

Ladishah: A Kashmiri Melody

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Abstract

Ladishah is an interesting part of our Kashmiri music tradition. Ladishah is a combination of two words "Ladi" and "Shah". One of the known historians of Kashmir Dr. Farooq Fayaz in his book Kashmir Folklore describes Ladishah as an independent genre and says that the Ladishah is given after its creator who was from a village "Lari" of district Pulwama, South Kashmir. The creator was from the village and from Shah Dynasty so he was recognized as such of Lari village so finally this genre got the name of Larishah. It is very much popular in the rural areas of Kashmir. The main singer generally called Ladishah, usually carries an iron rod called "Chimta" or "Dehar" with loose iron rings on it and when they sing folk songs they shake the rings skillfully up and down so as to produce a pleasing jingle.

Keywords: Ladishah, Kashmiri melody, singing, artists

Introduction

The singers were usually people having no permanent habitation, who move from village to village and mainly to perform during the harvesting period and get edible in return.



Fig 1

Ladishah dressed in a long loose gown below the "Pheran" Kashmiri language (a traditional dress of Kashmir), white trousers and a white turban tied on a skull cap, a white piece of material is hung on their shoulders like a stole.

The Ladishah songs are based on the social, cultural and political issues full of criticism in humorous form and gives an image of different facets of the society.

Ladishah came into existence in late 18th century or early 19th century when natural calamities like floods, drought and famines were on rise, which ultimately remained the focus for Ladishah rhymes for a long time.

Ladishah would sing their poems on various themes like Bunil Nama, ("Bunil" Kashmiri name of earthquake), Sehlab Nama (flood), Sher-Singun Drag (famines wrought by Sher Singh) Asmani Jahaz (Aeroplane) and on many special occasions like Ramadan Eid etc.

The composition of Ladishah usually consists of two shudh swaras i.e., (Sa and Ma) and are sung in six beats in Dadra

taal. The above said swaras are repeated in ascending/descending order. The laya remains uniform in all the compositions of Ladishah. Ladishah songs are mainly sung in Madhya laya, which is generally lasts for 20-30 minutes. The following composition of Ladishah depicts the reaction of the public in Kashmir on seeing the aeroplane for the first time in Kashmir. Ladishah artists composed satirical verses and represent like this.

Some famous verses composed by Ladishah.

"Asalam Alaikum Ladishah aav

Kadam thav pathar haez kan mekun thav"^[1]

(In Kashmiri language)

Meaning

Ladishah has arrived wishing you the best.

Come on sit and listen to me.

Composition

Table 1

Sa A	Ma Sa	Ma La	Sa Ma	Ma Li	Ma Kum
Sa	Ma	Ma	Sa	-	-
La	Di	Sha	A	-	Av
Sa	Ma	Ma	Sa	Ma	Ma
Ka	Dam	Thav	Pa	Ther	Haz
Sa	Ma	Ma	Sa	-	-
Kan	Me	Kun	Tha	-	Av

"Illahi raham kar miskeenun

Kum kum kar kaer sehlaban"^[2]

(In Kashmiri language)

¹ Kashir luk Baeth by Rattan Lal Johar p. 72.

² Kashir Luk Baeth by Gh. Nabi Aatish p. 164

Meaning

Oh God save poor people of Kashmir

Let there be no floods it caused havoc

God save us and our countr

Composition**Table 2**

Sa I	Ma La	Ma Hi	Sa Re	Ma Ham	Ma Kar
Sa Mi	Ma S	Ma Kee	Sa Nan	-	-
Sa Ka	Ma M	Ma Kam	Sa Kar	Ma Ar	Ma Kari
Sa Se	Ma He	Ma La	Sa Ban	-	-

*“Mulki Kashmir Kyah Wanith aav
Sher singh drag mokul banith aav”* ^[3]

(In Kashmiri language)

Meaning

When Sher Singh was the governor of Kashmir natural calamities were rise on Kashmir.

Ladishah would sing their poems full of criticism and that time their target was Leaders.

Composition**Table 3**

Sa Mul	Ma Ki	Ma Kash	Sa Me	Ma ee	Ma r
Sa Kya	Ma Ba	Ma Nith	Sa Aav	-	-
Sa She	Ma R	Ma Singh	Sa Pra	Ma G	Ma Mo
Sa Kul	Ma Ba	Ma Nith	Sa Aav	-	-

*“Hawai jahaz aav mulki Kashmir
Yemav wuch taem kur tobi takseer”*

(In Kashmiri language)

Meaning

Aeroplane sky ship has arrived in Kashmir

Who ever saw it is saying prayers.

When aeroplane came to Kashmir for the first time the above-mentioned verse was composed by the Ladishah.

Composition**Table 4**

Sa Ha	Ma Wa	Ma Ye	Sa Ja	Ma Haz	Ma Aav
Sa Mul	Ma Ki	Ma Kash	Sa Mir	-	-
Sa Ye	Ma Mav	Ma Vuch	Sa Te	Ma Mav	Ma Kor
Sa Tao	Ma Be	Ma Takh	Sa Seer	-	-

The main ornamentation of ladishah in its overall formation e.g, the repetition of the swaras, its long pauses, the style of singing of Ladishah, its presentation, really attracts the audience towards Ladishah, last but not the least social issues etc are expressed in a humorous manner.

References

1. This instrument is like a very long rod of iron rod and it has iron and bronze rings to support it. These rings are controlled by the musicians hand movement.
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³ Ibid Gh. Nabi Aatish P.164