

## **THE TRADITION OF GHARANA AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN HINDUSTANI MUSIC**

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### *Abstract*

North Indian Classical Music or Hindustani Music is specially based on the ‘Raga’ singing. Raga singing holds a very important place in the field of Classical Music. Alike Raga the term ‘Gharana’ also plays a very significant role in North Indian style of Classical Music. The tradition of Gharana is very ancient as it has been considered with the tradition of Guru-Shisya Parampara. Basically Gharana is a system of social organization which connects musicians or dancers by lineage. Every Gharana has its own features and characteristics. There are a fair number of Gharanas in Indian Classical Music which are very famous for its unique style of singing. As a result, various styles of singing have been formed by maintaining the Raga structure. It creates a great scope for the learners of Classical Music to understand the characteristics of a raga in different ways and to choose one particular style of raga rendering through the system of Gharana. This also helps to sustain the artistic authority of an artist. Hence, in this article our endeavour shall be upon focusing on the aspects of Vocal Gharanas and its importance.

**Keywords:-** Hindustani Music, Guru-Shisya Parampara, Gharana, Classical Music.

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### **Introduction: -**

The term Gharana has been derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Griha’ which means house/home (**Raja, 2005**). In the same way Gharana represents a house of different rules, formulas and unique styles of singing. Gharana is used to represent the unique style of raga presentation. The modern genre of Hindustani music follows the tradition to keep the Khayal

singing alive. Hindustani music is commonly based on the structure of raga. In North Indian music there are several ragas having distinct features and to preserve the diverse characteristics it's important to categorize them under different styles. Our country is a land of diversity where people having different caste and creed reside together and their cultures come together. In the same way the aspect of raga creates huge number of ragas which are in vogue. The term raga means to color the minds of listeners as described by Matanga Muni in his text "Brihaddesi" (Pradip, 2011). Basically raga is a melody which is composed by several musical notes. There are seven pure and alternative notes in the Hindustani Musical tradition. The origin of Saptaswaraslay took place in the Vedic period. In the Vedic period the term Swara has been pronounced as Yama. The chanting of Vedic hymns began with only one note that is 'Archika'. The note was sung during Yajna. Shlokas were sung on that note repeatedly. Gathika consists of two notes. When one more note was added to Gathika it became Samika. Samika consists of three notes Gandhar, Rishava and Sadja (Gautama, 1989). Swarantara was later evolved with four notes. In this way seven Sama Vedic notes have originated. From Vedic notes Seven Loukika notes have evolved and the seven pure notes of Classical music are nothing but the changed forms of Vedic notes. The Vedic period has been considered as the source of every type of music specially the Classical Music of India.

### **Evolution of Gharana:**

The evolution of Gharana dates back to 16<sup>th</sup> Century. The history of evolution of Hindustani Music or North Indian Classical music had undergone profound changes and also suffered a lot to reach where it is today. Indian History tells about the Mughals who invaded our country and occupied our land. With their entry their culture also came with them to India. Muslim rulers were less interested in music as it was mentioned in their religion. Few of them

became great lovers of Indian Music and encouraged it. Some of them tried very hard to develop Indian Music.

They welcomed many great musicians at their courts to upgrade the Music system of India. Mughal Emperor Akbar was a great lover of Music and Mia Tansen who was a great classical singer of India belonged to his court. The concept of Gharana is actually a group of trained musicians with their own singing styles. The Group tradition which is known as Gharana has ruled Khayal singing for two centuries approximately (**Raja, 2009**). The term 'Khayal' is considered as the modern genre of Classical Music in India. The term has been derived from an Arabic word which means 'imagination'. With the advent of Khayal in Indian Music different singing styles have been formed and named as Gharana. Khayal singing has no boundaries and restrictions and that is why it became very popular in Indian Music and gave birth to a fair number of Vocal Gharanas. The singers of a particular Gharana get full opportunity to use his or her own imagination to sing a Khayal of a raga. The concept of Gharana emerged as a means by which artists could preserve their artistic authority. Some well-known Gharanas of Vocal music are Gwalior, Agra, Kirana, Patiala, Mewati, Rampoor Sahaswan, Bhendibazar and Jaipur. A Gharana indicates a magnificent musicological identity. Sometimes the ideology changes from one Gharana to the others.

**Khayal:**

The term Gharana is directly connected to Khayal singing. Khayal provides a great platform to its performers to express their knowledge and skill at full length. Among all musical forms Khayal offers a great opportunity to use one's imagination to improvise the singing. Khayal is the main or most important part of vocal music. Today every musician prefers to perform a Khayal on a particular raga and it has become one of the major items of a

programme. Khayal is a Perso-Arabic word which means ‘imagination, ‘idea’ or ‘thought’ (Mutatkar, 1987). The similar meanings are subjectivity, individuality and impression. All these are related to the characteristics of the term Khayal. Khayal singing is different from other musical forms in terms of melodic movement, shape and singing style. It has been believed that in 13<sup>th</sup> Century Amir Khusro the legendary poet had invented Khayal. It is not possible to consider an individual as the inventor of one genre because Thakur Jaidev Singh had also spoken about Khayal to describe ‘Rupakalapti’ form of Vocal music. But the evolution of Khayal somehow depends on Muslim rulers because Khayal tradition is a mixture of older Indian musical tradition with Arabic culture that started from 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Century. This form had acquired great rank during the period of Sharqi Sultans of Jaunpur (15<sup>th</sup> Century) and got maturity during the reign of Mahammad Shah of Delhi. In the medieval period Dhrupad/Dhamar was considered as the pure Classical form of Indian Music. With the evolution of Khayal Gayaki the trend of Dhrupad/Dhamar has declined. Dhrupad/Dhamar was very strict in discipline, on the other hand Khayal singing was melodious by nature. As a result Khayal acquired an important place and other forms have lost their popularity.

The Khayal genre comprises of two types such as the Bada Khayal or Vilambit Khayal (slow tempo) and Chhota Khayal or Drut Khayal (medium tempo). The important format of Khayal is Bada Khayal in Ektala (12beats) or Jhumra (14beats) or Tilwara (16Beats). Chhotakhayal is practiced commonly on Teentala (16 beats) or Ektala (12 beats).

### **Gwalior Gharana:**

This is the oldest Khayal Gharana. The tradition of this Gharana is associated with the place Gwalior. Mughal king Ustad Nathan Pir Bakhsh and his maternal grandsons Hassu and Haddukhan are considered as the Founders of this Gharana. According to some scholars Nathan

Pir Baksh settled in Gwalior and formed the styles of the Gharana. The Gharana was formed during the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar (1542-1605). The most popular of his court was Miya Tansen. The main musician of this Gharana was Bade Mohammad Khan whose taanbazi style was very famous. Gwalior Gharana's well known feature is its simplicity of singing. Common ragas are mostly sung in this Gharana rather than complex one. Straight taans are practiced in this Gharana. The Sapattaa is a very important part of this style of singing. At the time of Bol Banttaan this style of singing includes all the words of Sthayi. Some notable musicians of this Gharana are Gulam Rasool, Ustad Bade Inayat Khan, Balakrishnabuwa Ichalkaranjkar, and Anant Manohar Joshi. The Gwalior Gharana is considered to be the only source of the other gayakis or styles which were formed later on.

#### **Agra Gharana:**

The evolution of this Gharana is Nauhar Baani. Nauhar Baani is a style of Dhrupad singing which dates back to 1300 AD, during the time of Allauddin Khilji. Samrang and Sasrang were the founders of this Gharana. Agra Gharana has been derived from Gwalior Gharana and Ustad Ghagge Khuda Baksh introduced the Khayal style of Gwalior Gharana into Agra Gharana. In the opinion of some scholars Haji Sujan Khan, son-in-law of Tansen founded the Agra Gharana though he was not a Khayal singer but Dhrupadiya (**Deva, 1973**).

The singing style of Agra Gharana is the mixture of Khayal Gayaki and Dhrupad-Dhamar. His Gharana has a unique style of Khayal singing where Khayal starts with a vowel sound 'a'. The Bandish or 'Chija' plays an important role in every Gharana but in this Gharana Bandish or Chija has occupied a very special role in the teaching methodology of this Gharana. As the Gayaki of this style is a blend of Dhrupad and Khayal so while practicing Khayal artists use Gamaka, Meend etc. Laya-kari is best style of this Gharana and all artists of this style are

masters in laya-kari. Tihai of this style is very interesting. In this Gharana Dhrupad singing is still in practice. Some famous exponents of this Gharana are Faiyaz Khan, Ghaghe Khudabaksh, Kale Khan, Natthan Khan, Vilayat Hussain Khan.

### **Jaipur Gharana**

The founder of this Gharana is considered to be Alladiya Khan who was born in Atrauli (a town near Aligarh) and migrated to Jaipur. Basically the Gharana has evolved from Dhrupad and mainly from the Dagarvani of Dhrupad. The Gharana is known for its special laya-kari. The Gharana has a good collection of ragas such as compound or Sankeerna ragas. Jaipur Gharana presents mixture of two ragas where listener can enjoy the blending of two ragas without losing their distinctive features. Alladiya Khan had introduced various lesser known ragas like Basanti Kedar, Jait Kalyan, Kafi Kanada, Nat Kamod etc. Some eminent artists of this Gharana are Kesaribai Kerkar, Gaanapaswini Mugubai Kurdikar, and Bhaskarbuwa Bakhale.

### **Kirana Gharana**

Kirana Gharana was founded by Gopal Nayak in 13<sup>th</sup> Century. It is one of the productive Gharanas in Indian Classical Music. The name of this Gharana has been derived from 'Kirana' or Kairana, a town of Shamli District in Uttar Pradesh. This place is the birth place of Abdul Karim Khan and he was the most important musician of this Gharana. Abdul Karim Khan is the founder of this style. One of the best features of this Gharana is to extend the notes. It is believed that Kiran Gharana has been influenced by the Carnatic Music as most Hindustani artists from Carnatic music are exponents of this Gharana. Abdul Wahid Khan was a great exponent of this school who was the cousin of Abdul Karim Khan. A unique feature of this style is the use of Pukara in higher octave. The waving of notes with notations is another characteristic of this Gharana. Raga Todi, Lalit, Multani, Patdeep, Puriya, Marwa, Suddha Kalyan, Darbari Kanhara

are the mostly sung ragas in this. This style always focuses on the notes. It also includes Thumri singing but with the emphasis on the notes. Renowned singers of this Gharana are Abdul Karim Khan, Abdul Wahid Khan, Sawai Gandharva, Pt. Biswanathbuwa Jadav, Sureshbabu Mane, Hirabai Barodekar, Roshan Ara Begum, Gangubai Hangal, Firoz Dastur, Pt. Bhimsen Joshi, Basavraj Rajguru, Madhava Gudi, Manik Varma.

### **Patiala Gharana**

Patiala Gharana was founded by Fateh Ali and Ali Baksh, they were known as Aliya-Fattu. It was the only Gharana which was named after the city Patiala. Aliya-Fattu or the founders of this Gharana had learnt music from Miyan Kallu who was a well-known Sarangi player of Patiala court. Patiala Gharana is very close to Gwalior Gharana. The most important feature of Patiala Gharana is taan rendering. The exponents of this school use rhythmic and vakrataans that are very fast in nature. Ragas are sung mostly in Ektaal and Teentaal. Patiala Gharana has various styles that are distinguishable from others. Voice Culture of this style is open throated. The use of different notes makes the voice culture melodious and Gamakas are used in a special way. Taans, Alap, Bol-Alap, Bol-Bant are common features. Musicians use medium tempo to sing ragas. The Patiala Gharana is the blend of four styles such as Dhrupad Ang, Gwalior Style, Jaipur Style and Delhi Style. It uses Kana, Gamaka, Meend, Khatka, Murki and other elements. The Gamakas have been evolved during the pre-Christian era. The names of the Gamakas were Tiripa, Sphurita, Kampita, Lina, Andolita, Vali, Tribhinna, Kurula etc (**Prajananda, 1963**). Important exponents of this Gharana are Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Shiv Dayal Batish, Kumar Mukherjee, Ali Baksh Khan, Barkat Ali Khan, Munawar Ali Khan, Bade Fateh Ali Khan, Amanat Ali Khan, Hamid Ali Khan, Farida Khanum.

### **Rampur Sahaswan Gharana**

This is the Gharana of North Indian Classical Music and Inayat Hussain Khan was the founder of this Gharana. Basically the singing style of this Gharana has originated from Ustad Mehboob Khan who was chief Khayal singer of Rampur Court of Rampur in Uttar Pradesh. His singing characteristics have been adopted by his son Inayat Hussain Khan. In this way the family tree of this Gharana has been formed. The shadow of Dhrupad singing can be found in this Gharana. It is believed that Rampur-Sahaswan Gharana is the off-shoot of Gwalior Gharana. The basic characteristics are medium tempo, open voice, rhythmic taan patterns. Renowned singers of this Gharana are Ustad Inayat Hussain Khan, Ustad Hyder Khan, Ustad Ghulam Hussain Khan, Ustad Wajid Hussain Khan, Ustad Ghulam Taqi Khan, and Ustad Ghulam Sadiq Khan.

### **Bhendibazar Gharana:**

Bhendibazaar Gharana originated in Bhendi Bazaar in Mumbai. The Gharana was established by three brothers Chajju Khan, Nazir Khan and Khadim Hussain Khan in 1890. They were the sons of Ustad Dilawar Hussain Khan. Three sons of Dilawar Hussain Khan shifted from Bijanaur, a place in Uttar Pradesh to Mumbai. Vilayat Hussain Khan was brother of them, he used to stay in an area named Bhendibazaar. This place was known as Behind the Bazaar by the British and later local people changed the name and it came to be known as Bhendi Bazaar. Three brothers learnt music from their father Ustad Dilawar Hussain Khan and Inayat Hussain Khan of Rampur Sahaswan Gharana. The characteristics of this school are different from various other schools of Indian Classical music. The Gharana is well known for its unique compositions or Bandish. Ustad Chajju Khan has composed so many compositions by using his pseudo name 'Amar'. The pseudo name is the unique identity of this Gharana. One of the important features of this style is Alapi ornamented with Gamaka, Soot and Meend. Breath control is very important to sing Khayals in this Gharana. Musicians of this Gharana maintain very good balance between the



grammar and aesthetic. Mixture of Carnatic music and Hindustani Music can be found in this Gharana. Prominent singers of this Gharana are Anjanibai Malpekar, Ramesh Nadkarni, and Ashraf Hussain Khan, Vasant Rao Deshpande, Mubarak Ali Khan, Fida Ali Khan, Shivkumar Shukla, Pandurang Amberkar, Master Navrang, Ramesh Nadkarni.

### **The Significance of Gharana:-**

Indian Music has two major divisions viz. North Indian Music and South Indian Music. North Indian Music is known as Hindustani Music and South Indian Music is known as Carnatic Music. Hindustani Music is based on the structure of raga singing. Raga has acquired an important place in Hindustani Music and raga is considered as the lifeline of Hindustani Music **(Prajnananda, 1961)**. There are various musical forms but raga singing holds a very significant place. The evolution of raga dates back to 2<sup>nd</sup> Century when Muni Bharata had spoken about the term 'Raga' in his musical text 'Natyashastra'. Later the term appeared in Matanga Munis text 'Brihaddesi'. Raga has been described as a sweet melody which attracts the listeners by its emotional approach **(Kshirsagar, 1998)**.

From ancient period till date raga singing is in practice. In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century a very interesting genre of music evolved which has been named as Khayal. Khayal genre got popularity due to its nature which allows an artist to express his/her imaginations without any restriction. With the invention of Khayal the Gharana system came into light. The Gharana system has different styles of Khayal singing. Each and every style has been named after their own characteristics of singing. In ancient times in different princely states of our country court music was very popular. In course of time this system was abolished and many students have learnt from different Gurus of Various Gharanas. But in Gharana system of singing musicians would not allow disciples from any other Gharanas. The tradition of Gharana is similar to Guru-

Shisya parampara. It's an old tradition of teaching where a student dedicates his or her full time to learn from a Guru. The tradition of Guru-sishya parampara dates back to Vedic period as the knowledge was transferred from guru to shisya orally. The tradition is one of the divine relationships as it radiates with knowledge, obedience and respect. In North Indian Classical Music this is the biggest tradition to carry forward the music system from one generation to the other generation. Guru-Mukhi Vidya is the only way to learn this art. Through this tradition one can learn properly from his or her Guru which does not need any other lessons. Students get the chance to correct their mistakes in this method. Important part of this process is to listen carefully to the Guru and direct listening from the Guru improves the power of memory. In ancient times disciples used to stay at Gurus place to receive music training. Now a days it's not possible to reside with the Guru. So students find a place near Gurus house and visit it very often. In modern time with the help of Information and Communication Technology everyone can learn from various apps like YouTube and Facebook, but one who wants to keep the tradition of Gharana would never take help from these apps. In the epic Ramayana the mention of Guru Shisya parampara has been found. Rishi Vishwamitra and Lord Shri Ram Chandra's relationship is age old relationship. Dwapara Yuga tells about the relationship of Lord Shri Krishna and his guru Sandipani. Oral tradition or Maukhik Parampara has been considered as the pure process of learning Hindustani Music. Vocal Music is one of the finest arts of our country and Khayal singing adds additional beauty in this. Gharanedar Gayaki is more effective because in this process disciples have to stay 24 hour with their Guru and it's a great opportunity to learn and evaluate. One can justify his or her talent through this tradition. The Gharana legacies allow every artist to express their feeling through Khayal singing in different ways by maintaining the raga structure. The concept of Gharana offers musicians to sing as per their choices and to keep it

for next generations. In this way the tradition has been passing on from one generation to the other and as a result, different techniques have been evolved and many brilliant artists also have come to light. In Hindustani Music its essential to study the life history of great musicians because history of Indian Music talks about the effort of different scholars and it is due to their hard work that Indian Music has reached its present position. Sometimes we do not recognize many musicians but when it comes to the aspects of Gharana we must know each and every musician by the name of that particular Gharana. As a result we can distinguish their singing also. In Gharanedar Gayaki one disciple was able to learn music from only one Guru. There was a ritual in this tradition named ‘Ganda-Vandhan’ that means the disciple officially announces that he is going to dedicate his or her full time to Guru until or unless the music training completes. This is the process of starting the journey with the respected Guru who will shape the career of a musician. If the disciple tries to learn and listen to music from other musicians he/she shall be rejected by the Guru. The tradition was very strict but it taught discipline and respect. By singing a particular style of music one can keep the techniques unchanged because today students are listening to more than one style and this destroys the purity of a raga. So the tradition is very important to keep one particular style unique.

Khayal singing has influenced the tradition very much because with the advent of Khayal Gayaki many styles were formed by different musicians. Day by day it flourished and gave birth to different excellent Gharanas and Musicians. There are no records or manuscripts available regarding the History of Indian Music. Hence various ancient scholars are the main source of data collection about the history of Hindustani Music. The tradition of Gharana has influenced Indian Classical Music in different ways and provides a great opportunity to choose one particular type of singing from among various other styles. It gives the opportunity to research on a particular

style of singing and to know the history of its formation. It also allows us to learn the family tree of one particular Gharana and the relation between Guru-Shisya. The tradition helps the students to learn attentively different techniques of Khayal singing and to distinguish one from another. The raga structure remains the same in every Gharana but it is dependent on the musicians to sing the ragas in their own way. The Gharana tradition is very important for the students of modern times because it provides iconic styles of music. It also attracts the students to follow the techniques of music learning because the singing pattern varies from Gharana to Gharana. Besides, the Gharana is a unique identity of Hindustani Classical Music which represents the aspect of Khayal form. Indian Music is the repository of different kinds of music since Aryan music has adopted the non-Aryan Music in our music system. On the other hand, foreign countries also have taken advantage of the music of our country. In the opinion of Dr. Bagchi, an eminent musicologist, before the entry of Islam, Indian musicologists were familiar with the music of other countries (**Prajanand,1987**). This concept was proven right when Xuanzang, a Chinese Scholar had visited India. In this way Indian Culture has become rich and developed.

## **CONCLUSION:**

We live in a country of rich cultural heritage where Hindustani classical Music holds an important place. It is considered that classical music is the base of every kind of music. Raga singing is the best part of Indian Music which influences the audiences by its melodious nature. Khayal is a beautiful concept through which one can perform a raga according to his or her imagination. To develop the Khayal concept the tradition of Gharana was evolved and different Gharanas have been formed. As a result, students and music lovers get a great scope to understand raga presentation in various ways. It's a good opportunity to be familiar with the eminent musicians from all over the country through the tradition of Gharana. The tradition of

Gharana helps us to enrich the repository of Hindustani Music so it's our duty to keep the tradition alive.

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