

Changing Scenario of Music Education and Future Perspectives in Universities

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The issue of quality and excellence is in the forefront of the conventional system of Higher Education in the changing scenario in the 21 century which is characterised by information and communication. Since classical music is now a formal academic discipline in the universities, it needs a fresh look and appraisal in the changing scenario. The perceived need for the reassessment is on the background of some major developments

1. The increasing number of students learning music at higher level
2. The increasing dissatisfaction of younger learners of Indian music with Guru-Shishya Parampara.
3. A general feeling that Indian Universities have not succeeded to fulfil their objectives, due to several constraints.

It is therefore widely felt that problems of quality in music education could be tackled simultaneously on many fronts and in my write up I will suggest some of the possible areas to sustain quality and excellence in teaching music at higher level which are identified as following:

- The western conservatoire system of music education be examined in the context of Indian art music and efforts be made to assimilate selected features of it in Indian educational structures.
- One of the major themes for reconsideration for the university in this context, is the felt need of diversifying courses to respond to the changed conditions of music careers in general.
- I also feel that it is necessary to examine in depth the role of audiovisual aids to music teaching and music education modified in the newer methodologies may need a radical reorganization of the musical material itself.
- It is also necessary that keeping the performing nature of art music, research-projects be designed more imaginatively, because the quality of postgraduate and post-doctoral research in Indian music has deteriorated and does not serve to the performance of music.

Music being a highly specialized and popular subject needs to be promoted in such few identified areas. We are aware of the increasing mediocrity in music education, in performance abilities of students even at the higher level, poor accountability of the teachers, therefore, there is great need for careful planning for the quality teaching and development of music education in such a changed environment. Indian classical music has its own special requirement and totally different from the usual run of subjects that are tackled in our university system of education. We know that there are several problems relating to the teaching methodology of classical music which continue to plague our university system. In the present day university system of music education we face two major problems:

1. The time bound teaching within the four walls of the classrooms.
2. Teaching a large number of students.

The present day crowded classroom condition of music classes results in a lack of personal care for the students, because each student of Music has his own particular needs and requirements, Music as an artistic discipline has its special requirements and can not be treated at par with such general subjects. We have crowded music classes at universities with a very low number of teaching staff. Such problems hamper the teaching quality and excellence among the students of music. Universities also don't seem it necessary to test the aptitude of candidates.

It is therefore necessary to review and re-orientate some of our present day practices by careful planning and management of music education.

Some of the substantial points I wish to focus are:

- As we know music communication mediums are playing a vital role in the development of music education and enriching its qualitative improvement. The technology at present has been influencing learning and teaching process both. It is time that the music academicians think of making the music education available in Distant Education mode. Our music is so rich in content that availability of Indian Music through distance education is expected to receive a global outcome.

University music curricula in the U.K. have changed since the 1970s and the recent treatment of Indian Classical Music in the Curriculum of the British Open University in recent years has formed part of their curriculum, which includes video based projects aimed at giving instructions in collaboration with Indian musicians."

I wish to suggest some of the possible problem areas through the use of current technology in music. For information and knowledge we have seen the main methodologies of education of Guru-Shishya Parampara, Sena Basina Talim, small to big class room education. From the 19th century and particularly the 20th century ushered in the era for education for all, to be attained as quickly as possible. A revolution was created by the print and press media, sound recording and in the last decades, electronics, T.V., videorecordings, digital sound, CD's and website, completely changing the values and influencing the traditional system. Application of technology to teach classical music has varied means as it can be made available on cheaper cassettes, or videos, vast literature on ragas, biographies could be made available on website. There can be recorded lecture demonstrations catering to different aptitudes in university teaching. Learning aids can be evolved for teaching learning. The use of electronic musical instruments have slowly given way to acceptance. There is no field of knowledge which is denied to distance education in music. The various forms of distant education may be categorised like certificate or diploma or degree, syllabus oriented courses, open university, workshops and self learning device from distance.

It was never before that so many students have become so serious to take to music and profession. so it is the demand of the time that we evolve suitable training and practising technique. In distant education of music, one could use e-mail, audio video, CDs. Distant education should primarily incorporate more illustrative examples than regular teaching a bank on frequently asked questions should be formed and short term courses should be launched. Music is concerned mainly with sound. Sound recording and reproduction have brought in digital sound and long lasting compact disc track, recording, editing, mixing and adding new sounds. User friendly package could be produced. Since classical music is taught in institutions a teacher has to learn the craft of teaching, For evolving distance music modules, we require modern teaching methodologies which

employ learning techniques, creating multimedia support materials, encouraging self-learning devices. The interactive television is highly suitable for distance education as it allows two way, audio and other way video interaction between the expert and the learner.

Through internet teacher disciple can have conversion. We can have an interacted media computer then software. We need a software and computer, the software can very accurately detect swar. In the current scenario, it is the best requirement as it is an interaction media. Those involved in distance education may be knowing that university of Madras is running a correspondence education course on music. There is even global environment for distant education and an establishment called ICDE i.e. International Council for Distant Education. H.Q. based in OSLO Norway in which more than 100 countries are represented and is affiliated to United Nation through UNESCO. In Sibelium Academy Finland, the latest course is mainly based on ISDN technology and Net-Conferencing. Here the teacher can interact with the students 200 miles away. Distance education for music is both a challenge and an opportunity. The use of technology in all fields is the reality and -- would be a great benefit as a mixing guidance. We can also organise music appreciation classes or music laboratory classes in which at least the available recorded music and compositions of the distinguished musicians are heard and analyzed.

Formal educational institutions could help develop such software as part of their research or other projects. Universities can organise web sites and subsidised centres for distant education. The teacher/student can effectively use the web-based services like maintaining own web site, publishing information, find articles, web text summary, learn a new word everyday via e-mail and net telephony etc.

Performance, teaching and academic research all complement each other and should be encouraged. The students should be exposed to artists of repute in their teaching hours and for this some arrangement like an artist in residence scheme is necessary, which would give them an opportunity to listen to a performersriyaz and achieve certain skill in performance. Similarly teachers should also be exposed to new environment in other institutions as a exchange programme, where they can interact with the teachers of special areas of interest and proficiency which they can share with their students. Refresher courses, orientation programmes are beneficial in this regard.

We find common problems in music education, whether it is imparted in professional institutions or universities. Some of the common points are:

Admission rules, limited no. of students in a class, modern way of music teaching, usefulness of syllabus and uniformity of teaching standard from middle school to university level. Again there are problems relating to Standardization of syllabus of music in all universities, similarity between the theoretical and practical aspect of music, problems of research, teaching of new compositions along with the old traditional compositions, modern scientific instruments and their use in music education, problem of efficient teachers, musicologists and performers prevailing at graduate and posto graduate level, lack of proper funds, staff and accompanists, and other infrastructure, teaching methods like that of modern techniques along with traditional methods of teaching, skill in teaching methods by the educationist. musician, appointment of visiting professors for short term courses.

All these problems are there in all institutions and we have to find solution by focussing on some important points.

1. Music appreciation, group singing, stage performance music teachers training, music research, musicology, because there is a connection between every stream of music in the modern music education. The vast syllabus, limited number of periods does not allow a music student to go deep into the subject. If within the prescribed period of his music education, he can learn in a particular direction as per his aptitude and talent, he can get a lot of proficiency in the subject. For the development of music education, we need to re-examine the standardized syllabus, availability of books, mode of examination, appointment of efficient teachers as well as admission of serious students. The status of music education should be at par with other subjects. There is a need to combine the good points of traditional gurukul education system, gharanedar education system, institutional teaching system in universities and evolve an ideal system of education.

For the improvement in the existing music system, we need cooperation from the administrative section, ministry of education, U.G.C., Radio and T.V. and officers of different academic branches. If we survey the music institutions, we find that some departments have not even the proper infrastructure like teachers for Tabla, Tanpura, Sitar, and the accompanists. Most of the students cannot tune their instruments, lack of proper space for riyaj and proper books.

These are some of the problems faced by music institutions. If few suggestions are followed in teaching music, the standard of music can be improved, viz.,

1. Aptitude test must be taken at the time of admission.
2. Selection of teachers should be done properly as following:
 - (a) For practical teaching proper performers should be appointed and for music theory, proper degree holders or musicologists should be appointed.
 - (b) Facilities for essential things like instruments, music books, electronic teaching aids, place for proper riyaz must be there.
 - (c) Regular seminars should take place at the departments, and discussion on ragas or on theory must be a regular practice.
 - (d) Students should have their own instruments, tune them and practice with tanpuras.
 - (e) The students should learn Gayaki Ang from the same Guru every year.
 - (f) The students should be pressed for enough practice to acquire proficiency in the subject.
 - (g) At least once in a week. "Sangeet Goshthies" should be arranged. where students and the teachers can select one raga according to the syllabus, sing and discuss.

Again there is another problem, number of students are increasing, but number of good students are decreasing. If we reduce the number of students, teachers can give proper attention and can lift their standard.

- (h) The vast courses should be reduced in theory and practical both. The duration of period should be more than other subjects.
- (i) Students should be encouraged to sing their own tanas, alaps, sargam and improvise them. One period should be allocated only for riyaz under one teacher

If these suggestions are followed while teaching, the standard of music can be improved and will certainly give a beneficial result.

Institutions should also make it compulsory that the students spend certain amount of time everyday in the premises of the institution and practice under the supervision of their teachers. For sufficient attention to their practice areas of music institutions should encourage inter-collegiate exchanges and competitions, so that the students overcome stagefright and develop performing skill. Besides the institutions of music should create an

atmosphere of discussion and exchange and stimulate student's thinking by holding seminars for the students. Practice, critical listening descriptive evaluation and reproduction of recording should be made mandatory, Notation system is a powerful tool in the understanding of music, therefore much attention should be given to develop a much more developed notation system.

While we consider the present day resources at institutions we accept that our institutions cannot come up with top ranking performing musicians and theoreticians on their staff. However, we the teachers can help to develop cultivation of music in students by adopting some of the methods suggested above. We have to re-orientate some of our present day practices. For instance music institutions have not considered introducing specialized training in the many professional areas which are related to the performed music. Not only the performers, but the organisers, critics, teachers, writers, composers, instrument makers, audio technicians, record and tape dealers, manufacturers of audio equipment and so on are also equally important in various areas of music. Music is also related to other disciplines like poetry, psychology acoustics, philosophy, sociology. Other professional and specialised areas like medical therapy, plan therapy also apply music and some specialized training should be introduced in universities to produce competence in performance. Music education if being made job oriented with various activities as mentioned here, more people would opt music with serious involvement. Such professional and job oriented options in music would provide economic incentive to the students to pursue music as a vocational subject especially in the modern time when economic pressures are more important than a means of entertainment.