the state of Tanjore but also a composer and a patron of music and dance. It was a common custom to sing a *tillāna* in *harikathā kalākśepams*[39] in situations like riding a chariot (Gaston 1996b: 266, 267). This was sometimes referred to as *tiri tillāna.* Even though this musical composition has a north–south link, it seems to have had older roots from the South Indian tradition itself. (Raghavan 1974: 248) *Tillānas* choreographed for dance are the ones that are continually absorbed from the vocal and instrumental court repertoires (Gaston 1996: 266, 267).

3.2.2 Music and structure of a *tillāna*

The structure of a *tillāna* essentially consists of a *pallavi, anupallavi,* and *svaras.* After the *anupallavi,* sometimes there is a *sāhitya* passage that is added. This passage is also called the *caraṇam.* The freedom to add this either based on a deity or a king, lies with the composer. The composer might add his signature name or *nāmamudra* in this passage. There are also *tillānas* with just the *pallavi* and *anupallavi,* and some others with the *pallavi* and *sāhitya.* Some *tillānas* have a distinct *caraṇam* with *sāhitya, jatis,* and *svaras.* (Pattabhiraman 1985: 150) The *pallavi* forms the main musical line for the *tillāna.* This musical line serves as a background and a stable pillar to which the song keeps coming back after every other paragraph (refer Figure 3.2). With this simple

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[39] *Harikathā kalākśepam* is a form of religious discourse in which the storyteller describes the life of a saint or a story, in the form of an epic. (Datta 1988: 1552)

musical *pallav*i, the dancer weaves highly intricate and complex dance patterns. Together with the *pallav*i developing into the *anupallavi,* and finally the *caraṇam,* the dancer also gathers the tempo to create the final crescendo of pure *nṛtta.* The structure of a *tillāna* is almost similar to a *jatisvaram,* the pure and abstract *nṛtta* item performed as the second item in a Bharatanāṭyam recital. But when compared to a *jatisvaram,* the dancer designs more complicated and sophisticated patterns in the *tillāna.* (Vatsyayan 1974: 388)
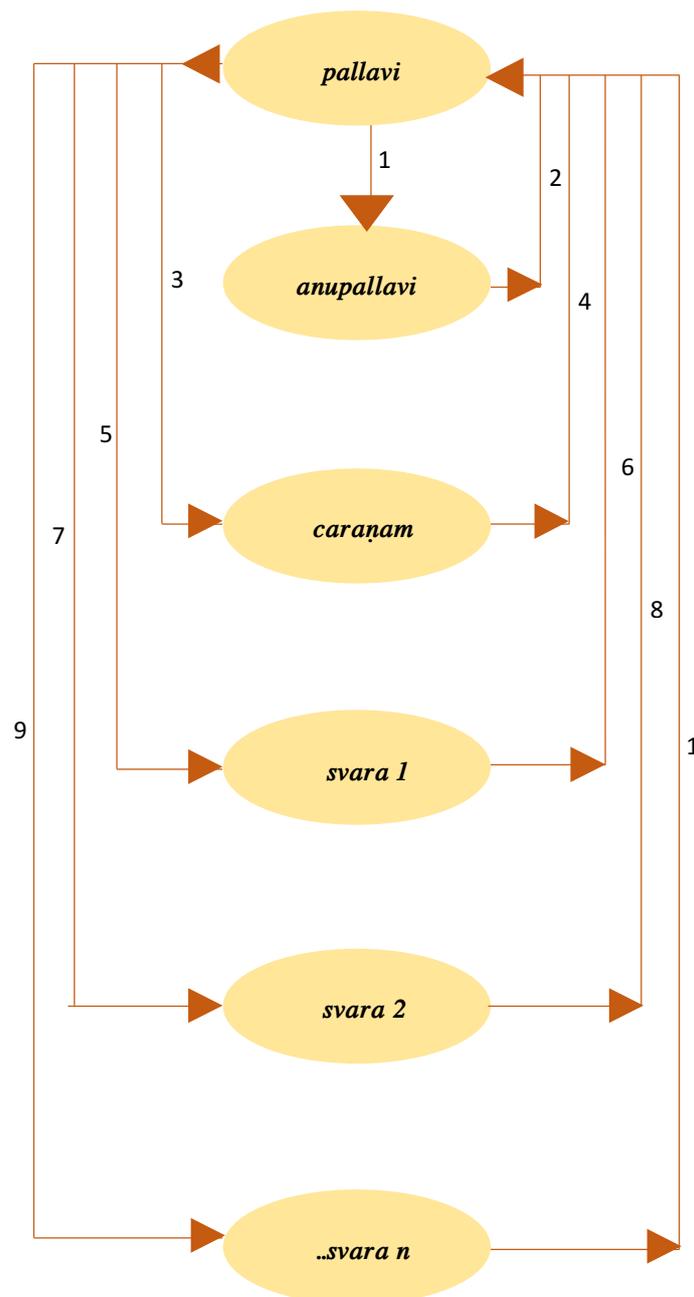
Figure 3.2 Structural flow of a *tillāna* (Figure: by author)

The music for the *tillāna* mainly consists of *sollukaṭṭu*. Examples of *sollukaṭṭu* syllables are *dhīṃ, tiranā, nādhṛdhānī, dhṛdhṛdhānī, toṃ tiranā, taka joṇu, tarikiṭa, tadinginatoṃ,* and so on. They are meaningless words that are well suited for the percussion and *tāla* instruments. Although there exist a few *tillānas* in *vilambita kāla* (slow speed), most of them are brisk and in *madhya kāla* (middle speed). The composition gained popularity with the presence of both, these mneumonic syllables and a line of *sāhitya*. Several *tillāna* compositions by great musicians, vocalists, and Bharatanāṭyam teachers exist today. (Gaston 1996b: 266–67; Pattabhiraman 1985: 149–150) Though the distinction is not very rigid, there is a minor difference between *tillānas* that are sung for music concerts versus those sung for dance recitals. For *tillānas* sung in music concerts, special attention is paid to *rāga bhāva* or the elaboration of the musical lines to define the quintessence of the *rāga*. They are also set in a very slow tempo. The *tillānas* intended for dance are faster in tempo, and the arrangement of the musical lines give more scope for a display of a variety of footwork. The importance is given more to the *tāla* than to the *rāga*. Several rhythmic variations for the *pallavi* are brought out in dance *tillānas,* thus giving an immense possibility for the dancer to show her/his grip over *nṛtta* and the beauty of abstract dance. (Raghavan 1974: 248, Gaston 1996b: 266–67; Pattabhiraman 1985: 149–150; Ramachandran 1982)

All the *nṛtta* or the abstract movements that the dancer rendered through her recital is reinforced in this fluid number. The dancer starts the *tillāna* with fully developed movements from the *alārippu.* The *tillāna* begins with the movement of the eyes, neck, and then shifts to the shoulders. Then the dancer proceeds to the movements of the entire torso with arm and feet movements. Gradually the whole physical form is interpreted through many chiseled poses. This usage of sculpture–like poses is never dominant in any other item of the repertoire. The floor choreography or the designs in space are along straight lines, diagonals, semi–circles, rectangles, and triangles. Several dance cadences, also called *kārvais*[40] are inserted, that emphasize the characteristic finale. A

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[40] *Kārvais* are spaces that are left between two mneumonic syllables in a musical line. They are usually denoted with a comma (,). These spaces act as breaks in a dance pattern. Here is a set of *sollukaṭṭu* in *ādi tāla* (refer to the glossary for more details on how to notate this *tāla*):
ta , ri ta | ri ta jhaṃ , | , , , , ‖

certain dynamic quality develops in the *tillāna* due to the picturesque arm movements and leg extensions executed for a variety of *aḍavus*. One can see the usage of eye–catching *periya aḍavu* covering large distances in space using *alapadma* and *kaṭakāmukha hastas*. The dancer uses this *aḍavu* as the concluding movement, to exit quickly, that livens up the mood for the audience. For *tillānas* containing a *sāhitya* passage, the dancer performs appropriate facial expressions and hand gestures based on the meaning of the passage. (Vatsyayan 1974: 388; Kothari 1997: 102)

3.2.3 *Tillāna* composers

The earliest composer of *tillānas* is believed to be Vīrabhadrāya from Melattur who lived during the reign of Pratāpasiṃha (17th century). He used the signature *"prātapa"*, and shaped the *tillāna* as a separate musical form. In the late 17th and 18th centuries, *tillānas* were composed by the Tanjore Quartet and Mahārāja Svāti Tirunāl (early 19th century). The Tanjore Quartet have used *madhya kāla* (middle speed) with intricate *svaras* and *sollukaṭṭu* in their compositions. This helped the dancers prove their skills in rhythm. Svāti Tirunāl holds a unique position in Indian history being a composer of the highest order and a liberal patron of music. His *tillāna* in *dhanaśrī rāga* is quite popular even today. Sēśayyar who came after Tyāgarāja is known for the natural flow of music in his *tillāna* compositions. His *tillānas* in *dhanyāsi* and *vasantā rāgas* are quite popular. Mahā Vaidyanātha Iyer has made a magnificent contribution for the Sanskrit *tillāna,* *"gowrināyakā"* in *kānaḍa rāga*. The entire *tillāna* is made up of just two *āvartanas*. The first line is a *sāhitya* in praise of Lord Naṭarāja and the second is made of beautiful *jatis*. His signature was *"guhadāsa"*. Paṭaṇam Subramania Iyer, another brilliant composer, is known for his *tillānas* in *rāgas – khamās* and *sindubairavi*. Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar has, to his credit, *tillānas* in *rāgas – kāpi* and *pantuvarāli*. *Vīna* Seshanna of Mysore, a celebrated *vīna* exponent has composed a classic *tillāna* in *senjuruti rāga*. Sadāśiva Rao, Harikēsava Muttayya Baghavathar, Ariyakudi Rāmānuja Iyengar, and Mudikondan Venkatarāma Iyer have composed a couple of *tillānas*. The 20th century composers like Balamurali Krishna, Lalgudi Sri Jayaraman, and Dandayudhapani Pillai (a *naṭṭuvanār*) have infused a good degree of sophistication in their *tillāna* compositions by combining both melody and intricate rhythmic framework. (Pattabhiraman 1985: 152; Anjali 2012)

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ta   ta   ri   ta | ri   ta   jhaṃ   , | ,   ,   ,   ,   ‖

3.3 *Padam*

The word *padam* was initially used by Bharata, the author of *Nāṭyaśāstra* in the sense of *sāhitya* (lyrical part for which the dancer gesticulates) or a song employed for *abhinaya.* It started being used loosely in musical parlance after the 13th century. The term *padam* has now come to mean a song in slow tempo, soaked in *śṛṅgāra rasa,* surrounding a *nāyikā* as the main motif. Visual representations by gestures is an indispensable feature in *padams.* Even though the *padam* is generally intended for dance, it can also be sung independently as part of a musical performance. (TSP 1998: 160–161)

In a *padam,* the dancer should be able to move freely in time from the present to the past to the future, and back to the present. She/he is able to interpret the various states of mind, apart from the character itself. This is due to the free play of time at three levels connected with two aspects − memory and hope. The multilayered meaning in the *padams* moves towards a unified state even though unfolding through diverse variations. The dancer should be capable of conjuring up a whole world of similes and metaphors like a poet in movement. The dancer interprets a line differently each time by using the same group of words as statements, or interrogation, or description, or memory, or hope. (Narayanan 1994: 9–14) Abundant number of *padams* are available by various composers. For the analysis and validation of *padams* in Indian cinema, the spotlight is only on the *padams* by the composer, Kṣetrajña.

3.3.1 Kṣetrajña's *padams*

Kṣetrajña, an outstanding composer and musician of Telugu literature, lived during the 17th century in a village called Muvva. He traveled widely and was patronized by various kings. He is known for his *padam* compositions, and he occupies a unique place among the Carnatic musicians. He was one among the first who could draw a complete picture of a *rāga* and develop it in proper sequence. He was an adept scholar fully aware of the *śāstras* in Telugu and Sanskrit literature. (Rao 1950: 110–112) This poet could tap into the invisible psychic side of the humans and give a metaphorical and a colorful picture to it with the softest of textures. With appropriate usage of subtle and very colloquial local idioms, he could address every possible kind of emotion that one can find in human life. The temperament and psychology of both men and women were intrinsically understood

by Kṣetrajña. It is believed that his various affairs with beautiful dancers who were courtesans, and his alliance with the kings, had an influence on his work. (Aruna 1995: 152–155)

Very little authentic evidence is available about the life history of Kṣetrajña. Kṣetrajña is believed to have been born in the village of Muvva or Moova[41] in Krishna district in Andhra Pradesh, which is about two miles from the birthplace of Kuchipudi[42] dance. However, there is a controversy over this. Some scholars have suggested Movapu village in Chingelput district, and some others the village of Movaluru in Tanjavur district in Tamilnadu. But since most of his *padams* are dedicated to the Gōpāla[43] of Muvva, there is an agreement to consider this village as his place of birth. (Andal 1995: 2) The year of his birth is speculated to be around 1595 CE. His parentage or his background is still unknown. It is rumored that he might have been born in a pious Brahmin family. Seemingly, his original name was Muvva Varadayya which was forgotten later. This piece of evidence was uncovered by Vissa Appa Rao (Rao 1950), who has undertaken research about Kṣetrajña, and three hundred and thirty of his poems. Kṣetrajña, the composer adopted the name "Kṣetrajña" in all his works. This name could have come about due to his several visits to the various *kṣetrās*[44] during his lifetime. Today, he is referred to as Kṣētrayya in the state of Andhra Pradesh, and as Kṣetrajña in the state of Tamilnadu. (Rao 1981: 23; Rao 1950: 111–113)

Kṣetrajña is known to have been intimate with a young *devadāsī* girl. Though this intimacy was in his early years, it had a huge impact on his compositions. Later in his life, he left Muvva for Tanjore and never returned. Going from one temple to another as a pilgrim, Kṣetrajña brought the whole of Deccan and South India under one cultural roof. His literary works extend from Golconda in the Deccan to Madhurai in the South. Kṣetrajña is known to have visited temples from the deities featuring as heroes in his *padams.* The places include Tirupati, Tiruvallur near Madras, Vedanarayanapuram,

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[41] The term Muvva comes like a signature in all Kṣetrajña's *padams.* It refers to the name of his village. The spelling of Muvva varies in the works available today. It is also called Mavva, Mova or Moova in his different *padams.* (Rao 1950: 111)

[42] Kuchipudi is another form of Indian 'classical' dance that originated from the state of Andhra Pradesh.

[43] Gōpāla is another term to refer to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

[44] In common parlance, *kṣetrās* are referred to a place where there is a temple or someone who could have been of religious, or sacred importance.

Satyavedu, Palagiri, Kadappah, Hampi, Kanchi, Chidambaram, Varahur near Tanjore, Srirangam, and Madhurai apart from some shrines in Andhra Pradesh. (Raghavan 1963: 124; Aruna 1995: 154–155)

Kṣetrajña who lived in the second half of the 17ᵗʰ century was patronized by the Tanjore kings – Śri Achyutappa Nayak, his sons Raghunātha Nayak, and Vijayarāghava Nayak. Besides this, he also obtained patronage from Tirumalā Nayak of Madurai and Abdulin Qutab Shah of Golconda. All of them feature in his set of *padams*. In a *padam* that he composed in the *devagāndhāri rāga* at the court of Tirumalā Nayak, Kṣetrajña has mentioned evidence about the 'number' of his *padam* compositions. This *padam* is called "*meruva padam*". In this, he seems to have declared of composing two thousand *padams* in the court of Tirumalā, and a thousand at the court of Vijayarāghava Nayak. He also states to have engaged in a debate with Tulasīmūrti at the Golconda court, the result of which was an extra thousand five hundred *padams*. Thus, the total output of his *padam* work seems to be four thousand five hundred. Out of these, only three hundred and twenty came into limelight from Vissa Appa Rao's edition (Rao 1950). (Raghavan 1963: 124; Aruna 1995: 154–155) Aruna (1995: 155) mentions that a later edition from Gidagu Sītāpatī has about three hundred and eighty *padams*. Kṣetrajña being a master in the field of *nāyikā–nāyakā bhedas*[45], illuminated the fields of music, dance, and literature at the same time. There were many composers of dance and music who followed him closely to compose their *padams*, including the illustrious Tyāgarāja and Śyāma Śāstrī of Carnatic music. (Rao 1981: 16–21)

 The *padams* of Kṣetrajña are exquisite in its beauty, born out of the creativity and facile imagination of the composer. Two aspects are exceptional in his *padams*: one is the fine melodic standpoint he takes, and the second is the importance he gives to the emotions. Besides, he had a distinctive command over the Telugu language and local idioms. He could employ it in a very seductive manner with flowy verses. The songs are soft, simple, and mellifluous. The Telugu idioms were charged with subtle ideas that give an artist a lot of space and freedom to explore different layers in the songs. Even though the *padams* feel heavy, the words are far apart and fewer. He was a genius in bringing out the implied or suggestive meaning. Despite being a profound Telugu scholar, his

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[45] Types or classifications of heroes and heroines.

language was close to the understanding of common people. Undoubtedly, his expertise proves that he was the uncrowned king in the field of *padams*. (*Ashtanayikas* 2011; Rao 1981; Aruna 1995: 155)

Padams initially originated as devotional, religious, and philosophical compositions. It was during the time of Kṣetrajña, that the shift to *śṛṅgāra* based poetry took a front seat. The most famous deity attached to the *śṛṅgāra rasa* is Kṛṣṇa. However, this shift from devotional poetry to more 'humane' themes did not occur abruptly. Even in Kṣetrajña's *padams* a little bit of devotional aspect lingers in some songs. But a majority of them are unmistakably addressed to real–life situations. Even though the deity is Lord Kṛṣṇa, the direction of *śṛṅgāra* is strong and clear. (Ramanujan et al. 1994: 9–40) Thus, Kṣetrajña's *padams* go back to the Sanskrit love lyrics initially put forward in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Ghosh 1951) and *Daśarūpaka* (Haas 1912)*,* and later carried forward by *Rasamañjarī* (Randhwa & Bhambri 1981) and *Rasikapriya* (Dahejia 2013) that were solely devoted to this theme.

Kṣetrajña's *padams* portray the *śṛṅgāra rasa* in endless varieties of *nāyikā–nāyakā bhedas.* There are excellent examples depicting the state of *sambhoga śṛṅgāra* (love in union) and *vipralambha śṛṅgāra* (love in separation) in a *nāyikā* elaborating her different mental and physical states. The *padam* compositions draw a fine picture of the *nāyikā's* moods, nature, and their type. The dancer has great scope for interpretation of the emotions and their corresponding manifestations. Careful avoidance of incongruous feelings, ideas, and acts can be avoided when the *nāyikā bhedas* are clear. The limited words used to describe expansive ideas, and the slow tempo of the song, give the dancer room for great interpretation and creativity. Kalanidhi Narayanan gives about twenty–three different interpretations to portray the first line of the song, "*eṭuvaṃṭi vade vadu*" that translates as "what sort of a man is he?" (Narayanan 1994: 13). Here, the heroine has heard about the *nāyakā* or her lover but never seen him. Thus, she speculates about him even without seeing him. The variations possible are: what sort of a man is he? (interrogatively), what sort of a man is he! (in surprise), what sort of a man is he! (in love), what sort of a man could he be? (thoughtfully), what sort of a man could he be (with curiousness), and so on. This is the reason why Kṣetrajña's *padams* are said to be especially suited for *abhinaya* in Bharatanāṭyam. *Abhinaya* is not just conveying the

literal meaning or taking different roles by moving in space or a skilled action sequence. It involves the skill of creation and suggestion of the more subtler aspects. Until today, Kṣetrajña's *padams* have formed a part of the repertoire of musicians as well as dancers. (Andal 1995: 5; Narayanan 1994: 13–14)
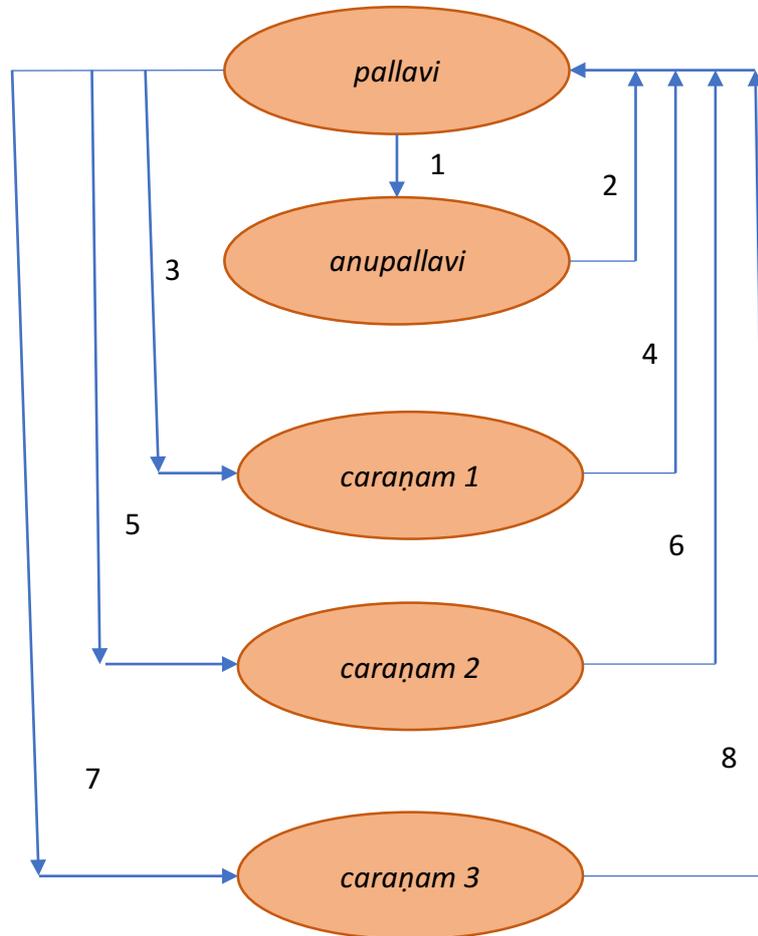
Figure 3.3 Structure of a *padam* (Figure: by author)

The appendix in Vissa Appa Rao's edition (Rao 1950: 240–260) gives one hundred and fifty types of heroines based on permutations of *nāyikā bhedas.* The author also gives a correlation between the type of heroine and Kṣetrajña's *padams.* Another handbook on dance called *Apinayasārasamputam* deals with the gesticulation of some select Kṣetrajña's *padams.* (Raghavan 1935–37: 97–118) Every composition of Kṣetrajña is individual, with no connection to one another. The structure of the song is like a usual *padam* containing a *pallavi, anupallavi,* and two to three *caraṇams.* Figure 3.3 shows the structure of a *padam,* that also applies to all Kṣetrajña's *padams.* The song comes back to the *pallavi* every time after the *anupallavi* and the *caraṇams.* The compositions are short,

but there is a strong thematic narration about the *nāyikā*. There is always an incident that is unveiled through the passages. This unveiling of the incident or the narrative technique is very systematic. The composer addresses the present context in the *pallavi;* he then switches time and space of the situation in the *anupallavi;* and finally explains the happenings that led to the present context in the *caraṇams.* This framework is apparent in almost all his *padams.* (Andal 1995: Ch. 10)

The deepest and the subtlest feelings are powerfully expressed in the inarticulate language of the *rāga.* Even articulate words fail to comprehend the sublime feelings. The complex mood of situations in the *padams* is perfectly matched with the *rāgas* of Carnatic music by Kṣetrajña. The resulting circumstances and problems of emotional nature are portrayed at extraordinary heights in the *sāhitya* with the help of the *rāga.* Compelling expression of the content happens through musical treatment. (Seetha 1977: 140–141) With deep and extensive knowledge of music, Kṣetrajña has composed *padams* in over forty different *rāgas.* These include *bhairavi, kalyāni, toḍi, sāverī, bilahari,* and *śankarābharanam.* His favorite of them all is *kāmbhoji.* Some rare ones include *ghaṇṭāravā, saindhavī,* and *khaṇḍe.* He uses *tālas* like *triputa, chāpu,* and *jhampa* in *vilambita kāla.* For situations in *sambhoga śṛṅgāra, rāgas* like *mohana, kalyāni, pantuvarāli, srīrāga, surati,* and *kedāragaula* have been used. A few of them have also been used to portray *vipralambha śṛṅgāra.* Even if many of his *padams* are in the same *rāga,* they would have different musical notations. The *rāgas* carry the independent symbol of each *padam* giving maximum musical support, and expressing every nuance of the temporal states of the heroines. The *rāgas* are also able to bring out the *vibhhāvas, anubhāvas* and the *vyābhicāri bhāvas* inherent in the composition. (Aruna 1995: 163–165)

Before performing a *padam* or an *abhinaya* item, it is important for the dancer to delve deep, into understanding the literary text at its primary and secondary levels (literal and suggestive meaning). The dancer should be able to grasp the musical melody and the rhythm involved. *Abhinaya* can be wonderfully portrayed, only if the dancer can internalize and become one with the text, music, and rhythm. An understanding of the mood of the song, and identifying the character of the situation portrayed is a necessity. A literal understanding of the *padam* helps in expressing the same idea in different ways.

It is ideal for narrating and emoting from view of only one character. Switching many personalities loses focus and emphasis on the main character, and the suggestive meaning might get diffused. (Narayanan 1994: 27)

3.4 *Jāvalis*

Jāvalis are a genre of poetry that is characterized by earnestness, light–heartedness, and capsule–like brevity, with bright, attractive, and catchy music. These songs could be easily interpreted by dance because of their earthiness and directness of appeal. Since these fast–paced *jāvalis* are sung towards the end of a performance, it helps in enlivening the entire concert. (Rao 1964: 224) *Jāvalis* are also composed in the Telugu language. But most of them are composed by men from the Tamil land. Hence their language and choice of words are very simple, laced with humor and wit along with allegorical use of sexual imagery. (Viswanathan 1999: 92)

Just like the *padams,* the theme for a *jāvali* is the eternal love between lovers. The *nāyikā* (heroine), *nāyakā* (hero), and the *sakhī* (her friend) constitute the chief actors in a *jāvali*. The sensuality in *padams* is usually layered, while *jāvalis* have a more intense treatment of sexual imagery. (Viswanathan 1999: 89) Most *jāvalis* are based on love in separation (*vipralambha śṛṅgāra*). Study shows that earlier composers have treated the *nāyikās* as a *mugdhā* or a *madhyā*[46] while later composers have treated them as a *pragalbhā.* The difference between a *padam* and a *jāvali* lie in its musical form and pace. *Padams* are usually in the slow tempo or *vilambita kāla,* while the *jāvalis* are composed in a faster pace or *madhya kāla.* The pitch of the song is also at a higher level bringing an enlivening charm to the entire concert. The fast tempo on the song appears to be suited for a *khaṇḍitā nāyikā. Jāvalis* are said to be a symbol of cultural unity as they represent a synthesis of Carnatic and Hindustani music. (Rao 1964: 227; Viswanathan 1999: 87–88)

Even though the position of *jāvalis* in Bharatanāṭyam performances was shaky during the reform and revival period, they had traveled and found a position in Indian films. Initially emerged as gramophone recordings sung by *devadāsīs, jāvalis* became popular film songs in India's entertainment industry. A community of performers called *kalāvantula,* and *mejuvani* from the Andhra region were well adept in performing them.

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[46] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.8 for more information on types of *nāyikās.*

The *jāvalis* were showcased as popular salon performances[47] in these regions. (Soneji 2010: 87–114; Shah 2016: 6–8)

3.4.1 Origin of *jāvalis*

The *jāvalis* had their origins in the 18th and 19th centuries under the Maratha rulers of Tanjore (Rao 1964: 224). Ciṉṉaiyya was a pioneer in composing them at the Tanjore court, and Vaṭivēlu introduced them in the courts of King Svāti Tirunāl, who was himself a musician and an adept composer.[48] Some sources claim the genesis of *jāvali* in the Mysore court under the kings Mummadi Kṛṣṇarāja Wudayār III (1799 CE – 1868 CE) and Chamarāja Wudayār (1881 CE – 1894 CE). (Sastri 1974: 161–164) The *jāvalis* also became famous in courts of Travancore and Vizianagaram. During those times, *jāvalis* were included as part of both musical concerts as well as dance concerts. Apart from being performed by the female solo dancers, they were also showcased in dance dramas like *yakśagāna*[49] and *bhāgavata mela nāṭakam*[50] either as a curtain raiser or in between the drama, to relax the mood. (Rao 1964: 224–225)

Satyanarayanan Roa in his paper (Rao 1964) talks about the origin of the word *jāvali* from four languages: Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Marati. In the language Tamil, *jāvali* has been traced back to the Urdu word named "*jhali*". However, this has not been verified by the Persian and Arabic scholars. The word "*jāva*" means speed or quickness in Telugu. In Marati, "*jhāvali*" means gesture of the eyes in the language of love. In Kannada, it means a song of lewd poetry.[51] (Rao 1964: 225) In Kannada, "*je*", "*pode*", or "*vode*" means "striking the bow–string with the finger", while in Sanskrit "*jye*" means "bow–string" (Chennakesavaiah 1974: 156). Arudra explains that "*jāvada*" is a musical word that is found in fifty percent of musical works. It also means "half of a song", which has been explained in Subbarāya Dīkṣitar's *Saṅgīta Saṃpradāya Pradharśini*. (Arudra 1986: 43) In Telugu, "*jāvadam*" or "*jāvalam*" means "a falcon", "colt", or "a

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[47] Salon performances performed in the homes of elite patrons became popular in colonial Madras in the late 18th and the early 19th centuries. The salon performances became the main cause for instigating the "anti–nautch movement". More on this in chapter 1.
[48] Ciṉṉaiyya and Vaṭivēlu were the oldest and the youngest among the Tanjore Quartet (brothers).
[49] *Yakśagāna* is a theatrical form practiced in the state of Karnataka.
[50] *Bhāgavata mela nāṭakam* is a theatrical form practiced in the state of Tamilnadu.
[51] Defined by Reverend F. Kittel in 1894 (Soneji 2012: 96).

filly". Despite the deep explorations, the origin of the word still seems inconclusive (Viswanathan 1999: 89).

3.4.2 *Jāvali* composers and compositions

Even though most composers were from the Tamil land, the maximum number of *jāvalis* can be found in Telugu or Kannada language (Rao 1964: 225–226). There exist very few Tamil *jāvalis* like "*chidambara naṭarāja*" and "*āṭuturai sundareśvara*" dedicated to the gods (Soneji 2012: 99). Customarily, in one of the stanzas of the *jāvali*, the composer would leave his signature. The signature would be their favorite god, or sometimes the name of the ruler or patron. Because of its light classical nature and easy language, *jāvalis* enjoyed the same kind of attractiveness that many lyrics of film songs enjoy now. (Rao 1964: 225–226; Chennakesavaiah 1974: 156–157)

Not only are the *rāgas* selected for the *jāvalis* highly compatible, but also the essence and beauty of the song is brought out in a nut–shell. The popular *rāgas* include *khamās, behāg, jhunjuti, kāpi, surati, kannadā, yamankalyāni, pharās,* and *mohana.* (Rao 1964; Chennakesavaiah 1974) Compositions in *rakti rāgas*[52] like *bairavi, kalyāni, kedāragaula,* and *bilahari* are also seen. Many *jāvalis* are in the *khamās rāga*, one of the best–suited *rāga* for romance and audience appeal. (Viswanathan 1999: 90) Even though the most common *tāla* is *ādi* in Carnatic music, most of the *jāvalis* run in *madhyamā, desādi, chāpu,* or *rūpaka tālas* (Rao 1964: 226; Chennakesavaiah 1974: 157).

The earliest known composer of *jāvali* is Ciṉṉaiyya from the Tanjore Quartet family. He was a pioneer in composing *jāvalis* and was patronized by Tanjore as well as Mysore rulers. (Viswanathan, 1999: 88) His royal patron "*chāmarājendrā*" is reflected in the *jāvali*, "*ēlarādāyenā ramannē*". "*Samayaṁidē gādarā*" is one of his popular *jāvalis'* that deals with a *parakiya nāyikā.* "*Iṭu sāhasamulu*" is the earliest known *jāvali* composed by Svāti Tirunāl (1813 CE – 1847 CE), who was the *Mahārāja* of Travancore. His signature was "*padmanābha*". (Rao 1964: 225; Arudra 1986: 44)

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[52] Musically, *rakti rāgas* are *rāgas* that have more scope for elaboration. The word *rakti* translates to "pleasingness", "lovingness", or "devotion" (Monier Williams 2008). These *rāgas* give ample scope for the musicians to emote. "Return of Rakti Ragas promises more melodies*"* (TNN 2017) gives insight into this.

Lakshmi Viswanathan (1999) in her paper on *jāvali,* quotes four famous composers as the *"Jāvali Quartet"*: Patnam Subramania Iyer, T. Pattabiramayya, Dharmapuri Subbarayar, and Tirupati Narayanaswamy (Viswanathan 1999: 91). All of them lived from the late 18th to the early 19th century, and were patronized by *zamindars* (landowners). They are known to have served a short stint in the Mysore court. Patnam Subramania Iyer moved from his home town Tiruvayaru to Madras. His signature in *jāvalis* was *"veṅkaṭēśa"* or *"varada–veṅkaṭēśa.* (Rao 1964: 225) T. Pattabiramaiah composed *jāvalis* in high order with great appeal to laymen and spectators (Rao 1964: 226; Chennakesavaiah 1974). He had many disciples who came from the hereditary dance families, like Balasaraswati and Mylapore Gauri Ammaḷ. Many of his *jāvalis* deal with the *khaṇḍitā nāyikā.* (Viswanathan 1999: 91; *Ashtanayikas* 2011) Dharmapuri Subbarayar composed *jāvalis* with the signature of the place he hailed from – Dharmapuri. He was educated, and greatly inspired by the Carnatic musician, Vīna Dhannamal, and dedicated several compositions for her. (Rao 1964: 226; Arudra 1986: 46; Viswanathan 1999: 92) Sivaramayya was also an educated composer who hailed from a village named Karur. He has done queer compositions with many English words. *"oh my dear, varuvai"* and *"o! my lovely lalana"* are some examples from his *jāvali* list. Dasu Sreeramulu's compositions of *jāvalis* are also very popular in the east and west Godavari regions. (Arudra 1986: 45; Soneji 2012: 100–101)

3.4.3 Structure of *jāvalis*

A *jāvali* song is structured with three, four or five stanzas: a *pallavi*, an *anupallavi,* and two or three *caraṇams.* The pattern is of cyclical nature with the song returning to the *pallavi* after every stanza. The structure of a *jāvali* resembles a *padam.* The lyrics of the song keeps moving back and forth between the past and the present. (Soneji 2012: 104) In most of the *jāvalis*, the *pallavi* and the *anupallavi* have only one line, and sometimes there is no *anupallavi* at all (Arudra 1986: 43). In *jāvalis*, the dancer performs *āṅgika abhinaya* for the lyrical stanzas. Interspersed between the different stanzas, would be *svaras,* or even *jatis,* for which the dancer performs *nṛtta*. The *svaras* aid the musician to explore the magic of the *rāgas* (Sankaran 1970). However, the practice of including *nṛtta* as part of *jāvalis* is not in vogue anymore. *Jāvalis* are different from the *padams* in the fact that they are opaquer, and produce a kind of field between the dancer and the

audience. They were performed as salon performances while *padams* were part of private performances for rich men. The open–ended nature of these compositions allows for flexibility in interpretation and improvisations. (Soneji 2012: 97–99)

Soneji (2010: 102–106) talks about the availability of these numbers. He says, *jāvalis,* in the manuscript form exist as part of two papers in the Kannada language. The notations for some *jāvalis* are found in personal notebooks of some dance teachers like Chennai Nellaiyappa naṭṭuvanār. The 19th and 20th century Telugu and Tamil print materials have some *jāvalis*. In the Tamil and Telugu speaking delta regions, one can find a traditional community of *jāvali* performers who possess perhaps, the last source of *jāvalis*. These hereditary community of performers were called *kalāvantula* and *mejuvani* troupes who live in the Godavari delta region. *Kalāvantula* women had performing ensembles called *bhōgamēḻams*. *Mejuvani* performers danced for salon concerts. *Jāvalis* grew into becoming the backbone of these salon performances. Some of these *kalāvantula* and *mejuvani* performers even came to Madras to perform.[53] To express some extremely amorous themes, these dancers made use of what was called as *"rati mudras"*[54], for example; *samarati* (man on top), *uparati* (woman on top), and *nāgabandhamu* (bodies coiled like a serpent). *"Nakha śikha varṇanaṁ"* was also one of the hallmarks of these performers where they would compare every part of a woman's body to the natural world. These Telugu speaking women performed something called a *"gaptu–varusa"*, which looks like a *tīrmānam*[55] done in Bharatanāṭyam. A *gaptu–varusa* is a string of dance movements that are performed for improvisation of the *rāga* with a tripartite cadence at the end. (Soneji 2010: 102–106)

3.4.1 Connotation of *jāvalis*

The etymological roots like '*jāvada*' or '*jāvala*' have a more vulgar meaning. Due to the sensuality and the way they are presented, they were regarded as an inappropriate dance genre during the revival of Bharatanāṭyam. It was said, "the literary content of a *jāvali*

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[53] Kotipalli Hymavathi, a dancer from the *kalāvantula* community performed in Madras presidency. She says her favorite item is the *jāvali*. (Soneji 2010: 103)

[54] The word *mudra* translates to "positions or intertwinings of the fingers (commonly practised in religious worship, and supposed to possess an occult meaning)", "a dance accordant with tradition", or "seal" (Monier Williams 2008). *Mudra* is another term used to denote hand gestures (*hastas).*

[55] A *tirmānam* is a string of tripartite rhythm that comes at the end of a *nṛtta* sequence. A *tirmānam* usually contains *tirmāna aḍavus.*

often transgresses the limits of respectability and stretches into vulgarity". (Chennakesavaiah 1974: 156) They were a taboo to the 'purists' due to the erotic descriptions in the lyrics. Many writers and dancers during the revival dismissed the use of this genre identifying it to be 'lowbrow' and 'degenerate' that were made to arouse the senses. (Soneji 2010: 95, 96) However, one can find *jāvalis* as part of performances by hereditary dancers at the Madras Music Academy during the revival period. Varalakshmi and Bhanumati who came from Kumbakonam with Papanasam Vadivelu Pillai as *naṭṭuvanār* performed a *jāvali* in *behāg rāga* and *rūpaka tāla* in December 1936 at the Madras Music Academy. (Sriram 2016)

Devesh Soneji writes about the taboo that was associated with performing these items. *Jāvalis* became a sign of the volatile and sexually charged spaces of the salon performance. They were lodged between the limited space of colonial modernity and emergent nationalist reinvention of South India's arts. It is not difficult to imagine how, like the salon performances, the *jāvalis* slipped in the cracks of historicizing and historiography. (Soneji 2012: 104) *Jāvalis* became items that lapsed the bounds of respectability and stretched into vulgarity. 'Obscene', 'taboo', 'undignified', 'morally questionable', 'inappropriate', 'degenerate', 'arousing only the senses' were the terms thrown against these items. (Rao 1964: 224; Chennakesavaiah 1974: 156; Soneji 2012: 72, 95–96; Khurana 2012)

The relocation of hereditary dancers into the urban cities gave birth to a new culture of salon performances in the precincts of the city. These performances were highly sexual and awfully modern. Unfortunately, *jāvalis* became the characteristic indicators for these salon performances. *Jāvalis* developed popularity here because of their opacity and the close interactions it offers between the dancer and the audience. The language of the song is colloquial and mostly contains blatant eroticism. One could argue that the *śṛṅgāra padams* like Kṣetrajña are equally erotic, but *jāvalis* seem to have a fundamental difference; while the *śṛṅgāra padams* were composed primarily in a religious context, *jāvalis* compositions were very secular. They were mostly sung for a patron, *zamindar* (landowner), or a ruler, instead of god. (Soneji 2012: 95–96) The reason for their secularism may be because many of the *jāvali* composers like T. Pattabirammayya,

Dharmapuri Subbarao, Dasu Sreeramulu, and Sivaramaiah came from Urban cities. They worked as either clerks in district offices, or as lawyers (Arudra 1986: 44–46).

Jāvalis have gained momentum in recent times especially after they were advocated by legendary dancers like Kalanidhi Narayanan and Lakshmi Viswanathan. Much talk has been happening in recent years about 'reviving' this item. They are being accepted more widely and is included in many of the stage performances. (Khurana 2012; Chakravarthy 2009)

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter discusses the repertoire of Bharatanāṭyam taking a balanced mix of *nṛtta* and *abhinaya* based items. The repertoire of Bharatanāṭyam has influences starting from the Nayak and Maratha period. The items are complex, yet very distinct. Each of the items has an appealing flavor affected by its structure, background, composer, and compositions. An understanding of the origin, background, structure, composers, and compositions of the four selected items (*alārippu, tillāna, padam,* and *jāvali*) in the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire not only enhances appreaciation, but also facilitates in analyzing and validating the Bharatanāṭyam performances in Indian films.

4 Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema: background

This chapter is a prelude to chapter 5 that centers around validating the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire items in Indian films during the flux–period to recognize the depth of inclusion. The focus of this chapter is to locate and briefly evaluate the film clips[1] cointaining the following repertoire items: *alārippu, tillāna, padam,* and *jāvali* during the flux–period, select the appropriate film clip for further analysis in chapter 5, and provide a brief outline of the movie[2]. For the *nṛtta* based items, an interplay of factors traversing to produce the Bharatanāṭyam style for the dancer is presented. This seeks engagement with the life and journey of non–hereditary Bharatanāṭyam performers and *naṭṭuvanārs* who were part of the films.

Indian cinema is one of the highly influential "pro–art" forces[3] that shaped the emergence of Bharatanāṭyam against the forerunner of this form, *catir*[4].[5] The revival of the dance form started in the early 1930s. The "Devadasi Abolition Act" was passed in 1947 and by the 1950s, the revival of Bharatanāṭyam had taken a complete form. Also in films, there was an increase of Bharatanāṭyam performances in the 1950s as compared to performances in the 1930s and 40s.[6] It is safe to say that by the year 1960, Bharatanāṭyam was a completely

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[1] The attention is on full–length or feature films of India. The selected film clips for detailed study are full–length films of India. As an exceptional case, two identified *alārippus* and one identified *tillāna* are from documentary films not produced in India. Nevertheless, I have retained them in this thesis because of two reasons: firstly, they belong to the flux–period and secondly, they are an extremely valuable source, owing to the dance performers, and the performance itself.

[2] I use the words 'film' and 'movie' interchangeably throughout this chapter.

[3] "Pro–art" forces are those forces that helped in the revival and restoration of the dance form around the mid 20th century. The concept of "pro–art" forces has been introduced and discussed as part of chapter one, section 1.5.

[4] *Catir* was the name used to refer to today's Bharatanāṭyam up until the early thirties of the 20th century. This name was changed to Bharatanāṭyam only to erase the taboo and the cancerous deterioration that had set in the content of the art. (Subrahmanyam 1979: 75) The word *sadir,* when transliterated in Tamil is *caṭir.* The word *sadir* is used more commonly in several books.

[5] The birth of sound in cinema began at the same time as that of the revival of the dance form. Revivalists like E. Krishna Iyer and Rukmini Devi Arundale participated in the moral and aesthetic making of Tamil cinema. One can also see the replacement of hereditary dancing community in cinema by the non–hereditary dancers after the revival (Krishnan 2013: 6).

[6] The doctoral thesis *Usage and application of classical dance forms in Indian cinema* (Soundarya 2010: Ch. 4) discusses the various appearances of dance (Bharatanāṭyam and others) performances in South Indian films. It shows an apparent increase in the number of Bharatanāṭyam performances in the 1940s and 50s as compared to the 1930s.

revived dance form practiced primarily by the non–hereditary community of dancers (Gaston 1996b: 307–311). Thus, in this work, the period between the years, 1930 and 1960 is considered for identification of the four repertoire items – *alārippu, tillāna, padam,* and *jāvali* in Indian films. The identified items from the movies and short films is however not an exhaustive set of the appearances. Due to the vast number of movies released, and the non–availability of some of them, I acknowledge that there could be other appearances that were not identified.

A systematic search and selection of dance clips from movies were performed, that was a time–consuming process. Starting from 1930 until 1960, movies from languages including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Hindi were scanned to find the appearance of these Bharatanāṭyam repertoire items.[7] This 30–year time span contained thousands of movies in the selected languages.[8] The number of movies increased exponentially in the late 1940s and 50s. With the available set of movies, I worked on sorting the dance numbers, classifying, and saving them for further exploration. To gain a basic understanding, I worked with music teachers to identify musicalities like the *rāga* and *tāla* for these songs. Later, the search process was performed once again, to be certain I had not overlooked and left out any important dance number.

Between the years 1930 and 1960, I found Bharatanāṭyam performances by hereditary dancers[9] as well as non–hereditary dancers in films, choreographed by hereditary *naṭṭuvanārs* who had migrated to urban centers from their villages. I figured that the number

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[7] Bharatanāṭyam, being a South Indian dance form, South Indian language films were concentrated for identification. The primary compositions used for Bharatanāṭyam are in the languages – Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada. A handful of Bharatanāṭyam dancers traveled to the famous Hindi film industry in the mid–1950s to become actors/dancers, and thus, Hindi films were also considered.

[8] I used many channels to look for dance numbers in movies. The World Wide Web proved to be a valuable source in listing and locating the movies released in the selected period. "pad.ma", short for Public Access Digital Media Archive – is an online archive of densely text–annotated film material. Many dance numbers that I was looking for was identified from here. Two leading online newsreel archives – British Pathé and Net Film contain plenty of old film material. "cinemanrityagharana" is an online blog that brings to light the classical Indian dances in the Indian cinema. The doctoral thesis *Usage and application of classical dance forms in Indian cinema* (Soundarya 2010) proved a useful resource to identify dance numbers in films.

[9] T.R. Rajakumari was a famous hereditary artist, who danced and acted in films like *Haridas* (1944: 00:23:50–00:28:34) and *Chandralekha* (1948: 02:32:36–:02:35:10). Performances by hereditary artists are also available in movies like *Bhakta Potana* (1942: 01:05:41–01:09:41), *Yogi Vemanna* (1947:00:14:00–00:16:50), *Thyagayya* (1946: 00:12:23–00:12:53), and so on.

of non–hereditary dancers in Indian films only increased with time (Soundarya 2010: Ch. 4). Kamala Lakshman, Vyjayanthimala Bali, Lalitha, Padmini, E.V. Saroja, L. Vijayalakshmi, Sayee Subbalakshmi were amongst the famous non–hereditary dancers in the cinema fraternity.[10] They worked towards building a good reputation for the art form that resulted in making Bharatanāṭyam extremely popular amongst the masses. They were dancers who underwent rigorous Bharatanāṭyam training from *naṭṭuvanārs* before entering the film industry. The hereditary *naṭṭuvanārs* like Vazhuvoor Ramaiah Pillai, Dandayudhapani Pillai, (Pandanallur) Muthukumara Pillai, and Muthuswami Pillai played a huge role in choreographing for films in the first decades after the revival.[11]

The opening and closing items in a Bharatanāṭyam repertoire, *alārippu* and *tillāna* are both strong *nṛtta* based items, filled with nuances in music and rhythm. Hence the complexity of footwork, hand, and body movements for the dancer is especially high. During the early decades of the revival, the non–hereditary community of dancers fostered and refined the *alārippus* and *tillānas*. Flawless *nṛtta* with utmost precision was the order of the day. The revivalists and the new non–hereditary dance fraternity were proud of their *nṛtta* pieces. Hence, *alārippu* and *tillāna* enjoyed growth and perfection over time. (Vatsyayan 1974: 20–24; Gaston 1990: 120–125) Thus, they were also seen to be appearing in many Indian films of the revival period. Another reason to present *nṛtta* items on stage and in films was perhaps to demonstrate the complexity of Bharatanāṭyam, in terms of vigor and dynamism

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[10] "…Kumari Kamala, Vyjayanthimala Bali and Lalitha–Padmini were the best that happened to Tamil cinema". (Pandian 1996: 954) These dancers have given performances, be it entirely classical, folk, a mix of classical and 'cinema dance', in several movies between 1940 and 1960. Kamala Lakshman was the pioneer, and the rest of them followed. *Sri Valli* (1945: 00:02:54–00:09:03), *Naam iruvar* (1947: No. 6, 8) are very famous for Kamala's performances. Vyjayanthimala was known for her dance in *Vanjikottai Valiban* (1958: 01:05:03–01:13:10) and *Chitoor Rani Padmini* (1963). Lalitha–Padmini were sisters who were excellent Bharatanāṭyam dancers. Apart from the 'traditional' repertoire items of Bharatanāṭyam, there are other songs specially composed for the films, for which these dancers perform Bharatanāṭyam. I do not consider these numbers for my study.

[11] Vazhuvoor Ramaiah Pillai became famous due to his star disciple, Kamala Lakshman. They were an impressive duo in the Tamil cinema. Dandayudhapani Pillai and Muthuswami Pillai came in the 1950s and choreographed for many Hindi films. Muthukumara Pillai has not only choreographed but also made an appearance in the movie *Kannika* (1947) where a young Hemamalini Arni (a famous dancer/actor) dances for the famous song, *naṭanam ādinar*.

in a period that was craving for its advancement (Gaston 1996b: 96–105; Soneji 2012).[12] The portion on *abhinaya* based items draws attention towards the more lyrical, gestural, and emotive aspects that one comes across in repertoire items like the *padams* (of Kṣetrajña) and *jāvalis*. The content, context, and verbal imagery of these poetical songs form the bedrock of these items. Just like a Bharatanāṭyam dancer on–stage, the dancer in films suggests or communicates the meaning of the song by creating various moods through gestures and expressions.

4.1 *Alārippu* in Indian cinema

Alārippu is an intricate *nṛtta* item that was embraced and performed by both hereditary and non–hereditary dancers both on–stage and in films during the revival period. *Alārippu,* being a *nṛtta* item, was shielded, protected, and nurtured by the revivalists during the revival. It has lived on undamaged, right from the time of the Tanjore Quartet[13] until now. According to Gaston, in the period from 1930 to 1950, all the recitals at the Madras Music Academy presented *alārippu* as the first item. (Gaston 1996b: 288–311) Fascinatingly, both hereditary and non–hereditary dancers have showcased *alārippu* in films. Four clips of this highly structured item have been identified in Indian films from the flux–period. Below I shall describe each one in detail, along with an argument to select the most fitting one for the analysis and validation in chapter 5.

4.1.1 *Alārippu* appearances in films and selection of clip for detailed analysis

Arguably in the year 1926, a silent documentary film titled *Maharanee of Baroda* shot by British Pathé has two *catir* dancers performing an *alārippu* for the duration of one minute and twenty–five seconds (British Pathé [1930–35]: 08:21–09:46). This film is believed to have been shot for the "Golden Jubilee Celebrations" of *Mahārāja* (king) Sayajirao of

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[12] Showcasing vigor and dynamism in the dance form was in fact, a leading motive of the revivalist, Rukmini Devi Arundale (Coorawala 2004: 55–56). Projecting the *nṛtta* aspect in cinema could have been an effect of this. This importance for *nṛtta* continues even today, as one can see recitals giving high focus to dynamism, geometry, and speed rather than the *abhinaya* aspect. (Shea 1998: 54)

[13] Tanjore Quartet were the four brothers – Ciṉṉaiyya, Poṉṉaiyya, Sivāṉandam, and Vaṭivēlu who lived in the early 19th century in the courts of the Maratha kings in Tanjore. Their compositions are used profusely in Bharatanāṭyam. The Tanjore brothers played a crutial role in standardizing and systemizing the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire items that we have today.

Gaekwad's reign which happened in the year 1926 in Baroda (Minai 2013a). However, British Pathé lists the film to have been shot between 1930 and 1935. This is filming of real–life events that happened at the palace celebrations. It includes a bullfight, martial arts, a clap dance performed by some children, and a woman singing with the musicians. The film also contains a footage of *mahārāja*, his wife, and their son. Apart from these, it has a rare *catir* performance by the hereditary *catir* artists who are believed to have been taken to Baroda as part of wedding dowry from the Tanjore court.[14] The entire film has been shot in the palace's main locations – the arena near Pani gate, the Motibag palace gardens, the Nazarbag palace gardens, and the Nyaya Mandir. The Nazar Bagh palace gardens appear to be the setting for the *catir* performance along with the musical ensemble. (British Pathé [1930–35]; Minai 2013a)

In this film clip, a live musical ensemble is standing behind the dancers. There is a *mṛidaṅgam* artist, a harmonium player, two *naṭṭuvanārs,* and a *tūtti*[15] artist. The lead *naṭṭuvanār* appears to be rendering the *sollukaṭṭu* for the *alārippu.* The performers are wearing a *catir* costume[16] with the pajama along with the fan–apron in front that has a lot of golden tassels to add grandeur. Their jewelry and make–up seem to match their style.

The *alārippu* is performed in *tiṣra jātī, eka tāla*[17], the most common type. The overall structure of this *alārippu* is the same as the one discussed in the *alārippu* section under chapter 3. Despite being a silent film, the structure can be traced and identified with the help of the dance, the *tāla* attached to the dance, and the movements from the musical ensemble. Table 4.1 gives a comparative overview of the structure of all the identified film clips of

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[14] Ashish Mohan Khokar mentions how Bharatanāṭyam traveled to the north and west of India. He says, "A set of talented devadasis were part of the dowry of Chimnabai, a Tanjore princess who was married to the Maharaja of Baroda, Sayajirao Gaekwad III, in 1883. The devadasis stayed back and entertained the court and thus, Bharatanāṭyam came to the north and west of India" (Khokar 2011: 4)

[15] *Tūtti* is an instrument like a bellow or a bagpipe that is used for maintaining pitch. The presence of *tūtti* and harmonium in *catir* recitals was in vogue during the reign of Maratha kings. This was later eliminated in Bharatanāṭyam performances in the early decades of revival.

[16] The *catir* costume of the late 18th and the early 19th centuries is explained under chapter 2, section 2.4.

[17] *Tālas* are nothing but the many varieties of time measure. '*tiṣra jātī, eka tāla*' is explained in detail under chapter 3, section 3.1.2.

alārippu.[18] There is a coordinated start by the two dancers for the opening phrase. This is followed by the three speeds in the standing and *araimaṇḍi* (half–sit) position. The three speeds customarily done in full–sitting position is eliminated in this film clip. Following the cycle in *araimaṇḍi* position, the *dṛta kāla* (fast tempo) starts with *kuṭṭaḍavu*[19] as footwork and *ardhapatākā hasta*[20]. This is continued with a short *jati*[21]. The *alārippu* ends with the *dhṛgaḍtaka* phrase for four *āvartanas*[22] followed by the closing phrase. One *āvartana* from the *jati* is missing perhaps due to editing mistake. But in general, the *alārippu* structure has been precisely maintained. This *alārippu* from *Maharanee of Baroda* does not belong to the Indian cinema industry. Nevertheless, it remains an exciting piece of evidence for my research owing to its recorded year, the dancers in the clip, and the repertoire item showcased.

The Telugu film *Thyagayya*, directed by Chitoor V. Naggaiah released in the year 1946, has a highly–shortened version of an *alārippu* (*Thyagayya* 1946: 00:12:23–00:12:53). It is a biographical film about the life of Saint Tyāgarāja who lived under the rule of *Mahārāja* Serafoji II (late 18th and early 19th centuries) of Tanjore. The dance is set in the form of a salon performance in a hall in front of a vast audience who from their reactions, seem to be sincere connoisseurs of music and dance. The *alārippu* is extremely short, lasting for about thirty–one seconds.

From the style of the dancer's *nṛtta,* her costumes, the language of the film, it is quite clear that she must have been a *kalāvantula* artist.[23] She wears a saree with a golden apron–fan in front. She is decked with grand jewelry including a complete headset, nose–ring, necklace and hip belt (*odyāṇam)*. The musical troupe which accompanies her also belongs to the hereditary community of artists. Like in the previous film clip, the ensemble is standing

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[18] I refer to the structure of *alārippu* discussed in chapter 3 section 3, to be the 'standard *alārippu*'. I compare all the other *alārippus'* structure with the 'standard *alārippu*'. For the terms used to describe the structure of an *alārippu,* refer section 3.1.2 under chapter 3.
[19] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.1.1 for details on *aḍavus.*
[20] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.2.2 for details on *hastas.*
[21] Refer to the glossary for details on *jati.*
[22] Refer to the glossary for details on *āvartana.*
[23] Soneji (2010) in chapter 2, discusses about the *kalāvantula* artists. They were a hereditary community of artists who belonged to Andhra Pradesh.

behind her. There is a *mṛidaṅgam* artist, a *naṭṭuvanār,* and a man holding a fan. There is another man and a lady who are standing beside. They can be presumed to be the orchestra singers. The dancer performs for recorded music could have been recorded by the same troupe.

There is great deviation in the *alārippu* structure in this film clip. Even though the rendition of *sollukaṭṭu* (mnemonic syllables) is like the 'standard' structure, a lot of rhythm sequences have been eliminated (Table 4.1). The *alārippu* starts with an opening phrase, after which an increasing tempo for the three speeds is presented. The dancer does the *vilambita kāla* (slow speed) in the standing position, *madhya kāla* (middle speed) in full–sitting position, and *dṛta kāla* (fast speed) with *kuṭṭaḍavus.* Next ensues footwork with *ardhapatākā hasta* in *dṛta kāla* alone, followed by a half *jati*. The rest seems to have been lost in editing. Thus, the *alārippu* gives a comparable flow to the original but does not match in terms of the number of *āvartanas,* repetitions, and cycles. Due to its concise and vague appearance, this *alārippu* is not selected for the detailed analysis.

In 1954, when an Indian Cultural Delegation of musicians and dancers sponsored by the Government of India visited the Soviet Union, a thirty–nine minutes' film was made, which is now available in Net Film (Net Film 1954), an online Russian digital archive of documentary films shot in Russia. The film is titled *Masters of Indian Art* (1954) and contains dances by Guru Gopinath[24], Tara Chaudhury, and some other Maṇipurī[25] and *nāga* (snake) tribal dancers. It includes popular singers who went as delegates from India for this event. Tara Chaudhary was a Kathak artist from Punjab who came to South India to learn Bharatanāṭyam from the great *naṭṭuvanār,* Meenakshisundaram Pillai. She has appeared doing Bharatanāṭyam dances in two Tamil films, *Paarijaathan* (1950) and *Vedhala Ulagam* (1948). (Minai 2013b; Sai 2014; Guy 2010) In this footage, Tara Chaudhary is performing a Bharatanāṭyam *alārippu* for two minutes and fifty–five seconds, and later a *tillāna.* (Net Film 1954: 11:04–12:55)

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[24] A famous actor and dancer of the 20th century India.
[25] A 'classical' dance form from the state of Manipur.

The *alārippu* performed, is either for recorded music, or there could have been an orchestra in the side which has not been recorded as part of the film. The dancer is wearing a Bharatanāṭyam pant costume with 'authentic' jewelry[26], in line with the design changes made by Rukmini Devi after revival. The structure of *alārippu* is exactly followed with an extended eight *āvartanas* for the *dṛta kāla*. However, the first three tempo cycles in the standing and *araimaṇḍi* position have been eliminated. Everything else remains in sync with the 'standard *alārippu*' (Table 4.1). The style of *nṛtta* for Tara Chaudhary is visibly different, especially with the shoulder and arm movements. This could have been due to the influences from the other dance forms she learned (Guy 2010). This is a film clip to be treasured as it is a matter of prestige for India. Nonetheless, this *alārippu* does not belong to the Indian cinema industry.

The Hindi movie, *New Delhi* directed by Mohan Segal and released in the year 1956, has a beautifully rendered, 'authentic' *alārippu*[27] (*New Delhi* 1956: 00:34:54–00:37:23) performed by the star actress Vyjayanthimala Bali. Vyjayanthimala is a *brahmin*[28] Bharatanāṭyam dancer and actress, belonging to the non–hereditary community of dancers. She underwent rigorous training in Bharatanāṭyam under top *naṭṭuvanārs* in Madras. Her dance is technically suave and graceful, with exceptional rhythmic precision. She has worked in several films and in many languages. She gained popularity in the movie industry primarily because of the Bharatanāṭyam dances that she performed in films. She has always been remembered as a dancer who made a mark in the Indian cinema fraternity during the period of Bharatanāṭyam revival. (Janaki 2010a) Thus, her *alārippu* in the movie *New Delhi* becomes an attention–grabbing piece of evidence for my research.

Further, this piece of dance is attractive especially because of the style of rendering. Vyjayanthimala initially started learning Bharatanāṭyam from the *naṭṭuvanār,* Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai in the Vazhuvoor *bāṇi*.[29] When she felt that the Vazhuvoor *bāṇi* lacked

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[26] For details on Bharatanāṭyam costume and jewelry, refer chapter 2, section 2.4 and figure 2.4.
[27] 'authentic' here refers to the fact that the *alārippu* matches with the structure, musicalities, and other nuances related to Bharatanāṭyam as described in the 'master *alārippu*' under chapter 3.
[28] Non–hereditary dancers primarily belonged to the 'high–class' Brahmin community.
[29] Refer to section 2.6 for details on *bāṇis*.

definition in form and lines, she shifted to Pandanallur *bāṇi* seeking out training from Dandayudhapani Pillai. Starting from the basics, she corrected herself and changed her style. Intriguingly, the dance–direction for this piece of *alārippu* has been done by a third *naṭṭuvanār,* Muthuswami Pillai who also belongs to the Pandanallur *bāṇi.* So, in this *alārippu* performed by Vyjayanthimala in the movie *New Delhi*, three different *naṭṭuvanārs* have contributed to her Bharatanāṭyam style. Thus, it would be interesting to see the kind of style that blossoms in this item. Furthermore, *naṭṭuvanār* Muthuswami Pillai is uniquely placed in history. Coming from a tiny village in Tamilnadu, he migrated to Madras and then to Bombay to choreograph for films. He has been both a teacher as well as a dance choreographer for some of the best film dances by non–hereditary dancers who brought Bharatanāṭyam to limelight in the 1940s and 50s. (Bali 2007: Ch. 1,2; Vijayaraghavan 2011: 19)

The structure, rhythmic sequences, and *nṛtta* for this *alārippu* are rendered by Vyjayanthimala Bali in an 'authentic' style matching precisely with the 'standard *alārippu*'. The *alārippu* notations and *tāla* strictly follow the original structure discussed in chapter 3 (Table 4.1). The treatment and representation of this Bharatanāṭyam *nṛtta* item in Indian cinema becomes interesting as this *alārippu* is performed by a non–hereditary Bharatanāṭyam artist belonging to the Tamil land and dance directed by a hereditary *naṭṭuvanār,* Muthuswami Pillai. This is the exact combination of artists (non–hereditary artist as a dancer and hereditary *naṭṭuvanār* as a dance director) who imparted a strong "pro–art" force in the cinema industry and made Bharatanāṭyam popular amongst the masses. It is perhaps the most iconic classical dance that Vyjayanthimala has performed in films. Besides, the film *New Delhi* was a successful movie. Thus, among the four different *alārippus* discussed, this one seems to be a suitable fit for the detailed analysis and validation presented in chapter 5.

No	Section sequence in 'standard alārippu'	Tempo of verses or kāla	Presence in *Maharanee of Baroda alārippu*	Presence in *Thyagayya alārippu*	Presence in *Masters of Indian Art alārippu*	Presence in *New Delhi alārippu*	No. of *āvartanas* (repetitions) in master	No. of *āvartanas* in *Maharanee of Baroda alārippu*	No. of *āvartanas* in *Thyagayya alārippu*	No. of *āvartanas* in *Masters of Indian Art alārippu*	No of *āvartanas* in *New Delhi alārippu*
1	opening phrase		Y	Y	Y	Y	5 (2)	1	2	2	3 (1)
2	standing	*vilambita*	Y	Y	N	Y	8 (2)	8 (2)	4 (1)		8 (2)
3	standing	*madhya*	Y	N	N	Y	8 (4)	8 (4)			8 (4)
4	standing	*dṛta*	Y	N	N	Y	8 (8)	12 (12)			8 (8)
5	*muḻumaṇḍi*	*vilambita*	N	N	Y	Y	8 (2)			8 (2)	8 (2)
6	*muḻumaṇḍi*	*madhya*	N	N	Y	Y	8 (4)			8 (4)	8 (4)
7	*muḻumaṇḍi*	*dṛta*	N	Y	Y	Y	8 (8)		8 (8)	16 (16)	20 (20)
8	*kuṭṭaḍavus*	*vilambita*	Y	N	Y	Y	8 (2)	8 (2)		8 (2)	8 (2)
9	*kuṭṭaḍavus*	*madhya*	Y	Y	Y	Y	8 (4)	8 (4)	4 (2)	8 (4)	8 (4)
10	*kuṭṭaḍavus*	*dṛta*	Y	Y	Y	Y	8 (8)	4 (4)	2 (2)	4 (4)	4 (4)
11	*ardhapatākā hasta* with footwork in *vilambita*	*dṛta*	Y		Y	Y	4 (4)	4 (4)		4 (4)	4 (4)
12	*ardhapatākā hasta* with footwork in *madhya*	*dṛta*	N		Y	Y	4 (4)			4 (4)	4 (4)
13	*ardhapatākā hasta* with footwork in *dṛta*	*dṛta*	Y	Y	Y	Y	4 (4)	4 (4)	2 (2)	4 (4)	4 (4)
14	*jati*		Y	Y	Y	Y	5	4 (1 missing perhaps due to editing)	2	5	5
15	*dhṛgaḍtaka* phrase		Y		Y	N	3 (3)	3 (3)		3 (3)	
16	closing phrase		Y		Y	N	5 (2)	1		2	

Table 4.1: Comparison of *alārippu* structure in identified film clips (Table: by author)

4.1.2 Movie and storyline – *New Delhi*

New Delhi, a movie based on a social theme, was directed by Mohan Segal who was part of Uday Shankar's[30] dance troupe before he became a full–time director. Mohan Segal received training alongside Guru Dutt[31], in the art of filmmaking. He was a complete artist who had a penchant for choreography. This movie is a satire on national integration, and it starred two prominant artistes – Kishore Kumar and Vyjayanthimala Bali in the lead roles. The music for the movie was rendered by Shankar–Jaikishan and lyrics by Shailendra and Hasrat Jaipuri. The movie received rave reviews and was a huge box office hit becoming the sixth highest grossing film in the year 1956. (Liddle 2016; Anuradhawarrior 2013; *New Delhi* 1956)

A short storyline of the movie would help in better understanding the situation where the selected dance clip appears. A Punjabi boy, Anand (Kishore Kumar) arrives in New Delhi from Jalandhar[32] and ends up finding no place to stay. The sole reason for this is the prevailing caste and culture issues. Every sect of people is willing to rent their homes only to their own sect. This issue that was and still very much prevalent in India is shown in a refined and comical manner in this movie. Anand encounters Tamils, Bengalis, Marwaris, Gujaratis, and Sindhis[33]. But he quickly learns that a Marwari is willing to rent his house only to another Marwari, and so do Gujaratis, Bengalis, Tamils, and Sindhis. Exasperated with the turn of events after his arrival, he decides to masquerade as a Tamilian and stay with a Tamil family. This is when he meets Janki (Vyjayanthimala), the daughter of the head of South Indian Cultural Association who happens to be his landlord which he discovers later in the movie. Anand and Janki fall in love, but Anand is unable to reveal his original identity to her. Janki is a Tamil girl who teaches dance and music in a school named, Kalamandir. As part of the '*Pongal Utsav*'[34], the association organizes Janki's Bharatanāṭyam recital. Janki invites Anand for the dance performance, but he turns it down due to other commitments with his landlord. It

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[30] Uday Shankar (1900–1977) was an Indian dancer and choreographer best known for creating a contemporary style. He was very popular and is known to have revolutionized dance. (Cultural India 2018)
[31] Guru Dutt was a Hindi film director known for making classics in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s.
[32] Jalandhar is a town in the city of Punjab.
[33] Tamils, Bengalis, Marwaris, Gujaratis, and Sindhis are people belonging to the different states of India.
[34] *Pongal* is a harvest festival popularly celebrated in South India. *Utsav* in Sanskrit means "festival", "beginning", "joy" (Monier Williams 2008).

is for this dance performance that she performs a Bharatanāṭyam *alārippu.* To her surprise, Anand turns up for the recital. It comes as a pleasant surprise for Janki, and her expression is evident at the end of the *alārippu* (*New Delhi* 1956: 00:37:20–00:37:23).

The scenes that follow become more dramatic, yet filled with humor. Anand's parents and sister arrive from Punjab. His sister falls in love with a Bengali painter while Anand's love for Janki gets stronger. Initially, the two–couples face opposition from their respective families as they belong to distinct sects. In contrast to Anand experiencing ostracism from the other cultural communities at the beginning of the movie, the second half shows how the communities give up their identities to help each other. After much complications and moral dilemmas, the movie ends on a happy note with both the couples getting married with full consent of their families. The film promises to be a persuasive and entertaining appeal for national unity.

Vyjayanthimala received wide appreciation for her dance performances in this film. *Upperstall.com*[35] reviewed the movie by stating,

> "Vyjayanthimala proves to be the perfect foil for Kishore Kumar…has always had the mandatory dance sequence in practically every film of hers evoking 'classical art' associations. She excels in the two main dances in New Delhi – the solo Bharatnatayam Aliruppu [sic] number and the Bhangra folk dance in her Punjabi avatar and she is absolutely brilliant in the Bhangra folk dance…". (Bali 2017)[36]

Vyjayanthimala made this film with Kishore Kumar subsequently after pairing with him in the movie *Ladki*. Some of her comments about the movie taken from her autobiography, *Bonding, a Memoir*–

> "It was really an interesting genre of musical comedy, wherein compilations, impersonations and moral dilemmas arise in the plot when a Punjabi pretends to be Tamil in order to obtain accommodation in Delhi… Again, in New Delhi, it was delightful playing my own self as a South Indian girl. The

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[35] *Upperstall.com* is a leading online reference website for classic and contemporary Indian cinema. It was proclaimed as one of the top three film websites in the world by the TIME Magazine in 2004.
[36] Available at https://upperstall.com/film/new–delhi/

concept revolved around regionalism. This girl with a strict father and no mother falls in love with a Punjabi and the father is naturally opposed to the alliance. Much later, life was imitating art, as I also faced stiff opposition wanting to marry a Punjabi… In this rip–roaring comedy, Kishore was simple hilarious both as a Punjabi and a Tamilian. He had a terrific sense of humor. He sang his own numbers and often told me that my reactions to the tala were very comfortable for him." (Bali 2007: Ch. 2)[37]

This surprising inclusion of a beautiful Bharatanāṭyam *nṛtta* item in a Hindi film is in my opinion, due to three main reasons – firstly, actress Vyjayanthimala is portrayed as a Tamil girl. Bharatanāṭyam being a dance form from the state of Tamilnadu is appropriately included.[38] The movie centers around national unity, thus incorporating a Bharatanāṭyam number that was evoling to be a symbol of national heritage in the 1950s is natural. Secondly, she is a well–trained Bharatanāṭyam dancer, especially known for her impeccable *nṛtta,* and thus the film utilized her 'classical' dance skills. Thirdly, the dance director, Muthuswami Pillai is the doyen of Pandanallur *bāṇi*, whose style underscores on *nṛtta*.

4.1.3 Pandanallur *bāṇi*: Interplay of factors

Vyjayanthimala's dance is known for its grace, liveliness, firmness, and dignity in the presentation. This has transpired with her arduous training and years of practice from some of the greatest *naṭṭuvanārs* of the 20th century. Her style of dancing in the *alārippu* from *New Delhi* may have its influences from her first guru, Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai who was the maker of Vazhuvoor *bāṇi*; her all–time favorite guru, Dandayudhapani Pillai who followed the Pandanallur *bāṇi;* and the movie's dance director, *naṭṭuvanār* Muthuswami pillai who also trailed the Pandanallur *bāṇi* with slight innovations. Thus, it becomes vital not only to examine the three styles, but also to briefly study the dancer's and the *naṭṭuvanārs'* personal and professional lives for a thorough comprehension and

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[37] Page number is not mentioned in the book.

[38] In the interview with Vyjayanthimala Bali, she mentioned the reason for inclusion of the *alārippu* in the movie, *New Delhi.* She said, "They {director/writer} chose *alārippu* in that movie because she {the character} is a dancer from South India. So, they said, being a classical dancer, why not we start with the *alārippu* and I was more than happy. And that's how *alārippu* got introduced into the movie." Refer "Interviewing Vyjayanthimala Bali" in chapter 5, 03:40.

appreciation of the *bāṇi*. This section reveals the journey of Vyjayanthimala Bali, Dandayudhapani Pillai, and Muthuswami Pillai, the three eminent figures of Bharatanāṭyam of mid 20th century India who carried Pandanallur *bāṇi* into Indian cinema.

Vyjayanthimala Bali is best known as an upholder of traditions. She has been an outspoken champion of traditionalism and has constantly avoided dilution, modern innovations, and experimentation. She is one of the most versatile and refined artists of her time who has imbibed the finest form of Bharatanāṭyam. She can be called a consummate Bharatanāṭyam artist and an intellectual with high standards of aesthetics. (Janaki 2010a: 18; Janaki 2010b: 25) Vyjayanthimala talked to *Sruti* about her principal characteristics while performing Bharatanāṭyam –

> "When I performed Bharatanāṭyam I paid utmost attention to austerity of technique, command over footwork, and angularity of line. At the same time the dancer must have a languid grace, a calm unhurried approach to her art, which is soothing and perfectly in keeping with her own individual personality." (Janaki 2010b: 26)

Belonging to a Mysore royal family, she lived in Madras in a house that faced the famous Pārthasārathy Swāmi temple at Triplicane. She grew up listening to devotional hymns and became deeply religious and highly devotional. The reason for the air of religiousness in her house was due to her maternal grandmother fondly known as Yagamma. Yagamma brought her up teaching her scriptures and reciting ancient stories. At one point, she was experiencing an unpleasant phase in her life when her mother went against her father. During this period, Yagamma offered all the motherly love and affection she needed. Vyjayanthimala began learning music from the eminent singer, D.K. Pattammal. She was also talented at playing sports as a child. Vyjayanthimala showed a keen interest in dance even when she was six. She danced in front of the pope on her visit to the Vatican. (Bali 2007: Ch. 1)

Yagamma was the sole reason behind her interest in dance. Having seen a performance by Pandanallur Jayalakshmi, Vyjayanthimala was amazed at the dancer's pristine form, nimbleness, and *araimaṇḍi*. Recognizing Vyjayanthimala's keen interest in dance,

Yagamma commenced her Bharatanāṭyam training under the famous *naṭṭuvanār,* Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai when she was eight. A man with a pleasing personality, his style was well–known for its grandeur, fast movements, and sculpture–like poses. His persona reflected his discipline and values. Vyjayanthimala states that she imbibed everything that he taught almost mechanically without understanding the real meaning of the words or *abhinaya* expressions. Although the *padam* expressions were incomprehensible to her, she reveals that she would learn like a parrot. This was the case until her *araṅkēṟṟam*[39] that took place in her own residence under Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai. (Bali 2007: Ch. 1; Janaki 2010a: 9–17)

Up until her *araṅkēṟṟam*, Vyjayanthimala felt that she lacked the intensity that she was looking for in dance. For her, the Vazhuoor style seemed to lack in maintaining geometric lines and definition of form.[40] Even though Vazhuoor style was pleasing to the audience, Vyjayanthimala was constantly haunted by the neat and clean performance of Pandanallur Jayalakshmi. So, she desired to learn this 'more pristine' form and refine her dance style with stronger footwork and clearer postures. She took efforts to direct all her energies towards following the Pandanallur tradition. Dandayudhapani Pillai who belonged to the Pandanallur style at that time was also a musician at the Kalakshetra Foundation[41]. He was an excellent composer who learned the art of *naṭṭuvāṅgam* later in his life. He was the disciple of the famous, Pandanallur Meenakshisundaram Pillai, the master who came from the illustrious lineage of the Tanjore brothers. (Bali 2007: Ch. 2; Janaki 2010a: 9–17)

Dandayudhapani Pillai (1921–1974), was born to A.K. Natesa Pillai, a famous musician in Karaikaal. His grandfather, Ramakrishna Pillai was a Bharatanāṭyam expert, and Meenakshisundaram Pillai was his relative. Hence, coming from a family of hereditary

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[39] *Araṅkēṟṟam* is the first formal presentation of a complete dance performance. The etymological root lies in Tamil; *araṅkam* means "stage" and *ēṟṟam* means "climbing", thus "climbing the stage". It is also defined as the maiden performance, or first performance, or debut performance for the dancer. In Sanskrit, it is often called as *raṅgapraveśa,* meaning, "entering the stage" (Rao 1980: 11). It is a landmark in a dancer's career. It happens on an auspicious day. Usually, the complete suite of the traditional Bharatanāṭyam repertoire is performed here. It takes place in the presence of family, friends, and critics.

[40] Vyjayanthimala's opinion on this matter was evident even in the in–person interview. She was extremely certain that Vazhuvoor style was not suitable as it lacked purity of lines and definition. Refer "Interviewing Vyjayanthimala Bali" in chapter 5, 11:42.

[41] The Kalakshetra Foundation was started by Rukmini Devi Arundale during the revival period. It had a galaxy of eminent scholars and musicians from multidisciplinary fields to teach arts.

artists, he began giving regular concerts in music at the age of twelve. He learned Bharatanāṭyam from his grandfather and taught at Kalakshetra for almost seven years. The classes held by him were intensive focusing mainly on the *aḍavus*. The students were taught one hundred–eight variations of the *aḍavus.* Dandayudhapani Pillai undertook a stage by stage teaching. Initially, the students would be taught only the foot movements. Only after practicing them for days, would he move on to teaching the hand movements. After perfecting the feet and hand movements, he would teach them glance and grace. (Rajagopalan 2016)

Bharatanāṭyam artists who came under Dandayudhapani Pillai's tutelage in the later part of their lives have had similar experiences – starting the training from scratch. Their posture and stance would be corrected followed by relearning the *aḍavus* in his style. His style paid a lot of importance to clear lines, geometry, and correct positioning. Space was beautifully utilized in a calculated geometric pattern. His choreographies always had a low repetition of *aḍavus.* He was well–known for the complex patterns he wove into the *jatis*, often termed *laya* (another term for rhythm) intricacies. His *jatis* had a musical tinge with nuances in rhythm. Further, the *sollukaṭṭu* usage was engaging. His recitation had a strong flow of syllables even though he had a stammer while he spoke. He was a musician par excellence with many compositions to his credit. The list includes very appealing and beautiful *jatisvarams, varṇams, padams,* and *tillānas.* The students of every other *bāṇi* adopted his compositions for their performances. (Kumar 2012; Mohan 2010: 36; Indian Heritage 2018).

When Dandayudhapani Pillai left the Kalakshetra Foundation*,* with his consent, Vyjayanthimala became his disciple. Since he was a man of precision and insisted on thorough learning of fundamentals, Vyjayanthimala started training from scratch, learning the *aḍavus.* She quotes, "*Vādyār* (teacher) Dandayudhapani Pillai started from scratch – from the *aḍavu taiyātai*! He would insist on a clear–cut *araimaṇḍi*. He taught me so many *aḍavus*, sets of them, and put me through my paces".[42] She could sense her boundaries in positioning, sitting postures, movements, and stretching of arms after she trained with him. Her dance style seemed to have developed more clear–cut lines, defined *hastās,* and footwork. She remarks that she felt as if she was going back to the

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[42] Refer "Interviewing Vyjayanthimala Bali" in chapter 5, 11:42.

'traditional' form of Bharatanāṭyam. He helped her with undoing the old and imbibing the new style that had no curvy movements[43]. As she learned two conflicting styles of Bharatanāṭyam, her struggle was to avoid mixing, but slowly change her entire style according to the Pandanallur tradition that had more defined lines and form.[44]

Just like Vyjayanthimala Bali, Urmila Satyanarayanan is a dancer who learned Bharatanāṭyam both in the Vazhuvoor style (from *nattuvanār* K.J. Sarasa), and in the Pandanallur style (from Dandayudhapani Pillai). In her article on dance styles (Satyanarayanan 2010), she clearly states the characteristics of Dandayudhapani Pillai's style. According to her, much stress was given to the upper body leaning forward, in terms of posture. Pertaining to the *aḍavus, taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavus* were done with the knee in front; *sarukkal aḍavus* used only single feet for the jumps; *kudiṭṭumeṭṭaḍavus* were done with arms held at outstretched; and *mardita aḍavu* brought the feet together after every repetition. He used very minimal *abhinaya* in *varṇams* with more repetitive hand gestures. He preferred the dancers wearing pyjama costume with the pyjama stitched up to the ankle and the *salaṅgai* (dancer's anklets) worn over it. (Sathyanarayanan 2010: 49–51; Venkataraman 2012: 28) Dandayudhapani Pillai has not only been a dance director for Indian films but also for a Hollywood movie, *The River* that was shot in Calcutta in 1951. He is seen singing and playing the *naṭṭuvangam* in the movie. (Ramani 2018)

At this point, Vyjayanthimala began traveling extensively for her performances. On one occasion, when she performed at the Pārthasārathy Swāmi Sabha, A.V. Meiyappa Chettiar of AVM productions[45], and M.V. Raman, a producer and director, were present. This brought her into celluloid screen. She was specifically taken into films because of her training in Bharatanāṭyam. *Vazhkai*, a Tamil film directed by M.V. Raman was her

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[43] It is said that Vazhuvoor style has a bit of curvy movements. Rather, the style does not insist on perfect geometries of the body while dancing.

[44] In the personal interview, Vyjayanthimala refers to the Vazhuvoor style (chapter 5: 11:42) as "*vala vala koḻa koḻa*" style, which means that it is unclear and loose. There is low perfection in the *aḍavus* and the postures remain loose. She also blatantly expresses her hatred towards this style, "I had no liking for Vazhuvurar's (Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai's) style. I din't want to continue in that. So, I completely changed to *Vādyār* Dandayudhapani's style and started learning everything from the basics (*taiyātai*)… I did not want even a tinge of Vazhuvoor style to come in my dance after that. I made sure of that.". Vyjayanthimala expresses similar opinions in her autobiography (Bali 2007: Ch. 2) and in an interview with *Sruti* (Janaki 2010a: 9–17).

[45] AVM productions is a popular production company for Tamil cinema.

first. The entire script in this film was built around her dancing skills. The film had four dance sequences, both classical and folk[46]. This was also made in Telugu as *Jeevitham,* and in Hindi as *Bahar*. The film was a huge hit and took the north of India by storm. The kind of gestures, expressions, and graceful Bharatanāṭyam movements were novel to the North Indians. After this entry into films, Vyjayanthimala's studies came to a complete halt, and she started traveling for recitals with increasing frequency. Her next was a trilingual film called *Penn* in Tamil, *Sangham* in Telugu, and *Ladki* in Hindi. In the year 1953, she moved to Bombay and signed the films, *New Delhi* and *Devdas*. The role that lent her tremendous scope was '*Chandramukhi*' in *Devdas*. She came to light as an outstanding actress in this role. Since then, she has acted in several films and reigned the world of celluloid. She has worked with the three most respected actors in Tamil cinema industry – Sivaji Ganesan, M.G.R., and Gemini Ganesan. (Bali 2007: Ch. 1; Janaki 2010b: 25–33; Sebastian 2017)

Vyjayanthimala paid utmost attention to her costumes and jewelry. She preferred conventional colors, and designed her costumes after researching the 13th century dance sculptures available in Indian temples. After her successful period in the cinema industry, she had the opportunity to learn the nuances of expression from Mylapore Gauri Ammal, one of the greatest exponents of *abhinaya,* and recreated the *navasandhi kautvams*[47] with the help of the *naṭṭuvanār,* Kittapa Pillai. She has performed worldwide, including countries like USA, Canada, France, Germany, Russia, Australia, Malaysia, China, Philippines, Beirut, Singapore, Hong Kong, and UK. She was also a member of the Tamilnadu Congress Committee serving as a politician for a certain period. (Vijayaraghavan 2010: 23–29)

Although most of Vyjayanthimala's dance choreographies in Hindi films are attributed to Gopi Krishna, Hiralal, and his brother Sohanlal[48], a handful were choreographed by

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[46] Folk dance involves an expression about the lives and feelings of ordinary people in a specific group or country. It may be born out of a spontaneous response to nature. (Cambridge Dictionary 2019; Sathyanarayana 1969: 97)

[47] *Kautvam* forms part of the temple repertoire of hereditary dancing community. A *kautvam* has rhythmic syllables intertwined with lyrics of the song. It consists of both *nṛtta* and *abhinaya.* (Kersenboom 2010: 59–63) The word *nava* in Sanskrit translates to "nine", "new", or "young". The word *sandhi* in Sanskrit translates to "junction", "connection", or "union". (Monier Williams 2008)

[48] Gopi Krishna, Hiralal, and Sohanlan were popular dancers and choreographers in Hindi films in the mid–fifties.

Dandayudhapani Pillai and Muthuswami Pillai. Vyjayanthimala believed that her dance influenced her films to a great extent, but her films, in turn, had nothing much to do with her stage performances. Vyjayanthimala discusses her dances in films when compared to on–stage performances –

> "I observed that the reaction of the audience did not change. They were as thrilled seeing me on–screen as performing live on–stage. I wasn't established either way, but an upcoming artist focused on my classical performance. I was often asked 'how do you retain that pristine beauty of a classical dance while performing in a film?' I think it all depends on the state of mind. Even though it was commercial, whatever dances I did, there were elements of classicism and folk. As far as I was concerned I heard no one clubbing my dance as being 'filmy'. Indisputably, I've tried to maintain dignity of my dance. I did not attempt the movements that did not suit me or what I was not comfortable with. I would restrain from doing anything that was not decent, even though it had to be entertaining." (Bali 2007: Ch. 3)[49]

The *naṭṭuvanār,* Muthuswami Pillai, has choreographed for five of Vyjayanthimala's films: *Marma Veeran* (1956) in Tamil, *Irumbuthirai* (1960) in tamil, *Chitoor Rani Padmini* (1963) in Tamil, *Patrani* (1956) in Hindi, and *New Delhi* (1956) in Hindi (Vijayaraghavan 2011: 19). Muthuswami Pillai was born on October 24, 1921, in the tiny village of Vaithīsvaran Koil[50]. This village, along with its neighboring villages like Vazhuvoor, Mayavaram, and Pandanallur nurtured a tradition of dance and music with several *naṭṭuvanārs* and music artists. Muthuswami Pillai belonged to a family of hereditary musicians, dancers, and *naṭṭuvanārs.* His mother, Seetharamu who was a musician and hereditary dance artist, died when he was five. Subsequently, his uncle Vaitheeswarankoil Meenakshisundaram Pillai became his custodian. Meenakshisundaram Pillai was a well–known *naṭṭuvanār* in this village, and Muthuswami Pillai became his trainee. It was the time when the *catir* form faced extreme criticism and came with an attached disfigurement. This brought a lot of embarrassment and loathing to the young Muthuswami Pillai, especially when he

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[49] Page number is not mentioned in the book.
[50] Koil or *kōvil* in Tamil means "temple". Here it refers to the name of the place where a temple is also situated.

accompanied the *catir* artists. Muthuswami Pillai expresses that he was treated with scant respect due to his associations with the *catir* artists. (Vijayaraghavan 2011: 13–14)

Muthuswami Pillai was a spectator as well as an active participant in the transformation of *catir* to Bharatanāṭyam. He has witnessed the process of detachment of the earlier form. He belonged to that section of *naṭṭuvanārs* who left their villages and migrated to urban cities to teach the upper and middle–class women. He could see dance becoming an attraction for the elite. The cinema industry provided a gold mine for the *naṭṭuvanārs* as choreographers and vice–versa. Both the movie lights and the proscenium stage was a novel experience for *naṭṭuvanārs* like Muthuswami Pillai. Muthuswami Pillai secured strong traction in the film industry as a choreographer. Between 1940 to 1960, he directed several dances in Indian films. He was the dance director for more than twenty–two films including *Sabhapathy* (1941)*, Vedhala Ulagam* (1948)*, Malaikallan* (1954)*, Rathnakaneer* (1954)*,* and so on. He has one Malayalam film – *Bhaktha Dhruva* (1947), and two Hindi films – *New Delhi* (1956) and *Patrani* (1956) to his credit. He has choreographed for the following actors – Vyjayanthimala Bali, Lalitha, Padmini, Ragini, Yogam, B.S. Saroja, Kamala, Radha, L. Vijayalakshmi, Sayee and Subbalakshmi, Vasundara Devi, Mangalam. Between 1950 and 1960, Sayee and Subbalakshmi brought the best out of Muthuswami Pillai's choreography. They were petite and an agile 'twin dance' duo of Indian cinema during this time. They were well–known in the cinema fraternity by their synchronized dance sequences which they executed with high speed, flexibility, and accuracy. (Vijayaraghavan 2011: 15–20)

In his style of Bharatanāṭyam, the energy and dynamism radiated from the two triangles defined by the dancer's *araimaṇḍi.* He used the power from the bent knee for jumps, leaps, and dives. He also used this to gain momentum for space utilization. The *araimaṇḍi* position was unbroken throughout all his *aḍavus* with the feet moving as fast as a spinning top. Even though his style was characterized by enormous power, it doesn't fail in grace. Power, at times, may give rise to robotic movements. At the same time, in the name of grace, some styles may lack in perfection and geometry. But Muthuswami Pillai's style was sound in terms of grace and dynamism. His *nṛtta*, just like Vazhuvoor Ramiah pillai's, was filled with life. His newer innovations with *nṛtta* include converting the double–handed *aḍavu* movements into single–handed ones, adapting hand

movements from three–directional (two diagonals, front) into multi–directional space. Thus, space became more like a prismatic globe ceasing to be linear. His love for off–beat rhythms needs mention here. His disciples have remarked about his unyielding resistance to perfect the *aḍavus*. (Sathyanarayanan 2012: 49–51)

Vyjayanthimala's Bharatanāṭyam style mutated from Vazhuvoor style to Dandayudhapani Pillai's Pandanallur style owing to her disagreements and dislike towards Vazhuvoor style. The famous conflicts between the Pandanallur and Vazhuvoor styles that existed in the Bharatanāṭyam society pervaded the Indian cinema industry as well. The Pandanallur style of Bharatanāṭyam was celebrated in Indian cinema owing to Vyjayanthimala, Dandayudhapani Pillai, and Muthuswami Pillai. The impact of Pandanallur style in Vyjayanthimala's *alārippu* in *New Delhi* is explored in chapter 5.

4.2 *Tillāna* in Indian cinema

Tillāna, a fast–paced *nṛtta* item with complex patterns was extensively performed in stage recitals during the revival (Gaston 1996b: 288–311) and made frequent appearances in Indian films between 1945 and 1960. Originating from the *tarānas* of Amīr Khusrau's compositions, it was part of the *nirūpaṇas* of the early 19ᵗʰ century. Afterward, it came into the *catir* repertoire that was standardized and systemized by the Tanjore Quartet[51] in the Maratha period. Subsequently, *tillāna* has permeated the Indian cinema industry surfacing in Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi films.

4.2.1 *Tillāna* appearances in films and selection of clip for detailed analysis

Remarkably, seven *tillāna* film clips around the mid 20ᵗʰ century have been identified. The earliest is from the movie *Sri Valli,* released in the year 1945 in Tamil language. This *tillāna* is in the popular *kamās rāga* and *ādi tāla,* performed by actress and dancer, Rukmini, and choreographed by the well–known *naṭṭuvanār,* Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai[52] in *Sri Valli*. This is a mythological film based on the story of Lord Murukaṉ and Vaḷḷī, the tribal girl, with whom he falls in love. Rukmini played the role of Vaḷḷī in the movie. (*Sri Valli* 1945: 01:18:27–01:21:48)

In this story which describes the romance between Lord Murukaṉ and Vaḷḷī, Lord Murukaṉ appears in the form of an old man to tease Vaḷḷī. While playing games with her, he challenges her to dance for his song. A hilarious and comical scene ensues in the movie to make fun of the old man. Vaḷḷī (Rukmini), after much persuasion consents for the challenge. Then, the old man sings the beautiful *kamās tillāna, "nādhṛ dhīṃ dhīṃ tana dhīṃtana saṃāgāmā pādānī"* for which Vaḷḷī (Rukmini) performs Bharatanāṭyam. It lasts for three minutes and twenty seconds. The film mentions the music composers as T.R. Rajagopal Sharma and R. Sundarsanam, and the lyricist as Papanasam Sivam. The dance by Rukmini gives the impression that she may not have been a trained Bharatanāṭyam dancer. However, the choreography by Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai is delightful and attractive. Rukmini's *araimaṇḍi* postures, hand gestures, and movements look amateur. There are many *aḍavus* created by Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai in the

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[51] The Tanjore Quartet (late 19ᵗʰ and early 20ᵗʰ centuries) were the four brothers – Ciṉṉaiyya, Poṉṉaiyya, Sivāṉandam, and Vaṭivēlu who came from a lineage of musicians.
[52] Credits to Vazhuvoor Ramaiah Pillai appear in the movie titles.

pallavi[53] that do not belong to the conventional set discussed in chapter 2, section 2.1.1. The music is exquisite with nuances in rhythm. The instruments include *mṛidaṅgam* and violin. The *pallavi* is sung for many *āvartanas* with some *āvartanas* consisting of just a play of instruments. The *anupallavi* begins with *kuḍiṭṭumeṭṭaḍavus*[54] followed by a *caraṇam* with a *sāhitya* (lyrical) passage in praise of Lord Naṭarāja. A *svara*[55] passage follows and the *tillāna* ends with the song cycling back to the *pallavi* for which the dancer performs *periya aḍavus.* (Soundarya 2010: 271–273)

Rukmini is wearing the post–revival Bharatanāṭyam pajama costume with a stitched fan in front.[56] She wears a decorative blouse with ornate jewelry. She has long braided hair with flowers. The setting appears to be in a hut located in the forest. Wooden chairs are lying everywhere, and there is a huge window behind the dancer. In the early part of the dance, a peacock makes an entry near the window. The *tillāna* is 'authentic' in terms of its musicalities, rhythm, and structure besides the choreography of Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai. Nevertheless, the *aḍavus* lack finesse and perfection as Rukmini is not a trained Bharatanāṭyam artist.

Two *tillānas* from Telugu movies in the year 1950 have been identified. The first *tillāna* is in *kānada rāga* and *ādi tāla* that appeared in the movie, *Shri Lakshmamma Katha.* The dancer's name and the choreographer are unknown. The dancer appears to belong to the hereditary community since she is wearing a costume that belonged to the *catir* artists of the 19th and early 20th centuries.[57] The setting appears like a temple's *nṛtta mandapa*[58] with eager spectators sitting around the dancer. The *tillāna* lasts for a minute and has only the *pallavi* and *anupallavi.* The dancer is not among the popular list of post–revival dancers. The second *tillāna* is in *pharās rāga* and *ādi tāla* that was featured in the movie, *Lakshmamma.* The item commences with the melodious *pallavi* line, *"thadhīṃ dhīṃ tatananā toṃtatānī".* In the movie, the dancer performs this *tillāna* for a wedding. It was common for *catir* and *kalāvantula* artists to perform in the weddings in the pre–revival

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[53] The structure of a song (in this case, a *tillāna*) usually consists of a *pallavi, anupallavi,* and two to three *caraṇams.*
[54] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.1.1 for details on *aḍavus.*
[55] Refer glossary for details on *svara.*
[56] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.4 for a detailed write–up on this.
[57] Ibid.
[58] *Nṛtta mandapa* is a hall of dance situated within most temples in India.

period. The bride and groom along with their families are watching her performance. The dancer is not wearing a 'traditional' costume of *catir* or Bharatanāṭyam. The musical ensemble consists of newer instruments like *sitār* (lute), harmonium (drone), and drum, apart from the *naṭṭuvangam* and the *mridaṅgam*. The *tillāna* starts with the *pallavi,* then comes the *anupallavi,* and *caraṇam* with a *sāhitya* passage in Telugu. This is followed by a *jati.* The above dance clips from *Shri Lakshmamma Katha* and *Lakshmamma* are not consistent with the style of Bharatanāṭyam and the popular dance masters are not engaged with the choreography (*Shri Lakshmamma Katha* 1950: 00:19:32–00:20:33; *Lakshmamma* 1950: 00:25:05–00:28:28)

Three film clips containing *tillāna* have been found from the year 1954. One is from the documentary film *Masters of Indian Art* by Tara Chowdary. This is the same film which also housed the *alārippu.* The film is available at Net–film, an online film archive from Russia. In this, Tara Chowdary performs a *tillāna* in *kānada rāga* and *ādi tāla,* in the Russian opera house. The *tillāna, "toṃ tatha dhīranā tanadhīranā tanadhīranā tana tanadhīranā"* starts with a commentary in Russian. It lasts for about two minutes. She dances for a live orchestra. The live orchestra is not shown in the clip, but when Tara does the *periya aḍavu* for the concluding passage of the *tillāna,* the *naṭṭuvanārs* and other members of orchestra are seen sitting by the side of the stage. The musical ensemble has a singer along with *mridaṅgam, naṭṭuvangam,* and flute. The costume matches the post–revival one. The dancer is wearing a lot of jewelry, and flowers behind her head. The *aḍavus* by Tara Chowdary are attractive. The *tillāna* contains only the *pallavi* with several variations. Nonetheless, the film clip does not belong to the Indian cinema industry. (Net Film 1950: 34:09–36:10)

The next *tillāna* from the year 1954 is from a Telugu movie, *Vipra Narayana* performed by actress Banumathi. This *tillāna* is in *kānada rāga* and *ādi tāla* lasting for about two and a half minutes. The movie is a biographical film based on the life of a Tamil *vaiṣṇava* saint, Toṇṭarāṭippoṭi *āḻwār,* also known as Vipranārāyana.[59] Devadevi (actress Bhanumathi) is a *devadāsī*[60] who gives a performance recital in the court of a Chola king. Before this recital, she performs a *tillāna* for a group of spectators in a place that looks

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[59] A group of people who worshipped Lord Viṣṇu were called *vaiṣṇavites.* *Vaiṣṇavite* poets of the 6th to 9th centuries were called *āḻwārs.*

[60] *Devadāsī* is a generic term used to refer to hereditary dancers.

like a temple's *nṛtta maṇḍapa* with a deity in the background. The dancer is surrounded by spectators. The orchestra consists of a singer, *mṛidaṅgist, naṭṭuvanār,* and *vīṇā* artist. They are not sitting together. They are sitting on the four corners of the *nṛtta maṇḍapa.* This is uncommon in Bharatanāṭyam because the entire music ensemble always sits together on the dancer's right. The dancer is wearing a post–revival Bharatanāṭyam costume decked with rich jewelry. Bhanumathi was a popular Bharatanāṭyam exponent during the mid–fifties trained by Kanchipuram Ellapa of Tanjore. She received rave reviews for her dances in this film. The *tillāna* was sung by L.N. Gana Saraswati. Kanchipuram Ellapa is said to have composed a few songs for the movie. Thus, it is a possibility that he composed this *tillāna* too. (*Vipra Narayana* 1954: 00:11:00–00:13:27; Narasimham 2014; Soundarya 2010: 250–252)

The *tillāna* in *Vipranarayana* is structured into the following stanzas – *pallavi, anupallavi, caraṇam,* and a *jati.* The dance scene in the movie starts abruptly with the *pallavi* line *"toṃ dhadhāra tāritha dhiranā dhiranādhiradhānī".* Bhanumathi performs numerous *aḍavus.* Her walk between the *kōrvais* (a sequence consisting of a group of *aḍavus*) appears to be undeveloped. There is low rigidity and perfection in her *nṛtta.* Her *araimaṇḍi* looks limited and incomplete, throughout the item. She starts the *anupallavi* with some *paical aḍavus.* The short *anupallavi* is immediately followed by a *jati* after which the cycle goes back to the *pallavi.* Successively, a *caraṇam* with a *sāhitya* passage in praise of Lord Viṣṇu follows. The dancer does *abhinaya* along with *taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavus.* It appears as if a *jati* might have been lost due to editing before the *caraṇam.* The *tillāna* ends with the *pallavi,* when the dancer does a *periya aḍavu* and the final pose.

The third film clip with a *tillāna* in the year 1954 is from the movie *Penn* in Tamil. This was a trilingual film by AVM Productions that released as *Sangham* in Telugu, *Ladki* in Hindi, and *Penn* in Tamil. The film is based on a social theme about women reform. It has a beautifully woven subtle message about a bold girl and the widespread male chauvinism in the country. Vyjayanthimala Bali is the heroine in this movie. As already seen, she was specifically chosen in films for her 'classical' dance performances. As part of a longer recital where she also performs folk and Manipuri, Vyjayanthimala performs a Bharatanāṭyam *tillāna* in *behāg rāga* and *ādi tāla.* Credits for choreography of this

tillāna goes to her guru, Dandayudhapani Pillai.[61] The performance in the clip is like a recital on stage and has a backdrop of a temple. Vyjayanthimala is wearing the customary Bharatanāṭyam costume, like the one she wore for the *alārippu* in the movie, *New Delhi.* The *tillāna* appears to be pre–recorded, and it lasts for about two minutes. (*Penn* 1954: 05:53–07:30)

The dance scene containing the *tillāna* does not immediately commence like the previous clips. First, Vyjayanthimala performs a *nṛtta* sequence for *mṛidaṅgam* beats. Next, the *pallavi* line, *"nādhṛdhadhīṃ dhīranā dhītillāna"* begins. Several *aḍavus* are performed by her. Her style is impeccable as always. Then follows the *anupallavi* sequence. The song cycles back to the *pallavi* and ends shortly after. There is no *caraṇam,* or *svara,* or *jati.* The ending has some instrumental music patterns. Due to the shortness and incompleteness of the *tillāna,* it is not selected for further analysis.

The Hindi movie, *Chori Chori* that released in the year 1956 was a huge hit. It has an elaborate, and a very 'authentic'[62] *tillāna* in *rāgamālika* and *ādi tāla.* (*Chori Chori*, 1956: 00:39:39–00:42:22) This *tillāna* houses extremely intricate *jati, kōrvais[63],* and *svara* sequences. It contrasts with the other short *tillānas* that were previously discussed. This one has a longer *pallavi* with many *kōrvais,* strong *anupallavi* followed by three *svara* passages, in the *hindoḷaṃ rāga.* The first two *svaras* of the *tillāna* are in a different *rāga:* one is in *mohanam rāga* and the second in *kāpi rāga.* The third *svara* goes back to the *hindoḷaṃ rāga.* But throughout, *ādi tāla* is followed. The *tillāna svaras* are performed at such high speeds that it looks like the dancer is almost flying.

The dance is performed by a well–known Bharatanāṭyam artist of the revival period, Kamala Lakshman. She was called the superstar of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema, and her journey to stardom was rapid. She studied from Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai who was also the dance choreographer for many of her films. Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai put Bharatanāṭyam on the map during the revival along with Kamala, and made it enjoyable among the audience. Kamala is known for her speed and perfect sense of rhythm with

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[61] Vyjayanthimala mentioned this in the interview (chapter 5: 18:40). The credits also appear in the movie titles.
[62] 'authentic' refers to the fact that the *tillāna* is line with the structure and musicalities as discussed in chapter 3.
[63] Refer glossary for details on *kōrvai.*

absolute control over her body, and Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai rose to fame because of his star disciple, Kamala. Thus, it is appropriate to say that Kamala and Vazhuvurar[64] together, popularized Bharatanāṭyam and the Vazhuvoor style in the Indian cinematic realm. (Vijayaraghavan 2012a) Intriguingly, Dandayudhapani Pillai, from a contrasting Pandanallur *bāṇi* is the dance director for Kamala's *tillāna* in the movie *Chori Chori.*

The *tillāna* from *Chori Chori* appears best suited to select for the detailed analysis and validation owing to the following reasons: it is the most complete *tillāna* in terms of its structure, with very complex and intricate *svaras.* The dance is performed by the torchbearer of Vazhuvoor style, Kamala Lakshman who has trained under the hereditary *naṭṭuvanār,* Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai. This item is comparable to the selected *alārippu* performed by Vyjayanthimala in the previous section. Vyjayanthimala Bali and Kamala Lakshman ruled the Bharatanāṭyam sphere in cinema industry during the mid 20th century. They belong to two contrasting styles of Bharatanāṭyam. Moreover, the movies *New Delhi* and *Chori Chori,* were released in the same year of 1956, in the language Hindi.

4.2.2 Movie and storyline – *Chori Chori*

Chori Chori, a 1956 Hindi movie was released from the house of AVM production company. It is in the genre of romantic comedy directed by Anant Thakur. The music for the movie was rendered by Shankar–Jaikishan, and lyrics by Hasrat Jaipuri and Shailendra, the same set of musicians from the movie, *New Delhi.* The cast consists of the famous Raj Kapoor and Nargis in the lead roles. Kamala Lakshman appears in the movie only to perform the *tillāna.* The vocal for this *tillāna* was rendered by M.L. Vasanthakumari. The film also contains another dance sequence by Sayee and Subbalakshmi, the disciples of the *naṭṭuvanār,* Muthuswami Pillai. (Anuradhawarrior 2012; Vyas 2014)

Kammo (played by Nargis) is the daughter of a very wealthy multi–millionaire father, Giridharilal. Even though Kammo lives a very wealthy lifestyle, her father wants her to marry someone who is not after their wealth. Unfortunately, to his disappointment, she

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[64] Vazhuvoor Ramaiah Pillai is also referred to as Vazhuvurar in many instances – (Lakshminarayanan 2010; Vijayaraghavan 2012). My guru, K.J. Sarasa was a direct disciple of Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai. She and her senior students always used to refer to him as Vazhuvurar.

chooses to marry a womanizer and a greedy person, Sumankumar (played by actor Pran). When her father disapproves of this, she decides to run away but later learns that Sumankumar has dissapeared. On her journey to find Sumankumar, she meets Sagar (played by Raj Kapoor). Despite hating each other at first sight, Sagar, being a chivalrous and curious person, helps Kammo. Meanwhile, Kammo's father offers a huge sum to the person finding Kammo. This compels the two characters – Kammo and Sagar to travel in disguise. (*Chori Chori* 1956)

Scenes then change to show the pleasures Suman enjoys. It may be inappropriate that they have included Kamala's beautiful Bharatanāṭyam *tillāna* for this scene. Suman is sitting in the front row watching her perform. Kamala Lakshman, in one of her interviews, has spoken about her view on this grand performance in the movie *Chori Chori*. Her disappointment is evident when she says –

> "[m]y dance in *Chori Chori*—it was such a beautiful Thillana, and they put it where! When Pran[65] is sitting there and watching and looking at this another girl. I told Chettiar[66], such a beautiful Thillana and you have Nataraja in the background and the orchestra and everything playing so nicely...and what a situation you have given for the dance! Very crazy people. Sometimes they are crazy. What to do!" (Minai 2014)[67]

Kammo and Sagar continue to travel their long journey. On the way, they develop feelings for each other, but neither of them wants to acknowledge it. Later, Kammo realizes what is right and what is wrong. She decides to go back to her father. The ending is quite predictable with Sagar and Kammo getting uniting with the consent of Kammo's father.

The significant reasons for including the *tillāna* in the movie could have been the following: firstly, the filmmaker used Bharatanāṭyam as a means of showing Suman's attitude towards women and his sophisticated yet ravenous lifestyle; secondly, an

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[65] Pran is the name of the actor who played Suman in the movie.
[66] Chettiar refers to producer of AVM company and the producer of the movie.
[67] Available at http://cinemanrityagharana.blogspot.com/2014/05/meeting–and–interviewing–kamala–and.html

inclusion of an 'authentic'[68] South Indian classical dance form by an eminent dancer, directed by an eminent guru could add more value to the film itself; thirdly, it was the time when Bharatanāṭyam was recognized and admired in the North Indian societies.

4.2.3 Vazhuvoor *bāṇi*: Interplay of factors

This section illuminates the life and journey of two luminaries of Vazhuvoor style in Indian cinema: Kamala Lakshman and Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai. Kamala was the first–born child of Rajam and Ramamurthy Iyer. Rajam, Kamala's mother was very passionate about dance. When the family lived in Mayuram, she unfailingly took Kamala to every *catir* concert in the neighborhood. The dances would be performed by hereditary artists like Kumbakonam Bhanumathi–Varalakshmi and Thiruveezhimalai sisters in weddings and temple festivals. Kamala's training in Bharatanāṭyam started under Kattumannarkoil Muthukumara Pillai in 1934 in Mayuram. Her mother played the role of a mentor for Kamala. She completed her *araṅkēṟṟam* under this dance master in the year 1941. For this, her mother did her make–up and played on the harmonium. The music orchestra consisted of clarinet and *mṛidaṅgam.* Kattumannarkoil Muthukumara Pillai's style is characterized by stiff movements of body and hands. The dance movements can seemingly look disconnected in this style. (Vijayaraghavan 2012a: 20–23; Yennamalli 2014)

Within a few years, Kamala had become well–known in dance circles. Since Muthukumara Pillai was aging a little, he suggested her Bharatanāṭyam continuance with the *naṭṭuvanār,* Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai. When she joined Vazhuvurar, it was as if a great teacher and a diligent disciple had come together. Until then, Balasaraswati and Rukmini Devi Arundale were established figures. Once Kamala coupled with Vazhuvurar, she won over the people at large. However, she did not relearn the basic *aḍavus* from him. Unlike Dandayudhapani Pillai, who was very particular about Vyjayanthimala relearning the entire set of *aḍavus* to correct her style, Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai did not lay emphasis on this. He directly began teaching Kamala the different items in the repertoire. Vazhuvoor's style was different from Kattumannarkoil

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[68] Here, 'authentic' refers to the fact that the *tillāna* is line with the structure and musicalities as discussed in chapter 3.

Muthukumara Pillai's style in the fact that he avoided standing at the end of *jatis* and *svaras*. (Vijayaraghavan 2012a: 23–24; Yennamalli 2014)

Kamala Lakshman is well–known for the Vazhuvoor style of Bharatanāṭyam. Firstly, what catches one's eye, is the speed at which she executes the *aḍavus*. Even at high speeds, her limbs are in perfect position. The audience gets to experience her split–second precision thrills, freezes for poses, her leaps, and spins to round off a passage in an item. She can indulge in rapid turns in quick succession which is because of her short training in Kathak during her early days. Even for these swift turn arounds, she executes them with poise and lightness, characterizing the completion of her stance. She has the unique proficiency to freeze into poses at the end of strenuous whirling movements. Her absolute control over her body and breath is no less. Kamala's agility is striking, especially when she does a full 360–degree turn, for just four *mātras* (internal beats of a *tāla*) of a single beat, and end by taking the perfect position for the next *aḍavu*. (Vijayaraghavan 2012a: 20,24; Rao 2012a: 14,15,20,21) There is tremendous ease in her execution of *nṛtta*. This makes even treacherously complex *nṛtta* to appear deceptively simple. Kamala's tapping of feet is soft and sharp as against a heavy thud. This marks her leaps and landings with feline grace. Her style of *nṛtta* is devoid of demarcations and cuts between the *aḍavus*. Every *aḍavu* seems to grow organically into the next with an element of grace. With complimentary neck and eye movements, the *aḍavus* look as if they are in a perpetual smooth flow. (Vijayaraghavan 2012a: 20,24; Rao 2012a: 15; *Kumari Kamala in Bharata Natyam* 1956)

Kamala was not just a dancer but also had an amazing perception and sensibility towards music. Music and dance are seamlessly linked to each other, and all top dance artists require this virtuosity in music.[69] Kamala carefully chose the music for her items. Insipid and slumberous music was immediately rejected by her, even if it offered high scope for *abhinaya*. The music had to inspire her and be worthy of creativity in dance. (Rao 2012b: 41) Blending of *bhāva* using her eyes, prominent chin, and sensitive lips is a characteristic of Kamala's *nṛtta*. Her smile appears natural, and thus, she is epitome of joy when she dances. When Kamala talks about the Vazhuvoorar's style, she mentions

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[69] In the interview with Vyjayanthimala Bali, she expressed the importance of music for dance. At the end of the interview, she sang a song. Her sweet and meeliflous voice was so beautiful to hear. Refer "Interviewing Vyjayanthimala Bali" in chapter 5, 23:50, 24:03.

that Vazhuvurar's style avoids stiffness of movements and lays emphasis on poses. (Vijayaraghavan 2012a: 26; Rao 2012a: 14) In his style, "there is *bhāvam* even for the *aḍavus*… Even *nṛtta* is full of life. You can do it with a lot of expression." (Vijayaraghavan 2012a: 26) This expression occurs on its own when the *aḍavus* are executed.

The specifics of Kamala's *aḍavu* style need mention. One of the most taxing, yet visually brilliant is her *sarukkal aḍavu*[70] where she slides her foot as far behind as possible without the slightest bend of the knee while her hands remain fully stretched. For the *tirmāna aḍavus* which form the climax of a *kōrvai, or jati, or svara,* Kamala executes it with so much of expression. Especially for the triple measure of *sollukaṭṭu* that goes like – '*tadiṅgiṇatoṃ, takatadiṅgiṇatoṃ, takadikutadiṅgiṇatoṃ*', she looks straight ahead, then at her hand, head turns back and follows the circular movement of the hand forward. From the spectators' point of view, it seems like she says, 'here it is, take it', every time she effects this *aḍavu.* In the *kōrvai aḍavus,* as she opens the *kaṭakāmukha hasta* into a series of *alapadmas*[71], it appears like stars sparkling in heaven. For her *paical aḍavus,* when she leaps from one side to another with the *kartarīmukha hasta*, the reporters have a different description. They compare this to a heroine taunting an elusive consort with her eyes that she is right after him. Thus, Kamala is proven to have conveyed so much through her expressions in *nṛtta.* (Vijayaraghavan 2012a: 22,27; Rao 2012a: 15)

Kamala's stint in Indian films began when she was only five years old. Since Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai was already a dance director in films, he suggested Kamala for the roles. Kamala's family was dependent on her earnings at that time. Therefore, even though some votaries of art were unhappy about Kamala entering films, she felt no regret. Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai had choreographed most of her dances in films. She did a few under the dance direction of Dandayudhapani Pillai, Kanchipuram Ellapa, and Hiralal. She created a sensation the moment she appeared in films. Great singers including D.K. Pattamal, M.L. Vasantakumari have sung for her films. (Vijayaraghavan 2012a: 21–46; Guy 2012)

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[70] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.1.1 for details on *aḍavus.*
[71] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.2.2 for details on *hastas.*

The design and choreography of Kamala's dance in movies was a collaborative process with Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai. Vazhuvurar enjoyed freedom from the directors for his choreographic style. After shooting, Kamala and Vazhuvurar would carry out adjustments watching the preview. (Minai 2014) Like Vyjayanthimala, Kamala's roles in films too were based on her dance. Kamala maintained a clear dividing line between her career in films and her career on stage. Even though many of her early film dances were strictly 'classical', and looked like Bharatanāṭyam performed on stage, she seems to have deviated from the technique of Bharatanāṭyam in the film dances of her later years. (Vijayaraghavan 2012a: 28,29,22[72]) Choreographies specifically prepared for cameras have in her case, changed some of the techniques of Bharatanāṭyam. This concerns the *aḍavu* innovations created by her and Vazhuvurar – reduction of *abhinaya* repetitions and choreographing new movements for camera angles (Vijayaraghavan 2012b: 30,31). In cinema shootings, the dancer's control over the audience is lower, because of the angles offered by the camera, added with editing techniques. Nevertheless, Kamala denies the fact that her quality of Bharatanāṭyam reduced in films because of this. (Raman 2012a: 18; Vijayaraghavan 2012a: 34[73])

There is a twenty–five minutes' documentary film made on Kamala titled, *Kumari Kamala in Bharata Natyam* (1956). She has won several awards as a dancer and has a huge repertoire of items to her credit. The repertoire contains *tillānas* that she studied under Vazhuvurar, and the ones she choreographed. *Tillāna* in *rāgas* – *aṭṭāna, chenchuruti, kanada, kedāram, khamās, śankarābharaṇam,* and *surati* were taught to her by Vazhuvurar. A *tillāna* in the *hindoḷaṃ rāga*[74] is found among her choreographies. But this one is a composition of Madurai Krishnan, which has the following *pallavi* – "*dhīṃ tānananā*". (Vijayaraghavan 2012b: 40[75]; Vijayaraghavan 2012b: 31)

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[72] The page numbers are not ordered correctly in – Vijayaraghavan, S. (2012a). Kamala, the dancer. *Sruti,* [E–book edition], E–Issue 6, May 2012. Certain page numbers appear twice. Here, page 22 refers to its second occurance. All the page numbers referred to in this paragraph belongs to the pages that contain the interview of the author with Kamala.

[73] As seen in the footnote above, page numbers are not ordered correctly in this book. Here, Page 34 refers to its second occurace.

[74] The selected *tillāna* performed by Kamala in the movie, *New Delhi* (1956) is also in the same *rāga.*

[75] As seen in the footnote above, page numbers are not ordered correctly in this book. Here, Page 40 refers to its second occurace.

At this juncture, it is meaningful to study the life and style of Kamala Lakshman's guru and *naṭṭuvanār*, Vazhuvur Ramiah Pillai who was the leading light of Vazhuvoor *bāṇi*. Ramiah Pillai (Vazhuvurar) was born in the village of Vazhuvoor in 1910. He grew up with his maternal uncle after he lost his father at a very young age. Just like Muthuswami Pillai, Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai too stayed with a *naṭṭuvanār* in Mayavaram, about eight kilometers from his village. There, he learned the art of Bharatanāṭyam. Later in 1938, he migrated to Madras when he received opportunities to train actors to dance in films. Vazhuvurar came to be known as the creative master because of his innovative works. He was recognized for choreographing patriotic songs like *"āṭuvomē paḷḷī pāṭuvomē"* in movies and on stage, especially during and after India's independence. He introduced repertoire items like *varṇams* and *padams* in the Tamil language (that were primarily in Telugu). For this, he used the same composition and pattern from the item, but replaced the lyrics in Tamil language. This was successful amongst the Tamil audience. The skill, sonority, and majesty with which he rendered the *sollukaṭṭu* was matchless. He was an expert in keeping offbeat cycles in *jatis* even at a young age. (Vijayaraghavan 2012b: 18–22; Gurunatha 2016)

A detailed view of the different characteristics of Vazhuvoor *bāṇi* is necessary. *Abhinaya* had newer interpretations and fewer repetitions. Without much abhorrence, *abhinaya* had subtlety. His *jatis, kōrvais,* and *svaras* had complex patterns in *tāla* with precise and sharp *naṭṭuvangam.* The style emphasizes fluency of gestures and facial expressions as against rigid classicism and severity of line and form. The facial features were mobile while performing *nṛtta* as against a plain smile. Fast tempos and aesthetic poses for transitions in music were given priority. Vazhuvurar made the entire presentation stylized and graceful. The dancer's entries and exits were made novel. (Vijayaraghavan 2012b: 27,28; Venkatraman 2012: 28; Lakshminarayanan 2010: 29–33)

Vazhuvurar upheld his family tradition and brought it into a new sphere – the Indian cinema. When Vazhuvurar started choreographing for films, there were no studios in Madras. The dance sequences were shot in Calcutta until the first 'Newstone' studio opened in Madras. Except for trained dancers like Kamala, E.V. Saroja, all the actors in films had to be trained from the basics. Vazhuvurar taught T.R. Rajakumari, K.L.V. Vasantha, M.V. Rajamma, and Pasupuleti Kannamba. Vazhuvurar maintained a

monopoly as a dance director for many years in the film industry. He composed and choreographed dances to suite every situation in the film. He would spend four to five months on training actresses on their foot movements, hand gestures, and facial expressions. Vazhuvurar had a perfect sense of camera and was proficient in choreographing with constraints. He would make modifications based on area available for the shoot and camera angles. Close–ups were given emphasis. He was a teacher who offered full autonomy to the dancer, especially in the case of Kamala, for new ideas and innovations. (Vijayaraghavan 2012b: 24–27, 29–31; Vijayaraghavan 2012a: 27,28) Kamala, in an interview with *Sruti* talks about the duo's innovations –

> "He and I have together formulated some new adavu–s. There are some adavu–s which are very similar to each other. I would try some variations of them and perform in front of him. Such as doing an araimandi adavu in full standing posture or to do a full mandi or to do with a bend or a slant. As he thought out the movements during choreography, I would do these variations. He would be pleased very much." (Vijayaraghavan 2012b: 30)

A very rare footage of Vazhuvurar is available in a documentary film, *Morning in India* that is housed at the online film archive, Net Film. In this film, he is seen doing *naṭṭuvangam* for E.V. Saroja for the song *"naṭanam ādinar"*. He is also seen walking, smiling, singing, reciting the *sollukaṭṭu,* and demonstrating hand gestures, eye and eyebrow movements to a group of young girls. (Net Film 1956: Reel 6, 01:35–03:55) Vazhuvurar was a celebrated guru in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s especially because of his star disciple Kamala. With his broad vision of the cinematic medium, ability to depict composite ideas with popular songs, he made Bharatanāṭyam interesting to a very wide cross section of people. A huge percentage of people took to dancing after seeing Kamala. One could confidently say that Kamala defined the Vazhuvoor style. This style was a contrast when compared to the Pandanallur style. The former gave importance to unorthodox and creative dancing, while the latter emphasized on grammar, structure, and technique. Vazhuvurar's Bharatanāṭyam disciples include T.M. Pattamal, Anandhi, Radha, Kamala, Lalitha and Padmini who all made their successful entry into films. Other stage performers who also studied under his tutelage include Kanaka Srinivasan, Komala Varadan, Padma Subrahmaniam, Chitra Vishverswaran, Swamimalai

Rajarathinam, *naṭṭuvanārs,* K.J. Sarasa, and S.K. Kameshwaran. (Vijayaraghavan 2012b: 24–28,32; Venkataraman 2012: 28; Vijayaraghavan 2012a: 27,28[76])

The selected *tillāna* from the movie, *Chori Chori* (1956) performed by Kamala has been directed by Dandayudhapani Pillai of Pandanallur *bāṇi*. In the *alārippu* section, it is already seen that Dandayudhapani Pillai is a genius composer and musician. He has several *tillānas* to his credit and is known to prefer his compositions for stage recitals and film shoots. From the list of his *tillāna* compositions[77], one can see that he has been a fan of the *hindoḷaṃ rāga*. Though this *tillāna* performed by Kamala in the same *rāga* is not part of Dandayudhapani Pillai's list of *tillānas*, it is likely that it is a composition of Dandayudhapani Pillai. (Mohan 2010: 47–48) A statement from the article on *bāṇis* with respect to his *tillāna* compositions might be of interest – "…many times he changed the pallavi line of the tillana, keeping the latter part constant. Thus, for some tillanas like the one in hindolam, different versions are available." (Mohan 2010: 48)

Thus, it would be intriguing to identify any glimpse of Pandanallur *bāṇi* in the execution of the *tillāna* in the movie *Chori Chori* by the idol of Vazhuvoor *bāṇi*, Kamala Lakshman in the validation section in chapter 5.[78] This section endevoured to provide an account of the two players of Indian cinema industry who not only made Bharatanāṭyam widespread during the flux–period but also cultivated the Vazhuvoor *bāṇi,* the popular style of Bharatanāṭyam in the cinematic realm.

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[76] As seen in the footnote above, page numbers are not ordered correctly in this book. Here, Page 22 refers to its second occurace.

[77] A list of Dandayudhapani Pillai's compositions is available at http://www.indian–heritage.org/lyrics/kndp.html

[78] I have received training in the Vazhuvoor style of Bharatanāṭyam. All my three teachers – K.J. Sarasa, Lavanya Sankar, and Padma Subrahmanyam belong to the Vazhuvoor style. K.J. Sarasa and Padma Subrahmanyam are direct disciples of Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai.

4.3 Kṣetrajña's *padam* in Indian cinema

Kṣetrajña's *padams,* written by the great composer Kṣetrajña are in the language Telugu. Therefore, the appearances of Kṣetrajña's *padams* have been mostly found in Telugu films. Notably, during and after the revival period, there have been a handful of appearances. Particularly, there is a movie dedicated to the composer, Kṣetrajña, titled *Mahākavi*[79] *Kshetrayya* in the year 1976. So far, I could not find Kṣetrajña's *padams* in films of other languages. Telugu films have utilized Kṣetrajña's *padams* in their films, and employed Bharatanāṭyam or sometimes Kuchipudi[80] dancers to perform for them.

4.3.1 Kṣetrajña's *padam* appearances in films and selection of clip for detailed analysis

The earliest Kṣetrajña's *padam* is *"maṁci dināmu"* identified from the movie, *Swarga Seema* was released in the year 1945. The dance is performed by a young girl and popular actress, Bhanumati from the Telugu film industry. It is performed like a private performance for a *zamindar* (landowner). There are four more people seated along with the *zamindar* in this scene. The dancer is named Subbulakshmi in the movie. She is accompanied by an animated *naṭṭuvanar* who plays on the cymbals, and attempts to sing a few lines in between. Nonetheless, he is reprimanded and shunned by the *zamindar* in the scene. The song is in the mellifluous *rāga, ānanda bhairavi* sung by the actress Bhanumati herself. The dancer is accompanied by a harmonium to maintain pitch. The dance sequence portrays the *pallavi, anupallavi,* and the first *caraṇam* in the movie.[81] The dancer wears a half–saree with light jewelry, and almost no make–up on her face. (*Swarga Seema* 1945: 00:14:50–00:17:28)

The *padam "maṁci dināmu"* appears in the letter that C.R. Reddy[82] wrote to Vissa Appa Rao[83] in the year 1950. He says, "…Did I tell you the year 1922 when I happened to be

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[79] The word *mahā* in Sanskrit means "great", "mighty", "strong" and the word *kavi* means "poet", "composer", "wise man", thinker", "sage" and so on. (Monier Williams 2008)

[80] Kuchipudi is a form of South Indian 'classical' dance originating from the state of Andhra Pradesh.

[81] The translation of this *padam* is available in the book *Telugu Courtesan Songs by Ksetrayya and Others* (Ramanujan et al. 1994: 63). It is under the category "courtesan to her messenger".

[82] C.R. Reddy was an educationist, political thinker, economist, poet, and literary critic of the early 20th century.

[83] Vissa Appa Rao is an author, who collected and did immense work on Kṣetrajña's *padams.* His book in Telugu is titled, *Kshētrayya Padamulu* (Rao, 1950).

in Tanjore, I heard a cow–herd going about the streets singing *'Manchidinamu nede'?"* (Rao 1981: 18) In this *padam,* the *nāyikā* says, "Today is a good day. Ask him to come in a royal way". Then, the *nāyikā* tells her *sakhī* (or messenger) in the *anupallavi,* "…Tell him then I won't fault him if he mentions her name. When he comes, I won't treat him any different. Isn't this place his house?". This song is in the mood of *virahotkhaṇḍitā nāyikā.*[84] The heroine portrays pining for her lover and the inability to bear the pangs of separation. In the film clip, Bhanumathi displays gestures and expressions in a charming, gentle, and graceful manner. She is as flowy as the *rāga* itself. Her expressions are genuine, and she looks like a *mugdhā nāyikā*[85].

Two Kṣetrajña's *padams* appear in the movie, *Vipranarayana* performed by the same actress, Bhanumati (only looks a little older in this movie) in the year 1954. The first one, "*evvaḍe evvāḍe ō bhāma*" portrays a *parakiya nāyikā*. The *nāyikā* in this song wonders about the identity of the man who arrived elusively at night to kiss her. Here, the heroine is talking about Lord Kṛṣṇa. The actress is dancing in a hall, probably in the court of a king. The king is not present, but there is an audience watching her performance. This *padam* comes immediately after her *tillāna* (that I had mentioned under the *tillāna* analysis section). Only the *pallavi* and the *anupallavi* appear in the movie with some *nṛtta* sequences interspersed in between. (*Vipra Narayana* 1954: 00:14:19–00:20:23) The second Kṣetrajña's *padam*, "*rāra sāmi rāra*" is in the mood of a *virahotkhaṇḍitā nāyikā* who longs for the love of her beloved, and suffers the pangs of separation. This is performed by the actress in the court of a king, while he is watching. The *padam's* appearance in the movie is not complete. Only the *pallavi* and the *anupallavi* are shown.[86] (*Vipra Narayana* 1954: 00:22:37–00:25:04)

The Kṣetrajña's *padam, "iṁta telisiyuṁḍi"* from the movie *Devadasu,* (Devadasu 1953: 01:27:20–01:30:52) that released in the year 1953, appears in full. It contains the *pallavi, anupallavi,* and all the three *caraṇams*. This *padam* also has literary value as it appears as one of the three hundred and twenty *padams* published by Vissa Appa Rao in the year

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[84] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.8 for details on the different types of *nāyikās.*
[85] Ibid.
[86] The full *padam* with translation is available at
http://www.sangeetasudha.org/othercomposers/kshetrayya2.html#MARK_RARA

1950 (Rao 1950: 24[87]). Two other literary sources of the same *padam* are also identified (Ramakrishnan 1985: 60–61; Pattri 2014[88]). The dance is performed by the popular Bharatanāṭyam dancer and actress; one of the "Travancore sisters"[89], Lalitha, who learned the art of Bharatanāṭyam from the dance masters – T. Mahalingam Pillai and Guru Gopinath. The theme of the movie is based on the popular novel *Devdas*, that has its essence in *śṛṅgāra rasa.* In the movie, this *padam* is performed by Chandramukhi, whose character is that of a dancing girl. The dance is performed like a private performance along with a musical ensemble. Owing to the characteristics of the performance, the dancer, and the complete appearance of the song, I choose this Kṣetrajña's *padam, "iṁta telisiyuṁḍi"* for the analysis and validation.

4.3.2 Movie and Storyline – *Devadasu*

The movie *Devadasu* adapted from the Bengali novel, *Devdas* revolves around the characters of Devdas, Parvati, and Chandramukhi. The story is based on the emotion of love. Devdas and Parvati have been in love since childhood. Devdas is from a rich Bengali *brahmin* family while Parvati is from a middle–class Bengali family. Unfortunately, due to family circumstances, Parvati is married off to a rich *zamindar* (landowner). Unable to bear this, Devdas becomes a drunkard. In this time, his friend introduces him to a prostitute named Chandramukhi (played by actress and dancer, Lalitha in this movie). She turns out to be a very wonderful person who loves Devdas selflessly. A unique bond is formed between the stunning courtesan, Chandramukhi, and Devdas. Nevertheless, Devdas loves Parvati until his last breath, and so does Parvati, even though she performs her worldly duties with her new family. The Kṣetrajña's *padam, "iṁta telisiyuṁḍi"* is danced by Chandramukhi (actress Lalitha) for Devdas (played by actor Akkineni Nageswara Rao), when she meets him for the first time. According to Randor Guy, the Indian cinema space was obsessed with the story of "*Devdas*" right from 1928, when the first silent film was made based on this story. The first "talkie" version came out in 1935, and then, it was continuously made in Tamil, then in Telugu, Hindi, Malayalam in the years 1938, 1953, 1955, and 1978. (Guy 2002)

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[87] The page number 24 refers to its second occurance in the book.
[88] Pattri is a blog where the translation, transliteration, and meaning of several Telugu *padams* are posted. This *padam* was posted in January 2014.
[89] The Travancore sisters were Lalitha, Padmini, and Ragini. They were popular Bharatanāṭyam dancers who came into the cinema industry as actors following Kamala Laskhman and Vyjayanthimala Bali.

In the Hindi film *Devdas,* that was released in the year 1955, Vyjayanthimala Bali played the role of Chandramukhi. In the interview with Vyjayanthimala, she expressed that it was the role of Chandramukhi in *Devdas* that gave her a transformation in the Indian film industry. Recently in the year 2002, the movie was remade in Hindi, the role of Devdas played by the popular actor Shah Rukh Khan. (*Devdas* 1955; *Devdas* 2002)

The movie *Devadasu* in Telugu was directed by Vedantam Raghaviah and produced by D.L. Narayana for Vinodha pictures. The music composition was done by C.R. Subbaraman, and the *padam* rendered by the popular singer Smt. Balasaraswati Rao. Later, this movie also released in the Tamil language. Actress and danseuse Lalitha, who started her career in 1938 in Tamil acted in movies from various languages including Hindi, Malayalam, and Telugu. She became popular due to her Bharatanāṭyam sequences, just like Vyjayanthimala Bali and Kamala Lakshman.

As seen in chapter 3, Kṣetrajña's *padams* are full of *abhinaya,* and are based on the concept of *śṛṅgāra rasa*. In the next chapter, the identified Kṣetrajña's *padam* from *Devadasu* will be analyzed. A philological study (with translation and transliteration) of the chosen *padam*,[90] will be done to comprehensively examine the context of the song, gestures depicted by the dancer, and the *nāyikā bhedas* portrayed by the her. This will enable in validating the *abhinaya* performances in Indian films.

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[90] As seen earlier in chapter 3, *abhinaya* items like *padam* and *jāvali* contain *sāhitya* or lyrical passages.

4.4 *Jāvali* in Indian cinema

Jāvalis are short, fast paced numbers that were chiefly performed by *catir* troupes from Madras, as well as *kalāvantula*[91] artists from the Godavari delta region (in Andhra Pradesh). *Jāvalis* were not only part of the Maratha Tanjore repertoire, but also part of salon performances during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Later, from the salons of the elites, *jāvalis* traveled as items of entertainment in the mass media. Even in films, *jāvalis* appeared as a reflection of what was happening in the society; thereby shot as salon performances. Although not an exhaustive set, about six appearances are identified, four before 1960. Most of these performances have been performed by hereditary dance artists.

4.4.1 *Jāvali* appearances in films and selection of clip for detailed analysis

The earliest *jāvali* identified "*idi maṁci samayamu rārā*" appears in the biographical film, *Bhaktha Potana* in the year 1942. Chittoor V. Nagaiah composed this *jāvali* in *kalyai rāga* for the movie (Sastry 2017: Ch. 4). This movie is set in the period of the 15th century Cholas. Before the *jāvali,* there is a welcome dance for the king by the courtesans. This *jāvali* is performed by a hereditary dance artist, as a private performance for a king and his guest. There is a passionate discussion between the king and his guest about music and dance. The musical ensemble consists of children, which is atypical. A *jāvali* danced during the time of the Cholas also seems unlikely.[92] The song has a *pallavi, anupallavi,* and two *caraṇams.* There are five *svaras* with many *tīrmānas* in between. "*Idi maṁci samayamu rārā*" meaning, "[t]his is the right time, come. Why do you delay?". This song deals with a *virahotkhaṇḍitā nāyikā* pining the separation of her lover. The dancer is seen to be wearing a normal saree with light jewelry. (*Bhaktha Potana* 1942: 01:05:41–01:09:41)

Another *jāvali* has been identified from the biographical film *Thyagayya* in 1946 that showcased Dharmapuri Subbarayar's well–known *jāvali,* "*nī māṭalē*" performed by a hereditary artist in a salon like setting (*Thyagayya* 1946: 00:12:54–00:14:34). The dancer

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[91] The hereditary community of performers in Andhra Pradesh were called *kalāvantula.* They lived in the Godavari delta region. *Kalāvantula* women had performing ensembles called *bhōgamēḻams.*

[92] The repertoire during the Chola period is not known to have this dance number. Refer chapter 1 for more details on dance during Chola period and chapter 3 for the origin of *jāvali.*

is wearing a traditional *catir* costume from the pre–revival period.[93] The song contains a *pallavi, anupallavi,* two *caraṇams*, a *svara,* and a *jati.* This has been composed in the *pūrvi kalyāni rāga* and *ādi tāla.* The heroine in the *jāvali's pallavi* says, "[w]hat has become of your promise my dear friend? Have you forgotten your enticing and honeyed words that you told me?.." (Arudra 1986: 46). The song potrays a *vipralabdhā nāyikā* who is angry with her lover for cheating on her. In the film clip, the dance begins with an *alārippu* and then continues with this *jāvali.*

"*Samayaṁidē gādarā*" figured in the historical movie *Pelli Sandadi* that released in the year 1960 (*Pelli Sandadi*, 1960). In the year 1964, two other *jāvalis* appeared in the movies, *Bobbili Yudham* and *Pooja Phalam*. However, there is one *jāvali* that journeyed from the traditional community of *kalāvantula* performers through the field notes of a music orientalist, and finally appeared in the movie *Muddu Bidda* in the year 1956 (*Muddu Bidda* 1956). The *jāvali, "aṁtalōnē tellavāre"* has been addressed and discussed by Davesh Soneji in his book (Soneji 2010: 107–111; Soneji 2012: 102–104).

The *jāvali, aṁtalōnē tellavāre* also appeared in the form of a western musical notation in C.R. Day's book on *Music and Musical Instruments of Southern India* published in 1891 (Day 1891: 79–80). It has been attributed to the *śankarābharaṇam rāga* and *rūpaka tāla.* Day mentions that this song was extremely popular throughout South India in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He remarks on the kind of instruments used to keep strong rhythm, like the cymbals and drums. Figure 4.11 shows the image of the western staff notation for this *jāvali* taken from the book.

Figure 4.12 Western staff notation for the *jāvali, aṁtalōnē tellavāre* (Day 1891: 80)

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[93] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.4 for details on *catir* costume.

4.4.2 Movie and Storyline – *Muddu Bidda*

The Telugu drama film *Muddu Bidda* translating to "darling child" was released in the year 1956, directed and produced by K.B. Tilak. The plot of the movie is based on a Bengali novel, *Bindur Chhele* written by the famous Bengali writer, Saratchandra Chatterjee. However, the story has almost no impact on the dance sequence. The dance is only included in between. The act to abolish *devadāsīs* was passed earlier at the Madras presidency in the year 1947 was passed again few years later in 1956 in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Since the *jāvali, aṁtalōnē tellavāre* was performed by a *bhōgamēḷam* troupe consisting of *kalāvantula* artists in the movie, this inclusion is considered as a send–off for the hereditary dancing community in the Andhra Pradesh region. This song in the movie is a celebration of the culture of courtesan's dance. It distinctly portrays the simultaneous desirability and vilification of a salon performance. In line with the reform of courtesan's dance in the society at that time, a man is reprimanded in the movie for watching the *bhōgamēḷam* performance. (Soneji 2012: 108–111; *Muddu Bidda* 1956: 01:20:45–01:25:10)

In the movie, the entire troupe of *bhōgamēḷam* belongs to the traditional hereditary community of artists. The main dancer is actress Krishnajyoti, coming from the *kalāvantula* community in the Godavari delta region. The woman playing the role of the troupe leader is Surabhi Kamalabai who was born into a community of Telugu drama artists. She made her debut in acting as the heroine in the Telugu film, *Bhakta Prahalada* in the year 1931. The man playing the cymbals, assisting the troupe leader belongs to the community of *brahmin* dance–masters from the Kuchipudi village tradition. (Minai 2012)

I select this *jāvali, aṁtalōnē tellavāre* from the movie, *Muddu Bidda* for the detailed analysis and validation in chapter 5 because it was a popularly performed song amongst the hereditary community of artists who came to the movies, the *jāvali* in the movie represents an architype of salon performances, and its appearance is also a landmark in the history of salon performances, as *Muddu Bidda* was released in the same year when the "Devadasi Abolition Act" was passed in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

4.5 Conclusion

The identified film clips of *alārippu, tillāna, padam,* and *jāvali* were delineated in this chapter to select the fitting one for the detailed evaluation in the next chapter. Out of four *alārippus,* seven *tillānas,* four Kṣetrajña's *padams,* and four *jāvalis* that were identified and presented, one from each category was selected with reasoning: *alārippu* from *New Delhi* (1956: 00:34:54–00:37:23), *tillāna* from *Chori Chori* (1956: 00:39:38–00:42:23), Kṣetrajña's *padam* from *Devadasu* (1953: 01:27:20–01:30:53), and *jāvali* from *Muddu Bidda* (1956: 01:20:45–01:25:10). An account of the movies' storyline is also presented in this chapter. A comprehensive explanation of the interplaying factors that brought out the two contrasting Bharatanāṭyam styles: Vazhuvoor and Pandanallur in Indian cinema is provided. This explanation entails engagement with the dance journey of two non–hereditary Bharatanāṭyam dancers, Vyjayanthimala Bali and Kamala Lakshman, and three *naṭṭuvanārs,* Dandayudhapani Pillai, Muthuswami Pillai, and Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai.

5 Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema: validation

This chapter centers around analyzing and validating the selected film clips according to the 'standard' Bharatanāṭyam technique and repertoire put forward in chapters 2 and 3. After an initial assessment of identified film clips in chapter 4, the following ones are selected as a case study for validation: *alārippu* by Vyjayanthimala Bali from *New Delhi* (1956), *tillāna* by Kamala Lakshman from *Chori Chori* (1956), Kṣetrajña's *padam* from the Telugu movie *Devadasu* (1953), and *jāvali* from the Telugu movie *Muddu Bidda* (1956).[1] Movement analysis[2], music notation[3], and notations for rhythm[4] are used as methods to evaluate the *nṛtta* based items – *alārippu* and *tillāna.* The impression of the two contrasting *bāṇis* of Vyjayanthimala and Kamala are reviewed in the *alārippu* and *tillāna* film clips. An in–person interview with Vyjayanthimala Bali provides substantiation. For the *abhinaya* based items – Kṣetrajña's *padam* and *jāvali,* a philological study of the Telugu songs is vital to understand the content, context, and verbal imagery of the song. Then, the *abhinaya* of the dancer is assessed using her gestures and mimes, followed by a comprehensive analysis of the *nāyikā bhedas* (heroine types) portrayed by the song, and dancer in the film.

The primary aim of this chapter is to recognize the depth of inclusion of Bharatanāṭyam items in Indian films. It facilitates in comprehending if Indian cinema provided space for Bharatanāṭyam, its dancers, and its dance masters to ascribe to their glorious technique and standards. It establishes awareness about the adaptations in Bharatanāṭyam repertoire's items created specifically for the cinema fraternity. It reveals the representations of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema regarding the setting (stage

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[1] A short note on rights for publication: the chapter analyses three films that belong to the year 1956 and one film that belongs to the year 1953. For explanations, I use screenshots and video clips from these films. The Copyright Protection law under section 14, that protects literary works, dramatic works, musical works, artistic works, cinematograph films and sound recordings came into effect in the year 1957 (Copyright Office 1957: Section 14). Therefore, it is safe to publish screenshots and video clips of films prior to this year. For screenshots and film clip that is extracted from a TV channel broadcasting (TeluguOne), the publishing rights have been obtained from the channel.

[2] I have not used any notation system for notating the dance movements. I have utilized a descriptive method for explaining the dance movements and/or the *aḍavus*.

[3] The South Indian Carnatic music tradition that utilizes concepts of *rāga* (melody) and *tāla* (rhythm) using basic sol–fa syllables has been utilized. This is explained in detail under chater 2, section 2.3.3.

[4] This utilizes the *sollukattu* for the respective *aḍavus* in the framework of the *tāla* system of South Indian Carnatic music. This is explained in detail under chapter 2, section 2.3.3.

performances, salon performances, or private performances) that was constructed as a reflection of happenings in the Indian society during the flux–period. It aids in the appreciation of performances by hereditary and non–hereditary dancers in Indian films.

5.1 Analysis of *alārippu* from *New Delhi* (1956)

It is established in the second chapter that *nṛtta* and *abhinaya* are two central aspects of the technique of Bharatanāṭyam; *nṛtta* consisting of abstract dance movements, and *abhinaya* referring to the art of communication. It is also learned that *nṛtta* cannot exist in isolation. Thus, the four kinds of *abhinaya*[5] form part and parcel of even a complete *nṛtta* item. In fact, music and rhythm that form a part of *vācika abhinaya* is the heart and soul of *nṛtta. Nṛtta* is wholly inert without it. In section 2.3.1 under chapter 2, I have described the importance bestowed by Sanskrit and Tamil literature on music and rhythm for dance. Dance ceases to exist the moment there is no *vācika abhinaya.* Therefore, the analysis of Bharatanāṭyam technique for *alārippu* that is *nṛtta* based, encompasses the aspects of music and rhythm right from the beginning. The duration of *New Delhi's alārippu* is two minutes and thirty–five seconds. The *alārippu* clip (*New Delhi* 1956: 00:34:54–00:37:23) is extracted from the movie and is annotated. This attached film clip (00:00–02:35) will act as a guide for the forthcoming explanations.

The *alārippu* in *New Delhi* commences with a quick opening of the frontal curtains on the stage. Vyjayanthimala is already present in the center–stage, with a spotlight on her. She carries out the conventional *namaskāra*[6] (00:05), that is customarily done before the recital begins. Usually in practice, the *namaskāras* are done by the dancer before entering the stage. The dancer could have opted to show the *namaskāra* tradition on stage as this number is a 'traditional' Bharatanāṭyam item performed for a Hindi movie. Successively, the music for *alārippu* begins along with the percussion beats from the *mṛidaṅgam*. The *alārippu* matches the 'standard *alārippu*' discussed in section 3.1.2 under chapter 3. It is in *tiṣra jātī, eka tāla*[7]. As already seen, *tiṣra jātī* has three rhythmic beats with every beat, in turn, having four *mātrās* (internal beats of a *tāla*) totaling to

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[5] Refer chapter 2 for details on the four types of *abhinaya.*
[6] The word *namaskāra* means an "offering of respect" or "offering of reverence" (Monier Williams 2008).
[7] Refer to section 3.1.2 under chapter 3 and section 2.3.3 under chapter 2 for details on technical terms and definitions that come as part of this describing the *alārippu.*

twelve units for one *āvartana; āvartana* being one complete cycle of a single *tāla*. A single *tāla* here is made up of one *anudṛtam* (performed by one beat of the hand) and one *dṛtam* (performed by one beat of the hand and one wave of the hand in the air). A music notation along with the corresponding *tāla* for this *alārippu* is presented below, that aid in evaluating the *nṛtta*. The accompanying instruments are the *mṛidaṅgam* and the *naṭṭuvangam,* to keep rhythm. The *alārippu* is sung in the *nāttai rāga.*[8] There is perfect synchronization between the dancer and the musicians throughout the *alārippu*. The music notation for this *alārippu* as it appears in the movie *New Delhi* is furnished below.

Opening phrase:

tā   ,   ,   , │ tai ,   ,   , │ tai ,   ta tām ‖

dhi ,   ,   , │ tai ,   ,   , │ tai ,   ,   , ‖

dha lāṃ , gu │ ta ka ta di │ gi ṇa toṃ , ‖

[*vilambita kāla* (slow speed):

tāṃ ,   ,   , │ ,   ,   ,   , │ dhit ,   ,   , ‖

tāṃ ,   ,   , │ ,   ,   ,   , │ ki ṭa ta ka ‖

tai ,   ,   , │ ,   ,   ,   , │ tat ,   ,   , ‖

tai ,   ,   , │ ,   ,   ,   , │ ki ṭa ta ka ‖ {2}

madhya kāla (middle speed):

tāṃ ,   ,   , │ ,   ,   dhit , │ tāṃ ,   ,   , ‖

tai ,   ,   , │ ,   ,   tat , │ tai ,   ,   , ‖ {4}

dṛta kāla (fast speed):

tāṃ ,   ,   dhit │ tāṃ , tai , │ ,   ta tai , ‖ {8}/{20}/{4}]

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[8] According to Vyjayanthimala, the vocal was redered by a South Indian girl. Refer "Interviewing Vyjayanthimala Bali" (19:42) in this section.

jati:

tā   ,   ha   ta | jhaṃ ,   ta ri | tā   ,   ,   ,   ‖

ta   ta   ha   ta | jhaṃ ,   ta ri | tai   ,   ,   ,   ‖

ta   di   gi   ṇa | toṃ   ,   ta ka | ta   di   gi   ṇa   ‖

toṃ   ,   ta   ka | di   ku   ta   di | gi   ṇa   toṃ   ,   ‖

tā   ,   ,   , | ,   ,   ,   , | ,   ,   ,   ,   ‖

The cycle in square brackets [] is repeated for standing position, full–sitting position (*muḻumaṇḍi*), *kuṭṭaḍavus* (in *araimaṇḍi*), and the footwork tempos in *dṛta* phase with *ardhapatākā hasta.* The curly brackets {} denote the number of repetitions for the respective sections. The number of repetitions performed in *dṛta kāla* varies for standing position, full–sit position, and *kuṭṭaḍavus.* This is indicated as {8}/{20}/{4}: eight, twenty, and four repetitions respectively. In comparison to the 'standard *alārippu'* in chapter 3, the *sollukaṭṭu* mneumonics for the opening phrase and the *jati* are different.

Before commencing to dance for the opening phrase, the dancer steps forward (00:10). She executes subtle side to side movements of the eyes followed by *aṭṭamīs* (00:11–00:16). The subtlety that is innate in Vyjayanthimala's style is observed here. The *vilambita kāla* in standing posture begins with a step forward in *añjali hasta*[9] raised above the head in salutation. The arms get to the *nāṭyarambha* position with feet together. Subsequently, the shoulder movements begin in consonance with the neck and eye movements. (00:17–00:27) The *madhya kāla* is similarly performed for eight *āvartanas* with only an increase in tempo. Here there is a minor innovation by the dancer. She shifts sides while half–sitting cross–legged, with a slight hip bend while one of her hands is brought in front of the chest. In this process, there is a subtle shift in the direction of her body. This novelty could have been the work of Muthuswami Pillai as his style is known to have converted several double handed movements into single handed ones, and explored newer directions in space (Sathyanarayanan 2012: 49–51).[10]

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[9] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.2.2 for details on *hastas.*

[10] Even though this was not quoted by the dancer herself in the interview, this innovation is something new that likens with Muthuswami Pillai's innovations with *nṛtta.* In the interview, Vyjayanthimala says that

(00:28–00:36) Then, the dancer executes the *dṛta kāla* in *araimaṇḍi* posture. Here, the steps are carried out with a clear demarcation using eye and neck movements. There is appropriate space utilization and exploration of new directions for this *kāla*. Vyjayanthimala uses the momentum for longer glides from the power of bent knee, which is certainly a technique unique to Pandanallur style. (00:37–00:46)

By raising an *añjali hasta* above her head, the dancer starts the next cycle of *vilambita* to *dṛta kāla* in full–sit or *muḻumaṇḍi* posture (00:47). The *vilambita kāla* is the same with shoulder, neck, and eye movements. Like the previous cycle, four *āvartanas* of *madhya kāla* are executed with a bit of creativity using *alapadma* and *kaṭakāmukha hastas,* setting off with a delicate jump. The rest of the four *āvartanas* are typical. (00:49–01:08) The *dṛta kāla* which is done for eight *āvartanas,* is extended most times to sixteen *āvartanas* (*Bharatanatyam invocatory items* 2011). But in this *alārippu,* Vyjayanthimala extends the *dṛta kāla* to twenty *āvartanas. Aṭṭamīs* with a slow hand movement towards an *añjali hasta* is executed for the newer addition of four *āvartanas*. The usual variations of *maṇḍi aḍavus* are performed for the extended eight *āvartanas*. The *maṇḍi aḍavus* include jumping on toes, touching knee on the floor alternately, and stretching one leg outwards while the remaining rests on the other heel. *Tripatākā, alapadma,* and *kaṭakāmukha hastas* are used for this part. (01:09–01:34)

Once the cycle in *dṛta kāla* is over, the *kuṭṭaḍavus* begin in *vilambita kāla. Kuṭṭaḍavus,* as seen in chapter 2, include alternate striking of the feet on the floor with both feet raised on its balls in a slight jump followed by one of them coming back to its flat position. The stretching of her leg in front with a slight bend of the hip is novel and striking. The *kuṭṭaḍavus* in *madhya kāla* and *dṛta kāla* are customarily executed. But four *āvartanas* out of the eight in *madhya kāla* are performed sideways, thus exploring new directions in space. (01:34–01:59) The increasing tempo of footwork with *ardhapatākā hasta* is customary. The dancer alternates from *araimaṇḍi* to standing posture as she moves forward and back; this is in line with her hand movements that travel from a dropped position to a raised position. The dancer steps back diagonally for the *vilambita kāla*. (02:00–02:15) The *jati* begins immediately after the main *kāla* cycle is complete. The

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even though the dancers and choreographers do not change the choreographies between stage and cinema, the positions change for the sake of the cameramen while shooting for cinema. The diagonal position in this *alārippu* could have been adopted for the sake of camera.

dancer performs the *tirmāna aḍavu[11]* in *tripatākā, alapadma,* and *kaṭakāmukha hastas.* (02:16–02:21) The *tirmāna aḍavu* performed with circular movements of the arms in *alapadma hasta* while accompanied by body–turns in *tripatākā hasta* needs a comment. In the Vazhuvoor style of dance, this *aḍavu* is done with a body–turn and full circular movements. Kamala Lakshman is adept in executing this *aḍavu* at very high speeds. But Vyjayanthimala's *tirmāna aḍavus* look short and stunted when compared to the fuller circles used by Kamala (*Kumari Kamala in Bharata Natyam* 1956). The finish does not look flawless because of this. The *jati* ends with an *añjali hasta* raised above the head. The *dhṛgaḍtaka* phrase and the closing phrase are absent in this *alārippu.*

Figure 5.1 *Āhārya abhinaya* of Vyjayanthimala in *alārippu* from *New Delhi*
(***New Delhi* 1956: 00:36:39, 00:35:57**)

The costume, jewelry, and make–up worn by Vyjayanthimala are shown in Figure 4.1.[12] She is wearing the regular, pre–stitched pajama costume which has a pleated fan in the front make from silk. Since it is a black and white movie, the color of the costume is unrecognizable. However, the dancer's fan and blouse are light colored while the rest is dark colored. Her hair is braided in a long plait with a lot of flowers. She is wearing a single *chuṭṭi, jimikī,* and *māṭal,* one long neckpiece, some bangles, *odyāṇam,* and *salaṅgai.* She is also wearing a *bullāku* on her nose which is common among the non–hereditary *brahmin* community of dancers. Her make–up looks light and pleasing. The backdrop for the stage is in the form of a temple. The *gōpura* (tower–gate in a temple)

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[11] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.1.1 for details on *aḍavus.*
[12] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.4 for detailed write–up about *āhārya abhinaya* and its elements.

and pillars that are part of a temple are aesthetically replicated as the backdrop for her performance. [13] The lighting is created well to focus on the dancer.

To give a deeper insight into *āhārya abhinaya,* I include the camera angles used to shoot the dance for the film clip. The director and the cinematographer of the movie have made valuable use of the camera to show the dancers' *nṛtta* movements. The shot starts at a long distance and suddenly moves closer to the dancer when the song begins. This is perhaps to emphasize the face and neck movements in the opening phrase. The camera slowly travels backward for the *vilambita kāla* and *madhya kāla* in the standing posture. The complete body is visible only in *dṛta kāla* when the dancer shifts to the *araimaṇḍi* position. The camera focusses on specific parts of her body like shoulder and face, for the full–sit *vilambita kāla.* Between the full–sit *madhya kāla* and the increasing tempo sequence with *ardhapatākā hasta* the camera remains in the frontal position showing the dancer's full body. When the dancer performs the alternating dropping and lifting of hand in *ardhapatākā hasta* in the fastest tempo, the camera shows her footwork and her hands alternately. After this, the camera recovers to the frontal position to show her complete body for the *jati.* Once the *alārippu* is complete, the camera is taken close to Janki's (Vyjayanthimala) face to show her expression of surprise on seeing her lover, Anand (Kishore Kumar). The scene ends with them smiling at each other.

In my opinion, there was ample mental involvement (*sāttvika abhinaya*) from Vyjayanthimala in this *alārippu.* With regards to *dharmī*[14] or mode of presentation, the dance is in *nāṭyadharmī.* The dance has exemplified stylization and grammar in its presentation. Thus, there is no *lokadharmī* present. The expression of surprise from Vyjayanthimala at the end of the performance too has a lot of stylization. Not even a glimpse of Vazhuvoor *bāṇi* is recognizable in this performance. Vazhuvoor *bāṇi* is known for its fluid grace, as against firmness in postures and movements while maintaining heavy facial expressions for *nṛtta.* Vyjayanthimala's *araimaṇḍi* and *nāṭyarambha* postures look chiseled and firm while the *aḍavus* are executed with immense relish perfectly in alignment with Pandanallur *bāṇi.* The movements glide with

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[13] In the interview with Vyjayanthimala, she says, "[t]his [backdrop] is decided by the art director. In this case, since it was a traditional Bharatanāṭyam number, a temple backdrop was selected". Refer "Interviewing Vyjayanthimala Bali" (15:42).

[14] The concept of *dharmīs* (*nāṭyadharmī* and *lokadharmī*) has been explained under footnotes in the first page of chapter 2.

inimitable grace. Her *aḍavus* are entirely in the Pandanallur style. Her eyes and other facial movements have taken on a subtlety. The fluid grace of Vazhuvoor style seems absent in this performance.

– Interviewing Vyjayanthimala Bali –

An in–person interview with the 85–year–old actress, Vyjayanthimala Bali was conducted on November 1, 2017 at 16:00. It took place in a delightfully decorated rehearsal room in Vyjayanthimala's residence at C. P. Ramaswamy Road, Alwarpet, Chennai. Vyjayanthimala's *naṭṭuvāṅgam* artist, Gayathri Sashidharan was present at the interview. The interview was more like a conversation, an informal discussion. It is very common among Tamil speaking Indians to converse with a mix of English and Tamil. Our interview was also the same. There was a continuous mix of both Tamil and English. The meaning of the Tamil words is provided in square brackets. Additional details observed are mentioned in curly brackets. Length of the conversation was 26 minutes and 20 seconds.

Figure 5.2: Interview room in Vyjayanthimala's residence (Picture: by author)
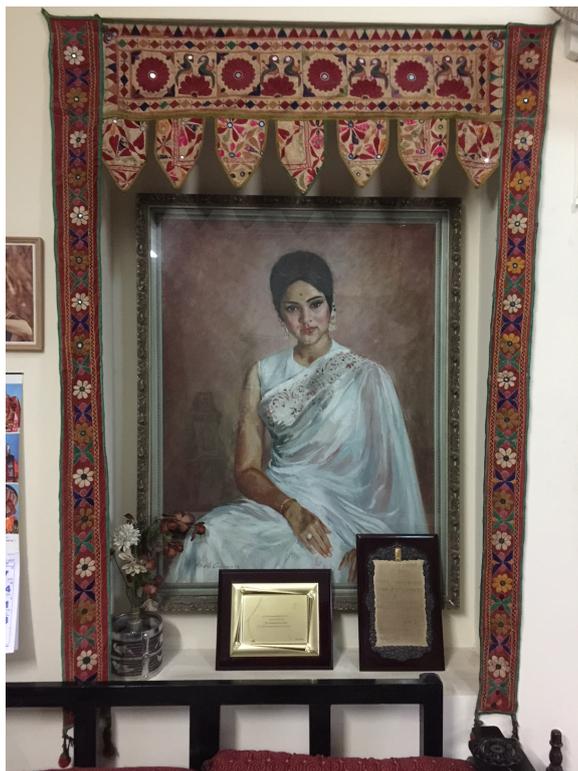
Figure 5.3: Painting of Vyjayanthimala in Vyjayanthimala's residence (Picture: by author)

Figure 5.4: A picture of me with Vyjayanthimala (Picture courtesy: Gayathri Sashidharan)

02:04 Author: Your experience when you performed this *alārippu*[15] in the movie *New Delhi*, அதை பற்றி கொஞ்சம் சொல்ல முடியுமா? [Can you say a little about that?]

02:13 Vyjayanthimala: அலாரிப்பு எனக்கு படதில பண்றதுக்கு கஷ்டமா இல்லை. [It wasn't difficult to perform the *alārippu* in the movie.] யென்னா நான் எப்பவுமே பண்ணிண்டு இருக்கிறது த்னே. [Because this is an item I used to always dance {on–stage}.] நான் பரதநாட்டிய dancer-ஆ ருக்கிறதினால எனக்கு அலாரிப்பு பண்றதில ரொம்ப சந்தோஷம். [As I am a Bharatanāṭyam dancer I was very happy to perform the *alārippu*.] என்னா அந்த அலாரிப்ப அப்பிடியே எடுத்து பண்ண சொன்னாங்க. [They {director/writer} told me to take the *alārippu* and perform it as it is!] அதை செய்யறதில் எனக்கு ஒண்ணும் கஷ்டம் தெரீயலை. [I did not find any difficulty in doing that.] எனக்கு ரொம்ப புடிச்சு போயீடுத்து. [I really loved doing it.] அலாரிப்பு என்பது தெலுங்கு வார்த்தையில் இருந்து தான் வந்தீருக்கு. [The word *alārippu* has originated from the Telugu only.] பூ அலற்றதாம், அலரிம்பு. [It seems the bud is flowering, *alariṃpu* {shows gesture}.] மொதல்ல அதுதானே வழிகாட்டறது, [Isn't this the first guiding light.] Invocation item.

03:14 Author: Why did they include the *alārippu* item in the movie? Was it because your character was dignified and poised in the movie?

03:25 Vyjayanthimala: During my era, all my dances were based on classical, or folk, because they are rich in culture. That is why I was the first South Indian to become an 'all India dancer', the first superstar.

03:38 Author: That's true.

03:40 Vyjayanthimala: ஏன்னா அந்த மாதிரி dances நார்துல அவா பார்த்ததே கிடையாது. [Because they have never seen such type of dances in the north {North India}.] அவாளுக்கு முத்திரை கிடையாது, footwork கிடையாது, facial

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[15] Refer glossary or chapter two, section 3.1 for details on *alārippu.*

expressions கிடையாது. [They {North Indians} have no hand gestures, no footwork, no facial expressions.] அதெல்லாம் பரதநாட்டியம்ல இருந்ததொடு, [Not only that, since they were Bharatanāṭyam,] my dances became very popular. எனக்கு இந்த [For me, this] Bharatanāṭyam base இருந்ததொடு, [since I had] it helped me with all the film dances. And film dances also had a classical touch at that time. My dance had typical *mudrās*[16], typical footwork, typical gestures. அந்த படதில அவங்க அலாரிப்பு choose பண்ணாங்க, ஏனாக்கா, [They {director/writer} chose *alārippu* in that movie because] she {the character} is a dancer from South India. So, they said, being a classical dancer, why not we start with the *alārippu* and I was more than happy. And that's how *alārippu* got introduced into the movie.

04:54 **Vyjayanthimala:** நீ அந்த அலாரிப்பு பார்த்திருக்கியா? [Have you seen that *alārippu*? {To Gayathri. she smiles}]

04:58 **Gayathri:** ஆம். பார்த்திருக்கேன். என்ன speed, என்ன perfection, especially அந்த மண்டி அடவுல. [Yes, I have seen. What speed! What perfection! Especially in the *maṇḍi aḍavu*[17]]

05:13 **Author:** அதுல innovations இருந்தது. மத்திய காலத்துல, இப்படி பண்றதுக்கு பதில இப்படி பண்ணேள்[18]. [There were some innovations in that *alārippu*. In the *madhya kāla*[19]. You did this {demonstrates diagonal movements}, instead of that {demonstrates straight movements}]

05:24 **Vyjayanthimala:** இந்த மாதிரி உண்டு. [This kind of step exists.] இது ஜதீஸ்வரத்தில் வரும் சாதாரணமா. [This {step} usually comes in *jatisvaram*[20] itself.] இது அலாரிப்புல இருந்ததா? [Was it there in the *alārippu?*] நான் சேர்த்துண்ட்ருபேன். [I might have used it {she laughs}.]

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[16] Hand gestures

[17] Refer chapter two, section 2.1.1 for details on this *aḍavu.*

[18] I was demonstrating the step as I was asking the question. This is addressed in the analysis section.

[19] Medium tempo

[20] Refer chapter three for more details on *jatisvaram.*

05:48 Author: Stage–ல perform பண்நதுக்கும் கெமராக்கு முன்னாடி பண்நதுக்கும் என்ன வித்தியாசம் இருந்தது உங்களுக்கு. [What were the differences you faced when performing on–stage versus performing in front of the camera?]

05:55 Vyjayanthimala: Stage–ல retake ங்கறத கிடையாதே. [There is no retake on stage.] சினிமால என்ன mistake ஆனாலும் retake option இருக்கு. [In movies, whatever mistake happens, there is an option of retake.] இப்ப அது கூட இல்லை, [Now, that doesn't exist] because of modern technology. Retake–ஏ வேண்டாம். அங்கங்க cut பண்ணி they edit. [Retake is not required at all. They just cut it here and there.] And sleek–ஆ பண்ணிடறா. [And they make it sleek.] நாங்க 10 தடவை, 15 தடவை, எவ்வளவு தடவை ஆனாலும் பண்ணிண்டே இருப்போம். [On the other hand, we would continue performing even if it takes 10 times or 15 times or even more than that.] Not that it happened to me, but that was the case. அலாரிப்புக்கு [for the *alārippu*] there were two cameras. They {cameramen} used to tell me the position and I danced accordingly. அந்த diagonal movements–ம், அந்த camera place பண்ண காரணத்துனால பண்ணேன். [We did those diagonal movements/steps {the diagonal movements that I demonstrated} because the camera was located there.[21]] Steps எல்லாம் எப்பவும் பண்ற மாதிரி தான் பண்ணேன். [But I performed all the steps in the way I always do it.]

07:08 Author: அந்த சமயதுல, சினிமால, நீருத்தா based items prefer பண்ணாலா because of the dynamism? Instead of அபிநயா? [During that time in cinema, did they prefer using *nṛtta* based items instead of *abhinaya* based items because *nṛtta* looked more dynamic?]

08:18 Vyjayanthimala: இல்ல. நான் நிறைய சிருங்கார பாட்டுகு பண்ணிருக்கேன். [No, I have performed a lot for *śṛṅgāra*[22] songs.] I was known as "twinkle toes", because all my films were known for my dances. அப்படி இருக்கும் போது, தேவதாஸ்-னு ஒரு படம் வந்தது. [At that time, a movie called *Devdas* came

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[21] She meant she did those movements/steps in a diagonal in order to face the camera as she performed.

[22] Emotion of love. This is expressed in items focused on *abhinaya*.

out.] அந்த தேவதாஸங்கற படத்துல தான் எனக்கு ஒரு transformation கிடைச்சது. [In that movie *Devadas*, I got a transformation.] ஏன்னா, அவ {the character} அதுல ஒரு dancing girl–ஆ இருந்துட்டு, அவலோட life–ஏ change ஆயிடுறது. [Because in that movie, the character's life changes even though she is a dancing girl[23].] Then, she becomes a very noble, pious and a good lady. She loves Devdas.[24] She is all giving but makes no demands because she knows he loves Parvati. ஆனா அவ ஒண்ணும் கேக்கறதில்ல. [But, she {chandramukhi} does not ask for anything.] Serve பண்றா. [She serves.] அதுல, [In that,] she gets pleasure. That film got released. My character was that of a dancing girl, a prostitute. அதுல திலிப் குமார் ஒரு பெரிய நடிகன். [In that {in the movie}, Dilip kumar was a big actor]. எனக்கு ஒரே பயம், நான் எப்படி perform பண்னப்போறேன்னு. [I was very scared about how I would perform.] Acting–ல அந்த level க்கு வரணமே அப்படின்னு practice பண்ணேன். [I used to practice hoping I should match his level in acting.] He was very cooperative. Director was an outstanding director, Bimal Roy. அவர் என்ன போய்ஜயன்தினு தான் கூப்பிடுவார். [He used to call me Boyjayanthi.] அந்த film release ஆனத்துகுப்புறம், [After the film got released,] she has acted so well, அப்படின்னு வந்துடுத்து. [it {news} came out] அதுக்குப்புறந்தான், நியு டெல்லி, சாதனா எல்லாம் வந்தது. [Only after that, movies like *New Delhi, Ladki, Sadhna* released.] *"Filmfare"* awards உம் கிடைச்சது. [I got *"Filmfare"* awards too.] Then, I was known to be a very fine actor.

11:00 **Author:** இந்த movie, New Delhi–ல, நட்டுவனார் முத்துஸ்வாமி பிள்ளை தான் dance director இல்லையா? [In this movie *New Delhi,* Muthuswami Pillai was the dance director, correct?] What was his role during the shoot?

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[23] Here she refers to the dancing girl in the negative sense. A dancing girl of the early 20th century (like a prostitute).

[24] Refer chapter four, section 4.4.2 for details on the storyline of *Devdas* (also referred to as *Devadasu* in Telugu).

11:13   **Vyjayanthimala:** அவர் வந்து record பண்ணி கொடுத்தாரு. [He came and recorded it {recorded the audio} for me.] அவர் இருந்தாரு set–ல. [He was there in the sets.] நான் ஆடினேன். [I danced.] அப்படி ஒண்ணும் corrections எல்லாம் இருக்கல. [There were no corrections at all.] நான் பண்றது சரியா இருந்தது. [What I did was fine.] I did what I already knew.

11:39   **Author:** வழுவூரார் ஓட பாணிக்கும் வாத்தியார் தண்டாயுதாபாணி பாணிக்கும் நிறைய வித்தியாசம் இருக்கு இல்லையா? [Isn't there a lot of difference in the dancing styles of Vazhuvoorar and Dandayudhapani Pillai?]

11:42   **Vyjayanthimala:** நான் வழுவூரார் ஓட பாணிக்கே போகமாட்டோன். [I will never go to Vazhuvoor *bāṇi*[25].] அவர விட்டுட்டு தான் நான் தண்டாயுதபாணி பிள்ளை கிட்ட ஆரம்பத்திலிருந்து, தையா தைய்லிருந்து ஆரம்பித்தேன். [I left him {Vazhuvurar} and started learning from Danyayudhapani Pillai from the beginning, from '*taiyatai*'[26].] எனக்கு அந்த வழி அவ்வளவு பொருத்தமா இல்லை. [For me, that style {Vazhuvoor's} was not very suitable.] எனக்கு அதுல தொடர்ந்து பண்ணணுங்கற விருப்பமும் இல்லை. [I did not feel like continuing with that style {Vazhuvoor's}.] எனக்கு வேற பாணில பண்ணணுனு இருந்தது. [I wanted to dance in some other style.] எப்போ நான் பந்தநல்லூர் ஜெயலஷ்மி ஆடநத சின்ன வயசில பார்தெனோ, அப்ப மீனாஷி சுந்தரம் பிள்ளை நட்டுவாங்கம் பண்ணார், [When I saw Pandanallur Jayalakshmi perform when I was young, Meenakshisundaram Pillai did the *naṭṭuvāngam*.] அப்ப நான் சின்னவ. [That time I was young.] பார்த்தஉடனேயே நான் அவ்வளவு impress ஆயிட்டேன். [I was so impressed after seeing it.] ஆடினா அப்படி ஆடணும்ங்கற ஆசை இருந்தது. [My wish was that if I danced, I should dance like that.] இந்த வழுவூரார் ஓட வழவழ கொழகொழ style–ஏ எனக்கு வேண்டாம். [I do not want this Vazhuvoor's unclear and loose style.] தண்டாயுதபாணி பிள்ளை கலாஷேத்ரால பாடப்போனாரு. [Dandayudhapani

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[25] Refer glossary for details on *bāṇi*.

[26] '*taiyatai*' is the *sollukaṭṭu* for the first *aḍavu* in Bharatanāṭyam. The first step that is taught by the dance teacher to his/her student.

Pillai went to Kalakshetra to sing.] அப்போ அவர் தாத்தா கிட்டஇர்ந்து நன்னா நட்டுவாங்கம் படிச்சுண்டுடாரு. [At that time, he learnt *naṭṭuvāngam* from his grandfather.] இப்ப நான் பண்றது எல்லாமே அவங்க பாணி தான். [Today, whatever I do is in his style only.] எங்க தாத்தா சொல்லி அவர் கிட்ட ஆரம்பிச்சேன். [I started learning from him after my grandfather's bidding.] தையா தையில் இருந்து ஆரம்பிச்சேன். [I started from '*taiyatai*'.] வழுவூரார் பாணிஅ complete-ஆ விலக்கணும். [I wanted to completely eliminate Vazhuvoor's style {in my dance}.] அந்த பாணி வரக்கூடாதுன்னு பண்னிண்டே இருப்பேன். [I used to keep practicing so that {Vazhuvoor's} style doesn't come back.] சிரதையா இருந்து படிச்சுண்ணுட்டேன். [I was very sincere in learning.] அந்த காலதுல, 72 அடவு. [In those days, there were 72 *aḍavus*.] தையா தைய், தத்தை தாஹா, தாதைதைதா, அத்தனை அடவையும் படிச்சுண்டேன். [I learnt all the *aḍavus* like *taiyātai, tātaitaitā, tataitāhā.*[27]] அதுக்கப்புறந்தான் எனக்கு அலாரிப்பே சொல்லிகொடுதாரு. [Only after that, did he {Dandayudhapani Pillai} teach me *alārippu*.] அவர் compose பன்ன ஐதி, வர்ணம், சப்தம் அத மட்டும் தான் ஆடணம். [I must dance only those *jati, varṇam, śabdam* composed by him {Dandayudhapani Pillai}.] பழசெல்லாம் ஆடக்கூடாது. [{I} must not dance the old ones {Vazhuvurar's}.] அப்புறம் கொஞ்சம் நாள்ல அவர் இறந்துடார். [Then he died after a few years.] அப்புறம், கிட்டப்பா பிள்ளை வந்தார். [Then Kittapa Pillai came.] நான அடவுகள் எல்லாம் கத்துக்கல அவர்கிட்ட. [I did not learn the *aḍavus* from him [{Kittapa Pillai}.] ஏன்னா அதே வழிதானே. [Because it was the same style.] நான் பண்ணது எல்லாமே அவர் சரின்னுட்டார். [Whatever I danced, he {Kittapa Pillai} said it was correct.] தண்டாயுதபாணி பிள்ளை எல்லா அடவயும் நின்னு ஆடி காட்டுவாரு. [Dandayudapani used to demonstrate all the *aḍavus* {while teaching}.] நாட்டுன்னா இப்படி தான் நாட்டணும், குத்தன்னா இப்படி தான் குத்தணும், அவ்வளவு strict அவர். [He

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[27] She names the *aḍavus* with their respective *sollukaṭṭus*. Refer chapter two, section 2.1.1 for more details on this.

{Dandayudhapani Pillai} was so strict that, *nāṭṭu* must be done this way, *kuṭṭu* must be done this way. {he used to stress on the way the *aḍavus* are performed}] அதுக்கப்பறம் நாங்க நாட்டிய நாடகமெல்லாம் பண்ண ஆரம்பிசோம். [Afterwards, {after Kittapa Pillai entered the scene}, we started doing dance dramas.] எனக்கு அதுல பாவத்துலயும் கஷ்டம் இருக்கலை, ஆட்டத்திலயும் எனக்கு இருக்கலை. [I did not find emoting difficult nor the dance.] So, everything was easy for me.

15:26 **Author:** அந்த அலாரிப்புல நீங்க normal stage–ல ஆடறமாதிரி தானே பரதநாட்டியம் costume போட்டுண்டோள்? [For this *alārippu,* did you wear a normal Bharatanāṭyam costume that you usually wear for stage performances?]

15:35 **Vyjayanthimala:** ஆமாம். [Yes.]

15:37 **Author:** The backdrop was like a temple. Who decides that?

15:42   **Vyjayanthimala:** The art director decides. Knowing that it was an ancient Bharatanāṭyam number they wanted to give that kind of a backdrop to go with the dance.

15:55   **Author:** யார் அந்த அலாரிப்புக்கு பாடினா? [Who sang for the *alārippu*?]

15:58 **Vyjayanthimala**: லதா தான் என்னோட நிறைய dance க்கு பாடிருக்கா. [Lata Mangeshkar has sung for many of my dances.] லதாவா தான் இருக்கும். [It must be Lata.] சொல் எல்லாம் வாத்தியார் பண்ணியிருப்பார். [*Vādyār* {the dance director, Muthuswami Pillai} might have done the *solllu* {*sollukaṭṭus* or the mnemonic syllables}]

16:40 **Author:** Did you do your choreographies for your movies?

16:48   **Vyjayanthimala:** No no. Only the dance director. Since it was an *alārippu* I already knew that. Otherwise we had Hiralal, Sohanlal, Gopikrishna. At that time Sarojkhan was a standby {she laughs}. If there are any changes that I wanted to do in my way, I used to do that.

17:40 **Author:** How was the public reaction to these traditional Bharatanāṭyam items?

17:48 **Vyjayanthimala:** Oh! Tremendous!

17:54   **Author**: Stage–க்கு choreograph பண்றதும் movies–க்கு choreograph பண்றதும் வேற வேற விதமா நட்டுவனார்கள் பண்ணுவாளா? [Do the *naṭṭuvānārs* choreograph differently for the stage and for the movies?]

18:16   **Vyjayanthimala**: அவா dance–அ முதல்ல set–up பண்ணிடுவா. [They {the *naṭṭuvānārs*} first choreograph the dance] அதுல எந்த difference உம் இல்லை. [There is no difference in that.] Camera man அதைப்பார்ப்பா. [The camera man view the dance.] அப்புறம் camera எப்படி position பண்றதுங்கறது camera man decide பண்ணுவா. [How to position the camera, the cameramen decide.] அவாளுக்காக நாங்க dance–அ மாத்திக்க மாட்டோம். [We don't change our dance for the sake of the cameramen.] Positions எல்லாம் மாறும். ஆனா movements மாறாது. [{Only} the positions change, the movements don't change.]

18:40   **Author**: Your *tillāna* in the movie *Penn*. Was it choreographed and composed by *Vādyār* Dandayudhapani Pillai?

18:50   **Vyjayanthimala**: Yes, it was choreographed by him.

19:07   **Author**: Let me play the *alārippu* and the *tillāna* for you. {she listens and watches}.

19:42   **Vyjayanthimala**: This is not by Latha. Some South Indian girl. Latha doesn't open her mouth so much when she sings. Can't believe it's been so many years. {she smiles}

23:50   **Vyjayanthimala**: நான் பரதநாட்டியம் பண்ணது எல்லாமே நல்ல classical *rāgas*–ல. [All the Bharatanāṭyam pieces I have performed were in very good classical *rāgas*] I have always loved the classical compositions that I danced. Shall I sing one now?

24:03   **Author**: Yes, of course.

She sings a Hindi song for about 2 minutes. "*jo… jo... naṇdatalālā…*". Then, another one in *bairavi rāga, "murali bainu gaiyī…"*

Vyjayanthimala wished me good luck. I took her blessings by prostrating at her feet. The interview was effective and I left with a warm heart.

– end of the interview –

5.2 Analysis of *tillāna* from *Chori Chori* (1956)

The *tillāna* clip (*Chori Chori* 1956: 00:39:38–00:42:23) is extracted from the movie and is annotated. This film clip that is attached attached (00:00–04:36) will act as a guide for the forthcoming explanations. At the beginning, the performance brings into view an auditorium filled with spectators, a stage covered in drapes, the echoing sound of bells and conch. Kamala stands to our right on the stage as the drapes are swiftly unwrapped. She is in a striking sculpturesque pose, and her hand is gestured like holding a *vīṇā*. There is a customary Naṭarāja[28] in the center of the stage which has lights lit around it. A combination of light and smoke from below emphasizes the statue. The backdrop has two statues, Lord Śiva (on the left) and Lord Viṣṇu (on the right). The sides are decked with four statues of devotees in *añjali hasta*. There are two large lamps on either side of the Naṭarāja. The orchestra is sitting on both sides of the dancer. Surprisingly it is an all–women orchestra which is uncommon for a typical live performance on stage.[29] The *mṛidaṅgist* and *vīṇā* players are sitting on the left, while the singer and the flute player are seated on the right of the stage. They are gorgeously dressed in sarees. The checkered floor of the stage has a large flower in the center. The stage is brightly lit with an additional spotlight on the side. Following the bells and the conch, the *vīṇā* starts playing, as Kamala and the picturesque stage comes into view (Figure 4.2).

Next, the camera shifts to focus on Suman (Pran). He is sitting in the first row eagerly waiting to watch the performance. He wears a mischevious smile on his face. The camera swings back and zooms into the Naṭarāja, as it slowly lights up. Then it travels back to bring Kamala and the *vīṇā* player into view. This is striking, as the music involves the *vīṇā* playing the *hindoḷaṃ rāga* for the stunning pose by Kamala. Kamala looks as delightful as ever wearing the pajama costume.[30] The front fan on the pant and the *tāvani* belongs to a darker shade with silk border. Her blouse appears to be of the brocade material. The pant looks bright with a lot of appended silk. She is wearing the *salaṅgai* on the pant, which is a feature that is found commonly in Dandayudhapani

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[28] After the revival of Bharatanāṭyam, it became customary for dancers to have a statue of Naṭarāja placed on the stage while performing. This is mentioned in chapter 1, section 1.5.

[29] The orchestra for a Bharatanāṭyam recital usually has both male and female musicians. Even during the revival period, it would contain more men than women.

[30] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.4 and Figure 2.4, for details on costume, jewelry, and make–up for Bharatanāṭyam.

Pillai's style as seen in chapter 4. Her jewelry suite appears to be made of bright stones. She is wearing a single *chuṭṭi, jimikī, māṭal,* a closed neck *chōkar, māṅga hāram,* waist *odyāṇam,* gold bangles, and *salaṅgai.* Her hair is in a long plait with a *rakodi* circled with flowers. There are more flowers beneath the *rakodi*. Her plait is simple without any ornamentation. She wears simple make–up with a nose ring. She has the usual red paint on her hand and her feet (Figure 4.3). Overall, Kamala wears a typical post–revival Bharatanāṭyam costume.

Figure 5.5 The stage with Kamala in a sculpturesque pose from *Chori Chori*

(*Chori Chori* 1956: 00:39:38)

Figure 5.6 *Āhārya abhinaya* of Kamala in *tillāna* from *Chori Chori* (*Chori Chori* 1956: 00:40:13)
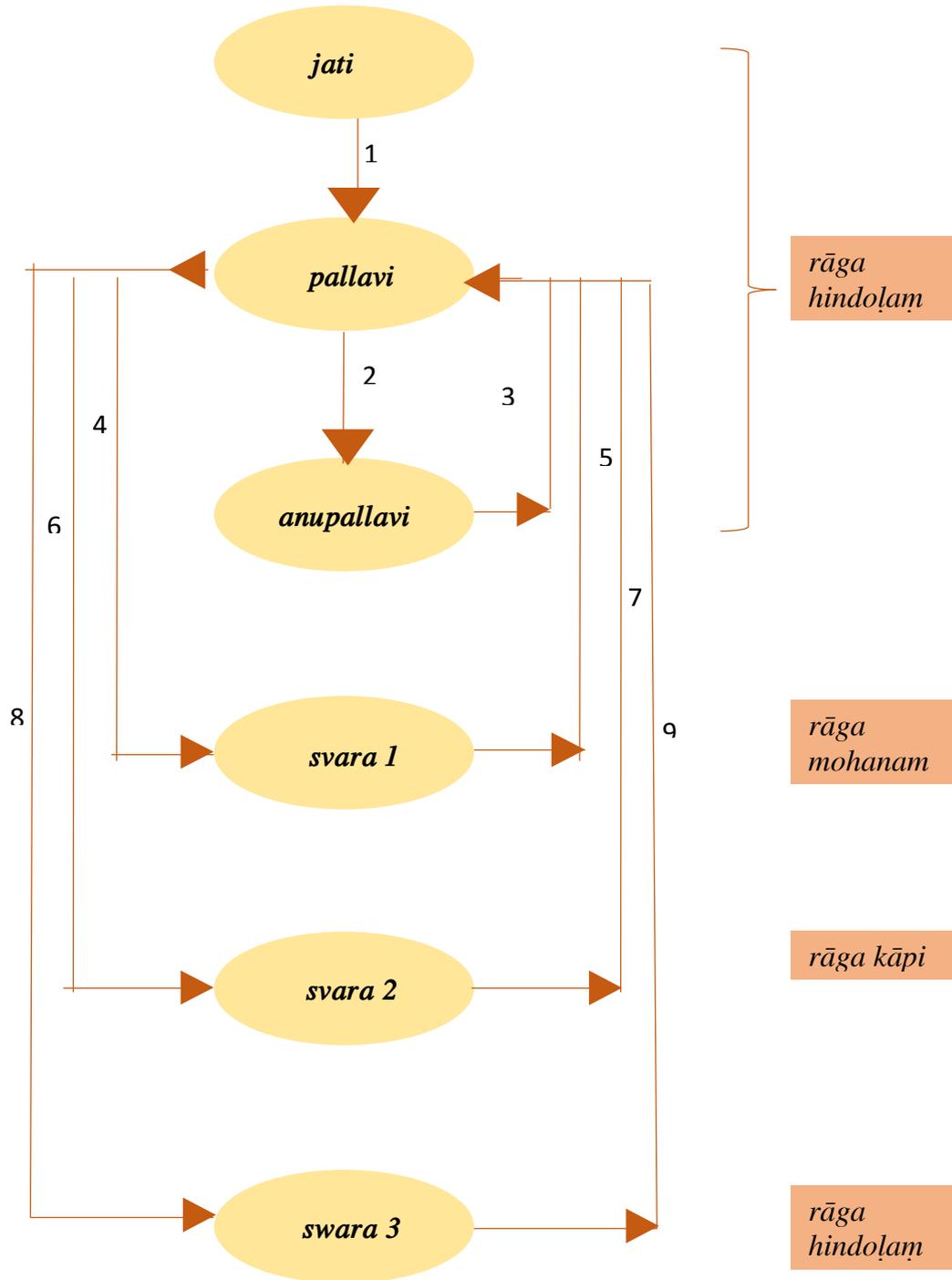
Figure 5.7 Structural flow of *hindoḷaṃ tillāna* (Figure: by author)

Figure 4.4 shows the structure of this *tillāna*. The *tillāna* starts with a *jati*[31], followed by the *pallavi* line. After many *kōrvais* in the *pallavi*, the song shifts to the *anupallavi*.

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[31] Theorotically, it cannot be called a *jati* because the *sollukaṭṭu* is not recited by the *naṭṭuvanār*. Nevertheless, I still call it a *jati* because *mṛidaṅgam* and *naṭṭuvāṅgam* are played, it has a *tirmāna*, and Kamala performs an *aḍavu* sequence.

Following a short *anupallavi,* the *tillāna* returns to the *pallavi*. Until this point it is in the *hindoḷaṃ rāga.* For the first *svara,* the song shifts to the *mohanam rāga.* The *tillāna* cycles back to the *pallavi,* and changes to the *kāpi rāga* for the second *svara.* The third *svara* that appears after cycling back to the *pallavi.* The third *svara* is in the *hindoḷaṃ rāga.* The song ends with fast sequences of the *pallavi* line. At the end of *svara 1 and svara* 2, there is a gradual shift of *rāga* to *hindoḷaṃ.*

The music notations[32] for the *tillāna* follow.[33] The entire *tillāna* is in the popular *ādi tāla* which is another name for *catuṣra jātī, tripuṭa tāla. Tripuṭa tāla* is made up of one *laghu* followed by two *dṛtams* (performed by one beat and one wave of the hand). Here, the *laghu* is in *catuṣra jātī. Catuṣra jātī* means, it has four rhythmic beats. Thus, every *tāla* has these four beats followed by two *dṛtams,* which make up another four beats; hence totaling to eight beats. In a *catuṣra gatī,* each one of these eight beats, in turn, have four internal beats (*mātrās*); hence totaling to thirty–two units for one *āvartana. Āvartana* is one complete cycle of an *ādi tāla* (*catuṣra jātī, triputa tāla*). The *laghu*, that has four beats (in total – sixteen internal beats), ends with the symbol |. The two *dṛtams* made up of four beats (in total – sixteen internal beats) mark the end of the *tāla* cycle and is denoted by the symbol ‖. Comma denotes the space of a note or the unavailability of lyric/note for an internal beat. Semicolon denotes the space of two notes or the unavailability of lyric/note for two internal beats. Hyphen indicates the splitting of the *svaras.* Underlines indicate that the *svaras* need to be sung faster within an internal beat. The music notations for the *pallavi* and *anupallavi* follow the lyrics of the *tillāna,* which are nothing but mneumonic syllables. The *svaras*[34] or the basic sol–fa syllables of Carnatic music are also used – S R G M P D N Ṡ.

S – note in the normal (middle) octave

Ṡ – note in the higher octave

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[32] Here, the notation system refers to the system of notating South Indian Carnatic music. This system is complex and demands an elaborate study of its own. Thus, I have utilized a basic form of Carnatic music notation to notate the *tillāna* and its *svaras.* I have followed the book *Gānāmrutha Bōdhini* by A.S. Panchāpakēsa Iyer (2014) for the music notations. Section 2.3.3 under chapter 2 gives a description on the vocabulary and notation system of South Indian Carnatic music. The works available in this regard are listed in 'Methodology' under section 2. Instruments like *vīṇā* and flute support these notations, meaning; when these intruments are played, they are mostly part of this notation.

[33] A more detailed explanation for music notations (especially for *ādi* tāla) is in chapter 2, section 2.3.3.

[34] The word *svara* refers to two things here – 1. The basic sol–fa syllables of Carnatic music are called *svaras*, 2. The permutation and combination of these sol–fa syllable is also called a *svara.*

Ṣ – note in the lower octave

The three *svaras* that form part of the structure of the *tillāna* are formed by permutations and combinations of these sol–fa syllables. The three *svaras* can also be called the three *caraṇams* of this *tillāna*. The third *svara* has melodic improvisations (*ālāpana*) for some *āvartanas*. The space between the notes carry no meaning.

– Music notations –

rāga: rāgamālikā, tāla: ādi (retta [double] kāla)

Pallavi: (*hindoḷaṃ rāga*)

1) Ṡ ; Ṡ	ND ND	M G M G	S , G Ṇ |
dhīm , dhī	*m, dhīm*	*, u da na*	*dhīm dhī ra* |
S , ;	; Ṇ S |	M G , S	G M D N ‖
nā , ;	*; nā dhṛ* |	*tha dhīm tha*	*na dhī ra nā* ‖
2) Ṡ ; Ṡ	ND ND	M G M G	S , G Ṇ |
dhīm , dhī	*m, dhīm*	*, u da na*	*dhīm dhī ra* |
S , ;	; Ṇ S |	M G , S	G M D N ‖
nā , ;	*; nā dhṛ* |	*tha dhīm tha*	*na dhī ra nā* ‖

Anupallavi: (*hindoḷaṃ rāga*)

G G G G	M M M M	N D , N	D N Ṡ Ṡ |
nā dhṛ thā ni	*tom dhṛ thā ni*	*ta nom tha*	*na tha thā ni* |
G G G G	M M M M |	N D , N	D N Ṡ Ṡ ‖
nā dhṛ thā ni	*tom dhṛ thā ni* |	*ta nom tha*	*na tha thā ni* ‖
Ṡ Ṁ Ġ Ġ	Ṡ Ġ N Ṡ	Ṡ N D–M	G M D N |
dhi tillāna	*dhṛ dhṛ thā ni*	*tha jha nu– tha*	*diṇ gi ṇa toṃ* |
Ṡ ; – S	G M D N |	Ṡ ; – S	G M D N ‖
dhīm , –tha	*diṇ gi ṇa toṃ* |	*dhīm , –tha*	*diṇ gi ṇa toṃ* ‖

(*dhīm dhīm*)

Svara 1: (*mohanam rāga*)

| P ; –P | ; –D P | D– G , P | G P D Ṡ ∣ |
| D , ; | ; ; ∣ | ; ; | ; ; ‖ |

(one *āvartana ālāpana*)

Ṡ, Ṡ, D; Ṡ	P;D P, GR	S ; RG	P;D G,PD ∣
Ṡ;Ṙ ;ĠṘ	D;Ṡ ; ṘṠ ∣	P;D ;ṠD	GPDṠ D,; ‖
P,DP GR– G,	P, D, – D, ṠD	PG– P , D , Ṡ ,	Ṙ,Ġ–Ṙ, Ġ–Ṙ , ∣
Ġ–Ṙ, Ġ–Ṡ,–Ṡ,	Ṙ–Ṡ,Ṙ–Ṡ,Ṙ–Ṡ ∣	,Ṙ–D, –[Ṡ,Ṡ–N	,N –
D,DMDN][35]‖			

(*dhīm dhīm*)

Svara 2: (*kāpi rāga*)

| Ṡ , Ṡ – N | , P– G M | M N P G | , R Ṇ S ∣ |
| G , ; | ; ; ∣ | ; ; | ; ; ‖ |

(one *āvartana ālāpana*)

PNṠṘṠ ; N	P;M G; R	S ; G	S;G ;M, ∣
P;M ;GM	N;P ;MP ∣	Ṡ;N ;PN	ṠṘ,N Ṡ,; ‖
PNPM G,	; RM	PṠNṠ P,	, M P N ∣
Ṡ;Ṙ Ṁ, ĠṘ	N; Ṡ Ṙ,ṠN ∣	Ṡ;P ;S,	;,[G ,MDN] ‖

(*dhīm dhīm*)

Svara 3: (*hindoḷaṃ rāga*)

Ṡ;N ṠĠṠN	D;N ṠĠṠN	DNṠN, DMG	MD,N Ṡ,; ∣
Ṡ;N ṠĠṠN	D;N ṠĠṠN ∣	DNṠN, DMG	MD,N Ṡ,; ‖[36]
N;D M,GM	D;M G,SG	M;G S, – SG	MDNṠ D,; ∣
N;D M,GM	D;M G,SG ∣	M;G S, – SG	MDNṠ D,; ‖[37]
ṠĠṠN D,ND	MDNṠ Ġ,;	ṠĠṠN D,ND	MDNṠ Ġ,; ∣

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[35] For the part in square brackets – the *rāga* is *hindoḷaṃ*.
[36] There is no vocal but only instruments for this half *āvartana*.
[37] Ibid.

Ṡ́ĠṀĠ Ṡ,DN	Ṡ́ĠṠN D,; │	Ṡ́ĠṀĠ Ṡ,DN	Ṡ́ĠṠN D,; ‖

(From here, a single line denotes one *āvartana* – single *kāla*)

MNDM G,;	MNDM G,; [38] │	GSGM D,; │	GSGM D,; [39] ‖
GMDM GS–GM	DNṠN DMDN– │	Ṡ́ĠṠ– Ṡ́ĠṠ– Ṡ́Ġ │	Ṡ– Ṡ́ĠṠ ṠNND ‖
NṠN– DND– NṠ	N– DND NDDM │	GMGMGMGM │	NṠ NṠ NṠ NṠ ‖
GMGM NṠNṠ	Ġ,Ġ , Ṡ;Ġ │	Ṡ;Ṡ ĠṠND │	N,;– Ṡ,Ṡ, ‖
N;Ṡ D;M	NDMG M,;– │	D,D, M;G │	S; S GMDN ‖

(dhīm dhīm)

– end of music notations –

The above notations guide in comprehending the music. However, for analysing the *aḍavus* of the dancer, it is necessary to have the *sollukaṭṭu* notation in the framework of *ādi tāla.* These *sollukaṭṭu* (rhythmic mnemonics) are according to the movements of the feet, *mṛidaṅgam,* and *naṭṭuvangam.*[40] The *sollukaṭṭu* patterns for each *aḍavu* are explained in chapter 2, section 2.1.1. It is important to note that these *sollukaṭṭus* are not recited in the film clip. Based on the *aḍavus* performed by Kamala, *sollukaṭṭu* notations are given. Every *āvartana* in this notation is numbered. The *tāla* is set in single *kāla* of the *ādi tāla* for ease of notating. The letter *A* denotes *āvartana,* and the number next to it denotes the number of the *āvartana.* This identification acts as a reference while explaining *nṛtta/aḍavus.* The total sums upto sixty–six *āvartanas.* For *aḍavus* that are not part of the classification discussed in chapter 2, the *sollukaṭṭus* have been formulated from my own experiences.[41] The annotations for the *tillāna* available as part of the

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[38] There is no vocal but only instruments for this quarter *āvartana.*

[39] Ibid.

[40] Music notations for *nṛtta* or rhythmic notations are nothing but the *sollukaṭṭu* used for the *aḍavus,* or rather the movements of the feet of the dancer. Thus, it is totally based on the rhythmic aspect. It is important to note that the *sollukaṭṭu* is not recited in this film clip. *Mṛidaṅgam* and *naṭṭuvāṅgam* support these notations, meaning; when they are played, they come as part of this notation.

[41] In practice, there are more *sollukaṭṭus* used as part of Bharatanāṭyam than the ones discussed in chapter 2 under classification of *aḍavus.* Hence, I have appropriately added them based on my experience.

attached film clips mention the structural elements, the 'number of the *āvartana'* and the *aḍavus*.[42]

– notations for *nṛtta* –

jati

A1: tai , , ,   , , tai ,   , , , ,   tai , , , |

     tai , tai ,   di di tai , | di di tai ,   di di tai , ‖

A2: tai , tai ,   di di tai ,   ta , , ,   tai , tai , |

     di di tai ,   ta , , , | tai , tai ,   di di tai , ‖

 pallavi

A3: tai , yā ,   tai , yā ,   tai , yā ,   tai , yā , |

     tai , yā ,   tai , yā , | tai , yā ,   tai , yā , ‖

A4: tai , yā ,   tai , yā ,   tai , yā ,   tai , yā , |

     tai , yā ,   tai , yā , | tai , yā ,   tai , yā , ‖

A5: ta , ki ,   ṭa , , ,   , , , ,   ta , ki , |

     ṭa , , ,   , , , , | , , , ,   , , , , ‖

A6: di , di ,   tai , , ,   di , di ,   tai , , , |

     di , di ,   tai , , , | di , di ,   tai , , , ‖

A7: ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa , |

     ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa , | ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa , ‖

A8: ta , , ,   dha , lāṃ gu   , tai , ,   di di tai , |

[42] Suggestion: Reading of the *nṛtta/aḍavu* analysis can be done in conjuction with the video annotations.

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, tai , , di di tai , | , tai , , di di tai , ‖

A9: dha , lāṃ gu , , dha , lāṃ gu , , dha , lāṃ gu |

, , dha , lāṃ gu , , | tai , tai , di di tai , ‖

A10: tā , , , , , , , ta , ka , di , mī , |

ta , ka , di , mī , | ta , ka , di , mī , ‖

A11: ta , tai , tā , hā , tai , , , , , , , |

tai , ha , tai , hi , | tai , ha , tai , hi , ‖

A12: ta , tai , tā , hā , tai , , , , , , , |

tai , ha , tai , hi , | tai , ha , tai , hi , ‖

A13: ta , ki , ṭa , ta , ki , ṭa , ta , ki , |

ṭa , ta , ki , ṭa , | ta , ki , ṭa , ta , ‖

A14: ki , ṭa , ta , ki , ṭa , ta , ki , ṭa , |

tai , ha , tai , hī , | tai , ha , tai , hī , ‖

A15: dha , lāṃ gu , dha , lāṃ gu , tai , tai , di di |

tai , , , dha , lāṃ gu | , dha , lāṃ gu , tai , ‖

A16: tai , di di tai , , , ta , ki , ṭa , ta , |

ki , ṭa , ta , ki , | ṭa , tai , di di tai , ‖

A17: dha , lāṃ gu , , dha , lāṃ gu , , dha , lāṃ gu |

, , dha , lāṃ gu , , | tai , tai , di di tai , ‖

A18: tā , , , , , , , tai , yā , tai , yā , |

tai , yā , tai , yā , | tai , yā , tai , yā , ‖

anupallavi

A19: ta , tai ,   tā , hā ,   di , tai ,   tā , hā , |

        tai , ha ,   tai , hi , | tai , hi ,   tai , hi , ‖

A20: ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa , |

        ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa , | ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa , ‖

A21: tai , yā ,   tai , hī ,   tai , yā ,   tai , hī , |

        tai , tai ,   tai , ha , | tai , hi ,   tai , ha , ‖

A22: dha , lāṃ gu   tai , ha ,   tai , hi ,   tai , ha , |

        dha , lāṃ gu   tai , ha , | tai , hi ,   tai , ha , ‖

pallavi

A23: dha , lāṃ gu   , , dha ,   lāṃ gu , ,   dha , lāṃ gu |

        , , dha ,   lāṃ gu , , | tai , tai ,   di di tai , ‖

A24: tā , , ,   , , , ,   tai , yā ,   tai , yā , |

        tai , yā ,   tai , yā , | tai , yā ,   tai , yā , ‖

A25: tai , yā ,   tai , yā ,   tai , yā ,   tai , yā , |

        tai , yā ,   tai , yā , | tai , yā ,   tai , yā , ‖

A26: tai , tai ,   di di tai ,   tai , , ,   tai , tai , |

        di di tai ,   tai , , , | tai , tai ,   di di tai , ‖

svara 1

A27: ta , tai ,   tāṃ , , ,   tai , , ,   , , , , |

        ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa , | tām , , ,   , , , ,   ‖

A28: tai , , ,   yā , , ,   tai , , ,   yā , , , |

    tai , , ,   yā , , , | tai , , ,   yā , , ,   ‖

A29: tai , , ,   yā , , ,   tai , , ,   yā , , , |

    tai , , ,   yā , , , | tai , , ,   yā , , ,   ‖

A30: tai , tai ,   di di tai ,   tai , , ,   tai , tai , |

    di di tai ,   tai , , , | tai , tai ,   di di tai ,   ‖

 A31: tai , yuṃ ,   ta , tā ,   tai , , ,   ha , , , |

    tai , , ,   dha , lāṃ gu | , , dha ,   lāṃ gu , ,   ‖

A32: tai , ha ,   tai , hi ,   tai , ha ,   tai , hi , |

    tai , ha ,   tai , hi , | tai , tai ,   tāṃ , , ,   ‖

A33: ta , ki ,   ṭa , ta ,   ki , ṭa ,   ta , ki , |

    ṭa , ta ,   ki , ṭa , | tai yā tai yā   tai yā tai yā   ‖

A34: tāṃ , , , tai yā tai yā   tai yā tai yā   tāṃ , , , |

    tai ha tai hi tāṃ , , , | ta ki ṭa ,   tāṃ , , ,   ‖

pallavi

A35: tai , , ,   ha , , ,   tai , , ,   hi , , , |

    tai , , ,   ha , , , | tai , , ,   hi , , ,   ‖

A36: tai , tai ,   di di tai ,   tai , , ,   tai , tai , |

    di di tai ,   tai , , , | tai , tai ,   di di tai ,   ‖

svara 2

A37: tai , , ,   yuṃ , , ,   ta , , ,   tā , , , |

tai   ,   ,   ,   yuṃ   ,   ,   , | tā   ,   ,   ,   hā   ,   ,   ,   ‖

A38: tai   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   yā   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   , |

      tai   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   , | yā   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ‖

A39: tai   ,   yuṃ   ,   ta   ,   tā   ,   tai   ,   yuṃ   ,   tā   ,   hā   , |

      tai   ,   yuṃ   ,   ta   ,   tā   , | tai   ,   yuṃ   ,   tā   ,   hā   ,   ‖

A40: tai   ,   di   di   tai   ,   tai   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   tai   ,   di   di |

      tai   ,   tai   ,   ,   ,   ,   , | tai   ,   di   di   tai   ,   ,   ,   ‖

A41: tai   ,   ha   ,   tai   ,   hi   ,   tai   ,   ha   ,   tai   ,   hi   , |

      tā   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   , | tai   ,   ,   ,   yā   ,   ,   ,   ‖

A42: tai   ,   ha   ,   tai   ,   hi   ,   tai   ,   ha   ,   tai   ,   hi   , |

      tai   ,   ha   ,   tai   ,   hi   , | tai   ,   tai   ,   tāṃ   ,   ,   ,   ‖

A43: ta   ,   ki   ,   ṭa   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   , |

      ta   ,   ki   ,   ṭa   ,   ,   , | ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ,   ‖

A44: tai   ,   ha   ,   tai   ,   hi   ,   tai   ,   ha   ,   tai   ,   hi   , |

      tai   ,   ,   tai   ,   ,   tāṃ   , | ,   tai   ,   di   ,   di   ,   tai   ‖

pallavi

A45: tai   ,   yuṃ   ,   ta   ,   tā   ,   tai   ,   yuṃ   ,   tā   ,   hā   , |

      tai   ,   yuṃ   ,   ta   ,   tā   , | tai   ,   yuṃ   ,   tā   ,   hā   ,   ‖

A46: tai   ,   yuṃ   ,   ta   ,   tā   ,   tai   ,   yuṃ   ,   tā   ,   hā   , |

      tai   ,   yuṃ   ,   ta   ,   tā   , | tai   ,   yuṃ   ,   tā   ,   hā   ,   ‖

A47: tai   ,   yuṃ   ,   ta   ,   tā   ,   tai   ,   yuṃ   ,   tā   ,   hā   , |

     tai , yuṃ ,   ta , tā , | tai , yuṃ ,   tā , hā , ‖

A48: tai , tai ,   di di tai ,   tai , , ,   tai , tai , |

     di di tai ,   tai , , , | tai , tai ,   di di tai , ‖

svara 3

*A49: (*singer and *vīṇā* player appear in the film clip)

A50: tai , yuṃ ,   ta , tā ,   tai , yuṃ ,   tā , hā , |

     tai , yuṃ ,   ta , tā , | tai , tai ,   tā , , , ‖

A51: (mṛidaṅgist and flute player appear in the film clip*)*

A52: di , tai ,   di , tai ,   di , tai ,   di , tai , |

     di , tai ,   di , tai , | tai , tai ,   tā , , , ‖

*A53: (*Naṭarāja appears in the film clip*)*

     tai , yā ,   tai , yā , | tai , , ,   , , , , ‖

*A54: (*singer appears in the film clip*)*

     tai , yā ,   tai , yā , | tai , tai ,   tā , , , ‖

A55: (mṛidaṅgist appears*)*   *tai , tai ,   tā , , , |*

     (mṛidaṅgam appears*)*   *| tai , tai ,   tā , , , ‖*

A56: tai , ha ,   tai , hi ,   tai , ha ,   tai , hi , |

     ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa , | ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa , ‖

A57: ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa ,   ta ki ṭa , |

     tai ha tai hi   tai ha tai hi | tai ha tai hi   tai ha tai hi ‖

A58: tai , ha ,   tai , hi ,   tai , tai ,   tai , , , |

        ta tāṃ , ,   tai , di di | tai , tai ,   tai , tai ,   ‖

A59: tai , , ,   ta tāṃ , ,   tai , di di   tai , tai , |

     tai , tai ,   tai , , , | ta tāṃ , ,   di di tai ,   ‖

pallavi

A60: tai yā tai yā   tai yā tai yā   tai yā tai yā   tai yā tai yā |

     tai yā tai yā   tai yā tai yā | tai yā tai yā   tai yā tai yā   ‖

A61: tai yā tai yā   tai yā tai yā   tai yā tai yā   tai yā tai yā |

     tai yā tai yā   tai yā tai yā | tai yā tai yā   tai yā tai yā   ‖

A62: tai , yuṃ ,   ta , tā ,   tai , yuṃ ,   tā , hā , |

     tai , yuṃ ,   ta , tā , | tai , yuṃ ,   tā , hā ,   ‖

A63: tai , yuṃ ,   ta , tā ,   tai , yuṃ ,   tā , hā , |

     tai , yuṃ ,   ta , tā , | tai , yuṃ ,   tā , hā ,   ‖

A64: tai , , ,   , , , ,   , , , ,   , , , , |

     tai , tai ,   tāṃ , , , | tai , tai ,   di di tai , ‖

A65: tai , , ,   , , , ,   , , , ,   , , , , |

     tai , tai ,   tāṃ , , , | tai , tai ,   di di tai , ‖

A66: tai , , ,   tai , tai ,   di di tai ,   tai , , , |

     tai , tai ,   di di tai , | tai , , ,   , , , ,   ‖

– end of notations for *nṛtta* –

The dance starts with a quick–paced *jati* that lasts for two *āvartanas*. Kamala starts with *taṭṭaḍavus* moving to the center of the stage for the firm sound of the *mṛidaṅgam*. The

camera focusses specifically on the movement of her feet for this *aḍavu*. For the end or the *tirmāna, sutru aḍavus* are performed with her hands moving upwards from *alapadma* to *kaṭakāmukha hasta.* After every whirl, she pauses with a slight jerk, before she slides into the next one. This is typical of 'Kamala's style' of Bharatanāṭyam.

Immediately after the *jati tirmāna*[43], M.L. Vasanthakumari's powerful voice is heard singing the *pallavi.* One complete *pallavi* line/lyric (refer to music notations) lasts for two *āvartanas.* This line is sung six times with an instrumental insertion of the same tune after every two repetitions. Thus, the *pallavi* line repeats eight times, hence for sixteen *āvartanas.* Kamala does only *taṭṭaḍavus* for the first line lasting for two *āvartanas* (*A3, A4*). Her facial expressions and neck movements are closely focused. She bears a *tāmracūḍa hasta* near the chin with a *ḍolā hasta* on the other hand. Her eyes move brightly from side to side along with the *aṭṭamīs* (side to side neck movements). To give a sprightly start to the second *pallavi* repetition (*A5, A6*), she turns her head to the side. She energetically opens her hand with a grin on her face for the second line. Her usage of Vazhuvoor–style poses has already begun for this *tillāna.* The percussion, cymbals, and feet follow *tiṣra jātī* (3 beats – *ta ki ṭa*) with a definite pause in between, where she includes poses with *alapadma* and *ḍolā hasta.* She executes a distinct cross–leg for the first pose that is quite uncommon. The second *āvartana* for this line is decked with very prominent *mukhaja abhinaya* (facial expressions)*,* and *tirmāna aḍavus* (*di di tai*) with hands in the diagonal position. With respect to her Bharatanāṭyam posture, her upper body is leaning forward; that looks a bit unpleasant. Kamala continues with *taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavus, paical aḍavu,* and *tirmāna aḍavus* for the next instrumental *pallavi* line (*A7, A8*). Her shoulders, head, and eyes move in harmony with her feet for the *taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavus,* followed by a huge leap for the *paical aḍavu.* This line ends with sharp *tirmāna aḍavus* with the circular–type movement of the hand. Kamala springs from the left side of stage to the right side diagonally performing *paical aḍavus* for the next *pallavi* line (*A9, A10*), and stops precisely after a '*tai tai di di tai*' (*tirmāna aḍavu*). This precise stop is where it seems like she is saying 'here. saw this?!'. She continues to finish this line with *taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavus* in *catuṣra jātī* (*ta ka di mī*) with delightful *aṭṭamīs.* The choreography for this line is somewhat like an '*aruḍi*' (a small sequence of rhythmic

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[43] The ending of the *jati* is called a *jati tirmāna.*

ending phrase) that repeats itself many times later in the item. Side *kuṭṭaḍavus, kudiṭṭu* (jump) followed by a movement on toes with *tripatākā hasta* is executed for the next *pallavi* line (*A11, A12*). The *kudiṭṭu* is characterized by silence from the musical orchestra. The movement on her toes does not belong to the *aḍavu* vocabulary but appears to be a type of *cārī*[44] named *janitha*. A mirror of this sequence is followed for the second *āvartana*. The rhythm for the instrumental *pallavi* line that comes afterwards (*A13,* A14) has eight *tiśra jātīs* and two *catuśra jātīs*. Extremely agile, defined, and graceful *maṇḍi aḍavus, taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavus,* and *kudiṭṭumeṭṭaḍavus* are performed by Kamala. The seventh *pallavi* line (*A15, A16*) has a multifarious combination of quick and swift *paical aḍavus, maṇḍi aḍavu, sutru aḍavu,* and *tirmāna aḍavus.* The last line (*A17,* A18) is again a repeat of the 'aruḍi' sequence. With this the *pallavi* comes to an end.

The short and precise *anupallavi* (*A19*–A22) has just four *āvartanas.* With respect to music lyrics, the first *āvartana* repeats twice before the second, third, and fourth is sung. In terms of notation, the presence of *kuṭṭaḍavu* (*ta tai tā hā), sarukkal aḍavu* (*tai ha tai hi), maṇḍi aḍavus,* and a mix of *sutru aḍavus* and *paical aḍavus* is seen. The *anupallavi* starts smoothly with the camera focusing on the dancer's full body. Then, the camera zooms in to emphasize the facial expressions for *sarukkal aḍavu,* and later shifts to the backside of Kamala, bringing into view the audience in the film clip. The *sutru aḍavu* is done on her toes with *tripatākā hasta*. For the *kuṭṭaḍavu,* she does not adequately maintain the *araimaṇḍi* stance, but stands up a little. This could have been an innovation that she must have done with Vazhuvurar in her early years. Kamala's agility and dynamism are clearly seen from the way she does these *aḍavus* at such a fast pace. Nevertheless, in my opinion, they look a bit jerky.

The *anupallavi* ends with the song returning to the *pallavi* (*A23*–A26) for which Kamala performs the 'aruḍi'. The second part of the 'aruḍi', with *taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavus* and *aṭṭamīs* has been replaced by a very odd kind of dance movement on the floor (*A24*–A26). For me, this appears to be done to utilize the effects of the camera. The camera has shot the sequence from the top and circles along with the dancer. Kamala is sitting on the floor with her legs stretched. She rotates, keeping her body as the axis doing *alapadma* and

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[44] *Cārī* refers to movement of legs according to ancient texts like *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Vatsyayan 1968: 31; Ghosh 1951: 197–212)

kaṭakāmukha hasta in her hands. She suddenly jerks in the end with a whirl, following a *tirmāna aḍavu.*

The first *svara* in *mohanam rāga* goes on for eight *āvartanas* (*A27–A34*). The music notation specifies the octave notes, while the notations on *nṛtta* have the corresponding rhythm patterns and the *aḍavu sollukaṭṭu.* Kamala starts with a neat *kōrvai aḍavu* (*A27*) which by itself is a combination of many *aḍavus* (refer chapter 2). Subsequently, she does a walk which looks a bit jumpy relative to the 'classical walk' done in Bharatanāṭyam (*A28*). Her eyes constantly follow the camera as it moves at the back of the stage from one side to another. One of her hand is on her shoulders with the *mṛgaśīrṣa hasta* while the other moves inward to outward in the usual *alapadma* to *kaṭakāmukha* style. The camera shifts focus on Suman (actor Pran) for the next two *āvartanas* (*A29, A30*) which has the rhythm of *tirmāna aḍavus.* Suman is seen looking at another girl beside him. This must have been added to show his inferior character. For the next *āvartana* (*A31),* Kamala does a supple walk with *patākā hasta* subsequently after a complex *nāṭṭaḍavu.* The walk looks almost like a fluid pose. For the *āvartana* that follows (*A32),* she moves sideward doing *sarukkal aḍavu* with *patākā hasta* on both hands. Her lively facial expressions for every *aḍavu* unfailingly present. She continues doing *taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavus* on the sides lifting her hands in *alapadma.* Afterward, comes a series of very distinct dance movements (*A33, A34*). It looks like she is initially doing *taṭṭaḍavus* diagonally with *alapadma hasta.* Later, she does a Kathak[45] type of quick hand movement in *patākā hasta* and finishes with a quick turn. This does not belong to the traditional *aḍavu* vocabulary of Bharatanāṭyam that was discussed in chapter 2. Kamala must have made some innovations to suit the fast–paced music. This admittedly does not seem to be the work of the dance director, Dandayudhapani Pillai.

The song returns to the *pallavi (A35, A36*). She continues doing her innovative steps. In all her new steps, the feet movements somehow match with the *aḍavu* patterns. But she tries something different with her hand. In this *pallavi* sequence, she does *kudiṭṭu,* and then *sutru* with respect to her feet, but her hands are used differently. For the *sutru,* she takes her hand in an inverted *patākā hasta* to the top of her head. She could have learned

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[45] Kathak is a form of North Indian 'classical' dance characterised by quick turns and faced paced music.

to choreograph such new movements during her previous movie shoots with Vazhuvurar, as he was a man who encouraged creative ideas.

The melody for the second *svara* that lasts for eight *āvartanas* (A37–A44) is in *kāpi rāga.* Kamala starts with a side to side walk *(A37)*, holding the *alapadma* and *kaṭakāmukha hasta.* The movement is usually common in *varṇams.* The difference here is that Kamala is doing this in the standing posture, while the usual step done in *varṇams* has some *araimaṇḍi.* The second *āvartana* has a simple walk *(A38)*, but the highlight is her expression. It looks as though she is trying to explain what the *rāga* is saying, to the audience. She continues to do a *janitha cārī* with *alapadma hasta (A39).* She does a complete bend of her body. This kind of posture is generally uncommon for these steps. For the next *āvartana (A40),* she does whirling movements resembling Kathak.[46] These do not belong to the Bharatanāṭyam vocabulary. Following this, the quickly paced *svara* syllables are adorned with *sarukkal aḍavus, kudiṭṭumeṭṭaḍavus,* and a bold walk *(A41, A42).* This is followed by a leg lift (*vīsi aḍavu*) and a series of beautiful poses *(A43).* It is amazing to see how she is able to pause like a stone sculpture when dancing at such high paces. She concludes *(A44)* the *svara* with *kudiṭṭumeṭṭaḍavus, maṇḍi aḍavu,* and a *tirmāna aḍavu.* Almost every *aḍavu* or dance movement in this *svara* passage has some innovation and novelty. This innovation is done either with the feet or hand movements. Kamala's gait and expression at such fast speeds add an aspect of novelty to the *aḍavus.*

The song comes back to the *pallavi* line for the next four *āvartanas* (A45–A48). In this *pallavi,* Kamala is on a spree of assorted dance movements, that are remotely Bharatanāṭyam. This kind of movements is seen in other film dances of that period in Indian movies.[47] Nevertheless, it looks offbeat to include this in a 'traditional'[48] *tillāna* like this one. Kamala quickly moves back to get on her knees and bend the body backward. She starts doing a wavy movement with her hands. This is followed by

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[46] The whirling movements are very common in Kathak. They are called *chakkars.* The *hasta* used is usually *patākā* or *haṃsāsya.* (Kothari 1989: 83,93,94) The *sutru aḍavus* or the whirling movements in bharatnatyam usually use *alapadma* and *kaṭakāmukha hastas.*

[47] Some movements that are colloquially called 'filmy' have movements from other dance forms mixed and intermingled when choreographed for films. This was common in several dance sequences in early films. *Vanjikottai Valiban,* a 1958 movie has a famous dance sequence by Padmini and Vyjayanthimala. This contains similar movements as done by Kamala in the above *tillāna.*

[48] The word 'traditional' refers to the fact that the musicalities and the structure of the *tillāna* are as described in chapter 3.

whirling movements that do not appear like the customary *sutru aḍavus* of Bharatanāṭyam. Her hands are in a diagonal position after every rotation, while her body bends asymmetrically.

Immediately after, the *svara* in the *hindoḷaṃ rāga* begins and continues for eleven *āvartanas* (*A49–A59*). The first part of this *svara* is shown like a contest between the musical orchestra and the dancer, Kamala. An alternate pattern ensues – a line is sung by the singer, followed by instrumental music when the singer pauses. The camera is focused on the singer when she sings the syllables for the first *āvartana* (*A49*). This is followed by a play of instruments in the second *āvartana* (*A50*). It is Kamala's turn to show her prowess in this *āvartana*. She does fast *taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavus* ending in a pose with *tripatākā hasta*. The camera shifts focus on the *mṛidaṅgist* for the next line (*A51*). The *vīṇā* player and the flute artist are also visible along with the singer and the *mṛidaṅgist*.[49] Kamala performs brief lifts of her feet as she goes back doing *taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavus* (*A52*). Her rapid eye movements in harmony with her hand movements are visible. The camera shifting the focus is now reduced to a half *āvartana* time frame. The Naṭarāja is in view, and Kamala enters the frame to take the pose of Naṭarāja for the second half of the *āvartana* (*A53*). The camera focus is back on the singer. Kamala does side to side movement of her hand and takes a pose with her leg lifted and hands in *alapadma hasta* (*A54*). The time frame of the camera shifting the focus is now condensed to a quarter *āvartana*. The *mṛidaṅgist* and Kamala are shown alternately. A close–up shot of Kamala appears. Only her eye, eyebrow, and lip movements are visible. However, she brings her palm close to her face that her facial expressions become obscure (*A55*).

Susequently, the crescendo of the music speed reaches the peak. The singer rapidly increases the speed of music. And Kamala matches her *aḍavus* to that speed. The speed is augmented with the amalgamation of the *svara* notes by the singer, rhythm from the instruments, and Kamala's dance steps. Between the *āvartanas* A56 to *A59,* Kamala performs *kudiṭṭumeṭṭaḍavu,* fast Kathak–type whirls that match precisely with the *svara* syllables, *taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavus* in *tiṣra jātī,* some *paical aḍavus,* and *maṇḍi aḍavus* in combination with the final *tirmāna aḍavu.* This performance reaches a climax before the

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[49] Although the sound of *naṭṭuvāṅgam* can be heard throughout the *tillāna,* the *naṭṭuvanār* is not seen as part of the orchestra.

pallavi resumes at an even more faster pace. A comment on Kamala's *araimaṇḍi* posture needs mention here. The space between the two feet, when in *araimaṇḍi,* usually is not more than two inches. But due to her rapid pace, the space between her feet is very high. Due to her extreme dynamism and fast movements, it seems like she loses firmness and the correct definition of body throughout the item.

The song ends with seven *āvartanas* (*A60–A66*) of the *pallavi* line. Kamala does *periya aḍavus* that are most times shortened in smaller circles, followed by *sutru aḍavus.* The conclusion is filled with different poses. She moves around displaying these poses. The captivating part is Kamala's undeterred facial expression until the last line of the song. She finishes with the *añjali hasta*. The curtains are drawn soon after the song ends. The audience is also seen applauding.

Predominantly, the *tillāna* of Kamala Lakshman corresponds to the 'standard technique' of performance. Kamala's *aḍavus*, *hastas,* body postures, and costumes are impressive and displays her talent and potential as a Bharatanāṭyam dancer. However, at a few points in the *tillāna,* the *nṛtta* does not fit into the 'standard' vocabulary of Bharatanāṭyam. The deviations are prominent enough at certain points giving the dance a 'filmy' look. Although the elevated pace of the *tillāna* is a characteristic of Vazhuvoor style, it drives the unorthodox look. Kamala's Bharatanāṭyam style in this *tillāna* matches exactly with Vazhuvurar's style. Fluidness of the body, high speed, dynamism, creativity, and facial expressions are the features exhibited by her in this *tillāna*. There seems to be very less influence from the dance director, Dandayudhapani Pillai with regards to her dancing. Kamala's and Vyjayanthimala's styles are poles apart in the two examined film clips. The contrasting styles of Pandanallur and Vazhuvoor is unmistakably seen in Vyjayanthimala's *alārippu* and Kamala's *tillāna*.

5.3 Analysis of Kṣetrajña's *padam* from *Devadasu* (1953)

Three versions of the selected Kṣetrajña's *padam, "iṁta telisiyuṁḍi"* have been identified from textual and online sources. The first version appears in the Telugu book titled, *Kṣētrayya padamulu* edited by Vissa Appa Rao and published in the year 1950 (Rao 1950: 24). In this, the song *"iṁta telisiyuṁḍi"* is found to have a *pallavi* that is followed by three *caraṇam* passages (Figure 5.8). There is no *anupallavi* for this *padam.* The song cycles back to the *pallavi* after every *caraṇam* passage. Vissa Appa Rao specifies that it is in the *rāga bilahari,* portraying a *virahotkhaṇḍitā nāyikā.* The next appearance of the *padam* was found in the book, *Kṣētrayya: Muvva Gōpāla* authored by Natarajan Ramakrishnan, and published in the year 1985 (Ramakrishnan 1985: 60–61). The Telugu version from this book matches with Vissa Appa Rao's version (Figure 5.9). A third version of this *padam* has been obtained from an online blog that is chiefly devoted to presenting the translation, transliteration, and meaning of Telugu songs (Pattri 2014). This version (Figure 5.10) contains the *padam* exactly as it is sung in the movie. The *caraṇam* in the third version is different from versions one and two. The English transliteration for the three versions are available below the respective figures.

Figure 5.8: Telugu version of the Kṣetrajña's *padam* from source 1 (Rao 1950: 24)

The transliteration of the version in Figure 5.8:[50]

iṁta telisi yuṁḍi – yī guṇam' ēlarā?

paṁtamā muvvagō – pāla! nā sāmi!　　　　　　‖ *iṁta* ‖

aluka cēsi yiṁṭikirāv – aitivi nenaraina

celikattel' unnārā! piluva vaccērā?

celikattel' aina nīve – celuvaḍav' aina nīve

talaci cūḍa nāpāli – daivamu nīvē　　　　　　‖ *iṁta* ‖

viṁtadāni vale nannu – vēru cēsi rāv' aitivi

aṁtaraṁgul' unnārā? nann' ādariṁcērā?

aṁtaraṁgam aina nīve – yādariṁcina nīve

cintiṁci cūḍa nā – jīvanamu nīvē　　　　　　‖ *iṁta* ‖

śrīnidhi! muvvagōpāla! cēpaṭṭi nann' ēlitivi

nā nērpul' evarainan ā – naṁdiṁcērā?

nā nērpulaina nīvē – nammikal' iccina nīve

yānagā balikeda nā – yānaṁdam aina nīve　　　　　　‖ *iṁta* ‖

Figure 5.9: Telugu version of the Kṣetrajña's *padam* from source 2 (Ramakrishnan 1985: 60–61).

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[50] The transliteration has been done according to ISO 15919 standards available at https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO_15919. For guidance while transliterating, I have used https://www.omniglot.com/writing/telugu.htm. Professor Dr. David Schulman from Hebrew University has verified them.

The transliteration of the version in Figure 5.9:

iṁta telisi yuṁḍi – yī guṇam' ēlarā

paṁtamā muvvagō – pāla nā sāmi ‖

aluka cēsi yiṁṭikirāv – aitivi nenaraina

celikattel' unnārā – piluva vaccērā

celikattel' aina nīvē – celuvaḍav' aina nīvē

talaci cūḍanāpāli – daivamu nīvē ‖

viṁta dānivalē nannu – vēruccēsirāv' aitivi

aṁtaraṁgul' unnārā nann' ādariṁcērā

aṁtaraṁgam aina nīvē – yādariṁcina nīve

cintiṁci cūḍanā – jīvanamu nīve ‖

śrīnidhi! muvvagōpāla cēpaṭṭi nann' ēlitivi

nā nērpul' evarainan' ā – naṁdiṁcērā

nā nērpulaina nīvē – nammikal iccina nīve

ānagā balikeda nā – yānaṁda maina nīve ‖

Figure 5.10: Telugu version of the Kṣetrajña's *padam* from source 3 (Pattri 2014)[51]

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[51] Available at http://pattri–pulu.blogspot.de/2014/01/inta–telisi–kshetrayya–padamu.html

The transliteration of the version in Figure 5.10:

iṁta telisiyuṁḍī īguṇam' ēlarā

paṁtamā muvva gōpālā nā sāmi

aluka cēsi imṭikirāv' aitivi, celikattel' unnārā, piluva vaccērā

celikattel' aina nīvē, celuvaḍav' aina nīvē

talaci cūḍa nāpāli daivamu nīvē   ‖ *iṁta* ‖

viṁtadānivale nannu, vērucēsi rāv' aitivi, aṁtaraṁgul' unnārā, nann' ādariṁcērā

aṁtaraṁgam' aina nīvē, ādariṁcinā nīvē

cintiṁci cūḍa, nā jīvanamu nīvē   ‖ *iṁta* ‖

śrīnidhi! muvva gōpālā nann' ēlarā, nā nēstulevar' aina ānaṁdiṁcērā

nā nēstul' ainā nīvē, nammi talacinā nīvē

ānaga palikeda nā ānaṁdam aina nīvē   ‖ *iṁta* ‖

The literal translation of the song according to the third (movie) version[52]:

pallavi:	Though you know all this, why are you behaving in this way?
	Why be stubborn, Muvva Gopala? My Lord!
caraṇam 1:	You haven't come home; probably you're angry.
	Do I have any close girlfriends? Could they come and call you?
	You are my girlfriends. You are my lover.
	If I think about it, you're the god who belongs to me. [Though you know]
caraṇam 2:	You treat me like a stranger. You haven't come.
	Aren't you the deepest part inside me? Don't you care for me?
	You're the deepest part inside, you're the one who cared for me.
	If I think about it, you're my life itself. [Though you know]
caraṇam 3:	Muvva Gōpāla, the Lover of Sri! You ruled over me.
	Could just any friend delight in my skills in making love?
	You are my closest friend, you're the one who promised me.
	That's what I say. You are my joy. [Though you know]

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[52] Professor Dr. David Shulman from Hebrew University has translated this song. I also referred to the following online blogs that give the meaning for this *padam* as it appears in the movie – https://versakay.wordpress.com/page/46/ and http://pattri–pulu.blogspot.com/2014/01/inta–telisi–kshetrayya–padamu.html for further explanations.

The three versions of the transliterated *padam* have some variations. The variations that alter the lyrical meaning of the song are visibly present in the third *caraṇam*. Although the variations have low impact on the analysis, they are discussed below to systematically study the transliterated *padam*.

- Firstly, there is an indication of how and when the song cycles back to the *pallavi* after each stanza. In the first version, the word, *"iṁta"* along with "‖" denoting the repeated appearance of the first stanza is present. The second version has only "‖" which marks the end of the stanza. Here, it is an unsaid rule that one must cycle back to the *pallavi*. The third version is similar to the first.

- There are slight variances in the way certain words are stressed or not stressed. For example, the word *nīvē* that means "you" is stressed differently in the various lines of the three versions; the word *gōpālā* that refers to Lord Kṛṣṇa also has some variations.

- The way words are split is different in the three versions. For Example, *muvva gōpālā, telisiyuṁḍī*. In the third version, it is according to the way the song is sung in the movie.

- There are dissimilarities in pronunciations for words in the three versions. For example, *palikeda* in version 3 versus *balikeda* in versions 1 and 2, *yī guṇamēlarā* in versions 1 and 2 versus *īguṇamēlarā* in version 3, *yiṁṭikirā* in versions 1 and 2 versus *iṁṭiki* in version 3, *yānaṁda* in versions 1 and 2 versus *ānaṁda* in version 3, *talacinā* in version 3 versus *kalacinā* in versions 1 and 2, The letter *y* is seen to be used instead of *ī* at many instances in versions 1 and 2.

- The third (movie) version has differing words for the penultimate line of the third *caraṇam. nā nēstulevar' aina ānaṁdiṁcērā. nā nēstul' ainā nīvē, nammi talacinā nīvē* in version three which means "Could any friend delight in my skills in making love? You are my closest friend, the one who promised me" as against *nā nērpul' evarainan ā – naṁdiṁcērā? nā nērpulaina nīvē – nammikal' iccina nīve* in verions one and two which translates to "Could just anyone delight in my skills in making love? You are my skills, you're the one who promised me."

The Kṣetrajña's *padam, "iṁta telisiyuṁḍi"* has been extracted from the movie, *Devadasu* (1953: 01:27:20–01:30:53) and annotated with the english translation (00:00–03:42) that is available as part of the attached film clips. The setting of the performance resembles a private performance. The courtesan, Chandramukhi performs for her private guest, Devdas. Devdas enters the performance room and takes a seat, while Chandramukhi greets him and prepares to perform. The musical ensemble consists of *mṛidaṅgam,* violin*, naṭṭuvāṅgam,* harmonium, and *vīṇā* who are seated behind the dancer in a semi–circular arrangement. The dancer is wearing a post–revival Bharatanāṭyam costume that has a front fan apron, a blouse with a smaller fan, pant, and backseat. She is wearing beaded jewelry containing a necklace, *jimikī, māṭal, odyāṇam,* anklets, and bangles along with an uncommon headgear. She has a long plait and light make–up on her face.

The *padam* is in *bilahari rāga* and *tiṣra tripuṭa tāla.* The audio of the song contains the same instruments shown in the musical ensemble of the fim clip. However, the vocalist is absent in the video. Instead, the dancer mouths for the lyrics as she dances. Setting off with a short *nṛtta* sequence,[53] the *pallavi* lines commence. The first line (refer translation) repeats four times, and the second twice. The gesticulations (abhinaya) executed by the dancer are performed along with *nṛtta*[54]. This is commonly termed as *nṛtya.* The dancer uses loose *patākā hasta* on her right to denote "you know all this" (00:33) and a casual walk using *ḍolā hasta* to denote the inconsiderate behavior of her lover[55] (00:36). For the first repetition of the first line, the dancer recognizes that her lover knows everything. But for the second repetition, her facial expressions show doubt. For the third and fourth repetition, the dancer performs only *nṛtta* with a bright smile. For the second line of the *pallavi,* the dancer performs similar gesticulations for the two repetitions. *Pāśa hasta*[56] is the typical gesture to denote separation or being cross with someone. The dancer uses the *pāśa hasta* along with a dejected look on her face to express "why be stubborn?" (00:46). Muvva, the village of Kṣetrajña is used as a signature in most of his songs. A *mṛgaśīrṣa hasta* with both hands raised is characteristically used here to denote the village (00:48). Two *haṁsapakṣa hastas* rested

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[53] Even though *padams* are pure *abhinaya* items, this dance sequence in the movie has *nṛtta* interspersed between the stanzas.

[54] Here, *nṛtta* refers only to footwork.

[55] The heroine addresses her lover as 'my lord' throughout the song. This is common in *śṛṅgāra padams.*

[56] Refer to chapter 2, section 2.2.2 (under double–hand gestures) for *pāśa hasta.* This section contains details on all the other *hastas.*

near the mouth symbolize a flute, the instrument of Lord Kṛṣṇa or "Gōpāla" (00:40)[57]. The last words of the *pallavi,* "my lord" are expressed using the usual *añjali hasta* (00:51).

The first *caraṇam* begins following a short *aruḍi*[58]. Excluding the last line, every line in this stanza repeats twice. In the first part of this stanza, the dancer is melancholic. She is unhappy that her lord has not come home and speculates that he might be angry with her. The dancer utilizes *mṛgaśīrṣa hasta* with both hands raised to denote home (00:58)[59] and *patākā hasta* to express "you haven't come" (00:59, 00:60). Two different variations are done by the dancer to show girlfriend; type 1 (01:08) uses a relaxed *haṃsapakṣa hasta* and type 2 (01:12) uses *tāmracūḍa hasta.* When the dancer enquires her lord whether she should send her girlfriend to call him, she uses *catura hasta* symbolizing "invite" (01:10). The dancer employs *haṃsāsya hasta* near her chest to show "If I think about it" (01:27). *Patākā hasta* is used to indicate "you" (01:18, 01:26) and "me" (01:28). A strong genuineness and innocence is seen in the dancer's face as she expresses the sentences in the first *caraṇam.*

After the first *caraṇam,* the song goes back to the first line of the *pallavi* which is followed by a short *svara.* The dancer walks back (the common 'Bharatanāṭyam' walk) and performs a short *nṛtta* sequence for the *svara.* Subsequently, the second *caraṇam* commences. Although every line repeats twice, the dancer's gesticulations are alike for every sentence. The dancer displays a fluctuating mood through her expressions in this stanza. The uncommon usage of *patākā hasta* is seen when the dancer wonders about the long acquaintance with her beloved (01:47). The dancer is sad that her lover treats her like a stranger; she uses *kartarīmukha hasta* to indicate stranger (00:59). However, she is content that he is her confidante and conscience; she uses *kaṭakāmukha hasta* near the chest to denote this (02:02, 02:07). She displays a hug to indicate that he is the one who cares for her (02:09). The dancer utilizes *haṃsāsya hasta* near her chest to gesticulate "if I think about it" (02:17). Throughout this stanza, she pleads with him to come back and care for her (02:10, 02:20).

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[57] Photo is from the first repetition.
[58] The ending that comes in any *nṛtta* sequence is called *aruḍi.*
[59] This is similar to the *hasta* used to denote village.

Before the start of the third *caraṇam,* the song returns to the *pallavi* followed by a short *svara.* The dancer utilizes *haṃsāsya hasta* to denote the figure of a beautiful lady, here goddess Lakṣmī (02:47). Characteristically, *mṛgaśīrṣa hasta* with both hands raised is used to indicate Muvva (02:49) and two *haṃsapakṣa hastas* rested near the mouth to symbolize Lord Kṛṣṇa or "Gōpāla*"* (02:50). By circling the *sūcī hasta,* the dancer shows "lord who rules over me" (02:51). The dancer avoids gesticualtions for several words that indicate love–making in this stanza. The neglect of using appropriate gestures for such words suggest the impact of the Bharatanāṭyam revival which eradicated the use and portrayal of erotic hand gestures. Even though the lyrics indicate love–making, they are masked in the dance with the use of *nṛtta* gestures. (02:54, 03:09, 03:16)

In this performance, there is a clear depiction of the *hastas* in every line of her portrayal. Appropriate *hastas* and expressions are used throughout. Lalitha (the dancer) displays her skills as a well–trained Bharatanāṭyam artist in this performance. Unfortunately, there are two pitfalls that diminish the *bhāva* conveyed to the viewer. Firstly, the gesticulation is mixed with a lot of *nṛtta* which causes a deterioration in the effect of *abhinaya* presentation. The dancer loses out on facial expressions at certain places because of her preoccupation with dance steps. Secondly, the pace of the song is too fast for a Kṣetrajña's *padam.* Generally, Kṣetrajña's *padams* are performed at a slow pace giving the dancer high scope for interpretation and more time to tap into the subtler aspects of the song. In this performance, *vākyyārtha abhinaya* instead of *padārtha abhinaya*[60] is executed by the dancer. For the *nṛtta* sequences, the dancer makes use of several *aḍavus* like *taṭṭaḍavu, nāṭṭaḍavu, sarukkal aḍavu, paical aḍavu, maṇḍi aḍavu, tirmāna aḍavu,* and *periya aḍavu.* Her *aḍavu* technique has a bit of slackness. Below are pictures (Figures 5.11–5.14) from the film clip that will aid in understanding the physical gestures and facial expressions portrayed by the dancer in connection with the lyrical meaning of the *padam.*

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[60] *Padārtha abhinaya* means the expression of word–to–word meaning while *vākyyārtha abhinaya* is the communication of the general idea of a sentence or even the mood (Subrahmanyam 2003: 34).

iṁta telisiyuṁḍī – Though you know
all this,
00:33

īguṇam' ēlarā – why are you behaving
this way?
00:36

paṁtamā – Why be stubborn?
00:46

muvva – Muvva (village)
00:48

gōpāla – Gōpāla (Lord Kṛṣṇa)
00:40

na sāmi – My Lord!
00:51

Figure 5.11: Stills from the movie *Devadasu* (1953), with meaning of the *padam's pallavi*

aluka cēsi – Probably you're angry.
00:57

iṁṭiki – home
00:58

rāv' –aitivi – You haven't come.
00:59

rāv' –aitivi – You haven't come.
00:60

celikattel' unnārā – Do I have any close
girlfriend? (type 1)
01:08

celikattel' unnārā – Do I have any close
girlfriend? (type 2)
01:12

piluva vaccērā – Could they come and
call you?
01:10

celikattel' aina – The girlfriend I have,
01:17

nīvē – is you.
01:18

celuvaḍav' aina – The lover I have
01:20

nīvē – is you.
01:26

talacicūḍa – If I think about it
01:27

nāpāli – who belongs to me,
01:28

daivamu – the lord
01:29

nīvē – is you alone!
01:31

Figure 5.12: Stills from the movie *Devadasu* (1953), with meaning of the *padam's caraṇam* 1

viṁtadānivale – After so many days of
acquaintance,
01:47

nannu – you treat me
01:48

vērucēsi – as a stranger.
01:59

rāv' aitivi – You haven't come.
02:00

aṁtaraṁgul' unnārā – Aren't you the
deepest part inside me?
02:02

nann'ādariṁcērā – Don't you care
for me?
02:03

aṁtaraṁgam' aina – The deepest part
inside me
02:07
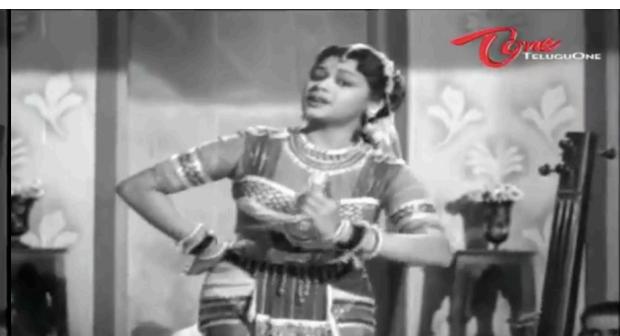
nīvē – is you.
02:08

ādariṁcinā – The one who cared for me
2:09

nīvē – is you alone.
02:10

cintiṁcicūḍa – If I think about it
02:17

jīvanamu – my life itself
02:20

nīvē – is you alone.
02:21

Figure 5.13: Stills from the movie *Devadasu* (1953), with meaning of the *padam's caraṇam* 2

śrīnidhi – The lover of śri (goddess Lakṣmī)
02:47

muvva –Muvva (village)
02:49

gōpāla – Gōpala (lord Kṛṣṇa)
02:50

nannn' ēlarā – who ruled over me.
02:51

nēstulevar' aina – Could just any friend
delight in my skills
02:53

ānaṁdiṁcērā – in making love? (not
the appropriate gesture)
02:54

nā nēstul' ainā – My closest friend
03:03

nīvē – is you.
03:04

nammi talacinā nīvē – You're the one who promised me (not the appropriate gesture)
03:09

ānaga palikeda – that is what I say.
03:14

nā ānaṁdam' aina nīvē – You are my joy.
(not the appropriate gesture)
03:16

Figure 5.14: Stills from the movie *Devadasu* (1953), with meaning of the *padam's caraṇam* 3

The primal import of this *śṛṅgāra padam* is the longing of the *nāyikā* (heroine), Chandramukhi for union with her lover, Devdas. The type of *nāyikā* represented in this film clip depends on the lyrics of the *padam,* the performance of the dancer, and the situation of the story in the movie, *Devadasu.* Further, the *nāyikās* are classified based on the following categories: behavior of the heroine, her experience in love, nature of the heroine, her mood or her situation, her relationship with the hero, and her pride as seen under chapter 2, section 2.8. For the analysis, every type of *nāyikā* under each category is reviewed by comparing with *nāyikās* of other *śṛṅgāra padams* or *jāvalis* to arrive at a typical *nāyikā* classification for this performance.

Based on her behavior, the *nāyikā* can be a *svīya,* a *parakiya,* or a *sāmānya nāyikā.* The *nāyikā* in this *padam* is visibly not a *parakiya.* The lyrics have no mention of her

guiltiness (which is usually the case in a *parakiya*) like "*evvaḍe evvāḍe ō bhāma*", where the heroine exclaims in the first *caraṇam,*

> "Oh dear, am I his property? Is it proper for him to address me so familiarly? While my man was out of town, as the daylight waned, he whispered tender words to regale me, gave me a kiss and went away. Who is he?" (Rao 1981: 94–95).

In the selected *padam,* there is nothing to prove her crafty thoughts like in the *jāvali,* "*samayīdhe rāra*" where the *parakiya* invites her illicit lover to her house when her husband is out of town (*Javali Jalam* 2011). Furthermore, the situation in the movie's story is not depictive of this type of heroine. Thus, she is not a *parakiya nāyikā.* Now, looking at whether the *nāyikā* is a *svīya* or a *sāmānya,* there arises a minor puzzle. If a *sāmānya* is usually defined to be a courtesan who takes money to sleep with men for pleasure, the lyrics may indicate her to be a *svīya.*[61] But this is misleading because of four main reasons. Firstly, there is a short personal love story in the life of Kṣetrajña which may have led him to superimpose the characters of a *svīya* and a *sāmānya.* He was wedded to Rukmini, his cousin and at the same time also in love with Mahanangi, a *devadāsī* courtesan. In some of his *padams* like "*ēmanenē suddulēmanenē*" and "*elā tellavārenē ayyo*", the *nāyikā* is presumed to be either a *svīya* or a *sāmānya* (Rao 1981: 40–42, 57–58). Secondly, there has been severe criticism of the definition of a *sāmānya,* in *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* (Raghavan 1951) and *Rasamañjarī* (Randhwa & Bhambri 1981). Bhanudutta in *Rasamañjarī* initially said that even in real love, material considerations might play a part. Akbar Shah, later in *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* said that a *sāmānya* could be a *nāyikā* who can either be really in love with her man, or can feel love for the sake of money. Akbar Shah classified a *sāmānya nāyikā* into five types[62] where a *kiptanurāga* is one who feels real love for her man. Because of her innate nature, she can have love for a person and only expect love in return. (Randhwa & Bhambri 1981: 40; Raghavan 1951: 95–97) Thirdly, the character Chandramukhi in the movie was a very humble lady in the most inspiring way. She was able to transform herself from a dancer–prostitute to

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[61] Although in the third *caraṇam,* the heroine asks, "could just anyone delight in my skills in making love?" there is no direct mention of the heroine accepting money from her lover in the lyrics.

[62] The five types of *sāmānya* mentioned in *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* are – 1. *avatantra* (independent*),* 2. *janayadhina* (under her mother's control), 3. *niyamita* (engaged to one), 4. *kiptanurāga* (having real love), and 5. *kalpatanurāga* (feeling love for money). (Raghavan 1951: 95–97)

a simple, pious, quiet, and reflective woman; this metamorphosis is brilliantly present in the storyline. She selflessly falls in love with Devadas and wants nothing in return. (Bali 2007; Ch. 2) The movie is a clear depiction of the *nāyikā* (Chandramukhi) being a *sāmānya.* Lastly, she refers to the hero (Devdas) as her 'lover', 'lord', or 'girlfreind'. The lyrics mention the term 'skills' referring to the *nāyikā's* skills in making love.[63] Thus, with the above explanations, I conclude that the *nāyikā* in this performance is a *sāmānya nāyikā.*

Pertaining to experience in love, the heroine can be a *mugdhā, madhyā,* or a *pragalbhā nāyikā.* The overall lyrics of this *padam* show innocence except for the last stanza that mentions the heroine's 'skills' in the act of love–making. But it is handled in a very subtle way. Taking an example of a *madhyā nāyikā* in *"iṁdukēmi sētunammā"* where she says, "[a]ccustomed to pulling me towards him, into embrace with extreme passion, would he be able to sleep alone? Searching for me on the bed and not finding me there, would he not be calling me aloud in his dreams?" (Rao 1981: 42–43). Then in the next paragraph, she talks about the hero sipping the nectar of her lips. Such is the *nāyikā's* knowledge of passion for a *madhyā.* A *pragalbhā* in the *padam, "samanyamu kāḍe vānipōdu"* talks of extreme passion. She suggests in the last *caraṇam,* "[s]he should offer him camphorated nuts and half–bitten betel–leaf, adding the nectar of her lips, watching the desire having taken a surge, should be prompt to press the lips" (Rao 1981: 61–62). Hence in the *padam "iṁta telisiyuṁḍi"*, the *nāyikā* can only be a *mugdhā.* Also, there is a profound innocence visible in the dancer's face throughout the perfromance. Her facial expression embodies a young, innocent girl matching with Kalanidhi Narayanan's facial expression for a *mugdhā* in the *jāvali, "iṭu sāhasamulu"* (*Ashtanayikas* 2011). Therefore, she is a *mugdhā nāyikā* in *"iṁta telisiyuṁḍī"*. With respect to the display of rebuke, she is a *dhīrā* as the dancer shows her disappointment in a self–controlled manner. A slight rebuke that is seen in the second *caraṇam* is handled in a delicate and restrained tone.

Relating to the nature of the *nāyikā,* she can be an *uttama,* a *madhyama,* or an *ādhama.* *Uttama* is someone who behaves favorably towards her beloved with greater refinement in her character type. From the lyrics and the *nāyikā's* character in the movie, she displays high sophistication and finesse. Even though the behavior of the *nāyakā* (hero)

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[63] This mention suggests that the heroine could be a courtesan.

might be unfavorable,[64] the *nāyikā* (dancer) deals it with a manner of great refinement and class. She bears no grudge; she does not cry nor swoon. *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* states that for a *sāmānya nāyakā* who is a *kiptanurāga,* her *uttama* nature comes out when she restricts herself to just one lover. The character of Chandramukhi is in line with this as she selflessly devotes herself to Devdas. *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* also declares that, for a *virahotkhaṇḍitā nāyikā,* who is an *uttama,* her pangs of sufferings increase at the slightest separation with her lover. (Raghavan 1951: 104–105) With the above justifications, I classify the *nāyikā* as a *uttama.*

With respect to the relationship with her lover, the *nāyikā* can be either a *jyeṣṭhā* or a *kaniṣṭhā.* Clearly, she is not a *jyeṣṭhā,* the one preferred by her lover because she is a courtesan (Chandramukhi) in the movie. Devdas has been in love with Parvati right from his childhood. Thus, Devdas prefers Parvati over Chandramukhi. In the dance clip from the film, Devdas seems to be displeased in front of Chandramukhi. She is clearly not the object of his attention. Furthermore, sentences like "you treat me like a stranger", "why be stubborn", "you haven't come" prove the *nāyakā's* disinterest in her. Some texts (Higgens 1993: 15; Sarabhai 2000: 49) define *kaniṣṭhā* as the younger one. Even with regards to this definition, the dancer in the movie may fit in because she has been classified as a *mugdhā nāyikā,* one who is young and innocent.

Pertaining to *garvita,* the *nāyikā* can have either *rūpa–garvita* or *prem–garvita.* Referring to the examples given in the *nāyikā bheda* section under chapter 2, the *nāyikā* in this film clip showcases neither *rūpa–garvita* nor *prem–garvita.* She is a *kaniṣṭhā* who is unsure about her lover's love for her. Therefore, there is low possibility that she can be proud of his love for her. The lyrics have no mention of her body. She does not speak of her physical characteristics in the song. It is all about the love that she has for her lover. Hence, she is a *nāyikā* who showcases no *garvita.*

It is challenging to classify the *nāyakā* (hero). From the lyrics of the song, he may be a *vaisika* (one who takes pleasure in courtesans)*,* since I have identified the *nāyikā* to be a *sāmānya.* But according to the character of Devdas, he is disinterested in Chandramukhi. He cannot be called an *upapati* (one who violates marriage) as he is not married to

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[64] The lyrics of the *padam* indicate that the heroine is sad about the behavior of her lover.

Parvati. Since the hero's character is obscure in the lyrics, no further conclusions can be made.

For the analysis and classification of the mood and the situation of the *nāyikā,* the process of reasoning out and elimination is used. *Svādhīnapatika, vipralabdhā, khaṇḍitā,* and *abhisārikā* are cases of immediate elimination. She cannot be a *svādhīnapatika*[65] since she is a *sāmānya.* There is no mention of the hero deceiving the heroine; hence she cannot be a *vipralabdhā.* For a *khaṇḍitā,* the heroine should be angry with her lover; which she is not. She is not attempting to go on her own to meet him, hence she not an *abhisārikā.* Now considering *vāsakasajjā.* There is no waiting or any kind of anticipation from the side of the *nāyikā* nor any decoration of herself or the surrounding to prepare for his arrival. Hence, she is not a *vāsakasajjā nāyikā.* The hero is not on a long journey or travel plus the heroine is not worried about a 'very long' separation. She is only sad that he hasn't come to meet her. Hence, she is also not a *proṣitabhatṛka.* Could she be a *kalahāntaritā*? A *kalahāntaritā* is filled with remorse and repentance after a quarrel with her lover. Although, in the *pallavi* the heroine asks, "why are you behaving this way? why be stubborn? my lord." there is no mention of any fight they had. The heroine is in fact, unsure why her lover is angry and sometimes even speculates whether he is angry. In this *padam,* there is no sign of repentance for any sort of fight. Hence, the *nāyikā* is not a *kalahāntaritā.* The only type of *nāyikā* left under this category is *virahotkhaṇḍitā.*

Aruna (1995: 157) states that Vissa Appa Rao mentions the *padam,* "*iṁta telisiyuṁḍī*" to have a *virahotkhaṇḍitā nāyikā.* This type of *nāyikā* is yearning for her lover due to separation from him. After several days of acquaintance with her lover, she can't bear the pangs of separation. Even though this longing is also the case of a *proṣitabhatṛka* or a *vāsakasajjā,* the undue delay of the hero is what comes out in a *virahotkhaṇḍitā.* The situation in the movie is a bit ironic for a *virahotkhaṇḍitā,* because the hero is sitting in front of the heroine while she dances. In this case, this *padam* is not well suited for the situation. However, the commentator of *Rasamañjarī,* Amoda has suggested that *viraha* or separation could also be happening even when the lovers are in the same place (Raghavan 1951: 98). Thus, I ascribe the heroine in the film clip and in this *padam* to be a *virahotkhaṇḍitā nāyikā.*

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[65] *Svādhīnapatika* can have a *pati* or a husband who is in love only with her.

In the above Kṣetrajña's *padam,* "*iṁta telisiyuṁḍī*" from *Devadasu* (1953), the technique of *abhinaya* performance is in line with the proposed standards for gesticulation. The *nāyikā* classification for different categories is distinctly evident in the song, storyline, and performance. Remarkably, unlike the previous two case studies on *alārippu* and *tillāna,* this Kṣetrajña's *padam* is weaved into the storyline of the movie, *Devadasu.* This is a typical example of a private performance that was widespread in the early 20th century. The impact of changes that ensued during revival is visible in the dancer's costume and performance.

5.4 Analysis of *Jāvali* from *Muddu Bidda* (1956)

The selected *jāvali, "aṁtalōnē tellavāre"* has been extracted from the movie, *Muddu Bidda* (1956: 01:20:45–01:25:10) and annotated with the english translation (00:00–04:50) that is available as part of the attached film clips. Apart from this *jāvali's* appearance in C.R. Day's book specified in chapter 4, it has not been found anywhere else in the written form. It is known to have been a part of the repertoire of the hereditary dancing community from the Andhra region. A lyrical transliteration of the *jāvali* according to how it appeared in the movie has been obtained from an online blog and given below.

The Telugu version of the *jāvali*:[66]

అంతలోనే తెల్లవారె

అయ్యొ ఏమి సేతునే

కాంతుని మనసెంత నొచ్చెనో

ఇంతీ ఎటు సైతునే "అంతలోనే"

కొంతసేపు ప్రియములాడి

చెంత జేరి చేయి జాపి

దోర వయసు నాసామి

దొంతర విడేమందుకోనే "అంతలోనే"

చెక్కిలిపై కొనగోటితో

ఒక్కసారి కొసర లేదు

మక్కువతో గోపాలుడు సుంత

పరిహాసమాడు "అంతలోనే'

The transliteration for the above *jāvali*:[67]

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[66] Obtained from https://rajamusicbank.com/lyrics/Actor/Jaggayya/Muddubidda/Antalone–Tellavare/1064.html

[67] The transliteration has been done according to ISO 15919 standards available at https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO_15919. For guidance while transliterating, I have used

aṁtalōnē tellavāre

ayyo ēmi sētunē

kāṁtuni manas' eṁta noccenō

iṁtī eṭu saitunē ‖ *aṁtalōnē* ‖

koṁtasēpu prīyamul' āḍi

ceṁta jēri cēyi jāpi

dōra vayasu nā sāmi

doṁtara viḍēmaṁdukōnē ‖ *aṁtalōnē* ‖

cekkilipai konagōṭitō

okkasāri kosaralēdu

makkuvatō gōpāludu suṁta

parihāsam' āḍu ‖ *aṁtalōnē* ‖

The translation of the *jāvali* :[68]

pallavi:	It is dawn already.	
	Alas! What can I do?	
	How my lover's heart must hurt.	
	How can I bear it?	[It is dawn already]
anupallavi:	Be romantic for a little while.	
	Come close, put out your hand.	
	My youthful darling, my lord.	
	Offer me beetelnut now, quickly.	[It is dawn already]
caraṇam:	With the edge of your fingernail,	
	not even once you have caressed my cheeks.	
	It's time you laughed with me,	
	at least a little, with affection.	[It is dawn already]

The song describes a woman who is enticed by Lord Kṛṣṇa[69]. It brings into focus the plight of a lover, the distress felt by the heroine. Even though she is married to another

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https://www.omniglot.com/writing/telugu.htm. Professor Dr. David Schulman from Hebrew University has reviewed the transliteration, and the translation available in the next page.

[68] Also referred to the *jāvali's* meaning available at http://cinemanrityagharana.blogspot.com/2012/08/kalavantuludevadasi–dances–in–films.html and http://pattri–pulu.blogspot.com/2018/01/lyrics–of–antalone–tellavare–song.html

[69] Lord Kṛṣṇa as a young man was a heartthrob in the village he lived. A lot of women wanted to be with him and he is known to have had several lovers.

man, she is unhappy that the time has arrived for Kṛṣṇa to leave. She talks of the manners in which Kṛṣṇa seduced her by giving her beetelnut, touching her check, laughing, and speaking of all the erotic things. The heroine had just the night with Kṛṣṇa. For her, the daybreak appears to have happened rapidly, thus she becomes sad. She can already feel the pain of separation. She recollects all the joyous things that she did with him.

The *jāvali*, *"aṁtalōnē tellavāre"* in the movie is a characteristic salon performance of the early 20th century. The orchestra consisting of the instrumentalists and the singers are standing behind the dancer, a typical style of hereditary performers. Instruments include *mṛidaṅgam, naṭṭuvāṅgam,* violin while the song is sung by the dancer in the film clip. She has a chorus support from a group of girls standing behind her. The sound of *mōrsing*[70] is heard in the audio for the first *jati.* There is great excitement in the face of the *mṛidaṅgangist* and the *naṭṭuvanār* while performing for the *jatis.* The music director for the movie is Pendyala Nageswara Rao, and singer is P. Suseela. But this *jāvali* must have been composed by the *kalāvantula* community who appear in the movie, since it was a common song during that period.[71] The song is in the *śankarabharanam rāga* and *rūpaka tāla*[72]. The music is mellifluous in a middle pace; very apt for creativities and interpretations for the dancer. The audience appear very charged and excited about the dancer's performance. They specifically request her to perform a *jāvali.* The salon performance space feels electric. Pertaining to *āhārya abhinaya,* the dancer is wearing a regular saree with a small silk border and a silk blouse. I recognize it to be silk from the shine it imparts in the film clip. The jewelry is quite grand. The dancer is wearing a *chuṭṭi, rakodi,* a serpent–like ornament for her hair, *necklace, odyāṇam, jimikī, māṭal, vaṅki, bullāku,* and some hand jewels. She is wearing lots of flowers on her head in a U–shape, and has light make–up on her face.

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[70] An Indian instrument that can be categorized under lamellophones or plucked idiophones.
[71] Refer Soneji (2012: 107–110) for more details on the composition.
[72] *Rūpaka tāla* is made up of 3 beats which, in turn, has 4 *mātras* (internal beats) each. Example music notation for the first line –

```
,   ,   ,   ,   |   aṁ   ta   lō   ,   |   ,   ,   nē   ,   ‖
tel   ,   ,   ,   |   la   ,   vā   ,   |   ,   ,   re   ,   ‖
,   ,   ay   ,   |   yo   ,   ē   ,   |   ,   ,   mi   ,   ‖
sē   ,   ,   ,   |   tu   ,   ,   nē   |   ,   ,   ,   ,   ‖
,   ,   ,   ,   |   ,   ,   ,   ,   |   ,   ,   ,   ,   ‖
```

The *jāvali* contains a *pallavi,* an *anupallavi,* and a *caraṇam.* The song is cyclical and returns to the *pallavi* after every stanza. Although this is an *abhinaya* item, *nṛtta* is intermingled. Sometimes, the gesticulations are executed along with some footwork. The *jāvali* begins with a *jati* for which the dancer performs *nṛtta.* Following the *jati,* is the *pallavi.* The dancer depicts dawn by gesticulating awakening from slumber for the first two repetitions. For the third and fourth repetitons, she loops the *alapadma hasta* on both hands to indicate awakening and sunrise (01:06, 01:08). Her facial expressions suggest unexpectedness for arrival of dawn. The fist moves to the forehead with regret to express "ayyo" (alas!) (00:54). The dancer uses *alapadma hasta* to ask her friends and the audience what she could possibly do in this situation (00:56). For the third and fourth repetitions, the dancer predominantly uses facial expressions to express her unfortunate situation. For the line, "how my lover's heart must hurt" the dancer uses *śikhara hasta* on the left hand indicating her lover and *haṃsāsya hasta* on the right hand placed near the chest indicating heart (00:58, 01:00). She moves her hand in embrace to show distress to her lover, Kṛṣṇa (01:03, 01:06). In the *pallavi,* the dancer is also afraid that it is dawn already because her husband[73] might come in anytime. But she is unhappy because Kṛṣṇa must leave now. Natural gestures close to ordinary life are utilized instead of extreme stylizations throughout the performance. A *lokadharmī* mode of presentation is employed by the dancer. The expressions and gesticulations of the dancers standing behind the main dancer (heroine) add to the mood of the song. The *pallavi* is followed by a short *svara* that ends in a *tīrmāna.*

In the *anupallavi,* the heroine addresses all her desires to Kṛṣṇa. She wants him to be romantic, kiss her, and hold her in his arms. She pleads with Kṛṣṇa to offer her a beetulnut quickly. The dancer uses *kaṭakāmukha hasta* to denote "for a little while" (01:50). The first two lines of the *anupallavi* repeat three times; once along with the chorus. The dancer mostly moves around with her right hand on her chin while her left hand is holding the saree (01:58). The dancer shows the gestures of kissing, proceeds close to the audience and tries to involve them (02:16, 02:27). *Catura hasta* on both hands is used to denote beetulnut (02:30). After the second and third line of the *anupallavi,* the song returns to the *pallavi* followed by a *jati.*

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[73] The indirect meaning of the song is that the heroine is a lady who is involved in illicit love–making with Kṛṣṇa. This will be dealt in detail under analysis of *nāyika bhedas.*

In the *caraṇam*, the heroine laments about all that Kṛṣṇa has disregarded. According to her, Kṛṣṇa has not touched her with his fingertips, and not laughed with her. She complains because she is remorseful about departing situation. The dancer makes use of the *sūcī hasta* to indicate "cheeks" (03:07), "fingertips" (03:09), and "even once" (03:10). She uses *patāka hasta* to express that he has not caressed her (03:12). Gōpāla or Kṛṣṇa is shown with the usual way of gesticulating a flute using *haṃsapakṣa hasta* on both hands (03:31). The last instrumental *svara* that follows contains the famous *gaptu–varusa,* a string of movements that is famous with the *kalāvantula* community.

Bhāva is evident in this *abhinaya* performance. The facial expressions are brought out in a wonderful manner retaining the feel of the song. Due to the slower pace of the song, emotional aspects are emphasized well. This *jāvali* in the film is a personification of sexually charged salon spaces that existed prior to the revival. The dancer performs many *kudiṭṭumeṭṭaḍavus, sutru aḍavus, paical aḍavus, nāṭṭaḍavus,* and *tīrmāna aḍavus* for the *nṛtta* sequences. Overall, the hand gestures display some slackness and *nṛtta* lacks perfection. The *aḍavus* are not strictly Bharatanāṭyam, but include Kathak–like steps, and steps that are specific to the *kalāvantula* community of dancers. Even with the presence of *nṛtta* sequences, the mental involvement of the dancer is not lost. The dancer seems strongly absorbed in the performance and her expressions are proof of that.

aṁtalōnē tellavāre – It is dawn already.
01:06

aṁtalōnē tellavāre – It is dawn already.
01:08

ayyo – Alas!
00:54

ēmi sētunē – What can I do?
00:56

kāṁtuni manas' eṁta noccenō – How my lover's heart must hurt.
00:58

kāṁtuni manas' eṁta noccenō – How my lover's heart must hurt.
01:00

iṁtī eṭu saitunē – How can I bear this?
01:03

iṁtī eṭu saitunē – How can I bear this?
01:06

Figure 5.15: Stills from the movie *Muddu Bidda* (1956), with meaning of the *jāvali's pallavi*

koṁtasēpu – For a little while
01:50

prīyamul' āḍi – be romantic
01:58

ceṁta jēri cēyi jāpi – come close, put your hand.
02:16

dōra vayasu nā sāmi – My youthful lover, my lord!
02:27

doṁtara viḍēmaṁdukōnē – Offer me beetelnut now, quickly.
02:30

doṁtara viḍēmaṁdukōnē – Offer me beetelnut now, quickly.
02:30

Figure 5.16: Stills from the movie *Muddu Bidda* (1956), with meaning of the *jāvali's anupallavi*

cekkilipai – my cheeks
03:07

konagōṭitō – with the edge of your fingernails
03:09

okkasāri – even once.
03:10

kosaralēdu – You have not caressed
03:12

makkuvatō gōpāludu – It's time you laughed
with me,
03:31

suṁta parihāsam' āḍu – at least a
little, with affection.
03:33

Figure 5.17: Stills from the movie *Muddu Bidda* (1956), with meaning of the *jāvali's caraṇam*

"Aṁtalōnē tellavāre" is a *śṛṅgāra jāvali* where the *nāyikā* (heroine) is troubled by the imminent separation from her lover. The type of *nāyikā* represented in this film clip depends on the lyrics of the *jāvali,* and the performance of the *kalāvantula* dancer. The storyline of the movie does not impact the dance sequence or viceversa. Now, I proceed to the analysis of *nāyikā* under each category: behavior of the heroine, her experience in love, nature of the heroine, her mood or her situation, her relationship with the hero, and her pride. This review will involve comparisons with *nāyikās* of other *śṛṅgāra padams* or *jāvalis* to arrive at a typical *nāyikā* classification for this performance.

With respect to the *nāyikā's* behavior, she may be a *svīya,* or a *parakiya,* or a *sāmānya.* According to Rao (1981), referring to another Kṣetrajña's *padam* with a *svīya nāyikā,* *"elā tellavārenē ayyo"* that translates into "[w]hy has the day dawned alas! So quickly" (Rao 1981: 40); it matches the first line of the *pallavi* in *"aṁtalōnē tellavāre".* But there is a consequential difference between the two. The dancer in the film clip of *"aṁtalōnē tellavāre"* expresses anxiety when she gesticulates the arrival of dawn. The reason for the anxiety is not only her separation from Kṛṣṇa, but also fear about her illicit actions. She exclaims, "It is already dawn. Ayyo! What can I do?". Here, the implied meaning is that she is terrified her husband might find out about her affair with Lord Kṛṣṇa. In the *anupallavi,* there is an urgency in heroine's requests to Lord Kṛṣṇa. She loves Kṛṣṇa, but is unable to digest her actions. The heroine's lament and fear are almost superimposed when one looks at this *jāvali* in a continuum. This makes her a *parakiya,* one who is secretly in love with a person other than her husband. Soneji's (2012: 107) discussion on this *jāvali* supplements this – "…is the *jāvali, "aṁtalōnē tellavāre",* which has been attributed by some to Dharmapuri Subbaraya Ayyar. It describes a married woman after a night of illicit lovemaking. She wakes in the bed of Kṛṣṇa, who is 'full of desire'". While in *"elā tellavārenē ayyo"* the heroine is a *svīya* because she mentions, "after a long absence, when my beloved came to our house" (Rao 1981: 41). Here, the heroine solemn that her husband must leave soon as it is already dawn; thus, she becomes a *svīya.* With further speculation, I arrive at whether the *nāyikā* in *"aṁtalōnē tellavāre"* is a *parakiya* because she may be a *devadāsī* wedded to a deity. However, in the Kṣetrajña's *padam, "piluvanaṁppe nannee vēla",* the *nāyikā* is a *parakiya devadāsī.* Here, Kṣetrajña clearly mentions the sacred oath the *nāyikā* has taken to become a *devadāsī.* (Rao 1981: 44–45) In *"aṁtalōnē tellavāre",* there is no mention of any oath. The *nāyikā* is not a *sāmānya*

because a *sāmānya* will never be afraid of her affairs. Thus, I assign the *nāyikā* in "*aṁtalōnē tellavāre*" as a *parakiya.*

Pertaining to her age and her experience in love, the heroine can be a *mugdhā, madhyā,* or a *pragalbhā.* Considering the lyrics in the *anupallavi* and *caraṇam* along with the dancer's expressions in the performance, the *nāyikā* in "*aṁtalōnē tellavāre*" cannot be inexperienced in love. Therefore, she is not a *mugdhā.* But there is some complexity to identify whether she is a *madhyā* or a *pragalbhā.* The heroine talks about caressing her cheeks with fingertips, reaching and holding her lover. But this level of knowledge in romance does not make her a *pragalbhā.* For example, a *pragalbhā nāyikā* in the Kṣetrajña's *padam "ayyayo vegaṭāyanā"* says, "…having pressed hard his front teeth on my lower lip that is he tried to speak, he would have to release my lip…", "...lest embrace would slip 'way when sleep overtook, in haste the four corners of the blanket be held tightly, with pleasure…" (Rao 1981: 95–96) The lyrics are highly erotic and show the heroine's high experience in the art of love and love–making. Whereas, in another Kṣetrajña's *padam "iṁdukēmi sētunammā",* where Kṣetrajña treats the *nāyikā* as a *madhyā,* she says, "oh bright faced one, he could not remain even a minute without sipping the nectar of my lips; he would not relish his food at all unless it was served in my company..." (Rao 1981: 42–43). Here less eroticism is noticed in the lyrics and is nearly comparable to the lyrics in "*aṁtalōnē tellavāre*". Although the dancer's conduct and portrayal has higher eroticism, she is still a *madhyā nāyikā.*

With regards to her character, the heroine can be an *uttama,* or a *madhyama,* or an *ādhama. Śṛṅgāramañjarī* (Raghavan 1951) mention a *parakiya uttama* to be someone in absolute secrecy when attached to a paramour; a *parakiya madhyama* to be one whose unchastely character is open; and *parakiya ādhama* to be a fickle–minded woman who seeks everyone. *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* and *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Ghosh 1951: 487) mentions that a *nāyikā* portraying an *uttama* character is more favorable towards her lover, showing more love for him than he does for her. Assuming she is either a situation of *proṣitabhatṛka* (which I will deal with later)*, Śṛṅgāramañjarī* provides definitions for the three types. For a *proṣitabhatṛka uttama,* the mere mention of her lover's departure upsets her; for a *proṣitabhatṛka madhyama,* only the actual departure affects her; and a *proṣitabhatṛka ādhama* experiences suffering only after the departure of her lover.

(Raghavan 1951: 103–105) At the outset, the dancer's balanced character, soft gestures, and mild expressions portray her to be an *uttama.* She is displaying more love towards her lover and acting favorably towards him; the lover here being Lord Kṛṣṇa. As a *parakiya,* it is evident from the *pallavi* that she wants to maintain absolute secrecy. If she is in a situation of *proṣitabhatṛka,* neither does she swoon nor does she show indifference to her lover's departure. Thus, I classify the *nāyikā* as a *uttama.*

With regards to *garvita,* she can have either *rūpa–garvita or prem–garvita.* From the lyrics and her dance, there is no presence of *rūpa–garvita. Prem–garvita* is visible in the lyrics of the *pallavi* when the heroine says, "how my lover's heart must heart". Relating to the heroine's relationship with Kṛṣṇa, she can be either a *jyeṣṭhā* or a *kaniṣṭhā.* The *nāyikā* in this *jāvali* has no concerns or doubts about her lover. She is not jealous but only afraid of her own act. The dancer shows a gesture of embrace while saying, "How my lover's heart must hurt, how can I bear this". This shows her apprehension and happiness in his presence, making her a *jyeṣṭhā,* the preferred one.

Upāpati is generally the hero figuring in the love life of a *parakiya.* The composition mentions Gōplāla or Lord Kṛṣṇa to be the lover. Kṛṣṇa is known to have been involved with several women in his adulthood. Even in this *jāvali,* the hero can be considered an *upāpati* as he is involved in illicit lovemaking with the heroine. He is addressed as "youthful darling" by the heroine, therefore, must not have aged much. He could love the other women of his life equally. So, he could be called a *dakśina* one who shows equal love to all ladies.

The last and the most important classification is based on the mood or situation of the *nāyikā.* The heroine is not a *svīya* and hence not a *svādhīnapatika.* She is not waiting for her lover to return home nor does she showcase any activity for preparation of her lover's return. The lover is, in fact, with the heroine in the song. Hence, she is not a *vāsakasajjā.* A *vipralabdhā,* or a *khaṇḍitā,* or a *kalahāntaritā* shows some amount of rebuke or jealousy for the dishonest behavior of her lover. But in this case, the *nāyikā* is a *jyeṣṭhā* with some amount of *prem–garvita.* She showcases no sign of jealousy or rebuke towards her lover. Hence, I eliminate *vipralabdhā,* or a *khaṇḍitā,* or a *kalahāntaritā.* She is not an *abhisārikā* because she does not go out anywhere to meet her

lover. Only two types are left: *virahotkhaṇḍitā* or *proṣitabhatṛka*. First, I look at whether the *nāyikā* can be in a situation of *virahotkhaṇḍitā*. The heroine must show some amount of sadness or longing. *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* defines that the hero can be in the same place for a *virahotkhaṇḍitā,* but she is separated from him due to his preoccupations. In this *jāvali,* the heroine shows her sorrow and longing when realizing the imminent seperation. She is only upset about what might happen in the future. Thus, it is not possible to classify this *nāyikā* as a *virahotkhaṇḍitā.* The only type left is *proṣitabhatṛka.* By normal definition, a *proṣitabhatṛka* is one who is suffering a long separation from her lover due to his journey abroad. However, as already seen in the *nāyikā bheda* section in chapter 2 that a *proṣitabhatṛka nāyikā* can also be one who is sorrow because her lover will start, or is starting, or is gone on a long journey. This *jāvali* portrays an unusual situation. This situation has been classified as *pravatsyat–patika nāyikā* (a *nāyikā* anticipating separation from her lover) in books like *Rasamañjarī. Śṛṅgāramañjarī* later criticized this and classified the *pravatsyat–patika nāyikā* under *proṣitabhatṛka.*[74] (Raghavan 1951: 101; Randhawa & Bhambri 1981) This *nāyikā* is worried and solemn about the coming of dawn which will lead to the separation with her lover. Thus, I treat this as a case of *proṣitabhatṛka.* A *proṣitabhatṛka nāyikā* sometimes tries to console herself. Probably her askings' to her lover is to seek some kind of consolation for the upcoming separation.

The above *jāvali, "aṁtalōnē tellavāre"* in the movie *Muddu Bidda* (1956) is a celebration of the culture of salon performances among the hereditary community of artists from Andhra region. Although their art form was abolished in the same year of 1956[75], their memory is preserved well in this film. The technique of *abhinaya* performance is according to the proposed standards for gesticulation, but has a lot of stylization from the *kalāvantula* community. The *nāyikā* classification for different categories is evident from the song, and performance. The case studies on Kṣetrajña's *padam* and *jāvali* proves that Indian cinema acted as a seamless mirror to showcase the happenings and developments of Bharatanāṭyam in society through its films. Below is a short table that contains the classification of *nāyikās* discerned from the selected Kṣetrajña's *padam* and *jāvali.*

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[74] This is dealt in detail under chapter 2, section 2.8.
[75] Devadasi Abolition Act was passed in Andhra Pradesh in 1956.

song	behavior	experience in love	nature	relationship with lover	pride	situation	hero type
padam	*sāmānya*	*mugdhā*	*uttama*	*kaniṣṭhā*	no	*virahotkhaṇditā*	not clear
jāvali	*parakiya*	*madhyā*	*uttama*	*jyeṣṭhā*	*prem– garvita*	*proṣitabhatṛka*	*dakśina*

Table 4.2: Classification of *nāyikās* in the selected Kṣetrajña *padam* and *jāvali* (Table: by author)

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have captured a part of the landscape where the illustrious Bharatanāṭyam legacy was embedded into the transnational avatar of Indian cinema during the flux period. Bharatanāṭyam and Indian cinema are two big forces that have continuously shaped the cultural context of Indian societies. Carefully etched into the urban memory of India, is the story of the emergence of Bharatanāṭyam as a symbol of national heritage. At the center of Bharatanāṭyam's transfiguration stands the dynamic powerhouse of Indian cinema. Indian cinema has been a massive channel for popularizing anything that featured in it. In the wake of a reform agitation, and a parallel emergence of a revival movement for the South Indian dance form that was finally called Bharatanāṭyam, early Indian cinema became a benefactor, staging several 'authentic' Bharatanāṭyam pieces performed by hereditary and non-hereditary dance artists. The narratives of Bharatanāṭyam and Indian cinema amalgamate at this point. Despite the high visible presence of this combination, it had remained highly understudied in scholarly works. In this work, I brought together a range of contextualization that address complexities and aesthetic trajectories of the combination in a period of flux. It can be clustered into the following: Bharatanāṭyam repertoire in Indian cinema, Bharatanāṭyam technique in Indian cinema, female performers of Indian cinema, *naṭṭuvanārs* and Bharatanāṭyam styles in Indian cinema.

Bharatanāṭyam repertoire in Indian cinema

Indian cinema embodies the splendor of Bharatanāṭyam by embracing the repertoire items of Bharatanāṭyam into its celebrated 'song-dance' routine. Unfortunately, due to the lack of discourses in this area, this was previously an unfamiliar theme. This research endeavored to unearth these magnificent repertoire items from the archives of Indian cinema especially during the highly entropic period characterized by colonial politics, nationalistic agendas, and social reforms movements in the Indian society. Four film clips of *alārippu,* seven film clips of *tillāna,* four film clips of Kṣetrajña's *padam,* and four film clips of *jāvali* between the 1930s to the 1950s were uncovered in the process. The identified film clips were examined to identify and cherry-pick one from each category as case studies for a comprehensive analysis and validation of its performance technique. The

case studies reveal that Indian cinema employed the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire items as an embodiment of its societal undertakings. The re-location of the revived dance form of Bharatanāṭyam onto the public stage and the re-population of the dance form with non-hereditary dancers is visible in the *nṛtta*-based items of Indian cinema – *alārippu* in *New Delhi* and *tillāna* in *Chori Chori*. The veneration enjoyed by the *nṛtta*-based items when Bharatanāṭyam was broadcasted as a symbol of national heritage is apparent in the movie *New Delhi* that is a portrayal of national unity. The selected '*śṛṅgāra*' *padam* and *jāvali* film clips are archetypical of the infamous salon and private performances of hereditary dancers that predominantly formed the reform discourse of the flux period. The *śṛṅgāra padam* in *Devadasu* effortlessly interlaces with the movie's storyline and presents a perfect example of a courtesan's private performance. A *jāvali* from the hereditary community of dancers took a distinctly modern life in the Telugu film, *Muddu Bidda* showcasing a salon performance. Although the *abhinaya*-based '*śṛṅgāra*' items were welcomed in the Indian cinema, I contest that their treatment was perceived with a deleterious eye. This work on the four repertoire items in Indian cinema can act as a reinforcement for further explorations in this regard. By using this study as a pedestal, it is possible to extend to the other repertoire items of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian films as well.

Bharatanāṭyam technique in Indian cinema

The examination and validation of the four repertoire items of Bharatanāṭyam demonstrates that early Indian cinema offered ample space for Bharatanāṭyam to ascribe to its glorious technique. The music notations, notations for *nṛtta,* structural analysis, analysis of *āhārya abhinaya,* video annotations along with an explanation of *nṛtta* evidences the holistic inclusion of Bharatanāṭyam items like *alārippu* and *tillāna* in Indian films. With respect to *nṛtta,* the performance of Vyjayanthimala Bali strictly follows the standard while the *tillāna* performance of Kamala Lakshman deviates from the standard only at a few instances. Some adaptations made for the camera angles appear atypical in Kamala's *tillāna* while it blends well in Vyjayanthimala's *alārippu*. The investigation into the *abhinaya* aspect of Bharatanāṭyam in films clips demanded an exploration into the matters of philology and Indian aesthetics. The portrayal of the lyrical meaning of the *padam* and *jāvali* is seamless with typical gestures and facial expressions from the dancers. Nonetheless, at a specific instance in the Kṣetrajña's *padam* where the lyrics indicate the

act of love-making, the dancer avoids usage of suitable gestures. This confirms the impression of dance reforms in Indian films. An insight into the treatment of the *śṛṅgāra* sentiment was achieved by examining and defining the different types of heroines based on their situations, tempers, and temperaments. I argue that the representations of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian cinema during the flux period were not only profound but also in harmony with its standard technique. The transference of the dance form to early Indian cinema shows it has retained the original form, technique, and choreographies. This is an eye-opener and a delight for the Bharatanāṭyam fraternity showing that the roots of Bharatanāṭyam have been quite strong in Indian cinema although it evolved into a 'cinematic' or 'filmi' form accruing elements from various other dance forms in the later films. Who were the people who played a vital force in the transition – directors, dancers, actors, choreographers, producers? When and how did the transition ensue? These are some interesting questions for further research.

Female performers of Indian cinema

The strong and bold female performers of the mid 20th century Indian cinema embodied the dance heritage, and influenced the ethnic tone of the public. These female performers essentially consisted of non-hereditary Bharatanāṭyam artists who acted as indexes for future artists. This writing has made an effort to discuss the history and artwork of two non-hereditary Bharatanāṭyam performers in early Indian films – Vyjayanthimala Bali and Kamala Lakshman. At the outset, the result has turned out to be stimulating and thought-provoking as both are exemplary artists and true connoisseurs of Bharatanāṭyam. Vyjayanthimala Bali's *alārippu* in the Hindi movie *New Delhi* and Kamala Lakshman's *tillāna* in the Hindi movie *Chori Chori* are proof of their talent, verve, and fortitude to broadcast Bharatanāṭyam to a larger audience. My personal meeting with 'the legend', Vyjayanthimala Bali enriched my perspectives on the transmission of Bharatanāṭyam in Indian films. Additionally, the thesis furnishes an outlook on non-hereditary female dancers in Indian films through the case study of a *jāvali* from a Telugu movie. The technical analysis of *jāvali* and its female hereditary performers agrees and extends from the work of Davesh Soneji (Soneji 2010, 2012). With this dissertation, I attempt to provide an impetus for inquiry into other female Bharatanāṭyam performers of mid 20th century India and other dance forms like Kathak in films.

Naṭṭuvanārs and Bharatanāṭyam styles in Indian cinema

The differing styles of Bharatanāṭyam surfaced in the mid 20th century when the urban societies witnessed a huge influx of hereditary dance masters or *naṭṭuvanārs*. This set the platform for several deliberations that ensued later about Bharatanāṭyam styles. By pervading the dance performances in Indian cinema, the *bānis* left a lasting impression on stage performances as well. The treatment of the differing Bharatanāṭyam styles unfolds the bidirectional influence of Bharatanāṭyam and Indian cinema. In this study, I debated on the performative nuances of two popular *bānis* in Indian films – Vazhuvoor *bāni* and Pandanallur *bāni* together with discussions on the two female performers – Kamala Lakshman and Vyjayanthimala Bali. I explored the journey and styles of three celebrated dance masters of Indian cinema, Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai, Dandayudhapani Pillai, and Muthuswami Pillai and their convoluted interrelationships with the two female performers. Vjayanthimala Bali and Kamala Lakshman showcase a tenacious allegiance to their respective dance styles in the case studies and throughout their career. In the personal interview, Vyjayanthimala displayed a distaste towards Kamala's *bāni.* A clear demarcation between the two styles resulted from the analysis of the dancers' performances in films; Vyjayanthimala Bali as an upholder of Pandanallur *bāni* and Kamala Lakshman as a champion of Vazhuvoor *bāni.* With this work, I try to open doors for research on the choreographies of *naṭṭuvanārs* in Indian cinema.

This work foregrounds on recounting the scene when a part of Bharatanāṭyam's community blended with the Indian cinematic realm. It provides a window to the personal journeys of female performing artists and dance masters of the mid 20th century India. It illuminates how the distinguished repertoire of Bharatanāṭyam was infused into the film industry especially during its ebb and flow in the society. Thus, the work attempts to leave a lasting impression on dance anthropology and sociology by opening many doors in this matter. By presenting specifics of the performance technique, using extensive archival material for analysis, and by positioning myself as a 'artist-scholar', I see this dissertation as a contribution to the over-arching field of performance studies under the broad umbrella of Indology. With a combined methodological approach that includes dance anthropology, dance sociology, performance studies, philology, Indian aesthetics, textual-based research, field research, music notations, and movement analysis, the research has attempted to be

comprehensive and multi-disciplinary. The bidirectional influence of Bharatanāṭyam and Indian cinema is markedly present and outlined throughout the analysis. The results of this research may hopefully serve the Bharatanāṭyam fraternity and the stakeholders involved in the early Indian films. The work is an attempt to take the readers on a journey of richness, complexities, and aesthetics that emerge in this unique landscape of Bharatanāṭyam and Indian cinema, and potentially inspire them for developing further discourses and debates.

Glossary

abhinaya *– Abhi* is a prefix to verbs and nouns expressing "to", "toward", and the verbal root *nī* means "to lead", "direct", or "guide". Thus, *abhinaya* translates as "leading towards". In the context of Indian aesthetics, it means, "leading the audience towards an emotional experience". (Monier Williams 2008) It is the art of carrying forward or communicating an idea or emotion to the audience (Rao 1980: 1). It consists of four types: *āṅgika abhinaya, vācika abhinaya, āhārya abhinaya,* and *sāttvika abhinaya.* The concept of *abhinaya* is discussed in sections 2.2–2.5 under chapter 2.

abhisārikā nāyikā *–* very bravely goes out on her own to meet her beloved.

aḍavu *–* The fundamental dance units used in Bharatanāṭyam *nṛtta* are called *aḍavus.* It forms the vocabulary of movements with hands, feet, eyes, and other parts of the body moving in a highly-coordinated manner. There is a systematic classification of *aḍavus* available. The term *aḍavu* in Tamil language means *cērkkai* or "joining" since it combines steps and gestures. (Kothari 1997: 41–43) *Aḍavu* might have been derived from *adu* which means "beating of the foot" in Telugu language. The words *aduvu* and *adugu* mean "feet" in Telugu. (Devi 1972: 50) There are fourteen categories in the classification of *aḍavus.* They are explained in detail in section 2.1.1 under chapter 2.

ādi tāla *–* It is the most common type of *tāla,* which has eight beats. Each of these eight beats, in turn, have four internal beats. Hence, totaling up to thirty–two beats for the full *tāla* cycle. This type of *tāla* consists of a *laghu*[1] in *catuṣra jāti*[2] and two *dṛtams*[3]. The end of the *laghu* in the first line is marked by the sign ⌎. The second line consists of two *dṛtams* – the two separated by the sign ⌎. The sign ‖ denotes the end of the *tāla*.

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[1] A *laghu* (l) is one of the limbs (*aṅgās*) of the *tāla* or the time measure. It is performed by one beat of the hand and three (or more) counts of the fingers starting from the little finger towards the thumb.
[2] The *laghu* in every *tāla* changes according to five different types of *jātīs* or rhythmic beats: *tiṣra* (3 beats) *catuṣra* (4 beats)*, khaṇḍa* (5 beats), *miṣra* (7 beats), and *sankīrna* (9 beats).
[3] A *dṛtam* (O) is one of the limbs (*aṅgās*) of the *tāla* or the time measure. It is performed by one beat of the hand and one wave of the hand in the air.

For example, the basic sol–fa syllables (S R G M P D N Ṡ) set to *ādi tāla* are notated as follows:

S , , ,   R , , ,   G , , , ,   M , , , , |
P , , ,   D , , , | N , , ,   Ṡ , , , , ||

āhārya abhinaya – It is the idea of communication using costumes, jewelry, make–up, lightings, backdrop. While watching a dance clip or a video clip, the camera movements and shots may also become the *āhārya*. Detailed explanation is presented in section 2.4 under chapter 2.

alapadma hasta – All the fingers a from the *padmakośa hasta* (the fingers are stretched out, and the palm is bent to a hollow) are extended and separated. It is used to show flowers, lotus, full moon, or face.

alārippu – It is the first item in the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire. *Alārippu* generally suggests the idea of blossoming of a flower. The word *alaru* in Telugu means "tower" or "blossom" (Krishnan 2008: 76). The word *alar* in Kannada means "flower" while the word *ippu* means "lowering" or "bringing down", suggesting the blossoming forth of both the dance and the dancer before the spectators (Kothari 1997: 93–96). This dance number shows parallels to a flowering bud, by opening the various limbs of the body sequentially. This, in turn, warms up the body for the rest of the items (Krishnan 2008: 76). It is short, and consists of only *nṛtta* or abstract dance sequence. It is like a warm–up dance employing the movements of all limbs of the body. Detailed explanation is presented in section 3.1 under chapter 3.

āṅgika abhinaya – Communicating an idea using hand gestures, body movements, and postures is called *āṅgika abhinaya*. It involves the movements of *aṅgas* (major limbs of the body)*, upāṅgas* (minor limbs of the body) and *pratyaṅgas* (other limbs of the body). The hand gestures or the *hasta abhinaya* is part of *āṅgika abhinaya*. Detailed explanation is presented in section 2.2 under chapter 2.

añjali hasta – When both palms are joined together (like *namaskāra*) and placed in front of the chest to indicate salutation, respectfulness, gratefulness. The word

namaskāra means an "offering of respect" or "offering of reverence" (Monier Williams 2008).

anupallavi – The second stanza of a song (like a *padam* or *jāvali*) is called an *anupallavi*. The structure of a song usually consists of a *pallavi, anupallavi,* and two to three *caraṇams.*

araimaṇḍi – The basic stance or posture in Bharatanāṭyam is called *araimaṇḍi* (*ardhamaṇḍali* or *ukkāramaṇḍali* as referred to by some authors) (Vatsyayan 1968: 17). *Arai* in Tamil means "half" and *maṇḍi* in Sanskrit means "knees". This stance has an outward bent of the knee, thigh and foot (Kothari 1997: 41–43).

araṅkērṟam – The first formal presentation of a complete performance is called an *araṅkērṟam.* The etymological root lies in Tamil; *araṅkam* means "stage" and *ērṟam* means "climbing", thus "climbing the stage". It is also defined as the maiden performance, or first performance, or debut performance for the dancer. In Sanskrit, it is often called as *raṅgapraveśa,* meaning, "entering the stage" (Rao 1980: 11). It is a landmark in a dancer's career. It happens on an auspicious day. Customarily, the complete suite of the traditional Bharatanāṭyam repertoire is performed here. It takes place in the presence of family, friends, and critics.

ardhapatākā hasta – The little finger from the *tripatākā hasta* (The third finger from the *patākā* is bent) is bent. It is used to show the bank of a river, showing 'two' or 'both', or a small knife.

aruḍi – A small sequence of rhythmic ending phrase in Bharatanāṭyam is called an *aruḍi.* It comes at the end of a *jati* or a *svara.*[4] Rhythmic patterns performed by stamping of the feet and accompanied by the song is called an *aruḍi* (Rao 1980: 13).

aṭṭamī – The side to side neck movements along with perfect coordination of the eye.

āvartana – It is one complete cycle of a *tāla.* In case of *ādi tāla,* there are a total of thirty–two beats (including internal beats) for one complete *āvartana.*

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[4] Refer glossary for the terms *jati* and *svara.*

bāṇi – *Bāṇi* means dancing style in Bharatanāṭyam. Its root lies in Tamil where it is translated as *pāṇi,* meaning "style". It is sometimes referred to as "tradition". It is also colloquially called *vaḻi* in Tamil. *Vaḻi* means "way" or "method" or "manner". (akarāti 2016) A recognizable technique or repertoire developed by a teacher that is also perpetuated by his students. The name of a *bāṇi* is usually derived from the region where the dance teacher hails from. Khokar (2010: 23) says, "the teachers are the rivers and *bāṇis,* its tributaries". The name of a *bāṇi* comes from the region the dance teacher or the *naṭṭuvanār* hails from. *Bāṇi* has a recognizable technique and repertoire that is developed by the *naṭṭuvanār* and perpetuated by his students. Detailed explanation is presented in section 2.6 under chapter 2.

bhāva – *Bhāva* translates to "emotion", "way of thinking or feeling", "manner of acting", or "intention" (Monier Williams 2008). The feeling or emotion that is conveyed by the dancer is called *bhāva.* There are totally eight kinds of psychological states for humans which tend to have a durable effect. They are called *sthāyi bhāvas.* Detailed explanation is presented in section 2.7 under chapter 2.

bhedas – The word *bheda* in Sanskrit translates to "division", "partition", "variety" "splitting", "rending", "disclosing", or "kind" (Monier Williams 2008). It is used in connection with classification of something. Example – *nāyikā bhedas* (classification of heroines).

caraṇam – The third stanza of a song (like a *padam* or *jāvali*) is called a *caraṇam.* A song could also contain more than one *caraṇam.* The structure of a song usually consists of a *pallavi, anupallavi,* and two to three *caraṇams.*

catir – *Catir* was the name used to refer to today's Bharatanāṭyam up until the early thirties of the 20th century. This name was changed to Bharatanāṭyam only to erase the taboo and the cancerous deterioration that had set in the content of the art (Subrahmanyam 1979: 75). The word *sadir,* when transliterated in Tamil is *caṭir*. The word *sadir* is used more commonly.

catuṣra – It is one of the *jātīs* or the rhythmic beats. This *jātī* has four rhythmic beats.

devadāsī – The word *deva* means "god", and the word *dāsī* means "servant" (Monier Williams 2008). The name *devadāsī* is referred to a hereditary dancing girl who is married to the deity of a temple after she undergoes an initiation ceremony. She dances, sings, and performs rituals for the temple deity. The term *devadāsī* is frequently misused and misunderstood. In the late 18ᵗʰ and early 19ᵗʰ centuries, this term was associated with a social stigma.

dhṛgaḍtaka **phrase** – This is the penultimate section in the structure of *alārippu.*

flute – A *flute* is a wind instrument that is used in Bharatanāṭyam recitals. It lays emphasis on the melodic aspect of music.

haṃsapakṣa hasta – The thumb from the *mṛgaśīrṣa hasta* (The thumb and the little finger are extended, and the other three fingers are perpendicular to the palm) is extended. It is used to show the body, covering, or arrangement.

hasta – Hand gestures used in *abhinaya* are called *hastas.* This comes as part of *āṅgika abhinaya.* The various movements of fingers and hands are classified into two main categories: *asaṃyuta hastas* or single–hand gestures, and *saṃyuta hastas* or double–hand gestures. Detailed explanation is presented in section 2.2.2 under chapter 2.

jati – By combining rhythmic patterns or *sollukaṭṭu,* for several *āvartanas*[5], a *jati* is formed in Bharatanāṭyam. Rhythm and speed form the backbone of a *jati.* Different *aḍavus* are choreographed for the *jati* sequences, and creativity plays a crucial role here. It is generally executed in three speeds: *vilambita kāla* (slow speed), *madhya kāla* (middle speed), and *dṛta kāla* (fast speed). The counts in the slow speed are doubled for middle and quadrupled for fast speed. *Jatis* are recited by the *naṭṭuvanār* who is accompanied on the *mṛidaṅgam.* The dancer's anklet (called *salaṅgai*) keeps rhythm. (Gaston 1996b: 260; Devi 1972: 55)

jātī – It refers to the number of rhythmic beats. It can be of five different types: *tiṣra* (3 beats), *catuṣra* (4 beats), *khaṇḍa* (5 beats), *miṣra* (7 beats), and *saṅkīrna* (9 beats).

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[5] Refer glossary for the term *āvartana.*

jatisvaram – as the term suggests, is a combination of *jati* and *svara* patterns. This is a simple *nṛtta* item without any lyrical passages. The *nṛtta* is executed in the form of *kōrvais* (combination of *aḍavus*), and *tirmānams* (ending rhythmic patterns).

jāvali – This item is usually performed after the *padam* in the sequence of Bharatanāṭyam repertoire. It is a genre of poetry with bright, attractive, and catchy music. It is faster in speed and considered to be erotic in style. It is full of *śṛṅgāra rasa* (the emotion of love) portraying different types of heroines. Satyanarayanan Roa in his paper (Rao 1964) talks about the origin of the word *jāvali* from four languages: Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Marati. In the language Tamil, *jāvali* has been traced back to the Urdu word named "*jhali*". However, this has not been verified by the Persian and Arabic scholars. The word "*jāva*" means speed or quickness in Telugu. In Marati, "*jhāvali*" means gesture of the eyes in the language of love. In Kannada, it means a song of lewd poetry.[6] (Rao 1964: 225) In Kannada, "*je*", "*pode*", or "*vode*" means "striking the bow–string with the finger", while in Sanskrit "*jye*" means "bow–string" (Chennakesavaiah 1974: 156). Detailed explanation is presented in section 3.4 under chapter 3.

kāla – The word *kāla* means "period of time", "measure of time", "for a certain time", "part" or "measure" (Monier Williams 2008). It is the speed of execution. It can be *vilambita kāla* (slow), *madhya kāla* (middle), and *dṛta kāla* (fast). The counts in the slow speed are doubled for middle and quadrupled for fast speed (Devi 1972: 55).

kalahāntaritā nāyikā – is remorseful about the fight that she had with her lover. She repents for sending him away.

kalāvantula – A hereditary community of artists who belonged to Andhra Pradesh.

kapittha hasta – The forefinger from the *śikhara* hand is bent over the thumb. It is used to show Goddess Lakṣmī, milking cows, or cymbals.

karaṇa – The term *karaṇa* has its root in the word *kṛ* meaning "action" (Subrahmanyam 2003: 74). *Karaṇas* shaped the basic units of *nṛtta* for many

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[6] Defined by Reverend F. Kittel in 1894 (Soneji 2012: 96).

thousands of years. The fourth chapter of *Nāṭyaśāstra* is devoted to *karaṇas*. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* discusses the three main elements of a *karaṇa*: the movements of legs (*cārīs*), hands (*nṛtta hasta*), and posture of the body (*sthāna*). There are one hundred and eight *karaṇas* in total.

kaṭakāmukha hasta – The forefinger and middle finger from the *kapittha* hand are joined while the other two fingers are raised. It is used to show plucking flowers, necklace, or wearing a garland.

khaṇḍitā nāyikā – is enraged and filled with jealousy upon discovering the signs of sexual relations of her lover with another woman.

kōrvai – A sequence of *aḍavus* combined into a pattern forms a *kōrvai*. In Tamil, *kōrvai* means "to join" or "connect" (akarāti 2016). Many *aḍavus* put together in a sequence make a *kōrvai aḍavu. taṭṭaḍavu, nāṭṭaḍavu, maṇḍi aḍavu, sarukkal aḍavu* can be woven together to form the *kōrvai aḍavu.*[7]

Kṣetrajña – Kṣetrajña was an outstanding composer and musician of Telugu literature who lived during the 17th century. He traveled widely and was patronized by various kings. He is known for his *padam* compositions and he occupies a unique place among the Carnatic musicians. (Rao 1950: 110–112) Detailed explanation is presented in section 3.3.1 under chapter 3.

kudiṭṭumeṭṭaḍavu – In Tamil, *kudiṭṭu* means "to jump" and *meṭṭu* means "to strike". In this *aḍavu*, both the feet are raised on its toes by jumping, followed by striking the floor with the heels. This *aḍavu* uses *alapadma, kaṭakāmukha,* and *tripatākā hastas.* The variations of this *aḍavu* are done using different hand movements (extended or closed arms). The common *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* are '*tai ha tai hi'*.

kuṭṭaḍavu – In this *aḍavu*, the feet strike the floor alternately. Both the feet are raised on its balls with a slight jump followed by one foot coming back to the flat (*taṭṭa*) position, while the other is still balanced on its toes. The body is in *araimaṇḍi* throughout. This *aḍavu* is performed in several permutations and combinations. The *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* are '*ta tai tā hā'*. Sarabhai mentions this *aḍavu* under the

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[7] Refer chapter two, section 2.1.1 for details on *aḍavus.*

category of *eṭṭaḍavu*. *Eṭṭa* here means, "to reach out". This may be because the hands are moved in the fully stretched position with *tripatākā* hasta. However, all the variations of this *aḍavu* have no leg extensions.

kūttu – A term used to refer to 'dance' in ancient Tamil belonging to a period between 500 BCE to 500 CE. There existed various types of *kūttu* right from the *Caṅkam* period. (Viswanathan 1991: 23–26)

lokadharmī – There can be different ways of performing abhinaya. They are called *dharmīs* or modes of presentation. It is the depiction of observations made from behavior and practices in the real world, on stage. When the abhinaya is very close to how it is done in real life, it is called *lokadharmī*. Natural and instinctive gestures, familiar costumes, jewellery and conventions close to ordinary life, are employed in *lokadharmī* style. It engages a lot of mental involvement. (Subrahmanyam 1979; Kothari 1997: 86; Vatsyayan 1968)

madhyā nāyikā – is slightly older and more experienced in love.

maṇḍi aḍavu – The word *maṇḍi* means "knees". This *aḍavu* consists of movements where the entire body rests on its heels, jumping on the toes, and the knees are moved by touching the floor alternately. This *aḍavu* has many more variations where the dancer stretches one leg outwards while resting her body just on one heel. The *hastas* used here are *śikhara* and *patākā*.

mardita aḍavu – This is also called '*tā tai tai tā*' *aḍavu* by many dance teachers. *Mardita* means "to bruise" or "to strafe". This *aḍavu* is performed by bruising the floor with the one foot moving to the right while the other foot goes behind the first foot.

mārgam – *Mārgam* refers to the entire suite of the eight–fold Bharatanāṭyam repertoire. It is performed in a particular order only. (Gaston 1996b: 262; Guhan 1991: 10) The word *mārgam* or *mārga* has several meanings in Sanskrit: "proper course", "route", "right way", "track", or "road" (Monier Williams 2008). Here, it refers to a full definite course where the items of the Bharatanāṭyam repertoire are performed in a fixed order. In the post Bharata period, the work by Bharata came to

be referred to as *mārga*. *Deśī* is another term that is always used alongside *mārga*. The word *deśī* means "regional" or a dance form that traditionally inherits regional tastes. (Subrahmanyam 2003: 52)

mṛidaṅgam – A percussion instrument used mainly for the rhythmic part of Bharatanāṭyam. It is very important for a *mṛidaṅgist* to be in line with the *tāla*.

mṛgaśīrṣa hasta – The thumb and the little finger are extended, and the other three fingers are perpendicular to the palm. It is used to show cheek, or calling the beloved.

mugdhā nāyikā – is one who is young, tender, with the desire of new youth.

muḻumaṇḍi – The full–sit posture in Bharatanāṭyam is called *muḻumaṇḍi* (Vatsyayan 1968: 17). *Muḻu* in Tamil means "full" and *maṇḍi* in Sanskrit means "knees". This stance has an outward bent of the knee, thigh and foot (Kothari 1997: 41–43).

nāṭṭaḍavu – The word *nāṭṭu* in Tamil means "to stretch". The dancer from the position of *araimaṇḍi* stretches one leg outward, striking the floor with her heel, and then, it is brought back to the original position of *araimaṇḍi* by beating the floor with the sole. The other variations include stretching the leg in front of the body, or by placing one foot behind the other with the toes raised. The *nāṭṭaḍavu* also has respective hand and torso movements. The hand gestures used are *kaṭakāmukha* and *alapadma*. The *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* are '*tai yuṃ ta tā tai yuṃ tā hā*'.

naṭṭuvanār – The dance master or the guru who also conducts a Bharatanāṭyam recital by wielding on a pair of cymbals called the *naṭṭuvangam*. A dance master is one who is extremely proficient in music and rhythm. He is the conductor of the orchestra and can understand the intricacies of *vācika abhinaya*. He chants the rhythmic mnemonic syllables called *sollukaṭṭu* which are profusely used for the *nṛtta* aspect of Bharatanāṭyam.

naṭṭuvāṅgam – It is a pair of cymbals used as an instrument for Bharatanāṭyam by the *naṭṭuvanār*. It is used to keep rhythm. The *naṭṭuvanār* recites the *sollukaṭṭu* along with playing the *naṭṭuvāṅgam*.

nāṭyadharmī – There can be different ways of performing abhinaya. They are called *dharmīs* or modes of presentation. It is the depiction of observations made from behavior and practices in the real world, on stage. When there is a lot of grammar and stylization involved while presenting abhinaya on stage, it is called *nāṭyadharmī*. Depicting tears with gestures, a single dancer playing several roles, transition of time and space, acting as though not hearing something uttered in proximity, are some examples of *nāṭyadharmī* mode of presentation. (Subrahmanyam 1979; Kothari 1997: 86; Vatsyayan 1968)

nāṭyarambha – When the arms are outstretched in the *araimaṇḍi*[8] posture with *patākā hasta*[9], it is called the *nāṭyarambha* position. The dancer starts any *nṛtta* sequence from this *nāṭyarambha* position.

nāyakā – The hero of the act, play, or dance is called a *nāyakā*. The composer of songs usually mentions name of the hero. However, in most performances, the dancer depicts only the *nāyikā* while the *nāyakā* remains unseen.

nāyikā – The word *nāyikā* in Sanskrit translates to "heroine in a drama", "mistress", "courtesan", or "a noble lady" (Monier Williams 2008). The heroine in the act, play or dance is called a *nāyikā*. In items focused on the emotion of love, the *nāyikā* yearns for, or is in the presence of her lover. She expresses her feelings, moods, and situations.

nṛtta – *Nṛtta* refers to pure or abstract dance with music and rhythm forming its breath or lifeline. They consist of bodily movements and patterns of dance that practically convey no meaning. The fundamental units of *nṛtta* are called *aḍavus*[10]. Detailed explanation is presented in section 2.1 under chapter 2.

padam – They are *abhinaya* items that are performed to songs or musical melodies. The literal meaning of the word *pada* in Sanskrit translates to "step", "portion of a verse", "footing", "a sign" (Monier Williams 2008). Sometimes, the word *pada* is used instead of the word *padam*. The central theme of *padams* most times consist of a

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[8] Refer glossary for the term *araimaṇḍi*.
[9] Refer chapter two, section 2.2.2 for details on *hastas*.
[10] Refer glossary for the term *aḍavu*.

nāyikā (heroine) who is in love with her beloved. She is either in pain (because of the separation from him), or she is overjoyed (expecting union). In a *padam,* the dancer moves freely in time from present to past to future and back to present. *Padams* can be performed for different *rasas.* However, *śṛṅgāra padams* (*padams* in the emotion of love) are very popular. (Kothari 1997:102; Gaston 1996b: 266) Detailed explanation is presented in section 3.3 under chapter 3.

paical aḍavu – The word *paical* means "to leap" or "to jump". This *aḍavu* consists of leaps and jumps. They are more silent in nature and are done gracefully. The *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* are '*dha lāṃ gu ta ka'.*

pallavi – The first stanza of a song (like a *padam* or *jāvali*) is called the *pallavi.* The structure of a song usually consists of a *pallavi, anupallavi,* and two to three *caraṇams.* The song structure is such, that it goes back to the *pallavi* after every stanza.

pandanallur *bāṇi* – Bharatanāṭyam style made famous by Meenakshisundaram Pillai, and Dandayudhapani Pillai characterized rigid classicism and severity of line and form, a plain smile while performing *nṛtta,* slower tempos, avoids modern innovations, and experimentation.

parakiya nāyikā – may be married or unmarried, but longs for, or is in love with another man.

patākā hasta – All the fingers are held together and extended with only the thumb bent. *Patākā* means flag. It is used in *nāṭyārambha* position, to show clouds, horse, and forbidden things.

periya aḍavu – is used to cover large distances of space. Hand gestures like *alapadma* and *kaṭakāmukha* are used here. The *sollukaṭṭu* are '*tai yuṃ ta tā'.*

pragalbhā nāyikā – is very experienced in love and possesses extreme desire.

proṣitabhatṛka nāyikā is undergoing prolonged separation from her lover or the hero, because of his long travels.

rāga – The combination of notes into a unique and individual structure is called a *rāga*. This form the essence of Indian music with emotional characteristics. The word *rāga* in Sanskrit translates into several meanings: "hue or color", "passion or desire", "love", "beauty", "melody", "harmony", "musical note" (Monier Williams 2008; Britannica 2018).[11] A musician uses the individual structure of a *rāga* to express different melodic types (Sarabhai 2000: 109–110). Detailed explanation is presented in section 2.3.4 under chapter 2.

rasa – The aim of any performance has been to achieve in the minds of the spectators, the state of *rasa*. The literal Sanskrit meaning is "essence" or "juice" or "sap". It can also mean "flavour", "taste", or "soup" (Monier Williams 2008). It describes, among other things, the mental and emotional state of joy and fulfilment that the viewer experiences, when enjoying a successful performance. One can say that the emotion (*bhāva*) that is expressed by the dancer creates a sentiment in the minds of the audience. Detailed explanation is presented in section 2.7 under chapter 2.

sāhitya – The lyrical content of the song is called *sāhitya*. The word *sāhitya* in Sanskrit translates to "literary or rhetorical composition", "poetry", "association" or "connection" (Monier Williams 2008). It is for these lyrics, *abhinaya* is done. The lyrics for Bharatanāṭyam can take any regional language, most common being Tamil, Telugu, and Sanskrit.

sāmānya nāyikā – is a courtesan who is available for any man.

sarukkal aḍavu – The word *sarukkal* means "to slide". The dancer performs this *aḍavu* in the *sama pāda* position. In this *aḍavu*, one foot is stretched sideways and is made to slide without raising the foot from the ground, while the other foot follows the first foot by sliding. Both the feet are then brought to the *sama pāda* position, and then, they are raised on their heels followed by beating of the floor with a slight jump. Some varieties include using toe–heel movement instead of heel–toe movement. The *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* are '*tai ha tai hi*' or '*ta tai tā hā*'.

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[11] *Acoustical Perspective on Raga–Rasa Theory* (Rao 1992), *The Rāga's of Northern Indian Music* (Daniélou 2007) and *Grammar of Carnatic Music* (Vijaykrishnan 2007) are some works on *rāga*.

sāttvika abhinaya – This branch of *abhinaya* is based on the state of mental condition. The idea of communicating something through mental involvement is called *sāttvika abhinaya*. This type of *abhinaya* should be felt by the artist and is one that cannot be taught. (Subrahmanyam 2003: 37) Detailed explanation is presented in section 2.5 under chapter 2.

śikhara – The thumb from the *muṣṭi* (The four fingers of the palm enclose the thumb by bending) is raised. It is used to show a patron, husband, bow, or bell.

śimir aḍavu – The word *śimir* means "to open". This *aḍavu* is performed by opening the hands and legs away from its central position. The hands move outwards like they are opening something. Sarabhai mentions *kaṭṭaḍavu* which is the forerunner of *śimir aḍavu*. They form the starting positions of *śimir aḍavu* and have arms positioned very close to the body as if enclosing. The *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* are '*tai yā tai hī*'.

śloka – The word *śloka* in Sanskrit translates to "a hymn of praise", "a stanza", "a proverb", "a call or voice (of the gods)" (Monier Williams 2008). It is usually solemn with a lot of gravity. It is either in Sanskrit or Tamil, and involves slow *abhinaya* invoking the gods in their peaceful or serene moods.

sollukaṭṭu – Rhythmic mnemonic syllables called *sollukaṭṭu* are recited for an *aḍavu* by the *naṭṭuvanār* to which he is accompanied by the *mṛidaṅgam*. Each set of *aḍavus* is identified by specific *sollukaṭṭu* (Sarabhai 2000: 26–27).

śṛṅgāra rasa – This *rasa* (sentiment) represents love or the erotic feeling. It has been a theme of perennial interest for most of the scholars and poets for many centuries. The primal import of the love song is usually the longing of the *nāyika* (heroine) for the union with her lover. Detailed explanation is presented in section 2.7 under chapter 2.

sūcī hasta – The forefinger alone is raised while others are bent and held by the thumb. It is used to show the number one, world, or city.

sutru aḍavu – The word *sutru* means "to turn" or "whirl". Any swirling movement in the choreography belongs to this category. Here the dancer turns with one foot raised

by balancing her body on the other foot. Some dance teachers also call this the *bhramarī aḍavu.*

svādhīnapatika – is a *nāyikā* who is extremely confident and proud of her relationship with her beloved.

svara – The word *svara* means "a note of the musical scale", "recitation", "accent", or "tone in recitation" (Monier Williams 2008). The sol–fa syllables or the octave notes of Carnatic music (S R G M P D N Ṡ) are called *svaras*. A musical melody within a *tāla* structure sung to sol–fa syllables of Carnatic music is also called a *svara*. A *svara* is the successive steps of an octave in various permutations and combinations. (Vatsyayan 1968: 380–382; Panchāpakésa Iyer 2014: 20)

svīya – is a *nāyikā* who is married and is faithful to her husband.

tāla – *Tāla* is the rhythmical component of dance. They are nothing but the many varieties of time measure. The word *tāla* means "metrical cycle" or "rhythm". There exists a system of *tāla* notation in South Indian Carnatic music. Detailed explanation is presented in section 2.3.3 under chapter 2.

taṭṭaḍavu – The word *taṭṭa* in Tamil means "to beat" or "strike". This *aḍavu* involves striking the floor alternately with the sole, while the body is in the *araimaṇḍi* posture. There are in total, six to eight rhythmic or metrical variations under this category. The *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavu* are '*tai yā tai yā*'. When they are choreographed as part of the repertoire, they can be executed in relation to various *tālas*.

taṭṭimeṭṭaḍavu – The words *taṭṭu–meṭṭu* in Tamil means "to strike and then to beat". Striking is done by keeping the heel raised with only the toes touching the floor. And then the heel is brought back to its flat position by beating. This is usually performed in five different beats (*tālas*): *tiṣra* ('*ta ki ṭa*'), *catuśra* ('*ta ka di mī*'), *khaṇḍa* ('*ta ka ta ki ṭa*'), *miśra* ('*ta ka di mī ta ki ṭa*'), and *sankīrna* ('*ta ka di mī ta ka ta ki ṭa*').

tillāna – The *tillāna* consists of a basic set of rhythmic syllables that are repeated and elaborated continuously throughout the item. The word *tillāna* itself consists of the rhythmic syllables, "*til–lā–na*". It is last item in most Bharatanāṭyam recitals. It is

fast–paced *nṛtta* item. It has *sollukaṭṭu* that are sung by the singer to a specific *rāga* and *tāla,* accompanied by the *naṭṭuvanār* on the cymbals. Detailed explanation is presented in section 3.2 under chapter 3.

tirmāna aḍavu – This is the most important *aḍavu* for the *nṛtta* part of Bharatanāṭyam. It is also called *makuṭa aḍavu.* The words *tirmāna* or *makuṭa* means "ending" or "climax" or "to conclude". This is mostly used for the final part of rhythmic sequences like *kōrvais* or *jatis.* This *aḍavu* generally leads to a group of movements that are repeated thrice, providing a cadence for the climax. There are a wide number of variations for this *aḍavu.* The permutations and combinations for this *aḍavu* can be very complex too. The movement of the arms can be either frontal or in circular patterns. This *aḍavu* involves an intense movement of the torso (twisting of waist), hands, and legs. The *hastas* used for this *aḍavu* are generally *patākā, alapadma, and tripatākā.* The *sollukaṭṭu* for this *aḍavus* are '*dhi dhi tai', 'tai dhi dhi tai',* and so on.

tīrmānam – The ending of *nṛtta* sequences is usually termed as a *tīrmānam.* It comes as the ending of *jatis*[12]. For a *tīrmānam, tirmāna aḍavus*[13] are executed, usually in a cycle of three.

tiṣra – It is one of the *jātīs* or the rhythmic beats. This *jātī* has three rhythmic beats.

tripatākā hasta – The third finger from the *patākā* is bent. It is used to show a crown, tree, or flames.

vācika abhinaya – The art of communication through speech, music, rhythm, prose, and poetry is called *vācika abhinaya.* It includes aspects like proper pronunciation, modulation of voice, accent, and rhythm. Music in Bharatanāṭyam as two fundamental aspects: *rāga* and *tāla.* The musical modes, rhythmical content, and lyrical content are based on the *rāga* and *tāla.* (Kothari 1997: 132–135) Detailed explanation is presented in section 2.3 under chapter 2.

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[12] Refer glossary for the term *jati.*
[13] Refer chapter two, section 2.1.1 for details on *aḍavus.*

varṇam – The word *varṇa* in Sanskrit translates to "color", "beauty", "form", "praise", "the order of arrangement of a song or poem" (Monier Williams 2008). It is the most complex of all items in the repertoire. It has aspects of complicated *nṛtta* and versatile *abhinaya*. The item is very intricate, with a lot of substance. It goes on for about an hour (longest item of the repertoire) giving full scope for the dancer to improvise.

vāsakasajjā nāyikā – is one who is waiting very anxiously for her beloved to return home or come to her.

vazhuvoor *bāṇi* **–** Bharatanāṭyam style made famous by Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai characterized by fluency of gestures and facial expressions, mobile facial features while performing *nṛtta,* fast tempos and aesthetic poses for transitions in music, novelty in the dancer's entries and exits, and complex patterns in *tāla* for the *jatis, kōrvais,* and *svaras.*

vīṇā – A *vīṇā* is a string instrument used in Bharatanāṭyam recitals. It lays emphasis on the melodic aspect of music.

vipralabdhā nāyikā – is upset with her lover for cheating on her. She is greatly offended that her lover did not arrive at the appointed place.

virahotkhaṇditā nāyikā – is a lady pining for her lover. After having waited for him for a long time, she is now starting to get anxious about his return.

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