Creativity of Rabindranath: Application of Taal in Rabindrasangit
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Abstract
Poet Rabindranath Tagore's creation of Taala is another contribution to the field of Indian Music. This paper tries to describe different Taalas which were created by him.

Full Version of Paper
Gurudev Rabindranath, a star in the galaxy of literary arts, fine arts and music as well. He was a great poet and got Nobel award for his legendary contribution 'Geetanjali'. Nevertheless he did an undeniable work in the field of music too. He tried to establish a separate style in Indian Music popularly known as 'Rabindrasangit', where he perfectly applied the actual Indian philosophical vision regarding Music, Taal and related things.

In case of Music he brought many innovative ideas in his own style. He made many changes in the treatment of Ragas in his songs. Similarly he changed somewhere the conventional process of Taal also. What is his work in case of 'Taal' requires some elaboration. So let us discuss about the creation of Rabindranath in the field of 'Taal'.

If we study the text of our Indian Taal Shastra we shall find innumerable Talas are there. Some of them as 'Marga Taalas' which are only five in numbers. Many 'Desi Taalas' (commonly known as 108 in numbers) and besides so many Hindusthani Taalas.

Deshi Taalas actually were transformed into 'Abhiyata Deshi' later on along with some Marga rules. These Abhijata Desi Talaas are nowadays known as Hindusthani Taal. If we look back we will see that, Taalas have always been made as per requirements of songs in different regions and all those were Desi Taalas.

Gandharba Sangit almost came to an end and Prabandha Sangit emerged in its place very rapidly before Gupta dynasty. Different Desi Taals were actually used in different Prabandhas. Hindusthani Talas are also Called 'Marga-Desi' (mixture of Marga and Desi). Apart from this Persian Taal system was also adopted in the Muslim Period.

However, we will now discuss about Rabindranath’s creation of Taala. He composed thousands of songs and many of them were set to the common Taalas, which we usually find in Hindusthani Sangit. In spite of that he composed some remarkable Taalas which have been appreciated by all. But the reason behind making some separate Taalas is different.

Rabindranath was basically a poet and then a music composer. Hence, he was that much careful about his songs as he was for his poetry. So he composed some new Taalas to adjust both his poetry and song wherever he felt necessary. Generally we know that he composed six different Taalas such as —
1. **Jhampak**: Division: 3+2
   Theka – Dhi Dhi Na /Dhi Na.
   Song reference: Amare tumi ashes korecho

2. **Sasthi**: Division: 2+4;
   Theka: Dhage /Dhage tete.*
   Song Reference: Amra nutan jaubaneri doot

   * This Taala have been composed in two different styles,
   the other structure is of 4+2 division. Commonly It is called
   ‘Ulto Sasthi’, but the nomenclature has not been made by
   Rabindranath. As reference we may recall the song –
   ‘Hridaya amar prakash halo’ set in this Taala.

3. **Rupakra**: Division: 3+2+3
   Song Reference: Keno saradin dhire dhire

4. **Nabataal**: Division: 3+2+2+2
   Theka – Dha Den Ta /Tete Kata /Gadi Gene /Dhage Tete.
   Song Reference: Nibiro ghana andhare

5. **Ekadashi**: Division: 3+2+2+4
   Theka: Dha Den Ta/Tete kata/Gadi Gene/Dhage Tete/Tage Tete.
   Song Reference: Kanpiche dehalata tharo tharo

   Another varity of Ekadashi has been created by him. That is—
   3+4+4
   Song Reference: Duare dao more rakhia

6. **Nabapancha** Division: 2+4+4+4+4
   Theka: Dha ge/Dha dha Den Ta/Kat Tage Den Taa/
   Tete Kata Gadi Gene/Dhage Tete Tage Tete

   Song Reference: Janani tomar karuno charanakhani

Now the Taala Rupakra may be discussed separately. This is a Taala of 8 beats. In our modern Taala system no such unusual pattern of 3-2-3 has been used. It is understood that he made it to maintain *Kabyachanda* (poetical metre) and avoided the conventional 2+2 or 4+4 rhythm of 8 beat cycle. He could make it in *Teora* but he did not compromise with Taala.

Now, if we look all these six Taalas, it seems that all of them were influenced by *Kabyachanda* (poetical metre). But, in consideration of our *Taalsashtra* those Taalas were made by using ‘Taal Prastar’ - i, e, a method of Marga Taal for creating multiple Taalas.
Another Taal is Nabataal. Rabindranath composed many verities of this Taala. Five different Patterns he made . Those are mentioned below-

i. 3+2+2+2  (Song Reference: Nibiro ghana andhare)

ii. 5+4  (Song Reference: Byakulo bakulero phule)**

** This is also an exception that he has composed this song in two different combination of Nabataal. One is 5+4, another is 3+6 respectively.

iii. 6+3  (Song Reference: Je kadone hia kadiche)

iv. 3+6  (Song Reference: Byakulo bakulero phule)

v. 9 beats  (Continously; Song Reference: Dur mor patha pashe)

In case of Sasthi we also find some non-conventional pattern. We have many categories of songs in India, such as, classical, semi-classical, regional (previously called Deshi), folk, film song etc. The 6 beat Taal is found in 3+3 divisions every where. Rabindranath is the only exception who used the combination of 4+2 and 2+4 instead of 3+3 combination. This kind of attempt opened a new horizon. We find another surprising implementation of 6 beat cycle in the song ‘ektuku choa lage’ where he used 6 beats continuously.

A remarkable point regarding the points mentioned above is that, he have not used ‘Faak’ or ‘Khali’ in any of the above Taalas. Though he did it by the influence of Kabyachanda (poetical metre) but it is recognized in our ancient Taala system also. ‘Faak’ has been introduced in our Taala from Muslim Period. Apart from six Taalas he created some other Taalas also but he did not give any name to them. Such as -

i. 7 Beats  3+4 combination
Division: 3+4
Song Reference: Tomaro geeti jagalo smriti

ii. 4 Beats  Continuous
Division: 4 (No division; continuous)
Song Reference: nirjan rate nihshabda charan pate

iii. 5 Beats  2+3 combination (commonly known as ardha jhap)
Division: 2+3
Song Reference: Pathe jete jete

iv. 10 Beats  3+2+3+2 combination
Division: 3+2+3+2
Song Reference: Pakhi bale chapa amare kao
Rabindranath gave much importance to rhythm (chanda) than conventional Taala system in his song. He often used to say that Music is more important than so called Raga and Taala system. Taala helps to express sentiment (bhaba), which exists in the thoughts and feelings of human being. In his writing ‘Sangit-o-bhaba’ he said that – “when we see that sentiment of music depends mostly on Taala, a better and more natural Taala system may introduce. In that process counting unit (matra), division (to clarify rhythm) etc. will remain same, only the system of returning into Sam after every Abartan (Taala cycle) may be relaxed and in that process I at least do not feel any inconvenience at all”.

It came to his mind because he was a poet at first and his creativity in case of Taala was influenced by poetrical metre (kabyachanda).

In the beginning of his life he composed songs mainly in traditional Taalas like - Choutaal Dhamar, Teental etc. but, afterward he experimented and created many rhythms which other composers did not attempt and thus he opened a new horizon in Indian music. He was fond of rhythm and always tried to apply various rhythms in his songs to make them colorful. He saw new possibilities in every rhythm and hence he pronounced -

“Manaber jirna baky e mor chanda dibe naba sur
Arther bandhan hate niye tare jabe kichdur bhaver sadhin loke,
Pakshaban agniraajsama uddam sundar gati”
(Reference: Bhasa-o-Chanda, Rabindranat Tagore)

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