



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Arts

CONTRIBUTIONS OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS TO TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF ODISHA

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ABSTRACT

The traditions of instrumental music in Odisha, is as rich as the cultural traditions of Odisha. Music of Odisha is considered more entertaining than that of the other regions of India. It has been mentioned in king Kharavela's Hatigumpha cave inscriptions that music and dance were performed then for the entertainment of the people. The imprints of Odisha's dance and music are found in the caves of Khandagiri and Udayagiri. Various informations about music are found described in the mythological books, like:- Swarnadri Mahodaya, Sarala Mahabharat, Kabi Kalpadrooma, Rasa Kalpadrooma, Vishnu Dharmotar Purana , Sangeeta Narayan , Sangeeta Muktabali, Abhinaya Darpan , Sangeeta Kaumudi, Sangeeta Kalpalata, Geetaprakash, Sangeetaratna etc. On the basis of facts found from the ancient stone- inscriptions, ancient literature of Odisha, architecture and sculptures of Odisha's ancient temples, we come to know a few things regarding the tradition of musical- instruments in Odisha.

Instrumental music has much importance in the traditional musical performance in Odisha since ancient period. The traditional musical instruments of Odisha have been contributed so as to enhance the melody of music. There was a widespread use of musical instruments in Odisha, as mentioned in the books like, *Boudha Charyageeti*, the books belonging to Ganga Vansh kings rule, such as Sarala literature, Panchasakha literature, *Rahasya manjari* (poetry) ,Prakreeti literature, *Rukmini-bibha*, *Ushabhilaas*, *Prema-panchamruta*, *Ichhabati* and *Gopichandan* etc. Besides this, during the period of Upendra Bhanja, the musical instruments were used along with the performance of various Odia songs, as per the evidence. The Odishan tradition of musical-instruments is highly developed, ancient and classical one. In some ancient music related books like, *Sangeetarnab Chandrika*, *Natya Manorama*, *Geeta Prakash* etc. it has been described that some expert instrument artists and women dancers were appointed to serve in the temples. Veena and Mardal are the most ancient musical instruments. Later from the Raaga- ragini's and various Talas like Jati, Nishari adi, *Eka Taali* etc. Apart from Odissi music , various folk songs have also been prevalent in different districts of Odisha .The prevalence of various types of folk songs along with the folk musical instruments is found. The prevalence of various types of tribal music is found in Odisha's western Odisha region, North-Odisha region and southern-Odisha region. It would be appropriate to say that the folksongs are like the mementos which live in numerous hearts of the people. Folk music is meant for the recreation and entertainment of people. This music is a companion is ones daily routine. At times we come across some people who sing out of joy or spontaneously for example, a farmer while ploughing his field use to sing a song or when a carter use to sing a rustic song while driving a cart. This is what we called folk song. Odisha is mainly a rural based state. The education and literacy rate is not so high here. Hence from this point of view the position of folk music and folk musical instruments has much significance here. It is the folk music which fulfils the aspirations of these working class people to a great extent. The folk music one, which acts like a companion in one's work and which stays along with one's religion, can also be a source of joy for those who practice music and can also be a treat to the audience.

Music plays a prime role in Odissi culture. Right from the birth of a child to marriage ceremony, thread ceremony or any such social ceremony, worship of deities, festivals, functions, yajnya rituals social traditions, agricultural events and in every other social event, there is involvement of music. The tribal life of Odisha is also said to be musical. Various (Natya-mandap) dance stages built in the temples statues and sculptures of dancers found on the carving of temples, *Akhada-ghara* of gymnasiums, *Bhaagabata tunji* which were meant for the

Purana recitals are the evidences of Odissi music tradition. The culture of Odisha is lord sri Jagannath's culture which reflects in the people of Odisha. Use of various musical instruments are found in Odisha in order to create jingles. The sculptures and drawings found in various temples of Odisha indicate about the use of various musical instruments .The musical instruments like Veena, Sitar, Manjira, Mardal are used for the *Uchhanga Sangeet* in Odisha for folk music the instruments like Dhol, Jhanja, Flute, Shinga, Kaahaali, Naagra, Jodi Mahuri, Telengi Baza, Jhumpa, Khanjani, Kendara, Dhuduki, Dhanakoila etc. are used.

There have been the prevalence of various musical instruments in Odishan music. These types of musical instruments have been classified into four categories. These four categories are Tat, Ghana, Abanaddha and Soosir. As it is difficult to know about the evidences regarding the origin of music likewise it is also not easy to know the facts related to the origin of musical instruments is also a tough task. However the evidences regarding the tradition of Odishan musical instruments can be found from the Utkalian art and sculpture, temple- sculpture ancient inscriptions and from ancient literature.

Among the existing musical instruments of Odisha, are like the conch of lord Vishnu, Dambaru of Lord Shiva, Veena of goddess Saraswati etc. Which are known to have existed since ancient ages. But the tribals living in forest areas used to play various musical instruments like Dhoomsa, Changu, Dhol, Naagra, Flute, Tuila, Gunung etc. and thus propagated their music and dance forms. The playing of various musical instruments like Bheri, Mahuri, Mardal and Dholki etc. in various temples is said to be an age old practice. The *Chhau* dance form is said to be the ancient martial- dance form of Odisha. Some musical instruments like Dhakka, Dhol, Mahoori etc. are played. A wooden musical instrument called *Duda* is used only by the *Ganda* tribals in Umakote area of Odisha. Khanjani musical instrument is mainly used in the *Kandha* dance of Phulbani district in Odisha. A wire made musical instrument called as Tuila is mostly used by *Kisan* tribals of Mayurbhanj district, in Odisha. Tribal musical instruments are mainly traditional Taal oriented. The concept of *Veera- rasa* especially depicted in Narttan- Ramayan, Mahabharat, Nursingha Purana and Haribansha compositions are enhanced through the thrilling *Naada* (vibrating sounds) created by the playing of musical instruments viz. Dhol, Mahoori, Dhoomsa etc. During the rule of Ganga- vansha kings, Rangadhol, Toori, Telengi, Dholki, Mahuri etc. Musical instruments were prevalent. The tradition of playing Ghanta, Mardal, Kansaala, Shankha (Conch) specifically during the Ratha yatra' festival and Snana yatra festival of Lord Sri Jagannath is prevalent till date. In Sri Mandir (lord Jagannath

temple, Puri) Mardal and Veena musical instruments were played during the dance performances of *Devadasi*, as per the evidences.

There are evidences about the use of musical instruments in various social functions, on occasion of various Pujas and festivals and also in various religious organizations. Specific musical instruments were used to be performed according to the specific occasions. Some of those musical instruments were Veena, Benu, Banshi, Mrudanga, Doondoobhi, Shankha, Kankari etc. On the basis of this Vedic- musical instrument many other musical instruments of Odisha have been in prevalence. Evidences about the Utkalian tradition of musical instruments of musical instruments have been found in the Charyageeti of Buddhists. Earlier, Buddhist religions preachers used to travel different places for their religions campaigns and they used to sing and perform Veena musical instruments during these religious campaigns. Evidences are also found about the use of Mrudanga musical instrument along with Veena.

As the tradition of musical instruments was very rich in those ancient days, so the artists with proficiency in instrumental music were deputed accordingly as the instrument players. As mentioned in the Madala- Panji almanac, the artists who used to play Veena instrument were called Veenakar, those performing Mardal instruments were called as *Maadalia* or *Mardalik* etc.

The ancient Odia literature, the sculpture and architecture of Odisha helps us to know about various musical instruments and their use. The following has been described in this regards. The Sarala- Mahabharata is one of these main ancient era literature which came up after the rule of Gangavansha.

In entire Sarala literature there are depictions about nature and environment. While describing about environment Adi Kabi Sarala Das had mentioned about some musical instruments from this the Utkalian tradition of musical instruments is reflected. Some of those musical instruments were Veena, Brahmabeena, Panchaswarabeena, Saptaswarabeena, Kahali, Dosaree, Dhol, Damburu, Doondoobhi, Pattah, Mardal, Toombi, Shankha, Pinaka, Mahuri, Banshi, Bheri, Kansaala, Mandira, Rasabeni, Saarang, KhaTaanga, Dama Biji Ghosa, Kuntali, Alabenee, Tamaka nisana etc.

The tradition of Odia music excelled much during the period of the great poet, Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja. There was a widespread propagation of Ragas raaginis and the musical instruments during this period. The literature of *Bhanja-Sahitya* had a specific mention of the musical instruments such as : Beena, Mardal, Meghaa, Taala, Kansaala, Kaahaali, Bheri, Mahoori, Dambaru, Ghanti, Amruti, Doondoobhi, Veerachangu, Naagra, RamTaali, Toori, Ghanta, Shankha etc. Besides this the *Nathapanthees* sages (the followers of Naath group) used to play Kendara musical instrument while singing *Nirguna* Bhajan (the devotional songs in praise of almighty) and the pictures of Kendra instrument found in the sculptures of Utkal, evident about the Utkalian tradition of musical- instruments. This process of playing musical- instruments is believed to be about one thousand years old. The *Utkalian* culture is very closely related to the Sri Jagannath culture. The rich tradition of Sri Jagannath culture is closely related to the people and lifestyle of Utkal. Music being an indispensable part of culture, the Odissi dance and music is considered as the heart and soul of Sri Jagannath culture. Odissi music is perpetual, ever new and splendid.

The role of music is worth mentioning in the cultural history of Odisha. This music is said to be neither Hindustani nor Karnataki, but is unique in it. And this we name as Odissi. Eminent scholars and critics have opined that there is a heritage of Odissi music and this music is unique. Much

before the beginning of Hindustani music and Karnataki music there was the prevalence of Odissi-raga and *Raaginis*, *Chhand-champu*, *Geeta Govinda*, *Champu* etc. in most of the rural areas of Odisha. And these are prevalent till date. Vocal music and instrumental music are the two wings of music. But, Odissi the traditional music of Odisha as well as the traditional musical instruments of Odisha seems have lost their sheen. As the singers today have started for getting the traditional *Raga-Raagini*, *Chhanda* etc. of Odissi singing style so also the performers of instrumental music have shied away from our own style of Odishan instrumental music. The uses of certain specific musical instruments along with the performances of Odissi music, Odissi dance, folk dance, since hundreds of years. Varieties of musical instruments are being played during various social functions and religious occasions and also played in the religious institutions of Odisha. Hence in order to make the musical Instruments more interesting various experiments have been done from time to time. Presently after undergoing several contributions to Odishan traditional music all these above mentioned musical instruments have now been enlisted as the special section of musical instruments of Odisha.

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