



Swaranjali Music School

स्वरंजली संगीत शाला

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Visharad Pratham Theory

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Theory: Written Exam Paper # 2: Chapter 2:

Classification of Raag: Successive Development of Thaata Paddhati

One of the most important method of classification of raag In Indian classical music is 'Thaata Paddhati'. (Paddhati = Method). One of the methods arranges raag according to how many swar it has, or on whether the raag is Odav, Shaadav or Sampoorana. Another method organizes raag by the time of singing. In the same fashion, raag's swar, pakad, chalan can be used to sort the raag. All these thought processes are included in Thaata Paddhati.

Question arises that 'why is the thaata paddhati necessary?' Answer is, if raag with similar tendencies are grouped together, it helps the curious students to understand the concept of 'Raag'. Classification is a fundamental scientific method. It makes it easy to memorize the known knowledge base.

Raag with similar characteristics are placed in one group. Name of the most famous raag from that group is given to the group.

Historical Review:

By the time music scholar Matang wrote 'Bruhadeshi' (600 – 800 AD), many raag were well established in Indian classical music. By the time the treatise 'Sangeet Ratnaakar' was written (13th century), the numbers of raag had increased considerably and people felt there was a need for classification of raag. From 14th century onwards, there is evidence of several scholarly books including 'Sangeet Saar' by Pandit Vidyaaranya swaami and 'Sangeet Sudha' by Govind Deekshit. Pandit Vidyaaranya swaami described 50 raag in 15 'mel'. (Mel = Thaata). Hence Pandit Vidyaaranya swaami can be considered to be originator of thaata paddhati.

After several such publications, around 1685 AD, Pandit Lochan mentioned eleven thaata in his book 'Raag Tarangini'. These eleven thaata are similar to Pandit Bhatkhande's ten thaata we use today.

Merits and Demerits of thaata paddhati:

Merits:

1. Many entities with same common name can be sorted into several groups based on their similarities and dis-similarities. This goal is largely achieved by Thaata Paddhati. Existing 100 – 150 raag can be classified using this method.
2. It is easy to understand similarities and dis-similarities of raag included in one thaata. Example: Thaata Kalyaan includes raag Kedaar, Bhoopaalee, Chhaayaanat, hence it becomes easy to understand and remember their properties.
3. Pandit Bhatkhande ji sorted raag according to the time of singing, and thaata paddhati is useful for that method.
4. For new students, this thaata paddhati is useful in understanding raag.

Demerits:

1. Sometimes two raag with identical swar are placed in different thaata. Example: Raag Bhoopaalee is in Thaata Kalyaan and raag Deskaar is in Thaata Bilaaval, even though they both have identical swar. This can cause confusion in students' mind. Another example is, Hindol

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raag is close to raag Maarvaa, Puriyaa, Sohanee, but it is included in raag Kalyaan. Dr. Ratanjankar wrote that Bhoopaalee clearly has Kalyaan 'Anga (body)' and Deskaar has Bilaaval body. Hindol can be explained same way.

2. How do we decide a thaat for a raag with two madhyam or two gandhaar? Ratanjankar ji replied that it is not enough to only look at the form of the raag. You have to also look at other factors like its body, character. This indicates 'Raagaanga' paddhati. By this approach, raag Aasaavaree with shuddha Rishabh, or with komal rishabh and raag Jaunpuri can all be included in thaat Aasaavaree.
3. Old raag like Patadeep, Ahir Bhairav or new ones like Chandrkauns, Jogkauns, Madhuvantee etc. do not belong to any of the ten thaats by Bhatkhande ji that we use today. Bhatkhande ji said: From the point of view of rules for thaats, ten thaats are sufficient and enough. one can always assume more or less number of thaats. Bhatkhande also suggested 32 thaats and above raags can belong to one of those 32 thaats.

In conclusion, if classification of raag is done by any method, there will always be merits and demerits to every one of them. If along with thaats paddhati, raagaanga paddhati (by Pandit N. M. Khare) is also considered, then classification of raag will be simpler.