

Indian Classical Music in a Globalized World

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Abstract

Indian classical music from its inception to the present has gone through various phases of transformations and transitions. In the process it has embraced and rejected many features with maintaining an absolute balance with the old age tradition.

In the world of globalization with the course of economic flexibility and advancement of technology, society underwent through a visible phases of change. Incorporation of western values, ideas, technologies and institutions changed the core values of culture introducing an era of commoditization of almost every aspects of human life so the music. Market became a vital mechanism through which the quality of music is judged. The paper 'Indian Classical music in the globalized world' aims at understanding 'globalization' in the context of Indian classical music. It deals with exploring and analyzing the phenomenal changes incorporated in Indian classical music because of the new ethics and values of globalization. The work is an effort to critically explain various components of present Indian Classical Music in the globalized generation.

Key Words- *Change in patterns, impact of technology and communication, market, economic status*

Music is always allied with the society or the social activities. Music system have been invented and developed by the interaction of individuals in the context of different social and cultural situations. The most spontaneous activities of social life in general are not without some musical characteristics. Thus musical tones are symbolic of social facts (N. Singh 2004). Music has been evolved since ages with the changing realities of the society. It has accepted and excluded many things with the need of the society. It has undergone sea change of the evolutions, with the time and situations. Indian classical music has evident of huge changes since its provenance. Through the process of evolvement it has accommodated many features which have completely changes its identity and place. From the philosophical religious music to the court, from court to the public, it is in the process of evolution till date. But in all these phases of time the music along with adaptation and rejection has always struggled for maintaining its immaculacy or the classicism.

Globalization in the end of the twentieth century has brought a very new and complex definition to almost everything. Be it politics, economy, culture and society. More the communication and interaction has been made simpler/ easier, the society as a whole turning towards a complex character.

Globalization brought–

- International Integration
- Opening of the world trade,
- Development of the advance mean of communication
- Internationalization of financial market and
- Increased mobility of person , good , capital data and Idea

All these components along with the economic flexibility have brought lots of reconstruction in the structure of the society and culture around the world. The free transfer of capital, good, and services across the frontiers has turns world into a ‘global village’. This as other aspect of life brought phenomenal swift in the art, culture and music. This typhoon of the technological advance and the globalization was considered threat to the very old tradition of Indian culture and society. As explained by Yogendra Singh in his book “*Culture change in India, identity and globalization*”- in the modern world

“It is noticed that scientific reason not only explains but also mystifies reality. The solution that science offers, on which the discourse of modernity largely rests, are not only revisable but often misleading. These have failed to resolve the issue which continues to bedevil the ideology of universal humanism and human rights. ... These and several other aspects of the contemporary process of modernization, globalization and universalization of culture and economic institutions, are therefore, perceived by people not entirely through a ‘scientific rational prism’. The scope for the mythical legitimating and rationalization of culture processes continues to enjoy validity in the ambience of ethical uncertainty and ambiguity which the contemporary processes of globalization of culture have generated.” (Y. Singh 2012)

For Indian Classical music the concept of Globalization was of little abhorrent as it trends in opposite to the tradition. Post independence North Indian classical music (hindustaani music) came up with lots of new dimensions and angles to look on. Since end of the British rule and decline of the royal patronage Indian classical musicians had to struggle for their bread along with the responsibility of carrying forward their lineage of the tradition or *gharana*¹. Artists were exposed to the market forces. Gradually with the incoming of globalization scenario of music started taking different shape. With the modern trends of the society artist has to compete in this emerging economic scenario. The very traditional music accepted and incorporated many new approaches in the learning and performances. It definitely has both the advantages and disadvantaged but what can be said that music world came up with a very new figure and identity. The approach of the artist and the audience towards music took different direction.

¹*Gharana is a collective noun meaning a group, which shares the same homestead. In the era of hereditary musicianship, the term came to represent a lineage , which cultivated a distinct style of rendering music over successive generations. Once kinship ceased to be the primary criterion for entry into the music profession, the term was redefined to denote a stylistic lineage. As a stylistic lineage, a gharana is characterized by three critical features-[a] a long period of rigorous training and aesthetic indoctrination of each aspirant under an authorized guru of the lineage [b] acquisition of the art through aural transmission [c] a sworn loyalty of each member to the music making philosophy and style of his mentor and lineage. The decay of the gharana phenomenon began in the second quarter of twentieth century and is now almost complete. The gharana model of continuity and change has been replaced by alternative models, yet to be conceptualized.* (Raja 2007)

As explained by Jonathan D. Kramer in the paper titled "*The Nature and origins of Musical Postmodernism*" (Auner (edited) 2002) in the context of post modernism the post modern music. They are relevant in the context of Indian Music as well and have very much affected the music and musicians. Like Postmodern music –

- (1) *Is not simply a repudiation of modernism or its continuation, but has aspects of both a break and an extension.*
- (2) *Is, on some level and in some way, ironic Doesn't respect boundaries between sonorities and procedures of the past and of the present;*
- (3) *Challenges barriers between "high" and "low" styles.*
- (4) *Shows disdain for the often unquestioned values of structural unity;*
- (5) *Questions the mutual exclusivity of elitist and populist values;*
- (6) *Avoids totalizing forms (e.g., does not want entire pieces to be tonal or serial or cast in a prescribed formal mold);*
- (7) *Considers music not an autonomous but as relevant to cultural, social, and political context;*
- (8) *Includes quotations of or references to music of many traditions and cultures;*
- (9) *Considers technology not only as a way to preserve and transmit music but also as deeply implicated in the production and essence of music.*
- (10) *Embraces contradictions;*
- (11) *Distrusts binary oppositions;*
- (12) *Includes fragmentations and discontinuity.*
- (13) *Encompasses pluralism and eclecticism;*
- (14) *Presents multiple meanings and multiple temporalities;*
- (15) *Locates meanings and even structure in listeners, more than in scores, performances or composers.*

The music and musicians demanded a broader outlook towards music and their art. They loved the challenges and desired to reach across frontiers. Music which was very much of India has easily crossed the frontiers and reached almost every corner in the world. Indian music got appreciation and recognition in the world musical platforms. Simultaneously Indian music accepted many of the western components and the Indian music also became a part of the western musical circles. *Ragas* and many other form of Indian classical music began to influence many rock groups. Artist like Pandit Ravi Sankar and Ustaaad Zakir Hussain excellently took Indian music to the world stage and dominantly influenced the jazz worldwide. As explained by Gerry Farrell in his book '*Indian Music and the west*'- The sound of tabla is heard in jazz, pop, and rock with increasing frequency, either live or sampled, and sitar is occasionally used in rock. There has been collaboration between Indian and western musicians, mixing jazz and rock with Indian classical Music. Some Indian Musicians such as, violinist L. Shankar and the tabla virtuous Zakir Hussain, have become central figure in fusion music (Farrell 1997). Indian musical concerts held in different places of the world. The artists travelled from India to various places and started to get recognition worldwide. In the course ages old philosophy of art had to implement new ideas of living. "Art for art sake" gradually turned to the principle of "art for life sake", rather money shake, as capitalism is the main essence of globalization. Markets became the vital mechanism through which the quality of music started to be judged so in classical music. And that's what quite obvious as the artist is too maintain the standard of living in the increasing economic status of the society where they live.

As explained in an article on “The Hindu” by Smt.Shubha Mudgal, one of the famous classical singer/musicians of India –

“Performing arts in India and its practitioners are today referred to most commonly as being part of the “entertainment industry.” This may seem innocuous enough to some, but the usage of the term and its passive acceptance in most circles definitely indicate a paradigm shift in the manner in which the arts are viewed by society at large. That today the arts must entertain and amuse in the manner defined by showbiz, and that they must form part of organised industry is the clear and unambiguous message conveyed by this shift. For creators and artistes who, in an ideal world, create art driven by an artistic urge or by that inexplicable creative charge that propels artistes towards their respective forms of expression, this shift from being an individual artiste or part of an artistic community, to being absorbed into or discarded by the politics and commerce of the entertainment industry, has had a far-reaching impact. A closer examination of the global entertainment industry, its mores and terms, would reveal greater details about the changes steered by globalisation. Firmly entrenched in the idea of “increasing material wealth” by the opening up of international markets, globalisation is unabashed about its obsession with checks, balances, net profits and turnovers. It would, therefore, seem only natural and come as no surprise that even in the area of performing arts, those genres that have a record of yielding attractive enough turnovers and lucrative profit margins would be easily and successfully globalised.”(Mudgal 2011)

Components which became important in music are –

- The numbers of musical performances
- Its accountability by the money the performer and program organizer gets
- Popularity and fame of artist in India and abroad
- How can the music make money in national and international market
- How the music would be accepted and communicated to as much people it could be.

Keeping all these factors in mind these days an artist in the globalized India not just have to bother about the music they makes. He needs to look after various other factors beyond just music. More the artist is skillful in the channeling and grooms themselves, is more successful. The soft skills are more important than domain. Public relations (PR) are important in order to maintain the position in the competitive market. It doesn't mean at questioning their talent in music but just being excellent musician is not enough in this commercial world. It is like selling and buying the product in the market. And for the market the brands need advertisement which has become very much essential for an artist to exist. Almost every artist of today has an official website with their musical profile, audio/video clippings, contact details etc. So many of the old and important rather identified characteristics of Indian classical music has changes, has taken different shape.

Performance patters had to make lots of adjustments. Duration of concerts has been squeezed to not more than one hour even less. That is indeed a challenge to the artist who has to make their performances worth listening maintaining both the technicality with the emotional or aesthetic facet in a very little span of time. And the organizer has to make a package of at

least three to four performances in this duration of time. So small *auchar*² has taken place of long *alap*³ with all its *angs* and varieties. *Bada khayals*⁴ have been squeezed too little lengthier than *chota khayal* and there is hardly any time left for the semi-classical form of music like *thumri*, *kajri*, *bhajan* etc. The performances as explained in the book Deepak Raja, Music simultaneously through the following progression, and arranges the different movements, sequentially, in progressive sequences-

- a. From the melodically simple to the melodically complex
- b. From lower level of swara- density towards higher level of swara density
- c. From the rhythmically simple towards the rhythmically complex
- d. From lower beat-density(tempo) towards higher beat density
- e. From the relatively unstructured towards the more structured ((Raja 2007)

The thrilling factor, surprising factor is crucial in performances. It should be a package of emotion and excitement which is possible with the variety in rhythmic pattern and elements like speed tans, *sawal jawaab*⁵, *jhala* etc. Neither people have time, interest nor understanding to explore the aesthetical values and linking philosophically to music. This is probably the reason of popularity of instrumental music more than vocal idiom. Apart from these technical changes now an artist no matter how perfect he/she is need support of the sound engineer in order to perform on a highly sophisticated stage, where the most modern sound system is installed. Not only that, technical assistance is also important on the part of the lights men who are capable of creating fabulous visual effects, giving a new look as well as more expressive environment to the performer. Supplementing all these, there are the stage managers or the event manager who look after the chorographical part of the event.(Sharma 2009). In the course classical music or Raga Music broadens its sphere from the autonomy of so called musical families to the common man. Music is no more the property of handfuls. This can be considered one of the advantages of the changing music world. Many musicians who are not from any musical background are doing great in the music world. Be it be short term or deception, as many says, somewhere now it is talent that counts more than the background. Furthermore teacher or *guru*, has to make adjustment with the variety of the students intended to learn music. So practically the essence of *guru-shiya(teacher-student)* relationship is very much changing. Rather it won't be wrong saying it has vanished. Hardly a student now is '*gandaband shaagird*'⁶ of a particular guru. If anybody is they are not away from the influence from any other artist than their guru. So the artists or Gurus approach and attitude. The guru *shisya parampara* of Indian Music is taking the face of weekend classes or short term crash courses. The *shisya* meets *guru* once in a week or even less frequently. In this fast life the time is important than what the student and guru is giving than '*taalim*'. The pressure is on both *guru* and *sisya*. Guru has to please students to keep disciples with them. In

² The term refers to an rhythmic prelude, rendered without percussion accompaniment, preceding a khayal presentation. The auchara has no clearly defined melodic movements, though it does follow an ascending-descending progression. It remains generally in the lower half of the melodic canvas, does considerably more than merely identifying the raga and aims at creating its atmosphere. (Raja 2007)

³ The word derives from Sanskrit alap= dialogue/conversation. The aesthetic implications of this word are appropriately translated in the alapa movement in Hindustani [north Indian] art music. The alapa is a leisurely, deliberate, almost conversational, exposition of the raga's melodic form aimed at achieving, for it, the highest possible level of intelligibility. This intelligibility is achieved by conformity with traditional principles of melodic progression. Within this general definition, the word describes different categories of movements in different genres of vocal music, and on the different instruments. (Raja 2007)

⁴ Khayal the singing style has two compositions are called bada khayal (sung in lower tempo or vilambit laya) and chota khayal (sung in higher tempo or drut laya).

⁵ A call and response technique of instrumental music performance. It is a conversation between the main instrumentalist and the drummer.

⁶ A tradition in which a thread [ganda] is tied by the guru [teacher] on the wrist of the disciple [shagird] before starting the teaching. This is a formal declaration that the particular student is the disciple of the guru.

this process the actually learning of music has been turned to very much materialistic creating a detached relationship among *guru* and *shisya*. Students also don't have patience to cope with the temperament of *guru* as they have lots of options. They easily can move from one teacher to the other who probably is in their comfort zone. Now neither *guru* has time and money to spend on students to maintain the tradition of '*guru-shisya*' and keep the students in the '*gurukool*' nor are the students daring enough to take music as a career. How much is he/she going to earn in life choosing this career. So it is not a surprise that the artist are being materialistic than being a true musician. Music is now a profession not a character not an identity. No wonder that true essence of Indian Musical tradition is disappearing.

In recent years music classes are held through internets, video chats, skype etc; and are doing great in this regards. That's no doubt a great invention. At least music is reaching far and far from very little corner from Kolkata, Mumbai and other places in India. And so many in modern days are dependent upon that. There are students seating very far in Australia learning Indian music live who have never seen their *guru* physically. The learning process is mostly based on the mediums such as skype, youtube or other archived music in various internet sites. In this process it is not possible to inculcate the ideation process or the principle of music making which make music possible as it has various drawbacks. Most importantly internet connection quality in our country, the problem of the broad bands etc. It affects the audio/video quality of the conversation. Furthermore how can the time of the *raag* be maintained when *guru* is in India and student is in the US? So they have to manage with the temperament. Although time of the *raag* is not that maintain while learning but if wanted they have to adjust. There is no other way though.

Again the invention of written documents like notation, theories of music etc has also made difference in the learning process in this era. Pt. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande, Pt. Vishnu Digambar paluskar's introduction has developed the dependence of learner to the notations and the written theories. No doubt their contribution is legendary in the history of Indian Classical music. Classical music freed itself from the clutches of the fundamentalist towards a democratic orientation of its. The old *bandishes*⁷ and very *khas cheezs* of old *gharanas* which were the autonomy of handful musicians were made public, which would otherwise have been absconded with time. Music has got enormous popularity in the country and worldwide. In this era the notations of *gats* and *bistaar* are easily available in staffs in books and internet sites etc. Music is part of the curriculum from the days of the schools. Without any familiar background a large numbers of learners learning music. This was very rare before. Indian Music has distinct identity in the world stage. Along with adopting the western influence in Indian Music it is seen that Indian Music equally influencing music of the west. But in the other side it has made the very *shruti*⁸ based classical music materialistic. The Music which is very much oral in nature can't be learned from books. Anyone can gather theoretical knowledge from book not the '*taalim*'(learnig) and this made difference in the quality of music. In this generation the artist has more information than *taalim*.

So the purpose is certainly not to blame any generation but to understand and appreciate the situation/circumstances and challenges any generation has to confront with particularly when several factors around us try to influence and intervene in the process of Classical music. Can

⁷ Bandish literary means is 'to bind'. Bandish in Indian classical music refers to the pre-composed poetic-melodic-rhythmic element. This is the foundation over which the *raag* is expanded or elaborated

⁸ Anything can be heard is *shruti*. In the context of Indian classical music, *shruti* is the measurement of the pitch of notes. There are 22 *shrutis*. Position of the notes are measured over these 22 *shrutis*.

we dream of something which actually doesn't exist? We like it or not we can't deny the unavoidable reality of Change. "Change is the only ultimate truth". Like any other art classical music also has to evolve with the changing time. Be it in a different form than it used to be the music will exist as it has been through ages. The effort is to make the music long live and the will continue in the future too.

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