

Aesthetics in Ragas :

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Introduction

Music is the language of pure and sweet sounds. Every language has got its own literature and music should be no exception.

Ragas constitute the sound literature of music. Really ragas constitute the sound literature to keep the art of music fully dynamic while the literature of other languages remains static in the sense that they remain only written in dumb letters but only to be enjoyed visually. But no doubt the enjoyment in both the realms appeal to the heart too, in one case by reading and in the other by listening. The literature of the languages evoke all the nava rasas and music is by itself only the language of pure emotions and feelings through the medium of sound language.

As John Ruskin refers to the 'Books' as books of the hour and books for ever so too, in music ragas are there which have gone into the oblivion and ragas surviving the test of time. Ragas of momentary pleasure and ragas of perennial worth and value abound in our music.

The academic technical and the aesthetic conception of the raga have been brought out in its essence in the very definition of the term raga as given for the first time by Matanga in his 'Brhaddesi'. 'Swaravarna vibhushitaha' implies the magical net work of combinations of swaras permitted and combined on the four fold 'varna'. 'Yosau-dhwani viseshastu' and 'Ranjakojana chit-tanam' these bring out immediately the musical aesthetics of ragas.

Any single swara may be pleasing by itself by the very virtue of it as per the classic definition 'Swato Ranjayati' and 'Swayam

yo rajate'. But combinations of sounds need not have the same effect. There must be 'pick and choose'. It is only here one must realise that though the ragas may be number-less- 'Ananthascha ragaha' not all can possibly and positively have equal quantum of rakthi or intrinsic melodic worth. The relative amount of rakthi is based on a number of salient factors analysed in the forthcoming lines. Scales form the legion and ragas are to be created out of them. It is an acknowledged fact that the raga system of Indian music is all comprehensive and all embracing in character that it is hardly possible for any human genius to conceive of any scale at any time in any part of the world which would not fall within the ambit of system of our music. This statement is not only quantitatively true but also qualitatively.

1. Methods of derivation of scales having a thorough practical bearing and musical initiative, intelligence, and instinct.
 - 1) Ragas conceived purely as result of musical initiative and instinct.
 - 2) Quest of musical knowledge for finding newer scales, experimenting up on the known musical intervals.
 - 3) Grahabheda-model shift of tonic.
 - 4) Redistribution and reallocation of the srutis or intervals.
 - 5) Applying the known scale pattern under different melas.
 - 6) Finding out pratimadhyama counterparts.
 - 7) Reversing the scale structure.

2. Contributory factors conducive to the melodic individuality of the ragas :
 - 1) Fullness of the scale and the regular structure of the formation need not necessarily guarantee the full melodic worth of the ragas.
 - 2) Most of the rakthi ragas are only vakra and they are the pride and glory of Carnatic music. Ragas of such type seldom exist in any other system of music in the world.
 - 3) The nature of the deletion of the notes in between has its influence on the intrinsic melodic worth of the ragas.
 - 4) Rakthi depends on the very combination of the notes brought to form the scale.

Eg:—A scale having the following notes can hardly survive:
 Shadja, Suddha Rishabha,
 Pratimadhyama, Suddha Dhai-
 vata and Kaisiki Nishada.

3. THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF RAGAS AVAILABLE IN OUR MUSIC

1. Ragas observing scrupulously the scale structure having derived melodic entity.
2. Ragas purely depending upon their scale structure and are developed only as swara patterns woven.

3. Ragas the melodic form of which lies much and far beyond their scale structure the latter proving an insignificant factor.
4. Ragas suitable for Geeta, Atapa, Thaya and Prabandha, all the aspects of Chaturdandi.
5. Raga fit for compositional purposes alone.
6. Ragas suitable for alapanakrama alone.
7. Ragas eminently suitable for all types of compositions and ragas only for a few specific types.
8. Ragas providing an elaborate scope for treatment on account of intrinsic melodic worth or treated only as a network of swara combination.
9. Ragas of an admittedly limited scope may be from the view point of :
 - 1) Structure
 - 2) Melodic worth
10. Ragas suitable for different tempos or specific tempo.
11. Ragas capable of evoking multiple rasas or with any specific rasa or rasas particularly attached to them.
12. Gana rasa-pradhana ragas.
13. Ragas suitable for all spheres or to a specific sphere.