CHAPTER 4

FORMS OF DOGRI FOLK-MUSIC
AND
MUSICAL STRUCTURE

4.1. General features:

It is generally contended that folk-music is composed of limited notes, which occur simultaneously in the psycho-physical condition of a man, isolated in pockets or living in community in rural areas in the lap of nature. Evidently, topography influences him considerably in his compositions. Topography may be understood as a term covering features of the land including valleys, ravines, rivers, up-lands and hills. The natural setting has much to do with one’s imagination and even diction. In the initial stage of development, the tunes that occurred to man contained a limited number of notes and in course of time more notes were incorporated as vehicles of worded expression. Once a few combination of notes were made spontaneously by single person or collectively, these were rhythmically arranged and constantly repeated, memorized and linked together with everyday local expressions. At length these limited forms became the trait of a particular class or group, and the musical contour thus attained was transmitted orally from man to man.

If a music adopts a system, it is a system of its own-making, un-written, habitual and a naturally devised formation. Rural minstrels of the Dogra land have been found to recite their songs—‘Karks’ and ‘Bars’ mostly in two or three notes, with ‘Ektara’, ‘King’, ‘Saranga’ or ‘iron tongs’ etc. as accompanying musical instruments. Subsequently, the execution of the notes depends on a continuous process which relates to the voice quality of the singers. Some instances of two or three notes used in the devotional songs of Dogra land viz:— Bhaints of mother goddess—‘Vaishno Devi’, ‘Maldevi, ‘Jawala ji’ etc, ‘Shiva-Mahima’ or ‘Bishan Patte’—
"Tū mata ae jawālā shehr di Main pujārī tere dar dā...." (bhaint).

"Tārī ē āce āryā bahā dhanā jāट tārīā rāyā mērī āryā ārī ārī kītē kheāyā pārēyā "Tārī āc meerā bāī nālē dhanā jāt tārēā mērī bārī aayī kīthāin chapeyān piyārēā  (Bishan patta)

äe ने चैला नाम जे ने शिवजी दा तैना जे  
aeṇ vē pehlā nām je vē  Shivji dā lenā vē  (Kark of Mahadeva)

can also be cited. Analytical view points there-of are discussed in relevant chapters. Most of the songs of women-folk viz: lullabies, lyrics of 'chann'; 'cheinchlo, and kuńjuā', and 'Sepoy' are peculiar instances of Dogri folk-music where even three, four or five notes are employed. The singer of 'Bhākh' form of folk-songs limit the music even to five notes, the mode of Raga mostly resembling notes of Raga 'Bhopali', and to a smaller extent to 'Billawaal' and 'Durga' with 'Sa' and 'Pa' or 'Sa and Ma' as prominent notes, and allowing a free execution of the notes without any instrumental supports (semblance of free 'alap' as before slow Khayal/Maseed Khani Gat). A peculiar effect is also produced in between the recital by introducing the consonant notes like 'Pa' or 'Ga' of the lower or the middle octave to create a drone effect. By spontaneously twirling or raising the notes to the higher pitch, centring 'Ga' of higher octave with in pentatonic frame work of the same mode, is called 'Swāi' in Dogri dialect, which gives a definite character to the rendition.

Some of the folk-singers of hill areas use notes in almost staccato form and naturally the graces and inflexions generally occur less in these songs, but the people more in touch with urban areas tend to take occasional flights of notes in addition to some simple graces. A few musical qualities pertaining to voice, tonal quality, graces and the nature of execution, though in small degrees are also to be considered in this regard.
Another relevant point which strikes most is that topography and nature operate on the vocal tone and the manner of exposition. People originated from the same stock but residing in different environments attain altogether different types of tones and natural inflexions of notes. The riverine districts and plains (lower Kathua—bordering Shakargarh, Hiranagar, R.S. pura bordering Sialkote sector, Akhnoor etc. of Jammu region) effect their voice to develop high tonal quality of pitch notes with an element of sliding down the octave to lower notes. This becomes evident on an illustration of the style of Sr. Bawa Singh of R.S. Pura in his Bar ‘Heer-Ranjha’ and Sh. Janak Raj Nath of Pathwal (Kathua) in his Kark ‘Maldevi’. It is observed that these folk-songs are based more on top notes. The up-and-down dry lands (kandi area in Jammu in particular viz: Koota, Dinga amb, Dialachak (upper Kathua), Samba, Suñjwañ (Jammu district) rouse in the singers a tonal quality in the middle octave of limited notes. This becomes evident from the ceremonial songs sung by Smt Sarishtha Devi of Dialachak (upper Kathua).

On close examination it has been found that smaller inflexions, simple ornate elements, peculiar spontaneous graces are differently grown at different areas because of the climatic pressure on the vocal chords. The people of the valleys and hills—(lower Himalayan belt of Ramban, Basholi, Billawar; Shivalik range of Rammagar-Riasi-Nowshera) conceive yelling and loud expressions in musical forms, where as those living in the areas adjoining Panjab (R.S. Pura, Hiranagar, Kathua) combine a few notes in a peculiarly accented manner, primarily because of the impact of climatic conditions and environment. As per the scientific explanation, the capacity of lungs as well as the velocity of the sound decreases because of the low pressure at high altitudes. Thus the singer has to exert more pressure on the lungs in using notes of the higher octave for the transmission of the voice to its normal level and since the notes of the normal (middle) octave sent across vast unobstructed area, loses its intensity before it echoes (reflects) back.
The same stock of persons from Kashmir migrating to Jammu may be observed to have different tendencies in tonal production, use of natural graces and compositions of notes. However, the nature of music differs due to the performance of rhythmic peculiarities, which occur partly, at least due to natural conditions and the topography of the land where the people live. Any slight change in the rhythm makes the same musical structure sound differently.

The structural system of Dogri folk-music bears evidence of various applications of individual graces and peculiar combinations, because, monophony develops more or less on the basis of individual actions of singers. The individual singer predominates in many cases and the community/gathering acts as mere followers, repeaters or refrainers. The individuals determine the principal movement from one note to another, based on modes, which are un-known to the rural or primitive populace.

The selection of the tonic (base note) by the singer is made impulsively. The tonic may be fixed on any key (the second or the third etc.). The note at once becomes a home-note of the scale, that is, the tonic 'Sa' which is dominant in folk-music. The position of the other notes is determined according to the fixed up 'Sa' that is, once the 'Sa' of the singer is known to be fixed, it remains as a standing scale for further determinant of the mode. The singer is not conversant with the note or scale in the formal way. It is imbibed by the method of inheritance and habits formed through traditional oral recapitulation of phrases. The most important feature is the fact that the seminote, previous to the fifth, that is 'ma' sharp (tivra madhayam) is never used in Dogri folk-music. The rural folk being ignorant of the technical knowledge of the music can sing songs with ease only in the natural scale making use of 'Shadaj-Madhayam' or 'Shadaj-pancham' bhāvā as the natural consonant notes and get the desired effect. The analysis of the Dogri folk-songs reveals that mostly the simple notes like that of Raga Bhopali, Durga, Bilawal, Kafi etc occur as the available modes and to a lesser extant glimpses of Raga Abbogi, Madh-Mad sarang, Peelā and Shud-Kalyan are also observed, during rendition.
The Indian names of notes—'Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni,' if known to any rural Dogri folk-singer of to-day, signify nothing more than some relative sounds which occur in fixed phrases. The rural folk-singer simply tunes his chordophone—'King' (single stringed instrument) impulsively, and gets seven notes spontaneously but with no basic knowledge of the notes used. The idea of consonance system is inherent in folk-musicians of the modern age. A modern folk-singer often uses harmonium conveniently, which means that the approach on the basis of tempered scale, standard of seven note principle is not in any way against the fundamentals of its methodology. The seven notes along with five semitones (vikrit swaras) make a complete Indian Saptak, where as in the Western system the thirteenth note, that is, the eighth tone is calculated to make one octave complete. The position of semitones, that is, the intervals and time divisions amongst notes, may now be explained through Indian method. This means that, though the arrangement of notes or steps look like the arrangements of keys of the diatonic scale when the tonic 'Sa' is fixed on it, the difference may be noted in the presence of flat and sharp notes. Comparative notes on Indian scale and western scale are illustrated below for reference:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes of complete Indian saptak (Octave)</th>
<th>Comparative notes in western system</th>
<th>Names of the Indian notes used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sa re</td>
<td>C Tonic D-flat or Db or d</td>
<td>Saraj Komal rishab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Re ga</td>
<td>D E-flat or Eb or e</td>
<td>Sudh Rishab Komal gaṇḍhār</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ga</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Sudh gaṇḍhār</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ma ma</td>
<td>F F-sharp or f</td>
<td>Sudh gaṇḍhār Tivra madhyam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pa dha</td>
<td>G A-flat or Ab or a</td>
<td>Pancham Komal dhaivat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Dha
   ni
A Sudh dhaivat
B-flat or Bb or b
Sudh dhaivat
Komal nishad

7. Ni
B
Sudh nishad

Sharp and flat notes in a scale, according to Indian idea are high and low (tones and semitones) respectively, and are not used together at the same time. The notes under the Indian and western system are indicated in alphabetical (capital and small) letters respectively.

Indian system
or simply as
S r R g G M m P d D n N

Western system:
C Db D Eb E F f G Ab A Bb B

The basic musical frame and structure of the folk-songs are illustrated on the basis of the alphabetical notations. In order to put through the discourse with illustrations in a readable form, it has been considered that the structure and the form of the music should be easily followed with contents of songs when gone through. Therefore, 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni', the alphabets of notes, have been introduced here as 'S R G M P D N' (Indian scale) and this has been adjusted to tonic C as 'C D E F G A B' (Western scale). Both of these types of alphabets have been inserted as symbols in the notation of the folk-songs.

The following is the pattern of the musical notes used in the folk-songs under examination in both Indian and Western scale:

Indian scale:
P d D n N
S r R g G M m P d D n N
Mandir saptak
Madhya saptak
Tar saptak

Western Scale:
G a A b B
C d D e E F f G a A b B
Lower octave
Middle octave
Upper octave
4.2. Major forms:

Dogri folk-music represents classes of songs in respect of compositional peculiarities that concern life and society. The folk-song is the most widely prevalent form of mass entertainment in our country side and the haunting melody of ‘Pahāri’ song add to the beauty and joy of daily life. Each folk-song has a tune of its own which seems to have evolved along with its composition. The Dogri folk-songs are classed under the following major heads:

1. Traditional folk-ballads:
   (a) Karkan: songs in praise of saints and martyrs.
   (b) Baran: songs of valour and sacrifice.

2. Devotional songs:
   (a) Bhaints: Worship of female deities in particular
   (b) Bishanpatte (Vaishnav pada): songs in praise of Vishnu or His incarnations.
   (c) Kirtan: Mass participation to send prayers to God or Goddess.

3. Ceremonial songs:
   (i) Songs related to the birth of a male child:
       (a) Bihai: Congratulatory song sung on an occasion sometimes before or on the birth of a male child.
       (b) Badhai: Congratulatory song sung on all the occasions of ceremonial joy and merriment.
       (d) Lullaby: Song that lulls a child to sleep.
   
   (ii) Marriage songs:
       (a) Badhawa: Songs sung to celebrate an auspicious occasion (Marriage)—a sort of invitation to share joy.
       (b) Ghodi: Songs sung by women folk while the bride-groom wears 'sehra' (nuptial veil) and mounts the mare.
(c) Suhag : Songs of good wishes, sung by women folk before and after bride's betrothal right up to her reception at in-laws house.

(i) Songs sung before and after engagement.
(ii) Songs of Sant. (Propitiation of God and Goddess)
(iii) Songs at Groom's welcome. (At arrival of marriage party)
(iv) Songs of Vedi. (At marriage rites sitting before the sacrificial fire)
(v) Songs of Doli. (Send off to bride)
(vi) Songs of Nadredna. (Bride's reception at her in-laws house)

4. Seasonal /Festival songs:

(a) Seasonal songs:

(i) Dholru : These songs hint at the setting in of the spring season. To hear the name of the month 'Cheit' (March-April) from the minstrels from “Doom class” is considered a good omen.

(ii) Barah-Mah : Songs that convey the description of the features of the twelve months or create devotional atmosphere by mentioning the supernatural powers— God or Goddess, relating to each month.

(iii) Other extant seasonal songs : Songs of 'Sawan' (Rainy season) and 'Baisakh' (on-set of summer) etc.

(b) Festival songs:

(i) Lohri : A festival of folk-dancers and pageant. The songs on this occasion are to bid good-bye to cold winter.

(ii) Rade : A peasants festival of the worship of sprouted grains in pitcher necks.

(iii) Navratras : The songs for pooja (worship) of mother goddess Vaishno Devi.

5. Dance songs:

(a) Dhamachara : The songs sung in this Dogri dance by women folk are humorous and lighter in vein.
(b) ‘Kud’ : Extant in ‘Himachal Pradesh’ (Bharmore), ‘Bani’ and ‘Bhaderwah’. The songs sung in this dance depict a romantic event or as a thanks giving in the days after sowing operation is over.

6. Bhakhan :

Dogri group folk-songs independent of any instrument to keep rhythm or tone. These songs mostly depict social and romantic picture of the Dogra hills. The typical varieties to be discussed are as :-

(a) Balahlti Bhakh (slow in pace)
(b) Bandrahtli Bhakh (Slow in pace)
(c) Sheika Bhakh (Slow in pace)
(d) Trodak Bhakh (Medium in pace)
(e) Pangasti Bhakh (Medium in pace)
(f) Sumarti Bhakh (Medium in pace)
(g) Drohri Bhakh (Medium in pace)
(h) Drohrki Bhakh (Medium in pace)
(i) Modern style in Bhakh rendition.

7. The popular folk-Love songs / Lyrics :

(a) Dogri songs :
(i) Love songs
(ii) Songs : 'Chann'; 'Chanchelo and Kunjua'.
(iii) Geetru (love lyrics)

(b) Tribal songs :
(i) Gaddi songs
(ii) Gojri songs
(iii) Bakarwali songs
(iv) Paernae songs

(c) Modern songs.

Love songs