

MUSIC EDUCATION THROUGH SWAYAM PRABHA: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE SANSKRITI CHANNEL

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ABSTRACT

Indian classical music, with its centuries-old tradition, has primarily been transmitted through the guru–shishya parampara. In the modern era, digital platforms have emerged as important avenues for music education, especially for learners with limited geographical, financial, or institutional access. Among such platforms, SWAYAM Prabha's SANSKRITI channel offers curated content dedicated to classical music pedagogy.

This paper presents a content analysis of the channel, evaluating the scope, reach, quality, and pedagogical value of its programs. The study includes detailed discussion of two prominent programs — Raag Ranjan (focused on rāga pedagogy) and Thumri ke Rang (dedicated to semi-classical music traditions) — to examine their structure, content, and impact on music education.

Keywords: SWAYAM Prabha, SANSKRITI Channel, Music Education, Content Analysis, Indian Classical Music, Digital Learning

Introduction

Indian classical music has traditionally been transmitted orally through the guru–shishya parampara. However, with technological advancements, digital platforms have emerged as new educational mediums. SWAYAM Prabha, an initiative by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, provides quality educational content via dedicated DTH channels. The SANSKRITI channel focuses on Indian arts, with a significant portion dedicated to Hindustani classical music.

This research analyses the pedagogical impact of the channel through a content analysis of two flagship programs — Raag Ranjan and Thumri ke Rang — which represent two contrasting but complementary streams of Hindustani music: the rāga-based khayāl tradition and the semi-classical genre of thumri and allied forms.

Objectives

- To examine the nature and structure of music education content on the SANSKRITI channel.
- To assess the reach and impact of its programs.
- To analyse pedagogical approaches through specific program case studies.
- To identify strengths and limitations for improving music education delivery.

Methodology

The study employs qualitative content analysis of archived program videos from the SANSKRITI channel on YouTube, along with quantitative data of viewership and engagement.

Program Selection: Two major programs were selected — Raag Ranjan (representing rāga pedagogy) and Thumri ke Rang (representing semi-classical pedagogy).

Analytical Approach:

- Examined the structure, presentation, and pedagogical strategies of these programs.
- Studied performances, explanations, and thematic organization.
- Analysed audience reach through viewership statistics and engagement through comments.

Analysis of Programs

Raag Ranjan

Raag Ranjan is one of the most comprehensive series on Hindustani vocal music available on the SANSKRITI channel. The program systematically presents a wide range of rāgas, explained and demonstrated by eminent musicians.

Rāga Coverage

The series covers more than 50 rāgas, including foundational as well as advanced ones:

Peelu, Jansammohini, Bhairav, Durga, Maru Bihag, Raageshri, Jhijnhoti, Abhogi, Kalavati,

Bilaskhani Todi, Kedar, Puriya Kalyan, Vihaag, Hindol, Shankara, Sohani, Des, Shuddha Sarang, Megh Malhar, Hamir, Darbari, Bageshri, Yaman, Todi, Marwa, Bhairavi, Bhupali, Jog, Hansadhwani, Madhuvanti, Jaunpuri, and many others.

Featured Artists

The program invites an impressive roster of renowned performers and pedagogues such as

Pandit Vijay Koparkar, Vidushi Arati Ankalikar-Tikekar, Pandit Sanjeev Abhyankar, Vidushi Padma Talwalkar, Vidushi Sawani Shende, Vidushi Manjiri Alegaonkar, Pandit Upendra Bhat, Pandit Rajendra Kandalgaonkar, and Vidushi Manjusha Kulkarni Patil, among others.

Structure and Pedagogy

Each episode (25–30 minutes) follows a structured format:

- Introduction with Sugam Sangeet: Anchors begin with a light piece (bhajan, ghazal, or film song) in the rāga, familiarizing the audience with its soundscape.
- Rāga Exposition: Guest artist introduces āroha–avaroha, chalan, thāt, vādi– samvādi, and gāyan samay.
- Vilambit Khayāl: Elaborated through ālāp, bol-ālāp, tān, and bol-tān.
- Rasa and Mood: Explanations of emotive quality and rasa, often linked to compositions.
- Comparative Study: Related rāgas are discussed to highlight distinctions.
- Concluding Drut Bandish/Tarana: Ends with a fast-paced composition.

Pedagogical Contribution

Despite time constraints, the series balances technical precision with accessibility, serving as both primer for beginners and reference for advanced learners.

Thumri ke Rang

Thumri ke Rang is a ten-episode series dedicated to exploring semi-classical traditions, with focus on thumri and allied genres. Unlike Raag Ranjan, which emphasizes rāga pedagogy, this series highlights expressive and lyrical aspects of semi-classical forms.

Episode-Wise Overview

- Episodes 1–2: Vidushi Arati Ankalikar Tikekar introduces history and stylistic features of thumri, performing thumri, dadra, chaiti, jhoola, hori, and tappa.
- Episodes 3–4: Vidushi Rajeshri Pathak presents ghazalnuma dadra and explores Purbi-ang thumri styles of Lucknow and Banaras; episode 4 explores variations of hori.
- Episode 5: Pandit Vijay Koparkar explains relationship between tappa and thumri, including ornamentations like gamak, murki, and sapat tān.
- Episode 6: Shri Mukund Fansalkar, Sulbha Pishvikar, and Anuradha Kuber focus on chaiti and barahmasa tradition.
- Episodes 7–8: Bireshwar Gautam explains thumri's integration with Kathak and abhinaya.
- Episodes 9–10: Pandit Ajay Pohankar and Vidushi Anjali Pohankar discuss stylistic diversity of Purab-ang and Punjab-ang thumri.

Pedagogical Contribution

This series combines history, theory, performance, and dance perspectives, offering a holistic view of semi-classical traditions.

Reach and Impact

Raag Ranjan Program

The Raag Ranjan program has a wide reach, with many episodes crossing lakhs of views.

For example, Raag Megh Malhar has 2.1 million views, Raag Yaman 1 million, Raag Kalavati 905,000, and others such as Charukeshi (509,000), Hansadhwani (319,000), Dhaani (198,000), Lalit (139,000), and many more. The strong viewership shows its pedagogical value and cultural relevance.

Thumri ke Rang Program

Thumri ke Rang has thousands of views despite being niche. For instance, Episode VIII has 27,000 views, Episodes VII and X have 22,000, Episode I has 19,000, while others range between 4,000–11,000. This shows sustained interest in semi-classical music and validates its educational contribution.

Findings

- Accessibility: High-quality classical music education available widely.
- Pedagogical Balance: Effective blend of theory and performance.
- Preservation: Rare compositions and styles documented.
- Limitations: Lack of interactivity and personalized guidance.

Conclusion

The analysis of Raag Ranjan and Thumri ke Rang demonstrates the significant contribution of the SANSKRITI channel in democratizing access to Hindustani classical and semiclassical music. While these programs cannot replace the immersive guru–shishya model, they serve as invaluable supplementary resources. A blended approach — combining traditional mentorship with digital platforms — is essential for holistic music education.

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