UNIT 3  TECHNICAL TERMS OF KARNATAK MUSIC

3.1 Introduction

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3.3 Definition and Brief Explanation of Technical Terms

NAADA
Aahata – Anahata

SRUTI
Aadhaara sruti

SVARA
a) Svara Saptaka
b) Uttaraanga – Poorvaanga
c) Sthaayi

MANDRA – MADHYA - TAARA
d) Arohana – Avarohana
e) Deergha – Hrsva
f) Svara Vibheda

SUDHA - VIKRITA
g) Vaadi – Samvaadi – Vivaadi- Anuvaadi
h) Varisai
   Sarali – Janta – Daatu
   Hecchu sthaayi -Taggu Sthaayi
i) Alankaara

TAALA
a) Kriya
   Sasabda – Nisabda
b) Aksharakaala
c) Graha or Eduppu
   Sama – Vishama – Ateeta -Anaagata
d) Aavarta
e) Laya
   Vilamba – Madhya - Druta
f) Soolaadi SaptTaalas
   Laghu- Durta – Anudruta -
   Dhruya – Matya – Rupaka
   Jhampa – Triputa – Ata – Eka
3.1 INTRODUCTION

Music has the ability to excite human emotions and induce pleasant feelings in the mind of the listener. It thus became natural for human mind to cultivate music to suit and refine his sensibilities. Music became the best medium to express his refined thoughts and subtle emotions.
Indian music has been an integral part of the life of the people of the country whether folk, tribal or ritualistic; their everyday activity is influenced by music. The intellectual mind realising the power of music systematically merged the melodic beauty that lay deep in the different Indian art forms and evolved the classical music which was governed by both Art (Kala) and Science (Shastra).

The Karnatak classical music is primarily devotional in nature. This music by virtue of its both poetic and melodic beauty has the ability to calm the aggressive mind and comfort the weary and distraught.

Learning music cultivates a certain discipline which would enable one to lead an orderly life, with no violent thoughts on one hand and becoming creative on the other hand, channelising the emotional release. This aspect of music is of great importance today especially with the rising tensions, violence and disharmony prevailing everywhere.

### 3.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the importance of learning music;
- the role of music in the life of Indians;
- the effect of music in the mind of the listener; and
- the salient features of Karnatak Music.

### 3.3 DEFINITION AND BRIEF EXPLANATION OF TECHNICAL TERMS

1) **NAADA**

Naada is the primordial sound, i.e. the beginning of musical sound. ‘Naada’ is the combination of Praña or air and Agni or fire. From Naada emerge the Sapta Svaras, or the seven principle musical notes.

‘Naada’ is div into Aahata (struck) and Anaahata (unstruck) sound. The Aahata or the struck sound is produced by the conscious effort of man. The Anaahata or the unstruck is said to be audible only to those who are in deep meditation, like the Yogis.

2) **SRUTI**

Sruti is the minutest audible pitch. Sruti is also known as microtones. A musical note or Svara may sound different by virtue of sruti.

The Aadhara sruti has a different connotation. It is called as the aadhaara shadja or the tonic note. All instruments are tuned to a tonic note. So also for a vocalist it is very important to select an aadhara sruti which will enable him to sing with ease in the 3 octaves i.e. Mandra (lover), Madhya (medium), Taara (higher).

3) **SVARAS**

Svaras are those sounds which have the ability to please the mind of the listener.
a) **Svara saptaka**

There are seven basic svaras called as saptapadas or svara saptaka which form an octave. These are Shadja, Rishabha, Gaandhaara, Madhyama, Panchama, Dhaivata and Nishaada.

b) **Poorvanga-Uttaranga Svaras**

In an octave, Svaras from Sadja to Panchama are Poorvanga svaras and those from Panchama to Nishaada are Uttaranga svaras.

c) **Sthaayi**

An octave is called as Sthaayi. There are 3 sthaayis, Mandra sthaayi or lower octave, Madhya sthaya or middle octave and Taara sthaayi or higher octave. The sthaayi is indicated with dots. E.g.

\[ S \rightarrow \text{Mandra Sthaayi} \]
\[ S \rightarrow \text{Madhya Sthaayi} \]
\[ S \rightarrow \text{Taara Sthaayi} \]

4. **MANDRA-MADHYA-TAARA**

d) **Aarohana**

Svaras in the ascending order of pitch is Aarohana. Eg. S r g m p d n s, r g m p d n s etc. In a Raaga the Aarohana generally starts from ‘sa’ followed by svaras in ascending order.

**Avarohana**

Svaras in descending order of pitch is Avarohana, eg. S n d p m g r s, n d p m g r s etc, In a raga the Avarohana commences from ‘sa’ in the higher octave followed by svaras in descending order.

e) **Deergha Svara**

Svaras with long duration of 2 akshara kaalas are Deergha Svaras.

**Hrsva Svara**

Svaras with short duration, of one aksharakaala are Hrsva svaras.

f) **Svara Vibheda or varieties**

In a Svara Saptaka, the svaras shadja and panchama do not admit any variations. Hence, Sa & Pa are called as Achala, Sudha or Avikrita svaras. The other five notes Ri, ga, ma dha, and ni admit of more than one variations. These are called as Chala or Vikrita svaras.

The vikrita svaras are :-

- Sudha Rishabha
- Chatusruti Rishabha
- Saadhaarna Gaandhaara
- Antara Gaandhaara
- Sudha Madhyama
Prati Madhyama
Sudha Dhaivata
Chatusruti Dhaivata
Kaisiki Nishaada
Kaakali Nishaada

g) Vaadi, Samvaadi, Anuvaadi and Vivaadi Svaras

The svaras in melodies are placed at different intervals from each other. It is by virtue of these intervals that the sounding together of two svaras gives different effect. Based on the intervals, the svaras are classified into four categories:

**Vaadi or Sonant** – This is the principle svara or the predominant note of a raga, which is frequently used to express the raga ranjatva or beauty of a raga. This is compared to a king.

**Samvaadi or Consonant** – ‘Samvaada’ means sounding together. Any svara when sounded with Vaadi svara, is pleasant to the ears, that svara is called as Samvaadi svara. The svaras ‘Ma’ & ‘Pa’ are the samvaadi svaras of Sa. This is compared to a minister.

**Vivaadi** – In the literal sense it means dispute. The sounding of vivaadi svaras have an unpleasant feeling to the listener. These svaras are compared to an enemy.

**Anuvaadi Svaras** which are neither vadi, samvaadi, vivaadi are anuvaadi svaras. These are compared to a follower. Their soundings have a neutral effect.

h) Varisai

Varisais also called as Svaraavalis are svara patterns which are composed as exercises for the beginner. Varisais help in developing sthaana shudhi or acquiring correct positioning of svaras. These are basic svara exercises, for the beginners of both vocal and instrumental music. They are set to Raaga Mayaamaalavagoula. The varisais are set to Aadi Tala of 8 beats which again is easily learnt. The varisais progress with simple svara exercises to complex patterns of svaras, in both ascent and descent.

**Sarali Varisais** - The first set of varisais are called Sarali Varisais. These are simple patterns where svaras follow in Krama i.e. in the order of ascent and descent.

All varisais are sung in 3 degree speed. The first speed includes one svara only for every beat. Likewise the second and third speed each beat is reckoned with two four svaras respectively.

**Janta varisai**

The Janta varisai are gradual progression of svaras, each of which is repeated twice. The second svara is stressed upon.

The janta varisai also includes sarali varisa e.g. – ssrrg srg ssrrgg mm, rrggm rrgmmpp. These varisai are more advanced as compared to sarali varisas.

**Daatu varisas**

Daatu means skipping. In the progression of svaras, some svaras are omitted. The Dhatu varisai also include janta svara prayogas Eg
Hecchu sthayi varisai or Tara Sthayi

The Hecchu sthaayi svaras are for increasing the range of voice in the upper octave. The first varisai will end in shadja of higher octave, while the second varisai will progress to R, then G, M and P.

Taggu sthayi varisai or mandra sthayi

Taggu varisai increase the range of voice in the lower octave from Mandra Nisada to Mandra Sthayi Panchama.

i) Alankaara

Alankaara means embellishment. Alankaaras are varisai set to the Soolaadi Sapta Tala or the basic seven talas, in five different Jaatis or rhythm. The talas are Dhruva, Matya, Roopaka, Jhampa, Triputa, Ata & Eka. The Jaatis are Tisra(3beats), Chatusra(4beats), Khanda(5beats) Misra(7beats) and Sankeerna.(9 beat)

5. TAALA

Taala is the measurement of time. Reckoning of Taala or mode of putting the Taala is called Kriya

a) Kriya

Kriya has two varieties:

Sasabda Kriya - Reckoned with a beat

Nisabda Kriya - Reckoned with a Wave. Also termed as ‘Visarjita’.

b) Aksharakaala

Aksharakaala is the shortest time measure. A minimum of 3 aksharakaala is required to constitute a Taala. Tisra jaati Eka Taala is the shortest Taala with 3 aksharakaala

$ 1/4^{th}$ aksharakaala

$ 1/2$ aksharakaala

$s$ one aksharakaala

$\$ Two aksharakaala

c) Graha or Eduppu

Graha or eduppu in Tamil is the commencing or starting point of music in a Taala. It has two varieties:

1) Sama – When music and Tala commence simultaneously.

2) Vishama – When music and Tala do not commence simultaneously. Vishama has two varieties.

i) Atita Graha – When music starts before the commencement of Tala.

ii) Anagata Graha – When music starts after the commencement of Tala.

d) Aavarta

Avarta is the time cycle. Reckoning of Tala once is Aavarta.
e) **Laya or Kaalapramana**

Laya is the Tempo or speed of a musical rendering. Also termed as Gati and Nadai. Three degrees of speed are established Vilamba (slow) Madhya (medium) and Druta (fast)

f) **Sooladi Sapta Talas**

There are seven principle taalas known as Soolaadi Sapta Taalas. These Taalas are named as Dhruva, Matya, Roopaka, Jhampa, Triputa, Ata and Eka. Taala has three main angas Laghu, Anudrutam and Drutam. The value of Anudrutam is one akshara kaala and Drutam is Two aksharakaals which are constant and do not change.

Value of Laghu changes to five different varieties called Jaatis. These are Tisra jaati(3), Chatusra Jaati (4) Khanda Jaati (5) Misra Jaati (7) and Sankeerna Jaati (9). They are rendered as Takita, Takadimi(4), TakaTakita (5), Takadimi Takita(7) and Takadimi Taka Takita(9) With the five different Laghu Bhedas each taala has five varieties.

g) **Chaapu Taala**

Chaapu Taalas are also time measures which are reckoned with two beats. There are two main varieties of chaapu taala, khanda chaapu has 5 aksharakalas and misra chaapu 7 aksharakalas.

6. **SANGEETA**

Sangeeta is a term used for Indian Music.

Kalpita Sangeeta -Music which is composed or preset is Kalpita Sangeeta.

Manodharma Sangeeta.- Music improvised or composed on the spot is Manodharma Sangeeta.

7. **DHAATU -MAATU**

A musical composition has both text as well as melody. The text part is called as Dhaatu and the melodic part is called as Maatu

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Dhaatu - x x x x v x x v
G G P ; P; DP S; S;
Maatu Va ra Vee - na mridu pa- ni-
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8. **MELA**

Mela is the term used for the parent scale. **Janaka Raga, Melakarta and Ragaananga** ragas are other names for mela. A mela is Sampoorna having all seven svaras both in arohana and avarohana. The svaras are in Krama or in order, both in ascent & descent. Mela same of svaras in both arohana and avarohana. Mela does not admit any foreign note or anya svara.

The equivalent of Mela is ‘Thaat’ in Hindustani music

9. **RAGA**

Ragas are melodies derived from the combination of different svaras, which have the ability to please the mind of the listener.

The whole structure of Indian music is evolved around Raaga. The beauty underlying
a raga are aesthetically brought out through compositions (Kalpita Sangita) as well as through extempore music (Manodharma Sangeeta). Each Raga has a distinct aesthetic form that lends it a different tonal colour.

Ragas Are divided Into Janaka Raga Or Mela Raga and Janya Ragas.

Janya Ragas

Ragas born out of Janaka Ragas are Janya Ragas. The Janya Ragas:-
1. May not be Sampoorna Ragas. May be audava i.e. five svaras in it or shadava i.e. six svaras in it.
2. May be Upaanga having same svara in both arohana and avarohana or Bhaashaanga with both varieties of svaras in it. The svara not found in its parent raga is Anya svara or foreign note.
3. May be Varja, deleting svaras either in arohana or avarohana or both.
4. May be vakra, with Zig Zag svaras in arohana or avarohana or both.

10. GAMAKA

Gamakas are tonal embellishments that enhance the melodic beauty of composition. Melody without Gamaka is like night without moon and creeper without flowers.

11. SANGATI

Sangatis are melodic variations brought about in a theme. Sangatis are important in the musical form Kriti, which progress from simple variations to complex.

12. MUSICAL FORMS

These are compositions which have different musical structures. The musical forms reveal a concrete picture of a raga. They are divided into Abhyaasa Gaana i.e. for practise and Sabhaa Gaana i.e. for concert.

a) Gita

Gitas are simple melodic compositions which come under the abhyaasa gaana. Each letter of the Maatu coincides with one svara of the Dhaatu. These are devotional with no sangatis or variations. The learner thus gets acquainted with the svarasthanas.

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g g p p d p s s

 va ra vi na nr du pa ni
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Svarajati

They are more advanced than Gita. The theme of Sahitya may be devotional, heroic or romantic. The Svarajati has svara passages with appropriate sahitya and Jati.

Jatisvara

Jatisvaras are compositions like Svarajati with Solfa passages and jatis However unlike Svarajati they do not have sahitya set to the Solfa passages.

Varnas

Varnas are highly advanced musical compositions that belong to both Abhyaasa gaana (practise) and Sabha Gaana (Concert).
The Raga Svaroopa is aesthetically structured in Varna. These are set to both simple and complex Talas and hence suitable for both practise and performance. Practising varna in different speeds or Laya strengthen the command over rhythm. The tonal modulations or gamakas add versatility to the voice and improves the style of execution in the instrumentalists.

**Kriti**

That which is composed is kriti. Kriti is a highly evolved musical form. It occupies an important place in the concert paddhati. In order to fully understand a Raga it is best to learn as many kritis as possible in that Raga. Both rhythm and melody find an important place in Kriti.

**Ragam Tanam Pallavi**

Raagam Tanam Pallavi also known as Pallavi is the most complex musical form as far as the melody and rhythm are concerned. This musical form also belongs to the Sabhaa Gaanam or concert presentation and includes the rendering of Raga alapana or melodic improvisation, Tanam i.e. phrases like Nom, Tom, Ananta. Pallavi i.e. Padam or words, Layam or rhythm and Vinyasam or exposition (pa + la+ vi)

**Padam**

Padam are musical compositions which express devotion through madhura bhakti i.e. bhakti through expression of love. In Pada both Dhaatu (melody) and Maatu(words), are equally important.

The devotion of the composer or the mortal for the Lord is compared to the love of Naayika (heroine) for the Naayaka (beloved). Padam belong to Sabha Gaana. Musicians who have a complete command over Raga, alone can render Padam effectively. Padam are also equally important in the realm of dance. They are rendered best in a Vilamba Kaala or slow tempo.

**Jvalali** - Javalis are love lyrics like Padam. The compositions are bright and lively. Unlike Padam the songs are of erotic nature and are sung in fast tempo.

**Tillana**

These are brisk compositions beginning with Jatis or syllables like Dim, Tadara, dani, Tanata etc, followed by a short passage of poetic words concluding with Jatis again. They belong to the realm of both music and dance concerts and are rendered towards the end as a befitting finale to the concert.

### 3.5 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Fill in the blanks, choosing correct words from those given below:

   (Jawali, Tillana, Laya, Uttaranga, Achala, Vikrita, Poorvanga, Laghu, Drutam, Aavarta, Anudrutam, Vilamba, Aksharakaala, Madhya Raaga, Gita, Druta Varna, Svarajati, Kriti, Pallavi, Jatisvaram, Padam, Eduppu)

   a) Svaras from Shadja to Panchama are called ________ and Panchama to Nishada are called__________

   b) Sudha svaras are also called as _________, and chala svaras are also called as ________________.
c) Three principle angas of a Taala are _______, _______, _______, Taala repeated once is _________.

d) Shortest time measure is _____________. The starting point of Taala is _________________.

e) Tempo is also called as _________________. The three varieties of Tempo are _____________, _____________, _______________.

f) That which pleases the mind of the listener is _________________.

g) Abhyaasa gaana includes ________, ________, ________ and _________. Sabha Gaana includes, ________, ________, ________.

2. Write five or six sentences giving important features of varisais.

3. Write briefly on the musical forms in Abhyaasa Gaana.

**Answers**

1. a) Poorvannga, Uttaranga
   b) Achala, Vikrita
   c) Laghu, Anudrutam, Drutam, Aavarta
   d) Aksharakaala, Eduppu
   e) Laya, Vilamba, Madhya, Druta
   f) Raaga
   g) Gita, Svarajati, Jatisvaram, Varnam, Kriti, Pallavi, Padam, Javali, Tillana.

2. Varisais also termed as Svaraavalis are svara patterns, set up as exercises for a beginner. These help in acquiring sthana shudhi or correct positioning of svaras. The varisais progress from simple to complex svara patterns. The different varisais are Sarali, Janta, Daatu, Hecchu and Taggu Sthaayi varisais. These are composed in Raaga Maayamalavagoula, set to Aadi Tala. These svara exercises are for the beginners of both vocal and instrumental music.

3. Musical forms that figure in Abhyaasa gaana are Gita, Svarajati, Jatisvaram, and Varna. The term ‘Abhyaasa’ means ‘practise’. Hence Abhyaasa Gaana is music meant for learning and practise. Gitas are devotional compositions, set to simple melodies which do not admit of sangatis or variations. Svarajatis are compositions which have svara passages and words set to every passage. Jatisvarams have only svaras and no sahitya or words. Varnam, the last to be learn’t in Abhyaasa Gaana, has more complex svara patterns which gives a complete Svaroopa of a Raga.
Technical Terms of Karnatak Music

Tanpura

Tavil

Veena

Violin
Understanding to Karnatak Music

Talam

Mridangam
Technical Terms of Karnatak Music

Chenda

Ghatam

Kanjeera