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Similarity and Dissimilarity in the 'Rāga' System of Hindustani Sastriya Sangeet

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Abstract- In Indian Music there are twelve notes, but there are large number of Ragas. How it could be possible and what are the things which make it possible; actually we have some minor factors and a strong theory behind this which can make differences in them. This article attempts to find those minor factors.

Key Words- Rāga, Thāt, Swara, Jāti

Introduction- “Gītam Vādyam tathā ṇṛittam trayam saṅgītamucyate”¹

It means, Music is joint form of Vocal, Instrumental and Dance. It is hard to find the present form of The Rāga and Tāla system which we follow, in any other Music system today. Every Music system have accepted notes and tempo as a part of Music but Rāga (Which is the combination of the different Swara) and Tāla (which is Depends upon laya) is a unique quality of Indian Music.

Our old scriptures have defined 'Rāga' as-

Yo'yam dhvani viśeṣastu swara varṇa vibhūṣitaḥ²
rañjako jana chīttānām saḥ rāga kathitau budhai

It means a special composition of sound, which give pleasure to others and also entertain others it will be called Rāga. The notes of the Rāga, vādi, samvādi, kaṇa, mīṇḍa, khatkā, rasa, thāt, jāti, swara prayog are important factors in this Rāga system which can show the similarity and dissimilarity.

We have two methods (thāt system and rāgāṅg system) to describe this. This paper will explain it on the basis of Thāt system.

Materials and Methods- The matter has been collected from the written sources and oral tradition.

Results- This paper describes all major factors which are interrelated with this topic and finally it was found that the little things like vādi, samvādi, kaṇa, mīṇḍa, khatkā, rasa, thāt, jāti, various swara prayog is very important factor in our Rāga system and they can change the whole structure, nature, aesthetical approach of a Raga.

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Discussion- There are Ten Thāt namely Bilāval, Kalyān, khamōj, Bhairav, Pūrvī, Toḍī, Āsāvārī, Kāfī, Bhairavī, Mārvā which have been described by Pt. Vishṇu Nārāyaṇa Bhātkhaṇde and they are origin of all rāgas. Various other rāgas arose with some minor changes in these ten thāts.

1. Dissimilarity of Thāts- In north Indian classical music we have innumerable number of rāgas which are based on same notes but they are from different thāts that's why they have different structural composition such as-
Rāga Bhūpālī- sa, re, ga, pa, dha, sa -- kalyān thāt
Rāga Deshkār- sa, re, ga, pa, dha, sa -- Bilāval Thāt
Rāga Vibhās- sa, re, ga, pa, dha, sa -- Bhairav Thāt

The thing which is to be noted is that they distribute same notes like- sa, re, ga, pa, dha, sa in different Thāts and they make different Rāgas on the basis of vādi, samvādi, pūrvāṅg and uttrāṅg and different uses of swara (chalan) like- Bhūpālī and Deshkār has same notes but they have different characters. bhūpālī is a pūrvāṅg pradhān rāga just like kalyān and 'ga' is a vādi (prominent) swara in it and Deshkār is a uttarāṅg prdhān rāga just like Bilāval and 'dha' is a vādi (prominent) swara in it just like the same Rāga Vibhās also has the same notes but it has komal (re, dha) that's why this is belong to Bhairav Thāt. So these are the different qualities because of these those Ragas who has the same notes belongs to different Thāt and has different aesthetic approach ³.

2. Dissimilarity of komal and tivra Swara (minor and sharp notes) – we have many Rāgas with same notes but we find differences in there notes (some time they used natural, some time sharp and some time minor) like- Rāga Bihāg, Bhīmpalāsī, Multānī, Patdīp, and Madhuvantī has same notes as- ni, sa, ga, ma, pa, ni, sa but they have different moods and structure so the factor which makes differences in it is different type of notes; like-
Rāga Bihāg has tivra 'Ma' in avaroha like-
Ni sa ga ma pa ni sa
Sa ni dha pa, ma pa ,¹ga ma ga, re sa
Rāga Bhīmpalāsī has komal 'Ga' and 'Ni'
Rāga Multānī has komal 'Re', 'Ga' and tivra 'Ma'
Rāga Patdīp has Komal 'Ga'
Rāga Madhuvantī has komal 'Ga' and tivra 'Ma'
3. Dissimilarity in Rāgas (besides they have same Thāt and same Jāti) – here we found some dissimilarity in those Rāgas who have same Thāt and Jāti such as- Rāga Brīndāvanī Sāraṅg and Rāga Madhmād Sāraṅg both have same thāt (kāfī) and same Jāti (audav-audav) but they have different melodic structure ⁴.
4. Dissimilarity in Rāgas on the basis of Jāti- Aūdava, Śadva and sampūrna these are three main Jāti's nine more branches of Jātis are there so we can divide that Rāgas in between them who has same characters like- Pūriya-Pūriya kalyān, Bhairawa-Gunakrī ⁵.

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5. Dissimilarity in Rāgas (besides they have same Name and same Jāti) – here we found some dissimilarity in those Rāgas who have same Nmae and Jāti such as
Shuddh Malhār in this Raga we can find two types. First one is belong to Bilāval Thāt and it is based on these notes $\frac{1}{4}$ sa re ma pa dha sa $\frac{1}{2}$ and the second one is belong to kāfi Thāt and based on these notes $\frac{1}{4}$ sa re ma pa ni sa $\frac{1}{2}$.
6. Dissimilarity in Āroha and Avaroha– there are many Ragas who sometimes have same āroha and different avaroha and sometimes just opposite of this, such as-
 - Rāga Briṅdāvanī sārāṅg, Sūr malhār and Desh have same Āroha but different Avaroha.
 - Rāga Toḍi- Multāni- Āsavari- Jaunpuri and Rāga Bahār- Miyā malhār has different Āroha and same Avaroha.
 - Rāga Bhimplāsi and Raga Bāgeshree has same notes but they have different Āroha and Avaroha.
7. Dissimilarity in ‘Chalan’ (usage of notes in different style)– in this category Rāga has same notes but it has been using in different style such as-
 - In Kalyān Thāt Kedār, Kāmod, Hamīr, Chāyānat, Gauḍsārag has same uttarāṅg and different poorvāṅg ⁶.
8. Dissimilarity of Vādi , Samvādi– here we have that kind of Rāgas who has same melodic pattern but they have different prominent notes (vādi, samvādi) like-
 - Rāga Mārvā- Re, Dha – Raag pūriya- Ga, ni – Raag Sohini- Ga, Dha
 - Rāga Bhoopāli- Ga, Dha – Raag Deshkār- Dha, Ga
9. Similarity in Swar sangati (Melodic pattern) – in this category we have so many Rāgas which has same melodic pattern like- chhāyānat, naṅd, gauḍa-sārāṅg, shuddh-kalyān, jaijivaṅti has same (pa-re) ptttern. Kāmod, Gaud-malhār, Durgā, Nāyaki-kanhḍā has same (re-pa) sangati.

Conclusion- Indian Music is developed on the basis of vādi-smvādi, jāti, āroha-avaroha and aesthetic approach so we can find some differences and some similarity in it. On the basis of these qualities our music is called a ‘Great Indian Music’.

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