

Swar

Musicians of our country have been considering **22** music-useful main notes in one octave since ancient times, which have been called Shruti in the scriptures. Out of these **22 nadas**, seven pure swaras and 5 distorted swaras useful for singing have originated. Out of **22** Shrutis, the main 12 Shrutis are called Swaras. There is a practice of considering these Naads as higher one after the other. The main swaras used in singing are seven, their common names are Shadaj, Rishabh, Gandhar, Madhyam, Pancham, Dhaivat and Nishad, respectively, which are called by these short names, **Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni**.

Out of 22 Shrutis of an octave, 7 Shrutis selected which are established at a considerable distance from each other and which are sweet to hear are called Swaras. That is, those melodious sounds which remain constant and whose jingle captivates the mind are called swaras in music.

Out of 22 Shrutis, 7 Shrutis were selected from far and wide and those 7 Shrutis that were selected are called by the name of Shuddha Swar.

Shuddha Swar

For ease of practice, **out of 22 Shrutis, the main 7 Shrutis were selected, which were called Shuddha or Prakrit Swar**. These shrutis are spread at little distance in such a way that the whole octave has come. They were given the names of Shadj, Rishabh, Gandhara, Madhyam, Pancham, Dhaivat and Nishad respectively. For ease of pronunciation, they were also called **Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha and Ni** respectively. The scribes selected the shrutis, which were 7 in number, to be used more in folk songs or in classical singing or playing. Their mutual distance was also considered the same as it was in functional music. There are 4-4 Shrutis of Sa, Ma, Pa, 3-3 of Re, Dha and 2-2 of Ga and Ni respectively.

Vikrat Swar

After a few days, our Shastrakars must have felt that in functional music only 7 swaras do not work satisfactorily, a few more swaras have to be used. Scholars must have found out other such swaras and unanimously came to the conclusion that apart from 7 swaras, there are 5 other shrutis, whose importance is less than pure swaras and more than rest of the shrutis. The scriptures called these five Shrutis by the names of distorted voices. Out of these, 4 shrutis were below pure swaras and only one was high.

The first was called by the name of soft distorted and the second by the name of sharp distorted voice. In modern North Indian music, 7 pure and 5 distorted swaras are considered, Re, Ga, Dha, Ni soft and M'a sharp. There are two types of distorted vowels, soft distorted and sharp distorted. That's why in total there are 12 notes in an octave. With the combination of these 12 swaras, the art of music developed. Distorted vowel can be defined as - **the vowels which go slightly up and down from pure state are called distorted vowels.**

varjya swara (forbidden vowel)

The swara which is not used in a raga is called a prohibited swara of a raga. For example :- In Raga Bhupali, the vowels "Ma" and "Ni" do not sound. Because of this, the vowels "Ma" and "Ni" became taboo in Raga Bhupali. Many ragas have such swaras, which are used in the ascension, but not in the descent. Similarly, in a raga, any swara can be forbidden in the ascension, and the same swara can be used in the avaroh. For example, in the ascension of Raga Khamaj, the vowel "Re" is forbidden, but it is used in the descent.

Octave:- Seven swaras from shadaj to nishad are written or sung one after the other in order to form an octave. This octave is called Bilawal Saptak in Hindustani music system. And the seven swaras of this octave are called pure swaras. There are seven vowels — Sa (Shadja) Re (Rishabha) Ga (Gandhara) Ma (Madhyama) Pa (Pancham) Dha (Dhaivata) Ni (Nishada). One octave is followed by the second octave, whose number of vibrations is double the number of vibrations of the first octave.

According to the height and low of the sound, its lower, middle, and upper three such differences have been told. These are called sound places. Considering each vowel in all these places as an octave —

1. Slow pitch Octave
2. Middle pitch Octave
3. Chord pitch Octave

Such three octaves are considered, our normal voice is counted in the middle voice octave, after subtracting something from this voice, the low voice should be understood in the low voice octave, and from these two, some higher voice should be understood in the chord octave.

The identification of vowels in all the three octaves is as follows: -

Lower Octave (Mandr Saptak) :- The octave before Madhya Saptak is called Mandra Saptak. The number of movements of each note of the Mandra Saptak will be half the number of movements of the same note of the Madhya Saptak. For example:- If the

movement number of middle octave Ma is 320, then half of the movement number of 320 will be 160. To write its vowels, points are put below the vowels in the **Bhatkhande method**. For example — **.Ni, .Dha, .Pa, .Ma** etc.

Middle Octave (Madhya Saptak) :- Mostly start the process of playing songs from the middle octave. The voices of this octave are used more than the voices of other octaves. The number of movements of the notes of Madhya Saptak is twice the number of movements of the notes of the previous Saptak i.e. Mandra Saptak and half of the number of movements of the notes of the next Saptak i.e. Tar Saptak. It is between the slow and string octaves. No symbols are used to write its vowels, for example — **Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni**.

Upper Octave (Taar Saptak) :- The octave after the middle octave is called the chord octave. This octave is twice as high as the middle octave. The movement number of each note of the chord octave is double that of the same note of the middle octave. To write its vowels, points are put on the vowels in the **Bhatkhande method**. For example — **S^{*}a, R^{*}e, G^{*}a, M^{*}a** etc.

The twelve (12) notes of music in all three octaves are as follows:---

Lower Octave :- **.Sa .Re .Re .Ga .Ga .Ma .Ma' .Pa .Dha .Dha .Ni .Ni**

Middle Octave :- **S Re Re Ga Ga Ma Ma' Pa Dha Dha Ni Ni**

Upper Octave :- **Sa^{*} Re^{*} Re^{*} Ga^{*} Ga^{*} Ma^{*} Ma^{*} Pa^{*} Dha^{*} Dha^{*} Ni^{*} Ni^{*}**

There are two types of vowels -

1. fixed vowel
2. moving vowel

Fixed Vowel - Those voices which are always pure and are sung at their own place, are not distorted are called fixed vowels. S (Shadj) and P (Pancham) these two vowels are immovable.

Moving Vowel — The vowels which are pure as well as soft or sharp are called Chal swaras. They are sung higher or lower than their place. The moving vowels are **Re, Ga, Dha, Ni and Ma**. There are two types of movable vowels -

1. soft tone
2. high pitched

Sharp and soft notes in the octave:- The main seven vowels are :- Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni. Two distinctions are made of these vowels:- pure and distorted are called

natural and distorted voices. Lowering the root note makes it soft and raising it higher makes it sharper. When removed from its place, that vowel is also given a distorted name.

Flat note (Komal Swar) — When a vowel is lower than its fixed position, it is called soft distorted, that is, soft vowels are sung below the main vowel. Re (Rishabh), Ga (Gandhara), Dha (Dhaivat), Ni (Nishada) have soft tones. To write these vowels, in **Bhatkhande's method**, underline is applied below the vowels. For example — Re, Ga, Dha, Ni .

Sharp note (Teevr Swar) — When a vowel is sung higher than its fixed position, it is called a sharp distorted vowel. Ma (madhyama) has an acute tone. To write sharp vowels, in **Bhatkhande's method**, a vertical line is drawn above the vowel, for example - M^{*}a.

12 notes in the octave:- There are 7 pure swaras and 5 distorted swaras, in total 12 swaras are in one octave, due to the distorted swaras being in a special state of pure swaras, their names are also like pure swaras. In this way, with the help of these 12 swaras, nowadays all ragas are created. The main 7 swaras are called pure swaras. When a pure tone is higher or lower than its position, it becomes distorted -

1. **Re, Ga, Dha, Ni** — When these four vowels are distorted, they are named as Komal Re, Komal Ga, Komal Dha, and Komal Ni respectively.
2. **Ma** - When this vowel is distorted, it is called 'teevr M^{*}a'.
3. **Sa, Pa** — These vowels never get distorted, that's why they are called '**Achal Swar**'.
4. Some singers or instrumentalists in propaganda call these notes '**Re, Ga, Dha, Ni**' as sharp notes and the pure medium as soft medium.