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## Music, Students and Schools

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### Abstract

Institutional music education in India was first started in colonial India by Rabindranath Tagore. Music education in India is basically understand and related to the traditional Guru Shishya Parampara. Introducing the same as a teaching subject in universities and giving it a recognition of a 'Subject' is the result of constant efforts of both Pt. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande and V.D. Paluskar later on it is recognized and established as a Subject in main stream of education. School education in schools is its planning stage where every teacher, educational institutes and policy making authorities are giving special attention to preserve our heritage and legacy to the generations.

**Keywords:** Music Education, Student Engagement, Academic Performance, Creative Expression, School Curriculum, Extracurricular Activities, Emotional Development, Cognitive Skills, Social Interaction, Holistic Education, Arts Integration, Classroom Learning, Cultural Awareness, Student Well-being, Performance Opportunities

### Introduction

Music, a celestial energy, certainly has a deep impact on each and every individual irrespective of their life style, work profile, geographical location etc. Music has power to transport the listeners to another zone and make them feel energetic within. This ubiquitous art form attracts many a people to get involved into music learning deeply and not just listening casually. In India, we are privileged to have two well established classical forms of music along with many other music styles. However, there are various schools, colleges, universities are providing students with formal music education and many aspirants disciples choose to learn in traditional Guru-Shishya format, as far as classical music is concerned. Having said that, some studies discuss average quality and availability of music education, especially in Indian schools and studies still emphasizes on improvement of music education to provide music students with better teaching-learning experiences. The fact that music education develops the creative potential of learners, destresses them and provides them with a conducive and holistic learning atmosphere have been discussed in the studies. Moreover, studies have revealed that music education helps the students to do well in other academic areas too.

**Rationale:** - At first sight, it is very fascinating to see that music education is available to school going Indian students right from their initial years of education, but does it really happen, probably not. This particular topic was chosen because of some personal experiences of author while teaching at some schools and also the similar indications in various official documents including a statement in NCF- 2005 given below.

**"Far from encouraging the pursuit of the arts, our education system has steadily discouraged young students and creative minds from taking to the arts or, at best, permits them to consider the arts to be 'useful hobbies' and 'leisure activities'. The arts are reduced to tools for enhancing the prestige of the school on occasions like Independence Day, Founder's Day, Annual Day, or**

during an inspection of the school's progress and working. Before or after that, the arts are abandoned for the better part of a child's school life, and the student is headed towards subjects that are perceived as being more worthy of attention."-(NCERT, 2005, p. 54)

**Objectives:** - This paper aims at exploring the music education system at school level in India and to discuss some of the key challenges (based on recent studies) and recommendations concerning improvement of music education in Indian schools.

### **Methodology:**

**1. Literature Review:** This paper majorly discusses the data, findings and recommendations found in a recent report titled 'A Comparative Study of Music Curriculum in Schools in India and New Zealand. However, other resource material i.e. official documents, policies, reports etc. were also reviewed and considered as base material to validate the information available in the above-mentioned report.

**2. Interactions:** Interactive (telephonic) sessions were arranged and conducted with some of the area experts, academicians and school teachers to have their inputs. It was pertinent to have insights of area experts to validate the authenticity.

The present era might be considered as golden age for music industry but shall we consider this the best time for music education sector as well? Do school going students have enough opportunities and conducive atmosphere to experience and learn the music along with other important subjects and skills to become an apt global citizen? Education has a significant role to play for overall development of children by emphasizing on both the creative and logical sides of students. Music is one of the potential tools to develop the right brain, while some other subjects/ skills may help in the development of left brain. A proportionate development of both sides of brain may produce a complete human, and subsequently a complete society around us.

### **Understanding the curriculum and concept of School Education:**

In the Indian school system at large, music education virtually non- existence. According to music researcher, Dr. Vishal "**Most of the Indian School do not have music education as a part of their academics or extra curriculum activities**". In Indian school (mostly in government sector) music education, focuses on Stress Relief, not skills.

While the 'Rashtriya Madhyamik Shikhsa Abhiyan' Mandates that "**Art** " should be treated as part of curriculum but not like as extracurricular activity. To the contrary, most of the boards and schools treats music as a non scholastic, extracurricular activity not on par with scholastic subjects. Students committed to pursuing music find it difficult to juggle academics with music in the current environment.

Some institutions or schools are offering music education with some extra fees, but very little could be done, to build music abilities and interest in a average school child who does not have access to learn music privately. while most of the schools, following NCERT have compiled a music syllabus for classes 6th to 12th. Apart from this, both the board CBSE and ICSE are offering music as an optional subject in 10th and 12th board exam but the tendency of discouraging the students to opt for this.

The study of the above mentioned table also gives an overview of the diagnosis of the various problems and impediments being faced in the arena of study of music as a subject in the classroom.

1. Insensitivity of the parent toward the music education of the children.

2. Social apathy and indifference toward the sector of music education due to lack of understanding of the scope in the same.
3. Uncertainty related to a career of music leading to a callous attitude of the society toward its scope/study as an option for career.
4. The other peer groups who are involved in other general subject like science, math, languages etc. making the student pursuing music in any form belittled and socially less productive.
5. Music being considered as an unwanted obstruction in the way of other academic pursuance.
6. The inability of the authorities to find good and appropriate teachers to appoint because of less awareness in capable unemployed candidates, Specially in small towns, compared to metro cities.
7. Teacher being overburdened.
8. The indifference towards the music education is reducing it to a mere tool of conduction of annual function and other cultural program, that leads to lack of initiative on the part of music teacher who feels him/herself bound more to the authority than to the students.
9. For schools, music is not a priority.
10. The output required from the music room has been limited to fulfilling the different cultural needs in the schools such as different cultural activities, Morning Prayer, and taking maximum number of classes with no fixed limit of the students by the music teaching staff.

**Conclusion:-** Various policy documents have mentioned arts education as an area of immense importance for the overall development of students and NCF-2005 mentions that music with other disciplines of arts education, should be available as compulsory subject up to class X of school education but still music education is not available for each and every school student of the country. Status of music education is not well-defined at schools of different states and students are missing an important part of their schooling. Music education in India does not provide an avenue for students to choose music as their career and the contents of music curriculum/ syllabus are not covering advances in technical areas of music. Schools do underestimate the role and scope of music in student's life and also capabilities, creative powers and artistic approaches of students are undervalued. Music education needs a strong advocacy at various levels i.e. policy makers, Boards of school education, parents and community and schools. A revised curriculum for music is needed with its aim to provide all the school going students with a chance to become a life-long music enthusiast and to provide music students (much talented/ interested) with a career avenue.

### **Recommendations:**

Music education has a major role to play by recognizing, that to develop a sustainable career in the music industry, there is a dire need to emphasis on 'the business' along with 'the music'. To prepare students for self-employment education system needs a range of applied practical skills to provide the students a wide range of career opportunities in music industry. These can range from pure music skills like performing, being able to read and write music scores, composing and arranging and using computers to create and record music, to transferable skills in areas like business and management.

Recent researchers have found musical training enhances language processing skills in kindergartener. Other researcher have proven that music improves mathematical ability reading comprehension and better self executive function like planning, time management etc. Education policies should also inculcate a deep awareness and understanding the diversity of music as a continuous and dynamic process.

There need to be more room for creativity rather than to focus on competing a set curriculum decided by education system. A music education should include a deep awareness and understanding, not only music within the territory but universal too.

The school years are probably the best period to shape up the children in any form and to introduce them with traditional musical rites and provide them with a chance to grow as at least a true admirer and lifelong learner, if not a professional musician. Music education in schools can put artistic expressions, emotions, analytical approach, talent, and confidence into children which can certainly enhance the cultural strength of any nation. Music is a part of national curriculum for all children's up to age of 9 or year 14.

The aim in the music class is to develop the child's aesthetic judgment of different types of music. They also acquire the skill, knowledge and understanding needed to compose music and to follow a related carrier they wish.

Everyone likes music and some much passionate souls choose to pursue music education to make music their profession at a later stage. Indubitably, the core purpose of education is to strengthen students' mind and make them capable to deal with the challenges in a better way. But, keeping in mind the modern life style and socio-economic conditions, education is also perceived as a tool provide the students with a career-oriented atmosphere.

Unfortunately, Indian education system is more concerned about numeracy, science and some other subjects while arts are being ignored or given less importance. Parents are willing to see the high-test scores instead of creative capabilities and talent of their children. Therefore, students are subliminally participating in rat-race (rather than recognizing their own instinctive talents) which may take them to a state of frustration at a later stage. Education systems should ensure the designing and implementation of a balanced curriculum to provide the learners with the opportunities to explore and pursue their individual interests, talent and capabilities.

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Courtesy:

Dr. Vishal, A Senior researcher musicologist and renowned Sitar artist from Mumbai.

**Interview :**

1. Shri KL Chaturvedi, retired music teacher, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Mathura Cantt.
2. Smt. Kshitij Neelima, music, Teacher, Kendriya Vidyalaya Khichripur Delhi.
3. Shri Prashant Lal, HOD music department, DAV Public School sector 29, Faridabad.
4. Mrs. Deepshikha , senior Teacher Kendra Vidyalaya Chawla, Delhi.
5. Shri Umesh nath, Sarvodaya School, Delhi.