

INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial, music has been an important means of human expression. While the vocabulary and grammar together have struggled to convey the emotions, the rhythm and notes have adequately complemented the words in expressing the most subtle of human emotions. In fact, music both instrumental and vocal even without words to accompany them, have been a powerful means of expression. Various ragas evolved in the Indian classical music bear ample testimony to this fact. While linguistic expression has a limitation that both the persons involved in the communication have to share the language, the appeal of music is universal, in the sense that it even transcends in its reach beyond humanity to the other cohabitants of the world including the animals and the plants.

Civilizations over ages have revealed and expressed through music. In fact music is a reflection of the cultural attributes of a society. Folk music brings out numerous characteristics of a society like prevalent social norms, beliefs, social order, status of women, Value system, family norms, leadership etc in the society. As a scholar in the tribal literature of Rajpipla Dr Jayanand Joshi aptly summarizes in the words of a tribal "If you want to know the true nature of my life then listen to my songs"¹. India is blessed with immense diversity. May it be ethnic, linguistic or cultural; no society in the world comes anywhere close to match India in this respect.

Numerous cultures have developed and prospered in different regions of this country. The remotely located hills are home to the numerous tribes across the Country. These tribal groups have over millennia's existed as distinct cultural entities having modes of living in complete harmony with Mother Nature. They constitute a very important element of the rich cultural heritage of India. So much so that the Indian nation has made constitutional provisions to preserve and promote the tribal culture. However the Indian cultural landscape has changed very rapidly in the past few decades. In today's age of rapid economic changes and developments in information and communication technology, all the cultures of the worlds are in a state of flux. Even the otherwise

1: "*Raj na Aadivaasi Chelliya*" By Dr Jayanand Joshi.

remote tribal cultures are facing existential challenges. Everything ranging from modes of livelihood to the means of entertainment in these societies is changing. Traditional modes of community entertainment and expressions are undergoing a vast change; in fact they are being greatly influenced by the popular modes of entertainment like cinema and television programs. In the light of these it is feared that the tribal folk music which has developed and survived over millennia's may get permanently lost or mutated. This would indeed be a great loss to the rich heritage of folk music of India.

My father had been serving in the forest department of the government of Gujarat. In the year 1991 he got posted in the Rajpipla's forest area. It was during this period that I got the first exposure to the tribal culture and the tribal folk music of this region. My first experience of this music was in the tribal fair of Shivratri in Sundarpura. As a school going kid and a passionate follower of music I always stood amused with the distinct nature of their music and musical instruments. Eventually as I pursued my graduation and post graduation in Indian classical music, my interest in understanding this tribal music grew. Further as resident of this region I could also witness the rapid erosion of this form of music.

As a scholar in search of an appropriate subject for my doctorate I was guided by my guide Dr Rakesh Mahisuri. He asked me to meet some senior scholars in the discipline including Professor R C Mehta. As we discussed about the possible subjects, Professor Mehta enquired about my background. Having known the fact that I had stayed in Rajpipla's tribal area and was fairly acquainted with their dialects and folk culture, he instantly suggested me to take up the study of the Tribal folk music of Rajpipla. As I got back to my guide and discussed it with him, he cheerfully agreed and consented to guide me in the proposed subject.

Thus under his guidance we embarked on the journey into A Detailed study of the Notation and Transliteration of the folk songs of Rajpipla's Tribal Area.