

## Original Article

### The Disciple of Indian Classical Music

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2025-170306

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 17

Issue 3|

Pp. 24-31

March 2025

Submitted: 03 Feb. 2025

Revised: 09 Feb. 2025

Accepted: 23 Mar. 2025

Published: 31 Mar. 2025

*Individual expression is highly valued in an artist, and this is no different within the context of Indian classical music. But whilst being allowed to develop a personal style, the Indian music tradition is firmly rooted in the idea of guru-shishya - referring to the relationship between the master and student. Traditionally, extended (often lifelong) close contact with the master meant that their personal style was firmly imprinted on the student. The Northern Hindustani and Southern Carnatic traditions take slightly different approaches to this idea. Most Hindustani musicians train under the umbrella of a certain style, known as a gharana. The word means family, and is derived from the Urdu for 'house'. In the context of music, it refers to a musical lineage with a consistent and special approach to presentation. Within a fashion house, different designers may create and innovate various styles of garment, but according to their training and the house style, their work normally has recognizable stylistic link with their fashion origins. Just as connoisseurs of fashion can distinguish Chanel from Prada, an experienced listener can quite quickly pick out the salient features that identify one gharana from another.*

**Keywords:** - Individual expression, gharana, form and interpretation, influenced

#### Introduction:

A gharana can be named after a person or family, as in the Senia gharana (named for saint-musician Tansen), or a place, as in the Gwalior or Jaipur gharanas. But before you get any ideas, a gharana can't be created on a whim. If you wanted to create your own, you would have to first give existing structures a totally new approach, form and interpretation, including the intonation and inflections of the voice and the specific application of various ornamental nuances. The present gharana system is not so old, but became more prominent in the 18th and 19th centuries. Before the ease of modern travel and communication, musicians from a certain region would hardly be exposed to anything but what was around them, especially if they were employed exclusively in the service of a rich patron. Sometimes the princes and noblemen of both the Mughal period and the newly rich who emerged after the end of their reign would hold soirees, where musicians of different gharanas would present their music. Naturally, musicians would become influenced after hearing different ragas and styles of presentation often inspiring them to reinterpret the material through the lens of their own style. You would then have to get busy establishing three generations of teachers and students who are all deemed to be training and performing at a high standard. After three generations, this group may be considered a gharana. There are gharanas for vocal styles like thumri and khayal, as well as for instrumental music and dance. If Hindustani music has been a free-flowing river, incorporating tributaries and sprouting streams, Carnatic music has been more of a mountain range, with some exponents even claiming that there have been few changes since the musical system was handed to people by the gods. Teachers and performers have endeavoured to carefully guard this purity and the fact that cultural and language barriers separated it from the North helped this isolation. It has never become as internationally well known as Hindustani music and exponents are sometimes even accused of being unnecessarily staid and stubborn to move with the times.



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DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.15286847](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15286847)



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#### How to cite this article:

Alshi, P. R. (2025). The Disciple of Indian Classical Music. *Journal of Research & Development*, 17(3), 24–31. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15286847>

Whilst disciples are undeniably linked to their lineage through the chain of guru-shishya sampradaya, and these varying styles are inevitably compared, the concept of gharana is not emphasised. Some musicians, such as the innovative violinist Lalgudi Jayaraman, have created a signature style, known as a bani (in his case, Lalgudi bani), which is imbibed and carried on by their students. However, it is expected that every serious musician will to some degree develop their own bani, whilst remaining faithful to the highly complex and structured forms of Carnatic music.



**The gharana system of Hindustani classical music, though steeped as it would appear, in tradition, is barely two or three centuries old**

Today the gharana system is losing its relevance. In an era where audio recording was not possible and musical notation was unsophisticated, it helped to preserve rich bodies of musical material and to facilitate high quality training. However, contemporary students have unlimited access to diverse concerts and audio recordings and their training is often conducted under more than one teacher.

Therefore, the kind of isolation that helped gurus in the medieval period to conserve their particular tradition is very difficult to recreate. Though the digital age has created new, dynamic opportunities for international cross-pollination, it remains to be seen whether this will still encourage distinct styles to be nurtured and carried forward.

### Pillars of performing arts

1. The word “**Gharana**” comes from the Hindi word ‘ghar’ which is derived from Sanskrit for **Griha**, which means ‘house’ and it implies the house of the teacher. “Gharana” in **social context** refers to a **family** staying in the house. Since families may stay in the house **for generations**, the **common skills and traits** of the members of the family and **rituals and traditions** followed by the family, become characteristics of a Gharana.
2. The Indian definition of Music subsumes all **the three pillars of performing arts, that is, vocal music, instrumental music and dance**. Perhaps, this notion can also be traced back in the very famous ancient and historic manuscript entitled “Sangeet Ratnakar”, where it has been said: “Geetamvadayam tatha nrityam trayam sangetam uchayatay” (Brahaspati, 2002) means music is defined as the art of singing, playing an instrument and dancing.
3. Under the Hindustani Classical Music, the tradition of “Gharana” system holds special importance. Perhaps, this feature is so unique that no where around the world can one find this sought of a tradition.
4. The Gharana system is followed by both the North-Indian as well as the South-Indian forms of Indian classical music. In south India, the term Gharana is acknowledged by the word “**Sampraya**”. In ancient times, there existed several Samprayas such as the “**Shivmat**”, the “**Bhramamat**” and the “**Bharatmat**”.
5. One of the most unique and exclusive features of the musical training and education teaching is the “**Guru-Shishya**” tradition. In recent times, the training is being imparted through institutions, schools, colleges and universities. But historically, and even now, the finest artists of the Indian Classical Music are produced through the “Guru-Shishya” tradition in India.
6. The musical **Gharanas** [also called **styles**] emerged from this same **Guru- Shishya** tradition, wherein the creative style of a genius, gave existing structures a totally new approach, form and interpretation.
7. Traditionally, musicologists and musicians have accepted a gharana if it has existed for **at least three generations** either within the **family [direct gharana] or through the guru-shishya mode [indirect gharana]**, where in the absence musically talented children, the teacher chooses to pass on his knowledge to a talented student]. Thus, for example, a musician cannot merely migrate from India and settle in, say, Fiji and start a school with a band of students (no matter how serious, motivated and dedicated they all be) and then call his school the Fiji Gharana.
  - a. Unless the teacher has produced students (**Generation A**) of **acceptably high calibre** who have proven themselves in the presence of knowledgeable (qualified) listeners, and the Generation A students have produced similarly acceptable and proven students (**Generation B**) themselves, and further the Generation B students in their turn have produced similar and proven students (**Generation C**), there cannot be a Fiji Gharana in this example.

8. Gharana may take the **name of**:
  - a. The **Guru** – a **family or group** e.g. Seni Gharana, Imdadkhani Gharana, Kavval Gharana and so on.
  - b. A **place or region [city, district or state] of residence** of the founder “Guru” e.g. Gwalior Gharana, Agra Gharana and so on.
9. This rich tradition of the Gharana system has contributed to all the three forms of music – **vocal, instrumental and dance**. So the **Senia** Gharana, the **Senia Maihar**, **Farukhabad** Gharana (tabla), **Etawah** or **Imdadkhani** Gharana exist for **Instrumental Music like sitar, sarod, tabla etc.**
10. And then there are the **Jaipur & Lucknow Gharanas** famous for dance.
11. Gharanas exist for different **genres** of music also:
  - **Dhrupad Gharanas**:
  - **Dagarvani** Gharana, founded by the Dagar family
  - **Bishnupur** Gharana, founded by Kirtankars in West Bengal (13th Century)
  - **Darbhangha** Gharana, Darbhanga, Bihar – known for style known as Gaurhar Vani and also has good command on Khandar Vani
  - **Bettiah** gharana, founded in Bettiah, Bihar
  - **Thumri: Benaras, Lucknow, Patiala** – although another school of thought opines that thumris are devoid of gharana divisions and are only to be associated with certain styles or Baj.
  - Some of the well known gharanas for **Khayal** gayaki are: **Agra, Gwalior, Patiala, Kirana, Indore, Mewati, Sahaswan, Bhendibazar and Jaipur.**

## Gharanas of Hindustani Music

There is a rich tradition of Gharanas in classical Hindustani music. The music Gharanas are also called styles. These schools or Gharanas have their basis in the traditional mode of musical training and education. Every Gharana has its own distinct features. The main area of difference between Gharanas is the manner in which the notes are sung. The concept of a Guru- Shishya leads to the development of Gharanas. The Gharanas emerge from the creative style of a genius, who gives existing structures a totally new approach, form and interpretation. The new approach, form and interpretation apply to include the tone of the voice, the pitch, the inflexions and the intonations, and the specific application of the various nuances. Let's have a quick look at popular Gharanas of Hindustani classical music.

**Gwalior Gharana** - This is the oldest among all the Khayal Gayaki (vocal) styles. The distinctive feature of this style of singing has been noted as its lucidity and simplicity.

**Founders** - Ustad Hassu Khan, Ustad Haddu Khan, Ustad Nathu Khan

**Exponents** - Bal Krishna Balchal Karanjikar, Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, Pandit Omkarnath Thakur, Veena Sahasrabuddhe and Malini Rajurkar

**Agra Gharana** - The Agra Gharana places great importance on developing forcefulness and deepness in the voice so that the notes are powerful and resonant.

**Founders** - Haji Sujan Khan, Ustad Ghagghe Khuda Baksh

**Exponents** - The important singers of this Gharana are Faiyyaz Khan, Latafat Hussein Khan and Dinkar Kakini.

**Kirana Gharana** - It derives its name from the birthplace of Abdul Kharim Khan of Kirana near Kurukshetra. In the Kirana style of singing, the swara is used to create an emotional mood by means of elongation and use of Kana-s.

**Founders** - Abdul Karim Khan and Abdul Wahid Khan

**Exponents** - Hirabhai Barodekar, Begum Akhtar, Bhimsen Joshi, Gangubai Hangal and Prabha Atre.

**Jaipur** - Atrauli Gharana- The most distinctive feature of the Jaipur Gharana can be best described as its complex and melodic form which arises out of the involutedly and undulating phrases that comprise the piece.

**Founders** - Ustad Alladiya Khan

**Exponents** - Alladiya Khan, Mallikarjun Mansur, Kesarbhai Kerkar, Kishori Amonkar, Shruti Sadolikar, Padma Talwalkar and Ashwini Bhide Deshpande.

**Rampur Sahaswan Gharana** - The Rampur Sahaswan Gharana there is a stress on the clarity of swara in this style and the development and elaboration of the raga is done through a stepwise progression.

**Founders** - Ustad Inayat Khan

**Exponents** - Ghulam Mustafa Khan, Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan, Ustad Rashid Khan, Sulochana and Brihaspati.

**Patiala Gharana** - Patiala Gharana is regarded as an offshoot of the Delhi Gharana. The Patiala Gharana is characterized by the use of greater rhythm play and by Layakari with the abundant use of Bols, particularly Bol-tans.

**Founders** - Ustad Fateh Ali Khan and Ustad Ali Baksh

**Exponents** - The major singers of the Patiala Gharana are Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Ajoy Chakravarti, Raza Ali Khan, Beghum Akhtar, Nirmala Deni, Naina Devi, Parveen Sultana and others.

**Delhi Gharana** - The Delhi Gharana was represented by Tanras Khan and Shabbu Khan. The highlights of Delhi Gharana are pleasing vistaar and exquisite compositions.

**Founders** - Ustad Mamman Khan

**Exponents** - Some of the notable exponents of Delhi Gharana are Chand Khan, Nasir Ahmed Khan, Usman Khan, Iqbal Ahmed Khan and Krishna Bisht.

**Bhendi Bazaar Gharana** - The most distinctive feature of the Bhendi Bazaar Gharana is the presentation of Khayal, which is open voice, using Akar. There is a stress on breath-control and singing of long passages in one breath is highly regarded in this Gharana

**Founders** - Ustad Chajju Khan

**Exponents** - The important singers of this Gharana are Ustad Aman Ali Khan, Shashikala Koratkar and Anjanibai Malpekar.

**Benaras Gharana** - The Benaras Gharana evolved as a result of great lilting style of khayal singing known by Thumri singers of Benaras and Gaya.

**Founders** - Pt Gopal Mishra

**Exponents** - The chief exponents of the Benaras Gharana are Rajan Mishra, Sajan Mishra, Girija Devi and others.

**Mewati Gharana** - The Mewati Gharana gives importance to developing the mood of the raga through the notes forming it and its style is Bhava Pradhan. It also gives equal importance to the meaning of the text.

**Founders** - The founder of Mewati Gharana was Ghagge Nazir Khan.

**Exponents** - The exponents of the Mewati Gharana are Pandit Jasraj, Moti Ram, Mani Ram, Sanjeev Abhyankar and others.

## The Uniqueness of a Gharana

1. Each **Gharana** indicates a comprehensive **musicological ideology**, a special Silsila or style or logic of presentation, within the general framework of the regional Bani (or, for instrumental music, Baj) which applied to it.
2. This changes substantially from one gharana to another, and directly affects the thinking, teaching, performance and appreciation of music.
3. Some of the **distinctive stylistic features** of Gharanas are:
  - The **tone of the voice used**,
  - The **pitch**,
  - The **inflections and intonations**,
  - The **manner** in which the notes are sung: **clarity, open voice** using aakaar,
  - The relative emphasis to **svar** and **laya**,
  - The importance of the **Bandish & exquisite compositions**,
  - The development, elaboration and **manner** in which a **raag** is presented,
  - The stress on breath control, rhythm-play or **Layakaari**,
  - The type of **Taans** esp bol-taans employed,
  - The dance-like grace in Sargams
  - The **specific application of these various nuances**, and
  - The **raag repertoire**
4. A talented "Guru" through his intelligence, aptitude and sheer practice creates a sense of uniqueness and exclusivity and thereby inculcates a special eminence into his form of music. These attributes and traits are amicably transferred into the talented "Shishya" and the particular form of the performing arts thus becomes a tradition. These exceptional qualities are in fact so strong and prominent that the audiences can immediately recognize the Gharana of the artist. In other words, a musician may form a distinctive style by assimilating a variety of styles.
5. Again, there are some Gharana that are "**hybrid**", i.e., they show mixed styles taken from other Gharana.
6. Thus, the rise of the Gharana system resulted in the **segmentation of the different styles of Raga development**. This sometimes led to different versions of the same Raga, specially when comparisons arose between the presentations of musicians of different Gharana presenting the same Raga. This has had a spin-off to the present day. For example, **Gwalior Gharana musicians use Shuddha Ni in addition to Komal Ni in Raga Rageshvari but musicians of several other Gharana use only Komal Ni and not Shuddha Ni.**
7. Another interesting phenomenon in this context is that before the rise of the Gharana system, **different regions had different Raags**. E.g. musicians of western India would normally sing or play Raags that were different from those of, say, northern, central or eastern India. But after the rise of the various Gharanas, this compartmentalisation became diluted,

## For several reasons:

- A musician of a particular Gharana may be invited to a court situated far away for performance or even service. In that case, it would be natural that he be influenced by the Raag in vogue in that place, just as the "native" or "local" musicians of that place would be influenced by the new (to them) Raag that the Gharana musician brought with him.
- Often, certain Raags and / or Bandishes or compositions would be considered the "property" of a particular Gharana. That is, the Raag in question would be known only to the musicians of that Gharana and

to none else. This would be especially true if the Raag was **created in the Gharana**. It was the custom to sometimes “**gift**” some of these Raag / Bandish as dowry to a son-in-law.

- In this way, many Raags found their way into Gharana where the Raag had not been in existence before. If the recipient or new “owner” of the Raag was a musician of another Gharana, he would naturally be guided by his own background conditioning in presenting this received Raag ; this would quite conceivably cause some variation in it that might remain or even become heightened with the passage of time.
  - Another common custom was for the princes and noblemen, and also for the new breed of rich men on the post-Moghul period (18th and 19th centuries) to hold Sabha or musical soirees where musicians of different Gharana would present their music. This would lead to an interchange of ideas where musicians would be influenced by the presentations of those of other Gharana.
  - Thus the Gharana system served to “dilute” the previous “insularity” of Raag music. The result was that musicians of one Gharana began to present Raag of another Gharana in their own conditioned styles. For example, if a musician trained in the **Gauhar Bani** style, where there was a good deal of Vilambit or slow tempo development with plenty of long drawn meends, took up a Raag like, say, Bahar, in which there was no Vilambit, he would by his own background pedagogic conditioning have a strong tendency to present Bahar in his own style, that is, he would incorporate plenty of Vilambit passages into the Raag and perhaps compose his own Vilambit Bandish in the Raag . Thus, the very character of the Raag would change over time. A good example of this phenomenon is the well-known Vilambit composition “**Nabi ke Durbar**” in the **Raga Basant**, which was not a slow Raag to start with.
  - Another fallout of this dilution was the emergence of **new Raags**, often with old names. It was now possible for two **Raags** of divergent sentiments or characteristics to have the same name. Previously, a **Raag** may have had minor variants in such a way that the basic character or sentiment of the **Raag** remained intact. For example, Pandit Ahobal reports in his monumental work Sangit Parijata (16th century) that the **Raag** Bhairavi had two forms, one with R and the other with r. The manner of application of both R and r was, however, the same. Thus the basic nature of Bhairavi – the main sentiment that it conveyed – remained the same in either case, as all the other notes, their Kaku, their Sangati etc. were the same in either form. The “mood” of Bhairavi, therefore, remained constant. Indeed, as long as this was maintained, such minor variations in the presentation of a **Raag** were acceptable.
  - However, in the Gharana system, **two Ragas bearing the same name could have completely different features**, and hence completely dissimilar moods. Thus for example, in the case of the Raga Shree, it is seen that a type of Shree called Poorvi Shree, similar to the modern Shree, was in vogue. This is reported in Hridayanarayana’s Hridayakautuka (17th century). The original Shree, which had G, D and N, became more or less obsolete in north India although in south India, it continued to be (and still is) in existence. By and by, this new Raga Poorvi Shree was abbreviated to Shree and became the Shri of modern times. The original Shri is to be seen in north India in the Raga Bageshri (also called Bageshvari), in altered form. Such metamorphoses were the result of the action of the Gharana system. In like manner, some Gharanas used D in Ragas like Lalit and Poorvi whereas some other Gharanas used d instead. The net result of all this was that the system of Ragas became quite confusing, since it lost a good deal of the standardisation of earlier times.
8. In this context, it is also important to know that the **Tabla accompanist** must be fully aware of the special features of the Gharana of the artist he is accompanying. If the accompanist has a less than proper understanding about these features, he will not be able to provide the **correct form of accompaniment** that is appropriate to the music of the Gharana. Many an otherwise good – even great – vocal performance has been ruined or all but ruined because the poor vocalist has had to struggle against the complacently ignorant accompaniment of the Tabla player.

## The genesis & current status

1. It is believed that well-organised gharanas began to **develop early in the 14th century**, although there already existed two principal gharanas- **kalavanta** and **kawal** – and some rules and disciplines of music.
2. When music moved from the **temples** to concentrate in the royal courts of the north, and finally, in the **18th century**, when its **popularity** began to wane, **dhrupad singers** dispersed to places like **Mathura, Rampur, Jaipur, Varanasi, Darbhanga, Betia, Vishnupur** etc. The gharana concept thus gained currency when the **royal patronage enjoyed by performers** weakened.
3. Over the years **poor transportation and communication caused the various gharanas to adopt their own particular approach to presentation, technique and repertoire**.
4. In the 20th century the gharana system had a negative impact on the standard of musicians. In the professional sense a gharana became like a guild. They were **secretive** and specialized in **only one technique or approach**, which was inconsistent with modern pedagogic and professional requirements.
5. Since the **abolition of the zamindari system** and development of **modern technology and communication systems**, **gharanas** have declined in importance. Music, like other branches of knowledge, is **no longer**

**regionalized**, and travels almost instantly to other regions. Now the emphasis is on the universality of music, not on its narrow confines.

**Here are a few details about some of the Gharanas:**

## The Shaam Chaurasi Gharana

1. This gharana is believed to have been founded in the 16th century by **Mian Chand Khan and Mian Suraj Khan** who were contemporaries of **Mian Tansen** at the court of Mughal emperor Akbar. Successive generations of musicians in the gharana specialised in the **dhrupad** form of singing and evolved a tradition of **duet vocal jugalbandi** performances.
2. Like the artists of Talwandi Gharana, the Sham Chaurasi gharana also claim their association with the founder of Talwandi Gharana, Ustad Suraj Khan and Chand Khan alias Sudhakar and Diwakar, who were the **disciples of Swami Haridas**. Though the roots of these two Gharanas were the same, yet they developed into two different streams.
3. Today, Sham Chaurasi gharana has **lost its identity** for want of the representatives of this gharana. Some artists have become very old and the great exponents of this gharana like **Nazakat Ali and Salamat Ali** have settled in **Pakistan** after the partition. But it is a matter of satisfaction that they still claim to be the descendants of Sham Chaurasi Gharana.
4. **History** of Sham Chaurasi Gharana:
  - The Sham Chaurasi Gharana was **once a very prestigious gharana**.
  - The name of Sham Chaurasi Gharana is attributed to a place called **Sham Chaurasi in Hoshiapur District of Punjab**. The township of Sham Chaurasia (sham = evening, chaurasi =84) was named after a cluster of 84 villages which constituted a land revenue unit in the time of Ranjit Singh. It is said that the **Mughal king Mohammad Shah Rangile** once paid a visit to this village to listen to the artists of this gharana. He was so pleased that he **donated all the income acquired from the 84 villages to the Sufi saint Shami Shah**. It is believed that after this episode, it became popular as **Sham Chaurasi** taking its name from Sufi saint **Shami and 84 villages**, Chaurasia adding up as Sham Chaurasi.
  - According to another legend, the founders were given a parcel of land here as a grant to them by Akbar.
  - This village still exists by the same name. The Samadhi of Sufi Saint Shami Shah is still there and many people come to pay their homage at this place. Ustad Salamat Ali also used to come to Sham Chaurasi to pay obeisance whenever he came to India.
5. **Singers** of Sham Chaurasi Gharana:
  - According to Pandit Dilip Chandra Vedi, **Sain Karim** was a great exponent to Sham Chaurasi Gharana. The vocalist as well as the instrumentalists of this gharana earned a lot of fame.
  - One of the eminent Veena players of this Gharana was **Baba Inayat Khan**. The proficient artists of this Gharana received tutelage under legendary **Baiju Bawra, Suraj Khan and Chand Khan**. According to history Baiju Bawara had gone to visit the village **Bajwada** near Hoshiarpur. It is believed that that during his stay the artists of sham Chaurasi Gharana had received training from him. It is also possible had the **name of this village was named as Bajwada after the name of Baiju Bawra**.
6. **Several artists of this Gharana had shifted to Pakistan after the partition of India.**
  - Mian Karim Bukhsh Majzoob, Khairdeen, Ustad Vilayat Ali Khan, Haidat Ali, Nazakat Ali and Salamar Ali all began singing in Jugalbandi.
  - Presently many singers like master Rattan of Phagwda, Om Prakash Mohan have kept up the tradition of the Sham Chaurasi Gharana. They all perform in the All Indian radio, Delhi.
  - Ustad Ahmed Ali Khan, Ustad Niaz Hussain Shami, and were some of the illustrious members of the Sham Chaurasi gharana.
7. **Style** of Sham Chaurasi Gharana:
  - Sham Chaurasi Gharana has been famous for its **simple Sapaat taans** that can be performed with ease.
  - The elaboration is done in all the **three octaves**.
  - The basic feature of this Gharana is the **step by step Alaap and Taan that gradually returns to the basic Shadaj**.
  - The artists of this gharana are popular for their execution of these taanas. The beautiful **taans, murkis, khatkas and bol bansav** added to the magnificence of the gayaki of this gharana.
8. Even today the essence of the Shaam Chaurasi gharana can be felt in the performance and gayaki pattern of the singers

## The Rampur gharana

1. The **Rampur gharana** was established around the middle of the 19th century under the patronage of the court of Rampur.
2. It is considered a **reincarnation of the Tansen gharana** as the talented descendants of Tansen had a role in founding it.
3. The gharana came to **Bengal** through Ustad Dabir Khan.
4. The famous sarod player, Fida Hossain, and the sitar maestro, **Ravi Shankar**, belong to this gharana.
5. A principal feature of this gharana was a **completeness of approach** and a balancing of the **dhrupad attitude with a harmony of sweet sound**.

## The Thumri Gharanas

1. **Benares Thumri Gharana**, revived by Siddheshwari Devi, Rasoolan Bai, Badi Moti Bai, Mahadev Mishra, Girija Devi (mid-20th Century), founded by Kirtankars (13th-Century). Here, the **words** in the text of a song are **musically embellished** to bring out their meaning, while the **Lucknow** gharana presents **intricately embellished and delicate thumris** that are explicit in their **eroticism**.
2. **Patiala Thumri Gharana**, founded by **Ustad Fateh Ali Khan and Ustad Ali Baksh Khan** in Patiala, Punjab (18th Century). The principal feature of the thumri of the **Patiala gharana** is its incorporation of the **tappa** from the Punjab region, departing from the khayal-dominated Benaras thumris and the **dance-oriented** Lucknow thumris.

## The Dagar Gharana

1. The Dagar Gharana is an ancient **dhrupad** gharana. The name emanates from its dhrupad presentation based on Dagar compositions.
2. There is no authentic account of its origin. Reliable information is available only from the 18th century, from the time of **Bahram Khan** and his father. In fact, the gharana that is known today began with Bahram Khan.
3. It was located first at **Jaipur** and then at **Udaipur**.
4. One of its best-known artistes was **Nasiruddin**. His two sons, **Nasir Moinuddin Dagar and Nasir Aminuddin Dagar**, became famous as the Dagar **brothers**. Their performances outside India drew considerable appreciation from music lovers.
5. The gharana, introduced into Bengal by Nasiruddin, was carried forward after his death by **Aminuddin**.
6. The dhrupad performed by this gharana is **deeply devotional** and **highly stylised**. It is said that 52 ornamentations are used in it.
7. The gharana specialises in presenting the dhrupad using the **veena** for musical performances and the duet vocal form.

## The Gaya gharana

1. This included both vocalists and instrumental musicians, as it nurtured both the singing of **khayal** and the playing of **esraj** introduced by **Hari Singh** and his son **Hanuman Das** around the middle of the 19th century.
2. Towards the end of the century, their disciple, **Kanaïlal Dhenri**, introduced the gharana to **Kolkata** and the rest of Bengal. Kanaïlal himself played the esraj and taught **Amritalal Dutta** of Kolkata and **Abanindranath and Arunendranath** of the Tagore family how to play it. **thungi** and harmonium playing were added to the Gaya gharana through the personal efforts of Hanuman Das' son, Mohan Das.
3. The superb composition of the khayal, the clarity of its words and its enchanting melody as well as the playing of the esraj with a touch of khayal and the addition of a sharp note were the gharana's speciality.

## The Prasaddu-Manohar Gharana

1. The **Prasaddu-Manohar gharana**, named after the brothers Hariprasad Mishra and Manohar Mishra, appeared towards the beginning of the 19th century at **Benares**.
2. It inclines towards **beats and tempo** and accommodates a variety of **vocal styles and instrumental music**.
3. Although originating in Benares, it flourished in **Kolkata** during the lifetime of the two brothers. Their successors carried forward the tradition of their gharana in Bengal.
4. Maheshchandra Mukherjee and Nagendranath Bhattacharya were among the famous disciples of this gharana.

## The Benares Misra Gharana

1. This gharana **arose in Benares** towards the end of the 19th century around **Buddhu Misra**.
2. The sarangi was used to accompany the performance of **tappa** and **khayal**. Later the **tabla** was added to the performance.
3. It gained a place in Bengal through **Bechu Mishra**, son of Buddhu Mishra.
4. Among the famous disciples of this gharana are Ramprasad, Sharat Chattopadhyay and Ramnarayan Choudhury.

## The Bishnupur gharana



1. The **sole gharana of Bengal** was that of Bishnupur, established by **Ramshankar Bhattacharya** during the reign of Raja Raghunath Singh II. Bishnu was then the only centre of music in Bengal.
2. The Bishnupur gharana meant essentially a **dhrupad** gharana, for Bishnupur was essentially a centre for **dhrupad** culture.
3. The founding and expansion of this gharana was an event of great significance in the development of music in Bengal as it helped in expanding the culture of dhrupad in Bengal.
4. The dhrupad of the Bishnupur gharana uses **shuddha dhaivata in Raag basant**, a touch of komal nishad in the descending notes of **Raag bhairav**. It has abandoned kadi madhyam in ramakeli, and uses shuddha dhaivata in **Raag poorvi** and komal nihsad in **Raag Bihag**. It has also developed its own character with regard to rhythm.

## The Betia gharana

1. The **Betia gharana** developed towards the beginning of the 19th century around the court of Betia, in **Bihar**, through the initiative of the **dhrupad** artiste, Raja Ananda Kishore.
2. It came to **Bengal** through two brothers, Guruprasad Mishra and Shibnarayan Mishra. At one stage, Bengal became its principal centre.
3. Among its prominent artistes were **Lalchand Baral** and **Satishchandra Dutta**. Skill in the intricate playing of notes and a wide range of vocal performances were its forte.

## Conclusion:

The appearance of Gharana system has its roots in the Guru-Shishya Parampara which is the hallmark of learning traditional art forms in the Indian subcontinent. The seeds of Gharana system were planted in the 16th century with the arrival of Banis or styles associated with the dhrupad. Even today a number of Gharanas trace their origin to these Banis. Further evolution of Gharana system came from the process of the gradual decline of the Mugal Empire. The modern Khayal Gharanas are generally detectable traceable to the period of the collapsing of the Mogul empire. Gharanas were found throughout the North in every field-dance,vocal and instrumental music. They tend to be expressed among themselves. In the professional sense, a Gharana had some of the characteristics of an association. It was always understood that tracing one's ancestry to a major Gharana was a needed for obtaining a position in the royal courts. The Gharanas were entrusted with the duty of maintaining a certain standard of music.

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