

Deśīs Employed in Padma Vijaya's Samarāditya-Kevalī-Rās

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Samarāicca-Kahā written by Haribhadrasūnīśvara (8th century) is a celebrated work of tales that has attracted many scholars to work upon it. (Its Gujarati translation was done by Hemasāgaraūrī in 1966)

Pradyumnasūrī of the 14th century, Digambara Brahma Jinadāsa (1520 v.s.), Padmasāgarajī of the 1650 v.s., and Kṣamā Kalyāñajī of the 1839 v.s. are some of the writers to have worked upon the **Samarāicca Kahā**.

In this tradition Padmavijayajī Mahārāja of the 2000 v.s. has written Samarāditya Kevalī Rās. He was a disciple of Uttamavijayajī in the lineage of Hiravijayasūnīśvarajī, who is said to have enlightened the Mogul Emperor Akabara. Padmavijayajī has composed about fifty-five thousand verses out of which 86 have been so far published.

Padmavijayajī has written a number of works in Gujarati, out of which Samarāditya Kevalī Rās is significant. The author commenced writing in 1839 v.s. on the third day of the black fortnight of the Aśvin month and completed in 1842 v.s. in Vasantapañcami.

The **Rās** has been edited and published in 1842 v.s. on the basis of a manuscript in the L.D. Institute of Indology.

Samarāditya portrayṣ nine births (of a mortal) in nine divisions. There are in all 199 **Dhāl** (a mode of singing) in which **Rās** is composed.

The original **Samarāicca Kaha** being in Prakrit was out of reach for a majority of the people. So the author recast it into Gujarati in order to make it accessible to a wider section of the public. He added a versified musical form also to it.

In his composition he employed the Deśī - a folksong mode of singing. The mode of singing being familiar to the people will ring in their ears and only words would have to be substituted. It may be noted that, on account of this feasibility in the Jaina literature of those times, a vast body of literature of this type has proliferated.

When we take into consideration the fact that this work has been written by a person who has relinquished the world since childhood and yet possessed a deep knowledge of the Deśīs and folksongs and even of classical music, we are astonished.

As stated above, the poet of this Rās has utilised in all 199 **Dhāl**, a mode of singing. The poet has not repeated a single deśī excepting two or three **Dhāls**. viz.

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| (i) | ā chhe, lāl, | deśī employed twice |
| (ii) | ekaviśānī | " " " |
| (iii) | copaini | " " thrice. |

Some of these deśīs consist of the Vedic, folk-songs and even Jaina deśīs. Language wise there are Gujarati, Rajasthani, Vraj and other Hindi languages deśīs.

Since fifteenth century, Rās form has been quite popular in old Gujarati literature. The Rās form used to be cast into a **Dhāl**. At the beginning of such a **Dhāl**, there would be an indication as to the mode of singing according to the prevalent **deśī**. Though composed in the same metre of **mātrāmela**, it could be sung in different deśīs. At times metre and classical rāg also would be indicated.

Let us illustrate :

copai	(copai metre)
truṭak'	(truṭaka metre)
dhamāl	(rāg)
goḍī	(rāg)

bangālo	(rāg)
māru	(rāg)
rāmagiri	(rāg)
aḍhiyāni	(deśi)
ekviśāni	(deśi)
kaḍakhāni	(deśi)
candrāulāni	(deśi of dhruvākhyāna)
candalīyāni	(deśi)
jogisar celāni	(deśi)
zunmakhadāni	(deśi)
dhaṇara ḍholāni	(deśi)
narāyaṇāni	(deśi)
pārdhiyāni	(deśi)
fatemalāni	(deśi)
baṭauni	(deśi)
bhaṇaṇāni	(deśi)
mākhinā gitāni	(deśi)
lalanāni	(deśi)
lālanāni	(deśi)
māruṇi	(deśi)
sūrati mahināni	(deśi)
hamcadīni	(deśi)
hāndāni	(deśi)
khambhāti	(deśi)

During the five hundred years from fifteenth to nineteenth century, there might have been thousands of such songs in vogue. An Jaina poets have utilized those popular songs' tarja in their compositions by noting the first line or a refrain of those popular songs. In this way we are enabled to have a glimpse the richness of the songs. Sometime a deśi used to be named after a metre or a work. In this way the lines or refrains which have been preserved are noteworthy even from the point of view of poetry. As noted above, these lines include the languages of Rajasthani

Punjab and Vraj. These lines may also serve as recognition-tags, as in the following :

- ‘ ai pritamśun ekwār , saluṇi bolo ho ’
- ‘ āj ānand thayo , premanān vādal varsyān,
dahādo sohilo ’
- ‘ āvo hari lāsariyāvālā ’
- ‘ Odhav mādhavane kahejo ’
- ‘ kahān avoji orā re, kahun ek vātaldī ’

These lines preserve the rare remnants of the folksongs of those days and hence very valuable. These deśis are significant from the historical point of view also.

Some of the folksongs, **garbā**, **rās** can be traced to these lines and accordingly we can get an idea about their age.

If a tradition of singing these deśis is maintained, then it should be recorded and studied, as their essence lies in its being lyrical. Similar is the case with its classical rāg which was mentioned at times. Deśis also used to be cast in classical rāg. To cite a few instances

pāsaji ho aho mere lalanā , division 5 Dhal 2

This is sung in Dhamāla rāg also.

be karjodi tām re bhadrā vinve, division 5 Dhal 9

This deśī is also sung in gauḍī rāg.

One more thing to be noted about this rāg or deśī is that they are not moulded into any rāg or deśī without any rhyme or reason. Propriety of the occasion is always kept in view. As we know, Śikhariṇī and vasantatilakā are appropriate for devotional compositions, or mandakrāntā is fit for the message-theme, or upajāti or āryā is fit to be the vehicle for descriptive theme or vasantatilakā is suitable for love-in-separation. The same view is kept in the classical music also. If there is a description of battle, kadakhām deśī is suitable as in the fifth division. 19th Dhāl.

So these deśis are to be preserved at any cost and would be academic crime if they are substituted with some modern cheap filmi song-lines (as is being done sometime).

So the importance of these deśis can hardly be over-stressed.

The writer has profited from the following earlier writing in Deśis :

Jain Gurjara Kavio. M. D. Deshai. Revised ed. by Jayant Lothari. Vol. 8, 1997.

Prachin Gujarāti Chando. R. V. Pathak. 1948.

Brhat Pingal. R. V. Pathak. 1955.

Gujarāti Sāhity-no Itihas. Vol. 2.

Deśio-ni Suci. Niranjana Vora.

(Translated from Gujarati by Dr. Vijaya Pandya)

