

**Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and  
Diverse Cultural Traditions of India”  
(2014-15)**

DOCUMENTATION PROJECT

TITLED

**AUDIO-VISUAL DOCUMENTATION OF THE MUSICAL PRACTICE  
OF LIVING MASTERS OF SUFIANA MAUSIQI**

**(FINAL REPORT)**

Submitted by

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# AUDIO-VISUAL DOCUMENTATION OF THE MUSICAL PRACTICE OF LIVING MASTERS OF SUFIANA MAUSIQI

## (Kamal Bhat Gharana & Qaleenbaft Gharana)

### OBJECTIVES

- a) To document the musical practice of Kamal Bhat Gharana and Qaleenbaft Gharana.
- b) To preserve the musical practice of these Gharanas for future generations.
- c) To preserve, promote and disseminate the Sufiana Mausiqi of Kashmir

### Methodologies for Documentation:

- Interviews with musicians of the Gharana
- Photographing Musicians and their Instruments
- Collection of rare photographs of the past musicians.
- Audio-Visual recording of some popular Maqams.

**Locale:** This documentation project was carried out at Village Wathoora; district Budgam, Jammu and Kashmir. This project contains important textual and photographic material of the gharana. In addition to this, audio recordings of three Maqams and a video record of one Maqam is attached in the form a CD.

**Project Outcome:** Textual cum photographic documentation of two prominent Sufiana Mausiqi gharanas (Qaleenbaft and Kamal Bhat). Audio-visual documentation of three maqams.

## INTRODUCTION

Like Indian classical music, the concept of Gharana also exists in Sufiana Mausiqi. In the past there were a number of Gharanas of Sufiana Mausiqi. These gharanas were spread across the length and breadth of Kashmir valley. But nowadays there are only three districts in Kashmir where Sufiana music is practiced. These include district Budgam, district Anantnag and district Srinagar. In the past some fifty years ago, there were many prominent Sufiana musicians belonging to the other districts such as Kupwara, Baramullah, Shopian, Kulgam, Pulwama etc. But unfortunately Sufiana Mausiqi is now not practiced in these districts. Although Sufiana Mausiqi has been mostly associated with Muslim musicians, however, in the past, when Sufiana Mausiqi was at peak, this art was also practiced by some Kashmiri Pandit families. There was one prominent Pandit Gharana of Sufiana Mausiqi at Sopore. This gharana was represented represented by Pandit Shankar Nath Panditi. Pandit Shankar Nath used to present Sufiana Mausiqi on Kashmiri Sehtar. His son Samsar Chand, grandfather of Pandit Bhajan Sopori, was also a good Sufiana musician and used to play Sufiana Santoor and Wasul. Pandit Bhajan Sopori also has a good knowledge of Sufiana Mausiqi. Many of the Kashmiri ghazals composed by the Legendary Musician cum composer are based on Sufiana Maqams. The other prominent Sufiana Musicians among the Kashmiri Pandits

was 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 Mehfiles organized at his home. There are only four Gharanas of Sufiana Mausiqi existing in Kashmir at present. The prominent Sufiana Gharana is Ramzan joo Gharana. This is the oldest and the main Gharana. It is like the Gwalior Gharana of Hindustani music as many musicians of other Gharanas trace their ancestry to this Gharana. The other prominent Gharanas are Qaleenbafat Gharana, Kamal Bhat Gharana and Setari Gharana. Setari Gharana is near to extinction because the only surviving master musician, Ustad Mohammad Abdullah Setari is now not performing due to old age and ill health. His son showkat jan Setari performs very rarely. This gharana does not have any musician of repute left. This Gharana only exists by name. Thus there are only three major gharanas that are striving hard to carry forward the tradition.

### **QALEENBAFT GHARANA**

One of the most prominent gharanas of District Budgam is Qaleenbaft Gharana. The gharana is named after the most renowned musician of the gharana, Ustad Ghulam Mohammad Qaleenbaft. It is an offshoot Gharana of Ramzan Joo Gharana. The founder of this Gharana, Ustad Qaleenbaft had

initially learnt the basics of Sufiana Mausiqi from Ustad Sultan Joo, the brother of Ustad Ramzan Joo. Besides he had also learnt Tabla from Ustad Ramzan Joo. However he had learnt the art of Sufiana Mausiqi mainly (75%) from Mohammad Khaleel also known as Khalla Sahib Anderwari, who in turn had learnt Sufiana Mausiqi from Ustad Abdullah Shah who also belonged to Ramzan Joo Gharana. But Ustad Qaleenbaft later developed his own style and founded a separate Gharana. For example it was the custom of Ramzan Joo Gharana to maintain a single tempo (laya) through out the presentation of a Maqam but Ustad Qaleenbaft would change the tempo of the Maqam from Vilambit (slow) to Madhya (medium) and Drut (fast) tempo, while presenting the Jawab of the Maqam. (Jawab is instrumentally repeated after a Waqf or rest during the presentation of a Maqam).

Ustad Qaleenbaft was able to establish himself as of the leading Sufiana musicians. He produced many good musicians like late Sheikh Abdul Aziz, Mushtaq Ahmad, Shakeel Ahmad Lala and the present Khalifa of the Gharana, Ustad Mohammad Yaqoob Sheikh (grandson of Ghulam Mohammad qaleenbaft).

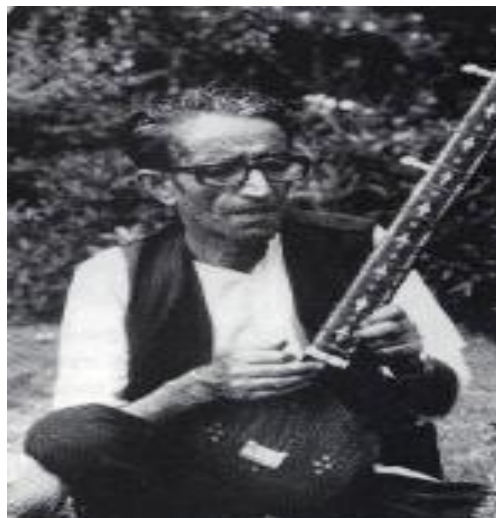
## **Ustad Ghulam Mohammad Qaleenbafat**

Ustad Ghulam Muhammad Qaleenbafat, son of Muhammad Siddique was born in 1909 at Khanakah-e-Maula, Srinagar. He belonged to the elite group of singers and musicians. Right from his childhood he used to participate in Sufiana Mausiqi Mehfiles and thus gathered interest in the art. He received his initial training in the art of Sufiana Mausiqi from Ustad Sultan Joo (brother of Ramzan joo) and then from ustad Khalla joo (Khaliq Joo) who in turn was the disciple of Abdullah Shah. He also learnt Tabla from Ustad Ramzan Joo. He had a unique style of singing. He served Radio Kashmir Srinagar from 1949 to 1971. He also imparted music lessons to girl students at Women's college Srinagar. Later on he was employed by Culture Academy Srinagar to impart Sufiana music lessons to the students. Qaleenbaft has performed throughout the length and breadth of the country and also abroad and received many awards including the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for his life time contribution to Sufiana Mausiqi. He died in 1996 at age of 90 years and his disciples include Muhammad Yaqoob Sheikh (grandson), Sheikh Abdul Aziz, Mushtaq Ahmad and Shakeel Ahmad Lala.



### **Ustad Sheikh Abdul Aziz**

Sheikh Abdul Aziz, son of Sheikh Abdul Karim, was born at Gaw Kadal, Srinagar on 15th of March, 1928. He received initial training in Sufiana Mausiqi from Ustad Ghulam Muhammad Qaleenbaft and then learned under the guidance of Ustad



Muhammad Siddique, Muhammad Abdullah Tibetbaqal and Maulana Shamsuddin Hairat Kamili. Although he did not belong to the family of musicians but with his dedication and hard work, he attained perfection in the art of singing and playing Santoor and Sehtar. He is said to be of the opinion that Dholak (an Indian musical instrument) is better than Tabla as it coincides with Sufiana Mausiqi. He had a good control on Laya and Tala. His greatest contribution in Sufiana Mausiqi is his book Kashur Sargam. This book has been published in three volumes by J & K Cultural Academy in 1964. The book contains the notation of the existing maqams in Bhatkhande System of notation. The importance of this monumental work lies in the fact that each Maqam has been notated in different talas. Another important publication of Sheikh Abdul Aziz is his Ramuz-e- Mausiqi (secrets of music) which is a small text book on Sufiana Mausiqi. Sheikh Abdul Aziz served the Institute of Music

and Fine Arts for over a decade. Afterwards he joined Radio Kashmir and served there till his retirement. During his early days in Radio Kashmir, Sheikh Abdul Aziz used to present a number of programs on Sufiana Mausiqi and also would play Sehtar with other players. Sheikh was the first Sufiana musician who was invited by Marry Land University U.S.A to deliver extension lectures, on Sufiana music. Sheikh Abdul Aziz left this world on 2nd December, 2005.

## **PRESENT KHALIFA OF THE GHARANA**

### **Ustad Muhammad Yaqoob Sheikh**

Ustad Muhammad Yaqoob Sheikh, son of Sheikh Abdul Ahad, is the torch bearer and Khalifa of Qaleenbafat Gharana. He is one of the leading artists of Present day Sufiana Mousiqi. He was born on 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1960 at Bona Shah, Kralpora, district Budgam. Yaqoob received



his initial training at the age of seven from his maternal grandfather, the legendary Ustad Qaleenbafat. He also received training in Sufiana Mousiqi from great maestros- Ustad Kamal Bhat & Ustad Sheikh Abdul Aziz. He is adept in playing Santoor, Sitar, Tabla, and Saaz but generally plays Santoor.



Yaqoob achieved top grade in year 2012 from the Music Audition Board, All India Radio, New Delhi and at present is employed at Radio Kashmir Srinagar as Staff Artist.

Yaqoob is having the great honour to perform in seventeen European & African countries such as Paris, England, Switzerland, Holland, Germany, Italy, and Tunis Algeria and Libya. He also represented his country at Holland Festival organized by Wielsand Eggromont International centre of RASA Netherlands Holland in 1999.

Yaqoob has performed in all the metropolitan cities of India and have achieved appreciation and applause from both the listeners and critics. Some of the important festivals where the later Ustad has performed include, Brihadeshi Sangeet Mohotsav organized by Sangeet Natak Akademi and Jahan-e-Khusru festival Delhi, organized by film maker, Muzaffar Ali.

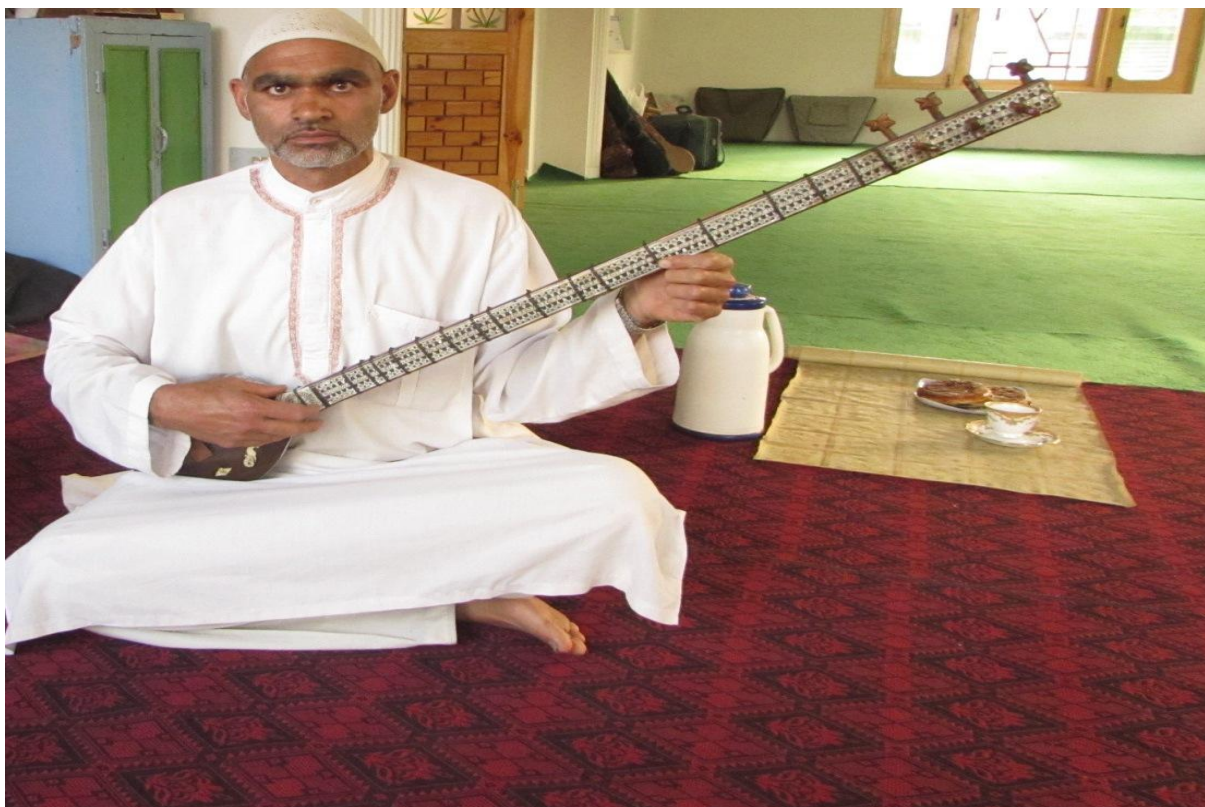
One of the important contributions of Yaqoob Sheikh, towards promoting and preserving Sufiana Mousiqi, is the establishment of “Qaleenbafat Memorial Sufiana Music Institute” at Bonishah Kralpora. The institute is running since 1996 and is dedicated to the guru and maternal grandfather of Yaqoob. Ustad Qaleenbaft. The institute has produced many students including two groups of girl musicians who have performed in both public and on radio. This unique achievement of Yaqoob has been appreciated by one and all. One

of the unique features of Yaqoob's training is to teach students with the notation of the Maqams. Yaqoob has also composed music for many TV serials and Tele-films. He is striving hard for the promotion, propagation and preservation of the dying art of Sufiana Mousiqi. Some of the budding artists and disciples of Mohammad Yaqoob Sheikh include, Mohammad Yusuf Beg (Sehtar), Sheikh Tariq Ahmad, Hilal Ahmad Malik, Mohammad Altaf Wani, Shakeel Ahmad Lala, , Manzoor Ahmad Dar, Nazir Ahmad, Umar Farooq and few female artists like Shabeena Akhtar, Rashida Akhtar, Sami Jan, Shazia Shafi, Fouzia Rasool, Irfana Yousf and Rehana yousf. However the female artists are now not practicing Sufiana Mausiqi.

## PHOTOGRAPHS



Ustad Yaqoob Sheikh















**Ustad Qaleenbaft with Late. Mrs. Indira Gandhi**







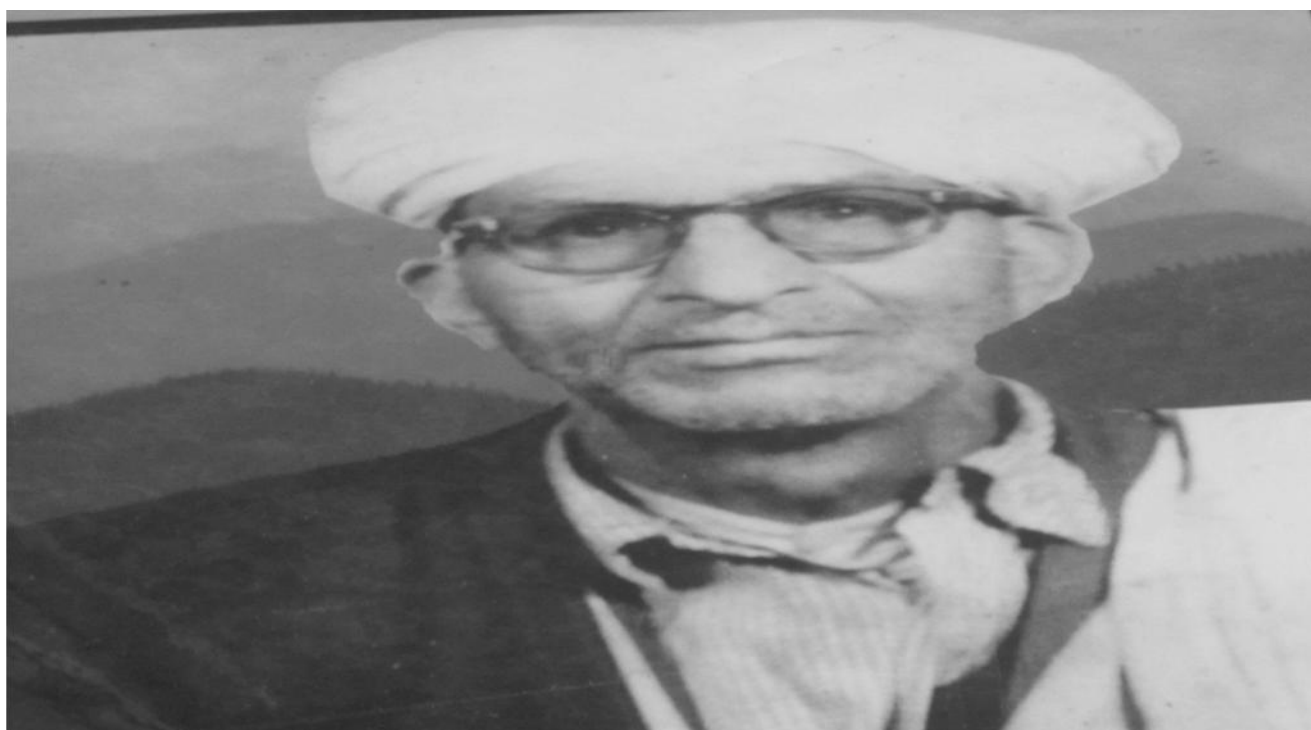


## **KAMAL BHAT GHARANA**

### **(Gharana of Bhands)**

One of the prominent gharanas of District Budgam Kashmir is Kamal Bhat gharana. This gharana is the gharana of Bhands and is named after top most musician of the gharana, Ustad Kamal Bhat. The gharana is presently represe

### **Ustad Kamal Bhat**



Ustad Kamal Joo Bhat son of Muhammad Jamal Bhat is regarded as the founder of Kamal Bhat Gharana. He was born in 1913 at Wathoora, Tchodur, district Budgam Kashmir. Since childhood he was fond of Sufiana Mausiqi. He inherited the art of Sufiana Mausiqi from his father Muhammad Kamal Bhat and his cousin Qadir Bhat. He learnt Sehtar from Ramzan Rather (popularly

known by the name, Ramzan Maagun) of Yetchgam, Kashmir. He began his career singing at private Mehfiles. Although he was illiterate but it is said that he had a huge memory and was at ease in translating Persian poetry. Although he knew the art of playing Sehtar, Tabla and Surnai, but he was actually known for playing Sehtar and used to lead the ensemble with Sehtar rather than Santoor which distinguishes him from rest of the maestros.

Ustad Kamal Bhat and his Family were professional musicians. He was very proficient in playing the following Talas- Nimdor, Mukhammas, Saaqel, Nim Saaqel, Hijaz, Dor-e-Khafif, Duroya, Yeka, Doyeka, Sehtal, Chapandaz, and Ravani and so on.

Kamal Bhat neither played Santoor nor Saaz-e-Kashmir, but he used to present “Lalle Vakhan”, the poetry of famous poetess Lalla Arifa and the (shurkh) spiritual poetry of Hazrat Sheikh Nooruddin Wali, wonderfully in a heart touching feel. He had taken the training in pronouncing correctly the Lalle Vakhan and Shurkh from Jia Lal Bhat of Lalgam Budgam and Haji Jallaludin of Charar Sheriff. If any day Kamal Bhat would not go to the house of Jia Lal Bhat then Jia Lal Bhat would himself visit the house of Kamal Bhat on his horse.

It is said that poet of Kashmir, Mehjoor used to participate in the Mehfiles of Kamal Bhat. He is especially known for playing difficult Maqam, Kanhara on



Sehtar that would make people ecstatic. Kamal Bhat was the first Artists to get a job in Radio Kashmir. He was employed by Radio Kashmir in 1948 on permanent basis and involved himself with programs organized and conducted by State Cultural Academy. Kamal Bhat was also proficient in dancing. After retirement from Radio, he was employed by Cultural Academy as a teacher in charge of Sufiana Mausiqi. He died in late 1980's at the age of 100 years. Notably, two of his students are Abdul Gani Bhat and Abdul Gani Namtahali.

### **Abdul Gani Namtahali**



One of the leading disciples of Ustad Kamal Bhat was Abdul Gani Namtahali son of Abdul Salaam Ganai. He was born in 1925 at Namtahal Tchodur, district Budgam, Kashmir.

Abdul Gani Namtahali is particularly known in the field of Kashmiri folk music but he was also a very well known figure in Sufiana Mausiqi. He took active part in the cultural movement that started after 1947. He used to play Sarangi as well as Rabab. He took training in Sufiana Mausiqi from Ustad Kamal Bhat. He also learnt Sufiana Mausiqi from Sheikh Abdul Aziz. He used to participate in the Mehfiles of Sheikh Abdul Aziz and used to accompany the later on Tabla.

Namtahali has sung a song in the style of Sufiana in film Habba Khatoon, in Maqam Bahar:

“Tu Azman, Wasl Azman, Eid Azman, Nav Bahar Azman

Dil Azman, Dosti Azman, Wafa Azman, Qarar Azman

Anan-i-Anjaman Va Aflaq Darqaf Kaam-e Dil Haasil

Moi Azman, Sagar Azman, Door Azman, Roorzar Azman”.

Namtahali was employed by Radio Kashmir in 1960. In addition to this he took active part in state politics and was elected to the Legislative Assembly from

1967 to 1972. He was such a fond of Sufiana Music, that whenever he used to visit Jammu, as a Member of Assembly, he used to take his Kashmiri Sehtar with him.

Till the recent past Namtahali would organize Sufiana Mehfil at the Shrine of Ahmad Sahab, every week. He left this world in December, 2001 and is at present represented by his two sons Ghulam Nabi Namtahali and Abdul Rashid Namtahali who are also practicing Sufiana artists.

## **Present Practitioners of Kamal Bhat Gharana**

### **Ustad Mohammad Ismail Bhat**



Ustad Mohammad Ismail Bhat is one of the leading masters of present day

Sufiana Mausiqi. He is the present Khalifa of kamal Bhat gharana. Mohammad Ismail Bhat has learnt the art of Sufiana Mausiqi from his guru Late Ustad Abdul Gani Namtahali. He has passed his hey days with those great Sufiana Mausiqi Ustads like Ustad Mohammad Abdullah Tibetbaqal, Ustad kamal Bhat, Ustad Sadaf Baht, Ustad Amir Bhat, and Ustad Sabir Bhat.

Ustad Mohammad Ismail Bhat is adept in playing all the instruments of Sufiana Mausiqi but his main instrument is Santoor. He has performed in and outside of the country in various festivals and programmes. Mohammad Ismail Bhat has been also selected as a guru by the North Zone Cultural Centre, Patiala. He is presently providing training to about 15 students under guru-shishya parampara. About five students of Ismail Bhat are working as music teachers in different institutions of Kashmir. Ustad Mohammad Ismail Bhat has got many awards in Sufiana Mausiqi. He is an approved B-High grade artist of the All India Radio.



## Ustad Mohammad Khaleel Bhat



Ustad Mohammad Khaleel Bhat aged 78 is one of the leading Sufiana musicians, belonging to the Kamal Bhat Gharana. He has learnt Sufiana Mausiqi from the legendary Ustad Late Mohammad Abdullah Tibet Baqal and also from Late Ustad Abdul Gani Namtahali. Mohammad Khaleel is adept in playing Santoor and Sehtar. Besides he is also a famous Qawwali singer of Kashmir. He is a B-high graded artist in Sufiana Mausiqi as well as Qawwali. Mohammad Khaleel Bhat is currently not performing Sufiana Mausiqi due to his old age and physical weakness.

## Ghulam Mohammad Bhat



Ghulam Mohammad Bhat (B-grade in Tabla and Sehtar) is the disciple of Mohammad Khaleel Bhat and Abdul Gani Namtahali He plays Sehtar and Tabla in the group of Ustad Mohammad Ismail Bhat.

### **Mohammad Sultan Bhat**



Mohammad Sultan Bhat son of Nadir Bhat and grandson of Ustad Kamal Bhat is a good Sehtar player, belonging to Kamal Bhat Gharana. He has learnt Sufiana Mausiqi from his father Nadir Bhat and his grandfather Kamal Bhat. He is adept in playing Sufiana Sehtar and is a graded artist in the same.

### **Ghulam Mohammad Bhat**

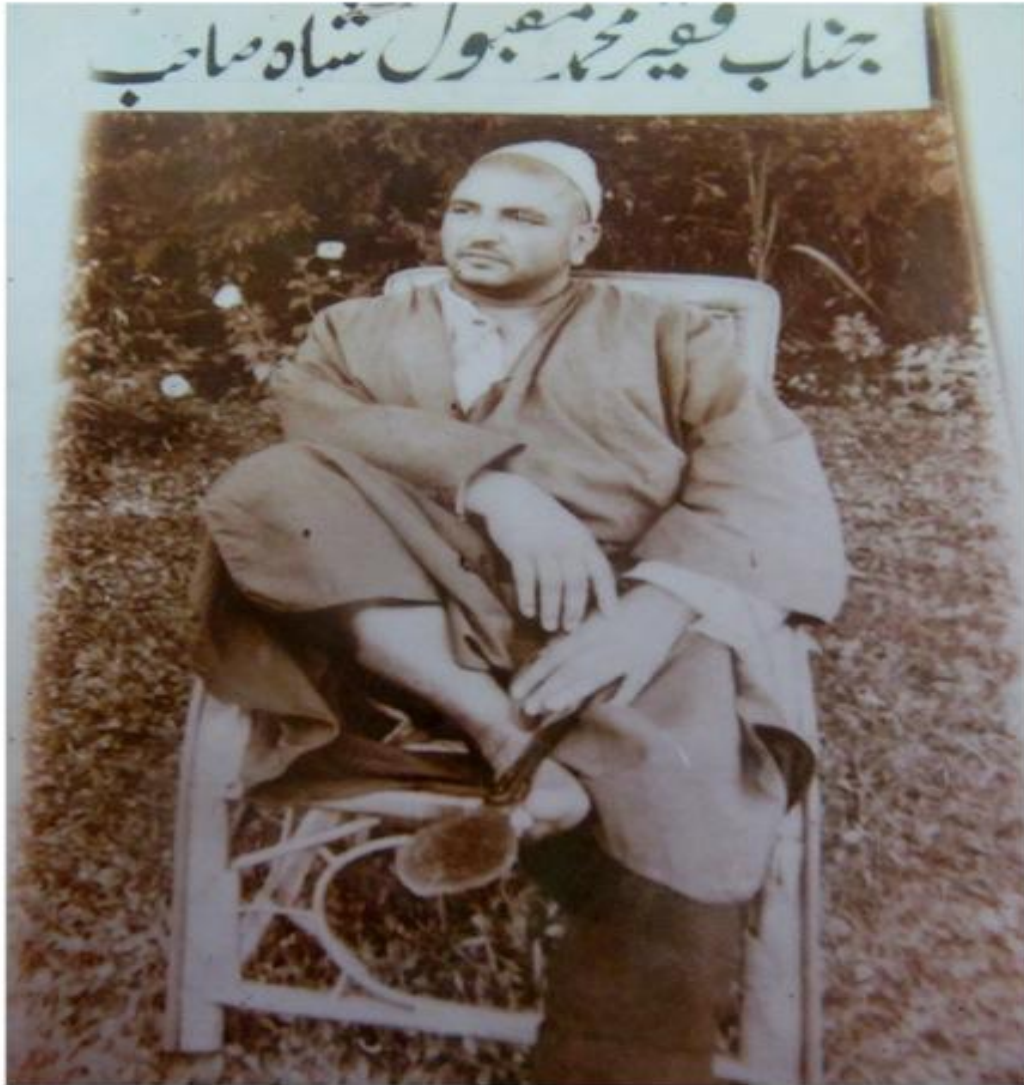
Ghulam Mohammad Bhat is B-grade in Saaz-e-Kashmir. He plays Saaz-e-Kashmir in the group of Ustad Mohd Ismail Bhat.

**List of Students learning under Ustad Mohammad Ismail Bhat.**

1. Zahoor Ahmad (Santoor, Saaz-e-Kashmir, Sehtar)
2. Mohammad Younis (B-grade tabla, Sehtar)
3. Noor Mohammad Bhat (Saaz-e-Kashmir, Santoor)
4. Zahoor Ahmad (Santoor, Tabla, Sehtar)
5. Hilal Ahmad (Santoor, Tabla, Sehtar)
6. Arafat (Tabla, Sehtar)
7. Aijaz (Sehtar, Tabla)
8. Bilal Ahmad (Saaz-e- Kashmir)
9. Tariq Ahmad (Santoor), {He is the son of Ustad Mohammad Ismail Bhat)
10. Muneer Ahmad



**RARE PHOTOGRAHS OF PAST & PRESENT SUFIANA MUSICIANS OF  
KAMAL BHAT GHARANA**



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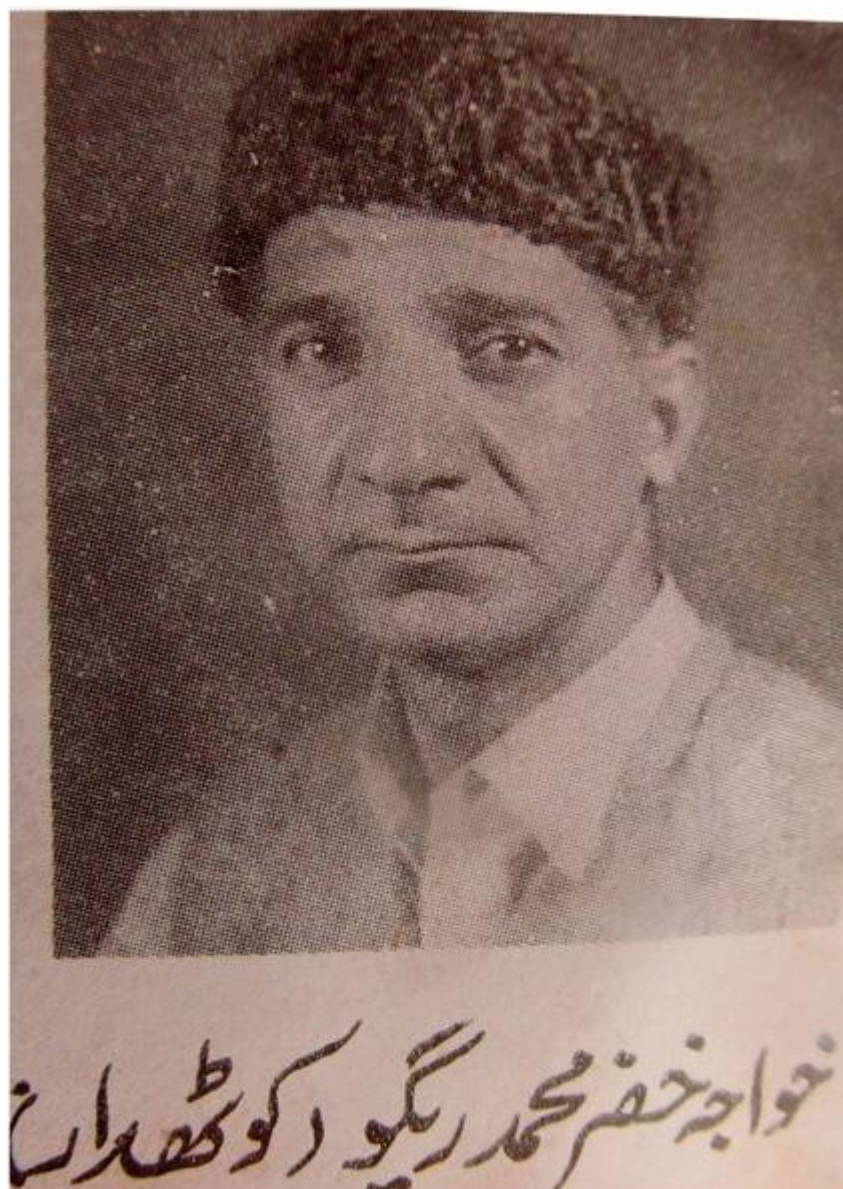
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A SUFI SAINT AND SUFIANA MAUSIQI PATRON

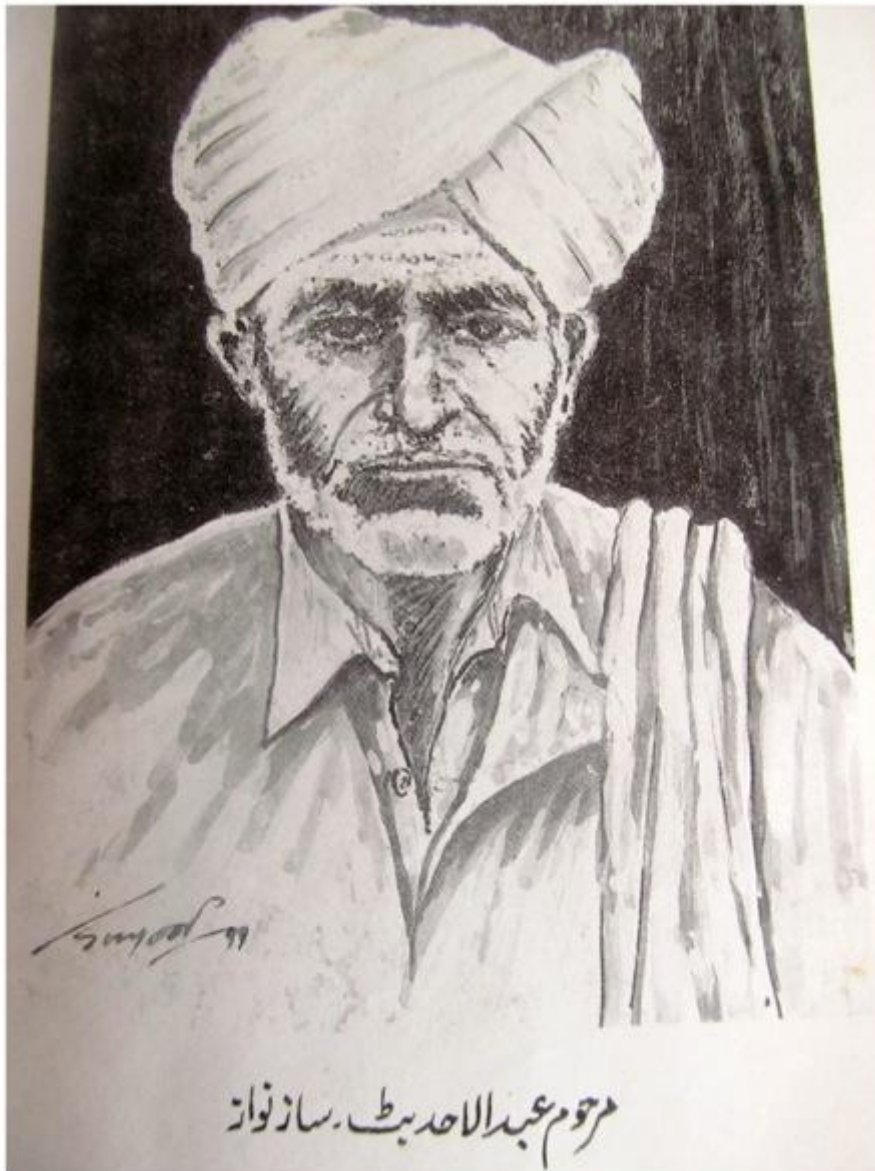


A SUFI SAINT

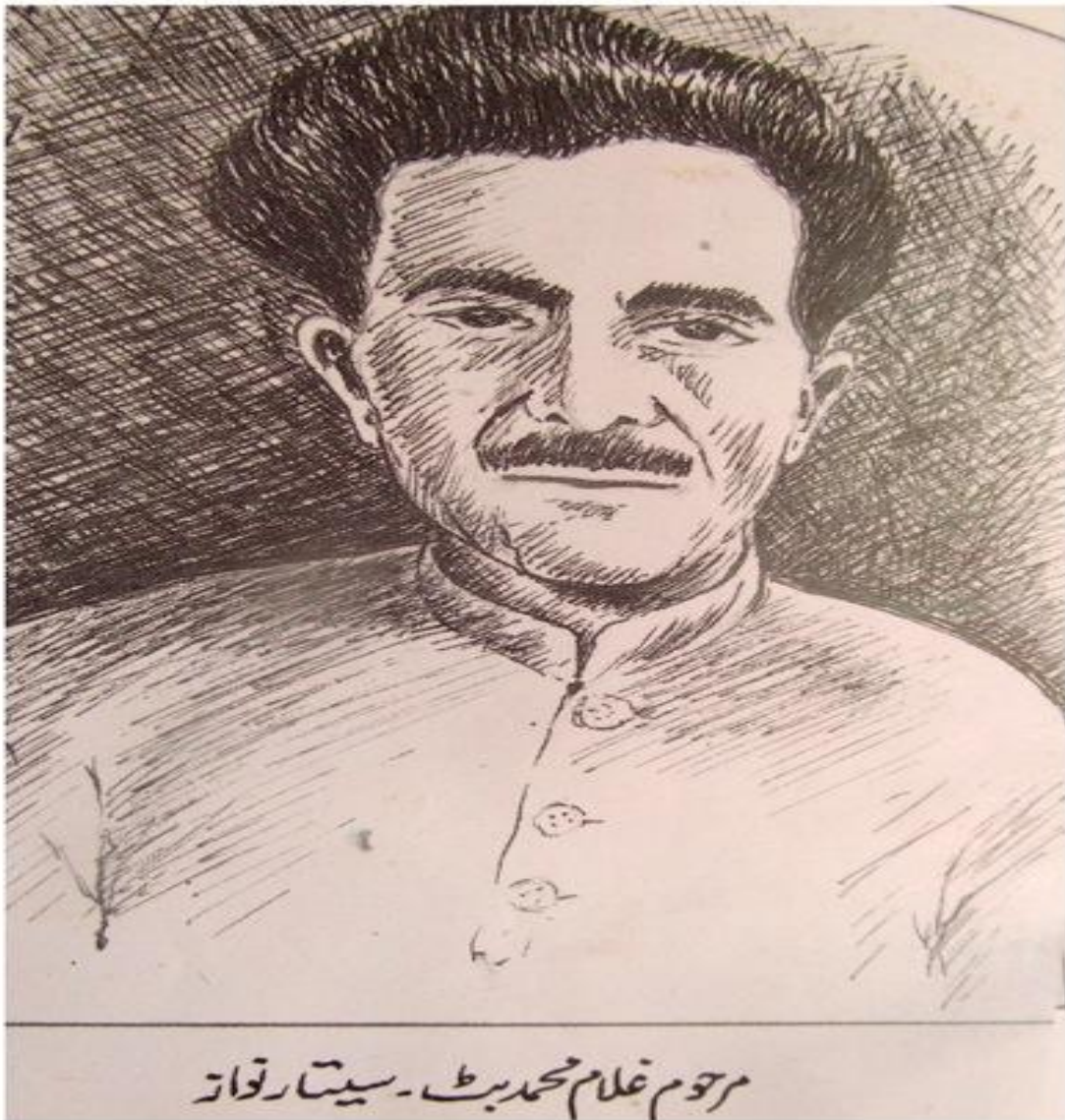


KHWAJA KHAZAR MOHAMMAD REGU KOTHDAR, A SUFIANA MAUSIQI PATRON

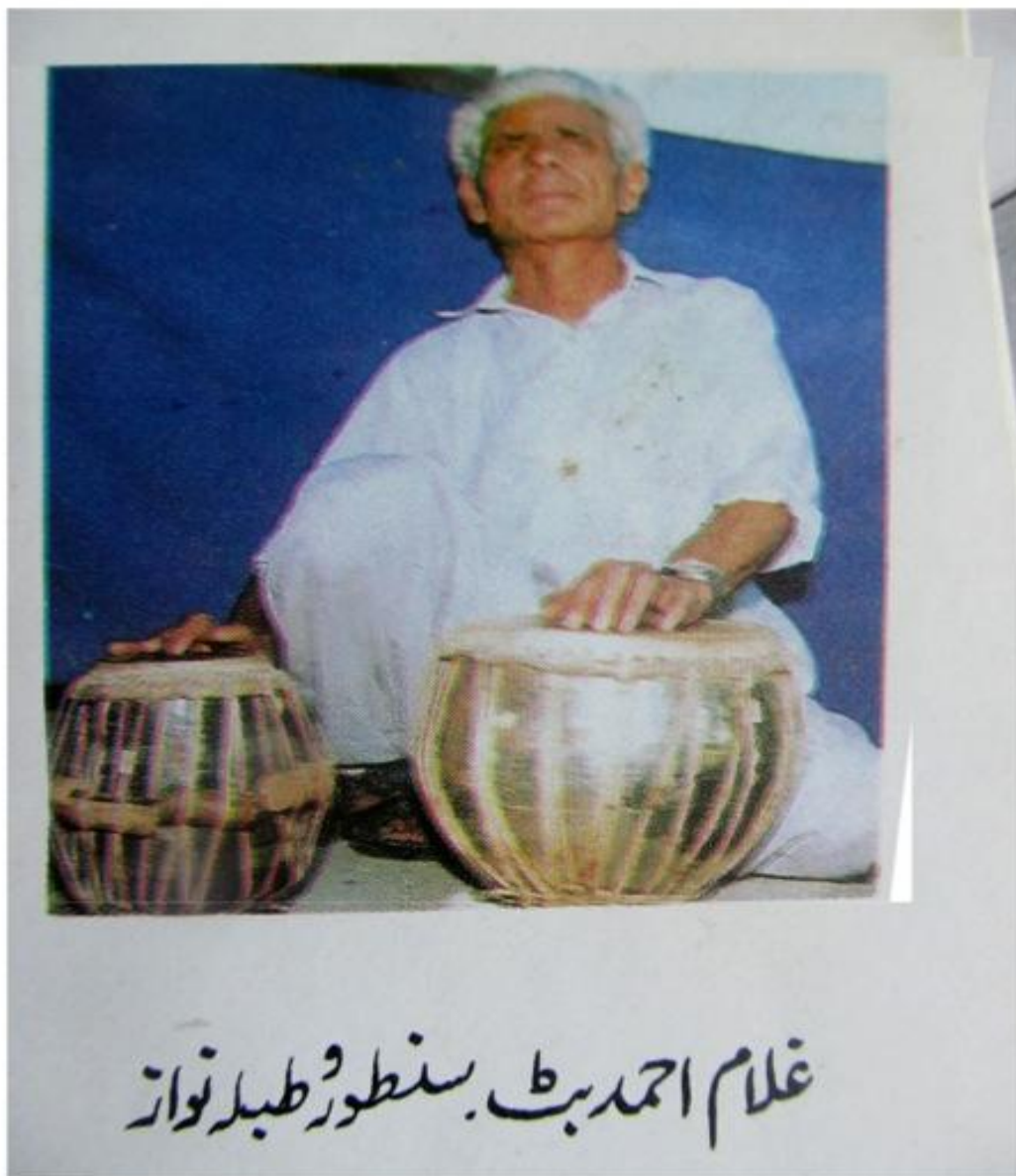




Late ABDUL AHAD BHAT SAAZNAWAZ, SUFIANA ARTIST

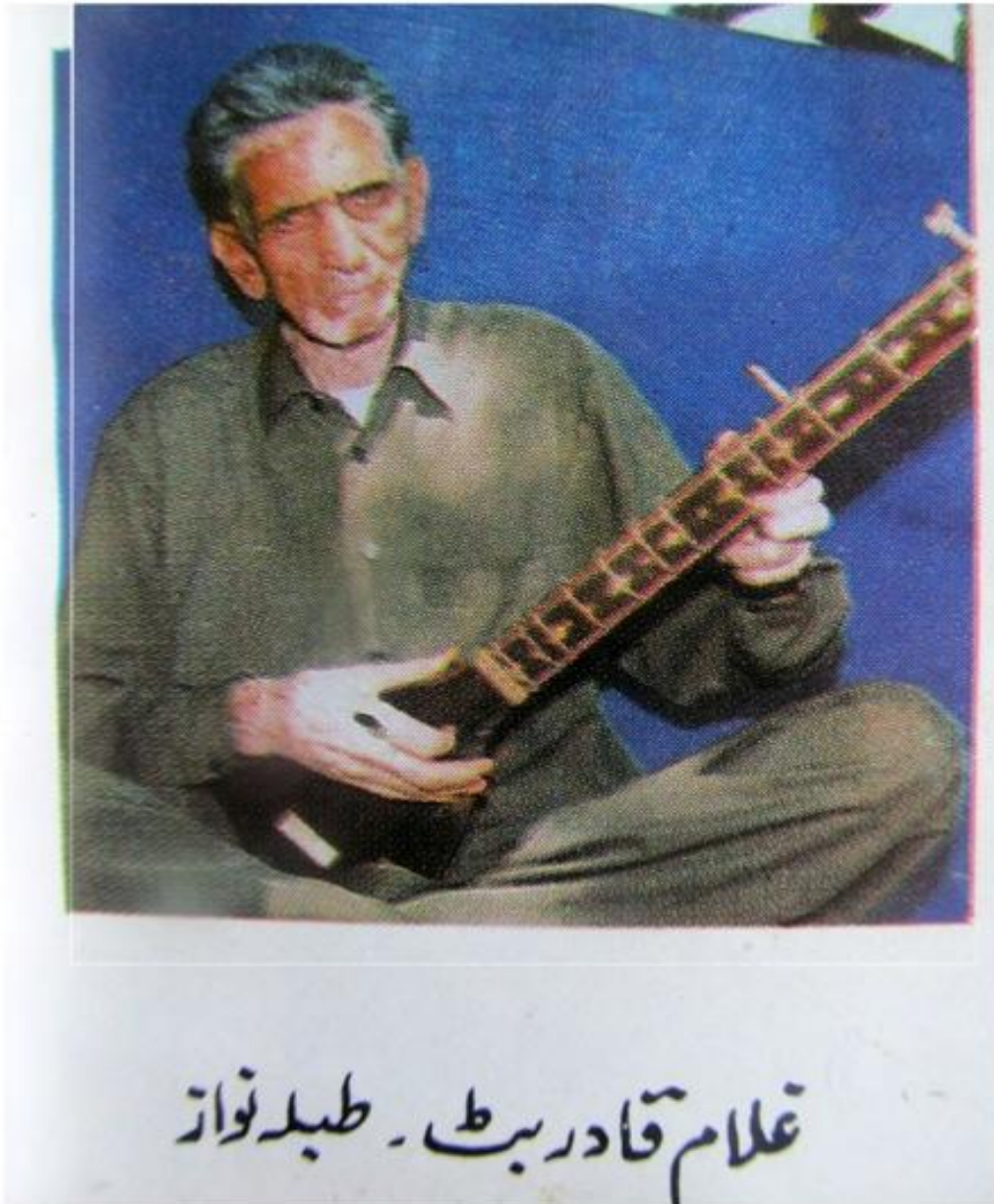


LATE GHULAM MOHAMMAD BHAT SAAZNAWAZ, SETAR PLAYER

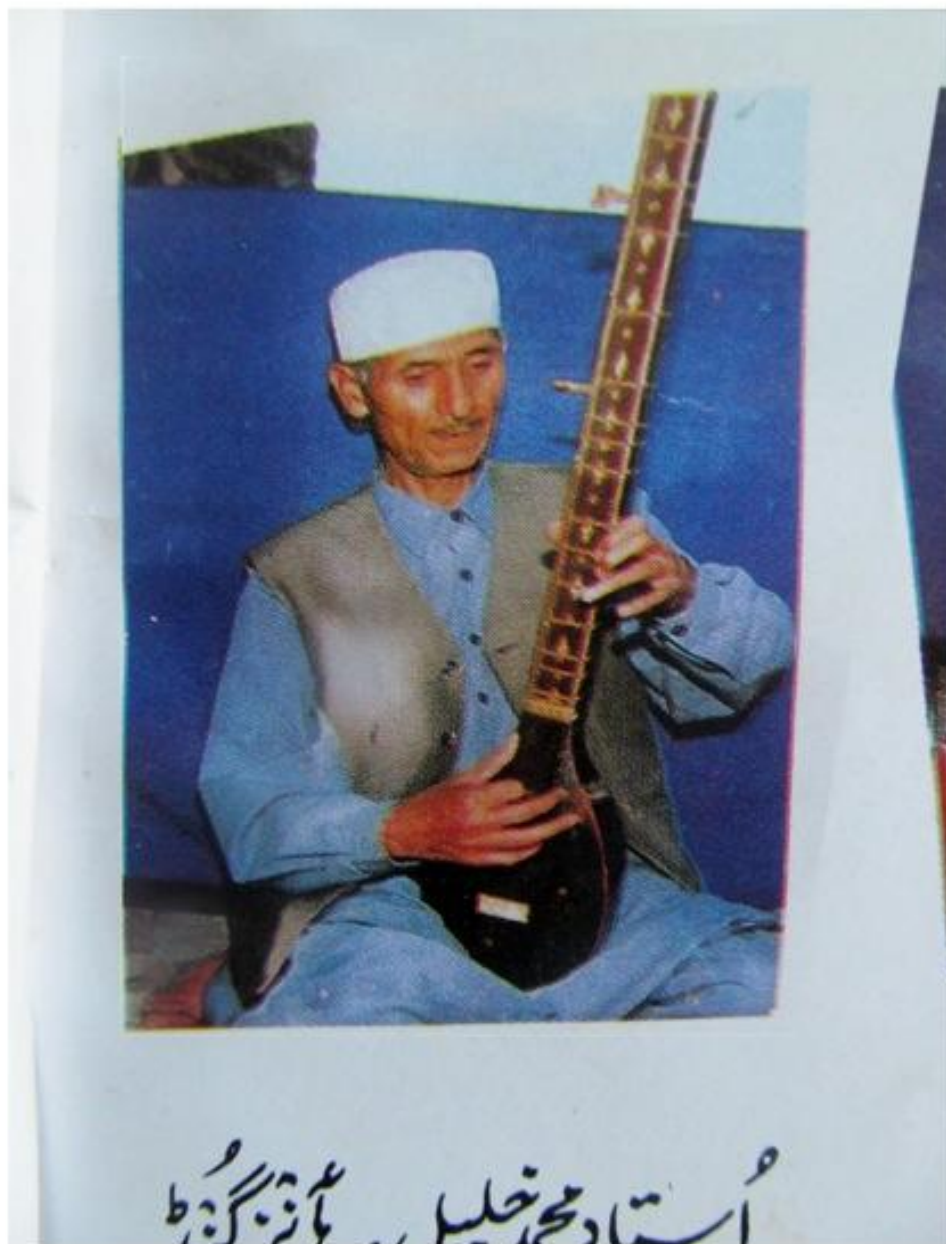


LATE GHULAM AHMAD BHAT, SANTOOR AND TABLA PLAYER

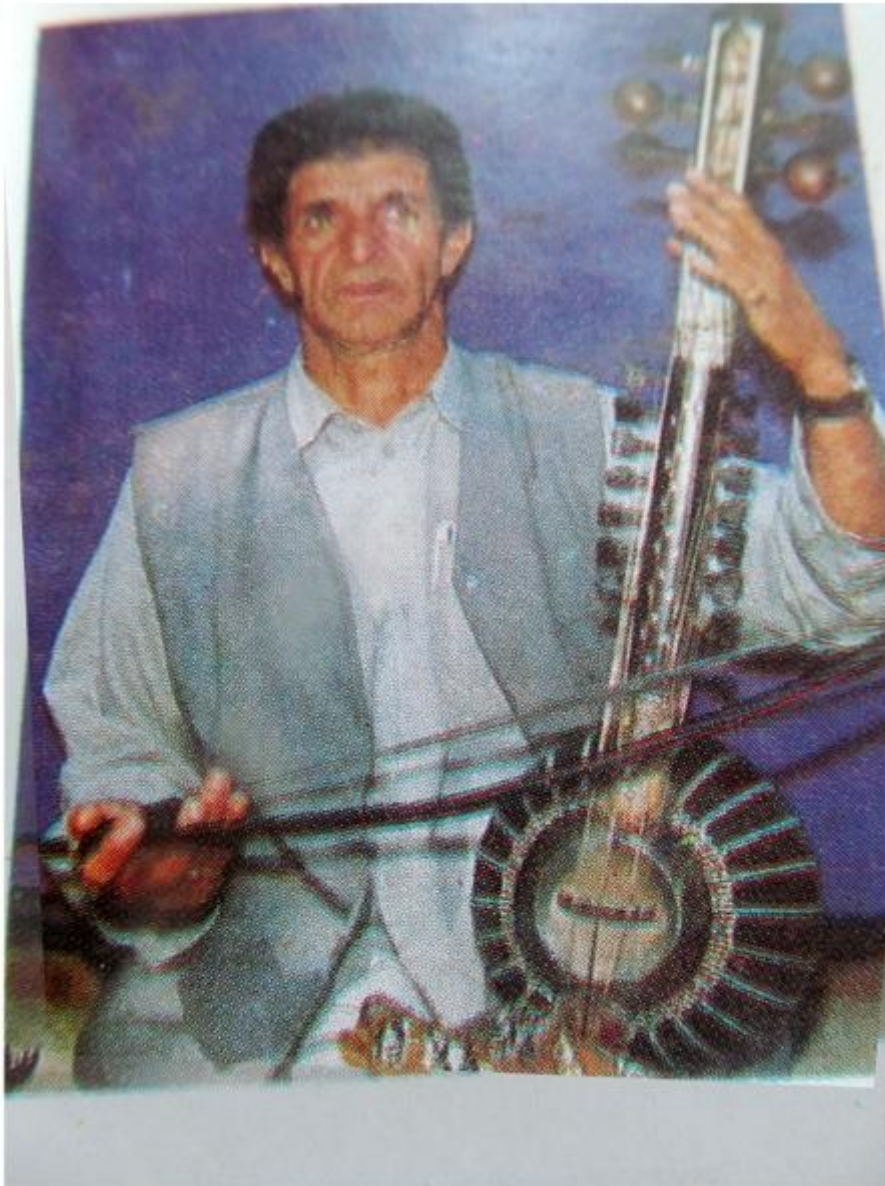




GHULAM QADIR BHAT, TABLA PLAYER

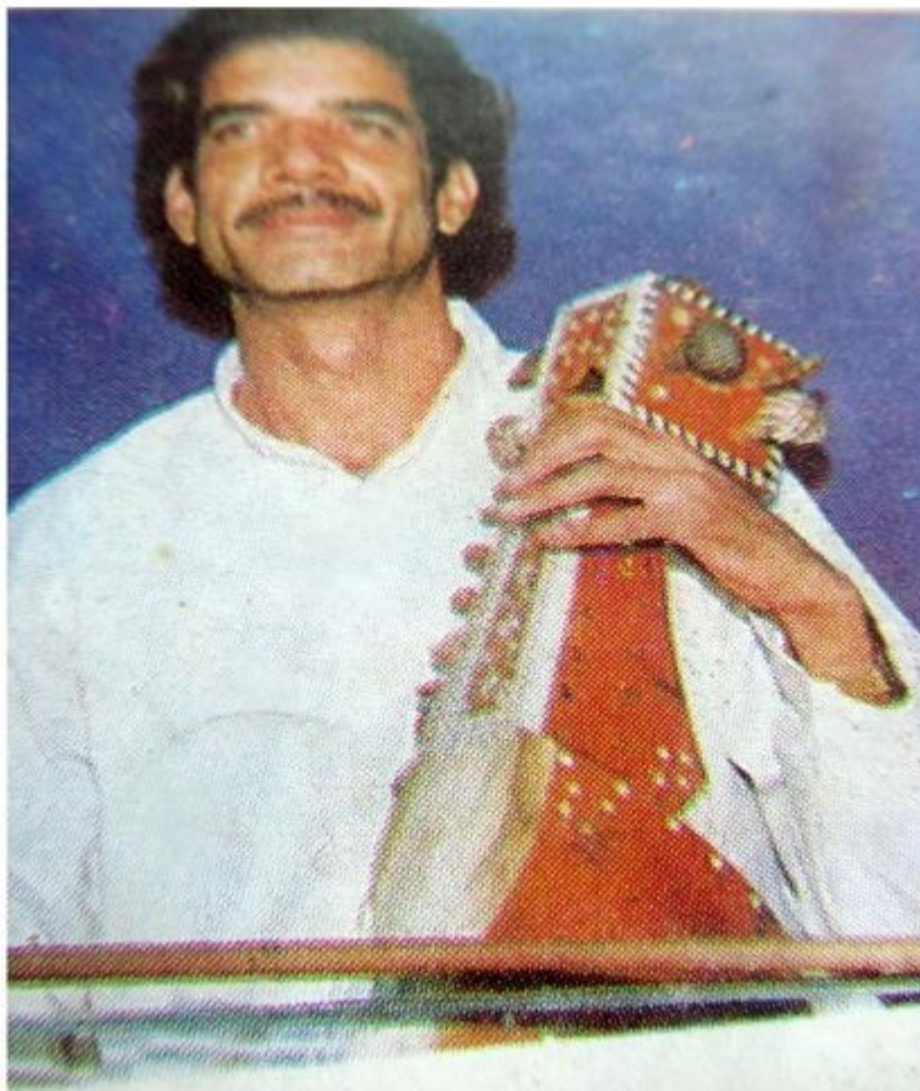


USTAD MOHAMMAD KHALEEL



A SAAZ-E-KASHMIR PLAYER





A SARANGI PLAYER







USTAD MOHAMMAD ISMAIL BHAT



CHILDREN PERFORMING SUFIANA MAUSIQI



USTAD MOHAMMAD ISMAIL BHAT AND PARTY



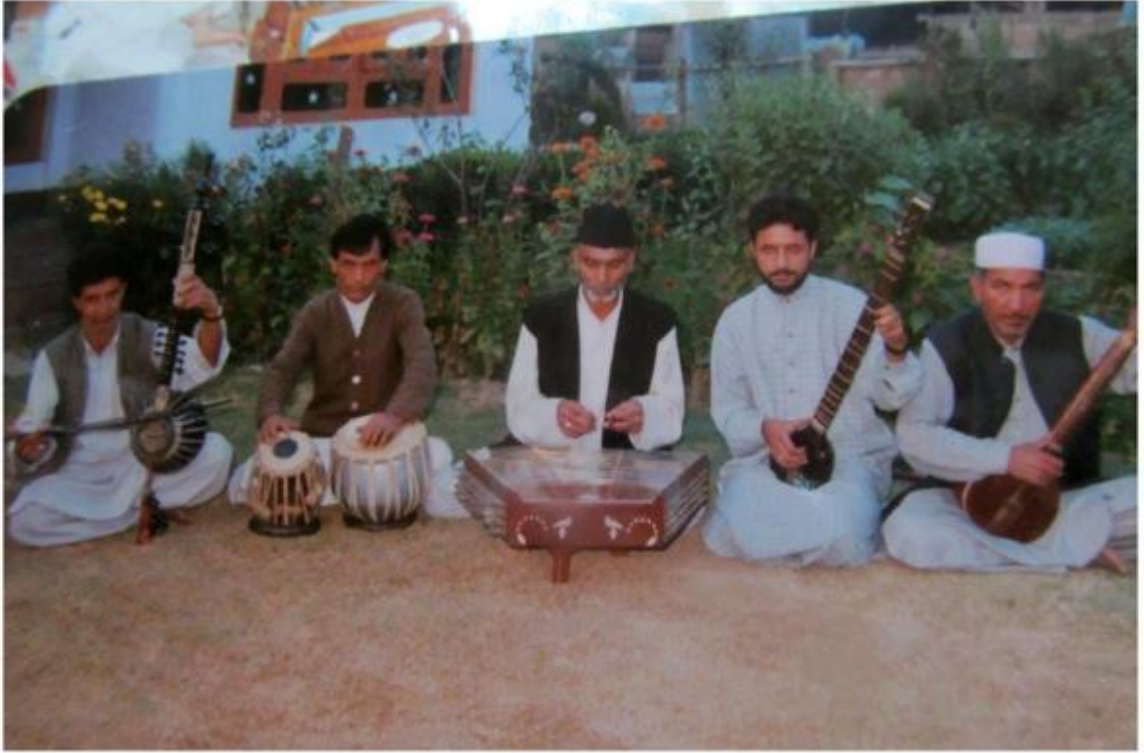
USTAD MOHAMMAD ISMAIL BHAT TEACHING TABLA





USTAD MOHAMMAD ISMAIL BHAT

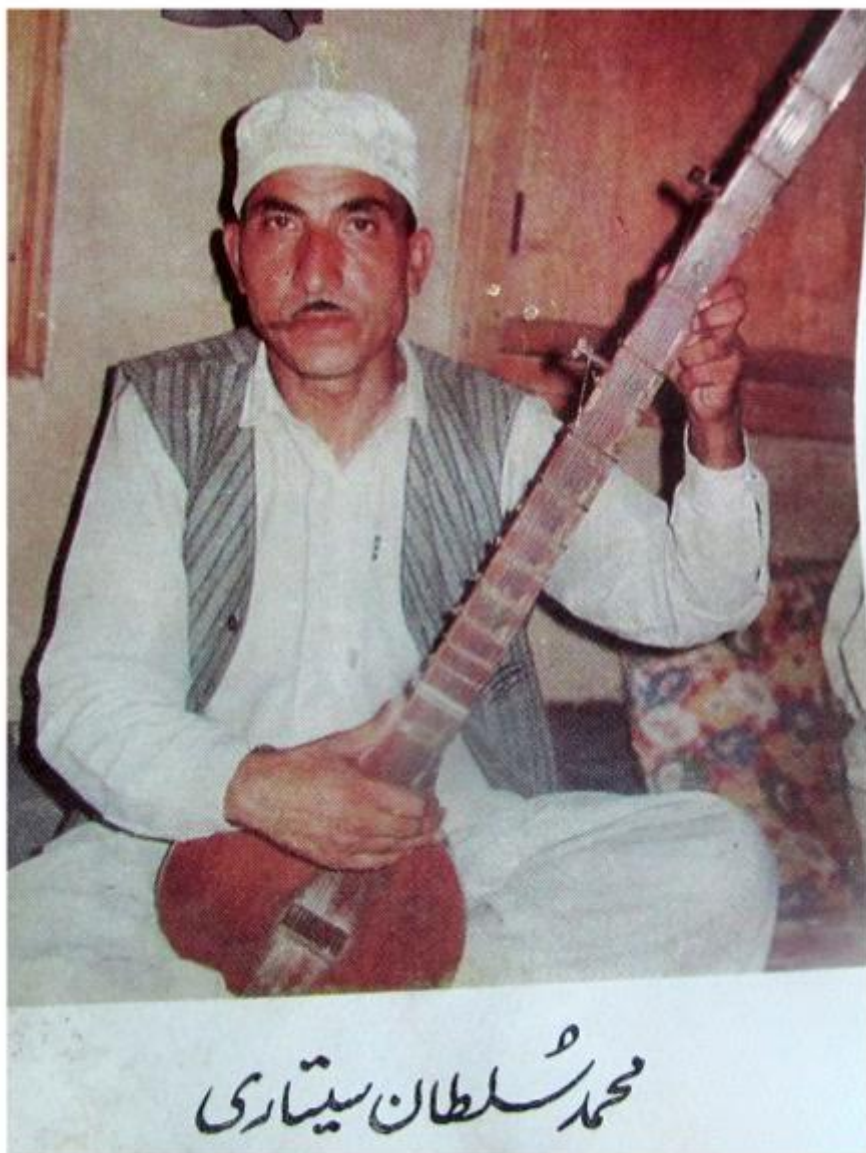




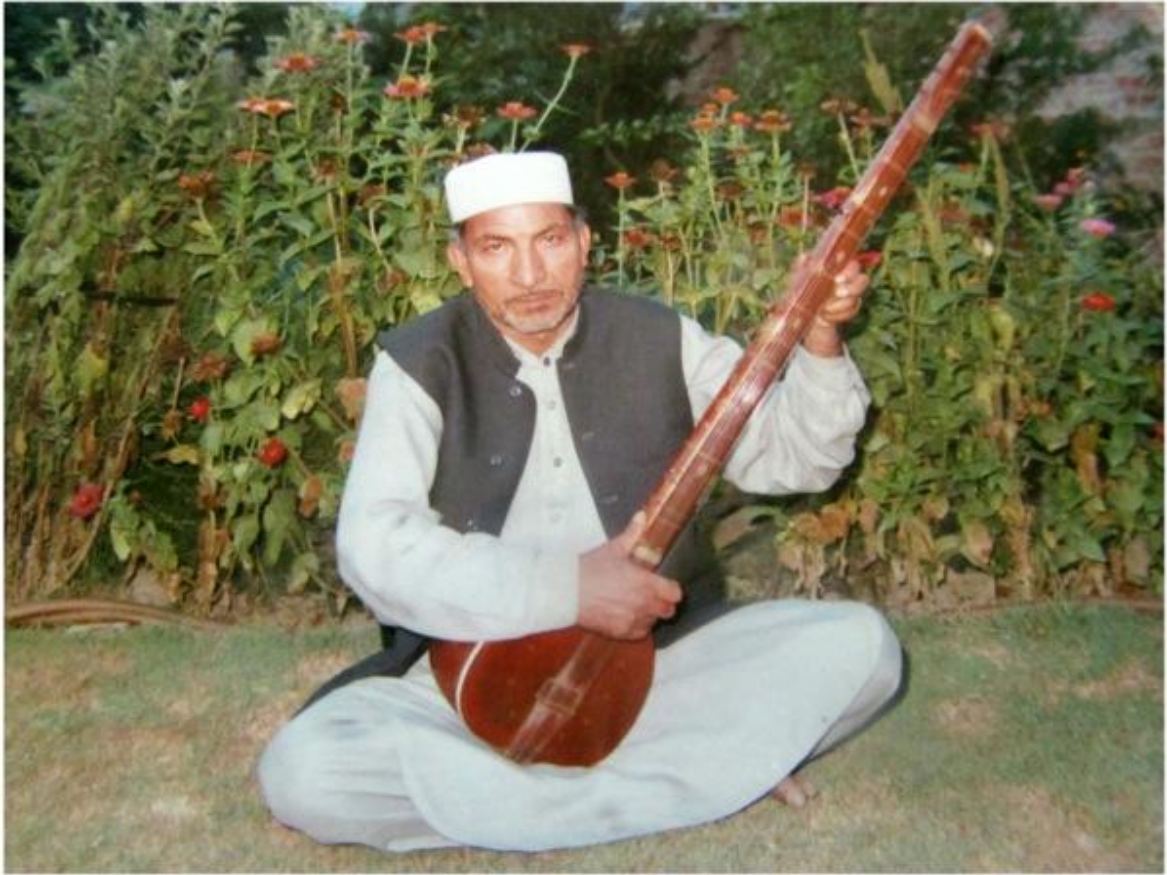
USTAD MOHAMMAD ISMAIL BHAT AND PARTY



SUFIANA MUSICIANS AFTER PERFORMANCE



MOHAMMAD SULTAN SETARI



MOHAMMAD SULTAN SETARI





A SUFIANA MEHFIL



USTAD MOHAMMAD ISMAIL BHAT PERFORMING WITH CHILDREN



USTAD MOHAMMAD ISMAIL BHAT IN A MEHFIL





USTAD MOHAMMAD ISMAIL BHAT AND PARTY



USTAD MOHAMMAD ISMAIL BHAT AND PARTY



USTAD MOHAMMAD ISMAIL BHAT AFTER PERFORMANCE





A YOUNG SAAZ-E-KASHMIR PLAYER



FORMER PRIME MINISTER, ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE WITH SUFIANA ARTISTS

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SUFIANA MAUSIQI MEHFIL





YOUNG SUFIANA ARTISTS





SUFIANA MEHFIL



MOHAMMAD SULTAN SETARI AND GHULAM MOHAMMAD BHAT