

MUSIC AND THE SCHOOLING

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Preamble :

I believe that Music education in India is as important as any other streams of Education. During the past ten years, our education system in India has evolved into many fervors and flavors. Before this time, the main thrust of education was for the sake of Knowledge. Now the thrust has extended to its utility. The slogan ‘get educated – get the job’ is now highly applicable and well established in the minds of the educated and educator. Education is as much in the ‘market’ as is the job. However, Music finds a special mention in these schemes of things. Music/art is at once marketable or learnt for its own sake. The end user is a person.

Such an oriented educational system now dwells on the power of memory, analysis and synthesis. The teacher prepares the student to achieve high in all these and leaves the final achievement level to the student. In Aksharavidya (as in languages, science, economics etc.) the first two of the triad (that is : Memory and analysis) gives the required ‘pass marks’ while the last (synthesis) gives the level of achievement. In the Nada(kala)vidya (music, dance, drama etc) we start the education from the finished product of the last (synthesized products like the music/dance compositions) and work our way towards the other two. The last one (memory) is achieved through incessant practice. The musical orientation and talent comes into play in all these three attributes.

However, from the ‘job’ market point of view, I personally do not find much difference. The highest paid in the job market equals an exceptionally talented and hardworking musician (dancer etc.) in terms of jeevanamsha (life sustenance).

The school prepares them all for all these. It is in the school the pupil starts from the rudiments and works the way up to the finest achievements. Hence, the school contains all the essential elements of the primary Art education.

In India, we have realized the true efficacy of music as an essential element of education, as an adjunct for higher learning and as a way of life itself. But we have not formulated, unlike other systems of education, a good, workable, pan-Indian

system to impart music (dance etc) that would achieve the goal. We have not even set a goal or the final product for such an art education.

I pose these questions :

- What would be the generalized goal for music (art) education in our country
- What would be its final or desired point of achievement that would make the learned live a better life
- How are we to tell our society that music is as much an integral part of its children's education as anything else (we are seeing music as highly 'paid' in almost all the popular media, and yet, the awareness is not there)
- How is music inter and intra – disciplinary in nature connecting itself to other knowledge systems like mathematics, physics, physical sciences, technology oriented systems, etc
- What do we mean 'music' when we say the word : classical (the so-called art music as in Karnataka and Hindusthani {now they also include the Odissi dance music!}, semi-or folk art music, tribal, popular like cinema/drama/etc music ?)
- How do we teach the most essential elements of music : the Shruthi and the Laya. Most teachers accept that shruthi and laya knowledge is or must be inbuilt (within the disciple) without which we can never attempt to teach music.
- We teach the type of music that has its predominant presence in the area of that school : for example, if it is in North India, then it would be Hindusthani or its likewise and if it is in the South, the Karnataka music etc. but what would happen now ? The globalization has brought-in the respective country's stylized music and our young ones are finding new 'meaning in it', while we, the 'oldsters' are worried about our heritage of rich culture and music ! Would we ever bring-in the so called 'fusion music' and try to make an education system out of it ? While we do employ such Fusion Music in some of our productions like, say, the school day celebrations, but the main question is, can we 'teach' it in a systematic way we so ably use in the classical music teaching ?
- I consider our music education to consist three levels :

- The Theoretical Knowledge : consisting of the basic content elements of our music,
- The Skill : performance oriented teaching contents and
- The Emotive : the expression of beauty or the aesthetic content.
How are we to generalize these so that we address our students :
will we teach them individually or in the group.
- Is there an average student who could be held as our average point to formulate our teaching methodology and technique ?

I pose these questions with the sole intension of eliciting a useful and thoughtful inquiry as to how to make music (etc.) of our land as ;

1. A standardized educational activity that would lead to a livelihood
2. A part of the regular curriculum in cognizant subjects in schools and universities
3. To help a dedicated music university to attract such students to its various levels of pedagogy
4. To help achieve the ultimate goal of popularizing music education by means of providing :
 - a. Campus recruitment (immediate and dedicated employment opportunities)
 - b. Making a university as a consulting authority in matters of music and other performing arts
 - c. Contrive a means for the global level of recognition of the standards to be set for such a music/art educational system.

I believe that even an initiative to a suitable answer to these and other questions raised in this article would bring a lasting beneficial methodology to improve and popularize the music and other performing arts of our country.