

## Editorial

### Integrating Tradition and Modernity: The Gharana System for Effective Mentorship at GAIMS

Mentorship plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of medical students, fostering not only academic excellence but also emotional and personal development.<sup>1</sup> In the dynamic field of medicine, where students often experience intense pressure and emotional challenges, mentorship becomes a cornerstone in providing guidance, nurturing skills, and enhancing overall well-being. As the challenges of medical education continue to grow, innovative strategies are essential to ensure students receive adequate scaffolding throughout their academic journey.<sup>2</sup> One such forward-thinking approach is the establishment of mentorship programs that align with the needs of modern medical students while drawing upon traditional practices.

At the Gujarat Adani Institute of Medical Sciences (GAIMS), Bhuj, under the able leadership of Dr Balaji Pillai (Director-Medical), an innovative approach to mentorship has been introduced: The *GAIMS Gharana System* (Mentorship House System), a model inspired by the traditional house systems seen in schools but a novel concept for medical colleges. The Gharana System is a structured yet personalized mentorship initiative designed to integrate academic learning with extracurricular and personal development. The system is composed of ten distinct "*Gharanas*," each named after historic educational institutions (*Nalanda, Takshashila, Vikramshila, Jagaddala, Mithila, Morena, Pushpagiri, Sharada, Vallabhi* and *Nagarjuna*). These names, rich in cultural and intellectual heritage, symbolize a bridge between ancient traditions of knowledge and contemporary medical education. By weaving these historical elements with modern mentoring practices, the system aims to immerse students in traditional ethos and values and seeks to foster academic excellence, emotional resilience, commitment, and leadership skills among students.

The Gharana System is built on the four foundational pillars of *Transparency, Equality, Integrity and Excellence*, which guide the operation and ethos of each house. Each Gharana consists of a blend of students from all phases of the medical program and is equipped with a hierarchical leadership structure that ensures optimal functioning and student engagement (Table-1). Each

mentor is randomly mapped with 3 students from each Batch (annual UG intake at GAIMS is 150).

The Gharanas are uniquely identified by their color, T-shirts, logos, and flags, designed by the students themselves, creating a strong sense of identity and ownership within each Gharana. This system empowers students to participate in leadership roles, thus enhancing their organizational and teamwork abilities. The unique structure of the mentorship program includes the involvement of faculty members as mentors who work closely with students, fostering a bond that goes beyond academics. Faculty members are assigned a manageable group of students (3 students from each batch), which ensures personalized attention, mentorship, and guidance tailored to each student's academic and personal needs. This is also in accordance with the NMC guidelines for mentorship in medical colleges.<sup>3</sup>

The system also integrates a variety of activities and events to promote well-rounded development. Inter-Gharana competitions in academics, sports, and culture encourage healthy competition and foster camaraderie among students. Community service projects further instill empathy and a sense of social responsibility, while professional development workshops equip students with crucial skills for their future careers. A peer mentorship program ensures that senior students mentor junior students, creating a network of support throughout the academic journey. These initiatives, coupled with a robust scoring system (Table-2) based on attendance, academic performance, research activities, extra-curricular and co-curricular achievements, provide students with tangible goals and rewards, motivating them to strive for excellence in all areas.

The above parameters are regularly reviewed in intra- and inter-gharana meetings. The Gharana rankings are declared in these meetings. At the end of each academic year, the Gharana with highest points will be declared '*Gharana of the Year (Rotating Trophy)*' to celebrate student engagement in the Gharana activities. The Gharana trophy to be awarded to the best Gharana which will be used as a rolling trophy year on year.

**Table-1: Structure of a Gharana**

Member	Level	Number of members in each Gharana	Functions
Faculty members	<i>Mentor</i>	5	Provide guidance, support, and advice to the students. Each faculty member is mapped with 3 students (1:3) from each Phase.
Phase-3 Part-2 students	<i>Captain</i> : Elected House Representative	1	Responsible for leading and organizing Gharana activities
	Cadets	14	Assist Captain
Phase-3 Part-1 students	<i>Senior Leader</i> : Elected House Representative	1	Responsible for smooth functioning of the Gharana and providing a link between Leader and Captain
	Cadets	14	Assist Senior Leader
Phase-2 students	<i>Leader</i> : Elected House Representative	1	Actively works with cadets and ensures that the Gharana functions properly
	Cadets	14	Assist Leader
Phase-1 students	<i>Elected House Representative</i>	1	Works according to the roadmap laid by the leader
	Cadets	14	Assist House Representative
<b>Total members in each Gharana</b>		<b>* 5 Mentors (Each mentor mapped with 3 students from each phase)</b> <b>* 60 Mentees (15 from each phase)</b>	

**Table-2: The Scoring System**

Parameter to be assessed	Level achieved	Points to be awarded
<b>Attendance</b> (reviewed at regular intervals)	> 90 %	30
	81 % to 90 %	20
	75 % to 80 %	10
	< 75 %	- 10
<b>Percentage Marks</b> (Formative/Summative Assessments) (Cumulative of all subjects)	> 75 %	30
	65 % to 75 %	20
	50 % to 65 %	10
	< 50 %	- 10
<b>Research Publication</b> (as 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> author)	Applied for SSIP (Student Startup and Innovation Policy) or Patent	50
	International Journal (PubMed indexed)	40
	Indian Journal (PubMed indexed)	30
	Non-PubMed indexed Journal (NMC recognized)	20
	Applied for ICMR-STS or any other project	10
<b>Co-curricular activities and Extra-curricular activities</b> (Sports/Arts)	Representing GAIMS at national level or above	Winning: 50 Participation: 25
	Representing GAIMS at state level	Winning: 40 Participation: 20
	Representing GAIMS at zonal level	Winning: 30 Participation: 15
	Representing GAIMS at university level	Winning: 20 Participation: 10
	Representing GAIMS at college level	Winning: 10 Participation: 5
<b>Participation in Community Programs</b>	Each student shall be awarded 10 points for participating in any community program.	

The Gharana System at GAIMS was implemented in August 2024 and the early results are promising. Preliminary data suggests that student engagement in academic, co-curricular, extra-curricular, and research activities has notably increased. The system's success will be evaluated after one year, with feedback from both students and faculty members to ensure that the program is continually refined and improved. Ultimately, the *GAIMS Gharana System* is a testament to the power of mentorship and the blending of tradition and modernity in shaping the future of medical education.

In conclusion, the introduction of the Gharana System at GAIMS is a progressive step towards holistic professional development. By combining time-honored traditions with contemporary practices, the *GAIMS Gharana System* ensures that students are not only equipped with academic knowledge but also with the essential emotional, social, and leadership skills needed to succeed in the ever-evolving field of medicine. As mentorship becomes an increasingly vital component of medical training, GAIMS stands at the forefront of integrating these elements into a cohesive and enriching educational experience.

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