



# APPLICATION AND ESSENCE OF FLUTE IN HINDUSTANI CLASSICAL MUSIC

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## ABSTRACT:

Flute (Bansuri) is very old musical instrument. It got its origin in India. It depicts the old Indian culture of Mahabharat times. Lord Krishna made it very popular in those days. Even today the flute players play on this instrument on the same style. They try to copy the activities of Lord Krishna, who used to play on flute to collect his cows and fellow cow herders. The musical display of Lord Krishna on his flute in the lonely jungles of river bank to hear the charming tune of his flute. Not only *Gopikas* but also the wild animals and birds were generally spell bound over the sweet voice of his flute. On account of being very expert flute player Lord Krishna has been called by various names such as Banshidhar, Murlidhar and Murli Manohar, etc. The flute is very cheap, light and thin pipe of bamboo. It is, therefore, very convenient and portable. It is also made of steel or bronze pipe. But in general, they are made of bamboo pipe, hence are called 'Bansuris' in Hindustani. This instrument is very useful in light as well as in classical music. Now-a-days the Bansuri (flute) is used in Orchestra also.

**KEY WORDS:** Flute, Music, Fingers, Bansuri, Classical, Beats.

The Bansuri(flute) is very simple and easy to play. The player is not required to tune it again and again. It does not need any sort of iron book etc. to strike on. It can be played simply with the slight blow of air from mouth and some movement of fingers.

This part is made of bamboo or bronze containing various holes as required. The holes of the flute should be in one straight line. The hole through which the air is blown, should be a bit bigger than other 6 holes. The inner part of the flute must be hollow and soft. A cork piece is fixed on the end of the main hole where lips throw air. This cork is meant for producing sound. The inner part should be plane and soft so that it may not put any obstacle to allow the air up to the cork freely.

This is very important part of the flute because the fineness of the sound depends upon the well adjustment of the cork. It is fixed with the upper portion of the bigger hole through which air is blown. If the cork is not well adjusted at the proper place, it is very difficult to play on it, hence the smoothness of the inner part of the flute is very essential. The Murli type flute

is not fitted with a piece of cork. A slanting cut wooden piece is placed in such a way that the air from the mouth strikes directly at the body of the flute.

The flutes are of various sizes so they are tuned on different notes. The radio artists keep different numbers of flute with them. The different flutes are tuned on different notes and are played according to the need of the time. One flute cannot solve the purpose of all sorts of sound as some of them are tuned on high pitch while others at low. Some players start from second black of Harmonium while others from third, fourth or fifth respectively. Every flute has its own original note. It cannot be changed by the blow of air from mouth. It should be remembered that smaller flutes produce higher pitch while longer one's produced lower pitch.

The Bansuri type flute is handled in oblique position. The main hole touches the lower lip. The air should be thrown with the upper lip into the hole in such a way that it should directly go in to the main hole. The player should put the lips of the first, second and third fingers of left hand on the hole numbers 6-5 and 4 respectively, while that of right hand on the whole numbers 3-2 and 1. The thumbs of both hands are to be kept just opposite i.e. the lower side of the flute. If there is hole on the back side, use the left-hand thumb. The tips of the fingers should be placed on the hole in such a way that they may cover it entirely and allow the air to pass out only through the outlet from which the sound is to be produced.

The Murli type flute is handled in straight position. So far as its playing is concerned, the player should adjust the fingers and the thumb in such a way that the hole of the outlet of air may remain just in front of the mouth. The placing and the movement of fingers is the same as in Bansuri type flute.

#### The Positions of Playing on Bansuri (Flute)

1. Sitting Position on ground.
2. Sitting Position on an unarmad chair.
3. Standing Position.

Sitting on ground. – It is an old Indian style of playing on Bansuri and is going on in practice since the time of Sri Krishana in Mahabharat. The player plays on flute independently sitting under a tree taking the position as shown in picture.

#### Notes on Bansuri (Flute)

The seven full tone notes come out as follow: -

Sa note of Medium Octave on blowing air from mouth and keeping all the holes closed and hole No. 1(main hole) open.

Re note of Medium Octave on blowing air from mouth and keeping hole No. 2 from below open.

Ga notes of Medium Octave on blowing air from mouth keeping hole No.3 from below open.

Ma notes of Medium Octave on blowing air from mouth and keeping hole No.4 from below open.

Pa notes of Medium Octave on blowing air from mouth and keeping hole No.5 from below open.

Dha notes of Medium Octave on blowing air from mouth and keeping hole No.6 from below open.

Nee note of Medium Octave on blowing air from mouth and keeping hole No.6 from below open.

Sa note of Upper Octave on blowing air with double force and keeping all holes closed. All the other Upper Octave notes can be played by the same method on blowing air with double force.

Half Tone Notes: (Komal Swara).

Half Tone notes are four in number -Re-Ga-Dha-Nee.

There are two methods of playing half tone notes on flute: -

1. By keeping the holes half open.
2. By changing the position of notes.

According to the first method if we keep the holes of full tone notes half open, the half tone note will come out i.e.- On opening the hole No. 2 half, Re-opening hole No. 3 half, Ga, on opening hole No. 6 half, Dha and on opening hole No. 7 half, Nee half tone notes will come out.

By changing the position of notes the following scales (Thatas) of notes will come out, because the positions of full tone notes are fixed on flute and when we change the Sa point on other notes, the positions of scales change such as :-

Notes on original setting of flute fixed on Bilawal Thana.

When we fix Sa note on hole No. 2 (Re) notes of Kafee thata will come out.

When we fix Sa note on hole No. 2 (Ga) notes on Bhairavi Thata will come out.

When we fix Sa note on hole No. 4 (Ma) notes of Kalyan Thata will come out.

Sharp Note

Out of 12 Notes of Octave only M (Ma) note is of sharp note. Others are half tone notes or fuji tone notes. To play out sharp note, the next hole is kept half open. For example, to make Ma as other sharp note, we will have keep Pa note half open.

Octave Positions in Bansuri

There are 3 Octaves in Indian Music: -

Medium Octave, Upper Octave and Lower Octave

Medium Octave. All the notes of Medium Octave come out by simple blow of air from mouth.

Upper Octave. With the application of double force of air from mouth the Upper Octave notes come out from the same hole accordingly.

Lower Octave. Originally in flute Lower Octave notes cannot be obtained. For Lower Octave the position of Sa note changes on Re, Ga, Ma and other notes. For example, if we fix Ma note as Sa on hole No. 4, we can obtain Nee, Dha and Pa notes of Lower Octave normally.

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