



Guru Layathvam

Academy of fine arts

IMPORTANT TECHNICAL TERMS

LAYAM

layam refers to an inherent tempo existing in the universe. It is flow of rhythmical movement or energy between two points. This universe exists purely because of layam. In music layam is defined as the flow of rhythmical movement between two aksharas.

THALAM

Thalam refers to union and separation of hands. The union is called GHAATAM and the separation is called USI. In music Talam is defined as a time measurement of any composition. The letter THA is from Lord Shiva's Thandavam and the letter LA is from Parvati's Lasyam. It is a combination of static and dynamic energy.

“ thakaraha shankaroh prokto lakara Shakti ruchhyate

Shiva Shakti sama yoga tala ithyabhidheeyathe ”

AKSHARAS - Major counts of tala

MATRAS – minor or sub units of tala.

AVARTHANAM – One cycle of a tala

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SOLLU – A rhythmical syllable

SORKATTU – Group of rhythmical syllable

PHARANS – Rapid rolling syllables which is double the length (Alavu) of sorkattu.

ADAVU – In any dance form, adavu refers to a basic step.

USI – It is an offbeat from Samam.

KARVAI – It refers to a pause or interval.

ANULOMAM

It is a method, with the speed of the Thalam as constant while varying the speed of the Sorkattu. For example. Sarali Varisai, Janta Varisai ect in Music. Trikala Jathi in Dance.

VILOMAM

Vilomam is a method of swapping the Angas of the existing tala. For instance, in Misra Chapu the pattern of 3 and 4 will become 4 and 3 in Vilomam.

PRATHILOMAM

It is a method, with the speed of the Sorkattu as constant while varying the speed of the Thalam.

THEERMANAM

It is a longer rhythmical phrase which is generally repeated thrice in any form of Yathi (Rhythmical pattern). Theermanam appears at the end of the Jathi. As the name suggests Theermanam serves as the concluding part of a segment, Jathi or Swaras.

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ARUDHI

It is a rhythmical phrase which generally occurs thrice. Its an abridged version of Theermanam. In Bharathanatyam, Arudhis are used commonly in Jathiswarams, Varnams and Thillanas. This is used as an indication of completion of a segment i.e, after Jathi, or Theermanam. Nowadays this is being used even after a swara passages in varnam.

NADAI

It refers to the fixed movements of syllables. The fixed movement is determined by the duration or the length of the syllables. Each number is considered as different nadais as each numbers have different length with different set of movements ie different movements in accordance with the length of the syllables. Our music system has 5 nadais namely Chathurasra , Trisra , Misra , Khanda and sankeerna . Nadai represents length not the speed.

GATHI

Gathi is the duration between two consecutive aksharas of a tala. gathi will be applicable only to the matras or sub counts of a tala. Gati refers to a specific but fixed time-interval between any two beats within a tala. It can again be of five types: Chaturasra, Tisra, Misra, Khanda and Sankeerna. The important thing to remember here is that the common names for the types of Jaati and Gati are only indicators of the values 4, 3, 7, 5 and 9. Whereas Jaati refers to the external finger-counting, Gati refers to the internal count between beats in the tala-cycle. Jaati gives a structure to the tala and Gati determines the gait of the tala. Coming to the 175 talas, it's once again a simple extension of the 7 and 35-tala concepts. Let's use the same example given above, Dhruva tala. Now we already know that it can be of five different jatis. Suppose we specify the Jaati as Chaturasra, let's see how the gati can affect it.

We know that the Chaturasra Jaati Dhruva tala has an external count of 14. However, while rendering the tala, how are we to ensure that the time-interval between each beat is uniform?

This is where we introduce Gati. Now, we could have a fixed interval of 4, 3, 7, 5 or 9 counts between each beat. Let's take the example of Chaturasra Jaati dhruva tala with an interval of 4 units per beat, i.e. Chaturasra gati. The external count of 14 is multiplied by 4 (gati units) and

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we get a total of 56 internal counts for the tala. The same would change to 42 in Tisra Gati (14×3). In other words, each of the 35 talas can be rendered in any of the 5 different gatis. Thus the 35-talas become 175 (35×5)

Trisra gathi - trisra gathi has 3 aksharakalas per akshara, trisra gathi double speed has 6 aksharakalas per akshara.

Chaturasra gathi – chaturasra gathi has 4 matras per akshara.

Khanda gathi – khanda gathi has 5 matras per akshara.

Misra gathi – misra gathi has 7 matras per akshara.

Sankeerna gathi – sankeerna gathi has 9 matras per akshara.