Chapter 4

Description of Localities
Chapter IV

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Rajasthan is situated in the north-west part of India between 23°3' N and 30°12' North latitude and 69°30' E and 78°17' East longitude, covering an area of 342,239 sq. kms. (Census of India, 1981, Vol. Part 11-A(1), p. 84). - “The name Rajasthan alternated with Rajwara or Rajputana does not appear to have been known before the advent of Muslims in India. The glory claimed by the traditions for the Rajputs who apparently gave their name to the region” (Ganguly 1983 : 1). Perhaps due to which (glory) Raman (1963) called it as the “island of glory”. The Rajasthan lies in the Aravali hills, which is one of the oldest mountain range of the world. The Aravali hills divide the Rajasthan into two natural zones:— north-west and south-west.

The north-west zone is a vast expanse of wind blown sand and is very sparsely populated. On the other hand south-east zone is full of hilly ranges, forests and fertile cultivable lands. The physiological features of an area, to a great extent, moulds the socio-economic aspects of the people inhabiting the area.

The state has the population of 3,42,61,802 individuals
(Census of India, 1981) with the density of 100 per sq. km. Sex ratio of the state found as 919 males per thousand females. The majority (78.95 per cent) lives in rural and only 21.05 per cent lives in the urban areas. In Rajasthan 17.04 per cent are the scheduled caste and 12.21 per cent are the scheduled tribe. The main language of the state is Hindi and Rajasthani. All the important religion groups i.e. Hindu (89.32 %), Muslim (7.28 %), Sikh (1.44 %) and Jains (1.82 %) are found in the state. Besides the major religions as mentioned above, animism is also practiced by the tribals who inhabit the area.


**THE PEOPLE**

The two dominant tribal groups of the area are the Bhil and the Garasia. The largest tribal concentration in Rajasthan is found in the southern part of the state. The former princely states
of Udaiur, Dungarpur and Banswara comprised the southern part of Rajasthan. In southern part of Udaipur district shows the highest concentration of the tribes.

(A) - THE BHIL

Bhil, is one of the largest scheduled tribes of India numbering 73,67,964 persons as per 1981 Census of India. According to 1971 Census, the population of Bhils in Rajasthan was 14,37,937. In Udaipur district alone where the study was conducted their numerical strength was 3,15,911 (Census, 1971). They are spreaded over a large territory of western India with the concentration of southern Rajasthan, western Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and northern Maharashtra. The Bhils are said to be the earliest inhabitants of this area. Risely (1915) classified Bhils within the Dravidian type while Guha (1937) suggested a definite 'negroto strain' among them. Later workers such as Fuchs (1941) and Majumdar (1944) differ from these earlier workers. They suggest that Bhils are neither Dravidians nor Aryan in their ethnic affinities. The Bhil of Rajasthan have been measured by Risely (1903), Kopper (1952), Biswas and Bhattacharya (1961) and Reddy (1989). According to some scholars the term Bhil has
been derived from the Dravidian word ‘bow’ which is the characteristic weapon of this ancient tribal people. Some say that the term is derived from the Tamil word ‘Bhilwar’ which means - a bowman. Monoharan (1986) opined that the Dravidian word ‘Vil’ meaning a bow or bowman appears to be more appropriate derivation.

In general, they stay in huts scattered over the hillock peak which constitute a phala (hamlet), a few phala constitute a pal (territory). The life of the Bhil is full of romance and adventure. Dance is part and parcel of their life. Their clothing is short and scanty, males put on a short dhoti, shirt and pagri, the females wears Ghagra (petticoat), which is blue or black in colours, blouse and Umi. The women are fond of ornament. Now-a-days, the traditional dress and ornaments are being replaced by modern dress and ornaments. Drinking, dancing and singing are the part and parcel of their lives. The Bhil speaks Bhili language which belongs to Indo-Aryan family of languages and can communicate in different regional languages. They are agriculturist and collect forest produce for maintaining their livelihood. Bhil of Udaipur district particularly Kherwara and Sarada regions are economically and culturally more advanced than the rest of the Bhils living other region of this district. They worship Bhawani, Shibjee and
ancestral souls. When they fell ill, they go to the Bhopa (magical man) for their treatment.

(B) - THE GARASIA

Garasia, are simple and courageous people prefer to lead a traditional way of life, in the hilly tracts of Aravali range of Rajasthan. They are concentrated in Udaipur, Sirohi and Pali districts. The term Garasia is applied to the Rajput and other land holders of Gujarat because they hold the land which gives them a Giras by chieftain for maintenance. Giras means mouthful and those who are given land for their subsistence are called 'Garasia'. It is said that the word has been derived from Giri and Sia means hill dwellers. The 1981, Census of India, the name Garasia as a derivation of the word Gras meaning subsistence has been given. Garasia has a population strength of 1,18,757 persons (Census of India, 1981). They speak in their own dialect which is slightly different from Bhil. They can also communicate in Mewari and Gujarati dialects too. They possess good physique. Men wear black or white turbans (Safa), white short sleeves kurta and dhoti. Women wear black and red long blouse (Julki), red petticoat (Ghagra), red and yellow printed veil (Churni). They
are fond of ornaments, both the sexes wear metal ornaments and tattoo their face, hand as well as feet. Drink, dance and music are the parts of their life.

Garasia reside in small house on the slopes of the hill near their agricultural field. The house consists of one room with open veranda and having mud wall or split bamboo wall plastered with mud, roof is thatched either with grass or with handmade Kailu. In general, the Garasia are fond of vegetarian diet but occasionally they enjoy non-vegetarian food too. Maize is their staple food. They also consume alcoholic drinks. They practice Hinduism. They are agriculturist and fond of hunting. Next to agriculture is animal husbandry.

✧ **Alwar District**

It is a non-tribal district. It has steep hills, dense forest which is an ideal place where tribal feels homely and can thrive well. Bhil and Mina tribes are reported from here. Alwar is also a backward district and have no proper approach upto tribal huts. There are some forest routes which are hardly jeepable. With the help of an interpreter, these tribes were gathered and gave a lot of information regarding the animals.
Tribes of the localities narrated the story of a battle which was believed to be held between Mina and Bhil tribes. Bhil won the battle. These tribes were interviewed repeatedly and their songs were recorded in tape recorder. Some single and family photographs of Bhil and Mina tribes were also taken. Some very interesting information about Bhil tribes were collected. They told us about certain medicines which are very rare among tribes.

❖ **Banswara District**

It is a non-tribal district. Bhil and Mina are the major tribes of this district. Some of the tribal live in the midst of forest in their poor huts where other people can not approach easily. Some of the Bhil tribes migrated from Madhya Pradesh. Most of them are doing cultivation and live in dirty huts. The interpreter, Sri Hemant Singh, who himself was a Mina and doing service in Block office collected tribals at his residence. With his help the interview of these tribals was made possible. Some ladies of Bhil sung folk songs. A group photographs of these tribals were also taken. After that 3-4 villages were also surveyed and collected data and snapped photographs.

❖ **Bharatpur District**

It is also a non-tribal district
where is reported 10 - 12 % tribal population. Bhil and Mina are the major tribes. Mina are reported to be more advance. There is one National Park ( Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary ), where a large number of deer and birds are maintained. With the help of Mr. N. K. Gaur ( interpreter ) Maya Gaon, which is having maximum population of tribes could be surveyed. This village is situated near a river. These tribes drink water from this river as there is not any other source of drinkable water. After taking the interview of these tribes a lot of informations regarding various aspects of ethnozoology were collected. 3 - 4 photographs of these tribals were taken, showing different aspects of their mode of living and recorded some songs of social systems. Some of the tribals are engaged in forest and PWD on daily wages.

❖ Bhilwara District

It is non - tribal district. Bhil and Mina tribals are reported from here. Bhils are more primitive than that of Mina. Bhilwara is also a backward district and have no proper route to the tribal huts, but there are certain forest route which are hardly approachable. With the help of Mr. Sharma, a interpreter, the tribes were gathered and gave a lot of information
regarding the food and medicines used by the tribals. They felt discomfort in revealing the information. But the tribals were interviewed at different places and many interesting ethnozoological information were collected. 3 - 4 snaps, regarding the ethnozoological point of view were snapped. Most of the Mina tribals are doing cultivation and their children were going to school. But the Bhil tribals are not so advanced. They live in dirty places in their proper uniform, 'Langoti'. A photograph of a group of Bhil ladies were also clicked. All were in their typical dresses. The ladies sung a folk song which was recorded also.

❖ Bundi District

It is a non-tribal district. Though Bhil and Mina are found in this district. The population of Bhil is not much as compared to Mina tribes. Mina are the major tribes of this district. They live in their poor huts where other people can not approach easily. Most of them are doing cultivation and live in dirty places. The interpreter Sri Hakku, who himself was a Mina, narrated many folklores about his community. A good many informations were collected from him about Mina as well as Bhil tribes. Throughout the district Mina are the dominating tribes.
Those who live near urban areas are educated. They are in services and their children were admitted in schools. A group photographs of these tribals were also taken in 3 - 4 villages.

❖ **Chittoorgarh District**

It is a non-tribal district consisting of about 8% tribal population. Bhil and Mina are the major tribes of this district. Gameti have also been reported at some places. The tribals are very poor as they are not getting any work. Due to the absence of mines and lack of land for agriculture, hunting is common among them. With the help of a Gameti interpreter, who was basically a teacher, collected Bhil and Mina tribes in a primary school. The tribals were interviewed and a good many ethnozoological informations were collected. Here a group photographs of different tribals were taken. Mina are the major tribes of this district. Some of the tribal live near the forest in their dirty huts where other people can not approach easily. Most of the tribals are doing cultivation. With the help of the interpreter a lot of interesting folklores / folktales and myths about the animals were recorded. A group of Bhil ladies who were performing a folk dance was clicked and recorded in tape.
❖ Dungarpur District

It is also a non-tribal district consisting of about 14% tribal population. Bhil, Mina and Domar are the three major tribes, which are reported from here. These tribes are extremely poor as they are not getting any work. Due to the absence of mines and lack of land for agriculture, hunting is common among them. Sri Sukhu an old village man of general cast collected many tribals at his residence. The tribals were interviewed and a good many ethnozoological informations were collected. Here a group photographs of different tribes were taken. Two photographs of peacock in dancing position were taken. On the way Chandanwara Gaon was also visited, 25 families of Bhils live here. Most of the Bhils have migrated from Gujarat because it is bounded on the north by Udaipur district, on the east by Banswara, on the south and west by Sabarkantha and Panchmahal districts of Gujarat. The district though fairly open in the south and east is interspersed with hills covered with low jungle. In the north and east the landscape is rugged and wild but towards the south-western border the harsh feature gradually became softer and finally merge in the topograph of Gujarat region. Only 0.5 per cent of the total classified area of the district is covered with forest. The cultivated area is almost confined in
the valleys and low ground between the hills where the soil is rich alluvial and it is irrigated by the water of the surrounding wells. The district is hilly but none of the hill attain a great height. River Mahi and Som, streams Jhakam, Majham, Vatrak, Bhader, Gangli, Sapan and Veriganga flows through the district. But in the field area neither any river nor any stream passes through. Hand pumps are the only source of drinking water though a number of wells are available within the area which are mainly used for irrigation purpose. Most of the tribals are doing cultivation and live in dirty huts. Some tribal ladies sung the traditional songs were recorded.

❖ Jaipur District

It is non-tribal district. Mina are the dominating tribe of the entire district. Most of the tribals are well educated and are in PWD and forest services. Being the capital of the state people are prosperous and roads are jeepable. There is no clear cut demonstration between the tribals and common people. A group photographs of the tribals were taken from the ethnozoological point of view. Dance is quite common among the tribes. The tribes are very fond of the catching fish. Almost all
the tribals are aware of the importance of education and send their children in the schools. A few tribals are engaged on the daily wages in the forest department. Sri Gautam, who was basically a teacher gave a good amount of very traditional animal drugs and other aspects of ethnozoology. At last some photographs were clicked from the localities.

_Jhalwar District_

Though it is a non-tribal district of this state yet showing a major tribal district. Originally Bhil, Domar, Garasia and Mina are found in this district. This district is known as the Gulf of India. Mostly the tribals are doing work in mines, PWD and forest department. Some tribals are living near the river. These rivers are only the source of water for the tribals living in that area. The tribals are uneducated and there are no school in such remote tribal. There are some tribal schools of education department which are near the town or urban areas. Some of the tribes who have started to live near the town are following the importance of education and send their children to school, but they also do work on daily wages. Some of the tribes living in the forest are engaged in cultivation. They
are very fond of catching fish. Dance is quite common among these tribes. Sri S. P. K. Srivastava, a "Punch" of the "Panchayat Body" of that area, gathered Domar and Garsia tribes on a primary school. A Domar tribe, Sri Sukhlal, a 70 years age delivered a wealth of interesting information about the animals. Here a good many data was collected from the ethnozoological point of view but mostly depicting the cultural and social aspects. The data collected regarding medicinal aspects were very poor. After that some photographs of these tribals were taken.

❖ **Kota District**

It was surveyed from ethnozoological point of view that Mina, Saharia and Bhil are found here. Garasia, Domar and Gameti are also reported working as labourers in the mines. Approximately 7 % tribal concentration is reported. It is one of the backward district of Rajasthan but now a days there are so many educational institution have been opened in the urban and rural areas. Most of the tribals understand and speak ‘Hindi’. Some of the tribals are doing cultivation, some working on daily wages and others working in forest department. Among these tribes Mina are more advanced. They are aware of education
and send their children to the school. With the help of Sri Thanna Singh, a tribal head man, wealth of information regarding different aspects of ethnozoology were recorded. At last 4 - 5 photographs of different tribals were taken.

❖ **Pali District**

It is a non-tribal district. Bhil, Mina and Garasia communities are found. Most of the tribals live near hill and remote places. Most of them are alcoholic in nature. Hunting of wild animals is occasionally done by them, violating all the law of forest department. The headman of Bhil tribe Sri Kanker Singh, gave interesting interview and delivered various aspects of information regarding ethnozoology. Some additional informations were also added during the interview.

❖ **Sawai Madhopur District**

It is also a non-tribal district. There are no dense forests and long rivers in this district. Mina, Saharia and Bhil are found in this district. But Mina constitute the maximum tribal concentration in this district. Other
tribes are found in scattered form. They are almost negligence. A Mina headman was engaged for collecting the data regarding the ethnozoological point of view. Mostly they avoid the hunting of animals. They are very fond of catching fishes. Some people are involved in witchcraft. Almost everywhere there are certain animal effigies are kept outside of their villages. During the incidence of small - pox, chicken - pox and measles they avoid to take the vegetables fried in the oil and wearing leather shoes and 'chappals'. To appease the Goddess they break eggs over the effigies and sacrifice certain animals. Some of the Mina tribals are aware of the education and sending their children to the school. With the help of the headman 3 - 4 photographs of tribal ladies were snapped.

**Sikar District**

It is a non - tribal district. Only Mina tribals are reported from here and they are also in very less concentration. The tribal touches almost have been lost because of the impact of urbanization. Some of the tribals live in very pitiable condition. Most of them are doing agriculture. Some are of criminal nature and using bows and arrows. During this
investigation, the tribal narrated a lot of story regarding the ethnozoological point of view were reported. Sri Nirhu Singh, 'Surpanch' of a village, gathered the tribal people in a primary school and some photographs were clicked.

❖ **Sirohi District**

It is a non-tribal district where 10% tribal population is reported. Bhill, Mina and Garasia are the major tribals living in this district. They are not so advance as found in other district. A tribal village was selected for the interview of tribals. With the help of Sri Sumer Singh, a tribal leader, new data regarding different aspects of ethnozoology were collected. 3-4 photographs of Bhil, Mina and Garasia and their children showing different types of tribal culture and social structure were taken. Most of the tribal of village are doing cultivation and have shifted near the town.

❖ **Tonk District**

It is a non-tribal district. Bhil and Mina are the dominating tribes in this district. Tonk is also a backward
district but have no proper route to access the tribal huts. There are certain PWD roads and forest routes which are hardly accessible. With the help of a headmaster of a primary school the tribals were collected near a 'Asanpat village'. With the help of an interpreter a lot of interesting informations were collected. The interview of the chief tribal with both the tribal wings were taken. Sri Dhukku, a Bhil tribal, gave some interesting information regarding the medicinal aspects of the survey. 4-5 photographs of the tribals were taken.

❖ Udaipur District

The district is named after its Princely city 'Udaipur', which was found by Rana Udai Singh about 1559 A.D. and acquired its name after him (Erskine, 1908). In April, 1948, it was merged with the United State of Rajasthan. The district is bounded on the north by Ajmer and Pali district, south by the districts of Dungarpur and Banswara. On the east by Bhilwara and Chittoorgarh district and on the west by Pali and Sirohi districts of Rajasthan, and Sabarkantha district of Gujarat. The geographical condition of the district reveals that it comprises of an elevated plateau on the north and
fertile plain on the east. The southern part of the district is mostly covered with rock, hills and fairly dense forest. The western part of the district is composed of Aravali range which enters Bhim tehsil from Ajmer district and continues south-westernly towards Kumbhalgarh and Gagra and then spread towards the valley of the Som river. The main rivers of Udaipur district are the Banas, Berach, Som, Jhakam, Sabarmati and the Wakal. Only the river Som which rises in the hill near Som village in Kotra tehsil touching the field area flows through the hilly tracts in south-eastern direction and joins the river Mahi near Baneshwar. The river water used only for bathing purpose. Well is the main resources of drinking water in the area. In rainy season the area remain cut off from tehsil headquarter. There was no proper sanitation in the area. This district shows the highest concentration of tribes. Bhil, Mina and Garasia are found in this district but Bhil and Garasia are the dominating ones. They live in their poor huts. Most of them are doing cultivation and live in dirty places but some of them are working in mines and left their traditional habits. Some of them have become aware of education and send their children to the school. The interpreter Sri Bhanav Singh, who himself was a Garasia narrated many folklores / folktales about the tribals of this district.
A good many informations regarding different aspects of the study were collected. Some photographs of the ladies of different tribal wings were clicked near mines. Most of these tribals are engaged as manual labourers. The Garasia tribals are somewhat different from other as their livelihood are surrounded around the omens and myths. On the incidence of any epidemic disease these tribes give wine to appease the Goddess. Most of the Garasia children use pendants toward off the evil spirits. They worship the cattle as they believe them as the Goddess of wealth (Laxmi).