



SALIENT FEATURES OF ODISHAN TRIBAL MUSIC

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ABSTRACT

The tribal music is passed down from one generation to next generations. In Odisha every tribal community has its own cultural values, which guide their socio-economic life. Odishan tribal music with its closed-group form of ethnicity is remarkable in the sense that it can never be studied in isolation from the social and ritual contexts of the people concerned. Odishan tribal music possesses a well-built community basis. The fact can be comprehended in the domains of musical-socialization, kinds of ownership, levels of participation and nature of specialization. The tribes-folk and their inbuilt artistic instincts, and intricate engineering skills passed down hundreds of generations, come together to create layered musical magic in a single instrument, using tools and materials that grew, or were found on their lands and forests. Odishan tribes have also possessed a variety of sub-cultures, racial and linguistics variations, which on their part; spill over beyond the administrative boundaries of the state of Odisha into the neighboring states.

KEYWORDS : Odisha, Tribal, Music, Instrument

The tribal culture of Odisha offers a participatory model of creativity or of communication between the gifted artist and his community. Whatever their level of economic backwardness or development, most of the tribal communities of Odisha have fairly high level of performing and other arts, songs and different types of tribal music encourage their individual and socio-cultural lives. Tribal music can be treated as social manifestation that represents characteristic aspects of a society and that can be understood by different aspects of analysis.

In Odisha there are many kinds of tribal music and music, and many ways of conceptualizing of them. Many tribal musicians with no education in literacy tend to think of words as just one part of the exchange between people engaged in communication. To understand what is being communicated, they, like us when we are in conversation, pay a great deal of attention to gesture, pantomime, and body language as well as to the context of the conversation, the social relationships between speakers as well as their personal and cultural histories. Most of the Odishan tribes are predominantly have a rich tradition of tribal music that encompasses wide themes surrounding their social and cultural lives. In the simplest sense, these musical instruments are meant not just to generate sound but to produce and modify the character of tribal music altogether. Tribal music as a popular tribal recreation has recently expressed the spirit and character of the people of the Odisha. Because it did so in such a vivid, human and universally comprehensible way, the different tribal music possessed an educative value for the general public especially the younger generation whose knowledge of tribal music is woefully meager. Odishan tribal music as a liberal democratic socializing agent and as an agent of cultural identity which is an assets in welcoming diverse clans in making them, one and a unified society.

Tribal music is one of the major forms of Odishan cultural expression. Generally speaking, there are several forms of tribal music each of which prevails in tribal districts of the state. Among these music forms, those of the central region were developed by the tribal society. Music of each Odishan tribe developed within its socio cultural context for centuries with very few interchanges among them. Odishan tribal music as an offering to gods, animistic gods, or tribal images, and to powerful spirits believed to occupy certain places. Odishan tribal music performances are held in many shrines in the tribal areas of Odisha.

Tribal music is an important part in tribal sports. Odishan tribal music is an integral part of most of traditional play which

is performed daily or nightly wherever there is a feast or a fair. Odishan tribal music is an important means for their cultural identity. Odishan tribal music is characterized not only by its originality and spontaneity but also for its wide range of rhythms. Many traditional drums, string and musical instrument are brought into play. Some of the tribal groups put on colorful dancing costume during their musical performance. With tribal music, the songs sung by different tribal groups differ from one area to the other. Among the tribes of Odisha everyone is a traditional musician and poet. When happily inspired, they can coin a song then and there and sing it with use of their musical instruments. On the occasion of performing traditional worship rituals and observance of festivals the songs sung are different. Such tribal songs are generally adopted from the past so many years. These songs describe the history of gods, the process of creation and some epic stories with the application of percussion and other musical instruments. The tribal music of Odisha claim traditional ancestry. Individually the tribes feel proud of their artistic origin, and that in fact guides them not to work for others, mostly outsiders, as paid labor.

The tribal music of Odisha is basically depending on their traditional instruments with the use of typical tribal musical instrument. All tribal music and dance is the worshipper of nature as they felt the presence of divinity in nature. Indeed, this is important from religious ground. They give more emphasis on three elements of nature. The tribal music with its simple beauty and immediateness is a medium for drawing near different clans for their better mutual acquaintance. Initiation and succession to tribal music, the person receiving the new status in tribal society and may perform a solo instrumental music of power or humility, or sometimes the community may perform music through tribal ways in honor of the individual with their traditional musical instruments and drums.

The tribal music is sacred or secular and it may be difficult to distinguish as religion pervades all the society's activities. Almost all typical ritual music, however, have a social element, and many tribal instrumental music formerly performed for ritual reasons are today music simply for recreation with their traditional drums and other musical instruments. Tribal music and dance as a part of tribal culture provided controlled situations in which differences were recognized while at the same time integrated into a smoothly running interdependent whole. Ceremonies are inseparable part of the way of life of Odishan tribal music with traditional musical instruments especially with their musical instruments. All types of Odishan tribal musical instruments produce melodious sound, which

helps to improve circulatory, respiratory, mental peace of people living in tribal areas of Odisha. Tribal music as communicative action of villagers is based on shared tribal meanings and the aim to establish a mutual social understanding. This shows that tribal music is not to be understood as a universal form of expression. Odishan tribal music has many distinctive regional styles and requires many years of training. The different tribes of Odisha, despite their livelihood problems and their pre-occupation with the continual battle for survival, have retained the rich and varied heritage of music and music forming integral part of their festivals and rituals. Among them, music is developed and maintained by themselves in a tradition without aid and intervention of any professional musician or teacher. The true essence of the tribal music will be lost if the hides are replaced by goat or cow skins.

The instruments will also lose their purity, as believed by the tribals, and can't be used at the place of worship. The ethnic musical instruments were once in high demand. But, they are losing their significance and popularity with the advent of modern-day instruments. Tribal music, the most delicate expression of Odishan tribal culture, is supposed to be an undiluted enjoyment for the art lover. Tribal music is mere rustic reflection of the larger Indian society, whereas it also often represents culture that are very different. Some of these tribal cultures are embodied with the cultural conditions as they were thousands of years ago. Tribal music primarily a language of emotions of tribal music, a formalized expression of feelings that are organized in order to have wider and greater effects on human action. Interpretations of Odishan tribal instrumental music forms range between extremes of absolutism and relativism, and of viewing tribal music as an action autonomous to treating it as an epiphenomenon of socio cultural life. The role of tribal village artists and musicians is important but their socio-economic development is poor. More needs to be done. The problems of tribal musicians of Odisha are largely common. Odishan tribal village artists and musicians plays a major role in the continuation of tribal traditional instrumental musical practice of their natural, social, economic resources but they remain backward due to traditional values, illiteracy, superstition and many other social and cultural factors. Music has always been a predominant part of Odishan tribal cultural life. Odishan tribal music is considered to be a version of house music. The music is mostly accompanied by drum-beats, with no presence of specific melody. The music beats are based on sophisticated and synchronized drum patterns, establishing a rhythm. During an ongoing performance, there exists no prolonged sound in such music. Unlike the classical musical instruments used here are not so refined, due to their rugged origin. These musical instruments are generally manufactured by the musicians themselves, using the materials like coconut shells, animal skin, etc.

Into a wholesome Indian tribal musical session, there can be a mixture of drum sounds in a particular track. Modernization has however completely overhauled or refurbished this tradition. Individualism is keenly looked after. In Odishan tribal dances, dancers are accompanied by songs and traditional music. Bamboo mouth organs, cup violins, bamboo flutes, trumpets, drums made of cattle skin, and log drums are crafted and used as local musical instruments by the tribal. Tribal music as communicative action of villagers is based on shared tribal meanings and the aims to establish a mutual social understanding. This shows that tribal music is not to be understood as a universal form of expression. Tribal music as we know it may exist in tribal way of life, but in many different forms and contexts. The constructions of a musical instrument and the different elements and symbols that constitutes it have been chosen by the performers and are part of their culture. Tribal culture is generally considered a tender

culture but it is not found to be caring in terms of dignity, self-respect and development of tribal life. Tribal village musicians are not treated on par with the mainstream urban Odia people. The modern and urban Odia people are generally not concerned with the tribal village musicians. The tribal musicians are not even known and identified by the people of Odisha itself.

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