



INTACH

UNIQUE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS: KUZHAL

Instruments form an integral part of the religious traditions and processes. These instruments have helped develop some enduring temple art forms which are a major characteristic of certain cultures. One such type of instrument is the Kuzhal found in the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Let us learn more about this musical instrument through some interesting facts.

ORIGIN

References of the Kuzhal can be found in the 13th century text, Sangeetha Ratnakaram, a text on Music authored by Sarangadeva. The Thirumvirai literature (a collection of hymns devoted to Shiva) also mentions the Kuzhal. It can be seen as one of the earliest instruments in the Southern Region along with the Yazh and Maddalam. A tribal origin can be attributed to it.



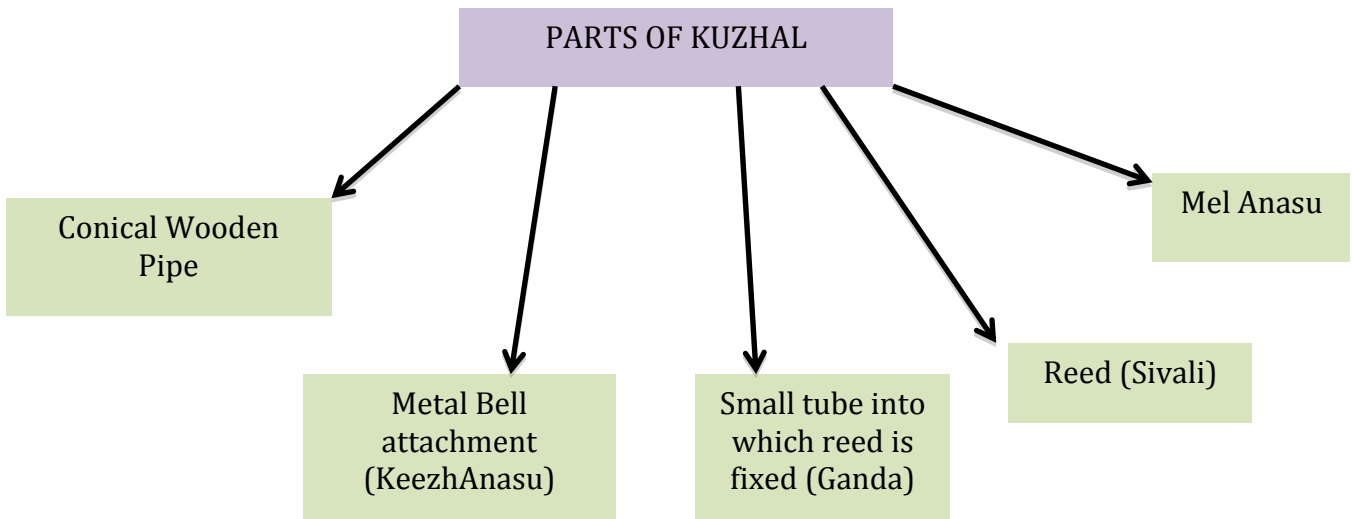
DID YOU KNOW?
In the Paniya community, the Kuzhal forms an integral part of the Family and is revered. It is believed that Kuzhal is divine in origin and signifies the father of the family.

WHAT IS A KUZHAL?

It is a double reed instrument and is very much like the Nadaswaram or Shehnai. Therefore, it is a small flute with a wooden conical end. It belongs to the SushiraVadya category (Wind instruments) of the NatyaShastra.

WHERE AND WHEN IS IT PLAYED?

It is usually played during the rituals and processions. Some communities such as the Adiya in Wayanad use it in rituals performed for a sick person and the rites of the deceased. Kuzhal is also used in dance by the Kattunaika community. Kuzhal is an important part of temple music.



DID YOU KNOW?
 KuzhalPattu is a form of music which evolved with Kuzhal as its base. This is played in the temple rituals. The sound of the Kuzhal here is like high- note and thin version of the Nadaswaram. It is played in the Kambhoji Raga and is accompanied by the Chenda.



MAKING OF KUZHAL
 The body consists of the conical wooden pipe which has a metal bell attached to it. It is made of soft wood. One interesting feature of Kuzhal is the seven holes above and one hole below the pipe. The lower hole is stopped by the thumb and gives the 'Ni' note.

DID YOU KNOW?
 Kuzhal is also used in SopanamSangitam. This is type of temple music used in daily rituals and prayers. The term means 'steps leading to a sacred place'.

TECHNIQUES OF PLAYING THE KUZHAL

SwaramMarikkuka
 The technique of blowing and breathing at the same time.

KuzhalMinnikkuk
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 Drawing circles in the air using the Kuzhal.



ACTIVITY!

Kuzhal resembles a lot of wind instruments. Try to look for instruments in your region which are similar to the Kuzhal. Write down their similarities and differences.

ACTIVITY!

Listen to a Kuzhal performance. Observe the tone and pitch produced. Also notice the posture of the performer.

ACTIVITY!

Kuzhal shows a mix of the Tribal and Mainstream cultures. Try to understand the influences of the tribal culture and the classical music on each other. Research for various stories surrounding the same.



ACTIVITY!

Imagine that you have to organize an event as an ode to the Kuzhal. Write down your ideas and the various themes that you will use in order to create this event.

ACTIVITY!

Look up for famous Kuzhal players. Read stories of their journey with the instrument. Come up with suggestions in order to spread more awareness about the Kuzhal.

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FOR PHOTOS-

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