

## The place of music in general education

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The world speaks to me in pictures, my soul answers in music. as Rabindranath Tagore says.[1] Indeed music awakes our soul. It is the lingua franca with all around us. Music relieves our soul from monotony. It has a soothing effect on our body and mind. Not only human beings, but also other animals respond to music. A melodious sound can cure physical and mental ailments. It is a proven fact. Music has a positive effect on everybody—office workers, day labourers, businessmen and who are not. We have seen a mother making her baby asleep simply by a lullaby that is nothing but a music. The students are also not exception.

Education is the manifestation of perfection already in one. So, the students should get education to make them perfect. The sole aim of education is to express oneself in a proper way. It is said that a disturbed mind is the root of all problems. We know that merely gathering of information is not education. From the time immemorial all over the world all the civilized countries have given importance on mental education or say mental culture in education. Now general education in schools and colleges are meant to gather knowledge which depends directly on one's mental state. Man has the need both physical food and mental food. Without mental food, a man loses his creativity and this creativity creates an inner joy. A student can do the best when he learns his lessons with joy. Here lies the importance of music. If a student has music as one of his subjects, his performances must be well done.

In this modern age Rabindranath Tagore thought first the good relation between music and general education. He says, we have two types of food. In physical hunger-fulfilment we are like the beasts and in the hunger of ambrosia, we are gods and goddesses. Music is one of the forms of ambrosia.[2]

Music helps the learners in general education to achieve their results more satisfactorily. Music is one of the best means for the differently abled human beings to express

their emotions and feelings. There is no gainsaying the fact that blind children possess a highly developed auditory perception as well as interest in and memory for sound. It is essential that blind children should be provided with as comprehensive and systematic a course in music as possible. Singing can assist the development of the speaking voice, which is an important means of communication for the blind, and instrumental playing and movement can be interesting forms of sensory motor-learning. Even in the education of the deaf, music has a definite contribution to make.[3] What is education or what is the real aim of education? Certainly it is not passing of some examinations and acquirement of certificates. Unfortunately the 21<sup>st</sup> century is laying all emphasis on information technology. But what is the use of information if it is not used to understand or to realise our essential nature. A student must know the purpose of education and music helps him or her get the meaning of his real existence. There are so many examples where we see that music helps one to improve his learning and actual growth.

A student, when he looks back to his heritage, he gets inspiration to go ahead. Without music a major part of his culture and heritage gets blocked. Thus, a student can build his personality with an understanding of what he ought to do and what he ought not to do.[4]

Aesthetic sense contributed by music has a great effect to build a student's character. He becomes disciplined, sober, more friendly and has the capability to learn his lessons harmoniously with others. When a student becomes tired of doing his daily, routine work or home work, he gets relief from the pressure of his study materials by the help of music.

Music reaches deep down into the soul. It helps a student get his general education spontaneously and removes his boring attitude. It has been seen that the children learn more quickly through poems and music rather than from

reading and writing. Music is an art and it is a discovery of one's within along with the development elementary principles of nature. So, music can not be detached from education. The great poet Rabindranath Tagore thought this idea. He believed that a sacred atmosphere created by music helps a student well in mental and physical upliftment.[5] Music must be introduced in general education from the pre primary stage to the higher study and there must be a cordial relation between the conventional education and music.

To tell about music Shakespeare says, "The man that hath no music in himself, Nor is moved with concord of sweet sounds, Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils; The motions of his spirit are as dull as night. And his affections dark as Erebus; Let no such man be trusted." [6] As all fine arts do, music has a great contribution to an individual's mental and spiritual balance. According to Plato, music is indispensable to become a complete man. Students through music get the sense of values about life and its meaning. So, music in general education for the students of schools and colleges should be introduced as a compulsory subject.

Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan is an excellent example of a musical environment surrounding an educational institute. Rabindranath wanted to mix up music with the general stream of education and work-life inside his institute. He composed unnumbered songs to create feelings of joys and sense of beauty through our habitual works. Those songs include prayer song, seasonal festive song, harvest song, plough song, tree plantation song and so on. Besides there are songs to commemorate birth, marriage or death of human lives. We can find no better instance of such ideals regarding musical environment of education and such successful efforts to realize the ideals.[7]

Almost all of us enjoy music. So, if it should be introduced in schools and colleges, it will not only be an enjoyable subject but also it will enrich student's lives and education. Music enriches the brain related to language and reasoning. The left side of the brain is better developed with music. Music enhances a mastery of memoritation which is very helpful for the students in their general education. It is music by which a student can uplift his work to sublime. Besides this, a sense of coordination and emotional development come spontaneously to a students. It is a

established fact that the students can do mathematics more interestingly and more accurately while listening to a Rabindra Sangit or like that sort. The students who practise music increase their fine-tuned auditory skills. They have better auditory attention and can collect a wanted sound from surrounding noise.

In the present century one crisis is observed and that is the lack of imagination. If music is introduced in the early childhood years, it can create a positive attitude in a student's mind in future. Thus, music builds imagination and intellectual curiosity. Students after doing their home work and several task, can relax by playing music. Musical education helps the students learn and enrich their potential. General music is considered a subject discipline that emphasizes the intellect as well as the development of sensitivity, creativity, and the ability to make aesthetic judgment. Music gives direction to our pattern of living, adds to man's communicative system, and gives meaning to his everyday life. A well-planned program of general music should be included in all school curricula.[8]

Considering all the good sides of music, the teachers must introduce music as a compulsory subject and an essential subject. In general music classes, the teachers must observe whether a student is interested in real music or in instrumental music or some other instruments. Sometimes the students will have to be taken to listen to good musical programme. The teachers can also make the children listen to select records as listening exercises. The teachers must know that music has an intense appeal to the students. Music as a subject in school can lessen the number of drop outs. In the beginning to teach a new song, it must be presented repeatedly and without any accompaniment. Another point is that the classrooms environment must be favourable for learning, music and musical instruments must be readily available. Sometimes tests and evaluations should be conducted to see the improvement of musical skills of students.

"The object of the study of music in school are then, firstly to develop and cultivate that liking for music which is learnt in the vast majority of children." [9] "Music is a vital factor in the lives of human beings. It has a soothing influence on the nervous system. Music should be studied for its own sake without any special end in view. It helps us to understand something of nature's laws. The study of music is an essential part of a liberal education. It

creates in the pupil a wider outlook on life. The principle of cooperation is well inculcated in the minds of pupils in group singing, orchestra playing etc.”[10]

### Conclusion

We do not need a hard-hearted degree and certificate-oriented man. We want a student will grow into a man, a complete man, a man in true sense with an aesthetic sense. Music serves the purposes.

### Footnotes

- 1 Tagore, Rabindranath, The English Writings of (Vol.2 : Poems), Rabindranath Tagore (Author), Mohit K. Ray (Intr.), Published by Atlantic Publishers & Distributors (p) Ltd, 2007, p 454
- 2 Tagore, Rabindranath, Sangeet Chinta, Sri Ramkumar Mukhopadhyay Visva-Bharati Granthan bibhag Kolkata-17, 1373 (Bengali), p 68
- 3 Kuppaswamy, Gowri & M. Hariharan, Teaching of Music, Sterling Publishers Pvt Ltd. New Delhi-110016, 1978, p 7
- 4 Ibid, p 8
- 5 Ghosh, Santidev, Rabindra Sangeet, Kumkum Bhattacharya Visva-Bharati Granthan bibhag Kolkata-17 1349 (Bengali), p 6.
- 6 Halio, Jay L., The Merchant of Venice, William Shakespeare, Oxford University press Inc, New York, 1993, p 217
- 7 Nikhilesh Chowdhury, Gabeshanamulak Sangitik Prabandhabali, Subarnorekha (73) Mahatma Gandhi Road Kolkata -700009, 2012, p 16
- 8 Secondary School Music Neal E. Glenn, William B. Mc Bride & George H. Wilson, Prentice-Hall, INC., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1970, p 105
- 9 Op.cit, Gowri Kuppaswamy & M. Hariharan, p 5-6
- 10 Ibid, p 7

