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Significant role of music in the Vedic age

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Abstract

Music means both vocal and instrumental sounds combined in such a way as to produce beauty of form, harmony and expression of emotion. During the Vedic era this music – both vocal and instrumental were held in high esteem in the society. Music had both ritual and secular aspects.

The word *svara* is derived from the root *Svr* which means to sound. The word is found in the Vedic literature, particularly in the *Sāmaveda*, where it means accent and tone, or a musical note. The *Sāmaveda* (*Sāman* means song and *Veda* means knowledge) is the *Veda* of melodies and chants. This *Sāmaveda* is considered as the root of *Vedic* music as well as the root of classical Indian music also. *Sāmagāna* was considered as the sound of inspiration of the people of that age. Performing the *Sāmagāna* the people of that age tried to get strength and inspiration. People of *Vedic* era offered prayer to different deities in the form of *Sāmagīti*. In the *R̥gveda*, the *mantras* were without song or melodies but in the *Sāmaveda* the *mantras* were connected with the melody and thus appeared as *Sāmagāna*. So in the *Jaimini Sūtra*, it was said, “*Gītiṣu Sāmākhya*”.

Deities were invited with the *rgmantras* and deities were glorified with the *Sāmagāna* was known as *stutiḡāna* or *stotra*. Melodious recitation and song – both were entitled as *Sāma* in *devakula*. *Chāndogyaopniṣad* says, earth is *R̥k* and *Sāma* is *Agni*. *Sāma* resides in *R̥k*. This *Sā* tune is considered as the *adisvara* of *saṅgīta*.

During the Vedic era, at the time of sacrifices and *upāsana āhuti* had been offered and with that *āhuti* rhythmic *Sāmagāna* was performed. With this *Sāmagīti* different types of musical instruments were associated. During the Vedic era, *Sāmagāna* was developed depending upon the *Yāga*. In *Āśvalāyana Śrautasūtra* and *Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra* – seven types of *soma-samsthā yajña* were mentioned. In each and every *yajña Sāmagāna* was sung. *Stuti-gāna* and *gāthā-gāna* were also famous.

Music was not only considered as the ritual performance, sometimes it was also considered as a social activity. In the Vedic time other than *Sāmagāna* some kind of *Sāmetara saṅgīta* also existed.

Hence, it is not worthy to say that during the Vedic era, the music not only remained as the medium of entertainment, rather it appeared as the medium of *Sādhanā* which would lead the ultimate and supreme realization.

Keywords: Vocal and instrumental music, harmony, emotion, high esteem, ritual and secular aspect, *svara*, musical note, melodies, chant, inspiration, *sāmagīti*, *stutiḡāna*, *stotra*, *adisvara*, *āhuti*, *upāsana*, *gāthāgāna*, *sādhanā*, *Sāmetara saṅgīta*, supreme realization

Introduction

Vedic –Aryan era is considered to be the golden era in the history of world literature. Not only the philosophy of that age reached at a certain point but also the art, culture, literature, sculpture, music, religion, and spiritualism reached to their highest point. Later on, from this flourished Vedic-Aryan culture, many new thoughts, ideas, dogmas, and philosophy have been developed. From the style and beauty of art and music of that age, later the concept of Indian music or song and the unity of art have been developed. The glorious message of unity and amity of Aryan-civilization, thus resounds the west. Therefore, Vedic era is marked as the source of art, beauty, literature, music and philosophy. In this regard the quote made by E.B. Havell is very much remarkable and observable. Havell comments, “Though the Vedic period may seem to Europeans so barren in artistic creation, it is of supreme consequence for the understanding of Indian art. For throughout all the many and varied aspects of Indian art-Buddhist, Jain, Hindu, Sikh and even Saracen there runs a golden thread of Vedic thought, binding them together in spite of all their ritualistic and dogmatic difference [1].”

Vedic literature is considered as the mirror of Vedic era. This Vedic literature mainly consists of four Veda – *R̥k*, *Sām*, *Yaju* and *Atharva* and their several recensions.

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The sages of Vedic age, realized the presence of different natural forces without which the survival of human beings were impossible. The sages put “prayana” into these different natural forces, being imagined all these forces as “God.” Hence, sometimes prayer or praise was offered in the form of *mantra* and sometimes in the form of *sāmagīti*. *Rg Vedic stotra* is mainly based on *mantra* in the form of verses on the other hand *Sāmaveda* is based on melody and note – which considered as *āvāhanagīti*. This melody was full of thought, devotion and reverence. This *sāmagīti* not only acquires a place in *Rgveda* but also gains high position in the other Vedic literature.

Vedic Music: It was believed that waves of sound, considered as *śabdabrahma*, stays hidden in the sky. This *śabda* originates from the sky, stays in the sky and dissolves in the sky. Therefore, after the emergence of *śabda*, the speech of all birds, animals, snakes, even human beings flowed out from the sky. The ancient poets had power to realize the presence and beauty of the natural forces and they unified themselves with that forces thus they found *paramātmā*. As a result they glorified that boundless power sometimes in a form of *stuti*, sometimes in a prayer and sometimes in a form of music and nicts. Connecting tune or melody to the *stuti*, *sāmagāna* was composed to worship different Gods. This *sāmagāna* creates a great impact not only in the field of Vedic literature but also in the field of post Vedic culture, literature and even in *saṃgīta*.

Sāmagāna has several branches and was sung in several methods. All these *gītarōpa* were not possible to restore because they had no written form. All these *gītarōpa* were preserved in the mind.

This *sāmagāna* was considered as the sound of inspiration of the people of that age. Performing this *sāmagāna* people of that age tried to get strength and inspiration. To protect their food shelter and relatives, people of that age offered prayer towards lord *Indra* in the form of *sāmagīti*. In *Rgveda* *sāmamantra* was without song or music but in *Sāmaveda* the mantras were connected with the melody and thus appeared as *sāmagāna*. So, in *Jaimīni Sūtra*, it was said that – “*Gītiṣu Sāmākhya*”. Commentator *Ācārya Sāyaṇa*, said, “*gīyamānasya sāma āśrayabhūtā ṛcaḥ sāmavede samānnāyante*.” Gods were invited with the *ṛgmantras* and Gods were glorified with the *mantras* of *Sāmaveda*. These *sāma mantras* are known as *stutigāna* or *stotra*. Melodious recitation and song – both were entitled as *sāma* in *devakula*. In Vedic literature, mainly *Samhitā*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Āraṇyaka*, *Upaniṣad*, *Dharmasūtra*, *Śrautasūtra*, *Kalpasūtra*, *Śikṣā*, and in *Prātiśākhya* – song was practised according to the application of *ābhūdāyika* and *ābhicārika*. Vedic song was associated with music and dance also. So, it is clearly found that during Vedic era, development of *saṃgīta* was undeterred. Though, then instead of *saṃgīta* – *graha*, *udgāna*, *udgīti*, *stotra*, - all these words were used.

In *Rk*, *Sāma*, *yajuh*, *Atharva Veda* and in *Brāhmaṇa* literature description of various musical instruments was found. Concerning dance, *Rksamhitā* (4/20/22) said “*martaścidvonṛtamorukmavakṣasa*” [2] Commentator, *Sāyaṇa* said, “*he nṛtavonṛtantaḥ he rukmavakṣasaḥ vocamānakṣaraṇam*” [3]. Another *Rk* *mantra* (5/33/6), *Sāyaṇa* further explained, “*nṛtamānonṛtyannamartomaraṇadharmā satvaṃ vasamānaḥ*” [4]. *RgVeda* (10/18/3) said, “*prāñcao agāmantaye’sāya*” [5]. *Sāyaṇārcaya* clearly described the meaning and said, “*tataḥ uttaraṃ vayaṃ prāñco ayāma nṛtaye nartanāya karmani gātravikṣepāya*

svakarmānuṣṭhāyetiśrāvah [6]”. From all these commentaries, - it becomes clear that *sāmagāna* was associated with dance. But sometimes dance was separately practised without music or song.

In assessing the meaning of ‘*sāma*’ *Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad* says, ‘*sāma*’ – this word originates from the two words – ‘*sā*’ and ‘*ama*’ [7].

Śāṅkara said in his commentary, ‘*sāma means prāṇa*’ [8] Here ‘*prāṇa*’ means ‘*prāṇavāyu*’ with this ‘*prāṇavāyu*’ – *svara* is carried into effect. Though *vāk* and ‘*prāṇa*’ – both are considered as secondary and *prāṇa* or *svara* is considered as prime [9].

Chāndogyopaniṣad says, earth is *Rk* and *sāma* is *agni*. *Sāma* resides in *Rk*. This *Sā* tune is considered as the *adisvara* of *saṃgīta* [10].

In *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* of *Atharvaveda* (3rd *prapāthak*), it is said that *sā* means *Rk* and *ama* is considered as the symbol of *sāma* [11]. *Śrautakāra Kātyāyana* also uttered the same [12]. *Ācācārya Karka* also uttered the same meaning of the word *sāma* [13].

During the Vedic era, at the time of *yoga* and *upāsana* – *āhuti* had been performed and with that *āhuti* rhythmic song and *gāthā* were also performed. With the song, different types of musical instruments and dance were associated. These all were performed to keep up the glorification of the *sāmagāna*. This glorified form of *sāmagāna* and methods were collected in *Śikṣā*, *Prātiśākhya* and *Brāhmaṇa* text. *Udgātā* added melody to the specific Vedic metre and then sang the *sāmagāna*. *Śrautakāra Kātyāyana paurṇamāsa*, *darśapūrṇamāsa*, *agnihotra*, *cāturmāsya*, *paśuvandha*, *somadvādaśāha*, *vājapeya*, *rājasūya*, *sautrānī*, *āśvamedha*, *pitṛmedha*, *ekāha*, *ahīna*, *satra* – during all these *yāga*, *sāmagāna*, dance and different musical instrument were used or performed [14].

Sāmavedā has several recensions. Famous commentator *Ācārya Patañjali* said, “*catvāro vedāḥ sāngā sarahasyā bahudhā bhinnāḥ - ekaśatamadhvaryuśākhāḥ, Sahasravartmā sāmavedaḥ, ekaviṃśatidhā vāhr̥cyam, navadhā’tarvaṇo vedāḥ.*”

From this it becomes clear that melody attracts people more than other. *Sāmavedā* has four (4) *gāna-saṃhitā*. –

1. *grāmageya gāna*.
2. *araṇyageya gāna*.
3. *ūha gāna*.
4. *uhya gāna*.

Grāmageya gāna is known as *geya gāna* or *prakṛtigāna*. This type of *gāna* or song was sung in villeges. *Grāmageya gāna* is also known as *yoninigāna*, *prakṛtigāna* and *Vedasāmāgāna*. Professor A.C. Burnell said, “*Sāma* or *Sāmans* means tunes”. Burnell further said, “The *Sāman* is originally a sentence (for many *sūktas*, especially in the *Āraṇyakagānas*, are in prose) sung or chanted in a peculiar manner; and the *gānas* are collections of such verses, arranged according to the purposes for which they were supposed to be intended [15].”

The songs which were considered forbidden, had been sung and learned from the *Ācārya* at *araṇya*. All these songs were known as *araṇyageya gāna*. At the time *yāga*, *uttarārcika* appeared more essential than *pūrvārcika*. During *yāga* – all the songs which were sung with melody based on the *sūkta* of *uttarārcika*. All these *sūtras* were associated with three *Rk*. According to *Kaushuma* recension there were 1197

grāmageya gāna, 294 aranyageya gāna, 1026 ūha gāna and 205 uhya gāna. Therefore total number of gāna was 2722. On the other hand, according to Jaiminīya recension, there were 1223 grāmageya gāna, 291 aranyageya gāna, 1802 ūha gāna and 356 uhya gāna. The total number was 3681. Actually pūrva ārcika and uttarārcika are the sources of Veda Sāmagāna and ūha gāna [16].

Vedic society and the people of that age completely depended on the natural forces. During Ṛk Vedic age, people offered prayer towards the natural forces in the form of stuti. In Vedic age yāga was considered as essential and necessary. During yāga sāmāgāna was sung. Yāga was divided into two categories – Smārtakarma and Śrautakarma. Yāga which was performed at the time of marriage ceremony, upanayana, plantation of trees, building lake, vṛṣotsarga, was known as Smārtakarma. Agnihotra, Agniṣṭoma, Aśvamedha, Rājasūya all these yāga were known as Śrautakarma.

Sāmagāna was considered as an essential part of yāga. This sāmagāna was sung for different Gods and seers at the time of different yāga. For instance bāmadevavyasāma gāna which had 25stoma was sung at the time of Mahāvratā yāga. At the time of mādhyandina yāga yaudhājaya and raurava sāma were sung. Like stoma and stotra gāthā and gāna were also famous at the time of Vedic era.

During somayāga, Gods were invited and praised with sāma and sara (melody). Mantra, associated with tunes was used to praise Gods. These praise or stuti was known as stotra. Besides this, without tune, the mantra which was performed to praise God, was known as śastra. So, in the methods of yāga, difference between stotra and śastra are found.

“Pragītamantrasādhyaguṇiniṣṭhaguṇābhidhānam
stotraṃ
apragītamantrasādhyaguṇiniṣṭhaguṇābhidhānam
śastraṃ [17].”
(RV- 1/2/1) ...śrautapāṭha, Paṭṭābhira Śāstrī

Regarding methods of yāga śastrai was always read after stotra. Regarding the rituals of yāga it was found that the stotra with which a God was praised, that God was further praised with śastra. Therefore, stotra and śastra remain same in number.

Sāmagāna is known as stotra gāna. Adding Vedic kruṣṭa (accent) sāmagāna had been sung as stotra-gāna rhythmically.

Somadeva was considered as the master of somarasa. Pragāthagāna was sung for Somadevatā. That Pragāthagāna was known as sāmagāna during Vedic era. Sāmagāna mainly sung based on stotra. At the time of the extracting somarasa, sāmagāna was sung. The person, involved in the extraction, became happy and got pleasure for singing the songs and at the same time, the whole ceremony became sacred.

Mention of dance, song and musical instrument was found in Sāmaveda or Sāmasaṃhitā [18]. Commentator Sāyaṇa, mentioned the influence or impact of sāmagāna clearly [19].

In Sāmavedic mantra, song was also mentioned as well as dance [20]. Then, gāna or song and recitation were the same. Gāthāgāna was also famous, at that time - puruhutaṃ puruṣhutaṃ gāthānyāṃ sanaśrutam. Ācārya Sāyaṇa said – “stutamata eba gāthānyāṃ gānayogyāṃ gātavyāṃ sanaśrutam sanātanayā prasiddgam.”-. (Sāyaṇabhāṣya) [21]. Saṃgīta is considered as a work, or an attempt – because prāṇavāyu first comes out from navel, then it flows through throat. At last sound emerges. Ācārya Jaimini, said in Mīmāṃsādarśana – “gītīrnāma kriyā hyābhyāntara-

prayatnajanita-svarabiṣeṣāṇāmbhīyāñjikā,
sāmasābdābhilapyā. Sā niyata pramāṇā, ṛci gīyate. Tat
sāmpādanārtho yamrgaṣkarbikāro bisṛṣo
bikarṣaṇamabhyāso birāmaḥ stobha ityebamādayaḥ sarve
sāmaveda samāmnāyante [22].”

Sāmaveda or Sāmasaṃhitā is divided into two parts – i) ārcika and ii) staubhika. The first and small part is known as ārcika. There are 585 ārcika in the first part. The second part is known as staubhika. Stobha means to praise someone. The song which was dedicated towards God and Seer, was considered as Stobha.

Grāmageya, aranyageya, uhya and ūha – with all these four division of song (gāna), Sāmavedic gāthā, gāna and part of songs were composed. All these songs were divided into two parts – pūrvagāna and uttaragāna. Grāmageya gāna was considered as pūrvagāna. Aranyageya, uhya and ūha gāna were considered as uttaragāna.

Ṛgvedic mantra to which melody was added, was called ‘sāmagāna’. The mantra, depending upon which the sāmagāna was sung, was also called ‘yoni’ or the source or cause of gāna.

Sāmagāna has five bhakti or bhāga - himkāra, prastāba, udgītha, pratihāra and nidhana. To sing sāmagāna more effectively and beautifully, all these seven bhāga were needed.

During the Vedic era, sāmagāna was developed depending upon the yāga. In Āśvalāyana Śrautasūtra and Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra – seven types of ‘soma saṃsthā yajña’ were mentioned. In each and every ‘yajña’ sāmagāna was sung. Stuti gāna and gāthā gāna were also famous, during the Vedic era.

In the Vedic age, the five parts of śastra and sāma were imagined like this:-

	Śastra	Sāma	
1	āhāva	himkāra	Sung by everyone.
2	prathama ṛk	prastāba	Sung by prostatā
3	madhyama ṛk	udgītha	Sung by udgātā
4	uttama ṛk	pratihāra	Sung by pratihartā
5	baṣaṭkāra	nidhana	Sung by three

For the above five division or parts – sāmagāna was also known as pañcabhaktika [23]. In Sāmagāna four to seven svāra were used. Mantra, Madhya and tāra – in these three places, accents were developed in the method of ascending order (ārohaṇa). Udgātā, prastotā and pratihartā – these three ‘sāmag rṭvika’ recited stotra gāna before each śastra. At the time of yajña before āhuti stotra gāna was sung and after āhuti śastra was read. sāmagāyī sang the song in the form of stotra gāna or stoma.

Rareness of Sāmaveda was in the tune of its song. Adding melody to the different types of Vedic metre, udgātā proclaimed the songs. Vedic seers had ability to realize the ṛk mantras and they sang all these mantras in different tunes. All these tunes had been preserved as miraculous gīta and were sung in different yajña. Sometimes, all these tunes had been added to stobha and were sounded by the udgātās.

In Sāmaveda mainly three (3) types of accents were mentioned – udātta, anudātta and svarita. In Pāṇini sūtra – the character of these three accents were mentioned [24]. The accent which was uttered in high pitch, known as udātta. The accent uttered in low pitch was known as anudātta. The accent remained between udātta and anudātta, was called svarita. At the time of uttering ‘udātta accent’ – body became

long and voluminous and at the time of uttering ‘*anudātta* accent’ – body reduced and became short [25].

In ancient Vedic era, during *yajña* – tuned or melodious *mantras* were uttered to praise Gods and to offer things in *homa*. Thus, the devotion and reverence of the people of that age, had been expressed through all these rituals of *yajña*. *Udātta*, *anudātta* and *svarita* – all these three accents were used at the time of *yajña*. But, sometimes, instead of these three accent – *mantras*, done with *ekaśruti*, was also uttered. *Ekaśruti* means utterance of *mantra* with only one effort. *Āśvalāyana* said in his *Śrautsūtra* – approximation of *udātta*, *anudātta* and *svarita*, was known as *ekaśruti* [26]. In *Sāmaveda*, all the tunes or accent used for singing were marked mathematically [27].

Vedagāna descended from the high pitch to low pitch – it was the style or method of *Vedagāna* – “*kruṣṭādayaḥ uttarottaraṃ nīcā bhabanti*” [28].

In *Rgvedic* recitation, accent from *gāndhāra* to *ṣaḍja* were used and all these accents had been ascended and descended. As, *Sāmaveda* had different recensions, so all these recensions had several laws or methods of singing. – “*gāyanti sarvāḥ śākhāḥ pṛthak pṛthak.*” *Rtvikas* and *sāmaga* of different recensions, sang *sāmagāna* in different tunes [29].

According to recensions, sometimes *Sāmagāna* was sung in five accents or sometimes in six or seven accents. *Nārada*muni, also mentioned the presence of different accent in his ‘*Nārādīya Śikṣā*’ [30].

R. Saatyanaarayan in “*Sāmaveda: an introductory note*”, said – “The *Sāman* is sung usually to a scale of five notes, a few to six and only two to seven. The notes are organized into a descending scale. Every *sāman* is fixed with precise notation with numerals or letters symbolising the note, written above it, if many notes are carried by a single syllable. They are written next to it in a proper order. All patterns of musical phrases are comprehensibly and unambiguously codified and serve as nomanic devices, in the Parishista texts. The duration of notes are prescribed by rules by the *Matralakshana* text [31].

Though in *sāmika* era *sāmagāna* was sung in three to four accents, but at the end of Vedic era, tunes turned into five, six or seven accents [32]. All these seven accents were developed mainly from the three collection of prime accents, named ‘*Svaratraya*’ or ‘*Sthānasvara*’ [33].

In the Vedic era, while offering oblation in the sacrifice, *mantras* were enchanted to glorify the gods and to achieve the desired objects. Among all rituals, *soma* sacrifice was considered as the most important and grandiose rituals. In this ritual offering was carried out in accompaniment of the *sāmagāna*. *Sāmagāna* is the singing of hymns from the *Rgveda* alone and not from other Vedas. *Sāmagāna* was the composition of word of *Rgvedic* hymns into notes. When the *Rgvedic mantras* were put into tunes, they are called the *Sāmagāna*. The priests followed the rules and regulation of the liturgical text rigidly. At the time of ‘*soma* ritual’ not only the song but also the dancing and musical instruments were performed. The *Mahāvratā* sacrifice can be cited as an example where the dance by the maidens (*Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, 5/1/1) and the playing of *Śatatantri vīṇā* (*vāṇaḥ śatatanturbhavati - Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā*, 34/5) were performed at the time of rituals. This *sāmagāna* is considered as the most remarkable source of Indian music.

From the history of Indian Philosophy and religion we come to that the ancient sages not only confined themselves in the trivials of rituals but they also showed the path of the higher spiritual philosophy. At the time of attaining the higher spirituality, the sages absorbed themselves in meditation. In

this regards, it is important to say that *sāmagāna* was not only sung in the rituals, it was also considered as the medium of meditation. Sometime meditation on symbols found shape and the symbols were served by the sacrifice. In the first part of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (1/1/1-2/22/5) – such instance of meditation of *sāman* had been found. *Udgūtha*, is one of the five parts of a *sāmagāna*. *Udgūtha* – has three syllables ‘*Ud*’ means *Prāṇa*, as with the help of *Prāṇa* one gets elevated from this material world, ‘*gī*’ means speech (i.e. *vāk*) and ‘*tha*’ carries the sense of *anna* (i.e. food), because it is the ‘*anna*’ which keeps up or supports all beings in this world (*√sthā*). These three syllables some times were meditated as the three worlds – heaven atmosphere and earth. Sometimes as the principal atmospheric gods – Sun, Wind and Fire were meditated, sometimes as the three Vedas and so on. The knowledge of unity was propagated through this meditation. This knowledge was considered as the highest knowledge in the path of salvation.

In this connection, we can take the ‘*Gāndharvasaṅgīta*’ as the reference, which developed the idea of achieving god through music. The term ‘*mārga*’, attached to the ‘*Gāndharvasaṅgīta*’, led towards the path of complete unification with the god. Therefore, it can be easily realized that the music not only remained as the medium of entertainment, rather it appeared as the medium of *sādhanā* which would lead to the ultimate and supreme realization.

Here it is essential to say that the *sāmagāna* not only existed and was practised in the ritual performances by a particular section of people in the Vedic era. Other than *sāmagāna* some kind of *sāmetara saṅgīta* existed. But in the Vedic texts, the existence of this *sāmetara saṅgīta* is not found. It is hard to say whether this music was basically of folk origin or was secular in nature.

This *sāmetara saṅgīta* was first recognized by *Śikṣākāra Nārada*. He not only noted down the names of seven *sāmasvaras*, but also noted down the secular *svaras*. *Nārada* compared these two scales by declaring – “*yaḥ sāmaganām prathamah sa veṇor madhyamah svarah / yo dvitīyah sa gāndhāras trītyas tv ṛṣabhaḥ smṛtaḥ // caturthaḥ ṣaḍja ity āhuḥ pañcamo dhaivato bhavet / ṣaṣtho niṣādo vijñeyah saptamah pañcamah smṛtaḥ//*” (*Nārādīya Śikṣā*, 1/5/1-2) [34].

A curiosity may arisen in the common mind, whether *Nārada* accepted this *laukika saṅgīta* as *Gāndharva* or not – in this regards some scholars believe that *Nārada* only referred to the term *Gāndharva* while explaining its etymological meaning – “*geti geyam viduḥ prājñā dheti kāruravādanam / veti vādyasya samjñena gāndharvasya virocnam.*” – (*Nārādīya Śikṣā*, 1/4/12) [35].

As *Sāmagāna* was restricted within the Vedic rituals, common people enjoyed the secular music more and they got pleasure in it. Though *Gāndharva saṅgīta* imitated *Sāmagāna* but there was a clear distinction between *Sāmagāna* and secular music both in style and mode.

The whole Vedic text was orally carried by the sages. There is a big portion of prose in this Vedic text. The sages had great skill of memorizing the notes. They indicated the note accurately by their fingers but sometimes it appeared difficult to reproduce the notes perfectly in voice and in their accurate forms.

Sāmagāna was confined among a particular section of people, who had not always tuneful and melodious voice as a consequence, sometimes tune and melody got distorted. This has led to the emergence of thousand *śākhās* or school of *Sāmaveda*. A.C. Burnell said “This division into countless *śākhās* is caused by the *sāmavedins* who in course of time

arrived at a better appreciation of melody and modified the *sāmans* with embellishments.” Burnell further said, “I am not sure that the chants are not modified even at the present day; some priests, at all events use embellishments which others reject [36].”

As it is believed that the Vedic tradition was fixed and unvaried, it is difficult to attain or find out the original *sāmans* within this fixed tradition.

Sāmagāna is not only considered as the earliest ancient music of India but also considered as the earliest music of mankind. Apart from it *sāmagāna* remarkably played an glorious role from the beginning of the notation system.

So, it is our duty to put the Vedic music properly into light unless the world music will become crippled and scrappy.

Sāmaveda Saṃhitā is the Veda of melodies and chants. It is an ancient Vedic Sanskrit text and part of the scriptures of Hinduism. One of the four Vedas, it is a liturgical text whose, 1875 verses are primarily derived from the *Ṛgveda*. Three recensions of the *Sāmaveda* have survived and variant manuscripts of the Veda have been found in various parts of India. *Sāmaveda* recensions from the *Kauthuma* (north India) and *Jaiminīya* (central India) regions are among those that have survived.

According to R.T. Griffith there are three recensions of *Sāmaveda Saṃhitā* – i) The *Kauthuma* recension ii) The *Rānāyaṇīya* recension iii) The *Jaiminīya* recension. *Sāmaveda Saṃhitā* of *kauthuma* recensions consists of two parts the ‘*Ārcika*’ or the collection of stanzas and the ‘*Uttarārcika*’ the second collection of stanzas. Both parts consist of verses which derived from the *Ṛgveda*. Most of these verses were composed in the *Gāyatrī* metre or in the *pragātha* stanzas, made up of *Gāyatrī* and *Jagatī* lines. Here it is important to note that 75 verses which are not found in the *Ṛgveda*, are partly found in other *Saṃhitā*. Some may originate from the unknown recensions but later have been patched together with the various verses of *Ṛgveda*. In this connection Theodor Aufrecht proved that the divergent readings of the *Sāmaveda*, was based only on arbitrary, intentional or accidental changes – changes as would occur ever otherwise when words are set to music.

The *Ārcika*, the first part of the *Sāmaveda Saṃhitā*, consists of 585 individual stanzas. In the *Ārcik* the stanzas belonged to the various hymn-melodies (*sāman*). These *Sāmans* hymn-melodies, were sung during the sacrifice. According to Vedic theologians, melody is born of the stanza. Therefore the stanza is termed as the ‘*yonī*’ or ‘womb’. Although, one stanza can be sung following various melodies and one melody to various stanza, but sometimes certain stanzas can be looked upon as texts for certain melodies – as ‘*yonis*’.

The second part of the *Sāmaveda saṃhitā*, the *Uttarārcika*, consist of 400 songs, mostly of three stanzas each.³⁷ The *stotras*, sung at the sacrifices, originated from these stanzas.

In the *Ārcika* the stanzas seemed to be arranged partly following the metres and partly according to the gods. But the songs in the *Uttarārcika* seemed to be arranged in the order of the chief sacrifices [38].

A *stotrai* consist of usually three stanzas. All these stanzas were sung at the time of sacrifices according to the same melody which had been taught by the *Ārcika*.

The pupil who wanted to be trained as the *Udgātās* – priest in the school of *Sāmaveda*, learned the hymn-melodies with the help of the *Ārcika*. It is presumed that the *Uttarārcika* was of the later origin of the *Ārcika*, because the hymn-melodies of the *Ārcika* did not find in the *Uttarārcika* and the *Uttarārcika* contained many hymns for which the *Ārcika* did not teach the

melody. The *Ārcika* and the *Uttarārcika* are the two major parts of *Sāmaveda*. The *Uttarārcika* is considered as the essential part of *Ārcika* [39].

In the earliest days during the Vedic era, the melodies were taught only by oral repetition or by playing them in instruments. At the time of singing, notes were marked nicely by the priests by the movement of their hands and fingers.

The hymn-melodies which were sung at the time of *somā*-sacrifices in the village were different from the those for the sacrifices of the hermits living in the forest. The *Ārcika* had two songbooks - *Grāmageyagāna* (= “village song book”) and an *Araṇyagāna* (= “forest song book”) the custom was – it should be only learnt in the forest. [See W. Caland, *die Jaminīya-saṃhitā*, p.10: H Oldenberg, GGA, 1908, pp. 722 f] There were also two other books of melody – the *Ūhagāna* and the *Uhyagāna*. *Ūhagāna* was connected with the *Grāmageyagāna* and the *Uhyagāna* was connected with the *Araṇyagāna*. Both were composed to give the *Sāmans* in order in which they were employed at the rituals.

Besides this, there was also a ritual book of the *Sāmaveda*, known as ‘*Sāmavidhāna Brāhmaṇas*’ whose second part was the special hand book of magic. This book has also an connection with the *Sāman*-melodies.

Sāmaveda Saṃhitā is not meant to be read as a text it is like a musical score sheet that must be heard.

From the all discussion and analysis it can be undoubtedly said that the *Sāmaveda Saṃhitā* is certainly valuable to the history of Indian concept of sacrifice and magic and its *gānas* (*saṃgītas*) were certainly very important during the Vedic period as well as for the development of the Indian and world music.

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3. Ibid, p. 91.
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5. Ṛgveda Saṃhitā. Ed. and Trans., R.C. Datta. Haraf Prakashani, Kolkata, 2015; 2:462.
6. Swami Prajnanananda. Bhārātīya Saṅgītera Itihāsa, Shree Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Kolkata, 2000; 1:91.
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8. ‘vāk prāṇābhīdhānabhūto’yaṃ sāmāśabdaḥ.’ (Śāṅkarabhāṣya) Ibid. 5.
9. ‘tathā prāṇanivartya svarādisamudāyamātram gītiḥ sāmāśavdenābhīdhīyate.’ -(Śāṅkarabhāṣya) Ibid. 5.
10. ‘ṛcyadhūḍham sāmā gīyate.’ (Chāndogyopaniṣad -1/6,7) Upniṣad Grathāvalī, Ed. and Trans., Swami Gambhirananda, Udbodhan Karyalay, Kolkata, 2016; 2:53-58.
11. ‘sā eva nāma ṛk āsīt, amo nāma sāmā.’ (Gopatha Brāhmaṇa, 3rd prapāthak) Basabi Kilikdar (Chowdhury), *Sāmaveda O Uttara Bhārātīya Saṅgīta*, SBD, Kolkata, 2008, 6.
12. ‘ṛco yajuṃṣi sāmāni nigadā mantrāḥ.’ (Kātyāyana Śrautakāra – 1/45) Ibid, 6.
13. ‘pragūtam mantravākyam sametyucyata. ataḥ pūrvapatitvatvād-gītireva sāmāśavdenābhīlakṣyate.’ (Karkabhāṣya) Ibid, 6.
14. ‘rathantaram gāyeti preṣyati’(3/228), ‘gānamadhvaryoḥ’(3/229), ‘brahmā bā vedayogāt’(3/330),

- 'yuktatvāccādhvāryoḥ' (3/331), 'vāṇena śatatantunā' (13/32), 'sadaḥ sūktiṣu dundubhūn bādayanti' (13/48), 'govābīṇāpāḥ kāṇḍavīṇāśca patnyo bādayanti' (13/50), 'upagāyanti'(13/58), 'anyāśca śbdān kurvanti' (13/52), 'satyasāma gāyati'(17/72), 'sāma preṣyati' (19/109), 'aindryām bṛhatyām gāyati' (19/110), 'vīnāgāthibhyām pṛthak śate dadāti' (22/59), 'nṛtagūtavāditravacca' (21/42), 'tamudgātre dadāti' (20/68). – Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra. Ibid, 6-7
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19. 'aram alam gāyata, bacanavyatyaya gāya-gūtiṃ kuru.' (Sāyaṇabhāṣya-5/1/85) Basabi Kilikdar (Chowdhury), Sāmaveda O Uttara Bhāratīya Saṅgīta, SBD, Kolkata, 2008, 40.
20. 'gāyanti tvā gāyatriṇo harcantyarkamarkīṇaḥ, brahmāṇastvā śatadruta udvaṃśamiva yemire.' (Sāmaveda -3/12/1) Ibid, 40.
21. Ibid, 40.
22. Ibid, 42.
23. 'te vai pañcānyad bhūtvā kalpetāmāhāvaśca, hiṅkāraśca prastābaśca, prathama ca pṛg, udgīthaśca madhyamā ca, pratihāraścottamā ca, nidhanam ca baṣatkāraśca.' (Aitareya Brāhmaṇa,12/12) Ibid, 53.
24. 'uccairudāttaḥ' (1/2/29), 'nīcairanudāttaḥ'(1/2/30), 'samāhāraḥ svaritaḥ' (1/2/31), (Taittirīya Prātiśākhya – 1/38, 1/39, 1/40) Ayodhyanath Sanyal, Vaidika Svararāhasya, The University of Burdwan, Bardhaman, 1969, 21.
25. 'udāttoccāraṇe tasya dehadairghyaṃ bhaved yataḥ. / uccārṇe'nudāttasya dehasya hrasvatā bhavet.' (Vyāsa Śikṣā) Basabi Kilikdar (Chowdhury), Sāmaveda O Uttara Bhāratīya Saṅgīta, SBD, Kolkata, 2008, 58.
26. 'udāttānudāttasvaritānām paraḥ sannikarṣa aikyaśrutam.' (Āśvalāyana Śrautsūtra-1/2) Ibid, 59.
27. 'yatheme'kṣaradharmabhūtā udāttādayaḥ svarāḥ sarvavedeśuccāryante likyante ca tathaiva sāmavede gānopayoginā dharmibhūtā api svarā gāna upayujyante'ñkaacihnaiśca likhyante.' (Sāmabhāṣya - Sāyana) Ibid, 63.
28. 'eteśāmeva ca svarāṇāmantimaṃ niśādamārabhya pūrvapūrvasya paraparavartivarāpekṣayā nīcairdhvaninā ṣaḍajaparyantaṃ gānevarohakrama ityucyate.' (Śrautapāṭha, p.- 11] Ibid, 63.
29. 'etairbhāvaistu gāyanti sarbāḥ śākhāḥ pṛthak pṛthak./ pañcasveba tu gāyanti bhūyiṣṭhāni svareṣu tu./ sāmāni ṣaṭsu cānyāni saptasu dve tu kauthumāḥ./ ūnānāmanyathāgūtiḥ pādānāmadhikāśca ye'. – (puṣpasūtra) Ibid, 62.
30. 'kathakālāvaprabṛtṣeṣu taittirīyāhvarakeṣu ca, ṛgvede sāmavede ca baktavyaḥ prathamāḥ svarāḥ. ...ete biśeṣataḥ proktā svarā vai sārāvaidikā'. (Nāradya Śikṣā - 1/9-14) Ibid, 62.
31. Workshop on Sāmaveda on 22.5.99. Ibid, 62-63.
32. 'sāmāni hi kruṣṭa-prathama-dvītya-tṛtīya-caturtha-mandrātisvāryākhāḥ saptasvarāḥ.'(statement of Kallināth, the commentator of the book Saṅgīta Sudhākara composed by Śārīgadeva) Ibid, 64.
33. trīṇi mandraṃ madhyamamuttamaṃ ca. / sthānānyāhuḥ saptayamāni vācaḥ.' – (Ṛgveda Prātiśākhya, 13/42) ii) 'sapta svarā ye yamānte.' – (Ṛgveda Prātiśākhya, 13/44) iii) 'mandrādiṣu triṣu sthāneṣu sapta sapta yamāḥ.' – (Taittirīya Prātiśākhya – 23/11) Ibid, 64.
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