CHAPTER 7

THE PRECURSOR TO
MARGAM - PRABANDHA AND NIRUPANA
"The Sanskrit texts on Sangeeta like Brihaddeshi, Samgitaratnakara and Sangeeeta Saramrutra belonging to 9th, 13th and 17th centuries respectively. They contain chapters dedicated to the topic of Prabandha-s. A Prabandha is a composition with four anga-s (parts) and six types of dhatu-s (elements)." The dhatu-s include swara-s (musical notes), pada (lyric), biruda (ornamentation of the pada), pata (rhythmic syllables), tala (beat) and tenaka (‘nonsense’ syllables like om nom tom). A study of these texts illustrate that the different types of Prabandha-s were produced by omission of certain anga-s and dhatu-s. However, the term Prabandha continued to be in use during Shahaji’s period (1680-1700 Ad) and it denoted a set form of rhythmic musical compositions. Shahaji, with his innovative mind seems to have invested the elements of the Yakshagana dance drama into the literary form of Prabandha to create a new type which gave plenty of scope for dance with its nritta and nritya aspects.

The term Prabandha literally means a musical presentation with emphasis on poietical composition. Generally, it denotes any work based on a purana story or sahitya. Prabandha was the dominant song-form for a thousand years or a little more till about the 17-18th century. According to Sarangadeva, Nibaddha has three names: Prabandha, Vastu and Rupaka. The best and the most well-established form of Nibaddha Sangita is Prabandha. During the 5-7th centuries, it was described as a form of Desi composition of varied nature and forms (Desikara-Prabandho yam), such as: kanda, vritta, gadya, dandaka, varnaka, karshita-gatha, dvipathaka, vardhati, kaivata, dvipadi, vardhani, dhenki, ekatali, etc. In the context of music, Prabandha is a comprehensive term which refers to a well-knit composition and it stands for a particular, specified form of songs constructed according to a prescribed format. Prabandha was, perhaps, first mentioned in the final Canto of Matanga’s Brihad-deshi (5th century). He described Prabandha simply as Prabhadyate iti Prabandhah (that which is composed is a Prabandha); and, classified it under Desi Samgita (a collection of many song types then popular in various regions). Matanga explains Desi Samgita with the aid of about forty-eight Prabandha songs. However, Matanga remarks that the Prabandha-s are indeed countless; and ‘their complexities are beyond the understanding of weaker minds’. Prabandha has been explained in detail in Prabandha - adhyaya, the fourth Chapter of Sarangadeva’s Samgitaratnakara. Sarangadeva explained Prabandha as that which
is pleasant; and that which is governed by rules regarding Raga, Tala, Chhandas, Vritta (Sanskrit verses) and Anga. Sarangadeva has described about 77 separate Prabandha-s with more than 4200 of their sub-variations.\textsuperscript{2}

Parshvadeva (9\textsuperscript{th} - 10\textsuperscript{th} century), was a Jain-musicologist-Acharya, who in his work, Samgita-samaya-sara divided the Prabandha into three classes: Suda, Alikrama and Viprakirna And, later in the 13\textsuperscript{th} century, Sarangadeva split the Suda into Shuddha Suda and Chayalaga (the Apabhramsa or colloquial form of Chayalaga is Salaga Suda). With this, the major types of Prabandha were counted as four: Shuddha Suda, Salaga Suda, Alikrama and Viprakirna. Among these, the Shuddha Suda was considered pure but rather rigid. It had to contain by six Anga-s or limbs (Svara, Birudu, Pada, Tena, Pata and Tala) and four sections or Dhatu-s (Udgraha, Melapaka, Dhruva and Abhoga).

In contrast, Salaga Suda set to Desi Ragas (Desi-ragadi-samabandat Salagatvam api smrtam) was a more popular form of Prabandha. It was simpler in structure and belonged to Taravali Jaati (class) of Prabandha and needed only two Angas: Pada and Tala. It also had only three Dhatus: Udgraha, Dhruva and Abhoga (but not Melapaka), and an Antara if needed. Hence, the Salaga Suda came to be known as Tri-dhatuka Prabandha; and, was considered pseudo-classical. Yet, the Salaga Suda ranks high among the ancient type of refined songs.

**PRABANDHA AND NIRUPANA: THEIR TANJORE CONNECT TO DANCE**

The two Maratha rulers of Tanjore, Shahaji II and Serfoji II, made a very significant contribution in the evolution of dance compositions during their rule in the 17th and 18th centuries. Their emphasis in dance presentation was essentially theme-based, therefore content and context became extremely important features that dictated the choreography. A considerable amount of literature related to this development of dance has been found compiled in manuscripts titled Prabandha (Shahaji II) and Nirupana (Serfoji II). Both rulers penned several compositions themselves and these seem to be the major link between the repertoire of the Nayaka period and that of the Tanjore Quartet of the 19th century. A study of these brings to light the gradual development of the Bharatanatyam repertoire. It also suggests that the single theme
focus of Serfoji’s *Nirupana* (with the *Ekartha* concept) if properly utilized, could perhaps even be considered for contemporary Bharatanatyam recitals. Actually it has started happening. We shall discuss this in last couple of chapters.

Fig.1: Maharaja Shahaji II Fig.2: Maharaja Serfoji II

King Sahaji II who received the title *Abhinavabhaaja* was a great patron of Performing arts. Sahaji II was a great scholar. He was the author of number of works on drama, poetry, *padas*, *prabandhas* and *ragalakshanas.* Shahaji II wrote four *Prabandha*-s. They were *Siva Pallaki Seva Prabandha*, *Vishnu Pallaki Seva Prabandha*, *Tyaga Vinoda Chitra Prabandha*, and *Pancharatna Prabandha*. Among these four, the first two are operas (*geya nataka*-s) where though there is the dance element, there is a dominance of music and song. On the other hand, the last two *Prabandha*-s abound in dance compositions. The predominant feature of these two works is the complex presentations of pure dance while the thematic content of the work take a secondary position.
Typically a compilation of various types of *daru-s* were the Shahaji II’s *Prabandha-s*. Based on a variety of themes and of a purely devotional or philosophical nature, these *Daru-s* were depicted by the *nayikas*. They had no thematic link, all different. Especially this feature made the *Prabandha* different from the *nataka* of Yakshagana *Prabandha* which had a single theme. Each *daru* had specific *raga-s* and *tala-s* and in many places with *swarajati-s* and *swarasollu-s* as well. A single *Prabandha* included about 50 different *raga-s*. Rare *raga-s* like *Padi, Gumma kambhoji, Purabhi, Revagupti, Ghantarava* and *Lalitapanchama* were mentioned. Apart from the *sooladi sapta talas*, a wide variety of *tala-s* were given.

In the ancient form of *prabhandha-s*, *pada* signified the literary content of the composition. At a certain stage, it came to denote all compositions with meaningful *sahitya*. Today, the term *pada* is synonymous with a particular form of lyric that offers full scope for the expression of emotions that is *Abhinaya*. In the history of Carnatic music, composer-poet Kshetrayya’s *pada-s*, came in the wake of the *madhura bhakti* cult (10th century), and left a deep impression. These *pada-s* on Muvva Gopala depicted various types of *nayika-s* and appear to have been one of the most important inspirations for Shahaji. He wrote about 400 *pada-s* in Marathi, all of which were marked by a spontaneity of expression, linguistic skills and originality of ideas. The *pada-s* are classified into various groups like *Bhakti pada-s, Sringara*...
pada-s, Vairagya pada-s, Neeti pada-s, Bhava pada-s and so on. The first two types are the most appropriate for Bharatanatyam.

"Shahaji’s two main works were Tyagavinodachitra Prabandha and Pancharatna Prabandha. The raga-s, tala-s and swara-s and the sollu-s used in them clearly indicated that these were intended to be rendered in Carnatic music and the classical dance-form prevalent at the time."

A brief description of dance compositions included in these Prabhanda-s.

Vinayaka daru or Vighneswarachi daru is a depiction of Lord Gajanana, through a simple sahitya having a pallavi and two or three charana-s of two lines each. In the Yakshagana tradition popular in Telugu and Tamil speaking areas, a recital would traditionally begin with a song danced in praise of Lord Vigneshwara. A dancer, wearing the mask of Ganesa, would come dancing on the stage. The Dasavari plays of Maharashtra, as do other popular folk theatre traditions such as the Bhavai in Gujarat, also have the same feature.

Sallamu daru is a corrupt form of ‘salaam’, an Urdu equivalent for namaste, a manner of respectful greeting. It entered Telugu literature probably due to the
influence of the Muslim Nawab’s of Golconda who ruled over Andhra in the late 17th century and patronized the local arts. The fact that words like ‘sallamu’, ‘sallamure’ occur at the end of every stanza is also believed to be one of the reasons for this name. It incorporates swara-s, sollu-s and sahitya of various deities. Shahaji composed a series of 30 sallamu daru-s for 30 different deities. Each daru is followed by a pada in the same raga and invoking the same deity. All these sallamu daru-s have the same structure as that mentioned above, and all of them contain the Tyaga mudra of Shahaji. Apart from displaying Shahaji’s command over this form of music and dance composition, these daru-s also furnish information on swara prayoga-s of the raga-s popular in Shahaji’s period, including those of some rare raga-s like soratha, revagupti, ghantarava and lalitapanchama. A detailed study of sallamu daru-s reveals that these dances were basically performed in temples as ritualistic dances and could have been the forerunner of the sabda-s of later times.

Saptasagarasooladi Prabandhalila daru is a composition of seven verses in praise of Siva as Tyagesha. It is a Ragamalika composition. The seven sooladi tala-s -- dhruva, matya, roopaka, jhampa, triputa, ata and eka are mentioned for each charanam. Particularly noteworthy is the specification of a different raga for each stanza. All the raga-s are of the goula variety, namely, narayanagoula, kannadagoula, malavagoula, reetigoula, poorvigoula, chayagoula and kedaragoula. Muthuswami Dikshitar (1775-1835) also composed a series of kriti-s in these seven raga-s on goddess Neelotpalamba of Tiruvanur.

Panchatala lila daru is a composition that includes a passage of sollu-s (pata), words in praise of Shiva. The composition uses five different tala-s --roopaka, chatchatputa, chaachatputa, sampadvesta and ananta are mentioned. Of these, except roopaka, the other tala-s are no longer in regular use.

Sringaralila daru is a composition of two passages, one consisting of swara-s and the other of sollu-s. A small verse of two lines addressing Tyagesa is incorporated in both the passages. The title Sringara daru seems rather odd for a composition which is obviously an item of pure dance. There is a Sutradhara’s instruction in between the two parts of this composition which says that, after performing the swara-s, the jati-s for the swara sollu-s should be performed. This composition seems to be the forerunner of later sollu-s, finally emerging as what we now perform as Jatiswaram.
Swarasabdartha tala trinsamavaratna Prabandha daru is a type of Prabandha that incorporates swara-s, sahitya and sollu-s. It is in todi raga and three different tala-s are suggested for its three parts. Each part contains a passage of swara-s, followed by a verse and a passage of sollu-s. This type of Prabandha is also found in Serfoji’s Nirupana where it is referred to as triputa.

Jakkini daru is a rhythmic composition, incorporating several charanam-s of sollu-s. It also includes wording like ‘Yallila yalla lalle’ and ‘Yallila yallam le’. Each composition begins with a verse in praise of a deity. It is followed by a pallavi which is to be repeated after every charanam of sollu-s and before the last charanam came a small verse of two lines. This daru is also found in Serfoji’s Nirupana though with some structural variation. The later-day Tillana shows a lot of similarity to it.

Ganapati Kautta is a composition similar to the kavuthuvam performed in present-day Bharatanatyam recitals. Beginning with sollu-s, it ends with a teermanam. No raga or tala is mentioned for it, since kautta-s are usually recited and not sung.

Abhinaya daru is a novel composition depicting the divine dance of Nataraja and meant to be performed as nritya. The sollu-s are incorporated in the text. The composition is in the form of a padam with a pallavi, anupallavi and three charana-

Fig.5 : Tanjore Nautch Party
s, with a scope for interpretation in *nritta* as well as *nritya*. It seems to have paved the way for the later-day *varnam*.

The four famous *prabanda’s* of Shahaji *Vishnupallakiseva Prabandam, Sankarapallaki Seva Prabandam, Pancharatna Prabandam* and *Tyagarajavinodhachitra Prabandam* are very special.6 These are *prabanda natakas* with beautiful *padas* in *rakti* rags and *gana* rags - depicting *Bhakti, Sringara* and *Vairagya* themes. *Padas* of such themes, collectively called *Tyagesa Padas* are in Sanskrit, Marathi and Telugu languages. These collections of *padas* are classified as *bhakti, bhava, vairagya, sringara, hasva padas, neethi padamulu* and *mangalamulu*. The *padas* of Shahaji so far identified and available reveal his mastery over the languages and his deep scholarship in music and *sahitya*.

An important landmark cognizable during the reign of Shahaji was the development of a musical opera known as *Geyanatakas*. The birth of *Geyanatakas* spurred several other kinds of dance and musical forms and their combinations. For example, the four *Prabandha-s* are also very special (*Sankara Pallaki Seva, Vishnu Pallaki Seva, Pancharatna, Tyagaraja Vinoda Chitra*) and represent a new class where the dramatic, literary, musical and dance elements are happily blended. It is clearly evident that Shahaji was the innovator of a new variety of *Prabandha* compositions that focused on musical and dance significance. "*Raghunatha Nayak’s* work like *Valmiki Charitram* and *Raghunatha Ramayana* were also examples of *Prabandha-s*. But Shahaji combined together the tradition of the literary *Prabandha* and the *Yakshagana* tradition. He created a fusion of the two and produced what are known as *drishya kavyas*. A harmonious blending of Sanskrit and Telugu with plenty of scope for dance both in its *nritta* and *nritya* aspects are found in these *drishya kavyas*. Shahaji conveys a dramatic story through song, dialogue, *abhinaya* and *nritta* in these dramas."7

"One of the earliest *geyanatakas* in Telugu is the *Pallakiseva Prabandha*. Tyageswara, is the presiding deity of Thiruvur around whom the Opera is developed. Shahaji had witnessed the *Pallakiseva* of the Lord *Vitanka Tyagesa* praying for the union with the lord, facing the north-east direction."8 The *Pancharatna Prabandha* gives a wonderful treatment of dance and music, in which a
band of five artistes consisting of two dancing girls, nattuvanar, chenchu kuravas, and a servant to help the artistes form the group. They visit the court of Parameswara and pleased with their talents in dancing, the Lord honors them. This work is noteworthy, because it consists of ghananatya. This dance is full of jatis and korvais in different talas. The sequence of korvai, jati, ganapathi kautuvam, darna, etc. present novelty to this production. It also shows a high degree of perfection of the art where sahitya is given secondary importance and the emphasis is on music and rhythm. Pancharatna Prabandha stands as a monumental evidence to Shahaji’s proficiency in music and dance. The Vishnu pallakiseva prabanda has Goddess Lakshmi as nayaki. It consists of sobhana, pavvalimbu, daru, dvipada, padva, dodhaka, davalambu and melukoluku. Pallakiseva therefore is a kind of temple service, very much popular in the district of Tanjore. The deity is taken out in procession followed by music and dance. A remarkable point is the description of such processions is made in elegant Telugu. Vinodachitra Prabandha is a manipravala Prabandha in which the songs are composed in Sanskrit, Marathi, Telugu and Tamil.

In Sankarakalinatana samvada natakam the daru-s are very unique in nature. The daru-s with different types of flowers, birds, animals, society, people, etc. are composed by Shahaji and explained in detail. While choreographing the dancer can incorporate different hastas from the dance texts, or even create new hastabhinayas. Such dance compositions allow for improvement in hastabhinayas. Thirty varieties of talas and its usages are described in a daru in this natakam. A unique item called Svara-sabdarta-taladinavarathna Prabanda is filled with jatis and svaras, in raga todi and dhruva tala in this nataka. This natakam demand a great experience and knowledge of dance on the part of the composer and dancer for such songs. It speaks volumes of Shahaji’s music and literary accomplishments.

It is very clear in the light of the textual knowledge that different types of Prabandhas were produced by omitting or including any of these six dattus or four angas. Prabandha is a poetical composition or kavya. In this sense The Mahabharata in Telugu and Nalayira Divyaprabandam in Tamil may also be referred to as Prabandha. It came to mean “a kavya of erotic type” in the beginning of the 16th century. It contain dvarnana (description) of a mountain, river, king, love, capital,
sunset, marriage and such. The Prabandhas are classified as 1. Prakyata prabandha, here the theme is from an epic or purana. 2. Utpadya Prabandha, here the story is from the imagination of the author. 3. Misra Prabandha: the theme is born out of the authors’ imagination and borrowed from epic or puran and mixed up with interesting incidences.

Fig.6 : Tanjavur Palace

During 16th century this variety of Misra Prabandha gained popularity. The old Prabandha form of musical compositions were replaced by the innovation of kriti and keertana. The Prabandha form was popular during the time of Shahaji as seen from the evidences. And it denotes a set form of rhythmic musical composition at this point of time. The Prabandha of Shahaji is a compilation of various types of daru-s is mentioned earlier. Example: abhinaya daru, Vigneshwara daru, jakkini daru, sringara daru, leela daru etc. what makes the Prabandha different from the nataka or Yakshagana which is expected to have a single theme that the daru-s have no thematic link. Each daru is mentioned with the appropriate names of talas, svarajathis, ragas, and sollukattus. Shahaji’s prabandha-s have wide varieties of daru-s suitable for dance presentations.
On the other hand, Serfoji II introduced a new form of dance that went by the name of Nirupana-s. The term Nirupana refers to Sangeet Upanyasa. The text of Natyaprabandha or Nirupana compositions of Raja Sarfoji II have been incorporated in the text 'Korvayanche Sahityache Jinnah' based on a puranic epic and kalpitha kathas. It is written by Shri Sarfoji II Raje Bhosale and contains seven Nirupana-s or narrative. The Original Manuscript has thirteen complete Nirupanas and few individual pieces. These are narration of a story with vivid themes possessing all the features of a dance repertoire. Nirupana literally means the amplification of a theme. The root seems to have been from the Maharashtrian kirtan, popularly known as kathakalakshepam. Serfoji’s Nirupanas present a single theme woven into a series of eighteen different types of dance compositions.

The eighteen items that figure in one Nirupana are:

1. Jayajaya  
2. Saranu  
3. Alaru  
4. Sollu  
5. Sabda  
6. Varnam  
7. Pada  
8. Swarajathi  
9. Abhinayapada  
10. Tillana  
11. Arjitapada  
12. Jakkini  
13. Geethi  
14. Prabanda  
15. Triputa  
16. Sloka varna  
17. Kautta  
18. Mangala.
Serfoji II was the first composer to introduce a single theme concept. All these original titles of the eighteen varieties are in Sanskrit and Devanagari manuscripts. Sarfoji II’s Nirupana, in short, includes compositions which relate to the repertoire of the past as well as the present. An important aspect is that the composer has prescribed a single raga and tala for the whole series of eighteen compositions. This may or perhaps be impractical, judged from the point of view of the present day connoisseur. But this was definitely accepted by the audience of Serfoji’s time since the performance went throughout the night. “The thirteen varieties of Nirupana compositions written mostly in Marathi by Sarfoji II are as following:”\(^{11}\)

1. Uma Mahesvara parinaya
2. Kumar Sambhava Nirupana
3. Kiratajuniya Nirupana
4. Mahadevace agaman Sakhine Parvatisa Parihasa Purvaka janate Karanyachi Kalpit Katha
5. Virahinkarta Manmathopalambha Kalpita Katha
6. Viratpatni Samvd
7. Nirguna Svamubhav Pratipadana purvaka sagunapar upadesa
8. Parvatyopakhyana Nirupana
9. Mahadevaci Prarthana
10. Sakhtne nayakice Srama NayakasaKalavoona Sanghanopaya Karane
11. Sakhine nayakisa Buddhivadha Sanganyachi Kalpitha Katha
12. Suladi Nirupana
13. Salamacha jinas Kalpita Katha

All the Nirupanas begin with the invocatory item jayajaya and end with mangalam. These can be danced as a solo performance. The performance conveys all features, emotions and moods of different characters. What is to be noted in this work, is the existence of seven different types of allarippus in different talas. Several items in the programme are gradually introduced in due course of the performance, so as to enable the audience to understand the thematic subject and the succeeding sequence by excellent exposition through gestures and abhinaya.

Though these Nirupanas are in Marathi, they are set to Carnatic mode of raga and tala. This forms a good background for sadir dance. The dance items present in these Nirupanas are alaru, sabdam, sollu, varnam, padam, tillana, kavutta, svara, jati, jakkini and mangalam. This type of dance was called bhedyaka and performed by a solo dancer, depicted or dramatized as a complete play. Apart from these Nirupanas, Serfoji ii also composed a suladi in ragamalika and talamalika and salamachi jinna kalpitha katha in raga attana and aditala. This dance piece explains very colorfully the various kinds of salams, salutations, ramram, namaskar, mujaras, offered to Raja Serfoji II in his darbar. The method and practice of various communities and people of India and their respect to the king are vividly presented.
Each of Sarfoji II’s Nirupana-s presents a single theme woven into a series of 18 different types of dance compositions. He seems to be the first composer of recent times to have introduced the ekartha -- single theme -- concept in dance compositions. Each Nirupana also has a title which is suggestive of the story-line of that particular Nirupana. For instance, the Nirupana Kirata Arjuneeyam is the story of the duel between Arjuna and Lord Shiva disguised as a hunter; Uma Maheshwara Parinaya describes Shiva and Parvati, while Sakhine nayakis budhivad sanganyachi kalpit katha tells the story of a mature lady giving advice to a newly-wed nayika.

"Various features of the compositions which are part of Serfoji’s Nirupana-s seem to be the precursors of most of the compositions of the compact series later delineated by the Tanjore Quartet. In Addition to the Nirupanas, his another work is ‘Vividha Karnataka Raga Ragini’\(^\text{12}\)The 18 components of each Nirupana listed earlier, are explained as below:

1. *Jayajaya*: This is a prayer song, a kind of invocation at the beginning of the performance. *Jayajaya* means ‘victory to thee’. It is a benediction song in which the dancer seeks blessing of devi Parvati for the success of the programme. The song has a *pallavi* followed by an *anupallavi* and a *charanam*. These are on various deities. The words *jaya jaya* occur at the
beginning of every line. In today's South Indian Music, it is known as 
Todyamangalam.

2. **Sharanu**: This is prayer song wherein the devotee sought shelter of goddess 
Tripurasundari for the attainment of fame. This seems to be the second 
invocatory song, where instead of *jayajaya*, the word *sharanu sharanu* are 
repeated after each line. **Sharanu** means ‘I surrender’, a form of obeisance, a 
respectful bow. These two prayer songs are only sung, unaccompanied by any 
dance.

3. **Alaru**: Alaru is a Telugu word literally meaning 'Blossoming'. The danseuse, 
as a devotee makes obeisance with folded hands in reverence to the Deities, 
the Guru, the elders and the learned Assembly and seeks their blessings. This 
is a composition consisting entirely of sollu-s of mnemonic syllables. It 
begins with sollu-s called tattakara, and ends with a pattern of sollu-s called 
aditya. The in-between main portion is called alaru. The tattakara sollu-s are 
made of letters *ta, tha, da* only and it is the same in all the alaru-s. Aditya is a 
small teermanam of one line. The similarity of the alaru with the present day 
alarippu is obvious.

4. **Sholla**: Shollu, Sorkattu is a Tamil word for Jati, or Bol. This dance form is 
an excellent synthesis of Sollu-s (Time - measures) and Swaras (Melodic 
Notes). It is more elaborate form of Nritta. It Exhibits graceful hand gestures 
and rhythmic patterns of foot movements. In the context of dance, sollu-s are 
sound syllables used to accompany the dance. In this composition, the sollu-s 
are sung like swara-s. The composition consists of three charana-s of sollu-s 
and a jati pattern. Serfoji’s sollu-s seem to be the precursors of Jatiswaram.

5. **Shabda**: Shabda means words. Shabda is an Abhinaya item with 
interpretation of a song through gesture and expression. This composition 
incorporates sahitya with the sollu-s. It begins with a passage of sollu-s 
followed by a stanza of song, a line of sollu-s and concludes with a short 
teermanam. Sabda-s in praise of various deities were performed in temples. 
As the song literature is very concise in this item, there is a great scope for
‘Sanchari Bhava’ in dance. The sahitya of each of Serfoji’s shabda-s has a theme consistent with that of the Nirupana to which the shabda belongs.

6. **Varna:** It comprises four lines of pallavi-anupallavi. This is followed by a big passage of swara-s and its corresponding sahitya (called chitta swara and chitta swarasahitya respectively in the sampradaya). Then comes a line or sahitya (called ettugada in sampradaya) followed by 4-5 charanawara-s and their corresponding sahitya. Only a few varna-s of Serfoji contain sahitya for the chitta swara-s and charana swara-s.

7. **Pada:** There are in all three pada-s in each of Serfoji’s Nirupana-s. The one following the varnam is called pada, while the other two are called abhinaya pada-s. The pada has a pallavi-anupallavi followed by a swara passage and its corresponding sahitya and one charanam.

8. **Swarajati:** There is a beautiful fusion of different modes of tala and the vivid expansion of raga in this item. In Serfoji’s swarajati after pallavi there are swaras and sahitya and no solkattus or bol. Traditional swarajati usually depicts devotional sentiment (bhakti Rasa), while in Serfoji's item various details of the narration are continued as a Story.

9. **Abhinaya pada -I:** Abhinaya pada is a song which expresses one predominant mood poignantly and the dancer depicts it with abhinaya of great intensity.

10. **Tillana:** This is a composition consisting of sollu-s and only a small verse is included in the last part. The patterns of sollu-s abound in sounds like tan, tom, nam, jham, dhim and also words like tillana, dirina, tandirina, etc. Tillana is similar to the song-form in Hindustani music called tarana, which commonly does not include meaningful poetry, though some rare compositions do include verse.

11. **Abhinaya pada II:** In the chronological order of Serfoji’s Nirupana, tillana is followed by another abhinaya pada. The construction of this pada is same as
for the earlier *abhinaya pada*, except that this one has three *charana-s* while the earlier one has two.

12. **Jakkini**: This is a combination of *sollu-s*, *swara-s*, *sahitya* and the words sound like *yallam, yallilam*, and *lale*. The composition begins with *sollu-s*, followed by a line of *swara-s*. Then come a verse in praise of a deity, a verse incorporating ‘*yala lale*’, again some *sollu-s* and four lines of *swara-s* at the end. According to some scholars, this *daru* derives its form originally from the dance of *jakkulu*, the folk performers of Andhra. Some believe it to be a corrupt form of *yakshaini*, the celestial danseuse or musician. Other opinions suggest that *jakkini* is a vibrant rhythmic composition. *Jakkini daru-s* are also found in the traditional Telugu Yakshagana-s. Words like ‘*yalla, yallilla*’ seem to be the corrupt form of the Urdu word, ‘*Alla, Ya Alla*’. It is interesting to note that some of the old *tarana-s* of Hindustani music also include such wordings, which further confirm the later replacement of *jakkini* by *tillana*, influenced by the Hindustani form.

13. **Geeta**: Geeta is twofold - *Lakshana geeta* and *Laksha sanchari Geeta*. The latter is utilised for dancing. In this mode of dance, the composition of the item consists of ‘*swar-s*, ‘*sahitya*’ (song) and ‘*tala*’. The *nritta* is performed on *swaras* first and the *abhinaya* accompanies the *sahitya*. This seems more of an exercise for vocal music than a dance composition. It comprises only *swara-s* and their corresponding *sahitya*.

14. **Prabandha**: Technically, this is a composition similar to Geeta. Along with Swara and Sahitya, it also incorporates Swara- shollus. With *Aalap* and *That* Prabandha forms or becomes a part of Chaturdandi compositions. it is a special musical mode in *gandharva* style of singing. It can notes an intact composition. The *abhinaya* accompanies *sahitya* and the *nritta* is performed on *paata*. Both are accompanied with *swara-s* which are followed by *Tana*. This item is now almost extinct.

15. **Triputa**: This is actually a part of *prabandha*. In *Samgitaratnakara* it is also known as Tipatha. Like the interwoven petals of a flowers, the three parts of a
dance, viz., Patta (bol), Biruda (Benediction verse on which 'abhinaya' is performed) and Swara-s are intertwined and form a complete exposition. This is also a rare and novel dance composition of Serfoji.

16. Shlokavarna: This is a novel composition. It consists of a sloka (verse) and a charanam of swara-s. The sloka-s as performed in Bharatanatyam have parallels in old Telugu Literature called the padyam-s which are performed without tala interwoven in the alapa-s. Serfoji’s shlokavarna-s are supposed to be performed with tala, and they have charanaswara-s.

17. Kautta: Kautta, kouta or koutuvam all seem to be the corrupt forms of the Sanskrit word koutukam which literally means words of praise. “Koutukam” is defined in Nandikesvara’s Bharatarnava as a dance composition set to rhythm, comprising drum syllables (para-s of sollu-s) intermixed with words in praise of a deity.”

13 (Anubandh 1. Shloka 11-14) In older times this dance form was witnessed only in temples. Traditional koutukam-s in Tamil are available even today. Serfoji has termed it as kauttam in old Marathi language and for most of his kauttams he has fixed the Raga in which the song is to be sung. The traditional koutukam-s are not sung but only recited, set to a particular tala. It is an absorbing mode of prayer to god. In Serfoji’s chronology this item is performed last. In Modern usage it comes at the start.

18. Mangala: This is a prayer sung by musician at the end of the performance. The danseuse only beats her feet in rhythm without dancing. This is a concluding prayer song, requesting god to pardon the dancer’s mistakes and give his blessing. The purpose of 'Mangal' is to seek pardon for all shortcoming during the performance, both as regards dance and music. Serfoji has written several mangala-s different raga-s depending on the raga of the particular Nirupana. Today’s Bharatanatyam performance also concludes with a prayer called nitya mangalam or simply mangalam.
This format was applied successfully in the development of the theme through the choreography and performance of 'Kirataarjuneeyam'. The Nirupana begins with a prayer to Lord Shiva in jaya jaya and sharanu sharanu, followed by alaru and sholla. In sabda, the story begins and it is further developed in the varna. Different episodes from the story are then narrated through the different pada-s, while the summary or gist is presented after the tillana in the shlokavarna. A detailed study of these compositions also throws light on an important stage in the development of the Bharatanatyam Margam from a mere string of daru-s to the well-planned set of compositions. Jaya jaya and Sharanu sharanu are parallel to present-day Stuti and Todaya mangalam. Alaru is akin to alarippu. Sollu is the transition point of Shahaji’s Sringaraleela daru and the present-day Jatiswaram. His shabda, varna, pada and tillana are similar to the present-day shabdam, varnam, padam and tillana. Jakkini is similar to Shahaji’s jakkini daru while geeta, Prabandha and triputa seem to be the old-forms of Prabandha-s. Swarasjati corresponds to the compositions of the same title composed by Purandaradasa. Shlokavarna comprises a single verse. However, it has been set to a tala and is not like sloka of the present-day repertoire which is presented without the bindings of tala.

Serfoji’s Nirupana include compositions which relate to the repertoire of the past as well as the present. Another aspect of the Nirupana is that the composer had prescribed a single raga and tala for the whole series of the 18 compositions, lasting long hours.
Serfoji’s *Nirupana* include compositions which relate to the repertoire of the past as well as the present. Another aspect of the *Nirupana* is that the composer had prescribed a single raga and *tala* for the whole series of the 18 compositions, lasting long hours. It is quite likely that in Serfoji’s period, the *Nirupana*-s were performed during all-night performances. Thus a comparative study of the of the repertoire contained in the *Prabandha*-s of Shahaji (17th century), the *Nirupana*-s of Serfoji II (18th century) and the dance *Margam* introduced by the Tanjore Quartet (19th century) points to a slow evolution of the Bharatanatyam recital format through centuries. It throws light on the fact that the earlier Dasi-attam performance was greatly influenced by the presentation of Bhagavata Mela. The traditions of dance drama as well as the solo dancing of the devadasi-s flourished simultaneously in Tanjore, especially during the Nayaka and Maratha periods. There were many dance varieties performed in group and solo by the court dancers specially to please the king. The *nautch* dance is one such variety which is the combination of classical and folk dances. "During the period of Serfoji the following items were danced in the court under the name of *nautch*."14

1. Jakkini
2. Perani
3. Gondal
4. Goph or Garba Dance
5. Dhrupadnautch
6. Sangitamelam Nautch
7. Kanchin Nautch
8. Desi Navpadh Nautch
9. Tippri
10. Chitra Natya

The compositions of Bhagavatars were presented by *devadasi*-s and the Bhagavata Mela adopted the Dasi Attam dance techniques. Thus there was a great deal of exchange of ideas till Dasi Attam finally emerged in its Sadir form during the period of the Tanjore Quartet.
Through this chapter, the continuity of solo dance and dancer is seen clearly. And the shape and format of dance presentation which is the main hypothesis of the research are coming into focus.

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