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BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO SANGEET RATNAKAR

Sangeet Ratnakar of Pt. Sharngadev is one such treatise of Indian classical music which is recognized as the basis for both the systems, Hindustani and Carnatic music. Through the medium of this treatise, not only was the ancient structure of Indian classical music conserved, but also knowledge about ancient forms, Svaras, Ragas, Gitis, Jati Gana, Tala, instruments, dance etc. was made available to modern musicologists. View points of authorities preceding Sharngadev such as Bharat, Matang, Dattil and others have also been mentioned in Sangeet Ratnakar which makes this a significant treatise of Indian music.

Written in the thirteenth century, Sangeet Ratnakar is also called 'Saptadhyayi' as it consists of seven chapters. Each chapter discusses different aspects of music in detail. For example, in the second chapter called 'Ragavivekadhya', he discusses the tenfold classification of Ragas and a total of 264 Ragas mentioned as previously prevalent and presently prevalent along with compositions and elaboration.

Pt. Sharngadev re-established concepts of music and put them forward in a comprehensive manner. To this day, definitions of basic terminology are quoted from this treatise.



OBJECTIVE

By studying this lesson, learners will be able to:-

- describe in brief the system of Sangeet Ratnakar;
- describe the important features of the Sangeet Ratnakar in brief;
- mention the names of the seven chapters of Sangeet Ratnakar.



Notes

7.1 ENUMERATION OF CHAPTERS

Pt. Sharngadev wrote Sangeet Ratnakar in thirteenth century. There are seven chapters in this Sanskrit treatise. Therefore, it is also referred to as 'Saptadhyayi'. The seven chapters are as follows:

1. Svargatadhyaya
2. Ragavivekadhyaya
3. Prakeernakadhyaya
4. Prabandhadhyaya
5. Taladhyaya
6. Vadyadhyaya
7. Nartanadhyaya



INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.1

1. In which century Sangeet Ratnakar was written.
2. Who is the author of Sangeet Ratnakar?
3. Mention the names of Sangeet Ratnakar's chapters.
4. What is referred to as 'Saptadhyayi'?

7.2 DESCRIPTION OF SVARGATADHYAYA

The first chapter called Svargatadhyaya has eight sections or Prakaranas. In the first section, after an invocation of God, the author mentions the name of the father as 'Sodhala' who belonged to the family of a revered Brahmin of Kashmir. In this treatise he has presented the viewpoints of great authorities on music preceding him such as Bharat, Matang, Dattil, as well as Yashtik, Durgashakti, Shardula, Kohala, Narada, Nanyadev etc. in a concise manner. Along with giving the term 'Sangeet' collectively to the trilogy of singing, instrumental music and dance, he gives it two types, 'Marga' and 'Desh'. According to him, that which was discovered by Brahma and practised by Bharat and others is 'Marga' and that which is practised according to the taste of people of different regions is called 'Deshi' Sangeet. Dance has been said to follow instrumental music and instrumental music has been said to follow singing. In this way, singing has been considered as foremost among singing, instrumental music and dance. He enumerates the seven chapters along with a brief mention of their content.

In the second and third sections of the first chapter, human physiology, omnipresence of Nada, Nada, Shruti, types of Svaras, their caste, deity, sage, metre, Rasa etc. have been discussed. While discussing the origin of Nada from the rising of life

breath in the body and its culmination from the mouth, 22 shrutis have been mentioned. From these 22 shrutis, 12 modified (Vikrit) and 7 pure (Shuddha) Svaras are obtained, which gives the total number of notes of Sharngadev as 19. He also gives their relation to Rasas, metre and colours. In the fourth and fifth sections, he gives an analysis of Grama, Murcchana and Tanas in which two Gramas Shadja Grama and Madhyam Grama and Murcchanas and Tanas obtained from them have been explained in detail. Then he explains the use of Svara Sadharana in Jatis. In the sixth, seventh and eight sections he gives details of Varna, Alankara, Jati and Giti.

**Notes****INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.2**

1. How many sections are present in the first chapter?
2. What do you know about Pt. Sharngadev's father and family?
3. What is the definition of Marga and Deshi Sangeet ?
4. How many Shrutis and Svaras does Pt. Sharngadev mention ?
5. Mention the topics discussed in the second and third section of the first chapter.

7.3 DESCRIPTION OF RAGAVIVEKADHYAYA

In the second chapter named Ragavivekadhyaya, the tenfold classification of Ragas has been described in the form of 'Marga' Ragas-, Grama Raga-, -UpRaga, Raga, Bhasha, Vibhasha, Antar Bhasha and Deshi Ragas – Bhashanga, Upanga, Kriyanga and Raganga. The total number of each category of Ragas given in Sangeet Ratnakar is 264. The chapter consists of two sections. In the first section, five types of Gramma Ragas have been discussed on the basis of five Gitis- Shuddha, Bhinna, Gaudi, Vesara and Sadharani. Thereafter, he mentions the Upa Ragas, Ragas, Bhashas, Vibhashas and Antar Bhashas. In the second section, Deshi Ragas has been described as previously prevalent and presently prevalent (during that time) along with Ragalap and Akshiptika.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.3**

1. How many sections are present in the second chapter?
2. Name the five Gitis.
3. Give the total number of Ragas that the author has discussed.
4. According to Sangeet Ratnakar what is the tenfold classification of Ragas?

7.4 DESCRIPTION OF PRAKEERNAKADHYAYA

The third chapter is 'Prakeernakadhyaya' which consists of 'Prakeerna' that is miscellaneous topics.



Notes

It begins with details of Vaggeyakara, the master composer. One who composes the verbal text as well as the melodic structure of a composition is called ‘Vaggeyakara’. Characteristics of Vaggeyakara include knowledge of grammar, language in general, Rasa, Bhava, Kala, Laya, Tala, Deshi Ragas, Prabandhas etc. Categories like Uttam, Madhyam and Adham have also been given according to caliber of composers. This is followed by description of Gandharva and Svaradi. One who knows Marga and Deshi Sangeet is ‘Gandharva’, while one who knows only Marga is ‘Svaradi’.

Characteristics of a singer according to different categories are given. For example, ‘Uttam gaayak’ or a good quality singer should have a good tonal quality he should be well acquainted with Ragas, Ragangas, Bhashangas, Kriyngas and Upangas. He should have knowledge of Prabandhas, Alapti, command over Gamakas in all registers, Tala, Laya etc. Similarly, other categories such as Madhyama, Adhama, Panchvidhgaayak, Trividh gaayak and Gaayani (female singer) have been described.

Fifteen types of Gamakas and ninety six Sthayas have been enumerated by Pt. Sharngadev in this chapter. Shaking of the tone in such a way that delights the mind has been called ‘Gamaka’, whereas ‘Sthayas’ are components of Ragas, the process of unfolding the Raga is called ‘Alapti’. He gives two types of Alapti-

- 1) Ragalapti and
- 2) Rupkalapti

In the end, he describes vocal and instrumental ensembles.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.4

1. Who is a ‘Vaggeyakara’?
2. What are the qualities of an ‘Uttam gaayak’?
3. How many Gamakas have been given in Sangeet Ratnakar?

7.5 DESCRIPTION OF PRABANDHADHYAYA

In the fourth chapter, i.e., Prabandhadhyaya, the musical form ‘Prabandha’ has been described. Prabandha was a musical form prevalent during the Ancient period that consisted of four Dhatus- Udgraha, Melapaka, Dhruva, Abhoga and six Angas- Svara, Biruda, Tenak, Pada, Pata and Tala. Three types of Prabandha have been given- Suda, Ali or Alikrama and Viprakeerna.

Pt. Sharngadev begins with the definition of Gita and its two types – Gandharva and Gana. Gana is of two types – Nibaddha and Anibaddha. That which is bound with Dhatus and Angas is ‘Nibaddha’ and that which is free from any such bonding is ‘Anibaddha’. He gives three terms for Nibaddha – Prabandha, Vastu and Rupaka.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.5

1. What is meant by 'Prabandha'?
2. Name the Dhatus and Angas of 'Prabandha'.
3. Name the three types of 'Prabandha'.

7.6 DESCRIPTION OF TALADHYAYA

The fifth chapter, i.e. Taladhyaya is devoted to the concept of 'Tala'. According to Pt. Sharngadev, Tala is the base upon which singing, instrumental music and dance are established. This chapter has been divided into two sections. The first section consists of Marga Talas and the second section consists of Deshi Talas. Five varieties of Marga Talas and one hundred and twenty varieties of Marga Talas and one hundred and twenty varieties of Deshi Talas have been given.

Different elements of Tala, such as Kriya (nishabda and sashabda), Laya, Yati, Kala etc. have been described according to their practical exposition in showing musical time or rhythm.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.6

1. Define Tala according to Pt. Sharngadev.
2. How many sections are there in Taladhyaya?
3. How many varieties of Marga Talas have been given in Taladhyaya?
4. How many varieties of Deshi Talas have been given in Taladhyaya?

7.7 DESCRIPTION OF VADYADHYAYA

In the sixth chapter called 'Vadyadhyaya', four types of instruments (Vadya) have been given, viz (1) Tata (2) Avanadya (3) Ghana (4) Sushir. Tata Vadya include stringed instruments, such as Ek Tantri, Tri Tantri, Chitra Vina, Vipanchi, Vina, Kinnari Vina, Pinaki Vina etc. Instruments covered with leather which are used for percussion are called Avandya Vadya. For example, Patah, Ghat, Dakka, Damru, Bheri and Dundubhi. Metallic percussion instruments are called Ghana Vadya. Instruments such as Jay Ghanta, Ghanta, Shudra Ghantika etc. are included in this category. Sushir Vadya include wind instruments, literally having holes such as Vanshi, Paavika, Murli, Shring, Shankh etc.

Description of these instruments along with technique of playing have been discussed in this chapter.



Notes



Notes



INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.7

1. How many types of instruments have been given in Sangeet Ratnakar? Name them.
2. Give two examples of Tata instruments.
3. What are Avandya and Ghana instruments?
4. Give two examples of Sushir instruments.

7.8 DESCRIPTION OF NARTANADHYAYA

The seventh chapter called 'Nartanadhyaya' is devoted to various elements, sub elements and exposition of dance. It consists of two portions. In the first portion, Pt. Sharngadev gives three terms in the context of dance – Natya, Nritya and Nritya. Natya and Nritya have been said to be performed during festivals and Nritya is to be performed during events such as coronation of kings, wedding, birth and other occasions. Natya depends on verbal expression, Nritya on bodily expression, whereas Nritya on bodily postures and foot work based on rhythm. 'Nritya' has been used in context of music. Two types of Nritya and Nritya have been mentioned, viz – Tandava and Lasya. Tandava is the frenetic and Lasya is the mellow form created by Shiva and Parvati respectively.

In the second portion, nine Rasas – Shringara, Hasya, Adbhuta, Raudra, Veer, Karuna, Bhayanaka, Vibhatsa and Shanta have been discussed in the context of the audience.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.8

1. Name the three terms given in Sangeet Ratnakar in the context of dance.
2. What are Tandava and Lasya?
3. Name the nine Rasas.



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

'Sangeet Ratnakar' of Pt. Sharngadev is a very important music treatise in Sanskrit language. It is considered as the basis for fundamental terminology of both Hindustani and Carnatic system of music. A detailed knowledge about classical music prevalent during Ancient period such as various forms, Ragas, Gitis, Jati Gana, exposition of Tala, instruments and dance is available through this treatise on Indian music. In

Sangeet Ratnakar, Pt. Sharngadev has defined various concepts in an organized way and also mentioned viewpoints of musical authorities preceding him. He has given the description of Ragas and Talas of his time as well as before his time. Since this treatise is divided into seven chapters, it is also referred to as 'Saptadhyayi'. An important feature of Sangeet Ratnakar is that Pt. Sharngadev has correlated theoretical concepts to their practical usage. He has given the description of Ragas and Talas of his time as well as before his time by calling them 'previously prevalent' and 'presently prevalent'. In this way, this treatise serves as an indicator of the classical music that was prevalent till the thirteenth century.

**Notes****TERMINAL EXERCISE**

1. Why is Sangeet Ratnakar considered as an important treatise?
2. What is the other name for Sangeet Ratnakar and why?
3. Which were the musical authorities preceding Pt. Sharngadev on whose viewpoints he has based his analysis?
4. What is meant by Marga and Deshi and previously prevalent and presently prevalent according to Sangeet Ratnakar?
5. Which are the main musical technical terms upon which the musical analysis in Sangeet Ratnakar Based?

**ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS****7.1**

1. Thirteenth century
2. Pt. Sharngadev
3. Svargatadhyaya, Ragavivekadhyaya, Prakeernakadhyaya, Prabandhayaya, Taladhyaya, Vadyadhyaya, Nartanadhyaya
4. Sangeet Ratnakar

7.2

1. Eight
2. The name of his father was Sodhala and he belonged to the family of a revered Brahmin of Kashmir.
3. That which was discovered by Brahma and practiced by Bharat and others is 'Marga' and that which is practiced according to the taste of people of different regions is called 'Deshi' Sangeet.
4. Pt. Sharngadev mentions 22 Shrutis and a total of 19 Svaras including pure (Vikrit) notes.



Notes

5. In the second and third sections of the first chapter, human physiology, omnipresence of Nada, Nada, Shruti, types of Svaras, their caste, deity, sage, metre, Rasa etc., have been discussed.

7.3

10. The second chapter has two sections.

11. Shuddha, Bhinna, Gaudi, Vesara, Sadharani.

12. 264 Ragas

13. The tenfold classification of Ragas has been described in the form of 'Marga' Ragas – Grama Raga, Up Raga, Raga, Bhasha, Vibhasha and Antar Bhasha and 'Deshi' Ragas – Bhashanga, Upanga, Kriyanga and Raganga.

7.4

14. One who composes the verbal text as well as the melodic structure of a composition is called 'Vaggayakara' -

15. 'Uttam gaayak' or a good quality singer should have a good tonal quality, he should be well acquainted with Ragas, Ragangas, Bhashangas, Kriyngas and Upangas. He should have knowledge of Prabandhas, Alapti, command over Gamakas in all registers, Tala, Laya etc.

16. Fifteen

7.5

17. A musical form prevalent during the Ancient period.

18. Dhatus – Udgraha, Melapaka, Dhruva, Abhoga Angas- Svara, Biruda, Tenak, Pada, Pata, Tala.

19. Suda, Ali or Alikrama and Viprakeerna

7.6

20. Tala is the base upon which singing, instrumental music and dance are established.

21. Two sections

22. Five

23. One hundred and twenty

7.7

24. Four types of instruments have been given in Sangeet Ratnakar – Tata, Avanadya, Ghana, Sushir

25. Ek Tantri, Tri Tantri

26. Avanadya – leather covered percussion instruments, Ghana – metallic percussion instruments.

27. Vanshi, Paavika

7.8

28. Natya, Nritya and Nritta

2. Two types of Nritya and Nritta have been mentioned in Sangeet Ratnakar – Tandava and Lasya. Tandava is the frenetic and Lasya is the mellow form created by Shiva and Parvati respectively.
30. Shringara, Hasya, Adbhuta, Raudra, Veer, Karuna, Bhayanaka, Vibhatsa and Shanta.



Notes

GLOSSARY

1. Hindustani music – Indian classical music prevalent in Northern India.
2. Carnatic music – Indian classical music prevalent in Southern India.
3. Jati Gana – a musical form prevalent in Ancient period.
4. Shruti – ‘shrutyatiti shruti’, the smallest form in which sound can be heard and recognized.
5. Grama – ‘melah svarasamuhah syat’, a group of notes becomes Grama when Shrutis are distributed specifically, e.g. the seven Svaras are established on 22 Shrutis in Shadja Grama as, Sa-4, Re-3, Ga-2, Ma-4, Pa-4, Dha-3, Ni-2.
6. Murchana – ascending and descending order (usually descending order) of notes in sequences within a particular Grama.
7. Tana – ‘tanantattanah’, spreading of notes or elaborating Raga through notes (present day meaning of Tana is to use notes in high speed at the end or sometimes in between elaboration of Raga)
8. Ragalapa – introductory Alapa of Raga in the beginning.
9. Akshiptika – a term used for musical composition in Ancient period.
10. Previously prevalent – a Raga or Tala prevalent before the period of the treatise.
11. Presently prevalent – a Raga or Tala prevalent during the period of the treatise.
12. Marga Sangeet – that which was discovered by Brahma and practised by Bharat and others.
13. Deshi Sangeet – that which is practiced according to the taste of people of different regions.
14. Grama Raga
15. Upa Raga
16. Raga
17. Bhasha
18. Vibhasha
19. Antar Bhasha

Sharngadev's tenfold classification of Ragas



Notes

20. Bhashanga
21. Upanga
22. Kriyanga
23. Raganga
24. Shuddha — types of Gitis
25. Bhinna
26. Gaudi
27. Vesara
28. Sadharani
29. Vaggeyakara – one who composes the verbal text as well as the melodic structure of a composition.
30. Gandharva – one who knows Margas and Deshi Sangeet.
31. Svaradi – one who knows only Marga Sangeet.
32. Prabandha – musical form prevalent during Ancient period.
33. Udgraha
34. Melapaka — Dhatus of Prabandha
35. Dhruva
36. Abhoga
37. Svara
38. Biruda
39. Tenak — Angas of Prabandha
40. Pada
41. Pata
42. Tala
43. Suda
44. Ali or Alikrama — types of Prabandha
45. Viprakeerna
46. Tata
47. Avanadya — types of instruments
48. Ghana
49. Sushir
50. Natya
51. Nritya — terms for dance
52. Nritta