



MUSIC IN NORTHERN INDIA: AN ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT FROM 1500-1857 A.D.

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ABSTRACT

India had political, social, and cultural upheavals in the early eighteenth century, which prepared the country for the Mutiny of 1857 A.D. also known as the First War of Independence. This time frame has a variety of effects on how Indian music developed. Northern India's musical culture flourished throughout this period inside an intricate web of Hindu devotional and Sufi mystical rituals, as well as networks of courtly patronage. Indian music culture flourished throughout the Mughal Empire, particularly under Akbar's patronage and saw great advancements in musical instruments, techniques, and genres. Although the colonial era presented difficulties, it also contributed to the codification and increased popularity of this musical genre. This paper examines the intricate development of musical culture in Northern India from early 16th century to mid-19th centuries, with emphasis on the emergence and growth of the genres that were later recognized as mainstream classical Hindustani music in the 20th century.

Key Words: Hindustani, Music, Culture, Chisti, Mughal, Mutiny, Patronage

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary socio-cultural developments are reflected in the music of that particular era. The rich cultural legacy of the Mughal era included music as an essential component. The Mughal rulers always enjoyed listening to music. Especially during Akbar's reign (1556–1605), significant advancements in the field of music were made. He supported many talented singers and artists throughout the years of his tenure as Emperor.

Even while some of their contemporaries tended to view excessive music patronage as a symptom of moral degradation, the tragedy of Mughal political decline stood in odd contrast to expressions of creative vigor in the field of music. Seniah Gharana artistes instructed those who attained brilliance in music. The Gwalior 'dhrupad' genre, linked to the Seniah gharana, became the standard musicological model when emperor Akbar invited a core group of Gwalior musicians to his darbar. Throughout the 18th century, the Mughal Court politics had a significant impact on the development of Northern India's musical culture.

A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND THE EVOLUTION OF MUSIC CULTURE

The evolution of music originated in the ancient history as numerous references were available in the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samveda, the Brahmanas and the Upanisads. Two kinds of flutes, two other wind instruments, five kinds of drums, five type of stringed instruments including the hundred stringed *vana* and cymbals as well as their players were mentioned. The fundamental ideas of classical music, such as the seven *swaras*, three *gramas*, twenty-one *murchanas*, three *layas* (speeds), nine *rasas*, three *sthayis* (octaves), *srutis*, and others, are invaluable references found in ancient literature, including the *Vedas*, *Agamas*, *Upanishad*, *Vayu Purana*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Bhagavata*, and others. The development of a repertory of "deshi" ragas and the progressive replacement of the "grama-murchana" system of melodic classification were the two most important developments. The *Vina* whose parts are named in the *Aitareya Aranyaka*, was played in the

Asvamedha yajna and in the *Mahavarata* ceremony a lute and drum were played. Most important of all was the sacred singing that formed an intrinsic part of all yajnas. The Brahamana and the Upanishads speak of the great spiritual efficacy of *Saam* singing. All later music developed from the *Saam*.

The Arab invasion of Sindh in the eighth century had an impact on India, but following the Mongol invasions to the west, a far fuller fusion of musical components started to emerge in north India. Sufis from central Asia carried with them a positive attitude toward interacting with Indian music and languages, as well as a plethora of Turkoman and Persian instruments, songs, and song forms. The Sufis developed a strong affinity for Hindu music after becoming drawn to yoga practices and connecting with the metaphorical themes of bhakti. The Bhakti movement which inspired and sustained the art in the South, also produced, all over the North, great souls who were both saints and musicians. The *padas* of Dasopant (1551-1616 A.D.) and other holy men of Maharashtra are set to different *ragas*. The Bhajanas of Mira Bai (1498-1546 A.D.) were famous. Vrindavan Gosvami and Swami Haridas occupied a prominent place in the development of North Indian music. During the 15th century, music was in its fully developed form and reached its pinnacle during Raja Man Singh Tomar's time (1486-1517 A.D.). His durbar was adorned with many *nayaks* (musicologists) who wrote *padas*. He played a distinguished part in the growth and perfection of the *Dhrupad* which represented the acme of classical art. The period immediate before Mughal rule was very important from the point of view of the advancement of art, music and architecture as great studies were made during this period. According to certain historians, Amir Khusrao invented the *qawwali*. A few of the most ancient components of the *qawwali*, *qaul*, *tarana*, *qalbana* etc. are credited to him. He is also credited with introducing a new system of classification based on the Persian "maqam," which accommodated both Arab-Persian tunes and the wealth of deshi *ragas*. He participated in a larger interrelated Islamic musical world that stretched from Spain to India and the borders of China. Amir Khusrao's Chistiah musical silsila' included musicians in its teaching line who became the Qawwal Bachche, the foundation of the Gwalior *khyal gharana* in the early 19th century. Some of them had adopted the gayaki of Seniah Niamat Khan 'Sadarang' at the beginning of the 18th century, raising the bar for modern music globally.

Following the establishment of Muslim dominance in the North, Indian music evolved with Persian and Arabian musical traditions. Indian music, which was supported by Muslim monarchs in their royal court, expanded to take on new dimensions. In contrast, there were no foreign incursions or uprisings in South India. South Indian classical music kept thriving and expanding in the age-old, customary manner that was supported by Hindu monarchs and temples.

THE MUGHALS AND EVOLUTION OF MUSIC IN INDIA

The Mughals had played a significant role in the evolution of music in the diverse ways. There are many references of musicians patronaged by the Mughal rulers in the historical records of the country. Several prominent musicians of the Mughal Empire are mentioned in the chronicles of Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty in 1526 A.D., including Sheikh Ghuran, Sheikh Adhan, Khawaja Abdullah Marwareed, Sheikh Nai, Sheikh Quli, Ghulam Saadi, Meer Anju, and many more. Baiju, a well-known musician, is thought to have been one of the musicians in Humayun's court. Akbar was a passionate music lover. During his reign, many new ragas and musical instruments were presented. The *rudra vina* and the *Tambur* featured in the music of the Mughal Empire, especially in the eras of Akbar and Jahangir (1605–1627 A.D.). The Mughal Court's favourite Indian instrument was *Rudra Vina*. The Mughal paintings from Akbar's era made this evident.

The musical culture created by Khusrau's brilliance was a smooth combination of linguistic and melodic Indo-Islamic components that influenced the courtly and devotional customs of medieval India. But Persian and Turkomani music seems to have remained popular at court until the Mughal court marked a turning point in the evolution of Indian music with Akbar's 'darbar,' which favoured the native 'dhrupad', indicating a change in imperial taste. The glory of *dhrupad* reached its zenith during the reign of Emperor Akbar whose court was adorned by Tansen, one of the nine gems. So extensive was the domination of Gwalior that of the 36 musicians in Akbar's Court, 14 were from Gwalior. It was the age of the dhrupad style.

In *Ain-i-Akbari*, Abul Fazl claims that Akbar loved music very much. He was a great admirer of music and heavily patronized musicians. Skilled musicians from Kashmir, Central Asia, Persia (Mashhad) and India (Gwalior, Malwa, Agra, Delhi) embellished the court of Mughal Emperor Akbar. Akbar loved music so the musicians were divided into seven divisions. Each of them performed on each day of the week. Not only was Akbar a good listener, but he also understood music and was interested in learning more about the science of music. In addition to being a talented musician, Akbar himself was a master *naqqara* player. Abul Fazl stated that Akbar had written about two hundred ancient songs, the best of which were *Jalalshahi*, *Mahamir Karkat*, and *Nawrozi*. Most of the foreign singers and musicians in Akbar's court were from central Asia and Persia. Abul Fazl cited the roster of international artists, which included Mir Saiyed Ali and Sultan Hashim Usta Dost, who were Persians.

Abul Fazl's Akbarnama mentions that Tansen was a musician, the likes of whom can be born only once in a thousand years. Tansen gave excellent contribution in the field of music and in the composition of Dhrupad style of music. Another composer of *dhrupad* were Subhan Khan Nohar, Hafiz Nad 'Ali Goyinda, Tan Tarang Khan, Ram Das, Chand Khan, Surgyan Khan Fatehpuri, and Suraj Khan etc. The second Indian musician Abul Fazl described was Rangsen, who came from Agra and was the son of Malwa's monarch, Baz Bahadur. During this time, Baz Bahadur was one of the best singers. Faqirullah Saif Khan claims that Akbar also supported Delhi's Khayal singers, who succeeded in perfecting their art form as a traditional genre. There was fierce competition among talented singers, poets, composers, instrumentalists and painters to earn Akbar's favour, according to some extremely fascinating facts provided by Badauni.

Jahangir had a good sense of music, just like his father. Many musicians were housed in his court by him. Hundreds of musicians and dancing girls were always ready to perform in Mahal as per their turn. He gave every one of them stipend according to their worth. Shahjahan enjoyed music as well. He used to listen to the performers' greatest tunes in the nights. Daily performances of vocal and instrumental music took place at *the Diwan-i-Khas*. Shahjahan himself performed music occasionally. The voice of Shah Jahan was so fascinating that many Sufis and holy men who attended these evening assemblies lost their senses in the ecstasy produced by his singing. Principal Musicians like Ram Das, Mahapatra, Jagannath and Janardhan Bhatt were also patronized by Shahjahan, son of Emperor Jahangir.

It is notable that Aurangzeb enjoyed music throughout the first ten years of his reign and had a sizable chorus of singers at his court. For many years, Aurangzeb imitated his predecessors' recreational pursuits. He loved music and spent his summers in Kashmir, the Mughal emperors' preferred place. A historian of the era, Bakhtawar Khan, claimed that the monarch was a master in music. Faqirullah's *Rag Darpan*, a musical treatise, included a list of Aurangzeb's preferred vocalists and instrumentalists. But as Aurangzeb grew older, he developed an antipathy towards music but individuals were permitted to sing in private. His move against music seems to have less to do with practical considerations and more to do with changing tastes in music. Aurangzeb never returned to his former passion for music, but he told his son in a belated letter that it was a legitimate royal pastime. However, there is no denying that these many changes around 1669 had one overall

effect: Aurangzeb's court was deprived of many elements of Mughal culture, including a number of Hindu-rooted customs.

Muhammad Shah (1719-1748 A.D.), the Mughal Emperor, gave North Indian music a lot of support at his court in the 18th century. Among his most well-known vocalists were *Sadarang* and *Adarang*. Although they were experts in *Dhrupad*, they also taught a lot of students the *Khayal* form of music, which was seen to have a more poetic and sensual approach. He was an ineffective, indolent ruler but a great patron of arts. His period was not known for peace and stability but was important for music and culture. The credit of establishing a firm ground for the *Khayal* style by composing hundreds of immortal compositions goes to *Sadarang*. *Khayals* were written by Muhammad Shah himself, using the pen name Rangila Piya. Around this period, a number of new musical genres emerged, including *Ghazal*, *Tarana* and *Dadra*. During this time, *sitar* and *tabla* gained popularity as well. Furthermore, the courtly music also included several folk musical genres. This category included *Tappa*, which originated from Punjabi camel drivers' songs, and *Thumri*, which used folk scales. The progression of the composite culture in the realm of music during the Mughals is still evident in Indian classical music, such as Hindustani music. Muhammad Shah combined the emperor's and composer's names to make the phrase "Muhammad Shah Rangile." Though later Mughal emperors continued to support music, it gradually faded with the Mughals' collapse.

CHISHTI SAINTS AND MUSIC

Hindustani music developed throughout the Middle Ages in the North India and the Chishti Sufi saints made a significant contribution to its development. Sufi saints from Chishti were impressed by the spiritual power of music. Regardless of their caste or faith, Chishtis supported talented professional singers who belonged to it. As a result, various Parso-Arab musical styles, such as *Qaul* and other related variations, started to be delivered in desi Indianized style. During this time, a great deal of individuals from all castes, both affluent and poor, were exposed to music.

Chishti used Hindustani music, blending Persian and Arab genres, to spread their ideas of spiritual and moral reformation for the general public. Amir Khusru, Hazrat Nizamuddin's student was highly renowned for his contributions. He abandoned the customs of the past and instituted new ones, including *Qaul*, *Qawwali*, *Qalbana*, *Naqsh-e-Gul*, and *Nigar*. It is reported that Amir Khusru composed roughly a dozen new songs, including *Zilaf*, *Muafiq*, *Ghanam*, *Farghana*, *Zangula*, and *Sarpada*. Performing artists such as Khusru's ghazals were regularly performed in Jalaluddin Khilji's court. In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, Sheikh Bahauddin was the leading Sufi musician in the Delhi region. He was a talented vocalist and rabab musician who also invented the *soz khayal*, a sophisticated new stringed instrument that became popular in those days. The *qawwali* repertory, which includes songs like *qaul*, *qalbana*, and *tarana*, was frequently sung in the Sufi gatherings. Shaikh Bahauddin Baajan, who passed away in 1506, was a highly esteemed Sufi in the Deccan known for his enthusiasm for music.

When Aurangzeb forbade music in 1667, it was the first sign of disaster for the *Kalawants*. According to a recently released study by Katherine Butler Brown (2006), Aurangzeb withdrew patronage and chose to forgo enjoying music due to personal anguish and devout austerity. But the lack of significant court employment for over 30 years caused a professional crisis for the north's best musicians, forcing them to look for other forms of patronage and reconsider their professional and performance approaches. The elite of Delhi seems to have developed a strong interest in music at this time, as seen by the abundance of musicological texts, resurrection of Chishti, *Kalawant* musicians, *Qawwals* and other liberal Sufi groups. After a year of mismanaged affairs, Jahandar Shah, grandson of Aurangzeb and the Mughal administrative and military elite had strained relations with the *Kalawant* musical community, which was already disliked by the ulema and

the orthodox Muslim society. Bahadur Shah Jafar became the successor of Akbar II upon his death on 28-09-1837. He was interested in Arts, Music and Poetry. Bahadurshah Jafar's reign lasted for 2 decades until the first war of Independence in 1857.

PATRONAGE OF MUSIC IN REGIONAL COURTS AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Following the fall of the Mughal Empire in the 18th century, lesser princely kingdoms like Lucknow, Gwalior, Bijapur, Golkunda, Banaras etc continued to support music, leading to the emergence of a variety of genres known as *Gharanas*. Many musicians left Delhi for the emerging regional courts around the end of the 18th century. The most famous of these was Lucknow in the independent kingdom of Awadh, which during the reign of Asaf ud daulah (1775–1797) "began to surpass even that of the emperor in Delhi" in terms of wealth and magnificence. The arts were greatly supported by Nawab Shujaudaulah (1754–75) and Asaf-Ud-daulah, who brought in well-known Delhi performers like the *khyal* singers Jani and Ghulam Rasul as well as the renowned instrumentalists Chajju Khan and Jivan Khan, also known as *dhrupadiahs* and *rababiahs*. Numerous entertainers descended upon Lucknow, and the court quickly rose to prominence as a hub for musical entertainment. Another significant location at this time was Jaipur, which was linked to the composer "Manarang," who was well-known for his *khyals* and "*dadras*". He also performed in the dhrupad style. Sawai Jaisingh (1727-1743) was the kingdom's founder and was well-versed in music and scholarship. By the late 1800s, the 'gunijankhana' of the kingdom was home to many talented musicians, particularly instrumentalists. Following the vocalists Bade Muhammad Khan and Kadir Baksh, together with his sons Haddu and Hassu Khan, being attached to the court by its king Daulat Rao Sindhia (1794–1827), Gwalior became a premier hub for *khyal*.

Gwalior is regarded as the land of music. It is said even a child in Gwalior cries in Sur Faqirullah, an administrator and scholar during Aurangzeb's reign had, in his book *Raga Darpan* described Gwalior as the cultural capital of India. Gwalior has the oldest school of music, and is referred to as the 'Gangotri of Gharanas'. The founder of the Gwalior school of music was Raja Man Singh Tomar (1486-1516) whose *darbar* was adorned by many *Nayakas* or scholar musicians like Nayak Charju, Nayak Baiju, Nayak Karan, Nayak Lohang and Nayak Bakshu etc. Little regional courts like those in Banaras, Rewa, Darbhanga, and Banda also presented significant chances for musicians who were on the move, demonstrating the significance of music and its endorsement for the political landscape and cultural image of native kingdoms. The Awadh Nawab Wajid Ali Shah's obsession with poetry, music and particularly for instrumental music gave patronage to Rampur, Farruqabad, Bulandshahar centers. These locations attracted artists from Delhi and fostered creative ties with neighboring provincial courts such as Lucknow. Nathu Khan, father of Ghulam Raza Khan, the celebrated musician of Lucknow, held an official position in Rampur between 1822 and 1840, while Ghulam Raza Khan's son, Ali Raza, spent time in Patna after the Mutiny.

MUTINY AND INDIAN MUSIC

Many people believed that the Mutiny marked a turning point in Indian history. Even if the British monarch tended to keep a low profile when it came to religious and social change, for the majority of the population it marked the moment of rupture with a pre-modern past and the inauguration of forces of modernization. In areas like Bengal, which by 1857 had accepted and dealt with the advantages and drawbacks of western education, the time for reckoning had arrived, but the Mutiny cemented this shift for the remainder of the nation. There was a substantial break with the previous political and moral economy in music. When musicians

moved between courts, they were frequently at odds with one another, fighting for patronage and unwilling to provide their musical expertise to anybody outside of their immediate family.

There was a lot of musical activities and development throughout this time, as seen by the variety and number of *ragas*, *talas*, musical instruments, notation systems, and other musical genres. Numerous scholarly musical genres were composed, including elaborately ornamented *Kritis*, *Swarajatis*, *Varna*, *Pada*, *Tillana*, *Jawali*, and *Ragamalikas*. It is significant to note that the foundation of all these various compositional styles may be found in the ancient *prabandhas*. In the newest compositions, the musical and lyrical aspects, had taken on a more refined and altered form. Notational compositions were also safeguarded and preserved, and the current generation is lucky to have access to all previous priceless works. Folk songs were the traditional means of igniting the sense of nationalism among the populace during the 1857 uprising.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the music had a great value in the ancient literature and developed in the subsequent period of time from the pre-Mughals and Mughals. The Mughals in India were particularly influential in the development of music in Northern India. Akbar was very interested in the development of Indian music culture during his reign, which was a pivotal period. Following Aurangzeb's death music culture flourished on a regional level. After the demise of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire quickly began to disintegrate. As a result, Subas or provinces of the empire began to announce themselves as independent from the central government. The imperial princes of the Mughals engaged in a fierce struggle for succession as soon as Aurangzeb died in 1707 A.D. From the time of late eighteenth century, music got its evolution in the regional kingdoms of the country. The palaces, or *havelis*, of the regional kingdoms became the hubs of cultural patronage, particularly for music. However the development in music culture continued after the decline of Mughal empire. Moreover, Indo-Islamic Hindustani music, or north Indian classical music, had to survive and adapt to "the modern" world due to the drastically changed political and social dynamics that arose during the Mutiny of 1857. The Mughals were finally overthrown from Delhi by the revolt of 1857, which also brought about far-reaching changes. Over the course of the following several decades, traditional music received little support from the British government.

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