

## **An assessment of some unanticipated hassles of music pedagogy in Indian universities : A professional perspective**

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Many discussions, studies, thesis or researches as well as articles in journals and books have been published on the music education system followed in Institutions and on the analysis or comparative study between guru-shishya-parampara and institutional education. Almost the same and common merits and demerits of institutional education system of music teaching have been expounded everywhere and seminars or conferences have also been organized many times on this issue, remedial suggestions have also been illustrated. Nevertheless, no major positive change has taken place in the scenario as yet. The educationalists, musicians, scholars have to rethink with new point of views why the situation is getting worse day by day and how to bring about a logical, scientific and an effective change in music pedagogy.

The process of democratization of Indian music occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by establishing music faculties in colleges and convening music festivals. Paluskar and Bhatkhande were successful to uproot darbarisangeet from the darbar-s of the kings and contributed towards introducing as well as popularizing the North Indian classical music among the masses. During that era, the aim of inaugurating music education system was confined, but now in the modern globalized period the aims of music education have to be reassessed and analysed with a new perspective because music education now has a broader aim and aspect. Pandit Bhatkhande acknowledged that this education system might not manufacture any 'Tansen' or performer but would be capable of making 'kansen' or connoisseur. But, the poser must be raised today whether the universities are being able to produce so called any 'kansen' even! What kind of a music education is transmitted or exchanged between teachers and students? Are the colleges being able to produce or recruit wise teachers? Teachers must think whether they are

maintaining the professional ethics at their workplace, or are they concerned about the moral values and a healthy teacher-student relationship! Are the teachers and scholars aware of the whole situation? Educationalists should reevaluate the curriculum properly and rethink on the methods of teaching.

Many similar uncharted and controversial issues would come up, which are still not explicated. By and large, the most disincensive and dismayed fact is that the students are not trained to become professionally capable of contributing and strengthening the music industry.

### **The current state of music education and learning**

The process of globalisation and commodification which started in the previous century have changed the aims of education rapidly. Only the moral development or character building are no longer the goal of education, though still the primary aim is to expand and cultivate wisdom or produce new knowledge, now a days materialism, technological advancement etc. have brought about a huge transformation in the mentality of the people or learners as well. Often we can see that the traditional artistes not giving importance and even underestimating the music education system run by college or universities. According to most of the successful and renowned artistes, universities have not produced a single great performer yet, and it is not at all any sheer false statement. At least in Indian classical music guru-shishyaparampara cannot be replaced by any other education system. But, if anyone thinks properly, though the colleges and universities cannot produce artistes, these were established to acquaint the masses of India with the Indian music.

First of all, we need to discuss about the aims of music education system of higher education level. The main aim is to give information about Indian music and to describe

all the features of practical and theoretical, logical or philosophical aspects of music, so that the students can acquire a sound knowledge on music. The other important aim of this education system is to influence the students, by which they can be involved and proceed for the search of new knowledge i.e. the higher education system paves the way for research in Indian music. University education system aims to make good teachers and critics. It also aims to provide the erudition so that creativity and musicality may develop in the students' mind.[<sup>1</sup>] In the guru-shishyaparampara, step by step and a slow but steady development can be seen. But in the colleges, in a very short time span various *raga-s* or *tala-s* or many different important lessons are taught. Students must recognise these features, forms or subtle of music as a connoisseur. As now we dwell in a democratic system, everyone has the right to acquire the knowledge unlike in the previous era of kingship of *nawab-s* or princely state rulers. Therefore, if anyone says or criticises this very education system for not being able to produce good performers, he misconceives or misapprehends its conception.

Some musicologists opine that if historians, scientists, poets or novelists cannot be manufactured by general education system, it should not also be expected that artistes will be produced from the colleges. But, simultaneously, on the other hand, as music is undoubtedly a performing art, even if anyone does not become a performer, he should have a minimum eligibility to sing or play the instrument properly. But, it is very unfortunate, that a large number of students or some teachers also, not exaggeration to say, are unable to sing in tune and rhythm. Pandit Ajoy Chakraborty in his book 'Shrutinandan' expressed his disappointment saying that due to lack of honesty, awareness, affection and ability of the teachers, learners cannot become performers. One should acquire the ability to sing if he learns music. It is not that the syllabus of B.Mus or M.Mus are totally valueless or imprecise, but till now we have got some second class or substandard teachers or performers who are not able to tune their own *tanpura* or *tabla* properly. Can anyone expect a doctor after completing his M.B.B.S. cannot give an injection or a civil engineer after completing his B.E. cannot make a mundane design of a house? But in music after completing M.Mus and even Ph.D. also, a person unable to tune his *tanpura* is not an exceptional phenomenon, it is a common hard reality.[<sup>2</sup>] Raising the question 'why students are not becoming artistes' is invalid.

Here, the question arises why in most cases university education system of music becomes in vain in making so called kansen also? The education system, or syllabus and curriculum, teachers, students, government or the policy makers have different duties or responsibilities. Unless the role of these bodies, responsibility and irresponsibility of these bodies etc. are not evaluated, the causes of hassles in music education system and challenges in music pedagogy cannot be traceable.

Let's start from the admission process. In some colleges no admission tests are held, especially for those students who had 'music' as a subject in school level, students here get the admission directly.[<sup>3</sup>] Usually esteemed music institutions like ITC SRA and many more (not the colleges or universities) or guru-s of Indian classical music do not give the opportunity to all pupils or interested persons to learn. But, as the admission process is not maintained strictly in most of the music colleges, the titular students who have not that much quality to cherish this traditional art form with accomplishment are given chance to take admission. As a consequence, they face enormous trouble in competing with the talented students who have been learning the music seriously under a guru for several years or since their childhood. In many times the talented students also like to stay away from these mediocre or backward students in college. These mediocre students after completion of the course become music teachers in several places or institutions.

Another pertinent issue is implicated with it which is the syllabus. The examiners of admission test should decide at first whether they will give chance to students belonged to all categories or only to the students who have been learning music for years together. If the colleges will give chance to everyone like the students who have never learnt music and would start learning in college after getting admission, it is necessary then to design the course properly. Though the overall structure of the syllabus is the same, it varies in different universities a little bit. In the first very year if the difficult ragas like Alhaiya Bilaval, Des, Lalit, Miyankimihar etc. are taught, like it is done in many colleges, it is quite impossible to learn and understand the ragas for the mediocre students. After getting a good *taalimor* rigorous training from a guru and practicing, these ragas can only be sung. Therefore, at the very beginning or in the first year note identification, knowledge of common taal-s, *palta*, *alamkar-s* etc. and all the basic

elements of music should be taught. Then the basic ragas like Yaman and gradually ragas which have close relation with Yaman or ragas under the Kalyan group like Bhupali, Sudhkalyan etc. can be taught. Subsequently in the later years, all the *Thaat* ragas and some ragas under every *thaat* also should be given so that the students can feel and understand the features of ragas, difference and similarity in the treatment and the *anga-s*. As these students are not possessed with strong musical background or training and colleges admit all kinds of students, proper implementation of syllabus is very much important. A teacher has to complete the course because the syllabus is huge and there are uncountable holidays, in this situation those students who have no or less command over the *sur* and *taal* can learn just nothing. Hardly there are 150 to 180 working days in a year, within that short period some days are gone to waste because teachers are in leave for some days and for some days students become absent. General merits and demerits of university education system of music have been explicated yet several times by many scholars regarding the issues like number of students in classroom, system of examination and admission, classes taken by different teachers, time duration of classes and many more, here the same old issues will not be repeated therefore.

The education system can never become successful unless both the teachers and students perform their duty honestly and sincerely. According to some scholars, two categories of teachers should be recruited i.e. one type of teachers from theoretical background and another type of teachers will have the practical specialisation. Some even say the eminent artistes should be recruited in the universities. But we all know that the renowned artistes in most cases are not interested to do this kind of services because they remain busy in their stage performances and teaching in their own institutions. A teacher must have a good balance of theoretical, logical and practical knowledge. There are no contradictions between the two aspects of music. If one teacher only discusses the theoretical issues and the other only demonstrates how to perform, students will be unable to discover the connection between the two. Why a singer will not study when he is associated with an educational institution? And why the teachers who teach only the historical and musicological studies in the department will not try to learn how to sing properly or the nuances of performance, as it is a

performing art. A teacher of Indian university generally does not have to give as much time to their workplace as a doctor, engineer, labour or person belongs to any other profession spends his time in their workplace. Despite of getting plenty of time why will not they try to learn more, practice and perform well? On the contrary, sometimes, the teachers who are from the performing background underestimate their colleagues who teach the theoretical lessons. In that case these kind of so called performers should keep it in mind that they all are working as teachers or as the servicemen and not only as performers. If only they think of themselves performer, what do they need of doing the service for the months and years together?

As to the teachers who teach the theoretical portion or the musicology, in most cases they just distribute the notes in the classroom. The subjects are not explicated or expounded properly by the teachers often. Not only that, they don't influence the students to go to the library and read as much as they can. How to develop the intellect should be learnt. As the students are able to read and write they can access enormous and unlimited information from the library. But library can never be a teacher because it only gives us the information. A good teacher is not who only gives some notes or information, he should have the ability to inspire the pupils. But there is a big question mark regarding whether the teachers are being able to become ideals to the pupils!

There are more black sides which are very shameful in the teaching profession. There are lots of teachers who compel the students to come to their residence to get the notes or *bandishes* in exchange of monthly fees. For fear of the low marks in the examination the students are prompted to learn from these teachers. The mediocre students are usually victimized more of circumstances. Regrettably, many of the music teachers recruited in the colleges have rarely the knowledge of pedagogy and educational psychology etc. In school level, pursuing the courses like B.Ed or D.Ed is must so that a person having qualification in his specialized area can get the training how to teach and communicate with the students. He has to be aware of dos and don'ts properly in the method of teaching.

Listening to the good music is an indispensable part of learning music. The recordings of old masters of classical music and eminent artistes of present era are very much

valuable and effective in adapting new and proper styles and techniques of rendition.[4] Unfortunately this important method of learning is totally neglected or overlooked in universities where music is taught as a subject. Students are usually unable to understand the features of different *gharana*-s or the various styles of singing or the playing. Students of classical music if does not listen the singing of the gems of classical music like Faiyaz Khan, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Abdul Karim Khan, D.V. Paluskar or Mallikarjun Mansur or the tabla of Allah Rakha Khan or Wajid Hussain, or Karamatullah Khan and so on, then what are they studying and why? How will they become Kansen also? Students should attend the prestigious music festivals or *sammelan*-s as well as the small concert or soirees also to learn and witness the art of performing and the mannerism of artistes.

Students should also attend and participate in seminars or workshops on music conducted by various esteemed institutions all over India. But for this the students have to stay updated and also the teachers must stay updated so that they can inform and inspire the pupils to go and acquire knowledge from there.[5] Lots of institutions and organisations offer the scholarships to the students in the field of music like Ministry of Culture, Sangeet Natak Akademi, ITC Sangeet Research Academy, CCRT, ICCR, NCPA and so on. Government and these institutions are working, giving fellowships, conducting conference or workshops but often the information of these can't reach to the students. Only taking classes is not at all enough, students must be informed and inspired by the teachers, which is mentioned earlier. Both the teachers and students need to be tech savvy, the youtube, sound cloud and lots of channels, websites, software, apps, etc. are undoubtedly like the blessings for all musicians. Internet, e-sources, websites, e-journals etc. have opened a new horizon in the field of education. If the students don't learn to utilize it or teachers don't realise the importance of the digital world they will be moving backwards and remain behind in the race.

The students need to undergo rigorous training under a guru and continue austere practice under the supervision of the guru. As many of teachers recruited in the colleges have not undergone the good *taalim*, they often are unable to show the right path to proceed. One more catastrophe occurs in the recruitment process. Many teachers are recruited who have not that much quality or capability to

become a professor in university;[6] regulations are violated by the persons sitting in higher authority. For these reasons UGC has made guidelines or regulations on minimum qualifications for appointment of teachers and other academic staffs in universities and colleges and measures for the maintenance of standards in higher education.

The colleges which do not get the good rank or grades given by NAAC, the lack of interest in research projects among the teachers is one of the reasons behind it. The teachers are not being associated with the major and minor research projects (of UGC and other funding agencies), sometimes there are a very little number of permanent teachers in colleges and they bear a huge pressure. Some are busy in giving private tuitions to earn more (black) money, a corporate culture has come into this noble profession, a large number of teachers are running behind the luxury. As a result of this teachers are becoming less interested towards research. Serious questions are now being raised regarding teachers' quality and attendance in colleges. The in-charges or the principals of the colleges are being embarrassed by the posers raised by NAAC. For instance, some of the questions asked by NAAC are—

- There should be 180 working days in a year, how many teachers maintain that?
- Why do the teachers stay less than five hours daily?
- Why there is no interest among the teachers in studying research journals online?

Why there is lack of interest in using the modern technology and so on.[7]

Questions are also being raised regarding teachers' API (Academic Performance Indicator) score and reasons for not having any publication and not attending or presenting any paper in the seminars. The educationalists must evaluate the curriculum and syllabus also. Because, in many colleges syllabus is quite the same which it was like in the 30 or 40 years ago. Teachers are giving the same old notes what they have got from their own teachers. Syllabus also must be updated. Syllabus will be knowledge based and career oriented. Because after completing the course students will have to face a difficult nature of the world, they have to enter in a professional world. Students must develop a good sense of western music also. Although a very small theoretical lesson is there in the syllabus of many Universities but most of the students

does not have the idea of its practical utilization. The staff notation, time signature, chords, etc. remain only in their exercise books and after qualifying the exam they forget all they had learnt. Merely a little number of students who learn under an accomplished mentor and acquire some professional knowledge or skills also by their own endeavour can go further in life. Many students look for a job of music teacher in schools, but in the most private schools the teachers are required who know western music as well as Indian music, who should have the knowledge of playing one or two instruments like guitar or piano. Now this kind of skills cannot be achieved by the students often, because in colleges the syllabus which they have completed consists of something else. Many scholars have proposed to introduce the vocational courses i.e. in syllabus students should be given the chance to enhance or develop their musical skills like playing some instruments, singing commercial songs, knowledge of studio recording, etc.[8] But it seems like a realm of imagination. Because the basic infrastructure is also pitiable in many colleges, the students face huge problems due to bad condition of Harmonium, Tanpura or Tabla, bad structure of classroom, bad condition of library etc. Question arises that whether it is possible for these kind of universities to create music therapist, composer, instrument repairer, sound recordist etc. Because in these professions also a person's personal endeavour, creativity, skill, training etc. make him successful. As far as the eye can reach these are beyond reach of Indian colleges or universities in the near future. Here also the teachers should admit the limitations or barriers of music education system of university and make the students aware of it. Again they have to inspire and advise the students to develop their skills simultaneously from anywhere outside and not just to rely upon the university education system. Otherwise it will lead them to an uncertain future.

#### Scenario of music research in Universities

Now if we discuss about the research scenario in India or the music research in Indian universities we also can see some major challenges and hurdles. In the above mentioned discussion it is clear that after completing the course of five years what kind of students are being produced mostly. Though claiming no good students are coming out is invalid, the majority of the students cannot learn the basics of music due to many reasons or

systematic faults. So it can also be assumed what kind of students take the admission in Ph.D. course or sit for the RET (Research Eligibility Test) exam. In this admission process also there are some corruptions like some teachers or persons in the authority or teaching position are partial towards the students of their near and dear ones or the students from their home university, these students in many places get the undue privilege from the persons sitting in the faculty.

At present Ph.D. has become like an extended course of MA or M.Mus where after completion of masters, students are being prompted to do Ph.D. The students who have no new idea or perspectives are also coming to do research. Some students assume that like B.Mus and M.Mus, research level can also be surmounted similarly. Some are doing Ph.D. because they don't know what to do after MA because there are no plenty of jobs. But the fact is students only acquire or gather knowledge in the graduation or in masters' level. But a true scholar after imbibing the sound knowledge in his discipline, work on a project in which he discovers some new aspects. He investigates the study from new angles or approaches. In short, students are receivers but the scholars are givers, givers of new idea or contributors of society.

A student who has no enough depth in his subject after getting the admission in the university as a scholar usually face a problem regarding choosing a topic, because, he has no idea about his own limitations of knowledge or the area of his interest. He has not that depth in his subject to decide a research gap; he is often unable to find the major and minor research questions. Due to lack of new idea, views or perspectives, students have to wander hither and thither. Because of this, often guide or the supervisor has to come forward to find and select a topic for the scholar. We should remember that great musicologists like V.N. Bhatkhande and V.D. Paluskar who introduced music in the college and universities had no such Ph.D. degree. Great musicologists like Swami Prajnananada, Thakur Jaidev Singh or S.N. Ratanjankar and Omkarnath Thakur were not also the Ph.D. holders. The question is were they not wise persons! Were they not the men of intellect? Were they not the great thinkers of music and musicology? Many great scholars of the past and present have not done Ph.D. But they are great contributors of art and music. It is not necessary that all students have to do Ph.D. If Ph.D.

becomes compulsory to get the job in colleges, all will be compelled to pursue the course. As a consequence, the quality of researches will be very poor. Regrettably the aim of doing research will be to get only the degree. The policy makers have to think whether it is necessary to be awarded Ph.D. in music for entering in the service in university. A nation can produce labours or increase the number of labours and army also, but it is impossible to manufacture scholars forcibly in this way.

If all students come to pursue the Ph.D. or number of Ph.D. candidates increased in the departments, all the teachers or the faculty members of the colleges or departments will have to supervise. But in the music faculties all teachers are not from the musicological background, like many are the AIR artistes (it should not be misinterpreted that all the AIR artistes are lay persons, many of them are excellent guides working in the Indian universities without having Ph.D.), some teachers have never published a research paper or article in book or journal or anywhere else in his lifetime, some teachers despite of being supervisors of the research scholars have no idea even on the research methodology. But anyhow among them supervisor have to be selected. If all the faculty members become research guides in this way, a combination of second or third class guide and a second or third class scholar will carry out a sheer substandard and poor research work. According to the latest guidelines of UGC, assistant professors, associate professors and the professors can supervise 4, 6 and 8 scholars respectively. But question arrives in mind, with all due respect to the professors, how many professors are there in India who are performing their duty appropriately as guides while supervising eight scholars in eight different topics of research at a time simultaneously. It is not at all a matter of joke that a person is involved or associated in eight different research projects.

In Ph.D. research also, many teachers who become the guides demand bribery unethically from the scholars where scholars get research fellowship. If the scholars do not agree with this unethical transaction, supervisors blackmail them saying that they will not sign on the monthly, annual or progress report which are to be sent by the scholars to universities or funding agencies like UGC. What else we can say it other than extortion done by high educated persons who are involved in educating the whole

society. But, it is a fact that there are some common problems which are similar in every stream. One can say that these problems exist everywhere or these are the common problems of every stream of education system. Yet it should also be discussed. For instance, it is applicable in research methodology also. There is a general methodology applicable in all disciplines and similar research problems or hurdles which are being faced by the research scholars of every discipline. Though there are some specific issues and challenges of music pedagogy, the problems of music education system run by universities are not always different from other disciplines.

Students and scholars in music in many cases do not keep in touch with the current affairs of society, many students have no interest in the socio-cultural, historical and political changes or upheavals which have been taking place in the world. They cannot find its link with music. Even if there is no connection with music, as a member of a civil society and an educated person they must be updated with all social issues taking place in the society which may be non-musical. In the first paper of NET exam and other competitive exams students of music face difficulties. Only reading some books on music and playing an instrument is not enough, teachers or the guides and scholars of music should be updated regarding the notifications, guidelines and regulations of UGC, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of culture etc. and of all the policy making bodies.

There is a vast area of research in interdisciplinary studies. Music researches related to the social life of masses, cultural and political upheavals etc. still have a large scope to be focused on. In many cases no new ideas are coming out, same old facts, issues are being repeated by the scholars. The numbers of survey research, scientific or experimental research should not get declined. Scholars are relying on the information given by Google sometimes without checking its validity. An abundance of only narrative researches can never give a new perspective to the society, research must be analytical too. Survey or the field work is very much essential and relevant in this regard, which is neglected sometimes.

There are some other problems also of music researches done in universities. There are many regional languages in India. Different languages are spoken in different states. Now most of the researches which are done in regional

languages cannot be understood or accessible to all. Though musicologists like Premlata Sharma have opined in favour of learning different languages other than the mother tongue so that it can be possible to study the musicological literatures written in various languages.[<sup>9</sup>] But, right now how many scholars have been successful to learn 3 or 4 languages including English? Among the languages of India most of the musicological literatures whatever it may be the books, or journals, articles, researches etc. are published in Hindi. But most of the teachers or scholars who are not working in the universities situated in Hindi region are not familiar with Hindi. Teachers do not inspire the students and scholars to study Hindi or English publications. They have no problem in enjoying Hindi movies but so far Hindi books are concerned they face a tremendous difficulty to explore or understand.

### Conclusion

To conclude it can be said that a process of democratisation of the Indian classical music came into being by introducing music education in college and universities. Music is sought to be popularised and the music education has been standardised. Everyone is getting the opportunity to learn this classical art form. But it is also an undeniable fact that every art is not for everyone. 'Access' and the 'outcome' are the two most important aspects of the system. Access means getting or giving the chance or opportunity to become professionally abled, and the outcome is getting or giving the chance to work professionally. After getting the proper training a person will work successfully. Starting from the admission process of the students to the recruitment process of the teachers, transparency must be maintained. Otherwise the society will be unable to get the proper impact of this system.

Last but not the least, in spite of the process of democratisation of traditional art form came into vogue in Indian society, the folk arts, folk literature or the folk music has somehow been overlooked by educationalists or the policy makers. Reach tradition of folk music has been cultivated in India for thousands of years. Every region has its own form of folk music. So, it is not possible for a university to introduce all categories of folk music prevalent in India. But if the universities introduce at least the folk music of its own state or region, for example music colleges or universities situated in different states in India if establish a department or faculty to introduce the variety of folk music prevalent in their state only, it will be undoubtedly a great step to revive the cultural traditions of India and who can deny the fact that *desisangeetha* has been influential on classical music!

### Footnotes

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