

CHAPTER - III

RATIONALE OF RESEARCH

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I hate the uninitiated crowd and keep
them away. Observe silence. I, the
music's priest, sing Songs never
heard before."

- HORACE

Music of the seers and Sages of India was a divine discipline and was solely dedicated to the Supreme object of God-realization in and through which human life fulfilment itself. Such music had an arresting charm and universal appeal. For, it flowed out from the lotus region of heart as an outpouring consequent

upon blossoming of the divine discipline of music into God-realization. As is universally accepted and well observed by Swami Prajñānandā :

"The realization of the knowledge of the Atman ^{is} ~~is~~ the be-all and end-all of all music artists and art lovers. The prime object of Indian music is, therefore, to get the blessed boon of the Divine Knowledge that makes men free from the chain of delusion forever and ever."¹

But the present day tendency of music culture offers a pitiable picture and a deplorable sight. It is so because with the development of science and galloping technology the main centre of concern has shifted from God-realization to Gold - acquisition.

As and how the lovers of music in India fell apart and forgot the very root of music, the music and musicians began to serve Mammon more and more. Mammonism supplanted mysticism. Consequently,

1. Swami Prajñānandā : A Historical Study of Indian Music, Calcutta, Anandadhara Prakashan, 1965;pp. 428-429.

the music of the God seeking seers fell into the hands of self seeking and material - prosperity mongering moderners. It was the impact of growing industrial civilization born of rise in modern science and technological revolution. The revolution in industry was fostered and facilitated by Mechanisation and commercialization of economic activity. The advent of economics into the Hall of Music introduced a phenomenal change in the attitudes of the practitioners of music. The attitude of money mindedness and material prosperity began to gradually dominate and as a result thereof the earlier love of self-realization drifted into the background. Music which was once an open high and holy way to self-realization got confined within the narrow walls of self interest. This tendency has vitiated the taste and temperament of both the artists and the art lover.² It should, therefore, be refined and viewed in its true perspective and colour. That is one reason that has inspired and necessitated the present research work.

2. Swami Prajnanananda : A Historical Study of Indian Music, Calcutta, Anandadhara Prakashan, 1965, p. 429.

Ancient Dedication:

Music in ancient India was an offshoot of divine knowledge leading to God and self-realization. The ancient musicians were either the Mystic Minstrel^l of God or the devotees of Divine sound Nāda-Brahma. The former Sang 'deshi' while the later Sang Margi music under the spiritual care and training of the former. The ancient system of music, culture was thus inspired and organised by the accomplished seers of Nādo-pāsana; and the place where this music culture was divinely^e drilled into the devotees of music was called gurukul. The entire environment of the music Master's Abode (Gurukul) used to be charged with religious purity and devotional fervour. There was no trace what-so-ever of professionalism of the present times. God was the centre of all education in music and guru, the Master of Nādo-pāsana was revealer of the Secret of Nada-Brahma through music culture. God sang through the guru and the eager recipients of that divine lore heard it with rapt attention and practice, day in and day out, the same music. The students went on practising the music heard from gurus mouth till the later expressed his full and

hearty satisfaction on the performance of the pupil. By the time the music education was over the pupil or pupils were as good experts in Nāda-Brahma upasana as the guru himself was. There was no trace of professionalism in them the kind of which is evident in the professional musicians of modern time.

R. Rangaramanuja Ayyanger succinctly points out the ancient seer - musicians of India "had no idea of professionalism. They struck to ideals imbibed early in life and looked about for discerning patrons. They never bargained for fees and were quite mind^{ful} of the dignity of ^{the} ~~their~~ divine vocation."³ By orientation and conviction the lovers and practitioners of music in ancient India were religious to the core. They observed ad-
 verbati~~m~~ the discipline given them by their Master. This made them what in religious literature is called 'gurumukhi'. They never questioned or challenged the dictates of the guru. They only faithfully obeyed each and every instruction. Music was thus a great Sadhana with them. This discipline

3. R. Rangaramanuja Ayyanger : History of South Indian (Carnatic) Music, Poona, Aryabhushan Press, 1972, p. 318.

had the intimations of the guru. It thus demanded of the pupil observance of appropriate austerity. That is how ancient Indian music was nourished in a religious atmosphere, and that is why it fulfilled itself in and through a spiritual discipline which guru gave them.

This kind of devotion to music, which was inspired by the highest ideal of God-realization was in strict vedic terminology called Margi Sangeet. It was the property of very few deshiks (gurus) in Music and their pupils were not always in much number. This tradition went on for a long time and even today solitary instances of such masters and lovers of music may be found out. But the main trend in Indian classical music today has drifted further away from its original form of Margi and deshi music. It has tended to become more so as a result of the progressive onward march of modern Industrialism, atleast a mint of money, if not precisely a marketable commodity. Personal glory and material prosperity have become dominant factors with present day classical musicians.

Modern Setting:

Several reasons may account for this sudden sea-change that was overwhelmed them to a point of dismay. Western science and technology with their pragmatic materialism brought about a swift, hectic movement of time and tide. Hurry and tension pervade the entire life of community. The social and economic set up jolts people heavily. The psychological turmoil tends to upset old attitudes. It has already disrupted human values of personal loyalty, sense of duty, respect for guru, tradition tolerance and good fellowship. The very object of musical culture and discipline has undergone a radical change. Where God was enthroned in the halls of music, gold is now seated on the highest pedestal therein. The landed aristocracy which had been 'the bulwork of culture and fine arts' has lost all power, position and prosperity, leaving the classical musicians at the mercy of common men's concerts in a democracy. R. Rangaramunja Ayyanger writes : "With the rise in population consequent on industrial progress, the number of musicians went up. But the gurukul system had died, and so the new comers in the field had no link with the past culturally or emotionally. Professionalism,

competition and absence of esprit de Corps marked the neophytes. In the prevailing confusion, a branch of national culture, developed for more than 2000 years in sheer dedication to intangible higher values of life, was transformed into a market produce."⁴

The old order began to yield place to the new. The old seats of patronage crumbled and new institutions which grew in popularity and attractive large crowds kept their gaze fixed on the box office. This new brand of musicians tore themselves away from the old ideal of God - realization, religious discipline and spiritual values of holy life and began to jostle and elbow their way to personal fame and prosperity, to professional success and mass contact. Music that had inspired awe and reverence was tainted with the stamp of professionalism over night. From a vehical of high serious spiritual culture, it became a cheep entertainment. Advertisement, wall posters, gate-crash thundering aplause, press

4. R. Rangaramanuja Ayyanger : History of South Indian (Carnatic) Music, Poona, Aryabhushan Press, 1972, p. 318.

reviews, public relations technique etc. have become the order of the day. That is, holy saints of high music culture has been supplanted by pragmatic sense of craft cattering for the masses than for the enlightened few. The quality of music has suffered as its result and standards have gone down. It needs to be borne in mind that every writer on classical music, Bharta onwards, emphasised 'janaranjaka' as the most indispensable quality of music. Lakshya was the end and Lakshana only the means there to. They have condemned with one voice discordant music, compromise with ideals, uncouth gestures and mannerisms and slovenly execution.

Briefly, it may thus be averred that Sangeet Gurukul flourished in the days when musicians had no eye on a career as public performers. Some of them were teachers and some others Sadhakas. But they were all surrounded by aspirants with various attitudes and dispositions towards the art. Therefore, music was a continuing endless pursuit. Years of study, contemplation and research found their fulfilment in thousands of compositions that flooded the land in the Golden Age. Products of inspired

genius of spontaneous outpourings of the soul, and of dedication and devotion to ideals, the songs were a synthesis of music, poetry, sentiment, ethics, philosophy and religious fervour. In the modern era of fast developing industrial and technological civilization music has lost its religious moorings and has yoked itself with the career and money - Mongering professionals. It is difficult today to find even a few who toil with no motive of profit with faith in the old ideal of self-realization. The musician of today has his mind rivetted on the applause of the listening senates who can scatter pelf, bestow popularity and bring his name into the lime light of history.

Dakshina Versus Fee

The transition from convictional devotion to commercialisation and careerism of music, though gradual, has been accelerated by the irresistible spell which Industrialism cast on the popular mind, on the one hand, and on the mind of the pragmatic thinkers, on the other. This change was based on the changing criterion of position in society. According to the new status symbols, those who

commended self or power enjoy position of prestige in society. Naturally thus money mindedness began to harp more and more on human mind in all walks of life. The world of music was also corroded by this attitude, more so especially in the transitional face in the post independent India. Barring few stalwarts and connoisseurs of vocal classical music of India, the whole trend among the classical musicians, both vocal and instrumental, is to charge as much fee as possible from the organisers of musical concerts all over the country. The sum to be paid is bargained by the musicians and money is partly taken in advance. The main logic behind such redical change ^{is} ~~is~~ musicians outlook and performance. The musicians hold, is that the old temple brand musicians or for that matter the artists of all sorts had the blessings and liberal munificence of the royal patrons who gave shelter and office of honour and dignity to artist of all shades. They could therefore afford to run gurukuls wherein the pupils offered gurudakshina to their masters at the end of their learning. Now it is not possible to do as was done by the master musicians of the gurukul system. So the fees have

to be charged and agreements have to be entered into. Though the musician is not purely an economic being, yet he cannot brush aside the economic consideration for the sublime or graceful performance of music he offers his audience. This attitudinal change has been a matter of anguish to the real good artists and lovers of music in our country.

The Lament:

Accharya Kailaschandra Deva Brihaspati gives an example of the late Musician Mirza Nawab Hussain sayed who was the court musician in the state of Rampur. Though a muslim by birth, he was liberal at heart because he was a musician first and last. In the evening of his life, while he was counting his last breaths he told his dear disciple, the author of 'Bharat Ka Sangeet Sidhant' : "Practice Music, grasp the texts (scriptures of music), have faith in them and understand the purpose and essential meaning of the sage - musician who were truthful desireless and dedicated to the cause of music. We do not know the scriptures, but we ~~have~~ firmly believe that the austerity and penance which is required

to understand the works of the sages has not been undertaken for long time past. In this very court of Rampur the so-called 'Pandits' have sometimes come who did not understand the necessity of looking with reverence the great geniuses like Bharat and Sharangadeva, regarded their works (on Music) as unclear or clumsy and who have looked askance at them. Not only this, they have used such words about them which having heard gives us heartache. Your ancestors had been great scholars and knowers of music. You are their successor. If you do not undergo the austerity and discipline of understanding the ancient treatise, then who else will do ? Believe me, and have faith that no labour ever goes waste. We will not be, but our soul will enjoy peace on your success and that alone will be our guru dakshina. If you do not do this, then you will ever remain indebted to us and our soul will be restless."⁵

Another great and far famed court musician Maulana Imtiyaz Ali Khan Arshi also advised the Accharya almost in a similar vein in Persian language:

5. Acharya Kailaschandra Deva Brihaspati: 'Bharat Ka Sangeet Siddhant', Prakashan Shakha, Suchana Vibhag, U.P., 1959, pp. 21-22.

"Well, undergo a little pain, big works merit big austerity. Then alone the wealth of the Elders will be had. Difficult is the path, great are the obstacles, but try to be aware what the western critics speak about your ancestors. Unless and until you succeed in grasping the essence and main purpose of your predecessors, your ancestors who are faultless continue to be penalised for your defaults. Their spirits will have rest when you ~~yourself~~ will establish yourself as their worthy successors (By being connoisseurs of Indian classical music). Today, people are regarding the works of your ancestors as Myths or mythological hoaxes. You know about yourself, but, on my part I feel ashamed."⁶

The need of research and revivification:

From the above outpourings the Muslim Court musicians, it is obvious that our great musical treatises on classical music need to be read and reread, to be interpreted and reinterpreted, time

6. Acharya Kailaschandra Deva Brihaspati : 'Bharat Ka Sangeet Siddhant', Prakashan Shakha, Suchana Vibhag, U.P., 1959, p. 22.

and again, by the serious and meaningful students of vocal as well as instrumental classical music of India in order that the confusions about the divine origin of our music may be cleared, some of the illusions about musical terminology is rationally and scientifically explained and the deterioration in the standards of musical performance is at once arrested and something is done to ^{resurrect} ~~resurrect~~ and revivify our classical music in its true science.

It would ~~be~~ not be out of place to mention the words of exertation written by T.V. Subba Rao on 'Plea for a rational interpretation of Sangeet Shastra'. He says "I would exhort you to find out the rational basis and scientific foundation for the propositions of Sangita Sāstra and discover its beauties with no less zest than that with which you do the beauties of the art. You will find how our sages with remarkable powers of intuitive perception understood the secrets of the universe in a measure that modern science with all its mechanical appliances has not been able to achieve. Greatest minds have illumined both the Sāstra and the Kalā. They cherish and cultivate by study and practice the science and art hallowed by the association of

names like Bharat and Narada, Jayadeva and Purandaradasa, Ksetragana and the Trinity of Tiruvarur; and adored by gods and men as the only knowledge capable of yielding the fourfold blessings and honoured by Sarasvati with her twin arms circling round its visible symbol the vina.⁷

The experience of recent years has shown in many fields that refined culture, especially the voice culture in Indian classical music needs to be revitalized. The main source of inspiration, renewal and re-examination of our important and epoch-making Sanskrit treatise on classical music should now come from the music loving younger and eager generation of the modern age. But this will have to be seen that new developments and interpretational innovations are coherent and are in accordance with the essential spirit of our Sangeet shastras. In the course of his papers read out in 1966 at 'Music East and West' on International seminar conducted on behalf of Indian council for Cultural Relations by Alain Danielou, he made a very

7. T.V. Subba Rao : Studies in Indian Music, Asia Publishing House, Bombay & New York, 1962, pp. 32-33.

significant and impression^{ed} plea for the resuscitation and presentation of the essential integrity of classical music of India.⁸ While concluding the session Mr. Narayan Menon, while presenting his report of the sectional discussions emphatically observed that "Our main duty is to preserve our heritage - our monuments, our literature, our language, our music. We must keep it at the highest standards and allow only of new developments that are really implied in the system and are a real addition, not an adulteration."⁹

Somewhere else the same authority made clear that a century and a half prior to 1947 that has been a period of pridelessness in the history of Indian classical music and that the music lovers were in danger of losing sight of the real thread and spirit of our musical development. Today India is on the threshold of an exciting and most interesting period in the history of Indian music. It opens immense possibilities for the dynamic revitalization of classical music in the sense

8. 'Music East and West', India Council for Cultural Relations, edited by Roger Ashton, 1966, p. 12.

9. Ibid, p . 199.

that the whole range of music the world over is now available to us. The Radio, the gramophone, the television and the easy travel have made available to us the vast realm of cultivated music. They can give says Mr. Narayan Menon, better perspectives, widen our musical horizons and revolutionize our musical thinking and creation.¹⁰ There is thus a vast scope for revivification of classical music as well as a serious challenge that can thwart its progress.

Mr. A. Danielou has very beautifully and exhaustively summed up the psychology of the present generation and aptly exhorted them in the following words, which I can not but quote word by word for precision and perfection of its purposefulness : "Do not tell me that the people of this land have been already so corrupted by the vulgarities of film music and commercial songs that nothing can be done to save an art which any nation would be proud to possess and that it may survive only if it is adapted to meet the

10. V.K. Narayan Menon : 'The Music of India' Published in Readings on Indian Music, ed. by Gowrie Kuppaswamy and M. Hariharan, College Book House, Trivendrum, 1979, p. 3.

requirements of modern mass media. This is not true and cannot be true. If mass media are used as a means to spread the lowest forms of a debased culture it is because they are often in the hands of technicians and shopkeepers without any culture or any sense of their responsibility. The police interferes when they go too fast towards degrading the moral standards of the people. Why do they not interfere with matters of artistic morality and standards ? We should remember the precepts of the Natya shastra explaining that this fifth Veda is intended to educate the common man. That traditional role of the theatre is now transferred to the film, the radio, the television, with much greater powers. Why should its basic purpose be forgotten ? To go against the trends of this haphazard, unconscious evolution, it would be enough to have a few really well-subsidised conservatories for Indian classical music and give the traditional musicians more opportunities on radio, or discs, or in concerts. This would be sufficient to maintain and revitalise one of the greatest musical arts in the world. What is needed is a consciously started counter - evolution,

a guided evolution, that seeks the purity of types, of styles. It is only in that way that India may keep its place among the great musical cultures of the world and also keep alive the source of musical inspiration for the future modernists of this and other lands."¹¹

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11. V.K. Narayan Menon : 'The Music of India'
Published in Readings on Indian Music, ed. by
Gowrie Kuppuswamy and M. Haricharan, College
Book House, Trivendrum, 1979, pp. 14-15.
