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MUSIC IN PURANAS

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ABSTRACT

Puranas are the treasure of our Indian history, which picturise the life style of ancient people. Puranas are the guide, not only for the ancient people, but for the present and future man kind to lead a pieceful life. They are the richest collection of mythological informations, folklores, stories, literature, knowledge regarding sacred rituals in the form of hymns. Puranas were categorised as major and minor. It was written by Veda Vyasa after the great epic Mahabharata. This research reveals the musical information from Bhagavata, Agni Purana, Harivamsa, Markandeya, Vayu, Skantha, Brhaddharma and Visnudharmottara. Since Puranas are the sources which throw light on the cultural history of the ancient people, the analyses from few of the main 18 Puranas will help us to know about the musical information of the ancient period such as: Svaras, the various types of musical forms (songs), different types of Talas, meters and so on.

According to the dictionary, Purana means- old, belonging to olden times, a tale of the past, ancient or legendary history and so on. Hence this study will help to gain the knowledge of the musical history of ancient time. **Bhagavata Purana:** In this, Bhakti Yoga is portrayed to realize God in 18,000 verses into twelve Skandhas (chapters). It contains Vishnu's ten avatars. The tenth canto is the longest one, which narrates the deeds of Krishna.

Musical references are noteworthy and the information regarding music is the resource for us and for the future also. Few references from Bhagavata Purana mentioned below are :

1) Sama Veda, 2) Gitam, 3) Trend of singing with accompaniments, 4) Sangita as a compound venture, 5) Gandarva style of music pattern 6) Svaras 7) Various Talas 8) musical instruments.

1) In Bhagavata Purana, Sama Gana was mentioned in many places. Sama Veda was also termed as Brahma Gosha (Skandha-1, Adhyaya -11, Sloka 18).

2) Gitam: Music compositions were named in a general term as Gitam. The example is:
Devayanye purodyana pushpitadrumasankule |
vyacarat kalagitalinalinipulinebala |

skandha -9, adhyaya-18, sloka-7

3) Songs were also rendered along with the accompaniments of music instruments. For example:
Tamayantamabhipretya brahmavartasraja : patim |
gitasamstuti vaditrai : pratyudiyu : praharshita: |
skandha -3, adhyaya-22, sloka-28

4) Music was mentioned as a compound venture of Geetam, Vadyam and Nrutyam in most of the places. Following Sloka is cited as an example.

a) Nrutyam vaditra gitaisca stutibhi : svaati vacakai :
lkarayet tatkathabhisca pujam bhagavata nvaham |
skandha -8, adhyaya-16, sloka-57

b) Majjanma karma kathanam mama parvanumodanam |
gita tandavaditra goshti bhirmadgruho tsava : ||
skandha -11, adhyaya-11, sloka-36

-in the above sloka the term 'Tandava' denotes one of the patterns of dance.

5) **Gandarva:** In Bhagavata Purana the Gandarva style was mentioned. It means in the third century B.C also Gandarva type music was in practice.

Tatra Gandarva marganya divya marga manoharam |
visismy rajaputrata mrudanga panavadyanu ||
skandha -4, adhyaya-24, sloka-23

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6) Svaras:

a) Origin of Svaras: Music, Nada, Svaras are always portrayed as God. For any kind of music, Svaras are the basic component or the vital source. Without svara, there won't be any music. Hence Svaras are the back bone of music. The origin of Svaras stated in Bhagavata Purana is as follows :

Ushmanamindrayanyahuranta : stha balamatman : |

svara : sapta viharena bhavanti sma prajapate :||

skandha -3, adhyaya-12, sloka-47

The Atmabala of Brahman (Prajapati) is mentioned as the originating place of Sapta Svaras.

Svaras were numbered as seven is noteworthy.

7) Tala:

Satala:

Mrudanga Sankhanaka dundubhisvanai : satala veena murajashtir venu bhi : |

Nrutyai : savadyai roopa devagita kairmanoramam svaprabhaya gitaprabham ||

skandha -8, adhyaya-15, sloka-21

Here, deva Gita (Sama Gana) was sung with various instruments, which was set to Satala.

Malla Tala:

Vadyamaneshu turyeshu malla talottareshu ca |....||

skandha -10, adhyaya-42, sloka-36

8) Musical instruments: Mrudanga, Sankha, Dundubhi, Veena, Muraja and Venu are the instruments mentioned in the below Sloka:

Mrudanga Sankhanaka dundubhisvanai : satala veena murajashtir venu bhi : |

Agni purana: (9th .cent. A.D) It contains details of Vastu Sastra and gemology in 15,400 verses. Regarding music the metres and Ganas are mentioned in this Purana. While talking about Ganas, the short and long vowels, which play a great role in music were discussed. Saman singing and the metres Gayatri, Anustubh, Brhati are also dealt with in it. Gita is the term to denote song.

Harivamsa purana: This is considered to be Itihasa (epic poetry) in 16,000 verses. In the Harivamsa purana also Saman singing has been mentioned. The Pavamana - Saman - Stotras were sung and also recited outside the Mahavedi. There are ample references to music found in the Harivamsa. Stutiganas - (in honor of Siva) Chhalikya Gana, Asaritagiti are different types of music

compositions. The names of Serpent king Asvatara (Naga dynasty) and his brother Kambala occur in Ramayana, Mahabharata, Harivamsa and other Puranas.

Markandeya Purana: In Markandeya Purna (3rd - 5th Cen. A.D.), Chapter - XXI, - the king Asvatara and Kambala used seven jatis to their compositions of seven Gita-s'. An interesting evidence in Markandeya purana is that, Devi Saraswati, the embodiment of all arts and science of music, bestowed the desired boon upon Asvatara and Kambala, saying -

Sapta - surah gramarragah sapta pannaga-sattama |

Gitakani Sa Saptaiiva tavatisvaip marchhanah ||

Tanaschrikonapanchasat tatha gramat rayancha - yat ||

Etat Sarvam bhavam gata kambalascha tathanagha |

Jnayasye mat - prasadena bhujagendra - param tatha |

Chaturvidham padam tatam triprakaram layatrayam ||

Yatirayam tatha todyam maya dattam chaturvidhaam |

Asyantargatamayattam Svava - vynyjana - Sammitan |

Tadasesam maya dattam bhavatah kambalasyacha ||

Tatha nyanyasya bhurloke patale chapi pannaga ||

Pranetarau bhavantau cha sarvasyasya bhavisyatch ||

Patale devaloke cha bhurloae chaiva panna gau ||

Oh King of the Serpents, both you and your brother Kambala will be able to master the seven notes, seven Grama Ragas, fifty-nine Tanas and three gramas. Moreover, I bestow upon you the boons of getting efficiency in four Padas, three Talas, three Yatis and four Todyas. By my benediction and grace, both of you will be able to acquire the knowledge of this arts . . . everywhere you will be honored.

Markandeya -Purana mentions four types of compositions as Chaturvidham Padam. The Pada contains the notes and tempos. So it is termed as Vastu. Four kinds of rhythm- Avapa, Niskrama, Viksepa and Pravesaka, three kinds of tempos -Vilambita, Madhya and Druta, three kinds of Yati-Sama, Srotogota and Gopucha, four kinds of Atodya (musical instruments) -Tata, Susira, Avanaddha and Ghana are also taken place in this Purana. Seven Gities (raga Gities) are also mentioned in Markandeya Purana..

Vayu purana: The Vayu purana (300 AD to 500 A.D.) devotes two chapters (86-87) on music and hence writers sometimes refer to it as a source of music. It describes

that Svaramandala consisted of seven notes, the Sadja Madhyama Gramas, forty-nine Tanas and twenty-one Marchchanas. Besides these, three hundred Alamkaras are mentioned. When the Varnas and Padas are combined according to their own quality, they are known as. On the other hand, Alamkaras (300) were the embellishments of Gitas i.e., songs. Alamkaras Lord Siva is described as 'Gitasila', that means Siva is accustomed to songs.

In Skantha purana, Chapter XXVI - 'Dvarakamahatmy' is stated that Bhajans can be sung not only in Sanskrit but also in any other languages. This purana also refers to three grama ragas and seven svaras.

The Brhaddharma purana speaks about Nada, Twenty two Srutis (Dayavati and the rest), seven Svaras, with their three Gatis, Svaram-compositions, Ragas, Raginis, (the Svaram compositions are the Ragas and Raginis, 5 crores 5 lakhs 5 thousands in number), six ragas, with their thirty six wives (Raginis) and Dasi raga, Dasa ragas, etc.

This purana also states that Siva raised the Nada and manifested the Raga Gandhara. There is an interesting song on Lord Siva and Vishnu. The Sahitya is the message of a beloved, sent to Vishnu as the lover, through a messenger is as follows:-

Kesva Kamalamukhi mukha kamalam
Kamalanayana Kalayatula mamalam |
Kunjagruhe vijaneti vimalam || Dhruva :
Surucirahemalatanavalamba -
tarunatarum bhagavantam |
Jagadavalambana mava lambitu -
Manukalayati satu bhavantam ||

Then Siva sang the Ragini of Gandhara called 'Sri'. The sahitya is -

Rasikesh Kesava he
Rasa sara simiva mamupa yojaya
Rasa maya Rasamiva h? || Dhruva : ||

Vishnu felt now as if embraced; He became 'Sri'. He, along with the whole - Vaikuntha, was billowing in the Rasa - i.e. -Vishnu's body had become the Rasa of the Gana Brahman. Here it is understood that the compositions were composed even in Srngara rasa.

In Visnudharmottara - Purana (between 450 and 650 A.D.) two chapters were devoted to vocal and instrumental music. The XVIIIth chapter is devoted to Gitalaksana. Gita (song) had two fold - Samskrta and Prakrta. It dealt with

three registers (Sthanas) Urah (chest), Kanthah (throat), Sirah (head); three stayis - Mandra (low), Madhya (middle) and Tara (high); seven notes -Sadja, Rishabha, Gandhara, Madhyama, Pancama, Dhaivata and Nisada; three gramas: Sadja, Madhyama and Gandhara; twenty one Murchanas Sauviri, Harinasva, Kalopanata, Suddha - Madhyama, Margi, Pauravi, Uttarayata, Suddhasadja, Matsari - Krta, Asva-Kranta Udgata Alapa, Kuntima, Suddha, Uttara, Aadja, Pancayata and Udgata; forty nine Tanas and three Vrttis Vadi, Samvadi and Anuvadi.

Different Musical compositions (gitas) namely Aparantakam, Ullopyam, Mandrakam, Prakari, Vainakam, Sarobindum, Gatakani and other types of musical compositions namely Rk - Githa, Panika and Brahma-Gitika are taken place. Besides these the sitting arrangement of the orchestra - players and musical instruments - Tata, Susira, Ghana and Avanaddha are discussed in the Visnudharmottara Purana. Talas of four and eight matras Samya tala and three kinds of Laya are also mentioned in it.

Conclusion: Music is an ocean and Pur'n's are also a vast resource. Hence it is hard enough to bring all the materials in limited pages. The study of past literature is the foot path for the future. Only from the old resources, the modified new innovations raised. Art has the liberty to catch hold something and to admit the changes within it. The seven notes, three tempos, three Sthayis, three Sth'nas of the body, three Vrttis, four kinds of instruments and so on are still practice is the mile stone of the history of music.

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