

## SAINT LITERATURE: MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS AND CONTEMPLATION

SARITA S. INGALE

Head, Deptt. of Music, Late C.M. Kadhi Kala Mahavidyalaya, Achalpur Camp, Amravati (Maharashtra)

### ABSTRACT

Saint literature has been composed in the preliminary stage of Marathi language. It was composed not only in Marathi but also in other different languages in our country. Saint literature came forward in the form of devotional songs and is considered to be an important part of social and cultural history of Maharashtra. The whole Saint literature was intimately related to the contemporary social, political and religious traditions.

This research paper is an evaluation of contribution of Saints, their literature and musical compositions. So far as the Saint literature is concerned the contribution of Saint Dnyaneshwar, Saint Namdeo, Saint Eknath, Saint Tukaram, Saint Ramdas and Saint Kabir, Rastrasant Tukdoji Maharaj as well as Sant Gadgebaba is indescribable. The didactic literature of these great personalities contributed a lot in the development of the contemporary Indian society. Actually, the literature written by Saints of Bhagwat Sampradaya is known as Saint literature. It emerged especially from the musical compositions sung for lord Vitthala and as it was sung with wonderful musical notations, it was popularized among people effectively.

**Keywords:** Saint literature, contemplation, musical compositions, Ragas, Abhangas, Owis and Bharuds.

**Objectives:** To contemplate the strong connection of Saint literature with traditional Indian music.

### Research Methodology

The present research is based on the primary resources of data which contains Abhangas, Bharuds and Owis written by renowned saints in India. Analytical study is also carried out by musical recordings of saint literature. Observational method is used for the analysis of saint literature.

### Research Material

Primary material considered for present research comprises mainly books of saint literature and recordings. Some of the sources are referred from internet data, which include audio and video recordings of Dnyaneshwari, Abhangas and owis.

**Hypothesis :** Music is one of the most important sources which immortalized saint literature.

### INTRODUCTION

'Dnyaneshwari' was written in 1290 which was the last phase of 13<sup>th</sup> century. The literature before 'Dnyaneshwari' was written in Sanskrit language. This Sanskrit language was not taught to

the common folk, hence people could not understand Sanskrit literature. In such difficult conditions Saint Dnyaneshwar opened the doors of knowledge for common people by writing 'Dnyaneshwari' in Marathi.

### CONTRIBUTION OF SAINT DNYANESHWAR

Saint Dnyaneshwar had laid down the foundation of Bhagwat Dharma in Maharashtra. Bhagwat Dharma considered lord Vitthal of Pandharpur as their God. He mingled 'Harry' and 'Har', and this amalgamation resulted into the unification of 'Shiva' and 'Vaishnav' sampraday. Many wonderful musical compositions were composed in the devotion of lord Vitthal, and these compositions reached to the common people quite easily. Saints spread a message through their literature earnestly that 'the whole human race is equal'.

Bhagwat sampraday had continued for nearly six decades. The common folk from every strata of society came around Saint Dnyaneshwar, and he enlightened the people through his abhangas, ovis and his enlightening literature. He had bestowed the right of worship to all the folks in society. Gradually, Dnyaneshwar's saint family extended widely, and along with his siblings Sopan, Muktabai and Nivrutti, the other devotees like Namdev Shimpi, Chokha Mahar, as well as Sena Nhavi, Visoba Khechar and Gora Kumbhar also became members of his grand spiritual family.

Secondly, women saints like Saint Janabai, Soyarabai and Nirmala also became the active members of the 'saint family'. They contemplated seriously for the betterment of society. Their selfless contribution in the literary as well as social world is really valuable, especially, Saint Namdev who is regarded as the chief saint in this family.

### SAINT REFORMER NAMDEV MAHARAJ

Saint Namdev is regarded as the chief Saint in Dnyaneshwar's spiritual family. Saint Namdev, with his slogan, 'Nachu kirtanache rangi dnyanadeep lau jagi' expressed the value of knowledge in human life. He was the incarnation of extra ordinary bright talent. He amalgamated Marathi literature and music wonderfully, and changed the Marathi language. Saint Namdev contributed a lot in this moment of public interest. In the orthodox society it was not an easy task at that time. He was the first word painter, autobiographer and a devoted poet in Hindi, as well as the pioneer of Hindi poetic compositions. Saint Namdev was a great philanthropist who worked for women empowerment and equality. His 69 compositions have been included in Sikh people's religious book 'Guru Granth Sahib' which reflect 'Vitthal bhakti' 'Sagun nirgun bhakti' and the philosophy of Bhagwat sampraday. He used to spread the message of equality through his musical compositions. Normally, he sang his abhangas in beautiful running notes of Dhumali, Kerwa and Dadra with the help of veena. While praising the compositions of Namdev, Saint Dnyaneshwar says,

'Shabda kaise ghdiye premasi kaise pa chadhiye Alankaru mhanije |  
kayje nene Namdev hi tyach gotavlyatle|

and another, Saint Janabai says,

Dhoodhavarchi say tevi wanu kay|

taise gane gay Saint Namdev|

Saint Namdev dealt with different contexts, subjects and musical compositions which enhanced him to the special altar. He spread his message not only in Maharashtra but in other states also.

Saint Dnyaneshwar took tomb and then the whole responsibility of Bhagwat Sampraday descended to Namdeva's shoulders. He managed it very successfully. Saint Dnyaneshwar placed before the people the 'pure form of devotion', and Namdev extended this 'pure form of devotion' enthusiastically in the Bhagwat Sampraday.

### **SOCIAL REFORMER SAINT EKNATH**

Eknath Janardan Swami was the chief administrator of the king of Devgiri. Janardan Swami was a great devotee of Lord Datta and he was also considered to be an authority in the spiritual world. Saint Eknath took initiation of the same Janardan Swami. He studied a number of scriptures and religious books and also went for pilgrimages in the supervision of Janardan Swami.

After his spiritual education, Eknath wonderfully composed Leela Bhagwat Ramayan on the 21 section in Bhagwat, Rukmini swayamvar and bharud, as well as gawlan, Abhang and Aartis. In the age of Sant Eknath the reign of Yadav kings ended, and India came under the reign of Muslim Empire. This change in reign brought a lot of change in everything. Instead of Indian languages, 'Farsi' became the main language of Administration. At the same time, Sanskrit Pundits were also trying to sustain the value of Sanskrit language among people.

In such confusing condition Saint Eknath wrote his literature in Marathi and turned common people towards Marathi. He used to question Shastri and Pandits that if God has created Sanskrit language, then Marathi is also created by the same god. Sant Eknath was a prolific writer of Marathi literature, he tactfully mingled the day to day life with scriptures. His bharuds are especially written on various events in folk life. Saint Eknath has wonderfully created awareness in the people. Saint Eknath was born at paithan in 1553. In his childhood he became orphan, hence he was brought up in the cultured supervision of his grandparents. He liked the spiritualism since his childhood. He successfully handled the torch of social reformation after Saint Dnyaneshwar, and Saint Namdev.

Saint Eknath was a very polite and loving person and the same politeness and broad nature appears in his literature beautifully. He was not a rebellion but he opposed casteism and bad traditions.

He used to present bharud and bhajan with wonderful musical notations and propagated people for unity and good deeds, for example,

“Asa dadla Nako Ga Bai”

OR

“Bhoot jabhar mothhe ga bai”

His bhavuds were the wonderful remedies for the social problems at that time. He was no doubt a good poet as well as a great lover of music:

“Para Prashanti vaghari Na Tute Jana”

'Madhyam Gram' and 'vaikari murchana' references exhibit the notations of different types of stringed instruments. Sant Eknath was a great kirthankar. In order to reform the downtrodden superstitious society, he composed a number of gawalan geets. He used to transfer the gawalan geet from shrungar rasa to Bhakti Rasta very tactfully. These compositions are so lucid that even an illiterate devotee can sing them passionately. In his gawalan he says about God that,

“Ram Ram mhane taya ka na yeti  
Vimane, nawal smaranachi  
Thev, nami nahi Anubhav.”

God is not only a subject of understanding, but also, a subject of staunch devotion and strong belief. He also wrote Eknathi Bhagwat in which one can easily get the references of his conceptions, for e.g.,

“Muka zalo wacha geli, hoto pandit mahadnyani,  
dashgranth shadshastra purani chari ved mukhodgat  
wani garvamadhe zali sarv hani”

He wrote many musical compositions too and 'Chatushloki Bhagwat' is remarkable among them. Saint Eknath left us for heavenly abode on 24th February 1599.

#### **EPOCH-MAKING SAINT TUKARAM**

Saint Tukaram especially criticized the superstitions, bad traditions and pretensions in the name of god. According to Saint Tukaram, man should treat a man with humanity and a man should be a strong follower of morality. likewise, he was an honest, virtuous and pious thinker. His piousness wonderfully reflects in his abhangas. Saint Tukaram belongs to the varkari sampraday and he is considered to be the emperor of varkari sampraday. He says,

“Shabdanchich shakhe yatne karu  
Shabdach amuchya jivache jivan  
Shabde watu dhan jan loka!”

He strongly believed that only words can reform the society, and annihilate anti-social elements and adultery. Saint Tukaram was true, bright and sharp social reformer of the varkari sampraday. Tukaram admits that he has been enlightened with knowledge only because of Saint Namdev and lord Vitthala. He says,

Namdeve kele maji swapnamadhe jage,  
sawe Pandurang gheuniya |  
Sangitle kam karave kawitwa,

wawge nimitya bole nako ||  
Saint Tukaram further says,  
Aise kaise Jahale bhondu|  
Karma karuni mhanti sadhu||

He also says,

Vrikshwalli amha soyari walchari||

In this way, he dealt with the different context of public interests and developed intimacy in the people,

'Dnyandeve rachila paya  
Tuka zalase kalas'

## CONCLUSION

- 1) Saints were altruist, they devoted themselves for the betterment of society.
- 2) They taught that the behavior of man should be humanitarian, pious and moral.
- 3) They worked hard to remove the suppressing set up of dharma.
- 4) They tried to annihilate diversity in the society with the help of Tathagat Bhagwan Buddha's Pradnya, Shil and Karuna.
- 5) Saint have especially written their literature in Marathi and Hindi languages, as well as adorned their poems with wonderful music and created spiritual revolution in the society.

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