



MUSIC DIPLOMACY: A CASE OF PAKISTAN-INDIA RELATIONS

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Abstract

Pakistan and India both belong to the subcontinent and share a lot of similarities but after independence, both have been in conflict for most of the time. They are not friendly neighbours and have a lot of conflicts due to many issues that have not been resolved and are there for quite a time. When one problem has finished another starts and it's been going for decades. Both countries share the same culture, listening to same music and songs but after independence, music has a special impact on both countries. Anything that can exchange through ideas, art, and language comes under cultural diplomacy. It's main goal is to maintain positive relations between different nations and can be used as a tool for international policies to establish harmony and peace among nations. The research finds that music has a positive role in promoting peace and harmony between the two neighboring countries. It concludes that the music diplomacy must not be neglected as it contributes in maintaining friendship.



Keywords: Music Diplomacy, Pakistan India Relations, Film Industry, Music Industry, Peace and Harmony.

Introduction

To maintain peace, singers also have to play their role and singers like Rahat Fateh Ali, and Salman Ahmed played an important role in maintaining peace inside and outside the borders of Pakistan and India. Music that has a feel of religious nature tends to make more impact, since both countries have quite similar languages, culture, etc. Music is a main element of culture and by listening to it one can feel for others. Music and musicians bring societies closer to each other. (Asghar, 2010)

Newly launched initiatives like Coke studio and Sur respectively established in Pakistan and India play a huge role in bringing the youth of both the nations closer by their music that are so appealing and liked by both countries. Despite strict restrictions across both borders, these initiatives help in building peace; moreover having a huge impact on both countries music should be harnessed as an entity for peace between India and Pakistan. (Hafeez, 2015)

Some important aspects of cultural diplomacy are art crafts, music, ideas, education, sports, and customs all these combined can bring up a positive image of a country and can be a tool for good relations. (Bangash, 2018)

Cultural Diplomacy between Pakistan and India

Both countries love artist and their artistic work. Pakistani musicians are loved by our neighbour India and they usually perform there giving out the message for peace by visiting India and singing for their people, Pakistani musicians like Ali Zafar, and Atif Aslam are adored by Bollywood and they want them to sing in their movies and it is the responsibility for governments of both countries to give out visa to these individuals without any difficulty so they can easily perform in India or Pakistan as war is not the right choice for peace it should be resolved by democratic means and with music. (Acheson & Maule, 2004)

Languages play an important role in cultural homogeneity between India and Pakistan as both countries share common languages and by that, it's easy for them to understand other countries' cultures through music, movies, and show. (Banu, 2019) Coke studio a famous Pakistani song studio is quite popular among Indians as they love listening to it and mostly



it listens in roadside eateries in part of Delhi, similarly Pakistani love Bollywood films more and prefer watching it rather than Lollywood. (Ibrar, 2010)

Music Diplomacy around the world

Furthermore, the US has been organizing events to promote their music from early as the 1950s and they have been sponsoring events to show and promote their cultural values by sending different artists across different regions to showcase their talents. The purpose of these events was to showcase to the world their cultural morals and show a positive image of America and enhance the reputation of the USA in front of the whole world. Like in 1956 former US ambassador for congress, Edmund Gullion describe how sharing cultural values and tradition is a source of sharing of ideas and information. Suggesting that these events produce intangible and different ideas even mutual. In my opinion, cultural musical diplomacy is very impactful for a built a strong relationship. Because you can hear the song from any country, you can go everywhere to sing and earn a name and brighten or shine your country name, and the most important thing is that music introduces your culture, that how you lived, people wear which types of clothes, you all can show them through a music video to the other countries.

Music as a Tool of Soft Power

Music can be used as a positive influence in creating peace between Pakistan and India. Music is a tool by which we can get rid of the mindset of violence. Through relaxing or mind-soothing music performances we can create an impact of positivity and this type of music are a must. (Irum, 2019) Music can provide us with a platform from which we can address our imaginations and turn conflict into an agreement. Music can be used to reflect one country's society to another's and can be used to send a message of peace it plays an influential role in society. (Carqueira, 2018)

There are songs and movies made that tents to play with the sentiments of Indian and Pakistani people in the name of national interest or patriotism but for that, organizations are working like Pakistan and India censorship boards to prevent these types of events and to help citizens watch songs and movies related to their culture and traditions. Both nations need to provide with such content that gives out a message of brotherhood between this nation and that such entertainment can be a powerful element for promoting peace. (Abbasi, 2020)

Music Initiatives by India and Pakistan



Newly launched initiatives like Coke studio and Sur respectively established in Pakistan and India play a huge role in bringing the youth of both the nations closer by their music that are so appealing and liked by both countries. Despite strict restrictions across both borders, these initiatives help in building peace; moreover having a huge impact on both countries music should be harnessed as an entity for peace between India and Pakistan. (Akhtar, 2014).

Peace Anthem

India and Pakistan relations have not been ideally good since independence, but to promote peace between these nations an Indian activist 'Ram Subramanian' planned a mixed Indo-Pak anthem for both countries' 70th anniversary of independence day, and the name for the anthem was given 'Peace Anthem'. He gathered musicians from both countries to sing their national anthems Pak Sarzameen (Pakistani) and Jana Gana Mana (Indian) and then combined both anthems by adding some sentences to promote peace. This Anthem was released on 13th August 2017 some days before Pakistan and India's independence; the song became quickly viral and whooped enormous views of above 4 lacks within its first day of release.

The program for peace anthem was introduced to get the attention of international audiences and showcase peace in India and Pakistan and let the foreign people living in India and Pakistan know that we are nations of peace. (Booth 2007, p. 8) The wars fought in past have created the impact of negativity and it's hard to forget it, especially when there is still conflict between these nations that's why the 'Peace Anthem' initiative was introduced and its goal was to show harmony and brotherhood between India and Pakistan and to get rid of negative mindset that one country people have for other country and to invent humanity. (Rid, 2020)

Dosti Music Project

In March 2017 a project named 'DOSTI' was released which literally means friendship. The purpose of this project was to search for musicians from Pakistan, India, and the USA and to showcase their talent through a single platform internationally. This project was funded by the USA and was formed in the US Embassy in Islamabad. Culture from different countries was mixed to enhance the music experience it was loved by the younger generations and its roots are deeply dug for future collaborations. This model created a unique experience for both listeners and singers and they produced different types of songs. (dosti.org) website name. (Tere, 2014)



Sufi Music in Hindi Films

Hindi films have been featuring Sufi music for quite a long time as a qawwali style but it gain momentum in the late 1990s to early 2000 as the band Junoon was formed which became quite popular and was liked by Indians as well it became quite successful and began the new era of Sufi pop culture which was liked by both Indians and Pakistani and later this was followed by other musicians who performed it solo or with films soundtrack in which one band was the Indian Ocean which also became popular and both Junoon and the Indian Ocean made several collabs in promoting music and maintain harmony between India and Pakistan. Rahat Fateh Ali Khan also played an important role in the Sufi music industry and was featured in quite Hindi films.

If we're talking about Sufi music, we cannot ignore A.R. Rahman he is one of the most prolific and creative film composers he led the way to feature Sufi music in Hindi films. He made his debut in the 1993 film 'Roja' and the music composed in this film influenced generations of music composers. Rahman works in utilizing traditional Sufi music in his films but as Sufi is quite a sacred topic it was difficult to adjust in the end, it found its way and he provide the music industry with completely new directions to work on. (Sarrazin, N. 2017)

Role of Pakistani Singers

Ali Azmat is a Pakistani artist who is the vocalist of a famous band named Junoon. He became popular for his song 'Dosti' and it became so popular that he was invited by the Prime Minister of India in 1999 to sing this song, to send a message of peace and prosperity internationally. He played an important role in bringing up the positive role of India and Pakistan to the world. Junoon band was also given the award for 'Best International Group' in a music award ceremony in Delhi. (Kamboh, 2021)

Rahat Fateh is a prominent figure in the music industry, especially in Pakistan and India He has performed in India on several occasions. He once collaborated with Indian musician Kaushiki Chakra borthy on recreating a song as an initiative of the Indo-Pak peace project started by fusion. The music conveyed the message of peace, and unity between both nations; it became quite popular for good reasons. (Business Standard, 2018)

Music and International Relations

Music glorifies the culture. We can demonstrate our culture via music to the entire world. Music plays a role in our sentiments. Sometimes music united the nations. We all know



that music is the sound of peace. Oftentimes our politicians do use musicians for entertainment purposes and some messages are spread via the singers. Every country has its national anthem and when any country resident moves outside for sports or other duties served for a country so on that national anthem runs in that place and everyone listens. So it has a very proud wink for all overseas people and it is also a sound of peace. (Einbinder, 2013)

Every country loves artists and their artistic work. Pakistani musicians are loved by our neighbour's India and they usually perform there giving out the message for peace by visiting India and singing for their people, Pakistani musicians like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Atif Aslam, Ali Zafar, act also featured in Indian movie songs. They are cherished by Bollywood and they want them to sing in their movies both countries' governments should give out visas to these individuals without any difficulty so they can easily perform in India or Pakistan as war is not the right choice for peace it should be resolved by democratic means and with music. (Maule, 2004)

Music can be a reflector on identity and communication. Music and international relations are not usually in the same domain of interest. In international relations music is used as a tool of cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy is a well-understood aspect of international relations. Scholars of international history consider music as an instrument of dominance and resistance. The impact of music on international relations is equally dominant. Musical performances can have and have-had political differences. Music was also used as a tool of political power during the nineteenth century by the Germans. (Franklin, 2016)

Music as Tool for Conflict Transformation in Kashmir

Pakistan, India, and Kashmir share mixed and common culture as it's not hidden due to music and other components of art both Bollywood actor and Pakistani musicians like Mehdi Hassan are most loved in all of the subcontinents, and recently a concert took place in Kashmir which was the collaboration of India and Pakistan and it was enjoyed by majority such events should be held on regular bases to promote peace between India and Pakistan and to control conflicts. (Mahapatra, 2013)

All Pakistan Music Conference

At the time of the independence of Pakistan in 1947, Pakistan was so weak in its social, cultural, and political situation and that's why his art was also entirely undervalued. The arts were not getting any attention of the people and the government and the people were only heard radio Pakistan they were ignoring Pakistani music the musicians were frustrated



and the Bade Ghulam Ali Khan decided to leave his birthplace and go back to India because in Pakistan they were frustrated. (Khan, 2012).

After the 12 years of independence, the concerned citizens of the country met at the famous coffee house of Lahore on 15th September 1959 and decided to launch the organization under the title of 'All Pakistan Music Conference' to promote the music and the musicians of Pakistan by organizing concerts, conferences and festivals and the moving spirit of All Pakistan Music Conference. Late Hayat Ahmed Khan, was also one of the founders of this long-serving secretary. When they organize the folk music and classical music festival from 19th February 1960 to 23rd February 1960, this festival was a great success for Pakistan music all of the musicians of the country participated and people attend the festival in the large amount from all over the country and held at Alhamra Arts Council Lahore. This organization was so helpful in promoting Pakistani music in the country and world as well. (Express Tribune, 2017).

Musical Bridge between India and Pakistan

As we all know that there is a huge craze for Pakistan classical music in India and Indian classical musicals are so much popular in Pakistan even today also and so many Pakistani musicians work in India also and they make a fan following in India with their songs but in September 2016 Indian Motion Pictures Producers Association, the largest entertainment organization of India announced the ban on all the artists of Pakistan and also canceled their concerts in India and in reply Pakistan authorities imposed the complete ban on India TV channels and Bollywood movies in Pakistan from that day till now both countries divided their music for each other. (Rid, 2020).

Music always connects the soul and the sad music is always better than the other music and this is Pakistan's fate that the world's best and most famous singers are Pakistani, singers of every era are awesome and their songs connect the souls that's why songs sung by them connect the two rivalry nation, which is the politician's responsibility and they fail but music does this work. The young generations of India love Pakistan's music more than India's and music is for all ages people old generations also loved music liked young generation and these two rivalry nations who fought 3 wars shared their culture and their music and we hope that through music these two nations will end their rivalry and will spread love not hate. (Lianu, 2016).

Role of celebrities in bridging the gap

Mehdi Hassan entered people's hearts with his Ghazala and he also worked in the music industry. He was a famous singer in the '90s and with great lyrics after this, he was



awarded the name of '*Shahanshah e Ghazal*' not only did Mehdi Hassan work hard and brings the ghazal to the listeners. He also played a great role in uniting the two countries through his music. He was offered a radio show to perform as he had a passion for the Urdu language there he go with the experiment for ghazal. Firstly he sang on the radio in 1952. He received many awards some of them from India, in 1983 Gorkh Dikh and the awards given by Pakistan were Tamgha-e-Imtiaz, Hilal-e- Imtiaz, and Nishan e Imtiaz. (Desk, 2019).

Lata Mangeshkar was an Indian playback singer and a music composer. She had a worldwide fan following but the people of India gave respect so much to her, that she was rewarded with the title of 'Queen of Melody', 'Nightingale of India', and 'Voice of Millennium'. She recorded the song in 36 Indian languages and some are in foreign languages, some Indian are Marathi, Bengali, Hindi, and some of the foreign music are Russian, English, Nepali, etc. She received many awards such as the National film Award, Bengal film journalist Associations award, Film Fare Best Female Playback Award, two Filmfare Special Awards, one Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award, and many more awards. In 1947, she was the first Indian playback singer to perform in the Royal Albert Hall, London, and also she appeared in Guinness World Record which listed her as the most recorded artist in history which was between 1948 and 1987. (Hindustan Times, 2019) She also played an active role in bringing the music industries of both countries together in times of need.

Noor Jahan is famous for classical music as well as others. She started singing at the age of 6 and showed a great interest in that. At a younger age she drew the attention of Punjab musicians and they support her and arrange the proper work for her in Lahore, not only this, she received several awards for making a song and making a large number of film songs in the history of Pakistan. She sang a total of 2422 songs for 1148 Pakistani films and she was rewarded with many rewards like Sitara e Imtiaz in 1996, Tamgha Imtiaz in 1965, and Pride of Performance in 1965. (Daily Times, 2021) like others, Madam Noor Jahan was also famous for her voice and singing in India as well. She was also very active on all fronts when and were needed according to her skills.

Music as Cultural Diplomacy

Pakistan and India have a strong connection through music and music is also a culture of these two rivalries nation, both countries have the best music and best musician ever, and the music of both nations are loved by each other, so these two nations indeed have rivalry but for the music, they are one and they show love to each other music. These connections are possible with the All Pakistan Music Conference which organizes concerts every year



and both nations cross the border for music so the hand in strong music culture is the All Pakistan Music Conference. (Massey, 2004).

As we all know that these two nuclear power countries have so many political issues but they are the same and unite in music so many times singers of both countries performed together and collaborated on songs. Which people love so much so if we say that music helps us in peace so it's not wrong because music and the sharing of culture is the only reason for spreading peace in these two countries? So many times they used each other songs to give the message of peace to their people and this is the best example of peace that in Pakistan A.R Rahman who is an Indian singer is so much popular and loving singer and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan in India till now. (Fosler, 2012).

Music Reunite India and Pakistan

Music indeed has no boundaries and it was proved when Indian singer Lata Mangeshkar died, at that time both countries forget their rivalries and give tribute to the late singer. Politicians, actors, singers, and common people tweet on their social media accounts to show their respect for her because they love her music and song. If we talk about today so recently one new song of coke studio was released Pasoori. The background of this song is about boundaries and distance through compassion, love, and identity in this music they use the classical tune of Rubab along with the modern beats which was not just liked by Pakistanis but the Indian love most, which makes the social media fire and cross the 100 million views and everyone loves that song even Indians also. The Indian actors, singers, tiktokers, and many other people made videos on this song and show their love for the song, these are the examples that show that music can reunite these nations. (Hafeez, 2015). There is much music from which we are united like A.R. Rehman and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's collaboration.

India Pakistan and the Musical Gurus of Peace

If we just listen to the name of India the first thing which comes to our mind is enemies same for India but the powerful moment in both the countries India and Pakistan is their music diplomacy, which was held in August of 1997, where both the countries were celebrated their fiftieth anniversaries of independence. As a nation-state to make this day even more memorable the most experience and most famous Indian music composer A.R. Rehman recorded with the most loving personality Nusrat Sahab they collaborate with the famous musician, singer, and composer of India, and the most famous musician they just don't collaborate they composed a 'Guru of Peace'. While India and Pakistan were tested



nuclear weapons but A.R. Rehman and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan reminded people that we can get united through this music fusion.

Several other events were also there, where both the countries collaborate in terms of films and music. Different film celebrities from India work with Pakistani film stars and in the same way, different famous film celebrities from Pakistan went to India for their films with the famous Indian producers and directors. In the same way, people from both countries also want to listen to and enjoy the music from their neighboring countries. Even in times of tension or in times of peace the music from both the countries continues to play in the other country. This music diplomacy or a kind of soft relations is considered very beneficial all over the world where people decided on their own not based on geopolitical tensions and contemporary political dynamics of the world, that whom they love or hate.

Findings

The research finds that music is something that is loved by both sides of the boundaries. People from India and Pakistan don't differ from the music of any country and give the same respect and value to the music of the other side. It has also been seen that the people who have some influence or have some say among the mass, are playing their role in the betterment of any society. Similarly, the celebrities of both countries play their part in maintaining peace and harmony between the two historical rivals.

We all know that the track three of diplomacy is related to the culture, festivals, and rituals, and in this type of diplomacy, the celebrities from the film industry, and from any sports and any kind of influential personality who are liked by the people play their part in engaging the people from different countries and also in harmonizing the political congestion among the countries.

With this music, the person who is involved in these practices can also play their part in bridging the gap between the countries as did by Pakistani and Indian celebrities in the case of India-Pakistan relations. The above literature review finds that there are several events or incidents where the celebrities play an active role in normalizing the political conditions by performing in the other country and spreading the message of love and care from one country to the other. We have seen several examples of cricket matches also where the President, Prime Minister, or any other official designated were present in the cricket ground just to show moral support to their team. Similarly, these acts of the government officials also contribute to normalizing the political situations between the countries.



Conclusion

Music is a language of heart, it is a language of the soul, and it is an expression of inexplicable feelings. Music is felt rather than sung, it is a memory rather than a moment, and it is the soul of food rather than the food of the mind. Hence, when it comes to diplomacy, music solely is the language of peace. But when it comes to India and Pakistan the word 'peace' seems illusionary. Nevertheless, Pakistan and India are connected strongly through music.

Diplomacy is an art and it gets its strong footings when there is a similar culture, language, traditions, and customs. Cultural Diplomacy comes from sharing the same values and working on the same levels to integrate into others' cultures through art, entertainment, and most of all music. Music is the food of spirits, and when spirits are aligned it fosters friendship and lessens animosity. In the case of Pakistan and India, it is the music that has brought the two countries at daggers drawn to each other. Music is the soul of two different countries separated in the chaos.

It is music diplomacy that has brought a positive image to both countries. Pakistan and India have always been engulfed under heated circumstances where coming close and developing a healthy relationship was next to impossible. However, music was a pill that helped lessen this intense situation of misunderstanding. From Abida Parveen to Lata, from Rahat Fateh Ali Khan to A.R. Rahman, from Atif Aslam to Arijit Singh, many upcoming stars have put their great efforts to expunge the animosity and bring peace through music.

Not only singers but a gamut of projects have been launched to take the initiative of strengthening the soft power through music; Coke Studio and Sur are two of many. A whole Genre i.e. Sufi Music was promoted keeping in view the homogeneity of language. 'Junoon', a band was created that gave a different fervor to Sufi Era. It was witnessed that Pakistani Music was listened to on side roads in India while people enjoyed the food.

Both the Governments must lift bans on all the cultural exchange activities such as concerts, movie screening, collaborations, artists' and fans visits' in for peaceful bilateral relations. It can be safely concluded that cultural exchanges like music play a great role in a thaw in bilateral relations and must be promoted to normalize political tensions.



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