



A Study Of Major Writings Of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah With Special Reference To Music

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Abstract

This research paper is about the last Nawab of Awadh or Oudh- Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, who had great patronage to arts such as Music and Dance. He patronised more than hundred of artists in his royal court. He embraced the Lucknow city into a Paradise. Nawab Wajid Ali Shah himself was a poet, a writer, a composer, a dancer of considerable note. He wrote more than 80 books during his lifespan, out of which many books were reserved in a personal library of Dr. Masood Hasan. Few of his works are available in the libraries of Lucknow and Kolkata. Being an intellect Nawab's most recognised writings are preserved with 'Royal Kingdom Press' and in Windsor Castle, England.

In this research paper, the researcher has discussed the 5 books written by the Nawab Wajid Ali Shah which deal with the different elements of music such as *Khayal*, *Dadra*, *Dhrupad*, *Songs*, *Hori*, *Sargam* etc. The five books are '*Saut-al-Mubarak*', '*Najo*', '*Dulhan*', '*Banni*' and '*Chanchal Naaznin*'. All these books were related to music and the compositions of the Nawab were originally written in Urdu, Arabic, Sindhi, Awadhi, and Hindi languages. Dr. Roshan Taqi, Krishna Mohan Saxena, Dr. Yogesh Praveen did a commendable job by translating Nawab's writings in Hindi for all the lovers of music. Indeed, the contribution of the Nawab through his compositions is unmatched. This research paper is about all those compositions by the Nawab that will enlighten the readers with his fine imaginative comprehension, his selections of words in appreciating a beauty, his sense of 'love' and concerned about his contemporaries.

Keywords- Khayal, Dhrupad, Banni, Najo, Thumri, Dadra.

Talking about the term 'Sangeet', it is not a single word here but comprises of three sections which are 'Gayan', 'Vadan' and 'Nritya'. The togetherness of the three sections completes the term 'Sangeet'. "Thus, the Indian musical expression is primarily vocal, a total aural experience and has generated overwhelming

oral manifestations.”¹ The scholars of music, take the term ‘Sangeet’ or ‘Music’ as a compact art form that left no aspect untouched. There were artists that were well versed in singing, dancing, and playing instruments, especially during the Mughal era, many Mughals like Muhammad Shah Rangeele, Asaf-ud-Daulah, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah and others should be credited for resuming the arts during their respective reign. If there was no patronage by them, it is very clear that the treasure of music that we have today, might have been just a dream like state. The Hindu era witnessed the evolution of music and dance in temples and mostly the themes presented were divine, but invasions of the Mughals totally transformed the nature of music and the theme converted from divine to pleasure, entertainment, and sexuality.

The bright side of this was that various categories arose during the Mughal era such as Khayal, Thumri, Ghazal, Dadra, Hori that changed the approach of music. Though ‘Dhrupads’ were practiced in some areas, but these categories took over the masses with their styles. The artists took a bend towards these shailies for blending themselves with the ongoing trend.

‘Awadh’ or ‘Oudh’ was the state where the artistic culture developed the most. The first capital was Faizabad, but the capital was shifted to Lucknow the city of Tehseeb, Adab by the Nawab Asaf-ud-Daulah in 1775. The city witnessed its golden age till 1856-57 when the Last Nawab of Awadh- Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was annexed from his own Kingdom by the East India Company. It was a great setback to the artist lobby. For better survival most of the talented young artists and the Gharanedar Gurus migrated to Matiaburj (Kolkata) where the Nawab was asked to spend his rest of his life. Some went to Benaras, Jaipur, Agra etc and resided themselves and started the practices of music and dance from the beginning. After the revolt of 1857, in the early and mid-20th century, India had lot of practitioners of music and there were institutions that provided the training of music. ‘Bhatkhande School of Music’ and ‘Marris College of Music’ of Lucknow was a name that would imply here as an example.

It was the contribution of the Indian music scholars who made the grammar of music available to all the generations. Few names regarding this were Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande, Pandit Omkarnath Thakur Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar etc. They made the history of music by writing various books, granths on music and its right practical usage. In fact, the detailed Ragas- Raginis and their use is mentioned in various books like ‘Ragapravesha’, ‘Ragalakshanam’ etc. The systemised pattern for practicing Hindustani and Carnatic music is one of the biggest contributions of Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande and Pandit Viankatmukhi or Venkatamakhin. Scholars like these, maintained the richness and authentication of music.

Music and Dance was inseparable part of Nawab’s Life. He could have survived without his administrative duties towards his kingdom but keeping him away from the arts was impossible. There has an incident mentioned by G.D. Bhatnagar in his book- Awadh Under Wajid Ali Shah, that once he was taking his Persian lesson from his tutor, the music, the rhythm was so deeply rooted in Nawab that he used to tap his fingers all the time. Doing the same while learning his lesson, the tutor got angry and slapped him tightly. It

¹ Singh, Nivedita, Tradition of Hindustani Music a Sociological Approach, Kanishka Publishers, Distributors, New Delhi, 2017. Pg- 71.

was such a tight slap that he lost his ability of hearing from one side. Rosie Llewellyn-Jones mentioned this incident in her Book- 'Last King in India: Wajid Ali Shah' and other details in an open discussion in a literature festival which was held at Jaipur in 2016. She researched on Awadh with special interest in Nawab Wajid Ali Shah and disclosed his artistic side to the world through her writings. Another Historian Dr. Roshan Taqi stated in an interview that it was wrong if the Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was accused of indulging in practices of arts the whole time, it was just another side of the king was portrayed in a negative sense by the East India Company.

According to the history, more than 40 books were written by Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. After he was annexed from Awadh, many of his works were written during his stay in Matia Burj, Calcutta where he was successful in developing another Lucknow. The practises of arts began in Matia Burj and the groups that migrated along with the Nawab, settled down there and spread the fragrance of the Lucknawi Tehseeb and Arts. The other books written by Nawab Wajid Ali on Music himself are.

1. *Saut-al-Mubarak*
2. *Najo*
3. *Dulhan*
4. *Banni*
5. *Chanchal Naaznin*

According to Dr Roshan Taqi, all these five books are particularly subjected to music and subjects like *Sur*, *Taal*, *Laya* are discussed in detail. All the five books had another thing in common that the names of these were synonymous to each other.

The very first book written by Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was **Saut-al-Mubarak**. This book was written in Persian language between 1847-1850. He also gave the reason of writing in this religious context to his background where he was strictly told by his father and grandfather, to not perform any activity that was non-religious. If did so, he would have been expelled from all royal services. The pocket money nawab was allotted was not enough for his hobbies.

The content in the book was about the 'Mosiqui', Its true meaning and practice. Nawab Wajid Ali Shah wrote about his deep interest in Mosiqui and the factors that lead him to elaborate the phenomenon of Mosiqui. According to him, the true pronunciation of 'Mosiqui' was Mosaaqui or मोसाकी. This was further divided into two parts – 'Moosa' and 'Qui'. The first word meant Air (hawa) and the latter meant the art of tying a knot. The art of Girahbandhna in air or tying a knot in air was known as Mosiqui.

This book had 6 chapters which have been stated by the term 'Hijaab'. The first Hijab revolves around the *Sur* and *Nagma*, the second chapter gives the detail of the *Taals*, the third hijab talks about the usage of the instruments. The fourth contains the elements of *Dance* followed by the fifth hijab relates with the *practice* and the last one describes the *Rahas* and its creation.

According to the knowledge of Nawab, He stated that the human body had 12 different houses within that helped to produce the sound of a swar or musical note. He wrote the different ways and postures of the body for practicing the sound of different swaras. There were notes which could be produced only through stomach and a few which could be produced only through the throat of the singer. He further explained four components which were essential for Nagma. They were- हवा, अग्नि, जल, मिट्टी। The interconnection of these had direct interference with Sur. As he felt the stability of all these components was important within the body of a singer. For an example, he relates the Air component with the breathing of human, he explained that, singing required lot of potential and strength in a breath and the one who does not have that strength, might not be able to sing well.

In the next sub chapter, he explained the structure of *Tarana*. He gave 8 alphabets – Ta, Da, Na, Aa, Ya, Ma, Re, Va which can construct a Tarana and if repeated abruptly would result in producing unstructured Tarana that would be considered invalid.

All these writings proved that Nawab Wajid Ali Shah had a wider vision for music and dance and was interested in spreading its grammar to every heart that wanted to learn it.

The second valuable book for the music lovers is '*Naajo*'. The estimated year of publishing it was 1869. This was originally written in Persian language and Dr Roshan Taqi, a Historian, has translated his work in Hindi in the form of another book- '*Wajid Ali Shah Aur Awadh-Sangeet*' for all the readers to understand the writings of the Nawab in a better way. This book contained **15** chapters which are term as '*Baab*' and the sub chapters are termed as '*Awaaz*'. When Nawab Wajid Ali Shah came to Matia Burj, he lost his interest in arts due to the ongoing activities of East India Company against him. He felt hurt and it took him few years to return to his practices and writings. '*Naajo*' was the second book to which Nawab's contemporaries, Mirza Ali Bahadur, Hamid-ud-Daulah Bahadur presented the "Taarikhs" (It was a practice in the form of an announcement that finalised any particular - date, day, or any incident). The Very first chapter states 'Stutis' (divine compositions in the praise of God or Almighty). Nawab wrote **ten** Stutis in this chapters that were supposed to be in ragas such as, 'Bhairavi', 'Bhairon' and in raginis such as 'Miyani ki Malhar', 'Tilak Kamod'.

One of the Stuti of Nawab in Bhairavi Raag accompanied by Taal – Jhaptaal (10 Matra)

“Awaz Som Dar Manqabat Janab Haidar Krar Stuti

Dar Bhairavi, Taal Jhaptaal, Min Musniff

Asthayi Yah Sah Mere Madat Kijiye Meri

Yatan Data Do Jagg Ke Ali Wali

Sinchayi Hasan Hussain Nainan Chain **Akhtar**

Jitni Araj Ho Na Radh Kijiye Meri”²

² Taqi Roshan, Wajid Ali Shah Aur Awadh- Sangeet, Sanjay Prakashan, New Delhi, 2021. Pg- 67.

The other chapters were about Hori, Thumri, Tarana, Sargam, Sadhra, Sindhi Geet, Sawan etc. Few Dhrupad Compositions are as follow.

1. “Drupad, Raga Taal Aejan, Min Nayak ‘Bakshu’

Asthayi

Pooj Re Ganes Ko Guni

Ati Budhi Ke Daata

Vighan Harayan Davne

Antara

Jin Dhayo Tin, Gauri Mukh Saun Baat

Yaun Sun ‘Bakhsu’ Kehat

Sun Nar Narayan Mohane

2. Drupad, Raga Bhairon, Taal Chautaal, Min Alam

Asthayi

Shakar Ganj, Ganjbakhsh Sheikh Farid Alam Murid

Antara

Aise Ki Kijiye Namaaz

Jo Rahe Jagg Beech Laaj

Jaave Tann Se Ranj”³

Ending the book with Few *Dohas*, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah completed this music on music. With an effort of sharing his own learnings and knowledge on music he wrote this book- ‘Naajo’. This book contained the writings of His wife with the pen name “Alam” and his contemporaries. “While some of the genre chapters are quite thin, Dhrupad is very well represented with sixty-seven lyrics, of which twenty-five by Khas Mahal, one that they wrote together, and one each by Nayak Baksu, Nayak Gopal, Nayak Biju, Tansen, and Pyar Khan.”⁴

The next Book of Nawab was ‘**DULHAN**’. The writer wrote about the importance of the blessings of the almighty before starting anything in the book. Assumed to be written in year 1871, Book Dulhan was another text which had a great contribution from the side of Nawab. The chapters of this book are termed as ‘*Tasveer*’. It has total **12** Tasveers which further contain Dhrupad, Sadra, Sargam, Chaturang, Hori (Chachar), Khayal, Tarana, Tappa, Thumri, Dadra, Sawan, Sanskar Geet. Most of the compositions are by Nawab’s wife. The name Pyar khan has also been used in earlier sub chapter as one of the important names around Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. He was his teacher or guru and taught him both vocal and instrumental music. As a symbol of respect and love nawab added his (Pyar khan’s) Drupad in first Tasveer which was.

³Taqi Roshan, Wajid Ali Shah Aur Awadh- Sangeet, Sanjay Prakashan, New Delhi, 2021. Pg- 69.

⁴ Dehejia Hasha V., Love Songs of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, D.K. Print World, New Delhi, 2020. Pg- 24.

“धूपद, खम्माच चौताला

प्यारे खाँ रचित:

Asthayi: तखत बखत मिले वाजिद अली सहन्सा को

ब्याह रचो जगमग भाई सब सोपाल गाऊँ ।

Sinchayi: बना बानी को सुलताने आलम के संग ।”⁵

The wife of Nawab – ‘Alamahra’ also helped Nawab by including her own writings in this book as she herself was capable writer. The generosity of the Nawab by including her writings in his book was seen which also meant that he never found his wife inferior from any aspect. Her writings were also compiled in book with symbolic line ‘आलम □□□□’. In fact, he openly mentioned her name on the compositions that were writer by her.

“धूपद, रागिनी टोरी

अल्लाह की शान में – आलम रचित:

Asthayi: मेरे तू अल्लाह नाम को आधार रचो संसार

काम करो तू तज जंजार

Antara: जिन रचो अरस करस ज़मीन आसमान

निरंजन निरंकार सांची क्यों ना सेव परवरदिगार ।”⁶

The next masterpiece was ‘**BANNI**’ which was printed in year 1877. The book was in Urdu, was synonymous to the term ‘Dulhan’. The motive of this book was to contribute a *guidebook* to the students of music and dance as Nawab had a hobby of teaching his shagirds (Students). “In Bani, Wajid Ali Shah has himself mentioned the names of 46 books that he had written.

They are as follows:

1. AKHTAR-E-MULK
2. AFSANA-E-ISHQ
3. IRSHAD-E-KHAQANI
4. IMAN
5. AL HIDAYAT
6. BAHAR-I-ULFAT
7. BAHAR-I-MUKHTALIF
8. BANI
9. TARIKH-I-MAZHAB

⁵Taqi Roshan, Wajid Ali Shah Aur Awadh- Sangeet, Sanjay Prakashan, New Delhi, 2021. Pg- 161.

⁶Taqi Roshan, Wajid Ali Shah Aur Awadh- Sangeet, Sanjay Prakashan, New Delhi, 2021. Pg- 161.

10. TARIKH-I-MAZHAB
11. TARIKH-I-KHAS
12. TARIKH-I-FIRAQ
13. TARIKH-I-MASHAGHALA
14. GHAZALA
15. TARIKH-I-NOOR
16. TARIKH-I-JAMSHEDI
17. TARIKH-I-DEHAR
18. TARIKH-I-ISHQ
19. GAUHAR-I-AROOZ
20. HUZAN-I-AKHTAR
21. DARIYA-I-NAQSH
22. DASRUR-E-WAJADIYA
23. DAFTAR-E-HUMANYUN
24. DIWAN MUBARAK
25. DAFTAR-E-PARESHAN
26. DULHAN
27. SUKHAN-E-ASHRAF
28. SHEVU-I-FAIZ
29. SAHIFA-E-SULTANI
30. SURAT-UL-MUBARAK
31. ISHQNAMA
32. AQMAR MAZMOON
33. KULIYAT-I-AKHTAR
34. KULIYAT-I-SOOM
35. GULDASTA-I-ASHIQAN
36. SODAT MARSIYA
37. MAHINAMA
38. MURAQQA-E-FAROGH
39. MUBAHASA-E-ULNAFAS-WAL-AQAL
40. NAJO
41. NAZM MAMoor
42. WAQAI-I-AKHTARI
43. HAIBAT-I-HAIDARI
44. LUGHAT HAFT ZUBAN
45. MAJMUA-I-WAJIDIYA
46. DARIYA-I-TASHUQA”⁷

⁷ Sinh Ranbir, Wajid Ali Shah, The Tragic King, Publication Scheme Jaipur, 2002. Pg-142,143.

It had 6 chapters which were described as 'Baab' or □□□ in the book, they contained compositions and information on SUR, TAAL, RAHAS, RAHAS VISTHAAR, NAKAL, KHITAAB. The Nawab mentioned about the Daroga of the printing press in Matia Burj, Kolkata. His name was Amir Ali Khan 'Hilaal', who accompanied the Nawab to Calcutta after the annexation and stayed with him in the prison at William Fort for almost two years.

Starting the first chapter with name- SUR, Names of his music teachers – Basit Khan, Pyaare Khan and Haidar Khan were mentioned by the writer. The first Baab contained sub chapters termed as फ़सल or Fasal. The chapter had the details of taking Alaap in a composition. In **Baab 2nd**, knowing the importance of 'Taal' in Music, Nawab wrote various layakaris such as Dugun, Tigun, Chaugun and specified the relation of Taal with dance as well.

The 3rd and 4th Baabs were about the different Rahas and two stories of Krishna and Radha with other characters which were termed as Sakhis Rahaswalian etc. The 5th chapter held different perspectives of one who were called 'Bhands' and 'Naqal' who performed just to entertain the masses.

The 6th baab was termed as 'khitaab' which meant prize or award of honour. The total fasal in this baab were 2. Nawab Wajid Ali Sah mentioned 23 groups of Jalsewalian who performed in Jalsas and 216 artists who participated in these Jalsas (festivals). Among them 43 were the ones who learned under the Nawab. He categorised different groups by names such as Masiyanwalian, Nakalwalian, Tamashewalian, Sultankhanewalian, Shardamanzil walian, Khaasmanzilwalian etc. In this chapter he mentioned each and every worker with its designation and nature of work they did. For smooth and better functioning of each group, Nawab appointed a Ustad and a Daroga from each group. They were paid the salary from the Nawab's account.

The fifth book by Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was '*Chanchal Naaznin*' or 'चंचल नाज़नीन'. The estimated year of publishing this book was 1880. According to the research of Dr. Roshan Taqi, this book was entitled with a different name which was 'मिलाजुल कलमात' and was published under this title. This was the last work by the Nawab, that was started with the prayers of the almighty. This book contained the knowledge of the summation of the music in the form of poetic phrases. Going through this book, one thing about the Nawab was crystal clear that he not only had the knowledge of Indian music but also, he was well versed in Arabic and Irani music traditions. The book contained the names of the ragas and raginis in which Nawab composed and wrote. The phrases in this book contained the following topics- 'Aroh-avroh', 'Alaapchari', 'Matt', 'Dhrupad', 'Khayal', 'Bhartiya sangeet', 'Taal', 'Sur' etc. He wrote about the relation of dance with music, names of Pakhawajis, instruments, singers etc.

It can be assumed that Nawab wanted all the names to be remembered in the history, as he himself did not have the urge to take the whole credits for promoting arts. In all his writings he gave the credits to the deserved ones by mentioning their names. Some of the phrases from his book are as follow.

“तालों के नाम

‘तितला’ है ‘धीमा तितला’ है यार
 तो ‘एक ताला’, ‘चौताला’ ‘रूपक’ नेगार
 कहीं ‘आडा चौताला’, ‘तीव्र’ ‘ब्रम’
 तो ‘झपताला’, ‘लछमी’ ‘चित्रा’ बस ‘बहम’
 कहीं ‘सूल’ के बाद है ‘फाख्ता’
 तो ‘पटताल’, ‘होरी’ है ‘झुमरा’
 कहीं ‘जत’, ‘सवारी’ कहीं ‘दादरा’
 इसी ‘जत’ को चाचर किसी ने कहा!!
 यह अठारह ताले हैं पोथी की यार,
 नहीं खुसरो देहलवी का शुमार |”⁸

“पखावजियों के नाम

हसीन उसके बाद है खाँ भी ज़रूर
 भवानी है फिर दास साहिबे शऊर
 वह अव्वल तो खब्बा है उसको सुनें
 है मशूर क्योंकि न हम भी लिखें
 यह दोनो है बेमिसाल और लाजवाब
 जहाँ भर में कामिल बहुत इन्तेख्वाब”⁹

Conclusion

According to scholars, Nawab wrote more than 100 books throughout but many of them were preserved by the British Government as they were afraid of the disclosure of the Nawab’s intellectuality. “Of these, at least sixty are said to have been carefully preserved in the personal library of Dr. Masood Hasan.”¹⁰

⁸ Taqi Roshan, Wajid Ali Shah Aur Awadh- Sangeet, Sanjay Prakashan, New Delhi, 2021. Pg- 346.

⁹ Taqi Roshan, Wajid Ali Shah Aur Awadh- Sangeet, Sanjay Prakashan, New Delhi, 2021. Pg- 348.

¹⁰ Misra, Susheela, Musical Heritage of Lucknow, Harman Publishing House, New Delhi, 1991. Pg – 77.

Many of his works were destroyed in fire in Lucknow and many of his works were stolen from Lucknow and Matiaburj, Kolkata.

All these works of the Nawab will act as resourceful for the ones who want to gain knowledge of various gayan shaillies. As mentioned earlier that during the nawab, there was no systemised pattern of writing the dhrupads, Sargams, Khayaals, Dadras etc (with their notation as available in today's time). The compositions written in these five books are very valuable and can be used in performances by singers and dancers both as they are interconnected with the grounds of Sur and taal. Dr. Roshan Taqi and Krishna Mohan Saxena have done a commendable job in translating the texts of the Nawab from languages like Urdu, Persian, Arabic to Hindi. All these texts specify the artistic intelligence of the Nawab Ali Shah, his passion, his concern for reserving the arts in the form of Books, his contribution to the music and dance shall be remembered. Not only his own name, but legacy of many 'Gharanedaar Artists' has been written permanently through his theoretical works in the world.

