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Development of Pakhawaj (Structure, nomenclature and repertoire)

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Abstract

The Instrument Pakhawaj which we see presently is the later emanation of Mridanga of the early days. In Natyasastra also we find the Instrument Mridanga which was very similar to Pakhawaj and it was an important instrument of that time. But as the style of music has been changed from time to time instruments has also been changed accordingly, and pakhawaj was not also an exception. Some are of the opinion that the Pakhawaj of the modern age was made at the time of Maan sing tomar of 16 th century. It is possible as because we know that the present form of Dhrupad was introduced by King Maaan singh at that time and an instrument like Pakhawaj was very much required to accompany with. It is very interesting that a same instrument has two names and both are popular within the common people. Now what is the difference between Mridanga of early days with that of the pakhawaj of present time is my subject matter. A similarity notwithstanding there are many changes in structure repertoire and even in case of nomenclature we find. How Mridanga has become pakhawaj will be discussed here. How the name pakhawaj have become popular within the common people will also be discussed. The use of pakhawaj, changing trend, the repertoires, nomenclature all will be discussed vividly. Badyapath of Mridanga as stated in Natyasastra was quite different. I will try to give reference of the above and also the present style of Pakhawaj will be focused. Objective of this article is that scholars will get much more information regarding Pakhawaj, Many hidden matters regarding the development of this instrument will come into light. Present research article is written with the help or secondary sources.

Key words : Pakhawaj, Natyashastra, Pushkar Vadya, Mridanga, Sangeet Ratnakar

Research Paper

We know that from the time immemorial Pakhawaj has been playing a greater role in Indian Classical music than that of other percussion Instruments. It is mainly related to songs and Instrumental music of dhrupad style. Even now when Tabla is a most popular, rather should say the key instrument in Indian music Pakhawaj have not lost his dignified identity. Even listeners of any kind of good music have been listening it with deep pleasure, despite electronic musical instruments have captured major portion of the musical field. Always music lovers of our country have liked the sound of Pakhawaj, its gravity and high resonance, its solemnity. If we want to know the actual development of this dignified instrument we must have to cultivate the ancient musical text as well as the modern history of Indian music, because hearsay may not be the actual history. Well-versed researchers are of opinion that even before Vedic age there were some instruments like Mridanga as we have in the modern age. some evidences have been found from some items of Harappa and Mahenjodaro civilization, where we can see some musical instruments have been preserved are quite like Mridanga. Swami PragnanandajiMaharaj have said in his book "In one of the terracotta figures a kind of drum is to be seen hanging from the neck and two seals, we find a percussion of the modern Mridanga with skins at either end".[1]

There is no mention about present Mridanga or any other kind of instruments of either end in any of the text of Vedic age. At that time 'Dundubhi' was the key instrument. There were different kind of dundubhi at that time, like Dev dundubhi, bhumi dundubhi and banaspati. Banaspati was made of wood and all others with soil. In the post Vedic age (1500 B.C to 1200 A.D) when formal or social practices became recognized in the place of virtuous practice, then the commonly used instruments were also started to be developed according to demand of the time. We find the name of Mridanga in many mythology of that time. In Markandeya Puran we find some instruments like Muraj, Pataha, Puskar, Panav apart from Mridanga.[2] Many are of opinion that Mridanga, Muraj and Mardal are of same group.[3]

The especially notable ancient text, as far as music is concern was 'Natyashastra' of Bharat Muni of nearly 200 B.C. Though Natyashastra was mainly for drama,

music (Geet-Vadya-Nritya) is also a vital part of that text. As vocal, instrumental music and dance was indispensable for drama, Bharatmuni described many important theoretical and practical matters related to music (28th to 33rd chapters) in his text.

In Natyashastra we find mainly three musicologists- Swati,Narada and Vishwakarma . Among them Swati Muni was exceptionally knowledgeable person and expert in Taal shastra, in fact he was the protagonist of idiophone instruments. Bharat was of opinion that Swati Muni was the inventor of 'Puskar' vadya (Natyashastra 34/285).[4]

According to Natyashastra the sound of raindrop on the lotus leaf attracted Swati Muni and by the influence of that sound he requested Vishwakarma who was the 'Devashilpi' or 'The Architect of Gods' as stated in mythology to make an instrument which can produce such sound. So swati muni made three kinds of Puskar vadyas which is called 'Tripushkar' together. One is of hanging category, that is 'Alinga' (27 inch length,6 inch surface) 2nd is an instrument of vertical position called 'Urdhak'(length, surface 10and1/2) and the final to be played keeping on the lap, called ankika (31 and ½ and surface 9 inch). But in the Natyashastra we find three other instruments also for the purpose of drama, those are Mridanga, Dardur and Panav. As all of them are made of ceramics they are called Mridnaga.[5]

Sharnagadev have also mentioned the name of Mridanga in Sangit-Ratnakar. At the time of giving description of different kind of instruments he even described Madal in the category of Mridnaga. Shrangadev have described all kind of instruments of vedic, gandharva, desi and regional category. So, no other text like this for percussion instruments of any age.

In Sangit Ratnakar and 'Sangitopanishad-Saroddhar' of Sudhakalash Bachanacharya we find two different kinds of desipataha- one is 'Puskar' and the other is 'Abaj'. Many of this opinion that the name has come from the combination of these two instruments later.[5]

Puskar + Abaj =Pukhkar + Abaj = Pukh + Abaj = Pakh + Abaj = Pakhabaj = Pakhawaj.[6]

Another opinion is that, the word 'Pakhawaj' has come from 'Pakka Awaj' or perfect sound.[7] It may be said that Pakhawaj is the later emanation of Mridanga of the time of Bharat Muni . Only Mridnaga is the textual language and 'Pakhawaj' is used by the common people.

Particularly from which time the name Pakhawaj was emerged that is not mentioned anywhere properly, even no historical evidence is there too. It happened because several times external enemies attacked our country to plunder and destroyed many valuable historical resources in careless manner. As we know that they destroyed many of our temples, sculptures, architectures, similarly they destroyed many valuable books etc. in fire.

In different books of mediaeval period, such as 'Ragdarpan' of Fakirullah or 'Tuhfat-ul-Hind' of Mirja Khan we find the name of Pakhawaj. In this age Pakhawaj became popular in North-India and as it was similar in shape with Mridanga of the time of Bharat Muni, people of that time used to mention the instrument sometime Pakhawaj sometime Mridanga and still it is going on. We find both the names in the lyrics of Surdas of the mediaeval period —

"Atitanagatsangitbichtaanmilai

SurtaalnrityadheyipuniMridangabajai"

Another lyrics-

"Baajatataala, Pakhawaj, jhallari goon gabata jo harasata

Naachatanatisulagataumaganasursumansurbarasata"

Many of that opinion that Dhrupad has been found from 'Dhruvapad' but the modern researchers say that the present form of Dhrupad formed at the time of Maan Singh Tomar of 16th century.[8] He was a noted person in the field of music. He was a knowledgeable person and patronized musicians as well as music as a whole. He encouraged to create the new form of Dhrupad as we can hear nowadays with the help of great musicians Nayank Bakshu, Mohammad (mammu) and Bhanu (bhannu). After word it was recognized by the whole music world. As Dhrupad has been flourished everywhere Pakhawaj also have been developed time to time. Dhrupad and Pakhawaj is as if complementary to each other. In fact Dhrupad couldnot be imagined without Pakhawaj due to the solemn nature of this instrument.

Now we will discuss about the style of playing of Pakhawaj. Bharat mentioned about different Patakshara

and repertoires. How different syllable-words used to be played in Pakhawaj with a combination of vowel and consonants discussed in Natyasastra has been mentioned here. He used three words in case of percussion instruments as 'Pani', 'Panipratha', and 'Prahar'.[9] All of these have a few sub-sections. Moreover he stated three playing styles here also. In case of repertoires of Avanadha vadyas he mentioned 4 kinds of margas- Alipta, Addita, Gomukh and Bitasta.[10] Among them 'Addaita' marga would use to be applied in case of Mridanga. Some syllables are there – Ghattang, Katthit, Ghetang etc. this kinds of bols were used in the compositions of Shringar and Hasyarasa (two rasas or sentiments among nine rasas).

Now Sharangadev mentioned 16 Patavarnasin Sangit Ratnakar. Many syllables were made with the help of those. Three kind of bols were there- Suddhapat, Kutpat, Khandapat. Tat, Dhi, Thong, Theng, heng etc. are some examples of such syllable words. He mentioned about different 'Hastapat', out of which five in his opinion were uttered by Lord Shiva.[11]

Those were- Sadyojato, Bamdev, Aghor, Tatpurush, Eshan. They have also seven varieties. According to that some examples are given below.[12]

Sadyojato—

Nagbandha- Tanagana, Ginagana

Paban- Nanagida, Gidadagi.

Ek- Gida gidadattha...etc.

Nowadays we are accustomed with a different style of Pakhawaj which may be discussed with relation to gharana system. Because there are many kinds of things which comes from different gharanas and which emerged from different provincial cultures. Actually different style of playing hidden in different gharanas. Though it is the age of professional music and different traditions are there accordingly, still we find some amateur traditions also which are practiced in different temples as 'Haveli Sangit'

However, professional and amateur traditions are as follows:-[13]

	Havali Parampara		**Darbari Parampara**
1.	Mathura Prampara	1.	Jabali Gharana
2.	Nathdwara Parampara	2.	Panjab Gharana
3.	Kashi Paranpara	3.	Gwalior Gharana
4.	Gaya Parampara	4.	Banda Gharana
		5.	Baroda Gharana
		6.	Rampur Gharana
		7.	AyoddhaGharana
		8.	RewaGharana
		9.	Banaras Gharana
		10.	Darbhanga Gharana
		11.	Vishnupur Gharana
		12.	Dhaka Gharana
		13.	Nana Panse Gharana
		14.	Kolkata Gharana
		15.	Gaya Gharana

Among the amateur paramparas Mathura, Vrindavan, or Braja Mandal Mridanga paramparas are notable. From the 2nd half of 16th century onward this place became are markable holy place by the influence of Shree Chaitanya Dev and with the hard effort of two notable disciples Shreerup Goswami and Sanatan Goswami. At that time Vishanpad or Vishnupad would practice at this region[14] Many of that opinion that this was the origin of 'Dhamar'. As many songs were composed on the above concept, many compositions of Pakhawaj also made accordingly. For example :

Ras Paran,Maharas Paran, Jugalras Paran, Holy Paran etc.[15] How the thoughts of Vishnu or Krishna has been described in this parans are really surprising. Many paramparas of north India are influenced by this parampara. The main centre of Vaishnab religion is Nathdwara. Temple of lord Srinathji is the central place of all Haveli or religious traditions in Rajasthan. Along with that some eminent artists from Jaipur or Mewar Court also joined here with the Pakhawaj traditions. As a result this parampara was undoubtedly enriched. Ghanashyam das ji was one of the foremost names of the former and Ranchor das ji from the later stream may be mentioned especially.[16]

We find the names of Nana Panse baaj or Kudau Singh baaj as some important professional or Darbari parampara and baaj (style of playing). Though separate baaj for every separate gharana or parampara are not acceptable to the

eminent artists of different gharanas, still some baaj or styles have been recognized overall. Kudau Singh was a pakhawaji of highest level, he had tremendous power of playing different types of parans like- Gaj Paran,Topkhani Paran, Indradhanush Paran, Bijlikarak Paran etc. and he was famous for the above kind of compositions.

Nana Pansebaaj was introduced by Nana Sahib Panse of Maharashtra. Mathematical purity was one of the specialties of this baaj. A kind of paran used to play in this baaj named 'Sarani-Paran'.

Some baajs of Pakhawaj are famous for accompaniment like in Bengal. Pakhawaj playing of this place has been influenced by the style of songs of pathos sentiment.[17]

However, the long way of development of Pakhawaj or Mridnaga is not an easy task to describe in a small place, yet I have tried to give a sketch of the topic.

Conclusion :

However the long way of the development of Pakhawaj or Mridanga is not a easy task to describe in a small place. In fact most of the instruments of our country have been modified according to the demand of the age, the changing music styles and according to the imagination of the musicians.

So any particular instrument may not be found in a particular shape from ancient to modern age. As the music history of our country is sometimes very foggy it is therefore very difficult to find the development of our music clearly.

So sometimes we have to find in mythologies, sometimes in history. Sometimes in the sayings of eminent scholars, sometimes through the cultures of common people. Development of Pakhawaj is not also an exception. It has come through a long way to get the present shape. It may not be found in a particular place or book or age, we have to observe it from different corners, then we can understand how the instrument Pakhawaj has been developed.

FOOTNOTES

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