CHAPTER TWO

DETAILED STUDY OF GURUKULS OF MODERN ERA
Modern Era Gurukuls can be divided into two basic sub-eras:

1. Pre- Independence (1858–1947)

2. Post- Independence (1947–present)

Study of both is below in detail:

1. **Pre- Independence (1858–1947):**

The Pre-Independence era we do not see any particular Gurukul as The educational system which the British introduced teaching of English language was given greater emphasis and the study of languages like Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit were left to individual efforts. Same was the case with music. By the colonial era the Gurukul system was declining in India.

“Guru Shishya Parampara” or the teacher - pupil relationship is an important part of India’s teaching tradition. In ancient India most of the knowledge was passed on from the teacher to his pupil through oral tradition, this oral tradition of passing knowledge is known as the “Guru Shishya Parampara”. 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. What we get to see is the Guru shishya Parampara where the Shishya is learning music face to face from a Gharanedaar Gayak or Vaadak. By the end of pre-independence era, the Gharana style had taken over and students of the Guru were not allowed to listen or learn from any other Gharana gayak/ vaadak. The Guru Shishya Parampara was also seen on the lines of “Father Son Relationship”, mainly because the shishya would behave in a way like that of Guru’s own son. There had to be transparency in the relationship and the student had to be totally devoted towards the Guru and his teaching.
Strengths and weaknesses of Guru Shishya Parampara:

Strengths:

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:

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.
Weaknesses:

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:

1. The student learns only from one teacher and thus, looks at all the aspects from only one vantage point.

2. Absence of a structured teaching method makes students more vulnerable to failures.

3. This tradition is particularly helpful for imparting practical lessons. It does not help in learning the theoretical aspects of the subject.

4. 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.


Post-Independence also had continued with the Guru Shishya Parampara tradition which had later become more accessible to people interested in music. 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.

Institutional Setups for Learning Music:

Just a few years before the Independence some important institutions were established that were only devoted to Learning and teaching of music.

1. Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya(1939):

Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal works for the promotion and propagation of Indian Classical Music and Dances with its main Sangeet Vidyalaya in Vashi, Navi Mumbai and has nearly 1200 affiliated institutions and nearly 800 Exam
Centres all over the country from Assam to deep South Kerala and more than One Lakh students take examinations every year from Prarambhik (Beginners level) to Sangeet Acharya (Ph.D. level). Mandal's General Body consists of members not only from almost all the States in India but from abroad also. The art of Indian music, which in the days bygone, had enjoyed the privilege of honour and esteem in the royal court, was deprived of it in the mid-eighteenth century. With a single aim in mind to uplift music, Pt. Paluskar set out on a Bharat Yatra in the year 1896 with his two disciples. He conducted music programmes in different states in India and received accolades and recognition. No treatise of musicology in India will ever be complete without making a study of life of the great visionary late Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar and the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya established by him in 1901 at Lahore. Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalalaya Mandal is a virtual continuation of this Gandharva Mahavidyalaya.

**Establishment and Progress of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya:**

The Art of Indian Music, which in the days bygone, had enjoyed the privilege of honor and esteem in the Royal Court, was deprived of it under the British Rule. Due to this, the public had begun to look rather disinterestedly towards Music. Musicians were being looked upon as illiterate, whimsical and uncultured persons by the society and public at large. Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar was aware of the humiliating treatment shown by the society and public towards music and musicians and aimed to uplift music and musicians to the esteemed and honorable status it now enjoys.

With this single aim in mind, Pt. Paluskar set out on a Bharat Yatra in the year 1896 with his two disciples. He conducted music programs at Aundh, Satara, Baroda, Rajasthan etc and received accolades and recognition. In the year 1898 he entered Punjab. On 5th May, 1901, Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar established the Gandharva Mahavidyalay at Lahore.

In 1907, Pt Paluskar reached Mumbai. In the year 1908, he established a Vidyalay at Girgaon. After this the scope of his activities widened and vidyalayas were established at Gokuldas market in 1911, Budhwar Peth, Pune in 1912 and at
Nagpur in 1913. In the year 1915, he inaugurated the new building of Gandharva Mahavidyalay in Mumbai. Unfortunately, due to unavailability of adequate funds and resources, the building of Gandharva Mahavidyalay was lost in 1924. After a distinguished and unparallel service to the cause of Indian Music, Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar laid down his life on 21st August, 1931.

After the sad demise of Pandit Paluskarji, the task of democratizing music education was taken over by his disciples, who had, by then established in the field of music as teachers and artistes. A meeting of all the disciples of Panditji was convened in 1931, at Ahmadabad by Prof. Shankarrao Vyas & Shri. N. M. Khare. A large number of their colleagues responded and it was decided in this meeting that a body named “Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal” be constituted and its executive council elected, which should direct all activities.

It was also decided that the general body should meet triennially and elect the executive council, including its President. Thus the “Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal” was formed in 1931.

For the first few years, after the formation of the Mandal, the disciples of Panditji established their own vidyalayas in different parts of the country and affiliated these vidyalayas with the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal. The Mandal drafted a syllabus for the various courses to be followed in the affiliated institutions. The first exams of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya were organized at the Anand Centre (Gujarat) as per the Mandal’s syllabus. Further the number of affiliated institutions kept on increasing and by the end of year 1950. These institutions were situated all over India in various provinces such as Mumbai, Gujarat, Sind, Karnataka, Punjab, Delhi, Rajasthan etc. Examinations were conducted according to the Mandal’s syllabus at various centers and approximately one thousand students appeared per year in the various examinations. The degrees and certificates of the Mandal were recognized by various universities and other educational bodies. During this period, a need was felt to co-ordinate and communicate the different activities of the Mandal to the various affiliated
Image: Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal, Vashi, Navi Mumbai

1 http://abgmvm.org/home.php
institutions, exam centers, music teachers, students and music lovers at large. For this purpose, it was decided to publish a bilingual monthly magazine i.e Hindi and Marathi, which will be the House journal of the Mandal. Thus, in the year 1947, on the auspicious day of Balipratipada (Diwali) the first edition of the Sangeet Kala Vihar magazine was published.

The "Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal" was registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860 and Bombay Public Trust Act in the year 1946 which led to an increase of public confidence in the activities of the Mandal. The foundations of the present day "Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal" were laid down in this era.²

The history of convocations of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya dates back to 1911 when in its first convocation Lord Sydenham, the then Governor of Mumbai, conferred the degrees on the successful graduates of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya. Ever since then, the convocations have continued and are being adorned by respectable dignitaries in educational and other fields. Convocations were held at different places of the country by the Mandal to confer titles to the candidates who has successfully completed their respective courses.

Facilities:

Convocations:

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² http://abgmvm.org/about-us.html
Music Teacher’s Conferences:

Till 1950, disciples of Pt. Paluskar met every third year to take stock of the situation. These meets were now converted to triennial conferences of music teachers. The idea was to evolve common platform for teachers, working in institutions all over the country. The first Music Teacher’s Conference was held at Delhi in 1952 which was inaugurated by Dr. Rajendra Prasad. These conferences are attended in large numbers by music lovers and artistes alike.

Discussions, lectures, seminars and of course, performances by eminent and new artistes are a regular feature. These occasions are eagerly awaited by the members and music lovers of country. Now under this banner music teachers are given an opportunity to discuss their needs and difficulties.

Workshops & Seminars:

Sensitive to the changing needs of the music field it was decided around 1975 to concentrate on seminars and workshops. Many workshops were conducted with a view to enlighten the advanced students about intricacies and delicacies of raga structure. For this purpose, various experts were approached and brought on one platform to discuss, explain, teach and demonstrate the ragas. In 1990-91, a four day seminar arranged at Vashi, termed as ‘In tune with Kumarji’, provided a unique opportunity to budding artistes to interact with none other than Pt. Kumar Gandharva. This novel workshop proved to be a grand success.

Publications:

The Mandal has to its credit a unique distinction of publishing a monthly magazine viz. Sangeet Kala Vihar in Hindi & Marathi since 1947. During these years it has published valuable and thought-provoking literature for the benefit of its members and students. Many scholars and writers have contributed expeditiously to the magazine. The magazine has proved to be an asset to the music world.
Image: Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar (August 18, 1872 – August 21, 1931)

3 https://www.gandharvapune.org/images/Vishnu-Paluskar.jpg
Image: Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar’s building, Lahore, Pakistan

*http://abgmvm.org/about-us.html*
The special issues published by Sangeet Kala Vihar are ‘Khayal’ and ‘Thumari’ which were published in the year 1990-91 which proved to be a grand success among the readers. In 1991-92 the Sangeet Kala Vihar published a special issue to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Mandal. In the year 2001-02, ‘Carnatic Sangeet’ and ‘Sangeet Ke Bharat Ratna’, year 2002-03, ‘Sangeet Padmavibhushan’ year 2005-06 ‘Pandita Mogubai Kurdikar’ and ‘Platinum Jubilee of Mandal’ and in the year 2007 - Special issue of Sangeet Kala Vihar namely - "Parampara” was published.

Besides this magazine the Mandal also has to its credit some significant publications viz. Music of India, Paluskar Biography, Navrag Nirmiti, Sangeet Alankar etc., to name a few.

Audio - Video Archives:

Modern sound equipment's and its impact on music world forced the Mandal to take this project on hand. 25 years back the work on audio collections was started. Private concerts, lectures, seminars, discussions, compositions were the objectives. Live recordings since 1950 across the country are the main bulk of this library. Donors with positive outlook and progressive approach offered contents from their possessions Performances since 1950, from about 275 artistes, performed across country on various occasions can be listened here. Catalogued in four basic ways, this collection is a boon to research oriented students who can study, compare and go through the various styles and performances at one place.5

2. Bhatkhande Music Institute (भातखंडे संगीत संस्थान) now Bhatkhande Music Institute University(1926):

The history of music education in India dates back to ancient period when all education was imparted in Gurukulas and Ashrams of great Saints and Rishi-Munis. The system of modern institutionalization of education in graded, time bound structure was ushered in by the British rulers from the mid-nineteenth

5 http://abgmvm.org/facilities.html
century. Indian music education was brought and structured in this system in the beginning of twentieth century. Two stalwarts of Indian music in this century, Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar and Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande led and developed two strong and parallel traditions of this institutionalization of music education and training system. In 1926, Pt. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande established a music school in Lucknow with the help and co-operation of Rai Umanath Bali and Rai Rajeshwar Bali and other music patrons and connoisseurs of Lucknow, culturally vibrant princely state of Awadh.

This institution was inaugurated at the hands of the then Governor of Awadh Sir William Marris and was named after him as “Marris College of Music”. On 26th March 1966, the State Government of Uttar Pradesh brought this college under its control and aptly renamed it after its founder as “Bhatkhande College of Hindustani Music.” At the request of the State Government, the Government of India by a notification on 24th October, 2000, declared this institute as “Deemed University”. Bhatkhande Music Institute is registered under the registration of Societies Act 1860 and is an autonomous institution. On 2nd November, 2002 Hon. H.E. Governor of Uttar Pradesh consented to become the President of Bhatkhande Music Institute Deemed University. Bhatkhande Music Institute Deemed University has a very glorious history with exemplary achievements in the past. The alumni of this Institute are spread all over the world and many are in the active pursuit of music education and performance. Anoop Jalota, Dilraj Kaur are amongst the many such alumni. Bhatkhande Music Institute Deemed University is also much sought after destination for seekers of music from Europe, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Central and East Asian Countries. Many of the students from these countries are pursuing education in Indian Classical Music.6

6 http://bhatkhandemusic.edu.in/?page_id=36

Image: Bhatkhande Deemed University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.

*Image Courtesy: http://bhatkhandemusic.edu.in/?page_id=1493*
3. Prayag Sangeet Samiti (1926):

Established on the auspicious day of Maha Shivratri in the year 1926 by Deshraj Major (Dr.) Ranjit Singh, Late Baijnath Sahai and Late Satyanand Joshi, the Prayag Sangeet Samiti remains the premier Institution for the practice and propagation of music in India. The Samiti is an organization registered under the Indian Societies Registration Act of 1860 and was founded with the sole aim of popularizing the cause of Indian Classical Music in India.

Prayag Sangeet Samiti is a valiant attempt towards rescuing music from disrepute to which it had come during the period from 15th to 17th century. All through its span of nine decades of existence, the Samiti has been playing the role of torch-bearer in the world of classical music and it can legitimately pride itself in having achieved high reputation for consistently upholding the highest and the richest traditions of this sublime art.

Prayag Sangeet Samiti was established in the year 1926 with a view to popularize and teach Indian Classical music amongst the masses in India. This institution is registered under the Indian Societies Act (Act No. XXI of 1860). The basic object of the Samiti has always been to revive the prestige of the art of music comprising vocal music, instrumental music, dance and to organize systematic training in this art in India and also in foreign countries, besides reaching it to people at large. With this end in view, the Samiti had been devotedly applying itself to solid work for the last 62 years. It is through the efforts of this institution that music was included as one of the subjects in High school and Intermediate Examinations curriculum in the state of Uttar Pradesh (India), and a lot of credit for the impetus given to the teaching of the art of music by various government institutions and universities, goes to this Samiti. The Samiti has played an important role in the all-round revival and popularity of Indian Classical music by organizing music competitions and conferences on All India Basis annually, in an effort to revive taste and devotion towards the art of music amongst the people and thus, popularizing this great art.
It took them a few years to establish and by post-independence era they were full-fledged institutions that helped popularize Indian classical music.

In the later years other than these institutions new wave of Gurukul system in the modern era has slowly cropped up. Not many just few but are doing good amount of work to bring out the best talent in Indian Music.

3. Emergence of Technology:

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.\(^9\) Acceptance to the fact that the technology that we are using today – youtube, online courses etc. give us a wide scope in learning, but one barely finds anyone using them actually pursuing that field interest until the end of discourse. One should be influenced such that the change starts to come from within them, and that influential power has to come from a Guru through her teachings. This is the reason why there can be no substitute for that bridge between the Guru and Shishya, even by today's advanced technology for that matter.\(^{10}\)

\(^9\) http://www.sumantasarkar.com/2012/01/guru-shishya-parampara.html
\(^{10}\) http://shankhnaad.net/living/culture/item/198-indian-tradition-guru-shishya
Image: Main building of Prayag Sangeet Samiti, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

Image Courtesy: http://www.prayagsangeetsamiti.co.in/upload/photos/upload/Who-We-Are-2611.jpg
4. Summary of the Chapter:

“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 a fusion of “Guru Shishya Parampara” with institutional training. New technology and equipment can further increase the effectiveness of this tradition. We must not forget that this is a time tested method. With spontaneity and improvisation as its key ingredients, it is destined to play even a bigger role in shaping the future of Indian classical music.

Today, technology has made music more accessible to people but a face-to-face interaction with a teacher helps you take the right path. A guru, does not give the solution but shows the right way to do it. That is what a guru does.