



Raagpradhan Bangla song: An Analytical study

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Abstract:

Once a musical style has become very popular in Bengal. Later it was named as ‘ Raagpradhan ’. Along with the name, many features are hidden in this music style. It is a completely unique musical form of Bengal. The main objective of this research paper is to discuss about the various aspects of Raagpradhan bangla songs. The definition of Raagpradhan song, it’s characteristics, and also the influences of another music styles on this particular music form have been thoroughly reviewed in the said research paper. Some renowned artists and their legacy in raagpradhan songs are also mentioned in this discussion. The main purpose of the study is to inform the readers about multiple aspects of Raagpradhan bangla songs.

Key words:

Raagpradhan , Raga-bhav, Khyal, Thumri, Dadra.

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Introduction:

All the musical styles that have been born in the genre of Bengali music have left their mark on aesthetical beauty. Raagpradhan is one of the main among them. The fact that, Bengali songs can be so melodious can be understood through Raagpradhan bangla songs. In the depth of the poetry and the sweetness of the lyrics, Raagpradhan bangla songs have become the glory of Bengali music.

Meanwhile, the mixture of different nations of Raga has given an another dimension to these combinations. An attempt has been made to highlight various aspects related to

Raagpradhan song through the discussion paper. One of the key factors in enhancing the beauty of this style based on appropriate information is also being highlighted.

❖ **The definition of Raagpradhan song:**

The definition of Raagpradhan song may vary from person to person. According to some music experts this style called as ‘Bangla Khayal’¹, while others call it as ‘Classico Modern song’². Raagpradhan songs are something between the pure Classical or Semi Classical music. That is, at what point exactly it can be divided into pure Classical or semi classical music is a matter of great controversy.

By way of definition, the style of music which evokes the emotion of a Raga and is performed with artist freedom is known as Raagpradhan bangla song. Although it is said so easily, but its terminology is not so simple. In order to understand about Raagpradhan songs, it is necessary to know about some of its characteristic features. Raagpradhan songs are prominent among the novel genre of Bengali songs.

❖ **The main features of Raagpradhan bangla song:**

Some of the special features of Raagpradhan songs are mentioned below:

- ❖ One of the main characteristics of Raagpradhan song is that both it’s melody and lyrics carries equal importance.
- ❖ The root of this style is Raga bhava. The main aim of raagpradhan songs are to evoke the bhava (expression) of a raga.
- ❖ Although the lyrics of raagpradhan songs are written in a completely modern style, but the warmth of a raga music can be fully noticed in it’s melody.
- ❖ Raagpradhan songs do not have the restrictions and seriousness or strictness like a Khyal.

¹ Kar Chowdhury, Amalendubikash, Raagpradhan Ganer Utsha Sandhane , Pg - 24.

² Chowdhury, Narayan, Bangla Ganer jagat, Pg - 16.

- ❖ The combination of more than one raga increases the beauty of raagpradhan songs.
- ❖ One has to keep in mind while performing so that it does not become completely khyal or thumri. Because it has it's own individuality and uniqueness.
- ❖ Raagpradhan songs have a personality and that is one aspect of it's novelty.

❖ **Influence of other musical styles on Raagpradhan Bangla songs:**

Raagpradhan bangla songs are a mix melody of different styles, but not exactly a follow or imitation of any style. Khyal, Thumri and Dadra are the notable among the blend of musical styles that can be seen in raagpradhan songs as I told earlier. Apart from these styles, the influence of Tappa and Ghazal effect also can be seen in some cases of raagpradhan songs. Composed under the influence of Khyal, raagpradhan songs can usually be serious in nature, as Thumri and Dadra are songs of a light nature, based on them raagpradhan songs may have a raspy feel. The matter will be understood more clearly by giving some examples of songs.

❖ **Some of Khyal's most influential Raagpradhan songs are:**

- ❖ Aji nijhum rate ke bnashi bajay - Raga Darbari Kanada.

Artist - Acharya Jnanendra Prasad Goswamy.³

<https://youtu.be/3aFRBbHnvpM?si=HteFtvX1zWTTMy2M>

- ❖ Mon bole tumi acho bhagaban - Raga Bhairavi.

Artist - Acharya Jnanendra Prasad Goswamy.⁴

<https://youtu.be/hiDJJHjNag?si=rjUvvx5viZVTVzg7>

- ❖ Nabarun rage tumi sathi go - Raga Bhairavi.

Artist - Acharya Vishmadev Chattopadhyay.⁵

<https://youtu.be/awjUuW15QwU?si=NOLetuTK3DGB9AsB>

³ <https://youtu.be/3aFRBbHnvpM?si=HteFtvX1zWTTMy2M>

⁴ <https://youtu.be/hiDJJHjNag?si=rjUvvx5viZVTVzg7>

⁵ <https://youtu.be/awjUuW15QwU?si=NOLetuTK3DGB9AsB>

❖ Tabo lagi byatha othe go - Raga Deshi-Todi.

Artist - Acharya Vishmadev Chattopadhyay.⁶

<https://youtu.be/VdEePrLvLP8?si=I1vX-ERTCzV0kUX0>

❖ Tabo charantole dibo jiban dali - Raga Malkauns.⁷

Artist - Acharya Tarapada Chakraborty.

❖ **Some of Thumri and Dadra's most influential Raagpradhan songs are:**

❖ Seshar ganti - Acharya Gnanendraprasad Goswami (Thumri chal)⁸

❖ Ogo shyamorai bolo - Acharya Chinmay Lahiri. (Thumri chal)⁹

❖ Koyeliya gaan thama ebar - Vidushi Begum Akhtar (Dadra chal)¹⁰

❖ **Some of the popular artists of Raagpradhan and their songs:**

With the contribution of talented artists, the world of raagpradhan song has become possible. The biographies of some of the great artists who have advanced the quality of raagpradhan song to a great extent are mentioned.

❖ **Acharya Gnanendraprasad Goswami:**

Acharya Gnanendraprasad Goswami's name is notable as a well-known artist in the world of raagpradhan music. He was born on 25 December, 1902 in Bishnupur. At that time he have no rival in Classical music. His singing technique was very unique. He had immense knowledge about Raga- Ragini. His Gramophone records are still attracts to the listeners today.¹¹ Some of his famous raagpradhan songs are mentioned below:

⁶ <https://youtu.be/VdEePrLvLP8?si=I1vX-ERTCzV0kUX0>

⁷ Chowdhury, Narayan, Sangeet Parikrama , Pg - 68

⁸ <https://youtu.be/7lOp2QvduIE?si=KoZFCf-usn5K1b2i>

⁹ Interview from Shyamal Lahiri ji.

¹⁰ <https://youtu.be/7MT6JPrhPsi?si=vbVFVp4WeAFTvxjl>

¹¹ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jnanendra_Prasad_Goswami

- ❖ Lilayeto chanchal anchal - Raga - Bageshri.¹²
- ❖ Eki tandra bijarito ankipat - Raga Malkaus.¹³
- ❖ Brindabana dhana - Raga Vrindabani Sarang.¹⁴
- ❖ Baje mridanga beena - Raga Darbari Kanada.¹⁵

❖ **Acharya Vishmadev Chattopadhyay:**

Acharya Vishmadev Chattopadhyay was a very famous artist of Raagpradhan Bangla songs. He was born on 8 November, 1909 at Sarai village near Pandua station in Hooghly district of West Bengal. Vishmadev Chattopadhyay's musical talent blossomed from a very young age. He took Khyal training from various renowned classical musicians. He was proficient in all kinds of music including Dhrupad, Khyal, Thumri and Tappa.¹⁶

He added a novel flavor to Bengali songs. His raagpradhan bangla songs are fully based on Raga sangit. Raga's are very much dominant in his songs. He have created an another level of Bangla songs. He added the whole flavor of a raga in the raagpradhan songs and that's created an aesthetics to his creativity.

❖ Some of the Raagpradhan Bangla songs sung by him are:

- ❖ Jodi mone pore sediner kotha - Raga Kafi-Bhairavi¹⁷
- ❖ Fuleri din holo je abashan - Raga Jayjwanti¹⁸
- ❖ Jago alok lagane - Raga Ramkeli.¹⁹

❖ **Acharya Tarapada Chakraborty:**

Acharya Tarapada Chakraborty was born on 13th April 1909 in Kotalipara village of Faripur district. He was one of the first class classical musician of his time. He took musical training from renowned musician Pt.

¹² <https://youtu.be/8IqtCU4Et5A?si=k2VKIJ2pEHZuMEM7>

¹³ <https://youtu.be/8IqtCU4Et5A?si=k2VKIJ2pEHZuMEM7>

¹⁴ <https://youtu.be/rgSWbwYPwrI?si=bX-XdVaEaNTGVJp>

¹⁵ https://youtu.be/KQPU3_hped4?si=ij18UCMABC2pE3G

¹⁶ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vishmadev_Chattopadhyay

¹⁷ https://youtu.be/SxtYpV12V18?si=kpieNepRG_6XKCCI

¹⁸ <https://youtu.be/ivKJ3ngbCbQ?si=URQzbbVMyl9hiYlm>

¹⁹ <https://www.discogs.com/release/3733481-Vishmadev-Chatterjee-Vishmadev-Chatterjee/image/SW1hZ2U6MzYzMjU3NDk=>

Girija Shankar Chakraborty Mahashay.He had special skills in both Khyal and Thumri. But he gained more fame in Khyal performances.²⁰

His raagpradhan songs are seems like Bangla khyal more.The skill he has shown in raagpradhan songs is not seen elsewhere.

Some of his Raagpradhan songs are:

- ❖ Kholo kholo mandir dwar -Raga Tilang mishra²¹
- ❖ Phule phule ki kotha - Raga Gujjari Todi²²
- ❖ Bone bone papiya bole - Raga Bahar²³
- ❖ Kotha gyalo shyam - Raga Bhairavi.²⁴

❖ Conclusion:

The paper shows various aspects of Raagpradhan songs and provides some informations to the readers. Analyzing various aspects related to ragapradhan songs one can understand that Raagapradhan song is a one of the own unique music style of Bengal. Although it reached its peak of popularity once, but it has now lost some steam. The reasons can be various for this. Maybe it is not reaching to the audience properly. Otherwise, in the genre of Bengali music it is one of the most beautiful and poetic music form.

The sentiment of raagpradhan song is truly heartwarming. It's beautiful even as its lyrics and melody evolve over time. All in all, raagpradhan songs are a place of emotion in the Bengali hearts. Khyal and Thumri's eternal lover Bengali still wants to float on the raft of raagpradhan songs. Just we need to compose and write virtuous songs. Only then it can touch the hearts of the audience again and a Bengal will regain its old value.

❖ Reference:

1. Karchoudhury, Amalendu Biikash. (1984). Raagpradhan ganeer utsha sandhane. Farma KLM praivate limited. 250-B bepin behari ganguly street. Kolkata- 700012.

²⁰ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tarapada_Chakraborty

²¹ <https://youtu.be/nMqnylga9Do?si=2LR0G6OmjzAyw8Ab>

²² https://youtu.be/th9ea1Hz_Qg?si=54L_siIwRZKHmRx-

²³ <https://youtu.be/odYMfCciYCo?si=8JduogXjO392bTfQ>

²⁴ https://youtu.be/o3GqP7etkBU?si=YdV89PN8CjQ_b1iH

2. Chowdhury, Narayan. Bangla Ganeer Jagat. Farma KLM praivate limited.

257- B Bepin Behari Ganguly Street. Kolkata - 12.

3. Chowdhury, Narayan. Sangeet Parikrama , Shri Sourendranath Mitra, M-A, Bodhi press, 5 Shankar lane, Kolkata 6.

4. Chowdhury, Narayan. Bangalir Geeticharcha , Jiggyasha , Kolkata -9, Kolkata-29.

❖ **Interview:**

1. Shri Shyamal Lahiri (Famous Raagpradhan artist).

2. Vidushi Mandira Lahiri (Famous Raagpradhan artist).

