

Essential Attributes of Odissi Music

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Human life is said to have an intimate and historical relationship with music. The purity, sanctity and characteristic features of Odissi music have been enriched, refined and pervaded its horizon through systematized forms. Odissi music tinged with religion, attained mass appeal and royal patronage. As such the royal patronization of art and culture made the Odissi music developed and enchanting for enjoyment of both gods and goddesses and human beings. This tradition is still continuous in its different manifestations. Odissi music has its own Melas, Ragas, Talas and Prabandhas, which are rendered in different styles as its attributes. Odissi music gives great importance to the lyric where words are required to be sung without fragmentation or distortion. Information about ancient prominent books like Natyashastra and Sangeetratnakar, there are rare books written in Sanskrit language by the writer/poet of Odisha. The eminent writer of Odisha has gifted their contribution to the field of Odishan art and culture i.e., Geet Prakash by Krushnadas Badjena Mohapatra, Jagannath Ballav Natak by Ray Ramananda Pattanayak (15th century), Sahitya Darpan and Chandrakala by Biswanath Kabiraj (16th century), Sangeet Suryodaya by Laxminarayan Mishra (17th century), Sangeet Darpan by Damodar Mishra (17th century) and

Avinab Geetagobinda by Dibakar Mishra (15th century) etc. which are recognized all over India. World famous and revered poet Sri Jayadev and his most famous lyrical composition Gitagovinda, the musicality in Odia prose and literature is well established in the country and abroad. Artistic sculptures and painting found in the engraving of Parshurameshwar, Mukteswar temples and many of such ancient and historical temples and most important the traditional music called as Veenakaar or Madeli performers and exclusive Mahari dancers who were deputed in Sri Jagannath temple only to perform in praise of the deity. All these indicate about the rich tradition of Odissi music. Alike its tradition the grammar or principles of Odissi music is equally rich and splendid. The musician-fraternity of our country have been following the traditional principles of Indian music and also have mentioned about the special feature aspects prevalent in the Odissi music in the music based books written by them. Naming of new *raga* or tunes indicates that developing of musical trends in accordance of our Indian contemporary music; the predecessors of our music have established a special identity for us. As a result of which we feel proud today for our tradition of Odissi music.

Alike its tradition and discipline, the application of Odissi music is equally rich in nature. It is noteworthy that the application of any classical music is more important as compared to its tradition and discipline or principles. From this point of view also Odissi music is splendid, as its application is much influential. In any form of classical music there are two specialties. First is – what is being sung and how it is sung. We know that in Hindustani music Khayal-Thumri, Tarana like tunes are sung. In Carnataki music, Padam-varnam-jabali-kirttanam-tillana etc. are sung. Likewise, in Odissi classical music, Odissi Champu-Chhanda-Geetgovinda, Chautisa-Pallabi-Bhajan-Janana etc. are sung. In the entire system of Odissi music all these elements are important.

The most unique nature in Odissi music as said in Sanskrit is – *Na druta na bilambita*, which means that neither it is very speed or fast nor it is too slow. Hence it belongs to a proportionate class or similar. Hence the velocity of our music maintains certain stability along with a beautiful and artistic presentation which displays its special identity.

On the basis of functioning range of our music, it usually transforms itself into a smooth and beautiful form during presentation and thus it maintains its uniqueness.

The act of widening of classical music is also properly executed in Odissi music amid its fluctuating range (speed). During the performance of Odissi music, five actions are executed for expansion. Those five actions are Anibaddha - alaap, Nibaddha- alaap, Pada-binyasas, Swara-binyas, and Taan. Before singing of song, for the introduction of *raga* descriptive way in

accordance of *Taal*, alaap is presented in new forms according to the concept.

All these processes are followed in singing of Odissi music and which Odissi music has position at par other classical forms of music and their respective applications. All these processes are followed mainly in the singing of Odissi music and as per the requirement, it is divided into four important segments of Odissi lyrics or prose named as *Dhrubapadaanga*, *Raagaanga*, *Bhabanga*, *Natyanga* and these four divisions keep the conceptual dignity of lyrics intact. The culture of *Uchhanga* music is known to be eternal, authentic, pure and historically approved. Application means, its specific factual nature or its grammar. It is an honour and privilege that our Odissi music embodies all these three required qualities for which the Odissi form of music is worthy to be called as one of the classical music.

The songs wholly, belonging to Odissi form of music which are sung during the stage performances are, Odissi, Champu, Chaupadi (Odissi and Chaupadi are quite different from the composition point of view), Chhanda, Chautisa, Gitagovinda, Janana, Bhajan, and Pallavi etc. Besides this *Swarnamalika*, *Lakhsyana geeta* etc. are meant for the sake of teaching or imparting training. All these segment of music are defined as *Prabandha*.

Odissi Prabandha developed musical art and skill. Prabandha is composed of developed artistic skills of music. Among this series of *Prabandha* Odissi series has been classification, as per the nature of 'Prabandha' it has two parts and due to its conceptual uniqueness it has four sections viz- *Dhruba Padanga*, *Raagaanga*, *Bavaanga*, and *Natyanga*. The specialty about

what we missing or how we sing or the style of our performance is the equal application of language and *raga*. Odissi music is solely effortless. Moderate ripples created by the simultaneously use of two *Swara* (tunes) is the reason behind this effortlessness. But this fluctuating action of Odissi is never so high.

The movements in Odissi music' has nicely been compared with a smooth flowing river. The main nature of our Odissi music is that, this is neither very slow nor very fast. It would be appropriate to say that this is music with balanced form.

The bases of Odissi music's movement and religion are, language and *raga*, for which the performance of Odissi music is done through the medium of language and *raga*. Our music is entirely dependent on language and *raga*. Normally the role of language in *raga Sangeet* has less importance. But the yet another specialty of Odissi music is that the language as well as the 'Raga' has an equal importance in this music.

It is said that language is the body of song, whereas the concept is its soul. And *Swara* (tune) is called as the body of *raga* and *rasa* is the soul of *raga*. The concept of song and *raga* are created through an artistic and skillful blend of language and tune (*Swara*). An amazing coordination of language and *raga* is found in Odissi music and proportionate blend of language and tune (*Swara*) is the specialty of the Odissi music performance style.

As regards, *Raga-sangeet* or *Ucchanga* or classical music, singing as well as playing of musical instruments of a *raga* have the key roles during the performance of *Raga-sangeet*, *Ucchanga* or classical music.

A specific discipline has to be followed during the singing of *raga*. Normally we know that in order to perform a *raga*, we have to follow some steps. Because, *raga* is formed with a maximum combination of seven *Swara* (tunes). Hence by doing a harmonious composition of these tunes (*Swara*) thereby creating a beautiful blend of *Laya* and *Chhanda*, a *raga* is made worth for a prolonged performance. During the performance of a *raga*, that begins from a particular situation till the end and this entire process is called *Bistara*. The process of *Bistara-kriya* (extension-acts) done during the performance of *Odissi-raga sangeet* has six chronological stages.

It is noteworthy that these six series of extension-acts done during the performance of *raga* is only followed in Odissi-raganga series.

Nibaddha alaap, *Swara-binyas*, and *Taan* are not done during the series of *Dhrubapadaanga*. *Padabinyas* is done with the help of various characteristics of *Laya*, *Anibaddha Alaap*. *Swara* and *Taan* are never elaborated in the series of *bhavaanga*. *Roopak allap* meant for disclosing the form of a *raga*, along with some concept based *Nibaddha alaap* as per the requirement of *Prabandha* and *Taana* are not performed.

Swarabinyas is done according to the song and *Taal*. *Gitagovinda*, *Janana*, *Bhajan* (devotional songs) etc. are performed like *Odissi-bhavaanga*. Even though *Champu* is closely related to the *Raganga* series still neither any extension act nor *Taan* is performed along with *Champu*. And the traditional tune (*Swara*) of *Prabandha* is never modified or changed.

The purity of *raga* is kept intact during the performance of *Dhruba padaanaga*, *Raganga*, *Champu* and *Gitagovinda*, *Bhvaanga*, *Natyaanga*, *Janaana* (devotional songs) etc. are sung with the combination of various *ragas*. Any type of extension acts are not done during the performance of *Chautisa* and *Chhanda*. All the lyrical stanzas (Pada) are sung in a same tune (Swara) according to these above mentioned guidelines.

All these singing acts of Odissi music are sung on the basis of some specific Gamak. A particular vibration that is created by a tune (Swara) is called Gamak. It has been written in Sanskrit as such: *Swarasya kampa gamakah*. From this vibration of the tune only a style of the music is differentiated from other style of music and soon after listening we can come to know that which music belongs to what style. Similarly in Odissi singing style also there are some particular vibrations of tunes called Gamak, for which our Odissi style of singing bears a quite different identity among its other counterparts. It is noteworthy that the vibration act in music is solely general. But the language and conceptual difference, at the backdrop of regional and cultural distinction retain the importance of a particular style, irrespective of place. The Odissi styled Gamak might be used in their forms of music but, rises spontaneously in Odissi, hence it is said to be an asset for Odissi. May be by making efforts all sorts of Gamak can be sung or performed musically. But the Gamak which can be sung normally, effortlessly or spontaneously, truly represents the natural quality of the concerned style of music.

In the singing and musical performance of Odissi the use of four important Gamak is found. Those are :- *Andolita*, *Ahat*, *Dhaalu*

(*Arohi Dhaalu*, *Abrohi Dhaalu*), *Ambreydita*. The movement in *Odissi sangeet* (Odissi music) is said to be *Andolita* (fluctuating). This movement is mainly a classical Gamak named as *Andolita*. The specialty of this Gamak is that it is neither stable always nor very fast.

This fluctuation act plays an important role in awarding a special identity to Odissi music. *Andolita* Gamak is transformed with the help of a Gamak called *Ahat*. And its unique nature is that to sing a tune (Swara), the next or following tune has to be twisted mildly and then to be resumed. Hence this process is called *Ahuta-kampana kriya* or Gamak. With the help of *Ahat Gamak* the act named as *Arohan- abarohan* of Odissi form is done in such a manner that a listener can instantly have a clear picture about the distinct quality of this form of music. *Dhaalu* is one of the Gamak's or tuning acts of traditional form of singing which is mostly used during the performance of *raga-sangeet*. This is executed in both the acts called *Aaroha* and *Abaroha*. Likewise a traditional vibration act called *Ambredita* is used immensely during the performance of Odissi, which is a special Gamak act of Odissi.

The quintessence of Odissi music is discerned in the intrinsic vision of the learners and listeners, who repose in *Gitagovinda*, for its traits like composition, improvisation, raga repertoire, treatment of rhythms and rhymes, usage and genre. Hence Odissi can undoubtedly be considered as one of the classical forms of music. This is solely a matter of pride for Odisha, Odissi music and Odishan culture.

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