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INTRODUCTION OF HINDUSTANI MUSIC

Hindustani classical music has primarily been vocal centric. This is implied by the term 'Sangeet' itself that is used for music, which literally means 'singing in a correct way'. Most of the forms were originally suited for vocal performance and instruments were designed to emulate the human voice. Singing, instrumental music and dance together constituted music or 'Sangeet'.

**OBJECTIVE**

After studying this lesson, the learner would be able to :-

- state the foundation of music is based mainly on the elements like Nada, Shruti and Svara;
- write the two main types of Nada, Ahat and Anahat;
- explain the Saptaks are usually used in music;
- define Alankaras and the benefit of their use in music.

1.1 SANGEET

The term 'Sangeet' is formed by the combination of two words sam+geet. 'Sam' means complete in all respect or proper while 'geet' means to sing. By joining the two it means to sing in a proper manner. That is, singing in a proper manner following set rules is Sangeet or music. However it does not involve only singing. It includes instrumental music and dance as well. The following words from the great



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authority on music, Pt. Sharngadev endorses this statement, thus 'geetam vadyam tatha nrittam trayam sangeetamuchyate.

1.2 SYSTEMS OF MUSIC

Presently, two systems of music are prevalent-

1. Northern or Hindustani Sangeet
2. Southern or Karnatak Sangeet

Northern or Hindustani music system

With the exception of four southern states, this system is prevalent in the rest of India. It is also prevalent in neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Southern or Karnatak music system

This system is prevalent in the southern states-Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Though these two systems of music are independent of each other, they have many similarities, thus

1. Both systems follow the concept of twenty two Shrutis in a Saptak.
2. Both systems have twelve notes in a Saptak.
3. Both systems follow the concept of Thata Raga.
4. In both systems, music is based on Raga and Tala.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.1

1. Which are the arts included in "Sangeet"?
2. Which among the three arts is foremost in "Sangeet"?
3. How many systems of music are there? Name them.

1.3 NADA

Nada is that melodious sound that is obtained from a physical object (mouth or some other material) and reaches the ears through the medium of physical matter (solid, liquid or gas). This process is achieved by vibrations or oscillations in the object. When these oscillations are of a regular nature, then the sound obtained is melodious and useful for music, this sound is called Nada. When the oscillations are irregular, then the sound is not melodious which is not useful for music.

1.4 DEFINITION OF NADA

The word 'Nada' is a combination of the two syllables 'Na' and 'Da'. Phonetically 'Na' indicates life breath and 'Da' indicates fire. Therefore, being obtained from the combination of life breath and fire, it is called Nada. There are two types of Nada-Ahat Nada and Anahat Nada. Ahat Nada is produced by striking together of two objects whereas, Anahat Nada is experienced through knowledge without any external factor. Ahat Nada is related to music, Anahat Nada is not related to music.

1.4.1 Ahat Nada – There are three main characteristics of this Nada:-

Pitch, Intensity or Magnitude and Timbre

Pitch-Pitch signifies whether the Nada is high or low. The pitch of the sound producing object depends upon the frequency (number of vibrations). The higher the frequency, higher is the pitch of the Nada and lower the frequency, lower is the pitch of the Nada. For example, the frequency of 'Sa' is 240, 'Re' is 270. therefore the frequency of 'Re' being higher than that of 'Sa' and frequency of 'Sa' being lower than that of 'Re', the pitch of 'Sa' is lower than that of 'Re.' A Nada with frequency 60 to 4000 is possible for use in music.

Intensity or Magnitude-Intensity or Magnitude signify whether a Nada is louder or weak and of greater or smaller amplitude. This characteristic is determined by the force used to obtain the Nada. When a string or surface of the Tabla is struck softly, the Nada would be heard over a smaller distance. However, if these are struck with greater force or a louder sound is produced from the throat, then the Nada would be heard over a greater distance. This is intensity of Nada.

Timbre – There are different mediums to produce Nada. The different tonal quality produced through different mediums is called the timbre of a Nada. Through the timbre of Nada it can be ascertained that a given Nada is obtained from a particular instrument of an individual. It is this difference of medium that gives the quality or timbre of Nada.

1.4.2 Anahat Nada –

This Nada is related only to the human body and not to any external objects or instruments. It is the omnipresent Nada that becomes a means to experience God. That is why it is called Brahmarupa. After great penance, sages are able to experience it and gain its knowledge. It is not useful for music.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.2

1. How many types of Nada are there? Name them.
2. Write the characteristics of Nada.



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3. What do you understand by pitch and intensity of Nada?
4. Who can experience Anahat Nada?
5. Is Anahat Nada useful for music?

1.5 SHRUTI

Shruti is the smallest form of Nada . The derivative definition of this word has been given in ‘Sangeet Ratnakar’ as

‘shravanacchrutayo matah’

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ie. That which can be heard is Shruti. In music, Shruti forms the basis for musical notes or Svaras and through which creation of Ragas takes place.

1.6 NUMBER OF SHRUTIS

Different viewpoint regarding the number of Shrutis are prevalent among musicologists. Among these three are main. According to one viewpoint, there are twenty two Shrutis in a Saptak, according to the second there are sixty six and infinite according to the third viewpoint. The first viewpoint according to which there are twenty two Shrutis is the most prevalent.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.3

1. What is the definition of Shruti according to Sangeet Ratnakar?
2. How many viewpoints regarding the number of Shrutis are prevalent among musicologists?
- 3.. Which viewpoint regarding the number of Shrutis is most prevalent?

1.7 SVARA

Svara has been defined as that creamy, resonant sound which is capable of pleasing the minds of the listeners on its own.

1.7.1 NUMBER OF SVARAS

In the beginning during the Vedic period, only three notes were in use, namely, Udatta, Anudatta and Svarita. Udatta demoted high pitch, Anudatta lower pitch and Svarita medium pitch. Slowly the vedic notes developed into four, then five and later seven notes. The Laukik or present day seven notes first find mention in Bharata’s NatyaShastra. These were named as Shadja, Rishabh, Gandhar,

Madhyam, Pancham, Dhaivat and Nishad. Their abbreviated form used in practice are 'Sa', 'Re', 'Ga', 'Ma', 'Pa', 'Dha' and 'Ni' respectively. These Svaras were established on the twenty two Shrutis of the Saptak based on the principle

‘chatushchatushchatushchaiva
Shadja madhyamapanchamah
Dwedwe Nishadgandhar Tistririshabh Dharatau

'Sa', 'Ma', 'Pa' have four Shrutis each, 'Re', 'Dha' have three Shrutis each and 'Ni', 'Ga', have two Shrutis each. The placement can be shown through the following table.

Shruti No.	Svara	Shruti No.	Svara	Shruti no.	Svara
1		8		14	
2		9	Gandhar	15	
3		10		16	
4	Shadja	11		17	Pancham
5		12		18	
6		13	Madhyam	19	
7	Rishabh			20	Dhaivat
				21	
				22	Nishad

These were the pure notes. Apart from these, Bharat has given two modified (Sadharana) notes- Antar Gandhar and Kakali Nishad. According to modern musicologists, other than the seven pure notes, there are five modified notes. The pure (Shuddha) and modified (Vikrit) Svaras are explained in brief below—

1.7.2 Shuddha Svara

When Svaras are placed on their specified Shrutis, they are known as Shuddha Svaras. The seven Shuddha Svaras in their natural state are 'Sa', 'Re', 'Ga', 'Ma', 'Pa', 'Dha', 'Ni', Among these seven Shuddha Svaras, 'Sa' and 'Pa' are fixed or 'Achal' and remain in their pure state.

1.7.3 Vikrit Svara

The notes other than 'Sa' and 'Pa' can get displaced from their natural state and become modified or Vikrit, therefore they are referred to a 'Chal'. The modified or Vikrit state is either 'Komal' or 'Tivra' 'Re', 'Ga', 'Ma', 'Dha', 'Ni' are notes of this category. Among these, 'Re', 'Ga', 'Dha', 'Ni' become komal by getting displaced to lower Shrutis and 'Ma' becomes Tivra by getting displaced to higher Shrutis. According to Bhatkhande's Notation System, Komal Svara can be recognized by a horizontal line underneath the Svara and Tivra Svara can be recognized by a vertical line above the Svara. For example, Komal 'Ga' is written as 'Ga' and Tivra 'Ma' is written as 'Ma'.



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INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.4

1. How did the development of Vedic notes begin?
2. In which treatise do Laukik notes first find mention?
3. How many notes in all have been mentioned in Natya Shastra?
4. On which Shrutis have the seven Svaras been established?
5. Which notes can attain modified state?

1.8 SAPTAK

In music, after Nada, Shruti and Svara comes Saptak in the evolution order. Literally, 'Saptak' means a group of seven, i.e., 'saptaka saptanam samuhah.' In the context of music, its meaning has been implied as a group of seven notes in sequence. According to the high or low pitch of sound, there can be an infinite number of Saptaks, however, three types of Saptaks are used in music. These are also called registers or 'Sthan'. A brief description of the three Saptaks is given below:-

1.8.1 Mandra Saptak

Mandra means low. When the sound used in a Saptak is twice as low as the normal sound, it is called 'Mandra' Saptak. When Svaras are pronounced while singing in this Saptak, there is pressure on the heart. According to Bhatkhande's Notation System, a dot is used below the Svara, e.g. Ṣa, Ṛe, Ḡa Ṙa Pa Ḍha Ṇi.

1.8.2 Madhya Saptak

Madhya means medium or normal. Mostly performing is done in this Saptak in which the sound is twice as high as the sound of Mandra Saptak when Svaras are pronounced while singing in this Saptak, there is pressure on the throat. There is no symbol used for notation of Svaras in Madhya Saptak, e.g. Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni.

1.8.3 Tar Saptak

To sing higher than the Madhya or normal Saptak, Svaras of Tara Saptak are used. The sound for Svaras of this Saptak is twice higher than that for Svaras of Madhya Saptak. To pronounce the Svaras of the Saptak while singing, there is pressure on palate and brain. According to Bhatkhande's Notation system, a dot is used above the notes, e.g. Śa, Re, Ġa, Ṙa, Ḍha, Ṇi.

Usually, these three Saptaks are used for singing and instrumental music.

Along with seven pure notes, the five modified notes are also included in Saptak.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.5

1. What is meant by Saptak in the context of music?
2. How many Saptaks are used in music, name them.
3. How are the three Saptaks differentiated in notation?
4. When Svaras are pronounced in the three Saptaks, which parts of the body are affected?
5. Are the five Vikrit svaras included in a saptak while singing or playing?



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1.9 VARNA

Even though the general meaning of the word 'Varna' in Hindi is understood as syllable, colour, caste division or category etc., however, in musical context, it refers to various methods or embellishments used in singing and instrumental music. Thus,

‘ganakriyochyate varnah’

The basis for these methods or ‘kriya’ are four types of Varnas:-

1.9.1 Sthayi Varna

Sthayi means stable. When a note is pronounced continuously or repeatedly at its own place, it is Sthayi Varna. For example Sa..., Re... or Sa Sa Sa Re Re Re etc.

1.9.2 Arohi Varna

When notes are pronounced in Ascent or ascending order, then it is called Arohi Varna. For example, Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha or Sa Ga Ma Dha. It is not essential that all notes are to be used. According to usage in the Raga, there can be a break in sequence, however, the sequence has to be in Ascent.

1.9.3 Avarohi Varna

When notes are pronounced in Descent or descending order, it is called Avarohi Varna. Like Arohi Varna, it is not essential that all notes are used in sequence. Some notes may be omitted according to usage in Raga, e.g. Sa Ni Pa Ma Ga.

1.9.4 Sanchari Varna

When the above stated Varnas, i.e., Sthayi, Arohi and Avarohi Varnas are mixed together, Sanchari Varna comes into being. For example- Sa Re Ga Pa, Dha Ga Pa, Ga Pa Dha Sa, Sa Sa Sa, Dha Dha Dha Pa, Ga Pa Dha Pa, Ga Re Sa, this is a Sanchari Varna.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.6

1. What is the meaning of Varna in the context of music?
2. How many Varnas are there? Name them.



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3. What is meant by Sthayi Varna?
4. What do you understand by Arohi and Avarohi Varna?
5. What is Sanchari Varna?

1.10 ALANKARA

The word 'Alankara' in Hindi means ornament. Just as an ornament beautifies the body, an Alankara beautifies music. In the context of music, a specific group of Varna or group of notes in a particular sequence constitutes Alankara. According to Pt Sharngadev,

‘Vishishtar varnasandarbham alankaram prachakshate/
—1/6/3 Sangeet Ratnakar

Modern musicologists refer to Alankaras as 'Palta' also. Their creation follows a definite sequence. The sequence of the starting notes in an Alankara directs the sequence of the following notes in Ascent by considering each note as the starting note of that particular sequence. The same rule is followed in Descent in opposite sequence, this is Alankara. An example of an Alankara is as follows

Ascent – Sa Re Ga, Re Ga Ma, Ga Ma Pa, Ma Pa Dha, Pa Dha Ni, Dha Ni Sa

Descent – Sa Ni Dha, Ni Dha Pa, Dha Pa Ma, Pa Ma Ga, Ma Ga Re, Ga Re Sa.

By creating and practising Alankaras for each Raga, the hand (for instrument) or throat (for singing) are prepared, knowledge of notes is improved and help is provided in elaboration of Raga. For mastery in Raga, practising Alankaras is very helpful.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.7

1. What is meant by Alankara in the context of music?
2. What is another name for Alankara?
3. What are the uses of Alankara?



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

1.1 Sangeet

- (i) Sangeet is formed by the combination of two words – sam + geet.

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- (ii) Sangeet includes the three arts of singing, instrumental music and dance.
- (iii) Singing is foremost among the three arts.
- (iv) There are two systems of music – Northern (Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati) and Southern (Karnatak Sangeet Paddhati).
- (v) The Southern system is prevalent in the four states of the South and Northern system is prevalent in rest of India.
- (vi) Both systems have some similarities and some differences.

1.2 Nada

- (i) Nada is obtained from the combination of life breath and fire.
- (ii) There are two types of Nada – Ahat and Anahat.
- (iii) Ahat Nada – useful for music, Anahat Nada-not useful for music.
- (iv) Ahat Nada is obtained by the striking of two objects, Anahat Nada is omnipresent.
- (v) Three characteristics of Ahat Nada – Pitch, Intensity and Timbre.
Meaning of Pitch – Signifies whether Nada is high or low.
Meaning of Intensity – signifies whether Nada is loud or weak.
Meaning of Timbre – quality of Nada.

1.3 Shruti

- (i) Shruti is the smallest form of Nada.
- (ii) Viewpoints on number of Shrutis – twenty two, sixty six and infinite.
- (iii) Viewpoint of twentytwo Shrutis most prevalent.

1.4 Svara

- (i) Definition of Svara.
- (ii) Number of Svaras.
- (iii) Development of Vedic notes from three to seven.
- (iv) Laukik notes – seven.
- (v) Names of Laukik notes.
- (vi) Establishment of Svaras on twenty two Shruties of Saptak.
- (vii) Laukik Svaras – seven Shuddha, five Vikrit.
- (viii) Two types of Svaras – Achal and Chal Svaras.



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1.5 Saptak

- (i) Group of seven notes is Saptak.
- (ii) Three Saptaks – Mandra, Madhya and Tara.
- (iii) Limit of singing and instrumental music- till three Saptaks.

1.6 Varna

- (i) Meaning of Varna – Various methods or embellishments used in singing and instrumental music.
- (ii) Types of Varnas – Sthayi, Arohi, Avarohi, Sanchari.

1.7 Alankara

- (i) Meaning of Alankara
- (ii) An Alankara beautifies music.
- (iii) Structure of Alankara in modern context.

**TERMINAL EXERCISE**

1. Describe in brief the structure of Sangeet.
2. What is the meaning of Nada? Write in detail.
3. "Shruti and number of Shrutis", give your views on this subject.
4. "Svara is the most melodious part of Sangeet". Discuss in detail on this subject.
5. What is meant by Saptak? What is their number? Write in detail.
6. What is meant by Varna in the context of music? How many Varnas are there? Write in detail.
7. What is the general meaning of Alankara and what is its utility in music?

**ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS****Sangeet (1.1)**

1. singing, instrumental music and dance
2. singing

3. two – Northern and Southern

Nada (1.2)

1. two – 1. Ahat 2. Anahat
2. three – Pitch, Intensity, Timbre
3. Intensity signifies whether a Nada is louder or weak or of greater or smaller amplitude and Pitch signifies whether a Nada is high or low.
4. Sages
5. no

Shruti (1.3)

1. ‘shravanacchrutayo matah’
2. three
3. the viewpoint of twenty two shrutis

Svara (1.4)

1. three to four, four to five and five to seven notes
2. Bharata’s Natya Shastra
3. nine – seven Shuddha, two Sadharana
4. 4, 7, 9, 13, 17, 20, 22
5. Re, Ga, Ma, Dha, Ni

Saptak (1.5)

1. Group of seven notes
2. three- Mandra, Madhya, Tar
3. dot below Svaras in mandra Saptak, no symbol in Madhya Saptak, dot above Svaras in Tara Saptak
4. Mandra Saptak – heart, Madhya Saptak throat, Tara Saptak – palate and brain

Varna (1.6)

1. ‘ganakriyochiyate varnah’ or various methods or embellishments used in singing and instrumental music.



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2. four- Sthayi, Arohi, Avarohi, Sanchari.
3. when a note is pronounced repeatedly.
4. ascending and descending order of notes.
5. a combination of Sthayi, Arohi and Avarohi Varnas

Alankar (1.7)

1. specific group of Varna
2. Palta
3. the hand (for instrument) and throat (for singing) are prepared, knowledge of notes is improved, helpful in elaboration of Raga.

GLOSSARY

1. combination – joining together
2. physical – natural
3. medium – means
4. objects – material
5. sound producing – that produces sound
6. frequency – number of vibrations
7. struck – hit
8. smallest – as small as possible
9. derivative – showing origin
10. neighbouring – nearby
11. refer – call
12. resonant – prolonged
13. listeners – audience
14. pleasing – providing delight
15. omitted – not used
16. established – placed

17. creation – to make
18. pronounce – to produce sound verbally
19. mixed – combined
20. elaboration – to spread
21. omnipresent – forever present



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