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# REVIEW OF RESEARCH



## DEVELOPMENT OF SANSKRIT AND MUSICAL NOTES

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### ABSTRACT

**O**n the basis of musical shrutis, Sanskrit language was spoken, When the listeners experienced difficulty in appreciating minute differences in the sound, then notes were formed by combining shrutis.

**KEYWORDS:** Development of Sanskrit, basis of musical shrutis, ancient musicologists, Musical Notes.

### INTRODUCTION :

At the time of formation of notes, shrutis were checked once again, for shrutis were formed for pronunciation of Sanskrit and for distinguishing its pitch. Meanings of words in Sanskrit could be understood only by pronouncing them properly on the basis of shrutis and the pitch of voice. Shrutis were based on the pitch, but it was the sentiment given expression to which was more important, for music influences human beings, birds and beasts even without uttering a word. On that very basis, Rag and Ragniswre developed. For example, Tori Rag enraptures deers. The sweet tune of a been enchants snakes; Sweet music of mridang captivates elephants. Many human ailments used to be cured by music alone. Even today, when we listen to a sad and sorrowful tune emanating from a Violin, our eyes become full of tears. If a dreadful tune comes out of an Orchestra, we all feel dreadful. That is why ancient musicologists made a thorough study of music and the impression its shrutis leave on men, birds and beasts. Consequently, they appropriated sentiments for each shruti. The notes which were formed by the combination of shrutis were also steeped in sentiments.

The time that we have fixed (6,000 BC) for the development of Sanskrit and musical notes has been done on the following basis:

(1) Sanskrit language is mainly based on shrutis. Its vowels and consonants are pronounced on the basis of shrutis alone. Shruti is a very small portion of sound which is formed by dividing the sound produced by pronouncing Sa note of medium octave to the Sa note of upper octave into twenty-two equal parts. In other words, we can say that shruti is equal to  $1/22$ . Thus the value of shruti comes to about 4.5.

(2) Shruti cannot be developed without the help of a stringed musical instrument. That proves that before the formation of Sanskrit language, residents of this country had such musical instruments. I have made my calculation of value of a shruti on the basis of Vana-an instrument which had 100 strings of munj grass. Reference has been made to that instrument in the Vedas. It was popular before the introduction of Sanskrit language and



twenty twoshrutis were formed on the basis of that instrument.

(3) For pronouncing vowels and consonants of Sanskrit language, three shrutis are used. For example :

*Shra, Aa, Aaa, ... e, e, ee....*

### HISTORY OF THE RIG VEDA

Let us take another instance. If we have to prepare a new constitution for our country, we can study the constitutions of so many other countries and draft our own on the basis of our own requirements. But that takes a pretty long time. When the Vedas were written, the sages had nothing to draw upon. There was no law, no constitution, no code of conduct for the human beings to follow for leading a happy, peaceful and comfortable life. There was no guiding factor for the development of the universe. There was no leading light to guide human beings for undertaking their life journey in peace and tranquility or to help them eventually in embracing Almighty Bhagwan fully at the end of their life journey. That leads us to believe that the sages would have taken a very long time in writing the Vedas.

It can be said without any fear of contradiction that the Vedas are the main means for man's physical, moral, social and spiritual upliftment. That is why the five human frailties, namely, passion, anger, greed, affection and egoism which are very essential for human beings, exist in a very limited extent in birds and beasts. They spend their lives within those bounds. They have no idea of good or bad. They are unaware of good, bad or sinful acts. They are not bound by any restrictions.

But man has mental power. He has also the power and wisdom to control fire. That is why all that man does he does after a good deal of thinking and in accordance with his own wishes. He has the sight also to achieve his salvation in this birth only. So long as the two powers remain within bounds in human beings, they have every right to call themselves as human being. But when a person starts misusing these powers, we call him her a sinner or a demon-natured person.

But, if some person use his powers for the welfare of others, for the relief of the afflicted or for rendering service to the orphans and the destitutes, then he is called god-like.

The Vedas ordain upon human beings to tread the path of virtue and to desist from the path of evil. It is now worth considering that our ancient sage who revealed the Vedas must have studied human nature in great detail. It is on that basis that the Rig Veda which is known as the Chapter on Knowledge was brought out. It has 10,589 mantras.

Then came the Yajur Veda. It contains 5977 mantras. It deals with medicines, herbs, medicinal plants and the methods for their use. It also covers construction of buildings and the importance of carrying out scientific research.

The fourth Veda-the sam Veda-is for purposes of singing. It has 1873 mantras. It is called Gandharva Veda also. Such a vast treasure of knowledge could not have been built up in a limited period of one hundred, two hundred or four hundred years. It is, however, possible that by about 6,000 B.C. with the simultaneous development of shrutis, notes and Sanskrit language did the work of producing the Vedas commence. The Rig Veda must have been committed to memory by 1,000 B.C. For, during the period of 400 years from 1,000 B.C. to 600 B.C., the two great epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata had beenw aged. Because of these two wars, India had gone back to the Stone Age. The people started believing in witchcraft, heresy, human and animal sacrifice, untouchability and in many more maladies. For the abolition of those maladies, Lord Mahavir was born in 599 B.C. and Mahatma Buddha appeared on the scene in the year 567 B.C.

The priod of Mohanjodaro has been accepted as about 3,000 B.C. But Mohanjodaro was just a code of business. There must have been many more cities to feed that city, which may have even been larger than Mohanjodaro itself, which produced materials and products for export to foreign countries through port towns and which also served as distribution centre for the goods imported from abroad. Keeping all such points in view, a date should be fixed. In all probability, that date was sometime about 8,000 B.C. Men then used to communicate with one another not through language but by pointing with their hands and other organs. That was called Brahami System of communication. That very system was later on called as Punjabi language. We should, therefore, accept with confidence that all the five notes (swaras) of our Sangeet had been formed by

about 6,000 B.C.

By about 500 B.C., Buddha Missionaries started preaching their religion through Sangeet. They too laid emphasis on Kam (Passion), Krodh (Anger), Lobh (Greed), Moh (affection) and Ahankar (Egoism)-the human frailties on which emphasis was laid during the Vedic Period. In Vedic period, Krodh (Anger) and Lobh (Greed) were depicted by the right hand, and the left hand stood for Kam (Passion) and Moh (Affection). But the Buddha Missionaries, in an effort to clarify these weak points, opted for four hands on the right for purposes of receiving Kam, Krodh, Lobh, and Moh from the world. They also displayed four hands on the left which stood for those very four frailties (Kam, Krodh, Lobh and Moh) for giving to the world. They based their preachings on that alone and used music for achieving their object. They developed Rag, Ragnis. They used meeting of a male and a female, as a symbol for Kam (passion). Murder or assassination depicted Krodh (anger). Ganesh stood for greed and a mother caressing her child in her lap was a symbol of Moh (affection).

### CONCLUSION

All these things affirm that the same music which our sages developed round about 6,000 B.C. is still popular with our social structure, and is an essential part of our civilization. Our folk songs, folk dances and musical instruments still vouch for that. From the very beginning they are steeped in worship of God, change of seasons and worship of gods and goddesses. They are sung on such happy occasions as marriages and births. We may not regard them as of a very high quality from classical points of view, yet they are very popular in each village and town of every State and region of the country. Folk songs, folk dances and musical instruments hold a very important place in our cultural life. They help in maintaining our traditions for their own sake and for the enjoyment of huge audiences. This is the very base of our classical music.

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