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" THE COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF TRADITIONAL AND THE MODERN METHODS OF LEARNING INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC. "

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Abstract:

India has been known for a wonderful history of transferring the great legacy of music through Guru- Shishya Parampara, Institutions , University etc. The Indian Music is acclaimed for the unique media, GuruShshya Parampara for transferring the knowledge, the art , the virtues from one generation to another. By the time ,the trend changed. The Music learning classes got introduced which then turn to big institutions. The GuruShishya parampara too went through several changes. The current paper is elaborating the comprehensive study of Ancient Guru Shishya Parampara and its new trends in learning Indian music.

KEYWORD:

Guru-Shishya Parampara, Indian Music, Guru, learning Indian music.

I. INTRODUCTION

India is having a great tradition of music which has been defining the Culture and Social identity and values of Indian culture. The glitter of this music is still fascinating and unique. Along with its own uniqueness and divinity , the very important thing which is keeping it alive is the way this music has been transferred from generation to generation. The "Guru-Shishya Parampara" is taking forward this great tradition.

The Guru-Shishya Parampara is the very soul of the oral tradition of India, and embodies the living and learning relationship between master and pupil. Evolving from the era of the great Indian seers, what the tradition signifies is the complete emotional, intellectual and spiritual surrender of the ardent shishya to the guru. Indian classical music is still largely dependent on this tradition. In the "Guru Shishya Parampara" the student lives with his guru or teacher. The student learns different aspects of the music mostly through observing his guru and by following his oral instructions. Although due to emergence of institutionalized training, now in many parts of the world Indian classical music is being taught on the basis of a particular syllabus. But still "Guru Shishya Parampara" is the preferred method.

II. GURU SHISHYA PARAMPARA :

The teaching of classical music has primarily been oral. The raga and its structure, the intricate nuances of tala or rhythm, and the rendering of raga and tala as bandish or composition, are passed on from guru to shishya by word of mouth and through direct demonstration. There is no printed sheet of music, with notation acting as the medium, to impart knowledge.

The oral tradition remains a unique testament to the capacity of the human brain to absorb,

remember and reproduce structures of great complexity and sophistication without a system of written notation. The raga, imparted orally from one person to another, is no one's intellectual property. It is difficult to trace the authorship of a musical composition or a raga in Indian music. The performing artist, or the guru, is just a medium through which the raga lives again in the world. The raga, unconfined to a single incarnation, composer or performer, is far greater than the artist who invokes it.

In Western music, every composition is written down with proper notation. Every musical composition in Western music is, therefore, clearly the intellectual property of a particular composer. But keeping records is alien to the predominantly oral Indian musical tradition.

As we know every tradition has its pros and cons and so does this tradition. The "Guru Shishya Parampara" is a very ancient teaching method and thus, in the course of its development it has evolved some unique techniques to accommodate different needs of both the teacher and the student. Let us now discuss the strengths of this tradition:

- The first thing that happens during this teaching process is the formation of a unique mental bond between the teacher and the student. This deep bonding is absolutely essential when someone is learning an art like music.
- In this teaching tradition the student gets the sole attention of the teacher. Even if there are many students studying under one teacher it is possible to impart training to each and every student separately.
- There is no particular time or format of a class. A lesson may be learnt by just observing a concert or performance of the teacher. The time of imparting a lesson is at the discretion of the guru.
- This method helps to maintain the traditional aspect of Indian classical music. A guru who belongs to a particular gharana (or school of music) will pass on the traits of this gharana to his shishya or pupil and over a period of time the shishya absorbs all the necessary traits and style of this gharana and in this way the cycle continues.
- Another striking feature of this tradition is its ability to teach spontaneity. Yes, spontaneous improvisation techniques are taught through this tradition. This is possible due to the fact that this tradition does not lay down a fixed format for teaching so; it varies from person to person, from teacher to teacher. So, improvisation is inherent in this tradition.

For years such knowledge was hidden from the masses. Even in the highly popular "Gharana" traditions meaning "musical households" or "families", this knowledge was given away only to their closest family members or a very good disciple. That is why we have so few really accomplished artists representing each Gharana. Also, in the old days, fewer people would seek specialized levels of education not for any other reason but because of the smaller population densities. Hence the burden of study was shared in the same proportions.

From the above stated facts we get a clear picture of the strengths of the "Guru Shishya Parampara". But, there are also some serious weaknesses in this tradition which are as follows:

- The student learns only from one teacher and thus, looks at all the aspects from only one vantage point.
- Absence of a structured teaching method makes students more vulnerable to failures.
- This tradition is particularly helpful for imparting practical lessons. It does not help in learning the theoretical aspects of the subject.
- Overdependence on a single teacher. We must not forget that teachers are human beings and their strengths, weaknesses, mood swings, perception and overall personality become important factors at the time of teaching.

III. THE CHANGING TREND OF LEARNING :

Today, with a surge in world population, we find the "modern" process has made it possible for more people to gain an education. And as more schools, colleges, universities cater to this demand the "one on one" G/S relationships have diminished somewhat. But again I add that it will never really be replaced or outmoded. This is live interaction and will go on till there are people. Teachers in classrooms are the modern gurus.

Good teachers are always introducing their students to varying influences to broaden the learning experience. This has also been true of the classical tradition in India. Our ragas are a testament to this very fact. Many of these are named after the people that introduced them. Raga Bhoopali is from the Bhoopal region, Raga Todi was from the Toda people. Pahadi means of the mountains. The classical traditions have always shown a healthy acceptance of growth. Without this it would have gotten stale and died a long time ago.

There are some institutes running with "teach however you can" approach. The goal being that knowledge should be available in plenty. If the student does not get it... that's for them to work out and improve. They make their presence and their services available whenever and however a student feels comfortable. As teachers, this we consider our sacred duty.

The Institute provides private and group lessons in three cities. They do lecture demos where ever and whenever required. There are several other modes which are contributing in transferring the information as well as knowledge. The magazine on the Internet discussing the latest trends of music. Educational articles on music of Indian and other world cultures are shared. The newer interactive ways the web has grown makes it possible to publish articles that can include audio, video, and midi clips to explain better what we are trying to teach. This cannot be considered "damaging" the culture but instead should be looked upon as "enhancing" it. It would be more damaging to keep this hidden from view and in the hands of a few. We would be adding to the delinquency of the art form if we didn't adopt such new means and hence newer methods of teaching.

Learning music is not just taking lessons from a teacher. That is just the beginning. Your education is complete only when you add to the practical, the theoretical. This is where other forms of helpful aids become important. Reading books, writing compositions in whatever notations you are familiar with, seeing live concerts, analyzing musical works, etc. cannot be ignored from the total learning experience. A good teacher will provide these options to their students.

The art is abstract. The expression is inborn. A guru is a giver of direction. His duty is to place the world before you. Some students are quicker than others to grasp at the knowledge others never get it no matter what.

Everyone thinks about the student, how about the teacher? It must sometimes be really frustrating for them to have to constantly ram an idea into a student head only to find they are not getting anywhere with it. This can psychologically be bad for both. And in many instances the guru abandons the student (to put it mildly). Now we have an un-caring guru and a dismayed student. Many a times this sort of interaction has impacted so negatively on a student that they give up their studies completely.

Now to the issue of teaching through videos. This in my mind comes closest to a live teacher being present. The missing part is the interaction. Whereas a teacher would stop the student if he notices a problem in hand positioning or a wrong rendition of a trill etc., in learning through a video, the tape just rolls on and a student bad habits might go unchecked.

But where the videos have an advantage is their power of repetition. It simply needs to be rewound and replayed again and again until the point is understood. In our case, we are always accessible to our students via, email, fax, or phone. Any questions we cannot answer, we ask them to make a video tape and send it to us.

For example : A tabla tutor for instance can give one of the largest two, three, and four beat (bol) combinations of any published work. This can be demonstrated with a close-up camera angle. One would easily have to go back to the tabla teacher for many lessons to gain access to this technique. A book falls short miserably. But then again what a book can do is give a vast reservoir of additional pieces, through tabla notations, that a student can work on after they've learnt how to play the sounds correctly.

The tanpura tapes give access to a "well tuned" tanpura that a student plays and practices along with. So again, such works can only "enhance" and not "damage".

IV. PRESENT FORM OF GURU SHISHYA PARAMPARA:

The present form of "Guru Shishya Parampara" does not strictly adhere to the principles of this tradition. It rather uses some basic concepts of this tradition along with modern teaching methods and techniques.

By using a MP3 player, iPod or digital recorder a student can now acquire more details in lesser time. Youtube and other such internet mediums have opened up vast archives of Indian classical music records of the past 100 years or so through which students can simultaneously learn and enrich their knowledge base. So, the scenario has changed quite a bit and we can expect to see more changes in the coming years.

V. CONCLUSION:

"Guru Shishya Parampara" is still essential for Indian classical music. It has not lost its credibility due to the emergence of new technology or institutionalized training system. What is needed today is the

confluence of “Guru Shishya Parampara” with modern training methods and techniques. New technology and equipment can further increase the effectiveness of this tradition. With spontaneity and improvisation, it is destined to play even a bigger role in shaping the future of Indian classical music.

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