

CHAPTER 1

A) THE ORIGIN OF MUSIC

The views of Indian and Western scholars:

An investigation of the historical origin or source of Music reveals that it is inseparably linked with the origin of human beings, being a natural means of expressing emotion. The vocal cord is a 'god-gifted instrument' and the foundation stone of both languages and music. It is the source of 'Dhvani' (sound), for animals, birds, and human beings alike. The very first sound they make comes from this natural instrument, the vocal cord. Even when human beings did not know how to speak, they expressed their emotions through making various noises.

Thakur Jaydev Singh¹ called such expression 'interjectional cries'. The same voices took the form of 'Stobh', in due course, when in the Vedic period musical songs developed. Although man did experience several kinds of voices in nature right from the primitive stage, music did not take the form of 'art' from the very beginning.

Thakur Jaydev Singh² says, "Although music is a natural gift given to human beings, it did not exist as an art form right from the beginning. Indian scholars, ancient sages and seers had experienced the Dhvani and gati in music after prolonged meditation, and they had noted that 'Nad Brahma' or the 'Omkar' was the omnipotent sound at the beginning of creation. This absolute and miraculous 'Nad' or Omkar is considered to be the beginning of all existence and Indian music by ancient Indian masters. The Nad Brahma is

¹ Jaydev – in the Prakakathan of the Geet Govind - 8

² Dr. Maharani Sharma – Sangeet-Mani, Part 1, Khand 1, pg. 1

timeless, absolute and eternal. Therefore, music - specifically Indian music - is neither related to any specific individual, place or country - it is the language of the heart.

As Dr. Arun Apte wrote, “The Omkar is the beginning of music and as a result the reason why music has always been the cosmic or universal language.”

According to ancient Indian masters, this art is ‘purely the knowledge of beyond’ (Brahma Vidya). The divine power of the Trinity - Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh - is the mighty source of its emergence and development. Therefore, Lord Shiva, Brahma, Saraswati, the Gandharvas, Kinnaras and other deities are considered the primordial and ancient sources of Indian Music. In India, Lord Shiva has been perceived in the form of the Nataraja, Saraswati as Veenavadini and Krishna as Murlidhar for centuries. The realisation that music emerged from divine inspiration has always been the basis for these notions.

According to Jaydev Singh, the word ‘Saraswat’ was derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Sru’, which indicate ‘smooth sliding or movement’. Saraswat is the power of Brahma responsible for making Brahma active and dynamic. It was with this power that Brahma created the universe. Nad is another manifestation of the same power. Thus, Nad and Gati pervade the entire universe. Saraswat is regarded as the forebear of all art forms, including music and poetry. This is why all Gods and Goddesses are considered the primordial source of inspiration. The deities are considered a source of music across the world.

If we look at the meanings of the words used for music in various languages, we find that music across the world emerged solely from divine inspiration.

In the Iranian language, it is *musiki*; in Latin, it is *musica*; in French, it is *musique*; in Portuguese, *musica*; in German, *musik*; and in English, it's *music*. In Arabic and Persian, the word for music is 'mousiki'.

The Greek word *muse* is the root of all these words for music in all these languages. The Greek word means 'amusing or inspiring Goddess of songs'. This proves that it was not only ancient Indian masters and sages who considered Gods and Goddesses as the inspiring source of music. It was so across the world. Indian thinkers retained firm faith in the belief that music is the knowledge of the transcendental (Brahma Vidya). The religious and philosophical concept of the origin of music is therefore self-evident.

If we examine Music from the perspective of the principles of Physics, we see that sound emerges from vibrations. Striking at an object or instrument makes it vibrate. The vibration makes a sound. In the creation of sound, the speed at which it is created (Gati) plays an important part. Sound and motion pervade the entire universe.

Physics defines two kinds of sound. The sweet sound is known as 'Nad' whereas harsh and jarring sound is known as noise. Both emerge from vibration. The difference is that harsh sound is produced by irregular and temporal vibrations while sweet sound is produced by regular and continuous vibrations. That is the reason why the latter sounds sweet and is known as 'Nad'.

Sound resides everywhere in the universe, within all movable and immovable objects. It has the quality of space (Akash). Hence, the Indian masters have defined sound or Nad as Nad Brahma, or Cosmic Sound. The speed/gati/motions also play an important role in the creation of sound, and the same are used in Music in the form of Swar (note) and Laya. Therefore, Music is certainly a natural art that emerges right from the birth of human beings. God has given the vocal cord to every individual, hence it may have

been the primary and a truly natural source of Music. The vocal cord is not only the first instrument for creating the Swaras but also the primary, god-gifted instrument that also gave rise to primordial murmuring or interjectional cries. That is why our ancient masters termed the vocal cord 'Gatra Veena', a bodily instrument. String instruments have been envisaged and created on the basis of the human vocal cord. It is safe to say, therefore, that the Gatra Veena, or the vocal cord, is the cause of origin and development of the world of music.

Thus, music emerged only after the advent of human beings. Along with the emergence and development of human civilisation and culture, it developed further. The art of music has undergone refinement time and again, and it went on developing to be the form of art that it is today. Thus, the story of the emergence and development of music goes back to the ancient past.

Different views on music prevail among Indian and western scholars. They differ on the bases of their inferences and interpretations of historical references:

1. According to one view, Music was created by Brahma, the creator of the Vedas. Brahma handed over the art to Lord Shiva. Then Saraswati acquired this art from Lord Shiva, which is why Saraswati is also referred to as 'Veena Vadini'. Narad, the great Gandharva sage, learnt the art from Saraswati and taught it to other Gandharvas and the Kinnaras. Then Bharat, Hanuman and others mastered this art and propagated and spread it on the Earth.¹

2. According to the view of some authors, "Lord Shiva has created ragas such as Bhairav, Hindol, Megh, Dipak and Shri by adopting positions facing east, west, north, south and towards the sky, respectively. The raga Keishiki emerged from the mouth of Parvati. Lord Shiva invented the Rudra

¹ Diverse opinions of several scholars and historic references (Indian as well as Western) - Sangeet-Mani - Part 1 – Dr. Maharani Sharma - pg. 3

Veena from the Shyam Mudra, or the sleeping pose of Parvati.

3. The main 'Shiva Stotra' tells us, "After asking Gouri, the mother of three lokas to sit on the throne, Sulpani Shiva performed dance, Saraswati played the Veena, Indra played his flute, Brahma played the kartal, Vishnu played the mrudanga and Laxmi sang a song. Yakshas, Kinnaras, Gandarvas and Vidyadhar were present to witness the performance. On this basis, it is believed that it was this performance that gave rise to all the three arts of music, namely vocal, instrumental and dance.

4. According to Pandit Damodar, the author of the book 'Sangeet Darpan', music was created by Brahma, from whom it passed to Shiva. From Shiva, it reached Bharata and others, thereby being propagated on all of Earth.

5. According to yet another view, Lord Shiva was the primordial creator of Music. He is known as 'Natraj'. He played the Damaru, a rhythmic instrument, and performed the dance called 'Tandava'. In the court of Indra, the Gandharvas recited songs, the Kinnaras played instruments and the Apsaras danced. After being taught this art by these Gods and Goddesses, Narad imparted it to Bharata. Thereafter, the was propagated and developed on the Earth.

6. Narad says in his work, 'Naradiyas Shiksha' that the sound of the seven Swars emerged out of the voices of different animals and birds.

षडजं वदति मयूरो गावो रम्भन्ति च रिषभं,

अजा वदन्ति गान्धारं क्रौञ्च वदति मध्यमं,

कोकिलो वदति पञ्चमं अश्वस्तु धैवतं,

निषाद कुन्जरो

The swaras, Shadaj, Rishabh, Gandhar, Madhyamam, Pancham, Dhaivat and Nishad emerged from the sounds of the various birds and animals including the peacock, cow, aja, crane, cuckoo, horse and elephant, respectively.

The western scholar Darbin supported the view of the ancient masters of Indian music. We are able to find the various sound variations even in birds and animals. These variations are so basic that human society has found use for them in its music. These are some Indian thoughts on the origin of musical sounds.

B) ACCORDING TO THE WESTERN SCHOLARS

1. According to one Persian scholar, when Moses was observing a natural scene, he heard a voice from the sky which said to him: “O Moses! Strike your weapon at the stone!” When Moses struck the stone with his weapon, it broke into seven pieces from which emerged the seven streams with the seven Swars (sounds).

2. According to one scholar, there was a bird called ‘musikar’ that resided on a mountain. There was a hole in its nose, similar to one in a flute. It is said that when one breathed in and out of this hole, sound emerged.

3. According to Freud, just as crying and laughter are instinctive behaviour of human beings, so is music.

4. A similar view of James Long is that like our other activities, speaking, walking, crying, and laughing, music has also emerged spontaneously.

Thus there is similarity in the views of Indian and western scholars

regarding the origin of music. Both agree that the original source of music are the Gods and Goddesses and that it is an activity innate to human beings. The sounds reside in everyone, and whoever has musical abilities will become an artist while others will just murmur and listen to the musical notes of nature. Human beings are sent to the Earth by God equipped with this art, with vocal cords for an instrument for creation of this art. As Dr. Shridhar Sharatchandra Paranjape wrote in his book, 'Sangeet Bodh': "The vocal cord is a natural instrument and the same determines vocal and instrumental music and its rotational areas (Swara-kshetra)." Our great sages realised this ability of the vocal cord and rightly named it 'Gatra Veena', because it determines Music. All man-made instruments created so far are based on the human vocal cord. Western scholars also recognised the ability of the human vocal cord by naming it the 'sound creator instrument'. Thus, it can definitely be said that the human vocal cord is the root of emergence of music.

C) HISTORY OF MUSIC

1. PRE-VEDIC HISTORY

Singing and dancing come as naturally to human beings as crying or laughing. Therefore, singing is a capability innate in human beings. The history of music starts with the primitive stage in the history of human beings. The Vedic period begins very late after that stage. At the time of the Vedic civilisation, music, literature and other arts had already developed.

During the pre-Vedic period, the life of humans was similar to that of animals. If one felt hungry, he would kill an animal and eat. If he felt sleepy, he would sleep; if he felt happy, he would jump and utter a joyous cry to express the joy. According to scholarly views, human beings were using the conch and animal horns as instruments of sound and rhythm for amusement at the time since the musical notes and rhythm were inborn and natural qualities

of human beings. Dr. Jaydev Singh¹ writes in his book, “Even at the primitive stage, where words and language had not yet emerged, human beings were able to express their emotions by interjectional cry or sounds. These interjectional cries were called ‘Stobh’ in ancient times. All around the world the sound of these interjectional cries or Stobh always remained similar, i.e. Aha, Oh, Hau, Hei etc. The very first human songs echoed on this earth were without any words, in the form of ‘Stobh’.

Thus, sound (Swar) and rhythm (laya) in music have always been instinctive in human beings, for which they received inspiration from Nature. That is why since the primitive stage itself human beings started expressing their emotions of happiness and sorrow through interjectional cries that included ha, ha, hu, hu, and through jumping or dancing. Hence, it is clear that in the absence of words and language, human emotions were first expressed only through sounds (swars). So music is as old as the birth of human beings on Earth.

According to the scholars, pre- or proto-Vedic civilisation was more ancient than Vedic civilisation. Its time is estimated to be between 5000 to 3000 years BC. Some scholars are of the opinion that Indus civilisation and Vedic civilisation were one and the same. But there are differing views of scholars on this issue:

1. According to the views of Sir John Marshal, Rakhil Bandopadhyay, Rai Bahadur, Dayaram Sahni, etc., the Indus civilisation was pre-Vedic, not Vedic. According to the views of Dr. Laxman Svarup, Swami Sankaranand, etc., this civilisation was Vedic. Dr. Thakur’s opinion is as follows: “This civilisation had already developed considerably before the Aryans arrived here. That was the civilisation of a non-Aryan tribe. The Aryans opposed them at the time of their arrival. But later on, they had adopted many things from them.”

¹ Dr. Jaydev Singh ji – Bhartiya Sangeet ka Itihaas

The scholarly opinion is that this civilisation was pre-Vedic. We can find references to this civilisation in various ancient books as well as inscriptions and pictures on the seals found at the excavation sites of this civilisation. We came to know more about the historical facts about music from the excavation, inscriptions and seals found from the site of the Indus Civilisation and also from the more specific references made in ancient scriptures about some of the facts related to the music of that time. A flute, a string instrument similar to the Veena, and an instrument made from leather were found from the excavation site of the pre-Vedic civilisation. In addition, some broken sculptures of dancing women were also found from the excavation site of the Indus civilisation. They were civilised and cultured people who used instruments of various forms for their amusement and could dance to express emotions of joy and happiness.

Thus, during the pre-Vedic period, music had been propagated and spread in accordance to the society that flourished then.

As Sharadchandra Paranjape said, “Some evidence found from the Indus civilisation suggests some information regarding music of that era. From the evidence found from excavation, we found that wind instruments like the flute, string instruments like the Veena, and some Avanadha instrument covered with leather might have been prevalent during that time. Moreover, the evidence of broken sculptures of dancing women suggest that they were using different types of instruments for their amusement.”

Dr. Shridhar Sharatchandra said: “Some evidence such as whistles and pictorial seals of horn found from the site of this civilisation suggest the existence of a tradition of using the whistles and horns as wind instruments during that time. They were widely evident in almost all the sites of this ancient civilisation. The wind such as the horns and conch were of great importance in the religious, ritualistic practices.”

2. VEDIC ERA

In the historical context, the Vedic period is considered to be the first and most developed period because most ancient written information is available from the Vedic literature. From Vedic literature, we get information on our ancient and codified music. Though there was no independent book on music available from that time, the references available on vocal and instrumental music and dances provide sufficient information about the music of that period. The tradition of Sam music is directly or indirectly still considered valid. Apart from the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sam Veda and Atharva Veda, we get vast written material on music even in the post-Vedic texts like Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads and Shiksha literature, etc. which were written to define the four Vedas.

We can divide these Vedic scriptures, which define music, into three periods:

1. Samhita period - The description available from the four Samhitas of the four Vedas, namely Rig Veda Samhita, Yajur Veda Samhita, Sam Veda Samhita and Atharva Veda Samhita
2. Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads period that defined the Vedas
3. Shiksha Grantha or literature and Prati Sankhya period - which avails the description and Sutras on music

3. VEDIC SAMHITAS

There are four Samhitas of Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sam Veda and Atharva Veda. We get chronological information about the Vedic period, about

its literature and about the music from these texts.

The timelines of these books vary according to the inferences of the scholars because the Samhitas are very ancient. Some scholars assume that the period of Vedic Samhitas might be around 25-50 thousand years BC. Some others say that it might be around 10,000 years BC. Though the Vedic period was very ancient, it was very advanced and rich in terms of Art, culture, literature and music.

The compilation of Veda Mantra (hymns) is called Samhita. There are four Samhitas, namely Rig Veda Samhita, Yajur Veda Samhita, Sam Veda Samhita and Atharva Veda Samhita. The most ancient among them is Rig Veda Samhita, also known as the Rg Veda.

According to Thakur Jaydev Singh, the vast material regarding music available from Rg Veda and other Samhitas including:

1. We can find three different types of Swars or notes namely a. Uddat, b. Anuddat and c. Svarit. We can find the definition of Swars as well: “Svayam Ranjanti Iti Svaraha”. Sometimes, the swar is defined in terms of grammer, i.e. A, aa, ee, etc. - the swars of grammar. Sometimes the swars are defined as NAD as well, which is useful in Music.

2. The word *Yam* is also used for Nad (Swars). It was known at the time that the seven Swars or yams can be created out of Uddat, Anuddat, and Svarit swars respectively. The European music scholar, Mr. Fox Stagweij, has written in his book, “Music of India”, that the Rig Vedic hymns were sung in Uddat, Anuddat and Svarit swars. The pitch, intensity (loudness) and frequencies were dependent on these three swars.

3. All the seven Swars had been developed already at this time and their names were *Krusht, Pratham, Dvitiya, Trutiya, Chaturtha, Mandra* and

Atisvarya. Later on, the names of these swars changed and became *Shadaj*, *Rishabh*, *Gandhar*, *Madhyam*, *Pancham*, *Dhaivat* and *Nishad*.

4. Though Rig Veda is not the scripture of music, we get detailed and most ancient written information about music from it. We also get a notation system from it. According to scholars' views, the Swar-Lipi or musical script found from the Rig Veda is the most ancient notation system, but enough research has not been done in this area.

5. Mantras and hymns of Rig Veda were of great importance, which were sung in Uddat, Anuddat and Swarit Swaras, with proper ritualistic practices. The sages believed that only if the hymns were sung in the proper Swars for a definite purpose would the realisation of NAD be possible. But if they were being sung in distorted swars, it might cause adverse effects. That means if the hymns or mantras were sung in distorted swars without due ritualistic practices and regards, there was the possibility that the person who sang the hymn or mantra or a person who arranged this recitation of hymns and mantras or the entire people and the animals of that area could die. That is why it was thought necessary to sing these hymns and mantras in the proper swars with due rituals and regards.

6. Among the four Vedas, the Rig Veda is the most ancient. It has references to the string instrument Veena. It was called 'Van' at the time. The instrument 'Van' mentioned in the Rig Veda was the original source of all the Veenas that came into prevalence later on. We have access to a detailed description of the shapes and types of 'Van' in it. Prof. Krishnarao Ganesh Mule mentioned in his book, "Bhartiya Sangeet": "In ancient times of the Vedas, we do not get the word 'Veena'. Instead, we get the word 'Van'. It was a string instrument. There were various types of Van. Vans from one-string Van (Ek Tantri) to hundred-string (Shapt Tantri) were prevalent at the time. In the initial phase the strings were made up of "Munj" (one type of grass). The

wooden frame of Van was made from Udundar or Gullar wood and it was covered by red skin leather of ox or bullock. The ten holes were made below the wooden frame, through which the strings made up of ten grass threads inserted. “From this ‘Van’, later on, one-string, two-string, seven-string Veenas were made.

7. Apart from string instruments, we can get the description of Avanadhha Vadya also in this period. Avanadhha Vadya is the musical instrument which is covered with leather, used for Laya and Tal of music. Under this category it mentions, there were Avanadhha vadyas like Dundubhi, Bumi Dundubhi, Gargar, and so on. These instruments played with the horns of deer.

8. There are references of Shushir Vadya (wind instruments) like Bakur and Nali.

9. After Rig Veda, we can get a description of music in the Yajur Veda Samhita. In it, for the first time, the word ‘Veena’ is used for the string instrument. During the time of the Rig Veda, string instruments were prevalent with the name ‘Van’ and the same Van became known as Veena during Yajur Veda period. Since then, the prevalence of Veena continued.

10. There are references to Shushir Vadya also like ‘Tunar’ in this Samhita.

11. Sam Veda Samhita was the Samhita related to music alone. According to the late ¹Thakur Jaydev Singh, “the entire Vedic literature considers ‘Sam’ as a music and the entire Indian music believes Sam as the original source of music. All the books written on music believe Sam Veda

¹ Excerpts from a conversation with Thakur Jaydev Singh

was an original source of this knowledge.” The sages of this period firmly believed that Sam Veda² itself was an expression of God. Even Lord Krishna says in the Bhagvat Geeta that ‘Vedanam Sam Veda’ - Among the Vedas, I am myself the Sam Veda. Upanishads believe that the entire universe is a sweet music of Brahma and the same is defined as ‘Sam’. The gnral meaning of ‘Sam’ is song. The song whose swars and laya are harmonious is called ‘Sam-Geet’. In Sam music, the Rig Vedic hymns were being sung with due rituals. The Sam music too words from Rig Veda and took swars and laya from Sam itself. Thus the recitation of vocal expression of Rig Veda hymns became known as ‘Sam’.

12. There were thousands of branches of ‘Sam’. Sam music was also based on the seven swars. When Rig Vedic hymns are sung with only one swar and laya, it is known as the ‘Aarchik Gan’. When hymns are sung with the help of two swars it is known as the ‘Gathik Gan’. When hymns are sung with the help of three swars, it is called the ‘Samik Gan’.

13. According to Shridhar Sharad Chandra Paranjape, ‘The Sam Gayaks were of three types, one main singer and two assistant singers. The main singer was called Udgate. He had two assistants, namely Prashtota and Pratiharta. Thus the three types of singers namely Udgate, Prashtota, and Pratihara performed Sam Gan.

14. The seven swars had been already invented during the Vedic period by using three main swars - Uddata, Anuddat and Swarita. We have references to it in ‘Naradiya Shiksha’. It says that from Uddat swar we can get Nishad (Ni) and Gandhar (ga), from Anuddat swar we can get Rishabh (re) and Dhaivat (dha) and from Swarita swars we can get Shadaj-Madhyam and Pancham.

² Samveda 1 / 2 / 3

“उदात्ते निषादगान्धारौअनुदात्ते ऋषभ धैवतः ।

चतुः चतुः चतुःचैव षड्जमध्यम पञ्चमः ॥”

Though the names of the Vedic Swars were: Krusht, Pratham, Dvitiya, Trutiya, Chaturth, mandra and Atisvarya respectively. The modern musical notes Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni developed from these swars. This very group of swar- Sankram or Gram or Saptak or seven swars of Vedic music. It was only later on that Shadaj Gram of Maharshi Bharat and Bilaval of modern classical Indian music and the natural scale of western music came.¹ Prof. Lalit Kishor Singh mentioned in his book, ‘Dhvani Aur Sangeet’ that “the first theoretician of Indian music, Bharat and then after theoretician Pandit Sarangdev, both considered the swars of Sam only as pure (shudh) swars.” Thus it proves that the prevalent seven swars (saptak) of Bilaval in modern classical music is the converted form of ancient Vedic Swara Gram.

15. Vedic period was rich in terms of musical instruments as well. We get the references of Tantri Vadya (string instruments like the Veena), Avanaddha and Shushir Vadya (wind instrument). According to Dr. Sharatchandra Shridhar Paranjape², “in Vedic era, Tat-Vitat (string and non-string) instruments and the lower instruments of Shushir Vadya (wind instruments) like Dhundubhi, Van, Nali, Venu Karkari, Gargar and Aaghati were prevalent during this era.

16. There was also the prevalence of dances along with vocal and instrumental music. The women used to perform dances by keeping a pot on their head and by circling around the sacrificial pit (yagna kund). During the Aatharva Veda period also dances were prevalent. The women performed dances in worship of the Gods and Goddesses. One other dance form was also performed by men and women with sticks in their hands. We can assume that

¹ Lalit Kishor Singh – “Dhwani aur Sangeet” – pg. 101

² Dr. Sharatchandra Shridhar Paranjape

the modern Dandiya-Ras of Gujarat might have been developed from this ancient dance.

17. While in the Vedic period the Sthan of Swars were named as Mandra, Madhya and Uttam, in modern times also the Sthan of the swars are Mandra, Madhya and Tar Saptak. The laya was determined by the 'Chhanda'.

18. In the Vedic period itself, each swar of Gram was considered as the primary or basic swar (aarambhak swar). Out of these Aarambhak Swars, various other swars were created. We find one Sutra that says: "Pratyek Shadajbhaven". That means the 'Sam Gan' were sung with different notes by taking any of the seven swar gram as the basic or Aarambhak or Shadaj swar. It is assumed that the seed of Murchhanas which were performed during the time of Bharata, might have been sown in the Sam Vedic period. Human vocal cord was known as "Svarotpadak Upkaran".

There is an illusionary assumption that in Indian classical music there was no notation system in the ancient time. But according to Thakur Jaydev Singh, "in the beginning there was a "ka-cha-pa-ta etc." type of syllabic notation system in existence, and later on the numeric system was used to codify the swars, which was the most ancient notation system in the world."

Even the European scholars have accepted now that the Indian notation system was first invented by Hindus. After that in China and Greece also notation systems came into existence. There might be a universal stream of music but no notational evidences are available as yet.

The literature of Vedic music remained confined to Rig Samhita, Sam Samhita, Yajur Samhita and Atharva Samhita. Out of these four, Sam Samhita was the one wholly related to music. The scholars are of the opinion that Vedic music developed basically around the sacrificial pit. That is why Vedic music is always considered as "Apourushey, unchangeable and Brahma Swarup".

According to Indian culture, the Vedas are not created by human beings. They are believed to be the creation God and that is why they are considered as Apourushey and eternal. According to Jaydev Singh, “Vedas were there in the past, Vedas exist now and Vedas will remain in future too. The essence of such belief suggests that Vedas are not the names of some books, but the names of the eternal truth by which the entire universe is in motion.” That is why the references of Vedic music are considered as authentic and scientific.

D) Brahmanas, Aaranyaks, Upanishads and Sutra Literature

There are many references and descriptions of Indian Music in Vedas. Similarly we can find definitions as well as the descriptions of vocal, instrumental music; dance etc. in more detail from books such as Brahmanas, Aaranyak, and so on, which were written in a later period to define the Vedas. These books are very important for the historical references of music.

“Brahman Grantha or texts” were the books in which the “Brahma” has been defined. “Brahmanas” are the texts in which the Vedic hymns on Brahma and Chaitanya has been defined.

Aaranyaks are the set books of the sages who meditated in the forest (aranyak). So the works of their derivations and meditation became known as Aaranyak.

Similarly, works of Upanishads consist the knowledge of Brahma, Aatma and universe, attained through sitting beside the Gurus. The word Upanishad - up + ni + shad - means to discuss and meditate by sitting near the Guru. Thus its literature is known as the Upanishads.

Brahmana, Aaranyaks and Upanishads etc are known as Sutra

literature because in these works the Vedic sutras are clarified. The period of this literature is of course post Vedic.

We can get many definitions related to music from these Brahmana texts especially from texts like Taitariya Brahman, Tandav Brahman, Shatpat Brahman and Sam Vidhan Brahman. Brahmanas are known for the definitions of Vedas. But among all these Brahmanas, Sam Vidhan Brahmana is much more important from the point of view of music.

Thakur Jaydev Singh writes that “the information related to music is scattered here and there in these books. The discussion on music can be found much more in Sam Vidhan Brahmana. There are some discussions in Taiterey Brahman, Eitarey Brahmana and Shatpath brahmana too.”

Brahmana Texts: The information found from these Brahmanas is as follows:

1. Apart from the definition of seven swars like Krusht, Pratham, Dvitiya, Trutiya, etc, their relations with Gods and Goddesses, human beings, animals, birds, plants etc. are also explained. For example, it was believed that Krusht Swars were the means of lives of Gods. The Pratham swar is believed to be a means of life for humans, Dvitiya Swar is believed to be the means of lives of Apsaras, the Trutiya is believed to be the means of lives of the animals, the Chaturtha Swar is of the ancestors, Pancham Swar is of Asuras and Rakshasas, and Atisvarya Swar is believed to be the means of the lives of the plants.

2. In these books the forms of Vedic Swar Gram mentioned are in Avrohi, i.e. the descending order - Ni, Dha, Pa, Ma, Ga, Re Sa.

3. There are descriptions of (Tant Vadya) string instruments - Veena, wind instruments (Shushir Vadya) - Shankh - Tunav (Conch) and Avandhha

instruments - Dundubhi etc.

4. There were traditions of dance also, along with vocal and instrumental music. There was a prominent importance of Veena, a string instrument. The songs were sung with the accompaniment of the Veena.

5. At the time of a sacrificial ceremony, Veda Gans were performed. The main singers were called “Udgatas” and the assistant singers were known as “Prastota” and “Pratiharta”, respectively.

6. The persons who performed the Sam Gan at the time of a sacrificial ceremony commanded great respect in the society. It seems that Indian music did not remain confined to Vedic period but continued and during Brahmana and Aaranyak periods it reached the fully developed stage. The professional singers were called Gathakar and Gathi and they enjoyed high social respectability.

E) The Description Related to Music in the Aaranyakas

While studying Aaranyaka, one can easily know that music was sufficiently developed in those days. The music was defined very well in terms of theory and practice in these works:

1. In Eitarey Aaranyak, for the first time the body was conceived as a divine instrument (Devi Veena) because the body itself has a vocal cord. The human vocal cord was considered as Gatra Veena. This Gatra Veena is a god-gifted musical instrument, which is why the body is called Devi Veena. Moreover, whatever Veenas human beings made on the basis of this Devi Veena were defined as “Daravi Veena”, Daru or a Devadaru is a pine tree. Thus Veenas made from Daru wood or pine wood were called Daravi Veena. Similarly, human vocal cord was called Devi Veena. The man-made Daravi Veenas were based on the human vocal cord. Thus we get very scientific and

sensitive definition of these two types of Veenas from Aaranyaks.

अथ खल्वियम् दैवी वीणा भवति /
तदनुकृतिरसौ मानुषी वीणा भवति //

2. The human vocal cord is god-gifted, hence it is known as Devi Veena. The man-made or Manushi Veena is a copy of this Devi Veena. Thus this Manushi or manmade Veena is called Daravi Veena. Bharat¹ has defined this Devi Veena (human vocal cord) as Gatra Veena, Sharirika, Shariri Veena, etc. There is a detailed description of manufacturing methods and shapes, types and various parts of Veena made from the wood in Aaranyakas. For example, the methods of making Tumba (a gourd-like portion) of a Veena, dand (stick), its holes and the strings are mentioned.

3. The description of bow-shaped Veenas which were previously known as Van in the ancient period.

4. The women used to play bow-shaped Veenas. We can also find the description about different types of dance forms of that period.

F) Music-related descriptions in Upanishads and Sutra literature

The Upanishads are also works that interpret and define the Vedas. There are many Upanishads like Chhandagya Upanishad, Bruhadaranyak Upanishad, Katha Upanishad, etc. We can get a good amount of information about music as well from these works. Apart from Upanishads, we can find such information from Sutra literature also. In the Chhandogya Upanishad, there is a specific description on music.

¹ Bharatnatyashastra – Maharshi Bharat

In these works, there is a description of the ritualistic worship based on Sam Gan. The detailed description is given regarding song, instruments and their types.

For example, there is a detailed description of various types of Veenas like Shattantri Veena, Vakri Veena, Alabu Veenas, Shil Veena, etc.

* In Latyayan Sutra as well as in Shankyayan Shrotra-Sutra we find very specific definition of shapes, types and the method to make Shattantri Veena in detail.

* The frame of Shattantri Veena was usually made from the Palash (Erythring) wood.¹

* Its stick was of Udumber wood. At the bottom of the stick, ten holes were made.

* Then ten strings in each hole were inserted.

* So it was known as Shattantri Veena.

* It was played with a small piece of bamboo with a leaf.

* Apart from these there were also Veenas like Ghat Karkari, Avghatarika, Pichhora and Kand Veena, which were played in those days by the wives of hosts.

* We can also find descriptions of Avanadhha Vadya covered with leather. Examples are Dundubhi (a kind of drum) etc. One instrument called

¹ Latyayan Sutra

Pichhara was a Shushir Vadya or wind instrument. It was also known as Mukh Veena.

* The player of this Veena was known as “Gangin”. The Gathas were sung along with Veena, by men and women.

Thus, from Brahmanas, Aaranyakas, Upanishads, and Sutra literature, we get many definitions and descriptions about vocal and instrumental music and dances of that time. This gives us a good idea about the music of that era.

G) Music in Prati-Sankhya and Shiksha Granth (literature)

We get very important information regarding music in Pratisankhya Shiksha literature. These works are most important in relation to the music. Since they had been written at a much latter period after Brahmana, Aaranyakas, Upanishads etc. they obviously give much more scientific descriptions on music - right from swars and laya and sthan of swars in the body, from where they come out, and how to pronounce the hymns with the help of Phonetics (the science of sound) etc. are discussed at length in these works.

Dr. Thakur Jaydev¹ writes, “The most ancient phonetics in the world emerged in this country. The phonetics of Europe a newly born baby. It is just two hundred and fifty to two hundred years old, while the authors (sages) of Prati-Sankhyas and the Shiksha (literature) have already formulated the profound principles of phonetics (dhvani) two to three thousand years ago. All the European scholars have accepted that the phonetics of India is much more ancient and most complete.”

Thus it can be argued that whatever discussion regarding western phonetics and voice culture is going on, they were well defined in Indian music

¹ Thakur Jaydev Singh – Bhartiya Sangeet ka Itihas – pg. 110

thousands of years earlier. So these works are still relevant today.

Pratisankhya are the compilations of phonetics and the laws of grammar of different branches of the Vedas. There were different branches of all the four Vedas. So the opinion of each Pratisankhya is that of each branch of the Vedas. The period of these texts is estimated by scholars to be around 800 to 700 years old.

There are six parts (ang) of Vedas, known as Vedang. Shiksha is one among them. Though there might be many Shiksha texts, the most important among them are Panini Shiksha, Yagnavalkya Shiksha, manduki Shiksha and Naradiya Shiksha. Out of these, Naradiya Shiksha is the most important Shiksha for music.

1. Pratishakhya and Shiksha literature mostly clarify the swars of Vedic music, but some of the facts seem unique. For example, the explanation about the Uddat, Anuddat and Swarit swars - *Ye te Sapt Svaraha Shadj-Rishabha Gandhar, Madhyamam Panchama Dhaivat Nishadaha Svaraha Iti*. The Vedic swars were known as Krusht, Pratham, Dvitiya, Trutiya, Chaturth, Mandra, and Atisvarya. The wars used for Sam Gan were called Yam Swars, thus Shadaj, Rishabh, Gandhar, Nishad, etc. Swars are also called Yam Swars. They were often used in Gandharva music. In modern music also the swars used are the same as these.

2. It becomes clear that all the experimentations for the expression of swar had been first done on vocal cord, or the Gatra Veena. We get clear information on which parts of the body will be pressurized while we pronounce a particular swar. For example: *Mandram urasi vartate, madhyamam kanthe vartate, uttamam shirasi vartate*, which means: the Mandra swar influences the heart, middle or madhya swar influences the throat, and uttam or higher swar influences the head. Nowadays, in western music, locations of these three swars are known as lower, middle and higher,

while they were identified in Indian music thousands of years ago. “It proves that our sages had already known the scientific secrets of swar (notes) in the ancient times.”

3. From these texts we get the idea that Gandharva music, which was once categorised as Desi music, parallel to classical music, later on replaced the Vedic Music and took the position of Classical Music.

4. At the time, the word ‘Vrutti’ was used for ‘Laya’, which means that Vruti and Laya were synonymous. As with laya, the vruti varieties were also of three types: Vilambit, Madhya and Drut. The morning songs used to be heard in Vilambit laya or Vriti. Noon songs were heard in Madhya or middle laya or vruti and evening songs used to be heard in Drut or fast laya. That means the Vilambit, Madhya or Drut laya or vruti can be determined in accordance with the quality of the vocal cord.

5. The philosophical definition for the expression of swar or sounds from the body has been given in these texts. It says the wind provided or inspired by the fire goes up from the Nabhi and influences the vocal cord and heart, due to various reasons, and thus gradually comes out from the mouth and nose as swars.

H) SHIKSHA TEXTS AND NARADIYA SHIKSHA

Shiksha texts are considered as Vedang. By the time of Shiksha texts, Indian classical music had developed much in terms of practice as well as theory.

The basic difference between Shiksha Granth and Pratisankhya is that Shiksha Granth gives basic laws of phonetics, while Pratishiksha discusses the law of particular branch. Shiksha literature discusses about Vedic music, language grammar, etc. in a scientific way. There are six parts of Vedas that are known as Vedang. Shiksha literature is one of them. Interestingly enough, we

get the information about music beyond our expectations.

There are many Shiksha texts, but Panini Shiksha, Yagnavalkya Shiksha, Mandhuki Shiksha and Naradiya Shiksha are mentioned often. We can get genuine information about swars etc. along with Vedic music from Naradiya Shiksha. We come to know that the music developed enormously from the Vedic period to the Brahmana's period of the Shiksha literature. In Naradiya Shiksha there is an analysis of Gandharva and Gan along with the procedure of the reciting and singing Sam in the correct swars. This is a compilation in which the immediate and important questions of contemporary music are discussed and again linked to theoretical questions. According to the opinion of the scholars this scripture had been written around 7th century BC.

It is believed that 'Narad' was the author of this book. There are diverse views prevailing among scholars about Narad. According to some, Narad was a Gandharva, a powerful and knowledgeable musician.

Some scholars also believe that Bharat got the knowledge of music from Naradiya Shiksha. This text gives a minute analysis of various aspects of Indian music like Shruti, Swar, Gram, Muchhana, Gram-Rag etc. The information we get from Naradiya Shiksha can be described in brief as follows:

1. In this text, two categories of musicians are recognized: a. Manushya Gandharva b. Dev Gandharva. Manushya Gandharva were the musicians of the Earth and Dev Gandharva were the musicians of the Gods or heaven. The word 'Gandharva' is explained in this book in the following manner: Ga represents Gan or song, Dha represents a person who carries (dharak) a musical instrument, and Va represents Vadak or instrument player. So the Gandharva is a person who is a vocalist as well as an instrument player.

2. We get a detailed analysis of Aarchik, Gathik, and Samik etc., Sam Gan and their Swars, Gram, Swar, Shruti, Jati, Udaat, Anuddat and Swarit etc.

3. It mentions the three Sthanas of Swars, its relations with the parts of body. For example, Mandra swar arises from the heart, Madhya swar arises from the throat and Tar swar arises from the head.

4. It also related different swars to different living creatures. For example, Shadaj Gandhar appeases ancestors, Madhya appeases Gandarva, Pancham appeases Gods, sages and ancestors. Dhaivat appeases other animals and Nishad appeases Yakshas.

5. The swar emerges from the body. For Shadaj swar, all the six parts of the body, namely nose, throat, talu, tongue and teeth play a vital role. The Rishabh swar emerges from the head, Gandhar emerges from the nose, Madhya emerges from the heart, Pancham emerges from the heart, head and throat. Dhaivat emerges from the forehead and Nishad emerges from Sandhi Sthan of swars such as the throat etc.

6. To decide the pitch of the swar, the swars of animals and birds are taken as the basis. For example, Shadaj Mayuro Vadati, which means the peacock sings in the Shadaj swar; cow sings in Rishabh, goat sings in Gandhar, crane sings in Madhyam, cuckoo sings in Pancham, horse sings in Dhaivat and the elephant sings in Nishad. Modern scientists also found that there exists definite swar variations and pitch variation among animals and birds. So to take the swars of different animals and birds for determining pitch is not unscientific.

7. The seven Swars developed gradually from the three types of Swars, i.e. Uddat, Anuddat and Swarit of Sam Gan. For example, Gandhar-Nishad emerged from Uddat Swar, Rishabh-Dhaivat emerged from Anuddat and Shadaj-Madhyam and Pancham Swars emerged from Swarit Swar. We get

names of seven Swaras: Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni, Sa from the Naradiya Shiksha for the first time.

8. In this text Shruti is defined as a subtle sound. It explains that as fire remains in the wood, ghee remains in the curd, Shruties remain in the Swars.

9. Narad defines the Swar Mandal. It consists of the seven Swars, three Grams (Shadaj Gram, Madhyam Gram, and Gandhar Gram), twenty-nine Murchhanas and forty-nine tans.

10. According to Narada, there are three Grams, for example, Sharad gram belongs to Bhulok, Madyam gram belongs to Bhurvalok and Gandhar gram belongs to the Swargalok.

11. This text also describes Raga and Gram Raga. It says that there are seven Gram Ragas.

12. There are references to different types of Veena, like Nand Veena, Mahati Veena, Gatra Veena, Daravi Veena, and Alabu Veena. It also describes the method of making Veenas and the method to make different types of its strings from the Munj or Kush grasses. It defines the human vocal cord as Gatra Veena and all other man-made Veenas such as Daravi Veena. Mahati Veena is the Veena that Narada himself plays.

13. There are descriptions of the wind instrument (Shushir Vadya) Pichhora and the Avanadhha vadya like Dundubhi, Bhudundubhi, Tunav and Tabla continued since the Vedic period.

14. We get descriptions of dance also, along with vocal and instrumental music. But till that time the word 'Sangeet' - which expresses the cohesive unity of all the three vocal and instrumental music and dance - had

not yet come into prevalence. So Sangeet denotes in this text the Gandharva music, which was a combined performance of songs and instruments. The dance tradition was a separate tradition at that time.

15. During this era Laya was known as Vriti, and there was a knowledge base of three types of Laya or Vruties, namely Vilambit, Madhya and Drut.

16. We get a good description about the pros and cons of Gan. At that time, the main purpose of music was to create Ras, so it discusses how Swar should be produced and the pros and cons related to it.

There is no doubt that Shiksha Literature, especially Naradiya Shiksha, is an important link between Sam music and the music of Bharat that prevailed at the time. It is an important text to get information about vocal and instrumental music and dance forms that prevailed in the Vedic and post-Vedic periods. Even Bharat himself took its references from this text. After Naradiya Shiksha, Natyashastra of Bharat was an important book for music and is still considered as the basic text for Indian Music.

I) MUSIC IN PURANAS (Pauranik Music)

We have seen that Brahmanas, Aaranyakas, Upanishads and the Shiksha texts define Vedic culture and general principles of music as well as the music prevalent during those days. The literature of the Puranas also comprises ancient texts. These texts contain ideas as well as principles related to literature and music, compiled in a chronological order. As Hariprasad Shastri says, “In fact, the Puranas are compilations. They were amended, recompiled, and re-edited from time to time. Whatever is old and ancient and whatever throws light on all the aspects of life is all compiled in the Puranas.”

Thus, in one way, the Puranas are compilations, but there are diverse views among scholars regarding their time. Some scholars are of the view that

the Puranas were compiled after the Vedas, while some others believe that they were compiled before the Vedas. No matter what the case, we get sufficient information about the Puranas in the Devi Bhagwat. There are eighteen Puranas all together, but information on Music is found only in the Vayu Purana, Markandey Purana and Vishnu Purana.

We find the following information about music from the Puranas:

1. Puranas define music as Gandharva. In the Vedic period itself the seven swars were identified. Puranas also believe that there are seven swars. There is a mention about 'Swar Mandal' in the Puranas. According to them, there are seven swars, three Grams (Shadaj Gram, Gandhar Gram and Madhyam Gram), twenty-one Murchhanas and forty-nine tans. We find a shloka about this:

सप्त-स्वरास्त्रयो ग्रामा मुर्छना चैकविशान्ति /

तानाश्चैकोनपञ्चाशत् इत्येतत् स्वरमण्डलम् //

2. Forty-nine tans were sung during sacrifices (Yagnyas), and they were recognised as Tans. At the time of the sacrificial ceremony tans were sung with rituals.

3. Vayu Puran mentions small (laghu) and long (Guru) alphabets and it also mentions songs composed to different talas. These songs were called Geetak. They speak of the seven types of Geetak, namely Mandrak, Uprantak, Ullopyak, Prakar, Rovid, Auvanak and Uttar. Bharat¹ mentioned these songs in his Natyashastra and defined them as Sapt Geet.

4. The Puranas mention four types of Pada: Nibaddha, Anibaddha, Atal, and Satal.

¹ Natyashastra – Maharshi Bharat

निबद्धम् चानिबद्धं च येन तेन द्विधा स्मृतं /

अतालं च सतालं च द्विप्रकारं तदुच्यते //

5. There is mention of four types of Padas, namely Nibaddha, Anibaddha, Atal, and Satal. According to the Puranas, there are four tals, namely Chatastra, Tistra, Mishra and Khand. There are three types of Layas, namely Vilambit Laya, Madhya Laya and Drut Laya, mentioned in the Puranas. At that time, Vadya or instruments were known as Atodhya. The Puranas provide information on four types of Atodhyas or vadyas.

6. Vishnu Purana suggests the four parts of songs: i. Pada ii. Swar iii. Tal and iv. Prayog. In this Purana, only Vadi, Samvadi and Anuvadi swars are recognised as Vruties. There is no mention of Vivadi swar.

7. In these Puranas, there is a detailed and elaborate definition of “Ras”. For example, Shadaj and Rishabh were considered to be Veer Raudra and Adbhut Ras Vyanjak. Gandhar-Nishad were considered to be Korum Ras Vyanjak, and Dhaivat was considered Shringar and Bibhats Ras Vyanjak. Similarly, the Puranas also explain the relationship of the three layas with rasa. For example, The madhya laya signifies Hasya and Shringar Rasas. Vilambit laya signifies Bibhats and Bhayanak Rasas and Drut laya articulates the Veer Raudra and Adbhut Rasas.

8. The great sage Bharata was well aware of the references to music available in the Puranas, hence he defined all these descriptions related to music in his Natyashastra.

9. Another fact is that the classical Vedic tradition continued in one way or another through Aaranyak, Upanishads, Brahmana, and Shiksha literature and the Puranas, and it finally found its way to the period of Bharata.

J) Music in Ramayana and Mahabharat

The epics, Ramayana and Mahabharat, have an important place in Indian culture and socio-cultural systems. Apart from their social and cultural importance, these epics also provide important information on the music of those days. Historically, it was an era of epics. Both these works are not just epics but ideal scriptures and sources of glimpses into the religion, morals, codes, and conduct and social life prevalent in those times.

Many European scholars believe that both these epics might have been written thousands of years before Christ. The great sage Valmiki wrote the Ramayana and Krishna Dvaipayana Vyas wrote the Mahabharata.

J.1) Music in the Days of the Ramayan

We find scattered references to music in the Ramayana. From these references, we get an idea about the prevailing condition of Music in those days.

1. This epic allows us to assume that during those days society might have been in complete order, because of which the art and literature of the time developed to such an extent. We find that people were interested in vocal and instrumental music as well as dance. The term Gandharva was used for Sangeet or Music.

‘ततः प्रवृत्तं मधुरं गान्धर्वमिति’

Moreover, the word Gandharva was used for civilised and higher music.

“Gandharva cha Bhuvih Vabhuv Bharatagraj”, which means: “Ram, the

elder brother of Bharat, was the best in the Gandharva on the Earth.”

2. Vocal song was accompanied by the Veena in a classical way, with Laya and three Sthanas: Mandra, Madhya, and Tar.

‘तन्त्री लय समायुक्तं त्रिस्थानकरणान्वितं’

3. All the swars and tal instruments applicable to music were known as ‘Aatodya’. The meaning of Aatodya is Vadya or instrument. This word was derived from the Sanskrit root word ‘तुद’, with the addition of the Aa *upsarg* to it. The meaning of ‘Tud’ is ‘to beat’. Thus the आतोद्य word denotes Vadya. Afterwards, Bharat used आतोद्य for Vadya or instrument in his profound work, the Natyashastra. In Ramayana’s Sunderkand, we find a reference to ‘आतोद्यानि विचित्राणी’.

4. There are references to various musical instruments as well. For example, among string instruments, we find references to two string instruments: Dvitantri Nakul Veena and the Tritantri Veena. The seven-string instrument, Sapttantri Veena, Chitra, and the nine-string Navtantri Veena, Vipanchi Veena are also mentioned. Among Shushir Vadyas, we get references to the Venu (flute) and Shankh (conch). Among Avanaddha Vadyas, we find references of Dundubhi, Bheri, Mrudang, Panav Dindim, Aadambar, Muraj etc and among the Gan Vadyas, bronze Manjiras were in vogue then. Thus we find all the four types of instruments, namely string, wind, Avanaddha and Gan instruments.

5. Ravana was himself a scholar of music. There were many beautiful women expert in playing the various types of Veena in his kingdom. So there were various types of Veenas prevailing then. In Ravana’s kingdom, the Shankh, Bheri, Dundubhi, Muraj, etc were more in vogue because the main

activity of the kingdom was war. And these instruments were used to produce Veer Ras among the warriors.

6. We also have references to Margi Sangeet in the Ramayana. It is believed that Marg or Margi music was invented by the Gods. The main purpose of such music was the attainment of salvation (moksha) or spiritual emancipation. Apart from Margi, there was also the Deshi or Laukik music in vogue, which was generally used in the society, in the day-to-day lives of the people.

7. The vocalist or players of musical instruments of that time were experts in Laya and Tal in Music. They were known as Kala-tal-mantra Visheshagna (Art-rhythm-meter experts). The word 'Vrut' was used to denote Laya in Music and these Vrut were similar to Vilambit, Madhya and Drut Laya of the present-day layas. Tal was generally meant to provide rhythm using the hands. The two types of activities were performed under 'Tal' - Nishabda and Shabd, similar to the use of khali and tali in modern times.

8. At that time, there were professional artists and they enjoyed a highly respectable status in society. Music was widely prevalent. The vocal and instrumental music were performed with various types of instruments at various occasions and for various purposes. For example, performances would be held in the morning, in rituals and worshipping, in festivals and at the time of weddings or birth or at the time of war.

9. According to Thakur Jaydev Singh, "There were guilds of vocalists, instrumentalists, and dancers at Ayodhya. There were guilds of such artistes even in Sugreeva's Kishkindha and Ravan's Lanka. Music was very common in the houses of civilised people and at the court. The shepherds would also play the flute on the banks of rivers or in the forest while grazing their cattle.

10. When the Ashwamegh Yadnya was performed by Ram, the sons of

Sita, Luv and Kush sang the entire Ramayana. Possibly that is why the then vocalist might have been known as 'Kush-Liv'. The performers - vocalists and instrumentalists - were given enough incentives (Suvarna Mudras) for their Art.

11. Usually artists performed Shudha Juti. They didn't omit any note. It is said that Luv-Kush sang the entire Ramayana in seven Jatis, namely Shadaji, Aarshabhi, and so on, using Shadaj, Rishabh, Gandhar, Madhyam, Pancham, Dhaivat and Nishad. These references in the Ramayana suggest that at that time, vocal (Gayan) and instrumental (vaadan) music and dance prevailed, and there was high regard for music, art and artists in the society.

J.2) MUSIC DURING THE MAHABHARAT PERIOD

Mahabharat is one of the greatest epics of our country. It depicts the war between Kauravas and Pandavas and their mutual social relations. According to an Indian belief, the Mahabharat is an epic of the Dvapara Yug. The author of this epic is Ved Vyas, or Krishna Dvepayan. According to the scholarly view, the epic might have contained 24,000 verses. There are diverse views about the period of these epics, yet it is considered as the most ancient epic.

As Ramayan depicts the story of Ram, Mahabharat depicts the stories of the sons of Bharata, hence it is known as Mahabharat. Though it is not a text of music, we find references to the music at that time throughout Mahabharat. Since the work is voluminous, Mahabharat is divided into different Parvas, or chapters.

We get the following information on the music of those times from the Mahabharat:

1. Even then, the term Gandharva was used as a synonym to music or

Sangeet. A great sage, Tumburu, was believed to have been the best among the Gandharvas (music experts). Apart from this Aadipurva, there are many references to other great Gandharvas such as Kambal, Ashvatar and Narada; they were experts at playing the Kachchhapi Veena.

2. These were experts in both vocal/instrumental music and dance.

"गन्धर्वा गीत कुशला नृतेषु च विशारदाः"

Gandharvas were not the only ones who performed vocal and instrumental music and dance; in the civil society there was regard for all three arts. Arjun got the training in vocal and instrumental music (Gayan - vadan) and dance from Chitrasen and then imparted training in these arts to Uttara, the daughter of King Virat, in the form of बृहन्नडा.

The Gandharvas were singers of high art. Apart from them there were professional singers of Mangal Gatha and Stuti, etc. They were known as Nat, Sut, Bandi, Magadh and Vaitaliks.

3. During the Mahabharat period, there were big schools for music and dance, in which music was taught to girls as well. From the Vedic period to the Mahabharata, music was not just confined to Veda Gan at the time of the sacrificial ceremony. It was also performed at the time of festivals. Thus, in social life too, during various festivals, various types of dances and music were performed.

4. These musicians were well-versed in music or Gandharva. The art of music was known as Gandharva at the time. In Gandharva music, there were seven swars and three grams - Shadaj, Madhyam and Gandhar.

5. In Mahabharat, there are references to four types of instruments,

which are: Tant, Shushir, Avanadhha and Ghan. More frequent references are those to Avanadhha, Ghan and Shushir Vadya such as Shankh because the society was often engaged in war at the time and these instruments were generally used on the battlefield to inspire warriors.

6. Compared to the Ramayana period, the Mahabharat period was heavily marked by social upheavals and wars. So the Avanadhha and Ghan instruments such as Bheri, Turya, Varij, Panav and Kansya were more common. The Shankh was used more often to inspire people with its energy and vitality. At the time of war, even great warriors had their own Shankh and were even recognised by it. For example, one such Shankh was the ' पाञ्चजन्यं रुषिकेशः' |

This was a period of war. So compared to the Ramayan period, the Mahabharat period saw relatively obstructed development of Music. Nevertheless, Music was recognised as an inseparable part of the society. The elite and the general masses used to take training in Music for amusement.

The significance of music of this time is that despite the turmoil, wars, conflicts, and feelings of jealousy and vengefulness, vocal-instrumental music (Gayan-Vadan) and dance were respected and regarded as high-status arts, and their importance was accepted in all walks of life. At the time of the birth of a child, or marriage and all other holy occasions and festivals, music was a given. It was an inseparable part of social life of the people.

K) MUSIC DURING MAURYAN AND GUPTA PERIODS

Though Chandragupta Maurya tried to develop Music, the Music of the time had crossed over moral boundaries. Its inner beauty was suppressed and replaced by entertaining elements. The music which could not fulfil desire was not considered Music. This notion had developed gradually. However,

during the Mauryan period, Music was an inseparable part of the civilised society. In those days, to be a civilian or to participate in a social gathering, it was necessary for an individual to become an expert in Music. Expertise in Art was considered as an essential quality in both the bride and the bridegroom. There was a custom then of imparting training in Music to women ever after they were married.

People often participated in the musical programmes organised at an art lover's place in the evening. Sometimes such gatherings were organised at the place of the Ganika as well, in which all civilians participated without hesitation. Often, guest artists received gifts for their performance.

There were Music schools for training in Music.

The leaders or Acharya of fine arts were given a remuneration by the state, as per their qualifications.

The people were required to take training in Music as it was considered a cultural gain. Moreover, it was useful for earning a livelihood as well. The political usage of Music was the most significant feature of the Mauryan period. The daughter of Seleucus married Chandragupta Maurya. She was one of the best musicians. Thus, Greek music arrived in India for the first time, and Indian music also reached Greece for the first time.

At the time of Bindusara's reign, there was no significant change in Music. But Ashoka tried to give it a higher, more respectable status. He had rejected erotic music.

Charumitra, the maid servant of Tishya Rakshita, the wife of King Ashoka, was an excellent Veena player. No music can be branded vulgar. It was necessary for a person to study the spiritual aspects of life before becoming a Music expert.

Foreigners had accepted the enriched form of Indian music while accepting religion. As a result, even today, the music of Tibet, China, Egypt, Greece, Java and Sumatra, Cambodia, Indonesia, Burma and Sri Lanka share many similarities with Indian Music. In Ashoka's time, Indian Music had almost become universal.

During the periods of Kanishka and the Guptas, there had been no major emperor who paid attention to Music. Hence, in Kanishka's time, the dignity of Music had greyed. Most of the time, Chandragupta was engaged in war. So he could not do much for Music. But the 'Dattilam', a book written by Bharat's son, Dattil, is considered a special gift of this period.

After Chandragupta, his son Samudragupta came to power. He was himself an excellent Veena player. During this period, classical music saw great development, and it is said that the magical power of Music also developed during this period. The performances of drama were also in vogue. Some scholars say that the Sitar was invented in this period. Much progress was visible in folk songs and folk dances.

After Samudragupta, his son Chandragupta Vikramaditya came to power. Though not much evidence is available about his qualifications as a musician, it is a known fact that during his rule, Indian Music reached countries such as Rome, France, England, Ireland and Hungary.

According to the opinion of some scholars, although Harshavardhan was himself not much of a Music expert as Chandragupta and Samudragupta, his sister Rajashri used to listen to and learn music from her brother.

L) MARGI DESHI MUSIC - GANDHARVA AND GAN

Before trying to understand the Gandharva and the Gan and Margi and

Deshi Music, we must understand when and how these streams of Music emerged.

We have access to relevant information from Vedic and supportive texts such as the Puranas, Aaranyaks and Upanishads. Though an independent text on the music of the time is not available, we find much information regarding vocal-instrumental music and dance from the Vedic texts. We know, for instance, that these two streams existed and developed on parallel lines and equally. These streams were recognised as Margi and Deshi music. Thereafter, two other streams - Gandharva and Gan - developed. Later on, classical music and folk music came into existence and they are still prevalent.

L-1. MARGI MUSIC

Margi music is the music of the Vedic period. There might have been musical rules and regulation for this music. Thus, it may have been considered to be Anaadi, Apourusheya, holy and unchangeable. Scholars are of the opinion that the main purpose of this music was the recitation of hymns of the Rig Veda in pure sears. Possibly, 'Sam' might have given the rules of the sears and laya. Thus, when the Rig Veda hymns were composed in 'Sam', Swar might have been defined as Vedic music. So we can assume that this Vedic music could have been Margi music. According to Thakur Jaydev Singh, "Sam Veda had taken words (hymns) from the Rig Veda and then composed in the Swar of Sam itself." These were the same Vedic songs that had been defined by scholars as Margi music.

L-1.1) THE UNIQUENESS OF MARGI MUSIC

1. According to historical facts, Sam music was itself Vedic music. This Vedic music was later on defined as Margi Music. Marg is a Sanskrit work that means 'to explore' or 'search'. Thus, Margi Music is the one that has

been explored through Sadhna, Tapasya and Meditation. Shiva, Brahma, Saraswati and other Gods and Goddesses are believed to have been the ancient creators of Indian Music. This music was first mastered by Narada, from whom it went to the Kinnars, Gandharvas and Apsaras. Later on, Bharat learned this music and defined it in a worldly manner.

2. This music was divine and holy. It was meant for attaining salvation. That is why it was codified in classical and doctrinal rules. The masters of that period were of the opinion that only through recitation of hymns in the proper Swars with ritual could one get in touch with the Shabd Brahma and thus attain his goal. By reciting or singing hymns in distorted Swar without any kind of ritual, a king or host and the people would suffer all the adversities in life. That was the belief of the sages of that time. That is why following strict discipline was emphasised.

3. That is why Margi Music is recognised as holy, pure and eternal, just like Vedic music. Margi music is considered to be the music of the sages. That is why it was known as being Apourusheya, unchangeable and eternal. It was a refined, purified and codified music of the time. That is why it was known as 'Sam Sangeet' or Vedic Music.

4. According to the scholars, there was the prevalence of Margi Tal (rhythm) along with the Margi Music. There were five types of tale: Chachattput, chachput, shatpitaputrak, udbhatt and samyakveshtak. According to Thakur Jaydev Singh, Margi Music used the Shadaj Gram, Madhyam Gram and Gandhar Gram.

5. This music was prevalent among civilised and respectable society, so it remained confined to a limited group. According to Dr. Shridhar Sharadchandra Paranjape, like Sam Music, Margi Sangeet was also refined, civilised and highly respected. That is why it was well codified. The Margi Music was accepted as classical music of the time.

6. We find references to Margi Music in Teitariya Upanishad, Eitareya Upanishad and Chhandogya Upanishad. There existed a stream of music parallel to that of Margi Music, whose main purpose was entertainment of all people and was based on popular songs of the time. This music was the Deshi Music of the time.

7. The Vedic Music or Sam Sangeet gradually started disappearing from common life of the people because of its strict discipline, adherence to purity, holiness, rigid rules and ritualistic practices.

L-2) DESHI SANGEET

According to Dr. Paranjape, “Music always gets its sources from the lives of the people, whether it is classical or Deshi or western music.”

1. When popular music gets refined and more furnished, it takes the classical form. That is why in each era these two streams, Margi and Deshi, have always existed simultaneously and continuously. They are mutually interdependent streams of Indian Music.

2. Only in the 7th century did Matong Muni first mention Deshi Music. The music that was popular and prevalent among the general masses was categorised as Deshi Music. The music emerged only from the daily lives of the people and the festivals and ceremonies they observed in their lives. So the music was in itself Deshi.

"देशे देशे प्रवृत्तसौ ध्वनिर्हि देशिति संगितो"

3. Deshi music is also a form of music. Since it has no classical base, it is simply the people's liking and choices that give rise to such music. In Deshi Music, there are only three or four Swars. The usage of tale is just for

providing rhythm. That is why this music is the simplest form of Swars.

4. According to Pandit Sharang Dev¹ of the 13th century, “मार्गी देशी तद्वैधा.” There are types of music, Margi and Deshi. Margi is the music whose creators were Brahma, Shiva and other Gods and Goddesses. Its form is completely codified while Deshi music is based on the likings and choices of the people and is folk music. Margi music, on the other hand, remains confined to a limited class of scholars and is classical music.

5. In both Deshi and Margi music, there always remains a harmony between Swar, Laya and Pada (words). Both forms of music can be used to express intimate emotions. But with a change in the likings and choices of the people, classical music disappears from the common lives of the people as a result of its adherence to strict rules and regulations and discipline. And Deshi music gets refined and ultimately takes the form of classical music.

6. Following the above rule since ancient times to the present day, there have always been two streams of music. One is refined, codified, cultured and doctrinal and the other is simple and popular. According to this law, we can see different streams in different periods, such as:

a. Margi-Deshi b. Gandharva-Gan c. Classical-Folk

L-3) GANDHARVA-GAN

There were two aims of Indian Music: one was to worship God and the other was that of entertainment or amusement. In Dr. Paranjape's words, “Music is for appeasement or amusement of the people as well as for the amusement of God.” The various forms of Indian Music have developed on the basis of these two aims. Since the Vedic period, music was absolutely

¹ Sangeet Ratnakaar – Pt. Sharangdev

meant for worshipping the divine Brahma and was diving in form. It remained confined to a particular class. Then folk music, which was a parallel to this music, followed the rules of Vedic Music and became known as Gandharva. This music was in existence during the time of Bharat. Though it was classical in nature unlike Vedic music, its purpose was the amusement of the people. It had its own tradition and authentic doctrine. That means that during the time of the great sage Bharat, in the fourth and third centuries BC, this music might have become classical and known as Gandharva. We find its authentic definition in Bharat's Natyashastra.

When the form of Sam Music or Margi Music became obscure or when it became non-accessible or non-acceptable for the people, Gandharva Music emerged.

Though its form and base were derived from the Vedic Margi music, it was absolutely Deshi music at the time. As Prof. Lalit Kishor Singh¹ writes, "Bharat is considered to be the first great scholar and aacharya of Indian music ... unlike Shiksha Literature, which aimed at Vedic Music, Bharat aimed at Deshi or Laukik music."

Gandharva music became prevalent because it derived its basic principles from Sam music and transformed itself entirely, for the purpose of amusement of the people.

L-3.1) SALIENT FEATURES OF GANDHARVA MUSIC

1. Though Gandharva music is based on Laukik music, it followed both Vedic and Puranic traditions whose aim was to entertain people.

2. Since this music was popular among the Gandharvas, it became

¹ Dhvani aur Sangeet – Dr. Lalit Kishor Singh

popular as Gandharva music. But according to Bharat, vocal and instrumental musical performances were referred to as Gandharva music.

“यत्तु तन्त्रिकृतं प्रोक्तं, नाना वाद्य समाश्रयम् गान्धर्वमिति /”

“The music created by string instruments and which is accompanied by several musical instruments is called Gandharva.”

3. The Gandharva comprises three elements: Swars, Tal and Pada (verse)

त्रिविध विद्या स्वरतालपदात्मकम् /

Instead of Sapt-Swar Krusht, Pratham, Dvitiya, etc., which were prevalent in the Vedic music, Gandharva used Shadaj, Rishabh, Gandhar, Madhyam, Pancham, Dhaivat and Nishad.

4. Gandharva music was a systematised music at the time of Bharat, under which Swar and various musical instruments like Tantra Vadya, Shushir Vadya, Avanadhha Vadya and Ghan Vadya developed. The dance tradition was a separate tradition from Gandharva music.

5. The Gandharva music was the classical music of that time, consisting of seven Shuddha Swars, twenty-two Shruties, Gram, Murchhana, Jati Gayan, and so on. But in the Vedic period, instead of being considered as classical, it was recognised as Deshi or Laukik music.

When Sam music became obscure for general masses, Gandharva, Deshi or folk music of the time became classical and popular among the people.

That was because the basic principles of Gandharva music were the

same as of Margi or Sam music. The only difference between them was that Gandharva music was relatively simpler in form than Margi or Sam.

The importance of Gandharva music reached a stage where it was designated as a subsidiary Veda to the Sam Veda and recognised as Gandharva Veda.

6. Gradually, the Gandharva music and its concept and form of Gram, Murchhana, Jati, etc. started disappearing and its parallel Deshi music stream of Gan became popular among the people.

Gandharva and Gan were both based on the harmony of Swar, Tal and Pada. The classical rules of Gan were also the same as in Gandharva. But compared to Gandharva, Gan seemed simpler to the people, so gradually, Gan took the classical form. Now the Gan music, once considered Deshi and parallel to Gandharva, became classical. In Natyashastra, Gandharva itself is defined as Gan.

7. The gains of Gandharva music were invisible because it aimed at self-satisfaction. But the results or the gains of the Gan were believed to be visible. Because, if an artist would present his musical performance well, he would immediately get its fruit in terms of praise.

8. A minimum of five and maximum of seven Swars were necessary in Gandharva music. There were two Grams, Shadaj and Madhyam, and eighty tans in Gandharva. Though the classical principles of Gan were the same as Gandharva, the Pada remained principal between them.

Sangeet Ratnakar mentions that:

देशिगदिशु प्रोक्तं तद्रूपं रंजनं¹

¹ Sangeet Ratnakar – Pt. Sharangdev

“When the composer of Raga composes for the amusement of people, it is known as ‘Gan’.”

Gandharva music comprises Swar, Pad-Tal and Laya, while in Gan the Pada is principal although it also comprises Swar, Tal and Laya since its main purpose is to amuse people. So the scholars mentioned two types of Gan: Nibaddha Gan and Anibaddha Gan.

निबद्धम् अनिबद्धं तद् द्विधा निगडितम् बुद्धेइहि²

The compositions that include Swars, Pad and Tal all come under Nibaddha Gan. For example: ancient Dhruva Gan, Prabandh Gan and the modern Dhruv Pad, Dhamar, Khayal, and so on.

Anibaddha Gan comprises Swars and Laya but there won't be Tal. For example: ancient Rupkalapti, Rupakalap, Aadhunik Aalaap, Swar Vistaar, and so on.

² Sangeet Ratnakar – Pt. Sharangdev