

Chapter 4

Dr. Aban Mistry as a National Figure

4:1 Achievements

4:2 Response of Media

4:3 Response of Artist Community

4:4 Letter Correspondence of Dr. Aban Mistry

4:1 Achievements

Dr. Aban Mistry was such a person who was completely dedicated to Tabla and music. One can look at Abanji's work from different angles and can get inspired from it. If a student understands Abanji's work, then his thinking as a researcher and a Tabla player will change. If a performer studies Abanji's work then he will attain new dimensions in his playing style and his presentation. When a music scholar thinks about Abanji's work, he expects many of his doubts to be solve. From the interviews of Abanji (published in various newspapers and magazines) as well as articles and interviews of other artists and scholars, the researcher came to know about the above mentioned information.

If a person possesses all such qualities, who can ignore their work? The music fraternity accepted, welcomed and honored her because of her unique music style. It can be said that there was no big city left in India where she was not honored. Also there is no music institute left who has not honored Dr. Aban Mistry. After considering all this, the Government of India presented posthumous award to Abanji in 2018. Abanji was such an academician, performer and social worker of music that even today her work is being honored and in many places awards are being given in her name. There is a long list of honors given to her which are as follows:-

4:1:1 List of Achievements

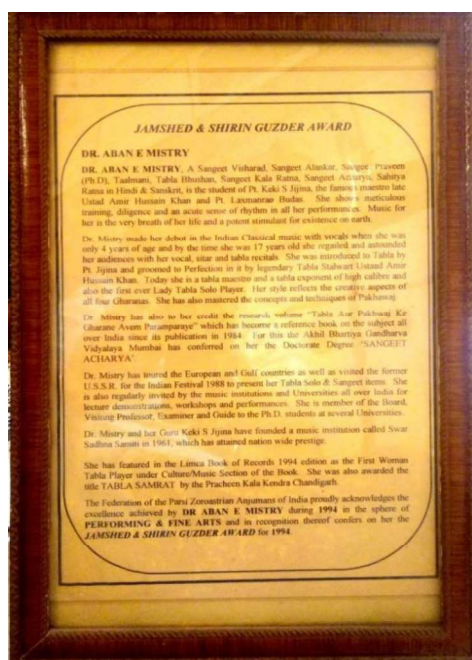
1. Pt. Omkarnath Thakur Academic Award – 2002, by Academy of Cultural Activities and Arts Institute, Surat – Gujarat.
2. Taalmani Award – 1971, by Sursingar Sansad, Mumbai.
3. Charmavadya Tabla – Bhushan Award, by Adarniya Sankaracharya, Sankeshwarpath, Karnataka. 20/10/83.
4. Sangeet Setu Award – 1984, Sangeet MahaVidhyalay, Sagar – Madhya Pradesh.
5. Limica Book of World Record.
6. Sangeet Kala Ratna – 1993, at Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar Festival – Agra.
7. Kala Shree Award - 1985, Shri Sangeet Bharti – Bikaner.
8. Taal Shingar – 1994, Bhaskar Rao Sangeet Sammelan, Prachin Kala Kendra, Chandigadh.
9. Taal Samrat, Kala-Darpan – Chandigadh. 17/01/1996.
10. Sangeetagna Award – 1997, by Bharat Vikas Parishad, Maharashtra.
11. Award by Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India.

12. Award by Kala – Gurjari, Mumbai.
13. Award by Kinnar Sangeet Sadhna, Mumbai.
14. Award by Shiv Sangetanjali, Mumbai.
15. Dadabhai Navroji Millenium Award - 2002.

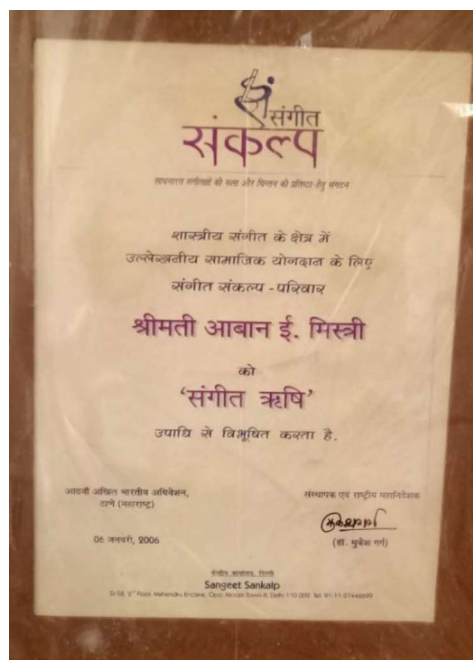
Note: Abanji was felicitated by this award on 30th March 2002 and along with her, film actor Amitabh Bachchan, Film Producer and Director of Mahabharat - Mr. B.R. Chopra, Film Producer and Director of Movie Sholey – Mr. G.P.Sippy were also felicitated with Dadabhai Navroji Award on the same day.

16. Lions Club Lifetime Achievement Award.
17. Gaint International Award - 2002, Mumbai.
18. The ITC Indian Music Forum Award for Research -2003.
19. Krutarth Kalajivan Award by Shri Ganesh Cultural Academy, Thane.
20. First Lady Awards by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India, Delhi.

Pictures of Awards



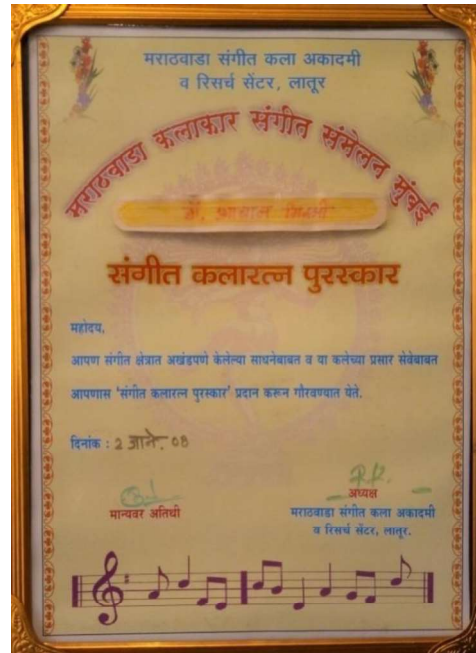
Award by Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian



"Sangeet Rushi" Award by Sangeet Sankalp Anjuman of India.



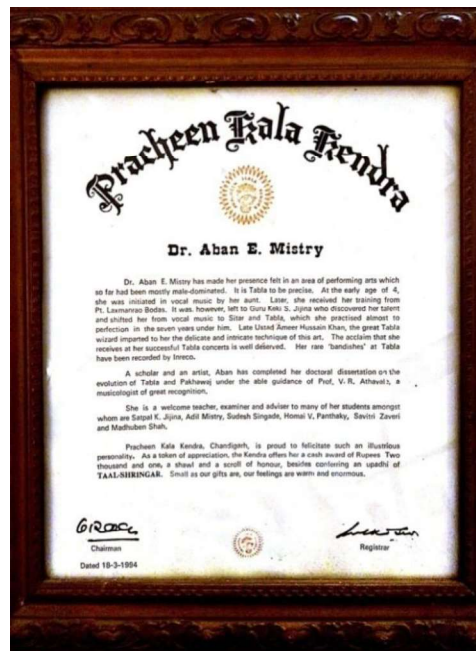
Award by Sankar Bharti
Academy and Research Centre, Latur.



Sangeet Kalaratna Award by Sangeet Kala



Dadabhai Navroji Millenium Award – 2002



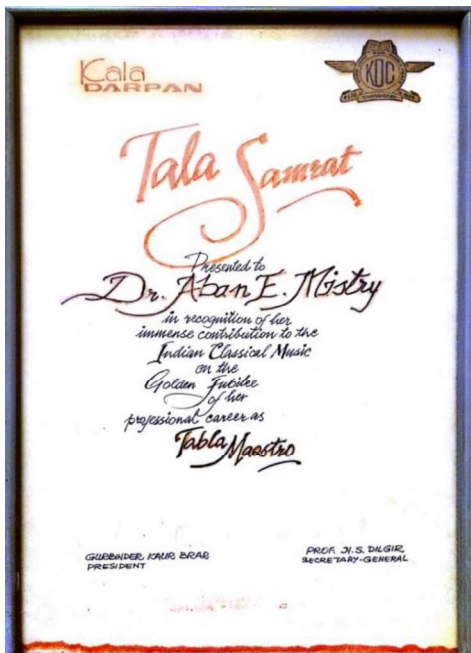
Taal Shringar Award by Pracheen Kala



Krutarth Kalajivan Award by Shri Ganesh Cultural Academy, Thane.



Charmavadya Tabla Bhushan Award by Sankeshwarpath, Karnataka.



Taal Samrat Award by Kala Darpan, Chandigarh.



World Zoroastrian Organization Award -2002



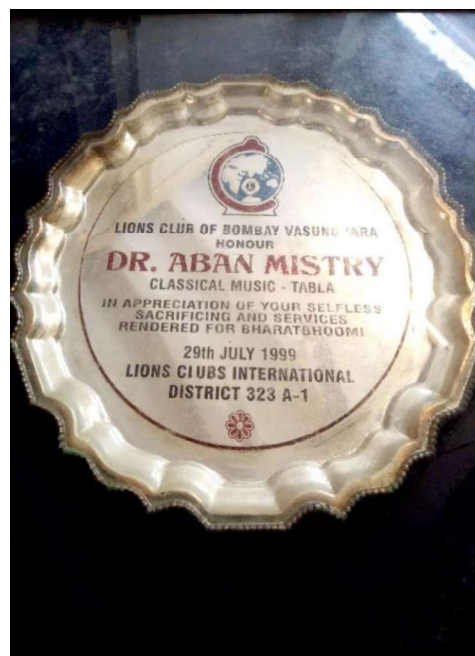
Research Award – 2002 by Music Forum,
Mumbai



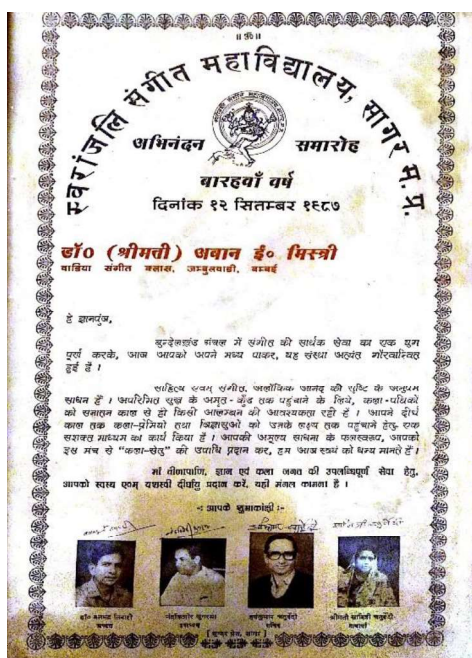
Felicitations by Lions Club, Mumbai.



Felicitations by Bharat Vikas Parishad,
Mumbai



Felicitations by Kallur Mahalaxmi
Tabla Vidhyalay, Dharwad.



Felicitations by Swaranjali Sangeet Mahavidyalaya, Sagar (M.P.)



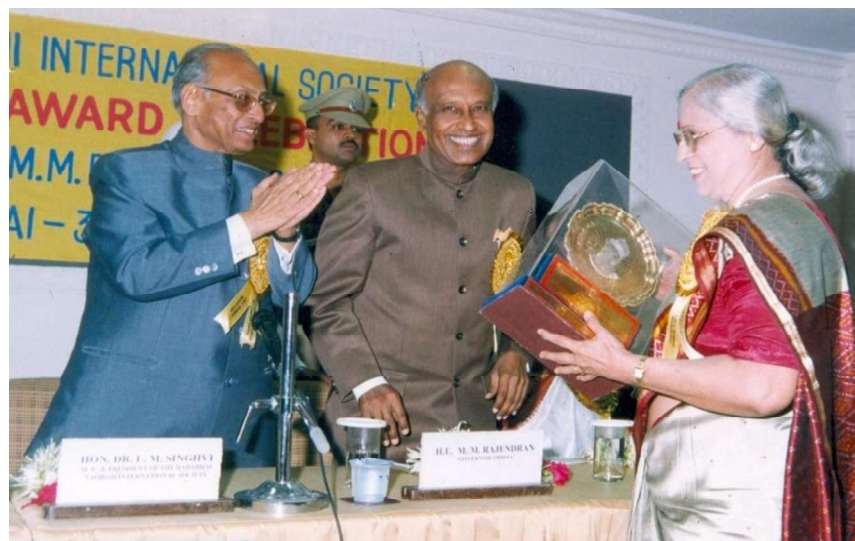
Felicitations by SNDT Women's University, Mumbai.



The First Lady Award (posthumous) by Ministry of Women and Child Development, The Govt. of India.



Hers was among the 112 awards presented to the ladies of our country, who struggled to succeed in their respective fields, by breaking barriers and forging new ground through their focus and relentless hard work. This is the most prestigious recognition by the Government of India. The research, selection and award presentation ceremony was wonderfully organized by the Ministry for Women and Children Development and officiated by MP, Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhiji.



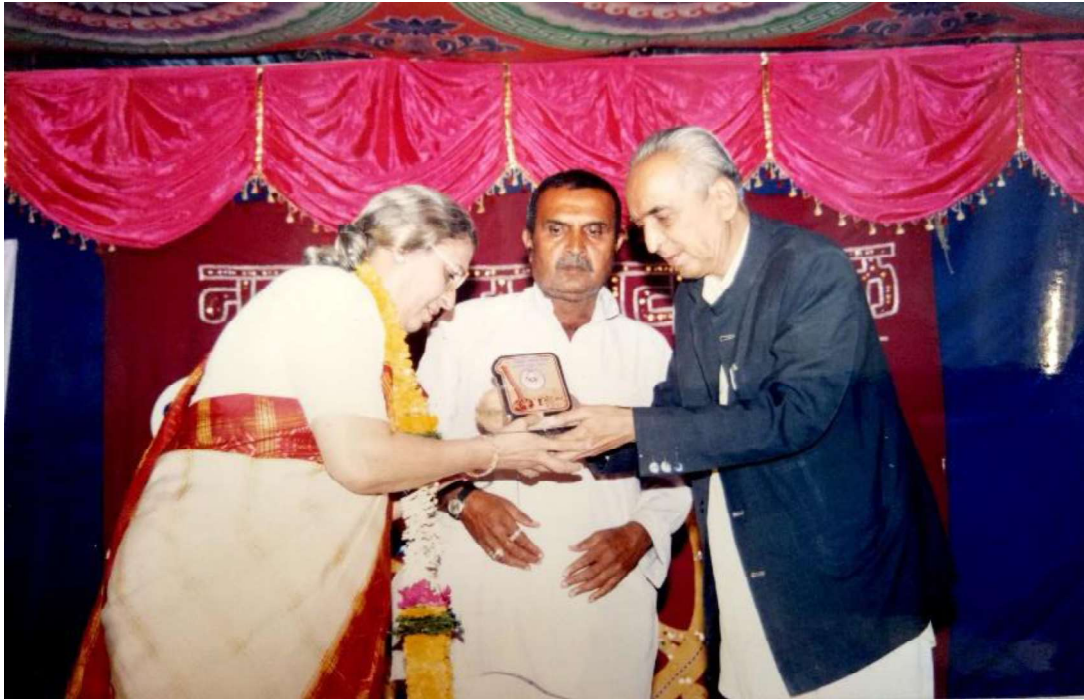
Dr. Aban Mistry receiving Dadabhai Navroji Millenium Award



Received this honor on 30th March 2002 along with the film actor Amitabh Bacchan,
Film Producer and Director of Mahabharat - Mr. B.R. Chopra.
Film Producer and Director of movie Sholey - Mr. G.P.Sippy.



Dr. Aban Mistry receiving awards from Smt. Gangubai Hangal at Stree Guru Vandana organized by Hridayesh Arts, Mumbai.



Abanji receiving award from Nuttan Gandharva Shri Appasaheb Deshpande.



Ustad Allah Rakha giving award to Dr. Aban Mistry on behalf of Kala Darpan, Chandigarh.



Abanji receiving Music Forum Research Award 2002.



Dr. Aban Mistry receiving award from Bharat Vikas Parishad, Mumbai for her contribution in the field of Music.

Picture of some awards and honor received by Abanji from various organizations



4:1:2 Awards in the name of Dr.Aban Mistry.

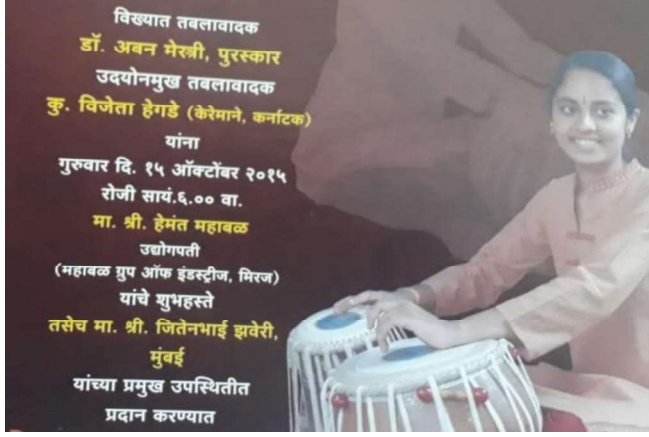
Pictures of the artists and students who have received Dr.Aban Mistry Award at Shri Ambabai Navratra Sangeet Mahotsav Mandal, Miraj.



Shri Kalyan Deshpande - 2013

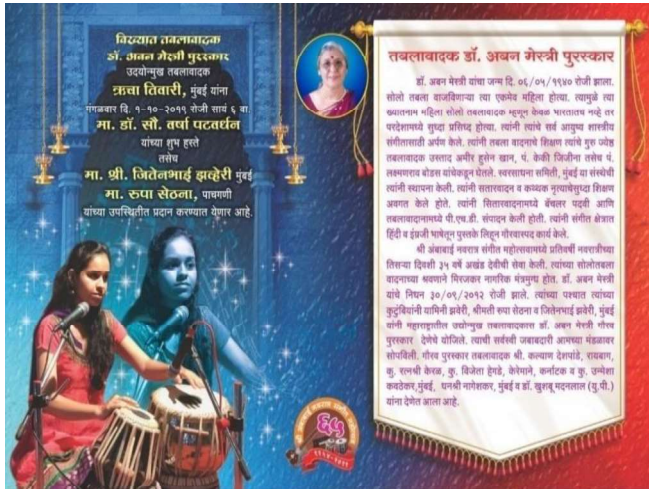
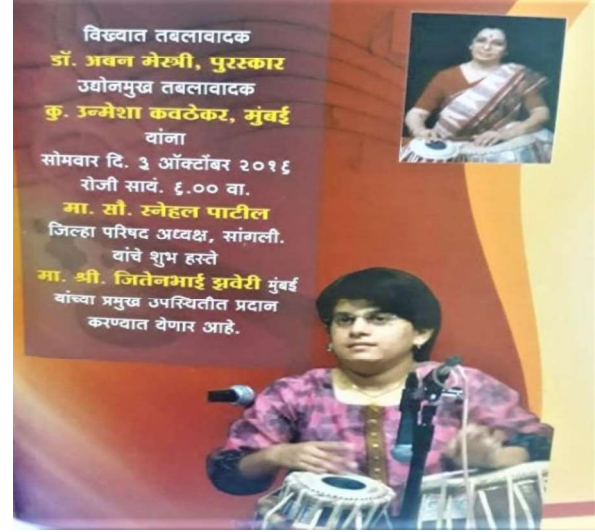
Ku. Ratnashri received Dr. Aban Mistry Award in 2014





Ku. Vijeta Hegde received Dr.Aban Mistry Award in 2015

Ku. Unmesh Kavthekar received Dr.Aban Mistry Award in 2016



Ku. Rucha Tiwari received Dr.Aban Mistry Awards in 2017



Ku. Rucha Tiwari receiving Award at Ambabai Navratra Music Festival, Miraj



Ku. Dhanashree Nageshkar receiving Award at Ambabai Navratra Music Festival, Miraj.

4:2 Response of Media

In the beginning of this chapter, the researcher has humbly tried to talk about the achievements of Abanji. The information regarding all the achievements of Abanji was received by the researcher in written form through media. Abanji has visited all the corners of India for her performance, research work and lecture demonstrations. Wherever she would go, she would make sure that the media is notified about it. This is a reason that her interviews with media or journalist are available in many different regional languages of India such as English, Hindi, Gujarati, Bengali, Marathi, Konkani, Malayalam, Telugu, Tamil etc. These are the facts that paved her way to success. Another aspect that has come to the researcher's mind is that Abanji would always stay in touch with the people of media and music through written correspondence. Be it print or visual media, the researcher has more than 600 press cuttings of interviews given by Abanji which gives a lot of valuable information about the work she has done. The list of some of the paper cuttings are as follows:-

4:2:1 Media Coverage of Dr. Aban Mistry's Interview.

Sr. no	Name of Newspaper/Magazine	Place	Date	Interviewed by
1.	Gujarat Mitra	Surat	24 th Aug 2002	
2.	Dainik Agradoot	Raipur	10 th March 1995	
3.	Dainik Sandesh	Raipur	11 th March 1995	
4.	Dainik Samvet Shikhar	Raipur	11 th March 1995	
5.	Santoshi Vani/ Magazine	Bikaner	August 1995	Asfaq Kadri
6.	Dainik Navbharat	Raipur	11 th March 1995	
7.	Gruh Shobha/ Magazine	Delhi	August 1994	
8.	Ahalya/ Magazine	Hyderabad	July 2010	Asfaq Kardi
9.	Vidhyarthi Sandesh	Pratapgarh - M.P	20 th Sep 1999	
10.	Hindustan	New Delhi	1 st April 1996	
12.	Navbharat Times	Mumbai	28 th Nov 1999	Vimal Mishra
13.	Jansatta	Chandigarh	17 th March 1994	

Sr. no	Name of Newspaper/Magazine	Place	Date	Interviewed by
14.	Manorama/Magazine	Jaipur	15 th Feb 1993	Purnima
15.	Navbharat	Raipur	21 st Sept 1993	
16.	Dainik Bhaskar	Raipur	21 st Sept 1993	
17.	Manorama/ Magazine	Jaipur	30 April 1994	Smt. Shanti Yadu
18.	Dharmayug/ Magazine	Mumbai	7 th June 1987	Krishna Swaroop
19.	Mumbai Sakal	Mumbai	13 th April 1990	
20.	Swadesh Weekly	Gwalior, Bhopal	Jan 1986	Prof. Ram Charan Dubolia
21.	Navjyoti	Ajmer	19 th Nov 1995	Asfak Kadri
22.	Navbharat Times	Mumbai	1 st April 1990	Madanlal Yas
23.	Dainik GnanYugbhat	Jabalpur	24 th Nov 1982	
24.	Navbharat	Raipur	08 th Nov 1982	
25.	Dharma Yug	Raipur	9 th Nov 1982	
26.	Deshbandhu	Raipur	9 th Nov 1982	
27.	Dainik Lokswar	Bilaspur	9 th Nov 1982	
28.	Kanna Damma	Belgau (Karnataka)	2 nd Dec 1984	
29.	Prajavani	Belgau	12 th Dec 1995	
30.	The Canara Times	Hubli-Dharwad	15 th Jan 1995	
31.	Mahasatta	Ichalkarangi	30 Sep 1995	
32.	Ratnagiri Times	Mumbai	06 Oct 1995	
33.	Mahasatta	Ichalkaranji	28 Sep 1989	Madhukar Apte
34.	AesiAkshare	Maharashtra	15 Aug 1992	S.A. Kulkarni
35.	Mumbai Sakal	Mumbai	20 Oct 1983	
36.	Maharashtra Times	Mumbai	25 Aug 1983	Prabhakar Kulkarni
37.	Swaraj	Mumbai –Pune	08 Nov 1975	Hemant Apte

Sr. no	Name of Newspaper/Magazine	Place	Date	Interviewed by
38.	Sakal	Pune	26 Dec 1985	Ashok Ranade
39.	Tarun Bharat	Belgau	30 Nov 1984	
40.	Maharashtra Times	Mumbai	27 Feb 1987	Sudhir Mainkar
41.	Loksatta	Mumbai	20 Feb 1987	Madhubvanti Sarpe
42.	Dainik Lokmatt	Latur	29 May 1993	Devikumar Pathak
43.	Dainik Bhaskar	Indore		
43.	Mumbai Sakaal	Mumbai	17 Oct 1984	Manohar Pujare
44.	Loksatta	Mumbai	10 March 1990	Rajni Apsingekar
45.	Madhya Pradesh Cronicle	Bhopal	24 July 1992	
46.	Lok Prabha	Maharashtra	30 Nov 1975	S.A. Kulkarni
47.	Lok Satta	Mumbai	19 Dec 1982	Hemant Apte
48.	Swatantra Bharat	Maharashtra	21 Jan 1977	
49.	Desh Bandhu	Bhopal	25 Jul 1992	
50.	Nai Duniya	Indore	27 Jul 1992	
51.	Lok Satta		07 Dec 1991	Nandini Lotlikar
52.	Dakshin Maharashtra Magazine		07 Jul 1992	S.A. Kulkarni
53.	The Times Of India	Bangalore	09 Sept 2002	Gururaj Jankhandi
54.	Dainik Lokmat	Rajasthan		
55.	Gujarat Mitra	Mumbai	22 Nov 1992	Saroj Pathak
56.	Phool chab	Rajkot	29 Dec 1999	
57.	Navbharat	Bilaspur	03 Aug 1993	
58.	Midday	Mumbai	04 Jul 1993	Seema Chandak
60.	Nai Duniya	Indore	21 Mar 1995	Asfak Kadri
61.	Dainik Bhaskar	Mumbai	03 Oct 1992	Sanjay Purandare
62.	Sandesh	Bharuch	11 Sept 1993	Prashant Mahendra

Sr. no	Name of Newspaper/Magazine	Place	Date	Interviewed by
63.	Bhavnagar Samachar	Bhavnagar	30 Jan 1985	Gohil
64.	Jame Jamshed	Mumbai	26 Mar 1986	
65.	Madhyantar	Gujarat	01 Oct 1990	Nalini Parekh
66.	Nai Jameen	Bikaner Rajasthan		Asfaq Kardi
67.	Maharashtra Times	Mumbai	14 Aug 1996	Alka Joglekar
68.	Indian Express	Mumbai	20 Apr 1991	Mini Menon
69.	The Punjab Mail	Chandigarh	16 Mar 1994	
70.	Maharashtra Herald	Pune	11 Jul 1992	
71.	Loksatta	Vadodara	30 Apr 1994	
72.	Indian Express	Vadodara	03 May 1994	Sarvesh Mathur
73.	Gujarat Samachar	Vadodara	26 Apr 1994	
74.	The Observer	Mumbai	28 Oct 1992	
75.	Nayi Duniya		24 Jul 1996	
76.	Loksatta	Vadodara	17 May 1999	
77.	Gujarat Vaibhav	Ahmedabad	06 Aug 1997	Asfaq Kadri
78.	Desh Bandhu	Raipur	10 Aug 1992	
79.	Nagpur Times	Nagpur	31 Dec 1983	
80.	Amrut Sandesh	Raipur	26 Oct 1985	Dr. Baldev
81.	Madhyabharat Paridrashya(Magazine)	Raipur	Sept/ Oct 1993	Mangesh Modak
82.	Rashtriya Sahara		17 Sept 1993	
83.	Hindustan	Delhi	24 Oct 1993	Mangesh
84.	Sansar		25 Jul 1992	P. Sanjay
85.	Nav Bharat	Raipur	17 Oct 1993	Mangesh
86.	Amar Ujala	Agra	11 Oct 1993	
87.	Madhurima - Dainik Bhaskar	Gwalior	31 Oct 1992	Sanjay Purandare
88.	Jaltesdip	Jodhpur	14 Dec 1988	

Sr. no	Name of Newspaper/Magazine	Place	Date	Interviewed by
89.	Dainik Bhaskar	Raipur	21 Sept 1993	
90.	Jansatta Sabrang		30 Jan 1994	Rakesh Shrimal
91.	Dainik Yugpaksh		13 Sept 1993	Gopivallabh Goswami
92.	Dainik Tribhyan	Chandigarh	17 Mar 1994	Madhur Kapila
93.	Rajasthan Pratika	Bikaner	2 Feb 1994	Asfaq Kadri
94.	Chhayanat	Lucknow	19 Sept 1993	
95.	Rashtriya Sahara	Lucknow	5 Apr 1994	Vijayshankar Mishra
96.	Deshbandhu	Raipur	10 th Mar 1995	
97.	Dainik Jagran	Agra	11 Mar 1993	
98.	Navbharat Times	Delhi	03 Apr 1994	Mukesh Garg
99.	Thar Express	Bikaner	01Aug 1994	Mohanlal Sharma
100.	Mumbai Samachar	Mumbai	8 Jan 1985	Pragji Dosa
101.	Mumbai Sakal	Mumbai	9 Nov 1984	Pragi Dasa
102.	Dainik Jaltedeeep	Jodhpur	30 Apr 1994	Asfaq Kadri
103.	Hindustan	New Delhi	1 Apr 1996	Dr. Mukesh Garg
104.	Gujarat Samachar	Ahmedabad	20 Mar 1989	Kanak Dave
105.	Town Times	Ahmedabad	6 Jul 1989	
106.	Sambhav	Mumbai	10 Jul 1986	
107.	Gujarat Samachar	Bhavnagar	10 Dec 1984	
108.	Paanjo Kutch	Kutch	31 Aug 1986	
109.	Janmbhoomi Pravasi	Surat	25 Jun 1990	
110.	Madhyantar	Nagpur	27 Mar 1990	Nalini Parekh
111.	Times Of India	Ahmedabad	14 Apr 1990	Girish Mudholkar
112.	Gujarat Mitra	Surat	25 Jun 1990	Ananta Parekh
113.	Loksatta	Vadodara	30 Apr 1994	

Sr. no	Name of Newspaper/Magazine	Place	Date	Interviewed by
114.	Mumbai Samachar	Mumbai	22 Sept 1993	Rustom Mirza
116.	Kutch Lok	Kutch	24 Mar 1989	
117.	Sakhi Magazine	Ahmedabad	30 Jan 1985	Vimal Dhami
118.	Gujarat Samachar	Ahmedabad	22 Jan 1995	Preet Shah
119.	Gujarat Mitra	Mumbai	26 Mar 1995	Saroj Pathak
120.	Gujarat Samachar	Vadodara	18 Oct 1995	
121.	Chitralekha (Diwali Edition)	Mumbai	1983	Saroj Shah
122.	Sandesh	Bharuch	11 Sept 1983	
123.	Sandesh	Vadodara	18 Oct 1983	
124.	Abhishek Magazine	Mumbai	Feb 1983	Saroj Shah
125.	Gujarat Samchar	Ahmedabad	25 Feb 1985	Mahendra Gohil
126.	Saurashtra Samachar	Bhavnagar	6 Jan 1985	Yagnesh Acharya
127.	Gujarat Mitra	Mumbai	14 Apr 1996	Ananta Parikh
128.	Jam-e- Jamshed Weekly	Mumbai	15 Aug 1999	Ruby Lilaowala
129.	The Daily Dairy	Bombay	18 Feb 1987	
130.	Sunday Amrita Bazar	Kolkata	24 Mar 1986	Sandhya Shin
131.	The Sunday States Man	Kolkata	24 Mar 1986	
132.	The Journal about Women Society	New Delhi	Mar/Apr 1986	Manushi
133.	Indian Express	Mumbai	20 Feb 1987	
134.	Indian Express	Mumbai	10 Apr 1990	Mohan Nadkarni
135.	Bulletin	Mumbai	9 Feb 1998	Munmun Ghosh
136.	Indian Express	Mumbai	23 Aug 1991	
137.	Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly	Mumbai	26 Jul 1992	
138.	Free Press Journal Weekly	Mumbai	5 Nov 1992	Rustom Sethna
139.	Samved Sikhar	Raipur	26 June 1983	

Sr. no	Name of Newspaper/Magazine	Place	Date	Interviewed by
140.	The Tribune	Chandigarh	6 Mar 1994	
141.	Indian Express	Mumbai	26 Apr 1994	Purushottam A.
142.	Midday		9 Apr 1994	
143.	Indian Express	Mumbai	29 May 1992	
144.	The Times Of Indian	Ahmedabad	27 March 1990	G.V.Mudholkar
145.	Indian Express	Mumbai	14 Mar 1999	Sumit Savur
146.	Daily M.P. Chronicle	Raipur	11 Mar 1995	
147.	The Sunday Times Of India		20 Aug 1995	
148.	Indian Express	Mumbai	12 Mar 1995	Purushottam A.
149.	Mumbai Samachar Saptahik	Mumbai	02 feb 1995	Jehan
150.	Midday	Mumbai	18 Jan 1996	
151.	The Hitavada	Nagpur	2 Feb 1985	
152. 153.	Nagpur Times	Nagpur	31 Dec 1983	
154.	Eve's Weekly	Mumbai	1 Jul 1982	M.G. Diggavi
155.	The Indian Nation	Patna, Bihar	19 Aug 1983	
156.	Aryavarti	Patna	24 Aug 1983	
157.	The Pioneer	Delhi	23 Mar 1984	Jitendra Pratap
158.	Indian Express	Mumbai	11 Sept 1990	Mohan Nadkarni
159.	Patriot	Bharuch	1 Mar 1983	Prashant
160.	Janmbhumi	Bharuch	26 Sept 1983	Prashant
161.	Maharashtra Herald	Mumbai	20 Apr 1989	
162.	Sandesh	Ahmedabad	20 June 1989	
163.	Kutch Lok	Kutch	23 June 1989	
164.	Indian Express	New Delhi	22 Mar 1999	V.V. Prashad
165.	Celebrity	Mumbai	Nov 1983	Seema Patel

Sr. no	Name of Newspaper/Magazine	Place	Date	Interviewed by
166.	Amrit Bajar Patrika		28 June 1979	
167.	The Times Of India		7 Nov 1981	Dr. M.G. Diggavi
168.	Indian Express	Mumbai	23 Aug 1991	
169.	Midday	Mumbai	21 Aug 1991	
170.	Indian Express	Ahmedabad	7 Nov 1981	G. V.Mudholkar
171.	The Afternoon		9 Jan 1992	Ajay Antani
172.	Eve's Weekly	Mumbai	8 Aug 1973	
173.	Chandigarh News Line	Chandigarh	17 Mar 1994	
174.	The Times Of India	Mumbai	9 Oct 1992	
175.	Midday	Mumbai	9 June 1993	Simi Chandok
176.	The Times Of India	Ahmedabad	8 Jan 1994	G.V. Mudholkar
177.	The Times Of India	Pune	13 Nov 1993	Madhukar Heble
178.	Sun Marg	Varanasi	22 Sept 2003	
179.	Amar Ujala	Varanasi	22 Sept 2003	
180.	Hindustan	Varanasi,Delh, Patna & Ranchi	22 Sept 2003	
181.	Dainik Jagran	Varanasi	22 Sept 2003	
182.	Janmbhumi	Mumbai	18 Jul 2002	Batuk Divanji
183.	Gujarat Mitra	Mumbai	17 Aug 2002	Chandrakant Mistry
184.	Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly	Mumbai	26 Mar 1995	
185.	The Punjab Mail	Punjab	16 Mar 1994	
186.	The Times Of India	Ahmedabad	5 May 1989	G.V. Mudhulkar
187.	BLITZ		18 Mar 1995	
188.	Gujarat Mitra	Mumbai	24 Apr 1996	Chandrakanth Purohit
189.	Kadambani Magazine	Delhi	Feb 1995	Asfaq Kadri
190.	Sangeet Magazine	Hathras	Nov 2000	Asfaq Kadri
191.	Samaj Kalyan Magazine	Bhopal	June 2007	Asfaq Kadri

Sr. no	Name of Newspaper/Magazine	Place	Date	Interviewed by
193.	Desh Bandhu	Rajasthan	19 May 1994	Asfaq Kadri
194.	Punjab Kesari		18 Apr 1998	Asfaq Kadri
195.	The Times Of India	Banglore	9 Sept 2002	Gururaj Jamkhandi
196.	Sangeet Kala Vihar/Magazine		May/July 1997	Asfaq Kadri
197.	Sannaari	Ahmedabad	7 th Sept 2002	
198.	Navbharat Times	Mumbai	21 st Oct 1982	
199.	Sangeet Kala Vihar/ Magazine	Hyderabad	Jan 1989	
200.	Dainik Bhaskar	Bhopal	28 th July 1992	
201.	Dhadkan – Magazine	Bikaner	21 th March 1995	Asfaq Kadri
202.	Jansatta Mumbai	Mumbai	22 March 1995	Kalandi Apasthi
203.	Saurashtra Samachar	Rajkot	10 th Dec 1986	
204.	Sakhi – Magazine	Rajkot	18 th June 1994	Mahendra Gohil
205.	Shree – Magazine	Ahmedabad	30 th Jan 1985	Mahendra Gohil
206.	Janmabhoomi	Mumbai	15 th March 1995	Batuk Divanji
207.	Gujarat Mitra	Mumbai	09 th Sept 1983	
208.	Navbharat Times		21 st October 1982	
209.	Gujarat Mitra	Ahmedabad	18 th Feb 1996	Chandrakant Purohit
210.	Mumbai Samachar (parsi prakash)	Mumbai	17 th January 1996	
211.	Jam-E-Jamshed Weekly	Mumbai	15 th August 1999	Ruby Lilaowala
212.	Womens Day- Bulletin	Mumbai	09 th Feb 1988	Munmun Ghosh
213.	Chronicle	Raipur	11 th March 1995	
214.	Celebrity		November 1983	Seema Patel
215.	Sunday Midday	Mumbai	14 th Nov 1999	Abhay Mokashi
216.	Dainik Lokmatt	Mumbai	07 th June 1995	

4:2:2 Statements of various Journalists and Artists about Dr.Aban Mistry

4:2:2:1 Asfaq Kadri (freelance journalist, Bikaner,Rajasthan)⁽¹⁾

Dr. Jaychand Sharma had introduced me to Abanji as I was associated with him as a writer for many years. I got an opportunity to write about him and his institute (Sangeet Bharti, Bikaner-Rajasthan), In 1993 Dr. Jaychand told me about the first female Tabla player of India who had a sound knowledge of four major Gharanas of Tabla. He further briefed me that she is touring the whole country like a yogi to know more about the origin and development of all the Gharanas of Tabla and to collect authentic information regarding her research from all the great maestros and gurus of Tabla. I wrote an article on Abanji with whatever matter was available and added my thoughts to it. I published that article in one of the leading newspaper “Rajasthan Patrika” and sent a paper cutting to Abanji. She appreciated my work and aspired to meet me but it did not happen for a long time but finally in March,1994 I got an invitation of “Swarsadhanotsav”- a three days annual festival of their organization, and I got chance to meet her first the time.

It was the month of Ramzan and very important day of Eid when I had to reach there, but I had great respect for Abanji as an elder sister, so I reached there on Eid itself. I met Abanji first time on this pious day of Eid. I was not aware but after the program there was a get together at Jitenbhai Javeri’s place (President of Swar Sadhna Samiti), where they all gave me lots of love and good wishes for Eid, at that time I felt that I am not alone here, they all were like a family to me. I also realized one thing that it is our great heritage that we celebrate all the festivals together whether it is Holi, Diwali, Eid etc. and I experienced the same on that day.

- **About Swar Sadhna Samiti**

In 1994, I attended the three days annual festival of “Swar Sadhna Samiti”, I had been there for all the three days and saw that they managed each and everything very well, from accommodation, transportation, stage and sound system to the felicitation of each and every artiste from senior to junior category. They faced many difficulties and challenges to make this program a successful event and the whole team worked with zeal and dedication to promote our heritage (Indian Classical Music) in the metropolitan city – Bombay. I have also seen how the

1. Interview of Shri Asfaq Kardi/ 26th March 2017.

trusties and volunteers came together to organize and smoothly execute this three day music festival named “Swarsadhnotsav” and it is not easy to organize such programs only to serve to the society without having any profit motives.

- **As an Academician**

She was on the panel of Board of Studies and worked as an Examiner in many universities across the country. She has also conducted many workshops and lecture demonstrations on various musical topics in many different universities and music institutes.

About her dedication towards Music:

There were many dimensions of her dedication towards music, the very first was her dedication towards Tabla, Tabla has always proved to be very difficult and a male dominant instrument. It is a belief that women cannot master the playing techniques and the various aspects related to it but Abanji proved it wrong. Actually Abanji wanted to become a kathak dancer but at the age of 16, she went through a surgery and doctor advised her to quit dancing. Because of her great guru who guided her to become a Tabla player and started teaching her Tabla, she turned her interest towards Tabla. After intensive training under her guru she started performing Tabla solo recital at the age of 15 and one of her performance was witnessed by the great Tabla wizard Ut. Amir Hussain Khan, Ustadji was so much impressed by a girl playing Tabla so well that he decided to give her further talim. In this way she got associated with great maestros and gurus of Tabla and took the knowledge and legacy of her gurus to greater heights in the field of Tabla. She never limited herself to one Gharana and always tried to learn as much as possible from the great gurus of all different Gharanas of Tabla by touring all over the country.

Secondly, apart from being a good Tabla player she was also an eminent scholar. As a writer she has written a book named “Pakhawaj aur Tabla ke Gharane evum Parampara” which proved to be one of the finest books of Tabla and today it is used as a reference book in all the universities of the country. To write her book and thesis she traveled across the county to collect firsthand information from artistes, which took 10 to 12 years to complete. She has also published two more books i.e. “Tabley ki Bandishey” and “The Parsis and Indian Classical Music: An Unsung Contribution”. These books have proved to be one of the strongest documentations of her dedication towards music and her contribution to the society. Besides that she regularly wrote articles (in Gujarat language) in one of the newspaper “Mumbai Samachar” in which she use to write on various musical topics and lives of great Indian

Musicologist. I have seen many great musicians in this field but have never seen any musician writes article related to musical subjects, Abanji was the only successful female musician during those days who wrote columns on regular basis. In this way she also worked as a musical writer and according to me it is not easy to work as a successful musician, writer, author and a scholar.

Thirdly, Abanji's dedication towards her students as a guru was noteworthy. She has trained many students under her, especially female students. I know one of her student Kum. Vidhya Parab who was a good Tabla player. I remember one program where only female artists were invited with their Gurus and felicitated for doing exceptional work in their field, Abanji was the only female guru during those days in Tabla who was honored along with her disciple Vidhya Parab. Thus, we can also see her dedication as a guru.

Along with that she has done stupendous work as an organizer. She provided stage and honor to the young upcoming artists, every year she organized a three-day annual program and along with that she also organized monthly programs without missing a single month from the day she started the Swar Sadhana Samiti. To invite established artistes in the annual program and to honor them by giving Swar Sadhana Ratna award was always her priority. The journey which was started by Abanji to promote Indian Classical music is still continued for almost more than 60 years, and I think that Swar Sadhna Samiti is the most reputed stage of India where all the great musicians have performed and even today this stage is being provided to the young artistes to enhance their stage experience. Thus, being an organizer Abanji has played a vital role and show her dedication to serve the society.

From the time she was alive till today media has great respect and honor for her and also believes that she, Dr. Aban Mistry was the first lady Tabla Player who created her identity in a male dominant field of Tabla by facing lots of difficulties which cannot be expressed in words. She was very firm in her decisions and once she decided her goal, in spite of facing innumerable difficulties she achieved it at any cost and this firmness led her to become successful in life. According to me she was a unique personality and I don't think after her any such multi-dimensional personality will take birth who would be able to manage everything with the kind of dedication and enthusiasm that she had and continued having till the end of her life. Thus, she was a great glory of Tabla.

4:2:2:2 Shri Girish Mudholkar (Former Editor, Times of India, Ahmedabad) ⁽¹⁾

My introduction to Abanji happened in the year 1980 and then continued till her death. From the time I met her till almost 15 years I was very close to her in the sense that she used to hold annual music competitions in Bombay and I was the only judge to be invited from Gujarat. The competitions were organized in a much disciplined manner. The timings of the competitions would be from 2 p.m. on Saturday afternoon to 8 at night and then again from 8 a.m. on Sunday to 8 at night. Abanji was so proactive that she would ensure that the first competitors would be ready on stage at sharp 2 p.m. on Saturday and on 8 a.m. on Sunday. She would personally ask each candidate about which taal they would play, which raag they would sing, do they have an accompanist or should she provide one to them etc.

As a human being she was very soft spoken and decent. Just by looking at her picture, one could know that she was a straight forward personality. She was a Parsi and there are very few Parsis who are in the music field. There were many musicians in Bombay as well, but amongst them Parsis were very few. Abanji was one such musician who was an expert in Sitar, Tabla and singing as well. She did her doctorate in Tabla but as a human being she was soft spoken, straight forward and a congenial personality. She always paid attention while talking to anyone. I was working with Times of India and have interviewed her several times and have written about her in the paper. Whenever she was asked a question, she would answer to the point. Her research work in the field of Tabla is incomparable and I don't think anyone else has done such kind of work during her time. Many Tabla players talked about her research work which was related to Gharanas of Tabla and Pakhawaj, but she was the only one who tried to compile it and make a systematic thesis, and being a lady and doing all this is very commendable. I have read her thesis, she had gifted her thesis to me. It has detailed information of the traditions of Pakhawaj and Tabla from the year 1890 till date, she has also prepared charts and specialty of each Gharana is also mentioned. No one has done such kind of work and I don't think anyone will do so in future too.

Women were not allowed to play Tabla in her time. But Abanji did her research none the less. There were instances when she had to travel very far to collect information for her thesis. She visited different cities, small places, bigger towns, metro cities. There were many Tabla players who refused to meet with her stating they do not want to talk about Tabla to any female.

1. Interview of Shri Girish Mudholkar/ 06th February 2019.

But she collected the material one way or the other. Apart from the book 'Pakhawaj aut Tabla ke Gharane avum Parampara', she has also written another book called 'Tabla ki Bandishey'. The book is a collection of rare bandishes and she has also attached a C.D. with it so that one can know how the bandishes are to be spoken in rhythm. So as I said, Abanji as a person was much disciplined and soft spoken, and as a percussionist, the work done by her during her time till date has not been done by anyone else. During her life, she has also visited foreign countries as part of the Indian government delegation and has given great performances of Tabla.

As a performer:

Her performance was just like her, systematic and neat. She would plan out everything like which Taal she would begin with, mostly Ganesh Stuti, and then she would play solo in Teentaal which included Kiada, palta, tukda, mukhda, chakradar bedam tihai, gat etc. her favorite was Farukhabad Gharana, but she played bandishes of other Gharanas as well. She knew the specialties of all the Gharanas because she had researched about all the Gharanas of both Tabla and Pakhawaj. All this knowledge reflected in her performance as well. She would start with Teentaal and then depending on the reaction of the audience she decided what to play next. If the audience consisted of good Tabla players then she tried to play uncommon taals like Mat Taal, Shankar Taal, Gaja Savari and Brahma Taal which is a rare Taal. I believe that no one has ever played a solo in Brahma Taal on a radio or TV. But Abanji has done that too. She was never invited to Doordarshan Ahmedabad, probably because she was a lady percussionist. But after she completed her doctorate degree, toured foreign countries and gave performances, it compelled me to write in The Time of India that 'here is a great percussionist who was probably neglected by television'. The next day she was called for a recording at Ahmedabad Doordarshan and probably this was her only program that was telecasted in Gujarat. She performed her solo beautifully and she also spoke about Tabla. If you look at her photo, she was such a pleasant personality that anyone would be mesmerized by just looking at her sitting on stage. She was a Parsi lady, was very fair and her speech was also very sweet, she had hatred for no one and amongst artists this is one of the best qualities which is very much appreciated. I have done 2 programs with her in Ahmedabad and in both the programs she was very particular about timing. She said that we will be on stage 5 minutes before the program starts, she also asked when she should finish the program. Usually the artists, especially during her time, were acentric and they would be in their own mood. But Abanji was an exception which is why all her programs were very successful. She was very good at time management.

Abanji also saw that in Mumbai there were many people who were interested and want to learn Tabla. She wanted to share her knowledge and whatever she had learnt with everyone because Teentaal solo was played by everyone and even if you go to any guru, he will also teach Teentaal first. But Abanji, being a researcher, she studied the uncommon taals , she created many compositions herself, she collected many new bandishes from great Ustads and presented them on stage so that the interested audience would be able to hear something different, this was her main objective.

About Swar Sadhna Samiti:

One of Abanji's biggest achievement is establishment of the Swar Sadhna Samiti in a city like Mumbai. The Swar Sadhna Samiti holds annual music competitions in the month of January and annual music programs in the month of March. In annual programs, she called prominent artists from all over India and honored them with Swar Sadhna Ratna award. Once I told her that you are giving the Swar Sadhna Ratna award to the famous artists, however there is a community in the field of music who have never been given appreciation like those people who make the Tabla, those who put syahi on it, the one who tunes the Tabla in the required pitch or fixes the vadi gate in proper manner, all these people are never spoken about or brought to light or on stage. Abanji took my words very positively and said that next year we will finalize all those people who have been helpful to us in one way or the other. And next time she honored all those people who were instrumental in making Tabla in one way or the other. Apart from that she also honored the organizers who helped in arranging the music programs. She also called the editors, reporters and music writers on stage and honored them as well. She also honored me, and I remember, artists like her guru Pt. K. Ki. Jijina, Abdul Halim Jafer etc. were present on the stage. I consider myself very fortunate that she gave me this honor. I believe that one of the reasons of honoring me could be because I had done a degree in Tabla and I could discuss a lot of things about Tabla like history or futuristic Tabla playing with her.

During those days there were many people who had good knowledge about music and they were experts in their field but they had not gotten a chance to be on stage. Abanji ensured that these artists also got a chance to perform on stage and provided them a platform either through competitions or annual programs. The age categories varied from 5 to 50 years, making sure no one was left out. By establishing Swar Sadhna Samiti she was able to do it, in the month of January they held vocal and instrument competition on the first Saturday and Sunday of the month followed by the dance competition on the following weekend. In the month of March

they would organize annual music festival ‘Swarsadhnotsav’ where top artist would perform and the winners of Swar Sadhna Competition would also be given chance to showcase their talent. These programs are being organized since 1967 without missing a single year. Mrs. Rupa Sethna and her husband played a major role in the success of this institution, they have a huge team who use to contribute whole heartedly for the success of any program. They would give great honor and respect to the musicians who were called for performance or as judges, who used to return very happy and delighted. The best thing of these programs was that everything was very systematic, on time and right presentation. Abanji would meet all the candidates, judges and also to the relatives of the competitors advising them to keep the mood and psychology of their son or daughter congenial and good so that their performance is not affected. Abanji has no intention to make money through these competitions and programs. Even the judges who use to come there for competition never expected money from her, because the ambience that Abanji created through music was simply superb that financial matters were never important at that time. As the popular saying goes “Music is a universal language”, so after listening to the swar of different instruments and bols of Tabla, you are transported to another world and at that time financial matters don’t bother you. Most of the top artists, especially of her generation, were never money minded. Even if they would not get the expected amount of money, still they would give their best performance and Abanji was also like that.

4:2:2:3 Dr. Jay Sevak (Assistant Professor, Dept. of Vocal Music, Hirani College, Rajkot)

According to me she was a lady of the Millennium and it is obvious that she was the source of attraction for media during those days in the field of Music. Abanji had performed in almost all the major cities of India as well as in many foreign countries and therefore she had always been a subject of discussion for the reporters of newspapers of all different places wherever she performed. I have seen many of her interviews and articles in innumerable newspapers and magazines of different states in their regional languages. At that time no lady was even thinking of taking this instrument as a career and there was a belief that this is male dominant instrument and can only be played by the males, but Abanji proved this wrong. She mastered all the aspects of Tabla and opened a new path for females to think about. She made it easier for the women to think about learning this instrument and instead of only thinking about vocal and dance they can also choose Tabla as a career, which a big reform was brought by her in the field of Indian Classical Music. Thus, Abanji had broken the belief that only males can play instruments like Tabla and

Pakhawaj and she started a new trend that even females can play such male-dominated instruments. Later on this was also accepted by many well-known Ustads and Pandits during those days.⁽¹⁾

• **Statements by the reporters of various print media about Dr. Aban Mistry :**

“प्रवाह के विपरीत जाकर और दुराग्रहों कि पस्ती जमीनको तोड़कर कुछ कर गुजरना आसान नहीं होता, लेकिन अगर कोई ऐसा करता है ओर वहभी एक महिला, तो उसकी हिम्मत कि दाद देनी चाहिए। डॉ. अबान मिस्त्री ऐसीही एक महिला है, हीनहोने उस जमाने में इस दुनियामे कदम रखा जब महिलाओ को रुडियो कि तमाम जंजीरों ने जकड़ रखा था”.⁽²⁾

- Mangesh Modak

“श्रीमति अबान कि तबला वादन कि कला किसी एक घराने का प्रतिनिधित्व कर सीमित नहीं रही। बल्कि उसमे विभिन्न घरानों कि जैसे दिल्ली की कोमलता, फरुखाबाद की चाल, लखनऊ कि नजाकत ओर बनारस की दहाड़ भी सम्मिलित है। आपके वादन में स्पष्ट निकास, बाये की दाबगौस, गणितकारी आदि से यह स्पष्ट होता है कि वो किसी पुरुष वादक से कम नहीं थी। अप्रचलित तालों में देड़ से दो घंटे तक स्वतंत्र वादन करना मामूली बात नहीं है”।⁽³⁾

- Gopivallabh Swami

“अबान मिस्त्री का नाम तबला वादन में अपनी अलग पहचान बना चुका है। उनकी वादन कि विशेषता है कि जहा उनका तकनीकी पक्ष सटीक है वही तबले के बोलों से मानो वो बातचित सी करती लगती है”⁽⁴⁾

- Madhur Kapila

“डॉ. अबान मिस्त्रीने अपनी प्रतिभा ओर कड़े परिश्रम के बल पर संगीत जगतमें नई मंजिलें तैय की है ओर राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर बहुमूल्य योगदान दिया है। उनका यह कार्य भारत के लिए ही नहीं बल्कि पूरी दुनिया के लिए एक मिसाल है कि एक महिला कलाकार ने तमाम परंपरागत धारणाओं व मान्यताओं को तोड़ते हुए तबले जैसे कठिन वाद्य पर एकाधिकार स्थापित किया और संगीत के सभी पक्षों पर विकास, प्रचार-प्रसार का स्थाई कार्य किया। इससे निश्चय ही इस क्षेत्रमें उनहोंने भारतीय परंपरा को सुदृढ़ किया है”.⁽⁵⁾

- Asfaq Kadri

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1. Interview of Dr. Jay Sevak/ 03rd May 2017.
 2. Statement by Mangesh Modak/ Madhyabharat Paridrashya Magazine/Sep – Oct 1993, Raipur.
 3. Statement by Gopivallabh/ Swami Dainik Yugpaksh/ 19-09-1993.
 4. Statement by Madhur Kapila/ Dainik Tribune/ 17-03-1994, Chandigarh.
 5. Statement by Asfaq Kadri/ Rajasthan Patrika/ 02-02-1994, Bikaner.

“અબ્બાનજી એક સમર્પિત સંગીત સાધિકા છે. સંગીતના ચરણોમા તેમને શબ્દશઢ પોતનુ જીવન સમર્પિત કરિ દિધુ છે. અબ્બાનજી ની તબલા વાદન કલા કોઇ એક ઘરાના સુધી સીમીત નથી પણ તે અનેક ઘરાનાઓ માથી પસંદ કરેલો એવો ગુલદસ્તો છે કે જેમા અનેક રંગ ના ફુલો સજાવેલા છે. સંગીતમા કરેલા કાર્યો એ સંગીત જગત માટે એક સુખદ ઘટના છે”.⁽²⁾

- Reporter of Sannari, Gujarat Mitra

“શ્રીમતી અબાનજી કા તબલા મહજ ઇસલિએ નહીં કિ એક મહિલા કલાકાર ખી તબલા બજા સકતી હે, બલ્કિ ડનકી તકનીકી વિશેષતા કે કારણખી ડન્હે જાના જા સકતા હે। એસી તકનીકી જિસમે ચપલતા હે ઓર વિવિધ ઘરાનોં કે અધ્યયન કે બાદ તૈયાર કિ ગઈ અપની તરહ કિ હુનરતા। ડનકે લરજતે હુવે ગાતે તબલે સે જમી બંદિશોં કો કૌન અપને સંગીત સંગ્રહ મે નહી સંજોના ચાહેગા”⁽³⁾

- Reporter of Jansatta, Chandigadh

“વિરલ કલાકાર એસે હોતે હે જિન્હે હાલત કે ક્રૂર થપેડે ખી ડિગા નહીં પાતે એસેહી એક જીવન કે ધની કલાકાર હે ડૉ. અબાન મિસ્ત્રી”.⁽⁴⁾

- Rutu Shree

“કોઇ રગવાયો થયેલો વાઘ એના સીકાર પર જે ચપળતા થી તરાપ મારે એવીજ ચપળતા થી તેઓ ખુબી પુર્વક સમનુ પ્રદર્શન કરે છે” ⁽⁵⁾

- Reporter of Mahila Times Purti, Ahmedabad.

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1. Statement by Reporter of Sannari, Gujarat Mitra/ 07-09-2002, Surat.
 2. Statement by the Reporter of Jansatta/ 17-03-1994, Chandigadh.
 3. Statement by Rutu Shree/Dopahar Purti/ 05-01-1994.
 4. Statement by Reporter of Mahila Times Purti/ 14-04-1990, Ahmedabad.

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4:3 Response of the Artist Community

The story of successful people remains in everyone's mind and is frequently talked about. This holds true in every field for all famous people. The field of music is vast, it is a cluster of different scholars belonging to the area of music, instrument and dance. The perspective of all the experts has been positive with regards to Abanji. The researcher has taken interviews of various scholars, musicologists, Tabla artists, other instrumentalists, singers, dancers, accompanists, academicians etc. and everyone has appreciated different aspects of Abanji's work. Some have talked about his research, some have talked about her performance while others have talked about her positive thought process and service towards music. The gist of all the above mentioned things has been presented in one form or the other in this entire thesis. Here the researcher has presented in words the experience of the artist community about Abanji. Further, the researcher has also taken video interviews of various scholars and the information received from them is presented here.

4:3:1 Statements of Various Eminent Artists and Academicians

4:3:1:1 Pt. Sudhir Mainkar

Abanji was a very gentle and glorious lady. She was born in a Parsi family and therefore she regularly went to the Parsi Agyari (religious place of Parsis) but whenever she spoke she always would always begin with "Maa Saraswati"

Generally what happens, the family to which a person belongs is very important to pursue deeper in any subject and therefore, family background plays a vital role in any individual's life. For instance: my father was interested in Music and he knew Tabla, which is why it became easy for me to understand or to learn Tabla.

Abanji belongs to Parsi culture so there was no background of Tabla in her family. But because of her guru Pt. Keki S. Jijina, (her friend, philosopher and guide) she got the atmosphere of Tabla, she also learnt vocal from Pt. Laxmanrao Bodas and later on she took further training of Tabla under the guidance of Ustad Amir Hussain Khan – The Doyen of Farukhabad Gharana.⁽¹⁾

1. Interview of Pt. Sudhir Mainkar/9th January 2018

4:3:1:2 Pt. Yogesh Samsi

I was born and brought up in Mumbai so from childhood I got opportunity to see and learn from many Tabla players like Pt. Arvind Mulgaonkar, Pt. Sudhir Mainkar, and Pt. Suresh Talwalkar. But I always saw a lady sitting with all these scholarly personalities discussing on different aspects of Tabla (at that time I did not have any knowledge of who Abanji is). So one day I asked Pt. Suresh Talwalkarji that who is this lady? And he brought to my knowledge that she is very learned lady and disciple of Ut. Amir Hussain Khan! It was very shocking for me as I found out that she belonged to Parsi Community, because in those days very rarely Parsis took music as a career. So the big question in my mind was, a lady from Parsi Community has chosen a Male dominant instrument-Tabla as a Career?

I was very curious to know how she turned towards Tabla, so when I got introduced to her, I got an opportunity to discuss with her on Tabla. She shared her experiences with me and that is how I came to know many things about her and also about Ut. Amir Hussain Khan sahab from her.⁽¹⁾

4:3:1:3 Pt. Amod Dandge

I saw Abanji first time when I was only 10-11 years old, there was a 'Datt' temple in our village and she used to come there on every Gokulashtmi for seva as my grandfather Haridattji was her spiritual guru, at that time I saw her playing Tabla and today I regret that at that time I was not mature enough to understand the compositions she recited and presented during her performance. But, that was the time I was introduced to lay and laykari because of Abanji as she had mastered the concept of Lay and laykari, she used to do many laykaris with different calculations and also with different combinations of bols like 14 beats in 16 beats, 11 beats in 16 beats etc., at that time I did not understand anything that was happening, the only thing I understood a little bit was, this is what is called "Lay and Laykari".

I can say that Abanji has done boundless work which was not possible even for a male during that time. When girls were not even allowed to get proper education Abanji had made her career in this field and made huge contributions to the society in the form of books and also by providing reputed platform of Swar Sadhna Samiti to the young artists. Thus, her efforts resulted

1. Interview of Pt. Yogesh Samsi /3rd March 2019

in achieving such work which was distinctive. She served whole heartedly with dedication as a great artist and a noble human being.⁽¹⁾

4:3:1:4 Smt. Hetal Mehta

I have been hearing Abanji's name since my childhood, and I think she was the first female Tabla player. I was just a teenager when she saw me performing for the first time and she was so happy to see me playing Tabla, she blessed me and called me to Swar Sadhna Samiti, Mumbai for a performance. So it was in the 90's that I first met her.

In my experience, she was an erudite personality and I have also heard from my father late Pt. Nandan Mehta that she was very kind hearted Lady. She was a source of motivation especially for female artists because during those days females did not have any interest in percussion instruments but irrespective of gender Abanji had chosen this male dominant percussion instrument and made her own identity in this field which is the biggest example for all of us. She broke the tradition that females cannot play any percussion instrument. She not only broke the tradition but also proved herself by mastering all difficult aspects of this instrument, it was a remarkable step taken by her during those days.⁽²⁾

4:3:1:5 Smt. Manju Mehta

My association with Abanji had been long lasting as we invited her many times for performance and also as a judge in Saptak as well as Sangeet Natak Academy. According to me she was one of the top most female Tabla players I have ever seen. During that time when females did not accept or even think about this instrument as most of the people thought that Tabla is just an accompanying instrument, It was not easy for a lady to travel everywhere with other artists to accompany them. This may be the reason why female did not accept this instrument as a career.

Abanji has proved that females can also be good Tabla players, however Abanji had to struggle a lot and worked hard to do so. Abanji not only played what she learned from her gurus but she had her own creative approach towards this instrument because of which she has in-depth knowledge of this subject and was able to comprehend various difficult aspects of Tabla. She has also created many taals and had great command on the calculations of

1. Interview of Pt. Amod Dandge/27th November 2018

2. Interview of Smt. Hetal Mehta /16th April 2018

various tihaai, not only that but she always tried to promote and spread her musical thoughts and the knowledge gained from her gurus. She also wrote many books on music and her book on the different tradition of Tabla and Pakhawaj has proved to be one of her greatest contribution to the society. She has also served as a guru for many years and trained many students, she was running an organization name ‘Swar Sadhana Samiti’ jointly with her guru Pt. Keki S. Jijina which is still active and has successfully completed almost six decades of its valuable service to promote Indian Classical Music, being such a learned person and having great artistic personality, she was very soft spoken and a kind hearted lady. According to me the contribution of Abanji is highly commendable and will remain in the hearts of people for many years. ⁽¹⁾

4:3:1:6 Prof. Mukund Bhale

I met Abanji first time around 1975 when she came to Khairagadh, I think I was a student or working as an accompanist I don’t remember exactly as it has been almost 45 years. She came for performance at that time and as I was a student, it was a matter of attraction that a lady is going to play a Tabla-Solo. According to me two women have contributed remarkably in the field of Tabla and if I am not wrong Abanji is known as the first female Tabla player. She has done phenomenal work by touring all over India and collecting first-hand information by meeting the artists and gurus of each Gharana despite the unavailability of modern technologies, how many difficulties she must have faced to collect information by meeting each of them personally, she had surrendered herself and did this work with utmost faith and dedication.

I saw her first time when she came for performance at Khairagadh, she looked so beautiful and was soft spoken, like a purely dignified lady. I remember that I met her last at Vashi in Mumbai and before that we met around five – six times. I feel honored to share one thing that Abanji always use to tell me that “whenever I see you, it reminds me of my brother Pt. Girishchandra Shrivastav”, I have seen both of them having great respect for one another as both have been associated since a long time and have also helped each other in their works.

When we met, many times I have asked her to teach me some bandishes and she never refused. I also want to share that Swar Sadhna is actively working since so many years and they have done enormous amount of programs but unfortunately I never got the chance to pay

1. Interview of Smt. Manju Mehta/ 16th April 2018

Haazri (serve by playing solo) in Swar Sadhna Samiti and I will always regret that.

I also wanted Abanji to come to Khairagadh and teach as a visiting faculty but she was so busy with her schedule that it was not possible for her to take out time for two or three days.

According to me people like Dr. Aban Mistry have done pioneering work and have invaluable contributed to Indian Classical Music, these are the people who have made the common people know what Tabla actually is! ⁽¹⁾

4:3:1:7 Shri Praveen Karkare

I have heard Abanji's name because of Swar Sadhna Competition which is organized every year since last more than fifty years. I had never participated in it but I send my students to participate in that competition. I was so impressed by the musical ambience of that competition and the work management of Abanji, how gently she deals with students and their gurus who come for the competition and the way she discusses everything with the Judges.

I heard that Abanji was the first lady Tabla player but I did not know how she looked or how she played Tabla? As YouTube and other social media was not easily available like today, after a long time I got a chance to listen to her performance. When I met Abanji I could not believe that the first lady Tabla player of the world is so humble and kind by nature, she behaved so gently with each and every one. As time passed, we got associated with each other and then being a senior artist and as acknowledgeable guru, instead of ordering me, she requested to me perform in the monthly program of Swar Sadhana Samiti, I said admiringly you just have to command me! Thus, from that day I am following her command and have been associated with Swar Sadhna Samiti and serving it as best as I can.

It was my good luck that Abanji was the examiner in my Alankar examination, I had read her book on "Pakhawaj aur Tabla ke Gharane evum Paramparaye" and after that when I came to know that Abanji is going to come to our exam center as an examiner, I was literally scared as I never met her before. I was scared because i came to know from some of my friends who had already faced Abanji as an examiner that Abanji is very strict when it comes to exam. So, I reached the examination center and Abanji asked me to play, I started playing and for some time she just kept observing my playing and I was not getting what she is doing! After sometime she

1. Interview of Prof. Mukund Bhale/ 28th November 2018

started asking me in detail about the compositions I played, like which Gharana do they belong to and who has composed them? And I kept on answering her questions one after another and she was happy with that. According to what I heard from people, she confused students while taking exam but that day I realized that she got impressed with students who worked hard in their studies and gained proper knowledge of it. She herself had worked hard and did lot of practice (Riyaz) to get command over the difficult aspects of Tabla. She knew the importance of practice and hard work as she had traveled the entire country for collecting data regarding her treatise during a time when ladies did not accept this instrument. Her expectations from the students who were giving the Alankar exam was that, they should be prepared for that particular exam as in the upcoming future they would have to deal with their students and so a teacher should be capable enough from the knowledge point of view before starting his or her teaching career. As the future of the students is totally dependent upon the knowledge of a teacher. Thus, today I feel proud to say that my Alankar exam was conducted under Abanji's supervision.

I also wanted to say that a researcher like you got inspired to do Ph.D. on Dr. Aban Mistry is in itself a great contribution of her but I want to advice you that if you really want to work on Abanji then you should follow her first, the way she had done her research and proved herself. If you do it the way she did then it will be the biggest tribute ever given to a great maestro by anyone.

One more thing should be added to her contribution, she has set an example for all the Tabla gurus that when any girl wants to learn Tabla then we should teach her without any prejudice and should not have an attitude of what can a girl do in this male dominant instrument, So Abanji is the biggest example in front of all of us.

Abanji was not only a significant guru but she was also an exceptional disciple. Until her last day, Abanji always remembered her gurus Pt. Keki Jijina and Ut. Amir Hussain Khan before doing any work in her life as she knew the value of respect and faith for guru. Thus, this unique quality and blessings of her guru took her to the greater heights.

"I am really feeling fortunate and grateful that I got an opportunity to say something about a great artist, exceptional guru and a kind hearted human being like Dr. Aban Mistry."⁽¹⁾

1. Interview of Shri Pravin Karkare /9th January 2018

4:3:1:8 Prof. Mukesh Garg

My association with Abanji goes back twenty years. She would send me her article for publishing them in the “SANGEET” Magazine, hence we came in contact with each other via writing letters. I started Sangeet Sankalp in 1989 with a vision to establish the branches of Sangeet Sankalp in all the major cities of the county. The objective behind having branches at all different places is that, the artist who are giving their whole life into practicing music and who don't have any clear picture of their future should be given an opportunity to present their talent at different places with the help of Sangeet Sankalp. The artistes belonging to different places, who are practicing hard and are not in this field only for the Glamour, can get a chance to present themselves at the respective branch of Sangeet Sankalp in their cities. So, I had a word with Abanji, asking if it is possible to open a branch of Sangeet Sankalp at Bombay. She replied that, they all are dedicatedly running an organization Swar Sadhna Samiti under the guidance of their Guruji Pt. Keki S. Jijina, without any commercial motive, only to promote Indian Classical Music and to provide stage to the young talents and help them go further. I told her our motives are very close to each other so we can also organize programs of Sangeet Sankalp in association with Swar Sadhna Samiti, she told me that she will talk to Guruji and will get back soon, she also asked me to meet whenever I came to Bombay. At that time I went to Mumbai and met Abanji and her guruji for the first time, after that meeting they started organizing the programs of Sangeet Sankalp.

According to me it is very difficult to find a person like Abanji in Music because being a Lady her aim was to promote each and every branch of music and every seeker of music should get an opportunity to present their talent and be recognized and know. I have never seen a lady who has given her whole life to serve goddess Saraswati (Music), she did not have any kind of selfish motive behind it and always thought about others. Thus, I have always seen her with greatest amount of respect. Second thing is that during those days no females were there who played Tabla, according to me one is Dr. Aban Mistry and second is Smt. Yogmaya Shukla who was working as an accompanist at Delhi University. It was very difficult for a lady to choose Tabla and also to prove herself in this field when Tabla players were not given any kind of importance like today. Before sixty years it was just equal to nothing. Even the male Tabla players were categorize in second category. During those days taking Tabla as a career was a big thing and according to me was a revolutionary step taken by Abanji during the time when girls were not even allowed to go out of the house. This step was taken by a Parsi Lady, in Parsis they don't have tradition of doing Pooja, but Abanji

worshipped goddess Saraswati and did regular pooja at Swar Sadhna Samiti without missing a single day. Thus Abanji, under her guidance created such a spiritual musical environment which is scarcely ever seen.

She have always had an excellent support from the members of Swar Sadhna Samiti, Rupa Sethna has always been by her side and still is working actively after Abanji passed away. All the members are dedicatedly working with the same enthusiasm as that was part of Abanji's teachings. Abanji was not a lady of glamour at all. She has contributed remarkably for continuously lightning the lamp of Indian Classical Music in the whole country.

She had a huge affinity for me in the three four years that we were associated with each other. She was 8 – 10 years elder to me, one fine day I received a letter with rakhi in it as it was Raksha Bandhan period and then she continued sending me rakhi every year till she was completely bed ridden. At that time I visited Mumbai to meet her, she was not even able to talk only her mind was working, I tried to make her feel good by telling her that she has done everything what she wanted to do in her life span and no women in this world has done what she had done by sacrificing her whole life serving for Music. Now, it's time to relax and take the name of god, at that I saw tears coming from her eyes. So this was my relation with Abanji, she was like an elder sister to me. ⁽¹⁾

4:3:1:9 Prof. Kiran Deshpande

First of all I would like to say we both were related to each other as I am also the student of the same Gharana; Farukhabad Gharana, to which Abanji also belongs. Abanji came on a Spic Macay Tour, when I was serving as a professor in Bhopal. At that time her Guru and a very learned personality Pt. Keki S. Jijina also came with her, that was my first meeting with her and then she invited me for a performance at Swar Sadhna Samiti. We also use to meet each other many times at Prayag Sangeet Samiti for conducting exams and Ph.D viva. We were also in the selection committee at Khairagadh University. Thus, we only used to meet during these academic works but only the presence of some people shows their intellectual level. Thus, I assumed the higher level of intelligence and knowledge of Abanji by her way of talking and discussion on various musical topics. ⁽²⁾

1. Interview of Prof. Mukesh Garg /3rd July 2019

2. Interview of Kiran Deshpande /5th January 2018

4:3:1:10 Pt. Girishchandra Shrivastav

Abanji was like a real sister to me and it was the same with her also. I was working as a lecturer at Kumaun University in 1974, when one day Mukherjee sir (an accompanist of our department) came to me and said that one lady has come from Mumbai and she is going to perform a Tabla solo this evening. He further said that she has told to inform all the music (Tabla) lovers of Nainital and that she will be pleased if they come to attend the program. I went to the program venue on time and I saw an elderly person playing nagma, who was Pt.Keki S. Jijina and Abanji was presenting her solo. She had presented Teentaal and Ektaal, I saw whole solo which was outstanding throughout. After the program I went to meet her and invited them for next day's lunch at my place. Next day, when she came to my place we talked for couple of hours and after having lunch she left for the railway station as she was traveling back to Mumbai. This is how I met Abanji, and in that one meeting, we both felt as if we knew each other since so long.

At that time letters were the only medium for any kind of communication and correspondence, in every 20-25 days she would send me a letter and I replied to each of her letters as soon as possible. I have two daughters one is dancer and other one is an upstanding sitar player, so she invited my daughters for a performance at the monthly program of Swar Sadhna Samiti.

After a few days she wrote a letter to me asking if I can help to publish her research which she has done from Gandharva Mahavidhyalay. I agreed to help her in her publication and so she sent her manuscript to publish. I went through her work and saw that there were so many grammatical errors regarding the language of the research done, I wrote to her telling her that this is not the correct Hindi for a book, I can publish it but it will not have any value in the market because of its language barrier. She asked me to do the corrections for her which was not an easy work at all. She handed me her manuscript with five thousand rupees and told me to hire a person to assist in this work. To correct the already written script is more difficult than to write something new, so it took a very long time, meanwhile my elder daughter got married and the money which Abanji had given was spent by me. Suddenly, one day I received a letter from her in which she had clearly written "Lost Faith in you, return my manuscript, not interested in Publication". After reading it, I felt very bad and insulted like there is a taint on my name, something like this had never happened with me before in my life. I wrote her a letter and told her that I have returned your manuscript but remember one

thing, if you get someone who can correct it and publish this work then that's great but if not, then my door is always open for you.

After some days, Abanji and Guruji Jijina sahab came to my home, I asked Abanji that why she wrote such things like "lost faith and not interested" she replied that she was still not interested to publish the book but she did not want to lose a brother like me, I still have memories of that emotional moment. Then I told her that if you want to publish this book then you have to come to Allahabad six times and you also have to call me to Mumbai six times because I don't have that much money that I can come by myself all the way to Mumbai, she agreed and then she used to call me to Mumbai and accommodate me in a hotel, she was so punctual and perfect in her work and she perfectly guided me about each and everything, she told that from 9 to 11 a.m. she has tuition and then she will come to pick me so be ready by 12.35 as she will come in a taxi and if she left the taxi then it will be hard to find another taxi. So I use to reach five minutes prior to the time given to me. Then she also came to Allahabad four to five times, she would do each and every thing very systematically and when the whole work was completed she told me to publish it.

The charts given in the book about the disciple lineage of all the Gharanas are really unique. During that time no technology like computers were available, at that time I was working in university and so I requested my friend who was in the printing department to help us in doing this work. He agreed to do the work and all the charts were designed and prepared in front of me. The whole book was completed and printed along with charts from Bhargav Press (from where we do all the printing work), but the question was, what should be the price of this book? Then she again called me to Mumbai, we all sat together and discussed about the price of the book, guruji said it should be 80 Rs. Which was really a big amount for a book during those days, I said that if a pan vendor who does not know the value of this book will not even give eight rupees for the book but a person who knows the value of the content in this book will spend hundred rupees behind it. Finally, after thinking a lot we all finalized 100 Rs. for the book.

During her book release, she invited my whole family and also paid for all the expenses of that trip. It is here that I saw the respect and obeisance she had for all the Gurus, there was a stage and chairs were kept for each of them who were present on the dais, she has also arranged one extra chair on which she kept the picture of her Ustad (Ut. Amir Hussain Khan). She gave a gift to everyone and also offered the same to the picture of her Ustad and said that today whatever I have learnt is only because of his blessings. I also want to share that Abanji

wanted the release of her book to be done by Thakur Jaidev Sinh. At that time Thakur ji was very old like I am today. Abanji contacted him and asked him to grace the occasion by his presence. Thakurji told Abanji to send him eight thousand rupees for air fare of two people. Abanji want it to be done by Thakurji only therefore she arranged and sent the money, thus finally the book release was done by Thakur Jaidev sinh and he read the preface, which was given in the book.

Her later life was very painful, she suffered from many diseases, one day I got a call from Abanji's very close friend Shrimati Rupa Sethna informing me that Abanji was not well and she was suffering a lot. My wife and myself we both went to Mumbai from Allahabad specially to see her, I saw that once a charming lady with a smile on her face always had become immovable and completely bed-ridden. She was not able to say a single word and that was my last meeting with her. At that time Pt. Sudhir Mainkar wanted to meet me and I told him that Mumbai is very new place for me and it will be difficult for me to search for your address, so it will be better if he could come here to meet. He asked for how long I was going to stay? And for what purpose had I come to Mumbai. I told him that I specially came to meet my sister, Dr. Aban Mistry, as she was not well. Mainkarji was shocked and asked that you came from Allahabad specially to see Abanji, I said yes as she is my elder sister so I have come to see her. During her last days when she was able to speak, I remember Abanji gifting her gold earrings to my wife and her Tabla hammer to me. These are invaluable memories of her.

I also want to share one thing that Abanji used to go to Amir Hussain Khan Sahab's place and the locality of that area was not favorable for girls. So, Ustadji told Abanji that from now onwards he will come to her place for talim. Thus, Ustadji used to go to her place to teach her which was an unusual thing because Ustadji was not gaining anything out of it but he was a very open-hearted person. According to him teaching others adds to your own knowledge and Khan was known as an exceptional guru of his time, because of his hard work and willingness to teach, this art had spread all over in Maharashtra. During his active time, he had stopped doing accompaniment and only concentrated on Tabla-solo, Khan sahab was widely known for Tabla solo and Abanji was very inspired by him, thus she had also emphasized on playing Tabla solo rather than accompaniment. Being a Parsi lady, she dedicated her whole life to music and minutely understood the quintessence of music, which was a unique thing as no Parsis were taking Indian Classical Music as a career during those days.

I want to share one thing that she was a very content person; I remember that when she had stopped getting out of the house because of her illness, at that time I went to Mumbai with my wife. My wife and Abanji were very close to each other so she asked my wife to take all of her sarees which she use to wear, by saying that ‘now it of no use to me’, she took out two or three sarees and gifted rest the sarees to my wife.

Abanji had great chemistry with her guruji Pt.Keki S. Jijina, she had always been loyal to her guru throughout her whole life. She had proved herself as a superior student by blindly following the instructions given him guru as she had great respect, faith and honor for her Guru. She was very persistent and determined for each and everything whether it is work, performance or a relation, once she decided to do then she would finish it at anyhow. In the same way she always maintained a healthy relation with everyone, once she got associated with the person then she would keep that relation throughout her life without having any selfish motive behind that relation. The greatest gift which god gifted to Abanji as a friend was Shrimati Rupa Sethna, she served Abanji till the last breath of her life. Today, Rupaji is looking after Swar Sadhna Samiti and she promised that “I will actively serve this Samiti as it was during the time of guruji and Abanji till the time I am alive”. ⁽¹⁾

4:3:1:11 Dr. Murari Sharma

She always had a desire to learn something new and addressed herself as a student and learner of Music. She had great respect and faith in all the gurus. My father Pt. Jaychand Sharma was very closely associated with her, he also wrote a note for her book which was printed in the beginning of her book. She had great respect for all the Gharanas of Tabla and Pakhawaj and proved it by doing an admirable work and writing a book on the tradition of all the Gharanas. Abanji’s priority was to develop as much interest of the art form-Tabla amongst the mass as possible and therefore she had minutely seen and understood each facet of this subject, so that she could present this subject precisely in front of the world.

Being the founder director of an organization like Swar Sadhna Samiti, she had widely contributed in teaching, examining and proper presentation of art (which is also a part of teaching). She would always guide students and young artists about presenting oneself in front of the audience and what things should be kept in mind before, during and after the performance. She was very well-mannered and always respected other artists. She invited

1. Interview of Pt. Girishchandra Shrivastav /13th March 2018

different artists to perform in monthly as well as annual programs of her organization and gracefully regarded them with great respect. To provide stage to number of young artists and also introduce upcoming talent to the music world were remarkable contributions of Abanji. She was a highly intellectual lady, her contribution to the field of research is invaluable, her book on the tradition of all the Gharanas of Tabla and Pakhawaj took almost twelve years to complete and the information it carries is undoubtedly reliable and it is used as a major reference book in all the universities of India. Abanji was always curious about learning new things and as a result she collected numerous compositions from various Ustads, Pandits and Gurus of all different Gharanas and published it in a book form to make these valuable and traditional compositions available for the upcoming generation. ⁽¹⁾

4:3:1:12 Prof. Pravin Uddhav

I saw Abanji for the first time at a Tabla Seminar organized by NCPA – Mumbai, and I met her first when I was in Khairagadh University and she came for a workshop over there. Upon meeting her I felt as if I am meeting some highly spiritual personality and a kind hearted human being, it is hard to describe in words about that happy feeling which I have felt on meeting Abanji the first time.

Abanji was a great personality having various qualities, she was a researcher, seeker, organizer thinker etc. She has done research in many different areas like origin of Tabla, History of Tabla etc. she had great command over complex laykaris of Tabla which were very difficult and she was successful in mastering them. She said many times that while practicing and concentrating on complex laykari she felt as if she is directly connected to Goddess Saraswati. ⁽²⁾

4:3:1:13 Pt. Sadanand Naimpalli

I was associated with Abanji since I was 13 or 14 years old, at that time I was learning Tabla from my Guruji Pt. Taranath Rao. Abanji and her guru Pt. Keki S. Jijina had just established their organization Swar Sadhana Samiti and they had come to meet our guruji and requested him to send students to participate in the swar sadhna competition, Guruji had sent ten to twelve students to participate in the competition. I also remembered that one of my guru bhai Shri Mohan Badolika and myself performed jugalbandi in the first or second annual program of Swar Sadhana Samiti.

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1. Interview of Dr. Murari Sharma /27th March 2017
 2. Interview of Prof. Pravin Uddhav/ 5th January 2020

As a lady she was extremely humble and very down to earth, she never refused to do anything if someone requested it of her. I remember one incident where I went for one program of Swar Sadhana Samiti and she was bringing her Tabla from her class and I saw a beautiful pair of Tabla rings which she had bought from somewhere outside Mumbai, I asked her from where did get those rings as I also want to buy such a pair. She told me that “I don’t remember exactly but you can take this with you Sadanandji and I will get another one for me”. She was so humble that she used to go out of her way to receive people, she would go down to the other person’s level and talk to them whether he or she is a student or a small child. Her presence never made anybody feel that she is such a learned lady.

I admire her for her courage and ability to do such great works during those days where people were so orthodox about taking music as a career. Abanji being a lady, took this male dominant instrument – Tabla as a career and has done such reformatory work which is very commendable. She was “The first Lady Tabla Player”.⁽¹⁾

4:3:1:14 Dr. Jay Sevak

Abanji always wished that females would also take interest in the field of music rather than staying at home and looking after family and cooking food. It can be anything, either singing, Instrument playing or Dance, but there should be some contribution of females in music. She wanted that like other fields’ women should also prove themselves in the field of Music as well.

Tabla was a male dominant instrument but then also Abanji chose this instrument because from very beginning she was a revolutionary kind of a person. She had not chosen Tabla because she wanted to do something unique i.e. female playing male dominant instrument, but she wanted to bring reforms like female also playing Tabla and achieving greater heights in it.⁽²⁾

4:3:1:15 Dr. Viraj Amar

According to me Abanji was a very pure hearted lady and artist too, I met her first when I participated in Pt. Omkarnath Thakur Competition and she was there as a Judge of that competition. At that time my age was 20 and I was the youngest amongst all the participants

1. Interview of Pt. Sadanand Naimpalli / 23rd December 2019

2. Interview of Dr. Jay Sevak /3rd May 2017

in the senior age group as the age limit of the senior group was from 19 to 45 years. I was very nervous at that time like how students generally feel during the time of a competition. At that time Abanji was sitting in the audience and she kept on encouraging me while I was performing. Finally, I stood first in the competition, under the senior age category. Just after the competition Abanji met my parents especially just to tell them that I was doing well and they should keep on supporting me to go ahead in this field and should not hurry into getting me married as after marriage the life of a girl totally changes because of all the responsibilities of the whole family.

After that she invited me to perform in the monthly program of her institution “Swar Sadhna Samiti” which was a big opportunity for me as a beginner to perform on such a prestigious platform at a place like Mumbai that too as a solo artist. Thus, Abanji supported me at a very young age of 21 and gave me a stage to perform in front of all learned personalities of music at Mumbai which was a big thing for me during those days and I am very much thankful to Abanji for the same. During those days our Indian society was totally dominated by the males and in that society to choose a male-dominating instrument and to build her own identity as a solo-player was a challenging task for her. I am pretty sure that she must have struggled a lot for making her identity in this field and for proving herself as a Tabla player, which was very rare during those days.

According to me, one needs so much of dedication and courage to do the reformative work that Abanji has done. There is so much of talent existing in our country, many girls and women wish to take music as a career but to be stable in any situation of life without quitting what one wants to do has many difficulties on its way but facing them and sticking to one’s decision is very important. It is not necessary that someone should keep encouraging you all the time. Music is such a field where initially it is not easy for everyone to get support and encouragement. But, one must face such situations and keep working hard with dedication and conviction that whatever we are doing is the right thing and that is what Abanji did during those days. Thus, it is very inspiring for all the artists and young generation of today, that in spite of facing so many difficulties in life, one should keep focusing on what he/she wants to do. If you are focused on what you want to do in life and you are really working hard with full dedication, it is obvious that you are going to achieve greater heights in future. Sometimes many people quit in the middle so being focused is very rare, and that is what Abanji did. ⁽¹⁾

1. Interview of Dr. Viraj Amar/1st April 2017

4:3:1:16 Pt. Omkar Gulvady

I came Bombay in 1967, and since 1970 I am associated with Abanji. I used to play in the monthly as well as in the annual program of their organization and because of that we became familiar with each other. My guruji Pt. Taranath Rao had a good relation with Jijina sir so he frequently came to meet guruji with Abanji and I also used to be there. In 1970 I played in one of the program of Swar Sadhna Samiti in which I accompanied a vocalist and after that they started inviting me every year. They gave me the opportunity to accompany many famous and reputed artists during that time.

She was like a goddess to me in a real sense, just like we see 'veena' in the hand of Maa Saraswati, in the same way Abanji was having instrument Tabla with her. Abanji was a complete personality, she was so religious and spiritual. I also remember that Abanji died on full moon day which was not an ordinary full moon, it was the poornima after the completion of Chatur Maas and it is a belief that it is one of the most pious days according to the Hindu calendar. One more thing I would like to add is that she had a complete balance between her private and professional life and she was so perfect both the aspects, she has maintained relation with each and every one so well without having any type of selfish motive behind it, nowadays we cannot find such type of relation without any type of commercialism. I have learnt so many things from Abanji

regarding how to maintain relations with others and I respect her a lot for that.

During those days it was very hard for females to choose the field of music as a career, there were some classes of the society who felt that music is an inferior type of work. But Abanji has done revolutionary work and proved that females can also do music and can choose any instrument whether it is a melody instrument or a percussion. Looking back into the history I think she was the first lady Tabla player. Lastly I would only say that Abanji was like a rushi muni who dedicated her whole life to music, 24 x 7 she was completely devoted to music. We can also say that she was eating, drinking and living Tabla. ⁽¹⁾

4:3:1:17 Shri Umesh Moghe

First of all I would like to say that your subject of research is exceptional. Abanji was one of the sweetest personalities I have ever seen. My first guru was Mandar Rao Kulkarni, I started learning Tabla from him when I was studying in 5th grade and before that I learnt from my

1. Interview of Pt. Omkar Gulvady/9th January 2018

father. During those days the competition of Swar Sadhna Samiti use to be held at VT in the building of Bharda High School. Every year guruji use to take 4 to 6 students for the competition, guruji made all of us prepare solo in different taals. Those were the golden memories of my life which I cannot forget at any cost, because the atmosphere which was created at Bharda high school was very pleasing and all the credit goes to the team of Swar Sadhna Samiti and Abanji. We all were very small and whenever I looked at Abanji, she seemed like Goddess Saraswati to me. She has a huge affection and love for all the students who participated in competition. There were students who came all the way from Andheri, Goregaav and also from other places outside Mumbai to participate in the competition and Abanji in spite of being strict would encourage and treat them very well. Many times she was liberal in the rules of the junior group competition. She always appreciated and encouraged the students who performed well in the competition. I have never come first in the competition, always use to come second so she use to encourage me saying that don't worry next year come with more preparation and you will come first.

I have always seen great respect in her eyes for her guru Ut. Amir Hussain Khan sahab, I was too small at that time but then also I could feel the respect which she had for Ustadji when she use to talk about him which I still have in my memory. I remember once she was invited by our guruji for a Tabla solo at Boriwali in Mumbai, I cannot forget her charismatic personality, the way she was dressed up in a saree and without any kind of stage fear. I always felt as if Maa Saraswati is there in front of me. I also remember that whenever she played any composition of Ut. Amir Hussain Khan, she felt so happy and proud of herself.

According to me, being a lady she has done exceptional work in the field of Tabla. She is a deserving personality and people should know about her contributions. I wish you all the best for your research on such a commendable Lady, Artist and Author. I think that through the medium of your research the upcoming generation will come to know about the stupendous work done by Dr. Aban Mistry. ⁽¹⁾

4:3:1:18 Padmashree Pt. Vijay Ghate

In our Indian culture and history, it is seen that women have struggled a lot to prove themselves in any field. It is the same in the field of music, and the name which comes to my mind is Dr. Aban Mistry. According to my knowledge, she was the first female artist in the

1. Interview of Shri Umesh Moghe/ 29th April 2019

field of Tabla. Being a Lady, she devoted her whole life to this male-dominant field-Tabla, which is not an easy task for a women during those days but Abanji did that. I bow to her for the remarkable research work that she has done in the field of Tabla. She served as a sincere disciple to Ut. Amir Hussain Khan, in return she got so many blessings of him and also learned Tabla under his guidance for many years. I have great respect for her and today on the special occasion of Women's Day I bow to her and present my sincere pranam and prayers in her feet. ⁽¹⁾

4:3:1:19 Pt. Arvind Parikh

She was a Parsi lady and truly devoted to music. She has written some very useful books on tradition of Tabla and Pakhawaj. She respects all artists whether he or she is a senior or junior to her. I remember one incident where there was a seminar of Tabla and someone asked Ut. Allahrakha Khan that do you play 10 mahaprans of Tabla. Ustadji was thinking what this Sanskrit words means. Suddenly, Abanji stood up and replied to the question that traditional artist don't care about all these Sanskrit terminologies but he plays each and every Jaatis of Tabla. Thus, Abanji understood the temperament, approach, culture and education of all these *Khandani* musicians and she deal with them accordingly.

In the later stage of her life, she suffered from many diseases. But I would like to say that because of her sanskar and culture, the Institution (Swar Sadhna Samiti) which she started is still continuing with the same enthusiasm. I have also performed recently in the Annual Music Festival of that institution. She was such a nice lady, I don't think anybody has any negative thought about her. She never claimed that 'I am the best lady Tabla player', what people generally do nowadays. ⁽²⁾

4:3:1:20 Prof. Gaurang Bhavsar

Firstly I would like to say that to speak something about Abanji is like showing a lamp to the sun. Actually it was around 1989 when I was studying in Faculty of Performing Arts, The M.S. University of Baroda, at that time I didn't know anything about Abanji as I came from a small village for getting my education here and Abanji came as an examiner to our college. One of my guru Shri Madhukar Gurav told me to take care of Abanji till the time she is in the town. She stayed for three days and every day I would go to the university guest house to pick

1. Interview of Padmashree Pt. Vijay Ghate/ 08th March 2019
2. Interview of Pt. Arvind Parikh/ 08th January 2018

her up and drop her. In this way, I came in contact with her and I also came to know that Abanji was the first female Tabla player. I also requested her to teach me Tabla. She told me that there is no need to learn from me as there are already great and exceptional gurus who are residing over here itself. On the last day of the three days examination she went to meet Prof. Sudhir Kumar Saxena and also took me with her at Guruji's place. She introduced me to Saxena guruji and also told guruji that "He is like my son so please accept him as your disciple", it created deep impression on my mind and from that day I started calling her 'Maa'. After that I started learning Tabla from Saxena Guruji which became possible only because of Abanji.

After that a new thing happened in my life that Abanji started writing letters to me and use to guide me for each and everything in my life. At that time I was just a beginner who don't have much knowledge about tabla. But then also Abanji keeps on guiding me through the regular letter correspondence in which she mentions each and everything about her performances, lecture demonstrations and tours at various places. One fine day I received a letter from Abanji in which she asked me to come to Mumbai to attend Swar Sadhana Competition and along with that letter she have send me a money gram to book tickets for myself to Mumbai. I have been to Mumbai which was first time for me and I was so tensed that what would I do after reaching Mumbai station but it was surprising that Abanji had send two members of Swar Sadhna Samiti (zavaare and yamini) to receive me. Not only that but she had booked a room for me in guest house just opposite to her residence. This is how I started going to Mumbai and continued till many years and Abanji use to send me money order every year. After the competition get over I stay there for 2-3 days for my Talim from Abanji, she asks me to play whatever I have learned from Saxena Guruji as well as from the college and also appreciates and guides me further for the same. Thus, I was very much impressed by her in a sense that I was just a student and she gave so much of love and blessings to me.⁽¹⁾

4:3:1:21 Prof. Ajay Ashtaputre

First of all I would like to say that it is very commendable and of extreme pleasure that you are doing a research on India's first female Tabla player, Dr. Aban Mistry. I met Abanji almost 27-28 years back around 1992, in Surat, where I took some of my students to participate in the Pt Omkarnath competition. There I was playing in one program where

1. Interview of Prof. Gaurang Bhavsar /4th October 2020

Abanji was also present. So from there our association began and we had very frequent correspondence. Abanji was very kind hearted, soft spoken and straight forward lady. She has sacrificed her whole life to serve for music and played an important role in preserving and promoting Indian classical Music. She has contributed greatly through her unparalleled work as a researcher, guru, author, founder of an institution like Swar Sadhna Samiti etc. I would like to say that Abanji left us at a very young age, and today if she was there with us she would have raised the bar even higher for the fraternity. ⁽¹⁾

4:3:1:22 Dr. Manoj Mishra

Abanji came to Banaras almost 35-40 years back. At that time I was quite young and everyone in Banaras was talking about a lady who has come from Mumbai and is researching on the Gharana traditions of Pakhawaj and Tabla for her PhD. She visited Pt. Kishan Maharaj, Kishor Mishra and my house too for the same. It is only later on that we came to know that she herself was a Tabla player.

In one of her performances in Banaras, she played different types of layakarīs which is very difficult to accomplish and takes a lot of hard work and practice, and it shows her mastery over layakarīs. This performance was the talk of the town for over 2 years in the music fraternity.

One of her most significant contribution was becoming the first lady Tabla player and thus breaking the myth that Tabla is an instrument only for the males. After her many females stepped into the field of Tabla like Shobaji, Anuradha Pal, Neelam Sharma etc, but Abanji is the one who paved the way into this male dominated field.

Another important thing is that her training in Tabla was done in a traditional manner, from traditional prominent gurus. Thus, she has received authentic Tabla training from gurus like Ut. Amir Hussain Khan. In the end, I would like to say that she has done a lot in order to promote Tabla and classical music. Today, she is not with us physically, but through her work she will always live in the hearts of all her well-wishers and students. ⁽²⁾

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1. Interview of Prof. Ajay Ashtaputre /21st October 2020
 2. Interview of Dr. Manoj Mishra /20th September 2018

4:4 Letter Correspondence of Dr. Aban Mistry

Looking into the depth of the subject, wanting to know more about Abanji's personality and gauging the depth of her work, the researcher started meeting with great musicologists of India upon which he not only got information on Abanji's work but he also came across a different aspect of her personality. She would stay in touch with artists of all regions of India through letters. After meeting many artists the researcher has estimated that in order to keep in touch with all the artists, Abanji used to write at least 20-25 letters in a month. This chain of writing letters went on for many years. According to the knowledge and information available to the researcher, Abanji wrote letters and corresponded with musicians like Pandit Jaychand Sharma, Pt. Murari Sharma, journalist- Asfaaq Kaadri (Bikaner), Gaurang Bhavsar, Devendra Dave, Pt. Harikant Sevak, Pt. Arunkaant Sevak (Rajkot), Babubhai Andhariya, Prof. Sudhirkumar Saxena (Baroda), Prof. R C Mehta (Baroda), Pt. Girishchandra Shrivastav (Allahabad), Appasaheb Deshpande (Kolhapur), Shri Girish Mudulkar (Ahmedabad), Pt. Shyamdas Mishra (Patna), Prof. HS Dilgir (Chandigarh), Ramakant Devalkar (Karda), Pt. Firoz Dastoor (Mumbai), Pt. Shankarrao Bapu Shinde Appagaonkar (Ambejajgai), Shri Swami Ramshankar Pagaldas (Ayodhya), Buddha Das Gupta (Calcutta), Pt. Harindrakumar Ganguly, Raghunath Talegaonkar (Agra), Bhagvat Sharan Sharma (Aligarh), Dr. Arun Kumar Sen, Bhikhubhai Bhavsar (Valsad), Anita Sen (Raipur), Pt. Ramprakash Singh (Darbhanga), Harishchandra Shrivastav (Allahabad) etc. these are just a few names. It is believed that there was no such artist in India with whom she might not have corresponded with. The researcher has received some photocopies of the letters written by Dr. Aban Mistry. Below are some of the extracts from her letters:-

As written by Abanji "the cost of publishing the book 'Pakhawaj aur Tabla Ke Gharane evam Parampara' has reached three and half lakh rupees, therefore we might have to keep the price of the book high. But I do not intend to earn profit from it, I just want to earn enough to repay the debt on my head. The first issue of the book is completed, I will try my best to control the costs in the second issue. My main aim is not to earn money but to serve good music".

Another extract from Abanji's letter "I have heard that Khapru Mamaji alias Pt. Ram Krishna Parvatkar of Goa used to recite 6-7 taals together. With the help of meditation and yoga and with the blessings of Maa Bhagvati and Gurudev, I have completed practicing recitation of 5 taals together. I have practiced in such a way that I can recite Mat taal, do Tritaal in one hand, Ektaal on the other hand, Japtaal with one leg and Deepchandi with the other leg in such a

way that the ‘sam’ of all the taals come together. Baba, I will show it to you when I meet you next time. These type of practices gives me great pleasure and happiness.⁽¹⁾

Abanji had spoken about ‘Tihai’ to the great scholar of kathak, Pt. Jaychand Sharma of Bikaner, following are some extracts of the same “Baba I have a few questions, related to the topic of Tihai that I need to ask you. I request you to answer them. I have given a lot of thought to these questions but I am not satisfied yet.”

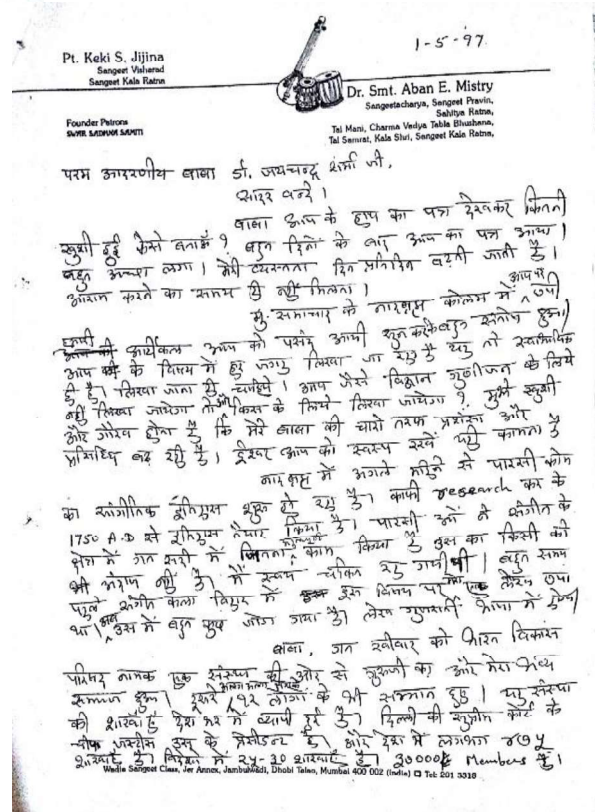
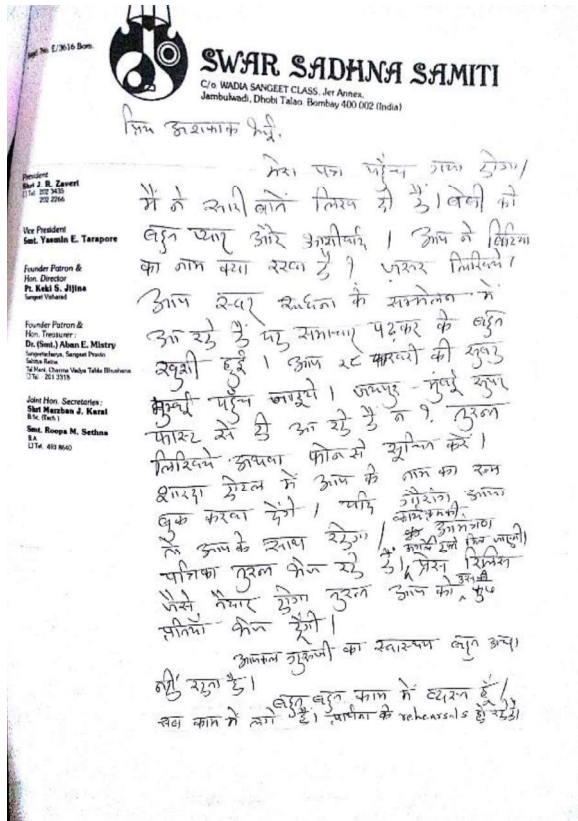
1. Since when did the trend of Tihai start and which book has the first citation of Tihai.
2. Tita kata gadi gan dha - Tita kata gadi gan dha - Tita kata gadi gan dha, Is it a bedam or damdaar Tihai and why?
3. What is the definition of damdaar, bedam, nau-hakka and farmaishi?
4. Since when did the trend of farmaishi and kamali chakradhaar start?

She used to discuss such topics related to Tabla in her letters. Now a days the path of such knowledge and enhancement isn’t found. This is the proof of how Abanji always gained knowledge from her Gurus.

Through letters and interviews, the researcher found that Abanji was very religious and had eternal devotion towards Maa Bhagvati. An example of this can be found in a letter that she wrote to Dr. Jaychand Sharma saying that “I know that there is immense power in the melody of music. I have always been reading that salvation can be achieved through laya. I strongly believe in the statement that ‘Moksh’ is attainable. I can reach the spiritual state of a higher class through practice of laya, so I try to keep my mind focused on the finest laya and therefore for me music is truth, music is religion, music is worship and music is karma”.⁽²⁾

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1. Letter Correspondence with Pt. Jaychand Sharma, Bikaner, Rajasthan/ Letter date 16/05/1999.
 2. Letter Correspondence with Pt. Jaychand Sharma, Bikaner, Rajasthan/ Letter date 23/10/1995.

Pictures of Dr. Aban Mistry's Letter Correspondence





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- 2 -
पडा है देना। आप को मैं से कल सुनाऊंगी -
दिलवाऊंगी यह गाना भी, परन्तु मुझे शक है
कि इसे बहुत कर के आप निश्चय निश्चय ही
'छाता' मय हो जायेंगे।
आप को मुझे निश्चय ही
के संबंध में कुछ पूछने है। कृपया आप
बड़े सोचकर के मुझे जल्द से जल्द जवाब
कर दीजिए। वेदा है जो भी उस पर
काफी सोचा है। परन्तु मुझे कभी संकोच
नहीं है। मैं तो तब तक निश्चयित हूँ।
① निश्चय का चलने कब से प्रारंभ हुआ है?
मुझे निश्चय का चलने कब से प्रारंभ हुआ है?
प्रकाश और प्रेम मिलता है।
② निश्चय गायन की निश्चय कलागरी गंधा-
निश्चय गायन की निश्चय है या दायर?
क्या यह निश्चय निश्चय है या दायर?
③ दायर वेदा, निश्चय और फरमावशी
की परिभाषा क्या है?
④ फरमावशी एवं काली - फरमावशी का
चलने कब से शुरू हुआ?
आप को कष्ट है यह है

आप सुनाएं। निश्चय गंधा को जल -
PROGRAMME
SAT 1st March '97
SUN 2nd March
MON 3rd March
SARASWATI VANDANA
Pt. Shyamdas Gishra Vocal (Patan)
Pt. Omprakash Chavmsiya Santoor (Bhopal)
Prize Distribution
Pt. Sukhdev & Pt. Kamalash Pawan - Dhruv
Dhruv Jagalbandhi
(Indore)
SARASWATI VANDANA
Smt. Shubha Mudgal Vocal (N. Delhi)
Dr. Aban Mistry Tabla Solo (Mumbai)
Felicitation & Prize Distribution
Dr. Smt. Aneta Sen Vocal (Khyal & Thumri) (Bandra)
(Mumbai)
Pt. Hindraj Dirakar Vocal (Pune)
Pt. Atul Desai - Vocal (Ahmedabad)
Shri Jagdeesh Gangani - Kathak (Baroda)
Accompanists: Pt. Omkar Gaurwadi, Pt. Sadman Mairamgalli,
(Tabla) Pt. Vibhav Nageshkar
(Mridang) Pt. Laxmi Narayan Pawan / Conger: H. S. Dilgiri
(Tabla) Smt. Seema Shrivastava / Yashini Zaveri
Lehra Sangat: Shri Sagat Shrivastava