

Q1. What are the key features of the Hindustani music? What are the most recurring themes in this style? Discuss.

Approach

Students are expected to write about Hindustani classic music and also write about its features. And highlight upon most recurring themes in the Hindustani style of music.

Introduction

Historically roots of the Hindustani music belong to the Bharata's Natyasastra, it diverged in the 14th century. The Hindustani branch of music focuses more on the musical structure and the possibilities of improvisation in it. The Hindustani music has elements of ancient Hindu tradition, Vedic philosophy and Persian tradition as well.

Body

Key features of Hindustani music:

- **Elements:** The Hindustani classical has ancient Hindu tradition, Vedic philosophy and Persian tradition as its main elements. It has been influenced by various elements such as Arab, Persian and Afghan elements which have added a new dimension to Hindustani music. In ancient times, it has been passed from one to another through the Guru-Shishya Parampara.
- **Hindustani Music Gharanas:** A Gharana is a system of social organisation linking musicians or dancers by lineage or apprenticeship, and by adherence to a particular musical style.
- **Based on the Raga system:** The Raga is a melodic scale comprising basic seven notes. The Hindustani branch adopted a scale of Shudha Swara Saptaka or the 'Octave of Natural notes'. It is based on the Raga system.
- **Vocal-centric:** Hindustani Music is vocal-centric. The major vocal forms associated with Hindustani classical music are the khayal, Ghazal, dhrupad, dhammar, Tarana and thumri.
- **Association with dance:** Every music show was accompanied by dance performance. For example, kathak with Hindustani music.
- **Praising of king in royal courts:** All the music compositions were made to express the bravery of king's. For example in Akbar court, poets praised him by singing songs. Most of the Hindustani musicians trace their descent to Tansen.
- **Praising of god:** Most of the music compositions were in deep reverence to god almighty. For example, the songs on lord Krishna and radha, Goddess durga, etc.
- **Musical instruments used:** Are Tabla, Sarangi, Sitar, Santoor, Flute and violin.

Most recurring themes in the Hindustani style of music:

- **Dhrupad:** One of the oldest and grandest forms of Hindustani classical music. Finds mention even in Natyashastra (200 BC–200 AD). Reached its zenith in the court of Emperor Akbar. He employed and patronised musical masters like Baba Gopal Das, Swami Haridas and Tansen, who was considered to be one of the Navaratna or nine gems of the Mughal court. The exposition preceding the composed verses is called alap and is usually the longest portion of the performance. Dhrupad singing can be further divided into four forms on the basis of vanis or banis such as Dagari gharana, Dharbhanga gharana, Bettiah gharana and Talwandi gharana.
- **Khayal:** Word 'Khayal' is derived from Persian and means "idea or imagination". Origin of this style was attributed to Amir Khusrau. Is popular amongst the artists as this provides greater scope for improvisation. Based on the repertoire of short songs ranging from two to eight lines. Is also referred to as a 'Bandish'. Major gharanas in khayal: Gwalior, Kirana, Patiala, Agra, and Bhendibazaar Gharana.
- **Tarana Style:** In this style the rhythm plays a very crucial role. The structure consists of melody. It uses many words that are sung at a fast tempo. It focuses on producing rhythmic matters and hence, the singers need specialised training and skills in rhythmic manipulation.
- **Thumri:** Originated in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, mainly in Lucknow & Benares, around 18th century. A romantic & erotic style of singing; also called "the lyric of Indian classical music". Compositions are mostly on love, separation and devotion.
- **Tappa:** In this style the rhythm plays a very important role as the compositions are based on fast, subtle and knotty constructions. Developed in the late 18th Century AD from the folk songs of camel riders of North-West India. Great use of very quick turn of phrases.
- **Ghazal:** A poetic expression of both the pain of loss or separation and the beauty of love in spite of that pain. Spread in South Asia in the 12th century due to the influence of Sufi mystics and the courts of the new Islamic Sultanate. Reached its zenith in the Mughal period. Amir Khusrau was one of the first expounders of the art of making Ghazal. Some of the famous persons associated with Ghazals: Muhammad Iqbal, Mirza Ghalib, Rumi (13th century), Hafiz (14th century), Kazi Nazrul Islam, etc.

Conclusion

Hindustani music played an important role in uniting Indians by generating the feeling of oneness and nationalism during national movement. Even today it is practiced during festivals, as a stage performance, in cinema's and bringing fame for Indian culture by reaching wider in western world.

Q2. Examine the contribution of Satyajit Ray to Indian cinema.**Approach**

Question is straight forward on importance of Satyajit Ray to Indian cinema. In the introduction factual details of life of Ray can be given followed by detailed analysis of his work in body with examples.

Introduction

Born on May 2, 1921 in a family of litterateurs in Bengal, Satyajit ray was a product of a Bengal renaissance. With a family background in religious and social movements in nineteenth century Bengal he completed his education in prestigious presidency college of Calcutta, he went on to develop interest in fine arts.

Body

Second half of twentieth century was a time of social and political churning. In this period new form of Indian cinema was emerging which saw aesthetic in daily struggles of people.

How Satyajit ray changed Indian cinema?

- He brought new approach in dealing with subjects of cinema. He was inspired by Italian cinema in which Italian wave of neo realism and national film movement used to portray struggles of working class and poor people.
- He was particularly inspired by film bicycle thief. Ray used non-professional actors and shot on location technique. His skilful representation of characters earned him a spot as the best filmmaker in the world.
- Young Ray was inclined towards writing and storytelling. He adopted Bibhutibhushan bandopadhyay's Pather Panchali in Apu trilogy. Apu film portrays life of a young boy who lives in a poverty in a small village. Apu's journey is reflected in trilogy covering his childhood to manhood.
- In the initial years of his career he faced many challenges. Because of his unconventional methods producers were sceptical about his work and sincerity but he sold his personal savings and went ahead with the pather panchali which proved to be a massive success.
- Pather panchali got award in cannes film festival in 1956 with it Indian cinema got world-wide recognition. Apu trilogy received praise and appreciation for its arts and aesthetics.
- After the success of Apu trilogy Ray gave India its first detective series of Feluda, our very own rendition of sherlock holmes.

Why cinema of Satyajit was important?

- In the times of social churning he portrayed universal feelings, universal relations, emotions and characters which crossed the barriers and reach out to others
- In his film Ashani Sanket he depicted severity of Bengal famine captured this disaster which took lives of five million people
- In “Charulata” he sensitively portrayed adultery, which was a taboo subject when it comes to cinema
- In “Jalsaghar” he brilliantly commented on zamindari system, its exploitative nature and inequalities which was a hot topic in newly independent India
- Satyajit ray introduced parallel cinema to India, his movies were rooted in reality and warranted discourse over things that matter. He came up with a great cinema while being commercially successful.
- His skilful representation of characters earned him a spot as the best filmmakers in the world.
- Music in his films was an important tool he composed natural yet dramatic tones which brought with it the element of humanism. Subtle and thought provoking nature of his craft made him extraordinary.
- In all he directed 36 films, got various 32 national awards for them (which is a record in itself). He received Dadasaheb Phalke award in 1984 for his contribution to Indian cinema also honoured with Bharat Ratna in 1992

Conclusion

Satyajit ray is not just a director but an institute in itself. He was a pioneer in various new experiments in cinema world. He was a writer director, music composer, cinematographer, editor. A man with multiple talents yet grounded. For his contribution to world of cinema he was awarded with honorary award by academy of motion pictures.

Q3. Comment upon the socio-economic significance of fairs in the context of India's past.

Approach

As the derivative is comment so you have to pick out the main points on a subject and give your opinion, reinforcing your point of view using logic and reference to relevant evidence, including any wider reading you have done.

Introduction

India is the land of celebrations. Fairs are the cultural heritage and sprit of Indian society. It had always been known as the land that portrayed cultural and traditional vibrancy through its conventional arts and crafts. Fairs have always made an immense contribution to the social and economic development of a region.

Body

The socio-economic significance of fairs in the context of India's past includes:

- They brought more awareness and economic value to the regions where they were celebrated and hosted.
- With fairs, communities were engaged in livelihoods and hence there was more social bonding and strengthening of ties between people.
- They helped in reinforcing the cultural roots and values by enabling communities to preserve their traditions too.
- Enable local communities to ensure continuity of their cultural beliefs and traditions.
- There was a positive economic impact on the local community, as fairs add economic vitality during the periods when they were organized.
- Protected the interests of local sellers to prevent economic leakages, and the related sense of irritation by the local community.
- It acted as a self-reliant framework integrated with regional economy and satisfaction of socio-cultural and economic requirements in the local community.
- Helped in keeping alive the rich heritage of our country and introduce the young generation with great historical culture and values.
- They promoted diversity, increased creativity, offered opportunities for civic pride, and made the society a better place to live.

Conclusion

Fairs are part of the intrinsic cultural fabric of our society as well as a continuation of our heritage. India is not merely a land of diversities but these diversities make India an epitome of cultural abundance. Different cultures have different traditions and celebrations that are celebrated in form of fairs and festivals.

While the potential of fairs and festivals as drivers of cultural and economic value is clear, there is evidence that they have not been leveraged adequately today. The key challenges are the deficiencies in infrastructure elements, lack of funding for facilities and service enhancements and, lastly, non-integrated stakeholder engagement to manage the fairs and festivals in a manner that protects cultural authenticity. We need to work on overcoming these challenges to make use of fairs just like they were used in India's past.



Q4. Do you think unbridled freedom on social media platforms can undermine democracy? Critically comment.

Approach

As the directive in the question is critically comment it is necessary to mention both positive and negative aspects of freedom on social media undermining democracy. Also answer should depict multi dimensionality of points covering all aspects the way social media impacts democracy in both positive and negative ways.

Introduction

Public participation is the bedrock of a successful and vibrant democracy. Debates, discussions and a healthy exchange of ideas go a long way in strengthening the foundations of democratic systems. Countries across the globe took to newer modes of public communication even as their democracies kept evolving.

Social media has been the new tool in the hands of people it has played a big role in changing the way democracies used to function earlier by giving access to every individual to have his say and change the discourse.

Body

Is unbridled freedom on social media undermining democracy?

Arguments in favour –

- The rise of polarizing and divisive content has been a defining moment of modern politics, which is fed by fake news propagation through social media channels.
- Further, dissemination of fake news through social media, among populations with low-to-no levels of critical digital literacy is a big challenge.
- In India, the spread of fake news has occurred mostly with relation to political and religious matters. However, misinformation related to COVID-19 pandemic was also widely circulated.
- Fake news spread through social media in the country has become a serious problem, with the potential of it resulting in mob violence
- Social media has enabled a style of populist politics, which on the negative side allows hate speech and extreme speech to thrive in digital spaces that are unregulated, particularly in regional languages
- The impact social media platforms are having on influencing elections in the US are also evident. In addition to social media posts, many voters have reported receiving text messages and emails that are nothing but disinformation campaigns about the presidential candidates and what they stand for.
- Recent incidents of disinformation campaign against the Agriculture reform laws and citizenship amendment act, on social media understated the real objectives behind such reforms.

Arguments against –

- Democratization of Expression: Social media has made Indian politics more inclusive by allowing citizens, who were traditionally excluded from politics due to geography and demography, to gain direct entry into the political process.
- It has also allowed for a diversity of viewpoints and public engagement on an unprecedented scale
- Making political communication people-centric: Social media has been increasingly used by Indian political actors for routine political communication between elections to provide unmediated and direct communication to connect citizenry.
- Social media can be used for greater political participation, The Election Commission of India recently launched an app to encourage voter mobilisation.
- Increasing access to political information through the mass media may enable citizens to monitor incumbents' behaviour, and use this information in voting decisions. Exposure to debates improve voters' political knowledge and the alignment between voters' reported policy positions and those of the candidates they voted for.

Conclusion

In recent years internet has expanded exponentially to every corner of the world. With rise in social media and its penetration, a wave of 'mediatisation' of Indian politics i.e., the media's ability to set political agendas has expanded, and elections have been transformed into an image contest between prominent personalities. As media and politics grow ever more intertwined, media exposure has impacted voting behaviours and opinions. This Demand strong measures and regulation by the government.

Q5. What role does a predictable tax policy play in ease of doing business? Discuss. In this light, examine the critical issues affecting the sentiments of investors and businesses in India.

Approach

The question can be addressed in two parts where the first part should discuss the role of predictable tax policy in ease of doing business while the second part should examine important issues affecting the sentiments of investors and businesses in India.

Introduction

To foster economic growth and development governments need sustainable sources of funding for social programs and public investments. To achieve the common goal of a prosperous, functional and orderly society, taxation is not only for public goods and services; it is also a key ingredient in the social contract between citizens and the economy, where a predictable taxation policy helps in overall improvement in compliance.

Body

- The ease of doing business in any country is influenced by a number of factors. A material consideration among these is the stability and predictability of a country's taxation system, together with the ease of discharging a taxpayer's tax obligations.
- Over the years, the Indian taxation landscape has been characterized by ambiguous legislation posing interpretational challenges, an aggressive revenue administration that has sought to interpret taxation provisions in a manner prejudicial to the taxpayer. For example, recent verdicts in favour of multinationals like Vodafone and Cairn Energy are cases in point.
- The uncertainty regarding retrospective taxation is an issue on the minds of investors and there is a real danger it will undermine the message that India is open for investment. It is imperative for India to have a non-adversarial tax administration which is both investor and assessee friendly.
- Governments must provide a fiscal climate within which electronic commerce can flourish, weighed against the obligation to operate a fair and predictable taxation system that provides the revenue required to meet the legitimate expectations of citizens for publicly provided services.
- Rules that enhance the predictability of economic interactions and provide contractual partners with essential protections against arbitrariness and abuse.
- Such rules are much more effective in shaping the incentives of economic agents in ways that promote growth and development where they are reasonably efficient in design, are transparent and accessible to those for whom they are intended and can be implemented at a reasonable cost.

- The quality of the rules also has a crucial bearing on how societies distribute the benefits and finance the costs of development strategies and policies

Although the current government has attempted to convey to investors across the world that theirs is a government where the decisions will be fair, transparent and within the four corners of the law, there are many issues which are affecting the sentiments of investors and businesses in India, some of these are –

- In a recently conducted USISPF survey of CEOs of MNCs to gauge investment sentiments of businesses in India, unanimously listed good governance, transparency, predictable tax policy framework, ease of doing business, infrastructure and cost advantage as reasons for choosing alternate countries for their investments.
- Delayed Administrative Mechanisms: A study mentions that in India, it takes over 250-254 hours annually to complete tax procedures for businesses. Another bottleneck faced by the Indian economy has been the lack of uniform policies amongst Indian states.
- Dispute Resolution: Similarly, delays in dispute resolution which take up to 1445 days to be resolved as opposed to only 164 days to resolve a dispute in Singapore, have also dampened India's attractiveness for MNCs.
- Quality infrastructure is critical for the sound functioning of an economy because it plays such a central role in determining the location of economic activity and the kinds of sectors that can develop. India lacks quality infrastructure, except few regions.
- Productivity of capital: Long-term changes in technology can influence the attractiveness of investment. In the late nineteenth century, new technologies meant firms had a strong incentive to invest in this new technology because it was much more efficient than previous technology. If there is a slowdown in the rate of technological progress, firms will cut back investment as there are lower returns on the investment.
- A healthy workforce is vital to an economy's competitiveness and productivity—investing in the provision of health services is essential for both economic and moral reasons. In this regard, the Global Hunger Index necessitates India improve vastly.
- Basic education increases the efficiency of each worker, and good-quality higher education and training allow economies to move up the value chain beyond simple production processes and products.

Conclusion

Recent times have seen improvement in India's overall efforts towards facilitating investors and businesses, which is evident from WTO's Trade Policy Review (TPR) which appreciated India's goods and services tax, reforms on taxation, trade facilitation and improving the ease of doing business, and liberalised regimes for FDI and intellectual property rights.