



ODISHAN TRIBES AND THEIR BLOWING MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS : AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

To understand the importance of blowing instruments in different tribal communities of Odisha, one must first appreciate the great diversity of social contexts in which they are used. Tribal cultures and blowing musical instruments in Odishan tribal cultures here implying tribal traditional communities music often serves purposes other than entertainment or aesthetic enjoyment. Certain blowing tribal musical instruments are closely associated with the supernatural, and their sounds connote powerful magic. Some tribal people, for instance, identify the sound of blowing tribal musical instruments with the voices of supernatural beings; the same sound signifies an awesome natural phenomenon, such as thunder. As a vestige of traditional culture in the tribes, every winter blowing tribal musical instrument sounded to drive away evil spirits and encourage the return of spring. Tribal blowing instrument which can be considered to be of the same family as, if not an improvement over time period, the tribal blowing musical instruments in Odisha.

KEYWORDS : Tribal, Blowing, Primitive, Society, Odisha

Blowing tribal musical instruments are often among some tribal group's most important ritual objects, and in tribal communities of Kandha of Keonjhar, Kondhamal, Sambalpur, Bolangir, Koraput, Ganjam and Sundergarh, Paraja of Koraput, Kalahandi and Sundergarh, Gadaba of Koraput, Nowrangpur, and Malkangiri, Oraon of Sambalpur, Sundergarh, Gunupur, and Bonai, Bonda of Koraput and Malkangiri, Juang of Keonjhar and Dhenkanal, Santal of Mayurbhanj, Balasore, and Keonjhar and Gond of Sambalpur, Bolangir, Koraput, Kalahandi and Sundergarh they are specially venerated. The Gadaba of the Koraput district rainforest keep their traditional flutes wherein spirits are believed to dwell, in a special shrine where they are treated as sacred objects. The tribal flutes and the drums of some tribal peoples are similarly housed and revered. Blowing musical instruments in Odishan traditional tribal cultures also serve nonreligious functions. In Some tribal villages, the Basi once played bamboo flute to alert a village that the victorious hunters were coming home with the corpses of the foes. Conch-shell trumpets are used for signaling in the few tribal regions of Odisha. Trumpets also may be associated with the tribal village head or chief, as in some primitive tribal communities of Odisha, where their use may be strictly controlled by tribal law.

A variety of blowing musical instruments in traditional tribal cultures of Odishan tribes is used for personal amusement, and some are known to accompany vocal performance and dance. For example, the Desia Kandha of Koraput district, which is found across the tribal areas from southern Odisha, supplies introductions, interludes, and conclusions, as well as accompaniments for vocalists and their blowing musical instruments; it also provides intricate aural counterparts to the foot movements of dancers. The blowing musical instruments player's technique, which uses circular breathing (inhaling through the nose while blowing into the instrument to yield an uninterrupted tone), involves both blowing and singing into the instrument.

It is common for blowing musical instruments of tribes to have symbolic significance. The form of an instrument or its decoration may relate to local myths. Blowing musical instruments in particular often have sexual connotations. Among the Didayi of Malkangiri district the blowing musical instruments traditionally depended on the age of the male performer. Boys between five and nine years of age play blowing instruments with only bamboo pipes. The straight shape of flutes, which are played exclusively by tribal men in many tribes of Odisha, is self-evident. No symbolism is universal, however, and an instrument's musical connotations may conflict: for example, a conch shell, which by its shape

and derivation from a water animal is female, is generally made into a trumpet, usually considered a male instrument.

Not only the shapes but also the sounds of traditional tribal blowing instruments are often rich in symbolism. The sound of the Odishan tribal flute, for example, is widely associated with love magic. Among the tribes young men played the flute to serenade young women; bamboo flutes and flute music historically have been connected with rites of romantic initiation. In some tribal communities of Odisha, instrument symbolism is highly developed. For the tradition oriented blowing musical instruments, sounds constitute a symbolic taxonomy comprising three levels: whistling, vibration, and percussion. The whistling of a tribal flute connotes romantic invitation, while vibration, represented by such instruments as the local clarinet. Percussive sounds produced by tribal traditional drums and various rattles symbolize the uniting of male and female.

In Gadaba, Paraja, Ho, Bondo, Didayi, Juang, Dongaria Kandha, Kutia Kandha, Paudi Bhuiyan, Birhor, Mankirdia, Hill-Kharia, Saora, Lanjia Saora, Chuktia, Bhunjia tribal communities of Odisha, blowing musical instruments are used in a variety of social contexts, not least in religious ritual. In Mayurbhanj the transverse flute are played in celebrating Santal birthday. The melodic instrument in Kutia Kandha's religious rituals is the traditional bamboo flute, which is used to play preludes and interludes to the tribal chants. Blowing musical instruments are used in many different ways in traditional tribal music of Odisha; thus, the distinctions between folk art and tribal instruments are not always clear-cut. Although traditional flutes are still made in irregular temperaments for traditional tribal music, many are now constructed in equal temperament for use in tribal socio cultural practices. Blowing tribal musical instruments also have been brought into classical music traditions elsewhere. Blowing musical instruments play an important role in Odishan tribal music and cultures. Most tribal music for winds imitates vocal models, such as the tribal music for Dhemsas and other group dances, the love songs for bamboo flute played by tribal men, and the blowing instrumental music of Odishan primitive tribes, which usually consists of richly ornamented versions of local tribal songs. Many kinds of blowing musical instrument are found throughout tribal districts of Odisha. These vary from the very simple ones found in tribal areas.

A few types of tribal music are idiomatic to blowing musical instruments. In tribal districts of Odisha, perhaps because of the proliferation of blowing musical instrument, including several basic types of flutes, tribal music is dominated by

blowing instrumental tunes, most of them for dancing. In certain primitive tribal instrumental ensembles, percussion instruments sometimes are joined by teams of flute or horn players, each of whom plays a single note whenever it occurs in the melody.

In Odishan Kandha, Saora, Paraja, Koya, Gond, Gadaba, Birhor, Didayi and Juang tribal communities flutes are made from a bamboo and woody pipes. They are termed a transverse 3-holed flute made famous by village musicians of tribe flute tradition. It is mainly performed in relation to their traditional tribal festivals, dance and rituals related to ancestral god. There are many ritualistic elements included in the performance and it is performed as worship to the family deities during marriages. The common and regular tribal festivals are those connected with agricultural operations. Greatest among tribe's festivals is the celebration of thanksgiving after harvest in which the god, who provides mankind with nature's bounties and ensures their prosperity, is honoured. There is no fixed date for the celebration; this varies from village to village, but usually. The climax of the celebrations is the colourful dance in which men and women take part in their best clothes. Lines are formed by males and females separately and to the rhythmic beat of drums and blowing of bamboo flutes and horns by the males, both groups shuffle forward in parallel lines. Music is an inevitable part of tribal life like songs. In traditional tribal life, music is not performed for entertainment but in rite rituals also. Ganabaja has a great role in the traditional tribal life of Odisha in every way. In every tribal rite ritual including marriage, Ganabaja has its age-old position though nowadays we could see the modern form of band music is used in some marriage events.

Ganabaja is performed by tribal people not only in western or southern parts but other parts of Odisha also. The music is played not only during the marriage but also during death. The main instruments of ganabaja are Mahuri (is a wind instrument), Dhol (drum), Nisan or Luhuti, and Tasa or Tiribidi. The instruments are made by members of the groups only. The Ganabaja where Nisan which has the shape of a long iron like a horn, is called a Singhbaja, and where it does not have this shape, it is called a Murribaja. These tribal musical instruments use the natural materials and the tribal people also make their musical instruments.

For example, the Dungdungga of the Parajas, the Kirkisa of the Durua, the Basi of the Kandh's, the bamboo flute of the Saura, the Maddal of the Gond, Saura, and the Santals are made only by the members of the respective groups. In different parts of the undivided Koraput district, tribal music is also known as Desia Baida or the county music. Among the Kandha, Paraja, Gadaba, Saura, Bhatra, Banda, Didayi, Kutia Kandha, Dongria Kandha, Lodha, Bathudi, Juang, Pahadi Bhuiyan and other tribes of Odisha Basi, bamboo flutes and Shinga are notable.

It is important to mention here that the Juang and Bathudi people are also seen worshipping at certain festivals by placing traditional musical instruments in the youth dormitory. Similarly, some blowing musical instruments vary in region and group which maintain their uniqueness not only for different names but also in terms of size and type. Similarly, the flute of Kandha, Saura, Durua, Santal also preserves their uniqueness. How the role of music in traditional lifestyles can be inferred from the following sayings:

Age baja pachhe raja (baja in the front and the king is the next). Age baja pachhe debta, pachhe biha (baja in the front, the deity is the next). Age baja pachhe biha (baja is the first in the marriage ceremony). Age baja pachhe desalta (baja is first, desalta (other equipages are in the next thing in rituals) is the next.

Ganabaja is performed in all social and cultural activities

such as marriage, worship of the deity, dance, in the occasion of death or the performance of death rituals, pre-wedding rituals for tribal girls and so on. Par the playing style or rhythm of the musical instrument depending on the event and situation and the needs. Odisha is a land overflowing with art and culture. In Odisha, it's quite common to find tribal Dance in Adivasi Areas. Tribal musical instruments every time remind the culture of our land. Tribal musical instruments especially the blowing musical instruments are usually homemade that developed and used among common tribal people. Most tribal instruments made from wood, bamboo, metal, and other natural materials.

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