

UNDERSTANDING ALLIED RĀGAS THROUGH ALĀPANA

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ABSTRACT

The Allied rāgas form a sub set of Janya rāgas and they appear close to one another. In spite of having similarities with respect to scale, notes or some phrases, they are very different in their structure. As these rāgas are ancient, they are phrase oriented. It will be very interesting to render them in a proper way without intervening one another. For this, proper understanding of the phrases of the rāgas becomes very important. Hence it becomes important for a performer to know the key phrase with which a rāga has to be started, amsha swaras of the rāga, gamakās given to the swaras, which swaras are short or long to render rāgas in a perfect way without spoiling the aesthetics of the rāga. This article mainly focuses on study of the subtle features through one of the important manodharma aspects that is Alāpana. The study is analytical and qualitative in nature. The study attempts to analyze how these rāgas are rendered by various maestros with the help of oral recordings of the ragālāpana available in the public domain. This study helps performer to understand how similar phrases have to be connected with differentiating phrases to portray the exact structure or essence of the rāga.

Keywords: Alāpana, Allied Rāgas through alāpana, Ārabhi, Dēvagāndhāri, Sāma

Introduction

Indian classical music mainly depends on rāgas. A rāga is a set of notes or swaras which is appealing to hear or it is the set of notes which creates happiness to the listener “Ranjayatīti rāgāḥ”. Rāgas can be classified into various types. For ex: Janaka rāgas and Jañya rāgas. Jañya rāgas are sub classified into Varjya rāgas, Vakra rāgas, Audava, Shādava, Sampūrna rāgas, Pañchmāñtya, Nishādāñtya rāgas, allied rāgas, ...

Allied rāgas are those rāgas which are very different from one another in spite of taking birth from the same parent rāga, having very similar structure. Allied rāgas are twin rāgas. Here the raga structure or the feature of the raga will be decided by the swara sanchara krama of the raga, relationship of the swaras, which swara takes gamakas, which type of gamakas, measurement of gamakas, laya of the phrase, which swara doesn't take gamakas, Understanding these features enables a performer to express the beauty of the rāga with clarity.

Scope and Limitation

The study aims at the analysis of alāpana in the oral recordings available.

Study focuses on one set of allied rāga for analysis

Recordings of nearly 8-10 artists have been considered.

Objectives

- To see opening phrase of the two rāgas
- To see the difference between the similar phrases of the two rāgas
- To see the akshara kāla taken by the similar notes

Methodology

For analysis analytical and comparative methods have been used. Audios and videos of alāpana rendered by maestros are considered.

Analysis

As defined earlier allied rāgas belong to same parent rāga. They have similar arōha – avarōha and similar notes. In spite of this they look different in their structure. Allied set of rāgas are mostly ancient rāgas for ex: Yedukula Kāmbhoji, Kāmbhoji, Nārāyanagowla, Kedāragowla, Bhairavi, Māñji, Mukhāri, Dēvagāndhāri.....

These rāgas are expressed on the basis of the characteristic phrases and not on the basis of scale of the rāga. Since they belong to same melakartha raga, they will be having phrases in common. Depending on the number of phrases in common, allied rāgas can be classified as Sarūpa rāgas and Sāmya rāgas as Prof. R Vishweshwaran explains in his book “Sangīta Shastra Chīntana

Rasāyana”. Sarūpa Rāgas are the twin rāgas having many similar phrases. These rāgas are phrase oriented . Sāmya rāgas are like siblings of a parent having some resemblance. These rāgas are mostly scale oriented.

Ex: Sarūpa rāgas - Madhyamāvati - Sri – Mañiraṅgu

Sāmya rāgas - Malahari – Sāveri – Sudha Sāveri of Dīkshitar pañtha

Sarūpa rāgas, as they have almost same structure and more similar phrases, to depict rāga bhava one has to understand the subtle features of the rāga. This can be obtained by the analysis of various compositions or listening to ragālāpana rendered by maestros... Usually among allied rāgas, one rāga will be fast and vibrant while the other one will be slow and graceful. In this study analysis of alāpana of allied set of rāgas Ārabhi - Dēvagāndhāri - Sāma have been considered. In this set of allied ragas Ārabhi is always energetic and vibrant while Dēvagāndhāri is slow and flows majestically. Sāma is a slow-paced raga which sets in a calm mood. These three ragas belong to 29th melakartha Dhīra Shankarābharana. Scale of these rāgas is

Ārabhi : Ārōhaṇa S R₂ M₁ P D₂ Ś

Avarōhaṇa Ś N₃ D₂ P M₁ G₃ R₂ S

Dēvagāndhāri : Ārōhaṇa S R₂ M₁ P D₂ Ś

Avarōhaṇa Ś N₃ D₂ P M₁ G₃ R₂ S

Sāma : Ārōhaṇa : S R₂ M₁ P D₂ Ś

Avarōhaṇa : Ś D₂ P M₁ G₃ R₂ S

Ārabhi is Upāṅga janya of Shaṅkarābharāṇa. G and N varjya in arōha and Sampūrna in avarōhaṇa. A Mūrchanākāraka Janya rāga. Madhyama kāla sanchāras, janṭaswara prayōgas and dāṭu swara prayōgas enhance the beauty of Ārabhi. Ārabhi is usually sung in the beginning of the performances. R, M, D are Jīva and rāga chāya swaras. G is a weak swara, R and P are nyāsa swaras. R M D R is a vishēsha prayōga and M g r s R is a ranjaka prayōga r r m m p p d d p p m g r s R, Dāṭu prayōga like d ḡ ṛ ś n d , d ṛ ś ṛ ś n d p, N varjya prayoga like ś ś d d p p m g R are the characteristic phrases of this rāga.

Some popular compositions in this rāga are Sālakallala, Sādhiñchane, Nādasudhārasambilanu, O Rajīvaksha by Thyāgarāja, Sri Saraswathi, Gaṇarājēna by Muttuswamy Dīkshitar, Narasimha Māmava by Swāti Tirunal, Durga Lakshmi Saraswathy by Papanasam śivan

Dēvagāndhāri is a Bhaṣāṅga Janya. N₂ is the anya swara or foreign note. ŚNDN₂D-P, P-; dN₂-DP are the bhāsaṅga phrases of Dēvagāndhāri. The phrases with the foreign note are sung in madhyamakāla. Singing in chowka kāla reveals the melodic beauty and rāga bhāva of this rāga. D, G and N are rāga chāya swaras. This is a Vīra rasa pradhāna rāga. Vali gamaka is the speciality of this rāga. R and D are kampita and Dīrgha swaras. Tīvra antara Gāndhara and tīvra Kākali niṣāda occurs in the phrases M - G R - and S - N D - , which is sung in vilambakāla.

Some of the popular compositions in this rāga are Kshīrasāgara śayanā, Koluvaivunnaḍē, Vinaradanā Manavi by Thyagaraja, Kshiti jaramaṇam, Sri Mīnambikayāḥ, Vadānyēshwaram by Muttuswāmi Dīkshitar

Sāma is an audava śādava rāga in which G and N are absent in arōhaṇa and N is absent in avarōhaṇa. R and D are kampita Jīva swaras, M is amsha swara. Chowka kāla sancharas like

M – d s, S – r G - s are vishesha sancārās. This rāga when sung in slow pace portrays śānta rasa. Evening and night time is best suited for this rāga.

Some of the popular compositions in this rāga are Śāntamulēkha by Tyagaraja, Maravakavē by Patnam Subramanya Iyer, Annapūrne Viṣālākshi by Muttuswamy Dikshitar, Mānasa sancharare by Sadāśiva Bramhendra

In the analysis below with the phrases, small clippings (20-30secs) of the phrases have been given. In the notations used, small letter swaras s, r, g, denote short swaras, capital letter swaras S, R, G, ... denote long swaras, swaras single underlined are to be sung in second speed and swaras double underlined are to be sung in third speed.

For raga Ārabhi rāga, alāpana begins with the phrases –

P P p m M g r s R R m p d P - , m P - mpdp M g r s

“ RK Srikanthan- Arabhi- Alapana” (0:00 – 0:20)

P P P m p d p M - , g r s R d P m p d P - d P - M g r s R

“Chuthamu rare in Arabhi” (0:00 – 0:21)

s n D s R - r m P d p M -, g r s n D s R - s r m g R s n D

“Arabhi RTP - Sri. N Ramani”(0:00 – 0:32)

D P P P p m M g r s R R M p D P - M - p D p m g R

“cAla kallalADu – Arabhi—Smt.Ranjini- Smt. Gayathri ---- St. Thyagaraja”(0:00 – 0:18)

From these phrases one can observe that R – can take only two aksharas and G has no prominence, it is only a transit swara.

For Dēvagāndhāri rāga alāpana begins as

R R -, , r g M - g r R -, , S S - r S - S s r s n D - d s R -,

“Kshitija Ramanam Chintaye – Devagandhari Raagam” (0:00 – 0:22)

P -, , P M M - g r R S r g M - g r R S s R S s n D

“Hyderabad Brothers – koluvaiyunnADE kodaNDapANi – dEvagAndhAri – tyAgarAja” (0:00 – 0:34)

P P P p m M - g r r s r g M - g R R D -, D P p d n d p M -, P m D -, d Ś - n D

“sItAvara sangIta jnAnamu – Devagandhari – Thyagaraja – TM Krishna” (0:00 – 0:29)

R R R r s r g M g r R s s r p m P -, M M g r R s r g M g r R

“03 S Soumya dEvagAndhAri rAga AlApana” (0:00 – 0:36)

From the above phrases we can observe that R and D are important and elongated notes.

For Sāma rāga alāpana begins as

M M M M m g g r s r G r R r̄ D s r M M

“Maanasasancharare -మానస సంచరణే బ్రాహ్మణే-Sama. by Semmangudi R Srinivasa Iyer” (0:00 – 0:28)

M M M M m g g r s r G r R , , s s S r p m g r m g r s r̄ D , S

“Nedunuri Krishnamurthy- Maravakave O Manasa- Sama -Rupakam -Patnam Subramania Iyer” (0:00 – 0:40)

M M M m g g r s r G R R r m p D m P M m g g r s r G R R , , s r̄ D S , ,

“Shantamu Leka Saukhyamu Ledu- Sama- Adi- Thyagaraja- Alathur Brothers” (0:00 – 0:29)

d s r m m m p d s D P M r M d s r r m P d p M M M p D s D P p d p M M m g r s R R

“AKC Natarajan-Annapurne Vishalakshi-Sama-Clarinet-Adi-Dikshitar”(0:00 – 0:39)

d s r M M m p d m p M m g g r s r G R R R r s

“ KV Narayanaswamy - annapUrNE vishAlAkSi - sAma – dIkshitar”(0:00 – 0:31)

Findings

	Arabhi	Devagandhari	Sama
Swaras	R can take two aksaras and G,N are only a transit swaras	R and D are dirgha swaras having kampita gamakas	M is an important swara and R is a dirgha swara
Similar phrases			
p m g r s	P m g r s R is sung in dhruva kala	P M g r R S is sung in vilambakala	P M m g g r r s
dsR mpD	dsR mpD dsR̄ in dhruva kala	ds R , , mpD , , in Vilamba kala	
ś ś d d p p m g R	ś ś d d p p m m g R		ś ś d d p p m g g r s R
mgR	it is sung as r M -, g R r p M -, g R - r d d p M -, g R - D P , , P - m p d p m g R -	d d P -, , M - G - R̄ -, , R R R R d d P - M - G - R̄ -, , ,	r M - g r r p M - g r r m p d M - g r m r p m d p M - g r

		DP - , , , m m m p D - D - p m p d p M - G - R̃ - , , ,	
Differentiating phrases			
1	r s R	r g M - G R - d N ₂ D P M G R - , , , ś n d n ś R̃ ś s r g s R s s n d n s R	s r g s R , , , r d S d s r p m M m d D Ś
2	SD is sung as sndp with Khandimpu gamaka		S d p m is sama's phrase
3	d ś R̃ d Ś - p D - m P - M g r s R	D - D - D - d Ś - N ₃ D - N ₂ D P - <u>D n d</u> P - <u>P d p</u> M G R - r g M - G R̃ - , ,	ś r g ś R̃ d Ś p D m p m g g r s R
4	phrases are developed around D in middle octave m p d Ś ś - ś n D <u>d ś r̃ r̃ ś n D</u> <u>d ś r̃ m̃ g̃ r̃ r̃ ś n D</u>		phrases are developed around M in middle octave m m p p M M D D D d p M - , p - d s d p M m p d m p m M S r m M M d S r m M

From these phrases it can be observed that they all circle around R in all the three rāgas. The phrases circle around M in Sāma whereas in Ārabhi and Dēvagāndhāri, phrases are developed around D in middle octave for ex: m p d Ś ś - ś n D d ś r̃ r̃ ś n D
D d ś r̃ m̃ g̃ r̃ r̃ ś n D

Phrases r M - , g R - r p M - , g R - r d d p M - , g R - D P , , , P - m p d p M g r s R sung in Ārabhi, the phrases sung in Sāma r M - g r r p M - g r r m p d M - g r m r p m d p M - g r s r g s R̃ - , , and the phrases sung in Dēvagāndhāri d d P - , , , M - G - R̃ - , , D - p m p d p M - G - R̃ - , , , appear same but the difference lies in the last part that is M g r s R in Ārabhi, s r g s R in Sāma and M - G - R - , , in Devagandhari. Another phrase is r d d p M g r s R in Ārabhi, it is r m p d M g g r s R in Sāma, R R R R̃ d d P - M - G - R̃ - , , , in Devagandhari look very similar but the difference lies in the last part of the phrases, that is r s R in Arabhi, r s r G R in Sama and M - G - R̃ - , , , in Devagandhari.

The phrase ś ś d d p p M g r s is the identical phrase that exists both in Arabhi and Sama. Soon after this phrase the distinguishing phrase M g r s R in Ārabhi and m g g r s R in Sāma appear.

Hence from the above analysis of these rāgas it can be observed that

gamakas taken by a swara creates different mood and changes the appearance of the rāga. R and D take Kampita gamaka in Dēvagāndhāri and Sāma whereas it is a straight note in Ārabhi.

Elongation or various aksharakālas given to same swara make them different. That's R & D take two aksharakala in Ārabhi but in Dēvagāndhāri and Sāma R & D can go up to 8 aksharas.

One more very important point to be noted here is to connect differentiating phrases with the similar phrases.

Conclusion

This type of analysis can be conducted for other allied ragas also. From the above analysis it can be clearly seen that Allied ragas in spite of taking birth from same melakartha rāga and having similar scale and some common phrases, they appear different from one another. This study will be beneficial to musicians, performers to understand these ragas in depth and can be presented in a matured way.

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