

‘QAWWALI’ IN PRESENT SCENARIO

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Abstract

‘Qawwali’ is a very popular genre of Sufi music whose history is more than 10 centuries old. In the beginning, it was only sung in Arab and Iran but, with Muslim emperor, this singing style also entered in India. On arrival in India, a very profound impact of Indian music was seen on this singing style, as a result, the qawwali took its place in Indian ragas and rhythms. Over time, many musical, literary and other types of changes started to take place, but along with these changes, the ‘Qawwali’ (where its original language and singing style also became the same singing style) became more popular and famous. In this research paper, the definitions of the meaning of ‘Qawwali’ along with the historical discussions highlight the changes, reasons and present scenario of this.

Keywords: Qawwal, Qawwali, Qaul, Sufi, Music.

Introduction

The word music seems to be very simple in hearing though its meaning is more in profoundness and wider in reality. Everything in the universe is subjected to music. In which, we can clearly feel the particular type of rhythm or tone: earth revolves around the sun, the shimmer of stars, the rising and setting of the sun, the movement of time at a certain speed, the fixed speed of heart and breath, the chirping of birds, the rustle of springs, the sounds of humans and other sentient beings, All these are subjected to the tone and rhythm of the music.

Man must have used music in some way in his life from the beginning. In our country, music is mostly used for devotion. Being people of different

religions, castes and creeds in India, the methods of doing all these rituals are also different. In Hinduism, Veda Mantra chanting, Sankirtana, Gurbani chanting in Sikhs and ‘Qaul-Qawwali’ in Sufis are all the forms of spiritual music.

Along with the creation of Sufism, the medium chosen by Sufi saints for the prayer was music. In the language of the Sufis, it is called ‘Mehfil-e-Sama’ (the gathering held for sufi devotional music). All those who followed the ‘Shariat’ in Islam denied the ‘Sama’ and the Sufism. But the Sufi people haven’t left this path to prayer, enduring every trouble. This led to the creation of many singing styles of Sufism, which in modern times are known as ‘Sufi’ singing styles. Among these singing styles of Sufis, ‘Qawwali’ became most famous.

‘Qawwali’ is one of the ancient singing styles of Sufis. The history of this singing style is more than a thousand years old. A lot of evidence is obtained. Initially, there is no concrete evidence of what the singing form of ‘Qawwali’ would be, but there is enough evidence that it is initially sung only with ‘duff’.

Meaning and Definition of Qawwali:

‘Qawwali’ is the most prominent and special singing form as well as most sung and heard singing style in ‘sufi’ music. The word ‘Qawwali’ is derived from Arabic language. Almost all scholars have the same statement that ‘qawwali’ is made from the Arabic word ‘Qaul’’. The word ‘Qaul’ simply means statement, talk, discourse or specific utterance¹. In Arabic and Iranian languages, ‘Qaul’ is said to be a special verse in which Arabic vocabulary and sentences are used according to need. A statement of the Prophet Hazrat Mohammad Sahib or singing of any Verses of ‘Quran-e-Pak’ can also called ‘Qaul’. The defined term for this is 'Nagma-e-Haqqani' (means- the song drenched with extreme love in honor of GOD). ²

The word ‘qawwal’ is also commonly used for the common singer in the Arabic language. The opinions of scholars and singers about ‘qawwali’ are as follows-

‘Qawwal’ is the vocalist of ‘Qaul’. In Brief ‘Ghazals’ sung in the singing style of ‘qawwal’ are known to be ‘Qawwali’.³

The word ‘Qawwali’ is originated from the Arabic word ‘Qaul’. The meaning of the word ‘Qaul’ is sermon, statement, speech, talk, discourse, contract and promise etc.⁴

‘Qawwali’ is a song, which is usually on the tomb of the elders and in the congregations of the ‘Sufi’ saints, and after listening to which they feel spiritually empowered.⁵

‘Qawwali’ is also called 'song of ‘Marfat’⁶ and 'Haqqani Gayan’⁷.

The ‘Qawwali’ is sung by a group of singers. The leader sings the various lines of the poem and the followers repeat them after him, emphasizing the rhythmic structure with a clap of the hand.⁸

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan of ‘Qawwali’ has given a very detailed description about Qawwali. Qawwali originated from ‘Qaul’. Describing ‘Qaul’ of the elderly is called ‘qawwali’.⁹

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan says in another interview ‘Qawwali’ for ‘Arfana Kalam’ and ‘Tasvuf’ and what goes into it is very close to reality.¹⁰

Historical background of ‘Qawwali’:

The history of ‘qawwali’ in India begins with the entry of Muslims. At that time, ‘qawwali’ did not appear in a complete independent form but it can be said with certainty that its structure had already started to form. It is believed that the first mosque in India, the ‘Keraman-jumma’ Mosque, was built in the seventh century. This means that by the seventh century, Muslim people had not only started coming to India, but they had also started promoting their religion in India.

In the tenth-ninth-century Muslim raiders also started attacks on India, the main purpose of which was to rob the treasury here to expand their kingdom and propagate the religion of Islam. In which these attackers also succeeded. Whenever these attackers came to India, they brought with them their religious people ('maulvi and qazi') and many 'Sufi-pir-fakirs'. 'Maulvi' and 'Qazi' were the people who, according to the 'Sharia' of Islam, used to convert Islam to the people of India and 'Sufi' saint-'fakir' were those who did not ask anyone to convert to Islam, but who would come in their company Almost every person used to get along with them.

'Sufi' people were very fond of singing. In the course of time, many 'dargahs' of 'Sufi fakirs' began to be established in India, especially in Punjab and its adjoining areas. Influenced by these 'Sufi dargahs, many Hindu people accepted Islam, in which the great musician Tansen is most famous. The Sufi people initially invented their 'dargahs' as music festivals because they knew that the people here were lovers of music, which led to many Indian singers becoming 'qawwals'. It was that time that Indian raga-music entered into 'qawwali' singing. Persian tunes and Indian music took a new form, as a result of which many new ragas and tunes came into existence.

Initially, the main place of Qawwali singing was also the 'Sufi Dargahs'. All scholars have given their views about the origin of 'Qawwali' which are as follows-

'Qawwali' is intimately linked to Hazrat Amir Khusro, who not only brightened the style, but also created the elements to make it possible, It is usually Performed with a lead singer and chorus.¹¹

Before the fourteenth century, Dhrupad singing style did not have a nominal sign of 'Qawwali'. During the time of Amir Khusro, the promotion of Khyal singers started. Its two parts Kalavati 'Khyal' (Bada Khyal') and Kowwali 'Khyal' ('Chhota Khyal') were made. In the fifteen century, the

emperor of Jaunpur, the Sultan Hussain Sharki, made the Kalavati 'Khyal' more significant and completely separated 'kowwali Khyal' from it.¹²

Acharya Brihaspati ji writes about 'Qawwali' that even though the words 'Qaul' and 'Qawwal' are not Indian languages, the word 'Qawali' is formed by adding suffix-(I, Ò§üUÓ) after the word 'Qawwal', according to Hindi grammar.¹³

Many 'Qawwals, scholars and musicians of India have also given their views in this subject, but one thing which is common is that the credit for propagating 'Qawwal'i singing style in Hindustan is given to Hazrat Amir Khusro. For which many proofs are also obtained. But for this reason, some scholars also consider Amir Khusro to be the father of 'qawwali'. But there is some truth in this matter. It is important that Hazrat Amir Khusro contributed a lot in the promotion of 'Qawwali' and at the same time Hazrat Amir Khusro wrote many 'kalams' and also contributed some publicity by creating some 'Sufi' singing styles. The credit for making 'Qawwali' singing style famous in India is given to Hazrat Amir Khusro.

Rishi Jaimini Kaushik writes that it is forbidden to sing in Islamic sharaa. But Khwaja Sahib listened to it as an prayer, so the Muslims of the Chishtiya family, who belong to the Chishti family, listen to the 'qawwali'. He was the one who brought 'Qawwali' to Hindustan. In this way, 'Qawwali' is only nine hundred years old in India.¹⁴

Many scholars consider 'Qawwali' as an Indian singing style. How much truth is there in this fact, it is known from 'Qawwali' emperor Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan that 'Qawwali' started a thousand years ago. Hazrat Baba Ganj Baksh Rehmat-Ula-Alah's book 'Qashf-ul-Mahjub' states that 'Qawwali' used to be in Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan areas earlier. It used to be in Arabic and Persian languages then. Then it was always sung in 'Arfana Kalam', Allah's 'Sift-Sanah', 'Naat-Sharif'.¹⁵

‘Qawwali’ was from ancient time in Iran. ‘Qawwali’ from ‘Qaul’, the singing style of ‘Qaul’ became ‘Qawwali’. Infact anything that uttered by Muhammad Sahib Aka-e-Madina became ‘Qawaali’.

In the world of ‘Qawwali’, Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan is given the status of ‘Khuda’. The second biggest thing is that the ‘Kashf-ul-Mahjub’, which describes some areas of the singing of ‘qawwali’, Hazrat Baba Ganj Baksh is a story of Sufis written by Ali Hujveri ‘Rehmatula aleh’ (1009-1072). All the above facts indicate that ‘Qawwali’ had started in 1072 A.D in Arab, Iran, Afghanistan and Turk, but there was few evidence about how the singing style of singing should have been in the beginning. Huh. It is believed that ‘qawwali’ was sung only with duff in the early stages. Only the ‘Kalam’ of Arabic-Persian Arfana were sung in it.

The credit for making the famous ‘Qawwali’ singing style in India is given to Hazrat Amir Khusro. The famous ‘qawwal’ of Punjab, Shaukat Ali Deewana, says that ‘Qawwali’ was most widely promoted by Hazrat Amir Khusro Ji in Hindustan. Not only ‘Qawwali’, many other singing styles of Sufi music like Rang etc. were also introduced by Hazrat Amir Khusro ji which was created by Amir Khusro, which is a propaganda even today.¹⁶

Initially ‘qawwali’ used to be only in the ‘dargahs’ and ‘majlis’ of ‘Sufi’-saint-fakirs. The ‘qawwal’ singer used to sing ‘Qaul’ written by Sufi-saints as ‘qawwali’.

Gradually, ‘qawwali’ came out of its initial phase and reached the peak of height. The main form of ‘qawwali’ was to convey spirituality, but with the change of time, ‘qawwali’ began to have some other aspects, which led to a new form of ‘qawwali’, as well as singing styles similar to ‘qawwali’. ‘Naksh-o-gul’, ‘Dhamaal’, ‘Shi-harfian’ etc were also made.

These singing styles reached their heights in a new way, traveling their spiritual journey in ‘Sufi Dargahs’ and ‘Majlis’. It is also believed that these singing styles were born along with the promotion of ‘qawwali’, and along with

‘qawwali’ singing, these singing styles also came into vogue and gradually came to be considered a part of ‘qawwali’. In modern times, the singing of these singing styles has become very rare. This is also the reason that many of these singing styles are associated with different times, seasons, rituals.

The changing form of ‘Qawwali’ in present time:

There is no doubt that change is the rule of the world. The journey from a young child to old age, the rotation of the wind around the sun, day and night, sunlight, different seasons, all of them fall under this law of nature. It is said that, the tree which does not change with the trend of wind when the strong wind comes, it soon falls on the earth. Similarly, there is a change in the singing of ‘Qawwali’.

Changes in ‘Qawwali’ from the literary point of view:

Literature is concerned with a particular place and its language. Just as the food of different regions and countries is different and whatever food is in that region, it feels better in the same area; in the same way enjoy the literature of a particular region and place which it belongs to. As People can enjoy in their mother tongue, they cannot enjoy it as much as in any other language. For example, if a common person of Punjabis told the Persian stock written by Maulana Rumi, 'Na Man Behuda Girde-Kucha-O-Bazar Mee Gardam', he will not be able to understand it as easily. Yes, if a ‘shayari’ or song is sung in the same language instead of Persian language, then they can also enjoy the literature of the ‘shayari’ or song. This is also the first reason for the change in ‘qawwali’ literature.

When the Muslim singers came to India, they only knew their native languages Arabic and Persian, but only after coming to India, they learned the language from here and from that, the formation of new languages in India which may have changed the language of singing styles. The ‘qawwali’, which used to be in Arabic and Persian languages, after the arrival in India,

began to be in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi languages along with Arabic-Persian languages.

There are two main reasons for the change in ‘qawwali’ literature in modern times: - Partition of India first and globalization.

Before the Partition of India, Urdu language was used in almost all the houses of Punjab irrespective of any religion. By which all the members of the household had knowledge of Urdu and the language associated with it, and the common people easily understood all the qawwalis sung by the qawwals.

After the partition, Punjabi took the place of Urdu in modern Punjab due to less publicity of Urdu. Due to which the ‘qawwali’ sung in Urdu is becoming incomprehensible to the common people.

The second change is due to globalization. Modern times are the era of computers and mobiles. There was a time when children used to sit near the elders of their house and tell stories. Elder members of the household used to teach their children their history, tales and experiences of life through stories. Due to which, from a young age, children used to know a lot about things and their old civilization. In modern times, instead of listening and understanding all these things from elders, they give all their time to their mobile and internet etc. Thus one is going far away from his civilization and culture. As a result, he neither has complete knowledge of his language nor his civilization, due to which he is not able to fully enjoy literature.

Changes in ‘Qawwali’ from musical perspective:

So far there have been many changes from musical perspective to ‘qawwali’. Initially ‘qawwali’ was sung along with Duff, but when ‘qawwali’ came to India from Arab and Iraq countries, Sufi saints saw that the people of India are music lovers, then they introduced it in a new way. The Muslim singers merged the ‘qawwali’ to the Indian ragas and started singing, which was very much liked by the people here.

Over the time, as Muslim singers gained mastery in the Indian raga tradition and its music, the ‘qawwali’ also began to be sung in the classical part i.e. various ragas. The popular instruments of the time such as ‘sarangi’, ‘tabla’ etc. came to be used as accompaniment in ‘qawwali’.

With the arrival of the British, the harmonium was also used in India. Gradually, ‘Sarangi’ was replaced by Harmonium, which allowed ‘qawwali’ to sing a lot. Due to the influence of English linguistic music, many ‘qawwal’ singers in India and Pakistan started making classical ‘qawwali’ as well as some light melodies which could be easily sung by common people. The fire of such tunes was very much appreciated by the people, as a result, ‘qawwali’ started to be sung in a new style from the restrictions of classical ragas. The names of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Badar Mian Dad, Muhammad Sharif ‘Qawwal’ are particularly notable for such experiments in ‘qawwali’.

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, while speaking on this subject, says in his interview that my style was a customary style. We are resorting to Western music to enhance and sustain our civilization and roots.¹⁷

Variations from the musical perspective bring about changes in two main forms, one with singing style of ‘qawwali’ melodies and the other with Western instruments such as harmonium, keyboards, octopads, etc. In addition to all these instruments, in modern times some ‘qawwal’ parties also use the drum during their stage performances.

Changes in ‘Qawwali’ according to audience interest :

‘Qawwali’s exorcism and elderly ‘Qawwal’ Karamat Fakir of Kapurthala ‘gharana’ says that in the early gathering ceremonies of our life, we saw that the listeners were exasperated by listening to each poetry because they knew about poetry and old things but In today's Mehfil (gathering), if we sing a deep romantic song, then it is limited to a few people.¹⁸

Karamat's fact makes it clear that listeners of modern times do not have the desire to listen to the real thing because they have little knowledge about their ancient heritage.

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan ji says in an interview that the youth of today do not know who the 'Heer-Waris Shah' is? Who is 'Sasi-Punnu'? Who is 'Miyan Muhammad Baksh'? Those who did not read and listen to their civilization, did not support their elders, who have been listening to English music from the beginning. If we will sing to our music in our own way, then it will not be tolerated.¹⁹

These facts make it clear that due to lack of knowledge about their civilization and heritage, the 'qawwal' singers are able to hear very little of the old and traditional 'Kalam'.

Apart from this, the mental condition of the people has become very fickle in today's runny life, due to which they do not show much interest in listening to the things of 'Arfana' and Stagnation. 'Qawwal Kuldeep Qadir says in this subject that most of today's 'mehfil' have the same demand to dance to the audience by singing 'qawwali' with more rhythm. Those 'Qawwal' able to make their listeners dance that 'qawwali' is more in demand.²⁰

Changes in the use of instruments

'Qawwali' used to sing only with Duff in its early stages. As soon as 'qawwali' singing arrived in India, Indian singing style and musical instruments were also used in it. The 'qawwali' which was sung only with duff, after coming to India, it also included 'sarangi', 'sitar', 'tabla' etc.

Due to the influence of English civilization, keyboards, guitar have also been used with harmoniums instead of vocal sounds like 'sarangi', sitar. Even today, the ancient type of dough 'tabla' is used in the rhythm instrument, which was in earlier times. Along with tabla, it has become a common practice in 'qawwali' to use instruments like Octopod, Dholak, Dhol, etc. for the rhythm instrument.

Conclusion:

The history of 'qawwali' is more than a thousand years old. Evidence of which is given at the beginning. The entry of 'qawwali' into India came from the 'Sufi fakirs' who came to India with the Muslim attackers of the first century and Indian music was used for the propagation of Islam by the same Sufi. In which 'qawwali' sung in Arab-Iran is particularly notable.

It began to diverge from its initial style with the entry of 'qawwali' to India. The 'qawwali', which was previously sung only with the tambourine (daff), has undergone many new styles under the influence of the ragas and singing styles of India. Many types of Indian ragas, rhythms and melodies were used in it.

Earlier, 'qawwali' used to be only in Sufi palaces and 'dargahs'. Over the time, 'qawwali' started to be sung from the 'Sufi dargahs' and sung in the royal courts. From which the literature of 'qawwali', which was earlier only on the spiritual side, went beyond many other aspects such as praise of beauty of girl (Shringar), Raja and the royal people etc.

With the arrival of the British in India, the English civilization had a profound impact on the Indian people. Indian music also remained unimpressive, which resulted in the use of Western instruments such as harmonium etc. with Indian instruments in the singing of 'qawwali'. The use of harmonium in 'qawwali' grew in such a way that the harmonium is not a foreign instrument but a main instrument of 'qawwali'.

After the partition of India in 1947, as globalization started, many foreign instruments and music from western countries started to be used in 'qawwali'. In modern times, despite singing many changes of 'qawwali' singing and the instruments used in it, the presentation etc. This singing style has retained its own place in the hearts of the listeners.

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