

DISCOVERING NEW MUSICAL TALENT – GUESS WHERE?

The renowned music traditions of western Rajasthan, lauded throughout the world, are almost exclusively the preserve of male members of the community. In 2019, at the crafts exhibition organized by ITRHD in Barmer, one of the rare women musicians from the *manganiyar* community gave a stunning performance. At that event Maharani Hemlata Rajye Jodhpur said that we should encourage women and girls from the community to become more involved in their musical traditions.



Inspired by this, in March-April 2022, ITRHD organized an experimental project in Bishala village. A one-month intensive training workshop brought together 22 young girls age 8-18 from the *manganiyar* community. With three of the few existing female *gurus* as teachers, and with traditional instruments (the *dhol* and *khadtal*) especially procured for the workshop, the girls trained intensively and with great enthusiasm. The results were encouraging, as even the male members of the community and the head of the *panchayat* were very pleased. One of the *gurus*, Darya Devi, has performed throughout the world. She was very excited by the workshop.



Following the unexpectedly great success at Bishala, another workshop for young women was organized in July-August at Kotra village. Again, two dozen young women (ages 7-18) from the *manganiyar* community worked with a *gurumata* every day. Again, the activity was a real success, and impressed upon us the need to continue this training. There are only two surviving renowned female musicians in the traditional communities, so the task is urgent.

