

MAIN PAPERS

Mystical Music: Safeguarding *Sufiana Mausiqi* - a Vanishing Art Form of Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

Music has always been a significant part of the lives of the people of Jammu and Kashmir in India. Since ancient times, Kashmir has been influenced by major cultures such as that of India, the near East, central Asia, and the West; the blending of different cultures (indigenous and foreign) has given Kashmiri music a rich and distinctive form. *Sufiana Mausiqi* is the classical Sufi ensemble music of the Kashmir region of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. This musical form developed through the Indo/Central Asian cultural exchange that took place after the arrival of Islam and Sufism in the region during the 14th century. The processes of globalisation and socio-economic change, as well as the current volatile situation of the troubled region, have diminished and marginalised this glorious tradition and it is currently on the brink of extinction. The deplorable condition of this endangered art form is evident from the fact that there are at present only a few surviving artists struggling hard to keep the tradition alive. This paper highlights the current situation of *Sufiana Mausiqi* and suggests the necessary safeguarding measures that are needed to preserve and propagate it.

Keywords

Vanishing art forms, Sufi ensemble music, *Sufiana Mausiqi, Maqamat, Sufiana Santoor, Sehtar, Saaz-e-Kashmir, gharanas,* Hafiz Nagma, *Wasul*, Kashmir, India.

Introduction

Jammu and Kashmir is a multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-ethnic state, and each group has its own distinct and particular cultural ethos which is further deepened by the geographical divisions created by formidable mountain ranges.[1] The state is located in the northern part of the Indian sub-continent between the Pir Panjal and the Zanskar mountain ranges. It has an estimated geographical area of 101,387 km^2 and comprises three divisions-Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. However, for administrative purposes there are only two main divisions, Kashmir province and Jammu province.

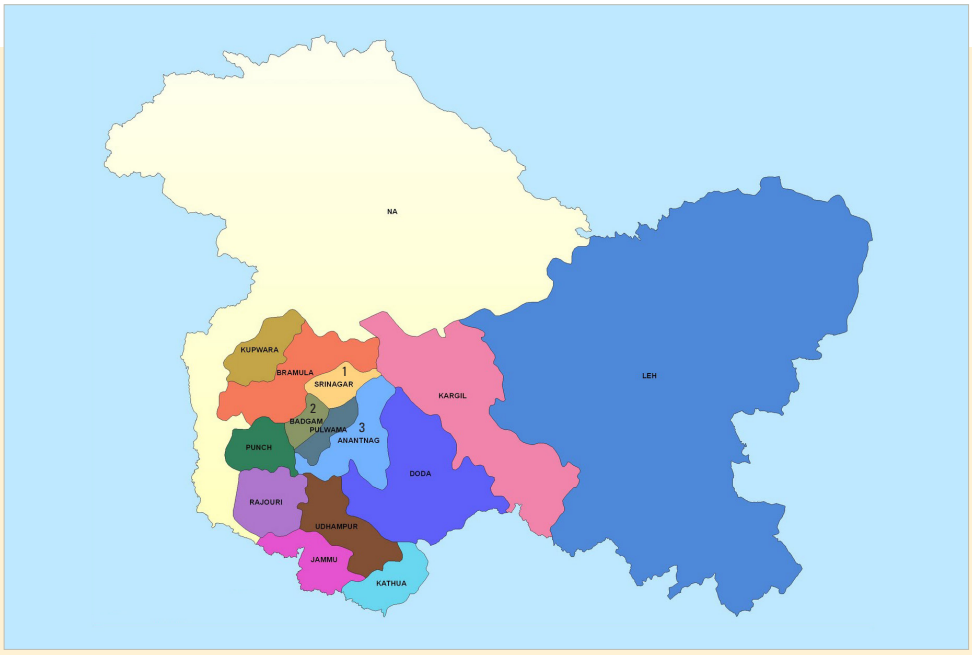


Figure 1
Numbers 1, 2, 3 show the districts where *Sufiana Mausiqi* is currently practiced.
Source: http://remote-sensingandgis.blogspot.in/2011/04/political-map-of-jammu-kashmir.html

The Jammu region is predominantly Hindu, while Muslims form the majority population in the Kashmir division.

> *Formerly one of the largest princely states of India, it is bounded to the north-east by the Uygur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang and to the east by the Tibet Autonomous Region (both parts of China) and the Chinese-administered portions of Kashmir, to the south by the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, to the southwest by Pakistan, and to the northwest by the Pakistani-administered portion of Kashmir.*[2]

The Kashmir division consists of ten districts which are Srinagar, Anantnag, Kulgam, Pulwama, Shopian, Budgam, Ganderbal, Bandipora, Baramullah and Kupwara. According to the 2011 census, the population of the valley is 6,907,623. Over the centuries, the beautiful land of Kashmir has been ruled by many rulers belonging to different dynasties. Contact between the indigenous people and foreigners has resulted in the blending of different cultures. The unique culture of the region is a result of this amalgamation and is quite different from the rest of the country.

Sufiana mausiqi is the classical Sufi ensemble music of the Kashmir region of Jammu and Kashmir. It is currently only practised in three districts of Kashmir - Budgam, Srinagar and Anantnag. This musical form has been fashioned over the centuries by a synthesis of foreign and indigenous elements. It is related to central Asian musical traditions but is also influenced by Indian classical music. However it has a distinct identity and mode of presentation. The word *'Sufiana'* has been taken from Sufism, meaning 'mystical', and *mausiqi* is the Urdu word for music. Therefore *Sufiana mausiqi* is a type of mystical music. *Although it is often performed on secular occasions, Sufiana is a religious music, and it principally functions as music for ritual at Sufi meetings – Mehfils* (Pacholczyk: 1979). *Sufiana* is performed by a class of professional musicians belonging to different *gharanas* (schools). The tradition is passed on orally from generation to generation. *Sufiana* is believed to have originated in the 15th century due to the inter-cultural exchange between Persia and India and it is therefore an amalgam of Indian and central Asian musical elements. The main concept in *Sufiana* is that of *maqam*, a counterpart of Indian *raga*.[3] The thematic content of the compositions is mostly mystical in nature and the text of the songs is generally in Persian or Kashmiri. [Figure 1]

Sufiana was at its peak up to 1947 and was patronised by kings as well as Sufi mystics, however it began to decline after this period and is currently battling for survival. There are very few competent practitioners left, and they are struggling to pass on the tradition to future generations. Ustad Yaqoob Sheikh, Ustad Mohammad Ismail Bhat and Ustad Mohammad Abdullah Setari are the only surviving master-musicians. Earlier there were a number of *gharanas* of *Sufiana Mausiqi* in most parts of the Kashmir, however only four of these have survived and they are located in the three districts of Kashmir-Budgam, Srinagar and Anantnag. The word '*gharana*' is derived from the Urdu word *ghar* meaning 'house' or 'family'. In relation to music, '*gharana*' refers to the school, lineage or family of musicians. Each *gharana* has its distinctive style and mode of presentation. Over the years, *Sufiana mausiqi* has lost many of the musical elements like *maqams*, *talas* (corresponding to meter in western music) and instruments. In the past there was also a female dance form associated with *Sufiana mausiqi*. In this dance form a female dancer, a *hafiza*, used to express the meaning of *maqam* compositions through various movements and gestures. However, this was banned by the Dogra rulers in the early part of the 20th century. It was generally believed that some *hafizas* were prostitutes and so respectable people were unwilling to patronise them. *Sufiana mausiqi* has lost its appeal and the charm of the past and now has very few listeners. It is therefore completely marginalised. The main reasons for this are globalisation and the socio-economic and political condition of the region over the last three or four decades.

Context

This study is based on my data creation project for the ICH division of Central Sangeet Natak Academy, New Delhi, India. The main objectives of the study were (i) to safeguard, promote and disseminate *Sufiana mausiqi* in Kashmir (ii) to create awareness about the dying art form at both the national and international levels.

As previously mentioned, *Sufiana mausiqi* is currently practised in only four *gharanas* in the Srinagar, Anantnag and Budgam districts. The oldest and principal one, *Ramzan Joo Gharana*, is in Srinigar. Two *gharanas* are located in Budgam, one at Wathura village (*Qaleenbaft Gharana*) and the other at Kralpora (*Kamal Bhat Gharana*). The fourth *gharana (Setari Gharana)* is in Bijbehara village in Anantnag, South Kashmir. The field work was conducted in 2014 and covered all four *gharanas*. Data was collected from the surviving master-musicians (most of whom are in their fifties although the oldest master is in his eighties), as well as from the young practitioners (there is no age limit for learning *Sufiana*, but those young practitioners interviewed are in their twenties) representing the different *gharanas*. The data collection included interviewing practising artists, audio-visual and photographic documentation of the master-musicians and their musical practice, and a review of some original texts dealing with Kashmiri music in general and *Sufiana mausiqi* in particular.

Historical overview of *Sufiana mausiqi*

We do not possess any musical text indicating the origin of *Sufiana mausiqi* in Kashmir, however, its origin can be related to the emergence of Islam in the region in the 14th century. Up to this time Kashmir was predominantly a non-Muslim state with Hindus as the majority population. The process of Islamisation began with the conversion of the last Buddhist king of Kashmir, Ritichina (Rinchina) in 1320. After his conversion, Rinchina adopted the title of Sultan Sadruddin and in this way the era of the Sultans began. Rinchina's conversion was followed by a large number of people embracing the new faith. With the spread of Islam, many well-known Sufi missionaries from Persia and central Asia visited Kashmir to spread Islam and Sufism through the example of their gentle and saintly behaviour.

The establishment of Islam altered the course of history and culture in Kashmir. Every aspect of life and culture, such as language, arts, crafts, cuisine etc. underwent drastic changes. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-70) was the greatest of all the sultans who ruled Kashmir. His period is known for peace, prosperity and benevolence. He was named *Budshah* (great king) by his subjects, the name by which he is popularly known today. In a Persian text *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, written by an anonymous writer and translated into English by K.N Pandit, it says that *Budshah* promoted learning, music and painting and made Kashmir a great cultural centre. The text goes on to say that *Budshah* used to distribute gifts to dancers, actors, musicians and women singers (Pandit: 1991, p. 66). In *Zaina Rajatarangini*, written during

the late 15th century in context of the Sultanate of Kashmir by Srivara, there are many references to the Sultan's love for the art of music and dancing. The Sultan was so fond of music and dance that he would spend the whole night happily enjoying songs and music (Dhar: 1994, p. 58). Brajendranath De in his English translation of a medieval text, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, notes that:

> *...whenever the Sultan was fully satisfied with the performance of the musical instruments like the Vina, the Rabab and the gourd shaped lute,* [he] *got these cast in gold and silver and with a multitude of gems* (De: 1992, p. 40)

Under the patronage of Zain-ul-Abidin, schools of music were founded in Kashmir by Irani and Turani musicians (Blochmann: 1927, p. 680). As a direct result of the influence of Persian and Turanian music, a good many *raganis* were thus imported into Kashmiri music. The *raganis* of Persian origin which are well known to the musicians are *Saga, Rast, Kashmiri Rast, Chargah, Iraq, Nawa, Rihai, Shah Nawaz, Nauroz, Nairez and Zangola* (Sufi: 1979, p. 225).

Budshah's court was thronged with artists, musicians, singers and scholars from various parts of central Asia and India.

> *In the Sultan's court there would be experts of various arts and accomplished people. Those who have heard the full story of his court consider the court of Akbar inferior to his. The sultan would bring religious books from Mecca and other Arab countries and study these in leisure time. Many saints, scholars, poets and pious men lived during his reign.* (Fauk: 2009, p. 268)

It is said that every year Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin used to hold a music festival to which were invited musicians and singers from as far afield as Yarqand, Samarqand, Tashkent, Kabul, Punjab and Delhi. It was during this time that the older musical traditions took on a new form due to the inter-cultural synthesis with the music of Kashmir, Persia, central Asia and India. The result was *Sufiana mausiqi*, now regarded as the classical music of Kashmir.

After Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, *Sufiana mausiqi* continued to flourish during the reign of Sultan Yusuf Shah Chak (1579-1586). His queen, Habba Khatun, is often credited with introducing a *maqam 'Rast-Kashmiri'* by making a little structural variation on *maqam Rast-Farsi*. Yusuf Shah Chak and his queen were great patrons of music as well as musicians themselves, and they devoted their time to embellishing Kashmiri classical music. *Rast-Kashmiri* still forms the most popular *maqam* of the *Sufiana* repertory.

After the Chaks, the Mughals (1586-1752) patronised the music of Kashmir. As reported by Qalandar (1976), during the reign of Akbar (1556-1605) Kashmir came within the orbit of Delhi and Agra, the two great centres of art and learning of that time. He further mentions that Akbar's court was thronged with Kashmiri, as well as Indian classical musicians. According to him, this resulted in the intercultural synthesis of musical forms and consequently, the classical music of Kashmir incorporated elements of Indian classical music, becoming partly Persian and partly Indian. Thus it can be said that *Sufiana mausiqi*, which developed at the time of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin in the 15th century and was at that time mostly based on Persian music, was influenced by Indian classical music in the time of the Mughals.

After the subjugation of Kashmir and the defeat of the last Mughal governor of Kashmir, Abdul Qasim Khan, by Ahmad Shah Abdali (the King of Afghanistan) in 1753, *Sufiana mausiqi* was deprived of state patronage and protection which resulted in its decline. Thereafter it was protected and patronised by Sufi saints and spiritual people for whom it was a means to come closer to the Almighty God. Qalandar (1976) says *Sufiana* was also patronised by the elite, Ameers, Rajas, and Zamindars, but that the mass of the population had no access to it. After the Afghans and Sikhs, Kashmir was subjugated by the Dogras for a period of a hundred years from 1846 to 1947. According to Qalandar, during the time of Maharaja Pratap Singh (1848–1925), a Dogra ruler, *Sufiana mausiqi* got a new lease of life when the musicians were called back to the court.

After 1947, the era of the *Jagirdari* System came to an end resulting in the loss of royal patronage and the gradual decline of Kashmiri classical music. However it was saved from total extinction by Radio Kashmir and the State Cultural Academy, and various positive steps were taken by these two organisations to preserve and propagate this dying art form. One significant step taken by the Jammu and Kashmir State Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) was to conduct *Sufiana*

mausiqi training classes at Tagore Hall, Srinagar in 1974. According to Ustad Mohammad Yaqoob Sheikh (the present representative of Qaleenbaft *Gharana*), twelve boys and girls were selected and trained. Scholarships ranging in value between sixty rupees for urban students and seventy-five for village students were provided by the Academy to all the trainees. This training programme produced some of the top *Sufiana* artists today, like Sheikh Abdul Aziz (the only English-speaking and scholarly *Sufiana* artist), Mohammad Yaqoob Sheikh, Amin Kakroo, Nisar Hajam and Mushtaq Ahmad. *Unfortunately the Academy had to discontinue the classes due to low attendance and lack of interest in the new batch of students.*[4]

The role of Radio Kashmir Srinagar in popularising Kashmiri music in general, and *Sufiana mausiqi* in particular, is noteworthy.

> *It was actually Radio Kashmir that exposed Sufiana mausiqi to the masses. It was otherwise limited to a few families and the elite class. Radio Kashmir fixed separate time slots for broadcasting Sufiana mausiqi. Moreover, it provided employment opportunities to various Sufiana artists who were employed as staff artists.*[5]

There used to be three time-slots per week dedicated to *Sufiana mausiqi*, but as the genre has declined in popularity there are at present only two periods (Tuesday and Thursday) when *Sufiana mausiqi* is broadcast. Despite the efforts of these two organisations, *Sufiana mausiqi* is presently on the brink of extinction and its preservation and propagation are causing serious concern.

Sufiana mausiqi - theory and current practice

Sufiana mausiqi is a type of choral ensemble music which is performed by a group of five to seven musicians who are both vocalists and instrumentalists. The group is led by a leader who generally plays the *santoor* which is the principal instrument in *Sufiana*. The other accompanying instruments include the *sehtar*, the *saaz-e-Kashmir* and the *tabla*. The *Sufiana santoor* is similar to the Persian *santoor* but has a different tonal quality, size and number of strings.

> *There are a total of a hundred strings in the Sufiana santoor which are stretched over twenty-five bridges, each bridge having four strings for each note, two of which are of steel and tuned to higher octave and the other two of copper or bronze and tuned to a lower octave. The instrument is played on a small triangular-shaped, three-legged stand that keeps the instrument slanted, thus making it easier to reach the top strings. It is played with two wooden hammers known as kalam. (Mir: 2015, pp. 68-69)*

The *sehtar* is a long-necked lute and is a relative of the Persian instrument of the same name. However it is considerably larger than the Persian *sehtar* but smaller than the Indian *sitar*.

> *The Kashmiri sehtar resembles the Persian tambour or ud in shape and the Indian veena (a plucked instrument used in North Indian classical music) in principle. It is an example of the fusion of Indo-Persian culture and civilization.* (Mir: 2015, p. 69)

The *saaz-e-Kashmir* is the only *Sufiana* instrument capable of producing microtones.

> *It is a three string spike fiddle with a globular sound box, resembling the Persian kamancheh. Unlike the Persian kamancheh it has a set of 14 sympathetic strings attached to both sides of the neck.* (Pacholczyk: 1979)

This instrument is now almost extinct. The last master-performer of this instrument, Ustad Ghulam Mohammad Saaznawaz, died in 1914. Now his son, Mushtaq Ahmad Saaznawaz, is the only competent *saaz-e-Kashmir* player left. *Tabla* are a pair of drums consisting of a small right-hand drum and a larger left-hand drum. The right-hand drum is called a *dayan* and the left one is called a *bayan*. Some eighty years ago a double-shaped barrel drum called a *wasul* was used but it has now been replaced by the Hindustani *tabla*. The *wasul* was originally the prime rhythmic instrument used in *Sufiana mausiqi*, but under the influence of Hindustani classical music it has disappeared.

> *The replacement of the wasul from the Sufiana ensemble was a great setback to the Sufiana mausiqi because the bols of Sufiana mausiqi talas were also forgotten with its disappearance. The original bols*



Plate 1
Sufiana artists playing the *Tabla* and *Sehtar* from Qaleenbaft Gharana.
Photo: Author, March 2016.



Plate 2
A young *Saaz-e-Kashmir* player from Ramzanjoo Gharana.
Photo: Author, 2015.

> *(syllables) of Sufiana talas such as Dish Tak, Takadish and so on cannot be played on the Hindustani tabla. These open bols were possible only on a wasul. The contemporary musicians play only the rhythmic structure on the tabla and not the bols.* (Mir: 2015.p. 71) [Plate 1]

The fundamental concept in *Sufiana mausiqi* is that of *maqam* (plural *maqamat*). The term *'maqam'* means a musical mode, a type of scale or a musical composition. Jozef Pacholczyk notes:

> *The term maqam in Kashmiri also indicates the entire repertory of pieces in a particular mode as well as a selection of pieces in a particular mode chosen for a particular performance, thus it is similar to the terms wasla, fasil or nawba in Near Eastern Music.* (Pacholczyk, 1979)

At present the concept of *maqam* is prevalent in the countries of North Africa (*maqam, Nuba*), the near East (in Turkey it is called *makam*, in Azerbaijan, *mugam*, in Iran, *dastagah*) and central Asia (in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan it is called *shashmaqam*, in Western China, *mukam*, in Kashmir *maqam*). All these countries share a universal system of twelve principal *maqams*; these are *Rast, Isfahan, Araq, Kuchak, Buzurg, Hijaz, Busilk, Ushaaq, Hussaini, Zangula, Nava*, and *Rahawi*. Originally there were around fifty-four *maqams* found in *Sufiana mausiqi* but at present there are no more than twenty to twenty-five in use. Radio Kashmir has preserved many *maqams* but present-day musicians have forgotten a lot of them.

The rhythmic system in *Sufiana mausiqi* is known as the *tala* system. It is similar to the *tala* system of Indian classical music. The *talas* (rhythmic modes or meters) bear Persio-Arabic names such as *Yektala, Sehtala, Duroya, Chapandaz, Hejaz, Nimdor*, and so on. Many of these *talas* have been forgotten. The longest *talas*, *Mukhammas, Nimdor* and *Chamber* are no longer practised. [Plate 2]

A *Sufiana* performance commences with *Shakal*, an instrumental prelude, introducing the theme of the composition. It is of a very short duration ranging from two to three minutes. *Shakal* is followed by *Nasr*, a short poem sung without rhythm. After *Nasr* the first composition, *Bathe* begins. Each couplet of the poem is set to a particular *maqam* and *tala* cycle. The longest *talas* are played first and are followed by shorter ones.

> *A piece is composed of two sections, Zamin, corresponds to the first section of the text. It ends with the Sepurda (first beat of the cycle), leading to the higher octave. After a Waqf follows the second part Nimwoj, corresponding to the second part of the text. The structure of the second part is the same as that of the first.* (Mir: 2015, p. 27)

After the completion of the first composition, the next composition begins. *The duration of a maqam may last from ten minutes to an hour and a half and contain several poems but in the same maqam.* (ibid., p. 27) [Plate 3]

Sufiana was initially performed at *mehfils* (musical gatherings) in the homes of Sufi saints or music lovers. However, at present there is no such trend as this music has lost both patrons as well as music lovers. At present, *Sufiana* is only heard twice a week on Radio Kashmir Srinagar, or through rare stage performances. The number of competent musicians practising this art form at present is very low and during the field work it was found that only a few such musicians remain. Among the Ustads, Mohammad Yaqoob Sheikh, representative of Qaleenbaft Gharana and Mohammad Ismail, representative of Kamal Bhat Gharana are the only active master-performers of this art. There is one more Ustad, Mohammad Abdullah Setari, the last musician left in the Setari Gharana. However he is no longer able to perform due to old age and ill health. Unfortunately, the master-musicians are not able to attract many pupils because people are reluctant to allow their children learn an art form which does not provide any economic security or job opportunities. In addition to these master-musicians there are a few young musicians from Ramzan Joo Gharana, but in total there are no more than eight to ten active *Sufiana* players left.

There are various reasons for the decline of *Sufiana mausiqi* in Kashmir. As reported by Jozef Pacholczyk (1980, p. 161), political and economic instability are the main reasons for the present condition of *Sufiana mausiqi*. Pandit Bhajan Sopori, *santoor* maestro and Kashmiri music composer, attributes the present state of *Sufiana mausiqi* to the loss of royal patronage and low economic incentives. For Mehrajuddin, former Additional Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir State Cultural Academy, and an ardent lover of *Sufiana*, modernisation and globalisation are the main causes for the decline of this art form. During interviews, the musicians blamed the state government for the present situation of *Sufiana*.



Plate 3
A *Sufiana Mausiqi* performance.
Photo: Author, March 2016.

They held that the state government is not concerned about the present condition of this art form and that there is no government support for the artists.

One of the other most important factors responsible for the decline of *Sufiana mausiqi* is the rapid growth of radical Islam in Kashmir. Up to the beginning of the 20th century the people of Kashmir followed a very liberal form of Sufi Islam which promoted all forms of culture including music. However Kashmiri society has now been influenced by more radical and fundamentalist Islamic groups like Deobandis and Jamiat Ahle-Hadith. The main goal of these sects is to purify Islam and promote it in its purest form. They preach a hardcore type of Islam in which music has no place. This has changed the mindset of a large number of people who gave up listening to all types of music, including *Sufiana*. Apart from these sects, Tablighi Jamat, a Sunni Islamic revivalist movement started in 1927 by Muhammad Ilyas al-Kandhlawi in India, has had a major impact on the Muslims of present-day Kashmir. The members of the Jamat preach a puritanical form of Islam and they have encouraged many people in the state to give up playing and even listening to music.

Decreasing knowledge of the Persian language in Kashmir is also responsible for the decline of *Sufiana mausiqi*. As mentioned earlier, *Sufiana mausiqi* texts are mostly written in Persian which was the official language of the state during the 15th century when *Sufiana mausiqi* took shape. However, at present, due to the decrease in contact with central Asia and Iran, knowledge of Persian has declined tremendously. As a result, ordinary people are not able to understand and appreciate a *Sufiana* performance.

One more recent factor responsible for the decline of *Sufiana* was the mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits (Kashmiri Hindus) to different parts of India and abroad during 1989 due to the volatile situation in the valley. The Pandits, who made up 15% of the Kashmiri population, were great patrons and lovers of music in general and *Sufiana mausiqi* in particular. *Sufiana* formed an integral part of many of their ceremonies like weddings and funerals. Kashmiri Pandits were not only patrons of this art but practitioners as well. There were two prominent Pandit *gharanas* of *Sufiana mausiqi*, one at Sopore Town and the other at Srinagar. The *gharana* at Sopore was represented by Pandit Shankar Nath Sopori. He used to play *Sufiana mausiqi* on the *Kashmiri sehtar*. The other prominent Pandit *Sufiana mausiqi gharana* was the *gharana* of Pandit Khera kak Munshi. Khera kak was one of the leading *Sufiana* musicians of Kashmir and it is said that there were regular *Sufiana mausiqi mehfils* at his home. After the migration of the Pandits, *Sufiana mausiqi* was deprived of many of its lovers and patrons.

How to safeguard *Sufiana mausiqi* ?

During the field work I interviewed a number of people involved directly or indirectly with *Sufiana mausiqi* and recorded their views regarding the safeguarding and preservation of this art. Ustad Ghulam Mohammad Saaznawaz blamed the state government for the present condition of *Sufiana*. He suggested that the government should provide scholarships to students interested in learning *Sufiana* as it is not possible for musicians to teach nowadays without any financial support. Ustad Yaqoob Sheikh was of the opinion that *Sufiana mausiqi* should be introduced into schools and colleges as a subject. He suggested that the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and Languages should restart training in *Sufiana*. He also stressed that the state government should provide financial support to artists to run home-based training institutes. Pandit Bhajan Sopori, international *santoor* maestro, and a legendary musician and composer from Kashmir, is currently performing Indian classical music; however his initial *taleem* (education) was in *Sufiana mausiqi* as his ancestors were also *Sufiana* practitioners. He urged the government to support and organise training programmes in *Sufiana mausiqi* for children. He also emphasised the importance of developing social awareness of this art form so that people can understand, appreciate and adopt it. Mehrajuddin held the state government responsible for the present deplorable condition of *Sufiana mausiqi*. According to him there is a need to revive this art afresh. He suggested that young people should be trained, and monthly scholarships should be provided to them by the government to inculcate in them an interest in *Sufiana mausiqi*. He also backed Ustad Yaqoob Sheikh's idea that *Sufiana mausiqi* should be introduced into schools and colleges.

From the study it is clear that *Sufiana mausiqi* is vanishing fast and is facing the threat of total extinction. Sincere and serious measures are required to safeguard, promote and revitalise this glorious Kashmiri tradition.

Some recommendations

The state of Jammu and Kashmir does not have a cultural policy. The first and foremost responsibility on the part of the state government is therefore to devise a cultural policy for the promotion and propagation of the state's cultural heritage (tangible as well as intangible). Since its beginning, *Sufiana* has remained the preserve of the elite. Due to its complex structure and language, it is appreciated and enjoyed by only a small section of Kashmiri society and hence has a very limited audience. According to Rashmirekha Sarma (2015), the most important part of safeguarding oral traditions and expressions is to maintain their everyday role in society. Thus there is a need to make *Sufiana mausiqi* an integral part of Kashmiri society and culture. This could be done by introducing music into schools and colleges. The state government must endeavour to make music a part of the curriculum in educational institutions. Along with courses in Indian classical music, *Sufiana mausiqi* training could be given at the school as well as the college level. To de-radicalise the young people of the troubled valley, Sufism and Sufi practices need to be promoted in the region.

Regular monthly or annual financial support should be provided to the surviving *Sufiana* master-musicians to help them pass on their art to future generations. All the practising artists who are unemployed should be provided with regular monthly grants to help them earn their livelihood and enable them to concentrate on their art. The government could also introduce a contributory pension scheme for all the *Sufiana* artists of the region.

The surviving *Sufiana* masters are running home-based training centres where they teach their students for free. These include the Saaznawaz Sufiana Training Institute (Srinagar), Qaleenbaft Memorial Sufiana Music Institute (Budgam) and Al-Khaliq Bazum (Anantnag). In addition to these institutes, Ustad Mohammad Ismail Bhat, representative of Kamal Bhat Gharana teaches *Sufiana* to seven or eight students at his home. These Ustads are not able to retain their students for a long period for financial reasons. These masters, as well as their students, should be provided with monthly scholarships so that they are able to carry on the work of training the next generation.

The state government should ensure that sufficient funds are allocated to organise regular *Sufiana mausiqi* concerts and *mehfils*. Moreover, the State Cultural Academy and the different universities in Kashmir should arrange regular seminars and workshops to create awareness about the state's dying art forms, including *Sufiana*, and promote them among young people and the general public.

Sufiana mausiqi is unknown outside the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It has become imperative to create awareness about this art form at both national and international levels. This paper is written with that particular objective in mind. UNESCO is unaware of this art form. Until *Sufiana* is recognised by UNESCO as an endangered art form the situation will remain uncertain.

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ENDNOTES:

1. http://www.jammu-kashmir.com/basicfacts [consulted 10 December 2015].
2. http://www.culturenorthindia.com/wp-content [consulted 10 December 2015].
3. *Raga* refers to melodic modes used in Indian classical music.
4. Interview with Ustad Yaqoob Sheikh (the present representative of Qaleenbaft Gharana).
5. Pandit Bhajan Sopori, *santoor* maestro and music composer and an expert on Kashmiri music.

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