

Dr. Aban Mistry, A Renowned Tabla Maestro of Farukhabad

Gharana: A Comprehensive Study

Synopsis of the thesis

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PREFACE:

In India, Tabla is solely a traditional musical instrument. In recent times, Tabla has been established as a prominent and complete percussion instrument, all over the world. If we look at the authenticity of Tabla, it is perceived that Tabla is a prominent instrument with male dominance. When the Ustads and Pandits had the authority over Tabla, the first female Tabla player Vidushi Dr. Aban Mistry, entered into this field and became an eminent Tabla player.

In the 20th century, females are establishing their authority equivalent to their male counterparts all over the world. They are considered to be the best as they have acquired their command in all walks of life, and so the field of Tabla is not an exception to it.

In the music world, tabla is considered as a complete and independent musical instrument. Due to its rhythmic impediment, females could never establish their authority over this instrument. However, before few decades, with severe hard work and dedication, Dr. Aban Mistry of Mumbai established her authority in the field of Tabla. She started her musical journey with kathak-dance, vocal, sitar and extended to an elaborate study in the field of Tabla. She faced many ups and downs to achieve success in this field. In her journey of music, she made her own identity in the male dominant field of Tabla, as the first female Tabla player and achieved great success and name worldwide. She conducted extensive research on various topics like gharanas of Tabla and Pakhawaj, history of Tabla and became famous all over India. Then after, she promoted music by successfully establishing Swar Sadhna Samiti in 1961, under the guidance for her guru Pt. Keki.S. Jijina. This body is being operated and run successfully till date by her followers. Her talent is appreciated, promoted and published by many of India's print and electronic media. Abanji has written many research articles and published two books in Hindi and two in English which have proved to be very useful to the music world.

After an in-depth study of Dr. Aban's life and work, the researcher felt that she dedicated her whole life to the field of music and Tabla by doing research, playing Tabla, writing books, articles and promoting and propagating music and Tabla.

NEED FOR RESEARCH:

For thousands of years, India is recognized as a traditional country with strong cultural values. It has spread its fragrance of values all across the world. With the rise of India's cultural tradition, the reverence to the females was evident to the world. In the Indian tradition, the 'Rigveda' is considered as the most important cultural as well as social manuscript. In various volumes of 'Rigveda', there is a special mention of woman power. The other four Vedas and 18 'Puranas' are all written based on 'Rigveda'. In all these treatises, the significance of females can be seen in different branches of studies, rituals, social and cultural traditions.

However, after meeting various scholars as well as experts from this field, the researcher has sought opinion about his topic and has stated his opinions. It mentions that in present times the females have achieved milestones and gained respect in various fields through rigorous hardships, aptitude, efficiency as well as focus. In the field of music too, tremendous contribution by female artists is obviously noticed. Females have primacy in several fields of music such as dance, drama and vocal. The researcher considered whether fifty years ago, the females had any position in the field of Tabla. He comprehended that half a century ago, what difficulties a female named Dr. Aban Mistry had to go through to prove her identity in the male dominated field. After profound study, the researcher has decided to put forward the contribution of Dr. Aban Mistry in the field of Tabla. Here the researcher has understood and felt the need to research in this field and to present before the music world, a successful documentation of the works of Dr. Aban Mistry. His work will also be beneficial for the student's future references.

HYPOTHESIS:

India acquired freedom after several years of enslavement. The idea of accomplished freedom is still under a prorogued condition. In Indian culture, for thousand years the females have given tremendous contribution which remained unrecognized. It has been observed that the females are victimized, exploited and dishonored in our society.

Moving towards the conclusion of this research work, the researcher felt that Abanji was truly a guiding light and a women of substance. She was a force to reckon with and an ocean of knowledge made immortal through her work and research towards Indian music and arts. In this hypothesis, the researcher has decided to compile and highlight Dr. Aban Mistry's contributions in the field of music and keep alive her life occurrences.

DATA COLLECTION:

The data collection of this thesis was a challenging, time consuming and a costly affair.

- Very few books were available relating to the subject of this thesis. Thus, in order to get detailed information about the same the researcher travelled to many places all over India to take interviews of different scholars, artists, journalists and people associated with Dr. Aban Mistry.
- Valuable information was collected through the letters of correspondence of Abanji with various artists, journalists and scholars.
- Very useful information was collected from the souvenirs (annual magazine) of Swar Sadhna Samiti.
- Information was collected by interviewing the committee members of 'Swar Sadhna Samiti' as well as the students and members of 'Wadia Sangeet Class'.
- This is the age of I.T, computer and technology. Thus information relating to this subject was collected from various websites as well as online blogs.
- Researcher has also collected useful information by attending the annual music festival and all India music and dance competition held by Swar Sadhna Samiti.

- Detailed Information was collected from different interviews and articles of Abanji, published in various regional newspapers and magazines.
- All the available books and treatises on this subject were studied minutely.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The researcher has found out that no study has been conducted on the achievements as well as contribution of Dr. Aban Mistry. The researcher has reviewed and has done an in-depth study on this subject and presented all the facts in this thesis.

OBJECTIVES:

Dr. Aban was the first female Tabla player of India. The goal of the researcher is to produce documentation of all the available facts of her contribution to the world of music. He has presented Dr. Aban's life journey; work in music, research articles, publications, video and audio recordings of her performances etc. through a concrete volume.

The researcher has presented facts about the origin of Tabla as discovered by Abanji. He has collected unattainable information by exploring various avenues to access it and documented the same. The researcher's aim is not only to get a degree but also to provide the future generation with invaluable knowledge about this exceptional lady and her work.

INDEX

Chapter 1 : INTRODUCTION

1:1	Origin of Instruments
1:1:1	Classification of Instruments
1:1:1:1	Tat Instruments
1:1:1:2	Avanaddha Instruments
1:1:1:3	Ghan Instruments
1:1:1:4	Sushir Instruments
1:2	Origin of Percussion (Avanaddha) Instruments
1:2:1	Origin of word: Avanaddha
1:2:2	Origin of Percussion (Avanaddh) Instruments
1:3	Origin and Development of Tabla

- 1:3:1 A Historical Background to the Etymology of the Tabla
- 1:3:2 Fables about the Origin of the Tabla
- 1:3:3 Tabla: A Reflection of Ancient Rhythm Instruments
- 1:3:4 Modern Research about Origin of the Tabla
- 1:3:5 Development of the Tabla
- 1:4 **The Origin and Development of the Gharanas of Tabla**
- 1:4:1 Delhi Gharana
- 1:4:2 Ajrada Gharana
- 1:4:3 Lucknow Gharana
- 1:4:4 Farukhabad Gharana
- 1:4:5 Banaras Gharana
- 1:4:6 Punjab Gharana
- 1:5 **Farukhabad Gharana**
- 1:5:1 Introduction of Farukhabad Gharana
- 1:5:2 Predominant artists and disciples of this gharana
- 1:5:2:1 Disciple Tradition of Munir Khan
- 1:5:2:2 Disciple Tradition of Ut.Channu Khan Bareliwale
- 1:5:2:3 Disciple Tradition of Ut.Aman Ali Khan
- 1:5:2:4 Disciple Tradition of Husain Baksh
- 1:5:2:5 Disciple Tradition of Husain Ali Khan
- 1:5:2:6 Disciple Tradition of Ut.Chudiyawale Imam Baksh
- 1:5:2:7 Disciple Tradition of Ut.Masit Khan
- 1:5:2:8 Disciple Tradition of Ut.Ahmedjan Thirakwa
- 1:5:2:9 Disciple Tradition of Ut.Amir Hussain Khan
- 1:5:2:10 Disciple Tradition of Pt. Nikhil Ghosh.
- 1:6 **Conclusion**

The first chapter of this thesis includes the Origin of Instruments and percussion instruments as well as its development over the period of time. It also mentions the studies done by various scholars of music about the origin of tabla which informs that the instrument Tabla has come from the ancient 'Tripuskar' vadhya. Along with that this chapter includes comprehensive knowledge about the development of various gharanas of Tabla and a detailed study is carried out on the tradition of Farukhabad Gharana including the list of all the disciples and artists of this gharana (till date).

Chapter 2 : The Life Journey of Dr. Aban Mistry

2:1 Family and Education

2:1:1 Statement of Abanji about her family and community

2:2 Learning and Establishment in the Field

2:2:1 Statement of Abanji about her childhood

2:2:2 Introduction of Keki S. Jijina

2:2:3 Statement of Abanji about her training

2:2:4 Statement of Abanji about her concert

2:2:5 Statement of Abanji about her marriage

2:2:6 Statement of Abanji about her dedication

The second chapter informs about the personal life of the Dr. Aban Mistry which includes her family as well as education taken by her. This chapter also carries detailed information about Abanji's training and learning process throughout her life. This chapter will clear the picture of Abanji's life and the challenges faced by her to establish her identity in the male-dominant field of Tabla and her journey in the field of music.

Chapter 3 : Contribution in the Field of Music.

3:1 As a Performing Artist

3:1:1 List of Performances

3:1:2 List of Prestigious Music Festival where Abanji performed.

3:1:3 Statements of various eminent artists, journalist and others about Abanji's performance.

3:2 Research and Publication

3:2:1 Research

- 3:2:2** Publications
- 3:2:2:1** Published Articles
- 3:2:2:2** Books of Dr. Aban Mistry
- 3:2:2:2:1** Pakhawaj aur Tabla ke Gharane evum Parampayeen – Hindi Edition
Pakhawaj and Tabla: History, Schools and Traditions – English Edition
- 3:2:2:2:2** Tabley ki Bandishey
- 3:2:2:2:3** The Parsis and Indian classical music: an unsung contribution
- 3:3** As a Guru
- 3:4** As an Academician
- 3:5** Swar Sadhna Samiti
- 3:5:1** List of artist performed in Swar Sadhna Samiti
- 3:5:2** List of the judges panel of the competition organized by Swar Sadhna Samiti.
- 3:5:3** List of Swar Sadhna Ratna Awardees
- 3:6** Innovations and Creations

The third chapter notifies the contribution of Dr. Aban Mistry in the field of music. This will enlighten the readers and students about the remarkable work done by Abanji to promote and propagate the Indian Classical Music in various ways i.e.

As an author by writing books (a milestone work) and articles (on various uncommon topic) which is a source of inspiration for various researcher scholars who are doing their research work.

As an organizer of a non-profitable music institution whose aim is only and only to promote the heritage of Indian Classical Music and to showcase the upcoming talents of the society by providing them stage.

As a Guru, she had trained numerous students (names are mentioned in the chapter) at Wadia Sangeet Classes without any discrimination of caste or sex and without charging any kind of fees.

As an academician, she was a panel member in 36 various universities. She provided her service as a resource person in many conferences and workshops and also gave lecture demonstrations in many universities, colleges and music institutions.

As a composer, she has a great command on complex laykaris as well as on the mathematical aspects of tabla. She also had interest in playing solo in different time cycles other than Teentaal and as a result she had composed many compositions and Stuti-parans in different taals like

Tripud Bhavani (9 beats), Rudra (11 beats), Pancham Savari (15 matras), Matt taal (18 beats) etc. Researcher has tried to present the compositions made by her in this chapter.

Chapter 4 : Dr. Aban Mistry as a National Figure.

4:1 Achievements

4:1:1 List of Awards and Achievements

4:2 Response of Media

4:3 Response of Artist community

The fourth chapter informs about the overall personality of Abanji as a National Figure. This chapter includes the achievements, recognitions and awards received by Dr. Abanji Mistry on national and international level. She was honored by all the musical institutions, universities, various print Medias of the country, Limca book of world record and by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India (posthumously). In the end of this chapter the researcher has added the interviews of various eminent artists, musicologists, journalists and the members of Swar Sadhna Samiti sharing their views regarding the contributions of Dr. Aban Mistry and her personality. This will bring to knowledge the multi-dimensional personality of Abanji and will motivate the students to do research (in the form of documentation) on many other devoted personalities of music who have sacrificed their whole life for the betterment of music.

Chapter 5 : Conclusion

In this chapter the essence of all the four chapters is understood and explained. This chapter will briefly talk about the journey of this thesis starting with introduction of percussion instruments specially tabla and the different gharanas of Tabla. Then the next three chapters are dedicated to Dr. Aban mistry's journey of life and music. The concluding chapter highlights the major milestones crossed by Abanji and its impact on the society as a whole especially on females as well as on the field of music. Along with the hard work, dedication and perseverance it also takes a lot of courage to change the perception of society. Dr. Aban Mistry was one such revolutionary lady who not only made her own identity but did so in a field where women had never stepped in. A salute to such a powerhouse of a women.

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13. Prof. Pravin Uddhav
14. Prof. Gaurang Bhavsar
15. Prof. Ajay Ashtaputre
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