

### **CHAPTER - 3**

### **ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF GHARANA**

Gharana word means tradition, conduct, path, commitment, specific community, method, style, heredity. Gharana can also be defined as a tradition which is carried out from one generation to another. If a household family or people of a community adopts any special art form and that tradition of art remains intact with them for few generations than such artiste belonging to such family is called as Gharanedar.

Gharana's relation is with such an art form which is continuing traditionally from its ancestors. Gharana's main artiste on the basis of its own marvelous talent does any new experiment and when his style gets established then a Gharana gets formed. According to scholars "Gharana" early source came from Sanskrit word "Grah" and "Ghar" further developed into "Gharana" word. That is any such ghar which have some different type of qualities are actually symbol of ancient gurukul tradition.

Tradition of Gharana's came into prevalent after 16<sup>th</sup> century. At that time good dancers were under the patronage of different states in North India. Rulers of these states were against in sending their own artistes to other states. That is why artistes were compelled to live their life in same state. One positive effect of this was in order to spend time as they had no other option, except to practice and make their dance beautiful and complete. This tradition continued till many generations and individuals improved their dance. This exclusive workout resulted in difference coming into the forms of dance and every Guru developed its own style forming its own Gharana. "Gharana" word in context of Classical dances is the introducer of unique style of dance.

The Gharana begin when some unique element or distinctiveness in the style of art form was noticed. The reason for having variety in the forms of styles of different gharanas was the circumstance of that era. There was a time when the Kathakas had the highest public respect among the Brahmin class, because of this class used to present in a very emotional way the stories of Puran through dance in temples and public function. The reason for having variety in till that time, till the people representing the Gharana remains united and followed the traditional values

and systems, thereby taking it in the definite direction of progress. It is very interesting to know about the formation of Gharanas.

After the Mughal attack the artistes were scattered in different parts of the country in order to take shelter under the different royal patrons (kingdoms). It is worth mentioning that during these difficult times they tried to keep their art form alive. Rajasthan had many Rajput dynasties. Many big and small dynasties provided shelter to these artistes. The dynasty who gave shelter and patronage to the art and artistes were kingdom of Jodhpur, Kishangadh, Bikaner, Alwar. Before the rule of Maharaja Sawai Jaisingh (1699-1743) the Gharana tradition was established and Kathak art form was divided into different Gharanas.

Earlier the Gharanas were known on the name of individual Guru like "Sawal Das of Rajasthan. Like wise in Lucknow it was only Binda Din and in Banaras it was only Janki Prasad who were running Gharana in their own name. But in Rajasthan there were more numbers of artistes, so more Gharanas were runned on the name of individual Gurus and artistes.

" At that time during the rule of Maharaja Jai Singh he got constructed "City Palace" in which 36 departments were built along with Gunijankhana. There was a time, when 750 talented artistes who were appointed in Gunijankhana which include musicians, dancers and instrument players. The artistes migrated to Jaipur, these artistes got tremendous encouragement during the rule of Sawai Pratap Singh and during the period of Sawai Ram Singh and Madho Singh. Jaipur became the main center of these artistes. As the number of Kathak artistes started increasing, so also the number of Gharanas related to the names started increasing and thereby increasing the differences between them. These artistes also felt the need to sort out the ever, so increasing differences.

As mentioned earlier that Bindadinji started a Gharana in his own name in Lucknow. Hence in order to stop these ever, so increasing differences, a meeting was called by Maharaja Madho Singh of Jaipur in 1895. Many well known gurus were the part of this gathering. To name the few are Bindadinji of Lucknow. Senior artistes from Banaras, such as Shri Sukhdev Prasad, Pandit Shankarlal, Shri Nathuram, Shri Hari Prasadji excluding Shri Janaki Prasadji. It was unanimously decided by the artistes and decision was taken of forming Gharanas on the name after the place, from where the artistes belong instead of running the Gharanas on the basis of individual name. This decision helped to reduce the differences. Most of the Gurus and artistes

were from Jaipur and Lucknow, so initially Jaipur and Lucknow Gharana were established and nobody objected this decision. After the establishment of Lucknow and Jaipur Gharana artistes from Banaras formed Banaras Gharana representing their unique style.”<sup>1</sup>

“ It was also decided to give titles to each artiste depending on their capacity and capability. This created a sense of goodwill and brotherhood among all the dancers. The assembled artistes honored each other by giving titles. As per the tradition those who had 101 students, were given the title of “Guru Maharaj”. Those who did research work in this art were given the title of “Nayak” and those who did new literary work were given the title of “Pandit”. The basis of these titles was the capability in the art and as per tradition these titles were given to the artistes by their fellow artistes, not by any university or organization.

In this meeting the title of Maharaj was given to Bindadinji by Kathak artistes of Jaipur. Maharaj Bindadin gave title of Pandit to Shankarlalji and Sukhdev Prasadji. If Shri Janki Prasadji would have been present in that meeting, he would have received the title of Maharaj. This title was kept reserved for him. Natthulal (Moda Village) and Durga Prasad were given the title of Nayak. These titles did not have any relationship with the birth place. All these artistes use to become either teacher or student among themselves. The tradition of titles established at that time is still continuing in present time.”<sup>2</sup>

“ In order to enhance the goodwill and brotherhood among the artistes the dancers of Jaipur took the initiative by making four of their students disciples of Maharaj Bindadinji. These students were Pandit Devilalji, Pandit Jailalji, Pandit Shivilalji and Pandit Mohanlalji. They were in the age group of 14-18 years. They came back from Lucknow after 6 months of training given to them by Maharaja Bindadinji.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Kathak Nritya Parampara – Dr. Prem Dave, Page no : 32*

<sup>2</sup> *Kathak Nritya Parampara – Dr. Prem Dave, Page no : 32*

<sup>3</sup> *Kathak Nritya Parampara – Dr. Prem Dave, Page no : 33*

After their return to Rajasthan few other artists protested about this idea of sending these four students to Lucknow as wrong and unnecessary. But other artistes took it as an exchange of goodwill. All these artistes firmly believe that they all traditionally belong to same Gharana and nobody should have any objection. After the establishment of Gharana it still took a long time to come into the limelight. As now Gharanas were known after the name of a place.

In this context it is necessary to mention that “Rajasthan” is considered the place of origin for Kathak dance. Though the artistes migrated to other places for their livelihood but their origin was Rajasthan. The present researcher would like to focus on the same in the next chapter.