

Innovation The Research Concept

New Approach to Music Education in Modern Times

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Music has been reflecting the culture, tradition, and personality of man since time immemorial. Man needs proper training so that a person endowed with a talent for music may express its beauty in the form of sounds. Undeniably more than all other arts, music has always evoked an immediate and forceful response from people of every land and every stage of mental growth and level of education. Music is an essential link in the day-to-day lives of all students. This noble art has helped in moulding and shaping them to be worthy citizens of our world. Music is the message of hope, consolation, peace, and above all, the divinity of man. It is an essential subject that needs to be studied by everyone desirous. However, merely learning the theory of music will not be beneficial until and unless one attempts to succeed in the practical aspect of the subject as well. One cannot ignore music as a part of the school curriculum. Therefore, it has become necessary to make the training system effective to allow new talent to emerge as artists.

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Introduction

In India, since the Vedic civilization, music has been the most significant part of cultural and religious life. It is an aesthetic representation of art. It is through music that souls communicate with the divine. The finite self becomes merged with the absolute self. Music provides an exhilarating outlet for natural and spontaneous self-expression, religious feelings, and successful creative activities. Music can also contribute to both physical and mental health. Music has become a crucial subject of study offered to students from the High School level up to the Graduation and Post-Graduation level.

The focus in any educational endeavour is the student. The progress of the student depends on the quality of the input. The teacher is expected to handle and mould the stipulated objectives of music education.

There is a firm belief among music educators that only students with the necessary aptitude and interest should be permitted to take specialised training.

Shuter (1968 p.113) believes that this kind of approach to music education is in the interest of both parents and teachers. It would be better to encourage the unmusical to pursue other more profitable activities, allowing teachers to devote more time and effort to discovering and fostering the talented. The teacher may feel reassured if the failure of some of the pupils to progress can be due to the innate lack of musical ability. The parents may wish to know whether it is worth spending time and money on music lessons for a student with no definite promise of skills.

Professor Shankar Lal Mishra has mentioned five qualities to assess a student's musical ability.

1. Capacity to appreciate melodious sounds.
2. Capability to respond to laya.
3. Ability to listen to sounds carefully and reproduce the same.
4. Musical memory.
5. Artist emotionality or sensitivity.

It is an acknowledged fact that no subject demands so much individual attention as music. Therefore, it is essential that if the teacher has to fulfil their assigned role effectively, the student must have the requisite calibre and inclination to pursue music.

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Gifted students have always shined through the means of talent contests, and must be encouraged to pursue and excel in the field of music and art in general

A teacher's role is no doubt of paramount importance in the framing of an enlightened student. He is one of the vital factors in the effective conduct of education. He must be educationally and musically competent.

Objectives of the Study

The prerequisites in making the education of music efficacious are aptitude, interest, competence, and dedication.

Guidance, counselling, and motivation are the driving factors in channelling students into appropriate subject fields and determining their performance levels. Teachers, parents, and peers play an important role in providing conducive learning conditions to the students.

A teacher's role in the educational process is highly significant. Qualities such as dedication, patience, sympathy, method of teaching, and the system in which the teacher works determine the effectiveness of the lessons. One can mark the contrast between the role and status of the teacher in Guru – Shishya – parampara and the present institutional system. The institutional system has not only changed the perception of teachers but also has changed the teacher-pupil relationship. Today the teaching has become impersonalized. One of the crucial factors is the class size which does not allow a teacher to have an intimate knowledge of the students' potentialities, aspirations, and limitations.

Method of Teaching

To impart scientific basis to music teaching, due emphasis should be laid on proper use of audio-visual aids, as well on the significance of motivation and correct method of practice and sitting posture.

Audio- Visual Aids

A major flaw in today's educational system is the limited time allocated for the subject of music. A teacher finds a shortage of time and is unable to attend to the individual problems of students. However, we can bridge this time restriction by providing supplementary material in the form of audio-visual aids.

It is heartening to note that some researchers are actively engaged in the preparation of audio – aids. Recently V. Prem Kumari has done a commendable job of developing these aids under a U. G. C. Sponsored project. The developed aids under this program fulfill the below three distinct purposes:

1. Aids for aesthetic appreciation of music,
2. Aids for the teaching of ragas, and
3. Aids for teaching correct method of Riaz, and voice culture.

In general, the purpose of these aids is mainly to develop an interest in music and make them appreciate and enjoy the intrinsic beauty of it – an objective that the usual dull and monotonous system of education generally fails to achieve.

The use of interactive and filmed aids needs to be encouraged in colleges, which must be

provided to the colleges by the government at subsidized prices. Also, equally important is an appreciation by the music teachers of the significance of these supplementary instructional materials and their keenness to make full use.

The technological advancements of the modern era can further enhance the usage of these aids via various social media platforms such as Whatsapp groups and more.

Motivation

Motivation is of great significance in any learning process, which is why it is an essential characteristic of the method of teaching. It makes teaching interactive, impactful, and complete. Students learn best when they are motivated.

It becomes the job of a teacher to instill motivation amongst their students by showcasing the meaning and purpose of the subject they are about to teach and giving the student a readiness of mind. Which heavily depends on the effort put in by the teacher to ensure the total participation and openness to learn from a student. To minimize monotony, they can introduce and promote small or large group discussions and debates. Supplementing the usual class lectures with appropriate interactive aids is also helpful in providing variety to the students.

A teacher can divide their class into groups for a playful musical contest in which they may ask each other a question about various aspects of a raga. The usefulness of this approach increases if students have prior information of such contest and if appropriate incentives in the form of appreciation certificates or same taken incentives are given to the member of the winning teams by the music club or music association functioning in the college.

Practice

The question of practice is of paramount significance in the context of music education. It is no doubt a universally accepted truth that practice is essential to learning an art form. In the old tradition of music education, emphasis used to be on cramming and long continuous hours of Riaz. The music educators no longer consider mugging up an integral part of learning but the psychological aspect that holds importance.

Instead of following the Rote method of learning to practice a particular raga, they should take regular relaxation periods to enhance the learning experience. Scholars like Seashore (1967, pp. 154-55) and Mishra (1990 p 8) strongly advise against continuous long practice.

Professor Mishra advises that while practicing, students must pay due attention to their mental and physical health and practice their lesson with proper comprehension, confidence, taking due care of their throat, mind, and other body organs. Even after mental and physical exhaustion, a student is persistent with their Riaz, their chance of faltering increases and, these faults eventually become his habit.

Therefore, the practice should be undertaken not continuously but intermittently with some relaxation in between. Many students become nervous wrecks as a result of a violation of this rule. Some become disgusted with music due to the dullness and drudgery of long practice. Seashore

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has appropriately said that: The command to rest is as important as the command to work in effective learning. It is the prime duty of a music teacher to emphasize this principle on his students.

Sitting Posture and Gesture

Due emphasis must be given to the correctness of the sitting posture while practicing. A correct posture of the body while singing or practicing is of great significance. Students pursuing instrumental music should also maintain the appropriate posture and position. Their bodies must not be rigid or tense. The great gurus of the Gharana system believed in the saying *Asanbaithe Utah (camel) ki, tab hosidhalap*. Hence the posture must mirror that of a camel. This posture makes sound production an effortless process. Also, it helps in the prolongation of breath.

Two aspects of presentation, i.e., the gesture and the articulation, have to be duly stressed in teaching music. While performing, many artists make all sorts of odd and ridiculous gestures. The artist who performs with ease and with elegance is sure to be a success on stage.

Articulation does not only mean pronouncing the words but also voicing the notes according to the emotional depth of the content. The voice should be free from artificiality, harshness and should not touch wrong notes.

Pitch Discrimination

As explained earlier, training of the hearing capacity of students is of great significance in music education and must begin at an early stage of learning. It is a firm belief of music scholars that disgraced singing is not the result of only a faulty throat but also a family ear, for instance, the inability to distinguish between the sound of various notes. Problems of such nature were automatically taken care of in the old Guru – Shishyaparampara because the pupil was asked only to listen to their Guru carefully for a couple of years, and only then, his music lessons followed. If a student failed to mimic their Guru, prompt corrective measures followed. However, with the scarcity of time and abundance of students, this is not achievable in the modern scenario. Therefore, the teacher should look up to other appropriate methods.

For instance, while teaching the notes of saptak (octave), the teacher should be careful and a bit slow. He should ensure that each student can identify and sing the note Sa properly. A common mistake observed among students is singing Ma or Pa instead of Sa. Once the student learns the comprehension of the Sa note, they must eventually be taught the ascending and descending of notes. The teacher should illustrate the pitch of various notes by singing himself or playing them on harmonium, or he may ask some students having graced voices to sing it. But in any case, varying pitches of notes need to be demonstrated before students repeatedly. Audio-visual equipment will be of immense use for this purpose. The teacher may also make use of techniques in developing their student's hearing capacity. Students may be divided into groups and asked to sing Komal, shudh swars turn wise. A similar process applies to instrumental music as well.

Conclusion

The Gharana system and the modern system of music education have their own merits. An absolute comparison of the two is hard to be justified. Instead, there is an urgent need that the modern system should adopt positive aspects of the Gharana system to the extent possible, which will go a long way in bridging the gap between the two.

No other subject perhaps requires a closer teacher-pupil relationship than music. It is improper and illogical to evaluate the art of music with the parameters of other topics of humanities. Thus, no evaluation system can guarantee effectiveness and reliability unless it involves the concerned teacher in the process.

In the education system today, there is an imbalance between practice and theory biased towards theory. Students with an average level of aptitude and are deficient on the practical side of music cram the theory part of the subject, and surprisingly, manage a good score on the whole. There exists a strong case for consideration of this problem. Music is a necessity for everyone making it essential to bring forth a balance. The extent to which a person should learn or appreciate music depends on his circumstances, age, aptitude, and capabilities. Given all possible chances, one may come to the level of only participating and listening to develop a sensibility in appreciating and understanding music.

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