

SWARAKSHARA: THE PERFECT BLEND OF SANGITA AND SAHITYA

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Abstract

In Music, the decorative angas are technical embellishments added to kritis to enhance their beauty, showcase the melodic possibilities of the raga and also, quite often, the virtuosity of the performer. Decorative angas in musical compositions can be related to ornaments or beautification aids for the human body - though the latter has a sufficient existence in itself, the addition of ornaments and decoration adds greatly to its beauty and brings pleasure to the self as well as onlookers. Similarly, embellishing a Kritis with beautiful sahitya and decorative angas not only brings pleasure to the musician but also all the rasikas.

Introduction

Decorative angas are of three kinds depending on whether they are applied to the dhatu, matu or both. Sangati is an example of angas used to decorate the dhatu. The Prasas such as Adyaprasa, Anuprasa, Antyaprasa etc., are examples of decorative elements used to embellish the sahitya or matu. Yatis and Swaraksharas are the examples of decorative angas pertaining to both dhatu and matu. Other angas which adds beauty to the compositions include MadhyamakalaSahitya, Gamakas, Mudras, Swarasahitya etc.

SWARAKSHARA

Swarakshara is an interesting phenomenon which acts as an attractive beauty of a composition. The aspect of dhatumatulankara can be said to be as Swarakshara. It is an added accomplishment which, the sahitya has the same syllable as its swara, that is both dhatu and matu have identical letters. Swarakshara has different types. They are;

- **SuddhaSwarakshara:** The Sahitya letters are exactly like the solfa letter, ie., the identity of the sahitya syllable with regard to the consonant and the vowel ending of the solfa letter remaining intact.
- **SuchitaSwarakshara:** The sahitya letters instead of being exactly like solfa letters differ slightly from them.
- **Suddha-SuchitaSwarakshara:** It is the combination of SuddhaSwarakshara and SuchitaSwarakshara.

EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT SWARAKSHARAS PORTRAYED IN VARIOUS COMPOSITIONS OF TRINITY.

SYAMA SASTRI

SyamaSastri has employed different types of swarakshara in his kritis.



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Eg; The Kriti 'Sari evvamma' in raga Bhairavi starts with a sudhaswaraksharaS and also has a mixed suddha-suchitaswarakshara occurring later in the sahitya in the line 'R G M P D N' corresponding to 'Sri Ka MakshiNi'. The anupallavi 'ParamaPavani' starts in the Panchamaswara and the charanam 'MadhavaSodari' begins with 'm d p'.

The MadhyamavatiKriti 'PalinchiKamakshi' which starts at Mandrasthayi and the syllable 'p', though glided down from the shadja, stays for better part of the phrase in mandrapanchama'snp p' which is a rare starting note for kritis. Other examples of swaraksharas include the PunnagavaliKriti 'Brovasamayamithe' where 'sama' is set to the swarass and m. Further in his kritis in YadukulaKamboji, Mukhari, Kalyani and Ritigowla, the swarasahityas start with swaraksharase.g; Ritigowla 'Niravatika' starts with mandrasthayiNi. The three swarajatis have numerous examples of both suddha and suchitaswaraksharas in the swarasahitya as do the varnams he composed. For instance, the Begadavarnam 'Dayanidhe' starts with a suddhaswarakshara in the pallavi, anupallavi and charana. Pallavi starts as 'daya' and the swara is dpmp.

MUTHUSWAMIDIKSHITAR

Dikshitar followed in the footsteps of his father RamaswamyDikshitar in his skill with swaraksharas. RamaswamyDikshitar had composed a padavarna 'Sarigadani' in raga Todi. It is completely covered with Swaraksharaprayogas. MuthuswamiDikshitar had composed plenty of compositions which consists of different types of swaraksharaalankaras. A few examples are shown here.

Eg; SudhaSwarakshara: 'Maye' in raga Tarangini, 'Nirajakshi' in raga Hindolam, 'Mahaganapati' in Todi, 'Sarasadalayanaya' in Khamas. SuchitaSwarakshara: 'Kamalambambhajare' in raga Kalyani, 'Sarasadalayanaya' (khamas) in which the sahitya 'Maghamahotsava' starts with the swarasM G M, where the sudhaswaraksharas 'Ma' are on either side of the suchitaswarakshara 'gha' in the charanam. Also, the phrase 'manita' in the sahitya 'Manitaguruguha' is set to the swaras m n d, with the two suddhaswaraksharaas followed by a suchitaswarakshara. The popular kriti 'VatapiGanapatim' also consists of the swaraksharaprayogas in the phrases, 'Vatapiganapatim', 'Muraripramukhadhyupasitham'.

TYAGARAJA

The compositions of Tyagaraja doesn't have much focus on swaraksharaprayogas. But have instances where he could have used them. ShudhaSwaraksharaprayogas can be seen at the beginning of the kritis such as, 'MakelaraVicharamu' in raga Ravichandrika, 'Dasukovalane' in Todi, 'Samanamevaru' in Kharaharapriya etc. One of the popular kritis 'Nadatanumanisham' in raga Chitharanjini consists of beautiful swarakshara phrases in the charanam; 'srgmpdnvarasaptaswara'. Here srgmpdn refers to both swara and sahitya.



SWARAKSHARA PRAYOGAS IN THE COMPOSITIONS OF POST TRINITY COMPOSERS

- Navaragamalikavarnam of PatnamSubrahmanyaIyer. Here, in charanam the sahitya **'Padasaro..ja..** is exactly the same as **P D S SND.. NDP..**So it should be SudhaSwaraksharaprayoga.
- In the charanam of the Ata talavarnam 'Chalamela' in raga Shankarabharanam, tgesahitya **'Paapajatha'**is exactly the same as its swara'**p,,,pm g r'**.
- MahaVaidhyanathalyer has incorporated the swarakshara beauty in his AdiTalaVarnam in Kamboji raga. The longest swarakshara passage occurs in this varnam for one full talaavarta. The varnam starts as **'Pankajakshi'**.
- In the Khamas Daru varnam 'MatheMalayadwajaSamjathe' composed by MuthayyaBhagavatar, depicts a lot of swarakshara phrases.
- In the kritis'**MaaRamanan'** and **'Samaganalolane'** in Hindolam composed by Papanasam Sivan,'**Pahimam Sri Rajarajeswari'** in Janaranjini by MahavaidyanathaShivan, **'Sadapalaya'** in Mohanam, **'Neepadamegati'** in Nalinikanti and **'Nee DayaGalkuno'** in Shanmukhapriya by G N Balasubrahmaniam, the beginning is beautified with swaraksharas.
- Dr. Balamuralikrishna has composed a beautiful swarakshara composition **'MaaMaanini'**, in raga Todi and talaAdi.

Apart from all these above mentioned examples, there are so many compositions present with swarakshara beauty. Another interesting factor is that swaraksharaalankara are created not only by the composers. The musicians also have a wide role in exploring the swarakshara phrases. It includes creative interpretations by them. For example, the charanam of the kriti 'SobhilluSaptaswara' in raga Jaganmohini, 'Dharahrids**samadulalo'** is sung with swarakshara**S M .** Here both madhyastayi and tarastayishadja are used for the same phrase. Patantara of each composition might be different for different artists. It may vary by banis or schoolings. But these improvisations should come under the creative ability of the musicians. One of the popular carnatic singers Sri Sakethraman has composed a swaraksharaRagamTanamPallavi (RTP) in ragamalika including the ragas Nalinakanthi, Bindhumalini.

The Pallavi is; **'SagariKripakariNalinakanthiNee KanindarpuriKaruna'**.

'SagariKripakariBindhumaliniNee SadaarpuriKaruna'. Here the ragamudra changes when the raga changes. The swaraksharas are beautifully portrayed in this pallavi. Like this, one of the famous khadomartists and singer Dr. S.Karthick has composed a swaraksharakriti **'Maampaahi'** in raga Shanmukhapriya and talaMishrachapu.

Conclusion

Swaraksharas are the common representation of both dhatu and matu. The word in the matu part will be coined within the seven swarasymbols and the dhatu of such a word or words will have



the same corresponding swaras. From these few examples, it is clear that the link between swara and sahitya plays an important role in the field of music.

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