

# Bollywood as a Facilitator of Indian Culture with Special Reference to Hindustani Classical Music

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## Abstract

Hindustani Classical Music has been the music of the subcontinent which is not only limited to India but also major regions of the current Pakistan. It is believed that the Hindustani Classical Music has undergone major transformation due to factors like popular folk music and religious music. It has received major boost from the Hindi film industry. With this in consideration a survey based study is conducted to find out how the classical musicians perceive the role of Bollywood in popularising classical music and how the classical music has been incorporated in the Hindi films. The findings suggest that the classical music has got ample boost from the film industry, particularly the Hindustani Classical. Its role has been prominent in the past few years and it has continuously increased but the fusion culture has gained more significance than the Hindustani Classical as such.

## INTRODUCTION

Classical Music or Indian Classical Music is an all encompassing term to indicate the Classical Music of India as a whole. There is however a bifurcation with one stream named as Hindustani Classical and other called as Caranatic Music. This is also sometimes called as North Indian Classical and South Indian Classical. There is a lot of similarity and also a lot of difference in the two art forms with respect to how the music is approached in the two using the vocal abilities and the instruments. There is preference for different instruments and there is difference in the approach to sing *Ragas* in both. The classical art forms generally are very well structured with clearly demarcated rules and regulations. The grammar of the two art forms is also somewhat different in some aspects. One thing which is different in the two is that Hindustani Music is being propagated well by the Hindi film industry popularly known as Bollywood.

Traditionally, Hindustani Classical Music has been the music of the subcontinent which is not only limited to India but also major regions of the current Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> It is believed that the Hindustani Classical Music has undergone major transformation due to factors like popular folk music and religious music.

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It is difficult to establish any direct connection but the popularity of music in the region was a key factor in popularising the Hindustani Classical Music in the medieval period of the Indian subcontinent. This metamorphosis of the Hindustani Classical Music allowed the art form to accept many things, assimilate it and give birth to something new while also shedding of certain aspects of the music. This is nothing new and part and parcel of any process of acceptance and assimilation. Amidst all this, the Hindustani Classical Music has maintained its traditional aura over centuries.

## **INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC: THE OBSTACLES AND HURDLES**

Indian classical music has been the heritage that has carried in its garb the history and culture of the entire subcontinent. When we say subcontinent, we are not only referring to India but the entire region that formed the subcontinent before getting divided into different international borders. The influence of such diverse culture has been tremendous on the art form which if demystified, can lead to mind-boggling discoveries. The problem with the classical music or the hurdles and obstacles in the path of classical music is the lack of connect of the people with the art form. The problem is not the critical reception but the lack of understanding of the art form. The temperaments in the fast moving era of information and knowledge, the classical music tends to appeal to lesser number of people because it requires utmost patience and a mind that carves its path through the intricacies of this complex art form.

The other obstacle has been the tradition in which the classical art forms have been preserved in the past. The classical artists and the classical arts especially music have been an integral part of the royal courts. These royal courts provided the patronage to these artists the arts by offering financial and social security. They were not only offered these privileges were also made part of the royal history and respected at all levels. Once the royal families declined especially post independence and the privy purse were sealed, the patronage declined. It became a matter of survival for the royal families and supporting the artists and art forms

went down in the list of priorities. Infact it was on a decline for long. A long withstanding demand for Swaraj and an elected form of government had already made the royal families sceptical and establishment of the democracy was just a matter of time.

Today when the monarchy is not present, the governments paid little attention on preserving the art forms. The classical art forms and artists have been pushed to the margins and now they are fighting their own battles of survival. While some Charanas have managed to survive, some are in extreme cirisis, some have vanished.

## **ROLE OF MEDIA: THE SILVER LINING**

It is believed that the media has played an instrumental role in making classical music popular amongst even those who have been indifferent about its existence. The information and communication technologies have acted as a catalyst and sky rocketed the pace at which some classical artists have made their presence felt amongst the general masses. Social media has been the real deal. This has been compounded by the popularity of cinema and the singing reality shows like Indian Idol, Sa Re Ga Ma Pa and many other similar programmes. Many popular classical musicians and vocalists have become household names. Ustad Rashid Khan, Kaushiki Chakraborty, Hariharan and many others are now easily identified by the people. This is a general broad perception which is reflected in many writings across the media. If this is really the case, then it can be said that classical music is being served well by the media and in fact media is helping its popularity, making it reach to large number of people.

It is thus imperative to find out if the same sentiments are being echoed in the voice of the most key stakeholders including the fellow classical musicians or not.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To study the perception of the classical musicians regarding the role of the Bollywood in popularising the classical music

- To study the degree of involvement of classical music in the Hindi films

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study is survey based study wherein the responses of classical musicians is monitored to find answers to the objectives mentioned above. Questionnaire was distributed through Google form to the respondents chosen using non-probability sampling technique (purposive) to be more specific. 120 responses were monitored and the data was run through basic statistical tests and filters.

## **FINDINGS**

The data was put through statistical tests on MS Excel and the following findings were inferred.

- Majority classical musicians are of the opinion that the vocal form of classical music has benefitted more from Bollywood in comparison to the instrumental.
- The classical musicians see the lighter forms of classical music having benefitted more in comparison to the pure classical which includes Khayal Gayaki.
- The culture of fusion has made fusion of Raags more popular. The pure single Raag based singing has been sidelined.
- Popular series/films on classical musicians is scarce. However films on popular music have been more prominent. Only one such series recalled was Bandish Bandits.
- The musicians see that the reality shows have done good to the classical music but it requires more overall efforts.
- Vidushi Kaushiki Chakraborty, Ustad Rashid Khan, Master Saleem are some popular singers

recalled by the musicians that they believe are close to the classical music.

- Musicians also believe that the representation of classical music in reality shows is more than its involvement in the Hindi films.
- It is also seen that the use of instruments (classical) is mostly seen in the background score. Vocal is mostly also used in the songs that need to drive emotions heavily particularly the sorrow and separation.
- Use of more than three Raagas in classical compositions in Hindi films is common.

## **CONCLUSION**

The classical music has got ample boost from the film industry, particularly the Hindustani Classical. Its role has been prominent in the past few years and it has continuously increased but the fusion culture has gained more significance than the Hindustani Classical as such. The people have now started recognising the musicians and their voices. The credit majorly goes to reality shows which have further paved way for this music in the Hindi film industry.

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