The Historical Context and Present Scenario of Madal
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Abstract: Madal is a two-faced hand drum used in Nepali music. It is also well-known throughout the world as a percussion instrument commonly employed in Nepali traditional music. In terms of its structure and playing style, limited works of literature and treatise have mentioned some rhythmic instruments akin to the m dal. The origins of the m dal have been linked to ancient instruments such as the mridanga, mardal, and muraj. The evolving trend of this musical instrument has been thoroughly examined in this study. The sources of information for this study were textual reviews and field trip notes. Furthermore, the researcher has also reviewed some research studies focusing on the caste and communities associated with m dal. As a result, the current study is intended to be a valuable resource for people interested in learning more about m dal. Similarly, this study has underlined the importance of m dal in the current global context.

Keywords: Folk-song, mādal, mardal, musical instrument, nātyashāstra, tri-pushkar.

Introduction
Among the varieties of musical instruments, the madal is one of the popular in mostly Nepali music field. It has been a representative and ideal musical instrument for each Nepali since ancient days. Most musical events, feasts, and festivals would be in the dark without it. Its indispensability has been almost on the top, ever in Nepali society, which is most famous folk musical instruments associated with our culture and lifestyle. “Mādal is a symbol not only of Nepali folk music but also of the whole Nepali music” (Regmi, 2058, p-3). So, it has been able to take a special place in the existing folk music in Nepali society since time immemorial. There is no doubt that mādal has always been present at every moment of sadness and joy in Nepali society. The current research is primarily concerned with the historical facts and charismatic significance of madal both within and outside of Nepal.

Methodology
The present article is prepared in a descriptive manner. The secondary types of data were utilized, reviewing the texts, books, research articles, news, theses, unpublished papers, and others. Library visits and web surfing were carried out to review the kinds of literature frequently as per necessity. A few field visits to Chāngunārayan, Gokarneshwara, Mahālaxmi temples, Kathmandu, Bhakatapur and Patan Durbar Square were made to collect some photos.

Historic aspects of Mādal
The very first musical instrument in this world, according to Hindu epic, is assumed to be the Damaru. It was believed to be created by Lord Mahādev, which is an Avanadda Vādyā, a kind of percussion instrument. According to the story, while Lord Mahādev started dancing cosmic Tāndava dance, he felt the lack of rhythm. So, he created the Damaru to accompany Tāndava (Mishra, 1992, p -70). In the Hindu religion, most of the Gods and Goddesses have been associated with music subjects, i.e. singing, instrument, and dance (Poudel, 2021a). Lord Ganesh and Indra are associated with mridanga (Regmi, 2058), which is similar to mādal of today. Mridanga is one of the Tri-Pushkar Vādyā, which was created by Śage Svāti, as stated in eastern ancient text: Nātyashāstra (Mishra, 2006, p -3). Likewise, Āwaj is another synonym word for Mridanga, which is known as Pakhāwaj, today (Mishra, 1992, p -64).
As stated in Nātyashāstra:

Mridanga Bheri Patahair Bhānda Dimdima Gomukhai:
Paṇwai Durdara chaiva Sarwātodyai Prawāditai:
(Malaviya, 1997, p -76)
Mridanga was one of the musical instruments of ancient time and has been popular at present too. Another eminent text Sangī Ratnākara has stated (Chaudhari, 2006, p 509) that,

...Nigadanti Mridangaṁ taṁ Mardalaṁ Murajaṁ tatha...

which denotes mādal with mardal or mridanga or muraj in the same sense. Veteran mādal player Subi Shah in his book 'Mādal' mentions as mādal in a modified form of Mridanga (Shah, 2039, p -1). There is a ritual belief in Hindu religion that Goddess Pārbati and God Shiva stay on left and right face of Mardal, respectively, according to a lines stated in a text, composed in between 7th to 11th century by Nārada in Sangīmakaranda (Telang, 1920, p -21).

Dakshinānge sthitam Rūḍra Umā bāme pratishtita;
Shivashaktimayo nādo mardale parikirtita:

The structure of mardal stated in Sangī Ratnākara by Shārangadev (Chaudhari, 2006, pp 508-509) is exactly the same as the structure of mādal today. So, the existence of mādal starts from the ancient period and continues to the modern days. Some photos of sculptural works taken by the researcher relating to mādal-like instruments in some Nepali temples are given below, which evidence the existence of musical works, especially the existence of mādal in Nepal since ancient times.

Figure 1 Nandi playing Tri-Pushkara (Gokarneshwara Temple)

Figure 2 Bhringi playing Mardal or Mridanga (Gokarneshwara Temple)

Figure 3 Yakshya playing Muraj (Chāngunārāyaṇ Temple)

Figure 4 An angel playing Pakhāwaj (Bhaktapur Durbar Square )
Figure 5 A group performance by Dancer, Mardal and Jhyāli player (Chāngunārayana Temple)

Figure 6 Lord playing instrument at Chāngunārayana Temple

Figure 7 playing three faced drum Kathmandu Durbar square

Figure 8 Mādal player in dancing pose at Kathmandu Durbar Square

Figure 9 stone carving of a Mādal player (downward, second last) Umāmaheshwara at Kumbheshwor Temple water spout, Patan.
Likewise, the mādal is associated with the magar people in the hilly region of Nepal. Traditionally, Magar people use to play mādal during their Sorathi, Kaudā, Ghātu, Sālaijiu dance and songs (Tiwari, 2060, p -104). Other communities i.e. Brāhmin, Kshatriya, Durā, Kumāl, Gurung also play mādal in the local ceremonies, like farming, cultivation, feast, and festivals. Newāri people of Nepal also use to play mādal with their folk tunes. The leather instrument is called ‘Khin’ in Newāri language. So, these people have named mādal as ‘Maga-Khin’in their mother language, which means the instruments belonging to Magar caste (Thomas et al., 1960, p -411). “Nepali scholars agree that the drum (mādal) is typical to the Magar caste in the central Nepali hills west of Kathmandu” (Maharajan & Moore, 2010, p -5).

In the past, Nepali people used to visit Indian places for employment, trade, pilgrimage, and educational purpose and Indian people also used to visit Nepal for the same causes. So, it can be easily assumed that, during those days, due to the movement of people across those two countries, either the mādal, probably, would have been arrived from the places of India, where, mridanga or pakhāwaj was popular or mādal would have been reached to the territories of India. Likewise, the Nepali Gurung and Magar people in the Indian army, in the past, also can be assumed as the carrier of the mādal from Nepal to ancient India, and probably, Indian scholars reformatted mādal into mridanga as per their convenience or vice-versa.
Folk music scholar, Kandel has opined that, before the unification of Nepal by King Prithvi Narayan, the magar ruler had occupied most of the territory of Nepal and they popularized the mādal throughout the country in between the 8th to 12th centuries (Maharajan & Moore, 2010, p -6). On the other hand, since primordial days, there have been many other musical instruments in practice, which seemed similar in the name, as well as, the physical structure of mādal, inside Nepal and in India too.

As discussed before, mādal is the alternate name of mardal (Mishra, 1992, p-88). The mādal in Bengal, Chhattisgarh (Sen, 2005, p -78), Rajasthan, South India (Sen, 2005, p -148) seem similar in name, and the structure of mādal, which are bigger than Nepali mādal in reality. Likewise, Maddale (Sindhusri, 2020) is an inevitable rhythmic instrument alike mādal at Karnataka, while performing Yakshagāna - a theater form that combines, dance, music, dialogue, costume, make-up and stage techniques, which was developed with the Bhakti movement during 11th century (Dey, n.d.). Late Hiriyadka Gopala Rao (1919-2019AD) was an eminent maddale maestro from Kannada (Reporter, 2019). Similarly, the Sudha Madhalam is another percussion instrument similar to mādal accompanied with Keli, Panchavādyam, Kathakali and Krishnanattam in Kerala (Cultural dept of Kerala, n.d.). The playing style of maddale (Upadhya, 2018) seem similar to the Khin (Kutumba, 2016), a kind of rhythmic instrument which is very popular in the Newāri community in Nepal. Some examples of mādal and alike drums found in internet are presented below:
Manufacture and structure of mādal

The major material for manufacturing the mādal are hollow log, goatskin, straw-ash, metal powder, glue, and other hand tools (Shah, 2039). As it is a leather instrument, animal skin, especially, goatskin is widely used to make good quality mādal. The log (Ghār) is specially made from the trees like Chhātiwan (Alstonia scholaris), Shīrish (Mimosas Lebbeck), Chāp (Michelia champaca), Sīmal (Bombax ceiba), Utis (Alnus nepalensis), Kadam (Anthoecephalus chinesis), Khirro (Apocynaceae), Bamboo, and Siudi (Cactus) (Shah, 2039 p-3). Shārangadev has mentioned the Bījpur (Bimiro) tree-log for making the mardal (Chaudhari, 2006, p. -509). The log is carefully hollowed from both sides, 1 foot to 2 feet in length. While hollowing, one side of the log is made smaller in circumference in comparison with the other. The smaller face is known as male (Bhāle) and larger is known as female (Pothi) (Shah, 2039, p-3). For the tightening purpose, a long leather strap (rope) is weaved in a zigzag pattern, on the edges (Mathurā) of both sides of goatskin, which covers both hollow ends. After tightening the processed goatskin at both ends of ghār; a mixture of straw-ash, metal powder, and glue is pasted carefully for the purpose of producing resonating sound if a stroke is made. Mādal is played either by hanging on the waist or sitting. Traditionally, specific castes of Nepal, like Chanāra, Sārki (shoe-maker), Kulu, and Bādi are engaged in the manufacturing of mādal (Shah, 2039, p-2). But today, this skill has been converted into a money-earning professional business. So, there is no boundary of castes in the production of mādal. Basically, the hilly regions of Nepal are popular places for producing the mādal in a wide range.

Kinds of Mādal

Due to the different aspects of mādal, like pattern, size, type, usage, and, various kinds of mādal are found according to location, and caste specific. The names of the mādal are also different from the place by place and caste by caste. In the hilly region, small-sized mādal is used, because it is easy to carry and dance on up and down landscapes. Purbeli mādal is small in size and popular in eastern hilly part of Nepal, and Pashchimeli mādal is comparatively big in size and accompanied with local tunes which are popular in the western hill and terāi region of Nepal. Rāni Mādal is much popular in Pālpā district (Karki, 2022). Sorathi mādal is another type of mādal which accompanied with sorathi tune and dance since the 16th century. Basically, Gurung, Magar, Brāhmin, Kshetri, Kumāl communities in Dhaulāşī, Gandakī, Rāpī, Bheri, and Lumbini districts of Nepal are engaged with Sorathi (Tiwari, 2060, p-104). Likewise, Sakhiyā Mādal and Jhumrī Mādal are accompanied with folk tunes and dances of Thāru community of Terāi region of Nepal (Karki, 2022).

Syllables played in Mādal then and now:

There have been some mnemonic syllables of mādal since ancient times. Those syllables (Varma- basic alphabets) are played with certain methods. Basically, special parts of the hand: palm and fingers are used to produce the appropriate sound from both faces of mādal. As stated in 1033 and 1034 shloka of "Sangīt Ratnākār", by Shārangadev, he had pointed 32 syllables altogether could be produced from mardal. 7 syllables Tat, Diṅ, Tho, Te, He, Nan, De are produced from the right face, and 6 syllables, Tha, Ta, Lha, Da, Dha, La from the left face. In addition, 16 other syllables of Pataha (Today's Dholak) and 3 syllables by another opinion Bha, Jha, Ma- 3 syllables.

Today, many of those alphabets have disappeared and some are changed or mixed with other syllables. As far as mādal is concerned, the experts of mādal have summarized 5 basic syllables: 1. Tat/Ta/Na/Nā, 2. Tā/Tin/Ti/Tuṁ, 3. Dhīṃ/Dhī/Dī/Dā 4. Fā/Fa/Khāt/Khā 5. Jhāṃ/Dhing/Dhāṅg. Those syllables practiced today are somehow similar to the syllables from ancient times.
Present Scenario of mādal

Mādal has gone through various epochs, since its origin. In ancient times, Mardal was accompanied with both, religious and folk music, which is mentioned in various ancient music texts. Mādal was accompanied with those types of songs, which were about historical ballads, historical tales of ancestors, religious hymns, romantic, and sad songs. Even today, Mādal is still played with equal importance. This musical instrument has been playing an important role in special occasions, festivals, farming, and other local ceremonies as inevitable. The role and importance of this popular instrument in the present context can be analyzed with the following aspects.

Mādal as the heartbeat of folk music

According to experts, folk music is the basis of our culture. Without music, culture becomes dull and crippled. The arts and artists in society are the bearers of tradition, generation to generation (Bohlman, 1988). Musical performances of singing, instrument playing, and dancing at different times and contexts are a beautiful way to express the feelings of human beings and to mirror the actual society (Mukarung, 2078). So, the music is glue for social integration. Likewise, the mādal also has been playing a coordinating role in the musical heritage of Nepal, which is celebrated since the traditional era. People from different communities including magar, gurung and other castes living in Nepal have been embracing mādal as their ancestral musical instrument. Therefore, Mādal, which has been played in folk music since the past, has been the heartbeat of Nepali folk music heritage.

Mādal as the identity of Nepal

Nepal is famous as a country, rich in folk culture in the international arena. “Nepal has been second to none in its musical tradition” according to an eminent musicologist (Darnal, 1993). Most of the 126 castes, here, have had their own way of living, festivals, and traditions since the past. So, from birth to death many musical patterns have been found in the society that exists as a tradition or practice. Most of the existing musical instruments in Nepali society are found to be fixed for certain purposes by tradition, i.e. from permission to proscription (Regmi, 2015). But mādal is such type of musical instrument that can be played and performed in all seasons, all months, and all days except in the hour of mourning. In most of the performances of Nepal in the representative programs held in the country and abroad, the presentation of Nepali folk music has been found to be indispensable, where the mādal is found played, sometimes as the main instrument and sometimes as an accompanying instrument. In this context, mādal has always been an important musical instrument in each national and international level music conference representing Nepal (Shah, 2039, p-2). Thus, it has been known as the identity of all Nepali. This has been termed “the national rhythm instrument of Nepal” (Tiwari, 2060, p -41).

Mādal as a professional subject

In modern times, music is studied as a rich profession, whereas, in the past, music was practiced as a subject of entertainment and self-expression. On the one hand, music used to be performed in the worship of gods and goddesses, on the other hand, music was developed as a powerful medium to express the events prevailing in the country and society and the feelings within an individual. At present, the importance of music for human life is increasing along with all these aspects. Compared to the eastern world, the professional attitude towards music in the western world is found to be more organized and stronger. In the case of mādal, it has been popular most in Nepal, and gathering fame in the international market gradually for some decades. It is reported that Nepali musician Ranjit Gajmer firstly used mādal during 1971 AD, in the Mumbai film music industry (Gaekwad, 2018) (Sasad, 2018). That made mādal a more popular musical instrument in the SAARC region through the Indian film “Hare Rām Hare Krishna”. Before the entry of mādal in Mumbai, many Nepali cultural trips were already had
made to international forums along with mādal. From this point of view, the performance of mādal has become as popular as any other subject of music.

Nepal’s veteran maestro Nhuochche Bahadur Dangol (Kantipur, 2018) (Karki, 2022) is an exemplary personality who has been making a name and fame for himself and his country by presenting the mādal music on stage at home and abroad, which he learned from his ancestors and guru. He has visited 19 countries with mādal music (Karki, 2022). Recently, another eminent Nepali mādal maestro from West Bengal, Kalimpong, Kajee Singh has been honored with the Padma Shri award -2022 by the Indian government for his great contribution for preserving and promoting Gorkha folk culture (Ministry of home affairs press note, 2022). This award has made all Nepali as well as all mādal players proud of the music profession. Thus, undoubtedly, in the current context, mādal seems to be established itself as a professional subject.

**Mādal as a subject of higher study**

After the establishment of Tribhuvan University in Nepal, Padma Kanya College in 2017 BS, Ratna Rajya Campus in 2030 BS, Lalit Kala Campus in 2033 BS, and Kathmandu University in 2053 BS, started teaching music as an academic subject (Pokhrel, 2021). Many Nepali scholars have been awarded higher degrees in separate subject of music from different universities (Dhakal, 2021). With the flow of time, theoretical and practical classes on mādal under folk music have been taking place in the courses of Tribhuvan University (Lalitkala campus, 2015), Kathmandu University, and in other private colleges too. At present, separate classes of mādal from school level to university level have been arranged as other subjects. After the establishment of the National Theatre and Royal Nepal Academy during 2014 BS in Nepal, many periodical pieces of training and instructional programs related to mādal have been organized time by time, which has been accelerating the popularity of mādal. Thus, it cannot be denied that mādal has been established as a separate subject of study. Many private and community-based organizations have been conducting training on mādal for decades.

**Mādal as a multidimensional musical instrument**

Among the 5 types of instruments prevalent in music (Poudel, 2021b), mādal is studied under Avanadda Bājā (Percussion instrument). Apart from accompanying folk music, there has been a new trend to play mādal with other songs and music too. Mādal is now widely used in folk songs, hymns, pop, movie music and other local and foreign music. There are many ample examples of Nepali artists and bands performing music at home and abroad (Yerina & Ivan, 2010), presenting the use of mādal from various dimensions. It seems that mādal has been presented not only for rhythmic purposes but also in melodic purposes for creating tunes as mādal-tarang (Tintala, 2007). Similarly, e-mādal is another example of mādal’s variety of experimentalism, through which mādal can be used for other phonetic uses including rhythm and melody. Likewise, mādal has been played not only placing horizontally, placed vertically too, which in called ‘Gilāse-mādal’, placed like a drinking water-glass (Fig: 17).

Apart from these views, sometimes mādal was the only one popular musical instrument accompanied by cadre to fight against Ranacracy and autocracy through conscious songs which supported for the emergence of democracy in Nepal. Many of the writers, novelists, cinema – makers, lyricists also have been expressed about mādal in their creations, i.e. singer late Dharmaraj Thapa and others.

**Conclusion**

There are synonymous names of mridang like muraj, mardal, pakhāwaj, which have been playing an important role in the music field from Vedic times to modern times. This study has further strengthened the fact that the ancestral instrument of Nepali percussion instrument mādal is mardal or mridang, which has been played with religious and social significance, since the old days. The process of manufacturing, the syllables, the playing styles of mādal...
today are found similar to mārdal during the ancient era. Many similar instruments like mādal are found in use with various names in multiple places. The important aspect is that, the playing style of mādal in Nepal is an unique.

Likewise, the present study has stated six major aspects concerning to the popularity of mādal at present situation in Nepal. As far as works of literature relating to mādal, there the researcher noticed a few other research articles mentioning caste and communities associated with mādal in internet, mādal related some books and general articles in Nepal. The study would be more effective if community visits were arranged. This study will be definitely a strong reference for future authors and researchers who seek for the historical facts of this musical instrument. Similarly, the present article will be very much relevant for teaching purposes also to clarify about the historical and current situation of the mādal from different perspectives.

References


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