



Munjaneddu Kumbaranna: a Unique Sonata

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ABSTRACT:

Karnataka has innumerable folklore songs but when listened to *Munjaneddu Kumbaranna* stands out as a unique as well as popular. When we dive deep into the song and its musical analysis we realize the fortune of its exclusivity and the rationale behind its reputation. At the outset this folk song depicts the situational condition of a potter and his wife. Secondly, the rhythm used for *Munjaneddu Kumbaranna* is 4/4 which is also known as common timings in western music that is easy and could be followed by any common folk. This does not require much effort or any meticulous attention except for its coordination of musicians and singers, as well as those involved in the dance or performance. The 4/4 rhythm applies four notes in a musical bar and the beats are 1234. The song is composed in Vakulabharana raga and Mayamalavagowla raga. The *Munjaneddu kumbaranna* folksong has influenced the ordinary folks of all spectrums. The fabric of the song is demonstrated in the lives of people of Karnataka.

KEYWORDS:

Kumbaranna, Vakulabharana raga, Mayamalavagowla raga, Potter, Sharana Basavanna.

INTRODUCTION:

Folklore, according to the renowned folklorist Alan Dundes, refers to "artistic communication in small groups."¹ The word folklore is derived from two English words: 'Folk', meaning people, and 'Lore', meaning traditional knowledge or wisdom passed down orally through generations.² Therefore, "folklore" essentially encompasses the traditional beliefs, customs, stories, and practices of a particular culture or community passed down from generation to generation. In its simplicity, folklore is a language of the heart that reflects the inner feelings of people, ultimately presenting a marvellous picture of traditions, beliefs, and the situations in which they were naturally composed and sung.

Richard M. Dorson, another influential folklorist, described folklore as "artistic communication in small groups and it is communication that has a social function."³ Every folklore needs to convey something to the people, both the singer/ singers and the listeners. The upholding of a particular tradition or way of life or concurrent things that need to be done is presented and carried on in and through this activity.

SOME OF THE POPULAR FOLK SONGS OF KARNATAKA

Munjaneddu kumbaranna, Chellidaru malligeaya, Nimbeya hannange, Mayadantha male banthanna, Kaanada kadalige, Thinga thingalu, maribiyada modala naa badaya, Kannadammana devaalaya, Dharani Mandala Madyadolage, Koli koogitakka, Bidiru naanyaarigalladavalu, Ninna Neethi Aadaava, etc., these folk songs have their line of thought and presentation in situations. Most of these folk songs were composed by illiterates and passed on in sung-form. Sung-forms are embraced because it is the easiest, happiest, and loveliest way of remembering a text. Needless to say even at one point of history the famous Epic stories of ancient India were passed down the lane through sung-forms so much so that even children could repeat these stories at an early age without errors at easy.

THE SONATA OF FOLKLORE:

Folklore and supplementary pieces are the result of individual compositions, either by village folks – individual or a group. The repertory of a folk community probably always included songs of variant origins.

The form of folklore as heard at any one time, however, is likely to have been very much affected by the entire community because of its life in oral tradition. Once introduced, a song could be easily dropped from the repertory. More likely, however, as it was passed from parents to children, to associates, to acquaintances and co-workers, it would be changed. Numerous influences acted on a song, including creativity, forgetfulness, previously learned songs, and stylistic expectations. As a result, it might become shorter or more like new styles of admired songs or new elements would be added as per the compelling or invitational situations. Any new song would undergo this process of collective re-creation. An important characteristic of a song or piece in traditional folklore is, consequently, its dependence on acceptance by a community—that is, by a particular community, a village, nation, or family—and its tendency to change as it is passed from one individual to another or a group to group and used or performed in public.

CIRCUMSTANCE, DIFFUSION AND DISTINCTION:

Though it is strongly believed that folklore is transmitted in and through individuals, one should not forget the circumstances during which they are used or sung. A folk song which is sung by a potter is not usually sung during the wedding, or a folklore sung during grinding the grains is not sung during reaping harvest or at the celebration of the girl's puberty. Examples are numerous to prove that each occasion would have a different folk song sung.

While the circumstances decide the vocalist or singers to choose a particular composition, the diffusion also depends on the people involved in such an activity or an event. The harvest songs are familiar to all those involved in the harvest bustle, such as the farmers, the laborers (both men and women), and the youth and children as well. Both men and women who are proverbial with the song that is sung would be singing with much more understanding and delights than the first-time listener or re-iterator. Men who are involved in pot making, cutting

wood and grazing cows would have their own line of song and tunes. Similarly, women who are involved in grinding or pounding to powder spices or grains sing a different folk song.

It is important to observe that in north Karnataka, especially in Belgaum, Bidar, Viayamoura and Bellary districts, women are involved in these activities more than men. Thus, the transmission of these folk songs that are sung during grinding or pounding grains is by women rather than men. Indispensable to mention, this is also true with the folk songs sung during girl's first menstrual celebrations.

The compositions are distinct due to the generation gap, the provement of language and its new terminologies, the forgetfulness of continual stanzas by the vocalist, inclusions given at situational presentations, and demands of acceptability by the local mores. Distinctions might also appear when sung by an individual or a group. The main distinct factor would be when folk songs are composed in a situation in which improvisation is demanded and inclusions do happen to appease the audience present.

MUNJANEDDU KUMBARANNA: A UNIQUE SONATA

It is very interesting to note that the folk song named *Munjaneddu kumbaranna*, which is much admired by the folks of Karnataka is because it has a simple and attractive tune or raga. It seem to have originated after the death of Basavanna, the religious and social reformer in 12th century in Karnataka. He had introduced Veera Shaivism to the ordinary people and also propagated Basava (Sacred Cow) as the presence of a deity amidst his people. Unlike other folksongs, this song is simple and attractive in rhythm as well as in its tune or raga. It closely resembles with Chellidaru malligeaya, Nimbeya hannange, Mayadantha male banthanna, Kaanada kadalige, Thinga thingalu, maribyada modala naa badaya, Kannadammana devaalaya, Koli koogitakka, Munjaneddu kumbaranna, Bidiru naanyaarigalladavalu, and Ninna Neethi Aadaava, in its rhythm and raga.

THE PRESENTATION OF MUNJANEDDU KUMBARANNA: KANNADA SCRIPT (THE ORIGINAL SCRIPT)

Lyrics in Kannada	Musical Notes in Carnatic
ಮುಂಜಾನೆದ್ದು ಕುಂಬಾರಣ್ಣ ಹಾಲುಬಾನುಂಡನ ಹಾರ್ಯಾರಿ ಮಣ್ಣಾ ತುಳಿದಾನ ಹಾರ್ಯಾರಿ ಮಣ್ಣಾ ತುಳಿಯುತ್ತ ಮಾಡ್ಯಾನ ನಾರ್ಯಾರು ಹೊರುವಂತ ಐರಾಣಿ	nS SS , SPmG ,GmGr ,SrSn nnnS , SrGG, rGr SS.... nS. S. ,SPmG GmGr, SrSn nnnS , SrGG ,rGr SS....
ಹೊತ್ತಾರೆದ್ದು ಕುಂಬಾರಣ್ಣ ತುಪ್ಪಾಬಾನುಂಡನ ಘಟ್ಟೀಸಿ ಮಣ್ಣಾ ತುಳಿದಾನ ಘಟ್ಟೀಸಿ ಮಣ್ಣಾ ತುಳಿಯುತ್ತ ಮಾಡ್ಯಾನ ಮಿತ್ರೇರು ಹೊರುವಂತ ಐರಾಣಿ	mP PP ,PSSN, dNdP ,PdPm mm P Pdn dndP p....X2 Sd d ddd... ,PdPm , GmGr, nnS SrG rGr SS....
ಅಕ್ಕಿ ಹಿಟ್ಟು ನಾವು ತುಂಬೊಂಡು ತಂದೀವಿ	mP PP ,PSSN, dNdP ,PdPm

ಗಿಂಡೀಲಿ ತಂದೀವಿ ತಿಳಿದು ಪ್ಪ
ಗಿಂಡೀಲಿ ತಂದೀವಿ ತಿಳಿದುಪ್ಪ ಕುಂಬಾರಣ್ಣ
ತುಂಬೀಡು ನಮ್ಮ ಐರಾಣಿ ||

mm P Pdn dndP p....X2
Sd d ddd... ,PdPm , GmGr,
nnS SrG rGr SS....

ಕುಂಬಾರಣ್ಣನ ಮಡದಿ ಕಡದಾಗ ಕೈಯಿಟ್ಟು
ಕೊಡದ ಮ್ಯಾಲೇನ ಬರೆದಾಳ
ಕೊಡದ ಮ್ಯಾಲೇನ ಬರೆದಾಳ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣದ
ಶರಣ ಬಸವಣ್ಣನ ನಿಲಿಸ್ಯಾಳ ||

mP PP ,PSSN, dNdP ,PdPm
mm P Pdn dndP p....X2
Sd d ddd... , PdPm , GmGr,
nnS SrG rGr SS....

English transliteration and translation is presented as follows:

munjaaneddu kumbaaraNNa haalu baanunDaNNa
haryari maNNa Thulidyana
haryari maNNa Thuliyutha maaDyana
Naaryaru baruvanth the airaaNi ||

*Having gotten up at dawn, Brother Potter eats cooked sorghum with milk.
He jumps and stomps on the mud,
Jumping and stomping on the mud,
he makes pots that women carry.⁴*

othaareddu kumbaraNNa thuppa baanunDaana
gattisi maNNa thulidaana
gattisi maNNa thuliyutha maadyana
Nidreru baruvanth the AiraNi ||

*Having gotten up at daybreak, Brother Potter eats cooked sorghum with ghee
He vigorously stomps on the mud
Vigorously stomping on the mud,
he makes pots that lasses carry.⁵*

akkilittu naavu thakkonDu thandivi
ginDeeli thandeevni thiliduppa
ginDee thandeevni thiliduppa KumbaraNNa
ThandeeDu namma AiraaNi ||

*We have packed and brought rice flour
We have brought fine ghee in a goblet
We have brought fine ghee in a goblet, Brother Potter
Bring out our pots.⁶*

KumbaaraNNana maDadi kaDagaada kaiyikki
kuDidaa myalena baredaaLa
myalena baredaaL kalyaaNada
SaraNaa basavana nilisyaaLa ||

*Brother Potter's wife keeps her hand in a pot
She writes (draws) something on the pot
She writes (draws) something on the pot
She brings forth Basavanna, the Sharana of Kalyana.⁷*

UNIQUE RAGAS (TUNE):

Usually the folksongs are composed in one raga which is simple as well as repeatable by the other participants when being used. Astoundingly, one uniqueness is found in this folk song that it is composed of two ragas namely Vakulabharana raga and Mayamalavagowla raga. In his analysis and finding, Mr. Pradeep, a guitarist at Mysore, says that the Pallavi(Chorus) is composed in 'vakulabharana raga' while Charana (stanza) is in 'Mayamalavagowla raga'. Variations in ragas also matter to influence the listener intensely and ardently.⁸ No wonder why this song catches the ears of listeners.

INTACT LYRICS:

Folklore lyrics undergo changes as they are passed down to the following generations. Because the lyrics either get more creative, elapsed words or situations are filled-in, previously learned songs, and stylistic expectations get their fraction of influence over the folksong. But in the case of Munjaneddu *Kumbaranna* the lyric remains untouched or tampered. There is neither inclusion, creative insertion of any other perception or removal of any segment of the original song for any purpose. The song and the lyrics remain intact.

SITUATION EMBARKED:

It is to be understood that the potter had to rise early morning and has to get into a time consuming task of jumping and stomping over the mud mixed with water. This boring task is made easy, enjoyable and brisk by singing folklore songs one of which is this popular *Munjaneddu Kumbaranna*. This song reminds the potter also of his duty to provide basic necessity of life which was needed to the villagers and families before the modernity. Women required best of pots to cook, fetch water, preserve things and to serve food as well. This required the presence of a potter at towns and villages. It is an evident fact even today that every town in India has a potter's colony that continues to provide pots. Many families in modern India also use mud pots if not for cooking but to preserve water and other things in middle class families. The poor of India are still using mud pots and vessels in their kitchen as they continue to cook by the fire wood.

TOWARDS COMPREHENDING THE SONG:

This folk song seems to stress on the fruitfulness of hard work and the godliness hidden in it. The potter right away does not get his clay in his hands, readymade, to give various forms to the same. Rather to get the clay in his hands, as to shape it to various forms, he has get up early morning, harness the required quality mud and not any sought of soil, and gather the same in his yard. This is only the beginning of it. Later, after gathering he has rightly

mix it with sufficient quantity of water and then his real labor starts as he fields in his both legs to stomp over again and again until the mud turns to clay. Only after it is turned to clay does the potter employs his skillful hands to grant definite shape to the clay at hand. Then after, he prepares the pots that ladies or women carry over head, shoulders or hip.

In this folk song the potter's activity is portrayed which is evident in his daily life. While the potter provides pots of various shapes and kinds to women, the women speak aloud in the song that they have preserved or packed and brought rice flour, fine ghee in a goblet seeking him to bring forth and provide more of pots in variant shapes that he has made. The song also reveals the art work of his wife, who paints or draws in colors, pictures of Sharana Basavanna, who is to be a divine person for her. The addition of pictures of deity moreover represents the divine element in his labor.

RELEVANCE:

Though things in the modern times have changed, yet this folk song holds water and is relevant to our time as still people in the villages and certain families in the towns and cities depend on potters for healthy life. It is to be noticed that even in high scrape buildings, people in India, use mud pots and other mud vessels to hold water, to preserve other things such as tamarind, salt, spices as well as other cooking ingredients. The potter continues to influence and hold importance even in our modern era. The potter is not considered to work hard to earn rather to make the life of women joyful, happy and easy to which the women return blessings in abundance. The potter is herewith reminded to continue jumping and stomping with the blessing of women and with the help of deity, Basavanna.

CONCLUSION:

People in Karnataka, beginning from small school going kids to the oldest, dance to the tune of this folk song. Besides, being relevant to the times, this song is still popular as children in schools, colleges and universities use it in their cultural fests, gatherings and competitions. *Munjaneddu Kumbaranna* folk song will remain as a reminder for all labor force to realize the fruits of hard work and the divine element hidden in all their undertakings and creation. Besides, revealing the secret it holds that work is not just for the sake of earning rather for gaining blessings which will keep human race forward, joyful and creative. Potter takes pleasure in creating new pots by his hands and works on new creations at every attempt.

¹ Dundes, Alan. "Folklore Matters." Western Folklore, vol. 48, no. 4, 1989, pp. 247–270.

² Oxford Advanced Learner's English Dictionary, 10th Edition, 2020. learner's English Dictionary, 10th Edition, 2020.

³ Dorson, Richard M. "The Future of Folklore Studies." The Journal of American Folklore, vol. 80, no. 315, 1967, pp. 3–15.

⁴ https://www.reddit.com/r/translator/comments/pdxpa1/kannada_english_folk_song

⁵ https://www.reddit.com/r/translator/comments/pdxpa1/kannada_english_folk_song

⁶ https://www.reddit.com/r/translator/comments/pdxpa1/kannada_english_folk_song

⁷. https://www.reddit.com/r/translator/comments/pdxxpa1/kannada_english_folk_song.

⁸ Mr. Pradeep, an Indian guitarist expert in Indian ragas and rhythms on guitar, Mysore.

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