

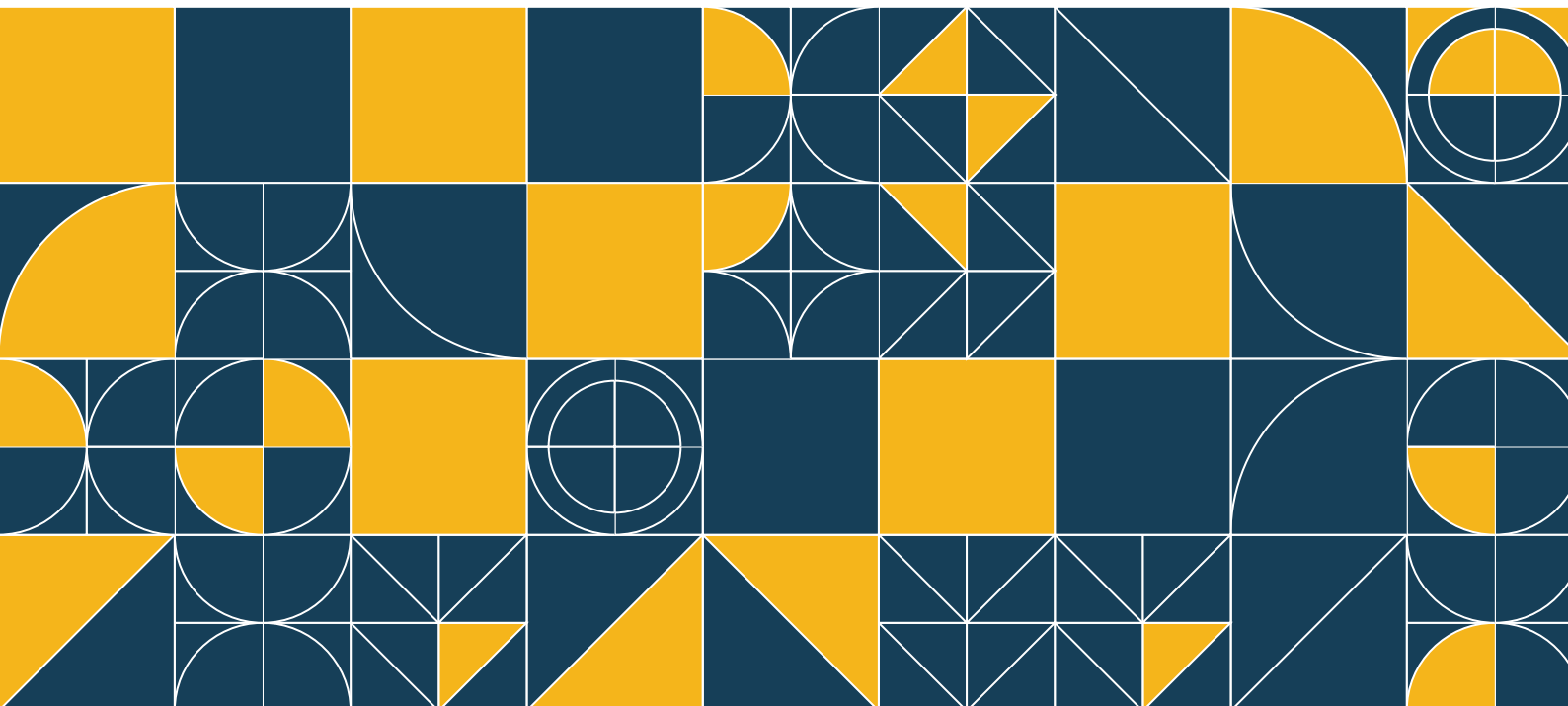


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DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF TRADITIONAL SINGING IN SRI LANKA

Saman Panapitiya¹ and Rohan Nethsinghe²



Abstract

It is evident that Sri Lankan musicologists have mainly used the meanings of traditional folk poetry/verses and the occasions on which they are sung to categorize them. The authors of this paper attempt to introduce a classification that can be used according to the characteristics of the melody/pitches, focusing on *seepada*, currently only known as a poetic stanza in Sinhala folk songs. The authors explain the distinctive features of *seepada* identified employing *yathi* and the notion of 'Cents', a logarithmic unit used for measuring musical intervals, and reveal those characteristics, acknowledging *seepada* as a traditional singing style unique to Sri Lanka. Suggestions for sustaining this fading art form are presented in this article including the urgent need for action by stakeholders to preserve the identity of traditional Sinhala folk songs, music and melodies of Sri Lanka.

Keywords

Sri Lanka, *Seepada*, Singing styles, Folk music, Sustaining musical traditions.

Definition of Folk Music

In many countries of the world, the terms folk songs, folk music and folk melodies are used to describe the type of music sung in a local way and played within the communities (Ronald, 2006). The English word "folklore" was first used by the English antiquarian William Thoms in 1846 (Asaqli and Masalha, 2020) to describe customs, beliefs and stories of people (Scholes, 1977). Transmitted orally (Vansina, 1965), traditional folk songs and music are associated with the word 'folklore' which means stories of people. Folk music is related to folk literature which stems from folklore (Asaqli and Masalha, 2020), and Savage et al. (2022) explains that folk song melodies can be considered as culturally transmitted sequences of tones that lead to constructing unique cultural identities. There are various definitions of folk music, songs and melodies in the world. Amongst the various methods of defining folk songs and music, Elbourne (1975: 9) observes that there are "two main approaches to the definition of folk music". One approach is concerned with its origin and cultural background; for example, "Irish folk music" (White, 1984), is a type of music produced by a particular ethnic group in a certain society or a country (in this case, Ireland). The other method contemplates the internal properties such as sound and pitch or the elements of music (Elbourne, 1975). Both of the above-mentioned characteristics of folk songs, music and melodies are often seen in the Sri Lankan folk songs and which have been

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passed down from one generation to another. This study attempts to apply the latter method that uses internal musical properties to define a particular type of Sri Lankan folk music called *seepada*, and to explore existing definitions and characterize it based on singing (specifically in terms of pitching, and the ratio between the two frequencies of tones sung). Abeyaratne (2001: 5) points out that “There is a definite need for the awareness of Sri Lankan folk music” as it plays an important role in the daily lives and sociocultural activities of people in the country.

Sri Lankan Traditional Sinhalese Folk Music

Sri Lanka is an island nation in South Asia. It lies in the Indian Ocean, southwest of the Bay of Bengal, and southeast of the Arabian Sea. Sri Lanka is also known as the “Teardrop of India” or the “Granary of the East” (Gunasekara & Momsen, 2007). It is a multinational state and is home to various cultures, languages, and ethnicities. The rich traditional practices shared by Sri Lankan cultures are the basis of the country’s long-life expectancy, high health standards, and high literacy rate (Spain 1984). Sri Lanka currently has a population of about 21.5 million. The largest ethnic group who speaks the Sinhala language and 74.9% of Sri Lankans are Sinhalese, and about 70% of its citizens are Buddhist while the Tamil language is spoken by almost all other Sri Lankans (Department of Census & Statistics, 2012). Earlier ethnomusicologists noted that these cultural and religious influences are embedded in the folk songs, music and melodies of Sri Lanka. The influence of Indian music can also be seen through the Sri Lankan musical flow (Amarasinghe & Jayaratne 2016). However, it is possible to find traces of evidence of a unique folk music style based on the Sinhala/Sinhalese culture in Sri Lanka (Dassenaike, 2012). This music style is often identified by the terms Sinhala folk music or traditional music of the Sinhala people. Aravinda (2000) explains that folk songs, folk verses or poems sung by village folk are associated with their daily routines, occupations, and rituals. Ranathunga (2018: 9) points out that “Sri Lankan music plays an essential role in signifying a unique cultural identity. Musical instruments, methodology of playing, performance, and occasions for playing still follow traditional customs”.

Therefore, as an essential characteristic, it is possible to understand that Sri Lankan folk song, music and melodies are named, categorized and defined using the meaning of the lyrics and the occasions or purposes for when they are sung. However, it is evident that the use of these methods may overlook and constrain other important aspects of *Seepada* that are meaningful and critical for sustaining it as a singing style. Dassenaike (2012: 5) pointed out that “Sri Lanka’s musical identity seemed to be undefined and hidden beneath layers of political, philosophical and social limitations” and “Sri Lankan Sinhala folk music is yet to be adequately recognized” (2012: 77). Therefore, this study has been conducted to explore and reveal the identity of the Sinhala folk songs in Sri Lanka and extend the body of existing scholarship and understandings. In this process we also hope to define the identity of *seepada* and contribute to the conservation of Sri Lankan folk music. Dassenaike (2021: 77) indicated that “Sri Lanka’s musical identity seemed to be amorphous and Sinhala folk music which encapsulates the nation’s musical identity appeared to be in a fragile state with very few practitioners left”. This claim clarifies the problematic nature of this context and the urgency of the need for intervention by the stakeholders.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

It is expected that this study will contribute to establishing and preserving the identity of *seepada* as a folk singing style and as an initiative that investigates the existence of communally-oriented original folk art of form called the Sinhala Music of Sri Lanka.

This study has three objectives:

1. To determine differentiations between Siwpada (a type of Sinhala quatrain poem) and Seepada by exploring the unique characteristics of each term commonly used interchangeably in order to resolve the ambiguity.
2. To explore and introduce the musical tones used in *seepada* singing that do not fit into the currently accepted values of musical tones in most countries of the world.
3. To present the facts that identify *seepada* as an autonomous singing style and urge stakeholders to take the required action to preserve it for posterity.

Many stakeholders who attempt to classify Sinhala folk music tend to ignore a range of important factors and this has been the case in the past. It is evident that factors such as the intonation and feelings of the creators (composers) and users (singers), and the emotional aspects involved - including musical qualities - are hardly considered in the process of grouping. When discovering associations between music and emotion, Lekamge and Marasinghe (2014: 2) point out that Sri Lankan folk melodies can be regarded as “transformations of true and innate feelings of the native community in the form of music”. Up-to-date, the classifications of folk songs in Sri Lanka have been presented by writers and reporters of folk literature. The majority of these writers seem to have a very poor knowledge of the practical aspects of folk music. There are only a very few folk musicians among them who possess the subject knowledge, although most of them have backgrounds in Western or Indian music. Sykes (2011: 179) explains that “The discourse on folk music that emerged through the Shantiniketan experience encouraged Sinhala musicologists to look to the rural areas of their own country for authentic Sinhala folk music”. Not surprisingly, most scholars with Western and/or Indian music education backgrounds have disregarded the unique qualities of folk music like *seepada*, assuming Sri Lankan music stems from Indian genres or as a primitive art form. The recommendations of pioneer disciplinary experts in Sri Lanka, such as C. De S. Kulathilaka and W. B. Makuloluwa (Ariyaratne, 1989), have often been ignored. As a result, there are many misconceptions in the classification of folk music in Sri Lanka. Even in modern school education, classifications based on the expressed meaning of the lyrics of folk songs produced in folk literature are used. Such education will eventually lead to a diminution of the authentic identity of Sri Lankan folk music.

Approach to the Study

As the primary source of data, traditional Sinhala folk songs recorded under the direction of C. De S. Kulathilaka during the 1970s and 1980s at the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) have been used, including the archived recordings from the C. De S. Kulathilaka Research Unit maintained by the University of the Visual and Performing Arts in Sri Lanka. Folk poems recorded by the first author of this paper while conducting fieldwork in various areas; mainly in the villages of Sri Lanka are also used. Permission to use the actual names of traditional singers in public domains was obtained before

the recordings were made. In total, 248 *seepada* were analyzed for this study. The first author is an ethnomusicologist who conducts research in the fields of Ethnomusicology, Folk Music and Folklore, Anthropology; and culture in Sri Lanka. In this study of *seepada*, the first author conducted the musical analysis and was involved in the process of writing. The second author, who is a phenomenologist with an extensive international background in music education, teacher education, and multicultural music, was engaged in conducting the literature review to explore existing knowledge related to the selected topic and was also involved in the process of writing this paper.

The terms kavi (poems/verses), gee (songs) and siwpada (quatrain) are used interchangeably when naming these folk songs, focusing on the composition of lyrics. However, the term *seepada* is also used in place of Kavi and Gee leading to ambiguity. A selected range of work related to *seepada* sung in different places of Sri Lanka is used for the purpose of this study. These are also known as Mehe gee (occupational songs) (Kulatillake and Abeysinghe, 1976). Mehe gee divides into further groupings such as: karaththa kavi (cart poems), pel kavi (watch hut poems), páru kavi (boat/ferry poems), pathal kavi (mining poems), nelum kavi (weeding, planting/transplanting poems), goyam kavi (paddy harvesting poems) and bambara kavi (wasp poems).³

As can be seen from the examples provided above, the types of kavi are named and differentiated based on usage or, in other words, using context-related naming. All these different types of kavi or gee are written as four-line poems and sung using the *seepada* style when required, according to the context. Kulathilaka (1980) claims that most of the Sinhala traditional kavi are sung in *seepada* style and known as *seepada* along with the relevant 'descriptive' adjective for example: karaththa *seepada* (cart poems), pathal *seepada* (mining poems), pel *seepada* (poems sung from a hut temporarily built in Chena farming), babara *seepada* (wasp poems), and paaru *seepada* (boat/ferry/raft poems).

The Ambiguity: Siwpada versus Seepada

The words *seepada* and *siwpada* have similar pronunciations and sound almost the same, especially to people who are unfamiliar with the Sinhala language. Some believe that *seepada* and *Siwpada* are the same (Wijethunga, 1999). The Oxford Reference describes *seepada* as a "Sri Lankan poetic stanza used very commonly in folk songs. *seepada* is the colloquial form of *sivapada* [*siwpada*]" (*seepada n.d.*). This description is incorrect and the two words *seepada* and *siwpada* cannot be used interchangeably as they have very different meanings. Kulathilaka (1991: 49) states that when "*seepada* are used in practice, it has a different meaning" and *seepada* can be referred to as a folk singing style. The word *Siw* means four in Sinhala and *pada* means lines. The combined word *siwpada* is used for poems consisting of four lines similar to quatrain poetry (Field, 2014); a verse with four lines.

*"Ganasaki vasam kisi ema math sama karathahoth sama Eli viram pada uva
sivupada nameyi danne" (Ven. Walivitiye Soratha Thera 2016).*

3. The Ph.D. study of Saman Panapitiya is based on this research.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLMZPfnwKE>,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvdwpHFSU3c> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qcEzRuPlcE>

In the above Sinhala guideline of lyrics writing method, Ven. Walivitiye Soratha Thera (2016) indicates that ‘when the dosage (quantity in metre) is written equally in all four lines, it is called a siwpada viritha’ (quatrain observance).

Identity Characteristics of Seepada Singing

Several features unique to the singing of the *seepada* can be identified from the following analysis. Those features are not found when other types of kavi or gee poems are sung. Sykes (2018) explores the links between sound and musical identities in Sri Lanka. In this study, it was found that specific singing techniques are deliberately used by the villagers, and retained for singing *seepada*.

- Singing with equal pauses (yathi)

Venkataraman (2007) describes “arranging different groups of syllables into a beautiful combination that gives a particular shape to music” as being called Yathi or Yati” and that “expanding and/or decreasing syllabic patterns that, when written, create a geometric shape” (Schnee 2013). A common feature of this singing is the uniform placement of Yathi. The first line is sung without using Yathi but in the second line, Yathi is placed after singing a couple of words followed by a Yathi placed at the end. This pattern repeats with the placing of Yathi until the end of the verse of a certain *seepada*.

First line *wel yaayaka gon dennek kaka uni*

Second Line *in eka gonekYathi.....valigaya nethiva veni veniYathi.....*

It should be noted that the lyrics provided above are in the Sinhala language and the example (a cart poem) has been recorded by the authors during their fieldwork. This example is provided only for the purpose of demonstrating the placings of Yathi (melodic improvisation) from a publicly accessible online resource, which is not quoted here. This style of singing and phrasing can be clearly identified as the main identity of the 248 *seepada* style folk poems analyzed in this investigation from different areas of Sri Lanka, and sung by different people. The other main feature is that the singing takes place using one breath until the first pause. It can be explained further using the image below

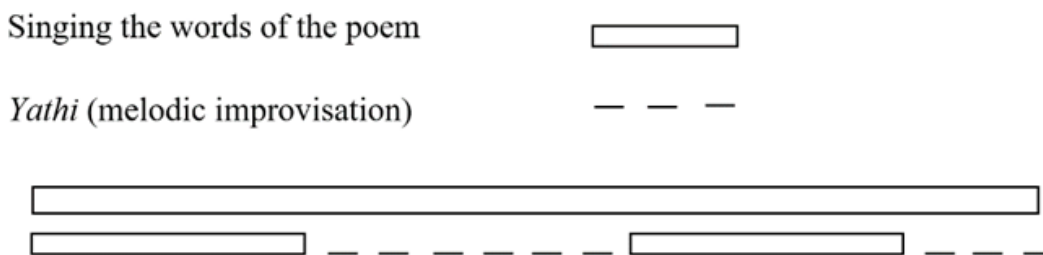


Figure: 1 Yathi placing in lines. Scheme by the authors.

Dassanayake (2021: 33) explains that “This fashion of phrasing thoughtfully and embellishing in selected areas may have influenced the way the peasants sang folk melodies in Sri Lanka although, fascinatingly, this appears to be a common theme for folk music in rural areas”. However, it is important to mention that contemporary singers place Yathi at random places as they prefer in performing contexts, leading to the destruction of the authentic style of *seepada* singing due to their lack of knowledge.

Contexts of *Seepada* Singing

The singing of these songs takes place far away from the singers' homes. It could be at a mine, threshing floor of a paddy field, at a chena farm, in a river, or a forest. These poems are designed to suit the occasion and the need, and these aspects are explained below for each type:

Poetry type	Place/Occupation	Purpose	Time
Mining Poems	Mines/ miners	overcome loneliness, motivation	Day and night
Wasp Poems	Forest/ honey collectors	safety, motivation, overcoming fear	Day, scary times
	Roads/ carters	communicate, motivation	Day and night
Cart Poems	River/ ferrymen	communicate	Day and night
Hut Poems (Chena farming)	Forest/ Watchmen	ensuring safety, chasing wild animals, overcome loneliness and fear	Night

Figure 2: Table of details of the poems. Table by the authors.

These poems are used by village folk based on their needs as explained above. They are sung in forests, jungles, meadows, roads, rivers or in empty spaces. The basic purposes of singing in these contexts are for communication, for overcoming fear, and also to chase wild animals away. Most songs are full of sorrow and pain (Wijesekera 1945). Therein lie the real worries and bitterness of the singers' lives. Some of the poems also retain traits of devotion and appeal.

Voice Production Used for the Singing of *Seepada*

Most voices fall into one of the eight vocal categories, of which there are four male and four female types. Voice type, sometimes also called vocal type, is the classification of a singer's voice based on several different criteria including gender, vocal range, vocal weight, tessitura, vocal tone, and bridge location. Eight classifications are presented below: (Figure 1)

1. Bass: lowest male voice type with a vocal range of E2-E4
2. Baritone: 2nd lowest male voice type with a vocal range of A2-A4
3. Tenor: 2nd highest male voice type with a vocal range of C3-C5
4. Countertenor: highest male voice type with a vocal range of E3-E5
5. Contralto: lowest female voice type with a vocal range of E3-E5
6. Alto: 2nd lowest female voice type with a vocal range of F3-F5
7. Mezzo Soprano: 2nd highest female voice type with a vocal range of A3-A5
8. Soprano: highest female voice type with a vocal range of C4-C6

(Ramsey, 2020)

Seepada is a type of singing using an open voice (Tenor and Countertenor voice).⁴ The highest male vocal range normally extends from approximately E3 to E5; an extremely high voice, extending into the countertenor range, is usually termed a countertenor. Almost all *seepada* used in this research are associated with the Countertenor voice range.

4. If compared to belcanto-singing of European provenience.

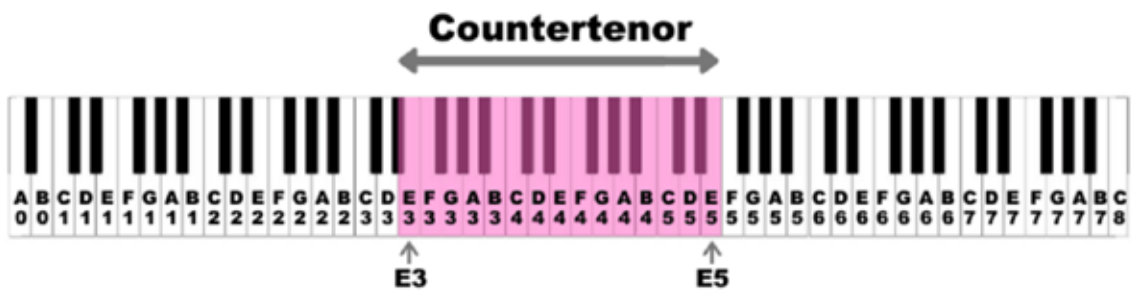


Figure 3: Vocal range of human voice. Scheme

Seepada singing can be easily heard from a distance as these singers use their full body energy to produce a strong and loud voice.

The Use of Fixed and Prolonged Yathi

Another important feature of the *seepada* singing style is sustaining the same tone for a long time. From that tone, various movements, beautiful trills, and other displays of singing prowess are performed. The following figure (Figure 2) presents an example of the use of such a long *yathi*.



Figure 4: Image of a Yathi melodic contour. Scheme by the authors.

The above image shows the use of a Yathi in a *seepada* sung by Dingiri Mudiyanseelage Abeykoon (aged 65) at the Kurunegala Kōnweve.

The initial time is 1 second and 452 milliseconds.



Figure 5: Image of another Yathi melodic contour.

The end time is 11 seconds and 166 milliseconds. (1 MS = 0.001 268 sec). The duration of the Yathi should be calculated by using the subtraction as below.

- 11 Sec. 166 Ms
- 01 Sec. 452 Ms
- 09 Sec. 714 Ms

The duration of the Yathi in this song is 9 seconds 714 milliseconds. It is amazing to be able to sing Yathi continuously without using the words of the poem in specific places, as required. We have provided this example to demonstrate that the use of Yathi in the singing of the *seepada* is a common feature. Implementations of similar placing of Yathi were identified in *seepada* recorded from different places, mostly villages, of Sri Lanka. Those areas are Rambukkana, Matale, Mathalapitiya, Monaragala, Hulangamuva, Laggala, Dambulla, Kalundeva, Pannampitiya, Kandy, Kaluthara, Galle, Mathara, Halawatha, Badulla, Kegalle, Rathnapura, Balangoda, Minneriya, Horana and Warakapola. However, it was found that the duration of the Yathi used are different, and it is possible to understand that the following reasons may contribute to those variations:

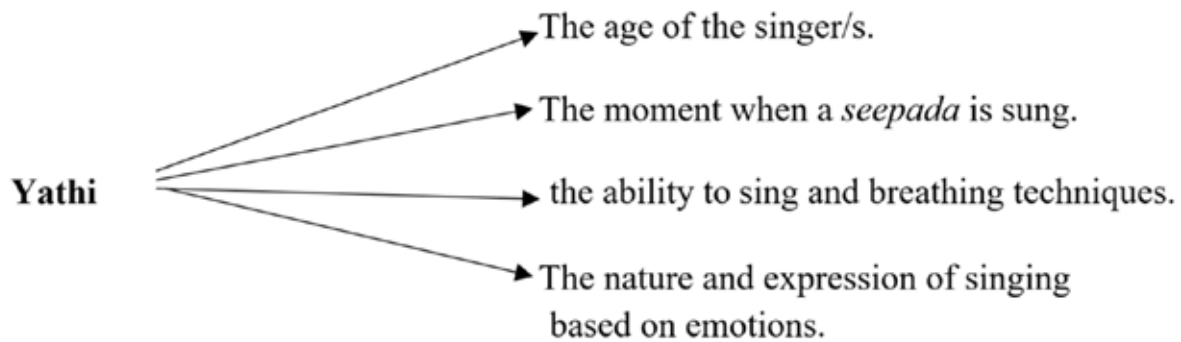


Figure 6: Yathi conditions. Scheme by the authors.

Breathing activity and ability vary according to the age of the singer. Breathing has a direct effect on maintaining the Yathi of the song. The Yathi may also vary depending on the occasion in which singing is performed; for example, Yathi used in the *seepada* sung from a watch hut while sitting freely at night and when working in a mine while doing heavy manual work are each influenced by the physical and mental state of the singer, including the environmental factors. Kulathilaka and Abeysinghe (1976) explain that *seepada* is a sung quatrain that serves a communicative purpose. It is noticeable that folk singers in Sri Lanka apply a unique set of syllabic patterns and musical intervals which are different from existing pitches of different music styles for singing *seepada*.

Qualities of Musical Tones

In this process of analyzing *seepada*, we also investigated the difference in the position of musical tones. It became clear that the locations of the musical tones applied in the singing of the *seepada* are not the tonal positions that we currently and commonly use. Therefore, a different method is required for analyzing the frequencies of the tones sung in *seepada*.

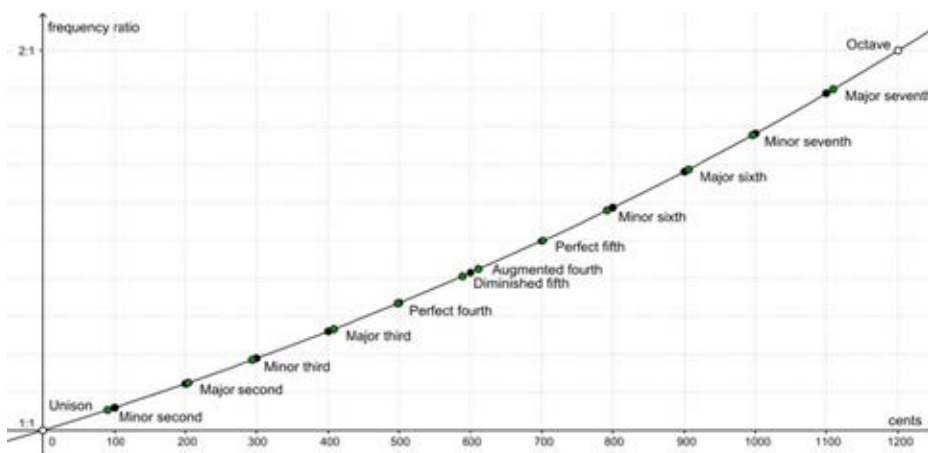


Figure 7: Quality spectrum of tones as an overview of frequency ratio. Scheme by the authors.

A scientific analysis of the dynamics, timbre, and frequency of recorded folk melodies can be performed by analysing them using various technological devices. The main purpose of employing such an approach is to conduct a scientific analysis of the elements of music, including expressions of singing, as sequences of tones and their characteristics of folk song melodies can construct unique cultural identities (Savage et al, 2022). The scientific method that we used for this analysis is currently the globally accepted ‘Cent’ system, as the precise representation of individual pitches or intervals, in general, cannot be described using “vibrations per second” (Stock, 2007: 306).

The width of musical intervals is often expressed in Cents which is a unit of pitch developed by Alexander Ellis (Helmholtz & Ellis, 1954; Stock, 2007). The notion of Cent for measuring musical intervals (Ellis, 1880) is based on the acoustic logarithms decimal semitone system introduced by Gaspard de Prony in the 1830s (Dumbrill, 2018). 1200 Cents are considered in this study for the 12 tones that we currently use from the Western Music model. The cents system is explained in the chart below (Yang, 2012).

A comparison of equal-tempered intervals showing the relationship between frequency ratio and the intervals’ values, in Cents.

We expected to find a difference in the musical tones of the groups of *seepada* (listed below) by applying the following formula.

If the frequencies of F1 and F2 tones are known in Hertz, the number of Cents for measuring the interval from F1 to F2 can be calculated using the above formula. A Cent is a unit of measurement for the ratio between two frequencies. An equally tempered semitone (the interval between two adjacent piano keys) spans 100 Cents by definition. An octave—two tones that have a frequency ratio of 2:1—spans twelve semitones and therefore 1200 Cents. Since a frequency raised by one Cent is simply multiplied by this constant Cent value, and 1200 Cents doubles a frequency, the ratio of frequencies one Cent apart is precisely equal to $2^{1/1200} = 1200\sqrt[1200]{2}$, the 1200th root of 2, which is approximately 1.0005777895 (Yang, 2012).

$$\ln\left[\frac{f_2}{f_1}\right] = \frac{\phi}{1200} \ln 2 \quad \text{or} \quad \phi = 1200 \frac{\ln\left[\frac{f_2}{f_1}\right]}{\ln 2}$$

Figure 8: Cents formula.

The *seepada* used in this investigation were measured employing the above method. The diagram below illustrates the pitching of the *seepada* called “*male male ara naamala nelaa varen,*”

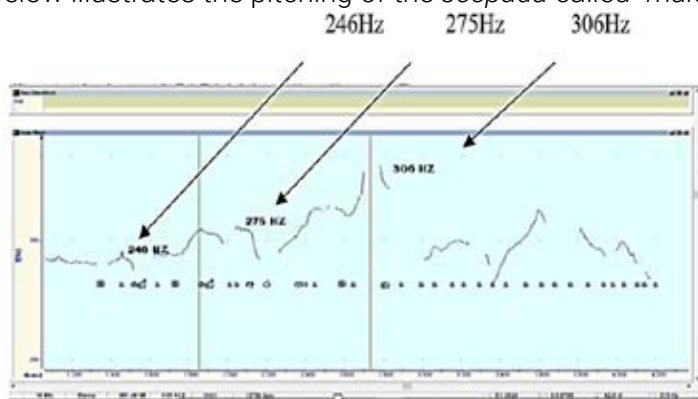


Figure 9: Speech Analyzer image. This poem was sung by Mathalapitiya, Wedikkaragedara Piloris (aged 67 at the time of recording).

The frequency of the first note here is 246 Hz (Arrow No. 1). The frequency of the second part is 275 Hz (Arrow No. 2). The frequency of the third part is 306 Hz (Arrow No. 3). These 3 sound locations of the tones sung are clearly displayed in the Speech Analyzer. 246 Hz is the frequency between the Bb and B musical tones.

The following calculation was made based on the above musical tones (Wolfe, n.d.), (MIDI Note reference chart- newt.phys.unsw.edu.au/jw/tones.html).

1st - 246 Hz 2nd - 275 Hz 3rd - 306 Hz.

The difference between the first and second places was calculated using the Cent measurement formula (presented in Figure 10 and 11).

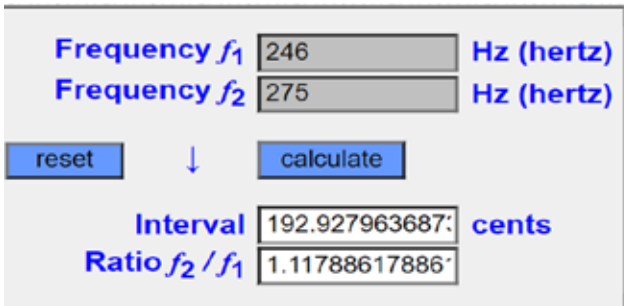


Figure 10: Interval in Cents.

The gap between the first and second places is 192 cents.

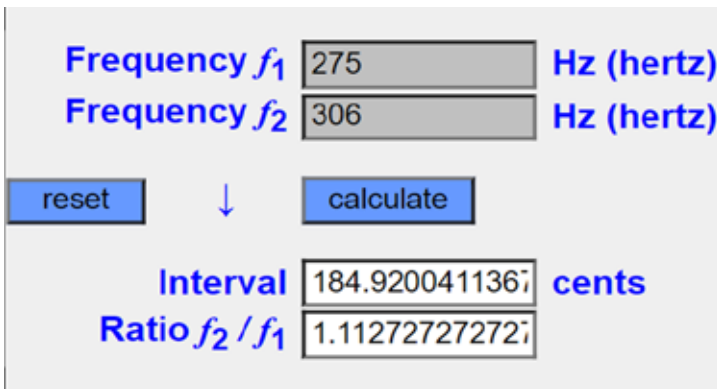


Figure 11: Interval in Cents.

The gap between the second and third places is 184 cents.

Below is a chart of the currently accepted note positions and alignments in the world based on these data.

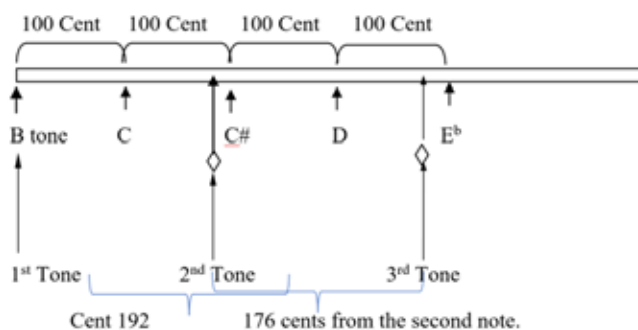


Figure 12: Tone distances in Cent.

This shows that the musical tone positions used in this *seepada* singing are different from those commonly accepted.

Below is the accepted frequency table currently used in most countries.

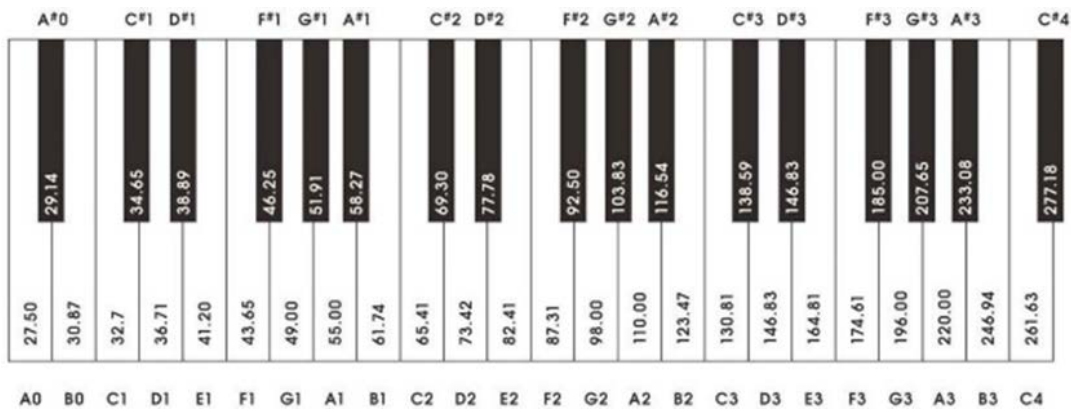


Figure 13: Keyboard frequency table.

The position between the two musical tones C and C sharp indicated above is not included in the current frequencies. These frequencies can only be calculated using the Cent Meter System.

- Distance between C and C# = 100 Cent
- Distance between C and new tone = 99 Cent

The following table shows the frequencies of pitch of *seepada* that we have analyzed in this study using the Cent System.

Name of Singer, Age at time of recording, and Village	Poetry type	Musical Tones	
		The difference between the first and second tones	The difference between the second and third tones
<u>Gama Gedara Ukkubanda</u> , (65) <u>Mathalapitiya</u> , Kandy.	<i>seepada</i> , Cart poem	1 st 225 Hz = A 2 nd 295Hz = D 468 Cents 28 cents less than the D Note	1 st 295 Hz = D 2 nd 318Hz = D/E 129 Cents 70 cents less than the E Note
<u>Millagahagedara Bayvaa</u> , (54) <u>Naagalaweva</u> , <u>Nuwaraelliya</u> .	<i>seepada</i> , Cart poem	1 st 242 Hz = B 2 nd 329 Hz = E 531 Cents 64 cents less than the F Note	1 st 329 Hz = E 2 nd 348 Hz = F 97 Cents 98 cents more than the E Note
<u>Koralegedara Chandana Hami</u> , (67) <u>Kivulpana Balangoda</u>	<i>seepada</i> , Mine poem	1 st 235Hz = B ^b 2 nd 349 Hz = F 684 Cents 14 cents less than F	1 st 349Hz = F 2 nd 317 Hz = E ^b -166 Cents 34 cents less than E ^u
<u>Morandavana Mahanakathige</u> , Pattee, (45) <u>Ihalamaliduuva</u> , <u>Ketanvala</u> , <u>Mathara</u> .	<i>seepada</i> , Ferry poem	1 st 354Hz = F 2 nd 327Hz = E -137 Cents 57 cents less than E	1 st 327Hz = E 2 nd 265 Hz = C -363 Cents 30 cents less than middle C

Figure 14: Table with Cent measurements of tone intervals from authors' field work.

The examples above are selected for demonstration from the first author's fieldwork. It is important to point out that these positions of musical tones are different from the currently accepted standard 12-tone equal temperament of Western Music and are microtonal pitches. Microtonal music includes

other equal temperaments, just intonation-based scales, mean-tone temperaments and is different from the pitch organization that modern pianos are set up to use. It is known that microtonal music is embedded in Thai, Indonesian, Indian, Chinese, Japanese and Maqam Music (e.g. from Turkey and Iraq). In the Indonesian traditional music context, each village has its own gamelan and each one is tuned differently; there are as many tunings as there are gamelans, although with certain common principles (Becker, 1968; Brinner, 1995). We assume that this is also the case with *seepada* singing in terms of variations of microtonal qualities in different villages and sensitivity to minute inflections of pitch.

The placings of Yathi are similar in *seepada* although the durations differ based on the factors explained above (including context specific pitching differences). Such intentional microtonal qualities are also found in all 248 recordings of the various types of *seepada* collected from different locations in Sri Lanka, sung by different villagers. Confirming the use of microtonal music, Dassanaïke (2012: 32) states: "During my fieldwork, I noticed that many traditionalists are of the opinion that contemporary, trained pitch-conscious vocalists are compromising the soul of Sinhala folk music" as a result of their pitch awareness. It is difficult to generalise the musical tones and or pitches used for *seepada* singing without using modern technology and measurement methods. However, from this study, it was revealed that some frequencies of *seepada* singing are different and worthy of further research employing scientific methods including "both the mathematical and psychological perspectives" (Lekamge & Marasinghe, 2014: 2).

From this study, *seepada* was identified as a singing style used in Sri Lanka by workers such as miners, ploughmen, reapers, watchmen, boatmen, carters, and apiarists (collectors of honey from wild wasps) who engage in related occupations (Wijesekera, 1945). It was found that Yathi and pitching used for singing *seepada* are different and unique. Therefore, the singing styles of Sri Lankan folk songs should be identified and acknowledged beyond grouping them using existing restricted systems. When categorizing Sri Lankan folk music, we suggest considering musical and melodic analysis that includes emotional feelings expressed by the singer through the use of musical tones. In this process, the intentions of poets, lyricists and singers (of folk songs) should also be considered along with the background and purpose of use, singing style and techniques. (Dassanaïke (2012: 32) explains that "it was not uncommon to hear a vocalist or leader shift key centers within one phrase during her fieldwork" and "the lack of attention to pitch is not only unique to Sinhala folk music". She assumes that "the reasons for this unconscious or conscious release of intonation could be due to the implementation of the untampered? scale which is known as just intonation ...or perhaps the performers are hearing the music microtonally" (Dassanaïke, 2012: 32-33). Surya Sena (2008) states that Buddhist monks deliberately implement microtonal ornamentation to enrich their chanting and be more impactful. From this study, it was found that performers of *seepada* also use microtonal ornamentation in their singing as a natural method of expression.

Concluding Remarks

Possibly, some researchers of the past argued that it is not possible to formulate a precise scientific definition to identify or differentiate embedded characteristics of folk songs. However, we tried to find a measure appropriate for an interval too small to be distinguished by human hearing (Dawson and

Medler, 2010) and accordingly employed the Cent measure in this study. Cent intervals may also be appropriate in other non-Western music contexts such as South Indian Carnatic music. Krishnaswamy (2003: 630) points out that Carnatic music employs “microtones” with at least 22 pitch positions in an octave and many people “may not even know what a 20-cent interval difference sounds like”. Almost seven decades ago, Devar Surya Sena (1954: 11) mentions that “Many of the Sinhalese folk songs are little more than chanted poetry”. In fact, it is possible to claim that some Sinhalese folk songs such as *seepada* are more complex than what had been estimated at the time, in terms of the use of musical elements. In simplifying the nature of Sinhalese folk songs, Western (music) trained practitioners may have not known about the unique features of *seepada* singing at the time, including microtone interval differences of pitch (Krishnaswamy, 2003). The findings from our study confirm the premise that *seepada* is a singing style that embeds complicated techniques. It is possible to find different versions of popular songs reproduced in genres such as Jazz and Reggae in the West and versions of popular songs sung in styles such as Opera, Classical music, and Soul singing (Butte et al, 2009). In most of these instances, the same melodies are

sung by different singers using different vocal techniques and styles related to a particular music. These reproductions or cover versions are identified and acknowledged using the relevant terms based on the singing styles used. Similarly, *seepada* can be acknowledged as a traditional singing style used in Sri Lanka, which moves beyond the existing generalized description as a “poetic stanza”, that is, their definition as being “the composition of lines of a poem as in the Oxford Reference (*seepada*, n.d.). Savage et al (2022) found that even creative art forms such as music are subject to evolutionary constraints. Asaqli and Masalha (2020) note that in the process of transition, folk songs adapt to social, political and economic changes as the content moves through society and time from one generation to another. Therefore, it is important to sustain the unique features of *seepada* singing, as most of the ‘home-grown traditional family professions’ (Kundalia, 2015) related to *seepada*, such as mining, boat/ferry/raft and bullock cart transportation including wasp honey making, are rapidly declining in Sri Lanka due to the effects of globalization and the emergence of modern technology. Lakamge and Marasinghe (2014) note that the storage of Sri Lankan songs, music and melodies in digital form allowing future researchers to analyze and further explore them, remain an important need yet to be acknowledged. Researchers should consider the changing social contexts when studying musical changes (Blacking, 1977). Dassenaik (2012: iii) observes that “Considered a dying art form by practitioners, scholars, nationals and expatriates interviewed during this research, Sinhala folk music is scarcely practiced yet holds the key to the nation’s musical identity”. To safeguard the musical identity of Sri Lanka, particularly the dying occupations, there is an urgent need for further research with larger samples collected through fieldwork from a range of locations where these traditional singing practices are still performed and used. Support from all relevant authorities, including the government of Sri Lanka, will be vital to achieve this. Finally, we also suggest retrieving *seepada* (e.g. from existing culture bearers and archived recordings) and teaching these singing styles and techniques to students at all levels of education: primary, secondary and tertiary, using authentic pedagogies in an attempt to conserve both the identity and practices of Sri Lankan Sinhala folk songs, music and melodies.

Acknowledgments

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Data access statement: Please note that all the recordings used for this study are archived at the C. De S. Kulathilaka Research Unit and are copyrighted material as stated in the metadata coming with the recordings. Access can be provided to stakeholders upon a formal request made to the University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo, Sri Lanka through the first author of this paper. Depicted materials are reprinted by written permission as stated by the authors.

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EXPLORING THE MUSICAL HERITAGE OF THE TRADITIONAL SRI LANKAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENT HORANEWA

Mahinda Wimalasiri¹



Abstract

Some historical information reveals that the art of ensemble playing in Sri Lanka dates back to the Yaksha, Naga, and tribal eras that existed even before the suggested arrival of King Vijaya. Indigenous ensembles can also be described as an art that evolved with the development of humankind in different periods due to various invasions. A large number of ensemble instruments used by the Sri Lankan village artist from then to now are revealed in bibliographical information such as the Mahavamsa, Thupavamsa, Dambadeniya Asna, Kuveni Asna, and Saddharmalankara. These ensembles are divided into five types, mainly, that which is described as the panchathurya, including aathatha, vithatha, vithathaathatha, ghana and sushira, of which sushira is the calibration of blowing instruments that includes the horanewa as well. The horanewa can be introduced as the only swara/ notes instrument used by the Sinhala folk artist of the day among the instruments of the panchathurya. The main purpose of this research is to investigate the technical methods used in the production of this musical instrument called horanewa and its special techniques adopted in playing. Why does the horanewa instrument used at present not produce its own definite melodic sound? In relation to this question that arose, data were collected, analyzed and interpreted and conclusions were reached. As revealed in this descriptive research, the horanewa is a special musical instrument built with the technology of three traditional manufacturers. This research will be important to introduce and preserve the arts related to this musical instrument which is gradually dying out.

Keywords

Indigenous ensembles, Panchathurya, Technical methods, Characteristics, Traditional use

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Introduction

There is historical information to confirm that group playing in Sri Lanka dates back to the era of the Yaksha and Naga tribes (Buddhadattha, 1959). The art of playing ensemble music has become a national heritage as it is regarded as a local cultural element. Many musical instruments used by Sri Lankan musicians have been explored in books such as Thupawansaya (Premarathna, 1987), Deepawansaya (Gnanawimala, 1959), Wansaththappakasiniya (Mallalasekara, 1935), Saddharamalankaraya (Sarananda, 1953), Dalada Siritha (Soratha, 1970), Dambadeni Asna (Gnanawimala, 1960), and Kuweni Asna (Gnanawimala, 1960). Those musical instruments are divided into five types, i.e. athatha vithatha, vithathathatha, ghana, and sushira are described under the name of panchangika thurya (Gnanawimala, 1960). In the study of panchangika thurya instruments based on various sources, many musical instruments are out of use and are in a state of not being recognizable, and some of them are only known by foreign names. Among them, the horanewa can be introduced as a musical instrument that supposedly can play according to harmonic progressions used among instruments played by modern village musicians.

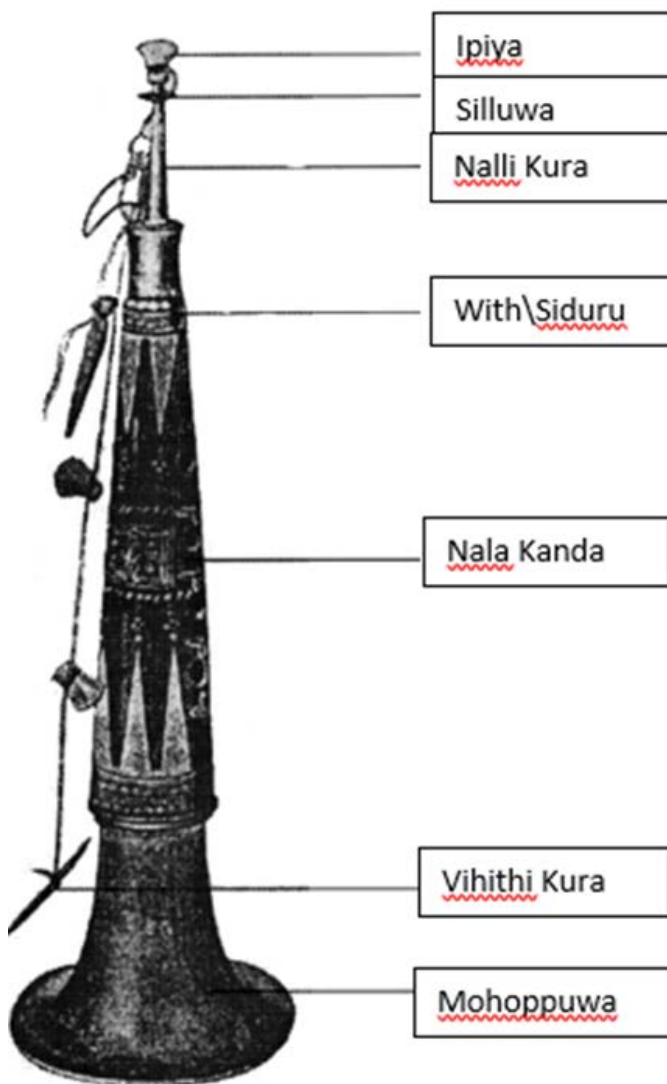


Figure 1: Main Parts of horanewa. From *Madya Kaleena Sinhala Kala* (p. XXIV) by Ananda K. Kumaraswami, 1962.

Literature Review

Different opinions on the origin of the name horanewa are available. According to the literature, it is a West Asian migrant instrument (Samarasinghe, 2023). There is no chord playing in the horanewa². Some scholars express the opinion that the horanewa is blown without a definite tone and also without accommodating harmonic progressions³. However, the above statement clearly proves to be false since some tonal manipulation takes place in the use of the horanewa.

C. de S. Kulathilake has shown that for the first time in the written literature of this country, the horanewa was called surana (Balagalle Wimalabuddi, 1967). He has further pointed out that the name surana was a synonym of the name surna in relation to the word quarna in Persia, and that the big instrument is known as quarna and the small instrument is known as a surna (Kulathilake, 1974). Meanwhile, Jayantha Aravinda says that the surnawa was the basis for the production of the Indian musical instrument about sixty years ago⁴. However, it was important for this study that the types of horane instruments were introduced as saranai in Malaysia, saranai in Vietnam, pinai in Thailand, shehnai, sahanai, and surnai in India. When asking questions, the common feature of all those names is that the sound 'nai' is applied to the end of each word. It is used in Egypt, meaning flute (Diagram Group, 1976). Apart from that, although certain types of horns have been introduced as surna and sona. C. de S. Kulathilake has further pointed out that the final "na" sound in those words has been shortened to nai. Considering the fact that nai is used for the horanewa, the use of "ne" in horanewa can also be recognized as a sound from nai or na. From the preceding facts, it is clear that it is difficult to find an etymological explanation for the name horanewa. Nonetheless, it can be identified as a wind instrument very similar to the types of double reeds used in Persia as well as in India.

Bibliographers, researchers, and reporters have expressed different opinions about the shape of the instrument. Meanwhile, in the Practical Sinhala Dictionary, it has been introduced as a wind instrument with a long body and with a wide foot. It also indicates that the name horanewa and *kahalaya* are used to refer to it (Wijethunga, 1984, p. 1909). The author of the Sinhala dictionary has also presented the same idea (Soratha, 2017).

Artist J. E. Sedaraman indicates that the body is carved from ivory or horn, the rest of the parts are made of brass, the blowing part is small, and the part that produces different pitches is made with holes. It is further mentioned that the holes are for playing tones that fit harmonic progressions and the singing of Kavi (Poem), "silo"⁵ and others including daul⁶, and thammattam⁷ verses are played through it (Sedaraman, 1997). It has been mentioned that the horn of the horanewa is made of palm leaves, the middle part is made of wood and the rest of the parts are made of brass, and a piece of wood called "fire string"

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2. S. Illesinghe, personal communication, February 2, 1999.
 3. J. Aravinda, personal communication, 2 April, 1999.
 4. J. Aravinda, personal communication, 2 April, 1999.
 5. Singing style.
 6. Sri Lankan cylindrical drum from Sabaragamuwa dance tradition.
 7. Sri Lankan kettle drum.

is used to separate the petals of the horn and widen the opening. It was stated that the sound of the horanewa is similar to the sound of the Scottish Bagpipe (Ellepola, 1967).

The Analysis of Sushira Musical Instruments

According to the world classification of sushira musical instruments, they are divided into three categories (Diagram Group, 1976).

- Single reed sushira instrument
- Double reed sushira instrument
- Free reed sushira instrument

According to the above classification, the horanewa is known as a double reed instrument (Meddegoda, 2019a and 2019b) by some musicians⁸. Considering the method of playing horanewa and how to prepare the ipiya, it seems that questioning that opinion is not the solution to the problems named. As a sushira with all its elements of more than 2 reeds clashing towards each other and producing sound through the interruption of the air flow in this way, the principle named with double reeds is not touched at all. It is still a concussive process. Insofar it is not a blank opinion but a hard fact. Here, the author tries to describe its modification.

The classification is done on the basis of reeds which are designed to produce sound. These reeds are delicately crafted from leaves and wood fragments as well as synthetic materials. The sound is generated by the vibrating of leaves and swinging reeds due to the strength and weakness of the air column created through blowing in the upper end of the mouth piece.

Reeds that produce sound using one reed are classified as single reed musical instruments. They are principally percussive in nature: the reed swings towards a solid base. Instruments that produce sounds using two reeds are called double reeds as they provide the opportunity to produce a concussive sound and instruments that produce sound without reeds touching any part of the instruments or themselves are called free reeds as they swing freely within the air. Single reed instruments include clarinet saxophone and double reed instruments including all oboes, nagaswara, and bagpipes which, in some cases, come under free reeds. Nevertheless, the harmonium and accordion are free reed musical instruments.

However, four reeds (quadruples) are used to produce the tones of the horanewa⁹. They work like double reeds.

8. C. de S. Kulathilake, personal communication, 4 December, 1998.

9. K. Danguwa, personal communication, 30 May, 1999.



Figure 2: The way of making “ipiyawa” (the drawings were made by the author).

In pinai¹⁰, surna and Shehnai instruments, the ipiya is made using four reed parts called vocal reeds¹¹, but it is clear in the study that it has not been taken into account in the classification of sushira instruments. C. de S. Kulathilake suggests that the upper and lower vocal reeds are used as a support to hold the player’s lips. Therefore, the reed seems to be set. However, when playing horanewa in practice, the lips are held on the knot that is tied so that it rests on all the reeds.

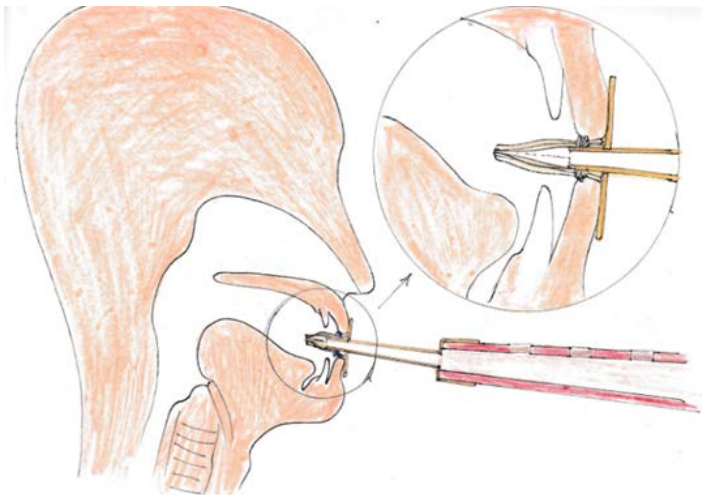


Figure 3: How to keep the lips on the ipiya while playing horanewa (the illustrations were made by the author).

As shown in Figure 3 above, it can be confirmed that the two upper and lower reed folds of the ipiya are not used as a support to hold the player’s lips.

It should be especially mentioned that in some musical instruments, simple double reeds are used for an ipiyawa. It is important to note that our focus here is only on the types of instruments that use four reeds like the horanewa. These wind instruments can be divided into two special groups.

- A. Instrument with the apparatus called silluwa.
- B. Instrument without silluwa.

Our research can show that the instruments related to the two sets are played in two ways. The sound of stringed instruments is produced by using the four reeds or leaves. It should

10. C. Patara, personal communication, 10 February, 1999.

11. M. Haneef & E. Husen, personal communication, 12 November, 1999

be noted that the player's lips do not rest on the leaves and they rest on the knot. It is as shown in the figure below.



Figure 4: How to store air in the mouth

Also, the air inhaled through the nose is stored in the mouth as the cheeks widen and is directed to the four reeds, and the pressure is pushed forward by the lips, preventing it from being further pushed through the lips. The author's observation of playing the horanewa in practice can be further confirmed by the given photographs.



Sri Lankan horanewa Player

Figure 5: Photo by Author.



Pakistani Shehnai Player

Figure 6: Photo taken by unknown person using author's camera.

When comparing the figures above, we can note how the playing styles of horanewa instruments and Shehnai players¹² are similar.

12. For more information about the Indian-shehnai players visit <https://images.app.goo.gl/DucnktVTLNkzmLr78>. Last accessed 17 August, 2023.

As a result, if pressure is applied to the ipiya, the leaves of the ipiya vibrate and produce a sound and that sound is released through the tubes. The tubes are arranged in such a way that the diameter gradually increases and finally through the mohoppuwa (part of horanewa) made of metal in the form of a cone. There, the sound produced by the instrument is doubled and directed away by the body and becomes specific in producing definite tones according to the physical nature of the instrument and the manipulation through the finger holes.

Wind Instruments without “Silluwa”

When playing the instrument without a mouthpiece, the lips are placed on the pipe and the air inhaled through the nose is not stored in the mouth so that the two ends are widened.



Figure 7: Shenai

<http://indianmusicsschool.com/shehnai/>



Figure 8: Pinai instrument of Thailand

http://www.istov.de/htmls/thailand/thailand_instruments.html

When playing the instrument without silluwa, the air inhaled into the mouth is directed to the ipiyawa at the same time and is not stored in the mouth. Sounds of the instrument or the tones are produced parallel to inhalation and exhalation and no continuous tone is maintained in the manner of playing with the silluwa. There, the mouthpiece stores air to the “silluwa”.

Accordingly, through this research, we have discovered that two types of sushira instruments were designed with four reeds. Also, it was found that while using the “silluwa” as a support, the air obtained by inhalation is stored in the mouth so that the cheeks expand and the air is continuously directed to the ipiyawa. At the same time, the air is continuously inhaled again in traditional horanewa playing. This playing process can be identified as a technique based on “circular breathing” .

Conclusion and Suggestions

The horanewa has a special place as it is the only musical instrument used in modern times belonging to the “sushira” group among the local instruments. In fact, it has become a sign of Sri Lankan identity although it has been fed by Persian and Indian cultural¹³

13. Circular breathing is a technique used by players of some wind instruments to produce a continuous tone without interruption.

influences. This can be revealed by the structure of the horanewa and its practical use. Among them, it was emphasized that the “circular breathing” technique can be identified as a specialty of horane playing found in the local system in Sri Lanka as an example called “dik osaya” and “pirith osaya” in horane playing. Based on this form, a series of tunes called “horane osaya” have been added to Sinhala folk singing. Accordingly, some scholars describe the horanewa as an instrument with double reeds, but in local horane playing, it is used with four reeds. The sound produced by playing the horanewa with two reeds is different from the sound produced by playing with four reeds. A new avenue has been exposed to music scholars or researchers to further enquire about this. Thus, we can state that the horanewa is a “sushira” instrument that is played using four reeds and is a special instrument that is played using the method of “circular breathing”. Also, we would like to introduce it as an instrument that should be developed with standardized tuning, and that it is one worthy of gaining the attention of local and foreign musicians.

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EXPLORING THE EFFICACY OF UTILIZING SONG TEXTS AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL TOOL FOR TEACHING THE PRESENT PERFECT TENSES

Sumudu Embogama¹



Abstract

Teaching grammar has always posed challenges for English teachers due to the tendency for it to be perceived as boring, resulting in disinterest and poor retention among learners. This study investigates the effectiveness of incorporating songs as an instructional tool for teaching the present perfect tenses in the context of English language learning. It explores whether songs can facilitate a deeper understanding of the tenses' usage, promote accurate application in authentic contexts, and enhance learners' overall interest in learning English as a second language. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative measurements of learners' performance on a grammar test with qualitative data gathered through focus group discussions. The results indicate that the group taught through the use of songs demonstrated significantly better test scores compared to the control group. Moreover, the qualitative analysis revealed students' positive perceptions of using songs, emphasizing the engaging and enjoyable nature of this approach. The findings align with previous research, highlighting the benefits of using songs in language learning, including increased motivation, engagement, and language proficiency. These results contribute to the growing body of research supporting the incorporation of music into language instruction and suggest its potential as an effective instructional tool for enhancing grammar proficiency. Further research is recommended to strengthen the generalizability of these findings and explore the underlying factors that contribute to the effectiveness of using songs in language learning contexts. Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of embracing innovative and creative approaches to create meaningful language learning experiences for students.

Keywords

Songs, Instructional tool, Present perfect tenses, Language proficiency

Introduction

Second language learning has long been a complex endeavor, requiring educators to employ innovative and engaging methods to enhance learners' understanding and retention. In recent years, researchers and educators have turned to innovative approaches, such as incorporating music and songs into language instruction, recognizing their potential to engage learners and facilitate language acquisition. Using songs as a teaching tool for ESL (English as a Second Language) instruction can be justified for several reasons.

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Firstly, studies have found that songs have a unique ability to capture learners' attention and create an enjoyable and appealing learning environment. Indeed, the combination of melodies, rhythms, and lyrics appeals to learners' emotions and can enhance their motivation to actively participate in language learning activities. Also, since songs reflect the natural use of language in real-world contexts, they expose learners to authentic vocabulary, grammar structures, idiomatic expressions, and cultural nuances. Thus, by incorporating songs, ESL learners can develop their understanding of English as it is used by native speakers. One such advantage is that by listening to songs in the target language, learners are granted opportunities to practice pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm in meaningful and memorable ways. Added to this is the fact that listening to songs can improve vocabulary due to lyrics that use contextually relevant vocabulary. In addition, when learners encounter words in the context of a song, they are more likely to remember them due to a song's emotional and melodic associations instead of a written text. Hence, it has been convincingly argued that the melodic nature of songs can help improve learners' phonetic accuracy and promote fluency.

Studies have demonstrated how songs have been used for teaching ESL to reinforce grammar structures and usage patterns. By exposing learners to grammatical forms in a musical context, it can provide a memorable and repetitive way to internalize grammar rules and improve accuracy in language production. Given the potential of English songs for grammar reinforcement, this study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of utilizing songs as an instructional tool for teaching the present perfect tenses in the context of English language learning.

English educators would not contest the fact that the present perfect simple and the present perfect continuous tenses pose a significant challenge for ESL learners due to their nuanced usage and irregular structures. Teaching them using traditional teaching methods which often rely on grammar rules and repetitive exercises may lead to disengagement and lack of long-term retention. As such, the researcher decided to use several English songs, by leveraging the emotional and mnemonic power of music, to create an immersive and enjoyable learning environment that would enhance learners' understanding and usage of the present perfect tenses.

The integration of songs in language learning has been a subject of increasing interest and investigation in the field of applied linguistics. Previous studies have demonstrated the potential benefits of using songs to enhance vocabulary acquisition, improve pronunciation, and promote language fluency. However, limited research has focused specifically on the effectiveness of utilizing songs for teaching complex grammatical structures such as the present perfect tenses. This research attempted to address this gap in the literature by exploring the impact of incorporating songs as an instructional tool for the present perfect tenses. It investigated whether songs can facilitate a deeper understanding of the tenses' usage, promote accurate application in authentic contexts, and enhance learners' overall interest in learning English.

The findings of this research have the potential to contribute to language pedagogy by highlighting the benefits of incorporating songs as a viable instructional tool for teaching the present perfect tenses. By shedding light on the effectiveness of this innovative approach, ESL educators can further tailor their teaching methods to create more engaging and impactful language learning experiences for

their students. The primary aim of the research was to explore the efficacy of using songs as an instructional tool for teaching the present perfect tenses. By investigating the impact of songs on learners' understanding, application, and overall proficiency in the use of the present perfect tenses, this study expects to provide useful insights into the potential of incorporating music into language instruction.

The following research questions were posed prior to investigating the effectiveness of utilizing songs to teach the present perfect tenses:

1. Do learners show greater proficiency and fluency in the present perfect tenses when songs are incorporated into their language instruction compared to traditional teaching methods?
2. What are the learners' perceptions and attitudes towards using songs to teach the present perfect tenses?

Literature Review

The efficiency of using songs may vary depending on factors such as learner characteristics, instructional design, song selection, and teaching context. Nonetheless, based on the available literature, it has been found to have a positive impact on second-language learners in terms of their capacity to motivate and engage them in language learning activities, support their vocabulary, grammar, and syntax development, promote better L2 listening skills, become aware of the target language users' culture, and, most importantly, enhance memory and recollection of the target language uses and structures. This last point can be corroborated by the assertion that "Learning takes place not merely through good presentation but through meaningful, spaced repetition of the learning items" (Paquette and Rieg, 2008, p.161).

The studies that consider the integration of songs such as the ones conducted by Asselt (1970) and Mora (2000), exemplify the positive effect of such an initiation on language acquisition. Although several studies are available concerning the introduction of songs for teaching ESL, a majority of them have focused on their use for developing the listening skills of learners. The findings of these studies premise that using songs in the target language and exposing them to L2 learners develop their ability to listen and understand the spoken output of the second language (Hadi & Seriadi, 2019; Hidayat, 2013; Lestrays, 2019).

A study was conducted by Reski (2017) in order to find out if there was a notable impact in the acquisition of the simple past tense as a result of the integration of song. The findings proved that the intervention provided positive results. Moreover, a study conducted by Alinte (2013) explored the use of music as a tool for teaching grammar in language education. The study investigated the potential benefits and effectiveness of integrating music into grammar instruction, aiming to enhance students' understanding and retention of grammatical structures. The author discusses various theoretical perspectives and research studies that support the use of music in language learning, highlighting its ability to engage learners, facilitate language acquisition, and promote a positive learning experience. This research explores how music, with its melodic and rhythmic elements, can aid in language processing, memorization, and overall language proficiency. The study further presents a practical framework for integrating music into grammar instruction, including selecting appropriate songs,

designing activities, and implementing them in the classroom. Alinte (2013) also provides examples of activities and exercises that utilize songs to teach specific grammatical concepts. Overall, "Teaching Grammar Through Music" provides insights into the potential benefits and practical considerations of using music as a means of enhancing grammar instruction in language education. The study contributes to the broader discussion on innovative and engaging approaches to teaching grammar while offering guidance for educators interested in incorporating music into their instructional practices. Similarly, most researchers studying this area provide details as to how and why songs can be used for teaching a second language; specifically, in this case, during the acquisition of L2 grammar. For instance, Monson, in his thesis titled "Teaching grammar through music" notes: "I learned that music is one way to help language learners improve their grammar without explicitly teaching a concept" (2019). Cheng and Wang (2019) found that song-based instruction increased learners' motivation and engagement in English language learning, leading to improved performance across various language skills, including grammar proficiency. Kao and Liao (2015) also investigated the impact of English songs on motivation and language proficiency among Taiwanese college students. Their findings revealed that using songs in English instruction increased motivation, enhanced grammar comprehension, and improved language skills. Yet another study examined the effects of integrating songs into reading instruction on motivation and reading comprehension (Huang and Chang, 2014). The results indicated that the use of songs increased motivation and improved reading comprehension, suggesting a potentially positive impact on overall language development.

This literature review highlights the positive impact of using songs in second language learning, particularly in terms of motivation, engagement, and grammar and listening skills development. Overall, the literature supports the incorporation of songs in language learning as an engaging and effective approach as it provides valuable insights into the potential benefits and practical considerations of using music to enhance various aspects of second language acquisition. As language educators, understanding and leveraging the power of songs can create more meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences for L2 learners, thereby fostering their linguistic and cultural competence.

Methodology

To accomplish the aims of the study, a mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative measurements of learners' performance on a grammar test, along with qualitative data gathered through focus group discussions. The research participants consisted of a group of undergraduates who were following a beginner-level ESL course as first-year students. They were relatively of similar proficiency levels as per the placement test marks obtained by them at the beginning of the course.

The study used the quasi-experimental research design whereby a control and experimental group were used to investigate the effects of an intervention on the participants' outcomes. Unlike a true experimental design, a quasi-experimental design does not involve the random assignment of participants to groups; instead, pre-existing groups were used for purposes of sample selection.

The following briefly explains the study design and process of this quasi-experimental study:

Selection of Participants:

The participants were beginners-level ESL undergraduates who were already in a group that was assigned to them based on the marks they had obtained at the placement test prior to the course commencement. This group was further divided into the control and the experimental groups whereby two teachers were assigned to teach each group.

Intervention Implementation:

Both groups had to learn the simple present perfect and the present perfect continuous tenses. The teacher in the control group conducted the grammar lesson in the typical manner in which such lessons were being done sans songs. The experimental group, on the other hand, received the specific intervention in the form of three songs that were integrated into the grammar lesson.

Assessment:

After the intervention period, both the control and experimental groups were assessed using the same grammar test. It was a fill-in-the-blank exercise that tested their knowledge of the uses and structures of the present perfect tense. The comparison between the marks obtained by the two groups was done to measure any changes in the participants' ability to use the present perfect as a result of the intervention.

Focus group discussion:

The FGD was conducted with the participants in the experimental group to elicit their perspectives regarding the use of songs for teaching grammar.

Data Analysis:

The data collected from the test were analyzed to compare the outcomes between the control and experimental groups. The independent samples t-test was done using an online statistical calculator to determine whether there was any statistically significant difference between the marks obtained by the two groups.

The data collected during the FGD were manually coded and themes were noted and used for interpretation. The thematic analysis allowed the researcher to explore the depth and nuances of participants' perspectives regarding the integration of songs when learning grammar. The data helped uncover meaningful insights and contributed to the overall understanding of the research topic.

Results and Discussion

In accordance with the research questions posed, the analysis was conducted to provide insights and address the specific research inquiries.

Using the marks that were obtained after the completion of the grammar topic "Present Perfect Tenses", the mean scores obtained by the control and the experimental groups can be seen in Figure 1:

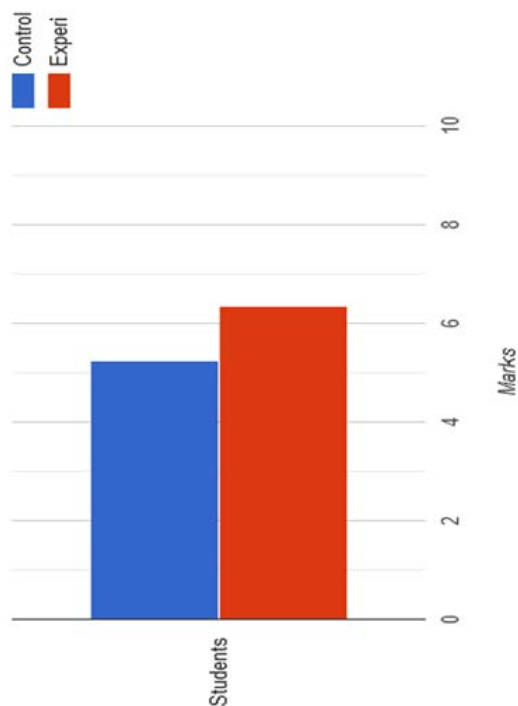


Figure 1: Comparison of the mean scores obtained for the test on the present perfect tenses.

As can be observed, there is a notable difference in terms of the mean whereby the control group received a mean of 5.24 while the experimental group obtained a mean score of 6.34.

To analyze the statistical difference between the control and experimental groups, an independent samples t-test was conducted as it is the most appropriate test when two separate groups are involved and there is a comparison of the means of their proficiency measurements in their use of the present perfect tense.

To conduct the independent samples t-test, the following null hypothesis (H0) and alternative hypothesis (H1) were used:

- Null hypothesis (H0): There is no significant difference between the means of the control and experimental groups.
- Alternative hypothesis (H1): There is a significant difference between the means of the control and experimental groups.

Subsequently, the mean and standard deviation of the marks for each group were calculated. This was followed by the conducting of the independent samples t-test using a statistical calculator. It should be noted that the assumptions, such as the normality of data distribution and the equality of variances between the groups were met prior to conducting this parametric test.

The 30 participants who were taught the present perfect tenses through the use of songs (M = 6.34, SD = 1.70) compared to the equal number of participants in the control group (M = 5.24, SD = 2.15) demonstrated significantly better test scores, $t(30) = 2.17$, $p = .017$. We can state that the result is significant at $p < .05$; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected in place of the alternative hypothesis. This finding indicates that the experimental group taught through the use of songs, performed significantly better on the test compared to the control group.

The significance level of $p < .05$ suggests that the observed difference in test scores is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis, which assumes no difference

between the two groups, in favor of the alternative hypothesis, which suggests that there is a significant difference in test scores between the groups.

According to the above analysis, the findings of this study support the effectiveness of using songs as a teaching tool for improving understanding and application of the present perfect tenses. Three songs; namely, "Since I Met You Baby," (singer and songwriter Ivory Joe Hunter), "I've Been Everywhere" (songwriter - Geoff Mack, singer -Lucky Starr) and "Have You Ever Really Loved a Woman?" (songwriters: Bryan Adams, Michael Kamen, and Robert John "Mutt" Lange; singer: Bryan Adams).

The fact that these songs contain repetitive structures in the use of the present perfect tense appears to have supported more positively the retention of the structures and also their uses. This could be mainly due to the following rationalizing.

Firstly, repetitive structures such as "Since I met you baby, my whole life has changed", "I've been everywhere, boy", and "Have you ever really loved a woman?" makes the structures more memorable. In addition, the simplicity of the lyrics and the clear contexts in which the tenses are used; i.e., to connect past experiences to the present conditions makes it easier for students to grasp the uses of the present perfect tenses.

Since the lyrics of songs tend to use everyday language that has simple structures and expressions, using them in this type of grammar lesson makes it more straightforward for the students to understand. Moreover, the emotional connection that one can make with a song, makes it relatable to individuals no matter what their nationality, race, or religion is. This feature of songs to be universally applicable in terms of their themes such as love, heartbreak and loss would invariably interest and engage the learners in the lesson much more than when a passage or isolated examples are used to teach grammar topics.

Thus, it would be possible to premise that the use of songs in grammar instruction can more productively enhance the grammatical competence of L2 learners as opposed to when they are not being used. The findings are consistent with that of Cheng and Wang (2019), Kao and Liao (2015), and Huang and Chang (2014).

These studies provide additional support for the finding that using songs in grammar instruction can enhance language learning outcomes. They focus on the positive effects of songs on motivation, engagement, and language proficiency, aligning with the findings of the present study. Overall, the convergence of findings from these studies, along with the results of the current study, strengthens the argument for the effectiveness of using songs as a teaching tool to enhance grammar proficiency and overall language learning outcomes.

In line with the quantitative findings of the independent samples t-test, the qualitative data gathered during the focus group discussion (FGD) further support the notion that the incorporation of songs in language instruction has a positive impact on students' learning experiences and motivation.

During the FGD, the students in the experimental group expressed their appreciation for the use of songs in language learning, emphasizing the engaging and enjoyable nature of this approach. Students specifically highlighted that the traditional methods of studying English grammar often lead to boredom, whereas when those concepts are taught through songs, the practical and interactive nature of the activity helped them grasp the material more easily and prevented feelings of monotony.

As one student stated:

"When we go to study a very deep theory part in a traditional way, we feel bored. But if we do it with

a song, because it's a practical thing, we can grasp it more easily and learn without getting bored." (Student 8)

Moreover, these students appreciated the immersive and interactive environment created by integrating songs into grammar instruction. They believed that this approach enabled them to better understand and retain the grammar rules. The relaxation effect of songs was also mentioned by the majority of students who felt that incorporating songs into learning activities made lessons more enjoyable and prevented feelings of difficulty and boredom. One student explained:

"Songs can relax the mind. By using those songs in learning activities, you can learn lessons without difficulty and boredom." (Student 3)

These qualitative findings align with previous research that emphasizes the benefits of using songs in language learning. For example, in a study by Cheng and Wang (2019), students expressed positive attitudes toward using songs in English language instruction, affirming that it made learning more enjoyable and increased their motivation to participate actively in the learning process. Similarly, Kao and Liao (2015) found that songs helped students relax and enjoy the learning process, and improve their language skills.

Furthermore, the qualitative data from the FGD supports the quantitative results by providing insights into the students' perspectives on the effectiveness of using songs in language instruction. The students' direct quotations demonstrate their positive experiences and perceptions of the benefits of incorporating songs, resonating the quantitative findings that the experimental group, taught through songs, performed significantly better on the test compared to the control group. This argument is beautifully worded by a student as she points out:

"A song is remembered based on the beauty of its melody. If we have a beautiful melody, we will be able to remember the lyrics quickly and learn the grammar parts you expect." (Student 13)

Overall, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data strengthens the understanding of the benefits of using songs in language instruction. The analysis reveals that students find songs engaging, enjoyable, and conducive to a more interactive learning environment. These findings align with previous research, emphasizing the positive impact of songs on student motivation, enjoyment, and language acquisition.

Conclusion

The results of this study contribute to the growing body of research that highlights the advantages of incorporating texts used for music into language instruction. Moreover, it suggests that utilizing texts as an instructional tool can have a positive impact on students' language learning outcomes, specifically in the context of improving proficiency related to the present perfect tenses. It is important to acknowledge that while this study demonstrates a significant difference in terms of the expression of proficiency during their use of the present perfect tenses between the two groups considered, further research and similar studies are needed to strengthen the generalizability of these findings. Additionally, future studies could explore the specific mechanisms and underlying factors that contribute to the effectiveness of using songs in language learning contexts, shedding light on the potential benefits for diverse learner populations and instructional settings. Ultimately, it is hoped

that this research will inspire educators to embrace innovative and creative approaches that foster meaningful language learning experiences for their students.

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THE POSITION OF KABIR BHAJANS IN NORTH INDIAN MUSIC

G.G.G.L Abeysekara¹



Abstract

Kabirdas is a poet who lived in medieval India. He visioned to spread social purity with philosophical thinking through the poems which are termed as Nirgun bhajans. Bhajan is simply known for chanting the qualities and the physical appearance of Hindu deity/deities. The bhajans or poems composed by Kabirdas are not consisting of the latter, but they are also put under the term 'bhajan' in terms of lyrics and their musical presentation. Traditionally, bhajans refer to devotional songs that depict the qualities and physical attributes of various deities. However, Kabirdas' bhajans deviate from this norm by focusing on different themes, while maintaining a certain essence of traditional bhajans. This study investigates how the melodies of Kabir bhajans effects in the absence of chanting the qualities and the physical appearance of a Hindu deity/deities in the lyrics. This study also aims to look at the broader significance of devotional music in promoting social and philosophical ideals in medieval India.

Keywords

Kabirdas, Bhajan, Nirgun tradition, Melody, Philosophy

Introduction to Kabirdas, Nirgun Tradition and Bhajan

Kabirdas

Kabirdas, a prominent poet from medieval India, held significant expertise in Hindi literature and actively supported a new path for individuals navigating diverse religious backgrounds of the era. He lived between 1445 and 1510 A.D. and, although born into a Muslim family, grew up in the Hindu pilgrimage site of "Kashi". Kabirdas is renowned for his non-religious stance, commonly referred to as Nirgun. During his childhood, he displayed little interest in reading or writing, but later received education under the guidance of his teacher, Pandit Ramanand. Given his Hindu upbringing under Pandit Ramanand's instruction, who adhered to the Hindu religion, Kabirdas likely encountered religious and cultural conflicts. Kabirdas expressed his thoughts and ideas in a language called Kichadi, which amalgamated khadiboli, Braj, and other languages. According to DeNapoli (2018), devotion (bhakti) was perceived as transcending earthly attributes, such as gender, names, physical appearances, racial and ethnic backgrounds, social class, and caste (Lorenzen, 1987). Kabirdas delivered his poems through two-line couplets known as Doha and four-line verses called choupai (Dhakde, 2022).

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Nirgun Tradition

The religious background of North India underwent significant changes during the Middle Ages due to Muslim invasions and migrations. As a result, alongside Hinduism, Islam gained popularity as a practiced religion. Vaishnavism, a prevalent form of Hinduism, coexisted with Sufism, which appealed to Muslims (Bose, 2019; Henry, 1991). Both religious traditions sought a connection with God, leading to the division of devotion into two categories known as Sagun Bhakti (devotion to a deity's qualities and physical attributes) and Nirgun Bhakti (devotion to the formless divine). The term "Nirgun" refers to the absence of specific qualities and physical appearance. Kabir Das emerged as a follower of Nirgun Bhakti, acting as a mediator and advocate of truth. Through his writings, Kabir focused on reconciling divergent perspectives within the community. While Kabir's poetry covered various themes, this study specifically examines the Nirgun tradition of Kabir bhajans. Nirgun (Gupta, K. S., 2016) also followed Rabindranath Tagore, who was a poet and artist introducing "Rabindra Sangeet" as a new form of Bangla music.

Bhajan

A bhajan is a form of devotional song that holds deep spiritual significance in Indian culture. bhajan traced back to ancient traditions which began through vocal musical forms known as prabandha shastra in medieval India (Pandit and Abeysekara, 2023). bhajans are melodic compositions that express devotion and reverence towards a particular deity or a divine power (Beck, 2017). The word "bhajan" has derived from the Sanskrit term "bhaj," meaning "to share" or "to adore" (Singer, 1963). As a musical expression of devotion, bhajans are considered a powerful means to connect with the divine and evoke a sense of inner peace and tranquillity. bhajans are typically sung in regional languages across India, such as Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, and Kannada, among others. These devotional songs are often composed in a repetitive and melodious manner, making them accessible and engaging for a wide range of listeners. The lyrics of bhajans typically focus on themes of love, surrender, gratitude, and seeking divine grace. They explore various aspects of spirituality and encourage individuals to cultivate a deeper sense of devotion and introspection. Bhajans are performed in various settings, ranging from intimate gatherings at homes and temples to grand public events during religious festivals. The music is accompanied by traditional instruments like Harmonium, Tabla, Dholak, and Manjira, creating a vibrant and rhythmic atmosphere. Many renowned artists and singers have dedicated their lives to propagating the tradition of bhajans, and their soulful renditions have touched the hearts of millions.

According to a survey conducted among Sri Lankan and Northern Indian university students who can sing bhajans, some individuals sing bhajans based on how they previously heard, either from their parents, the media or through learning from a teacher. A few of them also enjoy composing their own bhajans and incorporating them into their performances. However, it should be noted that all of these students were Hindustani music learners, and they preferred singing bhajans in accordance with that tradition. Interestingly, many of them tend to choose bhajans that resemble popular film songs due to various reasons such as the fame of the singer, the composer, or the nature of those melodies. It is important to mention that these bhajans, which originated from poems written by various medieval Indian poets, do not have fixed melodies. bhajans are sung in different ways as the performer prefers. Practitioners had the freedom to show their musical prowess by creating various melodic renditions

of Kabirdas's doha and choupai, drawing upon their musical training and heritage. Consequently, the Melodic Impact of Kabir bhajans remains dynamic and subject to stylistic variations. These compositions can be adapted to different musical forms in North Indian music such as bhajan, geet, khyal (bada khayal and chota khayal), as well as diverse styles like classical, semi-classical, light music, or folk, among others. Over time, artists have observed and incorporated existing melodies while making adjustments to the melodic and rhythmic aspects to suit modern band structures (Meddegoda, 2014).

Methods: Interviews and Micro-analysis

This study aimed to examine the meaning of the lyrics, scale systems, melodies, and systematic use of bhajans, specifically focusing on the context of Kabir bhajans. To achieve a multifaceted approach that combined musical analysis, literature surveys, and qualitative research, we utilized in-depth analysis, literature surveys, and musical transcriptions.

The in-depth analysis of the meaning of the bhajans revealed the philosophical views and messages conveyed to the community by Kabirdas. The melodic frame works used in Kabir bhajans involve various ragas. Additionally, the melodic structures, note combinations, and ornamentation techniques that contributed to the unique character of Kabir bhajans were explored. By focusing on their melodic contours, rhythmic patterns, and tonal variations, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of the aesthetic qualities and stylistic features of Kabir bhajans through musical transcriptions and audio recordings.

Furthermore, the context of Kabir bhajans was extensively engaged in a literature survey. This survey involved a thorough review of scholarly works, historical texts, religious scriptures, and other relevant literature that provided insights into the cultural, religious, and philosophical aspects associated with Kabir bhajans.

Some Analyses of Selected Kabir Bhajans

A few tunes of Kabir bhajans are transcribed for further analysis. The musical transcriptions are provided in Hindustani notation system introduced by Bhatkhande in the mid of 20th century. The Bhatkhande notation system is one of the most preferable notation systems used in Sri Lanka (Meddegoda, 2018). The diatonic scale will be shown with Hindustani solfege syllables as S, R, G, M, P, D, N, S. The majority of bhajans are sung in rhythmic cycles known as keherva tal, bhajan tal, panjab tal and dadara tal. The notation system consists of few elements which are defined on the table at figure 1.

Name of the element	Meaning
Sthai	Interlude
Antara	Verse
Laya	Tempo
Tala symbols	A sign for the rest of the rhythm
Kan swar	Touch notes/grace notes
Solfege syllables in brackets	Khatka or musical tones which are sung fast by sounding nearby tones e.g. (G)= RGMG
—	Continuation between intervals (Meend)
X 0 2 3	The rhythmic divisions that are indicated though clapping and waiving hands at the first beat on each division. The symbol '0' indicates waiving hand and the rest indicates clapping.
+	Offbeat
—	Combining notes
Below the note ●	Lower octave
● Above the note	Higher octave
----	Rests

Figure 1: Definitions of signs indicated in Hindustani notations.

Data Exploration

Bhajan 1

Lyrics	Translated Meaning
Teerth k aun kare, hamare man me hi Ganga Man me hi Yamuna Man me hi snan kare	You don't need to go for pilgrimage (तीर्थ) ² if you just think of Ganga and Yamuna in your heart and take a dip in water.
Man me hi mala Man me hi moorat Man me hi dhyan dhare	You don't need to go to the temple to worship. If you just close your eyes and think of the almighty in your heart.
Kahat kabeer Suno bhai sadhu Bhatakat kaun fire	Kabeer says Pure intention and meditation are the key to achieve anything in life.

Figure 2: Kabir's bhajan 'hamare teerth kaun kare' with rough English translation by the author.

The song 'hamare teerth kaun kare' is one of the Nirgun bhajan by Kabirdas. The meaning and the lyrics deliver a message to the community. Saint Kabirdas says and suggests the people 'no need to be confused, just meditate and think'. Kabir does not praise any physical appearance of a God.

The rough tune of the above lyrics (bhajan 1) is provided in the below transcription (Figure 3). The composer of the tune is unknown. This bhajan is sung on madhyalaya³ Panjabital or teental which follows 4/4 beats. The composition is based on a Hindustani raga mishra pilu. Harmonium, tabla, flute, manjira and other instruments are used as accompanying music instruments.

2. तीर्थ is the Hindi equivalent.

3. Madhyalaya stands for medium tempo which is described as not slow and not fast (Mishra, 2006).

Sthai

		S	SR	(G)	G-	R-	-	GG	-M	DP					
		ha	ma-	-	-	re	-	thi-	-r	th-					
G	-R	N	-N	S	-	-	P	PM	MG	GR	SR	G	GG	-M	DP
kau	-	na	ka	re	-	-	ha	ma-	-	-	re	-	thi-	-r	th-
(G)	-R	N	-N	S	-	-	-								
kau	-	na	ka	re	-	-	-								
3				x				2							0

Antara

				S	-	G	M	P	P	P	P			
				man	-	mein	-	gan	ga	-	-			
+ GG	-M	DP	G	-R	S-	S-	G	G	G	G	- GG	-M	DP	
+ man	--	me	Ja	mu	na	--	bha	ta	ka	ta	-	kau	na	fi-
G	-R	N	S	SR	G	G-	R-	-	GG	-M	DP			
re	--	-	ha	ma-	-	-	re	-	thi-	-r	th-			
x				2				0				3		

Figure 3: bhajan 1, a tune of Kabir’s poem ‘hamare teerth kaun kare’ transcribed in Bhatkhande notations by the author.

Bhajan 2

The following tune is the second variety of the same lyrics of hamare teerth kauna kare (Figure 2). The composer of the tune is unknown. This bhajan is sung on madhyalaya teental or Panjabi tal. The sthai is composed based on the Hindustani raga ‘tilakkamod’ and the antara is based on the Hindustani raga ‘desh’.

Sthai

				S	M	GR	S	N	N	P	N	S			
				ha	ma-	-	-	re	ti	-	-r	th			
G	R	G	M	(G)	-R	S	S	SG	RG	S	N	N	P	N	S
kau	-	na	ka	re	-	-	ha	ma-	-	-	re	thi	-	-r	th
G	R	G	M	G	-R	S	-	-							
kau	-	na	ka	re											
3				x				2				0			

Antara

		M R M M	(P) P P P
		man - me -	gan ga - -
M M M M	MD PD M GR	M P N N	N S N S
man - me -	ja mu na --	bha ta ka ta	kau - na fi
<u>N</u> <u>DP</u> P M	G <u>-R</u> S <u>N</u>		
re - ha ma -	- - re -		
3	x	2	0

Figure 4: A tune of Kabir's poem 'hamare teerth kaun kare' transcribed in Bhatkhande notation.

Bhajan 3

Lyrics	Translated meaning
Mann lago mero yaar faqiri main	My heart is set on renunciation
Jo sukh pavo naam bhajan main So sukh naahi amiri main	What joy I experience while singing the name Divine, is not to be found in any riches or pleasures.
Bhala bura sabka suun lee je Kar gujran garibi main	Listen to the appreciation and criticisms of everyone yet live your life in simplicity.
Prem nagar main rahni hamari Bhali bani aayi saburi main	I stay in the land of love, and all good comes to me effortlessly as I wait in faith and patience.
Kahat Kabira suno bhai sadho Sahib mile saburi main	Says Kabir, listen! sadho! that the one is to be found only in deep contemplation and patience.

Figure 5: Kabir's poem 'Mann lago mero' with rough English translation by the author.

Below is the transcription of the bhajan 3. The composer of the tune is unknown. This bhajan is sung on madhyalaya keherwa tal or teen tal. This bhajan is composed in Rag Parameshwari. Antara is based on the raga desh. The singer has freedom to render the shadows of other ragas while improvising the composition and it is one of the special features in Hindustani semi-classical performances. The first part of the song is performed in the style of khyal in Hindustani music.

Sthai

		S N	S G M N	D - P M
		ma na	la go me ro	ya - ra fa
<u>D</u> P M G	G - S S	<u>MG</u> <u>GR</u> <u>RG</u> M	M - - -	
qi - ri -	me - ma na	la- go me ro	ya - - -	
<u>GG</u> <u>RR</u> <u>SS</u> <u>NN</u>	<u>D</u> - - S	G - - -	<u>DN</u> <u>DN</u> <u>DD</u> P	
-- -- -- ra-	- - - fa	qi - - -	-- -- ri- -	
S - - -	- - S N			
me - - -	- - ma na			
x	0	x	0	

Figure 6: A tune of Kabir's poem "mann lago mero" transcribed in Bhatkhande notation by the author.

Bhajan 4

Lyrics	Translated meaning
Sadho, Gagan ghata geherai re.	The roaring dense clouds are spread in the sky, those dense clouds are all over.
Poorab disi se uthi re badariya Rimjihim barse pani....	These clouds have arisen from the east and drizzling there, take control of your mind .
Man ke bail, turat harwaaha, jot khet nirbani	and use it as bull to plough your field and make your field ready for the plantation o f nirvana.

Figure 7: Kabir's poem 'Sadho, gagan ghata geherai re' with rough English translation by the author.

The song 'Sadho gagan ghata gaherai' is based on Hindustani raga ahir bhairav which is sung in the morning time. The song composed on Keherva tal/ Panjabi or bhajan tal in medium tempo (Madhyalaya). This bhajan is also sung in raga puriya kalyan. The rough tune of this bhajan is displayed below. The composer of the tune is unknown.

Sthai

		D	N	R	D	D	D	N	D	P	G	R
		•	•									
		sa	-	dho	ga	ga	na	gha	ta	-	ge	he
S	-	S	S	-								
ra	-	i	-	-								
X				0	X				0			

Antara

			G	MD	-N	S	S	S	-	-	-	ND	PD		
			man	ki-	-bail	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	--		
PM	GR	SS	S	-	G	MD	-N	DN	R	S	N	DD	P	MG	R
--	--	--	-	-	man	ki	bail	tu	ra	ta	ha	ra-	wa	--	ya
N	DD	PM	G	-	MG	R	-	NN	DP	MG	RS				
jho	take	ta	nir	-	ba-	ni	-	--	--	--	--				
X				0				X							0

Figure 8: A tune of Kabir's poem "sadho, gagan ghata geherai re" transcribed in Bhatkhande notation by the author.

Bhajan 5

Lyrics T	ranslated meaning
Guru govinda dou khade	My G uru and the Lord a re b oth standing before me.
kake lagu pay balihari guru paki jin	To whom should I bow first? 'O' Gurudev, I give myself completely to you.
govinda diyo batay	You are the one who has shown the Lord to me.

Figure 9: Kabir's poem "guru govinda" with rough English translation by the author.

The song 'guru Govinda' here is a poem written by Kabirdas. The melody of the song simply related to raga bhimpalasi. The song has composed on tal keherva in fast tempo. The transcription is provided as Figure 10.

Sthai

+ P	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	• S	• S	• R	<u>N</u>	• S	-	-	-	-	-	-
+ gu	ru	go	vin	-	da	ha	re	-	-	-	-	-	-
+ P	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	• S	• S	• <u>G</u>	• R	• R	-	-	-	• S	-	<u>N</u>
+ ka	-	ke	la	-	gu	-	pa	-	-	-	ye	-	-
+ R	• <u>G</u>	• <u>G</u>	• <u>G</u>	• R	• R	• S	• S	-	-	• S	<u>N</u>	-	D
+ ba	li	ha	ri	-	gu	ru	a	-	pa	-	ne	-	-
+ P	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	• S	• S	• S	• S	• R	• S	• S	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	-	D
+ go	vin	da	di	yo	-	ba	ta	-	ye	ka	bi	-	ra
+ <u>N</u>	• S	• S	• <u>G</u>	• R	-	<u>N</u>	• S	-	-	-	-	-	-
+ go	vin	da	di	yo	-	ba	ta	-	ye	ka	bi	-	ra
X			0				X				0		

Figure 10: A tune of Kabir's poem "guru govinda" transcribed in Bhatkhande notation.

Observation and Rough Analysis

The melodies composed by musicians for the bhajans written by Kabirdas are mostly based on one raga and employed other ragas occasionally. The latter practice of composing melodies is not specific for Kabir bhajans but it applies to other bhajans too. Bearing that in mind, looking into similar music genres/forms may help to locate how the Kabir bhajan could be different from other music genres/forms practiced in Northern India. Figure 11 indicates various music genres that are closest

to Kabir bhajan in the contexts of the areas shown in the first column. The italicized text indicates the idiosyncratic notions/features visible in Kabir bhajans.

	Kabir bhajan	Non-Kabir bhajan	Keertan	Khyal	Thumri	Ghazal	Film songs
Origin/History	Derived from the chanted shloka in Vedic period. The history begun from Prabandha Shatra	Derived from the chanted shloka in Vedic period. The history begun from Prabandha Shatra	derived from the chanted shloka introduced by Shri Chaitanyadev Shankaracharya	started in medieval India	derived from Folk music	In medieval India	From the begging of film industry in 1930s in India.
Proficiency based	not necessarily	not necessarily	Required	Required	Required	Required	not necessarily
Improvisation	Less	Less Based on one or more ragas. Depends on the artists skills	Not permissible Follows the rules of North Indian classical music	Highly required Based on one raga	Highly required Based on one raga while switching to many other ragas aesthetically	Optional Singer has the freedom to beautify the composition as the singer's wish	Fixed compositions The composer/music director has freedom to beautify the composition as they wish
Modification in original lyrics meanings	Little adjustments <i>Philosophical</i>	Little adjustments Praising God	Strictly unchangeable Praising God	Little adjustments Varied themes	Little adjustments Romantic	Unchangeable Varied themes	Unchangeable Varied themes
Performance	Solo	Solo	Group	Solo	Solo	Solo	Solo, duet, group
Style	Hindustani music and other musics	Hindustani music and other musics	Hindustani music	Hindustani music	Hindustani music	Hindustani music and other musics	Hindustani music and other musics
Frequently used musical instruments	Tabla, tanpura, harmonium, manjira, dolak	Tabla, tanpura, harmonium, manjira, dolak	Dhol	Tanpura, tabla, Sarangi, harmonium	Tanpura, tabla, Sarangi, harmonium	Tabla, harmonium	Indian and European musical instruments
Purpose	<i>Purification of the society through philosophical thinking</i>	Pleasing the deity	Spreading the religion and pleasing the deity	Entertainment	Entertainment	Entertainment	Entertainment

Figure 11: Comparison between bhajan and other relevant musical genres/forms.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research paper has examined the unique characteristics provided through core lyrics and respective melodic dealings with them of Nirgun bhajans which is also known as Kabir bhajans and their approach in conveying messages, while still sharing common musical components with Sagun bhajans. Through the analysis of various aspects, including lyrical content, melody, and rhythm, it becomes evident that Nirgun bhajans are in a distinctive position within the realm of devotional music. The text analyses should be followed by a singing and other analyses in the future. An all-embracing analytical approach would be beyond the given framework of one article in this context. Nevertheless, the starting points seem to be clear and promising. Lyrical aspects and comparative listings of some outstanding features may contribute to the deeper understanding of musical functions in performances and their meanings in history.

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ISSUES IN RADIO MUSIC BROADCASTING IN THE SRI LANKAN CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

The interference of mass media plays a key role in changing people's listening behavior and thinking patterns in numerous ways. Due to technological factors, a majority of Sri Lankans are exposed to "light songs" which are music tracks to last only for three to five minutes. From earlier to present times, almost all recording and reproducing technologies in the island have been used basically for this purpose. Various types of government and private FM channels, TV channels, and social media propagate these forms of songs in the contemporary music scene for different purposes. Because of the commercial benefits and good demand for songs, mobile network companies also promote artists to record songs according to the contemporary taste of the younger generation. This study discusses how Sri Lankan music was stuck to a monocentric stream of light songs due to the fact that the listeners in Sri Lanka are constantly being exposed to "light songs" through radio broadcasting and radio politics.

Keywords

Sri Lanka, Light songs, Radio broadcasting, Mass media

Introduction

Radio broadcasting technology was first introduced to Sri Lanka in 1924. As a result, of the free economic policy which had been introduced to the country in 1977 under the newly elected government, Sri Lankan culture was subjected to unprecedented changes and influences. In contrast to other mediums of music, gramophone discs, EP LP discs, Cassette tapes, and CDs, radio broadcasting thoroughly embraced the masses since it has the power to address the masses.

Consequently, the listening habits of people began to change in a dramatic manner. The arrival of the gramophone as a listening machine in the early period did not affect the daily lives of people as it had impacted only the musical culture of some upper classes, especially because it was an expensive and elite item that represented high social status at that time. This situation could be seen not only in Sri Lanka but also in India and some other countries (Joshi, 1988: 147). Thus, radio broadcasting the music of the gramophone indirectly influenced the lifestyles of many rural villagers. With the influx of job seekers going back and forth from the Middle East to Sri Lanka, the radio cum cassette recorder soon became a popular listening equipment in Sri Lanka. This may be one of the main reasons why Sri

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Lankan musical culture at this time was subjected to unprecedented transformations. The radio and cassette players critically affected and influenced the folk music traditions and other music styles of the country. Instead of the traditional practice of singing different types of folk songs during various stages of agricultural activities such as plowing, transplanting, weeding, protecting the crop against wild animals in watch huts, harvesting, and manual threshing, farmers began to listen to radios and cassette players while performing such work. This new practice became further established since the television advertisements, which promoted popular brands of radios, used the visuals of farmers listening to radios while engaging in their agricultural practices. The practice of adopting such technologies seriously affected the future of music practicing, especially, the Sri Lankan folk music tradition leading to the breakdown of the fabric of the whole system of music and the taste of music in the Sri Lankan community. When compared to the listening practices and habits of those who are used to high art music traditions (South, North Indian, and some Western classical music), it is clear that the majority of the Sri Lankans were compelled to listen to and appreciate light music such as songs from earlier times in mediums such as gramophone, films, dramas, or radio broadcasting.

The introduction of radio cassettes is not the only such technological influence that affected Sri Lankan music during that time. With the introduction of North Indian dramatic groups, headed by Baliwala also brought a host of songs based on North Indian classical music, and that was resulted to increase the popularity to songs. Since this transformation, not only the people who desired art but also the general public got used to think that a song would be the climax of music. In the same way, the majority of people also began to think that the song itself is "music".

The "song mentality" was properly utilized when producing films, dramas, and other art forms. There were twelve to fourteen songs that were embedded in early Sinhala films based on South Indian stories and music. This trend highly affected the popularity of the films screened at that time. Accordingly, advertisements were produced with attractive songs strategically in weekly papers by film producers to bring the audience to film halls. The following are examples of such paper advertisements for the film *See Devi* (09th March 1951):

1. "Sinhala songs based on popular Hindustani melodies", or
2. "Popular songs based on Hindi tunes could be listened to in this film" (Ariyaratne, 2006:14-15)

The popularity of film songs gradually increased and they became the dominant form of music in Sri Lanka. In the early times, as mentioned in Peter Manuel's article "Popular Music in India: 1901-86", film music was also widely spread by the radio, and recordings were overloaded at tea stalls, homes, and restaurants, not only in India but also in Sri Lankan villages as well (Manuel, 1993: 170). On the other hand, the Commercial and the External Services of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) have been playing a leading role as the sole broadcaster of Indian film music throughout Asia, thus making Indian film music popular in Sri Lanka (Wallis and Malm, 1984: 37).

The literary aspect and the meanings of the majority of the early film songs were poor. Most of them consisted of vulgar idiomatic phrases, while the bulk of them illustrated over-romanticized love. However, in a few lyrics, the gramophone played an important and vital role in propagating and motivating people for patriotism from 1935 to 1945.

It is clear that other Eastern (especially India) and Western countries have moved on to certain measures to record and propagate both folk and art music traditions, in addition, to recording popular

songs. This practice was highly appreciated by some Sri Lankan listeners and, at the same time, this practice influenced them to cultivate a better music-listening culture in the country to some extent. In addition, it has been reported that some early musicians had also used those materials to learn North Indian music as per their choice (Perera, 1999: 44). There was also a practice of recording art music programs to be broadcast by the radio as a method of conservation within the premises of the radio station. Unfortunately, these productions were limited only to the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC). Some gramophone musicians occasionally recorded some North Indian ragas, but the majority limited their productions to traditional folk and light music.

Even though the SLBC had given high priority to propagate North Indian music in Sri Lanka, it also made the field somewhat confusing due to the practice of performing an elegiac music composition on the funerals of the leading political figures. This practice was initiated at the funeral of the late Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranayake and such music was played by the late musician Edwin Samaradiwakara on that occasion. The result was that North Indian music was degraded by the public, at least to a certain extent as a funeral or public music that propagates political views.

In the same way, other classical music genres have been utilized for several advertising purposes in electronic media all over the world which has highly affected their previous aesthetic quality.

Fixing a reasonable price for songs may also be considered as a matter influential in securing popularity among artists to promote light music genres in the early Sri Lankan music industry. Recruiting famous contemporary and popular musicians as well as singers under agreements to compose only for their own recording labels in the gramophone era revealed the above-mentioned fact and the popularity of songs began to gradually increase. It is interesting to mention here that on certain occasions some artists tried to release their own EP records to bring their music to the audience (Ariyaratne, 1997: 102).

It is thought-provoking to note that the song traditions that had been blended with other art forms, such as drama or films have been utilized for listening purposes by music-appreciating audiences as light songs that used low-cost recording and playback mechanisms.

The establishment of Radio Ceylon resulted in a critical reshaping of the song culture to a certain extent. However, it still depended on gramophone song records in its line, and some programs were totally based on imitated Hindustani melodies. Lampson's administrative report comments on the quality of such programs as follows:

"...the standard of both light and classical music program has left much to be desired. This was mainly due to the lack of trained artists and the common and undesirable habit of slavishly copying Hindustani film music" (Karunanayake, 1990: 290).

Some Historical Facts

A group of musicians who learned classical music in India and a team of officials involved in the SLBC had been assigned a significant role in remodeling the quality and the music of the song tradition after the 1950s. Among them, W.D Amaradewa, Edwin Samaradiwakara, Ananda Samarakoon, and Sunil Santa may be considered pioneers of the said musical renaissance (Karunanayake, 1990: 290). They attempted to try out a new song tradition with meaningful lyrics in collaboration with some well-known poets in this era such as Sri Chandraratna Manwasingha, Mahagama Sekera, Madavala S. Rathnayake, and Wimal Abhayasundara. Together they invented musical compositions according to the lyrical meaning by using music elements from North Indian and other indigenous musical traditions they

could find. The term “light song” was especially used to distinguish between radio and other song categories. This effort was greatly appreciated by the elite and some educated people at that time began to patronize the national radio. However, the broadcasting of other art music traditions in the initial period was remarkably low. A new program titled “Dwithiya Sangrahaya” a secondary program, was designed specially to encourage North Indian classical music (Karunanayake, 1990: 290). Some other programs; namely, Sangeet Sabha, Sangeet Manjari, and Rasa Dhara were also launched on behalf of art music fans and admirers. Not only vocal music programs but also some other instrumental music programs were equally broadcasted by eminent musicians together with their students. This context was greatly influential in cultivating a variety of aesthetic behavioral patterns among the Sri Lankan audience.

In the meantime, the SLBC was offering radio grades to light song artists such as “Sarala Gee Shreni” which could be assumed as an attempt to establish professional standards of Sri Lankan music. Srikrishna Narayan Ratanjankar arrived from India to audit and grade radio artists in 1952. He explained in his noteworthy speech, which he gave concerning the ways in which it could be possible to construct “Sinhalese music”, the use of typical Sri Lankan folk melodies which had hitherto been neglected in rural villages in the country due to the growth of Indian music. A pertinent section of this speech is as follows:

“The real Sinhalese music having a traditional background is lying neglected in the interior, in the villages of Ceylon. The vannams, the sivpadas, the kavis, the viridus, slokas are quite an interesting stock of musical compositions which contain the germs of a great system of music which can be built upon them. Indian music of today has grown to its present standard out of simple folk songs as are now heard in Ceylon. These folk songs of Ceylon, as they are, of course, in a very primitive form. I do recommend them to notice the modern musicians and musicologists of Ceylon” (Karunanayake: 1990: 292).

In the same way, imitating and applying the musical elements of one of the most famous musical traditions of Calcutta in India known as “Rabindra Sangeet” by the great poet Ravindranath Tagore was imitated and practiced by some Sri Lankan patriotic musicians such as Ananda Samarakoon, Swarnaguptha Amarasingha, W.B. Makulolowa, C. de. S. Kulathilake, and Lionel Ranwala. This also resulted in establishing the said situation in the country. The dream of a “national musical tradition” in the country was gradually established; however, ultimately the practice ended because of the creative light song tradition. On the other hand, due to the lack of a cultivated art music tradition in the country, the situation became even worse and resulted in the spread of poor-quality² songs in Sri Lanka. Because of the great demand and the popularity of light music, especially the song culture, the majority of the musicians who had specialized in North Indian classical music both vocal and instrumental entered the field of light music. In the meantime, a few others struggled to cultivate Indian classical music in Sri Lanka. They held private tuition classes for students to learn music and managed to introduce North Indian Art Music to the school curriculum in addition to perform cultural shows.

In contrast to art music, another music style known as “Sinhala pop music” (the term “baila” was used to refer to this tradition) began to emerge together with “group songs” during the 1960s. This was distributed among the urbanized young generation at that time. Wally Bastiansz, M.S. Fernando, Anton Rodrigo, Anton Jones, and Nihal Nelson are some of the then contemporary artists in this regard.

2. Aesthetically, lyrically, and musically poor.

The Commercial Service of the SLBC³ promoted such artists and gave them 15 minutes per week for their programs. These programs were rather different from the ones that were broadcast in the National Service since they often promoted popular music programs of pop artists with fast rhythms. Subsequently, some of these programs were banned by the authority because of radio politics.

Issues of internal politics and the prevailing dominance of North Indian music also paved the way for banning these music practices of so-called popular music. The vast majority of people who had been trained and educated in North Indian music tended to relentlessly criticize and ignore widely distributed commercial music. They sometimes refused to consider this music under the category of “music”. Undoubtedly, this trend directly impacted the growth and diversity of Sri Lankan music. Due to the dominance of North Indian music, those in high positions at the SLBC unofficially took responsibility for this new trend. As a result, those music productions and locally produced music were not given proper recognition at the SLBC. Radio authorities tended to consider these ways of doing music to be poisoning the people’s aesthetic sensibilities, which would ‘kill’ the spirit of music, and they did so by bringing in ethical principles into their arguments. The following extract is taken from an earlier research publication titled “Big Sounds from Small People”:

“...They're not only against pop, they're even against our own traditional music ... that crowd is in charge of Radio Ceylon [the SLBC's former name] ... To that crowd, pop is poison. I recorded a song called 'Dilhani' in 1969. It was the first genuine Sinhalese pop song. When I went to the Director of music of the Sinhalese Service he said: 'Do you want me to play that poison? ... so, when it became a success, I met him again and asked: 'How do you like the success of my poison?' He had nothing to say, of course” (Wallis and Malm, 1984:255).

This may also show the necessity of a better definition regarding “success”.

Some Control Practices

The SLBC policy, during the period in question, also affected some other ways of music production. In practice, the lyrics and music notations had to be submitted to a committee (Sensor Board) to be considered for approval before broadcasting. Only the approved ones were allowed to be broadcast. However, some music compositions subsided due to the policy of the SLBC. Some songs were seized by the Corporation without giving a significant reason. The song “Mage rathtaran Helena” by Rohana Beddage was banned accordingly (Beddage,1992: 71-75). However, some pop musicians had the opportunity of broadcasting their songs via National Radio especially because of the sponsorship of the then Director General of Broadcasting Nevil Jayaweera and the Director of Commercial Service Livee Wijemanna as well as the English announcer Vijaya Korea from 1967 to 1970.

As a solution, group song artists and other popular artists attempted to launch their own EP albums and cassettes to propagate their music genres among masses thereby resulting in a profitable business in the context of the Sri Lankan music market. The late musician R. A. Chandrasena used Extended Play discs (EP) mediums in order to bring his music to the general public under the names of R.C.A. and later under the name of “Sri Math”, after 1973. Later, the EP and LP (Long Play) mediums were used as models to launch personal song albums of individual artists/singers and other local traditions of folk

3. Established in 1950.

songs and traditional drums.

Depending on the usage of music, musical elements, and lyrics, there were two types of artists. The first category was known as “classical artists” or “sambhawya gayakayin” and was highly appreciated and admired whereas the others were known as “pop artists” or “baila gayakayin” who were often always disregarded by the ‘elite groups’⁵ on the grounds that their music could not be admired as a good practice. In general, their use of language, dress code, and style of performance was fairly different from the so-called classical artists. There was a bad practice emerging, in that the pop artists were not appreciated even when they performed meaningful songs due to prevailing stereotypes. This is visible in present-day Sri Lanka as well. The main reason behind this is that the majority of listeners in Sri Lanka has not been willing to “ideologically transcend” the limits of the classical light music genre. However, the quality and creativity, and the types of prevailing genres are highly dependent on the members of a particular community.

When compared to the services provided by All India Radio to cultivate and broadcast art music and other music (Mathur, 1970: 97-103), it is clear that except for the earlier periods of Radio Ceylon, the era of the SLBC had not taken sufficient measures to develop local high-class music during the period from 1990 to-date. Where the light programs are concerned, only one hour of air time was allocated to classical music programs every Saturday from 10.00 to 11.00 pm on the Swadeshiya Sevaya (or National service of SLBC), whereas other services such as Tamil and English, broadcasted a variety of art music programs and other programs during the rest of the week.

The introduction and distribution of cassettes in 1977 drastically changed not only the quality of music productions and behavioral patterns of listening and aesthetics of the general public but also the themes and rhythm styles of songs. This trend laid the foundation to propagate these songs further and resulted in a pathway for everyone to enter the field of music rather easily. Based on the direct business-oriented way of production, there were a number of manufacturers who entered the field of music. Some of them decided on the themes of songs and the style of music without taking the quality of execution into consideration when they were producing cassettes. However, it was also possible for the singers and artists to select the themes and styles freely, resulting in a situation with reasonable independence for whom? at the SLBC (Karunanayake, 1990: 315). Nonetheless, some cassette manufacturers such as Singlanka, Tharanga, and Torana produced a variety of first-rate cassettes of the above-mentioned musicians who ethically were and still are in the classical category, meaning they have a complex framework of ethics that they have followed. Such producers always promoted and stood up for these artists whereas some manufacturers produced pop songs just as a straightforward business.

Ultimately, aesthetic features of songs explained through ethical considerations began to wane. Further, the phenomenon of a “song” became a commodity rather than an artistic creation. Some popular “cassette artists” have even released more than 100 cassettes within a short period (within two to three years). In addition to that, by means of the new recording techniques available, some popular albums of famous singers, especially H.R. Jothipala, and Milton Perera have been reproduced and released with harsh and unfitted instrumentations by some popular bands, without changing the

original voice of the artist. In the meantime, as an alternative method, some albums of pioneer artists were re-launched with new instrumentations by those first-grade cassette producers to cultivate a proper music impression suiting the taste of the younger generation and as a challenge to the fake music propagated by money-oriented companies.

If a recorded song or a musical composition is considered a "text" in a modern literary context, the reader (the listener or the audience) tends to construct its "textual meaning" according to the given clues or signals in different contexts as mentioned in Holub:

"There is no regulative context between text and reader to establish intent; this context must be constructed by the reader from textual clues or signals" (Holub, 1984: 92).

As a result, of these practices, the appreciation of music could be differentiated as per their choices depending on the music and the musical elements that were employed in such compositions. The so-called practice of issuing the same song containing different instrumentations has resulted in serious divisions among the listeners or audiences. Some of them prefer to listen to the original version with acoustic instruments whereas others prefer re-arranged versions with electronic instruments.

Benjamin argues in his article "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", that the aura of aesthetic quality tends to be lost (Benjamin, 1992 [1936]: 211-244) as a result of 'reproduction'. Modern recording and reproduction technologies have affected not only music but also other artifacts such as photographs and films. Much evidence could be provided to prove this argument within the music contexts in Sri Lanka. Such practices have highly affected the musical depth⁶ of some compositions, together with the permanent mixing up of fame and quality, light music and light living patterns, tradition and old, modern and good, and many other items with assumed traditional contextual meanings.

However, musically inexperienced young people used technological "tricks" and have again changed the nature of producing music in the recent past. These cassettes are used by drivers and conductors of the public transport systems in accordance with their choice and taste and the assumed need they want to satisfy in the people they transport. This can be largely seen in rural areas of the country. It has also affected the line-of thinking of children and younger people, who are made to believe in fame, popularity, and money sources. Because of the bad practice of propagating harsh rhythm, or vulgar murmurings, passengers with refined taste are getting used to embracing new technologies such as walkman cassettes players, I-pods, MP3, and even mobile phones capable of playing back music as a way of escaping these so-called music items so as to listen to the music of their own choices. Those people are easy to identify by their arrogance, their different way of smiling and their inactivity to change other people's behavior towards too much noise and too much hunger for loudness in drivers. Developing computer-based mass recording productions and home-based small-scale recording productions have also resulted in the creation of some other music genres such as "hip hop", and other modern genres and styles of music which were widely distributed among the generation since the 1990s. This can be seen as one of the dominant forms in the music charts in almost all private

5. The richness, complexity, and multi-layered nature of a musical composition, performance, or piece.

media channels, which is just a ranking of sold items emphasizing beats or rhythms other than the melody. This is a salient feature of these songs.

Even though there is a stream meant for the study of aesthetic subjects in the Sri Lankan formal education, the priority has been given to studying 'abhyasa ganas' (singing practice) and students usually prepare only for music examinations. The teaching methodology of North Indian classical music appears to be not helpful to cultivate and strengthen the aesthetic features and moods of students according to the ragas used. As a result, students do not pay much attention to this music either for their further studies or for developing their needs for aesthetic pleasure.

Further, secondary education has basically focused on teaching applied musical traditions. These conditions critically affect the increased demand for light music in the country. This is one reason why the contemporary reality programs such as "Superstars shows" are being telecasted on more than three or four television channels every weekend, thus promoting the song culture further.

Since there is a good demand and popularity for the genre of light songs, other kinds of musical compositions are not given a proper place in the field of music in Sri Lanka. However, there are a number of international award-winning and internationally recognized music compositions of late musician Premasiri Kemadasa, and contemporary musicians like Lalanath de Silva, Dilup Gabadamudalige, Harsha Makalanda, have their songs mostly limited to cassettes and CD media. Although they organized live performances to bring those compositions to Sri Lankan music audiences in person, due to the high entrance charges only those who belong to the social upper class are able to access them. It is interesting to notice that there was a practice of forming four types of small groups (music clubs) to listen, propagate, educate, and initiate a dialog of music and they were formed by eminent musicians in different places in the country. Such music clubs are the P4 Club, the Musical Hour Club, the Music Conservation Club, and the Ceylon Music Society (Basnayake, 2002: 11).

Depending on the prevailing situation, many artists have attempted to record songs for light song albums, commercials, film songs, and tele-dramas. Indeed, there needs to be a critical discourse focusing on how to change this practice to a more socially oriented consumption of music.

Conclusion

Although Sri Lankan music is nourished by various musical cultures, it is clear from the facts analyzed above that the Sri Lankan fan's enjoyment has been limited by being locked in the commercial music production of light songs. Consequently, not giving a proper place to other music seems to be a major mistake. It is also notable that Sri Lankan musicians were captured by literati due to their reliance on the song itself. According to these facts, it appears that the enjoyment of each other is also shaped according to the local sameness and similar wishes created throughout history.

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SOCIAL PROCESSES THAT SHAPED SRI LANKAN SINHALA FOLK MUSIC AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS BASED ON THE PURPOSES OF USAGE

Kamani Samarasinghe¹ and Rohan Nethsinghe²



Abstract

Folk music is the music of the people. People have used folk songs to express different emotions. This research paper argues that the social processes that have shaped Sinhala folk music are multifaceted and have significant cultural and historical implications. By exploring the different categories of Sinhala folk music and their purposes of usage, this study aims to fill the research gap in understanding the characteristics and functions of this musical tradition, highlighting its role in preserving the cultural heritage of the Sinhalese people. Brief explanations of why these songs were used, including how lyrical characteristics and meanings are applied for grouping and naming, are included. Literature on Sri Lankan Sinhala Folk Music that has been published over the years in journals, books, research reports, web articles, and other materials was analysed using qualitative content analysis. It was found that people sing these songs mainly to express their feelings and emotions in addition to a range of other purposes such as communication, passing the time, motivating people, and entertainment. The existing classifications are made mainly considering activities or work-related aspects and meanings of lyrics demonstrating that they are influenced by social interactions. The authors suggest several methods to conserve Sri Lankan Sinhalese traditional music elaborating on the importance of ensuring such preservations.

Keywords

Characteristics of Sinhala folk songs, Occupational songs, Purpose of usage of folk songs, Sustaining and conserving folk music/songs.

Introduction

It is difficult to answer questions such as who created folk poems and music, when they were produced, and who ordered them to be composed and sung in various styles. Just as life in the villages is less complicated, folk poetry uses a simple language mostly with a simple tune. The concepts used for composing folk poetry are also simple. Folk songs have been sung based on events very close to people's lives therefore, folk songs can provide insights into the country's folklore.

There are many definitions of folk music worldwide. Freedman (2017: 134) presents the philosopher

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Johann Gottfried Herder's (1744-1803) definition of folk songs as "those created by a particular folk group, and these songs represent the true spirit of the community that produced and nourished them". The provisional definition of folk music adopted by the International Folk Music Council, according to Karpeles (1955: 6), is: "Folk Music is the Music that has been submitted through the process of oral transmission. It is a byproduct of evolution and is reliant on the continuity, variety, and selection of conditions". A musical tradition that has developed via oral transmission is what gives rise to folk music. Continuity, which connects the present to the past; variety, which results from the creative urge of the individual or group; and selection by the community, which decides the form or forms in which the music endures, are the components that shape the tradition (Lomax, 1960). Karim (2020) defined folk music as one of the fundamental elements of art and culture. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica (2022), folk music is a traditional form and generally a rural music type that was primarily passed down through families and other small social groups, whereas the Colombia Encyclopedia defines it as music of anonymous composition, transmitted orally (Lagasse et al, 2000). These qualities are embedded in Sri Lankan traditional music and this study explores a selected set of Sinhala/Sinhalese folk poetry and songs.

The history of scholars looking for Sinhala folk music can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Sri Lanka. During this period, there was a growing interest among scholars and intellectuals to explore and document the cultural heritage of the Sinhalese people. Scholars like Arnold Bake, Devar Surya Sena, W. B. Makulloluwa, and C. de S. Kullatillake were notable pioneers in the field of collecting and studying Sinhala folk music. Their contributions have been significant in documenting and understanding the rich musical traditions of the Sinhalese people.

The majority of the Sri Lankan population is Sinhalese and most Sinhalese are Buddhists, as such, both Sinhala music and dance depict Buddhist influences. Many melodic systems of Sinhala folk songs are influenced by Buddhist chant melodies, particularly those of the various styles of "*Pirittha*", a type of Buddhist chant (Kulathilaka, 1976). The influence of Buddhist chants, predominantly those associated with rituals and ceremonies, can be heard in the tonal patterns, melodic contours, and rhythmic characteristics of certain folk songs. While Sinhalese folk songs are often performed by the general community and are deeply embedded in everyday life and cultural expressions, the ritualists' songs and dances are performed by specialized practitioners who undergo specific training and adhere to prescribed rituals and traditions. The repertoire of the ritualists is often distinct and separate from the folk song tradition. Long time ago, Wijesekera (1945: 281) stated that "The folk songs of the Sinhalese can still be heard among the remote villages where the pleasures of living, labour, and enjoyment are understood"; however, under the current circumstances, it is possible to note that such practices are rapidly diminishing from those contexts. Although many types of research have been conducted on folk music, very limited reviews have been conducted on Sri Lankan Sinhala folk music. As such, there exists a research gap in the study of Sinhala folk music.

This research paper argues that the social processes that have shaped Sinhala folk music are multifaceted and have significant cultural and historical implications. By exploring the different categories of Sinhala folk music lyrics and their purposes of usage, this study aims to fill the research gap in understanding the characteristics and functions of these traditions, highlighting their role in preserving the cultural heritage of the Sinhalese people.

Methods

A qualitative research approach has been used as the methodology for this study. The literature on Sri Lankan Sinhala folk music that has been published over the years in journals, books, research reports, web articles, and other materials was analyzed in this study to find explanations for the research questions: How has Sri Lankan folk music been categorized? and What are the social processes that have shaped Sinhala Folk Music identities? The secondary sources used for this literature review were selected at random. In addition, this research also investigates why and how these songs have been used including the lyrical characteristics and methods used for grouping and naming the Sinhala folk songs. The findings are reported through categories, conceptual examples or systems, and a descriptive storyline (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Qualitative Content Analysis was used as the data analysis method. Green and Thorogood (2018) explained that for conducting exploratory work content analysis is suitable for the simple reporting of common information and facts from content considered for the study. The first author retrieved the literature related to Sinhala Sri Lankan folk music as a local academic with access to resources in Sri Lanka and the second author collaborated in the process of data analysis and contributed to the process of writing this paper as an experienced academic in music education with a Sri Lankan music background.

Results and Discussion

Descriptions of Sri Lankan Sinhala Folk Songs

According to Sena (1954), the earliest folk songs of Sri Lanka are those of the Veddahs who are considered Sri Lanka's aborigines. He described further that Veddaha's songs are sung with two tones and are chanted poetry. It is believed that Sinhala folk song has evolved from Veddaha's songs; however, many Sinhalese folk songs are more advanced and not just chanted poetry (Sena, 1954). Folk songs have been an art form associated with the lives of Sinhalese since time immemorial (Beddage, 1989). Folk songs were created as a way to express emotions such as when being away from home and loved ones, pass the time (at work), motivate people (companions) by enabling them to avoid fatigue, uplift energy, and boost their morale to work effectively, keep fellow workers entertained or to communicate with others, and also to keep wild animals away from their cultivated fields, protect their crops and their harvest. A substantial amount of Sinhalese folk music is associated with the laborious processes of paddy/rice cultivation. The agricultural sector dominates Sri Lanka's economy and Sinhala villages are predominantly agrarian. The challenging task of paddy cultivation is the subject of many Sinhalese folk songs. Procedures, such as weeding, reaping, and threshing paddy, preparing the soil, planting rice seedlings or transplanting, and so forth, are depicted in folk songs.

Traditional music in Sri Lanka is divided into two major categories: *gemi gee*³ and *se gee* (Opposed to *se gee*, which's texts were written by poets and educated lyricists) (Dassenaike, 2012; Makulloluwa, 2000). Furthermore, Dassenaike (2012) divides *gemi gee* into three subcategories: *mehe gee* (occupational songs), *adahili and wishwasa* (faith/ritualistic songs), and *vinodashwadya* (games and entertainment-related songs).

3. Songs composed and sung by ordinary villagers.

Moreover, Dassenaikē (2012) divides *mehe gee* into three additional groups: *seepada* (singing style) *nelum gee* (transplanting paddy songs), and *goyam gee* (songs sung during the harvesting of paddy), and *adahili* (worship) and *wishwasa* (beliefs) into four additional groups: prose narration⁴, *yaga gee* (songs sung during folk rituals)⁵, *Pasam gee* (church-style music), *thun saranaya* (devotional songs)⁶, and *vinodashwadya* (entertainment) into five additional groups: *saudam*⁷, *jana natya gee* (songs composed and used for folk dramas and plays), *daru nelavili* (lullabies), and *onsili waram*⁸. Beddage (1989) has classified Sinhala folk songs into several categories according to the tonal patterns and those are *nelavili gee* (lullabies), *keli gee* (children's sports-related songs), *seepada*, *nelum gee* (transplanting songs), *welapum gee* (songs of lamentation), *bhakthi gee* (devotional songs), *Udarata gee* (songs from the Upcountry), *naadagam gee* (traditional drama songs), *gadya saheli* (story/message presented in detail in poetic form, a poetic tradition)⁹, folk drama, and folk dance related *gee*.

Makulloluwa (2000) also classifies Sinhala folk songs into several categories similar to *Bethi Gee* (devotional songs), *Yaga Gee* (songs sung at folk rituals), *Mehe gee* (work-related songs), *Samaja gee* (community songs), *Keli Gee* (songs sung at folk games, and dances), *Nalu gee* (songs used by dancers or actors), *Virudu gee* (songs sung while playing the tambourine called rabana, a hand drum held in one hand and played with the other), *Rana gee* (battle songs), and *Venum Gee* (songs praising the beauty of nature). Makulloluwa (2000) enumerates the qualities of Sri Lankan folk music and according to him, common people without formal training or modern education who are not closely associated with educated people have created the lyrics, verses, and choruses of folk songs. Village songs contain people's feelings, thoughts, beliefs, folktales, history, historical events, life, careers, experiences of the day, and beliefs, amongst other things. Their composers are unknown, and folk music has been utilized by common folk and passed down orally. According to Kulathilaka (1999), folk music is the music of the people. Makulloluwa (2000) classifies Sinhala folk songs into several categories *Bethi gee* (devotional songs), *yaga gee* (songs sung during folk rituals), *mehe gee* (work-related), *samaja gee* (community), *keli gee* (songs sung at folk games, and dances), *nalu gee* (songs used by dances or actors), *virudu gee* (songs sung while playing the tambourine, called rabana, a hand drum held in one hand and played with the other), *rana gee* (battle songs), and *venum gee* (songs praising the beauty). As with most countries, Sri Lankan folk music is consistently present in the lives of the Sinhalese villagers, from birth to death during their life's journeys (Panapitiya, 2021).

The most popular singing style among the Sinhala folk is the *seepada* style (Kulathilaka, 1999). *Sivpada*, is a poetic verse consisting of four lines and a term synonymous with *seepada* but practically

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4. Rendered as invocations, invitations, and supplications (Kulatillake 1976).
 5. Yaga gee is divided into three types: Bali gee, Tovil gee, and Kankari gee (Kulatillake 1976).
 6. Devotional songs evolved from folk melodies, the most popular of which are the "Thun Saranaya" styles sung by pilgrims to Adam's Peak (Kulatillake 1976).
 7. Saudam are "salutary verses where drumming strokes and slaps attempt to mimic the melodic inflections of the voice" (Dassenaikē 2012: 44).
 8. *Onsili waram* (of Tamil origin) are "sung on makeshift swings that hang from tree branches" (Dassenaikē 2012: 44);
 9. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VX27Y-aSLJnBd-qhNOxGPrEXtIRJrd/view?usp=sharing>,

they represent two aspects (Kulathilaka, 1980, 1999).

Each of the four lines in a *sivpada* should be of the same length (Kulathilaka, 1991). According to Kulathilaka (1976), *sivpada* literally means four feet and is sung in/as a quatrain. Nonetheless, some *sivpada* contains as many as 32 *matras* (morae), a line with rhythms within those lines of three, four, or seven beats (Kulathilaka, 1991). Kulathilaka (1980) stated that most of the Sinhala traditional *kavi* are sung as *seepada* and are used to express hopes and despairs of the common folk. According to the literature, there are many types of folk songs *nelum gee* (transplanting songs), *gal/karaththa seepada* (when bullock carts were being driven), *pel seepada* (sung in temporarily built watch huts), *bambara seepada* (wild wasp honey collecting songs), *pathal seepada* (miner's songs), *paru seepada* (sung when boating/sailing) sung in *seepada* style (Kulathilaka 1980). According to Kulathilaka (1999), every folk song originated with a purpose in society, aside from purposes other than for enjoyment, and it is also used as a medium of communication.

The peasantry carries out these procedures cooperatively by helping one another (Prasangika, 2018). While they work in the fields, the farmers chant traditional melodies. Various verses, such as the *nelum gee* and *goyam gee* were sung throughout the paddy cultivation and harvesting procedures. *Nelum gee* are sung by a group of women while transplanting paddy seedlings, *kamath gee* is sung by the men while threshing paddy and *adahera* (cow calling) is also sung by men while threshing paddy and plowing paddy field. *Nelum gee* are most frequently sung in the upcountry region of Sri Lanka (Casinander, 1981; Panapitiya, 2021; Rajapakse, 2004). Despite the fact that there are many different types of folk music styles in Sri Lanka according to the literature, this research study has been limited to folk music categorized as activities or work-related songs and songs associated with social processes (*samaja gee*). Preparation of fields, planting, protecting crops (from wild animals, especially during the nighttime), harvesting, and processing (e.g., from paddy to rice) are procedures that require hard labour and it is evident that people have used folk songs to also express different emotions such as sadness, happiness, loneliness, and exhaustion related to above phases of farming, day to day lives including the transportation of crops.

Examples of selected Sinhala folk songs categorized as *Mehe Gee*

Andahera ¹⁰

Rice farmers utilized buffalos and let out a cry known as *andahera paama* when preparing paddy fields (ploughing) and threshing paddy. Only men are allowed to sing *andahera* verses. According to the style of the singing, *andahera* might take one of three forms: singing two lines of poetry with prose parts, singing a four-line poem in song form, and using solely prose parts and a variety of sounds (Kulathilaka, 1994). The usage of various tones and simultaneous vocal stops in the singing are the key features of *andahera* (Beddage, 2020; Panapitiya, 2020; Rajapakse, 2004). Since it is sung for animals, the use of different tones and pitch can be seen in this song (Panapitiya, 2020). The following footnote link demonstrates the sound of the *andahera* style¹¹

Nelum Gee

After the paddy fields are set up, the transplantation is completed. Paddy (rice seeds) sowing is used in

10. Cow Call

11. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1f6q1hvqEd5D_8PVD-Vf-tiH7I5k-VGQE/view?usp=sharing

a few regions instead of transplanting. However, transplantation is a famous procedure in most places. Transplanting and plucking are done mostly by women. *Nelum Gee* are sung during the transplanting of paddy and the weeding of wild growth in the paddy fields. An example of *Nelum Gee* (transplanting songs) transcription is given below (Figure 1).

English translation:

When we were on our way to Bogambara,
thirty women were harvesting paddy;

though thirty women were harvesting,
it would have been better to see sisters working;
sister, your golden bangles give out a melodious sound;
sisters, you, who are involved in the activity
are protected by the gods.

Figure 1: Transcription of *Nelum Gee* in an English translation. Adapted from (Rajapakse 2004, 40-41).

The following link provided in the footnote is a studio-recorded *Bogamabara api nelum gee* sung by an academic staff member of the Department of Ethnomusicology, Faculty of Music, University of the Visual & Performing Arts^{12 13}

Pel Seepada (Songs sung while protecting the crop from wild animals).

There are two main ways of cultivating agricultural crops in Sri Lanka. *Goda govithena* (dry land farming called chena)¹⁴ which is the most ancient method (Chena Cultivation in Sri Lanka | Traditional Agriculture Practices of Sri Lanka., 2022), and *mada govithena* (wetland farming/cultivation in muddy soil) (Panapitiya, 2020). After cultivating, farmers use different methods to protect the crops from wild animals in these two different contexts. A temporarily built small hut (*pela*) in the paddy field (wet farming) is used by the farmers to spend the night in order to protect the crop from wild animals. On the branches of a big and tall tree, a watch hut or a treehouse is constructed for the farmer to climb up and chase away animals that come to destroy chena crops. The tree top watch-hut is built (for the safety of the farmer) and used to spot wild creatures, especially wild elephants. While watching over the fields at night, these melodies called *pel seepada* are sung. Village farmers sing *pel seepada* to stay awake at night and prevent getting weary and lonely and dispel the danger of the unknown darkness.

12. Bolukandurage Thushari, interview by Kamani Samarasinghe. 2022, 6 August, 2022

13. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FqXBL53Zcb_CCJAsxyO_Dli7370Z8xbE/view?usp=sharing

14. <https://www.dilmahconservation.org/arboretum/traditional-agriculture/chena-cultivation--466d60ba372e7be52d4c6e8573baf9bf.html>

Male Male nobanin ape anmaata
 Thopen apen den de netha ammata
 Vena de nethath dethane kiri bivvata
 Budun vadina lesa vedapan ammata¹

(Translation: Brother, brother, do not blame our mother! /We have nothing to give mother.
 /Nothing else but milk from mother. / Worship your mother the way you worship Buddha).

Figure 2: An example of *pel seepada* transcription. Adapted from Panapitiya (2020: 53).

Goyam Gee (Songs sung during the harvesting of paddy)

Peasants take part in singing various poems known as *goyam gee* (harvesting song) while reaping the paddy crop. The following example (Figure 3) demonstrates the example of *goyam gee* transcription, phonetic Sinhala translation, and English translation.

Figure 3: An example of *Goyam Gee* transcription. Adapted from (Rajapakse 2004: 5).

Phonetic Sinhala Translation and English Translation

<p><i>Udayata paayona hiru deviyantai</i> <i>Sawasata paayana Sanda deviyantai</i> <i>Sathara warann devi sathara denaatai</i> <i>Wendalaa guruwara awasara gantai</i></p>	<p>to the sun God, who shines in the morning; to the moon God, who shines in the evening; to the four guardian Deities of the four corners; to get permission from the Teacher by worshipping</p>
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The following link provided in the footnote demonstrates the singing of *Udayata paayona hiru deviyantai goyam gee* a studio-recorded personal transcription and it is sung by a senior academic member of the Department of Ethnomusicology, Faculty of Music, University of the Visual & Performing Arts (Rajapakse, 2022)^{15 16}.


Kamath Gee (Songs sung during processing, threshing, and cleaning paddy)

The *kamath gee* performed on the threshing floors is regarded as the final form of chanting during paddy farming in the process of separating the kernels from the stems and the husks from the kernels. The singing of *kamath gee* is related to cattle. Cattle are used to separate paddy grain from their grain stems. The harvested crop is walked on by the cows/oxen, who also separate the paddy seeds. *Kamath gee* is where the singing effects and vocal productions utilized in the *andahera* singing style are performed. These melodies are intended to lead the cattle and unburden the loneliness and exhaustion of the night. Buddhist poems have an influence on the lyrics of *kamath gee* and the opening invocation sings the praise of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha (Panapitiya, 2020). The following example demonstrates a famous *kamath gee* (Figures 4 and 5).¹⁶

Budun vadithi me kamathata
Daham suvada vihideyi vata
Yodun usata thibenaa betha
Budun anin en kamathata

(Translation: The Buddha comes to this threshing floor./ Then the scent of Dhamma spreads./
At the word of the Buddha the harvest/ comes to the threshing floor.)

Figure 4: An example of the *kamath gee budun wediya me kamatha*; Source Adapted from Panapitiya



Budu n va di thee - me ka mathata - sa dan su vanda - visire I vata
yodu n u sa ta - thi bena ba tna - Bu dan a nin - ei kama thata

The Buddha visits this *kamatha*,
The scent of sandalwood spreads around;
About three miles in height
It comes to the *kamatha* with the Buddha's command

Figure 5: An example of *kamath gee* transcription of *goyam gee* and its English and Sinhala translation. Adapted from Rajapakse (2004: 8).

There are different styles of Sinhala folk songs/music related to other types of work beyond farming and agriculture, in ancient Sri Lanka and the following descriptions consider a few selected occupations.

15. Rajapakse, Mangalika. interview by Kamani Samarasinghe, 8 August, 2022.

16. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VQdJhJKulG4z7kiQEa-Gii3CZQgLSVQ9/view?usp=sharing>

Gal/Karaththa Seepada (Bullock-cart songs)

Bullock carts were a common mode of transportation for ancient Sri Lankans, especially when moving agrarian harvests and commercial products. These were extremely difficult tasks because it was quite difficult to walk alone on the narrow gravel roads with/behind fully loaded bullock carts. The men who draw the carts men (drivers) sang *gal/karaththa seepada* while driving a bullock cart to stave off boredom, and loneliness, for communication, and to exchange feelings and ideas. The following link provided in the footnote demonstrates the singing of *Thandale denna depole dakkanawa* studio recorded personal transcription^{17 18}. An example of a phonetic *karaththa seepada* transcription is given below (Figure 6).

Phonetic Sinhala Translation

Thandale denna depole dakkanawa
Katukele gale noliha wadadenawa
Haputhale kanda dakala bada danawa
Pawkala gono adapan haputhal yanawa

Figure 6: An example of karaththa seepada transcription.

The four stanzas in this verse denote the harsh life and hardships faced by the ox carter and his ox. The verse also describes the nature of the *Haputale* area in Sri Lanka which is a mountainous, misty, and cold area. Life is hard and this song depicts the bond and understanding between man, animals, and nature. The Oriental notation and Western notation of “*Thandale denna depole dakkana*” are given below (Figure 7).

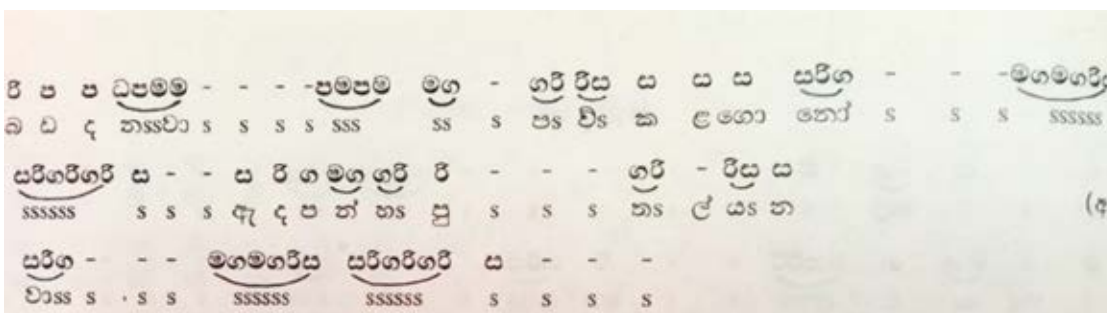
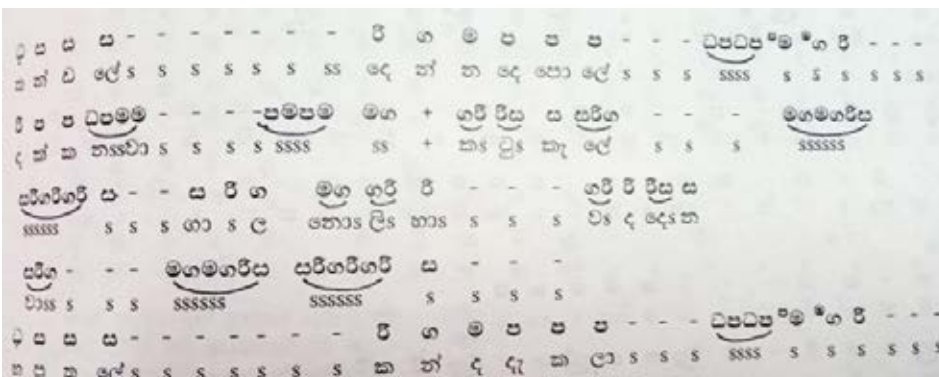


Figure 7: An example of gal/karaththa seepada transcription. Oriental music notation. Adapted from Makuloluwa (2000, 223-224) and its Western transcription.

17. Ariyaratna, Lansakkara, interview by Kamani Samarasinghe, 8 August, 2022

18. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1R_oezgOE9gZCP6uKnLzoESVn95WKiGX/view?usp=sharing

The image shows a musical score in Western notation, consisting of ten staves of music. The lyrics are written in Sinhala script below the notes. The lyrics are:
Tha n da le - dhe n na dhe po le - -
- - - dha : k Ka na - - wa - - -
- - Ka - tu - ke le - -
- - - - - - Gaa - la no - li - ha wa - dha dhe -
na wa - - - -
Ha pu tha le - Ka n da de Ka la - - - - ba
da dha na - wa - - - - Pa - u - ka la go
no - - - - ae dho fa n 'ha - Pu - tha - l
ya - na wa - - - -

Western Notation

Pathal seepada (Miner's song)

The folk songs known as *pathal seepada* are sung by the villagers while they work in the mines. Life at the pithead is described in numerous *pathal seepada* (miners' songs), from areas (in Sri Lanka): Dumbera, Migoda, Maduragoda, Karawanella, Kahatagaha, and Pattalagedera (Amunugama, 1980). A miner sings about his labours as he continuously turns the *dabare* (windlass) to physically hoist up from the pits the bucket of mined graphite, according to Casinander's book (1981) "Miner's Folk Songs of Sri Lanka". In an effort to describe the culture of the Sinhalese graphite miners, Casinander has made an effort to analyze many of the folk songs in the context of their social setting. Zacharias P. Thundy (1983) reviewed Casinander's *Miner's Folk Songs of Sri Lanka* in 1981 and claimed that Casinander's study and interpretation of the songs were incomplete and very sketchy. The following example shows one of the most common *pathal seepada* in Sri Lanka. This is about a person doing a labour job. He is underpaid and lives in poverty. He talks about the black stone yards and the led found under mud and how the higher ranks pay lower wages to the lower ranked workers. Folk songs by miners frequently sound sad due to the dangerous and hazardous nature of the job. Just by viewing the poem, it can be said that it is a miners' poem because of the work and field described in it. The following link provided in the footnote demonstrates the singing of *Dadibidi gaga karana weda ratawati ye* as a *pathal seepada* studio recorded personal transcription^{19 20}.

19. Widanapathirana, Udayasiri, interview by Kamani Samarasinghe, 10 August, 2022

20. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OvoaY1Jmgw-LX9Ugsl4q4QwXKor9eoBB/view?usp=sharing>

Paru seepada (Boatman's song)

Sivpada verses known as *paru seepada* are sung when performing boating activities (i.e. "boat/raft verses") on a range of different types of boats and rafts. The raftsman sang to his mistress while he punted his *paru* (raft) according to Casinander (1981). The singing of the well-known *paru seepada* called "*Male male oya namala*" can be listened to by clicking on the following link provided in the footnote^{21 22}. Sena (1954) in his article "Folk Songs of Ceylon" explained the first and second verses of this song as follows: "In this song, the boatsman is asked by his lady love to pluck for her a beautiful *Na* flower from a tree at the mouth of the river. She asks him to step lightly on the branch lest it breaks" (Sena, 1954: 13).

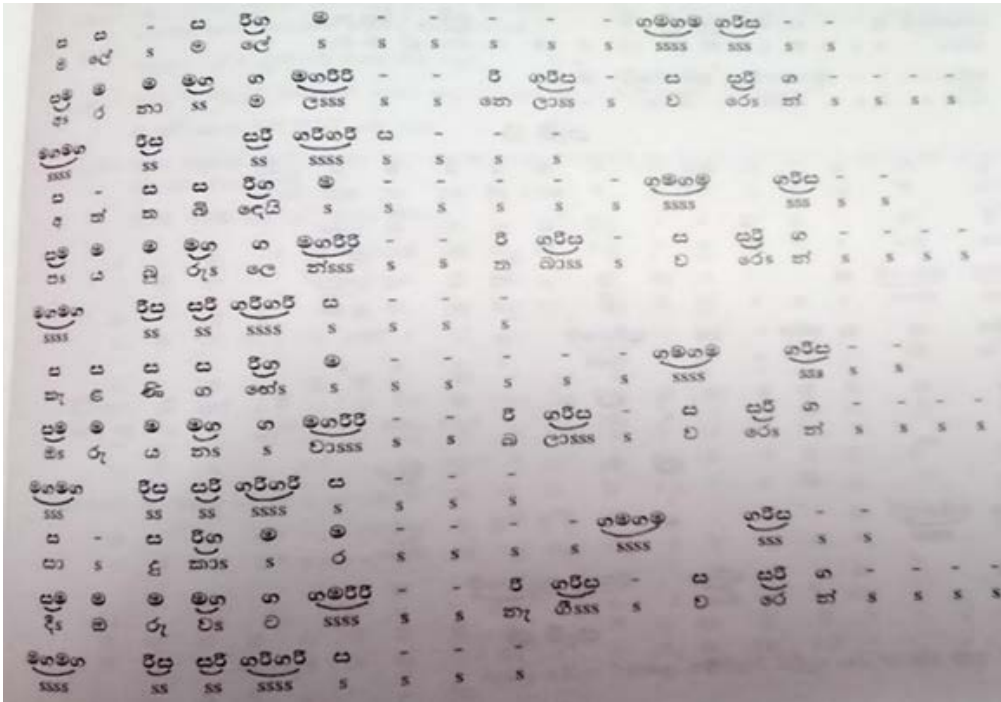


Figure 9: An example of *paru seepada* transcription. Oriental music notation. Adapted from Makulloluwa, W. B. (2000: 223).

Bambara Seepada (Wild honey collecting song)

One of the honeybee species found in Sri Lanka is the wild wasp, known as a *bambara* in Sinhala (Scientific name *Apis dorsata*). In Sri Lanka, there has been a long tradition of honey harvesting. The gathering of *bambara* honey from the huge combs built on the slopes of steep rocks is a daring feat that needs courage and skill. *Bambara Gee* are composed on a variety of subjects, including safety, personal amusement, pity for the wasps, and terror as well as the beauty of the surrounding natural environment (Depe, 2003).

The link provided in the footnote demonstrates the singing of "*Amma palla babarun atha warada ne thi*" *bambara gee* studio recorded personal transcription^{23 24}. Despite the fact that innocent wasps gather nectar drop by drop to build the hive and humans were aware that collecting honey is very sinful conduct, they still take the honey. Bees work extremely hard to survive, similarly humans collect the honey to make a living.

21. Bolukandurage Thushari, interview by Kamani Samarasinghe. 2022, 6 August, 2022
22. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uTYITbyHNDc3LRHGqziBVhGKawowxltg/view?usp=sharing>
23. Ariyaratna, Lansakkara, interview by Kamani Samarasinghe, 8 August, 2022
24. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kZ0IPD3CpJwmcFXCbn-TmXKPQAoz5hS2/view?usp=sharing>

Examples of Selected Sinhala Folk Songs used for social processes: *Samaja Gee*

In the old Sinhalese society, songs such as *Daru Nelavili* (lullabies), *Onsili Waram*, and *Keli Gee* were used for social interaction and entertainment other than occupations.

Daru Nelavili (Lullabies)

Daru nelavili gee is considered one of Sri Lanka's oldest singing styles and for generations, it has been used in Sri Lankan communities. *Nelavili gee* is the rhythmic singing coming from a beloved mother's lips²⁵. The *Nelavili gee* is the first song that every infant hears, and the mother's loving affection is recited in melodious lyrics in this style. The child is enthralled by the melody's soothing effect although s/he cannot understand its meaning. The Sinhalese village women have sung these *daru nelavili* songs to inspire their children with heartfelt affection and kindness. The following "*Doi doi doi doiya putha*" verses demonstrate how the mothers use words to express their love, kindness, and mercy.

Phonetic Sinhala Translation

Doi doi doi doiya putha - Bai bai bai baiya putha

Ube amma kothena giya - Pathana kele datara giya

Baratama dara kada gene - Enakal aa budiya puthe

Doi doi doi doiya putha - Bai bai bai baiya putha

The link provided in the footnote demonstrates the singing of "*Doi doi doi doiya putha*" *daru nenawili* studio recorded personal transcription^{26 27}.

Onsili Waram

Onsili is a folk sport played during the April Sinhala and Tamil New Year, and *onsili waram* is sung on the swing. There are a few melodic variants found in the different regions. Kulathilaka (1976: 12) describes *onsili* as "being a derivative of the Tamil *oonjal* (swing) belonging to religious traditions of singing in places of localized Hindu worship in Sri Lanka. However, the Sinhala songs are distinct both in melody and content". People sing these songs for fun and happiness, either individually or as a group. A well-dressed girl climbs onto a swing hung from the overhead branch of a tree and sits on the swing's seat; others stand behind her and push the swing forward while singing *waram* or quatrains. The link provided in the footnote demonstrates the singing of "*Ihalata yanakota papuwai danna*" *onsili waram* studio recorded personal transcription^{28 29}.

Keli Gee

Keli gee are performed while playing folk games and dances. Singing unique songs while playing games is a basic feature of Sinhalese society. They are distinguished by the names of the games, which include "*Lee Keli Gee*" (stick dance songs), "*Mewara Sellama*", "*Pana Hengeema*" (various detective

25. Rajapakse, Mangalika. interview by Kamani Samarasinghe, 8 August, 2022.

26. Bolukandurage Thushari, interview by Kamani Samarasinghe. 2022, 6 August, 2022.

27. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NeUxAkJ9JI8cvBoqdx1bUuYpLu8D7tL2/view?usp=sharing>

28. Bolukandurage Thushari, interview by Kamani Samarasinghe. 2022, 6 August, 2022

29. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bP5qrTcgfShELQTyBBwnLnO49F3C2tJL/view?usp=sharing>

games, similar to hide and seek games), "*Olinda Keliya*" (playing activity with crab's eye seeds). These are frequently sung during the April Sinhala and Tamil new year festival seasons (Kulathilaka, 1976). These are group activity-related songs.

Olinda Kelima is a popular two-sided game in which well-dressed girls engaged in a two-way recital verbal exchange in a rhythmic manner. First, the leader of one side recites *Olinda thiyenne koi koi dese* (In which countries can *Olinda* be found) and this is repeated by the participants on the same side. The opposing leader then sings *Olinda thiyenne Bangali dese* (*Olinda* is there in Bangli) and the team members repeat this line as well. The game ends when all the verses of the song have been sung. The link provided in the footnote demonstrates the singing of "*Olinda thiyenne koi koi dese*" *Olinda Keli gee* studio recorded personal transcription^{30 31}.

"*Mewara* (woman's jewelry) *sellama*" or *mewara keliya* is a folk game accompanied by singing. A game especially played by girls. This is a hide-and-seek game in which one girl hides her jewelry ornaments, for instance, an earring or bangle, in the sand and, pretends to have lost them, and asks the others if they have found them. *Sarasadisi petthi pera nelanakala walagiyado mage mewareya* (I feel like I've lost my ornaments while plucking *Petthi Pera*). The others respond: *nano numbapal numbe daruwanpal apa dutuwe nata mewaraya* (They swear that they have not seen the ornament). Finally, the owner of the ornaments skips to the music of the song and gets closer to where she has hidden the ornaments, snatches them, and declares that she has found them. The link provided in the footnote demonstrates the singing of *Sarasadisi Petthi Pera Nelakala* as a *mewara keliya* studio recorded personal transcription.^{32 33}

These folk game songs are significant because they enhance happiness and harmony among family members and neighbors. Such activities put the whole village in a good mood and improve contact, coordination, unity, cooperation, mental comfort, and consolation. Merriam (1964) states that music has a beneficial impact on people's well-being and social togetherness.

Music, according to Suttie (2015), is one way of communicating a sense of belonging, which may increase a person's sense of safety and obligation to their group. From this exploration, it is evident that singing folksongs are an integral part of people's everyday life, and components of music, culture, and society are inextricably linked.

Conclusions

Sinhala folk songs are frequently repeated across five or six tones with beautiful vocal frills (Dassenaike, 2016). Sri Lanka has a rich collection of folk songs and a good amount is songs of labour associated with various occupations, hence acquiring an occupational character and association. Many occupational folk songs in Sri Lanka are sung to relieve the monotony of the village folks' toil.

30. Bolukandurage Thushari, interview by Kamani Samarasinghe. 2022, 6 August, 2022

31. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sptsiqc0fCub0m2zDb7W3ETZcs5Fwq7Q/view?usp=sharing>

32. Bolukandurage Thushari, interview by Kamani Samarasinghe. 2022, 6 August, 2022

33. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1S4GwFpeGJqvftPNKs4xipf60o0-cg5XV/view?usp=sharing>

Many villagers, whose occupations were tiring and stressful, choose to relieve their stress, loneliness, and sorrows through folk songs, which often portray their difficult and sorrowful lifestyles due to the nature of their occupations. Also, there are traditional songs sung during different social activities with different intentions as explained above. Unknown to its creators, Sri Lankan folk music has been used by common folk and verbally transmitted. A large and varied collection of folk songs, or rather folk verses, are sung by the villagers and are connected to their everyday tasks, rituals, jobs, and crafts. The majority of melodies are simple and based on local tunes that may focus on the relationship between melody and verse. It is interesting to note that the same folk song is sung with slight modifications in different regions of the country. The same lyrics could be heard sung by various singers, occasionally with a slight modification to the tune to fit the words and rhythm of the specific song or verse. This practice provides evidence of the adaptation of common folk songs in different regions and communities, incorporating adjustments as and when required. The way folk songs are performed has changed significantly because of the country's technological and economic advancements. Most of these jobs (that we have considered in this paper) do not exist anymore and people have found new ways and modern methods to get the work completed. Therefore, the usage of these folk songs is not seen or heard any more in authentic work-related contexts. Traditional folk songs/music still exist in certain Sri Lankan communities with some changes (e.g. accompaniments) and some songs have made their way to the modern popular culture as POP music with Western musical arrangements. These changes demonstrate the fact that cultural practices change and evolve responding to contextual changes. As a result, former Sri Lankan Sinhala folk songs/music are gradually diminishing in society at present. Sri Lankan Sinhala folk songs are also performed on special occasions, in original contexts (e.g. in performance environments) with accompaniments as demonstrations harming the authenticity of the original performances. It is essential to sustain Sri Lankan Sinhala folk songs/music and provide authentic educational experiences considering the notions of inter-contextualization and intra-contextualization introduced by Nethsinghe (2015) that distinguish unique features of re-performance/ re-production of music in different environments and times. This will also contribute to the conservation of these traditional folk music genres through education and communication. Jahnichen (2011: 144) suggests the use of "media technology that helps to preserve tradition, such as archive recordings and documentation" as a method of conservation. In conclusion, it is important to signify that folk music is an important component of the culture, heritage, history, and emotions, of a society in a country; therefore' it is best to conserve in order to preserve the traditions and cultures of a nation. However, this does not imply that those specific components of traditional folk music would always remain the same as those genres are continuously evolving. Further research should be conducted to identify other characteristics that can be used to classify Sri Lankan folk music using scientific methods and melodic analysis. Additional research on the level of ICT/modern technology intervention is necessary to sustain the optimization of traditional music genres which is a dire need.

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WOMEN IN THE CIRCLE OF POLITICAL MODESTY: NOBODIES IN MUSIC RESEARCH AMONG CHINESE SCHOLARS

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Abstract

One might think of knowing it all: In Chinese research institutions, people base their admiration on positioning within a professional realm. Is the position powerful and the admiration growing? Might it come with even bigger power in the context of music research, where topics and experiences are still strongly connected to a biologist approach? Is the name of an author or contributor important in this circle? This short study gives some explanations about dealing with gender perspectives in a self-adopted circle of political modesty among Chinese scholars in music research. How do names play a role in addressing research outcomes and their applications? The direct observation span is 2015-2022 in major Chinese cities with larger tertiary educational institutions. Some insights may help understand current issues in the field of music research, used terminology, and priorities in referencing techniques. The gender perspective includes issues that are highly sensitive among those scholars and cannot be simply broken down into straightforward categories. The author is fully aware of the long journey ahead in order to change certain male-centered or -dominated conventions and thinking patterns.

Keywords

Chinese urbanity, Music research, Gender perspectives, Power relations, Names

Introduction

One might think of knowing it all: In Chinese research institutions, people base their admiration on positioning within a professional realm. Is the position powerful and the admiration growing? Might it come with even bigger power in the context of music research, where topics and experiences are still strongly connected to a biologist approach and personal merits? Is the name of an author or contributor important in this circle?

Ironically, the name of the author is not always important. If the name belongs to a student, the name of the supervisor is the only important name. If the name is that of a translator, it might be important to the Key Productivity Indicator (KPI) of that student who strives to get a fully funded scholarship.

Unfortunately, it is not unimportant who did the work. It seems, at least from far, that the name of the translator is more important than that of the author, or that the translator is nearly as creative as the author.

In this context, another less crucial problem may arise. Often, it is seen that the language use of an author is more admirable than the scientific outcome. Whether someone writes well or not, or

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if anyone writes directly in English or Japanese, that seems indeed a true achievement. In sum, the question of whether one knows Chinese among Chinese scholars is a completely different question than in some other places, where it is merely about communication styles?

Now, the last negative impact might be the authorship of a female researcher.

Professors

The Shanghai Conservatory of Music has a number of high-ranking female professors, supervisors, and performers among its staff. Yet, all decision-making positions are distributed among men. This was initially my point of departure. Why is that? We can see in each area that the important contributions are made by both male AND female scholars, yet, the overwhelming majority of all these extolled names are male. We can take any journal produced or any performance brought on stage. Males are the named authors in nearly every one of them. Moreover, women are characterized as especially tough or diligent if they work like men; thus, compensating for an imaginary conception of the 'female'.

陈鸿铎 <u>Chen Hongduo</u>	陈其莲 <u>Chen Qilian</u>
叶登民 <u>Danny Yeh</u>	陈星 <u>Chen Xing</u>
冯长春 <u>Feng Changchun</u>	戴晓莲 <u>Dai Xiaolian</u>
葛毅 <u>Ge Yi</u>	方琼 <u>Fang Qiong</u>
顾平 <u>Gu Ping</u>	郭树荟 <u>Guo Shuhui</u>
韩鍾恩 <u>Han Zhong'en</u>	黄英 <u>Huang Ying</u>
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刘红 <u>Liu Hong</u>	李小诺 <u>Li Xiaonuo</u>
刘英 <u>Liu Ying</u>	唐俊乔 <u>Tang Junqiao</u>
宋波 <u>Song Bo</u>	王丹丹 <u>Wang Dandan</u>
孙国忠 <u>Sun Guozhong</u>	王蔚 <u>Wang Wei</u>
陶辛 <u>Tao Xin</u>	肖梅 <u>Xiao Mei</u>
王凯蔚 <u>Wang Kaiwei</u>	谢乐 <u>Xie Le</u>
韦福根 <u>Wei Fugen</u>	杨学进 <u>Yang Xuejin</u>
徐达维 <u>Xu Dawei</u>	于丽红 <u>Yu Lihong</u>
徐孟东 <u>Xu Mengdong</u>	周丽娟 <u>Zhou Lijuan</u>
杨健 <u>Yang Jian</u>	周温玉 <u>Zhou Wenyu</u>
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张显平 <u>Zhang Xianping</u>	
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朱磊 <u>Zhu Lei</u>	
邹彦 <u>Zou Yan</u>	

Figure 1: All professors accessible via the institutional website of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Here printed with permission. (SHCMUSIC [上海音乐学院], 2021).



Figure 2: Advertising picture for the Shanghai Conservatory of Music to be found on diverse websites. Here printed with permission (SHCMUSIC [上海音乐学院], 2021).

Eighteen women out of 43 are at least professors, as acknowledged in 2021. Now, there are a few more. Maybe all together there are 20 female professors out of a total of 45. However, the final leading group consists only of men, especially, when it comes to musical training. Although the number of female professors is noteworthy, they do not find themselves in decision-making positions. The same goes for Guangxi Arts University, Guangzhou University, Wuhan Conservatory, Xi'an Conservatory, or the Central Conservatory in Beijing.

Sometimes, but not always, the fact of being female is a warning sign of not being able to succeed in a job associated with maleness. Additionally, some musical professions such as “composer”, music theorist”, “sound recordist”, are occupied by male scholars. Rarely, are there any women involved, and if so, it is pointed out as remarkable. Research, writing and being a scholar in these fields are obviously relegated to the male domain, not only in relation to the administration of a large university but also in instances that relate to all decision making. I am not saying that this is a special Chinese issue as this issue is observable almost everywhere in the world where conservatories or universities with art departments operate. Why is that?

Historical Perspectives

A view into history should lead to a clear hint. All “gender studies” regarding the arts, including music, (Citron, 1993; Drinker 1948; McClary, 1991; Solie, 1993, Reitsma, 2014) are “pointing out”, marking the ‘outstanding’ success of women in various musical sub-fields. I personally think that equity is only achieved, if names and gender backgrounds do not play any role in mastering a specific skill such as balancing pro and contra, looking at visionary graphs, teaching in a technically demanding field of some complexity, and writing about them through a musical mind.

Interestingly, at Shanghai Conservatory mainly female students are admitted, but the higher positions in the organization's hierarchical structure are occupied by males.

In other cases, this scheme is very similar. Unfortunately, the entire system of information about university and conservatory policies is to not expose too many personal details about the teaching staff and their duties. Policies of this kind are often taken as an excuse to not make proper references to women in scientific papers, or to make the entire group of employees responsible for possible changes or resulting mistakes. Insofar, it is not possible for the author to name any other institutions with persons held responsible for these texts. Only working places, where the author has had a deeper insight could be taken as entities to gather factual data.

However, the withdrawal from decision-making jobs by women can be problematic and it is not generally proven that the avoiding of complexity is always a choice.

Moving on to the specific situation in urban China: If articles are submitted to scholarly journals, one always finds males dominating the issues, and also among the reviewers or jury members in competitions, we may find that most of the reviewers are males, if the article goes to a prestigious journal (Li and Horta, 2021). The more women are involved, so it seems, the less prestigious is the journal. Then, there are some humanity-caring profiles, in which women seem to dominate such as in subject domains like anthropology of music, organology, and the dramatic arts. Also, one can often find women appointed as translators, arrangers, support staff and even layout editors. However, in the

editorial boards, males are more often present. I recommend that further studies should be initiated as there is almost nothing substantially written about it, not even in developed countries.

Another difficulty is the conditioned humbleness or avoidance of taking responsibility by a majority of these women, not even for good intentions, so, one rarely finds documents being signed with a personal name as, instead, there are ones that are stamped in red with an institutional seal. This context corresponds to the hidden policies in institutions around China, Vietnam, and Laos. The institutional seal represents the hierarchy and cannot be avoided.

It is, on the one hand difficult to recognize female scholars through their names (Levi King, 2022), and it is, on the other hand, difficult to demand personal signatures in general.

In order to support open discussions about gender discriminatory aspects from those discourses, we need to see the authors as real people. This is nothing new, but it proves that with every woman getting into the discussion circle, males are also freed to access all ideas. That could help in establishing a more egalitarian society in which choices are the norm and education is not a privilege.

Thoughts about the Roots of Some Problems and Concluding Questions

This is not only a problem of dominance but of an accepted life model. Although empirical data may show that many female scholars and teachers at prestigious institutions withdraw their demand to be in any leading position (Moustafa, 2020), it cannot be clearly said that this is the case as at least some of them see themselves 'automatically' hindered by their personal circumstances such as being responsible for the general well-being of their families. Women have to cook, to do groceries for the entire family, clean, wash clothes, deal with the homework of the children, and pick them up from school. Although in recent times, grandparents are increasingly involved in these tasks, the typical housewife is still the only accepted role for females, including those families in which they are scholars who need support. This also applies to grandmothers. That might be a strange idea, but it is the case, not only in urban China. We can observe that in most countries, even in modern Europe and America, Australia or Africa, women feel the same about leadership: that leadership positions come with a price tag. So, those women decide to refrain from taking such positions.

Now, let us have a look at the authorships of scholarly articles and research reports. The model of this is also dictated by leading groups of scientists. Especially, in the time of the pandemic, most knowledge had to come from male scholars, spoken out or written down and distributed via media. Only a very few women could hold press conferences and turn academic pages (Johnson and Oliver, 2001). Additionally, they were attributed to be very "male", whatever the meaning of that may be as some have labelled them as being cruel, insistingly sharp, demanding, self-centred, jovial, and/or oblivious their surroundings.

In music research, male dominance is lessening as most of the current students at some art-based universities are females and they continue to write and refuse their traditionally restricted roles as females. This does not change the patriarchal working principles and roles in the realm of academia. Females have to work harder and longer and more in specific order to get the same outcomes as their

male counterparts. That seems to apply to authorships around the world as well (Bernard, 2017). Just recently, I had the opportunity to watch a student quoting from press releases given by men as if press statements are scholarly literature. Only very few women were named, and the ones that were, turned out to be mostly translators or editors. The name of a responsible person is barely given voluntarily, except for prestigious journal articles that are widely and proudly shared in China. If it is international writing, the institutional affiliation is more important and thus, highlighted. Reference lists give good insights into that practice. We find no authors for specific entries and if so, those are male authors. The few female authors who are mentioned seemed to be there only by accident.

The attitude to let affiliations take over authorship responsibilities is not new to China. Many data collections of the past and the present have worked this way (Moustafa 2020). It is an expression of exhibited humbleness and devotion for the hosting institution to exhibit the all-embracing humbleness of their institution. One may find similar issues in the medieval literature of Europe. Now, the hiding of gender is another kind of humbleness or exhibitionism. If a male could sign his paper, then the fact that male or female authors cannot easily be distinguished by the construction of a name, helps cover the identity. This means that a relatively large number of female authors are addressed as male. Another interesting aspect is that specific research areas that are mostly delegated to women are anthropology, string instrument research and voice performance (Prieto et al, 2023), or working in the field of education.

In an advertising website inviting students to apply, it mentions the following about the Shanghai Conservatory of Music (SHCMUSIC [上海音乐学院], 2021):

“Our school adheres to the people-centered creation orientation. Teachers and students have created a large number of musical masterpieces that represent China and influence the world: piano music "Shepherd Boy Piccolo", violin concerto "Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai", "Long March Symphony", Zhonghu and Symphony Orchestra "Desert Twilight", art song "To the World Expo"... In recent years, symphonies "Silk Road Dream", "Ode to Yan Huang", opera "He Luting", the musical "Sea Music", "Dream Lin Tang Xianzu" Such original works were funded by the National Art Fund. Several major research topics have been approved by the National Social Science Fund Major Projects, National Social Science Fund Art Major Projects, National Cultural Innovation Projects, and dozens of provincial and ministerial projects and awards. On average, more than 400 art practices and concerts are held every year, the "Shanghai Spring" International Music Festival is held, and various concerts are held on world-class platforms in more than 20 countries to sing the "Voice of China".

This is a typical example of neglecting self-presentation, and women may think the same about themselves; that being trained in the field of music performance and music research means being ready to accept self-neglect, too. Female beauty is mainly there for male consumption, which makes one understand that the consumers are probably mainly meant to be male. It is another world phenomenon. Elderly women have a hard time fighting through this globally ingrained system, even in Shanghai, which is supposed to be the number one city of openness and tolerance in a big country. 'Why is that?' one has to ask. The only way out is for women to stop accepting the situation of being a nobody in music research.

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