



migrated from the Rath region of Madhya Pradesh to settle in Gujarat. They are known as Rathwas. Among these some married into Koli tribe and this group is known as Rathwa-Koli. They are better than the other tribes and, therefore, they consider themselves superior to others. The migrant Rathwas from Rath region roamed for a longer period of time in forest and thus they were not known by others for a long period of time. The Bhilala tribes of Vindhya Hills of Madhya Pradesh are a sub-division of the Rathwas.

Yet another pocket that the Rathwas inhabited is in Paal region of Vadodara District which is hilly and forested. The Rathwas of Paal also migrated from Madhya Pradesh. They are also found in Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Karnataka. In Gujarat, their population is the highest. The Chhotaudepur (Paal) of Vadodara District has the highest percentage of their population. The second highest is found in the Panchmahals. They are engaged as labourers in urban areas. In agricultural season, some of them engage in cultivation or agricultural labour.

The Rathwas follow a patriarchal family system. They seem to foster a strong social and economic bond. The youngsters discuss social and economic problems with parents and relatives. The Rathwas do not believe in the difference of age between girls and boys for the purpose of marriage. The land and property are under the possession of head of the family. The Rathwa women have no right to property. Rathwa girls are presented with fowls, cattle and ornaments at the time of marriage. Religion constitutes a very important dimension in their life. They do not practice the system of polyandry. A Rathwa can marry within the

community. At the time of marriage, they do not take into account any high or low status. The Rathwa women are hard working, clever and have good managerial abilities. They enjoy a status equal to men. A widow is allowed to remarry. The Rathwas do not eat, drink and marry in lower tribes such as Dhanka, Harijan, etc. The low tribes are not allowed to their temple "Malun" and hut. If a person commits crime, it is considered to be an offence. Such person is treated as an outcast and known out of the society. To re-enter the society the person has to serve liquor to the entire Rathwa tribe or to pay fine. Every village has its headman, priest and a quack doctor. The headman solves the dispute among the villagers. Another is a priest (known as Pujaro) and performs marriage ceremony. Rathwas marry between the age of 15 and 20 years. Child marriages are not performed. Marriage is arranged only after six months of the betrothal. Divorce and remarriage are both allowed in their society

The Rathwas had a nomadic life in earlier times. They engage in the practice of hunting and crude way of agriculture. They use obsolete implements. They keep themselves in a cheerful mood singing songs about the harvest. They also rear cattle. Their children now go to school and some of them have done certificate courses like plumbing, carpentry, electricity, etc. Some of them remain engaged as labourers in urban areas. The Rathwas depend on hunting and collecting wild fruits from jungles, but now they eat cooked food.

A Rathwa village is normally located near a river. Palm trees are generally found around the village. They produce liquor from the tree and use its leaves as

roofing material for their houses. The huts are generally scattered, are without window and are made of bamboo.

The Rathwas believe that there was water all over the earth God and Goddess Jogini were alone on it. God created man and continued to give birth to human beings to worship Him. God created Sun, Moon and Stars. Different Gods were made responsible for various things in the world. God created happiness and sorrow. Bhoj was the king of earth. They offer sacrifice of goat, hen, etc. to free themselves from calamities. They believe that God would punish them for their mistakes. To please God, they have to worship in Malun Temple. God will punish the person who cuts tree. God Inder Raj brings rain for agriculture. Pithoro is the great Rathwa God, who helps in the betterment of their life. They take a vow to help in difficulties. In case of fulfillment of their desire, the Pithoro ritual is performed in the form of painting, which narrates the mythological stories. The Rathwas keep believing that this painting in the house will have a deep spiritual effect on them.

The ethno-tribes include the Rathwas who remained naked in ancient times. Soon they started covering themselves. Initially the covering was made of leaves, barks of tree and animal skin. Then they moved on to use loin cloth, shoulder spread, hand gear and turban. The loincloth has been replaced by dhoti, trousers and pants. The upper garments are jacket and shirt. Women used to cover their breast with heavy stones and necklaces of beads in ancient times. The lower part was covered with leaves, tree bark and skin. Now they wear choli, blouse, petticoat and sari.

The Rathwas and other ethno-tribal men and women of Gujarat are very fond of ornaments. The natural environment affects the material used for their ornaments. Flowers, tender stems, bones, beads, metals, plastic, etc. are utilized for ornaments. Hansdi and coin necklaces are important ornaments of Rathwa women. The heaviest of all the ornaments is "Kalla", worn slightly above the ankles. A tattoo is considered as a sign of beauty for both men and women. They believe that relatives will remain with their dead body upto the cremation grounds, once they are dead but tattoo would remain even after death upto the heaven.

The ceremony for the dead ancestors among the Rathwas involves a carved wooden or stone slab. Such belief has inspired some people to use the opportunity to demonstrate their artistic talent and craftsmanship in carving even if these are not masterpieces. The simplest tools are used. They believe that the offering of a clay horse would make it easy for the dead person to continue with further journey and to complete. They believe in the existence of supernatural power, and have established the relationship between themselves and the supernatural powers. Magic is an integral part of their life. Their religion is considered to be animistic. The fear of animals caused them to worship these. Complication gap is the greatest hindrance in the rapid progress of their culture..

The Rathwas and other ethno-group speak their own dialects. They have more influence of the Hindus and the higher percentage of words used in their dialects are from Gujarati.

It is believed that the Rathwas and other tribes learnt the art of archery from Eklavya and passed it on from generation to generation. As they are brought up in the forest, the art of archery is a must for the purpose of self-defence. The Rathwas worship bow and arrow at the time of marriage. The agricultural implements and kitchen utensils used by them are very out dated.

The ethno-tribes including Rathwas derived inspiration for many things from nature. Music and dance was initiated by the people of Mohenjodaro. It then passed on from generation to generation lent with changes down the line. They have adopted music in all aspects of their lives from childhood to old age. The quality and nature of their music has been made possible through self-expressive process of nature. For, their music is connected with many sociological, psychological, and other factors. The Rathwa folk songs are like narrative accounts of the spontaneous enjoyment of existence and domestic events of their life. The pleasant songs of farm, the songs celebrating seasons childrens' songs, magic chants, marriage and hunting songs are all a realistic expression of life through music. Their story of music and dance from the pre-historic times to the present day is a record of human feelings. The tradition of folk art is strong among the Rathwas. They treat song and dance as a routine of life and not as one of art. The deceased may be rich or poor, but a drummer and pisvo (Country shehnai) player are called invariably. The Rathwas perform many dances during free hours at night. There are many Holi dances like Gheraiya, Madva, etc. They also perform a variety of dances during marriage such as "Rola", "Dandia", "Tinly", etc.

The musical instruments of the tribal folk are from Indus and Harrappan like the drum date back to the civilization. Before launching into the making of an instrument, the Rathwas seek to find the most auspicious moments to set the process in motion. The person making it has to observe celibacy, make offering to God, and only then begin the process. An impious person and a woman in menstruation cannot do so. Drum and dance form an integral part of the Rathwa life. They play different kinds of drum. Another important musical instrument is flute (Pisvo), and they play on this irrespective of where it is big or small. Bronze or Copper plate is used for beating on during marriage and festivals. Another musical instrument they play is bheri, which is made from dried gourd.

Gujarat state ranks fifth in the tribal population. One out of seven persons in Gujarat is a tribal. The tribal region needs some more ethno-museums. At present, there are only three tribal museums located in their area, one of which is at Chhotaudepur of Vadodara District. This museum has been launched very recently. The collection of objects and artifacts is still going on. As this region has more of the Rathwa population, the focus of the display will be more on the Rathwas. The other museum is Saputara museum in the Dangs District which has a Dangi collection. Yet another tribal museum is the Adivasi Sangrahalaya in Gujarat Vidyapith at Ahmedabad. The display focuses on the general tribals of Gujarat. Vadodara Museum has an ethno-gallery. The Lady Wilson museum, Dharampur has a gallery for the tribes in southern Gujarat. There is an urgent need for some more regional museum in north Gujarat, in the Panchmahals, and Sabarkantha, and some more in the Central and Southern tribal belts of Gujarat.

The proposed plan of a museum set up for the Rathwa culture is a subject of discussion in the chapter on museological aspects. The emphasis is laid on all sorts of security of the building such as combustible building material, electrical safety, non-smoking rule, protection against theft etc. The building should be well-guarded from a strategic point of view. There must be security for museum materials, safety of display, store room safety, etc. Modern technique related to these are a subject of discussion.

A museum has a collection of subject and, therefore, the discussion in Chapter on museological aspects centres around rules and regulations governing a scientific organisation of the museum. The objects and display require an explanation and thus various methods of label technique are discussed.

Another museological aspect discussed is the requirement of natural and artificial light arrangement in the museum as well as in exhibitions. The discussions in this case shed light on the need for consultations with architects and electricians which the building of the museum is being constructed. Attention needs to be paid to the provision of various sources of light and light arrangement required for the purpose in exhibitions.

Appropriate colour selection of object background, furniture, etc are discussed and so are issues related to colour combination. The discussion takes care of the location of store room, furniture, preservation and treatment of objects. Various objects require different sizes of show cases. The trial and error method

used in the arrangement of show cases, label, light, background etc has been noted.

Various methods used in the collection of ethno-data and objects, the theory and policy on collection, acquisition methods, field collection, handling, storing, transportation, methods and techniques involved in the organisation of various exhibitions, architectural design, gallery space, traffic pattern, light arrangement, furniture for different objects and their display technique has been discussed

Also discussed is the documentation aspect which deals with techniques, used in the selection and display of the aims and problems arising out of these, the application of this system to ethnographic museum; advanced technological equipment and the procedures used in a museum, the use of computer, and the study of audio-visual documentation. Interpretation of the concept and scope of a museum is based on a discussion on the planning of selected themes for various educational and other programmes through exhibition and other museological methods. The importance of museum education, how it can help the Rathwas and others etc are explained. Indeed, museum research plays a vital role in any systematic investigation and material collection. Publications on the museum are important from the point of view of visitors coming to the museum. Hence, this research effort highlights even that aspect of museology.