Pioneers of Ragani

Deep Chand Akhara : Pt. Deep Chand of Sonepat is considered as the founder of modern sang in Haryana. His melodious voice and performance touched the hearts of rural masses within Haryana and inspired many others to follow his path. He brought different changes in the management of this folk theatre. In the beginning the stage on which the sangs were performed consisted of small wooden chowki on which the leader of the troupe, actor, and the dancers used to perform their parts and get down after performing their specific roles. Pt. Deep Chand made many notable changes in this aspect. The first change was the installation of the stage on a higher platform which consisted of 4 to 8 wooden takhats. Secondly, provision was made on the stage for the Guru to sit on a chair. The third change was that the male actors started to dress as females while performing the role of a female. There aslo changes within the use of musical instruments such as, Sarangi was replaced by Iktara, Nakkara was used alongwith Dholak. Pt. Deep Chand was a socially and politically active artist, he inspired people to serve the nation by encouraging them to practice agricultural activities and to recruit themselves in the army.

Sarup Chand: Another prominent sangi of the Rohtak School was Sarup Chand of Rohtak district. He was born in a Brahman family in 1890 and from his very childhood started to take interest in sangs. He was also inspired by Pt. Deep Chand and started his own troupe. The main themes of sangs were love, romance, bravery, history, and emphasis on humanities. Following were some of his main sangs, Dhruva Bhagat, Jyani Chor, Harish Chander, Meera, Heer Ranjha. He died in the year 1931, and despite being a famous sangi none of his disciples continued his tradition.

Hardeva Swami: Hardeva Swami was born in 1895 in Gorad village near Sisana, he joined the Deep Chand troupe in 1910 and was one of the talented disciples of Deep Chand. In 1925 he started his own troupe and started to perform on his own. His mains themes were love and social aspects. Chand Kiran, Heer Ranjha, Jyani Chor were some of his famous sangs.

Baje Bhagat: Baje Bhagat was another prominent name within the Deep Chand Akhara in Haryana. He was born in 1902 in Sisana, Rohtak, he did not acquired any education from school like many other artists but he learned hindi and sanskrit from local teachers and was interested in poetry, music, dharma from his childhood. He met with Hardeva Swami through his father and adopted Hardeva Swami as his guru in 1921. He learned dancing, singing, acting from his guru. After the death of Hardeva Swami in 1926 he took the responsibilty of the troupe and began to perform with the troupe and excelled it. He earned donations for temples, wells, schools, chaupals, gaushalas by performing sangs in villages and gathering huge crowds. He has fans in Delhi, U.P, Rajasthan, he also staged his sangs in Lahore and and Multan. Some of his well known sangs were Chand Kiran, Harish chander, Jamal, Padmavat, Parun Mal, Raghubir, Roop Basant, Sarwar Neer etc.