

Music of Nomadic Gondaliga Community



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Abstract

Art evokes in us aesthetic sense and art is a magnus form of culture. Music is also one of the magnificent forms of art. Music has its root in folk. The classical music is an extended form. At this pretent, Gondaliga Community has a great tradition of music. They are the worshippers of Ambabhavani and during the Gondala ritual, the Gondala singers sings the narration in praise of Ambabhavani throughout the night. The main singer sings melodies and the choirs accompany him by playing the unique Sambala instrument. Gondaliga Community has enriched the cultural heritage of our country through immensely contributing to the music tradition.

Key Words : Nomedic, Gondaliga, Karnatka, Deity, Mela

Research Paper

There is no country without art. There is no language without literature. Language is an instrument of man in the universe to fulfill the very needs of every day life's communication. But art is a media of exhibiting man's internal aesthetics. Man is not merely living to fulfill his hunger. He is also living to enjoy the life. His inner intent has an intense desire for the beauty. To quench the thirst of it, he had invented various tools and paths. For this reason, language is almost important as breathing to the living person. Similarly, art is almost important for sensing the delightness to the mind.

“Art is an object of beauty or an activity creating sensational beauty. Art is an absolute superior form of culture and also an effective and efficient media of communication. No other Medias can be as much impressive as art and it is one of the most effective forms connecting the people.”(Vijay 1), Music is one of the best forms of art. Indian music having its own unique significance of a profound heritage has developed since centuries. It is the most attractive forms of art. Music has taken its origin during the period of Vedas. Later it has developed stage by stage with innovative experiments and at present has been identified as a unique form of art.

There are two forms in music 1) folk music 2) Classical music. Folk music is created and composed by common folk for their own enjoyment and to pass on to the future

our traditions and beliefs. It is an oral form of music that has been passed on to the generation which has been at present documented to preserve our glorious culture. It is sung by the common folk in local dialect. Classical music follows the rules. It carries the rhythm, tune, music, samvadi, vadi, thaata and other aspects connected to music forms. Classical music is composed with definite form. This can be learnt through regular practice. Two forms of classical music are significant and it has gained success.

The process of exchange of musical ideas between classical and folk continuously can be seen. With the innovative intent of the present society, experimentation, a kind of fusion has been developed. Gondalcommunity's(1) music is not a separate entity from this. Gondali nomadic community has adopted few of the nature of classical music in their pure folk music style and are exhibiting the sensational music at present.

Gondali Community

Gondali mean a worshipping method. In this worshipping form, at the presence of worshipping deity TulajaBhavani the community throughout the night, prays TulajaBhavani by singing songs with the instruments and narrates any story connected to the deity. This complete process of pray is called as Gondala

Singing. One who practices this Gondala are called as Gondaligas.

The information on worshipping method of Gondaliga Community at devotees house was given (Yanakappa Ambaji).

Gondaligas of Karnatka are basically from Maharashtra. Their mother tongue is Marati. During the reign of emperor Shivaji in Maharashtra, the neighboring provinces Vijayapura, Kalburgi were ruled by muslim rulers. In those days, spying or espionage was common. The king Shivaji appointed Gondaligas for spying and he sent them to the devotees for the act of Gondaligas. As spiers of Shivaji, Gondaligas entered Karnataka (Murigeppa 323).

Gondali artists visited the houses that invites them and they practice Gondala. As according to the tradition, primarily they worship the deity and starts the Gondala by singing the prayer on deity, later will be followed through narrating the worldly stories of Leelavati, Lohitakumara, Satisulochana, lakshapati Maharaj and similarly more than 30 stories are narrated.

Among many stories, few stories are selected as desired by the audience and are sung melodiously. The narrative songs of each song covers the complete night. This narration includes singing, instruments, dance and dialogues. The uniqueness found in their singing is it is narrated orally without the usage of any script.

These artists narrate the sub stories while narrating the story during night in order to keep aware the audience. For instance the stories are Jagalaganti Jakkam (Quarrelling Jakkavva), saint couples, humorous stories etc the rhythm or the sound is connected to any of the swaras. Similarly, the songs will also be associated with any of the ragas or any associated ragas. The Gondali singers are ignorant about the songs that are associated with the ragas. Even then, they never sing with melody less tune. Only countable singers have the knowledge of ragas who have connection with classical music.

Gondali singers begin the narration through a song with a raga. The song covers the notes of navarasa's. This type of singing can be considered distinct. They also sing Tatvapada's (Philosophical songs), Dasapada (Philosophical hymns of sages) along with the regular narrative songs. The tats and notations of Gondali Community itself is the raaga's in Hindustani Music. In

almost majority of the songs sung by Gondali Community, majority of Raagataala's of Hindustani music is found.

The ragas identified by me among their songs are Jeevanapuri, Bhairava, Bhairavi, Bhupa, Durga, Bheempalsi, Patadeep and Kafietc and similarly they sing with deepchandi Keharava and Dadra taal of Hindustani.

Mela

In the singing group or mela of Gondaligas three artists are found, the main singer and two co-singers are found. The main singer sings with the instrument sambala and co-singers sing with the instrument Choudki and Taala.

The main singer himself in the mela is the prime person. He will be the singer, actor, narrator, director, instrumentalist, musician, dancer and so. This doesn't mean that co-singers doesn't have any role. They accompanies the main singer by playing the instrument Choudki.

Integral information on choudike instrument is collected he told the legendaries behind this instrument (Gurupadappa).



The instruments Choudki and Sambala are adjusted to the tune of the songs before exhibiting the narrative songs in the programme. The the main singer begin the song through alap (that develops a raga) and develops through praising Shambavi which is later accompanied by the background singers. For example,

Main singer : Praying at the feet of Ambabhavani
 Co-singers : Praying at the feet of Ambabhavani
 Raag : Jeevenpuri
 Taal : Keharava

Song of Deity

Raag : Bhairavi

Main singer : Kaalikadevi, shown the bravery by tearing the entrails of demon.

Co-singers : Kaalikadevi, shown the bravery by tearing the entrails of demon.

Instruments

Sambala⁽²⁾: instruments have a greater significance in Gondaliga Community as music gains the significance.



Instrument Playing Style: This instrument with two heads is tied to the waist of the main singer. A taala is tied to the middle part of this instrument. He plays Sambala instrument from the fingers of his right hand and this results in the flow of melodious tone.

The tuning is adjusted to the Sambaala instrument by the Gondaligas before the music concert. The instrument is played associating with Utaan (Association of teen Bol's). Collected information on Sambala instrument. He informed about method of playing the instrument and also its significance in Gondala tradition (Kotrappa).

Name of Rhythm

followed by Gondaliga's

1. Three Rhythm

2. Associated Rhythm

3. Yektal

4. Unitaal

Name of Hindustani

Rhythm

Deepchandi

Keharva

Dadra

Bhajan

Sambala Preparation or Manufacturing

The Sambal is a folk membranophone made up of wood of two approximately cylindrical wooden drums united along a cammondege having skin membranes stretched over their mouths. This instrument is played using two wooden sticks, of which one has a curved end. The right hand side drum's pitch is higher than the left. Its membrane is excited by striking repeatedly to generate sound of a constant pitch.



Chaudki Instrument

“There are mythological stories connected to Chaudiki⁽³⁾ instrument usage by Gondaliga Community Parusharam, son of Yellammaslains the demon Betasura and he takes out the entrails and Chaudikis body is made with the body of the demon and strings are made from his entrails.”(Boralingaiah 83)



Chaudki instrument is very important in the mela of Gondaliga's because from beginning of narration to its end, narration is sung to the tune of the Chaudki instrument. The background artist plays this instrument. The rhythm must not be missed by the Chaudki accompanist.

Manufacture of Chaudki instrument

The Chowdiki has a long rectangular measuring jar supported by a three fit long bamboo that is fitted with a cork at the tip. The jar is either made of wood or bronze and is covered with the Swan's skin. A metal piece is inserted through a hole in the centre. A string is tied between the bamboo and the hide. It is attached to the

peg on top of the instrument. The sound is produced by either plucking the string by fingers or with a small rod that has tiny bells attached on either sides. The community themselves prepares the instrument.

Percussive Instruments (Pounding rhythms)⁽⁴⁾

Like Sambala, Chaudiki, pounding rhythm instrument also plays a significant role. In playing this rhythm instrument, the role of main singer is important.



Taala is tied to the middle part of Sambala which has two cylindrical wooden united along a common edge. He plays the rhythm instrument from the left hand playing the Sambala from the fingers of right hand. This pounding rhythm instrument is played by the background accompanists and this instrument is made of iron or bronze metal. Information on taala's played by Gondaligas are collected. Its use by the background choirs are given(Hanumanta).

Dance

The prominence is give to narrative music in the mela rather than the dance by the Gondaliga Community. But during few festivals and rituals like the final day of DusseheraNavaratri, oil lamp is lighted to worship the deity and the lamp is carried by the boy who had applied sacred ash to his forehead and he dances to the rhythm and to the notes of Sambala instrument. But there will be no any classical limit to their dance.

Overall it can be concluded that the music of nomadic Gondala Community has neither adopted classical form nor folk form in its music. But it is a composite or fusion of both the musical forms. They follow their own distinct form of music style in association of music with instruments.

Information about the social conditions of the Gondaliga Community and the need for government policies for its improvement was given(Ambaji Sugetara).

Conclusion

The Music of Nomadic Gondali community has played a ritual role in constructing the great culture of India. It is our native music and has immensely contributed to the heritage of our nation. Our all it can be concluded that it has neither adopted the classical form nor the folk form in its music. But it is a composite of the association of both forms Government has to implement different plans to preserve the great heritage of the music of nomadic Gondali Community and give justice to this community.

Footnotes

1. Gondala It is a music narrative tradition of nomadic Gondaliga Community. This community visits different houses who mainly worship Ambabhavani and they sing in praising Ambabhavnithroughout the night.
2. The Sambala instrument or Membronophone is an instrument seen in the Gondaliga's mela.
3. Chaudki instrument is used by Gondaliga's for tuning.
4. In the music of Gondaliga's, the percussive instruments play a vital role.

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