

# Heritage of Music

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## Abstract

*Since ever music has been with us to serve the mankind. It is associated with a number of purposes of our life. A man in this world needs some sort of entertainment and joy to lead a happy life; he requires money to meet out his daily expenses, above all he longs for peace and tranquility in his life. Urging for music is man's natural desire because it provides us with a medium to express the feelings lying deep in our heart. It exalts us with joy and delight and thus brings peace to our mind and soul. Our cultural heritage can be kept alive over the generations with musical notes. Without music we can not think of a culture because every society in this world has its own music. Particular musical modes associate with a particular society and culture. Some tonal combinations and melodies represent cultural background of a particular society. Like raga sindh bhairavi, rag manjh, nat bhairav, pahari etc. associate with particular regional societies and represent their cultures; folk tunes and folk songs have colours of their rituals and customs. This paper aims at studying how music is playing an indispensable role for the existence of a society and its culture.*

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Music has usually been considered as a supportive tool for collectivistic and social purposes. Loud noises made by trumpets, shrill sounding oboes and drums are made so that everyone hears the approach of the powerful monarch. Such glorification is always connected with the intent of indoctrinating and educating the masses to defer to their gods and to selected persons. Ancient China after Confucius (551-479 B.C.), some of the states of classic Greece, Hitler's Germany and Soviet Russia have all considered music, an indispensable part of political education (Etzkorn K. P. 1973: 44).

Confucius (551-479 BC) assigned an important place to music in the service of a well ordered moral universe. He saw music and government as reflecting one another and believed that only the superior man who can understand music is equipped to govern. Music, he thought, reveals character through the six emotions that it can portray: sorrow, satisfaction, joy, anger, piety, love. According to Confucius, great music is in harmony with the universe, restoring order to the physical world through that

harmony. Music as a true mirror of character, makes pretence or deception impossible (Britannica Macropaedia, 2005, Vol. 24: 494).

In every culture, music is intricately interwoven with the lives and beliefs of its people. Music serves different functions in different societies, though some basic roles are universal. It accompanies religious and civil ceremonies, helps workers establish a uniform rhythm to get the job done more efficiently, and provides entertainment through songs and dances (Machlis, J. & Forney, K. 1983: 61).

There is no society in this world without music. Every society has its own music showing its own culture and traditions. Forever, music remained a medium of religious, social as well as cultural activities. The development of music depends upon the development the society as well as the attitude of the people of the society. In Vedic age people regarded music as superb art. Seven notes were developed in this age. People in Vedic age accepted music for their religious rituals and cultural activities (Jahan, I. 2002: 109). Music and the society are very closely inter-related. Both are interdependent. One cannot exist without the other. A musician not only develops his own personality but also makes the society prosperous by rendering the valuable treasure of a culture. He creates a very perfect atmosphere by his creations. When people become very tense and stressed in the complexities of life, music soothes them (Pathak, J.N. 1970: 42).

A musician can please the deities and thus can achieve the religious passion, which creates the feelings of compassion, self restraint, contentment, sympathy etc. These virtues are very important for a social organization to be healthy and wealthy. As music is important for the development of a society so is the society for music. If the society nourishes the plant of music, it grows a lot but if the society creates hurdles in the way of development of music, it cannot grow. It is only society who promotes the development of music. Hence both the society and music are inter-related (Pathak, J.N. 1970: 43-44). So, music can be conceived as a component of socio-cultural system. The history of music is closely associated with human society and both have a great influence upon each other. The form and content of music, mode of teaching, rendering styles all have undergone a change with the change in social structure (Singh, N. 2004: 14).

The flour grinding songs of rural women grow into various folk songs. Music in and around the temple is another tributary to the mainstream. Vedic music which commenced as a recitation of three tones ended as a

seven-toned chant. In the temples and mathas (monasteries) music was and still is a vital part of meditation and worship. Through these simple bhajans, abhangas (marathi bhajans) and kirtans the most profound mystic truths and socially reformative ideas were conveyed to all the populace (Deva, B.C.1992: 2).

The folk tunes, throughout the world, speak of the feelings and some common characteristics of the people. Folk music is the oldest music and has been developed spontaneously. Folk music, which is most commonly known as village music is the proud wealth of the masses. For centuries this has been coming handed down from generation to generation. This not only gives a pleasant hearing but conveys the emotional appeal and touches the tender core of the heart. Every society finds a place for its social activities, ceremonies, festivals, in a rich store of folk songs (Ram, V. B. 1962: 20).

For a society, the importance of music can be overlooked under these two main heads:

(1) Music Associates with Culture

(2) Music as a Part of Social Ceremonies and Celebrations

### **(1) Music Associates with Culture**

Every kind of music possesses matrices, which identify with a culture and represent people with a common culture. Using sound matrix, it is therefore possible to discern the nativity of a piece of music even where the lyrics are drawn from the differing linguistic region. Structurally, the cultural elements can be identified in the tonality of the music and how the tones within the scale are manipulated. The compositional techniques such as statements of themes and their developments with sequences, repetitions, tonal shifts, orchestration, dynamic shadings, part singing, text, texture, rhythm and cadential formulae all are representative of a culture (Idolor, E. 2007: 15).

Technologically, the construction of some instruments produces either the sounds of birds, animals or the deities. The significance and meaning of tonal quality, which is produced from various musical instruments, are inferred from the speech patterns of the owners who code and decode messages in and from instrumental music performances within their culture-context. Above all, when all these are integrated in a performance situation, the costumes, dance types, movements, oral delivery, drum patterns,

dramatic props and the total scenery reflect a source of a cultural trait (Idolor, E. 2007: 15).

Culture is of immense value for a society. A society without its culture and heritage has no existence. Music plays a vital role in preserving the culture of the society. The growth of culture means the growth and development of people of the society. Music has always remained a medium to express developing thoughts and feelings of human being. Music remains changing from time to time as per the changes in the culture. Culture has to be regarded as a crucial topic of psychology – and even more of psychology of music. Cultural psychology is the study of the way cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform and permute the human psyche. Among those cultural processes and social practices that “regulate, transform and permute the human psyche” music plays an important role (Allesch, C. G. & Krakauer, P. M. 2004 : 1).

Culture finds expression in many ways, and in music, it has found a very powerful media of expression and communication. The combined power of sound and sense is realized in the folk songs. Music is a channel of communication for man. Culture translates itself into various kinds of behaviour, including behaviour in sound, i.e. in music and language (Goswami, R.1992: 55-56).

Folk songs in music portray some episodes and incidents. There are tribal songs, marriage songs, worship songs, occupational songs, palmistry related songs, songs related to astrology and to herbs useful for curing some diseases, humorous songs, festive songs and songs on various other topics, which are all current in the folklore (Ram, V. B. 1962: 20).

Archeologists have unearthed flutes and drums that date back 30,000 years. Looking back five or six millennia to Mesopotamia, the so-called cradle of civilization, we find the first thread of a musical culture that can be traced directly to modern times. The ancient sounds of music have their direct descendents in today’s world. The value we place on music and the emotional responses we have to its appearing melodies, rhythms and harmonies have also come down to us from early times, as a part of our heritage (Machlis, J. & Forney, K. 1983: 67-68).

Since the dawn of civilization, music has been an integral part of social and cultural life of the human beings. Music in one guise or another permeates every human society. Throughout the history, music has been an

important adjunct to ritual and drama and has been credited with a capacity to reflect and influence human emotions (Sharma, M. 1995:29).

In any cultural study of this country, the parts played by various races and tribes are the most important and can never be forgotten. As a matter of fact, it is the understanding of the contribution of these that can give us a clear picture of the changing horizons of Indian music. For, the present concept of raga is but often a highly sophisticated form grown from an archaic folk or tribal tune; what is now an intricate instrument like veena is but a refined kinnari (Deva, B.C.1992: 80).

The present society of India, then, is a resultant of the interaction of races and cultures, indigenous and foreign. The Negrito, the Mongoloid, the Dravidian and the Aryan have all contributed to this active agglomerate. Their part in the development of our music can be observed in the names of many ragas. Names like Malva, Gurjari, Karnata and so on indicate regional associations (Deva, B.C.1992:80).

Raga has as its seed in the primitive melodies of various tribes and folk cultures of the country. Similarly, tala has attained its sophisticated form from the ancient rhythms of the people. Ragas like Saveri, some say, has perhaps something to do with svara tribes of Orissa and Andhra; rag Botta is associated with Bhatta desa, today's Tibet; Takha, according to some people, had its origin in Attok, in Sind. Very obvious tribal names are Chenchu, Kambhoji, Bhairav and Bhariavi. The chenchus are forest people in Andhra; and the Bhairavas are again very well known tribe (Deva, B.C.1990:6 & 7). These facts prove that definitely music has its roots in some society or culture and traditional activities form the subject of folk music as well.

With the progress of civilization the standard of culture is raised. The same rules apply to music. Music is a part and parcel of civilization and culture. Gradually with the growing light of civilization and progress in human intellect, the cultural sphere is enlightened with a heavenly glow. The conception of various forms of the deities came into being and man paid his homage to those deities alongwith songs sung in rhythm and music as the part and parcel of the rites and sacrifices (Prajnanananda, S.1973:37).

## **(2) Music as a Part of Social Ceremonies and Celebrations**

K. Peter Etzkorn writes in his book "Music and Society" that ceremonies like baptism, celebration of puberty, weddings and funerals are the important events for musical performance in our society throughout

most of the history. He further says, “During epidemics of contagious diseases when a great many people die, special forms of prayer and rituals incorporating music and even dancing have been reported to develop.” Music has always been a part of public functions, national celebrations, coronation days, various types of banquets etc (Etzkorn, K. P.1973:47).

There was a great variety of songs among the primitive tribes. There were songs for dances and feasts, for funerals and wild processions, for war and chase. There were also love songs, songs of labour, songs in the praise of nature and the supernatural and the like, and the themes of their songs were woven around the trifle and simple events of their daily life. Their gods were the wind or the sun, the forest or the sky, and the fore-fathers or the ghosts. Sometimes their dances were accompanied by crude forms of drums or flutes; sometimes they used to sing without any musical instrument. The rhythms of the dances and songs were kept by mere clapping of hands and nodding of heads, beating the ground with feet or striking the sticks together (Prajnanananda,S. 1973: 5).

In every known culture, the ordering of sound in ways that pleases the ear has been used extensively to improve the quality of life. One of the most ancient and perhaps the most popular functions of music is to focus the listeners’ attention on patterns appropriate to a desired mood. So, there is music for dancing, for weddings, for funerals, for religious and for patriotic occasions; music that facilitates romance, and music that helps soldiers march in orderly ranks (Csikzentmihalyi, M. 2008:17).

## **Conclusion**

Since ever music has been associated with religious activities and on its climax it leads to bliss i.e. the salvation. The other hand on the worldly ground, it is a prime means of entertainment and employment as well. Recently it is being practised as reformatory tool for criminals. The band of Kot Bhalwal prison, Jammu inmates is one of the lively epitomes of its kind. Nevertheless, music, now-a-days is being used for a variety of purposes in all the spheres of our life; like for therapeutic purpose, for the better growth of plants, for enhancing the environment of a shopping mall, railway coach, meeting hall or at the places where someone has to undergo the boredom of waiting etc. and has always served as a means of propagation against social evils. Folk songs also possess the importance of being the prime heritage of any society and culture. All the cultures and the societies of the world have admitted the importance of music for various purposes; like entertainment, meditation, religious celebrations, cultural representations, propagation and

above all the mental peace and tranquility. It has a natural power to fetch the attention of the people and that is why it is used for the expression of social protest as well as publicity. In the correctional centers, music is considered to be a very useful tool. Inmates may have a choice to learn music in the prisons. They may listen to music or even can have training in music. Nevertheless, music plays a pivotal contribution in challenging communalism. Patriotic songs unite people belonging to various castes, creeds and regions by inculcating in them the feeling of peace, harmony and national unity. Today, there is a purpose behind applying music in shopping malls, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, railway coaches and in parks etc. It is because, music creates a very calm atmosphere in the surroundings, enhances the environment, fascinates people, refreshes mood and increases work performance. Hence it serves various purposes in every walk of life.

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