

Objectives and Content of Modern Hindustani Classical Music Education

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Abstract

The training for developing a taste for music should start from childhood. The children pick up music fast if the parents are deeply interested and involved in it and there is a favorable atmosphere at home. Music should be regarded indispensable at the nursery and primary grades in schools and the mode of teaching should be so designed that the taste for music develops gradually but consistently.

The objective of music education not only deals with practical aspects but the children may be acquainted with some theoretical aspects also. It is, however, advisable to give them theoretical knowledge only in the high school and not at the primary level.

Keywords: *Primary stage, Rhythm, Melody, Gharana, Modern system, Curriculum, Motivate, Talented, Musical atmosphere, Folk songs, Bhajans, Group Songs, Patriotic songs, Rhythmic dramatizations, Auditory power, Pitch, Retentive memory, Kansas, Intensive Training, Basic ragas, Aesthetical, Psycho acoustical, Sociological, Applied music, orchestra, Musicology, Music appreciation.*

Introduction

The objectives and content of modern Hindustani classical music education must be viewed in the light of current socio-economic conditions and the specific needs of pupils at different levels of education.

There are many music educationists today, for instance, Deva (1964), Gowri and Hariharan (1980), and Prem Kumari (1988) who strongly believe that the purpose of music education at the primary stage should be to teach music to all children and make them sensitive to rhythm and melody.

Training for developing a taste for music should start from childhood. Children pick up music fast if they are exposed to its nuances in the early stage for instance, if parents are deeply interested in it and there is a favorable atmosphere at home. Music should be regarded indispensable at the nursery and primary levels in schools and the mode of teaching should be so that the taste for music develops gradually but consistently. The method also should be so designed that the child learns music while playing. While selecting songs for this purpose it has to be carefully borne in mind that the words, tunes, and rhythms are not only simple and attractive but should be contemporary too. The contents of the songs may deal with themes taken from nature, patriotism, love, vasudhaivkutumbkam, etc. No songs should inspire a feeling of hatred, vengeance, or hostility.

It has to be appreciated at the very outset that goal of music education should be to promote understanding and also created professionalism and employability for students who want to take up music as a profession.

Training Motivation: It is now increasingly realized that before exposing students to the rigorous of classical music, they should be duly motivated and trained to develop a taste for listening and appreciation. In the beginning, greater stress should be laid on developing the hearing capacity of students. Scholars like Nye (1963, p.13), Attri (1988 p. 76), Prem Kumari (1988, p.73), and Mishra (1990, p.16) maintain that listening is basic music activity. Unless beginners listen carefully to pitches they cannot imitate them accurately. In this regard, Nye observes, in the primary grades the teachers' major objectives are to teach students to respondents to research music physically and emotionally and to identify instruments. Acknowledging the importance of auditory power in music, Professor Shankar Lal Mishra cites the example of Mian Tansen who had mastered the skill of listening and reproducing human and animal sounds with an amazing perfection even when he was just a young child. Professor Mishra has rightly remarked that all great singers and instrumentalists are known for their capacity of listening to sounds carefully, keeping them in their retentive memory, and producing the same almost verbatim. Furthermore, the music curriculum should exhibit variety in terms of inclusion, simplicity, and popular appeal for

melodious folk songs and tunes, bhajans, group songs, chorus/choir, patriotic songs, action songs, singing games, dances, and rhythmic dramatizations. The importance of community singing in the teaching of music in some form or the other is useful for children and adults alike.

Songs should be so, that the children start singing while listening to them without any effort. There is number of songs like Sare Jahan Se Achha, Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram, which lend themselves easily to community singing. In other countries, every school and college has its own choir and orchestra group. It is necessary that our schools and colleges take steps in this direction.

A Vedic hymn which is highly secular in its content inspires to move, talk and think not as an isolated individual but as a member of a large community could be considered for teaching.

Rise of Modern Educaiton and Decline of Gharana System: It is generally argued that the objectives of the Gharana system of education cannot be transplanted into the modern system. The Gharana system of education and its objectives (for instance style, scope, and producing artists) were in time with the teacher-pupil relationship, and these were also free from constraints of time and curriculum. In contrast to the present system of music education, the curriculum demands that a student has to be given the exposure of styles of many gharanas but there is a challenge of limited time and vastness of the prescribed syllabus. This is one of the biggest challenges faced by the teachers of music whether to impart expertise to the student of music as in the Gharana System or develop a system which develops student from a generalist, who develops a taste of listening and appreciation of nuances of classical music, to a versatile performer. A point to be noted here is that not every student would want to end up as an expert performer and there should be options for students who want to pursue music as a hobby. The recent modification in education policy also requires a revisit to design a music curriculum for students who are interested to pursue music as a subject in graduation but may not have studied music in either high school or matriculation. The consideration should be based on the importance of the development of balanced individuality in the life of a man. Music is a necessity for everyone. The extent to which a person should learn or appreciate music depends on his circumstances, age, aptitude, and capabilities. Given all possible chances, one may come up to the level of only participating in community singing while another develops a fine sensibility in appreciating and understanding music. It should be considered gratifying if everyone genuine artist emerges out of the thousands of students. New education policy will give an opportunity for all students from other branches and streams to pursue music as a subject and bridge the gap and stereotype that was prevailing for ages.

Learning and objectives of music for those students who want to attain perfection as an expert is a journey of voice-hearing and performance, improvement through practice (Sadhana/riyaz) in which many factors interact so as to produce quality, precision, and speed. Though scholars differ in their emphasis on the relative significance of various factors, they agree that the relationship among these factors is one of the supplementary rather than substitutability.

Music Education and Employ Ability: Apart from performing ability in music, there are other aspects like, critical hearing, appreciation, composing, music direction, critical analysis, discrimination, and research works which the aspiring students of music should go through. Acquiring an equal degree of competence in all fields is neither possible for one man nor is desirable.

Moudgalya (1966, p.14) and Patwardhan (1966, p.47) regard the development of the hearing power of students as a great significance for the popularisation of Indian classical music as it enables them to appreciate the subtleties of music. It is important to bear in mind that the propounder of modern system of music education, Pt. V.D. Paulauskas, categorically asserted time and again that this present system is not geared primarily to arouse the interest of the people in the learning of music and developing their taste for good music so as to produce Kansens in thousands.

In the case of higher grades, the curriculum should emphasize the development of student's ability to the critical aesthetic quality of music.

Two aspects of presentation, i.e. the right gesture and the right articulation, have to be duly stressed and incorporated in teaching music. Right articulation not only means clearly pronouncing the words of a song or bols on an instrument but also voicing the right notes according to the emotional depth of the content. The voice should be free from artificiality and harshness and should not touch false notes. The student should also know how to express emotion through the voice. Popular western instruments such as guitar, mandolin, etc. that have now been accepted in Hindustani classical music should also form part of curricula for senior students. At this stage, it is worthwhile to notice that many talented students of instrumental music forego music at the college level as they cannot afford the music instrument, which is quite costly. The need of the hour is to institute a system of scholarship for facilitating the procurement of instruments by such students.

No doubt the specialized training begins at the college stage. But here emphasis should be on the depth of course content rather than its width. Only a basic Ragas should be selected for intensive training. In this regard, Pt. Ravi Shankar (1966) has correctly admired the approach of his great Guru Ustad Allaudin Khan (as a matter of fact which was the general approach of many other great musicians too). "I have come to realize the

great wisdom of Baba in saying that it is only necessary to learn some basic Ragas (such as Yaman Kalyan and Bhairav) thoroughly and all the rest will unfold by themselves. The same kind of thrust is discernible in the writings of other scholars, for instance, Dev (1966, p. 40) remarks, only a few select ragas and talas should be taught but intensive training should be given in these. Professor Bhupendra Sheetal who is actively involved in overhauling the present system of teaching music recommends that at the college and university level students should be taught intensively according to the guru shishya parampara so that they may have a sound foundation. Sadagopan (1974, p.89) is of the view that at the post-graduate level it should be possible to offer two distinct types of courses to suit the talent and inclination of the students one for the practice-minded and the other for the theory minded. In an earlier article Sadagopan (1966, p.42) advocates that the syllabus of music education in universities should be carefully prepared so that music might be studied from various points of view technical, historical, psychoacoustical, and sociological. Extending Sadagopan's point of view Kaslival (1988, p. 54 to 58) emphasizes the need for the inclusion of applied music. It is argued that various courses of applied music, such as musical direction, in feature films, documentaries radio/TV features, advertising, etc. Orchestra, musicology, music appreciation (that is journalism in relation to music) music technology (that is manufacturing of musical instrument and their maintenance) should be started as these are expected to open greater avenues of prestigious employment for students of music. The suggestions are of a substantial vocational significance. Extremely talented voices amongst the students of schools and colleges should be picked up and for special training in a good music school under a reputed Guru. Thus some achieve the stature of performing artist while others nursed by music, would be able to develop a balanced personality when, by no means, is a mean achievement.

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