CHAPTER-II

SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT
OF IMPROVISATION AESTHETICS

We have, in the previous chapter, examined the various techniques of improvising in Hindustani classical music, an artiste's cultivation or designing of a style in accordance with his or her natural resources and limitations, training and temperament, conscious and unconscious psychological processes at work in the creation and conceptualization of music, inter alia. We shall now endeavour to study how social factors influence and shape Hindustani classical music especially during its stage performance and how factors such as individual sensibilities of pioneering musicians give rise to new styles that are recognised as gharaanaas in the course of a few generations of its followers or practitioners.

It is, of course, indisputable that improvisation is not infrequently the result of the musician’s endeavour for newer ways of expression. Both planned and creative forms of improvisation give rise to new articulation of feelings; in particular, creative improvisation, by breaking out into uncharted territory, creates astonishing edifices of the raaga, with revolutionary concepts, designs, colours and effect. However, the performer must, at all times, take care that his improvisations, no matter how original, creative or off-the-beaten-track they be, do not detract from the established norms of grammar as well as aesthetics. Just as it would never do for an architect to construct a building, otherwise
grand and beautiful, that, disregarding the laws of gravity and practical comfort, has slanting floors and oblique walls, so too would a performance of Hindustani music without respecting its universally recognized musical and aesthetic principles result, in spite of the mellow and accurate voice of the performer, in a curious musical monstrosity.

Broadly speaking, for music to be aesthetic, it must appeal to at least the following three responses of the “qualified” listener --- a listener who knows what to listen for in music:

1. The sensuous response ---- the music must appeal positively to the listener’s aural mechanism. In other words, it must be tuneful, sweet and attractive, if not entirely then in a major part.

2. The intellectual response --- the music must be such as to be comprehensible to the listener’s intellect. In other words, the intellect of the knowledgeable listener, conditioned as it is to the rules of correct raagdaari (रागदारी), principles of laya (लय) and taala and other theoretical concepts like form, gharaana, etc., must be able to identify the performer’s musical output vis-à-vis these diverse grammatical or shaastriya (शास्त्रीय) norms and accept it as being consistent with them.

3. The imaginative response ---- the music must be able to reach out to the depths of the personality of the qualified listener. Every individual is, after all,

\[\text{This description has been derived from “The Craft of Musical Composition”, Book I, by the renowned German composer of the modern period, Paul Hindemith (1895-1963), to whom acknowledgement is gratefully made. The description occurs at p. 22 of the 1945 revised edition of the English translation by Arthur Mendel, published by Schott &Co., London.}\]
the sum total of his background tendencies, beliefs, education, environment, aspirations, etc. it is this collection of intangible, yet very real, conditionings and qualities of a human being that makes up his imagination. As music transcends reality and glorifies life --- instead of merely portraying them as do the sciences, it is a language for communication between one person with a certain imaginative response (the artiste) and another with his own imaginative response (the listener). It is only when this imaginative bridge is built across two individuals --- artiste and listener --- can it be said that music has been successful, that it has been aesthetic.

It is clear from the above that aesthetic norms depend upon, and are intimately connected with, the conditioning of the human mind and personality.

Since such conditioning traces itself to a large extent to the special sociological contexts in which individuals exist, historical, political, economic, religious, social and cultural macro – effects are very important in forming and sustaining on the one hand, as also evolving and changing on the other, those principles that determine aesthetic norms and values characterizing music as acceptable or not.

Therefore, to be aesthetic, improvisation --- especially creative improvisation ---- must be logically relatable to and properly tuned with the general sociological milieu in which Hindustani music has flourished. It is thus necessary to consider and bear in mind the sociological reasons and bases of improvisation, these may be briefly enumerated in the following manner:----
1. During the so-called Naatya Yuga (नाट्य युग) ---- the period of Natyashastra of Bharata\(^2\) ---- there was a clear distinction between the higher, sacred, Maarga (मार्ग) or Abhijaat (अभिज्ञात) music based on strict acoustic principles and Gandharvic (गान्धर्व) laws on the one hand, and the lower, profane or secular, Deshi (देशी) music on the other. The former was used in religious rituals like yagnas (यज्ञ) and in classical theatre ---- naatya (नाट्य).

The latter --- Deshi music ---- was the folk culture of peasants and other ordinary and relatively unsophisticated people. In abhijaata music, there was little improvisation, it being restricted to the Deshi culture. Both religious rituals and classical theatre were highly formalized affairs, with the musical compositions being fixed and without improvisations. In naatya, there was usually a kutup (कुतुप) or ensemble of instruments in attendance producing preset music, with a minimum of improvisation. Indian aesthetic theory --- the theory of rasas (रस) ---- being essentially a concept in dramaturgy, peak aesthetic experience, called rasaanubhuti (रसानुभूति), was always linked to the confluence of several specific bhaavas (भाव),\(^3\) which could all be aroused

\(^2\) Although it is commonly believed that the Naatya Shaastra was written by Bharata Muni in the fifth century A.D., some noted musicologists like the late Dr. Bimal Roy maintained that it was authored by a series of Bharatas, belonging to the Bharata Sampradaya, between 2\(^{nd}\) century B.C. and 4\(^{th}\) century A.D.

\(^3\) Refer Chapter VI of the Naatya Shaastra, between shlokas 31 and 32 (Edition : Kashi Sanskrit Series, Haridas Sanskrit Granthamala) :
together only when many kinds of stimuli ---- visual as well as aural ---- influenced the spectator / listener at the same time. Music, being only one element in naatya, could not of itself give rise to rasaanubhooti : it could only arouse certain bhaavas.

In course of time, with the ascendance of Buddhism, which was a rebel movement against Vedic (वैदिक) and Gandharvic tradition, the classical theatre of Naatya Yuga broke up, resulting in two consequences relevant to the present analysis:

a. Music broke free from naatya and established itself as an independent performing art in its own right, and

b. Those Deshi traditions that were compatible with Gandharvic laws were incorporated into Abhijaata music, resulting in Abhijaata - Deshi (अभिजात देशी) music.

Just as various ingredients like “gur” (jaggery) give rise to the six tastes (sweet, sour, bitter, etc.) so too dose rasa experience come about by the different bhaavas acting upon the sthāayibhava 

Rasa is determined by the combination of vibhāv (विभाव), anubhāv (अनुभाव) vyabhicharibhav (व्यभिचारीभाव).
Due to these reasons, the scope of improvisation increased vastly in higher music.

Since music became a separate art form, it tried to approach rasaanubhooti as much as possible, and the Deshi techniques of improvisation helped by imitating or suggesting acting or abhinaya (अभिनय), the attempt targeted to arouse as many bhaavas as possible. Thus, dramatic contrasts were sought with the use of various ornaments, dynamics, etc., as well as note - permutations. All this led to the increased use of improvisation.

2. By the end of the Buddhist period, there were many Sampradaayas (सम्प्रदाय) in music. Each sampradaaya had its own way of perceiving the basics of music, such as the number of shrutis (श्रुति) in a saptak, the janak ragas (जनक राग), etc. the scientific (Gandharvic) aspect of music was a closely guarded secret, preserved by the aachaaryas (आचार्य) and handed down only to initiates. However, with the advent of Muslim rulers, these aachaaryas got lesser and lesser scope to practice their art, for they would not take their sacredly cultured music to non – Hindu rulers. Thus, as a consequence of this, in most of the courts of the Muslim nobility, musicians were either non-Brahmins or Muslims who had not formally trained under an aachaarya of a sampradaaya, but had picked up as much as was possible by mere listening but keenly imitating, practicing hard and guessing about the principles of music as

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4 Bharata, Narada, Hanumana, Shiva are some examples of ancient sampradayas.
practiced by the learned aachaaryas. Thus, not having a firm grounding in the Gandharvic laws, they tended to gravitate more and more towards the Deshi traditions. As a result of this phenomenon, music gradually became less and less rigid, and its practitioners expressed music in different / individualized ways according to their own intellectual, emotional and physical abilities. Thus, newer and more diverse styles emerged and so did newer and more diverse modes and techniques of improvisation emerge on the scene. Also, the old sampradaayas gradually died out, and in time, gharaanas came into existence, formed by such musicians as prevailed under the patronage of a sizeable nobility and royalty spread across the length and breadth of this vast, yet undivided country save the four southern states.

3. In the days of court patronage of musicians, it was common to reward musicians in proportion to the perceived amount of entertainment and satisfaction they could provide their patrons with. As a result, a fierce spirit of competition prevailed among musicians, who devised newer and newer and often ingenious methods of improvisation to outdo one another in novelty, virtuosity and creativity in a bid to win greater and greater material rewards. This tendency of pleasing the patron has persisted even to the present day, when many musicians “play to the gallery”. It is well known that artistes often render music according to their perception of the level of musical sophistication of their listeners. It may not be out of place to mention here, in passing, that improvisation can be used as a powerful tool in developing or refining the listening and appreciation faculties of listeners, and artistes have a
social responsibility of raising the tastes standard of listeners by means of suitably apt and aesthetic improvisations.

4. Improvisation in Hindustani music is basically a reflection of the nature of Indian philosophic thought, which is introspective and individualistic. In Indian culture, the individual has always been very important. Communal or joint effort in the field of serious artistic pursuits appears to be alien to Indian philosophy.

Even the large yagnas of vedic and puraanic (पौराणिक) times were individualistic, organized or performed for a specific yajamaana (यजमान).

Thus Indian culture has always given freedom of thought to individuals, and has never been dogmatic: it has so many school of philosophy and religion for this reason, unlike in other parts of the world where the group is placed above the individual. Thus improvisation, which can occur only in conditions of free and individual expression, is inevitable in our music: it is part and parcel of the basic programming of Indian culture.

5. Change in technology have given rise to corresponding changes in improvisation. In the days before amplifying microphones came on the scene, musicians developed a special voice culture to reach a large number of listeners.

With this kind of voice culture, certain specific kinds of improvisation were possible. With the microphones now an universal feature, singers have developed a different kind of voice that often allows for a good deal of subtler
articulation of sound that was not possible formerly. Thus the range of improvisations has increased vastly due to microphones. Similarly, improvisation nowadays is not always audience related: while singing for a recording in a studio or over the mass media, there is no audience in front of the artiste----he has to imagine a heterogenous audience comprising millions of listeners at various levels of musical sophistication. Also, in me large conferences, the distance between artiste and audience is so great, and the dias is so brilliantly floodlit while the rest of the auditorium is kept dark, that the artiste performs practically in isolation. All these conditions have their respective effects on improvisation.

All the above sociological factors go to determine the aesthetics of improvisation. To be acceptable aesthetically, improvisation must have parity with one or more of the above factors. That is to say, it must have its origin----physical or conceptual----in some inspiration growing out of the abovementioned contexts, otherwise, it will distort the musical edifice into the monstrosity referred to in the first paragraph of this chapter.

Thus, we see, that social context and certain extraneous factors affect the quality and aesthetics of music whether it is performed live or say in a recording studio.
IMPROVISATION IN THE GHARAANAAS

Since one of the most striking features of Hindustani classical music is its tradition of individual and free improvisation within the confines of the raaga, it is only natural that the varieties of style will thus be based upon the peculiarities and differences in this area itself. It therefore becomes inevitable that the gharaanaas, the originators of style, be discussed in as much detail as is required of the present topic. To begin with, let us delve into how this still potent institution of stylization of music and much more come into being.

As per recorded history, with the emergence of the attractively lyrical khayaal compositions by Sadaarang and Adaarang in the later part of the seventeenth century, that were significantly less straight-jacketed than the practically sacrosanct dhrupad, more and more musicians took to khayaal seeking refuge and patronage from the various big and small states that dotted the entire terrain of the Mughal empire. Over a period, their families became synonymously associated with these places of their inhabitance giving rise to gharaanaas comprising their male family members and disciples. Thus we have them named after places like Secunderabaad, Sahaaranpur, Khurja, Bishnupur, Banaaras, Lucknow, Gwaalior, Aagraa, Raampur, Sahasawan, Atrauli, Jaipur, Delhi and Kiraana among others.
But of course, there are also quite a few exceptions that bear the name of
their creator or main artiste such as, Senia gharaanaa, Allaadiyaa Khan
gharaanaa, Quawwal Bacchon ka gharaanaa, Taanras Khan ka gharaanaa etc.

As the khayaal gained wide acceptance as the ‘song of choice’ or the major
form of song by the nineteenth century, the gharaanaa system which had started
to crystallize around the end of the seventeenth century, now came into its own.

Since it was the age of court patronage of classical music, the musicians
remained with their patrons, living in their respective states for long ---- almost
entire lifetimes ---- and with consummate thought and practice developed their
own styles of presentation so as to be most effective and pleasing to their patrons.
This they passed on to their professional heirs (sons and / or disciples). Needless
to mention that this style which bore the stamp of its creator’s individuality, would
be the result of constant and protracted experimentation taking into account all the
physical and intellectual resources of its creator, such as his voice quality and
range, his physical stamina, his imagination, his skill relating to virtuosity and also
his intellectual limitations.

The finer points of a gharaanaa were almost always kept a jealously
guarded secret for fear of loss of monopoly. By the word gharaanaa one meant, as
earlier in the case of baanis (बानी) of dhrupad, a recognized style and artistic
lineage.
Both, the term and its interpretation have continued unchanged to this day in spite of rampant eclecticism that the scientific breakthroughs in a dramatically developing modern world has made possible.

It is believed that it was the celebrated Taansen’s descendants who first started the tradition of gharaanaa. The descendants of his sons who became renowned as dhrupadiyaas (धुर्पदीया) and rabaabiyaas (रबाबीया) were called the Seniyas (सेनिया) and those of his daughter, who were also established dhrupadiyas and beenkaars / been (बीनकार) players, were called Baaniyas (बानिया).

In sum, the term, ‘gharaanaa’ represents a distinct musical ideology carried forward by an able line of disciples.

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1 During Taansen’s tenure at Akbar’s court one Nabaat Khan (also known as Misree Singh, as it was customary for the musicians of those times to have a Hindu name as well as a Muslim one) who belonged to a family of songsters from Rajasthan, used to accompany him on the been (veena) while he sang. Taansen later married off his only daughter to Nabaat who, it seems, was also well versed in dhrupad singing as the former is believed to have gifted to the latter some 200 dhrupad compositions as his sole right by way of dowry. Most of these compositions bore Taansen’s name in their sanchaari section. Thus, the descendants of Taansen’s daughter became the beenkar gharaanaa which also boasted of some great dhrupadiyas.

Amir Khan of this gharaanaa was one of the originators of the Rampur gharaanaa of khayaal. Sadaarang, his son Adaarang and Manarang (Sadaarang’s disciple who later migrated to Jaipur ) belonged to the Beenkar gharaanaa progeny.

However, the originator of the Seni Gharaanaa was Taansen and was also called Ataa Mohammed. Taansen had four sons who were also musicians of high caliber. Listed below is their brief introduction:

1. **Tantaranga **** was the eldest. He was a highly gifted vocalist who settled in Gwalior and started the Gwaliori school of gaayaki (vocal style). His disciples also played the been.

2. **Surat Sen **** a great scholar well versed in old Sanskrit songs.

3. **Sarat Sen or Saras Sen **** also a songster.

4. **Bilaas Sen or Bilaas Khan **** who was also a noted vocalist though not as accomplished as Taantaranga. However, he took Taansen’s position at the Agra court after him. He and his disciples were also proficient in playing the rabaab. Therefore, this became the Rababi Seni gharaanaa. Surat Sen and Sarat Sen did not achieve as much prominence as their other two brothers.

I am indebted to the pioneering musicologist of Bengal, the late Dr. Bimal Roy, D.Litt., for the above information. However, Shri Harishchandra Srivastav in his book “Raaga Parichay” part IV (Allahabad, 1966) holds the view that the descendants of Tansen’s sons were beenkars or been players and were called Seniyaas and those of his daughter were rabaabiyaaas or rabaab players and called Baaniyaas.
The age old guru-shishya parampara is at its very core and the only method of teaching wherein the very ethos and the musical specialities of the concerned (gharaanaa) ideology are passed on from the teacher to disciple through ‘seena ba seena taaleem’ or the method of listening and reproduction.

In the present times, however, a watertight or rigid purity of a gharaana (style) is indeed a rarity, yet there do exist five main schools of khayaal gaayaki which have been widely accepted as the main representatives of today’s Hindustani raaga music.²

These are the Gwaalior gharaanaa (ग्वालियर घराना), the Aagraa gharaanaa (आगरा घराना), the Jaipur / Allaadiyaa Khan gharaanaa (जयपुर /अल्लादिया घराना), the Patiaalaa gharaanaa (पटियाला घराना) and the Kiraanaa gharaanaa (किराना घराना).

Although the basic characteristics of each gharaanaa are well defined, yet where the use of embellishments and other means of improvisation is concerned, there is a marked difference even though most of them employ almost all the alankaars to a lesser or greater extent. However, the preference for or

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² One hears about many gharaanaas of khayaal such as (apart from those mentioned in the chapter) the Rampur Seheswan (रामपुर सहेश्वान), Qawwalbachcha (कवाल बच्चा), Mewaati (मेवाती), Indore (इंदौर), Bhendibazaar (भेंडी बजार), Bishnupur (बिश्नुपुर), Delhi (दिल्ली), Benaras (बनारस), Taalmundi (तालमुंडी), and Khurja (खुर्जा), among others. Although some of these have been well-established during some time or the other, yet those discussed in the chapter are the only major and mainstream gharaanaas surviving today.
predominance of some *alankaars* in a particular style has always remained. For example, the use of *murki*, which is freely used in light classical genres, is also used by almost all the *gharaanaas* such as the Gwalior, Kiraana, Patiala, Jaipur, etc., in varying degrees. But, while the Patiala *gharaanaa*, which in fact, employs almost every known tool of embellishment ranging from the heaviest of *gamaks* to the lightest of *kanas* and *khatkaas*, uses *murkis* more frequently and profusely than any other *gharaanaa*.

The Kiraana and Gwalior *gharaanaas*, on the other hand, employ these with greater restraint, often delicately sprinkling them across the melodic line to punctuate long and sinuous *vistaar* passages.

Nevertheless, individual preference and the temperament of the performing artiste go a long way in determining the extent and proportion of such usage; for example, if we take the case of the present reigning queen of the Jaipur – Atrauli *gharaanaa*, we must at once notice that Smt Kishori Amonkar’s use of *murkis, kanas* and *khatkaas* is remarkably more than that by her predecessors from the same *gharaanaa*, such as Kesarbai Kerkar, and even her guru and mother, Moghubai Kurdikar. Similarly, the present *prima donna* of Kiraanaa, Dr. Prabha Atre also infuses her characteristically mellow music with these delicate *alankarans* significantly more abundantly than her *guru* Hirabai Barodekar and *gharaanaa* seniors such as Gangubai Hangal and Bhimsen Joshi. These classic examples clearly underline and account for the scope of individual choice within
the framework of the gharaana that Hindustani classical music typically allows for.

Some important aspects in the evaluation of the main characteristics, preferred improvisational tools and peculiarities of the various styles are as follows:

1. Attack or throw of the voice, i.e., voice culture.  
2. The treatment of the vowels, like ‘aakaar’, ‘eekaar’ (ईकार) etc.
3. The ‘vazan’ (वज़न) or weight with which the vowels, alone or coalesced with letters or words, are employed.
4. The treatment of the ‘anunaasik swaras’ (अनुनासिक स्वर) or nasals.
5. The characteristic flow of the melodic line.
6. The beginning aochar and enunciation of the raaga structure.
7. The enunciation of the cheez and its arrangement within the taala structure.

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3 Voice quality and technique are of crucial importance in the formation of style — the hallmark of the gharaanaas — and each of them has its definitive features of voice production that are best suited to its ideology. This phenomenon is so established that, in most cases, no sooner is the first note or the first phrase of notes sung than the gharaana of the singer is recognized by the connoisseurs. However, there are exceptions, e.g., Gangubai Hangal and Bhimsen Joshi, whose voices are broader than the generally accepted classic Kirana voice. Similarly, the voice production of Mallikarjun Mansur is somewhat at variance with the “Shuddha Aakar” (शुद्ध आकार) generally associated with the Allaadiyaa Khan gaayaki. Wim van der meer writes in his book, “Hindustani Music in the Twentieth Century” (1980) at page 169: “......the sound of the voice is kept as natural as possible, contrary to Western voice production. This implies a vast difference in tonal quality, in which the standards are quite flexible. There is the very high-pitched voice, almost shrill, with hardly any rumble, permitting extremely subtle tonal shades (Abdul Kareem Khan). Then we find deep, sonorous voices (Faiyaz Khan) or delicate and resonant ones (Bade Ghulam Ali Khan). But within Indian music even a cracky voice that is occasionally out of tune can be heard, if it is compensated by rich music, as was the case of Vilayat Hussein Khan.” Inference: Even voice tonality is a matter of choice — either that of the guru’s (dictated by the gharaana) which is true most of the time or, rarely, that of the individual.
8. Preference / choice of *taala* and *laya*.

9. Preferred method / style of developing the notes and phrases of the *raaga*.

10. The mode / way of transiting into *drut laya* after the *vilambit* is over, i.e. the preference for *bolbaant* (बोलबाँट), *bahalaava*, *sargam* or any other mode of *layakaari*.

11. *Taana* patterns, including *boltaana*.

   Thus, each musical style must have its definite boundaries in order to be compact and aesthetic as well as have its own identity. Like an *ikebana* flower arrangement, it must cherish the virtues of restraint and economy in ornamentation and decorativeness so as to become artistically irresistible and complete.

   Apparently therefore, every grandmaster of the *gharaanaa* had realized this truth and picked and chosen the tools of embellishing and putting together his *gaayaki* / style with utmost care, never losing vision of the final product of his art as a whole, for it is indispensable for any style to stand the test of time in the scale of lasting aesthetic appeal and popularity. In effect, this feature has helped in lending a distinct character to each *gharaanaa* owing to its chosen special features. A brief evaluation of these special features is being attempted below.

**A. The Gwaalior Gharaanaa** ---- Undoubtedly, the oldest *gharaanaa* of *khayaal* preceded perhaps, only by the *Quawwaal Bacchon ka gharaanaa* that was

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4 Some musicologists maintain that the Gwaalior *gharaanaa* is in fact an offshoot of the older Qawwallbachcha *gharaanaa*. However, the latter *gharaanaa* was basically known for its *firaabandi* and short *taanas* in the quawwali *genre* and is more or less obsolete, since there are hardly any practitioners of this *gharaanaa* left today.
more into *quawwali* based improvisation initially, and branching out into *dhrupad* – *dhamaar* and *khayaal* singing in the latter half of eighteenth century with their exponent, Ghulaam Rasool training the brothers, Shakkar and Makkhan Khan and Shakkar’s son, Bade Mohammad Khan further adding *taan* like *phirats* to it gave rise to something quite similar to the modern *chhota khayal* that the Gwaalior *gharaanaa* adopted and developed further. Following are some salient features of the Gwaalior *gaayaki*:

1. A strong *dhrupad* base.

2. Open – throated and high pitched, yet sweet voice production.

3. A longish *auchaar* or introductory *aalaap*\(^5\) so as to cover the main characteristic of the *raaga* including its *pakad* or catch phrase, especially within the gamut of the *madhya saptak* or the middle register.

4. Preference for Jhoomraa and Tilwaadaa *taalas* (*तिलवाड़ा ताल*) and Ektaal for *vilambit khayaals*.

5. Preference for a relatively faster paced and well knit *vilambit bandish*.

6. Maximum use of a wide variety of *taalas* including Jhaptaal, Roopak *taala*, Aadaachautaal and Ektaal for moderately slow or *madhya* - *vilambit* and again Ektaal, Aadaachautaal, Addha (*अध्धा*) / Punjaabi (*पंजाबी*) *thheka*

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\(^5\) *Aalaap* here means the short introduction of the *raaga* by *khayaaliyas* (*ख्यालियां*) before they take up the *bandish*, and not the *poornaanga aalaap* (*पूर्णांग आलाप*) of the *dhrupadiyaas.*
(ठेका) and of course the most favoured Teentaala (तीनताल) for chhota khayaals (छोटा खयाल).

7. Employment of bahalaavaa or slow paced flowing taan like melodic passages, in the process of raaga vistaar.

8. Importance of vowels in the execution of raaga badhat. Extensive use of aakaar. Vowels often coalesced with words and sharp vowels like ‘ee’ and ‘oo’ employed in the higher notes.

9. Employment of gamak throughout the rendition lending ‘vazan’ (weight) to the music presented.

10. Elongation of / rest on the “anunaasik swaras” (nasals), especially for staying on the higher notes.

11. Marked / primary use of meend and gamak (glides and oscillations) during the process of swara lagaav or approach / application of notes.

12. A penchant for long bandishes often containing “adi laya” (आड़ी लय) rhythmic syncopation.

13. The bandish is customarily sung twice, first in the naayaki anga or as taught by the guru and then depicting the gaayaki anga with the addition of suitable embellishments.

14. Systematic, phrase wise development of the concerned raaga that is based on raaga defining melodic structures comprising phrasing as well as bhangi
or manner together with requisite embellishment such as a *murki* or *meend* to bring out the underlying expression. Progression is also centered around the key points in the *bandish* which essentially encapsulates important aspects of the *raaga*.

15. Strict adherence to the purity of the *raaga*.

16. Preference for “*shuddha*” ragas (शुद्ध राग) as against “*sankeerna*” (संकीर्ण) and “*chhaayaalag*” raagas (छायालग राग). Thus *raagas* such as Yaman, Chhaayaanat, Hameer, Shankaraa, Bageshri, Malkauns, Basant, Bhairav, Sarang, Multani and Shree constitute its main fare as against a Bhairav Bahaar or Charju ki Malhaar that could come in as a second or later item and be treated as a *prakaar* or variant of its parent *raaga*.

17. Structurally simple *raaga* development, yet based on *raaga waachak* (राग वाचक) or characteristic *raaga* depicting phrases as opposed to the linear note wise development done in the Kiraanaa gharaanaa set up.

18. Use of *larajdaar* (लरजदार) or weighty *tanaas*, mostly *alankaarik*, in *vilambit laya* before fast *taanas*.

19. Forceful and simple *tanaas*, mostly *sapaat* and *chhoot*, produced with *vazan* at a moderately high speed.

20. Abundance of *bolataanas* employing words from within the song text.
21. Sizable portion of performance time given to bolbaant and layakaari before the commencement of the initial larajdaar taanas. Use of syncopation or varying accentuation during layakaari / bolbaant, especially in medium tempo phrases.

22. Employment of ladanta (लड़चंत) or cross-rhythm against the tablaa thekaa (तबला ठेका).

23. A bent towards display of tayyaari (तय्यारी) or virtuosity with the help of behlaavaa, tappa anga and gamak taanas.

24. Preference for taraanaa (ताराना) to depict drut laya as also a concluding piece instead of thumri (तुम्री).

25. The Gwalior gaayaki is said to be “ashtaang radhaan” (अष्टांग प्रधान), its various angs (अंग) or appendages being--- aalaap, bol-aalaap, bol-taana, taana varieties, layakaari, meend, gamak and murki.

26. Presentation with command of a large variety of song forms apart from vilambit and madhya – drut khayaals. These are khayaal numa (vilambit taraanaa), taraanaa, chaturang (a sthaayi - antaraa composition with sargam or solfa names, taraanaa syllables as well as pakhawaj bols appearing in sections along with song text / lyrics), trivat (a song form
similar to chaturang, only without the song lyrics section), tappa, tapkhayaals, thumri, ashtapadis and bhajans.

B. The Aagraa Ghaaraana ----- Because of socio - cultural links with the Gwaalior gharana at the time of its inception, the Aagraa gaayaki is considerably close to that of Gwaalior, the mother of all khayaal gharaanaas.

Its main features are ---

1. Bold and full – throated voice production akin to that of dhrupad gaayaki.

2. Laya based development of the khayaal incorporating long nome – tome aalaap as practiced by dhrupadiyaas, before commencing upon the khayaal composition.

3. A happy blend of features from dhrupad as well as thumri used during vistaar of the bandish (during the course of developing the composition).

4. Articulating the sharp vowels for lingering on the high notes so as to project the voice as far reaching.

5. Importance of bol – alaap in order to exploit the song lyrics.

6. Well enunciated, often romantic and elaborate bandishes.

7. Clear and lyrical rendition of the text of the song.

8. Development on the basis of the raaga phrases and rhythm centered around the cheez / bandish as opposed to the system of ‘swara-badhat’ (स्वर बद्धत).

10. Laya based gaayaki. Indulgence in saath- sangat (साथ संगत) / ladant (लडंत) with tabla accompaniment at appropriate places.⁶

11. Proficiency in dhrupad, dhamaar (धमार) and thumri gaayaki.

12. Emphasis on the purity of the raaga.

13. Little use of “lighter” improvisational tools e.g. khatka, murki, etc.


15. Use of jabraa taana (जब्रा तान).

C. The Jaipur - Atrauli or Allaadiyaa Khan gharaanaas ---

The Jaipur /Atrauli and Allaadiyaa Khan gharaanaas have become more or less one and the same today, although the latter is actually considered an offshoot of the former since it was founded by Ustaad Allaadiyaa Khan of Jaipur gharaanaa. Some of the salient features of this gharaana⁷ are as follows ----

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⁶ The late Sharaafat Hussain Khan was famous for this.
⁷ Kumar Prasad Mukherji, in his article “Sociology of Indian Classical Music” published in the annual journal (Gharaana issue) of the Sangit Research Academy, Kolkata, has observed as follows: “Alladiya Khan produced many distinguished disciples starting with his own son Manji Khan to Kesaarbai and Nivriti Bua Sarnaik, and no two members of the same gharana sing in exactly the same manner. This is perhaps because the Ustad was throughout experimenting and evolving a gayaki, and his pupils represent the talim given to them at various points of this evolutionary process.” While this statement is basically accurate, it is nevertheless possible to discern some common features shared by the exponents of this gharaana to a greater or lesser extent.
1. Broad and open voice production: much use of the chest voice and maintenance of the same tone through out the performance with little scope for tonal experimentation or subtleties as evidenced in the voice culture of Kiraanaa.

2. Predominance of aakaar or the vowel ‘aa’ in the course of raaga badhat so as to enhance voice projection.

3. The gaayaki or raaga presentation originally restricted to a single madhya – vilambit laya or moderately slow (medium paced) composition. The addition of a following drut or faster composition is a relatively recent phenomenon.

4. A markedly brief aochaar before the composition.

5. Preference for Teentala for vilambit khayaal. Jhaptala and Roopak taalas also used.

6. Employment of “penchdaar” (पेंचदार) (rolling or twisted / complex ) taana patterns and also short behelavaas in the vistaar portion.

7. Gaayaki based on continuity of the melodic line in total conjunction with rhythm, i.e., the vistaar or melodic phrase development strictly adheres to the taala and progresses totally in relation to its beats and sub-beats.

8. Profusion of complex melodic phrasing and intricate patterns coalesced with rhythmic behalaavaa during the course of vistaar.
9. Much importance given to ‘dum saans’ or breath control by arriving at the 
*sam* after finishing a *taala avartan* long *vistaar* mostly in the same breath. 
The celebrated Surashree Kesarbai Kerkar was a legendary exponent of this 
amazing phenomenon.

10. Unorthodox way of *raaga* delineation. Some *vidwans* profess that the 
*vistaar* in the Allaadiyaa *gaayaki* is based upon *taana* structures as 
against the *aalaap* base of other *gharaanaas* like the Gwaalior, Aagraa 
and the Kiraanaa.

11. Intellectual approach to *raaga* presentation with special emphasis on the 
aesthetics of complex and *alankaarik* note combinations.

12. Importance of *bol- ang* (बोल अंग) and employment of *bolbaant* akin to 
*dhrupad gaayaki* before approaching fast *taanas*.

13. A penchant for rare, mostly *saalag* (सालग) and *sankeerna* (संकीर्ण) *raagas*, 
i.e. complex and conjoined *raagas* that are neither commonly practised by 
other *gharaanaas* nor acquainted to the concert going public at large.

14. Own interpretation of many common and complex *raagas* by sometimes 
altering the grammatical structure as well as the aesthetic high points of the 
*raaga* structure. To enumerate just a few examples, *raagas* Tilak Kaamod, 
Baageshri, Raamdaasi Malhaar and Naayaki Kaanhadaa that are also 
popular with other *gharaanaas* are sung slightly differently and since 
relatively unconventional note permutations are often introduced in their
presentation, they sound significantly different from their more commonly heard version.

D. **The Patialaa gharaanaa** ---- Made famous by late Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, this gharaanaa is well-known for its lively and instantly entertaining gaayaki. This is a style which incorporates almost every known tool of embellishment in khayaal, making itself immediately appealing to all types of listeners. Some of its salient features are ----

1. Relatively mellifluous and resonant voice production.

2. *Badhat* on the lines of *raaga-vistaar* (राग विस्तार) as distinct from *swara-vistaar* (स्वर विस्तार).

3. Short and artistically catchy (virtuoso) *khayaal* compositions.

4. Free use of all types of improvisational tools, e.g. *khatka, murki, gamak, meend, zamzama (ज़मज़मा)* and so on.

5. Similarity with the Gwaalior gharaanaa vis a vis employment of a wide range of *gamaks, bahalaavaas and taalas*.

6. Abundance of *alankaarik, vakra (वक्र or zigzag)* and *phirat (फिरत) taanas*.

7. Incorporation of *tappa (टप्पा)* style *taanas*.

9. Marked flexibility of voice and the capacity to exploit a variety of tonal shades necessary for the incorporation of the famed Punjaab anga / style of singing.

10. Mastery over the Punjaab anga thumri (पांजाब अंग ठुमरी) alongside khayaal gaayaki.

11. Chromatic use of notes and such other unusual note combinations in thumri singing.

12. Use of behlaavaa and sargam during the transition from the badhat stage to the taana stage.

13. Employment of occasional shadja parivartan or tonic transposition techniques during taana like sargam phrases.

E. The Kiraanaa gharaanaa --- The Kiraanaa gharaanaa is one of the most popular gharaanaas of khayaal today. Founded by the great Abdul Kareem Khan, it has also been substantially propagated by his contemporary, Abdul Waheed Khan through two of his famous disciples, Hirabai Barodekar and Ameer Khan, as also by his own disciple Sawai Gandharva. Following Abdul Waheed Khan’s path breaking stylistic innovation owing to his induction of fresh ingredients or ideas such as meerkhand (मीर खण्ड) and other mathematically devised permutations into the Kiraanaa concept of music, Ameer Khan who adopted and developed it further, has been accredited with the orgination / popularization of another distinct
style, the Indore gharaana (इन्दौर घराना). The prominent features of this
(Kiraanaa) style are ---

1. Cultivation of a soft and sensitive voice capable of subtle tonal
   manipulation.⁸

2. Aalaap – pradhaan (आलाप प्रधान) gaayaki, i. e., a style that much
   emphasizes or builds around the slower developmental passages or
   vistaara.

3. Lyrical approach to “swara-lagaav” or articulation of notes.

4. Vilambit badhat or slow, chronological development of every note of the
   raaga along the principle of swara- vistaara , which is at considerable
   variance from that of raaga vistaara followed by, say, the Aagraa and
   Gwaalior styles.

5. “Chaindaar” (चैनदार) or unhurried , gentle, contemplative and somewhat
   restrained gaayaki generally creating a calm and serene atmosphere.

6. High introspective and emotive content.

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Hindustani Music” (1973), has in one place described the Kirana voice thus : “the Kirana tone is delicate
and tender ; it resembles a soft silken thread and possesses a sharp point.” However, he has also said, “In
Kirana the voice emerges from a deliberately constricted throat and has a nasal twang.” This, however, it is
respectfully submitted, is not entirely true. In fact, none of the Kiranaa stalwarts had or has a nasal voice,
as is evident from the available recordings of Abdul Kareem Khan, Hiraabai Barodekar, Gangubai Hangal,
Sawai Gandharva, Bhimsen Joshi, Roshanaaraa Begum, Ameer Khan, Phiroze Dastur and Prabhnaa Atre. As
far as the voice production from a deliberately constricted throat is concerned, it can be said that only
Abdul Kareem Khan had this tendency to some extent , otherwise the voice production in Kiranaa
gharaanaa is soft and supple in relation to the other gharaanaas , and is both effortlessly natural and full,
quite in keeping with the requirements of khayaal singing.
7. Preference for *ati vilambit ekaala* for *bada-khayaal* and *drut teentaala* for *chhotaa-khayaal*.  

8. A very detailed *vistaar* as part of the structure of *khayaal*.

9. No strict adherence to the rhythm pattern during *badhat*.

10. Employment of the words or syllables of the words of the song - text during *badhat*.

11. A somewhat loose and free flow/ arrangement of the *cheez* within its *taala* structure.

12. Employment of *sargam*, i.e., singing solfà note names. This is generally done before commencing upon *taanas* during the course of transition to a faster pace in the *vilambit khayaal*.

13. Sparkling melodious *taanas* of a wide variety (*sapaat, chhoot, alankaarik* and *aadi-laya* mostly in combined form).

14. Preference for a much faster *drut khayaal* following the often very slow *vilambit* completely foregoing the *madhyalaya* format followed by the older *gharaanaas* such as Gwaalior and Aagraa.

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9 In fact, the present trend of a rather laid-back *vilambit thekaa* was started by Abdul Kareem Khan and further slowed into *ativilambit (अतिविलंबित)* thekaa by Ameer Khan after him.

10 It is said that Abdul Kareem Khan started this trend under the influence of the Carnatic music traditions of “Kalpana Swaras” (कल्पना स्वर) after his exposure to the music of South India. Later, Ameer Khan developed *sargam* singing to suit his “Meerkhandi” (मीरखंडी) style of exposition turning it into one of the main highlights of his *gaayaki* with breathtaking mathematically derived note permutations even at significantly high speeds.