

Kiran is now pursuing his bachelor's degree through correspondence. It is an old head that we see on the young shoulders of Ravi Kiran. He says he does not even think of the reincarnation theory and does not feel he is any different from anybody else. There is a tender humanism in his smile. He gently presides over the practice sessions of brother Sasi Kiran and sister Kiranavali.

Ravi Kiran's gottuvadyam reveals the nature of the pious artiste! The unconscious expression of soothing notes from a mind at peace. Y.G. Doraiswamy, the grand old man of Madras who moulded many a musical and dance career, talks of Ravi Kiran with a special affection. "As a musician, Ravi Kiran is about a 100 years' old. As an individual he is one of the most natural, unassuming, genuine and modest persons. Totally honest and straightforward. His strength of character and integrity is clearly seen in his music. Ravi Kiran is among the top three or four in Carnatic music. Narasimhan has judiciously steered his son's divine gift and given him fullest

freedom to discover himself. What he plays on his gottuvadyam is the grand music of 19th century. The turn of the century music which saw great vocal and instrumental masters."

Ravi Kiran's music may be a God-given gift, but his father Narasimhan should be given the credit for preserving and enhancing it. Narasimhan is quite modest about his achievements. He had to sacrifice his own musical

career as a gottuvadyam vidwan to nurture Ravi Kiran's gift. His other children Sasi Kiran and Kiranavali are emerging as competent vocalists. (Critic N.M. Narayanan (NMN) says they can surpass most of the performers today.) But Narasimhan is holding them back refusing all requests for concerts. He will present them only when he is totally confident of them. "Ravi Kiran's was a divine gift which would have come out regardless.



■ Now 21, Ravi Kiran is a much sought after artiste

Another marvel

NINE-year-old Ganesh is the other marvel in the Narasimhan household. Son of Narasimhan's sister, Ganesh had been showing signs of a gifted musician even as a child. His father (a block development officer in Karnataka) got frequently transferred and Ganesh went to different schools. Ravi Kiran felt Ganesh had too much latent talent that needed to be nurtured and brought him to Madras. Ganesh plays the gottuva-



■ Ganesh, another promising musician in the family

diam with sincerity and a flourish. His voice has a remarkable range and depth like a veteran.

He is given to silence: one day he decided he would remain silent for a whole *mandala* (48 days). He answers only with his playful gestures but breaks the silence for his singing sessions. After completing the first *mandala* he spoke to his heart's content with everyone for three days and is now on another silent session.

Narasimhan says: "He has such tremendous gift and capacity and interest that if he had been with me from the beginning, he would have been an international celebrity by now."