



RABINDRA SANGEET IN CONTEXT WITH INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

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Abstract

This study will present a comprehensive look at Rabindra sangeet and Indian classical music. The purpose is to explore the musical calligraphy of cultures through the spiritual significance of Rabindra sangeet. The objective of the research is to explore the raga, tappa, and dhrupad gayaki which is an integral part of Rabindra Sangeet. As Tappa is a lighter variety of Hindustani classical music and Indian classical ragas which are used in Rabindra sangeet have much more depth in nature makes it a very interesting study for research. The elements of Indian classical music have been used in an extremely intelligent and effective fashion in Rabindra Sangeet, therefore the application of classical elements are beautifully decorated and sung with different emotions and with different Parjaays in Rabindra Sangeet.

Key words: Rabindra Sangeet, Dhrupad Gayaki, Parjaays in Rabindra Sangeet, Teaching Styles in Rabindra Sangeet, Tappa Style in Rabindra Sangeet.

INTRODUCTION

Song, musical Instruments and dance are called music together with the predominance of the word song. In a word, music is the heartfelt creation of tone, colour and rhythm.

In the case of Indian music, two styles can be observed. One is the Hindustani method; the other is the South Indian method or the Karnataka method. According to many, these two methods were the same in ancient times. But later, as a result of historical changes, these two methods became distinct. The music prevalent in North and East India is called Hindustani Method and the music prevalent in the south of Vindhya-parvat i.e. Madras, Mysore etc. is called South Indian method or Karnataki method. There are some Ragas that are similar in both the styles but are named differently, and there are Ragas that only belong to either of the styles.

Rabindra Sangeet is a creation of songs by Nobel Laureate poet and composer Guru Rabindranath Tagore and the songs are also evolved with Indian Classical Ragas and tappa. The flavours and variety of Indian classical music plays an important part in Rabindra Sangeet. They are very popular in the Bengali culture

in India as well as Bangladesh. These songs portray an enormous range of human emotions. They emulate the tonal colour of Indian Ragas, thus providing the songs with their emotional content. Rabindra Sangeet is mostly based on Hindustani Ragas; therefore, here we have worked only with Hindustani Ragas. Some basic terms of Hindustani music that are used here are ragas, vadi note, samvadi note, that and pakkad.

RAGA

A *Raga* may be defined as *a melodic structure with fixed notes and a set of rules that characterize a certain mood conveyed by a performance*. It is basically the framework provided to compose music. The *Raga* consists of notes (*swaras*) which give it a musical structure.

VADI NOTE

The *Vadi* note is the most important note of the *raga*, and it is also usually the most frequent note as well.

SAMVADI NOTE

The *Samvadi* note is the second most important note.

THAAT

The *Thaats* are considered to be parent modes, which form the foundation for every *Raga*. There are ten different types of *Thaats* in Hindustani classical music. Each *Raga* in Hindustani music belongs to any one of the ten *Thaats*.

PAKKAD

Pakkad is the structure of each *Raga*. It is the organization of notes that help in identifying the *Raga*.

Tagore songs easily blend into his work whether it is poetry, stories, or plays. Each song is known to express a deep human emotion, which is brought to colour with the use of Hindustani Ragas. The music is inspired not only by the Ragas, but also by the folk music of Bengal and Western Tunes. There are some songs that follow the characteristics of the *Raga* very strictly, but there are some songs that have a blend of two or more Ragas or probably belong to one *Raga* but do not strictly follow the *Raga* structure. Hence, it is a challenging task to predict the *Raga*; the Rabindra Sangeet is based on.

The composition of Rabindra Sangeet is such that for a beginner, it is very difficult to recognize the Raga from the song being played, for example, the song “aha jagipohalobibhabari” has more than 300 notes in the entire song. The existing methods of *Raga* classification cannot be directly applied to *Rabindra Sangeet* due to its diverse nature. Every song is different, and the creativity of the composer does not follow the strict structure of Indian *Ragas*. Also, due to the heterogeneous nature of these songs, the classification used is unsupervised.

The influence of Classical music on Rabindra Sangeet has been amply analysed and now stands as an accepted fact. In particular, there has been a pronounced influence of Rabindra Sangeet on some of the noted classical instrumentalists of North India.

The elements of Indian classical music have been used in an extremely intelligent and effective fashion in Rabindra Sangeet. It is indeed one of its most significant features. The application of this ingredient was however dictated principally by the perceived requirements of the mood evoked in the song, which was after all the core entity of his creation.

Therefore, the application of classical elements, more often than not, had been subtle, and only to the extent necessary to express the emotive content of the song. The urge to evoke a particular mood to his own satisfaction, often led him to blend ragas in unexpectedly beautiful and interesting ways, or to look for uncharted and unexplored nuances within the known frameworks of ragas. For example, in the song – “Shedindujone” one finds such an entrancing portrayal of the Raga Peelu; here the notes of this rather common raga have been played with creative mastery. In the song “Chokhe-r aaloe” - one finds a simple yet serenely beautiful depiction of Raga Yaman Kalyan.

In RabindraSangeet there are assimilation of many ragas of Hindustani classical music, for e.g.-

- Raga Bilawal – Ajiherisongsaramrito, dekhajodidile
- Raga Gour-sarang – Agunerparoshmonichoao, andharshakhaujolkori
- Raga Bhairav – Aha jagipohalobibhabori, ajprathomphulerpabo

DHRUPAD GAYAKI IN RABINDRA SANGEET

The name Dhrupad has been coined from the word Dhruvpada. The songs of this style are sung in a special process and rhythm by the alap of Nom, Tom etc. and its melody is special. Its nature is slow and deep, it is about the language chapter and in it the deep rhythm instruments are accompanied by the rhythms of Pakhawaj, chartaal, jhaptaal, etc. (Dutta. 2013).

As a child, Guru Rabindranath was particularly influenced and inspired by two musicians in his musical pursuits. One of them is Vishnu Chakraborty and the other is Srikantha Singh. Vishnu Chakraborty was one of the best dhrupadis of Bengal in the 19th century. He was the first music Guru of Rabindranath Tagore. Vishnu Chakraborty used to teach songs of the early Brahmosamaj in the style of Dhrupad. Moreover, Hindustani dhrupad, Khayal gayaki were sung only in the living rooms of zamindaars and rich people.

Radhika Prasad Goswami and Shyamsunder Mishra were the last to be appointed as music teacher in Thakurbari. Radhika Goswami was also a singer of BrahmoSamaj and has a wealth of various dhrupads such as dagarbani, khandarbani, gauharbani or gobarharbani, nauharbani, dhrupad of the mixed family.

Rabindra sangeet also has songs influenced by Tappa; Thumri and Taranabutits numbers are very limited e.g. the song of the nature of thumri is “Ki surbajeamarprane”, “Haikedibir” are taranaprakriti’s songs.

TAPPA ORIGIN & DEVELOPMENT

Tappa is a particular type of Gitabandha (composition for vocal music), which was created by Qabbal “singers of Punjab”. It is apprehended that tappa was originated during the first half of 17th century. It is supposed that tappa is originally a folk song of Camel Drivers of Punjab – Sindh region, so the language of its lyrics is essentially Punjabi. It was generally sung by the male singers of Punjab. The other form of tappa was sung by the female singers of Punjab as a wedding song. It is pure and simple love song. Tappa music is also very popular in Bangladesh and gradually a style of its own has developed. Ramanidhi Gupta or Nidhubabu is said to be the creator of tappasongs. Along with Hindustani tappa, Nidhubabu’s tappa song was also highly appreciated in Jorasanko’s

Thakurbari. So, naturally Rabindranath Tagore was influenced by tappa songs. However, boltan is predominant in Hindustani tappa but it is not sung in Rabindranath tappa. Some songs are based on Hindustani songs, but Rabindranath Tagore's distinctiveness in terms of style of services, style of composition, decoration etc. is also noteworthy. Tappa is a lighter variety of Hindustani classical music. These songs are characterized by their beaded appearance. Rabindranath Tagore had preferred the Bengali variant or Nidhubabu's Tappa rather than its Punjabi or Shouri-mian's Tappa for his compositions. The tappa gayaki is placed in different songs in such a beautiful manner that the feel and flavour of the songs became much more divine.

In Rabindranath's tappa-ang songs a special elegant of Sanskrit form can be noticed. There is not so much ornamentation in those songs that the lyrics of the song may remain unspoken or stressful, such as: "Sarthakjanamamar" (Desh, sahyasankhya, 1360, p. 138). Following are the Tagore songs which are correspond to Tappa style:

Shavari-Tappa

- Jaowaasarieikikhela

Behag-Tappa

- Chirosakhacherona
- Bhairavi-Tappa
- Bondhuraoraho
- Hridaybasonapurnoholo
- Pipasa hay nahimitilo

Kafi-Tappa

- E porobashe robe
- Kebosileaji

PARJAAYS

Classification of songs was done by Rabindranath Tagore himself according to the subject of the songs and can be seen in the collection, the book 'Geetabitan'.

They were classified in six Parjaays - Puja (offerings), Swadesh (Patriotic), Prem (Love), Prokriti (Nature), Bichitro (Amazing) and Anushthanik (Ceremonial). The first Parjaay, Puja, has twenty-one upa-parjaays or sub-classes, Prem has two and Prokriti has six Upa-parjaays.

In the 'Geetinatya O Nrityanatya' (Opera and Dance Drama) section six dramas are included - Kaalmrigaya, Balmiki-protibha, Maayar-khela, Chitrangada, Chandalika and Shyama. Bhanusingha Thakurer Padabali is a series of twenty songs written by the poet at an early age. Natyageeti is a section where songs written for several dramas are included. Jaatiasangeet is another section where songs to chant and praise for India have been chosen. Songs for offerings and prayers have been included in Puja O Prarthana section. Another section with some more ceremonial songs have been created as anushthanik sangeet. The next section is Prem O Prokriti.

CONCLUSION

From the beginning of 20th century till today Rabindrasangeet has been established on a throne at a sky-height, in the warmth of many people in the world. The popular Bengali songs like tappa, padavali kirtan, ramprasadi, baul, bhatiali etc. also provided him with enough inspiration. Rabindra sangeet assists in creating culture, characterized by a community of people, representing their customs, ethnicity, history, philosophy, and traditions. The language and speech of spirituality is as varied as the sounds of the Earth. It presents cultures with a refreshed relevance in people's lives, and provides a way for individuals to relate to other cultures. Exploring the musical calligraphy of cultures throughout the world is a wonderful way to explore the spiritual significance of Rabindra sangeet.

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