

## GHARANA MUSIC ACKNOWLEDGES VARIETY AND VERSATILITY: CONVENTIONAL RAGAS, UNCONVENTIONAL USAGES

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### Abstract

The exclusiveness of Gharana has made Hindustani classical music different from Carnatic classical music as well as other Indian classical musical forms. Classical music that deals with Ragas has been very aptly interpreted by the Gharana maestros through their performances since from the medieval period. Innumerable Bandishes (compositions) of Dhrupad and Khyal, exercised by the same Gharana representatives have also been transmitted among them from one generation to the other. These compositions known as Cheez to the Gharana representatives, supposed to be the most precious things as the hint of proper rendition of Ragas are hidden within. This paper highlights on varieties and versatilities among the same major Ragas, once formed out of innovations and exclusive creations by the Gharana exponents whether are being used or not. And if so, this is to be investigated where are these unconventional practices still in use among the Gharana representatives or people of particular places as Ragas being the prevailing Cultural Tradition of India which to be preserved through the culture of these Traditional treasures.

**Key words:** Gharana, Major Ragas, Varieties and Versatilities, Cultural Tradition

### INTRODUCTION

Gharana deals with professional performers in the field of Hindustani classical music. These performers or practitioners of Hindustani classical music were seen to be appeared as Court-musicians during medieval period in different parts of northern India. Gharana from its inception passed through controversies and tug of war among the professionals because of holding the positions of Court-musicians from same lineage. And from this perspective, exclusive music style gradually developed among the particular group or lineage. Performers made their exclusive music styles with certain follower groups which in course of time became familiar as specific Gharanas in the field of Hindustani classical music.

During the medieval period in India, Court-music came into existence and the old Acharya-Shishya Parampara or Guru-Shishya Parampara (Tradition of Trainer and Disciple) of ancient India was rapidly disappearing from the society. Court-music represents the Social and Cultural attitudes of that time. The *Gayak-Vadak-Nartak Parampara* or the professional performers in vocal music, instrumental

music and dance, being contemporary with the Acharya-Shishya Parampara, managed themselves as Court-musicians in the medieval period and got identified as the followers of recognised Gharanas from the last phase of eighteenth century A.D. (Ghosh 99).

Raga being the integral part of Indian classical music emerged through several forms or styles long before the medieval period and put a strong foundation in the Cultural Tradition of India. Indian classical music refers to organised and high-class musical exposition through proper articulation of sounds with definite embellishments of musical notes and rhythm. *Raga* is the compound of the powerful ingredients of Classical music which expresses specific moods. The evolution of Classical music describes various old and new Ragas through several musical styles undoubtedly denotes development towards music that did not occur a day. Perseverance, rigorous practice and strong dedication led the musicologists (those, having logical erudition on music) and the music professionals to accomplishments.

From 15th Century A.D. onwards, Indian music began to be divided into Hindustani and Carnatic Sangeet (music) with several musical forms. Dhrupad and Khyal are two ideal forms of Hindustani classical music through which Raga may be properly expressed. These two forms have been practised by the Gharana representatives since from the medieval period. Both the classical musical forms originated from Gwalior and there from spread all over India during that time. Dhrupad was reorganised as well as popularised by Raja Man Singh Tomar (1486-1516 A.D.), king of Gwalior and the practice and popularity of Khyal was also initiated by the effort of Quawaal Bacche family (Gharana) from Gwalior.

### **GHARANA: GENERAL IDEAS**

There is no existence of Gharana in Carnatic classical music or any other Indian classical musical forms. Gharana evolves from the Persian word Ghar which means family and it stands for music professionals under one family or certain school of music who follow definite style of singing, instrument playing or dance. Gharana talks about innovative styles in presentation, powerful improvisation and consistent variety of features, maintaining certain steps called Silsila (Ghosh, 99-100). There are certain common traits irrespective of all Gharanas, but differences of applications make the originality as well as identification of the

Gharanas themselves. The Gharana system gradually crossed the barrier of lineage and extended to the trained disciples from generation to generation (Roy,3).

Any Gharana is usually named after a person or a place or a family. There are a number of renowned Gharanas such as Gwalior Gharana, Agra Gharana, Kirana Gharana, Patiyala Gharana etc. which were named according to different places. Alladiya Gharana is an instance of a Gharana, named after Ustad Alladiya Khan. Again, Seni or Senia Gharana, Quawaal Bacche Gharana etc. are ideal Gharanas, for example, named after the families of Miyan Tansen and the Quawaals respectively.

Gharana implies excellence of certain elements associated with the particular Form (such as Dhrupad, Khayal etc.) of Hindustani classical music. At least three generations' performances continuity is the true recognition of a Gharana and each exponent of which has to be renowned in this case. Exponent/s of a particular Gharana may emerge with some innovative ideas which are adopted and practised by other representatives of the Gharana itself. Innovative ideas standardize the quality of Gharana music to a higher degree and give birth to a Gaayaki (exclusive style) in course of time. A recognised Gharana, thus, flourishes with its exclusive characteristics. Gharana does not entertain a mere imitation; it survives through Taleem (expertises) and proper improvisations.

Bandish (composition), which also known as Cheez to the Gharana representatives, have been carefully preserved and transmitted to the same Gharana representatives from one generation to the other in the form of Dhrupad or Khyal. Bandishes were treated as gem or treasure as they imply the way to unfold Ragas. Nayaki and Gayaki are two musicological terms and very much inclined to Hindustani classical music. Nayaki refers to the lessons that a disciple learns from his *Guru* during the apprenticeship. After having learnt a great deal of lessons the disciple acquires that much of potentiality to adopt ideas beyond his Gharana. He then, will have some power to blend ideas with self-experience and which is called *Gayaki*. Rigorous practice and contemplation of mind work together to shape a *Gayaki* in course of time. Gharanatraining helps a learner to understand different *Gayakis* apart from one's own.

## RAGAS OF HINDUSTANI CLASSICAL MUSIC

Royal patronage to Hindustani classical music made a huge repository of Ragas. Yaman, Darbari Kanada, Miyan Ki Todi, Miyan Ki Malhar, and many other Ragas have everlasting effects that are still in use. There are more Ragas to mention which somewhat related to particular places and might have been developed by certain professional maestros or the musicologists. For example, Bhupali, Jaunpuri, Multani, Bhupal Todi etc. may be considered. Similarly, Hussaini Kanada, Ramdasi Malhar, Surdasi Malhar, Bilaskhani Todi etc. are such Ragas which have deep association with some music maestros as creators.

The Royal Courts of Lucknow, Gwalior, Rampur, Jaipur, Betiya, Baroda etc. may be taken as instances where the rulers had been playing the good role of the patrons for the development of Indian Art and Culture. Nawab Wazid Ali Shah (1847 A.D.-1854 A.D.) of Lucknow Royal Court, *Raja* Daulat Rao Sindhiya and his descendants of Gwalior Royal Court, Nawab Kolbe Ali Khan and his descendants of Rampur Royal Court and many a rulers of other Royal Courts patronised many performers of Hindustani classical music (Chakraborty, 2004). As a result, the Court-musicians or the performers had ample scope to explore Rag-Raginis (Ragas) in different ways.

Long term practice among the performers made definite structure of the conventional Ragas, though at times some varieties of same Ragas might occur except the basic differences between the Gharanas due to Gharana exponents' creativity. And the variety or varieties of the same Ragas continued generation after generation as exclusive treasure of particular Gharana(s) simultaneously with the older one.

## RAGAS: CAUSES OF VARIATION

Ancient Ragas, their classifications and applications are obsolete today. Modern Ragas and their treatment resemble with that of the period, the Gharana exponents dealt with. In the formation of Ragas, four Varnas namely Sthayee (repeated notes), Aarohi (ascending), Avrohi (descending) and Sanchaari (both ascending and descending); and ten Lakshans (characteristics) namely Graha (starting note), Angsha (vadi), Taar (upper register), Mandra (lower register), Nyaas (ending note), Apanyaas (resting note), Alpatva (minimal use), Bahutva (maximum use), Shadava (use of six notes) and Audava (use of five notes) are

maintained. In Raga presentation, Vadi Swar (most essential note of a Raga, used with the help of other associated notes of the same Raga), Samvadi Swar (next essential note of a Raga, used with the help of other associated notes of the same Raga), Anuvadi Swar (rest of the notes of the Raga except Vadi and Samvadi), Vivadi Swar (irregular note or note except Vadi, Samvadi and Anuvadi, minimal use of which beautifies the Raga) and Varjit Swar (note or notes, no way should be used) are also very important.

Swar-Sangati (intonation and application of special feature of combined notes) which is as same as Angas or Phrases of a Raga may be considered for the cause of variation. In modern times Ragas are classified through Thaata-Raga system and Raganga-Raga system, introduced by Pandit Vishnunarayan Bhatkhande and Pandit Moreshwar Khade. So, Thaata and Anga (phrase) are other reasons for variation. Variety may occur due to the change of Swar-Jatis (change of the number of notes both in ascending and descending). Variation may also be possible in the application of Vivadi note of a definite Raga, if popularised by an exponent and then accepted by other followers of the same Gharana.

Besides the above, some stalwart Court-musicians used to follow Raga-Ragini systems of the early medieval period from reliable sources. Tantaranga Khan, son of Miyan Tansen and his followers exercised the views of Arjun while Bilas Khan, another son of Tansen and his followers prioritised that of Hanuman. Quawaals and the musicians, inhabitants of Delhi and adjacent areas accepted Indraprastha style (Ghosh 22-23). Seni or Senia Gharana being famous for Dhrupad style of singing and most of the Gharanas of Dhrupad have direct or indirect connection with it. And in case of Khyal Gharana, there must be deep inclination to Quawaal-Bacche family (Gharana).

## **VARIETIES AND VERSATILITIES**

All the Ragas do not possess equally charming and the inbuilt capacity that will live forever. So, many a Ragas have thus gone aside or lost from the conventional common practices. These Ragas are called Achhop Ragas or rare Ragas and are restricted to some specified people or certain Gharana maestros. Unconventional usage of common or conventional Ragas was formed out of imagination and innovation of the Gharana stalwarts. Inefficiency in the presentation, incapability in digestion of the variety of same Ragas, lack of proper Taleem (training) among

the successive Gharana representatives have resulted into aversion to this practice in the world of Hindustani classical music. Discussions as well as examples will be focused on the conventional Ragas with their simultaneous or unconventional varieties.

Raga Vibhas under Bhairav Thaata is well known almost everywhere in northern India. Vibhas under Marva Thaata is conventional in Jaipur-Atrauli or Alladiya Gharana and Maharashtra area.

In Bengal, another variation of Vibhas was previously in practice. Innumerable songs of Rabindranath Tagore and folk tunes have been composed with this structure. Renowned performers of the Vishnupur Gharana used to sing this version. This Vibhas was performed under Bilawal Thaata. This version was also in practice among the followers of Betiya Gharana and Kashi Gharana (Roy 41-42). Illustration of this version (only movement of the notes) is given below:

S D D D P D S-- D P G P G R S --,

S R G R G P D D P D N D P G R S --

(Bandyopadhyay 68)

There is a reference of Raga Vibhas comprising Suddha Rishav and Suddha Dhaivat where the name Abban Khan of Saharanpur has been mentioned (Khan 65). Probably this version might be somehow connected with Dagar or Dagur Gharana. Another composition of Tantaranga is also available where Suddha Rishav and Suddha Dhaivat both have been applied (Mukhopadhyay 23). This version might have been in use in the old Gwalior Gharana.

Besides the above variations, one composition under Purvi Thaata is found as example (Bhatkhande 391). But it is difficult to say, which Gharana practitioners used to perform this.

Raga Jaijaiwanti is heard to be performed through two Angas namely Desh and Vageshree. This Raga under Desh Anga is widely heard. Jaijaiwanti under Vageshree Anga is practised both in Agra Gharana and Gwalior Gharana. Example of the Jaijaiwanti under Vageshree Anga (expansion of notes):



Ascending & Descending:

NS RG MG Rg RS, GM DN SN Dn DP, MG RgRS, NS Dn R

(Thakur 36)

The general feature of Raga Purvi is everybody acquainted with. This is under Purvi Thaata and the application of Suddha Madhyam is minimal which used as Vivadi note. In Bengal, Purvi with Suddha Dhaivat were used to be performed and a number of such instances are found in Rabindranath Tagore's compositions. Some followers of Vishnupur Gharana use to perform this version. In Seni Gharana, two Dhaivats are used where Suddha Dhaivat is dominant (Roy37).

## CONCLUSION

Innumerable examples may be drawn in favour of the variations about the conventional major Ragas such as Vasant, Ramkeli, Tilok Kamode, Goud Malhar, Nayaki Kanhada, Durga, Megh or Megh Malhar and so on which more or less are in use. Scholars and Researchers should find out important sources as well as authentic examples so that exact structure of the variations of Raga may be defined and also be included into conventional practices. Veteran performers should also pay their attention into this matter. Interest among the learners and the music lovers in this matter will automatically develop. This will further strengthen the conception of Raga analysis as well as the quality of performances among the learners. With the unanimous endeavour of all many a hidden truth will come into light.

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