CHAPTER-13
ANUBHUTI ‘THE INNER EXPRESSION’

In this chapter the present researcher would like to share some of his views and personal experiences that had helped him to know the inner facts of Jaipur Gharana, Kathak dance.

The Jaipur Gharana is comprised of different characteristics. Apart from this there are some striking feature and noticeable facts. It is seen that till now legacy and tradition is been carried forward by male artistes of Jaipur Gharana. Ages have passed where none of the female dancer from community of Jaipur Gharana had come forward or brought forward as a dancer though they have a great sensibility and quality of dance. Due to this Jaipur Gharana can be called as male dominating Gharana. Other reason that supports this statement is the Jaipur Gharana style, which was patron by the royal patronage of Jaipur Maharaja and Rajputana kingdom. The influence of such royal patrons is freeze in the technical nritya aspect and therefore one can see the equal royalty and aggressiveness (kshetriyapan) among the male dancers of Jaipur Gharana. Abhinaya Anga is also equally expressed into deep emotions of the performer. It was the time when the dancer with big mustache were performing abhinaya anga and their deep down involvement into the song, thumri or bhajan made spectators to forget the gender identity that whether the performer is male or female. The performances of that time had a capacity of expressing the different variations in the abhinaya anga performed on one single line of song or thumri, which was sung by them without the support of vocalist. Different variations in abhinaya anga includes different Nayan Bhava (different eye expressions), different Mukh Bhava (different facial expressions) and above all this abhinaya aspects were render in one static position called ‘Baithak Ka Bhava’ by covering half of the body with dupatta, and sometime it is used to render different abhinaya aspects. In this contact I remember a festival organized by Gujarat Sangeet Natak Akademi in 1985-86 at Vadodara, where Ms. Nargisben Katpitia, reader in Dance Department (Bharata Natyam) asked Pt. Sundarlal Gangani a question “What is the use of dupatta
in *thumri* while performing *Baithak Bhava*?" He answered "When male dancer is performing *Baithak Bhava*, *dupatta* is used to show different *abhinaya*, many things are in *maryada*, which are portrayed with the help of *dupatta*, here male dancer becomes "*ARDHANARESHWAR*" to act as a female dancer, to support this he quoted an example of a female character "Mother" who is feeding the baby child, by ralling a *dupatta* from left side and giving a support of right hand to show the holding of a child expresses everything. In the same festival he presented *'Khamasa' (ibadati or prayer)* a *gayaki prakar* (a style of singing), performed by an old ancient Kathak dancers. In the same seminar he quoted one beautiful example of the royal kingdoms that survived by giving patronage to different art and artistes related to fine arts, literature and poetry. These artistes use to travel on foot from one kingdom to other and when they use to reach near by to the village, the whole group use to sing with a loud voice, the songs in the praise of kings and his forefathers. By the time they reach to the *Gadth* or palace, the king use to know about the arrival and the caliber of an artiste because of his *Duta* (messanger) had the sensibility to judge the artiste. Time for the performance was fixed and till that they were provided with the service like food of their choice. Even king used to meet them at the time of performance. This shows that how much importance artiste was given in the earlier period. This tradition recalls me one of the performance of *Pt. Sundartalji Gangani* at *Vadodara*, where he used the same pattern of arrival on stage, in the front of Executives and in front of different artistes of *Vadodara*, but not in the praise of Government Executives but in the praise of *Lord Krishna* with his marvelous *abhinaya*. Than he addressed and explained that today's young generation who are learning this divine art of dance should get the support and opportunity of employment in schools and colleges, they should be supported and honored in the way they were supported and honored by different kings in earlier period. In the same seminar he performed different *abhinaya* aspects like *bhajan, tarana and baithak ki thumri*.

It's a noticeable fact that mostly the artistes of *Jaipur Gharana* had performed in every class of audience. Every performance has the quality
presentation with its richness, remaining very true every time, than no matter whether it is in the front of learned spectators, classified audience in the big cities, in the front of foreigners who are not aware of dance style, or in the religious functions, in the temple in the front of Dharmaguru or in Bhaktamandal or in the front of lay persons of village. This is because they hold the solid confidence in their presentation without using gimmicks that is found today. It would not be exaggerate to say that artiste is very much responsible to educate and guide the audience in a proper direction so that they can get a true sense of presentation which will help them to value, appreciate and admire the art and artiste at right place and right time. To my knowledge spectators had a sensibility to know the right presentation and value it accordingly.

When one talks about presentation, it shows the depth of riyaz. In this contact, I remember one beautiful thing, when my father Pt. Sundaralalji used to teach me, he used to say "बेटे ऐसा रियाज़ करो कि जमीन भी तुम्हारे साथ चले ", I was very young, tender to understand such a deep version and was not having vision to see into that and considered such statement to be foolish statement, but such statement were given on and on to me to inspire and motivate to do riyaz. Riyaz helped me to acquire proficiency in my dance, and than I was able to understand the interpretation of this version that "Practice makes the man perfect", than no matter what kind of flooring it is, whether it is carpeted floor, cow dung floor, floor of village, or professional stage with mat finish polish. It is true that floor gives a great grip to dancers but finally its confidence of riyaz that helps the dancer in presentation. Here I personally feel very lucky to have Pt. Sundaralal Gangani as a Guru and father who have always inspired me and had given correct direction. Guru is the only one who brings the hidden artiste by inspiring and training and Shishya needs to follow strongly and strictly the path showed by him and this is how legacy and Parampara is been carried forward in one style.

Being Gharanedar I would like to share this personal experience that to get trained as a Shishya under father, and to give training as a Guru to son, is
a very critical aspect. It was the time when father used to teach their son without showing love and affection. It is obvious that father has a great deep down feeling but as a Guru the dance art form was taught with threatening and compelling language. Even it is obvious that son cares for his feelings and when he performs correctly in front of Guru and father, the soft feeling is there but with no admiration and appreciation. It shows that Guru’s of that time were never use to admire their son and shishya and were using condemning language. No matter whether the son is performing strongly and nicely in performance and also receiving a lot of admiration from spectators and Guni Vidwans, but still father or same Guru had never admired or praised and always had said "और अच्छा कर सकते हो". Here I personally feel that such comment motivates a son or shishya to do riyaz and tapasya for achieving perfection. Though the Gurus and father of that period were not showing love and affection and were using harsh language during the initial process but there is some natural power working between the line in the genes of parents as the son is getting equally strong by sanskars from mother’s side that is ‘nanhiyaal’ and so do from father’s side that is ‘dadhiyaal’.

As said earlier that females of this community had never come on stage as a performer but they had played vital role in building and supporting child’s carrier and shaping the future of family. It was the time when this artistes of Churu district had struggled terribly for their livelihood and due to lack of literacy, there were different boundations for their entire community, the females never got any kind of exposure as there was strict system of keeping women into maryada that is Pardah system but in today’s time there is a lot of exposure given. An artiste of Churu district had spread nationally and internationally. They had become celebrity artistes of nation. Due to this there is a vast change in their living style, their thoughts. In turn females also have got great exposure, Ghunghat system is still there but not as strict as it was. They do not perform but act a vital role in managing their husband or son’s schedule. They talk so correctly and confidently on phone with organization on
other artistic issues that the artiste doesn’t require any kind of secretary or management.

This personal experience of mine gives me pleasure as well courage to write about myself after writing, interviewing and giving detail information of great Gurus, Masters, Dancers and Musicians of Churu district, Rajasthan, Jaipur Gharana, Kathak. I have learned and known about the contributions and achievements of the artistes who were and are of high caliber. I belong to the family of such class. I feel proud to be son of Pt. Sundarlal Gangani, a living legend and Guru of Jaipur Gharana. His contribution had got noted nationally and internationally. It is his blessings and training that I am able to live to his reputation. He not only taught and trained me in Kathak dance but also has given me the wealth of artistic sensibility with all spiritual touch, as any art without spiritual spirit cannot be pious. My experience has made me to believe that to become an artiste of a class one must be a wonderful human. This teaching I got from my father and Guru.

My mother Lt. Smt. Chandrakala Gangani shaped and nurtured me. She inspired me for hard work. Her on and on criticism made me a sensible artiste. As a father Pt. Sundarlalji had never played a role of affectionate one, but had created fearful expressions that in reality was not. I personally feel and express respect and love for my mother who was from poet’s family. She had a great understanding for cultivating a notorious child like me. She even made the suggestions for the costumes. Like every mother my mother also dreamt for my flourishing and wanted me to become an artiste of a class. Her special care while feeding the nutritious food energized me to practice more. She use to talk and tell us about other Gurus and artistes and their performances, whom she had seen performing. “One day you should become an artiste of such caliber” was her wish. She always used to discuss and talk about my father’s riyaz and his performances, which really helped in developing my carrier.

Apart from my parents, my elder brother Pt. Harish Gangani, Reader in Dance Kathak has played a vital role in developing my professional carrier as a performer. Besides being a Kathak Guru he is equally a very good
knowledgeable tabla artiste. His strong and aesthetical accompaniment on tabla with my performance kept me vibrant and confident as a performer. He has accompanied and conducted my solo performances nationwide.

Today I am one of the leading Kathak exponent and performer of Jaipur Gharana. After giving my services as a teacher at Jaipur Kathak Kendra, Rajasthan for about 3 years from 1982 to 1985, my vision got wider and excepted that “Limitations must cross the boundaries”. In those days I was a promising upcoming artiste but not an experience teacher, as I was newly appointed at Kathak Kendra, Jaipur after my Masters. I was very much fortunate to work with and under the stalwart of Jaipur Gharana and my Param Gurudev Lt. Pt. Gaurishankarji. Working with him I experience and learn much more about the policies, discipline, attitude and behavior as a dancer and teacher.

Jaipur Kathak Kendra made me a choreographer. I was influenced by the style of my father but after joining Jaipur Kathak Kendra, it made me understand the demand and the taste of another state Jaipur, Rajasthan that I was never aware of. The presentation of my solo performance in 1982 was highly appreciated by the learned class of Jaipur, Rajasthan. The opportunity to perform as a main dancer in group compositions choreographed by Lt. Pt. Gaurishankarji had highlighted me. The audience and critics accepted me; this has given me the courage, sense and concept of choreographing and experimenting the new items without affecting the traditions of Kathak. The government of Rajasthan under the Ministry of Education, Culture and Tourism department, runs Jaipur Kathak Kendra, due to this there were many events performed round the year. This had given me an opportunity to exercise, practice and concentrate more on knowing the new work. I was very young and enthusiastically ready to work hard. Here I would like to state that the enviornment in those days was very much inspiring and healthy due to the great Guru Pt. Gaurishankarji who was equally working hard for imparting the students.

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Shri Babulalji Patni, disciple of Lt. Pt. Narayanprasadji, also worked very hard for imparting the knowledge of Kathak that had inspired and educated me and put me into habit of working sincerely and taught me the loyalty towards institution. After coming back to Vadodara, my other phase of life began. It was my very wrong decision of resigning from Kendra, which I still regret. I had experienced the hardship; struggle for work and also for a place to do riyaz. I merely got any opportunity to perform my own practice. I was lucky to get supported by my parents. The habit and practice that was form in me of working hard could not resist the stagnant situation. I established and form an institution ‘Nateshwar Nritya Kala Mandir’. Under this banner I performed and choreographed many group items. This quality as a choreographer for the people of Vadodara was new and thus they accepted me as a dancer and choreographer. I kept on writing to all over India to various organizations for giving me opportunity to perform. As a result I got invited to perform in many prestigious music and dance festivals in the cities like Lucknow, Mumbai, Pune, Chidambaram, Udaipur and many more.

In 1986 I got an opportunity to work in Dance Department of Faculty of Performing Arts as a dance teacher. Till 1993 December I worked on temporary basis. But during this time span I showed and proved my qualities and caliber as a teacher, performer and choreographer.

In 1989 I was invited by the ‘Global Convention’ people of India, origin at NewYork, USA to perform. The experience in USA as performer brought a great change in my entire professional dance career. I performed coast to coast and stayed about 9 months, during this stay I came across many organizations, institutions and universities. I had an opportunity to work with Ballet Company as a guest artiste in residence at Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, USA. Ms. Peggy Villas, a chairperson, director and choreographer admired and supported me and my Kathak dance art form of Jaipur Gharana. They also felicited for my presentation in ‘Ballet Sampler’. It was a big honor to me. Today I feel that this was the achievement in the carrier of my dance profession. I have learned here the discipline of one big project.
that how to get success. Here I would like to quote one incident. Ms. Villas was a gentle lady and a great choreographer who had never compromised with the quality of work. Her sense of music and dance was remarkably sharp, which I observed during the editing of my recording. She is American and did not have any idea of Teentaal theka that is of Sam and Khali. The recording process went little ahead but her sense did not permitted to let it go ahead. She expressed and stated that this was not appropriate and she edited at correct place where the 'Sam' was over. Such experiences made me more refined as an artiste.

This many years of hard work rewarded me. On 16th December 1993, I became permanent staff member of Dance Department, Faculty of Performing Arts, M.S. University, Vadodara.

Currently I am working as a senior lecturer. Since I joined as a teacher in Department of Dance, I experienced that working in academics area in University binds a lot as a performer. But on other hand the policies, strategies and the norms also widely open the opportunity for individual development as a performer, scholar, and as an academician.