

Appreciating Hindustani Music
Dr.Lakshmi Sreeram
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras

Lecture 44
Dhamar - A Compositional Form

Dhamaar: a compositional form in the Dhrupad style. The term Dhamaar the earliest references of this song form is found in the text Sangeet Raj of Maharana Kumbha and there it talks about this song that is sung in the month of spring - the Vasant ritu.

Dhamaar can have several connotations. We all know there is a Dhamaar taal of 14 beats, that is prevalent. The general meaning of Dhamaar that we all come across is that it depicts the colour festival Holi and is sung in Dhamaar taal, these compositions are generally known today.

But we also come across certain Dhamaar that do not talk about the holi festival, but there is an indirect reference of the nayak nayika in these songs. On further research it is found that Dhamaar in the temple tradition talks about the holi festival, but it could be sung in any other tala also apart from Dhamaar taal.

So, they are called the Dhamaar ke pad and we have a very huge repertoire of Dhamaar songs in the temple tradition. In the Dhrupad gharanas in the Dhrupad traditions that we have in the country we have the Dhamaar repertoire, all sing the Dhamaar compositions in their unique style. What is very special about Dhamaar is that it has the vigour, the playfulness, the festivity of colour. When we look into the movement of Dhamaar in the Dagar tradition my guru used to say that Dhamaar is never sung straight.

It is uneven and the movement, the gait of Dhamaar is serpentine, we also have a lot of offbeat movements that makes it very interesting and complex at the same time interesting. So, this uneven movement makes Dhamaar singing more challenging. In the Dagar tradition my guruji's father Ziauddin Dagar was a great stalwart of Dhamaar singing and he got the title Dhamarnath in the Udaipur.

That shows how Dhamaar was so important as a singing tradition during his times. So, let us see how the Dhamaar tala is. It is 14 beats with 4 divisions. We have 5 4 3 2 divisions. So, Aditya Deep will recite the Dhamaar

Kat dhi ta dhi ta dha , ga ti ta ti ta ta ,

(Refer time 04:27) [Music] [Music].

Now, I will sing an interesting Dhamaar in a Raag Chhayanat [Music] [Music] [Music]. Now you will notice that the taal is not even like Chautaal [Music], it goes between the beats [Music] [Music] [Music] [Music]. Another song very dynamic in Raag Chandrakauns [Music] [Music] [Music] [Music].