

## Interview Manbhari, (also spelled Man Bhari) Jodhpur

Manbhari is my name. I come from the village of Bhakrasani, near Jaipur. My father was Pusha Ram. My mother was Runny? Devi. She was a *bhopi*.

I started at 20 to recite epic in performance (*parvasna*).

*How did you acquire the skill?* From my father. He went off to recite.

*As far as you can remember, when was your first informal performance?* When I came to my inlaws' with my father, I began to sing professionally.

*Who were the professionals in your inlaws' family?* Krishna Ram and her mother-in law were itinerant performers. Makrana Junction is my husband's ancestral place. Makrana was my first place of performance.

*Are you teaching your daughters to perform?* I am trying to train the elder and the middle daughter now.

2:29 *What methods did your parents use to teach you?* Daytime performances and evenings with my father and his ravanhatta. He would teach me. (...)

*How did you come to attain high pitch when singing?* I would accompany my father initially but then he would say, You should not do this; you should follow me and then take the note and raise it to a higher pitch and volume. From the age of 10-12, I started to attain the highest pitch and volume.

*Did your father teach you 'phad' first?* No I started singing folksongs like Charka, Banjari Nomad, (section of interview missing)

*You used to sing 'Charka'. Is it like the 'phad' where you raise the pitch and volume?*  
*Sing a high pitched stanza for us!* I can't without the ravanhatta. [She tried but couldn't].

*Can Sujna help you?* No, it is the same for both of us. (...)

*How can you sing high pitch then?* Only with an instrument.

*Did your father teach you how to raise pitch with the ravanhatta?* Yes, my father taught me. He would start any segment of the *phad* and I would pick up the melody from there.

*How do you know which melody to sing for each segment?* From the ravanhatta. I have to balance the volume and the melody with the ravanhatta.

*Do you feel pain in your chest when you start practising the high notes?* No. It is our profession to do so and it gives me self confidence and spiritual satisfaction to do this.

*Did you practice holding your breath with your mother?* Yes.

*How did you learn?* First, I started practising short stanzas and then moved to longer sections. My father started singing at 17 and died at about 70 still singing. He was fine up until the time he died. My mother used to accompany my father. It is our family business. My father used to tell me to start low and then go higher.

*Do you feel pain in your tonsils at the time of performance?* No. As more and more people arrived in the audience, my father would start to sing at greater volume and also used to dance. Anopam Devi, my older sister and her husband also perform.

(2<sup>nd</sup> section)

*Do you feel the presence of Pabuji maharaj when you are singing?* I feel very happy when I am singing.

*To maintain your vocal quality and pitch, do you ever practice any prohibition?* No, not at all but if there is a *parvasa* (performance) in the evening, I avoid eating food with any oil.

**\*2:41** *Are you training your daughters to perform?* If we perform outside the village, they don't come but if it is in our own village, they watch. They are just watching so far.

*Why is it necessary for your daughter to sing the epic (phad) ?* If she can sing, she will face fewer problems in her in-laws' family.

*Is there another way of teaching?* When we are free, then we teach them about the *phad* and motivate them to learn.

*How many people in Sujna Rams' family perform?* His two elder brothers are singers and their wives as well.

*You have 2 sisters-in-law. Do you discuss breath control with them?* No, we don't discuss unless we are performing jointly. I start and then she starts and then after this we compare performance styles.

*Do you think there is a difference between your sisters singing?* Not in style but in melody.

*In your bhopa community do you know any bhopi who signs on a single note?* No, it is not possible. The style is similar and the words remain the same. We must follow the script. Some words need low pitch and some, high standard performance.

*You should try to give your daughters formal training.*