

**Manufacture of Veena and Tambura in Bangalore – The changing scenario.**

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## **Manufacture of Veena and Tambura in Bangalore – The changing scenario**

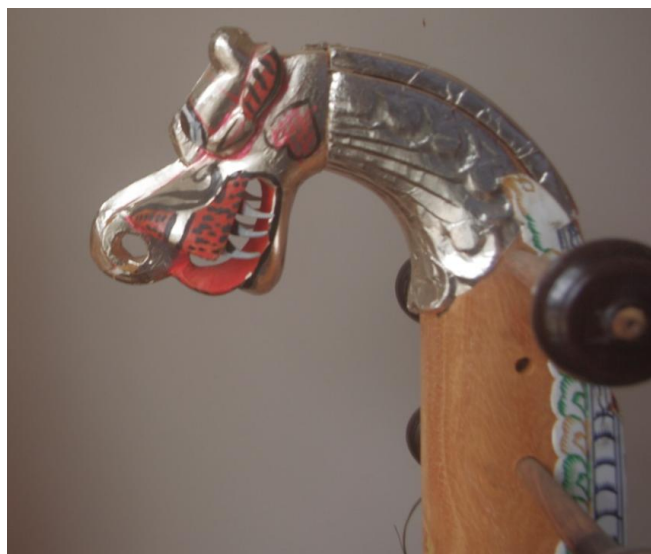
This research will inquire into the changes which happened in manufacturing industry in Bangalore with respect to the musical instruments Veena and Tambura. This study also highlights why these changes have happened over the last fifteen to twenty years. To understand this we will look at the following aspects.

- 1. Different kinds of Veena and Tambura**
- 2. Distinctive features of mysore Veena**
- 3. Dimensions**
- 4. Previous Manufacturers in Bangalore**
- 5. Innovations made**
- 6. Previous situation**
- 7. Present day situation of the industry**
- 8. Changes**
- 9. Conclusion**

### **Different kinds of Veenas**

Tanjavur	Mysore
Yali mukam is colourful Kudam has ivory like work embossed	Yali mukam is carved Has minimum ivory work

Tanjavur Veena



## Mysore Veena



Tambura in Karnataka was previously made of red cedar, rosewood and later made of jack wood, neem tree, mango tree.



Mysore Veena was made previously of rosewood, now made of jackwood with rosewood top or only jack wood.



### **1. Distinctive feature of Mysore Veena**

We can understand there are specific differences with respect to structure (external – visual), and also in the process of manufacture and also the mela setting

- The top of kudam is thinner which brings out a different sound as against Tanjore Veena.
- The width of the dandi widens from 2 inches to 2.5 inches (in melam)
- The tuning of strings to the burude is different. (Tanjore – strings 1 and 2 on one side) (Mysore-string 1 and 3 on one side).
- The sorakkai was made of tin and now made of fibre.
- The nagapasha is made of wood called puchcha.

- In the Mysore Veena the first part of the bridge near the first string is made of steel and the balance made of brass( integrated one piece)
- The mela making technique is also different .(video added)

## 2. Dimensions of a Veena and Tambura

### **Veena**

Height is 12 inches and bridge is 1.5 inches height slightly curved and the top flap of kudam is 12 inches by 18 inches.

Dandi is 24 inches in length, after fitting will become 22 inches.

The total length of a Veena is 54-56 inches.

### **Tambura**

12 inches in height and 16 inches in top radius (oval in shape).

Male shruti – Dandi is 6ft in height Female shruti – dandi is 4 ft in height.

## 3. Key Manufacturers of Veena of the last two decades

- Srinivas
- Ranganna
- Aruna Musicals
- Narasinga rao
- Krishnan –Veena works
- Kempaiah –Hosakerehalli
- Basavaraj – Nagarbhavi
- Krishnamurthy – Jayanagar.

**Typical manufacturing unit:** A factory of Aruna musical had 12 skilled workers manufactured and sold 20 Veenas and 15 Tamburas per month. Another music shop Veena works manufactured had 10 skilled labourers and manufactured and sold 15 Tamburas and 10 Veenas per month. The industry was very competitive and all the manufacturers aimed at making high quality Veena and this led to a lot of innovations.

## 4. Innovations Made during that period.

The innovation made by Narsing rao was a

- Portable Veena of wood.

- Making Veena with movable frets
- Fixed Tambura with a motor.
- Veena with guitar pegs instead of regular burude.

Aruna musicals had interns for Veena manufacture with a monthly stipend. They were the pioneer in fibre glass Veena which reduced the cost by a considerable amount. They used fibre cloth 2-3 layers. The outer cloth was smooth of first quality and the inner layers were of rough quality. They were fitted in moulds and were shaped using resin and hardener. The factory also mechanised the whole process of manufacture to 30 percent.



## 5. Present situation amongst manufacturers

Amongst all the above only Veena works and Basavaraj are manufacturing Veenas after getting carved kudams and dandi and yali from the base manufacturers. There is no Tambura manufacturer at all. Other manufacturers and shop owners get their material sourced from a place called Simpadipura a village off the Tumkur express highway.

**Data collected-** Visit to Simpadipura and met the families who manufacture the Veena. The village of Simpadipura is located about about 65 kilometres from Bangalore off the Tumkur Expressway.

The purpose of the study to analyse the growing changes in Veena and Tambura manufacturing industry .We will have to understand the process of manufacture and later we will analyse reason for the changes and why they happened.



## 6. Manufacturing process of Veena

The Veena and Tambura have similar process of manufacturing –

The manufacture of Veena is the two fold process

Structure involving basic carpentry and the mela fixing.

- **Basic carpentry**

### Basic Raw material



Jack Fruit Tree / Red Cedar or Rose wood is the most preferred wood for making Veena.

A jackfruit tree which is non fruit bearing over hundred years old is cut to carve kudams .The diameter of the tree could be up to 2 metres. The carving of kudams is a specialized job; lot of planning is done to optimize the number of kudams which can be cut from the tree trunk. In the tree trunk some pieces come out perfectly well others are not perfect in quality. The branches of the tree (one foot in diameter) are used to make dandi and the yazh mukha. The top of kudam is usually made of rosewood or jackwood. After the kudams are cut they are carved to form hollows and left to season for about two months.



The process of carving is very strenuous and a pit is dug inside the surface of the earth, the wood piece is fitted in and the carving takes place. The instruments used for carpentry and carving are locally manufactured. When the top plank of the kudam is cut, it is made sure that the grains on the wood or patterns are parallel to the length of the Dandi. After seasoning, the Veena assembling takes from 4- 6 days .The kudam and the dandi and yazh is fixed by mara vajra and sometimes by wax. Dandi is fixed using bamboo nails.





And the joints are covered with ivory like engraving. The finishing is done after painting polishing. The plastic decoration made for Veena includes skill of fixing the plastic to Veena, engraving and colouring. There are 4-5 families who are working in simpadipura with respect to Veena manufacture. Then they are transported to Bangalore as and when they get orders and the mela setting is done in Bangalore. The Family of Manju papaiah is one of the fore most who have been doing this for the second generation. These families do this as an additional source of work the main being agriculture.



- **Mela setting**

Materials needed are raw bees wax, charcoal powder and very little resin. Mela setting is done by experts who have musical knowledge and it takes about 3 day to make a mela. The major difference in mela setting which is special about Bangalore is the liquid is made using above materials and poured over the edges of the dandi using side support and then while hardening the melas are set. The melam is carved and polished after setting the frets. Slope in the melam to enable the adjacent frets not to touch the string while playing.



#### Sequence of mela setting-

- Fixation of strings
- Fixing the first fret near yali side( S positon )
- Fixing the bridge
- Fixing of panchama and it continues

The frets earlier used were box type, now are rounded shape.

The values of steel strings used are

Tala string –S-30	Veena string – S-30,	Brass string 3-24
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> string -32	P-27	Brass string 4-22

#### 7. Skills involved in manufacture

- Specialised carpentry for cutting and carving
- Followed by two months of seasoning
- Manufacture of Frets and Thanthi
- Plastic decoration

- Engraving and Colouring
- Time required – 4-6 days after seasoning
- Melam setting – 3 days (Musical sense is a must)

## 8. What we understand distinctively from the study

The findings have been classified with respect to

### Manufacturing

- No manufacture of Tamburas exist today
- Innovations were not phenomenally successful.
- The making of Veenas with raw material from exclusive trees like red cedar, rosewood has reduced.
- Shrinking demand for Veenas
- Reorganised into three distinctive clusters
  - Semi finished structure from Simpadipura
  - Bridge, Brass frets and Strings from Tanjavur
  - Melam set at Bangalore

### Labour

- Scarcity of skilled workers
- Not a full time occupation
- Long gestation periods
- Problem with integrating different skilled labour

### Other Findings

- The process of repair and mela setting is continuous and people knowing this skill are employed
- The export market is lucrative

## 9. Conclusions

- Shrinking demand has led to closure of many thriving units
- No exclusive manufacturer for Mysore Veena
- Manufacturers are flexible to consumer preferences

- Serious threat to the future of manufacture of Mysore Veena.

**Data collected from**

1. Mr Srinivas, Shantala table works, Bangalore.
2. Bombay Musicals, Bangalore
3. Mr Raju, Veena works, Bangalore
4. Mrs and Mr .Kashinath, Aruna musicals, Bangalore.
5. Family of Manju Pappaih, Simpadipura.
6. Other families at Simpadipura



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