CHAPTER II
INDIAN MUSIC
DURING THE AGE OF GURU NANAK DEV

A perusal of the history of Indian music indicates that it is closely linked with the progress of human civilisation. Right from the Vedic Age up to the period of Jainism and Buddhism, music has been considered to be a means of remembrance and realisation of God. Hence all the four Vedas and old religious scriptures were endowed with great musical quality. With the passage of time, however, changes came about regarding the concepts and utility of music.

Originated in wild forests and mountaineous caves, Indian Music played a great role in temples and in the hermitages of sages and saints and flourished later in the courts of kings and emperors, succeeded in transforming the views of the scholars and policies of statesmen through its infinite power.37

It is said that music brought health to the diseased. But during this period the wordings and the meanings of the songs and the physical expressions, gestures and postures became lascivious, sensuous and instigated carnal passions.

37. Nazula, Dr. Darshan Singh, Guru Nanak Sanskritigaya p. 3.
Hence the soul of Indian music had to bear a set back.

The birth of Guru Nanak Dev took place at that time when music was confined to the courts of kings and emperors. It (classical music) had little touch with the masses. It was dominated by low standards of morality and was misused. It had lost its age-old glory and lofty traditions. But with the advent of the Bhakti movement, there came a sea-change in the character. By the end of the eleventh century, the Hindustani and the Karnatak traditions of music had come to acquire their separate existences.

The basic book on Indian music Sangaat Ratanker, written by Sharang Dev, bears out the fact that these two systems of music had become two quite separate entities and the author of the book makes an attempt to synthesise the two. This fact confirms all the more emphatically that at the 14th time of Guru Nanak Dev, there were two systems of Indian music in vogue, namely, Northern music called the Hindustani Sangaat and Southern tradition of music called, the Karnatak Sangaat.

North Indian Tradition of Music.

The quality of Indian music started undergoing a

radical change after the arrival of the Muslims in India. Although the Muslim musicians tried to understand the tradition of Hindustani music, yet their social and political moves did not allow them to learn Hindustani music from the Hindu musicians. Another factor responsible for it was that all the books on Hindustani music were written in Sanskrit and the knowledge of Sanskrit was limited only to the Pandits (Brahmins). As a result, they classified and started singing the Indian raga according to their own style and tradition. But in spite of all this, they could not change the soul of Indian music. If we look at the character of Hindustani music at the time of Guru Nanak Dev, we find its following characteristics:

1. **Swaras (Musical Notes and their Forms)**

   There were seven shudh (natural) Swaras and five vikrat (changed form of a note i.e. a swara santak used during the period of Guru Nanak Dev. Total twelve swaras were used for singing. A musical scale comprised twenty-two shrutis and three musical scales (swara santak) were in use. The first was Mandar santak (half pitch), the second madhya santak (natural pitch) and the third, teer santak (high pitch). It is this new frame which forms the base of music today.

41. Chaitanya Deva, B. *An Introduction to Indian Music*, op. cit., p.3.

42. Ibid., p.82.
II. *Raga Ragni System for Classification of the Ragas*

Before and during the age of Guru Nanak Dev, the *ragas* were classified under *raga-ragni* system in Northern tradition of Indian music. But Guru Nanak Dev never adopted it. He used the word *raga* only while giving headings to his compositions. The modern musicians consider *raga-ragni system* unscientific and so did Guru Nanak Dev Jay in the fifteenth century.

In the medieval age, the following four types of *raga-ragni* systems were in use:

1. *Shivgat*
2. *Krishen or Kali Nath Mat*
3. *Bharat Mat*
4. *Hanumat Mat*

In each of these four types, there were six main *ragas* and every main *raga* had five to six *ragnis* and eight sons or daughters-in-law etc. Here the description of the main *ragas* and their *ragnis* of each type is given below:

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1. **SHIV RAGA**
   *(Six ragas and thirty-six Rekhis)*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Ragas</th>
<th>Rekhis</th>
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<td>1. Siri Raga</td>
<td>1. Nell Sirri</td>
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<td>2. Tirvendi</td>
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<td>4. Terika</td>
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<td>3. Sheerkew</td>
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<td>2. Gujjri</td>
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<td>3. Namhari</td>
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<td>5. Sondhari</td>
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<td>4. Panchim</td>
<td>1. Abhise</td>
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<td>2. Bhupali</td>
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<td>3. Karnati</td>
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<td>5. Malvi</td>
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<td>6. Patmonjiri</td>
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<td>5. Bhawansat or</td>
<td>1. Kamodi</td>
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<td>Nat Narayan</td>
<td>2. Kalyani</td>
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<td>3. Amiri</td>
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<td>4. Natika</td>
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<td>5. Sarangi</td>
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<td>6. Nat Kamira</td>
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<td>6. Nageh</td>
<td>1. Malhari</td>
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<td>2. Soorhi</td>
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<td>3. Saveri</td>
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<td>4. Kaushiki</td>
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<td>5. Gondhari</td>
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<td>6. Har Shinger</td>
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2. **KRISHAN OR KALI NATH RAGA**
   *(Six Ragas and thirty-six Rekhis)*

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Main Races

i. Suri Rege
   ii. Kolahal
   iii. Dhevla
   iv. Verijgo
   v. Andani Malkooh
   vi. Dev-Gandhari

ii. Bantali
   i. Andheli
   ii. Gunkali
   iii. Patmenjri
   iv. Geurgiri
   v. Dhenki
   vi. Devraag

iii. Bheirav
   i. Bheirvi
   ii. Gujri
   iii. Bilwali
   iv. Bhag
   v. Karnat
   vi. Kangra

iv. Panchim
   i. Tirveni
   ii. Nisant-Rotha
   iii. Aliri
   iv. Katobh
   v. Bairary
   vi. Aawari

v. Mat-Narayan
   i. Tirbanki
   ii. Tllangi
   iii. Purbi
   iv. Gandhari
   v. Gama
   vi. Sindh-Malari

vi. Nagh
   i. Bengali
   ii. Madhura
   iii. Kamod
   iv. Dhanasari
   v. Tirthi
   vi. Devali

3. Sharat-Nat
   (Six Races and Thirty Reginias)

i. Bheirav
   i. Madhu-melvi
   ii. Lalita
   iii. Bairary
   iv. Bheiravi
   v. Behli
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Ragas</th>
<th>Pankhies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ii. Malkosh</td>
<td>i. Gauri</td>
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<td>iii. Tori</td>
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<td>v. Rakubh</td>
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<td>iii. Hindol</td>
<td>i. Ramkali</td>
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<td>iii. Dewari</td>
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<td>v. Kohi</td>
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<td>iv. Deepak</td>
<td>i. Kedari</td>
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<td>iii. Rudrawati</td>
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<td>v. Gujli</td>
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<td>v. Siri</td>
<td>i. Sedhavi or</td>
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<td>iii. Thamuri</td>
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<td>v. Sohni</td>
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<td>vi. Magh</td>
<td>i. Malari</td>
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<td>iii. Deshi</td>
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<td>v. Kanra</td>
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4. Hanuman Mat

(Six Ragas and thirty Pankhies)

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<tr>
<th>Hanuman Mat</th>
<th>Pankhies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Bhairov</td>
<td>i. Madhmat</td>
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<td></td>
<td>iii. Bangali</td>
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<td></td>
<td>v. Sainhvi</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii. Kaushik or Malkosh</td>
<td>i. Tori</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. Gauri</td>
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<td></td>
<td>v. Kukubh</td>
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<td>iii. Hindol</td>
<td>i. Bolewali</td>
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<td></td>
<td>iii. Desakha</td>
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<td></td>
<td>v. Lalita</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Main Ragas

iv. Deepak

 iii. Deshi

 v. Natika

 v. Siri

 i. Basanti

 iii. Malasiri

 v. Asswari

vi. Megh

 i. Malari

 iii. Bhopali

 v. Takka

Ragini

i. Kedary

 ii. Kanrha

 iv. Komodi


III. Ragang System for classification of the Ragas

In the same period, the Ragang system also existed besides the Raga-Ragini system. Under this system thirty Raga in total out of all the Raga in use, were such as were different from one another in rendering and the nature of swara. The remaining Raga were sung according to the style of these thirty Raga. In this way there were thirty Raga styles or Raga-ances, for example Bairav-Ang, Kalyan-Ang, Sarang-Ang etc. This system is prevalent even now-a-days at some places in India.

IV. Main Raga – Classification of Ragas

During the medieval age, some scholars of music used to classify Raga under this system also. According to this classification, Mailes were considered to produce Raga and Raginis. There was no unanimity among the scholars regarding

47 Shrivastava, Raag Parchyas, op. cit., p. 224.
the number of these Mails. Lochan Pandit in his book
Raga Trangini had described twelve Mails and seventy five
Ragas and Racinias produced by these twelve Mails. According
to Rama Navyas's Swara Mails Kalanidhi, there were twenty
Mails.49 In Karnatika Sangeet Padhiti, Mail raga classification
is in use even in modern times. Vienkitmukhi had considered
their number to be seventytwo.

Lok-Sangeet or Desi Sangeet

Besides classical music, there was an other type
of music in practice called Desi Sangeet or music of the
masses. Its main object was to amuse the masses. In the
fifteenth century, India was ruled by the Lodhi rulers. Amir
Khwero, who was a great poet and musician, had introduced
by this time Kaweli, Tarana and Ghazal into Indian music.51
Amir Khwero also gave a new turn to Indian Music by
combining it with persian music.

The Bhakti Movement had also begun by this time. As
a result of the Bhakti Movement, Kirtan (devotional singing)
and Bhajan-singing were catching imagination of the people.
The Bhajans (devotional songs) were sung in Ragas and

48. Quoted by Shrivastava in Rasa Parshva, op. cit.p. 216.
49. Nadeu, Panna Lal Dr. Theory, Aesthetics and Scientific study
50. Ibid., p. 190.
51. Garg, Lakshmi Narayan, Nibandh Sangeet, Hathras-1975,
p. 999.
folk-tunes. By this time, folk literature had also fully developed in its different forms.

Prior to Guru Nanak Dev, Bhagat Kabir, Ravidas, Namdev and Surdas had already composed and sung their hymns based on different ragas. Guru ji composed most of his shabads in local ragas as Meajh, Tukhari, Tilang and Asa. Some of his compositions are in ragas based on folk-tunes such as raga Asa or Meajh. Examples of folk music are also there in Guru Nanak Bani as Alahunia, Patti, Paer, Aarti, Sahib etc.

The Muslim rulers were least interested in classical music of India because they found Indian music related to spiritualism and the Muslim rulers were of the view that the aim of music was only to amuse. So the theoretical aspect of music did not get due attention.

The Southern Tradition of Music
(Karnataki-Sangeet-Padhiti)

Karnataka, Andhra and Mysore are the states where Southern tradition of music is in practice. By the end of the thirteenth century, it had completely separated itself from the Northern tradition of music. Evidence of the prevalence of

52. Shrivastva, Harish Chander, Sangeet Nibandh Sangrah. Allahabad-1933, p. 44.
54. Tare Singh, Prof. Vedan Kale, op. cit., p.248.
two independent traditions of music in India is available in Sharan Dev's book *Samast-Ratankar*, which is considered to have been written in the twelfth or thirteenth century A.D. 35 The author of this book himself tried to unite these systems of music. This book is also considered to be the base-book of *Karnatki* and *Hindustani* music. These two systems of music developed independently in the medieval age.

At the time of Guru Nanak Dev's birth, it was not so fully developed as it is in the present times. In the fourteenth century, Madhav Asharya started research on arts at Vijaya Nagar. In *Karnatki music*, he found only fifty *raagas*. He classified these *raagas* in fifteen *maals*. From that day up to now, this system is used for the classification of *raagas* in *Karnatki music*. The number of *maals* kept changing from time to time.

There are many similarities between these two systems of music. In both the systems, there are seven natural *swaras* and twenty-two *shrutis* in a musical scale and their titles are also the same. Many *raagas* are identical in both the traditions except their names. For example, *Tor*, *Dhirshankara Sharan* and *Naya-Malgaur raga* of the Southern tradition are the same.

in nature and swaras as Bhairvi, Bilawal and Bhairav ragas of Northern tradition respectively. Theat comprised, seven swaras in both the traditions. Even then there are many differences between these two systems. For example, there seventy two theele in Southern music, while in Northern music there are only ten theele. The nature of swaras in both the systems is also quite different as there is no flat (Komal) swara in Southern music. One swara can be of so many forms and the lowest form of a swara is called natural swara in Southern tradition of music.

The Southern tradition of Indian Music has recognised two broad categories of musical forms; the open and the closed, roughly equivalent to and reminiscent of the ancient anibaddha means not bound and nibaddha means set within a frame. Anibaddha music is not set within the bounds of a frame work like a song. It has no rhythmic structure or defined sectional arrangements.

The nibaddha, on the other hand means bound or set within a frame. The most important anibaddha sangat is the alap.

1. Kriti or Keertana

The most popular and the finest form is the Kriti, sometimes also called keertana. Its great popularity and wide

60. Shanti Govardhan, Sangeet Shastra Darpan, op. cit., p. 123.
acceptance is due to the inherent viability in melodic growth and rhythmic elasticity, as the text and music permit great freedom for creative improvisation, *krti* means a creation that which is made. *Keertana* is to sing. In a *Keertana*, which particularly refers to a devotional song, it is the poetic beauty of the song that predominates whereas in the *krti*, on the other hand, music is more important.

A *krti* has three sections: *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and *charana*. The word *pallavi* is perhaps derived from *pallava* "to blossom" for this section opens the composition like the *sthavī* in *khaṇḍai*. It is the introductory part and the new word *anupallavi* means "that which follows the *pallavi*. There may be one or more *charanas* following the *anupallavi*. (Charana means foot); and *charana* combines the qualities of both *pallavi* and *anupallavi*.

2. **Padam or Pad**

What *thumri* and *tappa* are to Hindustani music, *Padam* and *javali* are to Karnataka music, though in construction they are entirely different. *Padam-javali* are slower in tempo and graver in import. Further, it is usual to treat them as allegoric; that is, the love-life sung in

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63. Chaitanya Deva, *An Introduction to Indian Music*, op. cit., p. 44.
64. Ibid., pp. 44-45.
human terms really refers to the yearning of the human mind for the adored God head. Guru Jee composed Tippadas, Choupadas and Ashtpadian in some raga.

3. Javali

Javalis are also love-lyrics sung to suitable raga. But they are not generally considered as allegoric. They are direct descriptions of human love, portrayed with fine understanding in text, music (which is faster in tempo than in a pades) and dance.65

4. Hindu

This is a type of romantic song in Tamil language. The songs of this type are very popular among the common people.66

5. Raag Malika

The swara combinations of different raga sung in a particular rythym is called raag-malika. After singing the poetry based on a particular raga, its swara combinations are sung. Raag-malika in Southern music is the same as it is in Hindustani music.

6. Tillana

Tillana is the Karnataka counter part of the tana of North India.67 While it has pallavi, anupallavi and

67. Garg, Karnataka Sangest Ank, op., cit., p. 143.
Sharané, the libretto is usually of latíng (tale memories) combined with swára signatures and sometimes with a few meaningful words. Tillane is not generally of slow tempo.

Besides being sung in the later part of a concert, it invariably is an item in the repertoire of a dancer.