



## IMPORTANCE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN ODISHAN TRIBAL CULTURAL LIFE

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**ABSTRACT** The mode in which individual tribal artists or tribes are in the habit of embellishing their musical instruments is sometimes as characteristic as it is singular. The materials for ornamentation chiefly employed by primitive tribes are bright colours, bamboo, beads, shells, grasses, the bark of trees, feather, stones, gildings, etc. Various types of tribal songs and music have also been prevalent in different districts of Odisha. The prevalence of various types of tribal songs along with the tribal musical instruments are found, especially in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Koraput, Sundergarh, Malkangiri, Rayagada, Sambalpur, Kalahandi etc.. The traditions of tribal music in Odisha, is as rich as the cultural traditions of Odisha. The tribal dances, plays and music of Odisha are considered more entertaining than that of the other regions of India. These arts of tribal dance, music and plays were mainly performed in praise of the deities.

**KEYWORDS :** Odishan, Tribal, Music, Musical Instrument

Each tribal community of Odisha has devised ways and means to commemorate a function. It may surround the forest, the village or the field to perform with all intimacy and with all free expressions as a slipway of the bandaged and regulated social life. The prevalence of various tribal instrumental music is found in Odisha's western region, north region and southern region. According to the findings, the tribal communities of Odisha used to compose various tribal dances by following the activities of wild animals and birds. Normally these tribal people use very simple musical instruments. Instruments called Changu (a type of drum) and Basi (flute) are used in almost all the tribal regions of Odisha.

Besides this some specific musical instruments are used in some particular regions. 'Durga' is a wooden musical instrument. This particular instrument is used only by the 'Gond' tribals of Umakote area in Odisha. The 'Khanjani' musical instrument is used mainly during the 'Kondhs' tribal dance of Phulabani district. 'Tulia' is a wire-made musical instrument. And this 'Tulia' instrument is mainly played by the farmers of Mayurbhanj district. Similarly the musical instruments called 'Goonong', made of thin-strips of bamboo is only played by the 'Gond' tribals. It would be appropriate to say that the tribal music of Odisha is like the mementos which live in numerous hearts of the people. Tribal music of Odisha is meant for the recreation and entertainment of tribal people. Tribal music of Odisha is a companion in ones daily routine. At times we come across some tribal people who sing out of joy or spontaneously for example, a tribal farmer while ploughing his field use to sing a song.

Tribal blowing musical instruments of the flute kind including pipes, whistles, flutes, pipes, etc. are also to be found almost everywhere. Much the same is the case with tribal blowing instruments of the trumpet kind. These are often made of the bamboo, horns, bones and tusks of animals; frequently of vegetable substance and of metal. They not un-frequently contain a series of tones produced by slabs of wood or metal, which are beaten with assort of hammer, as the harmonicon is played. Although the pattern of dance and music prevalent among them vary from tribe to tribe in different tribal districts of Odisha yet there are certain features common to all. Tribal music and dances have some accompaniments by means of which the rhythm is maintained.

This consists of clapping of hands or beating of drums or an orchestra of different traditional instruments. Every dance is accompanied by a song which is sung by the performers. Both men and women, young and old dance and invariably sing but the accompanying orchestra or music is usually provided by the male members. Tribal music and dance is characterized not only by its originality and spontaneity but also for its wide range of movements. Many parts of the body such as head, back, arms, feet, finger, etc. are brought into play. Some of the tribal groups put on colourful dancing costume during their performance. Among the tribes everyone is a musician and poet. When happily inspired, they can coin a song then and there and sing it. Like any others, when they see things of beauty and meet pleasantly, they exhibit this pleasure and happiness by composing songs. One finds in these songs humors, jokes, romance, satires, criticisms, acquisitions and anger. Though there is no modernity and fineness, their ideas being natural, the compositions are good, inspiring and melodious. On the

occasion of performing religious rituals and observance of festivals the songs sung are different. Such songs are adopted from the past so many years. These songs describe the history of gods, the process of creation and some epic stories.

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. 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. Learning music in a typical tribal society forms a cardinal part of the entire process of association of its members. It is learnt together with the umpteen customs and practices conforming to the standards reckoned apt by the society. Any given tribal community as a whole initiated its children in learning music, i.e., singing, drumming or dancing, from an early age. Children from the Santals tribal society are initially supplied with the small sized flutes of five to six inches in length with three to four envoys to blow and the drums of smaller size to beat. The musical instrument called Basi (tribal flute) is especially prevalent in the Desia Kandha, Gadaba, Paraja, Didayi community of Odishan tribal society. This type of blowing musical instrument is found in the undivided Koraput, Phulbani and Mayurbhanj district of our state. From its appearance it looks like the Indian classical musical instrument called Bansuri.

As per the classifications this musical instrument called Basi belongs to *Sushira Vadya* class. This musical instrument is very closely related to the lives, culture and tradition of the Odishan tribes. In tribal *religious and socio cultural practices* its tradition for playing Basi musical instrument. Today this Basi musical instrument is played during the 'Chaiti Parab' and also during the *Dhangda Dhangidi* dance performance of the Odishan tribes. This musical instrument is a purely wind musical instrument used by Odishan tribes. This is called as a wind tune device or wind tune machine. Many of the tribes have two distinct types of music, the 'outdoor' ensemble, which is often performed by members of a different tribe or a Hindu caste, and their own characteristic tribal songs.

The outdoor ensemble is used at weddings and on festive occasions. It varies in size and structure, depending to some extent on the affluence of the tribe. The main instruments are the double-reed oboe-type, a straight, curved, or S-shaped horn, a variety of drums – kettle-shaped, cylindrical, or frame drums similar to the tambourine – and cymbals. The names of these instruments sometimes vary from one tribe to another, although it seems likely that they represent a common tradition. No mention of Odishan folk music can be complete without naming the contribution of the rich tribal music and songs. The tribal of Odisha live an eventful life interspersed with instrumental music, songs and dance. Within any tribal community of Odisha one can hear the ricocheting voices of these merry people from afar. No social activity of these tribal people is complete without music and dance. The tribal songs with traditional music especially with blowing musical instruments are sung in chorus and are known for their beautiful tunes. In Odishan tribal cultures here implying tribal traditional communities music often serves purposes other than

entertainment or aesthetic enjoyment. Certain blowing tribal musical instruments are closely associated with the supernatural, and their sounds connote powerful magic. Some tribal people, for instance, identify the sound of blowing tribal musical instruments with the voices of supernatural beings; the same sound signifies an awesome natural phenomenon, such as thunder. As a vestige of traditional culture in the tribes, every winter blowing tribal musical instrument sounded to drive away evil spirits and encourage the return of spring. Blowing tribal musical instruments are often among some tribal group's most important ritual objects, and in tribal communities of Kandha of Keonjhar, Kondhamal, Sambalpur, Bolangir, Koraput, Ganjam and Sundergarh, Paraja of Koraput, Kalahandi and Sundergarh, Gadaba of Koraput, Nowrangpur, and Malkangiri, Oraon of Sambalpur, Sundergarh, Gunupur, and Bonai, Bonda of Koraput and Malkangiri, Juang of Keonjhar and Dhenkanal, Santal of Mayurbhanj, Balasore, and Keonjhar and Gond of Sambalpur, Bolangir, Koraput, Kalahandi and Sundergarh they are specially venerated.

The Gadaba of the Koraput district rainforest keep their traditional flutes wherein spirits are believed to dwell, in a special shrine where they are treated as sacred objects. The tribal flutes and the drums of some tribal peoples are similarly housed and revered. The musical beats and flute tunes are based on sophisticated and synchronized drum patterns, establishing a rhythm. During an ongoing performance, there exists no prolonged synthesis sound in such music. Due to the tribal variation being of much rugged origin, the instruments utilized are not as refined as the ones used in classical music. Tribal musical instruments are generally manufactured by the musicians themselves, making use of materials like bamboo, coconut shells, animal skin, etc. Into a wholesome Odishan tribal musical session, there can be a mixture of drum sounds in a particular track. Other blowing musical instruments utilized include bamboo flutes, Singha etc. Odishan tribal music is considered to be a version of house music. The music is mostly accompanied by drum-beats and tunes through use and application of blowing musical instruments with no presence of specific melody.

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