

## Interview Sugana Ram, Jodhpur

### TURBAN ROLLING

*Sujna Ram, how old are you?*  
35-40

*When did you learn the epic?*

At the age of 20. My father, Krishna Ram, was my teacher. We are 3 sons and I am in the middle. All of us are reciters.

*Do you have a special way of singing when performing Pabuji ki par?* No, not much difference. I am restricted to Pabuji but I can play different ragas.

*What was the pattern you followed in learning to recite?* When I saw my father sing and the audience's appreciation of it, I got motivated to do the same. 2:50 When you sing a Rajasthani folksong, you don't need to vary your melodies so much.

*What is so special about singing Pabuji ki par?* If a *bhopa* sings the epic in the middle melody range, it is boring. The modulation of the melody makes the music interesting. In Pabuji, the *bhopa* starts and then the *bhopi* picks up a word. The *bhopa* must adjust the melody to give form to the epic. We get great satisfaction from doing this. Yes, those who cannot hold their breath cannot sing epic.

*How did you learn to hold your breath?* I never tried to sing a single note at the beginning. I concentrated on developing my breath control rather than singing.

*Why did you do this?* It's important to be able to hold your breath. Then we would devise stanzas and words to go with the melodies. If we cannot do this, we will forget the words.

*Did your father suggest this approach?* Initially I used to forget the words so I would be scolded by my father. I had to learn the words by matching them to melody. I practised alone and after a few months, I was able to perform the whole epic. From that day forwards, I got more confident. Music helped me to remember.

*How do you sing while holding your breath?* Just through practice. It took me some time to learn the *ravanhatta*.

*What is the relationship between the instrument and your singing?* Starting to sing at the fifth note is easy but for epic, we need to sing at a higher pitch and start at the sixth. This becomes difficult.

*Can you show us what you mean? [He asks for the ravanhatta]* I need the company of my wife in order to be able to perform. [He tunes the *ravanhatta*] I learnt to play this succession of notes from my father.

We play with Manganiyars and other musicians and learn the songs from them.... (he starts to sing:

*'Pabuji's wedding procession is advancing*

*The guests are dressed in jewels and Pabuji is moving forward like the full moon*

*The guests are like the full moon, as glorious as the sun...'*