

Guest Editorial

Accessibility of Eligibility

In this era when the distance between knowledge and a 'receiving' mind is supersonically getting diminished, one is certainly compelled to think about the criteria of a 'receiving' mind.

Since this is that duration of the year when educational institutions invite fresh admissions or 'receiving' minds, I will try to share my views, experiences and observations on the phenomenon of 'admission' particularly in the light of musical eligibility. It might be a common theme of educational write-ups but is a vital one in today's academic context, especially in the field of performing arts.

On the outset, I would take this opportunity to analyze it from a different angle. One may agree that psychology is an indivisible part of education. Be it any sort of education. A few days back I came across a book mentioning the deep relevance of human psychology with music and music education. It was quite interesting to know that teachers, as in every other discipline, need to first study the psychology and temperament of the student before giving lessons to the students. Best teachers are those who can read minds of the students and can accordingly tune in with their frequencies. As music is considered to be one of the most subtle art forms, its teachers need to be more carefully aware of a student's requirements. Although since quite a couple of years, psychology is being studied as an altogether individual discipline, but actually it may be observed that it is intricately imbibed in the texture of every sort of education. Rather it may not be an exaggeration if we state that the foundation of any kind of education is psychology.

To remain focused on the main theme, for now we may just understand psychology in short as the mental characteristic or attitude of a person. This was the basis upon which counseling units started in school as well college level education so that candidates may be guided towards their 'soulmate' discipline on the basis of their mental characteristics or inclinations. This way wastage of time is avoided and students are directly ushered towards their dream pursuit. Unlike some portions of urban India where they have the facility of counseling, students on an average spend their golden quality time in burning midnight oils for some 'imaginary' goals which they have either inherited from their friends, family or relatives, not knowing what they are really meant for. Other countries apart from India follow this module of counseling to the core. There they even advocate the pursuit of dual professions. Like if a person is a licensed lawyer, she or he can also be a medical professional. If a person is an artist he or she can also be a professional chef. If a person is in nursing job, he or she can also be a musician. And so on and so forth. This is basically done to promote varied interests and inclinations, as well as to curb the issue of unemployment.

The scenario in India is different. Especially if I may mention the institutions offering performing arts in their curriculum, the situation is a bit uneasy! Firstly, we may not always get the desired combinations of subjects to choose according to our mental characteristics. Moreover, the students who opt for music are quite a range! From the most poorly skilled to highly talented, teachers experience all kinds of candidates. But the issue is that many colleges have different eligibility criteria, rather admission criteria. Some want numbers, few want quality. Even those who want numbers cannot be blamed solely as only long enrollment list insures lump sum grants for the smooth functioning of college administration. For the institutions who chalkout their admission process to fill in quantity, generally are short of quality because performing arts unlike other subjects cannot be mastered in Six-Semester-‘operated’ classrooms. So if unqualified students enroll, then the pressure of completing the course is more on teachers, which in turn makes them less available to more qualified students within the four walls of classrooms in a 30-45 minute per class time duration. Now in such a condition, the attention shifts from bestowing quality-level lessons to just finishing the courses ‘somehow’.

Returning to my point on psychology, with which I started, the admission process for performing arts must be based on the caliber and psychology of the students as well as intentions of parents and guardians. There are many students who opt music as a ‘stepney’. *Agar dusre subject me admission nahi mila to music se kaam chala lenge, degree to mil hi jayegi!* This is such a harmful attitude that it is ruining the batches of qualified students. People are unaware of the fact that music uses the highest working points of the brain. Research studies have shown that musicians and cartoonists have to be the most intelligent of all! It’s a pity that our society somewhere still nurtures the notion that music is for the unintelligent or for those who have been ‘abandoned’ by other ‘scientific’ subjects.

There is another category wherein the student is qualified but the guardians discourage. Many even ask ‘*music me padne jaisa kya hai?!*’ The society is still finding it difficult to place music in its so called ‘scientific and dignified’ list of subjects. This case is equally proportional to the psychology of the society as well as the economic framework of the country. A major portion of the society is still apprehensive to make their children chose music as a discipline in a college or university. The reason is very clear. They fear unemployment and maybe a low status. That gives a clear indication that enough jobs are missing for the students of performing arts. Besides even if there are a few job vacancies, the eligibility criteria for recruitment of a performing art teacher obstruct candidates. Not to mention that these eligibility criteria are again majorly designed by people from the non-musical background!

Once I read a very beautiful quote from the famous Norman Vincent Peale. It said ‘Every problem has in it the seeds of its own solution. If you don’t have any problems, you don’t get any seeds.’ Similarly the present state of musical education has enough ‘seeds’ of permanent solutions. Education has to be ‘user-friendly’, particularly in this case of music education. It has

to beget fruits; fruits of material as well as metaphysical gains otherwise such an education will be sterile.

I am confident that in future ‘music’ will definitely procure ‘business class’ in our thought and education system. Like the aviation industry offers seats in business class which provide various facilities to its passengers similarly music as a discipline will also soon hopefully enjoy a more dignified status and will attract quality students and interested guardians. The journey has already started. People have begun to appreciate music and its lessons, the patience and commitment it requires and its infinite potential in serving as a tool in personality development, especially in preliminary school education.

After more than seventy years of Independence, and travelling more than half-a-century path of music education, we may hope that music will find a permanent place in the ‘psychology’ of the people in our society but it will be possible only when the ‘psychology’ gets ‘engineered’ by ‘medicated’ minds!

Nevertheless, we must remember that besides musicians and maestros, the society equally needs music appreciators, connoisseurs, and wise audience simultaneously because music-education is exclusively all-inclusive and without the latter the former will be only partially complete.

In a nutshell, we may conclude that to reap better dividends there is a need to analyze ‘eligibility’ in its truest terms, an ‘eligibility’ which will offer better support system for the deserving, an ‘eligibility’ which will persuade the undeserving to re-access their potential and inspire them to work hard, and finally an ‘eligibility’ which will escort our country towards a better future.

I am glad to share my views and opinions with the intelligentsia of Sangeet Galaxy and extend my heartiest congratulations and best wishes to this widely accessed journal for contributing in the academic advancement of ‘humanitarian’ art forms in a colossal way.

Thank you!

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