

Music in Education System: A story of transformation from performing phenomenon to a subject of academic discipline

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ABSTRACT

In spite of so many changes in education system and approach we see only quantitative growth, qualitative improvement in human behavior is still out of reach. Professional ability along with moral uprightness should be acquired through education. Education is really meaningless if material progress is not accompanied by moral progress. Music as a subject of academic discipline can do a lot. Music having ameliorative force has a multidimensional effect and remarkable role on culture, art and human life. An academic subject in nature involves a lot of reading, studying etc. rather than it's practical or technical skill. But since music is a performing phenomenon or pure fine art subject it primarily emerged to create beauty and pleasure. It has aesthetic value, intellectual value and thematic value. Not only that it has ethnic and social impact on human being. Due to transformation of performing phenomenon into a subject of academic discipline and to make the subject completely educative it requires adequate theorization, analysis, modification and expository works. As an educator, it is our duty to organize the musical knowledge and skill into element of academic discipline for education purpose. For this music is to be appreciated, reviewed reassessed, critically estimated rather rebuilt and standardised in the perspective of wide range of education without diluting the standard.

Keywords: *ameliorative, phenomenon, aesthetic, intellectual, thematic, up-to-dateness, all-inclusive, exploration, upheavals, fundamental, multidisciplinary, structure, phrases, experiential, effective, dynamic, vibrant, instill, facets, aspects, paradigm.*

Present scenario of Education System

Role of education in enlightening human society or to the development of human resource is endless. That's why there is no limitation of thoughts to make the education system full-prof, flawless, perfect and effective. Importance and stress are given time to time towards many

principles, plans, experiments, measures etc for modernization of Education Policy and System. But inspite of so many changes in Education System and Approach meaningful education remains unattained, ideal education system remains intangible, rather out of reach till today. We see only quantitative growth, not such qualitative improvement in human behavior. Even, there is dearth of rational outlook and humanistic approach to life. Technological and scientific advancement has provided us huge speed and physical comforts in life but it has destroyed our emotional life along with the moral values of life. We have to face dramatic changes at the level of thought culture, action and attitude. Students have developed sense of alienation as they are found lacking natural curiosity and impulses. Immorality, brutality, political narrowness and dishonesty as well as uneven competitiveness in every sphere has been increasing day by day in a cumulative rate. In this perspective, education system seems to be frustrating, lifeless, joyless, mechanical & artificial tending towards extreme identity crisis of culture, sense of values—an overall crisis.

Indispensableness of Music in academic field

Such a 'crisis of civilization' was well apprehended by Rabindranath Tagore many a long past. As a result, he rightly presumed – 'We boast of the up-to-dateness of our education; we forget that the mission of all education is to lead us beyond present date'.¹ He realized that education is meaningless if material progress is not accompanied by moral progress. He always pursued for all- inclusive education i.e. intellectual, physical, mental, cultural development in all respect through education. According to Rabindranath, professional ability as well as moral uprightness should be acquired by education. In this context, he had suggested that mind should be changed and mind should be trained firstly and fore mostly to get rid of tension, conflicts of any situation; life should be given priority, not the life-style. As we know, education is not confined to acquisition of knowledge only, Rather, it is extended towards utilization of the same for the betterment of each and every individual of the society i.e. social and economic growth of the society as a whole. Education gives the strength to promote the process of self-activity by constructing and reconstructing the experiences of everyday life attaining liberal thoughts and spirit to work. That's why education should never be job oriented only i.e. restricted or limited to it's market value, product value, utility value only, but it is also to be oriented to inculcate humanistic values i.e. the development of mind, emotions etc. Rabindranath had a lot of experience of monotonous, unpleasant education system since his boyhood. It has led him to

think and create inspiring atmosphere for education by providing full scope for ‘intellectual exploration and creativity’ to stimulate mind and to increase gradual interest of the learners in all things. For this, he introduced various congenial subjects like play-acting, music, craftworks etc. in addition to subject like literature, science, philosophy in class teaching. He never thought of making educational institution into mechanical organization or factories for selling and distributing educational degrees or diplomas. Instead of supplying or distributing information how to live a life gracefully is actually the purpose of education to Rabindranath. He always emphasized on providing freedom—freedom of heart, freedom of will, freedom of mind, freedom in every respect. He believed that ‘education should be in full touch with our complete life, economical, intellectual aesthetic, social and spiritual’. ² It is also observed that so far natural education is concerned there is no unanimity regarding priority and perspective of different subjects. Again it is true that education is the process or system through which individuals get the scope to take their role in the society by improving rudimentary skill, power of knowledge, interpretation of the universe and the human being ultimately. In coping up with the situation, great educator, Rabindranath gave Fine Arts subjects specially Music principal place or top priority in the program of teaching –learning process to enhance mental ability along with development of intellectual interests in continuation of the study of science technology commerce etc. This collaboration actually helps us to broaden our outlook, increase our intellectual power, enlighten our mind and heart, sharpen our moral responsibilities and growth and development of the society as a whole. As it is experienced, we know, Fine arts like Music has the highest communicative value by bringing all people together. It stimulates imagination and quickens our emotion. It has the ability to create or enhance our mood or atmosphere. Not only that if we refer opinion of George Eliot we see, ‘Art is mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellow men beyond the bounds of personal lot’. It is similarly true in case of music also. Music deals with creative urges and impulses. Again, music having ameliorative force has a multidimensional effect and remarkable role on culture, art and human life. Let us have a reference from Rabindranath Tagore in this discourse to be familiar with the potentiality of music -

‘Music is the purest form of art, and therefore the most direct expression of beauty, with a form and spirit which is one and simple, and least encumbered with anything extraneous. We seem to feel that the manifestation of the infinite in the finite forms of creation is music itself,

silent and visibleIn music the heart reveals itself immediately; it suffers not from any barrier of alien material.

Therefore, though music has to wait for its completeness like any other art, yet at every step it gives out the beauty of the whole. As the material of expression even words are barriers, for their meaning has to be construed by thought. But music never has to depend upon any obvious meaning; it expresses what no words can ever express'.³

We have witnessed co-existence of music with the evolution of mankind and growth of humanity fulfilling the physical and metaphysical needs of the people irrespective of their caste and creed. Music is found in different contexts like social, devotional, political, economic sphere, where it is used for ritual, festive, sacred, daily work, entertainment, protest and function purposes. Pythagorus, the great mathematician as well as great philosopher considered music as a key to understand the universe. According to him, musical tones helps to explain mathematics and certain scientific principles, not only that certain combination of notes are thought to have profound effects on the emotions. He is the first person to prescribe music as medicine by using musical sounds and harmonic frequencies. From 'Pythagorean Intervals' and 'Pythagorean tuning' it is known that all our Rules should be borrowed from the great musicians for excellency and completeness. Music is the ultimate expression of consciousness, measure of fulfilment of human beings. Actually, deep-felt emotions, hopes, aspirations are reflected through music. It is such an unique medium of communication that our thoughts and feelings are expressed properly and effectively through it. Music construe a balanced relationship of the components within it as well as a good relationship with all concerned outside of it. Thus, it plays a vital role to improve quality education. Explanation of sangitacharya Ashok Da, Ranade, musicologist, voice culturist and ethnomusicologist of now-a-days is very relevant here to know the way music functions –

“Music travels from the ear to the mind. What stages does this journey consists of ?

Sound is the basic raw material of music. The first phase is to place the three properties of pitch, volume and timbre in the dimension of duration in order to reach the level of expression. This may generate a psychological state known as mood. To create disturbance in the prevailing state of mind is perhaps the most distinguishing feature of any mood.

When this expression receives contexts of a particular culture it generates pro/contra

attitudes and this is feeling. We become aware of what is known as import at this stage. (Import is often loosely called content.)

Further, when the expression is received within the perspective, contexts offered by specific correspondences with suppositions, events, etc., in a particular society, minds get disturbed and mental upheavals are felt. These are emotions. Usually it is experienced that language becomes an inevitable component at this stage of musical expression. At this juncture we begin to grapple with the concept of 'meanings'.

Thus in music, because of progressive narrowing down from the fundamental human level of reception it becomes possible to convey information, knowledge, thoughts, ideas and other intellectual content".⁴

Initiative by the First Prime Minister to introduce music as a subject of academic discipline

On the whole, our First Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru substantiated the significant thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore. In the pursuit of sustainable development of education he paid sufficient attention timely on study of fine Arts subject specially 'Music' and took initiative to introduce music as a subject in the curriculum and course of studies from primary-level to Doctorate-level of the university. The twenty first century has brought us face to face with the complex issues and challenges of Higher Education. Proper mind set in this crucial transitory period is becoming very much difficult, some times, it becomes impossible. The situation demands for a multidimensional thought process, patience as well as critically estimation or review of the academic subjects along with their potentialities. By this time Choice Based Credit System has been introduced to take the education program multidisciplinary in nature where students have the opportunity to take courses from a diverse range of disciplines. New situation calls for quality education, all round and well-round education, world-class education by providing students / learners exposition of multiple facets of any issue of education, developing their spirit of enquiry, integrating, analyzing and thinking power of them, optimizing their verbal and communication skill to motivate and inspire them (specially the new generation) by achieving confidence on respective subjects and let them go beyond their confidence.

Critical appraisal of Music – from past to present

Although, music has emerged primarily to create beauty and pleasure, it has aesthetic

value, intellectual value as well as thematic value and meaningfulness. Actually it is identified or acquainted for its own genre. It is also no longer an extra-curricular activity or a mere cultural matter only. Now it is an integral part of mainstream education. It has been accepted as an academic subject. But certain limitation of it are not ruled out since its excogitation. It is not identified or understood till today unless it is properly presented through actual performance and style. Exquisite mode of presentation and expressiveness of music have a all pervading characteristics with subtle and profound impact on human being. Initially, music was tune-based, tunes are very much worthy and attractive. But problem also lies there that tune changes faster than words in oral erudition of song and loses its actual form and identity simultaneously. Hopefully, in course of time, with the progress of civilization, language which is connotative and evocative has not only got priority as element of music but it has taken controlling space. Tonal quality has been combined and synchronized with lyrical quality to make music effective, expressive and powerful. Now, music is considered along with prosody and poetry at the same time. Again, music has been treated as 'Gurumukhi Vidya' since a long past. Teacher-student relationship i.e. 'GURU-SHISHYA PARAMPARA' is followed even today also. Through this communion of minds the essence of tradition is transferred from one generation to other. Conservative method of teaching-learning is still going on. Substances of music are taught orally verbally and personally. Demonstrations are supposed to come out from the Guru (Teacher) and the disciples (students) are used to imitate them or learn them by heart. Even, the influence of adult generation is exerted on the learners who are not ready to learn music. The most disgraceful matter is that all things of music are happening systematically as governed by definite norms and rules but they are not known in totality due to absence of well organized guiding principles, meaningful illustrations, cogent and uniform presentation, extensive background with lucid clear authentic and adequate text and literature. Even the interpretation, treatise on basic aspects of music are not properly written, rather unwritten, untold or unexplained in most of the cases. From the history, it is also known that notable theoretical deliberations are age old and written in Sanskrit language and lacking of knowledge in Sanskrit language has created confusion in extending ideas there in. Because of that there is no reason to think that theory of music has not developed at all. Actually, they are developing but are not sufficient enough. As a result, origin of music, fundamental of music, wisdom of music remain untraced and unfold. Variety, significance, sophistication, standard, quality along with actual form still remains mysterious due to lack of concrete evidences like recorded dialecticals and informations. It is

also to be remembered that the actual form of music of past time was inherited by so called uneducated professional musicians. They were such self-oriented that they considered music as their patrimony and they were averse to part with the knowledge of music. They had no desire or intention to leave them for posterity. Even they were not eager to bequeath those thoughtful ideas to their nearest or dearest descendants also. Besides, personal experiences and impressions are limited and they are to change in its own way time to time. As a result, with the end of the legendary generation, the actual performance along with its form, style, grace, elegance, beauty, charm etc is turned into a missing phenomenon. Since most of the structures, concepts, keynotes of music were oral or verbal, they were not written or described, recorded and preserved accordingly, even legendary works are not described as usual for promotion or discussion in future, inheritance of such glorious subject has also lost its vital link for future exploration and evaluation or to avoid conflicts of ideas in comparing and communicating transition of music from the past to present. The realization of eminent musicologist professor Mriganka Sekhar Chakraborty may be referred in this context – ‘Music is a performing art which requires a high degree of musical training culture and creativity. Music training is ardent practice of some essential factors of music together with theoretical knowledge of some musical facts what a musician should know. Every practical training whatever technological it may be must have theoretical base of its own. Both theory and practice have complementary relationship with each other’.⁵ Music is still confined to its performance oriented tradition due to its old structural and experiential features and for which there is ample possibility of conflicts and confusions regarding concepts, ideas, structures and multiple identities of music. We are dependent on a few great music artists of present day also as such some of the main ideas or principles are only known by them. Again there is dearth of number of such books with complete narration, analysis, discussion, interpretation illustration including psychology of music, aesthetic of music, acoustics of music along with clear, lucid, correct and scientific base. In this connection, it would be suppression of fact, if it is not mentioned that music is claimed as highest of education but it is not acknowledged out of ignorance till today.

Wider scope and range of an academic subject –a review

We know when a subject is treated as an academic subject in nature, it involves a lot of reading, studying of the relevant subject rather than its practical or technical skill. It also includes

teaching research and consultancy with appropriate analysis and comprehension. Since, music has been included in the academic domain it is considered as an important subject of academic discipline, the academic activity of music goes beyond its performing activity. In this context scholastic ideals of music may guide, govern and control musical performance through its theoretical, grammatical, codification and expository works. It should be remembered that music has now been transformed into subject of academic discipline instead of mere performing phenomenon. So, limitation of any type from any corner in this respect is to be wiped out and overcome. It requires a great deal of exploration of music from various angles to make the subject dynamic, vibrant, more comprehensive and update in the context of scholarly annotations, ambience for studying and achieving knowledge about the relevant subject, changes of perspective and revaluation with modern-thought. Audience or listeners of music or music-lovers may not require all these things. But the learners, practitioners, appraisers, researchers, critics, artists, accompanists, dramatists etc. who are related with musical activities directly or indirectly should have good and adequate knowledge and experience in making music, creating music and singing songs properly and spontaneously. It urges to provide adequate and sensible focus, discussions etc with reference to historical background on all the relevant items, matters, elements, articles and other concerning music related activities in teaching learning process to facilitate an easy understanding, realization, explanation, meaning, derivation of the terminology, ideas, theories etc. It should always be remembered that music is such a fine art subject which is specifically structured along with thoughtful ideas. Ideal learning of this subject involves a rational balance of both structure and creativity. Education through music thus needs to cover a vast and diverse area. It should not only be limited to mere transmission of informative knowledge and skill etc. it should be engaged to transmit insights which are the product of creation, purposeful explanation of concerned perceptions and ideas and perceptual imagery in music. Academic discipline of music needs to provide a clear vision to the students maintaining high standard of teaching option and research by triggering the inquisitiveness and provoking thinking capacity through access of its artistic accomplishment as well as every critical aspect of it in details. Distinct elaboration is must for attending subjectivity and the objectivity of music. To instill the difference between subjective and objective character of music there lies importance of redefining the keywords of music, their clear interpretation, distinct elaboration and relevant analysis etc. which finally offers elementary knowledge, helps to improve and enhance ability of communicative competence, divergent thinking power, general awareness

and musical aptitude as a whole. (with emphasis on correctness, particularity, sensuousness of the form of musical knowledge, technique and style etc.). A viable model of music-education is no longer be denied to cope up with the challenging situation of multicultural societies like India so that it should attract more serious thinking which is at the same time elucidatory and emancipatory, (not contented with only patently musical accomplishment)

No other way than to organize knowledge and skill of Music and its circulation

Music is no more cogs in education system. It is integral part of education. It has got not only an all pervasive identity of its own, it is an important field of study and has a tremendous value as an academic discipline. Even, it contributes towards understanding of some of the vital interdisciplinary subjects like Literature, History, Mathematics, Physiology, Botany, Zoology etc. Thus, all the ancient tradition along with its sophistication and refinement are not adequate to meet the needs of the time. In the changing scenario it encourages for intimate, intensive and systematic study to make music completely educative subject and to maintain highest caliber of music education; now, the subject is to be appreciated, reviewed, reassessed rather rebuild in the perspective of wide range of education without diluting the standard. Distortion of facts and principles is to be ignored every time and the truth is to be revealed by ensuring viability of the traditional form through elevation of different styles and approaches as per their real worth and developing untrained ears to clear their perceptions by providing original or actual substance of music (along with various facets and aspects) to them through theoretical interpretation i.e. literary text of music or documentary evidences. But it is lamentable that serious syllabus oriented books are not available till today. Although, they are most dependable tool for gratification of inquisitiveness, intensive enquiry into the variety of nature, beliefs, structures, phrases of music and to foster consensual deduction by rejecting unacceptable impulses of overdetermined presentation, rigid performing bias, passionate mental incitement after proper verification and justification. It will boost up to make the subject interesting as well as challenging by framing out essential norms, rules in this regard for universal acceptance of the subject. Fundamental and relevant topics, aspects, terminology etc. i.e. substances of music will get the opportunity so that they will be expressed as it were with clear meaning and they may be eked out by nuances to protect, preserve genuinity as well as glory of the subject. We should remember that in circulation of all the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, principles, sayings, comments, statements etc. in regard to musical paradigm they are required to be pithily expressed and

written to avoid unclear and ambiguous conceptions as well as to motivate the learners and the interested people simultaneously. It will promote unity in minds to make unanimous consensus about theory, principles, methods, techniques etc. for overall enrichment of music as a subject of academic discipline.

We have to organize musical knowledge and skill into subject of musical discipline at any cost. As an educator or as a teacher it is our responsibility to see that adequate perspective is available to enhance skill of performance as well as to make them know 'the all evading features of music'. Enough scope is to be given to extend learning in both way to improve affective and intellectual side of music i.e. emotional compulsion and intellectual challenges are taken into account in the cultivation and exploration of music. We can never forget that theoretical interpretation plays a dominant role in the transformation and dissemination of knowledge & technique of music. And all these are to be substantiated by making specific syllabus along with confirming availability of text books, digitized devices, by preparing effective programmes to that effect, by providing trained, knowledgeable as well as socialized faculty members and adequate infrastructure facilities etc. i.e. by accommodating ideal structure of knowledge in music with due consideration of ethnic and social implication of music.

Music education – a hope for better tomorrow

Quality impact of music on life is inexpressible. Scientist like Albert Einstein that's why wanted to see his life through music. Rabindranath Tagore's view was to see the universe through music (song)-viz, 'gaaner bhitar diye jakhan dekhi bhubankhaani'. To make education successful I solicit for the pertinent role of music as an academic discipline. In this process attending to music has no alternative. Comments of eminent author Ashok Da Ranade is very relevant in this perspective – 'In other words, rulers, thinkers, activists, etc. i.e. those interested in ameliorative action, social reforms and sustenance of society would be able to achieve more and better if they attend to music rather than merely hear it or at the most listen to it'.⁶

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