

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

On Traditional Music of Kashmir and the Attitude of Kashmiri People Towards Music Listening

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Abstract :

Music is a big part of most people's lives and from times immemorial, has remained the most important medium of expression of human emotions. Music is used by people for many different purposes, for example to relax, to evoke memories, to get into a mood, to express emotions, to create an identity, or to regulate emotions. Only recently have the field of music psychology become cumulative in the understanding of how music express and induce emotions in listeners. Kashmir, Mathura and Benaras, in the bygone times, were prominent centres for learning art and due to ravages of time all the written evidence regarding the kind, type and form of music prevalent in Kashmir in the distant past has perished thus task of preparing a comprehensive historiography on music of Kashmir remained a difficult one. In this paper, we discuss the traditional music of Kashmir and attitude of people towards music listening. Music listening primarily evokes positive emotions in listeners and research has shown that positive emotions may be fundamental for improving both psychological and physical aspects of well-being. Besides from the music itself it is essential to consider individual and situational factors when studying emotional experiences to music. A sample of 400 (200 males and 200 females) respondents were selected for the present study using simple random sampling technique for collection of the data. Finally, suitable statistical techniques were used for analysis of the data and the interpretation of the results.

Keywords: Music, Kashmir, Folk songs, Naats, Statistical analysis

1. Introduction

The state of Jammu and Kashmir popularly known as paradise on earth has a very rich culture heritage and has been a grand arena of arts. There have been poets, dancers, writers, dramatists and musicians, who have attained glory in the literary and art world. Kashmir have been great lovers of music. Since Kashmir language does not have any script of its own, the culture and tradition reserved in its music has passed from generation to generation. However some style of music and singing like temple sangeet, shiv gayan and folk music survived the upheavals and persisted to appeal on account of their sentimental value and emotional attachment. These styles of music are continuing even now as a distinct and as a tradition of ancient Kashmir. Kashmir music is so full of melody and rhythm that it distinguishes itself from the music of any other state. The delicacy the grace and charm of Kashmiri music is ultimate. There is no function or celebration which is performed without music. The social, cultural, economic and artistic life of the people of Kashmir inspired many writers and researchers to choose subjects varied in nature reflecting the cultural legacy of the land. There is archeological evidence, which points to the existence of singing and dancing in Kashmir. Tiles and some sculptures, excavated during Harwan excavations bear the pictures of dancing and singing persons and also of the ladies playing on the rhythmic instrument (drum). Another person is shown playing a Veena in an artistic pastime. Nilmatpurana, a sixth century Mahatmya provides details about the festivals, in which musical concerts and dips in the river Vitasta and collective singing in the evenings featured. Kalhana's Rajtarangini' is one of the works, which brought into limelight several such nuances of the lives of the people of Kashmir to write on the subjects, which had a social and cultural bearing. Music is basically a spontaneous creation, which gives expression to human instincts, sentiments and emotions with its universal appeal and potentiality to enlighten the soul. It has been the most important medium of expressing to human emotions from early stages of life on earth. This art has progressed and evolved everywhere in the world with the evolution of civilizations. Different places and different nations have evolved their different forms of music and art. Wherever human civilization and culture advanced, literature learning and art got promoted. The advancement in civilization from time to time has witnessed simultaneous progress development and promotion of music. The music of Kashmir during the Hindu period was more or less a shadow of Indian music. Nilmatpurana and Kalhana's chronicle suggest that ancient music of Kashmir was a version of Indian music. Ancient Kashmir has been a prominent by artists and musicians. They maintained very close links with the rest of the country and Indian impression was reflected in the culture of this place. The art of writing on the subject of music had not been in vogue. The musicians and

artists did not relish writing during those days, as a result of which we do not possess any written material on the notation or on the grammar of music, which was prevalent at that time. It is a matter of honour for the Kashmiris that Lalleshwari, Habba Khaton, etc., the great musical personalities belonged to Kashmir. Although the Kashmiris came under the threat of losing their art culture by the disturbances even then the modern institution of culture and art, media, electronic media, cultural academy and information department of J & K government have played a key role for revival of the art and initiated serious efforts for preserving and promoting the invaluable cultural heritage. These institutions are credited with strenuous efforts endeavouring at a suitable notation system, appropriate grammar and development of audio-visual aids. In the present study, the traditional music of Kashmir has been divided into the following categories: 1. songs sung by women folk 2. songs sung by minstrels 3. songs sung by the professionals with the view of earning money 4. songs sung by farmers 5. religious songs : bhajan, leela, shiva songs.

Songs sung by women folk Vanvun is a prayer in the form of folk music which commences with a prayer to God. The subjects of vanvun also refer to the events of the vedic period. In vedic period, when goddess Sinaivali's marriage was performed, God Pooshan had prepared a beautiful headgear to decorate her head called Kapal-apush in Sanskrit. Lord Indra beautified it further, wrapping a white strip of cloth around it. This custom prevails among Kashmiris as a compulsory item of marriage even today. 'Kalpush' in Kashmiri, is Kapal-push in Sanskrit and the white twinkling strip is tarang in Kashmiri. The customs till date are followed accordingly. In the pronunciation of vedic language with the use of uddatta, anudatta and swarit, every vowel and its following consonant preserves its pronouncing capacity. The technique with which uddatta, anudatta and swarit are used for modulation in chanting of Vedas, is the same as used in vanvun singing. Vanvun played a leading role in maintaining the continuity of our culture from the vedic period through the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Shrimada Bhagwat till the present day. The fact is that the Kashmiri language, cultures as well as religious ceremonies have a direct bearing on the speakers of rigvedic language. Vanvun thus, is the pure reflection of the same.

- Refu: Ruf is a very interesting and emotional type of folk dance which is directly related with spring. Every season lasts for three months. At the outset of spring, Kashmiri entertain themselves by dancing and dancing and singing. This practice was prevalent even in the ancient time, which is mentioned in Nilamatapurana.
- Hikar: It is a form or 'raas'. Reference of 'raas' is prevalent in Kashmir, and is available in Bhatt Avatar. Even his predecessor, Nund Rishi, was acquainted with 'raas'. Hikar has originated from 'hi-krit' which means any piece of work done joyfully. In this dance two girls stand in a circle in a pair, facing each other with two sticks in each hand and strike at each other's stick and sing.
- Lalnavun: In Hindi it is called 'lori', in English it is called lullaby and in Kashmiri it is called Lalnavun which is based on vatsalaya raas. It reflects motherly love, which is pure and depicts the unbroken bond between the mother and the child. The mother prays for the long life of the child and to make the child sleep.
- Songs Sung by the Minstrels: These songs are sung by the professionals from the view of earning money. They sing Bond Pather, Ladishah, Chhakri. Chhakri one of the many forms of folk music of Kashmir- is rhythmic, fast and when in full swing attracts the attention of each and every listener. Likewise 'ruf' another folk form of Kashmir is mainly a dance item. It has been derived from the word dwarf, which means a black bee. As the black bee sucks the juice of the flower, sits on it, moves forward and goes backward, the same moment has been depicted in ruf dance. Chhakri has an important place in the Kashmiri folk music. This type of song has been practiced for a long time. It is sung collectively in a group and the singers, themselves play the instruments and the style of singing is such that the first line repeated by other members of the group. It is a very popular and entertaining folk song.
- Bacchi Nagma: The general meaning of the Bachhi Nagma is adolescent melodious voice but in villages, it is still known by the old name 'Bachhi Gyavun'. During the Pathan reign (1758-1818) the Arabic word 'Nagma' must have been added to it. So it is the mixture of Bachhi (originated from Sanskrit) and 'Nagma' (originated from Arabic). Their dress matches the dress of Kathak dancers. The Kashmiris have great liking for the dance and music of Bachhi Nagma. Dhamaly means leaping and jumping. Dhamaly is a holy sport in Brij in Uttar Pradesh. It is related with an exercise of saints who jump over burning fire. This is a dance performed by fifteen to twenty persons. Ladies don't take part in it. The whole team wears white cotton dress and a head gear.
- Naind Gyavun: This song is related to farmer's folk songs 'Nanad' of Sanskrit. The word Gyavun is originated from 'Gayan' of Sanskrit. The tradition of agricultural songs is prevalent in every state and region. The nature of agricultural songs is joyful, exciting and merry making. Songs make difficult tasks of the farmers easy and enhances their zeal.
- Religious Songs: Leela songs are dedicated to God. Prayer songs in Kashmiri were written in Sanskrit in the past which were dedicated to shiv shakti, Vishnu and budh dharma. Kashmir has been the place of rishis whose every action was consecrated to spiritual powers. Even today, we can hear Hindus in temples, reciting the couplets from Panchastavi' (prayer book in Sanskrit). During the Muslim reign in Kashmir artists and musicians were invited from Iran, Turan, Turkistan and Hindustan to Kashmir. The entry of Irani and Turanian musicians saw the emergence of a new form of music, which came to be known as Sufiana Mosiqui which is liked by the people of Kashmir even today. This form of music has its style borrowed from Persian music and is played with musical instruments quite different from those used for Indian classical music and Kashmiri folk music. The ancient history of Kashmir recorded by Pandit Kalhana in Rajtarangini has specifically mentioned the art of music and musical instruments in this region in the distant past. The ancient musical instruments used in Kashmir had been more or less a reflection of the Indian musical instruments in usage during that time. According to Pandit Kalhana, the folk musical instruments like earthen pots, brass vessels etc. were used by Kashmiri people from very early times. In the past people of Kashmiris used mainly rhythmic maintaining instruments like: 1. tumbaknari 2. noet 3. setar 4. nai (flute) 5. thaliz 6. khayasa 7. rabab 8. santoor etc. Among the

musical instruments santoor occupies an important place in Kashmiri music. Soofiana singing is not possible without the accompaniments. These days, it is gaining popularity even outside Kashmir. Its sweet tapping creates a feeling of romantic mood whereas its soft tunes remind of the tranquility of the other world, which suits the mystical temperament of soofiana music. The instrument emits loud and enchanting sounds. Santoor is being used for mousiqui in Kashmir since 13th century. In the year 1956 the people of the state of J & K and around, heard for the first time, Indian classical music being played by an artist on an instrument, which was restricted to soofiana gayaki only. Kashmir is proud to produce eminent artists namely Pandit Bhajan Sopori, Tibbat Bakkal who have made a mark in the field of Hindustani classical music but have shown the relationship of Kashmiri music in Indian classical music. Santoor, to his gharana is not only an instrument which produced enchanting tunes but an instrument that sings and is on par with sitar, sarod and violin. Kashmiri traditional music is blessed with melodious charm. Besides that, it is a store house of the traditions of Kashmir.

The state of J&K is a Muslim majority state and there is, of course, a sizeable ethnomusicological literature concerning the role of music in Islamic civilization e.g., Hilmi and Coll (1982). Islamic music served traditionally not only as entertainment but as a way to reinforce social and moral values, and musicians provided models of exemplary leadership. Whether bringing listeners closer to God, sustaining cultural memory through epic tales, or strengthening the bonds of community through festivity and celebrations, music and musicians have been central to Islamic social life. According to Qardawi (2000) many basic Islamic rituals can be said to be musical. The first of these is the call to prayer by the *muethin*. Muslim scholars stress that the choice of *muethin* should be based on his attractive musical voice and its emotional impact on listeners. A second basic musical act is the recitation (*qirrat*) of the Koran with an attractive musical voice in accordance with *Ilam-ulqira* (science of the recitation). Similarly, a third musical act is chanting which is evident during *Talbiya* in pilgrimage (*Hajj*) and *Tasbeeh* of Eid Prayers. There are many more examples of the religious use of music by the Muslim Sufis. Joomal (2003) concluded that in addition to being a part of Islamic religious rituals, music has also played an important therapeutic role in Islamic cultures. For example, Al-Ghazali (1911, as cited in Joomal, 2003) in his book *Alchemy of Happiness* writes that absorption of music into one's heart and soul makes a person relaxed and happy. Al-Ghazali taught people how to utilize Islamic music as a medicine to develop peace and tranquillity and to help them in overcoming their sadness and grief. Another Muslim scholar Rumi, (1925, as cited in Joomal, 2003) says in his book *Mathnawi* that music is the food of man and its beautiful melodies makes one's heart soft and beautiful, and recommended using music while counseling depressed clients. Similar arguments are proposed by other Muslim scholars such as Al-Razi and more recent ones as Abul Kalaam Azad and Allama Iqbal. However, research has yet to quantify the potential importance and functions of music in everyday life within an Islamic culture. Nevertheless, the continuing technological modernization of Kashmiri society (and in particular the recent growth in access to satellite TV and the internet) suggests that Western pop music may be popular also. Second, J&K as a Muslim majority state may have implications for the role of gender in the importance and uses of music. In particular, religious and cultural obligations and restrictions mean that women are expected to spend a greater proportion of their time within the home than in the West, and this might lead them having a different relationship to leisure objects such as music as compared with that identified by the Western literature.

2. Methodology

The present study pertains to traditional music of Kashmir and the attitude of people towards music listening. To collect information a questionnaire was prepared keeping in view the literature available on the topic and the characteristics of the respondents viz., age, sex, education level, profession, type of family, family income, marital status etc. Factor analysis was used in finalizing questionnaire. 400 (200 male and 200 female) respondents were selected for the study using simple random sampling procedure. The data collected were tabulated and analyzed with the help of appropriate statistical tools.

3. Results and Discussion

The data presented in Table 1 shows the distribution of study population as per the characteristics age, sex, education level, profession, type of family, family income, type of family, marital status. Majority of the respondents were in the age group 20-35 years, literate, employed, married, living in nuclear family, business background, having both parents literate, monthly income above Rs 10000 and daily average time spending in music listening 1-2 hours. Further, it has been observed that music listening is positively correlated with age, marital status, sex, family income, profession and education level of respondent.

S. No.	Characteristics	Male (%)	Female (%)
1	Age (years)		
	20-35	90 (45.0)	96 (48.0)
	36-50	60 (30.0)	64 (32.0)
	Above 50	50 (25.0)	40 (20.0)
2	Education Status		
	Literate	150 (75.0)	160 (80.0)
	Illiterate	50 (25.0)	40 (20.0)
3	Profession		
	Employed	96 (48.0)	82 (41.0)
	Unemployed	44 (22.0)	40 (20.0)
	Student	60 (30.0)	78 (39.0)

4	Marital Status		
	Married	108 (54.0)	124 (62.0)
5	Unmarried	92 (46.0)	76 (38.0)
	Type of Family		
6	Nuclear	156 (78.0)	162 (81.0)
	Joint	44 (22.0)	38 (19.0)
7	Parents Occupation		
	Business	166 (83.0)	150 (75.0)
8	Govt/Semi Govt	34 (17.0)	50 (25.0)
	Education Status of Parents		
	Literate Both	140 (70.0)	130 (65.0)
9.	Illiterate Both	16 (8.0)	10 (5.0)
	Only one Literate	44 (22.0)	60 (30.0)
	Monthly Family Income (Rs)		
8	3000-5000		
	5001-10000	30 (15.0)	19 (9.0)
	Above 10000	48 (24.0)	68 (34.0)
9.	Daily Time Spend in Music Listening (Hours)		
	1-2		
	3-4	109 (54.5)	92 (46.0)
	>4	56 (28.0)	63 (31.5)
		35 (17.5)	45 (22.5)

Table 1: Distribution of study population as per characteristics understudy

The data presented in Table 2 investigated the importance of listening to music relative to other activities. Respondents were presented with 10 statements such as 'I would rather listen to my favorite music than, e.g., do homework' and were asked to rate their agreement on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 = 'I would definitely rather do this than listen to my favorite music' to 10 = 'I would definitely rather listen to my favorite music than do this'. The mean ratings and standard deviation in response to each statement is presented in Table 2. Remembering that the mid-point of the rating scale was 5, Table 2 indicates that listening to music was preferred to all indoor leisure activities (e.g., watching TV, playing computer games, reading books, doing homework and chatting with parents). Music listening was also preferred to outdoor activities like going out for shopping etc. Statistically, significant difference ($p < 0.01$) was observed in responses of various statement presented in Table 2. Further, it has been observed that the population under study male as well as female like Chakkri most, followed by Ghazal (males) and Ruf (females). Statistically, using Z-test we compare the mean score of the male and female respondents. Clearly p-value less than 0.01 i.e., at 1% level of significance or 0.05 i.e., at 5% level of significance show the significant difference between the liking of musical styles by male and female respondents.

Musical Style	Liking Music Male (n=200)		Liking Music Female (n=200)		P-value
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	
Indian Classical	5.54	2.38	4.82	2.38	<0.01
Vanvun	4.28	2.47	5.13	2.02	<0.01
Ruf	5.82	2.61	6.42	2.38	<0.05
Hikat	2.24	2.27	4.15	2.46	<0.01
Lalvanun	2.13	2.04	2.55	2.79	>0.05
Bond Pather	2.29	2.88	2.51	2.18	>0.05
Ladishah	2.59	2.57	2.88	2.82	>0.05
Chakkri	6.47	2.08	6.94	1.99	<0.05
Bacchi Nagma	2.87	3.04	4.29	2.79	<0.01
Naind Gyavun	2.82	2.91	4.07	2.95	<0.01
Ghazal	6.16	2.47	5.28	2.29	<0.01
Qawali	4.12	2.88	2.85	2.48	<0.01
Western Pop	3.20	2.55	1.82	2.55	<0.01
Naat	5.42	2.11	6.18	2.52	<0.01
Opera	1.56	2.64	2.43	2.02	<0.01

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations Assigned to 15 Musical Styles

The data presented in Table 3 reveals that generally people listen music to relieve stress, to change bad moods, to improve physical health and to evoke positive emotions. Further, it has been observed that only in reason ii and xi there is a significant difference between the opinion of male and female respondents. The results obtained in our study are in agreement with the earlier studies which shows that people like listening music in order to relieve stress, to reduce loneliness, to create a personal image, to change bad moods, to evoke memories, to express emotions, to raise energy, to improve physical health and to evoke positive emotions (Roe, 1985; North, Hargreaves and O'Neill 2000; Sloboda and O'Neill 2001; Sloboda, J. A., O'Neill, S. A., & Ivaldi, A. (2001); Juslin and Laukka, 2004; Saarikallo and Erkillä, 2007 and Hanser 2010).

S.No.	Reasons for Listening to Music	Male (n=200) %		Female (n=200) %		Chisquare	P-value
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
i.	To enjoy the music	90	10	92	8	0.244	>0.05
ii.	To develop imagination/creativity	69	31	39	61	18.116	<0.01
iii.	To relieve boredom	76	24	82	18	1.085	>0.05
iv.	To help get through difficult times	55	45	51	49	0.321	>0.05
v.	To be trendy	56	44	53	47	0.181	>0.05
vi.	To relieve tension	81	19	77	23	0.482	>0.05
vii.	To create an image	42	58	35	65	1.035	>0.05
viii.	To express feelings/emotions	54	46	49	51	0.500	>0.05
ix.	To create or enhance a mood	68	32	58	42	2.145	>0.05
x.	To have fun	72	28	81	19	2.253	>0.05
xi.	To be a part of a group	69	31	85	15	7.228	<0.01
xii.	To improve general ability to concentrate	35	65	31	69	0.362	>0.05
xiii.	To dance to	55	45	66	34	2.532	>0.05
xiv.	As a reward for having done something	64	36	52	48	2.956	>0.05
xv.	To be a part of a leisure activity with friends	84	16	78	22	1.170	>0.05
xvi.	As a distraction from worries	85	15	76	24	2.580	<0.05
xvii.	To reduce loneliness	88	12	92	08	0.889	>0.05
xviii.	As a part of a ceremony or ritual one often attends e.g., marriage	85	15	87	13	0.166	>0.05

Table 3: Reasons for Listening To Music

4. Conclusion

The present findings provide an initial insight into the importance of music listening among Kashmiri sample. Many of the findings seem to mirror those obtained from the West, indicating high prevalence and importance of music usage among Kashmiris. Nevertheless, there were also some findings that might well contrast with those from the West, most notably the lower prevalence of playing musical instruments, the differential importance attached to musical activities relative to others, and, of course, the nature of the participants' preferred musical styles. The present sample's interest in Western pop music points to a potential 'Westernization' of Kashmiri musical culture. This is mirrored by the finding that in addition to the harmonium, the instruments most popularly played were the piano and guitar, both of which are arguably associated more strongly with Western rather than Eastern music. Future research with the increased sample size may investigate into the underlying dynamics of growing mass media influences and the rapid impact of Western music in the modernization of Kashmir. To conclude the results obtained in our study indicate that music listening is an effective and easy way to improve well-being and health by its ability to evoke positive emotions and thereby reduce stress provided music is liked and self-chosen.

5. Acknowledgement

The authors are thankful to the respondents and all the faculty members of Faculty of Music and Fine Arts, University of Kashmir, Srinagar J&K for their support during the preparation of this manuscript.

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