

Role of multimedia in preserving, promoting and popularizing “Kashmiri traditional folk music”

Bilal Ahmed Dar

Research Scholar, Faculty of Music, Panjab University, Chandigarh, Punjab, India

Abstract

Although the age old traditions deeply rooted in the soil have been providing content and style to the folk music, certain external influences have no doubt gone to improve Kashmiri folk music in certain spheres to achieve cadence and balance. Kashmiri folk music as a popular genre, flowered and reached to its zenith of splendour with the timely support of Radio Kashmir Srinagar, Doordarshan Kendra and the state cultural academy and information department as well.

It has almost become the home of talented folk singers like, Ab Rashid Hafiz, Gulzar Ahmad Ganie, Manzoor Ahmad Shah etc, all of whom used to sing Kashmiri folk songs, which provides solace & relief to the disturbed minds of Kashmiri people. Their magical and melodious voices reaches the hearts of people living, even in the remote and back ward areas, through this medium.

Keywords: sufi, folk, melody, dastaan, chakri, ruf, tumbaknari, aesthetics, rhythm, tunes etc

Introduction

Radio Kashmir is believed to be the only sole medium which is broadcasting the audio of Kashmiri traditional & folk songs thus keeping the essence and glory of Kashmiri folk music tradition alive & contributing towards the Kashmiri society. The old folk music of the renowned, outstanding and well-known artistes of various parts of the region are preserved in the form of discs in the archives. Radio has helped in the improvement of presentation by way of introducing sophisticated musical instruments chosen by the producers according to the need of the singer with the aim of creating pleasing rhythmic peculiarity to the level of perfection.

With the help of Radio we often listen the great and beautiful old and new amazing, charming & heartwarming melodies of Kashmiri folk songs, like songs of joy, songs of every season, pangs of separation, songs dedicated to the Sufis and saints, songs of festivals, Chakri & Ruf songs etc.

TV has a bright future in building, shaping and reconstructing our ancient folk culture. The television programme is particularly produced in order to take over and step in the traditional music of remote areas and even the less advanced sections of the society. This is basically done with the motive and desire to mirror and high light the age old ways and cultural traits, which is basically less known to the people living in outside world. Besides all this it has also been a source of income for the folk artistes of this valley.

Influence of Radio

Folk Music has enjoyed a persistent and perpetual popularity in every land. In the Kashmir region particularly due to the predominating element of devotional strain and tributes paid to great Sufi saints, and because of serenity of atmosphere and beauty of the nature the people of this land are inspired to compose devotional songs, seasonal songs, festival songs, farming songs and all kinds of other merriment songs and this practice has continued to keep alive the traditional elements of

Kashmiri folk music. In the areas largely in rural region generally folk music of Kashmir breathes freely and finds an appreciative audience which shows to what extent such music dominates the community of both Hindus as well as Muslims. As the civilization gains in evolution and homogeneity, new strain are added to the folk music and vibrant tunes from popular music particularly the film music are supper added to make it more attractive. This is more particularly the case because with the villages getting less and less isolated and more and more close to the city influences due to better communication facility. The folk singers and their singing groups choose to become more mobile, more popular and better equipped to be able to earn both name and fame in a very short period of time. Radio Kashmir Srinagar has undertaken special programme in the Yuwa-Vani service and general service for introducing new talent in Kashmiri folk music, in which both traditional as well as amateur folk singers takes part with the motive that the valuable and significant folk music of Kashmir gains popularity and reach to every nook and corner of this valley, especially the remote hilly and back ward areas. The folk artists from such regions also participate in Radio programmes and live concerts and under the guidance and company of troupes they move from one place to another and as a result of cultural interaction bring the peculiarities of the region in terms of tunes and diction. There is no doubt to say that radio has promoted and preserved the folk music of Kashmir but as its aim is to widen the sphere and circle of listeners an offer is also made to the talented singers composers and poets to provide a better material for the production of musical programmes. The folk music of the outstanding and well-known artistes of various parts of the region are preserved in the form of discs in the archives.

The annual concerts organized by Radio have provided an opportunity and chance to the composers, singers, and poets etc, to evolve a better combination of musical compositions,

so as to help the singer to achieve a thrilling effect. Radio has helped in the improvement of presentation by way of introducing sophisticated musical instruments chosen by the producers according to the need of the singer with the aim of creating pleasing rhythmic peculiarity to the level of perfection.

The Radio has brought a compatibility between the singer and the instrumental player deputed for the programme and the teams are trained to work in a harmonious agreement or union in order to produce the best and most productive performance. Since the Radio can offer orchestra the singer or the team of singer feel benefitted and asset to improve the performance. These performances also help in transmission of experience.

The Radio Kashmir Srinagar and the cultural academy Srinagar both prompted the old arts and revive the Kashmiri folk literature which has almost stop to develop and progress in the scattered areas of Kashmir. This has also helped in creation of cultural clubs, which bring together local artistes who have perpetuated the culture and art and a lot of interaction has taken place by holding group competitions and festivals which are being covered by the radio team of experts in special broadcasts.

Nowadays Radio is now in direct contact with the artistes and allows the listening public to offer their views and reactions telephonically and through letters & messages. Time to time eminent personalities, like scholars, writers, musicians, singers, dramatist and other well-known social figures are invited in order to discuss the cultural heritage of Kashmir region in their talks on various occasions.

According to a prominent and well known Kashmiri "Daastan" singer "Mohammad Ismail Mir" all the credit and acknowledgement goes to the Radio Kashmir Srinagar in shaping & flourishing his career in order to promote and upgrade the rich and affluent folk song "Dastaan" of Kashmir. The Radio Kashmir Srinagar has taken this folk art form to the highest level of perfection and appreciation besides through this medium the valuable and significant folk music of Kashmir gains popularity and reach to every nook and corner of this valley, especially the remote hilly and back ward areas. With the help of Radio we often listen the great charming and beautiful melodies of Kashmiri folk songs, like songs of joy, songs of every season, pangs of separation, songs dedicated to the Sufis and saints, songs of festivals, Chakri & Ruf songs etc.

In this way we can say that the folk music of Kashmir attained a new life and reached to every door of the people in the remote hilly areas, with the help of this medium. Thus decaying traditional folk music is given a new height and glory. But one should not overlook the fact that the artistes invited for Radio programme, generally dilute the traditional folk rhythm or tunes to make the song more ear catching by incorporating popular modern tunes and rhythms. This results in compromising the old and traditional tunes. The programme director concerned should dismay and discourage this casual and unprofessional approach of such artists and should allow the folk musical instruments to make the song vibrant and alive within the intonation of the originality of such folk songs. Many folk songs like "Chakri, & Ruf song, Dastaan" etc. were confined to the villages only but the credit of popularizing of all these folk songs goes to Radio Kashmir.

We often hear these melodious and charming folk songs from Radio Kashmir Srinagar, which provides relief and solace to the heart and minds of the Kashmiri people. It has almost become the home of talented folk singers like, Ab Rashid hafiz, Gulzar Ahmad Ganie, Manzoor Ahmad shah etc. Their magical and melodious voices reaches the hearts of people living, even in the remote and back ward areas, through this medium. In this way Radio has been the main medium which is broadcasting the audio of Kashmiri traditional songs, thus keeping Kashmiri musical tradition alive and contributing towards the Kashmiri society.

Influence of Television on Folk Music

The television has added sight to the sound and the spectacle is made living and exciting through this media the folk singers and other artistes have been helped to present graphically the folk culture and music of the region. Hence a listener seems to have been transported physically to the times and the land of which the picture of culture is presented. Hence television puts in sharp relief in order to show the outline of the picture which projects the age –old life. TV has a bright future in building, shaping and reconstructing our ancient folk culture. The TV audience is spread out and the TV programme embraces the largest canvas. Historical, mythical, cultural and social segments are brought into high relief. In Kashmir the presentation of historical, social and mythological scenes through television has added new life and color to our folk music culture. Therefore effective make up, beautiful costumes, a twist and turn in presentation and dialogue have created very good scope for the up gradation and betterment of varied arts. The cultural and dramatic clubs have borrowed copiously from the television presentation of dances, dramatic feature and so on. With this help our many folk art forms like festive dances, skits and other folk songs have been influenced with new life and heights and have become vibrant and popular in every nook and corner of the valley.

The television programme is particularly produced in order to take over and step in the traditional music of remote areas and even the less advanced sections of the society. This is basically done with the motive and desire to mirror and high light the age old ways and cultural traits, which is basically less known to the people living in outside world. Besides all this it has also been a source of income for the folk artistes of this valley. As the folk singers in various pockets have been depending upon both public appreciation and public participation, the known folk singers and their teams present a musical compositions with the ray of hope that the presentation has a telling and soothing effect upon the audience. The singers are eager to adopt the sound systems of the neighboring areas or states to find out how will the musical pattern and style of artists can be adopted to improve upon their own presentation. Such interactions has prompted better understanding of folk art and culture.

Introduction of Orchestra and Style of Singing

The richness of Kashmiri folk music should be viewed from the stand point of content and style. It is worth taking up our folk-music for its simplicity and appeal. The magical and charming notes of "Chakri, Ruf songs, Vanvun" and also the devotional songs held the listeners spell bound, although there

were very few musical instruments to accompany the group. Talking about “Chakri” all the innovations and changes in the flexibility of the utterance were due to the singer himself. The beats of “Tumbaknari” (Kashmiri percussion folk instrument) and “Noet” (Kashmiri earthen pitcher) regulating the rhythm (laya) as well as nuances and flourishes provided by “Rabab and Sarangi” and other instruments enriched and refined the musical effect.

In the recent years more and more musical instruments like, “Harmonium, Guitar, key board, Flute, Clairnet, Tabla, Octapad, Kango, Banjo, Mirics” etc, have been introduced in order to provide a charming and appealing sound effect and sustain the rhythm in its shifting articulation suited to the choice of the singer or group. For singing a lot of musical flourish is produced by string and wind instruments which heightens the effect of musical notes and builds an atmosphere of excitement and be – witching. In order to increase the aesthetic essence of a folk song, a folk singer takes up the next line or part of the line with chosen instruments to deepen the effect or lengthen the flow of music as is demanded by the content of the song. Hence the orchestra has provided the same effect as costume does to a drama artist, who likes to emphasize and highlight the emotional effect with the help of make up.

Nowadays the artistes are provided with an operative and production orchestra. They have been able to add variation in the beat or the rhythm and very often a determined sound system is used to bring richness and significance in the musical symphony and to empower the singer take the refrain or sometimes leave a sound pattern half way for the orchestra to produce tonal and rhythmic artistic embellishments. Occasionally, this measure is to provide rest to the singer and allow him a chance to create and introduce a variation and extempore in style and mode suited to his emotion. Thus making the musical performance more attractive, charming, engaging and appealing.

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