

Gurū- Śiṣhya paramparā: A strong education system of Indian Music

Ruchi Mishra

Abstract-

*Ajnaān timirāṅdhasya jnaāñjana Śalākyā
chkṣaūrūnmilitam yen tasmai shrī gurūve namaḥ*

It means the Gurū is the one who can carry their disciples from the dark world of illiteracy (ajnaān) to the light of wisdom. The Gurū- Śiṣhya parampara has been an inevitable part of education in the ancient Indian Culture. It said in our Veda's that Gurū hold the top most position in human's life the topmost place amongst all. In Indian Music tradition all knowledge is passing through oral tradition so Gurū is the only person who can suggest the right path to his/her disciple. Gurū-Śiṣhya Paramparā or the teacher – disciple relationship is an important part of India's teaching tradition. In ancient India most of the knowledge was passed on from the teacher to his pupil through oral tradition, this oral tradition of passing knowledge is known as the Gurū Śiṣhya Parampara. Indian classical music is still largely dependent on this tradition. In this paper I had tried to describe the details about this tradition.

Key words-

Gurū, Śiṣhya, Parampara, Indian Music

For Referring this Paper-

Misra, Ruchi (2014). Gurū- Śiṣhya paramparā: A strong education system of Indian Music. International Journal of Research (IJR). Vol-1, Issue-3.

Introduction-

When we are talking about Indian culture we can't ignore the importance of Art in it. The Indian culture is very rich because of their Art, Philosophy, and the spirituality. In Indian Philosophy the Gurū is explained as the God. The Gurū-Śishya parampara has been an inevitable part of education in the ancient Indian Culture. In ancient India Gurū was the only source of knowledge. It is said that

*Gurū Brhmā Gurū Vishnu Gurū Devo Maheshwarā
Gurū sakṣat parambrhmā tasmai shrī Gurūve namaḥ*

It means Gurū is equal to the god like- Brhmā, Vishnū. In ancient time anyone who wanted to earn some knowledge about anything they should go to Gurukul for it. Gurukul was the place where the Gurū lived. The Śishya had to live the same place for a fixed time like- 2-3 years. They have to do their scheduled work besides that they should have continued their study also because of this tradition of a living and learning relationship between the Gurū and the Student (Śishya), signifying the emotional, intellectual and spiritual bonding between them. This strong bond between the Gurū and the Śishya enables the Gurū to become a mentor who leads the Śishya from ignorance to wisdom, and enlightenment.

Discussion-

In the world of Indian Music, the place of a Gurū has been considered as the highest of all so first of all we should know **the literal meaning of Gurū**. The word Gurū is made with two words like- 'Gu' and 'ru' the word Gu is the symbol of darkness and ru is the symbol of light so Gurū is the person who leads the Śishya from ignorance to wisdom, and enlightenment. Gurū is the one who is heavy with the weight of vast knowledge. Through devotion and meditation, the guru has experienced oneness with Divine Reality. Ideally such a being can awaken the divine within a student, transmit knowledge, offer guidance, and help integrate these experiences. The guru helps build the raft of knowledge which will cross over all evil and help to find the spiritual bliss. In Indian tradition the Gurū is also known as- Pram Gurū, Sata Gurū, Mahā Gurū, Shrī Gurū. It is said in Nāṭyaśāstra that a **Gurū should have these qualities** like-

- *Smṛti- memory*
- *Mati - insight*
- *Medha- intelligence*
- *Uha- wisdom*
- *Apoha- willpower*

- *Śiṣya Nishpadana- production of good disciples.*

These are the general qualities of a Gurū described in **Nāṭyaśāstra** but a Gurū should have some more qualities like-

- *Magnetic glow of an awakened personality*
- *Capacity to improvise songs and rhythmic sequences*
- *Flair for new creation in style*
- *Resourcefulness in handling situations*
- *Absolute mastery of technique integrating the body and soul of the dance art*
- *A live sense of rhythm and tempo in all their subtleties, expertise in conducting the dance ensembles*
- *Acquaintance with the individualities of musical instruments, sound knowledge of tradition acquired from seasoned veterans*
- *Perfect identification and devotion to ideals*
- *An intuitive perception of the strength and weakness of a student.*

The Gurū embodied divine power and was capable of bestowing grace. Through grace, the student, who may not yet have earned the merit, has love and favor freely transmitted to him or her from the Gurū now it is proved that how the place of Gurū was important to the knowledge and spiritual bliss.

As we know that Gurū Śiṣya paramparā is about to the relationship between the Gurū and the Śiṣya so now we have to know some Characteristics about Śiṣya. The Śiṣya is the one who are the taker. In Urdu the Śiṣya is also called Śāgird. Here the 'Śā' stands for the teacher and 'Gird' means around. Thus the word Śāgird literary means one who makes the teacher the center of his or her world. It is a very sensitive and strong bond he/her is worshipping his/her Gurū and taking the knowledge and bliss. The Śiṣya should have these qualities as described in Nāṭyaśāstra -

- *Smṛtī- memory*
- *Shlaghna- Merit*
- *Raga- devotion and dedication*
- *Saṅgharṣa- Great effort and hard work*
- *Medha- intelligence*
- *Utsaha- enthusiasm*

A student should have some more qualities like-

- *He should have belief in God, simple and pure life, possession of good*
- *He should win his Guru's confidence*
- *A student should learn with interest, practice his lessons sincerely, earn good name for his Guru and family*
- *He should adjust & adapt him to the various circumstances and situations*
- *He should spend most of the time with his guru and must have a thirst for more knowledge.*
- *He should be honest, self controlled, devoted to his work, cultured, disciplined, considerate, kind, helping and caring towards his class mates*
- *He should patient while learning, innovative, creative, update of new developments and inventions in the music forms*
- *He should proud of his Guru and devoted to his art form.*
- *He should not be short tempered, overconfident and boastful of himself and jealous of others*
- *He should set an ideal for the other disciples.*

The Gurū- Śiṣya parampara is a tradition where the student learnt the knowledge from his/her Gurū it's an oral tradition. It's an old education system.

The word of Education is made with a Sanskrit dhatu 'Śkṣha' it means to educate others. It is said in Manusmṛti that 'vidyāntamanuṣate' it means education makes man. The knowledge of Art's subject is also necessary with any other subjects. Education makes over inner thinking and Art's develop our thinking in aesthetics point of view and music is the topmost art form in amongst all art form and music education is very old tradition in Indian culture and the Gurū-Śiṣya parampara is the way of music education.

Gurū Śiṣya Parampara has been the most ancient and is also known as the best system. From the times of Veda, Music education has been given by the Gurū orally which is known as Gurū-mukh. The student while living in a Gurukul would offer services to the Gurū and at the same time, living under a stringent discipline, spending moderate lifestyle and perpetually practicing whatever education has been given to the student by the Gurū and learning by heart was the only way to receive knowledge. In ancient times music and other education depended upon the Guru. There was no syllabus and neither there was any provision to write the notations of the Bandishes learnt.

The student would try to imitate exactly the same way as rendered by the Guru. In the old days the practical aspect of music was given more weightage. The system did not give much importance to the intellectual treatment but the rules of the practical wing and primary values were not violated and only by the Gurū- Śiṣhya Parampara the student would graduate and become an artist.

Gurū- Śiṣhya parampara is based on the unwavering faith in the teacher and determination on the behalf of the disciple to make the mentor's path his own. This relationship is life long and deep. In the field of Indian classical dance and music this relationship is formalized with a ceremony called the Gandabandhan. With this ceremony the Gurū formally accepts the student in the lineage of the Gharana/ kul/ parampara the guru comes from Thus we see that though the term Gurū- Śiṣhya is considered Indian, it does have strong roots all the cultures and philosophies around the world. The bond between the mentor and his disciple is universal.

Conclusion-

In the Indian tradition place of a Gurū has been considered as the highest of all and the Gurū-Śiṣhya parampara is a one of the oldest tradition of Indian culture Even in today fast paced modern world we see this bond going strong not only in the field of dance and music but even in sports, science and academics. Everyone has some mentor in their life; it can be a parent, friend, a favorite teacher or coach, spouse or even some stranger who teaches you some valuable lesson in life. But for everyone irrespective to gender class and race our biggest teacher is our life itself. Music is a Gurū-Mukh vidya (Oral Tradition) so the Gurū is the only convener of this subject. In music the disciple is always following his/her guru to learn it. This involved the tradition of a living and learning relationship between the Gurū and the Student (Śiṣhya), signifying the emotional, intellectual and spiritual bonding between them.

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Contact Information:

Ruchi Mishra

Research scholar, vocal department
Faculty of performing Arts

Banaras Hindu University

Email- ruchimishra379@gmail.com