
Indian music and dance for inclusive development: A reflection on the Republic of Mauritius

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to argue, prove and demonstrate that Indian Music and Dance have a crucial role to play in the overall development of the Republic of Mauritius.

Following intensive and extensive literature search, and field study, the author shows that cultural and economic values inherent in these art-forms, if soundly and systematically explored, identified and leveraged, have the potential to create and enhance human, cultural, artistic and social capitals through arts education, besides contributing to economic development by generating jobs and earnings through the establishment of Indian Music and Dance Industries in the country. The author further argues that it is incumbent upon the government to formulate and deliver informed, evidence-based cultural policies to guide thoughts and actions in the arts, culture and economic sectors. Largely, the arguments are based on the experiences of different countries, especially those of India, and the findings of researchers in the field.

Keywords. Culture, Economics, Indian Music and Dance, Value, Cultural Industries, Indian Music and Dance Industries, Development, and Cultural Policy

Indian Culture and Music in Mauritius

Mauritius is a multiracial, multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual sovereign, democratic and secular country, protecting and promoting cultural diversity and diversity of cultural expressions of its people, thus presupposing the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is a small island located near the Tropic of Capricorn in the south-west of the Indian Ocean. It is situated on the south-east coast of the African Continent and lies approximately 900 km on the east of Madagascar. The island is spread

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over an area of 2,040 sq km, of which 2,030 sq km consists of land and 10 sq km, water. Mauritius, forming part of the Mascarenes Islands, includes Rodrigues, Cargados Carajos (Saint Brandon) and Agalega Islands, as its dependencies.

Discovered by the Portuguese, the island was later inhabited and controlled, one after the other, by the Dutch, French and British over a period of more than three-and-a-half centuries. The British's presence on the island lasted till the country gained its independence on 12 March 1968. And it achieved the status of a Republic 24 years later on 12 March 1992.

There were no indigenous people; hence, all its present inhabitants are progenies of the immigrants who migrated from France, Africa, China, Madagascar, and India. As at July 2013, the total population is estimated at 1, 295,789², out of which 68% comprises Indo-Mauritians, 27%, Creoles or Afro-Mauritians, 3%, Sino-Mauritians, and 2%, Franco-Mauritians.

Mauritius does not have one culture, but rather a mosaic of different cultures; namely, Hindu, Islamic, African, Chinese and European, co-existing together. In this respect, Mauritian society has been characterised as one fostering 'harmonious separatism'. The Indo-Mauritian community comprises different ethnic groups whose forebears had come from different parts of India, from 1834 to 1924 to work on the island.

Indian culture, which has developed and thrived on the Mauritian soil through its interaction with not only Indian, but also European, Chinese and African cultures and other sub-cultures for the last 177 years, has acquired distinctive characteristics. It is for this reason the author prefers to use 'Indo-Mauritian culture,' rather than 'Indian culture.' The former is unique in many respects, for it is more 'fluid' or 'flexible' than the latter, and shares the best of values of these different cultures of the world.

On migrating from India as from 1834, the Indians also relocated in their new homes on the island their food and dress habits, traditions and customs, family kinship and, more importantly, their music and dance art forms. Although rudimentary and amateurish in their forms and renderings, music and dance were not only an integral part of their socio-cultural and religious lives, but also a means to educate their children who were debarred of a proper and suitable educational scheme.

With the advent of Indian Cinema in the 1930s and later, the establishment of closer diplomatic relations with India, Indian Music and Dance received the much-needed boost for their introduction and propagation in the country.

Today, the number of publicly-funded and private institutions promoting Indian Music and Dance, and the increasing number of practitioners and students bear testimony to the good health of these art forms. Typical music and dance concerts put up to mark various historical, religious and social events comprise a variety of classical, semi-classical and/or light/folk/fusion music items, coupled with appropriate dance items. Sometimes, these

² Central Statistics Office of Mauritius, viewed 2014: <<http://statsmauritius.gov.mu/English/StatsbySubj/Pages/Populationjanjun13.aspx>>

recitals are either an amalgam of Indian, Western, Chinese and African components, or a blend of any two or three of these art traditions along with some local influences.

The article aims puts forth the following arguments:

- 1) Indian Music and Dance have cultural and economic values worth pursuing and exploiting,
- 2) if cultural values enshrined in Indian Music and Dance are properly interpreted and elucidated within the framework of an interdisciplinary Indian Music and Dance education, a new mindset more conducive towards inclusive, sustainable development can be built up within the younger generation of the country,
- 3) economic worth of Indian Music and Dance can be exploited and leveraged for generating more earnings, and creating jobs through the establishment of Indian Music and Dance industries in Mauritius,
- 4) cultural policies should be formulated in such a way that both cultural and economic values are taken on board to help build up a modern, forward-looking, just, saner and wealthy Mauritian society.

Culture & Economics

Culture, in its anthropological sense, can refer to shared beliefs, attitudes, practices, traditions and, above all, values of a group of people, and in its pragmatic sense, to the creation, practice and re-creation of arts (Throsby, 2001:3-4). Economics, on the other hand, refers to that science which tries to provide the alternatives or choices as to how the limited resources could be distributed among the people of a country, so that needs and wants can be satisfied in a judicious and rational way. We can say that economics, therefore, is the science about how “to allocate limited means among competing ends” (Throsby, 2001:1-2; Lipsey, 1989).

These two disciplines, which put man at the centre of their debate, are now two worlds apart and can hardly meet to foster inclusive development. Sen (2000) noted, “(T)he gap between the two perspectives ... is a major issue in conceptualizing development.” Hard-core economists have been maintaining that everything is guided and explained by prices only and that nothing else matters. In this regard, Thompson (2001) declares “[d]iscussions of culture ... are not seen by mainstream professionals as being within the parameters of economics. For them, these ... represent unimportant, irrational, messy noise ... ” On the other hand, inflexible ‘well-wishers’ of culture wish that economists should ‘keep their dirty hands off it’ (Eagleton, 2000). The role of culture in influencing development is barely recognized by both parties.

Such a phenomenon is apparent in almost all developing countries, and Mauritius is no exception. The author opines that, besides having a representative, educational and integrative function in the society, culture has also an economic purpose through its manifestation in cultural industries, which could be controlled, to some extent, by the logic of economics. He claims that neither culture can function outside the economic reality of the day, nor can the economy strive to bring more welfare and riches to the society without the support of arts and culture. Manuel Barroso, the then President of the European Commission, stated, with regard to the necessity to link culture and economics, in 2004:

(T)he EU has reached a stage of its history where its cultural dimension can no longer be ignored. It would be a mistake to pretend that culture and economy are two totally separate worlds. Without proper attention to knowledge, science and culture, our societies at large, our economies, cannot prosper.³

The author opines that there is a dire need for bridging these two ‘knowledges’.

Indian Music and Dance

The collective term ‘Sangita’⁴ refers to the arts of singing, playing musical instruments and dancing. The different music and dance genres, styles and forms, which originated in India, and are presently flourishing on its soil and elsewhere; namely, Mauritius, Trinidad, South Africa, UK, USA and Germany, among others, are considered as the main Indian intangible expressions and heritage.

When a work of art, whether tangible or intangible, is created by people belonging to and espousing a particular culture, it becomes an important expression embodying the essence of that specific culture. The shared beliefs, attitudes, traditions, and, above all, values, by and through which the culture is formed, nourished, sustained, and perpetuated, and from which the people and community acquire their identity and uniqueness, become the constituent elements and essential attributes/characteristics of this art form. Throsby (2001:27) rightly considers “the true value of a work of art as lying in intrinsic qualities of aesthetic, artistic or broader cultural worth it possesses”. He further notes that “... the assertion of absolute value inherent in cultural objects can be seen as congruent with the ideas of intrinsic, natural or absolute value ... ” in ordinary commodities or objects.

While talking about these inherent “cultural value characteristics”, Throsby (2001:28-29) mentioned six such constituent elements in art forms or cultural objects as follows: Aesthetic Value, Spiritual Value, Social Value, Historical Value, Symbolic Value and Authenticity Value. Likewise, Indian Music and Dance, as art-forms, have been shaped by and, thus, embody these perennial, time-tested, and universally-appealed values and thoughts. The author maintains that these have nurtured, enriched, and sustained Indian culture as well as the individuals and communities espousing it and flourishing under its protection over millennia (Pudaruth, 2012).⁵

Value

Value refers to that which is worthy or worth pursuing either for its own sake or, by its means, for attaining some other end. Hofstede (1985:347) defines value as “... broad preferences for one state of affairs over others. They direct our feelings of good and evil. They

³ Quoted in Obuljen, 2005.

⁴ “Gitam, Vadyam Tatha Nrityam, Trayam Sangita Muchyate” (Shringi, et al., 1978: 10).

⁵ Unpublished PhD Thesis of the University of Delhi, India.

are opinions on how things should be. Indirectly, they also affect our perceptions of how things are and they affect our behaviour.” In this regard, Mason (2000:7) describes value as the “morals, principles, or ideas that serve as guides to action”. Cultural values are what make any culture worthwhile, for they determine the thoughts and behaviours of the individuals of that culture.

From an economic point of view, value denotes the worth of a product as expressed in what people are willing to pay for it. It is at the base of and the motivation to all economic behaviours and activities.

The author, thus, argues that Indian Music and Dance have both cultural and economic values, and these values should be placed at the centre stage of any cultural and economic discussion. It is, therefore, worthwhile to start by wiping out the artificial barrier between cultural and economic activities, and exploring, exploiting and leveraging both the cultural and economic values of Indian Music and Dance to foster inclusive, sustainable development.

Cultural Industries and Indian Music and Dance Industries

According to the United Nations’ Creative Economy Report 2010, creative economy, if properly handled, has the potential to become a plausible option to trigger development and growth in developed and developing countries. Throsby (2010) points out that in most developed and developing countries, the object of cultural policy is the cultural industries. The latter, which focuses on cultural products, is taken as a subset of the broader creative industries (United Nations’ Creative Economy Report, 2010).

In line with the above, Indian Music and Dance Industries⁶, which can be regarded as a component of the general Performing Arts Industries sub-sector of Mauritius, refer to those individuals and enterprises that could produce, ‘package’ and distribute Indian Music and Dance products (goods and services) for consumption by the locals and tourists at the domestic level, and people world-wide, through export. There are not yet full-fledged Indian Music and Dance industries in Mauritius.

Development

The term ‘development’, which was initially defined in terms of only greater economic wealth created solely through economic activities, is now being regarded as a multi-dimensional, integrated process where the physical, mental, emotional, aesthetic, moral, religious, and spiritual needs and aspirations of the people are met and gratified. Development, according to Sen (2000), is equated with freedom, as it is, “... a process of expanding the real freedoms that people can enjoy.” Development, as Sen (2000) further points out, should not be taken in its narrower senses, such as growth of Gross National Product (GNP), or rise of incomes, or industrialisation, or technological progress, or modernisation only. Freedom is more inclusive and encompassing in nature (Sen, 2000). This view is a far cry from what Conteras had put forth in 1999 when he mentioned “Modernization, Westernization, and especially, Industrialization...” when talking about economic development. Though both Sen (2000) and Conteras (1999) maintain a neo-liberal, free market conception of freedom, yet Sen’s (2000) freedom is more inclusive, for it leads towards the overall well-being of human beings.

⁶ Indian Music and Dance products created, produced and distributed by the Indo-Mauritians, who own the Intellectual Property Rights (copyrights).

From the above, it can be understood that economic activities alone cannot create those values which can possibly help people develop fully their potentials as human beings; hence, bringing about more well-being in their lives. Heyne (1998) rightly says that economics has no solutions on how to create values other than purely economic ones. In the same line of thoughts, Throsby (2001:155), while criticising the narrowness of the earlier conception of economic development, fittingly points out that, “(T)he world may have become more efficient and productive (through market and economic activities), but it has not become more fair.”

Norbu (1996) refers to such a kind of development as ‘doable development’ where there is “industrial development that is people-oriented, eco-friendly and congruent with cultural patterns.” At the International Meeting for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) held from 10 to 14 January 2005 in Mauritius, it was unanimously agreed that any culture, which promotes cultural identity, self-reliance, social justice and ecological balance, is an indispensable issue for sustainable development in the country.

From the above stated, it can be easily deduced that the human, cultural, social and economic potentials of each individual, group, society, community, and the nation, at large, need to be nurtured in order to foster an inclusive, sustainable development.

Cultural Policy

Policy formulation is basically a government business; hence, it refers to “the basic principles by which a government is guided.”⁷ According to Mundy (2000), cultural policy is one of the cultural tools by which the government can help improve the quality of life of the people. Hence, cultural policy falls within the area of public-policy making, as it is the task of each and every government to formulate its politics regarding culture and cultural assets of the country. The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions⁸ mentions several measures member-countries ought to take with regard to their culture and cultural assets. One of them clearly stipulates that governments should aim at integrating culture in their development policies at all levels for the creation of conditions conducive to sustainable development.

The Republic of Mauritius does not have an explicit, well-articulated, and coherent cultural scheme, which can be reckoned as a Cultural Policy. The discussion below shows how the cultural values inherent in Indian music and dance can be used to foster human, cultural, social and, to some extent, economic development through a new body of knowledge and approach to arts education.

Inculcating Cultural Values of Indian Music and Dance for Human, Cultural, Social and Economic Development through Arts Education

With a view to connecting Indian Music and Dance with character building and enhancement of attitudes, thus contributing to the overall development of the students, the author has devised and put forth a completely novel, unique and original body of knowledge.

⁷ See <<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/policy.html>>

⁸ See <<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/themes/2005-convention/the-convention/>>

This involves cultural values inherent in Indian Music and Dance and their interpretations from different perspectives, as musical values, human values and entrepreneurial values. He argues that knowledge of these values could be imparted to the younger generation of students, through Indian Music and/or Dance education.

This knowledge will help develop and sharpen creative and critical thinking skills of the students, ennoble their thoughts, build their character, enhance their attitude towards themselves and others, and guide their actions.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Inspired by and partly based on Throsby's (2001) concept of deconstructing cultural value into its constituent elements, and anchored in the interpretivism and cognitive and social constructivism approaches, the author has identified, developed, defined and interpreted a typology of nine basic cultural values as follows: Aesthetic, Ingenious, Religious, Spiritual, Social, Historical, Symbolic, Authentic, and Emotive values.

The Nine Cultural Values and their Constituents

The author has evolved 31 constituent values from these nine main values. It is worth noting in passing that the number of constituent values is not exhaustive and definitive. What is important is how they are imparted to the students so that this knowledge can help trigger and optimize their latent potentials as productive human beings and, at the same time, reinforce and deepen their knowledge and skills of the art-form under study.

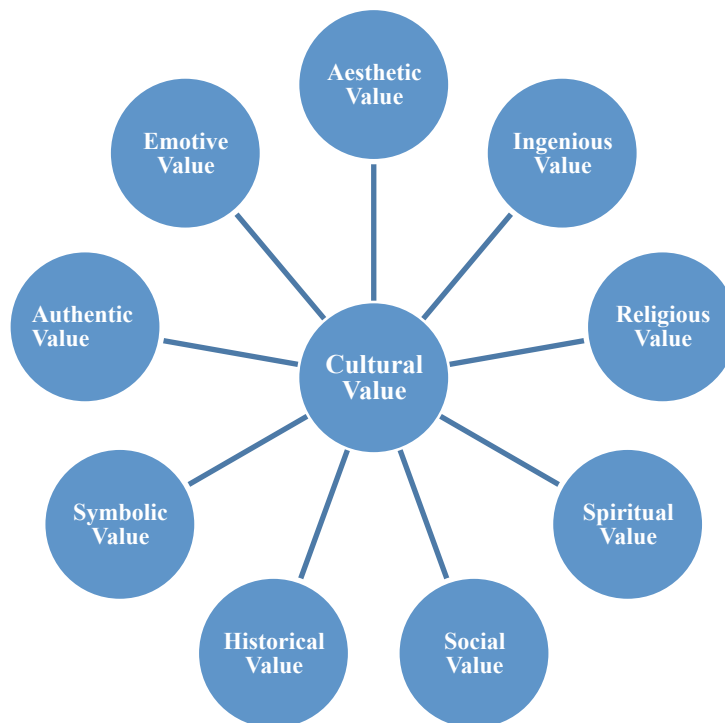


Fig. 1 Typology of the Cultural Values Inherent in Indian Music and Dance

The 31 constituent values, as categorised under the nine main values, are as follows:

Aesthetic Value	Harmony, Design, Symmetry, Restraint, Precision, Order and Newness
Ingenious Value	Wisdom, Clarity, Self-expression, Self-confidence and Self-governance
Religious Value	Religiosity and Morality
Spiritual Value	Truth, Universalism and Serenity
Social Value	Social Awareness, Co-operation, Tolerance and Respect
Historical Value	Continuity, Permanency and Authority
Symbolic Value	Communication and Significance
Authentic Value	Originality and Credibility
Emotive Value	Detachment, Sublimation, and Universalisation

Interpretation of the Constituent Values

By way of example, the author takes up the constituent value *Harmony* for interpretation.

Harmony in Indian Music and Dance

Harmony contributes to giving 'form', to any art form, be it music, dance, or painting. Harmony, which is defined in music, in strict terms, as the sonic effect produced from the simultaneous sounding of two or more notes, chords and melodies, is non-existent in Indian Music. The latter is basically monophonic (melodic) in nature. But, if the definition of harmony is taken, in a much broader sense, to mean 'in accord with', 'in synchronisation with' or 'in agreement with', then we might say that Indian Music and Dance, as any other art-forms, are replete with harmony as their main aesthetic value.

Harmony, in this sense, can then be interpreted, for example, as harmony among body, mind and intellect within the musician herself/himself in order to perform effectively. Likewise, unless the dancer is in a harmonious state within whereby the body responds to the call of the mind, which, in turn, receives the approval of the analysing or discriminating intellect, no dance can be performed.

Equally important is external harmony in the presentation of the art forms. Harmony among the different musicians in the case of vocal music, and among musicians and dancer/s, in the case of dance, is a 'sine qua non' for the success of any performance. External harmony denotes and connotes understanding, sympathy, comprehension, significance, and tolerance, amongst the people concerned.

Harmony as Human Value

Internal and external harmony is necessary for personality development and cultural and social integration, respectively. Internally, there must be harmony between body and sense, sense and mind, and mind and intellect. If the discriminating intellect or reason guides the mind and the mind, in turn, controls the senses and, by extension, the body, harmony emerges within the personality or character. Though man has different aspirations, urges and needs; namely, bodily, sensual, mental and intellectual, pulling her/him out in different

directions, yet harmony can emerge from within, for harmony usually arises from contrast, and not from sameness. Harmony is an equilibrium point where there is neither too little nor too much in one's personality.

The same principle of striking equilibrium, i.e. harmony within, can be applied externally to one's dealings with one's family members, relatives, friends, peers, colleagues and society, at large. One should always try to bring harmony amidst contrasting characters and behaviours of people around. Hence, tolerance, understanding, patience and sympathy towards others must be cultivated. It is also true that unless there is harmony within, there cannot be harmony outside.

Harmony as a Value Favours Entrepreneurial Mindset

Harmony can also be applied in the context of economics. The harmonious economic personality (entrepreneur) is a state of mind which blends and harmonizes contrasts, e.g. frugality and risk-taking in business.

In like manner, the other 30 values have been interpreted by the author.

It is worth noting that presently Indian Music or Dance education focuses only on dissemination of the specific knowledge and skills pertaining to the discipline under study. At its worst, teaching and learning activities are fully geared towards making the students pass the examinations and obtain certificates; at its best, they are trained to become, more or less, musicians and dancers of a reasonable standard. The values inherent in Indian Music and Dance, which have the potential to create better human beings, are considered as part and parcel of the 'hidden curricula' and are, thus, left on their own to seep into the psyche of the students and, eventually, affect their mindsets and behaviours.

The present author holds a different position. He believes that the present scenario is not yielding the required results and the strategies in place are not working. Few, if not at all, benefit from the cultural values which inhere in these art-forms. The problems a young Mauritian is facing presently at personal, cultural, social and economic levels is a matter of great concern.

Indian Music and Dance Industries

Another way of bridging the gap between arts and development lies in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of economic values of Indian Music and Dance. These could be achieved through the creation, production and distribution of Indian Music and Dance products (goods and services) having economic and market values.

Total Economic Value of Cultural Products

However, with regard to the economic value of cultural assets/products, price or utility is not the only value that comes into play when these are evaluated. There are other economic values worthy of pursuit when it comes to the utilization of cultural assets, or cultural goods and services. The economic values or benefits that can be captured from a cultural asset can be divided into direct and indirect use values and option values from excludable private goods, and non-use values and existence and bequest values from non-excludable public goods.

These are collectively known as the Total Economic Value (TEV) of the cultural assets, or cultural goods and services.

Excludable Private Goods and Services

Excludable private products are those goods and services that can be measured by what private individuals are prepared to give up in order to acquiring them, thus a private market can see the light of day. The valuation of the 'use benefit' is worked out from the price paid for their enjoyment (Throsby, 2010).

Non-excludable Public Goods and Services

Public goods and services are those goods and services that can be collectively enjoyed by the whole community or nation, at large. They are non-excludable or non-exclusive for once they are produced they are accessible to everyone and no one can be excluded from enjoying them. They are also non-rival or non-rivalling for one person's consumption of them does not diminish the amount available for others to consume or enjoy.

Indian Music and Dance have both public and private-good properties.

Indian Music and Dance as Products

The present author affirms that Indian Music and Dance, if combined with other artistic and technical inputs, have the potential to give rise to a whole range of goods and services, having economic values. The creation, production, and distribution, and eventually, consumption of these Indian Music and Dance products are expected to create more jobs, bring in more earnings and thus, produce more buoyancy in the economic and cultural lives of the country. These products, which the author has categorised under 60 types, are what the Indian Music and Dance Industries in Mauritius will produce and distribute for general consumption. This submission is based on and has been worked out from the visual and aural data gathered by the present author during his multiple attendances as non-controlled and non-participant observer in Indian Music and Dance programmes, seminars, conferences, festivals, concerts, and sittings throughout his stay in Delhi, India, from July 2010 to June 2012, in addition to his close interaction with musicians and dancers.

The researcher has put forth a new structural model of Indian Music and Dance Industries (IMDI), which can function within the larger framework of 'Cultural Industries' sector, albeit still in its embryonic stage, in Mauritius. He calls this model the Indian Music and Dance Industries Structural Concentric Circles Model. This model shows the relationship among the single industries or stakeholders (individuals, enterprises and/or firms) within the proposed Indian Music and Dance Industries component of the Performing Arts Industries sub-sector and between them and the rest of the economy or outside stakeholders.

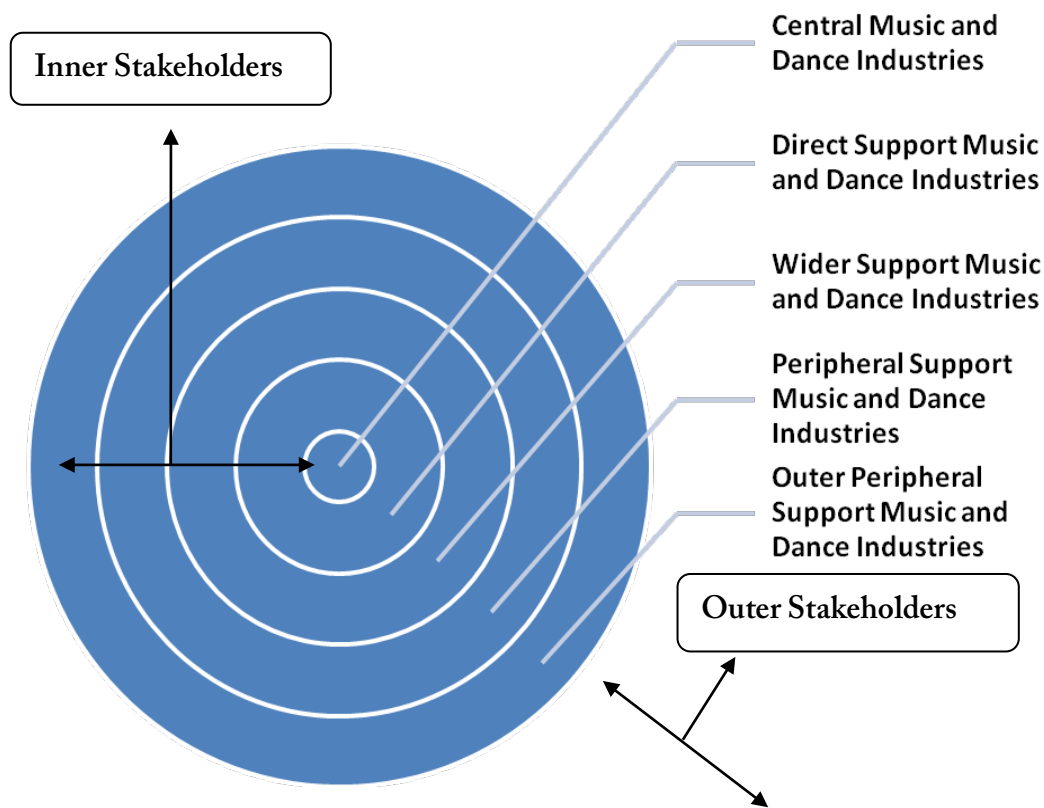


Figure 2: Structural Model of Indian Music and Dance Industries (IMDI)

Proposals for Implementation

With regard to the Inner and Outer Stakeholders, the present author has put forth 151 proposals which, if materialised, could give a new impetus and direction to a more rational and optimal utilization of artistic and cultural resources in the country. For want of space, it has not been possible to present all the 151 proposals in this paper. However, with a view to giving a direction to the reflection, 5 such proposals, each touching upon a related area, are given below:

- To audition and grade musicians and dancers into A, B, & C in different forms and genres through an assessment of their level of competences and knowledge and skills acquired.
- Give status of MSME to all informal enterprises involved in the creation, production and distribution of music and dance products in the country, so that they can benefit from the support, measures and schemes put in place by the government.
- Encourage those enterprises to keep pace with the latest technologies by providing funding accessibility via the Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM) or other agencies at concessional rates.
- Set up a funding organisation similar to Cooperative Credit Unions and/or The Mauritius Civil Service Mutual Aid Association under the aegis of the Ministry of Arts and Culture or any other agencies, with membership open to all registered

artistes, groups of artistes, and enterprises in the IMDI, and provide a seed capital to help the organisation take off.

- Ensure that all private educational and training institutions, their trainers and training programmes in Indian Music and Dance and Related Areas in Mauritius are duly registered, accredited and approved by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA).

Conclusion

The chasm between culture and economics could be reduced considerably. Culture, cultural values and cultural actions have a vital role to play in expediting inclusive development in Mauritius. Indian Music and Dance, the two prominent cultural assets of the Indo-Mauritians, have both cultural and economic values which could be tapped. These could be explored, identified, utilized to foster inclusive development. A new body of knowledge could be integrated into the existing Indian Music and Dance education and imparted in a systematic manner for changing and ennobling mindsets, building character and enhancing behaviour; thus, hastening enculturation process of the younger generation, while inculcating within them a spirit of adventure and entrepreneurship.

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