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The Intimate Relationship Between Music And Religion

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Abstract

The relationship between Music and Religion is closely linked and is known as being a “complex and diverse” one. Music is commonly known for being a universal part of religion in a pleasurable way. For centuries music has been a huge part of the religious culture and has helped to ‘promote’ and ‘influence’ religion by engaging and embracing people in religion. An important reason why music is used in religion is to promote religious values by associating music with religious texts such as singing songs in God/s or Prophet/s names. Singing also shows a great deal of respect and appreciation for life and what happens after death depending on what you believe. Music is a universal medium used in almost all religions. There are many similarities in the ways it’s incorporated into the religion as well as many differences. It is an essential and powerful element that enables worshippers to express their beliefs, their innermost thoughts and emotions. Music, when used sensitively, can create an atmosphere of worship, though if it is used insensitively the atmosphere can be destroyed. Composing music, taking part in the performance or simply listening and reflecting evokes a sense of spirituality. This paper tries to discuss on the **Intimate Relationship between Music and Religion.**

Key word: *Complex, diverse, promote, influence, music and religion*

Introduction:

Music is a transcendental, dynamic creative aesthetic culture as vast as the ocean primarily having an inherent nature of independence. It is characterized by evolutionary and revolutionary changes in course of time in sync with the changes and reformations in human civilization. It is to be critically observed gurus that the Sangeet should be flourished in proportionate dimensions with the additions of new components substantially without damaging the original features and norms to be preserved through generations to beautify and rejuvenate the old systems.

Music is the expression of human consciousness. Music is an offshoot of the nature that has been developed and cultivated over many years of growth and struggle. It is a part of human life's and thought, that needs to be acknowledged and must obliged to the viewpoint of human's life thought and ideology. (Sumati Mutatkar : 2006:3)

Music must have been evolved as a means of communication for early humans. Evolutionary scientists suggest that the culture of music would have helped human in communicating, influences them to identify their groups, and motivates individuals to support other groups. Music must have been definitely placed in a supportive role in human activities in prehistoric civilizations. (Smita Reddy: 2018: 1-2).

It has long been noticed that children who study music do better at academics as well. A recent study from the University of California found that music helps develop brain function. Second graders who were given music lessons scored 27% higher on proportional math and fractions tests than those children who did not receive any musical instruction. Also, a 1998 study which was published in the science journal "Nature Neuroscience" reported that musical training enlarges the brain. In fact, the area of the brain related to analysing pitches was 25 per cent larger in musicians than non-musicians.

Indian music is based upon the religious faiths, celebrations, observations and it has a highly coloured and fascinating history of the legends and traditions to be found in the ancient texts, conserved and passed down to us continuing cycles of ages, and the ravages of time.(Atiya Begum Fyzee- Rahamin: 1990, 1994: 28).

Susan Hallam, from the Institute of Education at the University of London, feels that music should be given equal importance to subjects like English or Mathematics. This is what she says on the importance of making music a part of school curriculum. "Music exerts a powerful impact on our lives and is as important for a well-rounded education as reading, writing and maths. Learning to play an instrument has demonstrable effects on intelligence and, when children play music together, it teaches them about cooperation and working together.

The word Sangita is the technical word of music in India, which originally, comprises of vocal music and instrumental music, in addition with dancing and drama. Musical instruments are scientifically classed into four groups according to the means used to produce sound: idiophones (bells, gongs, etc.), which produce sound by means of a solid vibrating body; membranophones (drums, etc.), which utilize a stretched membrane; chordophones (lutes, harps, etc.), which use strings; and aerophones (flutes, trumpets, etc.), in which vibrating air produces the sound. Instruments of all these classes are widely used in religious music, although one class or another is looked on with special favor or disfavor by various religious traditions. Instruments are often played in groups or ensembles. These are sometimes called "bands" or "orchestras," with the latter term technically implying greater size and more variety of instrument types; but the terms are often used simply to connote a lesser or greater degree of respect on the writer's part. Lord Siva is considered to be the creator of this art. The mystic dance of Siva signifies the rhythmic motion of the universe. Goddess Saraswati is always depicted, holding a vina, lute in one hand and playing it with the hand, a book in the third hand and a necklace of pearl in the fourth hand. She is considered as the Goddess of art and learning. According to Hindu mythology, the rishi Narada who wanders about in earth and heaven, singing and playing a vina in his hand, taught music to men (*Herbert A. Popley: 2013: 7*)

Indian music is a magnificent creative art, pervaded with a religious feeling. It is not only the framework of tones and tunes but it is an intense spiritual expression that arouses the consciousness of man to the uppermost level.

Since the dawn of time, music has been man's medium of communication with its divinity/divinities. Views of the origin of both religion and music swing between two poles: the belief in a reality that is essential and independent of an observer and a view that neither music nor religion exists on its own, challenging their independent existence. Both views address the question, did music and religion exist prior to our having discovered them or did they exist all along, whether we knew them or not? In modern psychology, Jung answered this by positing that the world comes into its being when man discovers it.

The History of Indian music has several periods like pre-vedic, Vedic, Hindu, Buddhist, Mohammedan, British and Post British. But these divisions are inappropriate, for the study because, some of the period specially Hindu period and Buddhist period have a long gap to each other. So, it is better to divide the whole periods into three broad periods, as ancient period, medieval period and modern period.

The Intimate Relationship between Music and Religion:

Music and religion are equally attributed to God, the supreme, the numerous holy and enormous. Music be considered as the language of god, because music is more profound than words. It has also been held as divine thing and as an outward representation of the Almighty, and has naturally been a prime approach of spiritual pursuit. For centuries music is associated and has been an important part of the religious culture to promote and influence religion among the people. Music helps to enhance human consciousness in a pleasant way that makes humans to praise through a medium of worship, which is more enjoyable.

Music gives meaning, mostly to thoughts and emotions that are complex, difficult to accommodate into words alone. So, music itself is a religion. It is the highest form of human expression. It is also the art form which is most suited to expressing human devotion to God with one common voice, with the same mouth, worshipping him well one spirit and the same faith. Music is often of critical importance in creating the faith of its people; since people tend to remember the theology they sing more than the theology that is preached.

Music is capable of evoking powerful emotions which is quite apart from an associated text. It is a universal feature of religious environments that can be converted between different cultures.

Religious music can employ as a fine clue associated with moral standards cultural socialization and ritual participation. In the history of mankind religious text have been sung not in a written form. Religious experts like monks, priests, prophets, saints, shaman and others have sung in the form of organized religious observances in the major religious observances in the major religious of the world through the centuries. The collective worship of creates and appropriate atmosphere and enhance spirituality.

Religious "texts" have been sung, not written, throughout most of human history; and religious behaviour has found musical articulation in almost every religious tradition. Navajo priests are "singers"; the primary carriers of Sinhala traditional religion are drummers and dancers; and the shamans of northern Eurasia and Inner Asia use music as their principal medium of contact with the spirit world. Through the centuries, priests, monks, and other specialists have sung the Christian masses, Buddhist *pujas*, Islamic calls to prayer, Hindu sacrifices, and other ceremonies that form the basis of organized religious observances in the world's major religions.

Religious music takes an important role in most of the culture and for that reason a source of knowledge relevant to social and personal issues, confronted by that population. Musical practices are much more ancient than the text themselves; having been long held oral tradition passed down to generation to generation through culture and widespread use.

Religious musical systems may also extend across cultural boundaries. Islam, for example, has forged musical links across vast regions of Asia and Africa; and North American traditions such as the Ghost Dance and the peyote cult have created musical bridges between very diverse ethnic groups. Other well-known intercultural religious musical traditions include Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and West African/Latin American possession music. Additional cases may include (a) the drumming and singing of Asian shamans, perhaps constituting a related tradition stretching from Scandinavia to the Himalayas, and possibly even extending into the Americas; (b) the epic songs, based on improvisatory recombination's of traditional song segments, of Central Asia and eastern Europe; (c) the bronze gong ensembles, associated with cosmological and calendrical symbolism and functions, of Southeast Asia; (d) perhaps the ancient sacrificial chants, linked to modal systems built on tetra chords, of Indo-European peoples extending from India to Greece; and (e) conceivably an even wider connection between Chinese, Indian, and Greek conceptions of music as an embodiment of universal cosmological and mathematical laws.

Religion and music have played integral roles in human life from the early period. And religions music has played an important role of many worship services and rituals of all nations. The praises of the Almighty have been accompanied by music, vocal and instrumental from ancient times. Music has always been found to affect human soul.

People who are emotionally connected in religious music are more likely to sense of connectedness with other people and these people are more hopeful in future, they will be more likely to rate their health in a favorable in all the time.

Music is something that can put people together with their innermost feelings. Music also leads to bonding between different groups. Music played an important role to play in collective worship to create an appropriate atmosphere and to develop and enhance spirituality. The uses of music, its forms and values in different religions are diverse and culture specific according to the varied religious traditions in which they belong.

Music is very important in every religious activity. It has a significant role in the promotion of religion. Music gives people to express deep emotions through holy hymns or chants of praise. Music has a very wide range of applications and a very important function in religions activities of almost every religion across the world.

In Christianity, praising songs and hymns, helps Christians to worship God, thanking him for the goodness done by him for them. Christians worship has included hymns psalms gospel songs, choral music, contemporary music, and instrumental music used for meditation and as prayerful worship. Christian music has been written to express either personal or a communal belief regarding Christian life and faith. The song of Bible is full of suggestion as to the uses and benefits of music and song.

In Buddhism music helps to calm the minds of people and can focus and concentrated in meditation. Music also helps to promote and spread the wisdom loving kindness of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas across every nook and corner of the world. In Buddhism, the texts of sutras and praising the virtues of the

Buddha's are set to music to attract and purified the minds of countless disciples. In this religion music is regarded as an offering to the Buddha. In this, religion, it is advised to utilized music bands, chorus orchestras, classical music troupes and other such groups to spread and or to teach this faith through music.

Chanting of mantras and the practice of meditation are age-old traditions in religions like Hinduism. During Vedic period music was the medium for praying in religious ceremonies. The development of notes of Indian music is said to be originated in the Vedic period. From the early period religious ceremonies and worship have always involved music in Hinduism. In Hinduism music both vocal and instrumental is considered to be of device origin and is closely identified with Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Sound is important in Hinduism; it has played an important role in spirituality, religion, culture, science and art etc. There are four characteristic feature of sound in Hinduism. They are:

- a) **Chanting of mantras from Vedas**
- b) **Sounds from conch shells**
- c) **Music (percussion instrument) and**
- d) **Musical tones from pillars.**

Hinduism considered sound vibration as the most subtle element of creation. The Vedic mantras called chhandas carries the listeners to spiritual experience. The clear phonetic articulations of the mantras have deep impact on the listeners.

Chanting mantras and singing devotional song are the norms of Hindu worship devotional songs include kirtan, bhajan and other musical genres.

The role of music in Hinduism is to agitate out the musical slumber of the people by provoking emotions of love and connection that helps people to realize the presence of Almighty within all.

In Sikhism, worship consists of recitation and singing hymns in praise of God with the accompaniment of various musical instruments. The Sikhs regarded music as one of the means of communion with God. The Sikh Gurus, from Guru Nanak to Guru Govind Singh honoured music and attach in their religion.

The religious music of Sikh is known as Gurubani Sangeet and as Gurmati Sangeet, or even as Shabad Kirtan. Kirtan singing tradition of Sikhism was started by the founder Guru Nanak Dev and followed by all the Nene succeeding gurus. Kirtan known as Shabad Kirtan is the central communal worship ritual of Sikhism kirtan is praise of the lord by singing the holy hymns together by the leading singer and congregation.

Conclusion:

Throughout history, it can be regarded that supernatural moves of God in music happens through divine sovereignty. It is one of the most effective means of impressing the heart with spiritual truth. There are two movements in every culture of the world and every culture lives within the interchange of this two movements. The outer movement is of performing the necessary activities for the continuation of physical life. The inner movement led towards relating to forces being and judgment behind and above that life. The music of a culture is a measure of the connection and balance between this two movement.

Music has a divine property that can attach someone to something significant and has been manifest to positivity influence spiritually and quality of life. Music is sometimes degraded to serve for the cause of evil, and thus becomes the most captivating agencies of temptation. But appropriately employed, it is a divine give of God, which was designed to arouse the human thoughts to high and noble themes to motivate and elevate the soul. Music and religion has an intimate relationship, as complex, diverse and difficult to define.

William James the American philosopher and psychologist (1902-1978) argued that music was one of the doorways in which religious experience could enter and it contribute a sense of deep consequence that scrape over one when human mind is tuned accurately.

Greenlay (1974) in his research reported that listening to religious music was the most common activation of profound religious experiences and it was even more important than praying over reading a religious text.

Koenig ,King & Carson (2012) a considerable body of research physical health, which has growing confirmation that non-religious music may affect health and wellbeing as well. This uplift the possibility that religious music may also have favourable effects on health reported that connectedness in religious institutions is correlated with better mental and.

Utilization of music in religious activities gave humans in the early period the ability to experience and explores the tantalizing impact of music without committing a sin. In the present day music is used much more widely and for different purposes other than worship.

Religion and music also provide people to express their innermost thoughts and feelings which also exercise the imagination, inspiration impression and propagating moral spiritual and cultural development.

The common ground of music and religion is most characteristic of stray between rituals of death and rebirth. They are the means of accessing the invisible, unseen , and in approachable, what is beyond what man can apprehend.

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