



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Percussion Instruments in Silapathikaram

B.RADHAKRISHNAN , Research Scholar (Music)

Tamilnadu Dr.J.Jayalalitha Music and Fine arts University , Chennai.

Dr.P.UMAMAHESHWARI , Principal and Associate Professor

Tamilnadu Govt Music College , Thiruvaiyaru.

Abstract :

Silapathikaram is a famous epic in Tamil literature written by Ilango Adigal. The text prides the merits of musical instruments and their importance. This paper gives clear information about percussion ,the oldest man made musical instruments that were mentioned in Silapathikaram.So many poems were also quoted from the epic to prove the importance of music and instruments during ancient period.

Introduction:

A percussion instrument is a musical instrument that is sounded by being struck or scraped by a beater including attached or enclosed beaters or rattles struck, scraped or rubbed by hand or struck against another similar instrument. The percussion section of an orchestra most commonly contains such as the timpani, snare drum, and bass drum, tambourine belonging to the membranophones and cymbals and triangle, which are idiophones. To understand about the musical world of yester years, you need to know about musical instruments as it plays a vital role in knowing about the antiquity (ancient times), Ancient people of Tamil have used around three hundred such instruments and as of today the number has dwindled. In this paper I would like to enumerate and explain about the percussion instruments used during the time period when Ilango Adigal has written his book titled Silappathikaram. Several musical songs featured in the book elaborated information on percussion instruments which quoted by a poet named Adiyarku Nallar while explaining the meaning of the songs in his many musical books. But we are not able to identify the books and the author from where he had quoted.

He had mentioned Perunaarai, Perunguru, Panjamarabu, Thala Samuthiram, Panja Baarathiyam, Sudhdhanantha Prakasam, Isaimarabu, Bharadha Senabathiyam as musical books. Out of these Panjamarabu, Thalasaruthiram, Bharadha Senabathiyam now in use.

Arangetru Kaathai in Silapathikaram is a treasure of both Musical and Dramatically. For this Arangetru Kaathai, the explanation of Adiyarku Nallar and lyrical explanation is available. The author very clearly explained about the endurance of dramatists, dancer teachers who were waiting patiently for their turn to get into the stage. As my topic is Music I have chosen the elements of perseverance of Music teachers of instruments such as flute, yaazh and all dramatical elements.

Percussion instruments made of Leather:

In Thanumaiyum, the endurance of Thanumaiyon (musical teacher) has been very vividly mentioned in line 27 in detail about “thaazh kural Thanumai” one who gives lyrical explanation describes about playing Thannumai instrument which is nothing but Matthalam which is the pioneer instrument to Miruthangam.

Adiyarku Nallar writes his explanation as it is and further expounds that instrument like Perigai, Padagam, Idakkai, Idukkai, Maththalam, Salligai, Karadigai, Thimilai, Kudamuzha, Thakkai, Ganapara, Dhamarugam, Thannumai, Thaadari, Anthari, Muzhavu, Chandhiravalaiyam, Monthai, Murasu, Kanviduthoombu, Nisalanthudumai, Siruparai, Adakkam, Thagunichcham, Viraleru, Paagam, Ubaangam, Naazhigaiparai, Thudi, Perumparai are made of leather .

“ Perigai padaga midakkai yudakkai
Seermigu maththalach challigai karadigai
Thimilai kudamuzhath thakkai kanapara
Dhamaruganth thannumai thaavir thadaari
Anthari muzhavodu chandira valaiyam
Monthai murase kanvidu thoombu
Nisalanth thudumai siruparai yadukka
Maasi rakunicham viraleru paganth
Thokka sabanganth thuperum paraiyena
Mikka noolor virithuraithanare
Entragilin”

These percussion instruments were divided into seven categories such as Agamuzhavau, Agapura muzhavu, Pura muzhavu, Pannamai muzhavu , Naanmuzhavu and Kalai muzhavu.

Among them

- Uthamamana mathalam, Sallikai, idakkai, karadigai, perigai, Padagam, kudamuzha are Aghamuzhavu.
- Maththimamana thannumai, thakkai, Thagunicham are Agapura muzhavu.
- Athama instrument Ganaparai is Pura muzhavu.
- The mentioned Neitharparai is Purapura muzhavu.
- The four veera muzhavu, Murasu Nisalam, Thudumai, Thimilai are Pannamai muzhavu.
- Naatparai and Naazhigaiparai are Naan muzhavu.
- Thudi is kuralai muzhavu.

Among these Matthalam got its name because of sound vibration and it is called the chief of all percussion musical instruments. Even though this instrument belongs to multiple group it is called Nanmugam because of the sounds it produced from it.

Sallikai is named for having a shrill sound. Avanchi, Udukai and idakai are the instrument covered with the skin, so they derived their name from Porthalaar Avanchi. As the instrument Kudukai is crooked, it got its name as kudukai.

The instrument Karadikai got its name because of its sounds like the sound produced by the animal bear and in the same way we can understand about the naming of the instruments. Matthalam was considered as the primary instrument, Salli has secondary to Matthalam whereas Ukukai has acquired the third place. Like this understand other instruments also.

After a thorough study of this area, you can find comments on the section on musical instruments. After giving a detailed explanation to Thannumai, Adiyarku Nallar has written the grammar root part of Thannumaiyasiriyar.

“ Aadal paadal lisaiye thamizhe

Panne paani thooke muda

Dhesiga mendrivai yaasi nunarnthu

Koodai nilathai kuraivindru migunthaangu

Vaara nilathai vangupu vaangi

Vaangiya vaarath thiyazhungkuzhalum

Yengiya midaru misaivanak ketpa

Koorugirk kaaranang kuriyarinthu serthi

Yaakkalu madakkalu meeththiram padaamaich

Chithirak karananch chithaivindru seluthum

Aththagu thannumai arung thozhin mudhalvanum ”

Adiyarku Nallar’s comment on this song.

The above stanza described about the music, musical songs and lyrics of quality have to two types of rhythms, and seven types of thooku and four types of words must be felt and add one after another to fill the gap which adds together in grandeur. Among these, we find the lyre and the singing of the pipe as the best because it can be sung and heard as they walk, According to the teacher, these sensing you are used to beautify and to know the beauty of tools as well.

Development and Types of Percussion instruments made of leather :

Yares have become side instruments for musicians for the growth of music. In ancient days these instruments were used to broadcast order of the King to the people of his kingdom. The arrival of thief/people from other kingdoms was being announced by the king's guards. All these information were already mentioned.

In this way all these instruments grew stronger. The instruments like hand wound cones, Thavil (one type of drum struck by sticks as well hands), Tamaru, a type of drum played by itself and Udukai, a leather instrument played one side by striking and the other side by rubbing of hands.

The instruments that are played by various ways can be divided into single or multi-faced instruments, either two, three, four, or five. Udukai is a five faced instrument. It can also be classified as equal faced instrument spread over the entire surface and wave-faced instrument spread in layers. These instruments again divided as instruments used in Concerts and those were not used in concerts. No concert can succeed without these instruments and what kind of instruments that were being used depends on the performer's personal interest and expertise. When we analyze the literatures in Tamil we can understand that these percussion instruments were being used mainly to announce and spread the news about the kingdom during ancient times.

Ancient Tamil people understood the sound can travel faster than man and even a horse. That was the reason why Drums, Tom-tom symbols conveyed different types of messages to reach from one place to another. A person sent different symbols to convey certain kind of messages from the top of the hill to another and get the reply through a different code. They used to decode the message like espionage and spread the messages to reach hundreds and thousands and to reach the turf. These percussion instruments played a role of ancient day telegram.

These instruments were used in temple during prayers and procession, The instrument called Nagara was kept on the back of cow and it was tied to a four wheeled chariot. Then the chariot moved on the street. On hearing the sound produced by Nagara, people used to understand that the procession of Lord has begun and they kept themselves ready with coconut and get the blessings of the Almighty.

Percussion instruments were played to inform about the ensuing war to the soldiers to keep themselves ready to join the war field and even to stop the war same instruments used.

As already mentioned that these percussion instrument tools were being used to bring awareness about floods; convey the news to the people such as King's proclamation, call for emergency duty etc. Further these instruments were used in folk songs, street plays and to announce to death of person (paraimolam).

Conclusion:

In this paper the author has tried his level best to explain about the percussion instruments used by the ancients Tamil people and mentioning of music, musical instruments in the literature. Tamil and Tamil literature is the combination of musical and drama, starting from Tholkapiam to Silapathikaram, Devotional literature, Sitrlakkiaam and kapiams. The limitation of the author is due to paucity of information available on the usage of percussion instruments in different literature, the author has highlighted only those instruments mentioned in Silapathikram written by Ilango Adigal.

Reference :

1. Tamizhisai ilakkiya varalaru (M.Arunachalam)
2. Sanga ilakkiyathil isai (R.kalaivani, S.Thamizh velu)
3. Isaithamizh (K.Vellalaivaranan)

