



Music, the Performing Art: Its Excellence, Appreciation and Cultural Progression

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Abstract

The universality of music is beyond suspicion. Music acts as a stimulus too, helps to strengthen impetus and willpower. There are perhaps a very few in this world who keep themselves away from it. Music has been a prevailing Cultural Tradition in the society. This is our ardent duty and responsibility to preserve prevalent musical forms by exploring our Cultural resources.

Music should not be treated as a piece of amusement; on the contrary it could be a means to recognise our Cultural Heritage. Associated literature, musical patterns and so many of different musical forms helps a Performer to render his performance properly. Exploration to this matter also develops the power of Cultural assessment and an attempt to sustain age-old Cultural Tradition to the right direction. The purpose of this paper is to retrieve the potency of the Cultural Tradition through Performing Art into common practices.

Keywords: *Cultural Tradition; Cultural resources; Literature; Music; Performing Art; Society*

Introduction:

Music possesses a universal appeal. Its central force attracts human mind by and large. It may cause to a means of one's tension relaxation. People celebrate and rejuvenate their memories through the piece of Music. Many people in this world spend their lonely life and Music reflects as an oasis in the desert to them. Some people learn Music, so practise and try to know pre-conditions as well as coherent unknown factors to explore for further developments. Those who are in the process of Performance, Teaching and Research hardly support the act of Music only as a means of mere entertainment. Music, undoubtedly, is a Performing Art; although there is a vast history of evolution in this regards which to be a matter of intensive study for the perception of the Cultural trait and analysis of modern trends of a particular community or a nation.



Cultural Tradition:

India is a diverse land; people of different languages, food habits, clothes, religions, castes and creeds live here. Inhabitants of this land have their own belief and prejudice irrespective of different ethnic groups, tribes and other castes. Different groups of people with their different parallel concepts and views have woven the social structure. Despite many differences, some sort of subtle resemblances are also observed due to prolonged co-existence. As a result, many a customs, culture either might have lost their originality or superimposed into a greater human race (**Roy 1**). History supports of many outer nations attack to India and afterwards their settle down as well as acculturation on this land. References of the evolution of Dhrupad and Khyal, the two Hindustani Classical musical forms may be drawn in this support. The historians have acknowledged the blood mixing between the Dravids and the Aryans; and their cultural assimilation thereof. The formations of Shaabari, Goand or Goandkiri etc. define such ancient Ragas in Indian classical music, which shows the effect of cultural assimilation between them (**Mitra 6, 31**). Many folk and tribal tunes (structures of musical notes) have been taken into account as Raga elements. The Ragas Tripuravati and TripiSarang may be referred to this connection, which were formed with certain modification of the tunes, practised among the Kokbarak speaking Tribes of Eastern hilly Tripura (**DebBarman 39-41**).

Cultural Resources:

There are broadly two distinction in Indian musicological context which may be drawn into Folk and Classical. Mass people easily relate with the folk songs, folk dance, folk tales, and folklores because of their close associations in life. They are also accustomed to the practices of rituals, deeply associated with the folk cultures. This culture is supposed to be preserved through generation after generation maintaining oral tradition. The age-old tradition of folk music had been in use on the basis of village culture since from the Vedic period and even before; the trail of the same perhaps still in practice to some extent but sometimes seems to be dormant through its several original forms.

Folk songs express the feelings and the story of common people through simple regional words and easy melodic structure of musical notes. Simple rhythmic patterns are commonly used to be played. Definite drummed and stringed instruments are also used for certain folk music of a particular region. Specific articulation of sound and tonal usage enable to produce distinct folk musical style.



Raga (Indian melody) is an exclusive feature in Indian Classical music and very much relevant as per the evolution of Indian music is concerned. There is a very deep connection between Folk music and Classical music. Dhrupad, the Hindustani Classical musical form which is still prevalent, has been defined as a folk musical form in Abul Fazal's 'Ain-E-Aakbari' and even Khyal, another Hindustani Classical musical form today was developed out of the folk music of Khairabad district which was modified as well as elevated to Court music by Hussain Shah Sharki. The same may be said regarding Tappa and Thumri, the two popular Semi-Classical musical forms today. Tappa was a folk musical form, exercised by the Camel-riders of Punjab. And the style of Lucknow Thumri evolved from the folk musical form of Ayodhya after modification. The ancient Indian Ragas such as Kanada, Bongali, Jhinjhoti, Maalavi, Gujari, Gaud etc. being the popular provincial tunes and some of which are obsolete today, were developed out of the folk tunes. So, there were sufficient elements of folk music during the period from 12th Century A.D. to 16th Century A.D. which may be easily proved (**Roy 97-98**).

Classical music refers to organised and high-class musical exposition through proper articulation of sounds with definite embellishments of musical notes and rhythm. Raga is the compound of the powerful ingredients of Classical music which expresses specific moods. Raga is the base of Indian music and it plays an indispensable role in the performance of Classical music. The journey of formation and development of Indian classical music is vast as well as intricate. Detailed information about the evolution of this music is found since from the age of the Vedas. The origin of the Swaras (musical notes) and their gradual development irrespective of Vedic (Marga or Classical) and Laukik (Deshi or regional) Swaras occurred during this time. The practice of Vedic music became obsolete in the Classical period that begins at about 600—500 B.C. (**Prajnanananda 44**). An extensive research on the development of Indian music as well as Ragas and their classifications was initiated from this time. The Gandharvas are considered to have established Gaandharva or Marga Sangeet (music). In fact, the Gandharvas took the leading role to accomplish successful progression of Indian classical music.

Before the beginning of the Christian era, music was divided into Marga and Deshi (**Prajnanananda 44**). Marga or Gaandharva Sangeet was bounded with certain rules of Raga (melody), Taal (beats), Chhanda (rhythm), Dhatu (tune), Matu (lyric), Geeti (articulation) and remained unchanged irrespective of regions. On the contrary, Deshi



Sangeet expressed its regional trait and was devoid of excessiveness of musical elements like Gaandharva Sangeet. Deshi Sangeet, having modified with some musical elements of Gaandharva Sangeet, appeared as Abhijaat Deshi Sangeet and was named as Prakirna in Sanskrit or Pakinnak in native language. The Prakirna songs were further modified and the new form was called Biprakirna. Both Prakirna and Biprakirna, the two forms of Abhijaat Deshi Sangeet, were in vogue till the Christian era (**Goswami Preface: 10**).

Gaandharva Sangeet became obsolete just after the Christian era. Biprakirna songs were modified again and in course of time Prabandha Sangeet evolved. Prabandha Sangeet was basically of three types; namely Suda, Alikrama and Biprakirna. With the advancement and demand of time, many a classical musical styles were developed in different forms and shapes out of different Prabandhas irrespective of North India and South India.

Critical Analysis:

In ancient musicological treatises the reference of Deshi (regional) tunes and Ragas were nothing but the developed form of folk tunes or music (**Roy 2**). The same may be expressed about different Prabandhas which has already been mentioned. There are some essential applications in classical music such as Meend (special gliding approach from one note to the other by skipping one or more notes), Shruti (micro-tone), Gamak (shaking character of notes) etc. through which Ragas may properly be expressed. Classical music is nothing but the sublime combination of Deshi and Marga Sangeet (specific rules to constitute high class music), though Marga Sangeet has become obsolete since from the beginning of the Christian era. Miyan Tansen of Gwalior created Ragas like Miyan Ki Malhar, Miyan Ki Todi, Darbari Kanada etc. which require huge scope of Meend. Tansen composed many Dhrupads where Gaurhaar or Gwalior Vaan was used. This Vaan or transformed Geeti was related to Gwalior. Actually, the specific utterance and articulation of music acknowledges the Deshitva or the nature of Deshi music. So, there should be no hindrance in accepting the truth that both the Folk and the Classical have been simultaneously prevailing Cultural Tradition which seems to be sometimes dormant or dominant in our society.

Ragas like Yaman, Darbari Kanada, Miyan Ki Todi, Miyan Ki Malhar, and many others have such everlasting effects that are still in use. There are more Ragas to mention which are somehow related to some particular places and might have been developed by certain professional maestros or the musicologists. For example, Bhupali, Jaunpuri, Multani, Bhupal Todi etc. may be considered. Similarly, Hussaini Kanada, Ramdasi Malhar, Surdasi



Malhar, Bilaskhani Todi etc. are such Ragas which have deep association with some music maestros as creators. But, all the Ragas do not possess equally charming and the inbuilt capacity that will live forever. So, many a Ragas have thus gone aside or lost from the conventional common practices. These Ragas are called Achhop Ragas or rare Ragas and are restricted to some specified people or certain Gharana maestros. Innumerable examples may be drawn in the formation of both Folk and Classical musical forms which have undoubtedly enriched the repository of Indian music. Some of which are still prevalent and rest have gone beyond our memories due to lack of proper exercise and preservation of the Art forms. And for this, appreciation of Fine Arts or any Art form is very important.

Performing Art is an Art or Art form, assessed or evaluated by the performance. There is little scope for imitation in any Art form. Summation of proper emotion, imagination and improvisation causes to successful rendition of an Art form. Communication and exact presentation are also deeply associated with Performing Art which comes out of long term training, depth of knowledge, sense of art and aesthetics. These qualities keep Performing Art alive for a long time as a Cultural tradition to the proper direction.

Art is the appetite of mind. Thirst for art chases a human being to search for the origin of art itself. He wants to know the concept and elements of art and starts finding the truth in it. Gradually he realises art and appreciates it. And he relates his own ideas with a Creator's Creation ---- thus inseparable relationship between Creator and Appreciator is formed at the end. Creation reaches to both the Creator and the Appreciator as a feeling of Ecstasy (**Bhattacharya 2**). In materialistic world, people take food to survive. They behave like other creatures, react. But in the world of Art, people seek the world through the eyes of imagination. They contemplate Beauty; try to find out proper emotion out of the Contents. All these nourish their minds. Actually, the expression of any ideal Art refers to the proper synchronisation of Form and Content, aesthetically presented with proper imagination and feeling.

This definition of Art is applicable to Fine-Arts also. Talent and Creativity are deeply involved in this case where a Creator of an Art applies in the Creation. This is also true that a Creator needs to maintain the continuity of the Tradition with efficiency which could be acquired through long term learning. Literature, Music etc. are included into Fine-Arts as there is immense scope for Creativity (**Bhattacharya 25-26**). Fine Arts and Crafts are uttered



at a time. Though there is a difference between these. Crafts follow Traditional trends with aptitudes. The question of Talent and Creativity is secondary in this case (**Bhattacharya 25**).

In Literature, we come across various interesting characters, plenty of events as well. We relate them with our materialistic world. The Creator must have collected those ideas from real life. But what else added to the Creation is Creator's wonderful touch of imagination, depth of feeling, unique style of expression. Sublime combination of reality and innovation elevates the piece of writing to Literature. In Music, Swara (musical notes), Taal (number of beats) and Pada (lyric) are the main components. A song consists of lyric and tune. Lyric is created with the meaningful words and the sense of literature is essential for the construction of lyric. Tune is made with the help of musical notes. The idea of Chhanda (rhythm) comes from the derivatives of Taal. A song may properly be rendered with the appropriate use of the portions of music. In Raga Alaap (expansion of Raga with proper use of musical notes) or Instrument playing in Classical music, Phrases (combination of certain notes, applicable in the particular Raga) are used in place of lyric as a companion of tune and rhythm. In both the presentation of Raga or a Song, music is properly communicated through the requisite qualities of a Performer. Our Culture does not allow us to imitate. The law of Art also supports this. Recollection of great ideas is recommended, not recapitulation. Great ideas are required to get inspired, which to be inculcated as well as delivered through innovative styles. This will lead the Human race towards completeness (**Tagore 258-259**).

Conclusion:

To appreciate Folk music or Classical music, whatever musical form it may be, one needs to have prior experience in this case. Creator and Appreciator (Performer and Listener) both play equally important role because everybody has to go through proper steps for the fulfilment of any art form. Continuous habit of listening and nurturing any particular musical form could be useful for a learner to command over the subject matter. This process will further arouse one's inquisitiveness and enable a person to assess the matter properly. People learn to identify themselves through Literature and Music exploration. And from this point of view there is a keen relation between Fine Arts, Culture and Education. The core of Education and Culture is to know oneself, resources what a person possesses, inherits from his ancestors and the motherland. It means one should go on research into the deep of the subject matter. No development will become possible without the knowledge of this origin. Deep contemplation and continuous rectification will lead us towards perfection. This will



inspire us to go through the right path. Also this practice will enable us to arouse inner strength, to acclaim our resources, to be connected with the outer world to action for the fulfilment (**Tagore 224-228**). Proper articulations of sound with definite embellishments mesmerises the listeners. This practice has been continuing from the past to the present through various musical forms with several ideologies. Proper synchronisation between theory and practice will lead us towards successfulness. Only what is needed is to go along with our Cultural resources.

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