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Critical Study Of Selected Marathī Padās From The Period Of Tanjore Kings

Study of Sangeeta and nirtya padās

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Abstract: This study has been undertaken to investigate the indepth subjective interpretations of Marathi padas particularly in the category of sangeeta and nirtya padas performed during the period of Tanjore kings. It consists of around 60 compositions popularly used by the the dance artists in tune with the rich traditions of Royal elegance. The proposed study is based oncompositional varieties from a book preserved in Saraswati Mahal library composed by different authors. The compositions are examined with the help of their theme, characters, and the writing style.

Index Terms - Sangeeta Pada, Nirtya Pada, Tanjore kings, Themes of Padas.

I. INTRODUCTION

The 17th and 18th centuries cover very crucial evolution period of music and the fine arts history particularly for the Tamilnadu region and Tanjavur after great Cholas heritage. This region has become culturally productive after 17th century. The Telugu, Tamil , Marathi languages flourished under the patronage of Tamil and Telugu rulers. Tanjore kings speciallu Venkoji, Shahaji, Shivaji, Sarbhoji have provided immense contribution to the field of music and fine arts through their preservation of traditional arts in their courts. Their mastery in different languages and the passion for cultural integration helped to archive valuable resources and the diverse cultural treasure in Saraswati Mahal Library founded by Maratha rulers.

During this period, dance and musical practices were common part of Court rituals. Both the North Indian and South Indian music and dance were in the existence at the same time. The compositions which were widely in use included- Varnams, Padams, Nirupanas, Prabandhas and Thillanas. In Bharatnatyam, the classification of Ragas, and Talas now in vogue in South/ Carnatic style comprising of Tamilnadu, Kerala and Karnataka, Andhra regions whereas, northern regions have been impacted by muslim domination of Mughals on their dances and musicalities. Hence, Kathak natya and nritya are based on Hindustani style of music.

In the court of Maratha kings there were numerous poets and composers and distinguished musicians who have contributed variety of musical and dance pieces.

Thousands of compositions were composed by Maratha kings specially Paratapsingh, Sarfoji were the brilliant composers to mention. They composed several musical and dance pieces Particularly, Nirupanas, Padams, Varnams in Marathi, Telugu, and Tamil. The scholars wrote numerous padas were classified into different themes, characters are almost 157 in number. There is a mention in a primary resource that there are different types of Padas such as- Samany apadas, Chitranga Padas, Abhinaya Padas, Sringara Padas, Ragamalika Padas, Bhakti Padas, Bhava Padas, Madhurabahava Padas and many more. These padas provide different narratives as they are performed as Abhinaya items in the Classical Bahratnatyam repertoire. Hence proposed study helps to find out different parameters of narratives , themes of these Marathi Padas from the period of Tanjore kings.

Bharatnatyam Repertoire

In general, from the Sadir Dance tradition till today the Bharatnatyam Margam has been undergone lot of changes in its repertoire. Tanjore quartet have given immense contribution towards today's practiced margam. Alaripu, Pushpanjali, Thodaimangalam, Jathiswaram, Shabdham, varnam, Padam, Jawali, Thillana and Mangalam are the major items performed in it. Shabdham, Padam, Varnam and Jawali are considered and performed as Abhinaya or expressional pieces.

The pada or Padam composed for dance and music both are devotional pieces in which devotee assumes the role of Heroine/ Female character and the god as a Nayaka or hero. Most of the compositions reveal devotees love-sick state of mind and pining for the love. Jayadevas and Meera bai's love songs are the Madhura bhava padas. These padas are very popular and are widely used to express love in abhinaya pieces. Next to Thillana padas are the important item of the dance programme as they can be used as abhinaya during exposition of Harikatha or pravachana. These padas are also categorised in different kinds. Samanya pada, abhinaya pada, chitranga pada, bhava pada, madhura bhava pada, sringara pada, bhakti padas and many more. The proposed study will provide a broader version of varieties that were in the practices during the period of Tanjore kings in the Tanjore.

Padam/Pada-

These are the expressive dance and music pieces that prioritise emotional depths and story telling. They are generally slower in pace and focusses on conveying variety of themes of love, devotion, spirituality with the combination of lyrics, music and dance movements. Structural composition of padams consists of Tridhatu prabandha- Pallavi, Anupallavi, and atleast one Charana. Padams are sung and composed in many languages such as Telugu, Tamil, Kanada, Sanskrit, Malayalam, Marathi, Manipravala. Padams have more graceful movements than that of footwork. The rhythm of this composition is not very rigid due to predominance of expressions and melody. Rhythmic syllables are absent in the most of the cases as it is expressive in nature.

The padas and padams are performed in four stages-

1. Padarthabhinaya
2. Vakarthabhinaya
3. Bhavabhinaya
4. Rasabhinaya

Padarthabhinaya is word to word interpretation of the composition. Vakarthabhinaya is to express whole meaning of the sentence through bhava. Bhavabhinaya is the thematic representation of meaning of complete stanza or pallavi. Here sanchari bhavas are included with elaborated presentation, whereas Rasabhinaya is presentation where musical orchestra will adjust along with a dancer to completely express her bhava without any time constraints. Now the dancers perform with the accompaniment of the singer. It is quite challenging for the singer to see the dancer's involvement and Bhava and sing accordingly. The emotion of the dancer and the singer should be in the same phase.

The composers and artists of the Tanjore court have composed variety of padas in different ragas and taalas. Among these 61 Marathi padas from collection "Sangeetham and nirtya padam" are composed in variety of ragas such as- Kambodi, Neelambari, Arabhi, Yamuna Kalyani, Punangavarali, Nandanamakriya, Shankarabharana, Mohana, Kanada. Anandbhairavi, Thodi, Begada, Pantuvarali, Ghanta, Bilhari, Hameera kalyani and ragamalika. Most of these padas are composed in Adi and jhumpa tala, a few of them are in Rupaka, and Chautala and Tisram.

Sringara is the basic theme of padas which has been traditionally carry forwarded. Along side of Lovelorn Nayika, different characters such as duti and sakhi are introduced in padas. Viraha, and bhakti bhava are expressed through a female character. A few compositions of Padas describe Vatsalya bhava and madura bhakti too.

The list of Padams covered in “Sangeeta and nirtya padams”-

1. Ha maṇatī māhādeva bhoḷā
2. Mī bahu devāñcī
3. Aparādha mājhā ghālīje potī
4. Devā majavarī karuṇā
5. Kāya majavarī dayā ālī
6. Hausāt to molanāhīre
7. Ghaḍī ghaḍī sāngu kāya
8. Nīṭa cītī tū vicāruni pāhī
9. Bāyakācā hā swabhāva
10. Kān ga naye ajhuṇi sakhe dhaṇi
11. Śāṅkha cakra gadā parā
12. Jo kī nīlamegha śyāma
- .
- .
- .
- .
61. Čapalapaṇāśi jhaṇi...

Lyrical merit of Padas/Padam-

Many of the padas and padams are composed in specific metres and figures of speech such as shabdalkara and arthalankara. Even few of them are constructed in Vrittas. Marathi compositions have three varieties of Shabdalkara in which Anuprasa and Yamak are the most dominant one which are commonly used in poetical compositions. The sahyas of Padams have several literary beauties like Anuprasa, Dvitiyaksharaprasa, Antyaprasam, metaphors, similes as well as musical beauties like Svarakshara, Muhana, peculiar gamakas and phrases, which can evoke the bhava of the Padam.

Certain concepts like Dwithheeya Akshara Prasa, Upama, Adyaakshara Prasa, Anuprasa and Yamaka, Matra vritta, Antyakshara Prasa is described for each Padam.

Sr.no		Meaning
1	Upama	Upama Means a word or Phrase that compares 2 things. It can be anything such as person, Objects etc.
2	Yamaka	The use of identical letters as the ending syllables
3	Adyakshara prasa	The use of identical letters as the starting of syllables
4	Antyaksharaprasa	The use of identical letters as the ending syllables
5	Matra vritta	Number of matras in a charana are same/identical
6	Anuprasa	Repetition of words or letters in a charana

Analysis of the selected Padas composed by poets in Tanjore kings period-

Pada no. 2

Raaga-Surati

Taala- Tisra tala

Abhinaya Pada

Pallavi-

Mī bahu devāñcī | prīṭi kariśī śivā tūcī ||

Anupallavi-

Heñca māninīsa uṇeñ | jen kin sambate manaviṇeñ ||

Caranam-

Tāri bhaktā tujhen nāva | tūñci mājhā patī **deva** |
Sadā ghaḍavī tujhī sevā | śarabheñdranutā **deva** ||

Meaning-

I pray all the deities but I love you only (Shiva).
I have to please/ convince you is the only thing that I don't have (your love).
Your name liberates everyone, you are my only husband.
Please allow me to serve you, oh! God Sharabhendranuta.

Analysis of the Lyrics-

In this composition, antyakshara prasa (the ending syllables) are used, rhyming words.
Phrases used to address the lover- Shiva, Samba

Pada no.3**Raaga-****Taala-****Abhinayache pada****Pallavi-**

Aparādha mājhā ghālīje **poṭī** |
Āhe mi to phāra budhīcī **khoṭī** ||

Anupallavi-

Uparī bolun kāya karuṇākarā |
Ughaḍī kripā dṛiṣṭī mhaṇate udārā ||

Jīvalaga maja koṇīcā **nāhīn** |
Kevala pāte jale tuja **pāhī** ||

Kovalyā manācā asunī majavarī |
Kopaśī kāñ śarabheñdranutā **harī** ||1||

Meaning of the Pada

Please forgive my mistakes, considering me as ill minded.
What can I say oh merciful,
Please have glance at me oh big hearted
I don't have any closed ones
Only you can see burning leaves
Oh though you are kind hearted,
Why Get angry on me? (the weak minded, deaf the mighty)

Analysis of the pada-

Adyakshara prasa- the string aksharas of pallavi anupallavi are same.
Antyakshara prasa- ending syllables of lines are same.

Phrases used to adress Lover-

Karunakara, Udara

Kavi mudra used- Sharabhendranuta**Pada no.5****Raaga- Kambodi****Taala- Adi taal****Abhinaya pada**

Pallavi

Kāya majavarī dayā **ālī** | kāya ājī vāṭa **ćukālī** ||

Anupallavi

He to nahon tujhā **vāṭa** | prāṇanāthā pāhīn **nīṭa** |
Kele jīce pāṇi**grahaṇa** | te mī tujhī rānī **jāṇa** |
Jarī vāṭe **anumāna** | narī sāṅgate mīn **khūṇa** ||1 ||

Dharitāncī mājhā **hāta** | jāhalāsī pulakāṅkita ||
Myā pāhatā te **kiṅćita** | jāhalāsī tuma **lajjīta** ||2 ||

Sakhyā tevhā te mī **neṇafī** | kāyato kīn rāga **ćitti** |
Pāṭī ghālī he **gārhānī** | śarabhendranutā **dhaṇī** ||

Meaning of Pada-

Why this mercy on me? What a waste of time.

Look, this isnt your way. Oh my love

You have married to the woman, know that I am the one queen.

Though you are doubtful, I will show you the proof.

By holding my hand. You got goose bumps full of shame and embararssment

When I observed it you felt awkward.

I understood that.what was the anger behind it? Let it be (whatever happened in the past)

Oh lord Sharabhendranuta.

Analysis of the Pada-

Antyakshara prasa- highlighted syllables are in rhymes

Addressed hero as- Prananaatha, Sakha

Mudra of a poet- Sharabhendranuta

Most of the padas express their theme as Shringara particularly where lovelorn Nayika is pining for her love. Few padas expresses praising to the Male character to be attentive towards nayika. Sakhi/ duti oriented compositions expresses connecting medium between Nayika and the Nayaka. Marathi Sangeet Padas were performed alongside Tamil devotional music, creating a synthesis of Marathi and Carnatic musical elements. The compositions were set to Carnatic ragas and talas, adapting to the local musical styles while retaining Marathi lyrical essence.

Devotional Themes: Most padas revolved around bhakti (devotion), emphasizing surrender to God, spiritual love, and divine stories.

Narrative Style: Many padas were narrative in nature, serving as part of dance dramas or Harikatha performances.

Language: The compositions were primarily in Marathi, but some had Sanskrit or Tamil influences.

The Maratha rulers' patronage of Marathi Sangeet Padas in Tanjore reflects their commitment to cultural integration and artistic excellence. These padas remain a testament to the enduring cultural legacy of the Marathas in South India.

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