

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN MAINTAINING THE GHARANA TRADITION

RAGHAVENDRA K BADASHESHI

Assistant Professor (Hindustani Vocal), Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Puttaparti, Andhra Pradesh

Abstract

After the fall of Mughal empire, Gharana system came into existence in Indian music. It is at this point that the traditional classical music came out of the clutches of the Kings and Queens. In simple terms, Gharana is a school of music which follows its own musical ideology and singing style. It used to be a fundamental duty of every student to follow the Gharana's tradition under which he is undergoing the musical training. Before the technological development, the pupil used to learn music under Guru-Shishya Parampara. The connection between the Guru(teacher) and Shishya(student) was direct and one to one. The music education was distinctively oral, and it depended on the intimate contact between the Guru and Shishya. There was no external influence on the student. But in the present world due to technological advancement, the social media has had a greater impact on the Gharana system of music. This article aims to explore the relationship between the social media and Gharana system. This study intends to bring to the forefront the influence of the social media in maintaining the Gharana tradition and challenges faced by the music learners and artists in maintaining the same. The Gharana system is found in vocal as well as instrumental music. We have Gharanas in Tabla, Sitar, and Sarod based on playing style. And even in vocal music different Gharanas exists under different forms of Hindustani music like Dhrupad, Khyal, Thumri etc. This article confines its study only to Gharanas with respect to the Khyal form in Hindustani vocal music.

Key Words: Hindustani classical music, Gharana, Gaiki, Bandish.

INTRODUCTION

“The Gharana word comes from the word ‘Ghar’ (rooted in the Sanskrit word Griha) meaning house or family or more specifically ‘of the house’ “ [1]. “The Hindi term is rooted in Ghar, meaning a household. Gharana as used in music, is a lineage which is biological (father-son etc.) to begin with and grows into a discipline chain, that is of disciples and their disciples spread over generations” [2]. The Gharana system of music came into existence in the 19th century. During this period music artists and musicologists wanted to establish their own identity by teaching the students with their own singing style under Guru-Shishya Parampara following Gurukul system of education. Every Gharana had its own distinctive identity and musical ideology. In terms of the portrayal of the Raag, every Gharana is different from each other. This Gharana system passed down through generations and even now in the present world every artist is associated with his own Gharana. Few are associated with more than one Gharana.

IMPORTANCE OF GHARANA

As the Gharanas differ from each other in terms of style of performance, every Gharana is special with its own distinctive characteristics. Every Gharana style is different from each other in terms of many factors like the importance given to Bandish, selection of the Raag and Taal, the usage of Swaras, the Badath, Alaap, Taan etc. Like every flower has its own fragrance, every Gharana has its own beauty. There are various Gharanas which are very popular. A few popular Khyal Gharanas are Gwalior Gharana, Agra Gharana, Kirana

Gharana, Jaipur-Atrauli Gharana, Mewati Gharana etc. Every Gharana follows a set of rules laid down by the lineage.

GHARANA SYSTEM BEFORE THE TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

Before the social media, the student was expected to live with the Guru, thereby the student was less exposed to other styles of music. His Guru was the only source of his music education. The student has less or no contact to the outside musical world. Even if the student intends to hear any other style of music, he had to go to the place of event in person to listen to the music. It was the prime duty of the pupil to maintain his singing style which he has learnt from his Guru throughout his lifetime. It was also the responsibility of the student to pass on the Gharana style to the future generations. Before the technological advancement it was easier for the Guru and for the pupil to maintain the Gharana tradition.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MUSIC

Social media is “A computer based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through virtual networks and communities” [3]. With technological developments, social media has a bigger impact on the music industry. The whole perspective of the music industry has changed with the advent of social media. Earlier it was very much difficult for the artists to popularise their art. But with social media it has helped musicians to get connected with a larger audience. Social media has also enabled the artists to interact with the audience. Social media is of a greater help in the marketing and promotion of the musical art. Not only in their country, but it has also helped them to stay connected with the audience in foreign countries.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND GHARANA

As discussed above, social media has a greater impact on the music industry. Likewise, it has also influenced to a greater extent in maintaining the Gharana tradition. Before the advent of the social media, rigidity of the Gharana could be maintained easily. As the individual Guru was the only source of knowledge for the student, it was easier for the Guru to teach the student the aesthetic part of that Gharana. It was also easier for the music learners to study the intricacies of the Gharana under which he is being taught by the Guru. We see that the Gharana tradition is still maintained in the present generation also. But due to social media influence it has become a challenging task to present your musical performance without the influence of other Gharanas. Not only for the music learners but also for the professional artists it has become a challenging task not to get influenced by the other Gharanas. But still we see that the Gharana tradition is still maintained, as it is, by many professional artists. Today the Guru is not the only source of music knowledge for the music learners. They are in access to many channels of social media. Knowingly or unknowingly, intending or unintentionally they are exposed to learnings of the many other Gharanas.

USAGE OF GHARANA BANDISHES

Every Gharana is special in its own way with its own distinct characteristics. There are a set of Bandishes relating to each Gharana which has been taught over generations. The learner or performer is expected to sing the same Bandishes in the process of elaborating the Khyal. But due to social media channels like Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. we see few performers using Bandishes which are not suitable for their own Gharana tradition. The music learners are concerned more about the beauty and the tune of the Bandish rather than maintaining the Gharana tradition. And also a few Gharanas give greater importance to the meaning of the Bandishes. But we see music learners listening to the Bandishes through social media and imitating it in their performances without knowing the meaning of those Bandishes. Unlike Gurukul system of music where music was taught in Gurukul system of education, we now see the music being taught in various institutions and Universities. We also see in the present generation, the same student learning from two or more Gurus or teachers in these institutions and Universities. Because of this, the student finds it difficult to stick to a single Gharana style.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE RAAG

Though the Gharanas doesn't differ in terms of following the rules of the Raag, they are different from each other in terms of many other factors. We know that the main course of the Khyal is Alaap. Only with the Alaap the true form of the Raag can be depicted. In terms of Alaap every Gharana follows a different style. Some Gharanas give importance to Akaar Alaap whereas some give more importance to the Bol-Alaap. Few Gharanas give greater importance to the ornamentation like usage of meend, khatka, murki etc. and few Gharanas prefer to take the Alaap without much importance given to ornamentation. The social media has a greater impact on the Alaapchari also. As most of the music learners are in touch of social media channels, they are exposed to different Alaap styles. Because of this they are following the Alaap style which is not relevant or suitable to their Gharana tradition. Unknowingly and unintentionally, they are developing the Raag in a way contrary to their Gharana. The same is the case with respect to the Taans. Some Gharanas give more importance to Akaar Taans whereas some give more importance to Bol-Taans. We see music learners and performers singing Taans in a way which is not relevant to their Gharana tradition. We have different Taans types like Sapat-Taans, Koot-Taans, Alankarik Taans etc. And every Gharana is different from each other in terms of selection of these Taans types. But with the influence of the social media, we see few Taans types being taken which are not suitable to its style of music. Through social media the music learners and performers listen to classical music of other artists because of which it becomes difficult to maintain the purity of their Gharana tradition. Basically, every Gharana is different in its Gaiki i.e., style of performance. So, the social is having a greater influence on the Gaiki overall.

Several Gharanas differ in terms of many other factors also, including the selection of Raags and Taals. Few Gharanas are known for singing bold and serious Raags while other Gharanas

prefer lighter Raags. Because of social media influence we see few Raags being performed and few Taals being used by artists and music learners which are contrary to their Gharana tradition.

CONCLUSION

Considering the above study, it is certain that social media has influenced the Gharana tradition to a greater extent. Social media has posed a greater challenge to the music learners in maintaining their Gharana. Music learners are not giving much importance to Gharana now a days. As the Bandishes of the Khyal are without copyright, everyone is using those Bandishes in their performances without even thinking whether it suits their Gharana tradition.

In this generation where more and more institutions and Universities are being opened in the country where Hindustani classical music is taught, it is of prime importance that music is being taught in these institutions following Gurukul system of education. In Gurukul system of education the student stays with the teacher and he is not exposed to the outside musical world. If the student is in constant watchfulness of the teacher, his Gaiki will not get corrupted, and it becomes easier to maintain Gharana tradition.

There are two sides of every coin. Likewise, though social media comes with its own advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, it is also very important that student is not allowed to stay in touch with the social media till he completes his music education. The social media is mostly accessed through mobile smart phones. So, the student should be allowed to access the mobile under some supervision.

But yet we see many institutions and Universities where music is still being taught following Gurukul system of education. Many professional artists have come forward and opened institutions where the student stays with the Guru and music is taught Gurukul system of education without the influence of the social media. So, for the Gharana tradition to survive with originality, it is very important to have a control on the social media.

REFERENCES

- Nair, Rajeev, A Rasika's journey Through Hindustani Music, Indialog Publications, 2007.
Ghosh, Nikhil, The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Music of India (Set of 3 Vols), Oxford University Press, 2011.
Dollarhide, Maya, Social Media: Definition, Importance, Top Websites & Apps, www.investopedia.com, Dotdash Meridith publishing family, 31st Aug 2023, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-media.asp>.