

Tabla aur Pakhawaj Prarambhik Part-1: Paramparik Sangeet ki Shuruaat

Introduction

Indian classical music has always been celebrated for its deep connection with rhythm and melody. Among the many instruments that carry forward this legacy, tabla and pakhawaj hold a unique and powerful place. While the tabla is known for its versatility and presence in both classical and popular music, the pakhawaj is revered as the ancient, majestic percussion instrument often associated with dhrupad sangeet.

Tabla aur Pakhawaj Prarambhik Part-1 is not just a beginner's book or lesson plan—it is truly the first step into the timeless world of Indian rhythm (tala). Just as the alphabet forms the foundation of language, the prarambhik (beginner) level lays the groundwork for every future exploration of rhythm.

Historical Context

The pakhawaj is considered the elder of the two instruments, tracing its origins back to ancient times. With its deep and resonant tone, it accompanied dhrupad singing, temple rituals, and court music. The tabla, on the other hand, emerged later, around the 18th century. It is believed to have evolved from the pakhawaj, split into two drums to allow more intricate rhythmic patterns.

Famous historical figures such as Amir Khusrau are often associated with the invention of tabla, though historians still debate this. What's certain is that tabla quickly became the heartbeat of Hindustani classical music, accompanying khayal, thumri, ghazal, and even film songs.

A lesser-known fact is that many great tabla masters began their journey by first understanding the bols (syllables) of the pakhawaj. Thus, *Prarambhik Part-1* reflects not only a curriculum but also a living tradition passed down through centuries.

The Instruments: Construction and Basics

- **Tabla consists of two drums:**
 - **Dayan (right drum):** made of wood, tuned to the raga's key.
 - **Bayan (left drum):** made of metal or clay, producing bass tones.
- **Pakhawaj** is a barrel-shaped, double-headed drum played with both hands. Its left head gives deep bass, while the right produces crisp, sharp sounds.

Both instruments rely on syllables or bols like *dha*, *dhin*, *na*, *ti*, *ghe*, *tun*. These bols are not just sounds; they are the language of rhythm.

Why Prarambhik Part-1 Matters

At the Prarambhik level, students are introduced to:

- **Basic sitting posture and hand placement.**
- **Fundamental bols of tabla and pakhawaj.**
- **Simple taals like *Teen Taal (16 beats)*, *Dadra (6 beats)*, and *Chautaal (12 beats)*.**
- **Recitation of bols (padhant), which sharpens rhythmic memory.**

This stage is crucial because a weak foundation in bols or taal sense makes it difficult to progress to advanced improvisation, compositions, or accompaniment.

The Rhythmic World (Taal)

In Part-1, students get their first taste of the majestic world of taals:

- Teen Taal (16 beats) – The most popular taal in tabla training.
- Dadra (6 beats) – Commonly found in light music and bhajans.
- Chautaal (12 beats) – A pakhawaj-based taal, often played with dhrupad.

Each taal is like a mathematical cycle combined with musical expression. Learning to clap (tali) and wave (khali) along with reciting bols is the first sign of mastery.

Famous Maestros Who Began This Way

Legends like Ustad Zakir Hussain, Pandit Kishan Maharaj, and Pandit Anokhelal Mishra in tabla, or Pandit Mohan Shyam Sharma in pakhawaj, all started with the same basic bols taught in *Prarambhek Part-1*.

As Zakir Hussain once said:

“Every great composition begins with a single dha.”

This simple truth reminds us that even the most complex improvisations rest on a beginner’s practice of dha, dhin, na.

Cultural Relevance Today

Why does *Prarambhek Part-1* still matter in 2025, when fusion bands and electronic beats dominate? The answer is simple: authentic rhythm never goes out of style.

- In Bollywood, tabla is still heard in soulful songs like *Kesariya* (*Brahmastra*, 2022) or *Ghodey Pe Sawaar* (*Qala*, 2022).

- The pakhawaj has gained renewed attention in global fusion concerts, blending with jazz, rock, and even electronic music.

By starting with Part-1, learners not only connect with tradition but also prepare themselves to experiment in contemporary music.

Interactive Corner

Mini Quiz:

1. Which taal is most commonly taught first in tabla?
2. Which instrument is older: tabla or pakhawaj?
3. What are the two drums of tabla called?

Poll:

Which do you prefer hearing live – the crisp bols of tabla or the majestic resonance of pakhawaj?

Resource Link: [Learn Basic Tabla Bols – Video Tutorial](#)

Conclusion

Tabla aur Pakhawaj Prarambhik Part-1 is not just the first step in learning rhythm—it is the foundation of a lifelong journey. From the booming resonance of the pakhawaj to the delicate brilliance of tabla, this beginner's stage connects students to the ancient roots of Indian music while opening doors to modern creativity.

If you are starting your journey, remember: every great maestro once played their very first *dha*. Your hands, too, hold the power to carry forward this paramparik sangeet ki shuruaat (the beginning of a traditional musical journey).
