CHAPTER II

Social condition of Nath
SOCIAL CONDITION OF NATH

The people who are dependent on snakes from ancient times are called as Nath, Jogi, Sapera, Madari, and Bajigar etc. The life of these people is dependent on snakes and herbs. They use mantras of various purposes. Thus their tradition and culture is primitive. Some times 'Nath' is catagorised under schedule tribe. The "sapera" is catagorised in to 7 sub caste (Ghamri, Vaid, Agarval, Nhar, Surdey, Panihar and Othwal). These people use to pet snakes for their livelyhood. The people belongs to sapera caste usually add word 'Nath' at the end of their names. Thus the sapera community is basically related with 'Nath' Community. They worship Gorekh Nath, as their Guru. The people of Nath community live like a sant and do not stay at a place of long period but always travel from one place to another place alongwith snakes and a big sized flute time, therefore they are catagorised as wanderers (Plate - 1). The flute is used to produce musical sound to attract the people. They make a show of snakes to earn money from the people for their livelyhood (Plate - 2).

Some others do some different jobs like singing, dancing, carving, manufacturing brooms, baskets, mats etc. (Plate - 3). They prepare medicines from medicinal herbs and sell them (Plate - 4 & 5). Most of these people are poor. (Plate - 6 & 7) Some hunt the wild animals and collect fruits, flowers and birds and sell them. Their sources of earning change according to the seasons. They climb up the tree with the help of bamboo and collect honey from hives and sell it too. Some of them also do bee keeping. (Plate - 8) They
lead their life in the forest by eating fruits, flowers roots etc.

They tame the animals like hens, goat, dogs, cow, bull and mule, and if, necessary they sell them too. They also grow paddy, sesame, wheat, gram, pea, oat, mustard etc. They also grow sugar cane to produce 'Gur'. (Plate - 9) The agricultural lands given by the government on lease to these people help them to settle their lives. They were found using traditional methods of agricultural works (Plate - 10)

Dress:

Some times the people belong to 'Nath' are also called as 'Kanphata', and 'Darsani' because they wear a coin in their ear. These people wear brass, iron or copper rings in their ear and garlands of herbs etc. and also keep amulets. Male make a bun of their hairs and generally keep long moustaches and beard. They wear black coloured kurta and take one or two satchle, one rule and 'bein'. They can be seen wondering near railway stations, fair, markets and in the lanes of villages and towns. Female live in the tents and wear ghagra, dhoti Kujia and ornament made of gilet or silver.

They live in open places, sometimes in tents or in huts. Now they are adopted to live in the houses made of mud cowdung and water. They take meals before the sun sets. They have only a few old articles, clothes, small baskets of snakes etc. in their houses.