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RESEARCH ARTICLE

RAJBANSHI 'DESHI DHOL': A MUSICOLOGICAL STUDY ABOUT 'VARNAS'

¹Dhananjay Ray and ²*Dr. Jayanta Kumar Barman

¹Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Music, Sikkim University

²Assistant Professor, Department of Music, Sikkim University

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*Corresponding Author:

Dr. Jayanta Kumar Barman

ABSTRACT

The 'Dhol' or Drum is a percussion instrument of Rajbanshis. It is known as 'Deshi Dhol' by the people in the region of Lower Assam and the Northern part of Bengal. It's a unique indigenous and old percussion instrument of India as well as of all over the Asia. As per the socio-cultural overview, we can say that it had been playing a very important role since ancient time in this society specially in marriage ceremony, puja-parban, as well as Rajbanshi folk festivals. It also used in countless folk genres, devotional traditions and family functions. But sadly, now a day's children are not interested to play or learn about 'Deshi Dhol' because they do not get the proper formula i.e Bols-Bani- taal which is not available in our region. That's why it is very important to create the syllabus for the children in schools and colleges to learn and play of 'Deshi Dhol'. Finally, we need to collect the Bol-Bani of 'Deshi Dhol' as a diploma course. We have to preserve the traditional one and to preserve new things to make a bridge. In the view of my research, we need to publish a hand book for the new generation how to play 'Deshi Dhol' so that they will take part as student. I hope to introduce the 'Deshi Dhol' everywhere.

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INTRODUCTION

It is known from the 'Uttarbanger Rajbanshi Jatir Puja Parvan' by the famous researcher Dr. Girija Shankar Roy that the origin and development of Rajbanshi Kshatriya community culture started mainly in Rangpur Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri districts of Bangladesh. Over time it expanded to reach Goalpara in Assam and other parts of North Bengal. As a result, the trend of its change is seen slightly in North and South Dinajpur district and slightly more in Maldah district. "Rowney" - describes that, among the Rajbanshi's there is a distinction between those who have adopted the Vaishnav faith and the followers of 'Hindu God Siva'. 'They are thoroughly 'Koch' under the name 'Rajbanshi'. There is no historical foundation for the claim of Rajbanshi's to be a provincial variety of 'Kshatriyas'. The original nucleus of 'Rajbanshi' was certainly Dravidian'. "Grierson" comments, Koch, Mech and Bara or Bodo all connoted the same tribe or at most different sets of the same tribe. Rajbanshi's are the Hinduised Kochs of Rangpur and Goalpara'. "Thompson" - states The Rajbanshis are the indigenous people of Northern Bengal and the third largest Hindu caste in the province. Rajbanshis claimed to be included as- Kshatriya, Bratya Kshatriya, Barua Kshatriya (Roy Dr.Girijashankar, 2015).

The Rajbanshis entered India from the north-east in the 10th century BC and settled in the Brahmaputra valley. Later they started living in the entire North Eastern region of Assam and Bangladesh and spread to different areas. From this point of view, the native land of the Rajbanshis can be assumed to be North-East India.(AdikaryDr. Madhab Chandra 2022). According to the Legend Padmashri DharmanarayanBarma, 'The father of the Kamtapuri language', the Austrian people entered the Kamrup-Kamta-Cooch Behar kingdom many centuries before the birth of Christ. These people gradually settled in the Brahmaputra River valley and the newcomers used to make a living by hunting, farming, and raising livestock in the region. However, this trend was later disrupted by the Mongolian population. (Barma and Manta, 2005). Principal Ambika Charan Chowdhury writes on page 121 of Granth Khan, his book on the history and culture of the Rajbanshi nation, that with the fall of the Hindu king KamtेशwarNilambar (reign period – 1480-1498).

History of Deshi Dhol: According to the myth - In ancient times, a group of people got tired while going out to hunting and cut wood in one of the forests of this region and all took shelter under a tree to rest. At some point, one drop of water from the resting tree is continuously falling on another big dry tree lying on the ground.

That sound over time in a lonely forest. From Dom - Dom i.e., the sharpness of the sound is gradually increasing. Out of curiosity some people went near the fallen tree and hit it hard with a branch of another tree. The sound after the impact attracted them and they decided that if they cut down a part of the tree and take it to their residence, the splintered log could be used to communicate messages to the common people. Returning to the residence, they were all worried as they did not get the expected sound from the cut trunk of the tree. Through some experiments they were able to realize that the two sides of the tree trunk were hollow, and therefore they were not hearing the expected sound from that particular tree trunk. Finally, it was decided that the two sides of the tree trunk would be covered with the skins of the hunted animals. Everyone decided to do so and they all heard the amazing sound of hope coming from the trunk of the tree covered in leather. The newly created music was used in different forms in various functions of the primitive society and in different festivals depending on the region. Many people think that today's 'Deshi Dhol' is a modified form of music made from the bark of that tree (Barman & Ray, 'Deshi Dhol' Shikkha, 2021)

History of Naming of 'Deshi Dhol': The use of this 'Deshi Dhol' in Bhawaiya songs was probably first started by our beloved Padmashri Pratima Barua (Pandey), the legendary and revered artist of Bhawaiya (GoalpadiyaAngik) songs. He always called this song sung in his own voice as 'Desi Song', which we have seen many times on different stages of Bengal and other parts of Bengal. After a long time, it was decided to name the 'Desi Song' of Bhawaiya as Pratima Barua or 'Dhol', the indigenous instrument used in Bhawaiya, as 'Desi Dhol'. This noble task of naming was first done in 2016 by Asst. Professor Dr. Jayanta Kumar Barman, founder and director of Bhawaiya Sangeet Academy and Parishad, West Bengal, (India) - URHF in Cooch Behar. His esteemed student Ph.D. scholar Dhananjay Roy collaborated with him. In keeping with the current music education system and thinking about the preservation of this Indigenous Musical Instrument, he has done long experiments and researches for ten years, naming this drum 'Deshi Dhol' in terms of its uniqueness, along with making Varnas, Vani and Bols, identifies and names different levels of folk rhythmic thought with rhythm, claps, Matra, Khali and Divisions. (Barman & Ray, 'Deshi Dhol' Shikkha, 2021)

The 'Varnas' of Rajbanshi Deshi Dhol

The 'Varnas' towards the right hands of the Desi Dhol

- Ga, Gi, Ge- Lightly strike on the topmost part demarcated as number 1 of the dhol with the striking stick or the lower number 1 with the middle finger of the right hand. There will be a vibration when thus struck.
- Ghee and Ghe- The top 2nd part of the drum is struck with the head of the stick while pressing the lower 2nd part with the palm of the finger. There will be no sustain in the sound.
- Ghet- The skin of the drum is pressed on the lower 2nd part with the palm of the hand and is struck on the top 2nd part with the stick. Then the hand is moved across rubbing on the skin.
- Dung- If one strikes the 2nd part or the part between the 2nd and the 3rd part of the skin with the stick in a free manner then the sound produced is known as Dung. There will be a sustain in the sound thus produced.
- Kat- The right-hand 3rd part of the drum is struck with right hand or with the head of the stick, both the method includes pressing slightly after the stroke. Then the sound produced is Kat. There will be no sustain in the sound.

- Tak- When the rim of the drum is struck with the lower part of the stick then the sound produced is tak.
- Ghen- When the skin of the drum is rubbed across from side to side with the middle finger and the thumb, then the sound produced is Ghen.
- Tik- When the wooden part of the drum is struck with the stick then the sound produced is Tik.
- Terer- The left 3rd part is loosely struck with the right hand carrying the stick, then the sound produced is known as Terer.
- Di- The top 1st part is struck hard with the stick while at the same time pressing the 3rd part with the heel of the right hand. Then sound produced is Di.
- Ka- This is the same as Kat, but in this case the stroke is much softer.
- The- The 2nd part of the right-hand side of the dhol is struck with the four fingers of the right hand and pressed after it. The sound produced is The.

The 'Varnas' towards the right hands of the Desi Dhol

- Ta, Na – When the 1st part of the treble side of the Dhol is struck with the index finger of corresponding hand then, the sound produced is Ta or Na. This sound has a fair bit of sustain.
- Twak- When the part close to the rim of the treble side of the Dhol is struck and pressed by the four fingers of the left hand, excluding the thumb, then the sound produced is twak.

This sound does not have sustain.

Te - When the 1st part of the treble side of the dhol is struck and pressed by the index finger of the corresponding hand, then the sound produced is known as Te. This sound does not have sustain.

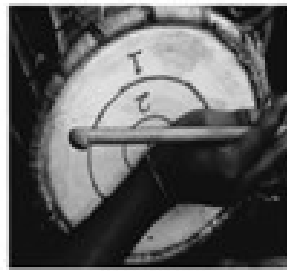
- Te, Re - When the 2nd part of the treble side of the dhol is struck and pressed by the ring finger of the corresponding hand, then the sound produced is known as Te, Re - This sound does not have sustain.
- Jaa - When then index, middle, ring and little finger strikes the 2nd part of the treble side of the dhol, then the sound produced is Jaa. This sound has sustained in it.
- Chak - When the little, middle and ring fingers are combined and the 2nd part of the treble side of the dhol is struck and pressed. Then the sound produced is called chak. The part of the hand below the fingers is used. This sound does not have sustain.
- Kurur - When the five fingers of the corresponding hand strikes with their nails, on the 3rd part of the treble side of the dhol, then the sound produced is known as kurur. This sound has sustained in it.
- Koror - When the corresponding hand is shaped like shown in the picture and then is rubbed across the dhol from the top 1st part to the bottom 1st part, then the sound produced is known as koror. This is an advanced technique and is to be learnt with a guru. This sound has sustained in it.
- Jhum - When the 3rd part of the treble side of the dhol is struck with the facing side of the whole hand then the sound produced is known as jhum. This sound has sustained in it.
- Laa - When the 1st part of the treble side of the Dhol is struck freely with the ring and little finger of the corresponding hand then the sound produced is known as laa. This sound has sustained.

The 'Varnas' towards the both hands of the Desi Dhol

- Dhing= Ga/Gee + Na/Ta
- Dha = Ghe + Na/Ta
- Dhik = Ghe + Twak
- Dhet = Ghet + Na/Ta
- Dhe = Ghe + Te
- Dik = Dee + TeTe



JAA / ज्य



GHET / गेट



KA / का



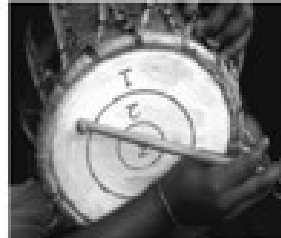
DHUNG / धुंग



TA/NA / त/न



TIT / टिट



DI / दी



TIK / टिक



KURUR / कुरुर



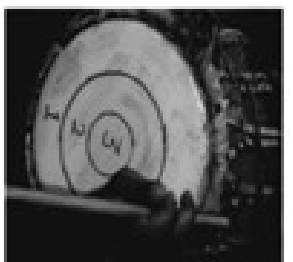
GHE / गे



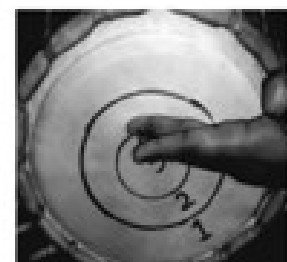
TERER / टेरर



KOROR / कुरुर



TAK / टक



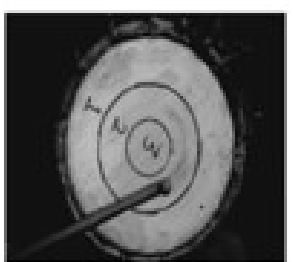
CHAK / चक



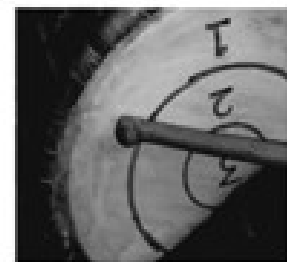
TE / टे



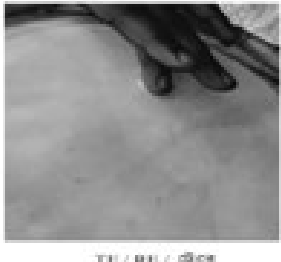
TWAK / टक



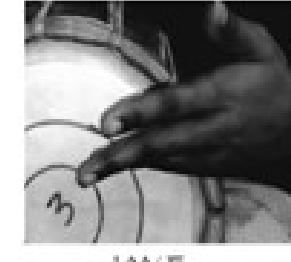
DUNG / टुंग



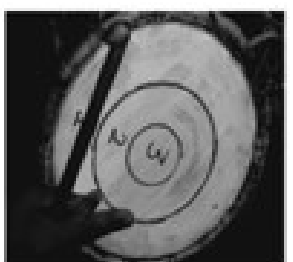
GA/GU / ग/गु



TE/RE / टेर



LAA / ला



GHEN / गेन



JHUM / जूम



The 'Varnas' towards the right hands of the Desi Dhol

The 'Varnas' towards the both hands of the Desi Dhol

- Dhete = Dhe + Te
- GirGir = Dung + TeTe
- DirDir = Dhing + TeTe
- KiriKiri = Ka + Tere
- Kran = Kot + Ta
- Tak = Ka + Ta
- Khet = Ka + Twak
- Dring = Dung + Jaa
- Jha = Chak + Ghe
- KhereKhete = Ka + Tete
- ThalaThala = Ka + TalaTala

(Barman & Ray, Deshi DholShikkha, 2021).

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