



THE ROLE OF PUMPKIN IN THE MAKING OF TANPURA: AN INSIGHT

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ABSTRACT

Tanpura and other instruments are made of wild pumpkins. The main objective of this research is to know where the wild pumpkins grow, how tanpura instruments are made and the continuity of swara produced by it. The purpose of my research is to introduce the farmers who grow wild pumpkins and the artisans of tanpura instruments. As a music teacher, I was very much curious to know the role of pumpkins involved in producing swara after the instrument was completely made. I have written the research article partly after consulting scholars, instrument makers and partly by experience and experiments. The research article throws light on many factors such as: How many months are required to harvest these wild pumpkins? What is the method of processing it? How do these instrument makers make the instrument after tempering it? What is the economic status of the instrument makers and how this impacted the transformation of the instrument in the course of time, besides the family history of instrument makers.

KEYWORDS: Tanpura, Tambura, Toumburu, Pepon, Pompon, Pumpion, Singers, Wild Pumpkins

Research Problems

- To collect information from rare filed
- Rare families of Making Tanpura in India..
- To face difficulties to meet Tanpura instruments makers
- Barrier of the language used by the farmers makes the researcher together relevant and genuine information.

Objectives of the Research Article

- To know where the wild pumpkins grow.
- How to tanpura instruments are made
- To meet the family history of instrument makers.
- To collect information from rare filed

INTRODUCTION

Tanpura is an ancient Indian instrument. Begins this instrument called Akatara. Before 17th and 18th Century musicians used pot instrument and a bamboo instrument. Yet The family's tradition of hand-making pumpkin instruments has been passed down for about 200 years, but now they face a threat from electric instruments. The pumpkin tanpura, known for its stronger vibration and better sound, became a staple for classical singers in India during the late 19th century, putting Mirage on the map as a hub for the best handcrafted instruments.

At present, in Karntaki in Music called Tambura and in Hindu Satani in music called Tanpura. It has two types, one is men Tanapura and another one is women Tanapura. The different size and strings in the made of Tanapura. The size of women Tanapur is lesser then men Tanapura. The medieval Scholars have considered two forms of Tanapura. One is Nibhada and Anibhada. Yet, I have undertaken a study of the Tanapura instrument made from pumpkin which is very important role in instruments.

The Evolution of wild pumpkin

The original Greek word pepon was changed as pompon by the French, pumpion by the British and pumpkin by the American migrants. It was discovered in North and Central America during 16th century. Oaxaca scholars of Mexico (7000-7550 BC) are said to have discovered the oldest dried seeds in the highlands.¹ Basically, the varieties belonging to the genus cucurbitae are divided into two categories: 1. Having smooth stem and bark, 2. Having strong stem and thick hard bark. Nuts are grown in different attractive colours. Cucurbita having white and yellow flowers yields nuts in small-large shapes like caveman's club, calabash, apple, drum bottle, small cucurbita seedling takes 10-120 days to mature. They take longer time to grow in cold climate. Cucurbita varieties grow in tropical and sub-tropical climates. It is essential to know how to plant them. Seeds should be sown at a distance of 10 to 15 wide, by 20 to 30 feet long. 500 to 700 vines are grown per acre.²

Pumpkins used for making musical instruments

Pumpkins are used all over the world for various purposes and on various occasions such as for food, Ayurvedic medicine, worship of gods and making musical instruments. But the main point of this study is about pumpkins suitable for making musical instruments.³

Globular pumpikins with thick and hard bark which are called wild pumpkins used for making Tanapura instruments. These originally came to India from Africa. In ancient times, the inner part of pumpkins was cleaned and honey was stored and transferred to different countries in a ship for trading. In 1850, the king of Miraj brought pumpikins full of honey and gave empty ones to musical instrument makers. Having realized the hardness of these nuts, the artisans started to use it for making instruments. But it is necessary to know the ancient history of Tanpura in Indian cultural art heritage.⁴

History of Tanpura:

The Tanpura instrument which is prevalent in the present day was called Tambur, Tambura, Tamburi, Tumburu, Tamburi, Tamburi, Tamburi etc. by writers. According to some scholars, it is Tumburiveena described in the works of "Sangeetaraj" and "Sudhakalasa".

According to some scholars, the tambara which came to be called as tumba was an Indian name for pumpkin. Kumbanadas mentioned 'surabin' and Pt. Ahobala mentioned the instruments named 'nibaddha-anibaddha'. It has been mentioned in "Radhagovind Sangeeta Sagar" as well.⁵

Basaveshwar, a social reformer in twelfth century wrote in a vachana:

Enna kayavadandigeyamadayya
Enna shiravasoreyamadayya
Enna naravatantiyamadayya
Enna beralakaddiyamadayya
Battisaragavahadayya
UradalottibariskuKudalasangamadeva.⁶

Make my body the fretboard
Make my head resonator (Pumpkin)
Make my nerves into the strings
Sing thirty-two rag
Play intensely
Oh Kudalasangama deva!

In this vachana, 'dandige', 'soreya, (pumpkin), tanti, kaddi, barisu, battisaragas are clearly mentioned. So tanapura was of form gourd in 12th century. And ancient history of 12th century states that KinnariBommayya used to sing vachanas by playing "KinnariVeene". Hence it is evident that tanpuri is a contribution of Indian musical heritage.

An image of tanpura of the Akbara period is available among musical instruments. An image of Moghal period in 1633, in which a person carrying a tanpura on his shoulder was found in 1709. An image of Bhairav Raga in which a person carrying a tanpura is available. An image of nibaddha-anibaddha in KisanagadDarbar which belongs to 1720 is available. In India, as a whole, there were traces of tanpura making from pumpkins in 16th century in India. In the middle of the same century, it came to be called tanpura from tambura. It is clear that wild pumpkins were used in making these instruments since ancient time.

During 20th century, music scholars upgraded tanpura scientifically in respect of dhwanitaranga, clarification and shrutikarana. As a result, there was an improvement at various points of tanpura and pumpkin. It is evident that anibaddhatampooru itself is the present day tanpura. The present day sitara, sarodha and veena players have transformed this tanpura's size into a small form, the sound of which increased. It is known by the name tamburi. From ancient times to this day, in south India, it is known by the name tamburi. The tanpura instrument occupies an equally important place in both the musical systems.⁷

Miraj: A major centre of tanpura makers

The Rulers of Sangli-Miraj, who were great lovers of music, promoted musicians by conducting concerts. As a result Sangli-Miraj emerged as a centre of music. Even now the most popular is the Meersaheb Dargha Urus where Ustad Abdul Karim saheb's mausoleum is located. A music festivals is held in his memory every year. The great artistes of the country gather there and display their art in the event. The Sitara Maker Galli located near the dargah is a home to hundreds of families who are known for making musical instruments like Tanapura and sitar made of pumpkin. These traditional families, who are known for making musical instruments for 7 to 8 generations, have been providing instruments all over the world.

Recently, I ventured into sitar Makers Galli in Miraj to conduct research pumpkins used for tanpura. There, I visited a centre, named B.M.Sitar Maker which is known for making sitar instruments and interviewed a sitar maker to know about the methods of making Tanapura. Here are the views expressed by 70 years old Mehaboob Abbas, a well known 'string master' and 'sitar maker' who belongs to 8th generation in the family of sitar makers.

Apart from making the instruments, he passes the art of making the instruments to his children and grand children. His continuous association and suggestions of renowned artists like Abul Karim Saheb, the funder of Kirana Gharane in Miraj, Neelkanthabau Ichalkaranjkar, A resident of this place; Pt.V.N.Bhatkhande; Vidushi Hirabai Badodekar; Pt.Vinayak Rao Patwardhan enhanced his expertise. It was Farid Saheb who started the craft of making musical instruments. It is admirable that the craft has continued to be passed down to the present day. Instruments are made as per the wishes of artistes.

The tanapura which is made in Miraj is in high demand all over the world. Because the instruments are made here on the basis of experience and expertise of musicians and artisans. They are also made according to the flow of shrutis and swaras. The role of wild pumpkins that are grown here abundantly is very important. These nuts are grown by the farmers of Siddapur and Begampur villages near Pandrapur (Maharashtra). Instrument makers buy from them and keep them tied on the attic throughout year. At the time of making the instruments, they take the right pumpkin and keep it filled with water for 2 to 3 days and soften it after cleaning the inner part of it. Then they temper it and cut it and make the instruments.

The daand (finger board), table (sound board) keelu (tuning beads) are made of red sandal wood. The bridge is made of either tusk of elephants/ antler of deer/bones of wild animals or sheesham wood. The daand and the pumpkin are assembled together with steel wires.

Scholars interpret that the daand is like a body, keelu-limbs, strings. So musicians strive to achieve self-realization through shruti and swara of tanapura.

Shruti is the foundation for singers, instruments players and

Tampuri, Tumburu, Tamburi etc. are mentioned

- In the Indian cultural devotional tradition, saints, monks, sages used this pumpkin Tamburi instrument to achieve concentration while serving God. Thus, this instrument is of Indian origin. Indian texts, archaeological evidences may have been destroyed in the course of time due to foreign invasions. Therefore, it is difficult to provide reliable evidences, records due to non availability of abundant documents.
- Since music is embedded in the way of life. There is not enough research works about it. Therefore, this article has been summarized based on the contents of available documents. On the whole, Tanpura was derived from the word Tamburi. In Indian folklore and devotional tradition, it is evident that Jogis and Jangamas used to play this instrument for the spread of religion and to attain salvation.
- Based on these sources, it can be understood that Tamburi was made of pumpkin from very ancient times. Since it has to be played with one hand, the instrument should be light. Also we have a history of using it for worshiping God in our cultural heritage. So it can be said that pumpkin was used for making instruments.

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