

Folk music influence seen in the Gēyanāṭaka “Nowka Charitramu” of Saint Tyāgarāja

Name of the Author: H.G.Amrutha Varshini, MA(Music), Ph.D(music)

Designation:

Carnatic classical Vocalist, AIR graded artiste (B Grade in both classical and Devotional Music)

Guest Faculty, Dept of Performing Arts, Bangalore University,
Tagore National research Scholar

Address, Email and Phone Number:

No 133, 13th cross, b/w 10th and 11th main, Malleswaram, Bengaluru-560003

Varshini.amruta@gmail.com

9480797278

Abstract:

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The *Gēyanāṭaka* “Nowka Charitramu,” attributed to Sadguru Tyāgarāja, presents a unique lyrical narrative centered on a symbolic boat ride between Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Gōpi-s. Deviating from the traditional portrayal of *Rasa Kreedā* found in the *Bhagavata Purana*, this operatic work explores deep devotion (*prapatti*) and divine love. It draws inspiration from regional literary traditions, such as the Bengali *Nowka Vilasa*, to forge a distinct spiritual path toward salvation.

While Tyāgarāja's parallel opera *Prahlada Bhakti Vijayamu* remains firmly rooted in classical traditions, “Nowka Charitramu” stands out for its intricate synthesis of classical and folk elements. Though structured within a limited palette of sixteen classical ragas and traditional talas, the folk influence remains highly visible. This study examines how Tyāgarāja juxtaposes chaste Telugu *Padyas* (poetic verses) with simpler, dramatic *Daruvus* (songs) featuring colloquial language and local dialects. This deliberate linguistic and melodic simplicity reflects the innocence of the rural women of Gokula. Ultimately, this research underscores how Tyāgarāja leverages accessible folk traditions and familiar cultural motifs to bridge high art

and community resonance, effectively illuminating the profound spiritual connection between the *Jeevatma* and *Paramatma*.

Key Words:

Gēyanāṭaka, Sadguru Tyāgarāja, Folk theme/ Folk music influence, *Daruvu*-s, *Prapatti*

Introduction:

The *Gēyanāṭaka* “Nowka Charitramu,” attributed to Sadguru Tyāgarāja, presents a lyrical narrative centered on the boat ride between Kṛṣṇa and the Gōpis. Unlike the *Bhāgavata*'s portrayal of *Rāsa Krīḍa*, this work emerges as a unique exploration of devotion and love, drawing on both classical and folk traditions of South Indian music and literature. We do not see the mention about this Nowka Charitra in the *Bhāgavatam*, but we find works like *Nowka Vilāsa*, *Nowka Vihāra*, a Bengali work, which seems to be a source of inspiration for Tyāgarāja to compose this *Gēyanāṭaka*.

Scope of Study:

Tyāgarāja's two *Gēyanāṭaka*-s, “Nowka Charitramu” and “Prahāda Bhakti Vijayamu”—demonstrate distinct stylistic approaches; while the latter is deeply rooted in classical elements, the former showcases an intricate blend of folk influences. “Nowka Charitramu” employs a range of Ragas, including ānandabhairavi, Nādanāmakriya, and Punnāgavarāḷi, alongside various Tāla-s such as Mīśra cāpu, ādi, and Rūpaka. Though only 16 Ragas are used in the entire *Gēyanāṭaka*, the folk influence is clearly visible especially in the “*Daruvu*’s” or songs where the language as well as the melodic representation is predominantly colloquial in nature. While the Padyas are composed in chaste Telugu, the *Daruvu*’s are much more simpler and Dramatic in nature to suit the theme of the *Gēyanāṭaka* where the scenes are between the simple women of Gōkula (the Gōpis) and the little mischievous Kṛṣṇa. The juxtaposition of chaste Telugu Padyas with the simpler, more accessible *Daruvu*-s enhances the narrative's relatability, incorporating local dialects and familiar motifs that resonate with the community.

This work not only embodies profound spiritual themes but also serves as a testament to Tyāgarāja's ability to synthesize classical and folk elements, fostering a deeper connection between the Jīvātma and Paramātma. By exploring the narrative style, musical structure, and

cultural resonance, this study underscores how these folk influences enrich Tyāgarāja's message of **Prappati**, illuminating the path to salvation.

What is a *Gēyanātaka*?

In simple terms, *Gēyanātaka* refers to a sung drama—essentially a theatrical form where the narrative unfolds primarily through music and songs (Santa). Although the term *Gēyanātaka* does not appear explicitly in traditional musicological texts, it can be seen as a precursor to operatic forms. For example, Bhōja in his *Sṙngāra Prakāśa* discusses dramatic forms, referring to them as *Prabandhā-s*, which are rich in music and dance elements. These forms were common during the Nayak and Maratha rule, leading to the development of works like *Nadanar Charitram* and *Pallaki Sēva Prabandhamu*. Tyāgarāja's *Gēyanātaka* closely resembles the operatic style found in these works, blending narrative, music, and dance to create a captivating experience.

2. The Plot of *Nouka Charitramu*

The central theme of **Nouka Charitramu** centers on Kṛṣṇa and the Gōpi-s' boat journey on the river Yamuna. To simply translate the title, “Nouka” means a boat and “Charitramu” indicates a story. So to simply put in colloquial terms it is a story of the boat with Kṛṣṇa and Gōpi-s as the main characters. The events that unfold during this journey form the crux of the story. Kṛṣṇa, with his playful and mischievous nature, imparts profound spiritual lessons to the Gōpi-s, guiding them towards ultimate truth and divine surrender. Through evocative verses, soulful songs, and the careful use of ragas and talas, Tyāgarāja takes the audience on a spiritual journey, transforming a simple boat ride into a profound narrative of spiritual awakening.

3. The Historical background of *Nouka Charitramu*

It is important to note that *Nouka Charitramu* does not derive directly from the Bhagavatam, unlike many other Kṛṣṇa-centric stories. This is striking, especially given that Tyāgarāja lived in the Tanjavur belt, a cultural hub where the Bhagavatam and the Bhajana Sampradaya were deeply influential. Some scholars believe the narrative may have been entirely Tyāgarāja's own creation, while others suggest that it was influenced by earlier works from Bengal like *Nowka Vilāsa* and Marathi traditions, such as *Nouka Nirūpaṇa* by Anadatanaya and *Nowka Charitra* by Vēmana and many others. Shahaji, the Maratha king of Tanjore, may also have shaped the

development of *Gēyanāṭaka*, providing a cultural foundation Tyāgarāja likely drew upon (Dr.Y.Bhagavathi).

4. The Philosophical Depth of Tyāgarāja's Work

What makes *Nouka Charitramu* even more intriguing is Tyāgarāja's choice to focus on Kṛṣṇa and the Gōpi-s, even though he was a devout Ramabhakta. For Tyāgarāja, the name or form of the deity was secondary; he saw all manifestations of the divine as different aspects of Lord Rama. This concept is evident not only in *Nouka Charitramu* but also in his other *Gēyanāṭaka*, *Prahlada Bhakti Vijaya*, where the focus remains on Rama, even though the narrative centers on Prahlada and Narasimha. Tyāgarāja's genius lies in his ability to blend these influences into a uniquely South Indian operatic form. Despite being a devout Ramabhakta, his inclusivity shines here, portraying Kṛṣṇa as the central figure while retaining universal spiritual themes.

5. Core Elements of *Gēyanāṭaka*:

Gēyanāṭakas are characterized by a combination of music, narrative, and dramatic elements blending dialogues, poems, and songs. "Nouka Charitramu" beautifully integrates these aspects, making it an exemplary representation of the form. It features **vachanas** (prose passages), **padyas** (poetic verses in classical meters like Kanda Padya and Sisa Padya), and **Darus** (songs resembling Kirtanas). The Darus, derived from the ancient Dhruva form, have evolved into simpler structures with Pallavi, Anupallavi, and Caraṇa-s, omitting intricate sangatis typical of Kritis (Dr.Y.Bhagavathi).

The **padyas** reflect the formal literary style similar to Pothana's Bhagavatam, while the **Darus** adopt a colloquial tone to suit the Gōpi-s, who are portrayed as simple village folk. Tyāgarāja uses conversational language, everyday expressions, and proverbs to capture their innocence and unpretentiousness, adding authenticity, charm, and a vibrant folk essence to the narrative.

By juxtaposing the classical elegance of the *Padyas* with the earthy simplicity of the *Darus*, Tyāgarāja creates a rich tapestry of poetic and musical expression. This blend not only brings the characters to life but also bridges the gap between high art and folk traditions, making *Nouka Charitramu* a timeless masterpiece that resonates with audiences of all backgrounds.

The Gopikas, portrayed as innocent souls, represent common people engaged in daily chores, with their lives in Gokula revolving around Kṛṣṇa and his playful deeds. The *Sāhitya* in the

Darus is marked by its colloquial charm, vividly capturing the rural lifestyle of the people of Nandagokula. Beneath the simplicity of the narrative lies a profound incorporation of moral and ethical values, often seen in folk tales. Tyāgarāja's ability to embed these elements into the story adds layers of depth and meaning to *Nouka Charitramu*.

When viewed from a philosophical lens, the work progresses through three significant stages of human experience. The first stage is one of joy and contentment, reflecting a state of blissful happiness. This is depicted in the opening scenes, where the Gōpi-s are in high spirits, having found Kṛṣṇa and enjoying his company amidst the serene beauty of the Yamuna River. This joyful mood is captured vividly in the first *Daru*, *Śṛṅgārincukoni*, set in the Rāga Sūruti. The narrative then transitions to a playful yet significant moment when the Gōpi-s notice a silvery boat and debate whether to allow Kṛṣṇa to join them. Kṛṣṇa's eventual persuasion to board the boat marks the shift in the story.

As the narrative unfolds, joy gradually gives way to pride. Kṛṣṇa subtly kindles the Gōpi-s' sense of superiority by instructing them on how to row the boat the Gōpi-s grow arrogant and slight him. In response, Kṛṣṇa creates a storm, plunging them into chaos and despair. The pride of the Gōpi-s turns into agony, sorrow, and helplessness. This phase mirrors the common human reaction during adversity, characterized by self-questioning and a sense of despair.

The final stage of the narrative is one of realization and surrender. The Gōpi-s, having experienced the turmoil, come to understand the supreme nature of Kṛṣṇa. This realization leads to their complete surrender (*prapatti* or *Atma nivedana*), forming the core theme of *Nouka Charitramu*. Tyāgarāja conveys this profound transformation with simplicity, using apt verses and compositions set to suitable ragas and talas (P) (Dr.Y.Bhagavathi).

6. Musical Setting of Nouka Charitramu:

The musical framework of *Nouka Charitramu* reveals Tyāgarāja's ingenious blend of classical and folk traditions. Most of the tunes employed are lilting, catchy, and free of complex *sangatis*, aligning with the dramatic and narrative nature of the work. The influence of folk music is unmistakable, as evidenced by the choice of ragas such as Punnāgavarāli, Nādanāmakriya, Yadukulakāmbhoji, Anandabhairavi, Jhenjuti, Kāpi, Nīlāmbari, Mōhana and Ghañṭa, many of which have folk origins. The significant aspect observed is the musical setting in most of the Daruvus are in *eka dhatu* or single musical setting. The style Tyāgarāja employs

mirrors folk traditions, making the compositions more relatable and accessible to the common listener.

At first glance, it may seem surprising that a composer of Tyāgarāja's stature, known for his mastery over a vast repertoire of ragas, would confine himself to such a limited palette. Why, one might ask, did he not employ a broader range of ragas to showcase his musical prowess? The answer lies in the purpose of the work itself: *Nouka Charitramu* is a dramatic presentation, not a standalone musical concert. Tyāgarāja's aim was to ensure that each raga not only conveyed the appropriate emotion but also resonated with the dramatic context, leaving a lasting impact on the audience. He selected ragas that were capable of packing the necessary emotional punch for the scenes they accompanied. This deliberate restriction underscores Tyāgarāja's artistic discipline and his focus on storytelling through music which is another striking feature of folk tradition as well.

7. Folk Influences and Raga Selection:

The theme *Nouka Charitra* is in the form of Narrative and Tyāgarāja has adapted this folk characteristic in this *Gēyanāṭaka*. It is important to understand that Tyāgarāja has employed the melody which is in eka dhatu for most of his narrative another feature of folk and the rhythm having seven beats "ta ki ṭa ta ka dhi na" for major parts of his daru's which is another characteristic of folk music. Apart from these elements the music that is employed as per the text is based in classical Karnāṭaka Saṅgītam. The form and structure is akin to folk but the melodic representation barring few employs traditional elements.

Tyāgarāja's use of folk-inspired ragas adds a distinctive charm to *Nouka Charitramu*. Few example of Ragas are taken up here.

Punnāgavarāḷi:

Punnāgavarāḷi is an ancient raga with strong roots to folk tradition. Punnāgavarāḷi's earthy and haunting character enhances the rustic ambiance of the narrative. This raga is popularly associated with snake charmers and is also used in traditional wedding ceremonies. A piece called the *ōḍam*, often played during the *muhurtam* (auspicious moment), is typically set in Punnāgavarāḷi. Also traditional Tamil compositions such as *Nonḍicindu* are also set in it. Tyāgarāja has composed four *Darus* in this raga in different stages of the narrative: the daru "*ēnōmu Nocchitimo chelula mē dāna mosagitimo*," comes in the beginning when the Gopi's

are in Joy "*Kṛṣṇa Mākēmi Dōva*," is sung when they are in a helpless state "*Hari Hari Nī Okadivya pādāravinda miyyave*," is sung when they realise the supreme nature of Kṛṣṇa and "*Gandamu Puyyaruga pannīru gandhamu puyyaruga*," is sung celebrating their arrival back with a decked up Kṛṣṇa.

Interestingly, the Tamil word *ōḍam* also means a boat, which may have inspired Tyāgarāja's imaginative genius to choose this raga for four of his *Darus* in his boat-themed story, *Nouka Charitramu*. To confirm this P Sambamurthy in his book on NC has mentioned under the Daru "*ēnomu nocchitimo*" as *ōḍapāṭṭu* meaning boat song (P).

Raga Yadukulakāmbhōji:

Now moving on to the next Raga Yadukulakāmbhōji which is steeped in folk history, formerly called Yerukalakāmbhōji named after the *Yerukala* tribe, later on became a Rakti raga infused in Bhakti and Bhava. In *Nouka Charitramu*, we find one *Daru* and a *Dwipada* composed in this raga. Tyāgarāja masterfully incorporates a dialogue (*samvāda*) between the Gōpi-s which is beautifully depicted in the *Daru*

"*āḍavārulella gūḍi manamu, āḍudāma harini vēḍi*."

Here, the Gōpi-s discuss amongst themselves whether Kṛṣṇa, portrayed as a little boy adorned with golden ornaments, should join them. They express concerns, wondering if he might get frightened or if someone might complain to his mother. Amid this discussion, one of the Gōpi-s interrupts, urging the others to stop talking and help push the boat into the water.

Following this, Kṛṣṇa and the Gōpi-s engage in a lively conversation, depicted as a *Dvipada*. Kṛṣṇa argues saying it is inappropriate for you young ladies to embark on such an excursion without a man to guide them. And the Gōpi-s counter argue by claiming that Kṛṣṇa himself is not capable of taking on that role. This playful exchange is set in the same raga but shifts to *Khanda gati*.

"*Purushundu lekane puvubonalaara taruNula kepuDaina tagadu sAhasamu bhAmalu santosha padiyunDu veLA gAmuku dacchota kArAdu krsna*."

Another popular Raga in the folk tradition is Raga **Anandabhairavi**: Known for its sweetness and charm, this raga is closely associated with folk melodies. Through

his *Sisapadya*, Tyāgarāja conveys the prideful minds of the Gōpi-s as they taunt Kṛṣṇa. They mockingly suggest that, while he may know how to enjoy himself and tell lies, he is incapable of navigating the boat. For example:

Bonkulāḍucu bāga bhōgimpa nērchune ḍḍanu jaripimpa vaśamugādu
Vanitala jūchite valapincha nērcune ḍḍanu jaripimpa vaśamugādu

This raga is also used in another *Sisapada* where the Gopikas lament their decision to bring young Kṛṣṇa with them. They regretfully say, "Because of our feminine instincts, we have brought ruin upon ourselves. Why did we bring this innocent prince along with us?"

Bālabāvamutōnu baṇatula pāliṇḍla pai bavvaḷincēḷi padmanābhu
Stribuddhivallanu jērachu koṇṭimigāni yēla decchiṭi, yēla vibhuni?

Tyāgarāja's use of Anandabhairavi beautifully captures the emotional depth and dramatic tension in these exchanges, enriching the narrative with its lyrical and melodic charm.

Another popular folk inspired raga is Jhenjuti. The raga is particularly effective in portraying the Gōpi-s' expressions of surrender and devotion, where Tyāgarāja intersperse the idiom saying just like how a patient listens to the doctor and how a pregnant women listens to the midwife, all the Gopi's listened to the words of almighty with utmost devotion and surrender.

Vyādulu galavāru vaidyuni vārtalu vishvāsamulatōḍa vininayaḷa

pūrṇagarbhiṇḍlaina polatullellanu mantra sāni cheppina māḷasalpinaḷa

Its association with traditional Tamil folk music and simple melodies further underscores Tyāgarāja's genius in using it to connect with the audience on a profound, emotional level. Its resemblance to the Tamil *Chindu* style is particularly noteworthy, as seen in compositions like *Kannan Varugindra Nēram*. Another example from Telugu folk tune: *Mukkajenna tōḷalō*.

The theme *Nouka Charitra* is presented in a narrative form, and Tyāgarāja has skillfully adapted this folk characteristic in his *Gēyanāṭaka*. It is important to note that Tyāgarāja employed melodies that are predominantly in *ēka dhātu*, a feature typical of folk music. Additionally, the rhythm, often set to a seven-beat cycle (*ta ki ta ta ka di na*), is another

distinctive aspect of folk tradition incorporated into many of his *darus*. Despite these folk elements, the music, as aligned with the text, is rooted in classical *Karnataka Sangitam*. While the form and structure resemble folk traditions, the melodic representation, with a few exceptions, adheres to classical principles.

8. Inclusion of Proverbs and Idioms:

One striking feature observed is the inclusion of the popular Telugu proverbs in the *Nouka Charitramu*. Few examples are cited: *Unḍi Unḍi Bāluni Gilli Mari Toḷlauche Deruga Mātēmi (chalu Chalu – Saveri)*, this saying humorously portrays persistence in teasing someone, an apt reflection of the playful interactions between Kṛṣṇa and the Gōpi-s, they say his actions are like the one who pinches the child and swings it in the cradle. Similarly in “*evarumanaku*” we find this saying “*āsache mōsa bōyiri*”. In “*allakallōla māyenamma*” we find two proverbs, “*Praḷayamu layyani yē pani jēsina bhāmala*”, which roughly translates into "When the end of the world is near, whatever you do will go in vain." and “*Mē mokka renca bōḷi mamma*” is a colloquial phrasing often found in light genre. Similar proverbs and idiomatic expressions are found in other Daru’s, showcasing the universality of such folk wisdom across cultures (Dr.Y.Bhagavathi)

The *Daru* compositions in *Nouka Charitramu* exhibit a range of structures. While most follow a simple *keertana* style with straightforward melodic frameworks, a few, such as *Evarumanaku* (Devagandhari), *Chālu Chālu* (Saveri), and *Tanayande Prēma* (Bhairavi), exhibit more intricate structures akin to heavy kritis, complete with *pallavi*, *anupallavi*, and *charana*. These exceptions add a layer of musical complexity while maintaining the overall dramatic appeal. (Dr.Y.Bhagavathi)

9. Unique Features of the Darus

In *Nouka Charitramu*, several varieties of *Darus* are employed, each serving a distinct dramatic and musical purpose. Among the 11 varieties of Daru’s figuring in folk forms like Yakshagana, Kuravanji Natakas etc, *Nouka Charitramu* employs around 5 they are the *Samvāda*, *Svāgata*, *Uttara-pratyuttara*, *Kōlāṭa* and *Varṇana darus*. The *samvāda Daru* is sung wherein the characters converse with each other. Eg “*Indukēmi Sētumamma Kṛṣṇa enta māṭalāḍe namma*” in the Rāga Varāḷi. Here the Gopi’s feel ashamed of themselves when Kṛṣṇa suggests them to

remove all their garments to plug the hole in the boat. The Gopi's converse with Kṛṣṇa asking "what have you spoken Kṛṣṇa? Are we ladies so cheap? Modesty is our life, isn't it?"

Another type, the *Uttara Pratyuttara Daru*, is a statement and counterstatement form, showcased in the fourth and fifth *Darus*, "*Jalakamāḍuva Vēḷa*" and "*Munu Mandaragiri*," a deliberate choice by Tyāgarāja to reinforce the thematic and musical connection between the Gōpi-s' accusations and Kṛṣṇa's rebuttals. These pieces depict a playful exchange between the Gōpi-s and Kṛṣṇa, with the Gōpi-s accusing Kṛṣṇa and him responding with wit and charm. These two compositions occur consecutively and are notable for their dialogic structure and their unconventional format. This form of statement and counterstatement mirrors the playful exchanges seen in *Kuravaji Natakas*, where the *Kuravan* and *Kuratti* engage in casual banter. Tyāgarāja adapts this folk-inspired dialogic structure, infusing the work with vibrancy and cultural resonance.

The *Svāgata Daru*, a soliloquy where a character reflects or speaks to themselves, is beautifully exemplified in "*Allakallōlamāyenamma*" Here the Gopi's fervently pray to Goddess Yamuna devi to save them from the calamity. Meanwhile, the *Kōlāṭa Daru* and *Varṇana Daru* is employed in the second *Daru*, "*Chūḍāre Chelulāra*," where the Gōpi-s describe the enchanting beauty of the Yamuna River.

10. Melodic Choices and Their Dramatic Impact

Tyāgarāja's selection of only 13 ragas for *Nouka Charitramu* (P), with some repeated multiple times, reflects his focus on dramatic effectiveness rather than sheer musical variety. The choice of ragas like Dēvagāndhārī (*Evarumanaku-Adi*), Bhairavi(*Tanayande prēma – Cāpu*), Sāveri(*Cālu Cālu- Cāpu*), and Sāranga (*ōḍanu Jaripe- ādi*) for more elaborate melodic structures highlights his ability to convey depth and intensity when required. On the other hand, ragas like Punnāgavarāḷi, Nādanāmakriya, and Yadukulakāmbhōji are employed for their simplicity and directness, complementing the lighter, folk-inspired sections of the narrative.

A special mention must be made of the treatment of the Rāga Kāpi in *Nouka Charitramu*. The melody presented here is unique and differs significantly from the modern-day rendition of Kāpi. The texts mention this as Kāpi/Hindustāni Kapi by Y.Bhagavati and Karnāṭaka Kāpi by P Sambamurthy, but both version give the same notation (Dr.Y.Bhagavathi) (P). It is likely

that Tyāgarāja drew inspiration from an archaic version of the raga, preserving its original essence and incorporating it into the dramatic framework.

11. Rhythmic Structures employed in *Nouka Charitramu*:

Tyāgarāja skilfully blends rhythmic structures from both classical and folk traditions. *Miśra Cāpu* (7 beats) and *Adi Tāla* (8 beats) are used extensively in the *Darus*, providing a rhythmic foundation that is both accessible and engaging. For example, the well-known folk songs "*Sōjugāda Sūju Mallige*" and "*Kālamām Vanatil*" , "*gōdālōri sinnadi dāni inṭiki* (Grover)" is in the seven beat style. Examples from *Nouka Charitramu* “ *Munumandara gir (Rāga Saurāśṭra)*, *Vēdavākhyamani (Rāga Mōhana)*, *cūḍare celulāra (Rāga Pantuvarāḷi)*, *Cūtamurāre (Rāga – kāpi/Hindustāni Kāpi)*, *ghuma ghuma ghuma yani(Rāga- Saurāśṭra)* , *Unnatāvuna nunḍaniyyadu vāna lūramulaite venakatīyadu (Rāga Ghaṇṭa)* etc are all based on *Miśra Cāpu*, demonstrating the adaptability of folk music to various moods and tempos. Additionally, the use of *Khaṇḍa Gati* (5 beats) is used for a few Daru’s and *Sīsa Padya-s* “*Purushunḍu Lēkane*” “*Vṛkṣabṛndamulōni Rērājusandhāna*” and “*Pannīru gandhamul* ”, and *Rūpaka Tāla* (6 beats) “*ēnomu nocchitimo*”, adds further variety, exemplifies the adaptability of folk music to various moods and tempos. The Daru "*Gandhamu Puyyaruga*" borrows elements of folk rhythm, subtly merging classical Karnatak rigor with folk spontaneity. Tyāgarāja incorporates rhythmic variations like a *gati bhēda* (e.g., pauses, accelerations, or syncopation) to create dynamic contrasts. These variations not only hold the listener's attention but also reflect the unfolding emotions in the narrative. The simplicity and clarity of these tala patterns make them highly effective in conveying the folk aspects of the music

12. Conclusion

In conclusion, *Nouka Charitramu* stands as a brilliant example of how folk and classical elements can seamlessly coexist within a single work. The ragas, predominantly rakti ragas like *Surati*, *Pantuvarali*, *Yadukulakambhoji*, and *Saurashtra*, are chosen with acute awareness of their dramatic and emotional impact. The *darus*, with their varied structures and melodic frameworks, reflect Tyāgarāja’s genius in adapting traditional forms to suit the needs of theatrical presentation.

By blending colloquial expressions, folk-inspired ragas, and profound philosophical messages, Tyāgarāja crafts a work that is both artistically sophisticated and deeply rooted in cultural

tradition. The philosophical progression in *Nouka Charitramu*—from joy, through pride and suffering, to ultimate surrender—parallels the spiritual journey of the soul. Tyāgarāja's ability to encapsulate this journey in a simple yet profound narrative makes *Nouka Charitramu* a masterpiece.

Through his compositions, he delivers a timeless message: the path to self-realization and divine connection is paved with humility, introspection, and surrender to the supreme. Many subsequent works, such as *Nauka Charitramu* by Venkatasuri and *Nauka Charitra* by Kṛṣṇamacharyula, have drawn inspiration from the saint-composer, exploring similar themes. However, it is Tyāgarāja's original masterpiece that continues to resonate across generations, reflecting the emotional depth and universal appeal of folk traditions within the framework of classical music.

13. Future Scope:

The present study opens up various avenues for future academic and musicological exploration. To begin with, a comparative analysis of Tyāgarāja's *Nouka Charitramu* can be conducted with similar works such as *Nouka Charitramu* by Vēnkaṭasūri and *Nouka Charitramu* by Kṛṣṇamācāryulu. Similarly, the texts belonging to the Non-local traditions which includes the Bengali work *Nauka Vilasa* and Marathi work, *Nauka Nirupana* can be analysed with respect to the integration of the Northern, Western and South Indian traditions. Research can be carried out with regards to the structural framework, melodic choices and thematic elements with the above mentioned works.

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Authors Short profile:

Dr. H.G. Amrutha Varshini is an accomplished Carnatic classical vocalist, researcher, and academician based in Bengaluru. She holds a Ph.D. in Music from Bangalore University (2015), along with an M.A. and B.Music from prestigious institutions in Chennai. A "B" graded artist for All India Radio in both classical and devotional music, she has received prestigious accolades, including the Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) from the UGC and the Tagore National Research Fellowship from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

She is a former disciple of the renowned Vidushi Smt. Seetha Rajan of the Balabrundam Sangita Gurukulam, Dr. Varshini is celebrated for her chaste, sampradaya-driven style that emphasizes raga and pada bhava. Her extensive performance portfolio spans solo and ensemble concerts across India and the United Kingdom, including acclaimed thematic productions like *Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam*, *Nowka Charitram*. A notable example of her collaborative and creative vision is *Trayi*, an innovative music and dance production that she co-conceptualized, composed, and performed alongside dancers Dr. Rashmi Prasad and Dr. Poorna Suresh. Exploring the multifaceted symbolism of the number three in Indian philosophy. The production received widespread acclaim for its artistic depth and originality.

As an active academician, she serves as a music faculty member for the postgraduate program at Bangalore University and is a Board of Examinations (BOE) member at multiple universities. She has published and presented numerous research papers focusing on musicology, historical compositions, temple rituals, and the integration of modern educational technology in music.