



242en04

STUDY OF FORMS

Dhrupad and Dhamar

Dhrupad and Dhamar are the oldest forms of Hindustani classical music which are still in vogue. It is believed that these forms have their roots in the ancient compositional form ‘Prabandha’. In these forms, there is special emphasis on the purity of Raga.

Sung to the accompaniment of Pakhawaj, the Dhrupad form is set to Talas such as Chau Tala, Sool Tala, Brahma Tala etc., whereas the Dhamar form is set to Dhamar Tala. The subject matter of Dhrupad usually consists of praises of deities and patronizing kings, whereas that of Dhamar describes Holi. Both these forms flourished around the 16th century, which was known as the golden age of these forms.



OBJECTIVE

After studying this lesson, the learner would be able to

- explain in brief history of Dhrupad and Dhamar;
- define the forms Dhrupad and Dhamar;
- identify the forms of Dhrupad from other forms;
- state the names of different Banis of Dhrupad singing;
- state the name of some great Dhrupad artists.

4.1 DEFINITION

4.1.1 Dhrupad

The word ‘Dhrupad’ or ‘Dhruvapada’ has its root in two Sanskrit words ‘Dhruva’ and ‘Pada’ meaning ‘fixed’ and ‘literary content’ respectively. Hence, Dhrupad may be defined as a form that has literary verses which are fixed (composed) to certain Svaras and Tala. The compositions of Dhrupad are generally related to the bravery, **prestige** of the praise of Gods, Goddesses, Kings as rulers and also

musical elements like Tala and Nada etc. This form is sung to the accompaniment of Pakhawaj. The ‘Talas’ used in Dhrupad are - ChauTala, Sool, Teevra, Brahma Tala, etc.

4.1.2 Dhamar

Dhamar is also a compositional form like Dhrupad which is sung to the accompaniment of Pakhawaj. Dhamar is invariably set to ‘Dhamar’ Tala of fourteen beats. The compositions of Dhamar are mostly related to ‘Holi’ and Leela of Radha-Krishna but as this form was developed more in Medieval period, the compositions also had contents related to the praise and prestige of Kings and rulers.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.1

1. What is meant by Dhruva - Pada ?
2. What type of literature is used in Dhamar compositions.
3. Name the accompanying percussion instrument for Dhrupad - Dhamar ?
4. Which tala is played with Dhamar?

4.2 HISTORY AND EVOLUTION

It is believed that Dhrupad evolved from Dhruva Prabandhas. Dhrupad in its present form has been in vogue since 15th / 16th century and is still practiced. Its ancient form had Svara, Laya and Pada (melody, rhythm and literary contents), all three components of equal importance. Since the literary component or the verses were entirely composed and fixed to Svara and Tala, hence this form was called Dhruvapada. Later, Dhruvapada went through certain changes and became more popular as a prominent form of classical music that was referred to as ‘Dhrupad’.

In 16th century, Raja Mansingh Tomar of Gwalior patronized this form. In his treatise ‘Mankutuhal’, he has specially discussed about Dhrupad. According to him, the literature of Dhrupad was written in ‘Deshi’ or local language of central India, i.e., Braja Bhasha. Dhrupads are also available in Sanskrit or Hindi. The literature of Dhrupad contains praises of deities and patronizing kings, whereas, the literature of Dhamar contains descriptions of Holi-the festival of colours. The composition is divided into four parts i.e, Sthayi, Antara, Sanchari and Abhog ; but some compositions are also found comprising only two parts - Sthayi and Antara. Apart from Raja Mansingh Tomar, Emperor Akbar also provided great patronage to Dhrupad. Mian Tansen, Nayak Gopal, Nayak Bakshu were some of the great Dhrupad singers of the 16th century. This period is known as the golden age of Dhrupad, when Dhrupad singing flourished in different parts of North India.

There were four ‘Banis’ or styles of singing Dhrupad, they are named as

1. Govarhar

Notes





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2. Khandar
3. Dagar
4. Nauhar

It is believed that Mian Tansen of Gwalior initiated Govarhar Bani, Brijchand hailing from Dagar (a place near Delhi) initiated Dagar Bani, Raja Samokhan Singh of Khandar initiated Khandar Bani and Srichand of Nauhar initiated Nauhar Bani.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.2

1. In which ancient of compositional form does 'Dhrupad' have its roots?
2. In which country Dhrupad was popular form?
3. Which two kings were great patrons of Dhrupad and Dhamar ?
4. Name the four sections of the composition of Dhrupad
5. Name the four Banis of Dhrupad singing and their initiators
6. Name the great Dhrupad singers of the 16th century

4.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF SINGING DHRUPAD AND DHAMAR

Dhrupad and Dhamar, both have a distinct style of rendition. In the beginning, the Raga is executed with the help of mnemonic syllables viz, Nom, Tom, Dere, Na etc. This portion of singing is known as 'Alap' and is without any rhythmic accompaniment. The Alap culminates into fast rhythmic singing of the mnemonics in the 'Jod' pattern of instrumental music. This is followed by the composition.

The composition is sung with various improvisations taking phrases of the lyrics; this part is known as 'upaj', which is unique to Dhrupad singing. The improvisations are done by doubling, tripling or quadrupling the actual tempo before returning to the original tempo. Dhamar is also rendered in a similar manner.

Tala is a very important aspect of singing Dhrupad - Dhamar. The rhythmic accompaniment is provided by Pakhawaj. Talas mostly used in Dhrupad singing are ChauTala, Matta, Brahma, Lakshmi, Sool, Teevra etc. Dhamar is invariably set to Dhamar Tala of fourteen beats.

NAMES OF SOME GREAT DHRUPAD SINGERS

Singers of Yesteryears

Behram Khan, Naseeruddin Khan, Jodu Bhatt, Gopeshwar Banerjee, Rahimuddin Khan Dagar, Naseer Moinuddin Khan Dagar, Aminuddin Khan Dagar, Zahiruddin Khan Dagar, Faiyazuddin Khan Dagar, Ram Chatur Malik, Siyaram Tiwari, Chandan Chaubey etc.

Singers of Modern times

Rahim fahimuddin Dagar, Wasifuddin Dagar, Faiyaz Wasifuddin Dagar, Ramakant - Umakant Gundecha, Uday Bhawalkar. Vidur Malik, Prem Kumar Malik, Abhay Narayan Malik, Phalguni Mitra, Ritwik Sanyal etc.

**Notes****INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.3**

1. In Dhrupad and Dhamar, how is the Raga executed in Alap ?
2. How does the Alap culminate?
3. What is Upaj ?
4. Dhamar is set to which Tala?

**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

- Dhrupad and Dhamar are the oldest forms of Hindustani music which are still practised in present times.
- The literature of Dhrupad contains praises of deities or patronizing kings.
- Subject matter of Dhamar contains description of Holi - The festival of colours.
- Talas used in Dhrupad singing are ChauTala, SoolTala, Teevra, Matta, Brahma and Rudra Tala.
- Dhamar is invariably set to Dhamar Tala.
- Both the forms are sung to the rhythmic accompaniment of Pakhawaj, a percussion instrument.

**TERMINAL EXERCISE**

1. Define Dhrupad and Dhamar.
2. Discuss about the language and literature of Dhrupad and Dhamar.
3. Give the names of Talas used in singing Dhrupad and Dhamar.
4. Describe the role of rhythm in the singing of Dhrupad-Dhamar.



Notes



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

4.1

1. ‘Dhruba’ means fixed and ‘Pada’ means literary content. Thus, Dhruba – Pada means a literary composition fixed (composed) in Svara and Tala.
2. Dhamar compositions are related mostly to Holi festival. Sometimes these are related to the praise and prestige of Kings and Rulers also.
3. Pakhawaj.
4. Dhamar Tala

4.2

1. Prabandha.
2. Dhamar.
3. Raja Mansingh Tomar and Emperor Akbar.
4. Sthayi, Antara, Sanchari and Abhog.
5. Govarhar, Khandar, Nauhar and Dagar.
6. Mian Tansen, Nayak Gopal and Nayak Bakshu.

4.3

1. Raga is executed in Alap with the help of mnemonics like Nom, Tom, Dere, Na, etc.
2. Alap culminates into a fast rhythmic singing of mnemonics in the Jod pattern of instrumental music.
3. Upaj is improvisation within the Raga using verses of the composition.
4. Dhamar is set to Dhamar Tala of fourteen beats.

GLOSSARY

1. Prabandha - An ancient compositional form.
2. Pakhawaj- A percussion instrument to be played as accompaniment for both Dhrupad and Dhamar forms of singing.
3. Mnemonics- The syllables which appear to have no meaning.
4. Alap- Gradual exposition of Raga in slow followed by fast tempo without rhythmic accompaniment.
5. Jod- Fast rhythmic pattern of instrumental music according to which mnemonics are rendered at the end of Alap.
6. Upaj- Improvising the Raga with the help of verses or words of the composition.