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## HINDUSTANI CLASSICAL MUSIC AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

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### ABSTRACT :

*Hindustani classical music is an essential part of North India's oral tradition. It is one of the two major streams of Indian classical music, the other being Carnatic music of South India. Hindustani classical music evolved as an expressive and emotive art form, influenced by the Mughal era and nurtured under the patronage of royal courts. This music tradition, along with devotional songs, also incorporates philosophical elements. Its roots trace back to the Vedic period, with gradual transformations over time.*



**KEYWORDS :** Carnatic music , gradual transformations , Hindustani classical music.

### INTRODUCTION :

The evolution of this musical tradition occurred in several stages. The chanting of mantras in the *Sama Veda* is considered the earliest form of Hindustani music. During the Purana period, devotional songs and classical elements began to develop. In the 13th century, Amir Khusrau introduced various new styles to this tradition. The 16th-century musician Tansen played a crucial role in shaping Hindustani music at Emperor Akbar's court, giving prominence to *Alaap* (elaborate melodic improvisation). Eventually, the *Gharana* system emerged, leading to the development of distinct stylistic branches.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF HINDUSTANI CLASSICAL MUSIC

Hindustani classical music consists of several significant forms. *Dhrupad* is the oldest and most serious form, emphasizing devotion and philosophical depth. The *Dagar Vani* played a crucial role in the evolution of Dhrupad. Later, the *Khayal* style developed, which is now the most popular form. Khayal has two main types – *Bada Khayal* (slow tempo) and *Chhota Khayal* (fast tempo). It gained prominence through Gwalior, Patiala, Agra, and Kirana Gharanas.

Another significant form is *Thumri*, which focuses on emotional expression and romantic poetry. The Lucknow, Banaras, and Patiala Gharanas are renowned for Thumri. *Tappa* is another expressive style, characterized by its fast-paced rhythm and intricate *Taans* (rapid melodic phrases). Originating in Punjab, it is known for its energetic and ornamented singing style.

One more influential genre is *Ghazal*, which carries the impact of Persian and Urdu poetry. This form, known for its poetic representation of love, sorrow, and philosophy, was popularized by artists like Begum Akhtar, Mehdi Hassan, and Jagjit Singh. Additionally, devotional music forms such as *Bhajan* and *Kirtan* represent spiritual themes within the Hindustani classical tradition.

The *Gharana* system in Hindustani music helped preserve and refine unique styles. The *Gwalior Gharana* is the oldest and most structured tradition. The *Kirana Gharana* emphasizes *Alaap* (melodic elaboration), while the *Agra Gharana* is influenced by the Dhrupad style. The *Patiala Gharana* is known for its rhythmic precision and *Palta Taans*, whereas the *Jaipur-Atrauli Gharana* is famous for its intricate raga structures and Swara-Laya balance.

### RELEVANCE AND NECESSITY OF HINDUSTANI CLASSICAL MUSIC IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES

Hindustani classical music, with its centuries-old tradition, is not just an art form but a path to mental peace, self-exploration, and philosophical understanding. From ancient times, it has flourished as part of devotional traditions, royal patronage, and emotional expression. In today's fast-paced technological era, where people seek inner tranquillity, Hindustani classical music acts as a therapeutic medium, offering solace through its melodies.

Music plays a vital role in enhancing mental resilience, concentration, and cognitive strength. The structured raga compositions in Hindustani music influence human emotions significantly. For instance, *Raga Yaman* induces calmness and relaxation, whereas *Raga Bhairav* evokes devotion and grandeur. Scientifically, Hindustani music is used in *music therapy* to treat stress, insomnia, and anxiety disorders. This highlights the spiritual and psychological significance of this tradition, even in the digital age.

Western countries have started integrating Hindustani music with yoga and meditation practices. Globally, there is an increasing interest in Indian classical music, leading to the establishment of music academies, raga therapy centers, and online training platforms. From the sitar recitals of Pandit Ravi Shankar to the *Khayal* singing of Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, Hindustani music continues to captivate audiences worldwide. In recent times, fusion experiments blending Hindustani classical music with pop, jazz, and electronic genres have attracted a younger audience.

Despite the influence of other musical traditions, Hindustani music remains a profound field of study, research, and practice. Emerging musicians are preserving its traditions while incorporating innovative elements to globalize this form. Digital platforms, online training, and modern technology have further popularized Hindustani music, ensuring that its essence remains relevant in contemporary times.

Ultimately, Hindustani classical music is not just an art; it reflects India's cultural heritage. Music is regarded as a powerful medium for human development, and in today's world, its significance is more profound than ever. Amidst modern life's challenges, classical music serves as a gateway for individuals to reconnect with their cultural roots. Every musician and music enthusiast must take responsibility for preserving and passing on this rich tradition to future generations.

Hindustani classical music is not merely a musical style; it embodies Indian culture, devotion, philosophy, and emotional depth. With centuries of evolution, it continues to thrive, adapting to modern times while retaining its distinct identity. The various forms—*Khayal*, *Dhrupad*, *Thumri*, *Tappa*, *Ghazal*, and *Bhajan*—highlight its diversity, offering a unique experience to listeners.

In the digital age, the importance of this music is increasing. It is not just a form of entertainment but an effective tool for mental peace, concentration, and emotional balance. The growing influence of Indian classical music in Western countries, especially in yoga and music therapy, signifies its global relevance. Modern artists are blending tradition with innovation to make it accessible to new generations.

### CONCLUSION

Thus, preserving and promoting Hindustani classical music is the collective responsibility of musicians and music lovers. For this oral tradition to thrive eternally, it is essential to study, practice, and explore new possibilities. This invaluable heritage must continue to inspire and shape the artistic and cultural landscape for generations to come. Looking at all these aspects, it is evident that Hindustani classical music remains an indispensable necessity in today's world.