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EXTERNAL INFLUENCES, TRANSFORMATIONS AND DILEMMA: A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN ASPECTS OF INDIAN MUSIC
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Abstract

Music plays a pivotal role in the lives of individuals and hence, it is difficult to imagine a world without the presence of music. Music and life share a psychological bond, which cannot be easily shattered. Contemporary Indian music has become an artistic medium, which contains the amalgamation of both western and classical elements, paving the way for Indian music to lose its originality and melodic patterns. Rapid changes are observed in Indian music, which resulted in the transformation of Indian music into global music. This paper attempts to give an analysis of Indian music by examining the external influences, transformations and dilemma encountered by Indian music. This paper also aims at understanding the present condition of Indian music marked by lack of identity that results in loss of the actual substance of Indian music.

Keywords: Carnatic, culture, global, Hindustani, music, society.

Introduction

Music has been described as a social and cultural phenomenon and acts as a medium or tool for expressing culture, language, ethnicity and other core elements of a specific society. It becomes a mirror, reflecting the overall aspects of the society or nation. Music and society are the two inseparable entities that are always interconnected. Indian music has the power to create positive impulses in human mind and operates as a healing agent to purify the negative emotions that is embedded in our minds.

Indian music has been regarded as a prominent artistic endeavor and cultural discipline that creates a huge and powerful impact on the listener's conscience. Music is considered to be a fascinating aspect of Indian culture. Indian music, basically divided into two types- "Hindustani and Carnatic," has undergone immense number of developmental changes and transitions since centuries ("A Brief Introduction"). Over the years, several other genres of music were added to Indian music like folk songs, film music, melodies,

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semi-classical music, etc. with respect to major influences on Indian music. Ancient Indian music is recognized as either "Hindustani or Carnatic" ("A Brief Introduction").

External Influences, Transformations and Dilemma in Relation to Indian Music

Indian music is well known for its rich culture and traditional values and often reveals the characteristic features of a society or nation. It is referred to as one of the ancient musical traditions when compared to other music systems of the world. It has a strong association to the cultural, social and ethnic diversity of India. It unites the whole nation in spite of race, gender, class, profession and thus, symbolizes the collective identity of the nation. As far as the ancient system of Indian music is concerned, the ultimate aim of music has not been confined to entertainment because rendering of music paved the way for spiritual bliss or enlightenment.

"Hindustani sangeet" has both "Arab and Persian influences", include the creation of new ragas. ("A Brief Introduction"). "Carnatic sangeet" has gone through western influences in its stage of development ("A Brief Introduction"). "Melody" is the most prominent element in Indian music whereas Western music has "harmony" as its essential aspect (Evans). The amalgamation of "Persian elements" and "traditional musical concepts" has acquired a vital position in the development of Indian music, especially "Hindustani sangeet" ("A Brief Introduction"). Perhaps, this musical combination proves that Indian music has been prone to external influences. As far as the history of Carnatic music is concerned, Muttuswami Dikshitar, a popular musician of Carnatic music 'exposed his wide Indian audience to the concept of western music' ("A Brief Introduction"). He employed 'western notations' in Indian music but tried to maintain original essence of Indian music. A 'hybrid musical style' was strongly accepted by him ("A Brief Introduction").

The present study becomes moreover relevant since Indian music has become prone to various external factors and as a result, contemporary Indian music has been raised to the level of global music followed by plenitude of elements in it and tremendous changes get reflected in Indian folk music, hindustani music, carnatic music, film music, etc. The emergence of cover versions of original songs represents a unique trend in musical culture and hence, Indian music has been traversing through new paths by choosing a different dimension altogether. It includes the musician's subjective contributions followed by a presentation that equals the expectations and demands of the listeners.

The advent of technology, British imperialism, economic flexibility, intrusion of western ideas, etc., have contributed remarkable possibilities to Indian music and at the same time, has negatively influenced the traditional values and essence of India's musical culture. As far as the condition of current Indian music system is concerned, a 'postmodern' attitude has been adopted by musicians to break the normal conventions followed in the

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composition of music and the rendering of songs. Actual musical platforms have been converted to digital platforms and it has had a crucial impact on culture. The emergence of new forms and trends in Indian music has to be considered and it has positively and negatively modified the actual music system and culture of India.

"Western tradition" has been adopted in modern music with respect to all genres of Indian music and therefore, becomes "a metaphor for contemporary Indian music" (Evans). Contemporary Indian music "may seem more western in appearance" which has led to its lack of inclination towards traditional musical elements (Evans). The relation between culture, identity, music, and society has been taken into consideration by many of the research scholars and academicians in their works. Western influences on Indian music, the mixing of both Indian and western aspects in music, music as a means of cultural expression, etc. have been the prominent aspects discussed by research scholars.

The idea of globalization certainly becomes the part and parcel of Indian music and most probably, film music. The so-called originality or the essence of Indian music has declined and the ultimate aim of music is to satisfy commercial benefits of production and entertainment factor aspired by the audience. Immense numbers of music bands are sprouting up with the complete intention of developing the different genres of Indian music into a globalised one so that people all over the world have the opportunity to enjoy music transcending the barriers of distance, space, time and other factors.

New songs are mainly shortened musical versions and hence, contemporary Indian music cannot be divided into separate genres. There emerges a complication in categorizing Indian music according to genres. As far as the present system of film music is concerned, a song attempts to fulfill the parameters of a film like story, screen play, direction, etc. rather than focusing more on musicality and originality. The urban culture that has been depicted in movies is reflected in the composition of music. Indian musical instruments are replaced by western instruments and therefore, enable musicians to explore numerous possibilities of world music.

Individuals, having a taste for music can observe plenty of platforms to exhibit their talents and it vary from reality show platforms to private 'YouTube' channels. Digital platforms have replaced real or actual platforms and hence, a digital musical culture has exerted domination over conventional music setups. Culture and music are bonded together and thus, a change in the overall system of music can positively or negatively influence the culture of society. "Increased use of technology" has resulted in the "addition of more updated versions in Indian music" (Vedabala 170). Indian music has transformed into technological music instead of traditional music. Social media also performs the role of a

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connecting agent between the artist and audience which has led to the decreased use of offline platforms.

Conclusion

The transformations that have happened in Indian music have incorporated a new culture to society since people enjoy a different culture in music. Indians experience an extreme alienation from their own music because of various factors like technological advancements, globalization, cyber revolution and other factors. The factors can be external or internal. Indians realize the fact that the actual identity of Indian music has lost which in turn results in the elimination of the cultural, ethnic and traditional values of India. Indian musicians and audience strive to overcome the conflict between the real Indian music and global music. They also realize the fact that there exists an unending struggle between real culture and digital culture.

The dilemma through which Indian music is traversing should be confronted by resisting the situation to the extreme. The loss of traditional aspects in Indian music because of intervention of western ideas, technology, globalization, digitalization, etc. can result in an existential crisis of Indian music. Indian music needs its own representation and acceptance in world music with its complete meaning, originality and essence which leads to the perfect balance of culture and music. Audience should never experience a kind of alienation from their musical system or culture because of the exclusion of traditional elements and hence, the right time has arrived for exploring the actual roots of Indian music to establish a kind of contemporary Indian music, which can resist or overcome the challenges faced.

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