

ANCIENTRY OF ODISSI MUSIC: A THEORETICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT: -

In Odisha, original Indian classical music in the form of “Raga-Pravandha-Gana” was transformed to Raga-Ksyudra-Geeta Pravandha Gana by Sri Jayadeva, the great composer, illustrious musician, a saint poet of Odisha as well as great devotee of Lord Jagannath. He was born in the first half of the 13th century A.D. in the village Kenduli on the sacred river Prachi in the district of Puri and gave new shape, new taste and colour to Indian Classical music through his ever glittering and uncomparable compositions of Sri Geeta Govinda. Ingredients of classical music like Raga-Tala-Geeta-Chhandas etc. of Sri Geeta Govinda were introduced in the services of the temple of the Lord Jagannath and was accepted as the temple music of Odisha.

The musical and poetic potentialities of the compositions of Sri Geeta Govinda were so rich and superb that it had a perpetual influence on the composers of Odisha of the mediaeval and the modern periods. In this regard the Sanskrit compositions of Abhinava Geeta Govinda of Jayadeva ushered a new era in the history of Indian music which can be rightly identified as Jayadevic- music. This Jayadevic music had paved the way for development and establishment of separate system of Indian classical music in Odisha in the form of Raga Khurda-Geeta- Pravandha-Gana. This music from its beginning had been in practice in the temple of Lord Jagannath as the part of the temple services but it is not the fact, that only the compositions of Sri Geeta Govinda were sung in the Jagannath temple. The Sanskrit compositions of the above composers including the compositions of Sri Geeta Govinda were also sung in the said temple and this practice continued till the beginning of the rule of Pratap Rudra Deva (1497 to 1541 A.D.). From the period of Pratap Rudra Deva only Jayadevic music was resumed in the Jagannath Temple. It is clearly mentioned that no compositions except Geeta Govinda would be sung in the temple.

Keywords- Odissi, Music, Antiquity, Dance, Song, Utkal, Gamak, Kalinga, Raga, Saint Poets, Lord Jagannath, Geeta Gobinda, Ingredients.

Odissi dance accompanied by Odissi music. Odissi music is a synthesis of four classes of music, i.e. dhruvapada, chitrapada, chitrakala and panchal. The dhruvapada is the first line or lines to be sung repeatedly. The use of art in music is called chitikala. Kavisurya Baladeva Rath, the renowned Odia poet wrote lyrics which are the best examples of chitrakala. Chitrapada means the arrangement of words in an alliterative style. All these were combined to form the style peculiar to Odissi music. Chhanda

(metrical section) contains the essence of Odissi music. The chhandas were composed combining Bhava (theme), Kala (time), and Swara (tune) The Chautisha represents the originality of Odissi style. All the thirty-four letters of the Odia alphabet from 'Ka' to 'Ksha' are used chronologically at the beginning of each line. A special feature of Odissi music is the padi which consists of words to be sung in druta tala (fast beat). Odissi music can be sung to different talas: navatala (nine beats), dashatala (ten beats) or egar tala (eleven beats). Odissi ragas are different from the ragas of Hindustani and Karnataki music. The chief Odissi ragas are Kalyana, Nata, Shree Gowda, Baradi, Panchama, Dhanashri, Karnata, Bhairavee and Shokabaradi. Odissi music is sung through Raganga, Bhabanga and Natyanga Dhruvapadanga followed by Champu, Chhanda, Chautisa, Pallabi, Bhajan, Janana, and Geeta Govinda, which are also considered to be in the repertoire of Odissi or an allied act form of Odissi. Odissi music has codified grammars, which are presented with specified Raagas. It has also a distinctive rendition style. It is lyrical in its movement with wave-like ornamentation. The pace of singing in Odissi is not very fast nor slow, and it maintains a proportional tempo which is very soothing.

With a charming and colorful music encompassing several streams, the heavenly state of Odisha (Odisha) unfurls many vistas of an array of dance forms and musical styles. Flourishing for ages, the rare dance forms of the state such as Odissi and Chhau are famous all over the world.

A number of folk traditions also lend a captive presence to it. The figures of musicians carved on ancient temple walls speak of Odisha (Odisha)'s rich musical heritage. It was 11th Century AD that the folk music of Odisha that still exists in the form of Triswari, Chatuhswari, and Panchaswari was only modified into the classical form.

Thus, Odia music is a classical form consisting of all the necessary ingredients common to Hindustani and Karnataki music, such as rags and talas. It is a synthesis of four classes of music namely dhruvapada, chitrapada, chitrakala and panchal. The dhruvapada is the first line or lines to be sung repeatedly. Chitrakala is the name given to the use of art in music. Kavisurya Baladeva Rath, the renowned Odia poet wrote lyrics which are the best examples of chitrakala. Then Chitrapada is the arrangement of words in an alliterative style. All these combine to form the style peculiar to Odissi music. Chhanda (metrical section) contains the essence of Odissi music. The chhandas were composed combining bhava (theme), kala (time), and swara (tune).

Another special feature of Odissi music is the padi, which consists of words to be sung in druta tala (fast beat). Odissi music can be sung in different talas namely navatala (nine beats), dashatala (ten beats) or egar tala (eleven beats) as Odissi ragas are different from the ragas of Hindustani and Karnataki music. The chief Odissi ragas are Kalyana, Nata, Shree Gowda, Baradi, Panchama, Dhanashri, Karnata, Bhairavee and Shokabaradi.

There were saint-poets of Odisha who composed lyrical poems to be sung. Bards usually went from place to place singing these songs that were meant to propagate religious ideas in various religions. Instructions were usually given by the poet himself as to how the lyric was to be sung, i.e. the raga or tune to be employed and the tala or beat scheme to be followed. Jayadeva was the first Odia poet who composed lyrics to be sung. In addition, he also indicated the contemporary classical ragas in which these were to be sung. Prior to this there was the tradition of chhandas that were simple in musical outline.

From the 16th century onwards Treatises on music were written or compiled in Odisha (Odisha). They were Sangitamava Chandrika, Gita Prakasha, Sangita Kalalata and Natya Manorama. Two treatises namely, Sangita Sarani and Sangita Narayana were also written in the early 19th century.

Features of Odissi Music are neither completely Hindustani nor Carnatic. Odissi music has its own unique style of composition and performance which is typical to this classical art form from the eastern state of Odisha. Technically, one can divide the singing style of Odissi into four parts- Natyanga, Raganga, Dhirubapadanga and Bhavanga. These are briefly discussed below.

Natyanga

These are small compositions. These are sung in Natya (small musical plays) or with dance. Such compositions are used in Gotipua dance. The stress in such compositions is on Tala. Pada Vinyas or Swara Vinyas is very sparsely made. Very short Taan is also sandwiched in between.

Ragang

As in any other classical music system, this is the most important aspect of Odissi also. The minimum rules of Raaga Gayan are: at least five swaras must be there; this must belong to a Janya that; rules regarding Jati, Gayan Time, Vadi, Samvadi etc. must be followed; besides these general rules all the characteristics of the particular Raaga are also to be followed.

The Ragang of Odissi as passes through six stages like all other classical systems. These are discussed below.

- (i) Anibaddha Alap: Though some practitioners today determine their Anibadha Alap according to the nature of the Raaga, the majority of the practitioners deride this as blind imitation of mainstream system. The latter compose their Anibadha Alap keeping in view the content, spirit and the tune of the composition, and not merely the Raaga.
- (ii) Prabandh: In Odissi mostly compositions from medieval Odia literature are selected as Prabandha. Some modern compositions following the form and content of medieval lyrics are also used. Just above the composition, Raga and Tala to be

followed are mentioned by the poet and the Sthai, called 'Ghosa' by the lyricists are also mentioned within the body of the composition. The composition ends with a Vanita, a kind of short colophon in verse form where the name of the poet is mentioned. The singing passes through the three stages of Sthai, Antara and Padi.

- (iii) Nibaddha Alap: Odissi music puts stress on Tala. Keeping the Tala in mind and after completing all the stages of Prabandha, the singer returns to Sthai.
- (iv) Padavinyas: In Padvainayas stage of Odissi, the words or the Padas to be expounded are chosen keeping in mind the total Bhava. Of course, generally the Sthai part is chosen for the purpose and sometimes the singer even arbitrarily chooses Padas but this should not happen. In Bhava music the singer must be fully aware of the meaning of the Padas and the Bhava expected to be expressed.
- (v) Swara Vinyas: Taking into consideration the Bhava, Chhanda and Laya of the Prabandha the Swaravinyas of the Raga is made. The artist gets an opportunity to prove his proficiency in Swara and Tala.

After giving an exposition of the Sthai the performer passes through Nibaddha Alap, Padavinyas and Swaravinyas. The same process repeated again after the Antara. But the ideal performer does not give extended demonstration of these parts.

- (vi) Taan: In olden days Taan was done intermittently within the Gaayan of the Prabandh. Long or short intricate Taans were sandwiched between the songs. But since the 50's Taan is made towards the end as is done in Hindustani or Carnatic Music.

Generally, 'aakar' taan is made use of in Odissi but many now-a-days also use Saragam. An overdose of taan, which is taken resort to by many modern practitioners, is influenced by the mainstream classical systems.

- (vii) Pallavi: Sometimes after all the stages of Ragang are completed Pallavi is sung. Pallavi is sung with the Ukuta of the Mardala in Raaga and Tala. There is Sthai, Pada and Padi. The Ukutas are sung in various lay as basing on the notation of particular Raaga. Intermittently the seven Swaras are sung in Chhanda.

Dhrubapadanga

This style like dhrupad in Hindustani is prevalent in Odissi since a very long time. The themes of the Prabandha are mainly either descriptive, devotional or else in praise of the patron. Bhakti (devotion) gets importance along with Veera (heroic) Rasa. Before the composition proper is taken up Nom, Tom, Alap is made. Following Odissi custom Sargam, Alap is also used. There is Laykari in Prabandh. There is no Nibadh Alap or Taan. Typical Odissi Talas like Matha, Kuduka and Sariman are used.

Bhavanga

There are some Prabandhas in Odissi which demand intense emotional expression and here expression of Bhava becomes primary. Purity of Ragas or accuracy of Tola becomes secondary. The Prabandha is sung in traditional Swara. For better effect various Ragas are also mixed and sung in slow, graceful manner. Sometimes short Nibadha Alap and Pada Vinyas are made. But Swara Vinyas or Taan are avoided. Thus, Odissi music has many original ragas and has also uniqueness in the style of presentation.

Odissi music belongs to the genre of Classical music of India and has its origin in the state of Odisha. Out of five main branches of Indian Classical music such as Avanti, Panchali, Udrumagadhi, Hindustani and Carnatic, Udrumagadhi exists in the form of Odissi style. Odissi songs traditionally depict the love and frolics of Radha and Lord Krishna. The classical Odissi dance is also performed with Odissi music. All songs of Odissi are sung in specific 'Raagas' and 'Taal'. The typical singing style of Odissi starts with a short 'Aalap', followed by the main song 'Prabandha'. 'Taan' is used in the form of 'Sargam' and it usually comes at the end of the song. It is set to the beats and pauses of the 'Taal'. Most of the Odissi songs are written by the renowned lyricists such as Jayadev, Kavisamrat Upendra Bhanja, Banamali, Deenakrushna, Kavisurya Baladev Rath, Gopalakrushna, Birakishore Dev etc.

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