

**National Seminar on “Kerala School of Astronomy and Mathematics: Contributions and Contemporary Relevance” organized by Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) in association with Amrita Darshanam, International Centre for Spiritual Studies, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Amritapuri Campus, Kollam, Kerala, India.
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ABSTRACT

2 An Appraisal of the Poetic Features of Karaṇapaddhati by Prof. Ramasubramanian, IIT Bombay, Mumbai

Putumana Somayājī in his Karaṇapaddhati, besides demonstrating his originality in thinking by coming up with novel techniques for handling certain class of astronomical problems, has also demonstrated his exceptional skills as a poet. His work consisting of 214 verses has been composed by employing almost 20 different meters, including some of the long ones such as Śārdūlavikrīḍita and sragdharā, having 19 and 21 syllables respectively. While it is easy to compose works on romance, arts, aesthetics, etc.

using long metres, it is not so easy to handle such metres while dealing with technical treatises such as astronomy or mathematics. This is because, one does not have as large a basket of words from which one could choose the one he likes, to convey a particular thought or idea, while still meeting the metrical constraints. This explains why even renowned mathematicians and astronomers like Āryabhaṭa, Brahmagupta, Mādhava, or Nīlakaṇṭha generally stick to one particular simple meter---āryā, anuṣṭubh, etc. that does not impose serious metrical constraints, and gives much leeway in employing words.

Notwithstanding this constraint, it is remarkable that Putumana has handled a variety of meters in his text Karaṇapaddhati with great felicity. In this regard, the other astronomers who could be recounted exhibiting their poetic skills are Bhāskarācārya (12th century) and Nityānanda (17th century).

During the lecture, we will quote a few verses from Karaṇapaddhati that at once highlight both the mathematical and poetic skills of Putumana.