

**Anthropological Study of Folk Music in Gilan Province in Iran
(Instrumental Music)**

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Abstract: *Ethno-musicology is an academic field encompassing various approaches to the study of music that emphasize its cultural, social, material, cognitive, biological, and other dimensions or contexts instead of its isolated 'sound' component or any particular repertoire. The term 'Ethno-musicology' became common in 1950, although the emergence of the field can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. Anthropological study of folk music of Gilan province, in Iran with regards to its richness and long history is the subject of this paper. Folk music of Gilan is a part of folklore since it represents the type of thoughts, feelings and behavior of Gilanian People. Nowadays, some Gilani music is on the verge of 'getting forgotten' The problem is not only the loss of a kind of music but it is feared that this change will cause another change in thinking and behavior, Therefore, the task is to identify, document and analyze Gilani folk music. In this paper, Informal interview and participant observations comprise the methods of data collection. Functional theory has been used for analysis.*

Keywords: *Anthropology, Ethnomusicology, Iran, Gilan Province, functional theory, instrumental music.*

Introduction

Ethno-musicology is an academic field encompassing various approaches to the study of music that emphasize its cultural, social, material, cognitive, biological, and other dimensions or contexts instead of its isolated 'sound' component or any particular repertoire. The term 'Ethno-musicology' became common in 1950, although the emergence of the field can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. As we know, music is not just an art, but a means of expression and transmission of culture, civilization and history of a nation or ethnic groups, which is mixed with artistic human feelings and emotions dedicated to others. Thus, the preservation and development of folkloric music of a nation and a tribe will prevent the destruction of languages, customs and genuine culture of the tribes and will preserve the cultural identity. Anthropological study of folk music of Gilan province, in Iran with regards to its richness and long history is the subject of this paper.

Problem Statement

Gilan has a very rich tradition of folklore especially in folk music. However with the flow of socio-Cultural changes in this age of modernity, the rich folkloric traditions are gradually vanishing and pose a threat of being forgotten forever. Hence there is an urgent need to document the minute ethnographic details of the rich folkloric music. Documentation of the ethnographic details of the folkloric traditions would be helpful in preventing it from being forgotten. This would contribute to preserve the culture treasure of the nation.

Aims and objectives

- To get Data and to study the Ethno-musicology of Gilan province in Iran;
- To understand relation between Ethnomusicology and folklore, custom and Gilanian everyday life.

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Problem Justification and Significance of study

Study of Ethnomusicology as a part of Folkloric traditions is important as it gives us a privilege to learn about our own culture and society. As the world is becoming a global village with people of different nationalities trotting across the globe and inhabiting in different parts of the world, the need for folklore study is coming to be more significant as this will be the only means to retain our own roots, culture and sense of belongingness to a certain community. Folklore gives an impression of collectiveness of the shared culture.

Methodological Considerations

i. Tools and Techniques used for Data collection:

In this paper, Informal interview and participant observations comprise the methods of data collection.

Map of location Gilan province in Iran (brown color)



Location of the Study

Gilan Province: Iran has 31 provinces. Gilan is one of the smallest provinces. Gilan province covers an area of 14,711 square kilometers. Gilan province is situated to the south of the Caspian Sea. To the East of Gilan is the Mazandaran Province. South of Gilan is covered by Alborz Mountain ranges. West of Gilan is covered by Talesh Mountain ranges. To the North of Gilan is the Caspian Sea. Rasht is the capital city of the province. The population of Gilan province in 2011 was 2,404,861 (<http://www.amar.org.ir>).

Theoretical Framework

Structural Functionalism is a sociological and Anthropological theory that attempts to explain why society functions the way it does by focusing on the relationships between the various social institutions that makes up society (e.g., government, law, education, religion, etc.). Structural Functionalism is a marete theoretical understanding of society that posits social systems are collective means to fill social needs. In order for social life to survive and develop in society there are a number of activities that need to be carried out to ensure that certain needs are fulfilled. In the structural functionalist model, individuals produce necessary goods and services in various institutions and roles that correlate with the norms of the society (Gingrich, 1999). Thus, one of the key ideas in Structural Functionalism is that society is made-up of groups or institutions, which are cohesive, share common norms, and have a definitive culture. Robert K. Merton (Hak, 2007) argued that functionalism is about the more static or concrete aspects of society, institutions like government or religions. However, any group large enough to be a social institution is included in Structural Functionalist thinking, from religious denominations to sports clubs and everything in between. Structural Functionalism asserts that the way society is organized is the most natural and efficient way for it to be organized.

Musical instruments of Gilan

Musical instruments of Gilan can be broadly classified into two categories namely folk music and western music. Folk musical instruments of Gilan are as follows:

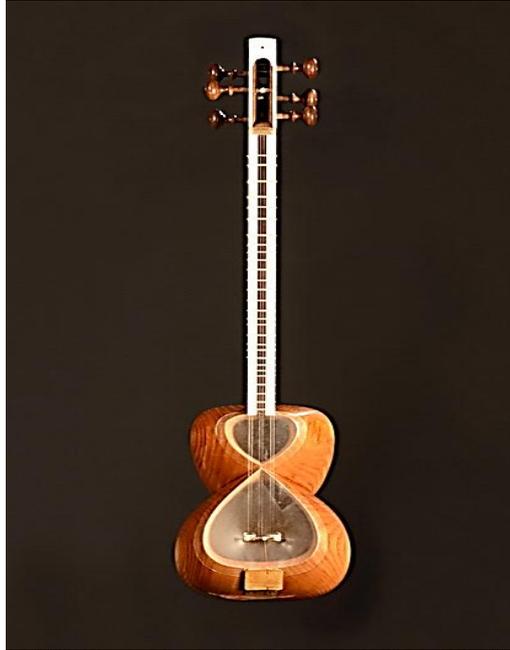
Dohol (Timbale -kettledrum):

It is a big drum; the diameter of its circle is about 1 meter and a height of 30 cm. The animal's skin is covered on both surfaces of its sidelong circle. A belt is fastened on two points of kettledrum, the player hangs this belt around his neck, so that the kettledrum is placed in between his chest and stomach so that the playing surfaces are placed at the right and left sides. The player strikes the playing surfaces with the sticks in his right and left hands. The kettledrum is an instrument that is not played singly. The companies Sornay (Oboe). It is noteworthy that the sound of this instrument is very high and strident. Accordingly, there is a related proverb that says "Oh, the brave music of a distant Drum!" means the sound of a drum is good from a far-off distance." Dohol can be used both in funeral and wedding ceremonies in Gilan. Dohol is often used in religious ceremonies of Ashura. Recently, with emergence of imported Drums manufactured by different factories, funeral ceremonies and religious rituals that are performed in form of carnivals are good means to advertise this product (Yamaha) for foreign manufacturers indirectly. In Gilan, some nomads believe that if wolf's skin is used instead of sheep's skin to cover the frame of Dohol the sound of this instrument will be more pleasant. Probably, this thought is referred to Nomadism and agriculture system of this group of people to cope with the generation of wolves that are a serious danger for their livestock trying to change this attitude. Moreover, according to another belief, keeping a wolf's claw besides parturient and neonatal will secure them from the danger of 'Aall' (Satan's Daughter). Therefore, up to near passed, a group of Gilani people catch and cut wolf's claw in order to obtain claw (its manifest function was to have an income and its latent function was to degenerate wolves and to secure their livestock).



Gileh Taar:

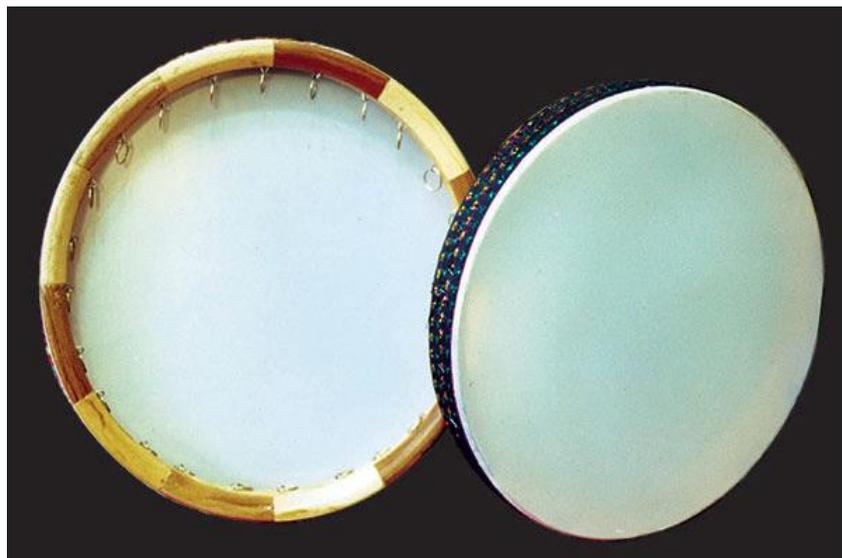
This Folk Instrumental music pertains to Gilan. In Gilan Taar has a thin wooden longer and thick strings are used. One of the differences between Gilan Taar and Common Taar is that the common Taar is sensitive to moisture, but The Gilan Taar is sensitive to skin.



The resonator of Gilani Tar is usually made of Mulberry Wood. The older and dryer wood the sound will be more pleasant. The frets Gilani Tar is often made of sheep's intestine and its resonator is usually covered by sheep or cow skin. According to the theory of diffusion, the Tar instrument has probably been entered Turkey and Europe gradually. It is claimed that Guitar is the reformed and completed form of Irani Tar.

Dayareh (Tambourine):

This instrument is made of a wooden ring, cow skin and some metal rings. The width of wooden ring is 5 to 7 cm. The diameter of the circle is 25 cm to 40 cm. 40 small metal rings are kept having at equal intervals along the internal surface of wooden ring. This arrangement is believed to honor the significance of the number 40. Dayareh is usually a musical instrument in happy ceremony in Gilan, but a bigger type of Dayareh known as Daf is usually used in religious ceremony of Darwishes in Khanqah as well.



'Dambook' (Tonbak) (goblet drum):

It has become prevalent in urban communities of Gilan concurrent with the appearance of Iranian traditional instruments. The player of this instrument is referred to as "Dambookchi" or "Dambookzan" in Gilan. The node of tonbak is made from the trunk of berry tree or walnut wood. In Gilan Province, the itinerant players use a Dambook having tin or iron foil. This instrument is usually used in happy ceremonies and since it has no use in religious rituals, it does not have a positive value.



Taleshi Tanboor (Dutar):

In Iran there are eight types of Tanboor (Dutar) including:

1. Eastern Khorasan Tanboor;
2. Northern Khorasan Tanboor;
3. Khorasan Khormanji Tanboor;
4. Northern Khorasan Turkmen Tanboor;
5. Turkmen Sahra Tanboor;
6. Mazandaran Tanboor;
7. Kermanshah (Kurdish)Tanboor;
8. Taleshi Tanboor.

Eastern Khorasan Tanboor has the biggest resonator and Taleshi Tanboor has the smallest one among all. Only Taleshi Tanboor is played by a small plectrum but the rest are played by claw hand. Taleshi Tanboor has nine to ten frets. Unlike Kermanshah Tanboor which is a religious musical instrument, Taleshi Tanboor is often used in parties and banquets. In Kermanshah, this instrument is very holy having a very special position among Ahl-e-Hagh Darwishes (Sufi holy men) as while beginning to play it they have to kiss its neck even some swear and take oath of Tanboor.



Santoor:

There are two theories about the creation of the world “Santoor”:

1. Santoor means to laud or to worship God;
2. Santoor referred to a musical instrument having hundred wires.

Santoor is one of the oldest and most perfect Iranian instruments. It is in the form of trapezoid box having rows of strings which are played by means of two wooden picks. It seems that Piano had been created on the basis of Irani Santoor. This musical instrument has seventy two wires and nine to eleven bridges (String holders). This musical instrument is played both individually and in accompany with Tombak. It is usually performed in happy ceremonies.



Sornay (Oboe):

This instrument is similar to a cone pipe including 9 holes. Out of these 9 holes 8 have been carved on the back side of the instrument and one hole in front. The length of instrument varies between 30 cm to 45 cm. Sornay is one of the old instruments that is used in the most states of Iran. This instrument is used together with Kettledrum during celebration such as wedding. In Gilan Province, Sornay is played in the different ceremonies and occasion such as wedding, Sorna along with Naghare are used in wrestling competition. Of course, the player of Sorna should have enough knowledge and awareness about wrestling to be able to change the rhythm in tune with the wrestlers. The players' speed, skill and Improvisation can have much effect on the wrestling and its excitement.



Sanj(Cymbal):

It consists of two metal circle-formed plates, 30 cm – 40 cm in diameter and each one of the plates has a leather ring at the central point of its back that the player holds the cymbal in hand by means of which. This instrument is used in Ta'zye (reciting amorality play) ceremony and Dastehgardani (mourning group) held in Moharram and Safar months in the mourning ceremonies. This musical instrument is just used in ritual ceremonies having to other usages in Gilan at the present time.



'Ney' (Reed):

This is one of the most important instruments of Gilan. Ney is an Iranian wood-wind musical instrument made of reed. Ney is one of the simplest and the most natural musical instrument from wood-wind family. Ancient nations had made use of flute to make different wood-wind musical instruments used during war and peace. It is widely used because of its simplicity, ease of performance, hassle-free transportation and availability of raw material in nature. It is used mostly among tribes and shepherds. In this sense it is also called as Shepherd's musical instrument. In comparison with other Gilani musical instruments, Ney has a very special place in public culture of people. This musical instrument is highly used in religious rituals of Muslim people (Shiites) and Sufis. This instrument along with Daf are of the major rituals instrument of Sufis and Darwishes.



dayareh zange(Timbre):

This instrument is similar to Dayareh or tambourine but smaller in size. This instrument is played particularly during Norooz Eyd by Norooz messenger and 'Haji firooz'. This instrument is often played during wedding ceremonies. The role of Haji Firooz during Nowruz in Iran is like the function of Santa Claus during Christmas. Haji Firooz with his 'Dayereh Zangi'



Karna:

Composed of two words of ‘Kar’ means war used in Persian language as ‘Karzar’ and ‘na’ which is the same ‘ney’ means reed. Karna (Clarion) is a woodwind and long musical instrument with a bass and an expressive music. Since it doesn’t have any hole, it cannot be played with fingers. Thus, it is played only by a player’s breath. Playing karna is one of the old traditions in Gilan Province particularly during Muharam and Safar months in different regions of this province. This religious tradition is mostly followed and practiced in cities like Astaneh Ashrafyeh, the city Shaft has started with this practice in the recent past. In the past, karna was used to make announcements and to inform people, now karna is being used as a mourning instrument in private or religious functions. karna is typically played collectively in 10 – 12 player groups in which one player is leader and the rest are followers. Karna is not only used in The Imams’ mourning particularly Imam Hossein (AS), but also in Martyrs Memorial and in case of sudden death of young people.

Gilan’s Karna excludes tenon and hole and consists of three parts. These are as follows:

- i. Mouth Piece;
- ii. The length of the body sometimes exceeds 3.60 m (one of the longest instruments in the world);
- iii. The circumference of the head gradually increases from the head.

Karna one of the longest instruments in the world



'Naghareh' (Timpani):

This instrument is classified as percussion instruments. It is formed of two bowls separate from each other. The bigger bowl is hemispherical in shape. The smaller bowl is conical in shape. The upper put of the bowls is covered by dried skin of goat or some other animal. Naghareh is usually played together with Sornay (oboe). In ancient times, Naghareh (Timpani) had been played and used both in battle field and during peace times. In the other words, it was a martial and passion drive instrument in battle fields, played on a camel's hump by timpani players. It was a lyrical instrument used during wedding ceremonies and parties during peace times. In ancient times, trumpets and timpani were commonly used in the court of the king. Timpani are considered as the symbol of kings' sovereignty and power. The place where timpani are played is called 'Naghareh-Khana'. 'Naghareh-Khana' has a long history. It had been common in Iran since antiquity. The rulers of big and capital cities were allowed to have 'Naghareh-Khana'. A group of players informed people about the 'sunrise' and 'sunset', times on a high ground. In fact, these were a signs of welcome and farewell to and from sun as the symbol of life, light and love. In those 'Naghareh-Khana', musical instruments such as Karna (Clarion) and Sorna were also played. Holy places such as Imam Reza's Holy Shrine in Mashhad and Shah-e-Cheragh in Shiraz do have Naghareh-Khana even today. These instruments are played on special occasions like healing and miracle rituals. Timpani have different types in different regions in Iran such as Kurdish timpani, Farsi timpani, and Gilani timpani.



Conclusion

In this research carried out in Gilan province, it was observed that the gilani folk music have undergone drastic changes and some of them lost their function and some of them have been completely destroyed According to the Structural functionalism theory, as all components and elements of a society are interrelated to each other and affect each other, hence a change in a structure will change the other structures. Therefore, the destruction or change in Folklore including Folk music can affect other structures as well. Accordingly, it is quite obvious that this issue has changed and removed some of the components of Gilan Folklore music has had negative effects on cultural body of the under study society. Documentation of folklore, Especially Folk music, and the most ancient cultural heritage of humans is a challenge for folklorists and anthropologists'. Such studies our fruitful for any society since it can reveal social and cultural ambiguities.

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