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RESEARCH ARTICLE

RAGA-BASED EMOTIONAL PRACTICES AND SOCIAL WELLBEING: INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC IN INDIA'S SOCIO-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The modern discourses often regard development as a process of improving living standards compared to the preliminary stages. Though GDP rates and other macro-economic indicators have been used widely as the stand-in of developmental progress, the scholarly community receives more and more valuable methods of social prosperity, cultural sustainability, and local solidarity in defining the overall progress of a society (DeNoro). In the widened development paradigm, cultural activities and artistic culture have a great impact on the emotional and social aspects of community living.In the Indian context music has always been beyond artistic representation. Indian Classical Music is both an artistic art form and a platform to spiritual learning and an essential part of the culture that permeates daily life (Neuman). Music has had a massive influence on emotive expressiveness, common cultural norms, and social experiences in society through its performance, reception, and transmission processes.The concept of raga takes a central place among other elements associated with Indian Classical Music. Ragas are not merely systems or schemes of melodies; they are traditionally bounded up with special emotional moods and aesthetic values. These raga-driven affective practices that are influenced by constructs in the form of Nada-Brahma and the Rasa theory have traditionally adjusted the affective and sociocultural environment in which music is experienced.

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As such, this paper aims to explore raga-based emotional practice in Indian Classical Music and pose a query into its connection to social wellbeing. The goal of the research is to explain how far the Indian Classical Music is capable of establishing the affective equilibrium, as well as social cohesion and the general direction of socio-cultural development by placing such practices within the framework of the larger society and the socio-cultural context of Indian society.

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Introduction:-

Conceptual Foundations: Nāda-Brahma and Rasa Theory:-

The Indian classical music has philosophical roots that support the view that musical sound has historically been perceived as too technical or acoustic of a phenomenon. At the center of this concept lies the doctrine of NadaBrahma that recognizes sound (nada) as the principal, principle of the cosmos. Creation has its beginning with sound, which is often related to creation (Bagchee), which makes music a continuation of a broader spiritual and philosophical context. In this sense, musical sound is not just a simple vibration that affects the physical world but a substance that can have an impact on inner experience and consciousness. As a result, music is understood as an art form, as well as a spiritual aspect of what people express, and the concept of nada is a critical basis to comprehend the essence of Indian music.

A different prominent theory to explain emotion dimension of Indian music is the Rasa theory which was first explained in Bharatas Natyasastra. The theory explains the way through which artistic performances evoke specific aesthetics emotions or rasas that are experienced by the audience or listener (Wade). The manipulation and expression of notes in the musical context might result in unique emotional reactions and the way particular notes are approached, emphasized, or interconnected could be at the forefront of the creation of emotional coloring in a performance. In case musical phrases are interpreted through adequate tonal impact and expressive coloring, they are able to instill emotional response in the listeners. The aesthetic power of music is, therefore, not only in the notes that are played but also in a way of how they are played.

In this conceptualizing, the idea of raga emerges in the emotional nature of the Indian classical music. A raga is created with the help of particular patterns and peculiar phrases that make it stand out of other ragas (Jairazbhoy). Such melodic metrics, as well as their movements and tonal connections, create a certain emotional mood. The fact that the traditional classification of the ragas was based on those times of the day that were considered auspicious also serves to underline the connection between music and the experience of a person, it indicates compliance with the principle that there can be the harmonisation between the musical mood and the natural rhythms. Ragas have the ability to induce a specific emotional landscape on the audience through careful composition and articulate justice of notes. The combination of these concepts can show that the Indian classical music in its various forms has historically been involved in the communication with human emotion via its philosophical, aesthetic, and musical structure.

Raga-Based Emotional Practices in Musical Traditions:-

It is the experiential aspect of the raga performance that has seen a large literature in the musicology and ethnography where musical experience is formulated in terms of process and involves the emotional and psychological conditions of the listener.Raga Bhairav is a commonly used morning Raga among Hindustani tradition in which the komalRishabh, komalDhaivat is used along with other shuddha notes. Oscillatory movements (andolans) to these notes produce an grave and thoughtful look. Raga Bhairav performances are traditionally associated with the early-morning hours and are often referred to as the experience of calmness, self-reflection, and spirituality. It has always been noted by musicologists, that morning raga like Bhairav generates an ambiance which is in line with tranquility and calmness of the dawn to help the audience gain a state of mind and inner balance (Jairazbhoy).Raga Puriya Kalyan is an evening melody of mixing the elements within both the spheres of melodies: Puriya and Kalyan. The use of komalrishabh and tivramadhyam , the raga creates a reflective and often devotional atmosphere.

Such ragas have been suggested to produce a range of emotions including still thinking or gentle words of srngara (aesthetic love), depending on how the performer performs it and how listenersinterprets it (Bagchee). Late-night raga- Raga Darbari Kanhda is the raga that is traditionally linked to the depth, solemnity and introspective quietude. The effect of its employing of komalgandhar, dhaivat as well as nishad together with the typical oscillations performed upon gandhar create a slow and dignified moving motion. The Darbari Kanada is largely viewed to be able to evoke a strong emotional response as well as a feeling of relaxation after the day events. In ethnomusicological discussions about the topic of late-night ragas, they are often described to help people attain mental calm and emotional expression, thereby may allowing listeners to gain sleep and self-reflection (Sanyal).

These instances demonstrate how the raga-based musical practice preconditions specific emotional experience which is corresponding to certain times of the day and listening modes. These experiences create collective emotional milieus within the society through performance traditions, devotional gatherings and collective music participation.

Social Wellbeing and Socio-Cultural Development:-

The emotional aspect of Indian Classical Music is closely connected with how the musical sound may alter psycho-affective state of a person who is listening. Performance can elicit discrete affective responses through accurate arrangement of timbral focus and rhythm form as well as through accurate arrangement of pitches. In the raga system, the interdependence between melodic phrases, tonal frequency and improvisation spontaneously influences the experiences of the listener regarding his or her phenomena. When a raga is performed within its traditional time of performance, one often thinks that the emotive effect is more intense due to the adherence of the musical mood to circadianrhythms. Scientists have reported that such aesthetic experiences are phasing conditions of focus, serenity, and meditative self-awareness, which adds to affective equanimity and inner steadiness (Jairazbhoy ; Sanyal).

There are also a powerful collective effect of Indian Classical Music in cases of performance in societal settings like concerts, satsangs and musical events. In the process of collective experience of similar affective states amongst the audience, an emotive atmosphere shared by the audience forms as a result. It is possible that such mutual interaction fosters a feeling of togetherness and community, as people begin to think of themselves as participants of a group musical activity and not as disengaged listeners.

The studies of the context of music performances have shown that personal engagement of the audience is more commonly brought forth in live performances than recorded media due to the dynamic interchange of the performer and the audience (DeNoro).This can be seen in the form of mehfils or devotional gatherings, where the listeners actually react to improvisational lines around them. Music can also be used to achieve a process of affective emotional cleansing in these situations whereby participants are allowed to release their repressed emotions and experience emotional relief. An example of this aspect of music experience includes devotional gatherings like bhajan or kirtan gatherings, where music performers experience deep affective responses sometimes leading to tears or euphoric calmness on the part of the listener.The devotional music cultures have been valuable tools to strengthen the social ties and spread the common cultural value in the past. Collective singing in a bhajan, kirtan or satsang environment leads to activity in relation to highly diverse social and cultural affiliated groups, thus establishing a feeling of communal belonging.

Some of the historical studies of the Bhakti movement also suggest that the practices of full and half-tone music also played a part in challenging the strict social existing condition and offering more inclusivity to spiritual movements (Neuman). It is also possible to view Indian Classical Music in a wider context which contributes to the social and cultural growth through the conservation and transmission of culture. The raga-performance traditions, bandish composition and the gharana pedagogy maintain some vital elements in the culture of India. These musical practices are relevant to the continuity of successive generations through concerts, festivals as well as pedagogical traditions. At the same time, attending musical events and performances gives a possibility to interact with the other people, carry out the cultural exchange, and enjoy the artistic traditions jointly. Therefore, Indian Classical Music can add a value not only to the personal affective health but also to the pillar of the supporting social harmony, cultural continuity, and life community in the Indian society.

Discussion:-

Although the recent studies have increasingly taken a closer look at therapeutic potential of music, it is necessary to make it clear that the role of Indian Classical Music in the society goes beyond the clinical or therapeutic paradigm. In its traditional system, this musical system has been a complex cultural activity, involving the artistic imagination, the emotional sympathies and the spiritual awareness. When the Indian Classical Music is viewed only through the prisms of healing or wellbeing, it can thus be defined as lost in the greater realms of being merely an artistic and cultural expression. Music was also a tradition held in high regard in the Indian aesthetic tradition as the way to stimulate inner emotional states in a person and make him/her more sensitive. With the help of the vocal use of melodies, improvisation, and raga constructions, musical performance is capable of triggering delicate emotions and enhancing the mental and imaginative abilities of the listener.Sociologically, the Indian Classical Music is also very instrumental in connecting people to their cultural background and religious heritage. These experiences lead to increased experience of cultural identity and at the same time promote introspection and emotional sensitivity among the participants. This way the impact of music goes beyond entertainment or even therapy and becomes part of the larger cultural life of a society.At the same time, the emotional and reflective nature of raga-based music implies that it can be significantly integrated into modern projects to help establish a better state of wellbeing.

Organized listening programs, real-world musical meetups, or active musical engagement based on raagas in schools, hospitals, and other community-based scenes or areas might potentially provide people with these relaxing, focusing, and emotional balance prospects later on. In the event that the practices of Indian Classical Music become more incorporated into the daily life (such as when people wake up to ragas or have his or her morning meditation session) then Indian Classical Music would not only help people improve their individual wellbeing but also result in a more conscious and emotionally well-balanced society.

Conclusion:-

This paper highlights that Indian Classical Music, as a cultural tradition that is broadly recognized as an elegant artistic tradition, may be a culturally important activity that influences emotional and social experiences. Raga-based musical form often creates a state of emotional balance, reflexive silence and inner repose in the audience. In this regard, Indian Classical Music can be interpreted in a way, beyond a form of art, as a thriving cultural tradition, which plays a role in terms of emotion wellbeing and societal social cohesion.At the same time, this exploration indicates that the raga-based musical activities should be the subject of the additional investigation, based on non-disciplinary perspectives. Instead, future studies may closely question the influence of music exposure to the raga and the involvement in classics music traditions as influencing factors on emotions and interpersonal relationships in the modern life. The cooperation between musicology, psychological studies, and cultural studies can potentially provide more information on how raga-based practices have remained important in human emotional reactions, as well as the cultural vitality of different communities.

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