

## **MANODHARMA SANGIT IN CARNATIK MUSIC**

Dr. Rekha M. Menon  
Lecturer, Department of Music,  
School of Drama and Fine Arts  
University of Calicut, Kerala  
E mail: [rekhamuttathu78@gmail.com](mailto:rekhamuttathu78@gmail.com)

Manodharma Sangita is the distinctive feature of Indian music. It is improvised music. Manodharma Sangita prevails in Hindusthani music as well as in Carnatic music in the same intensity. In an Indian music performance, three fourths of the time is allotted for Manodharma Sangita. It is during the performance of Manodharma Sangita that a gifted musician is able to elevate the audience to a higher plane. It is only the Manodharma Sangita that has kept alive Indian music all these centuries.

Manodharma Sangita and Kalpita Sangita are the two divisions of all music systems. Kalpita Sangita includes the compositions previously composed, memorized, practiced and performed in any music system. Manodharma Sangita is creative music while Kalpita Sangita is recitative or repetitive. Kalpita Sangita enables a musician to develop his ideas on the models provided. By learning and mastering many standard compositions in a raga representing various musical forms inculcates the element of creative faculty. It is only the Kalpita Sangita that really forms the strong foundation for the development of the creative ability in a musician.

### **Divisions of Manodharma Sangita**

Manodharma Sangita in Carnatic music has got five divisions:-

1. Raga Alapana
2. Madhyamakala (tanam)
3. Pallavi
4. Niraval
5. Kalpanasvara

#### **1. Raga Alapana**

Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi is the most important aspect of a Carnatic music concert. Raga alapana is unmeasured music and is without strict rhythm. Madhyamakala or tanam is the alapana in madhyama kala or medium speed. Madhyamakala has some perceptible rhythm. Pallavi is measured music and is in a definite tala.

Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi is an item of a Carnatic music concert in which a raga is elaborately sung in three different ways i.e, through raga alapana, tanam and pallavi. A person well equipped with years of thorough practice and a good deal of manodharma can have a mastery on this part of Manodharma Sangita.

Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi is rendered usually in major ragas. Raga alapana consists purely giving an exposition of a raga. The alapana was traditionally done with the usage of auspicious words 'Anandam', 'Anantam' and 'Tanam'. Later syllables and meaningless letters and sounds like 'na' 'ra' were substituted. It is non-rhythmical in scope, but at the same time the prevalence of some loose rhythmical progress should be clearly perceivable during the course of a raga alapana.

Raga Alapana admits of two divisions:-

- a) Samgraha alapana
- b) Sampurna alapana

Samgraha alapana is attempted as a prelude to a kriti in madhyamakala. The beauties of a raga are presented in an epitomized form, covering the entire range of three octaves. The musician emphasizes the key phrases occurring in the composition to be performed subsequently and thus give a hint to the audience of the approaching composition beforehand.

In a sampurna alapana, the beauties of a raga are presented in a detailed and elaborate manner. Raga alapana in a Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi is a Sampurna alapana. Sampurna alapana is rendered before a Chauka kala kriti (composition in Vilambita kala) in a major raga. Some ragas give ample scope for elaborate alapana. Such ragas are called major ragas. Ragas like Kalyani, Todi, Kambhoji, Shankarabharana are the finest instances of such type. Minor ragas are not suitable for elaborate alapana. Punnagavarali, Ahiri, Ghanta are some of the minor ragas. The alapana of a raga consists of three main stages:-

1. Akshipthika or the introduction
2. Raga Vardhini or the body of the alapana.
3. Sthayi and Makarini constituting the conclusion.<sup>(1)</sup>

Akshipitika consists in giving miniature form of a raga. It is the face of raga alapana. The details of a raga is included in Ragavardhini. It is the main part of raga alapana. Sthayi is the concluding part of a raga alapana.

### 1) Tanam

Another important aspect of Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi is Tanam or Madhyamakala. This is really alapana in madhyamakala or medium speed with perceptible rhythm. The rhythmical flow of Tanam is very fascinating. It is actually singing of a raga in madhyamakala using the syllables ta, nam, ta or tam, nam, tam in a systematic way. It is also known as 'madhyamakala gana'. There is also a tradition of musicians reckoning tala while singing tana or sometimes the mridangam also providing rhythmical accompaniment for singing.

### 2) Pallavi

Pallavi is the branch of manodharma sangita through which a performer's mastery over rhythm and his creative talent is revealed.<sup>(2)</sup> Pallavi is the measured music. The term Pallavi includes the three words: Padam – words, Layam – time and vinyasam – variations. A pallavi can be made in any raga and tala. The beauty of a pallavi is revealed through the

musician's mastery over madnodharma sangita. A pallavi is a part of manodharma sangita in which a particular theme is expressed through raga and tala. The words of a pallavi may be either on a sacred or secular theme and can be in any language. 'Prathamanga' and 'Dvitiyanga' are the two parts of a pallavi and the dividing point is called 'padagarbham' or 'arudi'. At this point, there is a period of rest or visranti. The two parts may be of equal length.

Just as there are major ragas and minor ragas, there are major pallavis and minor pallavis. Major pallavis admit of a long and detailed treatment and minor pallavis are intended for use in concerts of short duration. The music of the pallavi will be good and interesting to hear and it reflects the swarupa of a raga. The pallavi provides intellectual pleasure and aesthetic joy to the people having requisite musical knowledge. A pallavi singing has different stages like Anuloma, Prathiloma, Niraval and Kalpanasvara including ragamalika svara. Anuloma consists in keeping the tala constant and singing the pallavi at double and quadruple speeds. The pallavi music will be heard twice and four times respectively within the space of the original period of duration. Prathiloma consists in keeping the speed of singing constant but reckoning of tala with the hand at double and quadruple speeds. In this part, tala is reckoned twice and four times respectively within the space of the original period of duration. A high degree of mastery over rhythm is required to perform the anuloma and prathiloma of a pallavi.

#### 4) Niraval

The presentation of a pallavi with its sangatis or variations on the musical theme is called Niraval. It is the filling up portions of pallavi theme with fresh and appropriate music. In niraval, care should be taken to see that the syllables of a sahitya fall at the identical places in the avartha as in the fundamental theme. In concerts, Niraval is sung to the portion of a kriti having excellent sahitya portion. Niravals tend to become variations on the whole theme.

#### 5) Svarakalpana

Svarakalpana literally means rendering svaras out of imagination. This involves singing of svara passages. The svara should be sung suitably to the raga in which the pallavi is rendered. Svarakalpana is sung to kritis also. Svaras are rendered first in the same tempo or kala in which the theme is. After that, it is sung in the second degree or madhyamakala. After singing svaras in the same raga of a pallavi, svaras in different ragas are rendered which is called Ragamalika svaras (garland of ragas). The sahitya of the pallavi is repeated in the same raga in which the ragamalika svara is rendered. After singing the ragamalika svaras, the pallavi ends with the svaras in the original raga.

Indian classical music may be said as a limitless ocean. It is based on manodharma. The ideal of absolute music is reached in this branch of the art. The initial exercises and early training techniques in Carnatic music form part of a phase that lays a strong foundation for the development of manodharma singing later on.

-----

**References:-**

- (1) Prof. P. Sambamurthy – South Indian Music, Book IV, The Indian music publishing house, Chennai, 1973.
- (2) Prof. S.R. Janakiraman, Essentials of musicology in South Indian music, The Indian Music publishing house, Chennai, 2008.