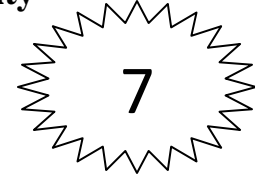


## Introduction of Pandit Lalanpiya's thumris in unconventional Taal (Rhythms) to Musical and Dance fraternity

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### 1.Introduction

In hindustani classical music and Kathak dance 'Thumari' has a very special position especially in the Expression part of Kathak as well after the khayal gayan for the semiclassical singing.

Bharat Telang, in his audio CD titled "Thumri with Shri. Gangadharrao Telang's book 'Bandish Ki Thumri'," mentions that Thumri is a form of light classical vocal music, which is also mentioned in the Sanskrit play "Malavikagnimitra." In Bharatmuni's Natya Shastra, the Kaisiki Vritti is explained, and this is predominant in Thumri.

During the tenure of Vajid Ali Shah, Thumri, a style of Kavya Gayan, became popular in Kathak dance. Thumri can be categorized into two types based on its lyrics and style of performing, which are the foundation of Thumri:

- i. Bol Banaav Ki Thumri: These are Thumris that are created by blending Khayal and folk singing and incorporating local melodies.
- ii. Bol Baant or Bandish Ki Thumri: These Thumris are created by blending Dhruvpad and Khayal singing(Bajpeyi,23).

Regarding the composers of Thumri, Dr. Puru Dadhich writes, "--- Lalanpiya and others are names that are still popular in the world of music (109)." I got introduced to Lalanpiya's Thumris in this way.

Pandit Nand Lalan Saraswat, a resident of Farukhabad, is known as the 'Lalan Piya (1856-1926)', the Thumri Samrat. He is considered the greatest composer of Bandish Ki Thumri and a pioneer in the unique Dhruvpad-oriented style of lyrics (youthindiatoday.com, 2020).

In commemoration of his 150th birth anniversary, a special issue of the monthly magazine "Kalakunj Bharati" was published by Samskar Bharati, and its theme was 'Pandit Lalanpiya: The Gandharva of Panchala.'

In this special issue, guest editor Shri Omprakash Mishra Kanchan has also extensively written about Lalanpiya's personality, literature, and singing style in his book 'Panchala's Gandharva, Thumri Samrat Lalanpiya.'

In "Sangeet Ratnakar," it is stated: -"तालस्तल प्रतिष्ठयमिती धात्रोर्वत्रिस्मृतः । गीतं वाद्यं तथा नृत्यं यतस्तले प्रतिष्ठतम्।" i.e. "One who possesses a profound mastery of rhythm (taal) is recognized as a genuine musician. In a milieu where music, musical instruments, and dance are esteemed, the very essence of rhythm finds its dwelling,"and Pandit Lalpiya was one such musician(dikshit, 17)

Kanchan Ji stated that Pandit Lalanpiya possessed an exceptional understanding of both music and literature. He was a great scholar and teacher in both music and literature.

Lalanpiya was not only a great musician but also a remarkable poet and an unparalleled composer in the realm of Thumri. Most of his compositions are characterized by the Sitarakhani style of singing(Kanchan,63).



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Dr. Sonam Gupta presented her doctoral dissertation titled "Thumri Samrat Lalanpiya and his Compositions: A Musicological Study" in 2009 at the Bhatkhande Music Institute University.

Shrimati Sushma Singh wrote a short essay on "Lalaniya's Literary and Devotional Sentiments" as part of her M.A. (Hindi) studies.

Sushri Pooja Gupta mentioned that Lalanpiya's compositions encompass not only the Shringar rasa but also various other rasas such as Shant, Karuna, Hasya, and incorporate figures of speech like Anupras, Upma, Utpreksha, Yamak, Shlesh, Alankar, along with words from regional languages (Gupta,22).

Dr. Shatrughna Shukla wrote in his research book 'Origin, Development, and Styles of Thumri,' on pages 155-156, "He (Lalaniya) had an extraordinary command over rhythm and layakari (rhythmic pattern)."

Shri Bharatendu Bajpai, who transcribed 125 compositions in his a book titled 'Thumriyan of Lalaniya,' stated in the introduction to his book, "His (Lalanpiya's) unparalleled mastery is evident in the rhythmic flow of his Thumris. Even while singing at a very fast tempo, the essence of the raga remains intact."

Historian Mukul Joshi wrote, "All connoisseurs who have faith in Thumri know the literary value of Lalaniya's bandishes (compositions) and are admirers of the sweetness of his swaras (musical notes). However, it is unfortunate that there is very little information about his personality and work (dnaindia.com,28th June 2015)."

Sushri Shubha Mudgal performed Pandit Lalaniya's Thumris at the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA). She mentioned that she learned Lalaniya's compositions from her guru, Pandit Ramashray Jha 'Ramrang,' and for a singer, singing his compositions is a big challenge also remarked that learning Lalaniya's compositions is a challenging task due to their rapid tempo and intricate layakari (rhythmic patterns) (dnaindia.com,28th June 2015) .

His most important book is Lalansagar, the second edition of which was published in 1927. Therefore, this book is important for my research. A total of 1343 compositions are mainly Thumaris , but there are also 110 Dhrupad, Dadra, and Khayal - Tarana compositions. I have taken compositions like Phag, Kajri, Hindola, Aastai, Nakta, Sadra, etc., along with Thumri for Research paper writing.

He had an exceptional understanding of taal and was known for composing Thumris in unconventional rhythms. Lalanpiya is a unique figure who dared to compose Thumris in unconventional taals, but his compositions have received limited attention and research. There is scarce information available about his compositions in unconventional taals.

A detailed description of 22 rarely used and less common talas, including Pachakol Tala, Bhramar Tala, Puttal, Patatal, Rudra, Ganesh, Brahma, Vishnu, Lakshmi, among others, along with the corresponding compositions, can be found in the first chapter of "Lalansagar" called "Lalan Shiromanika" (Kanchan, 18).

Regarding Lalan Piya's vocal style, which today's generation reveres as a cultural legacy, Shri Vidya Prakash Dixit, carrying the torch of this tradition, elaborates further: "The eminent musician Pt. Lalan Piya exhibited complete dominion over rhythm. Discerning taal (rhythm) and laya (tempo) within your thumri is not merely challenging but nearly insurmountable. Those who sing your thumris or have had the



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privilege of hearing them comprehend this profoundly." (Interview, 17)

This passage underscores the significance of rhythm (taal) in music and underscores Lalan Piya's unparalleled mastery of this musical element.

Lalanpiya's Thumris, composed in unconventional taals, have not been explored in the context of hindustani classical singing and Kathak dance and its expressive aspects. Therefore, there is a need to research and delve into this aspect and introduce the same to Music and Kathak dance fraternity.

## 2.Objectives:

Description and listing of Thumris composed in unconventional taals as per the directions given by Pandit Lalan Piya

Collecting the thumris in unconventional Taals which has come down through Guru-Shishya Parampara through the Lalan piya parampara singers.

Understanding and analyzing the Taals given on the compositions in 'Lalan shiromanika'

Deciphering the directions given on the thumris in respect of the Taal(rhythm) ,

## 3.Relevance of Research:

Today, there is a growing interest in hindustani classical singing and Kathak dance, with many new talents emerging. However, the literary content related to the expressive aspect of dance is limited, and most of it is based on conventional taals. This research aims to make available a rich repository of dance literature composed in unconventional taals. As well it would be a challenge for singers to sing the thumris in the rare taals.

Performing Lalanpiya's Thumris composed in unconventional taals would be a valuable experience for practicing dancers and singers.

## 4.Scope of Research:

The scope of the research is limited to Thumris composed in unconventional taals.

## 5.Research Methodology:

Qualitative analysis will be employed for this research.

Grounded theory will be used to explore and categorize Thumris composed in unconventional taals, and this will involve interviews with experts in the fields of dance and music, practical aspect and conclusions.

## 6.Analysis

6.1 Before understanding and analysing the thumaris based on unconventional(rare) Taals, it is necessary to establish as to which are the conventional Taals of thumri. In this respect the opinions of singers and dancers need to be found out.

- "Sangeet Kala Vihar, Thumri Visheshank, May 1991, Gandharva Mahavidyalaya." was read in this respect in which the renowned singers and dancers have written extensively about thumri and the taals used in it.

Dr. Sanjeev Shende – Upashaastriya Sangeet – Taals mentioned: Deepchandi, Jhaptal, Rupak, Addha, Tintal. Arvind Kumar – Thumri Gayaki aur Shailiyan – Taals: Mostly Tintal, Addha, Sitar Khani, Rupak, Jhaptal, Ektaal. Layakari in Dhrupad style: Dugun, Chaugun, Aad-Kuaad. Jawaharlal Nayak –



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Knowledge of commonly used taals in Bhajan, Thumri, and Sugam Sangeet – Daadra, Tintal, Deepchandi, Jat, Punjabi, Rupak. The Punjabi taal is essentially Tritala." "Deepchandi (14 Matra) is also known as Chachar. Dr. Prabha Aatre –Taal - Rupak, Jhaptal, Tintal, Dhamar

Pt. Rohini Bhate, the legendary Kathak dancer in her book ‘Lehaja’ informed the taals used in Thumri as Deepchandi, Punjabi, and Addha.

In the context of Thumri singing and dancing, it could be concluded that Kaharwa, Daadra, Tritaal, Deepchandi (with 14 matras), Jhaptal, Rupak, Ektaal, Dhamar, Punjabi Theka, and Sitar Khani theka are used. And hence any thumri based on Taal other than above need to be categorized as Thumri on rare or Unconventional Taal.

6.2 Through the reading and analyzing the book ‘Lalan sagar’ as well interviewing the singers of Lalanniya Parampara, it was noticed that there are 3 categories through which the compositions of unconventional Taals could be gathered and segregated.

### 6.2.1 The thumaris with direction of Taals given by Lalanpiyaji and which are unconventional–

Pandit Lalanpiya was a poet, musician and singer himself and has always given direction in respect of the Taal and Raga in which it is to be sung. On the basis of this direction his thumaris are segregated and following compositions are listed below. To facilitate the musicians, the page as well as composition no. is also given.

List of Thumaris in uncommon talas: (Bhatkhande system is used for giving the structure of Taal.)

#### Tal Shool or sul -

Matra-10, Vibhag-5, Tali-1,5,7 Kal/khali 3 and 9

#### Theka-

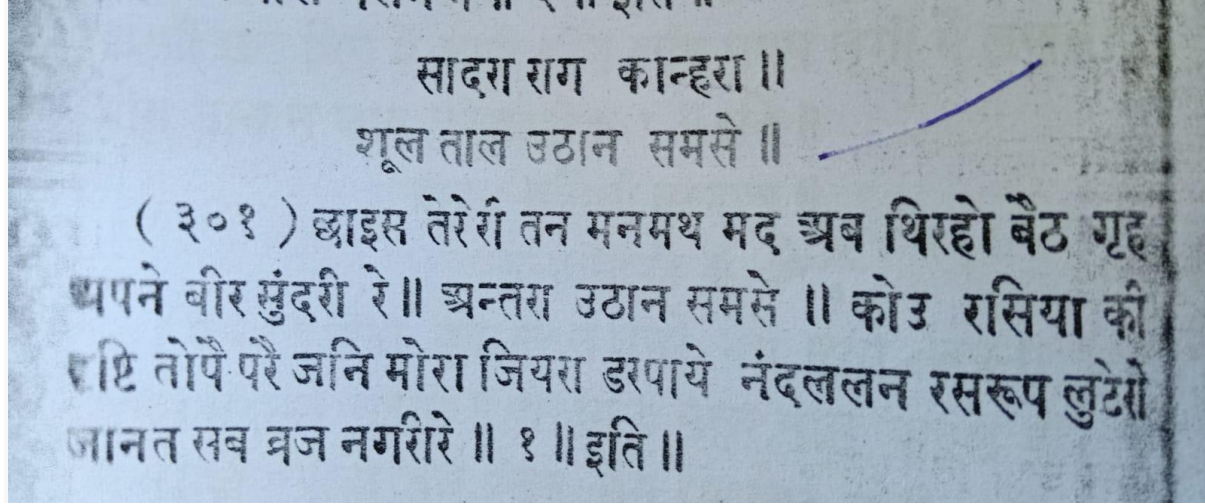
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Dha	Dha	Din	Ta	Kit	Dha	Titi	Kata	Gadi	Gana
x		0		2		3		0	

Sr. no.	Page no	Composition no	Details
1	45	29	Asthai
2	48	37	Asthai
3	78	137	Malaru Sadara
4	120	259	Thumri
5	136	301	Sadara
6	158	374	Sadara





7	236	603	Sadara
8	320	852	Sadara
9	323	858	Sadara
10	351	936	Asthai
11	378	1019	Asthai



**Tal Tyora, Tiwra, or Teora -**  
Matra -7, Vibhag -3, Tali-1, 4, 6  
**Theka**

1	2	3		4	5	6	7
Dha	Dhin	TA		Titi	Kata	Gadi	Gana
x				2		3	

Sr. No.	Page No.	Composition No.	Details
1	70	112	Thumari
2	96	188	Thumari
3	97	193	Thumari
4	122	263	Thumari
5	168	407	Asthai
6	301	800	Thumari





7	306	813	Asthai
8	310	824	Asthai
9	317	844	Asthai
10	336	899	Thumari
11	360	965	Asthai
12	392	1057	Asthai
13	462	1259	Hindola

### Tal Jhumra or Jhumda -

Matra-14, Vibhag-4, Tali-1,4,11, Kal/Khali- 8  
Theka

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Dhi n	- Dh a	Tirki t	Dhi n	Dhi n	Dhag e	Tirki t	Ti n	- T a	Tirki t	Dhi n	Dhi n	Dhag e	Tirki t
x			2				0			3			

Sr. No.	Page No.	Composition no	Details
1	46	161	Thumari
2	47	33	Thumari
3	82	148	Thumari
4	103	209	Thumari
5	112	237	Thumari
6	146	333	Thumari
7	177	431	Thumari





8	177	432	Thumari
9	355	950	Asthai
10	370	991	Hindola
11	396	1068	Asthai
12	458	1247	Thumari
13	475	1294	Thumari

**Tal Khemta** - This Taal is played 6 beats as well as 12 beats. Here the compositions are such that it appears its 12 beat Taal. Hence the Taal details are given as per 12 beats.  
Matra-12, Vibhag- 4, Taali-1,4,10, Kal/Khali-7

### Theka

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Dha	Te	Dhi	Na	Tee	Na	Taa	Te	Dhi	Na	Ti	Na
x			2			0			3		

Sr. No.	Page no.	Composition no.	Details
1	331	884	Thumari
2	377	1015	Bengali turj
3	377	1016	Khemata Jodeka

### Tal Sawaari Fardost

This tal is not found in any taal related books. Only Fardost (14 matra) and Kaid Fardost (19 matra) are mentioned.

Sr. No.	Page No.	Composition no.	Details
1	75	128	Thumari
2	156	367	Thumari



### Thumri Tal prabandh(where 2 or more taals are used in 1 composition.)

Sr. No.	Page No.	Composition no.	Details
1	176	428	Thumri Aastai beginning, Uthaaan Jhumde se, Antara Tintaal
2	176	429	Thumri Tyoora beginning, Antara Tintaal
3	177	430	Thumri Prarambh Rupak, Antara Tintaal

### 6.2.2Thumris which are sung in unconventional Taal through Guru-Shishya Parampara-

Sushri Pushplata Rastogi had mentioned in her interview that she used to sing Thumris of 19, 20, 21, 15, or other matras. Her disciple Dr. Vidyaprakash Dixitji is trying to recall those compositions with her guru as she is not able to recollect it easily at this age (above 80). They have provided information about three Thumris with Tal Basant (9 matra), Tal Manitaal (11 matra), and Tal Chitra (15 matra).

#### Tal Basant -

Matra-9, Vibhag-9, Tali-1,2,3,4,6,8 kal/Khali-5,7,9

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Dha	Det	Det	Thun	Thun	Tete	Kata	Gadi	Gana
x	2	3	4	0	5	0	6	0

Sr. No.	Page No.	Composition no.	Details
1	65	94	Thumri

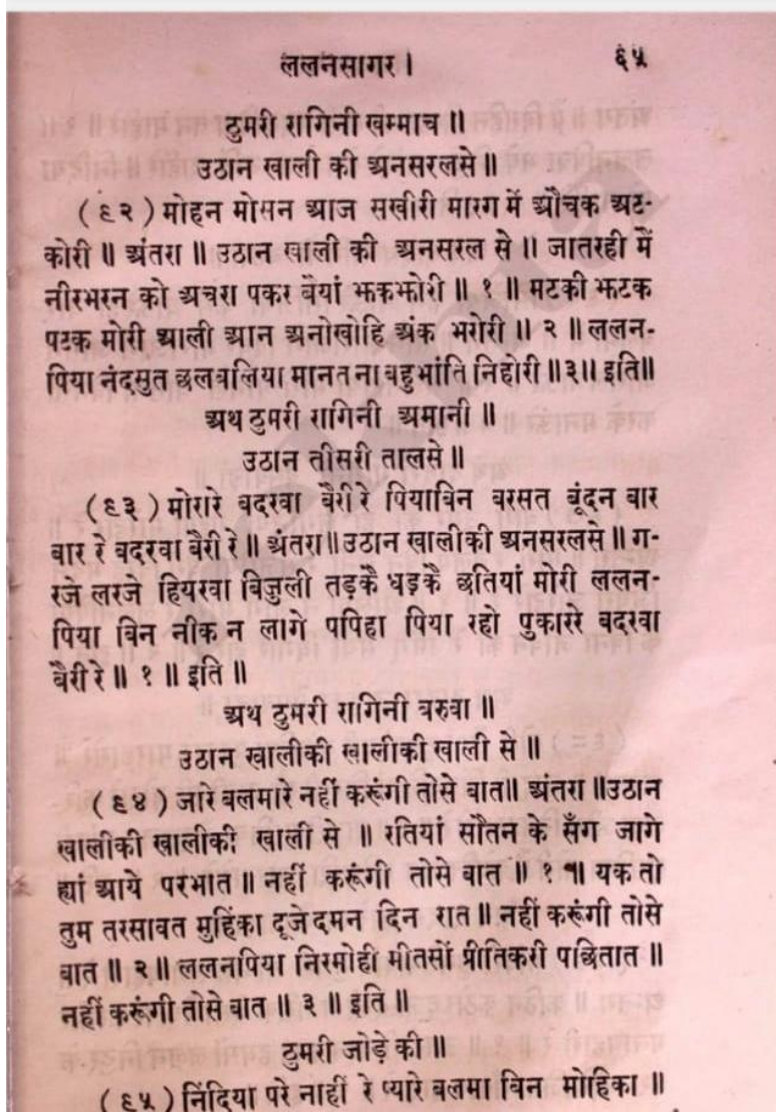
#### Tal Mani -

Matra-11, Vibhag-4, Taali-1,4,6,9

#### Theka-

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Taa	Dhi	Ta	Ki	Ta	Dha	Ki	Ta	Ta	Ki	Ta
x			2		3			4		





Sr. No.	Page No.	Composition no.	Details
1	161	381	Thumri

### Taal Chitra -

Matra-15, Vibhag 5, Taali-1,3,6,10, Kal/Khali-14

### Theka



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Dhi	Na	Dhi	Dhi	Na	Tu	Na	Ka	Tta	Tirkit	Dhi	Na	Dhi	Dhi	Na
x		2			3				4				0	

Sr. No.	Page No.	Composition no.	Details
1	259	673	Thumri

### 6.2.3 Compositions appearing in Lalanshiromanika which is part of Lalnsagar-

Lalansagar's Lalanshiromanika contains 43 compositions in 22 types of talas. These compositions may not strictly follow the Dhrupad structure, but Dhrupad is mentioned in them. In his interview Musicologist Dr. Chaitanya Kunte categorically stated that it is the treatment given by the musicians to a composition which decides its form like Saint poet Surdas bhajans/Dhripads are sometimes sung and performed like Nayika bhed. The compositions of Lalan shiromanika are not in the pure style of Dhrupad as well, the language used is soft. Hence all these compositions need to be included as compositions on unconventional Taals. The tal used in it are taken from the "Taladhyaayi" text of Munindra Muni, composed in 1101 AD. The compositions are comprising of name of Taal and no of Taalis in it. But no theka is appearing.

I read and acquired knowledge about taals from eight books, and I studied them in terms of the similarity of taals mentioned in Lalanshiromanika. Taals that are mentioned in Lalanshiromanika and are also present in those books were first written down, and then an attempt was made to match them with the taals and matra counts. The mention of Madhvi, Put, Shat, Sarvan, Varun, Hari, Bhramar, Vijayakhanda, and Kapal taals was not found in any book. Sarvanataal is a 20-matra tal with 7 claps. Comparing it with other 20-matra talas in other books, I attempted to obtain the syllables for these talas. Lalnapyiaji mentioned on which matra which tali would come, so even after obtaining 20-matra taals from other books, the arrangement of the talis was different.

For singing and kathak performance, knowing the Theka of the Taal is mandatory. Dr. Kunte stated that in 1101AD, there was no separation of classical dance styles. Over the period few Taals might have been acquired by other dance styles and it is impossible to get and match the same for hindustani classical singing and Kathak. But the Taal thekas can be created by singers and dancers as per the treatment given to the composition. Padmshri, Mahamahopadhyay Dr. Puru Dadheech in his interview categorically stated that the Thekas of the Taal can be created by musicians and the researcher only have to indicate this fact. One such attempt is made as per the direction given is as follows.

#### Taal Saravan-

Matra- 20, Vibhag-7, Taali-1,3,7,11,15,16,17

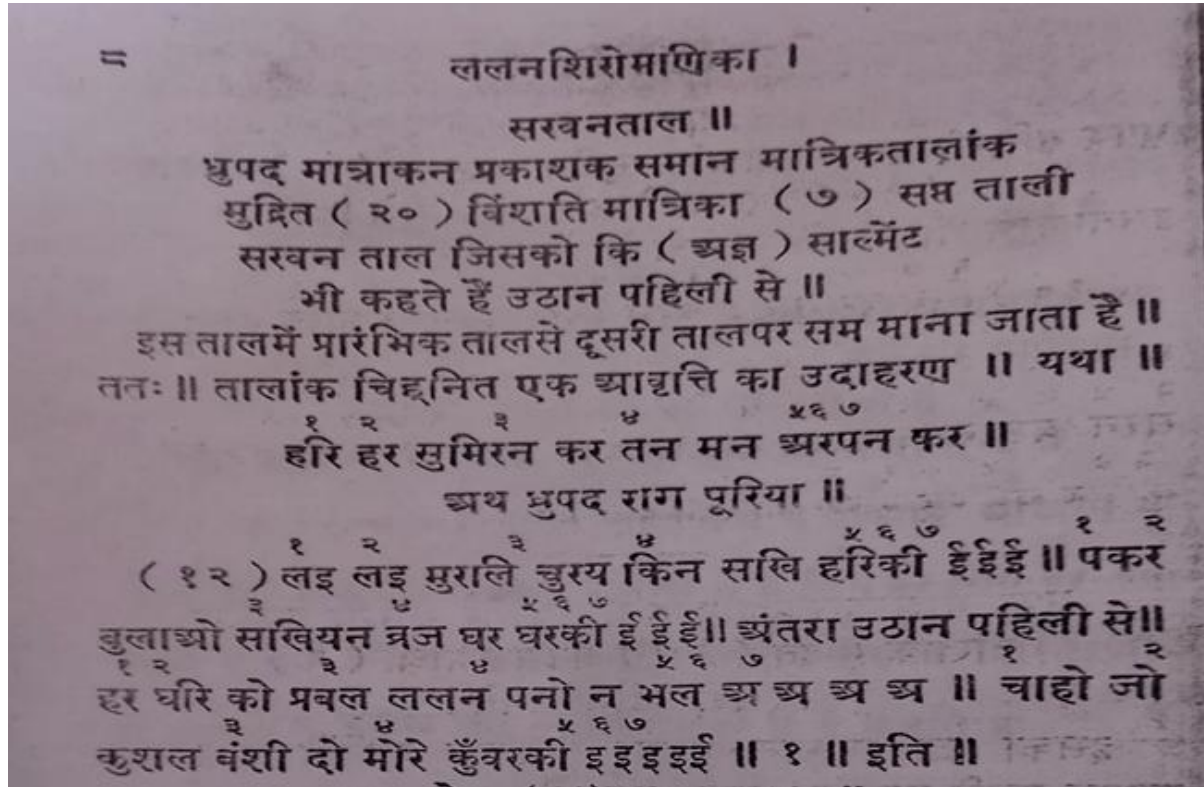
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Dhin	Na	Dha	Dhin	Dhin	Na	Trak	Dha	Din	Ta	Tin	Na	Kit	Dha





x		2				3				4		
---	--	---	--	--	--	---	--	--	--	---	--	--

15	16	17	18	19	20
Din	Ta	Titi	Kata	Gadi	Gana
5	6	7			



## 7. Deciphering the directions given in respect of start of Uthan and Antara

In the context of Teental, an attempt was made to understand the meaning of the words given in all his compositions through lipibaddha (notated) compositions by Bharatendu Bajpeyi and Gangadhar rao Telang books..

Uthan pahiliki Unsaralse- In teental this is the 2nd beat from which the song would start.

Antara khailiki Unsaral se- 10th beat from which the Antara would start.

Khali ki khalise- 11th beat Tisari ki Kahlise-15th beat

‘Uthaan khaali ki khaaliki khaali se-12th beat.

After deciphering the language it is easier to adapt it for unconventional taals.

Renowned young Kathak dancers Shri Vishal Krishna and shri Rudra shankar Mishra,during the interview showed willingness to perform on Thumaris based on such rare Taals.

## 8.Lalan Lalitya

This is the FIRST ever known performance of this wide range on the compositions of Pandit Lalan piya.



Thumaris on unconventional Taals and themes were performed along with other compositions in Taal Teental. Shri Shreerang Tembe and Sushri Tanvi Gore sung these thumaris and stated that they enjoyed experimenting in very unconventional Taals. Shri Rohit Deo and Shri Atul Goadse, both Tabla players also stated that it is tough but they would like to accompany such compositions.

The program unfolded in front of audience on 22 Oct, Dhanateras at Dwarakadhish Mandir, Apate Fata, Roha, Raigad district of Maharashtra.



## 9. Conclusion

From the various interviews with musicologists, singers, percussion instrument players, kathak dancers and the legends in kathak as well experiment through actual performance, it could be construed that the



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Thumaris of Pandit Lalanpiya based on the unconventional Taals are a good challenge to the upcoming as well renowned singers and dancers. The need is to explore the same. this is a small attempt to decipher the language used by him for describing Taals and make available the segregated Thumaris on unconventional Taals from the total 1345 Thumaris.

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