

Topic: Traces of History: The rāgāṅga rāga scheme followed by Muddusvāmi Dīkṣitar with special reference to Mālavagauḷa and its janya-s.

Speaker: Dr Arati Rao

Date & Time: 16.12.2025; 8.20 AM

Venue: Kasturi Srinivasan Hall, The Music Academy.

Abstract –

The rāgāṅga rāga scheme followed in the Muddusvāmi Dīkṣitar tradition consists of rāga-s tracing back to earlier centuries and rāga-s which appear to be artificial creations in the modern period. Compositions in these rāga-s are seen in the Saṅgīta-sampradāya-pradarśini (SSP) of Subbarāma Dīkṣitar. Several of the rāgāṅga rāga-s and their janya-s have been described with song phrase exemplars in Tulaja's Saṅgītasārāmṛta (SSA) and Śāhajī's Rāgalakṣaṇamu (RLS) of the 17th- 18th centuries. These exemplars appear to have been part of gīta, prabandha, ālāpa, ṭhāya and suḷādi songs notated in manuscripts found in the TMSSM Library, Thanjavur. Of particular interest is the rāgāṅga rāga Mālavagauḷa, which has the maximum number of janya-s. The mēla Mālavagauḷa has an interesting history in the mēla period, as seen in references pertaining to the mēla Mālavagauḷa/Gauḷa/Gauḍī/Gurjari in earlier texts such as Svaramēlakalānidhi, Sadrāgacandrōdaya and Rāgamañjari. This paper attempts to examine the features of Mālavagauḷa and some of its janya-s as seen in the compositions in SSP, which include compositions by Dīkṣitar and other composers. The objective of this paper is to trace the evolution of these rāga-s from earlier centuries, as evidenced by Thanjavur manuscripts and the texts SSA and RLS, as well as to examine the extent to which these rāga-s have changed in the Dīkṣitar tradition. This paper also looks into the variations in the features of the same rāga across different compositions in the SSP. The parameters for analysis in this paper are the phraseology and svara-s constituting the scales of the rāga-s.