

Various Aspects of Academic Research in Music

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ABSTRACT

Music is meant to be listened to and enjoyed not to be read and thought about, as some of our music lovers say that music is an art, the fantastic, sophisticated pleasing art of sound. It is a performing art, to be learnt practically from a guru through oral tradition method, but there is another aspect of this art, made up of its history, its norms, and its forms and formal rules, its style and together with these its ethnic and social implications. The study of inter-relationship and development of all these would certainly improve one's understanding of his beautiful art. If the art of music be so natural to man that vocal melody is practiced wherever articulate sounds are used, there can be little reason for deducing the idea of music from the whistling of winds. Research is very important in every field. But the situation of music research is different, if we are writing about any topic of music or the cultural background of any type, so we should bring out the relevance of this information to the music and the cultural background of the present.

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The Indian word for music 'Sangita' which includes vocal music, instrumental music and dance. Music that evolved on the Indian soil and was cultured all through ages in diverse ways and forms by the Indian people and matured in a religious and spiritual atmosphere is called 'Indian Music'. It is commonly believed that it originated from nature. But it has a systematic and chronological history, as it passed through different stages of evolution in order to take shape as a complete system of science and art. Music is a dual entity it is a science as a matter of exigency and is an art, by nature. As a science it has to obey certain laws, while as an art it creates its own forms and order, so as to make a direct appeal to man's aesthetic instincts and enrich him emotionally.¹ Indian music includes music in all its forms music is considered to be a fine art. As such it may be defined as an art, which employ sounds, combined so to be agreeable to the ears, as a medium of expressing one's emotion and perceptions. It is finest among the fine arts.

Research in initial stages moved on the lines of other humanities department. Research in its contemporary mean have not a long history. The meaning of this word is to collect and analyse facts and information and try to gain new knowledge or new understanding. Research in Indian music should be understood in the light of the uniqueness of Indian thought and values. Recent Research works on music are accordingly characterized by critical study, analysis and comparative study of vedas, puranas, Natya Shastra and series of work on ancient musicology we also find interesting epigraph interpretation. While recent research unfolds glorious part of Indian music its highly developed and rich tradition. Music is essentially a performing art. The area of research having relevance in some way therefore appears equally desirable. If the researcher's concern is the style and structure of the music, the methodological tools, transcription and analysis are used. Transcription is a subjective interpretation of a sounding musical phenomenon and its transformation coded in a graphic form. The

methodology helps to study music in and as culture, instead of separating music as an individual component unrelated to the performer or composer.²

In order to carry out the research in the perspective of culture and society, the field work is emphasised. By undertaking the field work, not only the music is learnt directly from the teacher but also the social and cultural background has known by the researcher. By using the audio recording devices and motion films besides learning to perform the style of music, the researcher must gather the data and material for further investigation. Music in culture is studied either as a microcosm of the culture, in the sense that the musical culture replicates in detail the total culture, and social system that people have adopted or the music is considered as a commentary of that particular culture. Not mere change of the new era, but change in the fundamental approach, practical impact and proofs might make research work very useful. Actual performance should from the basis of research work. Research on instruments from an historical point of view will have to rely as references in musical texts, general contemporary literature, a deep and careful examination of paintings, sculpture and other fine arts, epigraphic references, folk love and mythology for arriving at a conclusion. The realm of research in this regard is practically good, but imperative. The development of Indian music has not been the work merely of inspired artistes. It was born from the profound wisdom of the ancient seers, and from what remains of ancient writings on musical theory. We can see that it was a most elaborate science. To day if the music of India is to be saved, we have to reconstruction the bridge between theory and practical. The decadence of some brances of Indian music came from the fact that the practice became separated from the science. Practical musicians can carry the traditions of music for a certain time. But they are unable to adopt it to new conditions.

There still remain many great performers who are the direct disciples of the musicians of the past and they remains also large literatures, which can allow us to rebuild the basic theory of Indian music. The unity however cannot be re-created through a mere scholarly approach of the ancient books. It requires a true understanding of the principles underlying the whole system of music. This study will have to be carried into three main brances of research, which must be co-ordinated and we might call scriptural, archaeological and ethnological. They will refer to manuscripts and books, then to monuments, paintings and other remnants of the ancient music and finally to the popular tradition of the various peoples, castes and tribes. It is generally very difficult to arrive at a proper interpretation of available texts without the other sources of information being explored. For example, we have representations of musical instruments and poses of dances in the sculpture of temples, we have their description in ancient books and often find that they have survived almost unaltered in some tribe of the Himalayas or Nilgiris when we co-ordinate these there images and the description, the picture and the actual use that we can come to a proper explanations of the texts. Similarly, the notations of the ancient Ragas and talas can only be understood by reference to still existing forms found somewhere in the country. Until these are properly studied, the explanation of ancient notations will remain uncertain. The ancient books tell us for example that the oldest music had a descending and not on ascending scale.

So many books on research methodology are available and each book provides one or more definations. These definations differ from author to author in scope of research, methods used and the purpose of research. For a person registered for his doctorate degree, writing and submitting the thesis is conducting research. By presenting and publishing research papers, the scholars are satisfied that they are contributing something to their areas of study. Research simply means that the scholar gains deep knowledge of the problem makes a

purposeful search of literature and other data related with the study. In this process the Researcher collects data related with the study.⁴ So it is not easy to do research in any field.

An efficient work of research should therefore mean the study and photography of monuments and ancient paintings, the collecting and editing of the main treatises on music, the recording of popular tradition music and study of popular instruments and musical technique. There is no other country in the world where these three elements are found together with such abundant richness. Therefore, there is no country in the world more important than India for the study of the history and development of music. Indian music is the key to all the existing systems of music.

India is the treasures house of music. If research on all the aspects of ancient and traditional music is undertaken and a sufficient scale, it will be possible and even easy to bring back to light some of the most brilliant treasures of Indian musical theory and this will be the only sound means of preserving the music itself. The information about the music can be divided into documentary sources and non-documentary sources. The documentary sources may further be classified into primary, secondary and tertiary sources. The non documentary sources or non-book materials are gramophone records, audio tapes, audio visual tapes and computer floppies. Materials from other fields also contain information relevant to the music researchers example paintings, sculptures, architecture and coins. The non-book materials are very important sources of information. These sources contain knowledge that cannot be communicated through published materials.

The findings of research in some areas of science may be truly dramatic and interesting, but the research findings in visual arts cannot be spectacular. It is very difficult and interesting. About music research watanable writes, "It is characteristic at the artistic field that fresh facts are additive rather than relative, tending more to increase the body of knowledge than to displace or multiply data previously accumulated. Each study no matter small or how big can contribute something to the sum of human being and human learning and appreciation."⁵ I can say easily that research is logical process, it is the pursuit of facts ideas and thoughts. The organization of data to point to some possible concessions, the evaluation of the results and the presentation of the whole is an intelligible fashion. Without these factors research is not possible. It is said that to appreciate any piece of art, a person must imbibe the mood of the artists, so that the artists only may evaluate any art piece. The all type of material is very important for any research in any field.

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