



INTACH



KHARTAL

INTRODUCTION

A khartal or kartal is an ancient percussion instrument mainly originating from Rajasthan and used in devotional and folk songs. Khartal literally means the rhythm of the hand, the origin comes from the Hindi words, 'kara' meaning hand and 'tala' meaning clapping. Khartal falls under the class of idiophones of self-sounding instruments that combine properties of vibrator and resonator. This instrument even today in India accompanies bhajans, hymns or mournful songs on sad occasions.



DESIGN

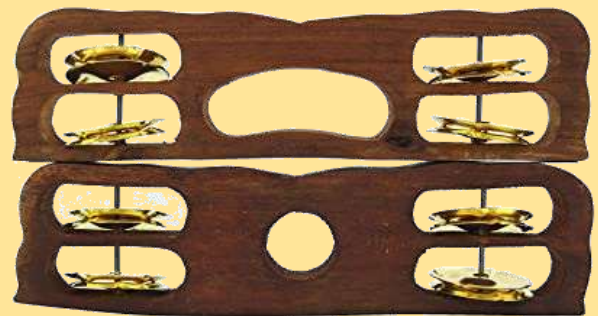
There are variety of khartals but the common ones come in pair, preferably described as 'male' and 'female' khartal. Usually made of wood or metal, this clapper is a 'Ghana Vadya' which has discs or plates and when clapped together produces clinking sound.

The 'male' khartal is usually thicker and is held with the thumb while the 'female' khartal is usually thinner and is mainly balanced on the ring finger, representing the fire element as it is associated with the sun and the root chakra. The force khartal produces is associated with staying power, stamina, and the power to be assertive.



Origin of Khartal

It is interesting to note that the music instrument Khartal is very ancient, as it can easily be seen in the hands of Saint Narada depicted and described in Vedic or Puranic texts. He was seen as always singing with a set of clapping blocks, which are apparently one of the categories of Khartal. This 'ghanvadya' was used by devotees during devotional dances and songs, or even during Musical discourses of divine stories called Harikatha rendering. A pair of castanets with little bells attached to them was the earliest form of Kartal.



In most of North India, Kartal instrument represents wooden block with jingles.

Bengal and East India

While in most parts of India has it as two blocks held in the hand of the player, but in Bengal, it is in the form of brass finger cymbals, about three inches or more in length, used during *Gaudiya Vaishnava Kirtans* taking place in this region.



Punjab

Khartal has carved an important place for itself for the music in Punjab. The favourite of saint and seers is still used in temples and gurdwaras. The contemporary rural bhangra sport the toombi or iktara in one hand and hartal in the other while dancing.



Rajasthan

Khartals hold a significant and unique place in the history of Rajasthan. It is played both as a solo instrument or part of an ensemble. A common feature of performances in Rajasthan is the rhythmic exchange between khartal and dholak artistes. Complex and fast rhythms are performed by khartal players, who stand, sit or kneel down.

Categories

- ✚ **Kartals (blocks):** It consists of a pair of wooden blocks with jingles or crotales (kartals mean crotales). One pair is used in one hand of the musician. These pieces can be clapped together at high speeds to make fast complex beats.
- ✚ **Kartals (small sheets):** It consists of a pair of thin, hard wooden pieces similar to the percussion bones (instrument). These are used in Rajasthan.
- ✚ **Kartals (cymbals):** The karatalas are small cymbals, also known as manjeera. These are used in devotional chants.



ACTIVITY TO DO...

1. Mention different names of Khartal as called in different States of India.

Maharashtra: Chipalya

Andhra Pradesh: _____

Karnataka: _____

Bihar: _____

Himanchal Pradesh: _____



2. Can you name few prominent Khartal instrument players and their works?

3. Write a short story associated with Khartal of ancient or medieval times.

4. Which communities are famous for playing khartal instruments in their folk songs?

References:

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<http://www.schoolchalao.com/basic-education/show-results/indian-musical-instruments/khartal>

