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THE ROLE OF CHHANDA IN INDIAN MUSIC

Arts

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ABSTRACT

Chhanda plays vital role in Indian music. It helps in evolve of new tala.Tala is the method of measuring the time used in music. A tala is differentiated with another tala due to its divison, number of beats and its movement.The Tala having same number of beats can also be changed by giving different emphasis on the first beat of the beginning of subdivision. Sum is the most emphatic stroke of a tala.The basic rhythm forms by metrical arrangement of regularly occurring stresses or beat. Chanting of vedic hymns,musical time followed the sequence of long and short ascents as used for poetic metres .For each segment or measure of western music have same number of beats but indian music vary from two to five.

KEYWORDS

Music, Chhanda, sum, veda, rhythm, matra, Bol, Tabla

Chhanda is the metre of a verse, even though the term primarily connotes of characteristics of poetry. It has contributed to the evolution of the concept of täla. A unique feature of the Indian Chhanda is its invariable association with definite tunes. The tunes being tonal moulds raise the performance of chhanda much above a simple recitation. In Sanskrit there are two types of chhanda which are known as varnik and matrik chhandas. A täla can easily be recognised on the basis of the mäträ vrita chhanda because the division of beats in a täla, is done on the basis of different matra vritta täla. It can be understood as the tälas having equal number of beats but having different chhanda will form a new täla such as Dhamartäl and Adachautal. Both having fourteen mäträs but the Division of Dhamartäla 5+2+3+4, whereas Adachautal has seven divison of two mäträs in each divison forming (2+2+2+2+2+2+2) divison. These divisions are based on chhandas. In this way in form of difference in division, syllables used in tal and its use in music make them completely two different tal. Likewise tal Deepchandi and Jhoomra has same number of matra and their divison is (3+4+3+4) but their use in music is different.TalDeepchandi is played with thumri and Tal Jhumra is played with Bilambit khyal in Hindusthani music.

The system of measuring time in music is called tala.It is used in music in a cyclic form starting from 1st matra to ending in last matra and again coming to 1st matra makes one cycle which is called as Abartan. Tala is the life of music. Tal is a repeating rhythm pattern usually played in percussion instrument. In addition to melody and harmony in music, Talis one of the fundamental elements of music. In fact, melody itself implies a pattern in time arising from the fact that the notes are played for different lengths of time. There is latent rhythm in every melody. The fact that people instinctively react to music either by clapping their hands or by tapping their feet which is very natural and it seems the evidence of the existence of rhythm in every living beings.

Another way to see the existence of chhand is during the recitation of a poem or recitation of a nursery rhyme. Here one can notice the recurring strong and weak accents which exist and are referred to as meter. The simplest of these is the duple meter, a repetition of the strong and weak pulsation ascents. The strong ascents are analogous to the clap as a means of marking time. The basic rhythm here therefore results from this metrical arrangement of regularly occurring stresses or beats. However this inherent pattern can be further brought out by having a design or frame work provided by an external source such as clap or drum-stroke which can be synchronized with the internal beat and arranged to enhance the latent rhythmic pattern.

In the earlier stages of the evolution of Indian music particularly in the case of chanting of the Vedic hymns, musical time followed the same sequence of long and short ascents as was used for poetic meters. However, this was given up later as it depended on the length of the syllables and hence did not necessarily provide the kind of periodicity required by music.

In music time measurement is based on the principle of recitation, i.e. a specified number of beats are arranged in a particular pattern which is repeated over and over again. In Indian music too, time measurement is based on the same principle, except that here the pattern adopted is more complex. This is because of two reasons. Firstly in western music each segment or measure, has the same number of beats 3+3+3 or 4+4+4. But in Indian music, each sub-division, called vibhäga varies from two to five. For instance, the simple DädraTäla consists of two sub-division each of three beats, the entire cycle having a (3+3) pattern, the more complex Jhaptal has a (2+3+2+3) pattern, that is four sub-division of which the first and the third have two beats where the second and the fourth have three beats each.

An even more complex pattern is provided by the Dhamar täla which has a (5+2+3+4) pattern, i.e., each sub-division has different number of beats. These beats are referred to as mäträ, while the subdivisions are called khanda or vibhaga, the entire cycle being called an ävarta (or ävartan).

Viewing this above fact tala is segregated in three different types-
i) Sampadi ii) Bisampadi iii) Mishra padi
i) Sampadi – Those tala is called as sampadi tal in which the number of matra in each divison is same. For example – Teental-16matra, chhand(4+4+4+4),Dadra-6 matra chhand-(3+3) Kharawa-8 matra (4+4)

ii) Bisampadi – In this tala the arrangement of matra of each divison is not same but it is done in two different way. For example – Jhaptal-10matra, chhand-(2+3+2+3),Deepchandi–matra-14 chhand-(3+4+3+4)

iii) Mishrapadi – The tala in which the arrangement of matra in each divison is not same is called Mishra padi tal. For Example- Dhamar tal-14 matra chhand- (5+2+3+4)

Thus tala refers to the rhythmic pattern or time cycle format formed out of these mäträs and vibhägas. It is usually represented by a mnemonic pattern, that is a theka composed of bols such as dhin, dha,terekete,dhage etc.

The main reason for the complexity of tala is that, in addition to the possibility of having varying number of mäträs in each Division, the pattern of two similar, having the same number of beats can also be changed by giving different emphasis on the first beat marking the beginning of the sub-division. Indian music recognizes three kinds of beats, an emphatic beat known as the sam, empty beat or rests called khali and the other beats are called as tali. The way in which the two sub-division within täl cycle can be distinguished by providing different emphasis within each section is illustrated below by considering the Dadra täl.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Dha	dhe	na	|Dha	tun	na
X			0		

Here though there are two sections or khandas, the first beat or mäträ in the first one is marked by an emphasis, while the first beat of the second section is also marked but by a stroke which has less emphasis or no emphasis. Thus, two sections, though consisting of the same number of beats, are differentiated by means of the stress given to the first beat

which is the sam as compared to the fourth which is a khali marked by less or total absence of emphasis. The tabla player while playing indicates sam by a hard stroke and uses a little lightstroke to represent the khali. Usually, the khali has a distinctly recognizable sound which is lighter then sam stroke which is crucial for identifying the täla.

The sam is the initial beat of a täla and it commences the cycle. It provides the centre for the exposition and all compositions are usually set so that their emphasis too is on the beat. In vocal or instrumental performances, a great care has to be taken so that the main artist (vocalist or instrumentalist) and the accompanist tabla player come together on the sam and as a result of which listeners or the audience feels full of ecstasy.

When the musician improvises, he must do so with skill so that he arrives at the sam at the end of the tal cycle. All rhythmic and melodic variations must end on sam. The sam, thus is a musically emphasized beat. Its significance lies in the fact that when vocalist and instrumentalist present their solo performances the bandish of the raga is composed in such a way that the important note of the räga which is called as vädi or second important note called samvadi of a particular raga comes in the first beat of the tala i.e. sum.

The Khalis is the second important place of a tala in order to indicate performer to reach at sam. Khali provides an indication to the musician to close his melodic variation so as to terminate them at the sam. In shorter tal like teora which consists of seven beats and bearing chhand of (3+2+2) having no khali, In that situation performer ends his performance or reach to sam by marking the chhand in mind. But in case of tal Dadra the fourth beat is indicated as khali so performer after making lots of variation, permutation combination reach to sam by marking khali in mind which indicates the performer to end his rendition at sam which is also be noted as first tali of the tala. However there are exceptions to this rule as the rupaktäl for instance the tala begins with a khali.

Tala in terms of individual beats and its different chhand recognizes one tala from another. Although tala having same number of matra but different syllables structure and chhand make them different from one another. For example we take two complex tala like panchamsawari and GajaJhampa.Both tal consists of 15 matra but their syllables and chhand are different. Pancham sawari chhand is (3+4+4+4)and tekha is –

Dhe	na	dhindhin	|	kat	dhindhin	nadhin	dhinna	|						
X				2										
tinkre	tinna	Terekete	tina	|	kata	dhindhin	nadhin	ndhinna							
0					3									

In this above tala while oral rendition putting clap on hand we have to give more pressure and emphasis on sam and after that in 4thmatra again a tali comes emphasis is given but some less pressure as compare to sam and after on 8thmatrakhali comes here we wave our hand and finally on 12thmatra 3rd clap comes and again we reach to 1stmatra i.e .sam. Again one interesting thing is that the last three matra is in sawari ang that means the last three matra will be played or rendered oraly as 123 123 chhand making emphasis on 1 each time .

Gaja Jhampa –Matra-15 chhand is (4+4+3+4) Its tekha is-

Dha	dhin	naka	taka	|	dha	dhin	naka	taka	|					
X					2									
tin	naka	taka		|	tete	kata	gadi	ghan						
0					3									

It means the grouping of matra is done according to the talas chhand and movement of the particular tala. Counting is done by means of claps for those sub-divisions that have the sam or the tali as the first beat and by not clapping for a khali vibhag. The khali vibhag permits the listeners to feel the up and down movements of a tala.

CONCLUSION-

Chhanda plays a vital role in differentiating one tala from another even if they have same number of matra.The playing techniques of each tala is different. It is played according to its use in music. Variety of strokes is required to play the various tälas in percussion instrument. Sam and phank are two important aspect of tala. While showing a tala in oral rendition putting clap on place of sam we have to give more pressure in place of sam to emphasis the sam but give some less pressure on other tali of a tala then sam and wave hand in place of phank. By doing this we can clearly show the chhand of a particular tala. For proper execution of these tala in percussion instrument one must have to study first in terms of its structure and capability of production of tonal sound of particular syllables used in the tala in order to understand the sounds produced and emanates proper chhand of that particular tala.

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