The Inclusion of Gharānās in Eastern and Western Baaj

Indian Music is an ancient tradition. Many prominent skills within this tradition are observed today. Here, we will exclude all other skills except those concerned with percussion instruments. Indian percussion instruments comprise several different musical instruments made using leather. The tablā, however, is considered the most prominent among Indian percussion instruments. It holds a position of the highest merit among percussion instruments made from leather.

Researchers and experts tend to agree that there are two important methods of playing percussion instruments: the Eastern playing style and the Western playing style. The researcher would ask why only these two methods have been taken into account. Most of the instruments that the Indian gharānā traditions were based on belonged to North India. Hence, the experts of old concluded that these would be the most important methods:
Eastern playing style
Western playing style

History does not stop at merely the methods for these instruments. Further research goes on to attempt to allot each instrument to a specific gharānā. The present research seeks to probe and explore the following issues:

- How these methods were ascribed to their specific gharānās?
- What their origins were?
- How the gharānā-specific methods came to be known as baaj?
- What required them to be divided between the gharānās?
- Why the gharānās were considered separate on the basis of the methods employed?

All these questions will be answered within the scope of this chapter.

1:1 The Meaning of Baaj

The literary meaning of baaj is "to play". When an instrument is being played,
the method employed in playing it is known as *baaj*. If a particular *bandish* is presented in different ways, we may say that different *baaj* or methods have been employed. Different presentations entail the following:

- Employing different styles of how the hands are positioned on the *tablā*.
- Playing a single *bol* using different sections of the *tablā* and with different fingers.
- When we think of a *baaj* from a given region, its meaning may be derived with the musical ethos of that region in mind.
- Making sense of the meaning of *baaj* also entails the musical legacy of the region to which it belongs.

Inclusion of all these matter we understand the meaning of *baaj*.

Pandit Sudhir Mainkar opines: "The identity of a *baaj* of *tablā* is determined using characteristics such as how the fingers and the hand rest on the *tablā* and the *bānyā*, their exact position, and what sounds are produced using that position. Study of these characteristics reveals that they are actually the identifiers of physical movement. These may be known as *baaj* or *vādan shailī*.\textsuperscript{1}

1:2 The Origin of the Word *Baaj*

A discussion on the meaning of *baaj* led us to conclude that it is related to the act of playing the *tablā*. We also realize that the word is related to the concept of sound. The phenomenon of Indian music and its development are also related to sound. Sound is taken to be related to the various natural sounds, such as those made by birds and animals for example. We use the sounds we like for musical purposes. The sounds that we do not like, however, are identified as cacophony.

Among percussion instruments, the sound of the *pakhāwaj* is considered to be calm and composed. The instrument is used to accompany calm and composed forms of singing such as *dhrupad* and *dhamār*. However, the development of *khyaṅl* form of singing led to the development of the prominence of the *tablā*. Today, this instrument is prime among percussion instruments. Here, excluding all other percussion instruments, we will discuss only with regard to the *tablā*.

We have previously stated that the literal meaning of the word *baaj* is 'to play'. When we play an instrument, we are very particular about the sounds that emanate
from it. Laying an instrument leads us to discover not only the various sounds we can extract from it but also that striking the same spot in different manners helps us produce different sounds from it. Such diverse sounds are found in the different instances of bandish, these days.

When we categorized these different sounds in accordance with the principles of Indian music, we realized the different methods for playing different sounds, which we developed into the meaning of the word baaj.

1:3 The Kinds of Baaj

Further discussion on the meaning of the word baaj led us to discover that vādan pranāli and vādan shailī are referred to as baaj. It is on the basis of the vādan shailī and vādan pranāli that we have explained the origin of baaj through the medium of sound. If we analyze such sound from the perspective of the tablā, we find two kinds of baaj: 1) Āśdār dhwani (khulā baaj) and 2) Maryādīt ās-yukta dhwani (bandh baaj).

1:3:1 Bandh Baaj

This baaj is very well-suited to the use of fingers in bandish. We hear sweet and soft sounds groups of bol in this baaj. Since the kinār portion of the tablā is prominently used in this baaj, it is also known as ‘kinār ka baaj’.

According to Pandit Arvind Mulgaonkar, the resonance of the tablā and the bānyā is limited. In solo performances, the limited resonance makes it possible to play much better. The resonance of the tablā is inherently limited; therefore it becomes necessary to play the next varna before the resonance of the previous varna ends. Therefore too, within bandh baaj, quāyedā and relā are most prominently used. In bandh baaj, the pure sound that comes from the tablā and the bānyā is given great importance. With the pakhāwaj, the sound coming from the maidān portion is not included in this baaj. While playing the pakhāwaj, the sound made with the impact of all the fingers together is not included in the bandh baaj. Therefore, in the bandh baaj, the kinds of bandish such as peshkār, peshkār-quāyedā, relā, and rau are used more frequently. Playing all these kinds of bandish perfectly is not possible until we give due importance to using each finger appropriately.
1.3.2 Khulā Baaj

This *baaj* involves the use of powerful and open sounds. It employs the use of the palm in addition to the use of fingers. The influence of the style of playing the pakhāwaj is observed in playing the open sounds of this *baaj*. This *baaj* involves the prominent use of *bol-bandish* such as uthān, padāl, padālang, chālā, layakāri, laggī, ladi, tukālā, gat, relā, and chakradār.

In Pandit Arvind Mulgaoankar’s book, ‘Tabla’, the author writes, “Khulā means open, indicating compositions that use resonance of alphabets. Such a sound is produced by using the hand as in playing the pakhāwaj. Therefore, speedy composition is more often produced using this *baaj*. Similarly, keeping the fingers together, and using the palm, and the longer duration of the resonance, the compositions in khulā *baaj* have less speed than compositions in bandh *baaj*. In this *baaj*, different sounds are heard, generally.³

The researcher believes that *baaj* originate from sound. *Baaj* are composed on the basis of this sound. The combination of different sound, different positions of the hand, and striking different areas with the fingers has led to the development of different nād, and bandh *bol* and khule *bol* were discovered through them. It also led to the differentiation between two kinds of *baaj*.

1.4 Inclusions of Gharānās in *Baaj*

We have previously mentioned about *baaj* and gharānās. But the researcher has always asked how the *baaj* came to constitute gharānās and when it happened? Therefore, discussion on the words *baaj* and gharānā led to the conclusion that compositions of every gharānā were definitely created before the gharānā was itself created. Therefore, the beauty, nikās, rules and style clarify the gharānā. While playing it, the player either plays it with a raised hand or with a closed hand. It also clarifies whether the composition belongs to bandh *baaj* or khulā *baaj*.

Yet every gharānā’s compositions retain their own specialties. Previously we have mentioned that in tabla, a total of six gharānās have been accepted. Out of these, two gharānās involve playing compositions without raising the hand - with only the fingers. Therefore we consider them compositions of the bandh *baaj*. The compositions of the Delhi and Ajrāḍā gharānās are soft and smooth. Therefore, Delhi and Ajrāḍā gharānās have compositions made in the bandh *baaj*. Similarly, if we look
at the other four gharānās, they exhibit the influence of the styles of the pakhāwaj and nritya ang.

The researcher believes that nritya ang should be played not with a closed hand but with an open hand. To further prove the point, many experts today have clearly written in their books that Lucknow and Banaras gharānās’ tabla is of the nritya ang style. And a majority of the Farrukhābad gharānā’s compositions match with the pakhāwaj ang. It is no exaggeration to state that Punjab gharānā’s tabla is also of the pakhāwaj ang. That’s because the compiler of this gharānā is Lala Bhawani Das. He was a great pakhāwaj player. If the players of these gharānās are considered, this fact is borne out.

About baaj we have previously said that for tabla, there are only two kinds of baaj. Therefore the researcher also opines that Delhi and Ajrādā gharānās are classified as bandh baaj gharānās. And Farrukhābad, Lucknow, Banaras, and Punjab gharānās are classified as khulā baaj gharānās. In the same way, the different gharānās are classified under two kinds of baaj.

1:5 The Origin of the Gharānās

The word gharānā is known in the music world since time immemorial. All music is based on these different gharānās and regions of India, thought, and style of playing. It can be safely assumed that the gharānās were founded on the basis of different kinds of styles of playing. It is difficult to tell when exactly the gharānās came to exist. In the modern age, the books available only on the gharānās, speak of the tradition of gharānās as being 150-300 years old.

The most ancient style, dhrupad-dhamār had four kinds of music that were classified into four names of gharānās. Even before the dhrupad-dhamār style, the Bharat Mat, Shiv Mat, Hanumant Mat, and Nārad Mat were the four mats prevalent that can be considered options to the four gharānās. Therefore, the rise of the gharānās cannot be correctly assumed to have taken place in the last 2 or 3 hundred years. Gharānās existed even earlier but they had a different form then. They were referred to sometimes as vāni or mat.4

Gharānās are created and spread through the contribution of individuals, their disciples’ thinking, their presentation, and renewal of bandishes. Since ancient times, emulation has been human nature. When such emulators saw something special in the
presentation or the dramatic nature of some artist's performance, such that they saw something unique in them, they would doubtless honor such performances and performers. They would have expressed faith and love for such an exponent. They would have been curious to listen to him time and again. His artistic skill and his intelligence would have influenced them to emulate him as his disciples and that would have led to the foundation of a gharāṇā.

According to Shri Bhagwatsharan Sharma, the foundation of gharāṇās in music was initiated between 8th and 12th century AD, in the Rajput era. In the Rajput era (8th to 12th century) musicians received patronage from the royal courts. Therefore the music of this period generally developed on imperial lines. The artists of this period were so possessive about their knowledge of music, that they kept it hidden from not only the practitioners of other birāḍī but also from those of their own birāḍī. This music passed from generation to generation.

If they were childless, their music ended with them. Later, in the British period, music passed into the hands of crass commercially inclined persons. The musicians of that very period displayed base, vulgar, selfish, narrow-mindedness and such other traits that impeded the development of music and personal interests dominated all else. The gharāṇās were born in a catalytic atmosphere of such selfishness and preference to promote self interest. Therefore, the worst event in Indian Music during the British era was the development of gharāṇās.5

The above two statements prove that although the gharāṇās began in the Rajput era, or prior to 12th century, the modern gharāṇās came into existence in the British era.

Now we will discuss exclusively the development of gharāṇās specific to the tabla. 'Tabla Shāstra' by Shri Madhukar Godbole tells us that in the history of tabla, the era of Amir Khusrau or the era after 1300 is considered the most important. This era saw the initiation of the sitār by Khusrau Khan, the khayāl by Hussain Sharki, and tabla by Siddhar Khan.5

Mridangacharya Pandit Ram Shankar (Pagaldas) writes in an article that Ustad Siddhar Khan is identified as a contemporary of Ustad Kudausingh's guru Bhawani Din (Bhawanidas). Acharya Brihaspati has identified Bhawani Din as a court performer of Mohammed Shah Rangila. When Bhawani Din and Siddhar Khan are identified as contemporaries, Siddhar Khan's era should be the same as that of Mohammed Shah. The period between 1719 and 1749 saw the rise of ahrupad gōyki.
This gāyki was replaced by khayāl gāyaki. Different historians agree unanimously on this. After all this discussion, the present researcher believes that tablā would have started developing after the 18th century.

All tablā scholars indicate Delhi gharānā as being the first tablā gharānā. If we take into account the lineage associated with this gharānā, it doesn't seem to be older than 300 years. The discussion seems to indicate that the exponent of Delhi gharānā, Ustad Siddhar Khan arrived after 1317 or in the 14th century. But if we think about the origin of gharānās, the fact is not borne out. Secondly, no medieval book speaks of tablā, its exponents, or its gharānās.

In Indian music too, until the time of Mohd. Shah Rangila, there is no discussion to be found of either the sitār or the tablā. Thirty-nine years after the demise of Mohd. Shah Rangila, the compilation "Nādirtānā Shāhi," the work of Mughal emperor Shah Alam II, was written in the emperor's own hand in 1797. This work also has no mention of the tablā.7

Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande writes in his "Sangeet Shāstra", "The mention of gharānās in music is first found in Hakim Mohd. Imam's book 'Mad-Un Al Mausiqui' which was written in 1857.8

Shri Lalit Kishor Sinh writes in his book "Dhwani Evam Sangeet that Tansen's descendent Vilas Khan started the famous gharānā of Rabāris (Rabāb players) and his youngest son Sursen started the sitār gharānā Seniya.9

When did gharānās start according to these scholars and books? If one does not wish to answer the question, the books mentioned in the śaśtras and those by scholars and individual analytical postulations can be used to posit that in Indian music, the origin of gharānās - whether it was before or after the Yavan culture - gharānās of vocal and instrumental music and dance, as they are known today, started in the Mughal period.

These fact point to the conclusion that modern-age gharānās (such as Vocal Music: Gwalior, Agra, Jaipur, Kirana, etc.; Pakhāwaj gharānās started in recognition of Kudausinhji and Nana Panse; Tablā: Delhi, Ajrādā, Farrukhbābād, Lucknow, Benaras, and Punjab; Dance; Jaipur, Lucknow would have come into existence in the Mughal period, and aren't older than 300 years. That leads to the conclusion that all these gharānās would have come into existence after the year 1800.
The word Gharānā has come from the word ghar. Just as ghar means 'home', or tradition and family, the word gharānā, in the language of music theory, gharānā means a personal style or tradition. The word ghar is actually an apabhramsha of the Sanskrit word gruha. The meaning of gharānā can be said to be 'family tradition' as well, which means the continuation of a personal or family style over generations. In earlier times, the meaning of gharānā was associated only with royal gharānās. But with time, it came to be used in other areas as well. The family tradition of a single family is also now seen as a gharānā.

The word gharānā was used in Indian music to establish family traditions in vocal, instrumental music and dance. A correlation between the gharānā and the development of its own style is only to be expected. Therefore too, the word gharānā came to denote the special style of its exponents. For that reason, style and gharānā are believed to denote one and the same thing. A gharānā is established only when by the means of a single talent at least three generations present their understanding and playing style and create new instances of bandish.

Music is an imitative art. At the root of the gharānās is the 'Guru-Shishya Paramparā'. All the finest qualities of a guru are observed in the disciple's singing, playing or dance, which establishes the tradition and style of the gharānā. After a disciple has acquired training over the years from his guru, he presents his thinking and style, the gharānā he belongs to is immediately obvious.

If such a disciple comes under the influence of another region's gharānā and presents his own unique interpretation of it, a new gharānā comes into being. The present researcher believes that a gharānā can materialize only through the 'Guru-Shishya Paramparā' or alternately, it is that very tradition that crystallizes the gharānā. There are two kinds of gharānās: one is where blood relations are trained - known commonly as 'Vansh-Paramparā' and the other is where a disciple is trained under the 'Guru-Shishya Paramparā'.

Perspectives on Gharānā

The social perspective on the word gharānā also establishes the historical perspective. In Sanskrit, there's the saying: "Vansho dwidha janmanā vidyāyā cha". This means, "Ancestry and lineage are two kinds of subclasses of tradition". In
addition, tradition is passed down by birth and knowledge. Persons of the same ancestry are known by the name of a single family or gharānā. But in the language of music, all generations of disciples studying under a guru are known by a single family name or tradition.

Dr. N. R. Marulkar writes on the point of view and form of a gharānā saying that a gharānā is a tradition of great thought started by the extraordinary effort of a genius.

That means that a gharānā is a tradition of great thought started by an extraordinary personage of high virtuosity. When such a great person imparts education of such a new tradition by means of his extraordinary thought and advances the tradition of his ancestors, a new gharānā is invented. ¹⁰

Any guru absorbs the teachings, education, and the genre of artistic presentation and related ideas received from his own guru. Such rules of presentation, discipline, tradition, and so on are received by the disciple from his guru and passes them on to his own disciples. In this way, the guru's tradition of artistic thought and presentation are accepted by his descendants and their disciples to give rise to a new class of tradition. Gradually, such a tradition is recognized as a gharānā.

If a gharānā is extremely old, its direct inheritor’s (khalifa) existence in the present is a matter of great fortune. Even if the khalifa of that gharānā is not living, the gharānā does not disintegrate. The gharānā is continued by the disciples of that gharānā. But when the gharānā’s inheritors—neither direct nor disciples—are no longer living, it is said that the gharānā is ended.

However, it is possible that if a future capable artist may present his thinking and all those thoughts match with an extinct gharānā—then we can say that the extinct gharānā is revived. But in the same context it is important for us to also understand that if those thoughts include a few new directions, it is not acceptable as a new gharānā. That is because a new gharānā is born only when its gharānā has an ancestral and disciples' traditions have a ‘Guru-Shishya Paramparā’ of three or more generations.

Pandit Sudhir Mainkar also believes, however, that in the history of music, the manifestation of art in an independent form by exponents has given rise to entire gharānās. Accompanists have never established gharānās. This is a common statement, but technically speaking, musicians can also have their own gharānās.

Gharānā anuvansh (direct inheritors) and disciples help a gharānā survive and
develop. The authority personage of a gharānā may not remain the authority figure within a gharānā, yet his authority is respected as that of the main authority.11

The present researcher believes that the basic viewpoint of a gharānā, its original thought, and its original characteristics should be preserved. But with the passage of time, the presentation and the thought behind the presentation peculiar to a gharānā keep evolving. A new way of presenting the gharānā is achieved this way. One should always remember therefore, that the characteristics peculiar to a gharānā should always be preserved in any presentation.

1:6 Gharānās of the Tablā

The word gharānā in Indian music has been passed down since time immemorial—which has already been discussed. These discussions have led us to discover that a gharānā is known by a geographical origin or the name of its originator. On this basis, we should focus on the birthplace of the tablā. On that basis, we can find how gharānās came to be included in tablā and how different gharānās were established for the tablā.

Tabla has been in vogue for the last 300-400 years. Experts have formed two opinions about the birthplace of the tablā. Many experts believe it to be Delhi while other experts believe Punjab to be the place of its origin. Those that believe Delhi to be its birthplace opine that Ustad Siddhar Khan is the original exponent and promoter of the tablā. Those that believe Punjab to be its birthplace opine that Lala Bhawanidasji is the original exponent and promoter of the tablā. The latter believe that the bāṃḍā is made with dough (Which is also known as dhāṃḍā), which is considered to be a symbol of its relationship with the pakhāwaj. The mere fact that dough is used does not prove that tablā originated in Punjab. It is possible that other artistes found the practice of using dough inconvenient and they preferred to use sūṭī.

To support the thesis that Punjab is the birthplace of the tablā, Panḍit Kishan Maharaj writes in the preface to Taal Prakār that: Even before the time of Ustad Siddhar Khan, the tablā was well-known in Punjab. Ustad Siddhar Khan’s son Ustad Modu Khan was married to a daughter of a tablā exponent in Punjab. On the occasion of the marriage, Ustad Modu Khan received 500 Punjabi gats. This proves that tablā had been in vogue for a long time in Punjab.
To begin with, there’s no evidence to prove whether the sum was 500 or 5 gats. Secondly, the pakhawaj was widely known in the medieval times. Then, it is possible that Modu Khan was given bandishes that were not gat but paran of the pakhawaj. Which the us tads would have called gat on account of their lack of linguistic skills. We agree that Ustad Siddhar Khan’s grandson, Modu Khan, was given 500 gats as dowry by his father-in-law. On that basis, we can say that Ustad Modu Khan’s father-in-law would have been elder to Modu Khan, which tells us that the father in law and Ustad Siddhar Khan would have been contemporaries. That in turn proves that Ustad Siddhar Khan’s own time Punjab saw the development of the tablā. Ustad Siddhar Khan’s contemporary Lala Bhawanidas developed the tablā in Punjab. Just as Ustad Siddhar Khan gave rise to many bandishes in Delhi, and these were taught to his disciples, Lala Bhawanidas and his disciples also probably gave rise to many ban dishes. That’s why the two critically important gharānās, Delhi and Punjab, came into existence.

According to Ustad Allarakha, in those times Delhi and Punjab were parts of the same province. Unlike today, they were not separate. But since Delhi was the capital, people would come to Delhi to find a living. It is possible that the tablā exponents of Punjab would have come and settled in Delhi. “Ainā Akbari” and “Moinuddin al Mushiki” are books according to which Dhādhī people were the original defenders of Punjab. That tells us that Ustad Siddhar Khān Dhādhī also belonged to Punjab. However, his work was done in Delhi. And his line and tradition of disciples started from Delhi.

There is no doubt that the proponent of Punjab gharānā, Lala Bhawanidas, and Ustad Siddhar Khan Dhādhī were contemporaries. According to an old record, these two maestros performed pakhāwaj jugalbandi for a period of nine years at the court of Mohammad Shah Rangila. Every year, Ustad Siddhar Khan would lose out. I also heard of this anecdote from Pandit Yogesh Samsi. On account of losing continuously for nine years, he left playing the pakhawaj for taking up the tablā. At the same time, the tablā had already been introduced. But it had not yet developed. At that time, the highly intelligent Ustad Siddhar Khan Dhādhī invented several improvements to the tablā and made several changes to its form as well. He also used the bol and bandishes of the pakhawaj to introduce using the fingers instead of the entire palm and give rise to a new style of playing the tablā. He taught these new bandishes and the new style to his descendants and disciples and presented this new style before the
audiences. At the time, in the place of the dhrupad-dhamār style, khyāl style of vocal music gained currency. For the music of the khyāl style, tabla offered a playing style that was completely compatible, which led to the introduction of a new era in music and great development of the tabla. According to the discussion that followed, Ustad Siddhar Khan, being a resident of Delhi, the style he introduced came to be known as Delhi gharānā and Delhi baaj. In the opinion of the present researcher, it is possible that in the field of tabla, new directions and a new style of playing it were initiated by Ustad Siddhar Khan and that is the reason why the very first gharānā in tabla was the Delhi gharānā. In similar fashion, tabla gharānās would have developed.

Since both maestros were contemporaries, the traditions started by Ustad Siddhar Khan and Lala Bhawanidas would have flourished at the same time in Delhi and Punjab. In Punjab, an instrument known as the dukkad was in currency. It is related to the invention of the tabla. It is said that Lala Bhawanidas used the dukkad to invent a new baaj. He also taught that new baaj method to his disciples. Apart from that, the pakhāwaj retained its prominence in Punjab. All of Lala Bhawanidas' disciples were known as ‘Pakhāwaji’. Nasir Khan, Miya Fakir Baksh, and Miya Kadir Baksh are all names that took the epithet pakhāwaji. The true publicity of the tabla in Punjab took place after the time of Miya Fakir Baksh. All pakhāwajis of the Punjab gharānā may have been playing the tabla and dukkad very well too, but they are properly known for playing the pakhāwaj. They are known as pakhāwajis', not as tabla artistes. Similarly, Ustad. Siddhar Khan and his descendants and disciples were playing the tabla right from the beginning, since 1750—the beginning of the Delhi baaj not the pakhāwaj. They were known as tabla artistes, not as pakhāwajis'.

The tabla in Punjab rose to public note since Ustad Fakir Baksh and his fellow exponents. Their time started after 1850. His son, Ustad Kadir Baksh, and other disciples such as Baba Mangaldas, Miya Karam Ilahi, Miya Mira Baksh greatly developed the tabla later on. At the court of Maharaj Chakradhar Sinh of Madhypradesh Raigad district, 1921-1947 all these masters played the tabla, according to historical records.

Ustad Siddhar Khan publicized the tabla in the Delhi gharānā from 1725 to 1750 according to some observations. That is because around 1850, in the book ‘Maudal al Mushiki’ by Hakim Mohd. Karam Inam and ‘Sarmaisrāt’ by Sadiq Ali Sital Khan both books refer to the Delhi gharānā in tabla and the skill involved in its playing. On page 143 of Sarmaisrāt, a quāyedā of the Delhi gharānā is also written.
This tells us that by 1855, the qaayeda of Delhi gharānā had gained currency.

On account of the lack of historical proof, we do not have the information on what kind of bol were used on the tablā as a folk musical instrument or before Siddhar Khan and what kind of bol were used and how that varna came to be developed. This question appeared in the mind of the present researcher because even before Ustad Siddhar Khan the tablā was used. According to the present researcher, it appears that before Siddhar Khan the bols and bandishes used on the tablā and the bol bandishes of pakhāwaj were used to Ustad Siddhar Khan would have given rise to a new style of playing and that style known as Delhi baaj came to be known as Delhi gharānā. All these historical fact tell us that in the history of the tablā the beginning of the gharānās can be located to around 1700 AD. Thereafter, all the development of the tablā can be considered as a different style of playing to lay the foundations for other new gharānās. Unfortunately, as there's no written proof of all these theses, they cannot be solidly backed by evidence.

1:6:1 The Development of the Gharānās of the Tablā

Since ancient times, leather instruments have been used for percussion in Indian music. Pandit Bharat Muni, Pandit Nanyadev, Pandit Sarangdev etc. ancient scholars have talked about Indian percussion instruments in ancient India. In the ancient times, bhoomi, dundubhi, panav, pushkar, godhā, ping etc. leather instruments were used for taal. Thereafter, nagādā, tāshā, nakkārā, pakhāwaj, etc. instruments were used in the mediaeval times as percussion instruments and on that basis nagādā, tāshā, pakhāwaj, dhol, dholak, naal, and tablā were used for percussion in the modern times.

As Indian music developed its vocal tradition, the style of singing adapted to the tablā in the place of the pakhāwaj. Till the mediaeval times, a new style of singing and new note instruments also underwent development, and pakhāwaj accompaniment was not suitable to any of the new styles, hence the need for a new percussion instrument was felt and at the same time new percussion instrument that is one of the most popular and most developed instrument, tablā came into its own.

Every percussion instrument was used for the purpose of accompaniment. That is why, before any discussion of origins and development of the gharānās of tablā, it is necessary to dwell on the history of ancient and medieval styles of Indian
vocal music. In this context, Thakur Jaydevsingh says that in the 8th and the 9th centuries, two main styles of vocal music were known: one was Rāgālīpta and the other was Rupkalōpta.

Rāgālīpta denotes the ālōp of a rāga. It started with a sequential increase of the notes and was known as Rāgālīpta. Rupkalōpta denotes the usage of words in singing the ālōp to enhance a rāga. In Rupkalōpta, the singer would sing the mukhālā repeated to match the sam. It showed the singer’s intellectual power (upaj ang) and natural flair. The artiste began using it to exhibit new directions in his thinking, which was different from dhrupad style of singing. That is why that style of singing became prevalent. In a way, khyāl style of singing became properly prevalent by the 14th and 15th centuries in the history of Indian Music. Before that time, it was the dhrupad-dhamār style and its accompaniment, the pakhāwaj that enjoyed currency. As the popularity of khyāl style went on increasing, and as the powerful baaj of the pakhāwaj was no longer compatible with that style of singing, tablā rose to prominence as a percussion instrument for accompaniment. In the next 200 years, the khyāl style and the tablā along with it became prevalent and developed. In spite of that, the intellectuas in music did not accept the tablā and khyāl style.

In 1719, Mohammed Shah Rangile inherited the throne of the Mughal Empire. His time is considered to be the most important from the point of view of the development of music and literature. These two artistes were responsible for the development of khyāl style. On the other hand, in the time of the king of Gwalior, Mansinh Tomar, and the Sultan of Jodhpur, Hussain Shariki, along with Khyāl style other new dynamic styles such as thumri, dādra, and gawāli gained currency. The tablā came into prominence as a mandatory accompaniment for these styles. At the same time, in the place of dhrupad-dhamār, a new style of singing known as khyāl came into prominence; similarly, in the place of the veena, the sitār gained prominence. With all these singing styles and instruments, the tablā proved to be more compatible and prevalent. In the same manner, new styles of singing and string instruments such as the sitār were sequentially publicized and became prevalent and developed, which led to the establishment of the tablā as a popular percussion instrument in North Indian music. Since ancient times in India, there had already been four vanis well-known within the dhrupad-dhamār style. Each of the four vanis had their own specialties that are the gharānās of the time were known by the names of the vanis. It is only on the basis of these four vanis of dhrupad that khyāl style gharānās
were established. The style and tradition developed in a particular region became a gharānā named after that particular region. For this reason, in vocal music, the Kirānā gharānā, Patiala gharānā, Bhindi-Bazār gharānā, Gwalior gharānā, Jaipur gharānā, were all named after the particular region. Like the diverse gharānās of this style of singing, the gharānās in-tablā also developed and their specialties were established.14

In 1738, the second Mughal emperor Mohd. Shah's time, there was a popular pakhāwaj artiste by the name of Rehman Khan. It is believed that his second son, Amir Khushro Khan created the tablā on Sadarang's request. Thereafter, in that time, khyāl style of singing started using the tablā for accompaniment. In diverse books on the tablā, the discussion descendants of the gharānās of tablā and information about shishya paramparā and the birthdates of those artistes and the date of their demise are all uncertain issues. Still, in the opinion of the intellectuals, the origin and development of tablā gharānās' should have happened in the latter half of the 17th century and the 18th century. On account of the disciplined governance of the company, the Nawābs, Maharājās of diverse kingdoms became indulgent and lazy. For that reason, many artistes began receiving their patronage. Indian music saw several great compositions created during this time.

Some 300 years ago, India's historical city Delhi in the time of the Bādshāh Mohammed Shah Rangila, Ustad Siddhar Khan Dhādhi was an influential and intellectual figure who came on the scene of Indian music. In spite of being a pakhāwaj, he modified the then tablā and gave it a new form. Pakhāwaj and contemporary avanadya instruments had a style of playing and bol-bandishes, on the basis of which bandishes compatible with the tablā were composed to establish a new style of playing that came to be known as Delhi gharānā.

The gharānā tradition in music has been carried forward since ancient times. It is on the basis of this tradition that the tablā gharānās were founded. The regulations we discussed previously in talking of the earlier gharānās are applicable to the gharānās in tablā as well. Therefore we may say that the vocal music gharānās were founded first and then the gharānās of pakhāwaj, tablā, instruments, and dance came into existence.

A historical saying goes that the Delhi gharānā is a parent gharānā to all other tablā gharānās. The disciples of the Delhi gharānā settled in diverse cities and managed to earn a living there. All these exponents considered the musical environment of their particular region, its folk culture, political conditions to create
relevant new bandishes and infused their knowledge of the Delhi gharānā to give rise to a new style of playing the tablā. The new styles were also taught to descendants and disciples by those exponents and that is how the style was passed down from generation to generation and was duly respected by other artistes. That is why different gharānās came to be established and the tablā was further developed. Today, North Indian music recognizes six main gharānās in the history of the tablā. These gharānās have been mentioned in books by all intellectuals. The six gharānās are as follows:


Six main gharānās are recognised in tablā, but in Dr. Aban Mistry's book she writes that Delhi, Ajrādā, Lucknow, and Farrukhābād are the four main gharānās of the tablā. According to the intellectual, Punjāb is considered to be basically a gharānā of the pakhāwaj. Similarly, the Banaras gharānā is believed to be without any major composition for the tablā. Therefore, Banaras gharānā should not be recognised as an independent gharānā. But it should be acceptable that the Banaras gharānā has given some high-quality tablā exponents.

According to Dr. Aban Mistry, in addition to the six main gharānās of the tablā, there are several traditions of the tablā in the different regions of the country. These include Indore, Vishnupur, Dhāka, Jaipur, Hyderābād, Muradābād, and Bhataula traditions. In addition, Rampur, Raigad, Gwalior, and such other royal courts had established tradition and other traditions discussed by dancers and pakhāwajis.

For the last twenty years, researchers have concerned themselves with the classical and experimental aspects of the tablā. In several cities of India, public performances and seminars have been attended by the present researchers. That has led to the conclusion that the development of the tablā gharānās would have taken place in several different regions, but the researcher believes that the development of the tablā has been chiefly attributed to the six main gharānās. In all of these six gharānās, the Delhi gharānā is considered to be the most ancient. The other five gharānās have developed from the shishya paramparā of the Delhi gharānā.
The Condition of Gharānā in Modern Times

The tradition of gharānā is an age old reality in Indian music. This tradition of Indian music is based on gharānā. Now it is experienced that its importance is decreasing due to changing era. The purity and existence of gharānā is in great danger due to advanced thinking pattern as well as revolution in the means of communication. The danger to the existence to gharānā that we see in the 21st Century, its foundation was laid in 19th Century itself. The condition of music turned over again after the British entry into India and then it continued changing thereafter. After the English began ruling India the condition of all the state and the realm changed. The rulers, kings and nawābs functioned as per the directives from Englishmen and their status was merely of caretakers. The foremost and direct effect of it was on musicians. Due to this the kings and nawāb felt tremendous financial crisis and the musicians were asked to leave. This was one more reason of downfall of music.

After facing lot of squalls, struggle and challenges, some of the musicians directed the society to the new path, gave them strength and inspired them to think in new direction. They became immortal and their names are written in gold in the history. This gave new dimensions to the art forms like vocal, instrumental and dance. The history of music bows down for them who gave new dimensions to the field of music such as vocal, instrumental and dance. They not only followed and preserved the age old tradition of music but also included new ideologies and specialties. Day by day the art of Indian music flourished. The artists of those times had gifted keen intellect, talent and powerful memory. These qualities are not found in the artists of this generation though they are well equipped with modern education system. The artists of those eras had accumulated so much knowledge, varieties of compositions, the expertise, incredible dedication, sense of loyalty, radiance of devotion and determination to maintain the specialties of their gharānā that was really prodigious and worth saluting. If these artists were so selfish then was it possible then would this art remained alive? They generously taught the art to the followers their gharānā.

In the recent times the field of music has expanded. Many people understand it, listen to it and try to learn it. It is widely spread in every household due to music concerts, conferences, AIR, television and modern technology. Today lots of books are written on music. The new melodies of bandish are composed, tukdā of dance and
Tabla-pakhawaj *bandishes* are composed. Forty years back it was very difficult to convince a renowned artist of a particular gharānā to perform. Now due to radio, television and records it is become very simple to hear them repetitively. This has made music easily available to all. In a single performance any artist presents the art of various gharānā. It is very obvious that every artist very easily accumulates many new and good qualities of different gharānā in his performance.

In the olden times the disciple stayed at his guru’s house-in ‘Guru-Shishya Paramparā’- for many years and got vigorous training from that gharānā. Due to this he was free from financial responsibility and was able to concentrate on teaching as well as learning. The students today’s generation cannot practice for ten to twelve hours a day like olden tradition as now life moves like a needle of a clock. In recent times a student has the responsibility to earn for his livelihood, so in such a situation he hardly finds four to five hours in a day for practice. Today the standard of music is deteriorating because a student has to work hard for his living, lack of training, lack of devotion towards music, lack of concentration and hard work and low standard of training in music colleges or schools.

It is impossible to maintain separate gharānā system and following rigorous traditional style of training. Now-a-days it is very rare to hear a particular singing style or *baaj* of any particular gharānā in the performance of an artist whether its vocal, instrumental and dance. The form of music has always changed according to the liking of the masses. These days every artist tries to acquire best from all gharānā to make his singing-instrument playing pleasing as it is a matter of human tendency to develop the best. As long as the best specialties of every gharānā are preserved till then it is very appropriate to follow this system of presentation. It breaks the orbit of the gharānā. This also true that due to this the music of a particular gharānā breaks own orbit and develops with liberal outlook.

It is must for us to acquire the best qualities from all gharānā. One has to follow all the rules and rigorous training to learn, understand and acquire the best qualities of all gharānā. Once an artist acquires the essential knowledge, understands the difference between various playing styles and able to know the merits and demerits of it he can easily choose his own path. In today’s era the requirement of every gharānā depends on the knowledge of a person.

It is the need of an hour to accept music in its present form rather than worrying about the ruined conditions of the walls of gharānā. However the upcoming
artists do not follow the traditions and specialties of a specific gharānā but they show the talent in their individual performances. This is the secret that this art is still alive. What else do we expect in the performance of an artist other than that of creativity and novel presentation in his art? In this way the flow of traditional art form is going on for generations and will continue.
FOOTNOTE

1 "Tabla Vadan Mein Nihit Saundarya," author Pandit Sudhir Mainkar, pg. 201
2 "Tabla" author Pandit Arvind Mulgaonkar, pg. 261 & 262
3 "Tabla" author Pandit Arvind Mulgaonkar, pg. 263
4 "Pakhawaj aurTabla ke gharâne evam paramparâye" author Dr. Aaban Mistry pg. 1
5 "Bhâratiya Sangeet ka Itiâhâs" author Shri Bhagwat Sharan Sharma pg. 51, 52
6 "Tabla Shâhistra" author Shri Ganesh Godbole pg. 46, 47
7 "Mrudang Ank" publisher "Sangeet Karyâlaya Hâth-Ras" pg. 35
8 "Bhâkhande Sangeet Shâhistra" author Pt. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande pg. 56
9 "Dhwâna aur Sangeet" author Shri Lalit Kishor Sinh pg. 56
10 "Pakhawaj aurTabla ke gharâne evam paramparâye" author Dr. Aaban Mistry pg. 10
11 "Tabla vadan me nihit saundarya" author Pt. Sudhir Mainkar pg. 202
12 "Sangeet Chintâmâni" author Aacharya Bruhaspati pg. 346
13 "Pakhawaj aurTabla ke gharâne evam paramparâye" author Dr. Aaban Mistry pg. 110
14 "Tabla" author Pandit Arvind Mulgaonkar, pg. 262
15 "Pakhawaj aurTabla ke gharâne evam paramparâye" author Dr. Aaban Mistry pg. 127
16 "Pakhawaj aurTabla ke gharâne evam paramparâye" author Dr. Aaban Mistry pg. 121
17 "Tabla Purâh" author Pandit Vijayshankar Mishra pg. 302