



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 8.4
IJAR 2022; 8(9): 192-196
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 08-07-2022
Accepted: 12-08-2022

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Folk percussion instruments

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Abstract

The typical folk song is strophic: the tune is repeated several times with successive stanzas of a poem. Tunes may have from two to eight lines, but most often there are four. The musical interrelationship among the lines is describes as the form. Although many form types are used universally, each culture favors certain ones. Folk-music of India adheres to monophonic structural system. According to scales of modern raga modes, the classification of music will prove more suitable.

Ancient music and folk-music are based on their respective techniques, derived from elementary methods of formative processes of the general system easily explainable through Indian musicological principles. It is true that connecting links between folk-tunes and ragas have not been properly established as yet. And these features are important facets of this discipline.

The history of ragas can be traced down to middle ages, fifteen hundred years back from the present century. During the course of its development for all these years the raga music, which is the Indian official music, has undergone a series of structural changes, and its current form is not more than six hundred years old. The continuous incorporation of several tribal and folk musical forms in its list has been a striking feature. When folk-music took a natural shape in the practical field, Indian musicologists started talking about reformed local melodies.

Keywords: Folk song, fuel-wood, households, Lanchaan

Introduction

A folk music instrument is a musical instrument does not have a known inventor and which is developed among the common people. It can be made from any wood, metal or other material and played in performances of folk music.

The instruments are either be percussion or non-percussion *i.e.* flute, trumpet, string instruments that are played by plucking or by other techniques. Some instruments which are commonly used in folk music are referred as folk instruments, even though that instrument does not fulfill the criteria defining a folk instrument; an example is the harmonica.

The folk music used in rural areas where they are very popular and also in film music. The urumi melam is one of the popular rural folk instruments of southern part of country and the instrument is used more often with an urmuri and nadaswarams and instrument of choice.

In Tamilnadu, the tribes live in rural hill having their own folk traditions.

In folk Music they say that Cooing of birds is the origin for the melodies called talams. Each of the talam has the name of deity, including Khunhanadha Talam, Karanganac-hi talam and mangalanaada talam. The music and dance have started from the temples of Tamil Nadu. In the early days, to sing divine songs in the temples, different groups of people were appointed. Officers or leaders of the world of music and incharge of arrangement of private worship of kings and group singing are called as Thevaranayakams.

A short musical programmes in the temples are offered by Odhuwars, Sthanikars, or Kattalaiyaars. They perform the devotional dhevaram songs. Musicians had the total reliance on divine grace. In the end of 19th century, instrument sarangi was in use in the temples of Tamilnadu. The Odhuvars lead the chorus in the temple congregational prayers with the accompaniment of the Sarangi.

The musical pillars are found in the artha mandapam of temples at Madhurai, Tirunelveli, Suchindram and Alwar Tirunagiri. While singing of Dhevaram, accompaniment are done with those pillars though they are called as stone-pillars. Folk Music and songs of Tamil Nadu are in its evolution since centenarians until to date. In the Villages life of Tamil Nadu, folk, music and dance performances have played a crucial role.

Folk music of Tamil Nadu has grown, comparing with other music of Tamil Nadu. And in the local educational stream I possess a part. Tamilnadu possesses a long music history for a few thousand years.

Village population of Tamil Nadu had distinguished from the passionate lovers of folk music and songs. The rukoothu is a street play presented in Villages and countryside and the charming folk instrument plays a major role either by solo or by group performance. Folk music frequently used in Tamil cinemas in their film production. Some of them were popular and got fabulous hits. The excitement given by the Tamil Folk Music is hard to overlook.

Folk Percussion Instruments

In the medieval period, the folk music had classes of literate urban which got the favor response to predecessors on late 15th and 16th centuries. The renaissance humanistic attitudes bought the acceptance of different genres in the music of folk. It is presumed that the folk song is simple but evocated in the rural and archaic areas. Extensive usage of folk are popularized music which made by renaissance composers. Some inner musical genres of folk music are: folk song polyphonic and folk song quodlibets. To motivate the raw materials called motet and masses are used more often as folk tunes; in a same way the music borrowing of reforming protestant are from folk music.

Now, let's have a look upon the instruments of folk percussion instruments:

Udukkai

Pambai

PambaiPanchamuka Vadhyam

Urumi

Kodukotti

Udukkai

The instruments udukkai or udukku is one of the family members of membrophone used in southern part of our country. This drum is similar to damaru and idakkada of northern and southern part of our country. Its shape is of hour glass and played by stretching over a side.

It is popularly used in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and the northern and the southern parts of Sri Lanka as well.

The structure of the udukkai

Udukkai is a smaller version of the one-hour glass shaped shape. This tool is about 8 to 10 inches long. It has a circumference of 6 to 8 inches at both ends and a center.

The tool was traditionally made of Kiln- burned clay. But then variations occur and it is made of wood. Palm bark is used to do this. In some areas, the body of the vessel is made of brass. The ends of the tool are covered across the mouth with processed and dried for this instrument. The rings are placed on the edge of the vessel. The skin is also tightened using strings woven from an end to the other.

The sound is raised on one side of the vessel. And one or two metal wire nets are tied to the side where the rhythm does not play. Thus the person reading this is able to create more vibration. A bar made of cloth is fixed in the middle of the tool to hold it. Colored balls made of cotton strings are also hung decoratively through a loop on the instrument.



Fig 1: Udukkai

Popular musical instrument of South India

The instrument is usually played as a rhythmic instrument of or in temple ceremonies or in folk culture. The Ayyappan song, which is preceded by the Ayyapan song at the sabarimala temple in Kerala, uses this instrument with rhythmic accompaniment and is often referred to as the udukku song.

Udukkai Kori song is a traditional art form of Kerala. The vocals of the song are in the tune with the rhythms of the song. From this, it can be seen that this instrument was very popular in Kerala. Udukkai is said to have been a popular musical instrument in Jaffna, Sri Lanka as early as the 9th century.

Method to use this instrument

The whistle is raised only on one side, usually the right side, holding the wedge horizontally. The left hand is used to hold the tool with the cloth strap. The fingers, mainly the index, middle and ring fingers, are used to raise the chin with the inner palm. Also, the fabric bar, by being released tightly or flexibly, is able to adjust the modulation of the induction sound. The fingers of the left hand are also to adjust the tightness by pulling the hanging strings directly on the weather.

Pambai

The couple of drums are always played in folk music and temple festive of Tamil Nadu.

Pamba is an Avanadha vadhyas or instruments. It is skinned instruments. In the early days the pamba was made of metal such as bronze and brass. But now, they are being use in metal like iron plate. There is a type of so-called satirical drum made of wood (jack wood or Neem tree).

Pamba in folk music

Pamba is a folk leather instrument that plays a background instruments in folk songs and dance performances. Folk musical instruments are appeared and presents to folk people.

The player who plays this musical instrument is called as Prabakaran in Tamil Nadu and pambala in Andhra Pradesh. This instrument is played in festivals like temple ceremonies and marriage of Gods. In these temple festivals thus instrument was played while singing the song of Goddess Devi. The temples of clan deities of Telugu Chettiyars the pamba player's contributions were essentials. Most of the pamba players are working as temple servants.



Fig 2: Pambai

Background music for folk dance

Further, this instrument is used for satirical drum, false leg horseback riding and other form of folk music and riding and other form of folk music and dance. Salitrical drum means 2 nadaswaram, 2 tavil, 2 pamba, 2 urumi, 1 kidimutti, and sinukkusatti, 1 sruthi box, 1 cymbal. This is how the salitrical drum is forms. This pair of drums are played by placing near waist of the player or placing on the floor and beaten with sticks or hands.

In this couple of drums, one of the drum is made of wood and another is made of brass. The drum which is made of wood is called as veeru vanam and the other drum which is made of metal is called as vengala vanam.

This instrument called pamba is four faced instrument. The big one is called periya Kottu which has a deeper tone and the small one is called siriya Kottu.

This instrument is made with different materials like goat skin which covers the head, jack wood and brass. The bigger drum sizes around eighteen inches in length and the smaller drum sizes around fifteen inches. Artists are worn this instrument to their hip and played by standing which is comfortable to them. Sometimes this instrument can be used by sitting.

Pamba has set to fixed pitch. The rhythm phrases are slow, fast and complex to produce in the temple festivals for an ensemble and accompaniment for many folk dances. It is used during the festivals of Madurai Thalaiyari Gurunathan temple, Ayyanpuram Angaala Parameswari temple and played in panguni uthiram which is very special festival for Lord Shanmukha and this festival holds in the month of march. It is said that the community of pambalas are experts from the southern art of Andhra Pradesh.

It is said that this instrument echoed as the hound dogs. An artist who plays this instrument was playing frequently on the path during the reign of king. This instrument should be hanged upside down from a tree. The instrumentalist named Andi said that the peculiar playing of instrument to the king. Then, the king replied and showed a stone to keep the instrument for dry, from then on the stone called as Andi parai. The verge of extension is taken to the measure to save this musical tradition.

Panchamukha vadhyaam

The panchamukha vadhyaam or instrument is a very large percussion instrument in the form of a five pointed elbow. It has many names like Kudamuzha and Kudapanchamukhi. This musical instrument is played only in some temples in Tamil Nadu. Panchamukha vadhyaam or instrument is still played at Thiruvavarur and Thiruthuraipoondi.

Appearances and References

This instrument is an AD percussion instrument that appeared only in the chola region during the chola period in the 12th century. It will be directed by parasivars who admire yamalatantra. This tribe called muttukarar will play this instrument for the stop of Lord Shiva. The five faces of the instrument are revered as the five faces of Sadasiva. This percussion instrument, which existed during the chola period, is now extinct. In Thiruvavarur, Kaamikaagama is played for puja and festivals.

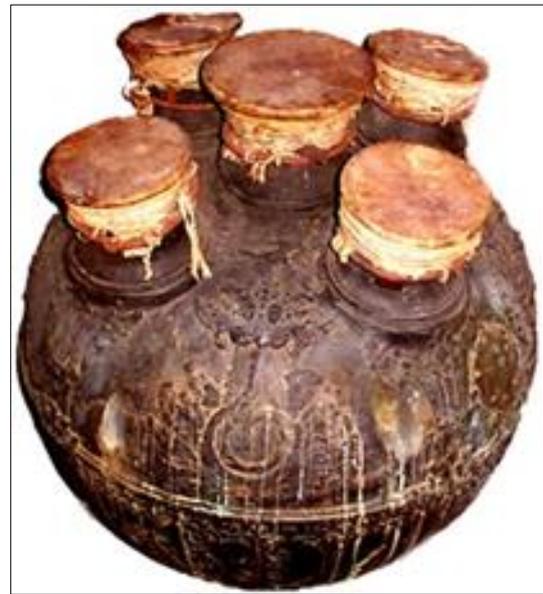


Fig 3: Panchamukha vadhyaam

Musical instrument of temple

The panchamukha vadhyaam or instrument is played during major events such as the nitya puja, special anointing ceremonies, festivals and temple ceremonies, which are often held in temples. This instrument is very special in the temple of Thiruvavarur. A face is like that of a snake. The other is located in the form of a swastika. Another face is in the shape of lotus. The division is unidentified. The 5th face in the middle is larger. Famous faces are made of deer skin. In this instrument each face is beaten separately seven times and five times together while the faces are beaten together five times.

It takes practice to play a leather instrument like this. There are also musical nuances. The instrument is often played by skilled temple.

Structure of the instrument

The base with 5 faces made of copper or bronze. The surface is stretched using leather. The panchamukha vadhyaam or instrument is attached to the wheel and set within iron frames. Arrangements have been made to move from place to place. Its use is getting very close.

The exhibition at the combatore Tamil classical conference showcased some musical instrument dating back to 700-800 years. One of them is a one and a half ton panchamukha vadhyaam or instrument made entirely of copper.

Urumi

Urumi is a double-headed drum which is in shape of hourglass and has two skins attached with the carved wooden shell. Most preferably the jackwood is used for this

instrument, although another wood can also be used, like rosewood. The thin metal rings are covered with cow hide, which usually stretched by both left and right head of the instrument. Approximately, both sides of the outer surface has holes around seven to eight. Tension of the faces were held continuing with the rope which intertwined as v-shaped pattern. The heads of the instrument are coiled additionally by the pair of ropes which were tethered and adjusted the tension horizontally by increase and decrease of left head if needed. For eg, the drums gets weakened in the season of monsoon, at that time this drum cannot be easier to play. The coil drummers can fix the problems easily.

Technique

The urumi drum is played horizontally by hanging with fabric shoulder strap. The urumi drummer can play the instrument by standing or walking. This instrument can be played with stick fully. Some of the instrument sounds produced by playing on this drum are explained in the next lines. Striking in the head of the drum resulted as an open sound. In the moaning sound both the hands are used simultaneously for playing. Right hand is used to give blow to the head while left hand is used rubbing the left head with the edge of a curved stick. Talking drum tone is produced by striking the right head and left hand grasping and releasing the rope holding the heads. To get the better quality of moaning tone by the urumi player the castor oil is applied on the left head.

Notation

There is no written scripts used in folk music, but it has taught only by oral. Artists or musicians learn the art over the years with conscious listening, imitating and practice.



Fig 4: Urumi

The history and context of performance

It is believed that this drum had possessed the celestial and holy powers when there were ceremonial processions held in the temple. The possession of spirit or trance in specific attacks on urumi performance' It used in the borders near Tamilnadu and Kerala. There are two types' ensembles of urumi:

- 1) Urumi melam is played during the funerals and adverse events. In this type one to three numbers of urumi drums are played along with two pambai instruments and double-reed nadaswaram.
- 2) Naiyandi melam is played during ritual and dance. In contract to urumi melam, in this type two double-reed nadaswaram are used along with barrel drum of thavil, pambai and urumi.

Devarattam is the well-known naiyandi melam in which 2 to 3 urumis are used along with other instruments. This is

performed during the wedding, menstruation ceremony, harvesting festivals, and staged folk dances.

Devarattam, poi kaal kudhirai aattam, mayil attam, puli aattam, and kaavadi aattam are some of the staged folk dances of Naiyaandi melam.

In the current movie recordings and albums, urumi melam is played to generate sound tracks.

Kodukotti

Kidikatti or Kodukotti is an ancient instrument is made out of the jackfruit wood and looks like a flower pot. It consists of 2 similar parts. These 2 parts are joined in the middle. It is narrow towards the bottom. One part has the dimension one-twelve inches in length and 8 inches of diameter. In the other part of the instrument which is smaller has dimension eight-ten inches in length and six inches of diameter. First part which is bigger mad out of cow skin and the other one is made of cow skin or goat. Both parts generates different sounds.

Playing of one face of the instrument is different from that of the other stick which is slight bent of the corner is used for playing the bigger face of the instrument. Slender bamboo stick is used for plying the other face. Tamarind trees twigs can also be used to play this instrument. These twigs or sticks are processed by soaking in water and then dried in fire before use.



Fig 5: Kodukotti

Old Tamil literature mentioned that kodukotti is one of the 18 instruments played in temples. Dhevaram written by Appar has mentioned about the playing of this instruments. Some years before this instrument was used along with nagaswaram. During thiruvavur ther festival, it is played along with the Bari Nayanam.

Dance form of this instrument was played by lord Shiva which is mentioned by thirunavukkarasar in his composition. In Tamilnadu villages this instrument are played during the poi kaal kudhirai dance. During this dance performance kodukotti is played along with urumi urumi. Now a days playing this kodukotti instrument is fast disappearing at temples. Similarly some fors are associated with the instrument. This ancient art frm needs to be from extinct.

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