

# Prabandha's As Described in Sangitratnakara

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## Abstract

The text of Sangita-Ratnakara is comprehensive and highlights the musical practices that were prevalent in ancient India. Sarangadeva originally belonged to the northern parts of India but, due to Islamic invasion, had to migrate to southern parts of India; his works, therefore, show traces of both north and south Indian music. The study has critically assessed Sangita-Ratnakara and the prevalence of different forms of prabandha within the book.

**Keywords:** Sangita-Ratnakara, Prabandha, music, classical, stages

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Sangita-Ratnakara is an ancient piece of literature written by Pandit Sarangadeva, a musicologist from 12th-century India. The book is highly insightful as it elaborates on the two main kinds of Indian music that were popular then. Marga-Sangita is a form of classical technique which continues to be still taught in the Natya Sastra. On the other hand, the other form of Hindustani music, as described by Pandit Sarangadeva, is Desi-Sangita; this refers to regional variations of music within the sub-continent of India that do not fit neatly under the classical rules of art. Sarangadeva has argued that singing is the most important part of music, and the presence of spiritual characteristics in classical music puts it apart from Western Music (Chakravarty, 2017). The present article has aimed at understanding the different stages of Prabandha as discussed within the Sangita-Ratnakara.

## 2. DISCUSSION

In order to understand the importance of Prabandha in Sangita-Ratnakara, a thorough understanding of the concepts is important. Prabandha has been described as an ancient form of music which is comprised of four different "dhatus" and six "angas". Dhatus define the structure of the song; there are four main properties: Udgraaha, Melapak, Dhruva and Abhoga (Hindustani Classical Music, 2023). Udgraaha is often understood as the opening part of any song, Melapak can be understood as the chorus that connects the Udgraaha and Dhruva. Dhruva is the song's third stanza, while Abhoga is the last portion of the song. Angas are the second element of Prabandha; these are Swar, Birud, Tain, Pad, Paal and Taal. Each of these elements is integral for the successful formation of a song (Hindustani Classical Music, 2023). A musical composition which involves all of these different elements is called a prabandha. While this ancient form of musical composition is no longer in use, it puts into perspective how unique Hindustani classical music has been over the years.

Roy and Upadhyaya (2020) have stated that the use of Prabandha in classical Indian music can be traced back to the 8th century, however, the significance of Prabandha in musical composition has first been stated by Pandit Sarangadeva in his Sangita-Ratnakara, the author has excellently portrayed the musical

properties. In the fourth chapter of the book, Sarangadeva elaborated on how “Gana” is two-fold; these subdivisions are Nibadha and Anibadha. Prabandha is synonymous with the idea of Nibadha because it also includes “dhatu” and “anga”. Sarangadeva has argued in his work that Prabandha’s can be divided into two distinctive groups, these are Aniryukta and Niriyukta. Niriyukta Prabandha is unique in its own right because it is comprised of strict rules and regulations, which are known as tala and chhanda. Aniryukta Prabandha, on the other hand, does not have any form of regulation. The domain of Prabandha that Sharangadeva has dealt with is classical in nature and has therefore incorporated three different subheads, which are Suda, Alisamshraya and Viprakirna.

The research carried out by Roy and Upadhyaya (2020) is highly insightful in this regard because they have compared another piece of musical literature named Manosollasa which predates Sharangadeva’s, Sangita Ratnakara. However, while the comparison brings out a unique perspective, it can be seen that Sharangadeva’s works are more detailed and includes several points of melodies in the composition. Sharangadeva has a chapter on music and dance in which the similarities between Prabandha in both the Sanskrit language and Prakrit have been highlighted. Every intricacy and difference within the forms has been highlighted within the literature. Matanga’s Brihaddeshi is considered by historians to be the first historical record that mentions and elaborates on the concept of Prabandha; in the book, the author has described 48 different kinds of Prabandha.

Charya is considered an ancient form of Prabandha that has been omitted from later musical records of classical India. Someshwara is credited for mentioning this Prabandha, and references to his name can be found in the Sangit Ratnakara as well. Sarangadeva is part of the next generation after Someshwara and defined Charya under the Viprakirna type of Prabandhas. In his book, Sarangadeva has defined and presented 36 of the Viprakirna kind of Prabandhas. In this context, it should be mentioned that during this period, the Mohammedans invaded India, and Indian music started acquiring an Arabo-Persian influence, particularly in the northern parts of India. During the 14th century, the Prabandhas that were recorded started showing the influence of the intermixture of IndoPersian music. As discussed by Poske (2013), Prabandhas are an extremely versatile kind of music which emerged in medieval India and has left an impact on the Indian music legacy still found in modern classical music.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The present research is highly informational as it has exhibited traditional classical musical forms which were in practice during the ancient Indian period. The study has mostly been carried out on the concepts of Prabandhas and their representation of it in Sharangadeva’s work. The findings show the versatility of the work and how it has impacted Indian music;. At the same time, various musicological texts have a strong presence in Indian literature, not all are as impact as Sangita-Ratnakara.

### 4. REFERENCE LIST

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