

THE CONFLUENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE ON SUFI MUSIC IN SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PUNJAB REGION

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Abstract

Man has always desired to establish an intimate relationship with God. The emergence of Sufism in India started around 8th century, when its prime objective was the propagation of Islam. The roots of Sufism are based on the principles of divine love, fear of God, patience and reunification of worldly things, which played an important role in keeping the flame of spirituality alive in the society. Like other cultural faiths, Sufism also had a deep relationship between religion, philosophy and music. The songs of divine love composed by Sufi's under the influence of contemporary circumstances, came to be known as Sufi Music. The wave of Sufi music gained its distinct identity owing to the devotion and religious sentiments. Gradually, special musical instruments were also started to be used for accompaniment with this musical form. The introduction of music into the Sufi tradition is considered to have unfolded under the influence of Indian culture. Its basic purpose was to immerse the singer and the audience in the celestial devotion. The various musical forms like Khayal, Kaul, Kalbana, Naksh, Gul, Tarana, Qawwali, Kafi etc subsequently cropped up as a result. Free from the Sharia ideology of Islam and thereafter adapting the influences of different cultures & regions, the way of worshipping God through music is present before us in the form of Sufi music. Punjab being the gateway to India for the foreigners from the central and the western Asia, harboured maximum number of Sufi's. The harmonisation and assimilation of local culture with the Sufi music is evidently asserted in this region.

Keywords: Indian Culture, Sufism, Indian Music, Sufi Music, Islam, Punjab

INTRODUCTION

Sufi Music is one of the various streams of music prevalent in India. Sufism's tradition of expressing one's love for God through music has established a unique identity throughout the world. Influenced by Islam, this tradition emerged in the form of songs of divine love while passing through changing times and accepting the circumstantial influences. It is important to mention here that though music is considered prohibited under Islam's Sharia laws, the basic propagation of Sufism proceeded through music. Sufi music signifies that music in which Sufi poetry, Sufi literature and Sufi ideology is presented in a bouquet of musical composition sung by Sufi saints in remembrance and worship of their Guru's. It created such an atmosphere of divine love that gave its followers a mysterious feeling of joy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study embraces the qualitative research methodology to explore the musical as well as the socio-cultural confluence between the Sufi Music and the Indian Culture. Researcher has adopted the required secondary resources. The study of historical documents and literary works related to Sufism, Sufi music, Indian philosophy, Indian culture and Indian music have been conducted for this purpose.

OBJECTIVE

The study intends to explore the exhaustive connection between music and spirituality. Music has been used as a means of spiritual expression throughout the world. This research paper aims to study the evolution of Sufi music, its arrival in India and Punjab. For this purpose, the paper directs its focus towards the impact of Indian culture especially of the Punjab area on the Sufi Music and how the Sufi music has profoundly assimilated itself into the Indian culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand the confluence of Indian culture on Sufi music with special reference to Punjab region, various published books and journals have been analysed.

Renu Sachdeva's book '*Dharmik Parampravein Evam Hindustani Sangeet*' affirms that after understanding the classical aspects of Indian music, the Sufi's mixed Arabic and Persian music in it and depicted many new singing styles

like Kaul, Kalbana, Naksh Gul, Qawalli, Tarana, etc. It also states that though Indian music and culture have contributed to the origin of various genres of Sufi music, but elements of Sufi's Irani music also finds its place in it.

Acharya Brahaspati in his book '*Musalman Aur Bharatiya Sangeet*' states that while Sufi's adopted Hindi language to reach out masses, they also adopted the verses of Indian folk songs. Indian singers who expressed Sufi thoughts in local Indian languages used to perform before Sheikh Moinuddin Chishti and people gathered around to listen to their songs. The book also points out that if the use of instruments inspires love for God, then their use become totally appropriate.

Manmohan Singh's book '*Sufivad Ate Dharmik Leharan*' asserts that Sufi's contributed immensely in development of mixed culture during the medieval period. The Bhakti wave having dominance of love and devotion was growing strong in the medieval Indian society in the form of its Nirgun and Sargun streams. The book acknowledges the influence of Bhakti Vedanta upon the Sufis. The saints and fakirs of Sufi tradition adopted music as medium to spread the message of spirituality.

SUFISM

To understand Sufi ideology, we have to first understand the meaning of the word Sufi. Different views are prevalent regarding the origin of the word Sufi. Most scholars believe that the word Sufi originated from the word 'Suf', which means wool. In Islam, the fakirs who wore Suf or woolen clothes came to be called Sufis, which was also a symbol of their simplicity. Some of the scholars are of the opinion that the Sufi word came from the word 'Safa', which means clean or purification of heart's intentions.

In the Mahan Kosh, the word Sufi is used for purified soul. In rebellion against the fanaticism that arose in Islam, the fearless fakirs who followed the Indian mystical path fiercely rejected those harsh restrictions. Although they never directly rejected the religion of Islam, but we could say that Sufism emerged as a liberal branch of Islam. Sufi music originated from the songs of divine love sung by these fakirs. In these spiritual songs, the writers presented themselves as the heroine and God has been presented as the hero or their friend. Sufi fakirs were basically rebellious by nature and their music originated out of the sounds of rebellion against Shariat. Sufi saints presented the subjects of the divine love, union with the God, distraction in his remembrance, separation and the ways of wooing the master by dancing, in their works.

SUFISM IN INDIA

Sufi ideology arrived in India around the 8th century. In fact, Sufi ideology gained its real uniformity and strength only after coming to India and the usage of music in it is also attributed to the Indian culture. In Indian culture, music has been used for spirituality since the Vedic period. Performing music for God and dancing in joy happens to be the Indian path of divine devotion. As cultures came into contact with each other, various ideological exchanges takes place. In the beginning, while Muslim invaders used to convert people through force and oppression, Sufi's encouraged people to adopt Islam through spreading the idea of love and simplicity. This is the reason Sufi saint's used to establish dialogue with the common people by mingling into the local environment of India. In the medieval period, the strong Bhakti wave in India also had an impact on Sufi ideology.

An Islamic preacher named Sheikh Ismail was first one to come to Lahore in the eleventh century. The first fakir to establish the Sufi ideology in India was Sheikh Makhdoom Ali Hujviri, who became famous by the name of Data Ganj Bakhsh. He wrote the famous book *Kashfal Maihjoob* in which the secrets of Sufi ideology were revealed. In India, the Chishti sect of Sufi saints is most preached, whose founder Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti came from Afghanistan via Punjab and Delhi and then ultimately settled in Rajasthan's Ajmer. He considered service of humanity as his prime religious duty and that is why he became famous among the masses by the name of Garib Nawaz. One of his many disciples, Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, carried forward his ideas and preachings.

After the death of Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Hazrat Sheikh Farid propagated their ideology on a large scale. After Sheikh Farid, one of his disciples Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya was also most sorted out preacher settled in Delhi and who happened to be the mentor of the famous musician Hazrat Amir Khusro. Amir Khusro was a prodigious genius who had command on different languages, was a poet of the highest order and of course an unparalleled musician. He created many singing styles, ragas, taals and musical instruments which are an integral part of Indian Classical music even today. The singing genres like Kaul, Kalbana, Naksh Gul, Kalbana, Tarana, Qawwali, Khayal etc. emerged due to

the blending of Arabic-Persian music with the centuries old Indian Classical Music. Amir Khusro is considered to be the creator of most of these genres which have a lot of similarities with the Dhrupad, Doha, Maand, Chhand, Prabandh etc. However, Sufi music appears to be an equal blend of Indian Classical music and Folk music. Today, Qawwali is the most popular singing form of Sufi music which also represents Sufi music.

SUFISM IN PUNJAB

Since ancient times, the land of Punjab has been India's gateway for the Western and Central Asia. Sufism arrived in India along with Islam from there. When the Muslim invaders failed to convert people into Islam with the use of force and suppression, they took the help of Sufi fakirs. The simplicity and spirit of love of those fakirs succeeded in attracting common people. Sheikh Farid 'Ganj Shakar', a disciple of Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, came to Pak Pattan in Punjab and settled here to propagate the Chishti tradition of Sufi ideology on a large scale. He is considered the founder of the Sufi poetry in Punjab and his works are even recorded in the Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Similarly, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria made Multan his main centre and carried forward the Suharwadi tradition of Sufi ideology into other areas of Punjab. In the 12th and 13th centuries, the propagation of Sufi ideology was at its peak in Punjab.

In the 16th century, Sheikh Hamid Kirmani rapidly propagated the Qadiri tradition of Sufism in Punjab. The famous fakir saint Sai Mian Mir was from this tradition only. He was such a widely acclaimed scholar that even the Mughal emperor Jahangir invited him personally for getting advice about how to become a good ruler. Similarly, the founder of Naqshbandi tradition Khwaja Baqi Billah, propagated the Sufi ideology and made his centre at Lahore. In the Qadiri tradition, the audience used to get engrossed in dancing with the music which was much familiar with the Vaishnav tradition of India. Mostly Chishti and Qadiri traditions played an important role in the spread of Sufi ideology in Punjab. The proponents of both these traditions inculcated their ideology in the hearts of the people through Qawwali, Ghazal and Kafi. Among them, the Kafi singing style is especially sung only in Punjab and is based on the Ragas. Its subject is based on Ishq Hakiki as it expresses the transcendental joy of spiritual love through personal love. Every artist presents Kafi beautifully and impressively according to his imagination, intelligence and emotion.

There are two popular forms of Kafi- Sindhi Kafi & Multani Kafi. Shah Hussain, Shah Saraf, Shah Habib, Sah Murad, Bulle Shah, Ghulam Fareed are some of the famous Sufi saints who wrote and composed Kafi's. Punjab's rich heritage and literature has always enhanced the prestige of Indian culture. Despite the losses due to suppressions by foreign invaders and deteriorating social conditions, the shine of Punjab's heritage has always remained intact. The Punjabi Sufi poetry's love stream is immersed in the colours of spirituality, which has been illuminating the mystical experiences for common people in simple language.

CONCLUSION

In Sufi ideology, music is used as a medium of preaching to such an extent that the body and mind of both the singer and the listeners become immersed in that music and attain a state of supreme bliss. While Sufi saints were successful in impacting the people of India with their ideology, at the same time they themselves could not escape the influence of India's rich culture. To propagate Sufi ideology, they had to learn and adopt Indian languages. While Punjab bore the brunt of foreign Islamic invaders, it gave place to a large number of Sufi fakirs who came from outside. The inclusion of Sheikh Farid's writings in Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the laying of the foundation stone of Sri Harmandir Sahib, the holy shrine of Sikhism at Amritsar by Sai Mian Mir, corroborate the assimilation of Sufi ideology into Indian culture. While on the Sufi fakirs gave special importance to the popular folk tales of Punjab by making them metaphors of divine love, at the same time they made music its power and soul. These compositions of Sufi music are so deeply ingrained in the minds of people that they have the same status as of the folk songs. The wonderful blend of Sufi ideology and Indian culture in the soil of Punjab is evident from the religious harmony and secularism that can be seen in this region.

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