

CHALLENGES OF THE PRESENT DAY RAGA CLASSIFICATION IN HINDUSTANI MUSIC

PURNIMA VENUGOPAL

Guest Vocalist, Dance department, Rabindra Bharati University,

Abstract: *The system of raga classification went through several changes since ancient times. The 32 Thaata system proposed by Hindustani musicians, especially the Senia gharana artists is a derivative from the 72 Thaata system of Venkatamakhin which was used in Karnatik raga classification. The 10 Thaata system of Pt. Bhatkhande has not been able to resolve the issue of raga classification due to the increase in the number of ragas in Hindustani music. This article upholds the benefits of the 32 Thaata system and the Anga system of Pt. Khare. It also discusses the limitations of both the systems through examples. The benefits exceed the limitations.*

Keywords: *Raga classification, Ragas, Anga system, Thaata system, Senia gharana.*

The system of raga classification has undergone many changes since the ancient age. According to Dr. Geeta Ravi Kumar in her book, “**The Concept & Evolution of Raga in Hindustani & Karnatic music**”, **Vidyaranya** coined the term **Mela** in the first half of the 14th century In **Sangita Sara in** which he prescribed 15 Melas. Later **Pundarika Vithhala** too added one more Mela taking the number to 16 Melas in his book “**Sadruga Chandrodaya**”. In “**Raga Tarangini**” **Locana** prescribed 12 Melas. **Somnath** did a massive work later taking the number of Melas to 23. **Ramamatya** in his book “**Swaramela Kalanidhi**” considered 20 Melas. Venkatamakhin, the great scholar in the South took the Janaka- Janya principle to the most scientific level by creating the 72 Mela system. The Mela system is constructed in such a way that no raga remains unclassified and lying out of the framework of the Mela-Raga classification or the Janaka-Janya classification. In the North, the Hindustani music was still under the influence of the Raga-Ragini Paddhati which was again a subject of imagination and improvisation. The 4 methods, 1) **Shiv Mat** 2) **Bharata Mat** 3) **Kallinatha Mat** 4) **Hanumant Mat**, classified the Ragas according to gender thus giving birth to the Raga-Ragini concept. 5 male ragas each had 5-6 wives, taking the number to 30-36. According to Dr. Geeta Ravikumar, **Mohammad Raza ‘Nagmate-Asafi’** (1813 A. D.) rejected this system as unscientific. He proposed the Bilawal That as Suddha Thaata thus bringing the That-Raga paddhati into force. Pandit Bhatkhande later did massive studies into Venkatamakhin’s system giving the 10 thaata system which would be easier to memorize than the 72 scales of Venkatamakhin. But that was not the end to the development of this raga classification in the North. Surprisingly there were a group of North Indian musicians who had foreseen that the number of ragas in Hindustani music would swell to a great extent in future thus making it difficult to categorize them even under the 10 thaata system. The 32 thaata system was proposed instead of the 72 scales of Venkatamakhin.

THE 32 THAATA SYSTEM CREATION

The Saptak is divided into 2 halves: **Purvang** and **Uttarang**. The swara combination happens as follows: Combining S r R g G m M with P d D n N S we get 16 Suddha Madhyam Melas and 16 Teevra Madhyam Melas which totals to 32 Melas. In the 32 thaata system chromatic use of Suddha and Komal swaras of the same note is forbidden like the 10 Thaata system.

(For our understanding r g d n stands for komal Re, komal Ga, komal Dha, komal NI; R,G ,D N stands for Suddha Re, Suddha Ga, Suddha Dha and Suddha Ni ; m= Suddha Madhyam, M= Teevra Ma)

SCALES WITH SUDDHA MA

S r g m P d n S {BHAIRAVI}

S r g m P d N S {DHENUKA}

S r g m P D n S {NATAKAPRIYA}

S r g m P D N S {KOKILAPRIYA}

S R g m P d n S {ASAVERI}

S R g m P d N S {KEERVANI}

S R g m P D n S {KAFI}

S R g m P D N S {GOURIMANOHARI}

S r G m P d n S {BASANT MUKHARI}

S r G m P d N S {BHAIRAV}

S r G m P D n S {AHIR BHAIRAV}

S r G m P D N S {ANAND BHAIRAV}

S R G m P d n S {CHARUKESHI}

S R G m P d N S {NAT BHAIRAV}

S R G m P D n S {KHAMAJ}

S R G m P D N S {BILAWAL}

SCALES WITH TEEVRA MA

_ S r g M P d n S {BHAVAPRIYA}

_ S r g M P d N S {TODI}

_ S r g M P D n S {SHADVIDHAMARGINI}

_ S r g M P D N S {SUARNANGI}

S R g M P d n S {SHANMUKHAPRIYA}

_ S R g M P d N S {SIMHENDRAMADHYAM}

S R _g M P D n S {HEMAVATI}

S R g M P D N S {DHARMAVATI}

S r G M P d n S {NAMANARAYANI}

S r G M P d N S {PURVI}

S r G M P D n S {RAMAPRIYA}

S r G M P D N S {MARWA}

S R G M P d n S {RISHABHAPRIYA}

S R G M P d N S {LATANGI}

S R G M P D n S {VACHASPATI}

S R G M P D N S {KALYAN}

Of the above combinations, Pt. Bhatkhande chose only 10 primary Thaats, which were enough to accommodate the ragas prevalent in his time. They are:

Bilawal, Khamaj, Kafi, Bhairav, Kalyan, Marwa, Purvi, Asaveri, Bhairavi and Todi.

According to **Dr. Nupur Ganguly** (HOD, Vocal Department, Rabindra Bharati University) in her book “**A Bird's eye view of Indian Musicology**”, Pg 82-83 (ISBN 9788177681109) (published Jan 2018) this improvised scientific 32 Thaats system was the conception of the **Senia Gharana**. The names of the musical scales have too been given for students of music. **Shobhana Nayar's** book “**Bhatkhande's Contribution to Music: A Historical Perspective**” [ISBN 9780861322381, 086132238X] (Page 142) (published 1989)] has an earliest mention of this 32 Thaats system. The

names of the scales are not mentioned in this book. This is a sad fact that such a huge contribution to Hindustani music done by the North Indian musicians other than Pt. Bhatkhande did not get the due recognition that was deserved.

THE RAGANGA PADDHATI

The concept of **RagAnga** was introduced by **Pt. Khare** to take care of the inadequacies of the 10 Thaatsystem. Ragas like Lalit, Jaijaiwanti which have a different construction foreign to the thaatsystem were given the formula of RagAnga paddhati or system. Khare Ji gave us 30 Angas:

1) Bhairav 2) Bilawal 3) Kafi 4) Khamaj 5) Purvi 6) Kalyan 7) Marwa 8) Todi 9) Bhairavi 10) Asaveri 11) Lalit 12) Jaijaiwanti 13) Malhar, 14) Kanada 15) Bageshree 16) Sarang 17) Kedar 18) Nat 19) Kamod 20) Bhupali 21) Durga 22) Hindol 23) Bhatiyar 24) Aasa 25) Bihag 26) Sankara 27) Pilu 28) Sorat 29) Dhanasree 30) Shree.

The fusion of RagAnga paddhati with the Thaatsystem was a mistake done regarding the raga classification over a period of time. **Raga Lalit** for all theoretical purpose is taught as being under the Purvi Thaatsystem. Raga Lalit is a very ancient raga. The older version of the raga was sung with Suddha Dhaivat. Many such ragas exist since ages. They were there even before the grammar existed. Raga Lalit is a beautiful meditative raga. The chalan goes as N r G m Mm, G m d N d, M d S, r n d M, d M m, M G r S. Now the question arises, as to how could a raga, with a chromatic arrangement of Suddha and Teevra Madhyam, be grouped under the Purvi Thaatsystem when the Thaatsystem itself indicates that the chromatic varieties of the same note are not allowed? The Lalit anga was proposed to meet the inadequacy of the 10 Thaatsystem. The repeated use of Suddha Madhyam shows that the Purvi Thaatsystem should not ideally hold this raga under the umbrella even if there is a presence of Komal Re and Komal Dha. The usage of the Purvi phrase, (r N d) does not justify the raga to be put under the Purvi Thaatsystem.

Raga **Bilaskhani Todi** (S r g P d S, r n d m g r g r S) has the **Todi anga** (r g r S) and hence the name Todi is appendaged to it along with **Bilas Khan's** name, who is said to have conceptualized this raga. This raga is still grouped under the Bhairavi Thaatsystem (S r g m P d n). The only reason it is grouped under the Bhairavi scale (S r g m P d n) is the similarity with the notes of the scale.

Let's take a look at **Raga Ahir Bhairav** for a comparative purpose. This raga is called **Chakravakam** in Karnatik music. This is a very melodious and soothing raga. The Bhairav anga (G m r S) is a feature of this raga, the phrase being sung repeatedly to establish the **Bhairav** anga intertwined in the raga. The **Ahiri** phrase comes in the Uttarang where the komal Dha and Suddha Ni of Bhairav gets replaced by the Suddha Dha and komal Ni. Both these notes are foreign to the Bhairav Thaatsystem. Now, the paradoxical situation arises. This raga still gets a place under the Bhairav Thaatsystem as the raga has a distinct Bhairav Anga. Following this logic, Raga Bilaskhani Todi should come under the Todi Thaatsystem because of the presence of the Todi Anga (r g r S).

Raga **Kedar** has two Madhyams employed melodiously. The D P m, m G P, M P D P m itself shows that both Madhyams are needed to establish the beauty of the raga. This raga should not be grouped under any Thaatsystem. Rather this raga should be theoretically placed under the **Kedar Anga** and

not add confusion by fusion to the Kalyan Thaata or Bilawal Thaata. The raga should be placed under the Bilawal Thaata only if the Teevra Madhyam is completely avoided as was done in olden days. If we still present Raga Kedar without the Teevra Madhyam, it could be classified under the Bilawal Thaata.

Raga **Darbari Kanada** is a heavy raga sung by great scholars putting the andolan on Komal Ga and komal Dha with great dexterity and subtlety. S R g m P, m P d n S, d n P, m P g m R S is a brief version of this heavy raga which can be expanded as a main raga for hours in a concert. Theoretically, this raga is placed under the Asaveri Thaata. We must remember that the characteristics of Raga Asaveri are completely different from Kanada and its variants. One point is clear regarding the Thaata classification that the Thaata has no **rakti** or **bhava** associated with it. This is exactly the replication of the Venkatamakhin system where the grouping is made solely on the basis of the swaras and not on the basis of rakti (Bhava) or Anga. Hence, classification of Raga Ahir Bhairav under Bhairav Thaata or Kedar under Kalyan Thaata has no scientific appeal.

Let's take a look at **Raga Bhupali** which has S R G P D S. S D P G R S. The beautiful raga sung by musicians has captured the attention of many music composers even in the Bollywood industry. A prevalent Chinese or Japanese tune has notes of Raga Bhupali as well. This raga corresponds to **Ragam Mohanam in Karnatik music**. This international appeal of the raga indicates that this and many such ragas existed even before the hectic scheme of classification and re-classification. The glide from P G R S is unique to this raga where it subtly touches Teevra Madhyam. Still the raga can also be grouped under the **Bilawal Thaata** considering that all swaras are Suddha. If we observe carefully, the RagAnga paddhati has also created the **Bhupali anga** as distinct from the **Kalyan anga** thus indicating that we need not lock up this particular raga under the Kalyan Thaata as is being done at present. **If the swaras belong to more than one Thaata, the raga should be placed under more than one Thaata.**

The **Bhupali Anga** was also created to accommodate ragas like Bhoopkali which could not come under any Thaata. Raga **Bhoopeswari** (Raga **Bhoopkali**) is the Hindustani equivalent of the Karnatik raga **Vaasanthi**. Pt. Hariprasad Chourasia calls the raga Bhupkali. Musicians of the Jaipur Atrali gharana refer to this raga as Raga **Prateeksha**. This raga is close to **Nat Bhairav** scale (S R G m P d N) The aroha and avaroha of Raga Bhoopkali is as follows:

S R G P d S, S d P G R S. As per the 32 Thaata system, it gets classified under the scale of **Nat Bhairav**. Hence with the application of the 32 Thaata system we find lesser dependence on the RagAnga concept for all theoretical purposes. During the practical demonstration of ragas, of course, the different Angas present in a raga could be demonstrated depending on the musician's craftsmanship.

Raga Suddha Sarang or Mian ki Sarang is a favourite raga which is sung in Vilambit, Madhya and Drut laya. S R M P N S. S N D P M P m R, N S. Here M P m R uses both the Madhyams. The thaata systems, both the 10 and 32 thaata do not allow chromatic notes. Hence forcefully grouping this raga under a specific thaata is against the rules of the thaata system itself. Hence the Sarang Anga was created because of the inadequacy of the 10 Thaata system. The 32 Thaata system too cannot give

relief to this raga as two varieties of the same note DO NOT come under a Thaata as per North Indian tradition. If theorists still argue that Suddha Sarang should be put under the Kalyan Thaata then the raga can be very comfortably assigned under the Bilawal Thaata as well, considering the assertive Suddha Madhyam during the landing in the phrase M P m R. The Kalyan Thaata (S R G M P D N) can scientifically give birth to a Raga with a Teevra Madhyam. Hence these ragas employing both the Suddha and Komal varieties of the same note, either in chromatic order or in vakra chalan (zigzag) cannot be placed under a Thaata because the Thaata is nothing but a simple scale of notes in the ascending order of pitch. A Thaata does not understand a vakra or zigzag order of notes.

These ragas with chromatic notes should only be classified under Angas and not under any Thaata system. Similar is the case with **Jajaiwanti, Behag, Malgunji, Brindavani Sarang**. And if still theoreticians argue that these ragas should come under the 10 Thaata system, well, then the 32 Thaata system is a better choice.

Raga Bhatiyar also faces the same challenge. **S m P D N D m P, P G r S** is a soothing raga. Occasional uses of Teevra Ma adds to the beauty of the raga in the phrase M D N S r N D P, m P G, P G r S. As per the 32 Thaata system the **Anand Bhairav** (S r G m P D N) scale) comes closest to Bhatiyar. The phrase P G r S is a **Bhatiyar** Anga given under the RagAnga paddhati. If Marwa Thaata (S r G M P D N) is good for Raga Bhatiyar, then why not the Anand Bhairav Thaata, considering the fact that Teevra Ma is employed in lesser degree in Bhatiyar compared to Suddha Ma, as has been done by many musicians like Pt. Samresh Chawdhury.

If the grammar is there, it needs to be followed to the core. If a raga with a foreign note is a strict no for the Thaata system, we find that the 32 Thaata system comes to the rescue of several ragas which are being sung since ancient times, let alone the modern ragas created by geniuses like **Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia, Pt. Ravi Shankar and Pt. S N Ratanjankar**.

Raga **Patdeep** (S g m P N S, S N D P m g R S) too finds a place under the **Gaurimanohari** Scale (S R g m P D N) of the 32 Thaata System following the same rules of the Thaata – Raga system. At present, this raga is forced under the Kafi Thaata (S R g m P D n). The raga found its way into the ghazal of **Ghulam Ali** in ‘**Daulat Mili Jahaan Ki**’. **Kazi Nazrul Islam’s ‘Prothomo Prodeep Jalao’** is based on this raga as well. Due to the Kafi Anga (m P g R) in the Raga, we find this raga being classified under the Kafi Thaata. A more scientific view makes us re-think if this raga could be released from the Kafi scale and assigned under the Gourimanohari Scale. A Thaata with a Komal Ni can only give rise to a Raga with a Komal Ni.

Raga **Keerwani**, another beautiful raga becomes a Thaata under the 32 Thaata system. It has been discussed in detail in the KHOAI magazine (Title: The 32 Thaata System: A Reality to Unfold, Pg 36, Vol 53,; 24th Dec 2023) as to how ragas like **Keerwani, Saraswati, Dharmavati, Vasant Mukhari, Chandrakans, Charukeshi, Nat Bhairav** get the position of a Thaata or Parent Scale or Janya thus leaving aside all doubts regarding the parental lineage of these ragas.

Raga **Ahiri** is a very ancient raga. Numerous ragas have been formed like Ahir Bhairav, Ahiri Todi, Ahir Lalit. **This raga is the same as the Natakapriya** scale of Carnatic music. Thus, **Ahiri can become a raga as well as a Thaata under the 32 Thaata system.** The chalan of Raga Ahiri is : **S r r g m, g m D n D, P D n D m g r, r g m r g r S.** This is a rare raga of the Maihar-Seniya repertoire (courtesy: Deepak Raja's world of Hindustani Music – Explorations in the realm of Hindustani Music in <http://swaralata.blogspot.com>). Ahiri is a scale too, which can hold **Raga Parameshwari and Raga Ahiri** comfortably under its umbrella.

THE BHAIKAV PRAKARS:

Apart from Raga Ahir Bhairav , which becomes both a Thaata and a raga under itself, let us take a look at the rare prakars of Bhairav.

Raga **Mangal Bhairav**, a rare raga with an Aroha-Avaroha as S r m P D S ;S D P m r S has a close affinity to the **Anand Bhairav** Scale (S r G m P D N). (Courtesy: www.parrikar.org). Here Raga Bhatiyar 'chaya' or phrase is found in m P D P, D P m. This raga can be elaborated in the Mandra, Madhya and Taar Saptak. A rare beautiful raga, not much heard in concerts.

Raga **Saurashtra Bhairav** is a rare raga employing both the Dhavats (www.parrikar.org). We cannot and should not accommodate the raga under the 32 Thaata system, which is an enhanced version of the 10 Thaata system. We can look into the Bhairav Anga for this raga's lineage. Here, the RagAnga Paddhati gets due priority over the Thaata systems. If theorists still justify the lineage of Malgunji belonging to Khamaj Thaata or Kafi Thaata, well, then Saurashtra Bhairav does belong to the Anand Bhairav Scale.

Raga **Anand Bhairav** (S r G m P D N S and reverse) is a rare Bhairav prakar. Classifying the raga under the Bhairav Thaata only emphasizes the confusion with the RagAnga Paddhati. This raga gets assigned under itself in the 32 Thaata System where the Raga's scale is also a Thaata. Pt. **K.G Ginde ji's** rendition of '**Bina Darasa Mana Tarsat nis din**' found in www.parrikar.org/hindustani/bhairav shows sparse use of Komal Ni inspired by the Bilawal just to add beauty. But Pt. **Ramashraya Jha Ramrang** sings '**Hari Bina Dinu Kaun Sanga Saathi**' without any Komal NI. Pt. Jha also advises us not to overstep into the Bhatiyar Anga. As per the 32 Thaata System , this rare Bhairav prakar gets a well deserved place under the **Anand Bhairav** (S r G m P D N) Thaata .

Raga **Bhatiyari Bhairav** in Pt. **Ramashraya Jha's** voice suggests Bhairav phrase (G m r S) to replace the Bhatiyar phrase (P G r S). The Raga almost resembles Raga **Anand Bhairav**. The phrase in the Mandra Saptak goes as D N r r S; S G m; g m P D P; D N r S (a characteristic phrase of Bhatiyar). G m P D N D m P (Bhatiyar) ; P m G M R S (Bhairav) in "**Palakan Lage Mori**" shows how the raga touches the shades of Bhairav and Bhatiyar very beautifully.

THE KANS PRAKARS

Let us look at some of the rare Kans prakars which lost its appeal mainly because of the lack of room under the 10 Thaata system. Of course, this view can be a subject of argument.

Raga **Amirikauns** (S G M P n S ; S n P M G S) is heard from **Ustad Amir Khan**. A rare gem in the Hindustani genre, this raga is derived from the **Vachaspati** (S R G M P D n) scale. This raga's melody is brought forth by Ustad Amir Khan. Under the 32 thaat system, this raga can be put under the **Vachaspati Thaata**, currently not possible under the 10 Thaata system. This raga is also called **Amirkhani Kauns**. The scales **Rishabhapriya** (S R G M P d n) and **Namanarayani** (S r G M P d n) also give rise to this enthralling raga. The glide from Komal Ni to Sa gives a feel of the Kans prakar.

Raga **Suryakauns** (S G m d n S ; S n d m G S). The raga is derived from the **Charukeshi Thaata** (S R G m P d n) or **Basant Mukhari** (S r G m P d n) scale. This raga has been popularised by **Pt. Bhimsen Joshi** and **Dr. Prabha Atre**. In “**Paar Karo Mori Nayya**” Dr. Atre stresses on Madhyam giving it a pseudo status of Vadi. The Nyasa is strongly on Madhyam sometimes giving us a feeling that the Madhyam is Shadaj. This raga is parallel to **Raga Surya** in Carnatic Music. This melodious raga deserves a place in our concerts!

Raga **Harikauns** has aroha and avaroha S g M D n S, and reverse. This raga demands a unique listening skill and vocal training to deliver it flawlessly. As per the 32 Thaata system this raga can be conveniently classified under the **Hemavati** scale (S R g M P D n) or **Shadvidhamargimi** scale (S r g M P D n). This raga seems to be more inclined to the glide through Suddha Re. **Amir Khan Saheb** glides over this rare pentatonic raga, which is truly difficult to sing. His **tarana** ‘Tadhim tadhim Tanana dhim’ in Madhya laya Ektaal followed by a tarana in Drut Teentaal is a masterpiece. **Sruti Sadolikar**’s bhajan ‘**Beet Gaye Din in**’ in Teevra Taal (7 beats) (released by Sony Music on 01/01/1989) is a treat to the lay musical ears. Dr. **Prabha Atre**’s ‘**Ga re Hari naam madhura**’ in Drut Ektaal is a treasure for students of music. **Pt. Jitendra Abhisheki**’s ‘Ja Re Kagwa’ in Vilambit Ektaal is a gem.

Raga **Bhinnakauns Or Rajeswari** (S g m D N S ; S N D m g S) has been popularised by Santoor maestro **Pt. Shiv Kumar Sharma**, **Ustad Salamat Ali Khan** and **Ustad Abdul Haleem Jaffer Khan**. This raga has shades of Raga Malkauns and Bhinna Shadaj. This beautiful raga can be brought under the scale of **Kokilapriya** (S r g m P D N). The 10 thaata system is not able to solve the riddle. Shades of Bhinna Shadaj is found in DND, DNDm, DNN, MDD. S g m, g m g S shows the Malkauns shade and hence the name Bhinnakauns.

Charukauns (S G m d n S, S n d P m G R S) is a beautiful raga in which the komal G of Malkauns is replaced by the Suddha G in the ascent and descent. In the descent we find all the notes of Charukeshi. The scale **Charukeshi** as per the 32 Thaata system deserves to be a parent for this rare, beautiful raga. If we observe carefully, Suryakauns and Charukauns differ in the avaroha. Suryakauns is Charukauns minus Pancham and Rishabh in the avaroha. The word ‘Kans’ is added here because of the feel of Malkauns this raga gives during the phrases mdn, dnS, nS, Snd.

The CD named ‘**Incredible Ravi Shankar**’ presents this raga. The 10 Thaata system is again not able to solve this problem of classification.

Raga **Madhukauns** is a reasonably new raga in Hindustani music with the notes S g M P n S ; S n P M g S. Bringing this raga under the Kafi Thaata is a forced inclusion. The scale **Shanmukhapriya** (S R g M P d n) or Or **Hemavati** (S R g M P D n) can be said to be the parent for this Raga. However, **Hemavati Thaata** seems to be closest to Raga Madhukauns. This raga was popularised by Pt. **Bhimsen Joshi**. The raga **Chandramadhu** created by **Ustad Amir Khan** resembles this raga. Due to scarcity of information, we are unable to find the key difference between Madhukauns and Chandramadhu. [Courtesy: <https://ragajunglism.org> by George Howlett]

Sanjeev Abhyankar's 'Kahe Mori Baat Chedat Ho Nandlala' in Vilambit 7 Matra has Nyas on Pa, with a well balanced treatment of other notes in mandra, madhya and taar Saptak. Ustad Amir Khan's rendition goes into a detailed exploration of the mandra Saptak.

Raga **AmbikaKans** or **Ambikakauns** almost resembles Raga Madhukauns with a Sudhha Dhaivat in aroha. The aroha avaroha is S g M P D n S . The avaroha is S n D P M g R S. The other name of Raga Madhuvanti is Raga **Ambika**. Here, the Malkauns anga is g S, S n g S. Raga **Saraswati** avirbhav here is in M P D n D P, n D P, S n D P (Ref: Topic Ambika-Kans by Ramkrishna Parkhi in **Sangeet Magazine** (ISSN 0970-7824) March 2003 ,published by Sangeet Karyalaya Haathras, UP, Hindi version, pg 11-12) . We also find a bandish ' **Ab Man le mori baat kanhaiya, kahe mohe tarsaawat hai** ' in Pg 12 .The tirobhav of Saraswati happens by the phrase g M P, S g M P, P M g M P whereby the Chaya (shade) of Raga **Ambika/Madhuvanti** gets established. This raga can be grouped under **Hemavati** scale (S R g M P D n) of the 32 Thaata system.

Raga **Devkauns** (S g m P N S, S N P m g S) . **Aslam Hussain Khan** of **Khurja** popularized this raga. He sang 'Ae Kartar, in Vilambit Ektaal. This raga has a meend from Komal Ga to Sa. Similarly there is a meend from Suddha Ni to Pa . As per the 32 Thaata system, the **Gourimanohari** Thaata (S R g m P D N) deserves to be the parent scale of Raga Devkauns. The chalan of g m P N , P N S N, brings out shades of Raga **Patdeep**. The **Malkauns** shade comes in S g, g S. The raga is explored in Madhya scale with nyasa on Pancham.(courtesy: <https://www.parrkar.org>).

Raga **Kaishiki Ranjani** is a relatively new raga introduced into Hindustani music. S R g R, g m d N S. S N d m g R S. This raga is the creation of **Chidanand Nagarkar** (1919-1971), a pupil of **Acharya S. N. Ratanjankar**. The raga phrases are

S d N S R, g R g m

g m d N, d N S'' (shade of Chandrakauns)

d N S'' R'', g'' R'' S'' N (shade of Keerwani)

S'' N d, N d m (shade of Chandrakauns), g R g m, g m (g) R S. (Courtesy: www.rajnparrikar.org)The Pancham is varjya (omitted) in this raga. In a straight sequence we can capture the raga as S R g m d N S and reverse.

As per the 32 Thaata system, this raga can be put under the scale of **Keerwani** (S R g m P d N). This raga gets no place under the 10 Thaata system. This raga has been sung extensively by late

Kishori Amonkar, Jitendra Abhisheki, Prabhakar Karekar. Chidanand Nagarkar was a gifted composer. His pen name was **Chit- Anand**.

Raga **Sundarkauns** (S g m D n S ; S n D m , g m g S) is a melodious raga which is formed by replacing the Komal Dha of Raga Malkauns with the Sudhha Dha. According to **Acharya Vishwanath Rao Ringe Tanarang**, we should not name this raga as Chandrakauns with Bageshree Anga because there is no presence of Suddha Ni as we find in Raga Chandrakauns. This misleading name was also a reason that the raga could not get much attention as it should have received. **Acharya S N Ratanjankar's** disciple, **Dinkar Kaini ji** has sung ' Vighana hara Ganesha'. **Vidushi Malini Rajurkar** has also sung this raga with her usual dexterity. In the Sangeet magazine published in Dec 2004, we find a beautiful bandish in Vilambit Ektaal given by Usha Parkhi ,the lyrics being :

Tabse nahin chain|

jabse mein nirakhyo Nandlalala||

Jabse dekhi soorat saanwari|

Sudh budh sab bisrayi||

As per the 32 Thaats system, we can classify this raga under the **Natakapriya** Scale (S r g m P D n) apart from **Kafi** (S R g m P D n) . This raga definitely has shades of **Bageshree** in S g m D , g m D n D , D n D m g m , D n D (www.tanarang.com)

OTHER RARE RAGAS IN THE HINDUSTANI GENRE

Raga **Madhukant** (S R g M P D n S and reverse) has Raga Madhuvanti in Poorvang and Kafi in Uttarang. In the article ' The ragas of North Indian Music: Their structure and Evolution by **N.A Jairazbhoy** (first published in 1971 by Faber and Faber Limited { ISBN 0 571 08315 3}), he mentions this raga. Not much is known about its origin. The raga has a close affinity to the **Hemavati** scale (S R g M P D n S) . Madhukant is identical with the Hemavati scale and can be grouped under the **Hemavati scale** as per 32 Thaats. Raga Madhukant resembles Raga **Madhukauns** with a Suddha Re and Suddha Dha added in both ascent and descent. Raga Madhukant can be said to be parallel to Raga **Hemavati** in Carnatic music. Shades of **Madhuvanti** is found in g M P M g R S. P M g R S. Shades of **Saraswati** raga is found in M P D n S n D P , P D n D P , M P D , P D n , D n S. Shades of Raga **Dharmavati** is found in S R g R , R g M g R , R g M P M g R.

Raga Saraswati Chandra by Abhijit Shenoy K 'Abhirang' has notes of Raga **Saraswati** in Aroha and Raga **Madhukauns** in avaroha (S R M P D n S ; S n P M g S). Sometimes in avaroha S n D P M P g R is used and the shade of Raga Madhuvanti is found in M P g R. As per the 32 Thaats system, this rare raga can be classified under **Hemavati Thaats** (S R g M P D n).

Raga **Bhimsen** (S g m P N S; S N D P m g r S) has been recently introduced into Hindustani music from Carnatic music by the music composer **Mahesh Mahadeva** (Courtesy: Bhimsen Raga- A Raga Discovered by Mahesh Mahadev, 17 July 2021) . This raga is named after ‘Bharat Ratna’, Pt. Bhimsen Joshi (BHIM) Mian Tansen (SEN). **Jayateerth Mevundi** has sung “ **Giridhar Gopal Shyam** ” . This raga is taken from the Carnatic genre and belongs to the 11th Melakarta **Kokilapriya**. Fortunately, under the 32 Thaats system, we are able to classify it under the Taat **Kokilapriya**. Shades of Raga **Patdeep** is found in g m P N S , P N S, m P N S , S N D P. Shades of Raga **Bhairavi** is found in P m g r, m g r, g r .

(Courtesy : “Bengaluru composer creating new ragas “ in Deccan Herald dated 10 of Aug 2021, retrieved 13 Jan 2023).

Raga **Champakali** (aroha : avaroha - S G M P n S : S n D P M P M G R S) is almost similar to Raga **Vachaspati** which has Rishabh and Dhaivat in Aroha and Avaroha. It can also be observed that the Aroha resembles **Raga Madhukauns**. It can be safely accommodated under **Vachaspati** Taat of the 32 Taats System. As per the present classification it has been forced under the Khamaj Taat. If we observe, Khamaj has Suddha Ma, hence the **Teevra Ma of Champakali is a foreign note for Khamaj**. The 32 thaats system is a systematic grammar suggested by musicians of the Senia gharana.

Raga **Pradeepaki** is a sibling of Raga Patdeep. In Patdeep adding the phrase GmgRS gives this beautiful raga. A piece sung by **Vidushi Ashwini Bhinde Deshpande** brings a pleasant musical experience. This raga , an afternoon raga has shades of many ragas. The raga can be put under the RagAnga classification system by N M Khare. The reason is the usage of both the Suddha and Komal Gandhar which is against the basis of the foundation of the Taat. Hence, a raga carrying both the Suddha and Komal varieties of the same note should not come under the Taat system. There are many ragas with such cases which have been forcibly classified under the Taat system.

Raga **Mukundapriya** created by **Mukund Vishnu Kalvint** is Raga Madhuvanti with komal Ni. The aroha avaroha goes as S g M P n (D) , S n D P M g R S. This raga was named by his disciple ,Pt. Devasish Dey. Shades of Madhuvanti, Madhukauns, Bhimpalas and Kafi are found interwoven in this raga fabric. As per the 32 thaats system, this raga too fits under the scale of **Hemavati** (S R g M P D n) . n S g R S gives the Bhimpalas feel. G M P M P, S g M P gives the Madhuvanti roop rekha, M P n S is a Madhukauns punch with n S n D P, g R S phrase of Kafi. This raga gets a well deserved place under the **Hemavati Taat**.

(Courtesy : <https://youtu.be/GIZPcnAmdGg?si=XCEreWrAp2kaDbB5>) & (<https://ragajunglism.org/ragas/madhukant/>)

Raga **Gangeshwari** is a raga introduced in to the Hindustani genre. Some give the credit to **Pt. Ravi Shankar** for introducing the same. This raga is Charukeshi minus the Rishabh excluded in both the aroha and avaroha (S G m d n S ; S n d P m G S). According to **Pt. Samaresh Chawdhury** , the phrase G S, this particular glide gives a feel of **Khambavati**. In **Tara TV show, Aj Sokaler Amontron**, held on **Dec 2018** , with **Pt. Pran Gopal Bandhopaadhyaay** Ji on tabla, Pt. Samaresh Chawdhury has sung his own composition ‘ Sugar Sundara Balma’. Raga Gangeshwari is created

out of the **Charukeshi Scale** thus making it possible to classify it under the Scale **Charukeshi** under the **32 Thaats system**.

Strictly observing the grammar, this raga is unable to identify itself with any of the 10 Thaats of Pt. Bhatkhande because of the simple fact that these 10 Thaats are just a part of the larger family of 32 Thaats.

We also do not find a Charukeshi Anga to classify the raga as per the Raganga paddhati. Any system is viable only for a particular period of time depending on the current situation. Raga Charukeshi was not explored during the period of Pt. Bhatkhande or Khare ji. Hence the raga and its derivatives lie unattended regarding parental lineage till date.

(Courtesy: <https://youtu.be/UIMhDtnnzQw?si=3sU-pzAq3Q4ksf1g>, <https://youtu.be/eNxKZVQzgCM?si=inba7296-XU3b2tK>)

Raga **Madhukali** is a raga created by the Vichitra Veena exponent **Dr. Lalmani Misra** by the blending of Multani, Madhuvanti and Ramkali (Raga **Rupanjali**, 2007 pg.307). The raga structure is as follows:

S g M P N S; S N d P M P, d n d P, M g R S.

Vadi Samvadi is Sa - Pa. Shades of **Madhuvanti** comes up in the phrases S g M, g M P M P, P M g M P. **Ramkali's** signature P d n d P, d n d P M P comes up. S g M, g M P, M P d P are phrases of **Multani**. As per the 32 Thaats system this raga could have been placed under **Shanmukhapriya** Scale (S R g M P d n) if there had been no Suddha Ni in the raga. Some research needs to be done to check if this raga could come under the Khare Anga classification system.

Raga **Parameshwari** (S r g m D n S, S n D m g r S) was a brilliant creation by **Pt. Ravi Shankar**, expanded by him in all three octaves. It has flashes of Bageshree, Bilaskhani Todi and Bhairavi and Ahiri.

(courtesy: <https://ragajunglism.org/ragas/parameshwari/#:~:text=Parameshwari%20has%20flashes%20of%20kn,own,from%20an%20evolving%20compositional%20repertoire>)

Pt. Samraresh Chawdhury's rendition. He was the disciple in vocal music of Pt. Ravi Shankar: <https://youtu.be/G8wHA-rEnHo?si=nEqaMzSgc-EXOeBq>

The raga chalan is as follows:

g m D, D n D, m D n D, m D n S, D n, gg mm DD nn D, D n S (Bageshree phrases)

S r g, r g r S (Todi anga)

S r n S, n S r g, m g r, g r S (Bilaskhani Todi phrase)

SS, rr, gg, mm (shade of Ahiri)

S r g r S, n S r g r S, S r g m g r S, r g m g r S (Bhairavi phrases)

This is one of the melodious ragas which did not get much attention among the masses. Of late, this raga has become popular among instrumentalists and vocalists. **Bansuriya Ronu Majumdar**, one of a select few to have learned Parameshwari directly from its creator, played it at **Darbar 2015**. This raga is a derivative of **Raga Ahiri** minus the Pancham. The 10 thaat system is not able to accommodate this beautiful raga. Under the 32 thaat system this beautiful raga gets accommodation under the **Natakapriyascale/ Ahiri**(S r g m P D n) .

Raga **Rangeshwari** is a raga derived from by adding Suddha Re in Aroha to Patdeep and removing the Suddha Dha in avaroha in simple terms. The chalan of raga is a bit complex. Let's look at the raga phrases :

S R g m, SR, R g, g m,

Pm P; P P g m P; , m P g m P, P g m, m P (phrase of Raga Bhimpalasi) ;

g m R S.

P N S, g m P N S, P N N S (shades of Raga Patdeep while moving from P to S).

P N S R N R S; R S N P m g R S.

Here as we observed, the raga has glimpses of Raga **Bhimpalasi** in **Purvang** and Raga **Patdeep** in **Uttarang**. The phrase R g m P, g m g R also reminds us of **Raga Keervani**, a melodious raga. Rangeswari could be described in short as Keervani minus the Komal Dha, though it has its own unique phrases like g m R S (vakra) at times. This raga was conceptualised by **Pandit Ravi Shankar** and played by various artists like Pt. **Susanta Chowdhury** along recently in 2023 in Kolkata. The 32 Thaats system is able to solve the riddle by assigning this melodious raga to the **Keervani Thaat**. A better choice would be to assign this raga under the **Gourimanohari Scale**

Raga **Unvanti** is a rare raga. Its melodious structure is yet to be explored. This raga has been resurrected from **Sangeet magazine (ISSN 0970-7824)**, published by Sangeet Karyalaya Haathras, UP, **Aug 2003** found in an article written by **Tukaram Jivaram Patil Goradekar**. The aroha, avaroha is

S G m d n S, S n d m G M R S.

The Aroha resembles **Suryakauns**. The Avaroha has all the notes of **Charukeshi** minus Pancham in vakra chalan. This rare gem of a raga can be put under the **Charukeshi Thaat** As per the 32 Thaats system. This raga has shades of **Malkauns** in S n d n S, trace of **Nandkauns** in G m d n S n, d m and **Charukeshi** in G m R S.

Raga **Kameshwari** is yet another remarkable work by Pt. **Ravi Shankar**. This raga almost resembles Raga **Saraswati**, a raga imported from the Carnatic genre. The aroha avaroha of both the ragas is S R M P D n S, S n D P M P M R S. According to Pt. **Subhendra Rao**, the notes of Raga Kameshwari are the same as Raga Saraswati, except that in Saraswati the useage of D n D S is quite

common whereas in Kameshwari the ascent goes straight into D n S. As per the 32 Thaats system, this Vachaspati janya raga comes under **Vachaspati Thaats** (S R G M P D n)

Courtesy-(<https://youtu.be/2jmZCsOFuiQ?si=NvZUfwCDoYSi-zzm>)

TODI PRAKARS

Raga **Mangal Gujari** is identical to the Carnatic raga **Bhavani** or Raga **Bhavapriya**. It resembles raga Gurjari Todi in its chalan. The Suddha Ni of Gurjari Todi replaced by Komal Ni creates this rare raga. The aroha avaroha of Mangal Gujari is S r g M d n S and reverse. Pt. Ramashraya Jha "Ramrang" has sung this raga effortlessly. Under the 32 thaats system this rare raga finds a place under the **Bhavapriya** scale (S r g M P d n). We also get to hear this rare raga from **Shounak Abhisheki**. The Todi anga is r g r S. In fact, the Bhavapriya scale as has been named could be termed as Mangal Gujari scale. Pt. Ramashraya Jha's composition in Madhya laya Rupak taal (7 beats) with complete control over notes and drut Ektaal (12 beats) is a treat. In the phrase r n d we get a feel of Bilaskhani Todi in his rendition which makes even a listener, trained to appreciate Bilaskhani Todi, appreciate Mangal Gujari as well.

(Courtesy: https://www.parrikar.org/music/todi/jha_mangalgujari.mp3)

Raga Viyogavarali Todi is created by **S. N Ratanjankar**. Its aroha, avaroha is S r m d N S , S N d m, r g r S. The Todi phrase r g r S has been introduced in this, raga beautifully. This belongs to **Dhenuka** scale (S r g m P d N) thus giving Raga Viyogavarali a parental lineage .

Pt. K. G. Ginde Saheb's 'Binati yehi na jaiyyo Mathura ' is an amazing piece .(<https://www.parrikar.org/hindustani/todi>)

Raga Chaya Todi (S r g M d S, S d M g r S) is definitely a Todi janya raga .This raga omits Pancham and Nishad in both aroha and avaroha and belongs to the **Todi Thaats**. But the point is that this raga can also be formed from **Bhavapriya Thaats** (S r g M P d n) by dropping off the Komal Ni.

Raga **Bhupal Todi** is a not much explored raga under the Todi genre. It is similar to the Carnatic counterpart **Bhupalam**. The notes are S r g P d S, S d P g r S. If we observe, Raga Bhupal Todi is derived from 3 parent scales : **Bhairavi** (S r g m P d n), **Dhenuka** (S r g m P d N) and **Todi** (S r g M P d N) . Initially Bhupal Todi was strictly under the Todi Thaats. We must understand that the Todi Anga does NOT restrict the raga to come under Bhairavi Or Dhenuka because both are different concepts. Intermixing of both concepts should be avoided.

Raga **Bairagi Todi (S r g P n S, S n P g r S)**, a rare raga performed by Pt. **Ravi Shankar** can be said to be born out of 4 parent scales : **Bhairavi** (S r g m P d n), **Natakapriya** (S r g m P D n), **Shadvidhamargini** (S r g M P D n). Here the **Todi anga** is r g r S, **not to be confused with the Thaats system**.

Raga **Jaiwanti Todi** is a conception of **Maharana Jaiwant Singh** of **Sanand**, who is best known for his composition **Mata Kalika**, popularized by Banditji.

The general outline is: Sr g, r g r S, S r m P D n, D, P, m P n D PP D, (P)m m P (m)g, r g r S

The gandhar is typically dropped in arohi movements extending beyond the madhyam. This raga maybe considered a janya of Ahiri Todi (courtesy : <https://www.parrikar.org/hindustani/todi/>).As per the 32 Thaats system, this raga gets a proper position under **Natakapriya** scale (S r g m P D n).

Raga **Salagavarali** has been conceptualized by **Shri S N Ratanjankar**. (Courtesy www.rajanparrikar.org for audio recordings). The Aroha, avaroha goes as S r g P D n D S, S n D P g r g r S. **Jitendra Abhisheki** has sung melodiously a beautiful composition ' Gheyi Chand Makarand' in Madhya laya Jhaptal. Here, the raga omits the Teevra Ma of the **Shadvidhamargini** scale (S r g M P D n) . Jitendra Abhisheki skilfully applies the Teevra Madhyam as Vivadi Swara in a small punch. **Vidushi Malini Rajurkar, Vidushi Parween Sultana** and **Pt. Rajan Sajan Mishra** popularized the raga. **Pt. K.G.Ginde ji's 'Sumara Saheb Sultana'** is a treasure for students of music and music lovers. This rare melodious raga can be grouped under the **Shadvidhamargini** Scale of the 32 Thaats System

LIMITATIONS OF THE 32 THAAT SYSTEM

This system does not recognize ragas with chromatic order of the same note, I. E The Suddha and, Komal varieties of the same note . Ragas like Ahir Lalit, Lalit etc can be put under Lalit Anga. Every system has its own limitations but this system is definitely superior to the 10 Thaats system .

CONCLUSION

The 32 Thaats system is a comprehensive solution to the problem of raga classification in modern times. Music has been adaptive and so the systems become. The ragas deserve far better public acceptance. This can only be possible by introducing them to the young students. Young minds are untainted and accept great works easily.

THE RULES OF THE THAAT SYSTEM ARE VERY CLEAR

- The Thaats does not recognize chromatic order of the same note, whether in straight ascension, descension Or vakra chalan.
- A Thaats cannot accommodate a foreign note because of the logic that a raga is born out of the Thaats Or parent scale (for theoretical purposes).
- A raga can be derived from more than one Thaats. The logic is to omit a note of a Thaats to get that scale which results in a raga and subsequent development.
- The 32 Thaats system does not recognize Rakti Or Bhava for raga classification. It just recognises the note similarities.
- Angas are to be used in case of ragas with chromatic order of the same note resulting in a semi tone.
- The Anga concept in theory should not be confused with the Thaats system.
- Both the 32 Thaats system and the Anga system have their own limitations.

In the book ' **Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati 'Kramik Pustak Malika 4**, Pt. Bhatkhande classifies Raga Kamod under Kalyan Thaata. The chalan of **Raga Kamod** as mentioned is S R2 P, M2 P D2 P, G M1 P, G M1 R2 S. Kamod has both Suddha and Teevra Madhyam. Placing the raga under the Thaata system defies the rules of the Thaata system. Similar is the case with **Chayanat** and **Goud Sarang**, both placed under Kalyan Thaata.

Raga Jaijaiwanti (pg 280) is placed under Khamaj Thaata despite the presence of Komal and Suddha varieties of Ga and Ni.

Raga Lalit (Pg 488) defies all rules of Thaata system . It is put under Purvi Thaata. Purvi Thaata has Teevra madhyam whereas Lalit has a distinct G M1 M2 M1 useage. In fact Khare ji proposed a Lalit Anga to give the grammar a better shape.

Different examples and explanations have been given to enumerate the benefits of a logical system of the 32 Thaatas proposed by the artists of the **Senia gharana**. Now is the time to make this system a part of the Hindustani curriculum for students and artists and also give these rare unheard ragas their well deserved importance making our music colourful, yet authentic as has always been. Let us take the right stand for the development of our long lost heritage of ragas!

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