

Beliefs and Practices of *Jogi* (Snake Charmers) Community

A Case study of Umer-Kot Tharparker



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2019**

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Master in Philosophy in Anthropology

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Abstract

Nomadic communities remained interesting point of documentation for the anthropologists for their interesting ways of living. The study majorly deals with the lifestyle of the *Jogi* communities living in Sindh. There were many *Jogi* tribes living in Sindh, but from them only *Dayah* caste/community selected to find out their interaction with nature and surroundings. Their beliefs and practices in a year cycle and their lifestyle as well as their understanding of life. The study conducted in Umerkot and in-depth interviews administered to document the livelihood patterns of the community. Overall, study has three major objectives e.g. documentation of the beliefs of the community the second one was to explore the livelihood characteristics and their economic circle and documentation of their practices and social organization of the community to find out their ways of living and carrying the heritage of the ancestors. To make it happened, a number of anthropological tools were utilized e.g. participant observation, key-informant discussions and their equal participation for data collection and verification of data and in-depth interview schedule for data collection, in last the case studies for enriching the existing thesis were part of the thesis.

Findings of the study revealed that the community was living very tough life; they were transforming their tradition from generation to generation up-till now, but now due to some external factors e.g. environmental and social they were changing their economic professions for better livelihood. Their lives majorly based on charming snakes and trade of them. They were performers who visited door to door for their animal performance and earn livelihood, but due to telecommunication e.g. TV, now the performing arts were not appreciated as it was in past. Therefore, for the survival of their families the profession of bagging was second major alternative profession by the community. Modernization and advancement in medical industry, easy access to medical facility centers took the medicinal role of Charmers and they lost one of major source of income for their survival. In young generations, love to the profession of snake charming was limited; parents also motivated their children to learn some other technical skills for their livelihood other than bagging and snake charming. Though the community was living very hand to mouth life but they still loved their traditions and do not wanted to leave it, because it was in their blood according to the community members.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Trainers of performing animals, Snake charmers, Magicians, jugglers, musicians, dancers, beggars, fortune tellers, potters and weavers along with other nomadic artisans and performers/entertainers filled the colored of joys and happiness in sedentary societies since the known history. The sight looked invisible in the context that numbers of researchers were available on the pastoral activities of such performers e.g. camel, sheep and cattle herders rather than the other side of the coin the nomadic adaptation and the activities of spatially mobile artisans and performers. If we analyzed all the characteristics of ideal culture in the context of 'nomadism', both the segments stated earlier have different type of structural, organizational and marginality regarding the sedentary agricultural and urban population. Knowingly, the term 'nomad' or the 'nomadism' more often used for the pastoralism or the herders and rather than using all the personalities under the umbrella of 'nomad' communities which are mobile e.g. hunter-gatherers, gypsies and the travelers.

Definitional discrepancies existed in conceptualization of the term nomadism, because the term incidentally linked with the pastoral activity that is why the other communities of nomads had very limited literature (Berland, 1983). In the same way, the theories of the spatial mobility come-up from same definitional issues, which was only the pastoral focused. That is why the knowledge of spatial mobility as the survival strategies for the human population was limited. When we see the spatial mobility in the context of 'survival strategy' it combine all the human groups either pastoral or non-pastoral, which includes all the internal and external factors towards the quest of survival e.g. socio-political condition, technological advancement etc.

All the groups either pastoral or non-pastoral, the spatial mobility directly linked with the subsistence strategies. In some communities it could be due to the physical conditions, in some it could be due to political, economic; each strategy related to the particular group of humans. There were patterns of mobility among the communities e.g. in urban areas the extensive presence of individual mobility for subsistence of his

family in rural communities the spatial mobility of families from low living standard (less agricultural output) to higher living standards (job oriented outputs) have the same characteristics of spatial mobility. However, due to the association of pastoral activities with the nomadic communities such type of spatial mobility pushed backward in literature (limited literature available). Because in pastoral communities, they only focused on herds, and herds related activities, which overlooked the other communities those who are, also spatially mobile but does not have herds with them. Due to such issues and limitation of nomadic theories and conceptualization, the present research study conceptualized the model of subsistence spatial mobility among Snake Charmers of Sindh. The conceptualization is necessary to document the patterns and resources of non-pastoral communities that were the part of spatial mobility (nomadic) population but does not have their voices (Irons, 1975, Barth, 1973; Cole, 1973; Salzman, 1978) which may enhance the existing knowledge to understand the patterns of social organization and interrelationship of social lives.

The study focused on the Snake-Charmer community of Sindh Province. In Tharparker, number of indigenous groups residing and earning their livelihood, majority of the Snake-Charmer community lived in Umer-Kot. Govt. of Sindh provided some land near the Umer-Kot to the *Jogi* community for their permanent residence but due to some reasons e.g. lack of life essentials, people forced to practice their traditional ways of living. There was only one hand pump in the community, no source of electricity, no drainage, and some other issues made the residential unit less attractive for the mobile communities.

Present research study focused on the rituals and practices of the Snake charmer (*Dayah*) community. It was evident that number of other communities like *Bhal*, *Jogi* living with the Snake Charmers and share the same geo-physical environment, both communities come under the umbrella of vulnerable and low economic minorities (Hindu), that is why the development indicators were low among them. In the area there were eight Snake-charmer communities who shared the locality in Village Wachoon-Bandhal. According to the key informant, there was only one major caste of Snake Charmer, which was 'NATH-JOGI' that were the part of Hindu-culture since from beginning. The informant again narrated that, in Sindh, two types of *Jogi*-communities existed one who was real one which were known as 'Nath-Panth-Jogi' and some other *Jogis* who belonged to the *Bhariya* and *Saami* tribes and named them

Jogis e.g. *Saami-Jogi* etc. that was eventually a different caste in the context of their living, their practices from *Nath-Panth-Jogis*. The study focused on the practices and beliefs of *Dayah-Nth*¹ that was the second sub-caste among the snake charmers in Umer Kot.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

For the present research study, three major objectives formulated to document the beliefs and practices of the community as,

- To document the beliefs of the community
- To explore the livelihood characteristics and their economic practices
- To document the practices and social organization of the community

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Every specific region has its own wealth of cultural art and crafts, which represent the skill, taste, and devotion of the people for the region. Pakistan is a country rich in the endless diversified culture, art and crafts, which to some extent different in every region but have same operational functions in every culture. Present research study documented the living patterns, beliefs and practices of the *Jogi* community in Umer Kot, Tharparkar. As stated earlier, practices and beliefs were prominent part of the study but along with their documentation foods habits, residential and dress patterns among male and female community members, income generation activities e.g. snake charming, begging and working as labourer etc. were also included to make the study more prominent and ethnographic in nature.

The *Dayal* community from Umer-kot selected due to their dual characteristics. The majority of the community members lived a mobile life, they spend more than half year in their permanent settlement in Umer-kot and remaining all the months in a nomadic life. Former period contains majorly snake charming, begging and laboring but in latter residential pattern begging, snake charming were only two professions for subsistence.

Marriage ceremonies, beliefs about religion and humanity, loved with snakes and their worship documented to find out indigenous characteristics of the community. There were 8 sub-castes existed in the locality which was surveyed for their

¹ Lineage

demographic information to make the study more up to mark and up to the standard of anthropology.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Present research study might contribute to the anthropological literature and research for understanding and conceptualizing non-pastoral nomadic communities in Pakistan. The study also provided ways to analyzed the patterns and the mechanisms which might be used for the documentation of other nomadic communities to make comparative studies for universal theoretical frameworks like in the pastoral nomadic studies already existed. This anthropological study provides valuable information about the belief system of Snake Charmer community and their subsistence strategies around the year. Study of indigenous communities has great importance in anthropological literature; it is the basic essence of anthropology to study the natives according to their own perception and understand the world according to their conceptualization.

Research on this particular topic is highly significant and it will contribute towards the culture, rituals and dying traditions of the community. Because of social and environmental hurdles as the community is shifting from mobile to permanent settlements along with change in professions from Snake charming to tailors, motor-mechanics etc. Since the underline agenda of anthropology is to determine the solution of problems and also make information available for related issues, this research would be the mile stone examine the living traditions and vanishing ethnicities of the Snake charmers castes.

1.5 Area of the Study

The Snake charmer community of *Dayah* selected for the present research study. The permanent settlement of the community was in Village Wachoon-Bandhal, Union Council Kharo-Syed, Umer Kot, they spend more than half of the year in their permanent settlements, and remaining months have been in traveling from city to city within Sindh province for their subsistence. The community could be conceptualized as sedentary-mobile community, which had both sedentary and mobile characteristics during one complete year. All major rituals they practiced in their permanent settlement e.g. marriage and other ceremonial activities.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Chapter consists of previous studies to conceptualize the existing study. It includes all the aspects as well as development of terms nomad and its functions to understand the mobile communities. The review chapter was writing down in the context for justification of new and previous techniques for the study of Snake charmer's communities. The word snake charmers were used for the identification of *Dayah* community.

2.1 Two Types of Nomads

In 1972, Dyson-Hudson were identified that the pastoral nomads 'nomadism' was an ideal cultural traditional model which was not helpful to understand the about the social system of other nomadic tribes. He suggested that the 'nomadism' was discussing two different phenomenon which internally linked but did not have same characteristics e.g. spatial mobility and herding. Lattimore (1957) and Krader (1959) mistakenly facilitated pastoralists' movement as the herds' movement along with human beings. Like the herds' movement spatial movement demonstrated that the movement is associated with the internal and external factors rather than on human-livestock-environment's interaction of water and pasture. Gulliver (1975) also stated that pastoralists did not move only for physical environment they were consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly participating in social systems. He also concluded that, spatial movement is not easy to understand with herd's movement because it is quite complex phenomenon. A number of studies discussed internal and external factors of spatial movement among nomadic communities but did not discuss the spatial movement separately.

If we come up with the cross-cultural development of the model than spatially mobile groups remained confined due to lack of other pastoral characteristics (Patai 1951; Krader 1955a; Gulliver 1955; Spooner 1971). Complex nomads were identified by Johnson (1969), he studied the agriculturalists and sedentary activities in different polar models (Nelson, 1973; Salzman, 1971). Above stated studies indicated a shift from environmental determinism into internal and external socio-ecological factors (Spooner, 1971). Meanwhile, Salzman (1978) stated it is not possible to make a

generalized statement for the pastoralists' spatial mobility because there is very limited literature and work available. These spatial mobility groups, interacting with sedentary population and the pastoralists as well but this interrelated interaction was still missing to find out the characteristics and analytical model for generalization (Barth, 1961). In this regards, traveling artisans, paddlers and animal performers/entertainers were some of the major communities in spatial mobility because they have dependence on spatial mobility inherited for subsistence activities. So, this is very important to discuss characteristics of both groups before going into the discussion of snake charmers in Pakistan.

First of all the dependency of community, herds' nomadic groups mainly depend upon the interaction with the community. It was evident that spatial mobile groups were more sedentary centric and the nomadic groups focused on the environment and the varying degree of human beings because they are food producers, so they have direct control over their subsistence activities rather than spatial mobile groups there are consumers. Barth (1973), distinguished between pastoralists and spatial mobile groups on the basis of their production.

In review of papers presented at 1978 'National Seminar on Indian nomads' held in Mysore, Misra (1978) has classified Indian nomads into three categories: natural nomads, hunting and collecting nomads and symbiotic nomads. Categorically, first two categories referring pastoralists due to certain characteristics e.g. they moved with their herds and their movement regulated by the nature. In last category 'symbiotic nomads', these are those groups who provide number of services to the sedentary people. But, all type of nomads existed in South Asia have symbiotic relationships with sedentary people.

Berland (1983) developed a model which discussed the type of community and their resources along with the personal skills, the model had five communities e.g. Agriculturalists, Pastoralists, traders, artisans and entertainers. First two categories have their cultivated land and pastures respectively, the third category have number of merchandise e.g. animals etc. The artisans need tools and skills for their livelihood activities in last the entertainers have all components e.g. personal skills, animals' skills for re-creation, rituals etc.

Figure 1. Berland's Categorization of Communities

	PRIMARY RESOURCE		CAPITAL	
Sedentary Agriculture	(Fields) LAND	+	SEED	+ LABOR
Pastoralists	(Pasture) LAND	+	HERDS	+ LABOR
Caravaneers (Traders)	HUMAN GROUPS (Crops-Goods)	+	PACK-DRAUGHT ANIMALS	+ LABOR
Artisans	HUMAN GROUPS (Production needs)	+	SKILLS AND TOOLS	+ LABOR
Entertainers	HUMAN GROUPS (Recreation, rituals, curiosity)	+	INDIVIDUAL SKILLS, ANIMALS	+ LABOR

Source: Berland, 1983

As stated in the above figure all the five categories need labour for their production, but only the first two categories need external capital as well e.g. seeds for cultivation and Herds for pastures. The remaining three categories mainly deal with human skills and their tactics for survival. If we go through the spatial mobility and specialized skills, all of the human groups need human skills for production. In the last two categories, artisans and entertainers have a unique description towards the interrelation with sedentary people; they only have their skills and animals for performing arts and moved from one community to another for their survival but the other three categories do not have such a main character, which made the former superior in nature. Moreover, we can say, nomadic artisans and entertainers have a unique space in the human social sphere.

2.2 Nomads of South Asia

For understanding the social and sedentary communities Marriot (1955) and Mandelbaum (1970) stated, villagers and the urban dwellers have a very unique and complex interactions which are necessary to identify the ethnology of social systems of South Asia. There was evidence of artisans and entertainers in the early Vedic period as by the late Vedic era (circa 1000-700 BC). The Rig Veda refers to a number of specialized fields 'entertainment industry which had professional flute players and dancers, fortune tellers (Basham, 1959).

Bose (1956), distinguished between different types of nomadic communities e.g. pastoral nomads, craftsmen and entertainers. Pastoral nomads and spatial mobile groups sensitive to social-environmental aspects but both influenced with a different degree. The pastoral nomads' decision always herds centered because they maintain the connection with the environment rather than the spatial groups which consists of artisans and entertainers which have flexibility in their mobility. On the basis of economic participation nomadic pastoralists were divided into three categories, Vidyarthi and Rai's (1977) included all three categories of performers, artisans and folk artists as unique type in Indian tribes. Misra (1970) documented 88 groups of nomads in India according to him, 'when we moved from one city to another, we meet them on roads; they camped beneath a tree, and transfer their luggage via donkeys, motor-vehicles. Each group had a different area of movement, some of them moved throughout the year cycle, some of them moved into two or three locations in the year and some only moved twice in the year. It was evident that on the economic basis the nomads were categorize into four types one was the pastoralists, second was the traders, third was the artisans and the last one was belonged to the bagging profession (Misra, 1970).

All the spatially mobile groups known as 'Khanabadosh' in local terms but they have certain characteristics which made them unique from others. In Pakistan there were 14 different type of groups and *Jogis* (snake-charmers) were one of them. Each of the groups has number of sub-groups which were distinguished with their economic activities. Like in *Jogi* community there were overall more than 15 sub-castes existed in Sindh and Punjab provinces.

Snakes have been so important in India, they are widely worshipped and feared. The belief that snakes could transform their appearance into human form is wide spread in society in general but it could be perceived in the light of 'survival'. According to the Edward (1969), the Snake goddess protects her worshipers against snake bites. If they wanted to transform they become humans. He also stated the importance of Snake charmers in previous days and transformation of this art into different occupational groups which were discussed further.

Some powers and qualities possessed by the *Jogis* that is why in back days of Muslim rule in Sub-continent they have interactions with the Mughal Emperor Akbar and

Aurangzeb. The story of Jaimal and Fattah was also associated with the Emperor Akbar with was stated by Briggs (1934) as, 'When Aurangzeb became the follower of Gorakh Nath, the disciples of the great Yogi refused to eat with him. He buried himself alive for twelve years, when he came back from his tomb, he was just a skeleton, there were rags on his body and called Mrtak Nath. After his appearance the flesh came back (re-filled by flesh), he became a young man and named *Siddha Handi Pharang* Nath.

The story of nomadic life is very important to discuss here. In sub-continent they were permanent settlers they have their own villages which were surrounded by thick forests. But in 19th century when they were allied with Emperor Akbar, they fought wars under the leadership of Jaimal and Fattah and defeated. From that onward they adopted nomadic lives. Though they were living very hard to mouth life but they enjoyed benefits from Mughal government and Sikh successors (Goswamy & Grewal, 1968).

2.3 Nomads and Anthropology

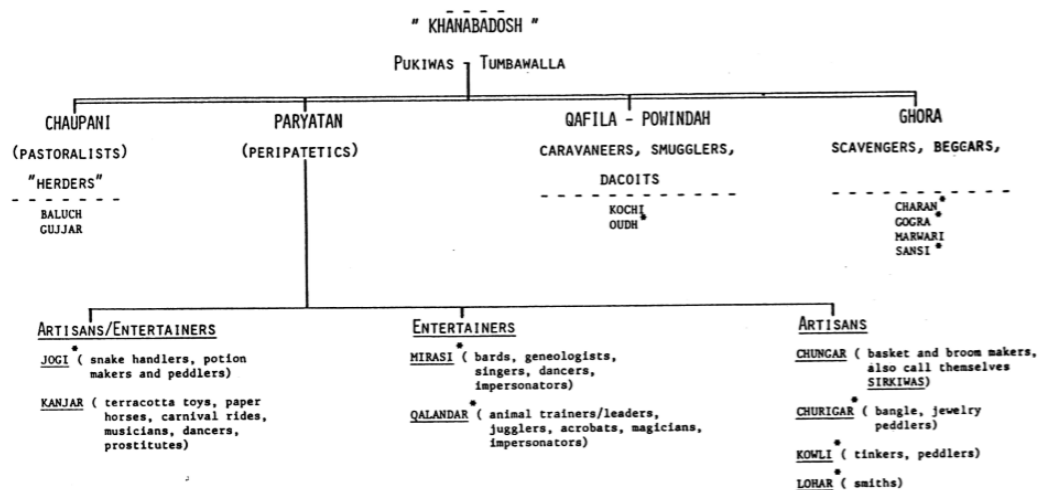
The observation of Spooner (1973) found out there is no common cultural traits in all nomadic groups as well as there is no exclusive trait which existed in nomads. This diverse finding of the nomadic groups made them more prominent in the aspect that they are different among their 'Khanabadosh' community. Sub-groups of nomads, spatial mobility, pastoralists communities, herds owners all have different parameters which needs comprehensive attention to the conceptualization of Nomadism (Ahmed 1983; Bates & Lees 1977; Schneider 1984; Salzman 1972, 1978, 1980, 1984). Like the findings of the Salzman (1980), nomadism is a useful concept. The Dyson-Hudson (1980) suggested intensive analysis for individual process of decision making is necessary rather than focusing on the social structure of nomads. Studies as stated earlier, find out this unique characteristic that flexibility among the group and individual level is common in nomadic system.

There is very limited knowledge about the spatial nomads as stated earlier, categorically researches were restricted to hunter-gatherer, pastoral and herds communities and overlooked the other nomadic communities of artisans, entertainers and performers who lived in different cultural and social setting. Georg Simmel (1950) might have called such professional groups as strangers (Schnetz 1944; Sway

1981). Anthropology is the specialization in small-scale societies, sedentary issues and the dynamics of small scale societies were the prominent aspects of the discipline. It could be due to lack of interest in spatial mobility as the part of nomadic community that is why the area has very limited literature. Present research study is the focus on the characteristics of the nomadic communities according to their subsistence.

Berland (1986) in his study discussed four types of ‘Khanabadosh’ and their sub-groups along with the role formation and particular group characteristics. In the study he discussed,

Figure 2. Characteristics of Khanabadosh



In stated figure, four major groups from *Pakhiwas* were studied by Berland (1986) according to their characteristics. The spatial nomads were in-lined under the Peripatetic (travelers) category due to their specific nature for subsistence. Three different categories were again developed on the basis of group characteristics e.g. Artisans, Entertainer and those who have both the characteristics the *Jogi* and the *Kanjar* in Pakistani community.

The present research study only deals with the rituals and beliefs of the *Jogi* community. The entrainment/performance e.g. snake dances, and the artisans potion making develop the dual characters in them.

2.4 Snake Charmers

Interaction of snakes and human beings has a long history before the inception of sedentary communities when snakes were deadly reptile. Because of its killing and hunting nature, man remained the pray and vice versa. The interaction of human beings with nature recognition of animals with their sound and physical attire started a new way of understanding the world around them. Human civilization started with hunter-gatherers societies, than domestication of animals and the cultivation broaden the horizon of human cognition. The domestication of animals for the subsistence developed into the domestication of pets e.g. dogs, cats etc. and then petting of venomous and predator animals e.g. lion, wild cats in cage homes. Human beings learned the way, how to pet them and trained them for performances/human entertainment.

2.4.1 Word *Jogi*

There was number of interpretation of word '*Jogi*'. According to some scholars the word come from the word YOGI means yoga. A number of out-caste or the lower castes were turned into *Jogis* in 14th centry (Chorkill, 1939). According to the scholar, the caste system was very strict in India, due to this strict system they all the time treated as low-caste or inferior because they were not from the Nath-*Jogis*. These out caste people introduce number of new tactics which were not the part of *Jogi* culture in old days and become the custodian of *Jogi* culture. Folk specialization, snake lore, they get skilled in manipulating snakes for their own entertainments which were later become the profession of performance with the snakes (Chorkill, 1939).

Like in Brahmaputra valley in Assam the *Jogis* has five sub-castes with different names e.g. *Sapmelas* (snake charmers), *Palupohas* (rearing silk worms), *Duliyas* (Palki bearers) and the *Katanis* (silk and cotton weavers) and in last *Thiyapotas* (they buried their dead bodies in standing positions and were not accepted by all four sub-castes of *Jogis*). Now with the passage of time they intermingled and there is no proper division among them so they are usually known as *Jogi* and lived in Goalpara, Kamrup and Nowgong (Das, Walter & Dankerhopfe, 1986).

2.4.2 Existence of Snakes

There was an old lore that snakes safeguard treasures, a roman belief about the snake defined as, it was prominent thought that if there is any snake in household that must be one of the ancestor of the household. The concept was originated by the nature of

the snakes and their development e.g. they produced and re-produced from earth/ground/mud same they could be arise from the graves. The secondary motif could be the idea that snakes remained the guardian of treasure, since treasures hidden in ground and in tombs so they belonged to the family of the deceased (Lacsh, 1965).

There is another belief among the sub-continent that all snakes drink milk. However, according to the Lacsh (1965) only those snakes that were pet did drink milk when they were served by their guardians. Snakes at one hand associated with the guardian of treasure at other they also had a very important thing 'Snake Stone' 'Nag-Mani' or 'Nag-Manka' which was remained mysterious among the snake charmer and other communities. Jefferey (1942), number of stories was associated with the 'snake stones' and certain beads were exhibited in Museums. The pieces of green, blue, red, brown glasses some of them with streaked and striped ones under 'snake stone' name which are fake.

There is another belief about the Crown on head of the snakes which were also found in Africa, which was found by the Jefferey (1942) as, there is a reptile known as 'Basilisk' which was looked like snake and lore associated with that, it wore crown of shining jewels. The Basilisk had a rock type hard shining skin in center of his forehead, on reflection of sun-light it shine like the star. Locally, the Basilisk was known as 'Little King' due to its shining forehead.

2.4.3 Music and Snakes

Music has a main place in Hindu religion and some Raags were associated with the snakes e.g. Cobra, which was considered the NAAG. The snake is more important than other snakes and offered milk in temples of Naag-Duta. In South Indian music there were some *raags* (musical modes) e.g. Raag Nagavarali. Similar, Raags were sung by the snake charmers by their traditional snake flute '*Been*' for them to make them unconscious (Reck & Reck, 1981).

2.4.4 Venomous Snakes

Snakes used to extract venom to produce anti-venom. Snake is dangerous, feared, worshipped, charmed and also used for preparing medicines. This confused conception of snake makes it a mysterious creature. Reid (1968) stated, Tiger snake anti-venom which was created in Australia were more effectively used for all common Afro-Asian land snakes as well as sea snake bites as well. *Jogi* have the

skills to catch venomous and non-venomous snakes for providing snakes to laboratories where they were used to prepare anti-venom. Now the profession of snake charming is universally adopted a number of other castes and in West it is the profession which was taught in different universities.

Brower & Johnston (2007), stated that in Pakistan, snakes were falling prey to deforestation snake charmers and virulent pesticides which though banned were used extensively and have entered the food chain and thus ultimately part of the snake diet, through insects and small vertebrates. Especially, endangered is the python, which peripatetic communities kill in order to sell its skin to make bags, belts. Snakes have been reduced now so the snake charmers. *Jogis* apart from snake charming, sold snakes to the National Institute of Health Islamabad for anti-venom.

Allen & Maier (1941) stated in their studies that snake venom was being used in medical circles for different therapies and it seems worthwhile to record that methods and problems encountered in securing and processing venom. Thus, medical research has found that the venom of the moccasin is an anti-hemorrhagic that of the cobra has been used as an analgesic for cancer, and that of the fredelance as a local coagulant.

2.5 Wildlife Protection Acts

More or less six wildlife protection, preservation, management acts have been developed by the Sindh Assembly since 1972 to 2020 for the protection of wild animals, birds, plants, earth and water animals, natural resources to maintain the environment friendly protected areas to balance the environment. Hunters, capturing of animals for trade, trophy hunt, meat, have been observed in Sindh and Baluchistan province due to the geographical locations and the less law enforcement in true letter and spirit. All the bills and ordinances are listed below to make the reader understood how much development done up till now for the promotion and protection of wild animals in the province.

2.5.1 Sindh Wildlife Protection Ordinance 1972

The law is related to the preservation, conservation and management of wildlife in Sindh Province. Wild animals have been distributed into First, Second schedule and wildlife means, the organic resources, animals, birds, reptiles, vegetation, soil and

water and wild animals means wild birds and animals specified in first and second schedule.

For the hunting of animals hawks for hawking and dogs for the gaming animals strictly prohibited but under special license from authority. Dead or dying, killed or caught animals from schedule first of second remained the property of the government no one allowed to use it for any purposes.

All type of snakes listed in Schedule Second under serial no. 6 with clear wording that, all snakes, of the python, Azhad or Arar from Python genus included in the list and prohibited to capture, kill, venomous removal (collection) as pet for a particular or life time. A valid license observed if any of the charmers wanted to capture or pet the cobra. That is why the interaction of the charmers and the SWD is not much friendly. Section 11 sub-section II, 12 sub-section I, clearly stated that no one allowed without any license to capture or gift any of the animals from schedule first and second. If someone found guilty a charge of 500 rupees fine and if crime is more heinous six month imprisonment may be observed, and in the case of third time conviction, the convicted may be punished not less than twelve months imprisonment and one thousand rupees fine or both at the same time.

2.5.2 Wildlife Protection Act 1974

Traditionally, in Hindu community the killing of snakes prohibited because they thought Snake as pet of their god Shiva. However, due to certain reasons this belief is low in new generation. In Pakistan, the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 banned the capturing, owning, or injured any snake, if anyone can observed in streets performing snake arts would be arrested.

The snake charmers removed the fangs of snakes for the safety. Without fangs, snakes have no mean to feed themselves and eventually they starve to death. The Act denies the right of charmers to carry their tradition-keeping snakes as pet for commercial uses. However, they claimed that, capturing snakes were the source of livelihood because they collect venom, which was used for life saving drug and without venom the creature needs caring.

2.5.3 Sindh Wildlife Protection Amendment Act 1993

The wildlife protection amendment act of 1993, worked on the Wildlife Act 1972. Some amendments have been done in 1993 with the approval of Sindh Assembly in

December, 1993. Common birds and fish, lease and license for fishing for the particular time frame was some of the major amendments in the Act.

2.5.4 Sindh Wildlife Protection Ordinance (Second Amendment) 2001

Two major amendments have been done in the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 that in the wildlife sanctuary exploration or production of oil or gas prohibited. Another amendment was done in section 15 that in the National Park exploration or production of oil or gas and the environmental assessment as in the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997 are prohibited.

2.5.5 Sindh Wildlife & Protected Areas Act 2010

The act divided into fifteen chapters each chapter have a detailed description as per title of the chapter. Protection of wild animals, hunting of game animals, possession of wild animals, wildlife trade and traffic, protected areas are some of the chapters which clearly discussed the list of the animals which are protected and preserved for breeding. In the act list of the animals and schedules were used from 1972 Act. Prohibition of hunting, fighting, capturing and transportation, fine and imprisonment of offenders, described in detail for sectioned penalties on offenders available there.

2.5.6 Sindh Wildlife Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management Bill 2020

A new law has been passed from Sindh Assembly in mid of the 2020, that anyone who shared the pictures of hunted animals on social media can sent to jail for six months. The 2020, Sindh Wildlife Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management Bill aims to provide full protection to the wildlife living in the jurisdiction of Sindh Province. The protection bill replaced the Wildlife protection act 1972, because that act was not implemented by its letter and spirit throughout the province. In this new bill a number of additions have been done for those animals and birds that migrated and entered in the province of Sindh for shorter or longer time. Mr. Javed Ahmed Mahar stated in his interview to Express Tribune that all the wild animals, ranging from a common crow to the other venomous species, are protected more because the new legislation is universal for all e.g. birds, reptile, mammals and turtle.

For the help of Wildlife staff, Wildlife police in this new law permitted the authority to register an FIR against the offenders through the inspector. Which provide the

status of 'Public Prosecutor' in SWD (Sindh Wildlife Department). Act of cruelty like the hunting, fighting and biting of animals banned in this law and penalty have been done on the acts of hunting wild animals intentionally or unintentionally with a heavy fine and impressment. The cages and enclosure for the transportation of the animals and reptiles strictly prohibited in this updated law.

A proposal was there for establishment of the local council which included nine members. Five members may be from well-reputed non-governmental organizations, hunters and those who are practicing captive breeding and academics and four members from the SWD for the sustainable wildlife development and promotion as well as awareness campaigns in local communities.

The law will also provide assistance to the SWD for declaring any land (wasteland, cultivate land) as the protected area so, in that area trapping, hunting poisoning, killing, shooting and injuring wild animals remained prohibited. The law further provide assistance to fencing the protected area, prohibition on damaging the culturally significant natural resources, if found comfortable can used the fenced land for cultivation to generate resources for SWD operations.

2.6 Study of Snake Charmers

For the present research study, ethnographic research tools administered, according to the Bhattacharya (2013), ethnography is a descriptive study of different customs and culture in any social system or setting in which ethnographer focus the whole lifestyle of that particular area or people with the use of participant observation and detailed interviews. Bhattacharya (2013) stated, *Jogi* is based on two different classes in which they first category includes in a regular religious order of Hindu which followed Gorakh-Nath and they considered pure and believer of Lord Shiva. Whereas, second category lies in low caste they are known as faqer and *Jogis*.

According to Shivashati (2012), when a person died, the community members perform his funeral procession according to the beliefs. The dead position in sitting posture, with the face turned towards the east. They take their corps of Zola or bags towards the burial ground. During the move to the burial ground, they accompanied with music made by beating of drums and blowing of shingles or hornpipes. After reaching at funeral place, some other rituals were also performed by the community members, such as they smeared their dead bodies with cow dung ashes and bell leaves

and along with flowers, water was offered and poured into the dead body's mouth. Finally, they lowered that dead body into the grave and placed some object by its side which he/she liked the most.

Kalhor (2015) in this article stated, Marhi was founded by Veer Nath early in the 17th century. Therefore, Marhi became the main center for the Nath-Jogs of Sindh who spread the teachings of Veer Nath. Moreover, with the passage of time, Nath-Jogis emerged very powerful and also participated in the political decisions of the Sodha Rajputs because of settling the disputes between the lineages of the tribes. Veer-Nath clients performed a very prominent role in resolving the family disputes of the Sodha Rajputs of Tharparker.

Richardson (1967) described the culture of communities and also shared about the residential expression of national institutions and the total culture. Therefore, the writer was of the view that the small rural communities of the complex culture are correlated to the large city. In addition, the writer also assembled the complex culture of rural people with a large city. The writer further viewed that unlike Indian and traditional peasant communities, the snake charmer community is connected in the large society.

Henry (1991) stated the mendicant musicians known as *Jogi/Yogi* who are appeared during the time of spring, harvest in the villages of Eastern Uttar Pradesh with playing Sarangis as well as singing Bhajans for the purpose of collecting food grains. The poetry was of Kabir who was the medieval India saint.

In anthropology, different scholars done fabulous work in ethnography e.g. Nuer by Evans-Pritchard (1940), Barth's (1965) work on Basseri, Stenning's (1969) work on pastoral Fulani. Nomads presented by different scholars as the source of wonder for sedentary population (Peters, 2006; Cresswell, 1997). As stated in earlier discussion, there was no proper definition of the Nomads, generally the definition was used for the pastoralists and for those who mobile for their survival (Keesing, 1975). There was no proper difference among the settled and mobile life because mobility remained the part of settled life as well as the seasonal settlement was part of mobility patterns (Glick-Schiller & Salazar, 2013; Kabachnik, 2012).

2.7 Nagas and Humans

From 19th century the major emphasis was on the conceptual development of the Nagas either the animal or the deity or the historical human ethnic group as per the scholars. Recently, in the novels (fantasy novels and the stories of god and goddess), Fergusson, 1868, Oldham, 1905 found that a specie of the Nagas was the different to the prevedic or non-aryan tribes. According to the scholar, worshipping of trees was present in pre-aryan religion but the presence of Naga identified with the help of Vedic-Dasyus. In the book 'Orthodox Images of Indian Snake Worship', the Cozad, L (2004) that the nagas were the cypher for the pre-aryan native Indians, the book also stated that the worship of snake were identified as the grass-root religious entity and the resistance towards the Brahmin and Aryan dominance.

As for the Nagas as proponents of a grass-roots religion, empowering women and farmers against caste hierarchy and patriarchy, Cozad (2004) makes her sympathy towards them quite clear. Thereby, she seemingly overlooks the fact that actual snake worshippers do not necessarily attribute positive character traits to their animalistic deities. This becomes clear from Alloco's ethnographic work in Tamilnadu (Alloco, 2013, 2014) from the stories about the Bengali serpent goddess Mansa. The threat posed to humans both by Nagas and by living cobras where they are not altogether held to be the same often makes the relationship between Nagas to humans much less harmonious than Cozad portrayed in her work.

2.8 Nagas as Animals/Deities or Demons

The word 'Naga' was first appear as the demon by the Mayrhofer (1996) that was dating back to the first half of first millennium BC. In modern world the 'Nagas' mean Cobras for the list of reptiles. Naturally, during the encounter of the snakes 'cobras' and other poisonous snakes they do not behave like they are protector as shown in movies and pictures or in tells. Such types of reptiles were the most deadly animals throughout the region (Haq, 2015).

The archeological remains of the previous civilizations and the histories showed that the snakes/Nagas were not always in their natural form, they were not pure human or pure reptiles but in-between both of them. Vogel (1926), pointed out that, 'the Naga present in the Hindu-mythology, or in the folk-lore were not only the snake, but it was raised as the divine being (Cobra); and the Indian art points the same conclusion. In South Asia, Nagas started to populate the religious imagery as cobras with several

hoods or as humans behind whose heads several cobra hoods are raised as a parasol (*chatra*), indicating royalty (Srinivasan, 2007).

According to Deeg (2008), in 4th and 5th Century North India, at the latest, a distinction was made between Nagas as supernatural beings and their manifestations in the shape of serpents. Nevertheless, a Naga who lives in a lake in the Hindu Kush, allegedly describes his own species as ‘wild animals’ of a low and evil kind, but of huge power, riding on clouds, drinking the wind, walking across the sky and water, often overcome by hate and violence they forget to control.

The valleys of Kathmandu in Nepal and Srinagar in Kashmir are prehistoric lake basins and appear in the myths of their respective *Puranas* as such. Both of these primordial lakes are said to have been populated by Nagas, of which a few still remain in contemporary smaller lakes, *Lake-Dal* in Srinagar and Lake *Taudaha* Kathmandu.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The critical goals of a research are to frame questions and to discover answers to those questions. Research methodology is a critical part of any research. Each study focuses on some manageable aspects of modern methodologies. The quality of data depends on the type of techniques employed by the researcher. The study demonstrates significant aspects of the processes of gathering and interpreting data. During the course of research, different tools and techniques were employed at different stages. The present study employed ethnographic research methods. Through ethnography individuals were studied in their own particular time and space in their daily lives. By employing ethnographic research tools, one can comprehend the construction of meanings from the natives' perspective (Geertz, 1973). The anthropological field worker must have a number of tools in their field kit. The research instruments and various methods of investigation or alternate techniques are helpful for objectifying and standardizing the field worker's perception. Some of the tools and techniques which were used to document the natives' point of view regarding their practices and beliefs were administered.

3.2 Participant Observation

Observation is a process through which an event or situation is watched carefully and note or remember, it is a thoughtful process. Participant observation is the foundation of cultural anthropology. It includes being close to the people and making them feel comfortable enough with you so that one can observe and record information about their lives. According to Goode and Hatt (1952), observation is careful and systematic watching of facts they occur in nature with regard to the cause and effects. Burnard (1994) also stated that participant observation is the foundation of anthropological research.

Along with participant observation rapport building is also very necessary for every anthropologist to create good rapport with the locals, though it is difficult but the process was skillfully completed. According to scholars rapport building is one of the most essential tasks after entering into the field that could be most difficult and time consuming. Rapport establishment is a relationship marked by mutual understanding

and trust among the researcher and community members. Rapport is one of the most important features of human interaction. This helps in collection of accurate information about the people's behaviors and attitudes. The researcher used this technique for building rapport in the field before conducting the field work.

I went to Umer-Kot, with my key facilitator, Mr. Chandan. He was working in International Hands Organization, and was introduced by my seniors in the department of Anthropology at QAU. He introduced me to the community (*Dayah*). One female and one male key informant were selected. During the stay in the community I met people directly and noted down their activities related to the objectives of the study. During the stay there, I have observed different ritual e.g. birth and marriage ceremonies. I became part of their family and they did not feel hesitated while giving me information.

3.3 Key Informants

After establishing the rapport building in the field the second and most vital step was to find key informant, which guide me towards the right data/information. Key informant method is using in customary anthropological field research. Key informants are foundation of particular information such as financial systems, family and kinship associations, and cultural as well as religious philosophies and practices. Agar (1980) explains the role of key informants that they are the first point of contact before entering into the fieldwork as key informants are "deviants" or professional stranger handlers. According to Pelto & pelto (1978), key informants were necessary for ethnographic researches, interviewing them used to validate the information gathered by the researcher because he belonged to the native community and equally participated in data collection process. The Key informants proved to be a valuable source of data validation. They chosen with care, as they should be from the community being studied and are required to have a significant amount of knowledge about the community in order to help understand the local people's perspectives.

- a. The first key informant was the mother of six children 'Nazu', she was 39 years old. The elder woman was selected to make the study enrich of data. Because elderly woman have lots of information about the cultural practices and rituals practiced by the community members. She helped me to in interview taking and validating data by cross-checking with key informants.

First, with the help of her I have developed a list of respondents who were willing to interact with me and giving me interviews regarding their practices and beliefs.

- b. The second key informant was the husband of ‘Nazu’, he was snake charmer by profession according to him, ‘there is nothing in this profession, but due to the hereditary profession I’m practicing it. He was 48 years. He was permanent settler in the village but his three sons along with their families they were spatial nomads. He discussed the routes and the rituals as well as beliefs regarding the life style of the snake charmers their genealogy and order of preference towards property distribution.

3.4 Sampling

Sampling is the process of selection, from whole population or universe; researcher selected a specific number of respondents from the community through probability or non-probability sampling methods. It is not possible for the researcher to interact with every individual of the community. It was evident that social scientists selected a group of representatives of the whole. Sample could be defined as; a set of respondents which would be the representative of a larger whole; and have all characteristics of the selected universe. For the present research purposive sampling procedure will be utilized to select the respondents for interviews. The technique of sampling is helpful in this regard.

3.4.1 Purposive Sampling

In the process of sampling I have selected the purposive sampling based on the appropriateness of the numbers of respondents. Appropriate according to the objectives of the study which was helpful for information and the perception of every main segment of the society (being studied) included. This sampling technique is primarily used upon the nature of the study and objectives of the study. Interviewees were selected from both the spheres e.g. spatial mobile and permanent residents.

In order to probe the key objectives and the perception of community members 30 members from the community (15 from spatial and 15 from permanent settled) members were selected after informal discussion. From them there were only 19 who gave consent for in-depth interviews consists of 11 females and 8 males making in all 19 interviewee.

3.5 Informal discussion

Informal discussion is a new technique which was recently becomes the part of methodology in anthropological research. This technique enabled the researcher to understand the hidden facts about the community which were not easy to discuss by the respondents in direct/in-depth interviews/discussions. Before the selection of the respondents, informal discussions in the community provide help to make the community understood regarding the purpose and the objective of the study. Such types of discussion could happen on tea-gatherings, on invitation for lunch or dinner by the community members. Another positive aspect of the informal discussion was the use of other techniques for investigating different aspects highlighted by the respondents during interviews for validation of the responses. The use of informal discussion technique also helped the researcher to build a good rapport with the respondents.

3.6 Interviews

Interview is a conversation with the respondents and other related segments of the society to get information regarding specific objectives. As defined by Goode and Hatt (1952), a list of point or topics was developed by the researcher before entering into field. Such topics may cover all the objectives of the research and may allowed respondents about their flexible thoughts and understanding regarding the topics/questions. To get inside of someone's thoughts and experiences face to face interaction is necessary. It is a sort of discussion between the researcher and the respondent like the conversation with a purpose to get information.

Majorly, there are three types of interviews; structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Structured interviews are those that have been formulated in a pattern whereas unstructured are those that are based on a set objectives and points of discussion, meanwhile the semi-structured interviews are those which have both structured and un-structured question which give liberty to the respondents to share his/her point regarding specific objectives.

In the present research study, unstructured interview tool were administered and in-depth interviews were collected to gathered the information regarding beliefs and practices among the snake charmers in Umer Kot.

3.6.1 Interview Guide

Tools for data collection remained the main portion of any research; it would be the set of questions based on the research objectives. Interview guide was developed and administered for the study which was prepared according to the statement of problem, objectives and significance of study. While preparing interview guide every aspect of study considered and tried to cover all the segments related to the objectives of the study. The interview guide was prepared and approved by the supervisor. The interview guide was divided into three portions, such as;

- i. The first part of interview guide contained questions related to the demographic information of the community.
- ii. The second part of the interview guide stretched upon the beliefs of the community regarding their personal lives, the concept of religion and religious practices
- iii. The third part contained questions regarding the rituals and practices of the community either religious or seasonal.

3.6.2 In-depth Interview

In anthropological research the method of interview conducting is relatively helpful for the researcher to getting in-depth knowledge about the field. Overall, 19 respondents were in-depth interviewed during field work. To ensure the suitability of interviewees, interviews were scheduled according to their convenience. From them there were 11 females and 8 male community members. During the field data collection, field notes were taken. Main points of the informal discussions were also documented which were helpful during transcription of the data.

3.7 Case Studies

In anthropological research case study method plays an important role. According to Yin (2003a) the need for case studies were raised to understand the complex social phenomena. The case study method allowed investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. In natural settings, a case study would be an explanatory one. This method is helpful for obtaining the authentic and reliable information in very detailed manners about the personal experiences of respondents.

Case study method provide comprehensive knowledge about the phenomenon under study because in this method the researcher profoundly involved and willing to know

the respondents real life and practical experiences. It is used for extensive and detail data collection in anthropological research. The case study, as a part of 'situational analysis,' is a vital approach that is used in anthropological research in the postcolonial world. In it we use the actions of individuals and groups within natural situations to exhibit the morphology of a social structure, which is most often held together by conflict itself. Each case was taken as evidence of the stages in the unfolding process of social relations between spatial mobile groups and the sedentary population.

In the current research there were 7 case studies conducted for detail description of information about the research topic. All the case studies helped to enrich the data regarding beliefs and practices of the *Jogi* community in happiness and grief situations.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

Anthropological research is very rich and in-depth by nature. Hence, for the sake of exploring any phenomenon through this form of research one has to work intensely with the respondents. Therefore, some ethical considerations must be taken into the account. There were particular concerns related to both directing and handling the data from the respondents.

Since the present study was about the beliefs and the practices of the community. Though the community majorly Hindu, so the concept of God and other beliefs were documented carefully to overcome the influence of subjectivity (religion of the researcher was Islam). Before taking interviews, researcher informed the respondents about what kind of research they were taking part in and how the data would be later on used. Respondents were mostly concerned about the information they have given to the researcher by asking: do you use all the information as it is? Such type of privacy queries catered a sense of security/in-security among the respondents. The queries were replied accordingly and tried to develop healthy and comfortable relationship among the community members by living with them and participating in their daily activities as participant observer. Key facilitator and the key informants helped in this regard to develop the sense of confidence on the researcher.

3.9 Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion is very productive and helping tool which was used by the researcher for the current research to find out the general trends of natives and their point of view towards the objectives of the study. By using the method of focus group discussion the researcher attained much information about different aspects of social, economic, cultural and traditional life of the community that further highlighted the perceptions and ideas of the natives which finally defined the general behavior of the individuals and group of the inhabitants. FGDs are very helpful in getting different opinions on selected issues in given time. Everyone in such discussions has the opportunity to share their opinions, endorsed others and might negate other's point of view. In this method researcher gave a topic to the group of natives for their understanding regarding the survival strategies of the community in this time of inflation and fewer earning opportunities. There was one compulsion; the group must be homogenous by gender.

Accordingly, two Focus Group Discussions were conducted by selecting about 6-9 natives. One FGD was conducted with males and one from females of the *Jogi* community.

3.10 Audio Recording

Heath, Hindmarsh and Luff (2010) explained the importance of audio and video recordings that provide astonishing openings for field research. It helped the ethnographical research actually needs while capturing events in their natural flow. Knoblauch et al (2006) explained that audio and video recordings were natural and accurate in when both were captured in natural settings. They can be used multiple times to review the findings and can be used as source of information for others as well. They also bring trustworthiness and reliability in qualitative research. The researcher used audio recordings to record the original responses from the respondents. They helped the researcher to compile the results and write the report in better way.

During the field work audio recordings were made and respondents were informed about audio recordings. iPhone 6 was used for recording data during the field. There were six respondents who gave their consent for interview recordings.

3.11 Translation and Re-translation

Translation and re-translation is the valid issue which broke out during interviews taking and translating the concepts of community member. The interview tool was developed in English, but in the respective community the tool was translated into Urdu. Due to national language and easily understandable throughout the country it was easy to get the information from respective community. There were some issues faced by me; due to language barrier constraints, though natives understand the question but for answering they sometime used Sindhi language words which were unfamiliar for me. Key informants provide help to understand their point of view in such cases. During re-translation of the responses gathered from community some of the words and ideas wasted. Certain answers were same so the number of the respondents increases but the responses remained same. I have tried to overcome such issue, but some of the data was leftover during English translation of the responses for thesis writing.

Chapter Four

Area and Respondent Profile

4.1 History of Tharparkar

This region is part of the great Thar Desert, which is spread in India and Pakistan. Most of the Thar Desert lies in the Indian state of Rajasthan and is extended till Haryana and Gujarat. In Pakistan, this desert lies on the eastern border of Sindh Province and is extended till Southeastern parts of the Punjab where it joins the Cholistan desert. District Tharparkar is majorly stretched in Sindh province.

The origin of Thar Desert is controversial as many historians have given different account about its origin. Some of the historical references stated that the region was fertile turned into a desert during 2000 to 1500 BC., at that time River Indus were providing cultivated facilities to the area that was water source for Indus Valley Civilization. Some historians believed that this is the same river called Sarasvati, one of the main rivers mentioned in Hindi Holy books. The region was also discussed in the Hindu Mythology, *Ramayana*, where it is called Lavanasagara ‘salt-ocean’.

The old name of Umer-kot was ‘*Amarkot*’ which was ruled by ‘Sohanas’ who were the Hindu Rajput rulers from medieval times until 1947. The city held eminence through the Mughal era and British Raj. Town is the district headquarters of Tharparkar District. Access to Umerkot is rather easy now due to the infrastructure development work in the last few years. Umer-kot was once the capital of Sindh including some part of the Rajhistan (now the part of India). Mughal emperor Akbar was born in Umer-kot in 1552 (at that time the Emperor Humayoun escaped from the conquest from Sher-Shah-Suri. The Rajput ruler ‘*Rana Parsad*’ gave him shelter as expatriate. Umer-kot is in fact known by the brick fort built by ‘Kalhore King Noor Muhammad’ in 18th century.

When Britain invaded the subcontinent, General Charles Napier, a commander in the British Army, defeated the Talpur dynasty and conquered Sindh in 1843. General was appointed as the first Governor General of Sindh. He made Tharparkar a part of Hyderabad. In 1860, this region was named as ‘Eastern Sindh Frontier’ with headquarter in Umer-kot. In 1882, the British Government divided the province into different administrative units and assigned to Zamindars (Landlords) to collect taxes for the British government. Umer-kot was given the status of district under the

promulgation. In 1906, the headquarters of this district was shifted from Umer-kot to Mirpurkhas.

The economic, Cultural and political history of Sindh has been intertwined with the flow of Indus river which is the main artery of Pakistan and life stream of Sindh valley. This area is about over 28,000 square kilometers, surrounded by rising sand dunes and is a continuation of the Rajasthan arid zone. The desert has a number of indigenous folklores, unique landscape, flora and fauna and a culture of its own which is quite different from other parts of the country. It provides a variety of opportunities to explore and an absorbing study of Sindhi culture.

The tale of *Umer and Marvi* is associated with Umer-kot. *Marvi* was a beautiful local girl that was abducted by the ruler *Umer* who wanted to marry her. *Marvi* refused to marry him, upon which *Umer* kept her in prison in the famous Umer-kot Fort for several years.

4.2 Geography and Administrative Division of Tharparkar

Geographically, in 1990 the district was split into two districts named Thar and Mirpurkhas. In 1994, Umer-kot was carved out of Thar and was given the status of a district. Now district Tharparkar consists of the areas of Thar Desert.

District Tharparkar lies in 69° 35' to 71° 47' east longitudes and 24° 35' to 25° 43' 6" north latitudes. This district is bounded by India on the East, Rann-Kuch on the South, district Umer-kot on the north and district Badin and Mirpurkhas on the west. The district is mostly deserted and consists of barren tracts of sand dunes covered with thorny shrubs.

4.3 Umer-kot

Umer-kot is the district of Sindh which lies at the northern edge of Thar Desert. The district is known as Umer-kot by the Muslims and Amerkot by the Hindus (Tahir et al, 2009). Umer-kot is one of the oldest cities of Sindh and has much to offer in terms of history, culture and stories of glorious past. The area ruled by Rajputs, Rathors, Sumras and Mughals. Umer-kot was given the status of a district in April 1993, but abolished in 2000 and merged into the district Mirpur Khas again as a Tehsil. However, local activists agitated against the decision till Umer-kot was restored as a district in December 2004 (Tahir et al, 2009). Umer-kot district has two distinct geographical portions: i.e. the irrigated area in the north and west and the desert in the south and east. One can see the sand dunes spreading towards east with thorny bushes.

Towards west are the alluvial planes with vast stretches of vegetation. There is no river or natural stream in the district (Tahir et al, 2009). Latest district census was conducted in 2017 and to find out the average increase in rural and urban dwellers the number of inhabitants as well. The description of the data is as under;

Table 1. Census Population of District Umer-kot

Sr. No.	Variable	Rural	Urban	Total
1	Population	829785	243361	1073146
2	Households	163551	48805	212356
3	Male	429945	127612	557557
4	Female	399834	115735	515569
5	Transgender	06	14	20

Source: District wise Census Result 2017

Above table depicts the overall situation of the district. The total number of individuals in the district was 1073146 individuals. It was also documented that in the district only 20 transgender and their division according to the residential structure is also discussed in the table.

4.3.1 Climatic Description of the Area

The Umer-kot district if we looked into the geography could be divided into two areas according to the geographical sight e.g. the irrigated area at north and west of the district and the desert in the south and east which contains the *Jogi* communities and other spatial mobile communities. The area was not cultivated due to desert and lack of ownership by the local community members for cultivation and other in-farm agricultural activities (Tahir et al, 2009).

The climate of both portions if different to some extent, irrigated area neither gets too hot nor too cold in summer and winters respectively. The temperature of the district remained moderated due to a regular breeze from the south western sea side of the region. However, relatively the eastern part (composed of desert) remained hot and dry in summers, but during monsoon the area receives heavy rain showers.

4.3.2 Languages and Ethnicity

Majority of this district's residents are Thari speaking but Sindhi and Marwari are also common languages of this region. Besides, Urdu is spoken and understood in the

city areas of Mithi and Islamakot. This district shares its boundaries with three different cultures i-e, it touches Sindh on the west, Rajhistan on the East and Gujarat on the south-east.

District has a unique cultural amalgamation but the *rajhistani* culture dominate among all. These *Jogis* could be categorized to their casts and sub-castes, or according to their religion and occupation. Major Muslim clans of this area were *Arabs, Syeds, Soomras, Samejos, Halepotas, Panhwars, Samas, Memons, Dal, Khosas and Rinds*. Major Hindu clans were *Brahman, Lohana, Malhi, Rajputs, Khatri, Bheel, Meghwar, Jogi and Kohli*.

In the area, there were eight sub-castes of *Jogis* which are discussed in tabular form.

Table 2. Ethnic Groups of Snake Charmers in Umer-kot

Sr. No.	Major Cast	Sub-Castes	No. of Household
1	Snake Charmers	Markhat	57
2		<i>Dayah</i>	18
3		Chohan	13
4		Dewrha	20
5		Rathore	37
6		Leria	35
7		Sandharyan	40
8		Arbabanyarn	39

Source: In-depth Interviews

Stated table discussed the overall number of sub-castes in the area and the number of households to participate in the community. The area which was selected for the interviews was adjacent to the Thar Desert. Markhat caste was the prominent major caste of the area not only on the bases of their household but also the political influence in the matters of the community. The Sandharyan was second in household numbers and the Chohan had very limited households in the area.

4.4 Demographic Information of the Community

The *Dayah* was selected due to a number of reasons e.g. a) community was still involved in snake charming, b) half of the community households engaged in spatial mobile groups, c) begging is the major profession for survival, d) other earning professions was adopted rapidly. The community was overall studied ethnographically.

Table 3. Population of the Community

Major Cast	No. of Households	No. of Individuals	No. of Families	Male	Female
<i>Dayah</i>	18	178	27	94	84

Source: In-depth Interviews

Stated table depicted the demographic information of the selected community *Dayah*. The community has total population of the community in the village was 178 individuals from them 84 were females and 94 were males. If we go through the number of families there were 27 families living in 18 households. In the village community have 8 semi pakka households.

Table 4. Age Distribution of the Community

Sr. No.	Age Bracket	Male	Female	Total
1	1-10 year	9	10	19
2	11-20 year	14	11	25
3	21-30 year	19	21	40
4	31-40 year	23	19	42
5	41-50 year	16	12	28
6	51-60+ year	13	11	24
	Total	94	84	178

Source: In-depth Interviews

Table stated the overall description of the age brackets among the community members. It was documented that there were 10.6% people have less than ten years of age among them 52% females and 48% males. In second category the 14% comprises

of 56% male and 44% females of 11 to 20 years' old individuals. The third category has 22.4% of the total population which have 52.5% females and 47.5% male community members. The fourth category has highest number of individuals which was 23.0% of the total population and 54.7% of male and 45.3% of female population. In fifth category there were 15.7% comprises of 57.1% male and 42.9% of females. In last category of age distribution there were 13.4% of the total population and from them 54.1% were male and 45.9% females. The category three-four-five have highest number of population 110 individuals who all were engaged in earning purposes.

4.4.1 Types of Households

There were almost three types of houses in the village of the *Dayah* community. Katcha, semi Katcha and Huts. The majority of the population had semi-katcha houses, huts and Katcha households were same in numbers. The semi-katcha households were owned by influential of the community. They did not migrate in any season. A better house was the symbol of the prestige and power of the owner among the community members. The details of house pattern have been given in the following table:

Table 5. Households' Distribution

Sr. No.	Household	Number Households	No. of Families
1	Huts	6	8
2	Katcha	6	9
3	Semi-Katcha	8	10
	Total	18	27

Source: In-depth Interviews

Majorly all of the households need proper maintenance. But due to economic issues they only have to eat not for saving or spending on households.

4.4.1.1 Hut houses

There was 33% hut houses, almost one third population of the community lived in the temporary huts. The people who lived in the temporary houses were not able to

construct even *katcha* houses for having no savings for the purpose. Majority, more than 80% of the hut residents, they were spatial mobile and lived most of the time in wandering and begging in Mithi and Umer-kot districts. Some of the families go beyond Baden district but the number was very small. There were two types of huts, one category was made of cloth like (double tents) and the other made of small bushes and straws. According to the respondents, *we are just spending our time, we don't have enough resources for construction of katcha houses.*

4.4.1.2 Kacha houses

According to the research findings, 33% of the houses were katcha made of mud having one room which was used as kitchen, and for sleeping as well. Natives living in those houses were of the view that because of katcha houses, they do not felt much heat during the summer and serve cold in the winter but in rainy season, they faced difficulties, their houses were scratched and the household commodities were damaged by the rain water.

According to a respondent, their houses were always the source of satisfaction for the inhabitants, but they could not decorate their houses like the surroundings areas and other communities due to poverty and meager resources of income.

4.4.1.3 Semi-katcha houses

The most prevailing household pattern was semi-katcha, 44% of families lived in semi-katcha households made of mud and mud-bricks comprising of 1-2 rooms, a short outdoor kitchen and boundary walls, while the distinguishing feature of 50% household was their structure, roofs were made of shopper bags mixed with other solid material, while some households have matte sheets roofs mixed with mud etc. The structure of the semi katcha houses was irregular, the height of the roofs were very low.

4.4.2 Economy of the natives

People were involved in daily labor activities. Major source of earning was snake charming in back days but now begging is the profession of elders. Though some of the young male of the community dislike this profession so they engaged in vocational activities in Umer-kot city, where number of workshops present and they

gave opportunity to the community to earn their livelihood. The description of the economic activities of the community is as under;

Table 6: Occupational Distribution of Families

Sr. No.	Major Cast	No. of Individuals	Percentage
1	Laborer	16	8.9
2	Shop Owners	6	3.3
3	Motor-Mechanic	11	6.1
4	Begging	62	34.8
5	Snake Charming	32	17.9
6	Housewives	51	28.6
	Total	178	100.0

Source: In-depth Interviews

Table stated the overall number of communities and their involvement in earning and household activities. Every aspect of the community is as under.

4.4.2.1 Labourer

As stated in table four about the age distribution of the community members which were 16 individuals. The 8.9% of the laborers come from category three and category four. Because in remaining categories the body was not able to work hard so they were engaged in other patty works and earn their livelihood. Due to increase in manpower, the wages reduced constantly, the labor community provided their service on cheaper rates just not to waste their time, thus they were exploited in terms of wages, in the near past they got PKR 400/- per day but with the availability of more laborer in market now the average charges per day reduced to PKR 200-250/- per day. Such very limited wage did not change their fate; they were living hand to mouth in the past and still poor. Most of the time they got less than their physical work but they accepted the changed situation for the sake of their families depending on their earnings.

4.4.2.2 Shop Owners

The second category by occupation of the respondents, there were only 6 individuals from the category of four and five who owned small shops (home based shops). Which contains daily used items for the community members, the age bracket of the shop owners was higher because after spending lot of time in begging and snake charming they save some capital for such initiatives. There was only one individual (Dass), who have five children, two of them were begging, one working in motorcycle workshop in city, one was snake charmer and the last one working as tailor. He has some savings which was used to establish a shop. According to the (Dass), all my sons living with me, we have extended family. We shared kitchen, food was collectively prepared for everyone that is why we have some money to save and invest in shop. I have left my profession (snake charming) 5 years ago. I spend all my time in shop now the condition of our house is good we have now three rooms in boundary wall.

4.4.2.3 Mechanic/Motor-workshops

There were only 11 individuals who were working in motor-workshops. The category of the boys was second and early half of third of table No. 4. The reason was that new generation was not interested in their hereditary profession because now there is nothing in it. Less opportunities for snake charming, there are very little snakes left in the surrounding due to extensive use of land cultivation, and expansion of households in jungles. And on the other hand now sedentary people were not interested in snake dances. So the performer profession is vanishing and community members shifting towards other earning professions for their subsistence.

4.4.2.4 Begging

Bagging was the second most common and in spatial families the first profession of their subsistence. The begging process is different in the community from other beggars. They moved one city or residential area to other and did not spend three days in one locality.

According to the native, *'in big cities e.g. Baden, Umer-kot we spend more days for begging. There are other communities e.g. Bhel, Kohli who also beg so, the portion of the money daily remained very low. We go house to house for begging and most of the time we gets wheat flour and money which consumed daily. New day start with new struggle and hard work.'* Some of the members begged in markets as well. The male

members along with children and women were used to leave their huts early in the morning and come back in different groups, females and children come back in evening but male members spent more time and come back in late night. According to the research findings, 34.8% of the community members engaged in begging which made it the first profession of earning.

4.4.2.5 Snake Charming

The community was famous due to snake charming and the second in the lineage of snake charmers. There were only 17.9% of the community members involved in snake charming and all were men. They all belonged to the fourth, fifth and sixth category of table No. 4. It was due to the less opportunities of snake charming, low earning in this profession that is why those who was engaged in this profession from more than one decade they practiced it.

4.4.2.6 House wives

Almost 28.6% women from the whole population of 178 individuals were house wives. They do not go for begging; spend all the time in their tents. If the family stays in permanent settlement in the village they do all household works. Remaining all females participated in economic affairs of the families. It was very interesting that, all the family members begged, but they do not get enough for their savings. Whatever was collected, consumed on the same day.

4.4.3 Education

The level of formal education was zero due to the nature of the community. Both segments of the community faced lot of issues regarding education of their children in the community there were 19 boys and girls which consists of 10.6% of the total sample size. Natives preferred to send their children for skilled work, which helped them in their future life as well as participation in household economic affairs. They considered education is the wastage of time and money, according to the respondents; first we do not have any educational facility in our community. If we send our children for education, who would be the responsible for family expenses as there were no job opportunities available for the educated youth so, what was the use of education by spending extra money if it would not return back in good economic life?

4.4.4 Social organization

The social organization of the villagers mainly based on their family structure. Early marriages often preferred by the community therefore almost all of the families were endogamous, family was the main player of socialization of children, keeping contacts with relatives and friends. Early marriages were common among all the eight lineages. The marriage age for males was 16-18 years and for females it was 14-16 years old. Keeping in view the early marriage, the marriage proposals were sent to the girl's home in very early age. Child marriages were not so much common like it was in old days but marriage proposals were given in very younger age and the girls were engaged in childhood. After the puberty age, parents try to marry their daughters according to the natives, *'after puberty, now the age is perfect for marriage. She must have to be with her husband before coming to the age of 16. In that age both the boy and girl ready for the responsibilities of their married life.'* The concept of dowry was not prevalent, the social organization at family level was quite good, parents and grandparents took good care of children and were socialized in accordance with the inherited norms.

Another respondent stated the significance of early marriages as, *'sister! Time is very bad now a day, if we are not engaging children in younger age they might cause of family dishonor'*. To avoid illegitimate relationships, natives practice early marriages. In the community it is very common to participate in economic affairs by the male and females of the family, only those who having small babies, or in lecting phase they stayed at home and after completing the phase they again participated in economic activities.

The pattern of living in the locales was extended by nature, parents of married couple lived with them; it was observed in all eighteen households (huts/houses) that parents lived with their married children. There were twelve families who earned individually, but consume income collectively; mother-in-laws saved some money in only two households. Each married couple gave their share to mother and she provided them food from that budget. Parents wanted to change their lifestyle on the basis of their children but, after starting families by the married children they inclined towards their personal huts.

Socialization of children was very big issue among the *Jogis*. They wanted to see their children prosperous but they wanted them to be the custodian of their ancestors' profession. Child socialization process would be the responsibility of fifth and sixth age category (table No. 4) of the family members. They spend most of the time in huts/houses and have very good interaction with early age children in the phase of socialization. Mothers went for begging along with their husbands or in some cases with their children. They come back in evening and then the household works (cleaning, cooking) starts and day end. Every day come up with same activities so the interaction till the age of four/five until they visited with their parents for begging started.

Parent don't have enough time for their children, mother-in-law or grandmother took care of children but being older they were not able to stop them from un-wanted activities. Due to lack of parents' attention they became more selfish about the facilities of life, because they groomed up in fewer facilities.

For the informal process of child socialization, parents and specially the grandmothers played an important role. In joint families (which were common) usually mother took care of her children and socialized them according to the prevalent norms of early marriages that resulted in abundance of children due to religious prohibitions over family planning. The average duration between the births of first child to second was about one year. In such circumstances, it became difficult for mothers to socialize the children. In the extended families, grandparents played the vital role for the process of child socialization.

4.4.5 Political organization/Punchayat

The power holding authority in the community was often a group or committee comprised of 8 elder individuals (ranging from 46-50 years old). The committee and its functions were for the settlement of the disputes (i.e. economic disputes, domestic disputes etc.) and for the wellbeing of the community.

Political organization in the community consists of 8 community members. Every sub-caste is known as Nath. For local disputes, regulation in the community and for the issues' resolution, the elderly groups which is known as '*Punchyat*' has the authority to take care of the matters. Each Nath has their own leader which must have some characteristics e.g. must be noble in the community, respectable, have enough

resources and did not have any negative association in past, as well as well aware of the problems and the issues and easily convey the message of the community to the elders and must be competent enough to his words.

Community issues either issues with other communities on any aspect were resolved by the *punchyat*. Like other parts of the country, *punchyats* are very common in small scale societies in which small scale and large issues e.g. murdered, encroachment, runaway girls were also resolved by the *punchyat*. According to the natives of *Dayah* community, since they are settled in the village, no major issue was broke out among *Jogi* and *Kohli* community. In the village both the communities were living in closed vicinity, both belonged to the Hindu religion and minorities, but have their own traditional justice system.

4.4.6 Family structure

The family patterns in the village were extended and joint in both *Jogi* and *Kohli* communities, where parents lived with their married and un-married children. Some residential unit were used for the family but with the passage of time every married couple now has their own hut/tent when they were on move for bagging in spatial mobility. In joint families fathers and mothers played key role in decision making, and influenced the child socialization process. One important reason for the large practice of joint family system was the need of families and the environmental and monetary issues. In spatial mobility out of their districts, with the entire family provide a sense of security among the family members. They stayed together in small huts and tents together due to lack of economic resources they were not able to afford separate tents/huts for themselves. That is why straw huts and tents used by the extended family.

The other reasons documented was the lowest economic status, due to shortage of resources, the practice of joint or extended family system was adopted; where fathers, mothers, married brothers, sisters, married uncles, grandparents etc. lived together and shared the household expenses jointly. Table below showed the family structure of the spatial mobile groups among the community.

Table 7: Family Structure

Sr. No.	Type of Families	Type of Settlements	No. of Families
1	Joint	Mobile Families	10
2	Extended	Mobile Families	12
3	Joint	Settled Families	4
4	Extended	Settled Families	1
		Total	27

Source: In-depth Interviews

Above table stated the distribution of families among both segments of the *Dayah* community. There were almost 81.5% of the families living mobile life and remaining 18.5% lived a sedentary life, but sometimes their family members visit Umer-kot city for begging. In mobile community there were 37% joint whereas 44% extended families which lived together and all of them engaged majorly in begging and secondly in performing arts for their subsistence. Whereas, 18.5% were living sedentary lives, they take care of the settled households and owned shops and their children worked in auto-workshops.

4.4.6.1 Early marriages

As it is hypothetically perceived by many social scientists that the variables of early marriages are directly depend upon poverty, the situation in the selected village was the same, that is why early marriages were practiced commonly. The age of marriage prevalent there for girls was 14-16 years and for men not exceeding than 20 years but 16-18 was appreciated. A respondent shared that when he got married, the age of his wife was 13 year and the concept of early marriage was to safeguard the youth from evil practices. He further argued

‘due to the early marriages, our children get young in our 30s, and they helped us to collective economic resources for the household.’

The marriages were decided by the parents with the consultation of elders, while the youth was not allowed to select their partners at their own. During the research work, one cases were observed where parent’s decisions were not accepted by the children as they were interested to marry their own choice. Such kind of incidents always

created enmity among the families that turned sometimes into conflicts and to resolve the issue, *punchyat* played their role and this disobedience was considered dishonor of the family and punishable offence among the community. The child was punished to leave the community for 5 years on that disobedience. But, he come back within a week and was sorrowful on his shameful act.

4.4.6.2 Kinship

The kinship terminology was based on the role formation and the status among the families. Among all the Hindu communities of lower caste in Sindh along with the selected sub-caste *Dayah*, the kinship terms were same. Number of terms were identified and documented which showed the role formation and the status of the individuals e.g. for fathers (Pita-ji) were common, for mothers (Mata-ji) was used. For sister it was the Urdu word (Bahan, or Behna), brothers were called (Bhaie or Bhao or Bhaa). The paternal and maternal grandparents were the Urdu words, Dada, Dadi, or Nana, Nani respectively. Mama for the mother's brother and for father's brother Kaka, for mother's sister Musi or Masi or for father's sister Phuphi or Phuphu was used.

4.4.7 Marriage Patterns

Dayah community belonged to the Hindu religion, so all the marriage patterns documented same as among all the other Hindu communities. The marriage must be outside the Nath, it was due to the exogamous nature of the Hindu communities all over the world. The boys and girls of same Nath considered as brothers and sisters. A number of ceremonies practiced for mate selection.

4.4.7.1 Engagement (Sagaiee)

As stated earlier, marriage proposals carry out by parents of both boy or girl. There was not concept of love marriage in the community in-fact such type of marriages prohibited in *Dayah* community. First of all parents of both boys and girl meet up and then they go to Mahraj/Pandat for *Kundli* (time of marriage). Girl name told to Pandat and then he decided the time of marriage through some spiritual knowledge. The girl not permitted to visit her father in law (groom side) or the groom before marriage. Some of the families do practice exchange marriages. In the community at the time of *Kundli*, relatives come from both the families. After identification of data by the Pandat, the sweet distributed among the relatives. The father of girl gave PKR 2000/-

and some green grass that was considered as the sign of prosperity and joy to the groom's father and in return the father of groom paid PKR 20/- collective amount consumed for sweet of the gathering. The amount fixed for the boy and girl's families.

4.4.7.2 Date of Marriage (Tithe)

Groom's parents visited the house of bride for selection of day. After the mutual agreement, male members of both the families go to *Owtak*², close relatives and other participants announced the date of marriage. At that time, the local sweet distributed and the participants greet the parents of boy and girl. After the official announcement both the families go for their preparation. The marriage data and the process of data selection never more than six months, because according to a respondent,

'Six months given to both the families for their preparation nor more nor less because this is the seasonal time, so both the families lived in sedentary areas.'

4.4.7.3 Banah

The ceremony performed before marriage. In this ceremony, groom and bride both sit together a place which built besides girl's parents home. For this ceremony a new hut/tent developed for new married couple. Because before marriage a separate residential unit constructed (hut, tent or semi-katcha houses) according to the economic condition of the groom's family. Father of the groom, put a embroidery thread in hand of the groom which was made by the sister of the groom.

4.4.7.4 Hina (Mehndi)

It is the part of ceremonial part of the marriage ceremony which decorated on the hands of bride and groom. Bride painted different designs on her both hands and her feet. Relative girls do paint their hands and arms because it was only interesting activity among the girls in marriage ceremony. The groom was also painted by mehndi i.e. his hands, feet were painted, a space of coin left under his feet which was significant in the context,

'For removal of evil impacts of mehndi, a small area under the left foot left to overcome the omen of bad luck.'

² Traditional sitting place

4.4.7.5 Chonwry

This was the very prominent custom among the Hindu community. However, it was most important among snake charmers. In this ceremony, bride and groom took four rounds around the fire, and promised to live together. The ceremony was more important because in all four rounds, bride leads groom in three rounds and in only one round groom leads bride. A very little coat given to the groom by the brother of bride, it would most of the time very tight, when groom sit down on a chair mostly it tore-up the coat. In that situation, he must wait for groom to come and sit along with him.

After that, one brother of groom and one brother of bride come with a round plate over two coins, which colored in red. The groom's mother does *Arti*, than Pandat took right hands of both bride and groom and put mehndi on it. The coin was given to them during their round around the fair, the coin was carry with great interest and security if it fell down from hands of bride and groom, there was an omen that the relationship of boy and girl will never last.

4.4.8 Death Rituals

Pundat was the central point for performing death ritual. When anyone from the community dead, the responsibility of his cleanliness goes to the Pandat, he take care of the body and do *Ashlok*³ un-till he finished the cleaning process. Like other Hindus around the world, snake charmers did not burn their dead. They do burry them like the Muslims and the concept was among them that, they were the custodian of Shiva's pet, Shiva is the creator, and world created by mud. That is why the body of snake charmers given back to the earth.

4.4.9 Birth Rituals

Like in other societies, birth of child is very happy movement among the *Dayah* community. As stated, those who were near to birth a baby left in sedentary village because of their physical condition. It was observe that during bagging time, married females with conceive child did not participated in bagging or any other hard work. There was no concept of maternal hospital because every Nath has their own traditional birth attended. She took care of mother and child.

³ Religious verses from their religious book

The foremost and important ceremony after birth of child was the 'Name-Chran' the time for giving him/her name according to the wish and will of parents. It observed that grandparents asked parents to suggest some name for baby at his/her seventh day.

4.4.10 Dress patterns

In the village all the eight castes wear their traditional dresses. The wear saffron-colored clothing in the form of long shirt and under trouser, females of the snake-charmers' community also wear *Shalwar-Qamees* along with large *Dupatta*. Male wear *Shalwar-Qamees* along with a piece of cloth on their shoulders, they also wear *Sindhi* cap in certain cases but the youngsters only wear *Shalwar-Qamees* without any cloth on shoulder or cap on their heads. Wearing turban was common in old days among all the snake charmer's castes but now a day the concept is vanishing. There were only 4 individuals who wear turban in the selected community. When asked about this shift, one of the respondent stated,

'turban was common in old days, now people have very limited resources there is no way of earning so, Sindhi cap was worn because of its cheap and easy availability. The turban cloth is very fine and costly in the context of cap.'

The women of the snake charmer's (*Dayah*) community wear bangles up-till elbow in white and sometimes in saffron color. It looked like the bangles which were worn by the women in Thar Desert. For footwear, comfortable Slipper (*Chapal*) is common among both male and females. There was no common concept of shoe. The use of *chadar* or head cover was common among the females of the community; it was enough to cover all the body. According to the mother of three children,

'the Chadar is the relaxing cloth especially during the day time in a sunny atmosphere, in summers and winters it was equally beneficial. The observance of Pardha is not easy because we have to move door to door and lived under open spaces in our huts so, this type of long cloth covered us from all bad intentions by the sedentary people.'

In winters, long coats and blankets were used to protect them from cold weather of Desert and the cities because all the time they were exposed to the nature. While females generally worn colored shalwar, long shirts like Ghagra and *dupatta* over

their heads. They generally liked silver made ornaments, bangles and necklaces on occasions of marriages; the use of golden ornaments was not seen during the stay with *Dayah* community.

4.4.11 Food patterns

Wheat flour was part of daily food. The food was cooked by the women in an informal kitchens installed temporarily in the corners of the tents/huts during spatial mobility and near the room in permanent settlements. There is no other space occupied for kitchen. In the huts, the cooking places was in the front of the hut in open air, while the utensils were kept in the boxes which was available among four families other all 18 families kept their utensils in cloth bags.

According to the respondent,

‘What to eat was mainly depends upon what we collect from sedentary community. Sometimes we have enough to eat and left some for other days but most of the time the collection of wheat flour from door to door only provide one time food.’

The community members mostly used vegetables and cooked Currie/Karri along with *Chapati* backed bread on laugh. According to three respondents,

‘vegetables and pulses were commonly used by the community members. There were two families who did not eat Chicken because it was used by one of our goddess for carriage.’

Mutton was commonly loved and used by the community members but the number fewer who can afford mutton. According to the research findings, among 37% of households, the food was cooked to be consumed for the whole day, only 5% respondents consumed meat after a week, remaining were categorized into three categories, one those who could eat meat after two weeks were 18% of the total sample size. Those who used meat after three weeks were 21% of the sample size and those who took after one month were 19%.

The eating pattern was dependent upon the economic status of the families. It was observed by the researcher that many of the families eaten food once a day. Meal cooked in the noon was practiced by 29 households, while cooking of food in the

evening was practiced by the remaining families; the cooked food was used in the dinner and in the breakfast of the next morning.

4.4.12 Modern amenities

The village lack of all modern amenities, there was no electricity, no drinking water, no proper drainage and no dumping unit in the community. The village looked like the slums of cities. No proper streets, no drainage, no washrooms and there was only two water hand pumps for fetching water for drinking and washing purposes. Kerosene oil lamps used by the permanent settlers and mobile families for light in nights. None of the community members have any mobile phone. There was three Radio present in the whole village two were owned by the Markhat and one was Sandharyan. In the *Dayah* community, no radio was found. They community lived an isolated life, it was also documented that they were all the time taught about the earnings, and tried to rid-off poverty but due to insufficient resources they have nothing just to talked about it.

4.4.13 Health facilities

In Taluka Umer-Kot, Mithi and Baden there were Tehsil Hospitals for the inhabitant of the population. Number of dispensaries was also present in city of Umer-kot but there was no any BHU, RHC or any basic health facility in the village.

The health camps established by HANDS in the community. The major area of interest of the organization was the cleanliness and health facilities for the *Jogi* communities. There were three toilets constructed by the HANDS but due to lack of proper awareness and follow-ups for the awareness of the community it was useless, natives go to open pit-holes. In old days, when there were forests and the community has their medical herbs all the small or infectious diseases treated locally. Due to urbanization and less interest in herbs now natives more inclined towards the medical (allopathic) treatment. According to the natives, 'it was very difficult for us to go to the hospital and get medical treatment but due to the *Punchyat* of the village, respectable members visited with us and their presence made the process of medication fast. Birth attendants were easily available and preferably they were asked for delivery at the homes. Those who were near to birth a baby they left at permanent settlements. Or families stayed in nearby areas for more time for safe and secure deliver.

Chapter Five

Beliefs of the Community

5.1 King Cobra

Chapter deals with the overall beliefs of the snake charmers. A number of beliefs recorded according to the perception of the community from snake charmers and spatial nomads. A very common belief which was documented by different scholars and told by every individual during the interview was similar to the Bull belief of Hindu community that the world is laying on the horn, when he tired he changed the horn which caused earthquake. Same story was shared by the respondents that, SHESH-NAG (King Cobra) the type of Black Cobra snake with five heads carrying the world on his one head. He switched his head when get tired, which caused earthquake.

Another belief was documented about the killing of snakes. Snakes were considered the family members when they were pet among snake charmers. Captivity of the snakes were according to some rules, when snake charmers capture/control/hold any snake they made a promise to release that one after a certain time frame in forest. During the time of capture along with families they were treated like member of the families, charmers taking care of their food and water like their children. Hunger might kill the snake would be the prominent fear of snake charmers. That is why they taking good care of their pets. There is prohibition of killing snakes or killed under the captivity of charmers due to their negligence the belief was that, if anyone kills a cobra by any mean its mate will take revenge. The mate visualized killers' face which guide the other one to take revenge by any mean e.g. biting the killer or poison the food.

The third belief regarding the Cobra is the Holy snake, who achieved the closeness to God. A 52 years old respondent who still was engaged in snake charming profession stated that, 'Cobra is known as *Assel-Nag*, it was born from salvia of Hazrat Ali (AS), so the cobra has a very significant position spiritually.

5.2 Body Immune

According to the natives, what you eat becomes your strength or weakness. Eat healthy and live healthy is not commonly applicable term in snake charming

community. Among the different Naths, the concept of using Slat is not existed. Dass stated in this context that ‘we *Jogis* did not use salt in our daily food items. It was prohibited for us, especially for those who were engaged in snake charming profession.’ When asked for the reason and conception way this was so, ‘he again narrated that, salt reduce our immune towards venom of snakes.’ As well as he again narrated that when someone eat salt in his life daily, it destroyed the venomous elements of the body which were necessary for the immunity against snake bite.

According to the first three sub-castes of the snake charmers, slat was prohibited by the ancestors, that is why they did not use it. For making the body more immune to the venom of snakes, when child born, one or two drops of Cobra Venom dropped in his mouth to make him/her strong and protective from any venom of snakes throughout his/her life.

5.3 Forms of Sounds

A number of musical instruments used by snake charmers for capturing snakes such as, flute/traditional Bansuri/been or *Murli*. The *Murli* come up with number of other use and composition. The *Murli* used in catching snakes and in ritualistic practices.

For bagging purposes, they had a specific type of Been/Murli which was known as *Sadha* among the *Jogi* community in Sindh province. It is the form of *Murli*, and the tune, which produced by the *Murli* interpreted by the snake charmers, ‘*blessings of god, and asked for something for the sake of god because they have nothing to eat at their homes.*’

Sufi poet ‘Shah Abul Latif Bhattai’, was renowned poet of Sindhi culture. His spiritual poetry has a very significant position in Sindhi literature. Singers among the Sindhi culture and beyond the Sindhi culture they equally love and perform on Shah’s poetry. But the snake charmers did a very fabulous work on it. They transformed the poetry in lyrics of *Murli*. When they sung or perform *Murli* for begging they most of the time sung poetry of Shah Sain.

According to a respondent,

‘Shah sain is the poet of all of religions, he do talked about colors of life and humanity. He had the pain for humanity and wanted to develop the world on the notion of peace and prosperity.’

Snake charmers sung the poetry to entertain the people. They play murli in different versions that is known as the folk music of Sindh. Shah Abdul Latif had write so many poems on Jogs. Shah Sain spend most of their time when they were traveling with snake charmers because they frequently moved from one place to another and know about the culture and the environment of the area. He depict the sorrows, sadness, love, joy and happiness in the poetry. Sami, Kaput, Sanyasi, Soother, Lahoti, Kankat and Kapri were the prominent names used by Saha sian in their poetry.

5.4 Concept of Shrine and Pir

Like other parts of the county and all of the communities, snake charmers do also believed in shrines and pirs. Some of the *Jogi* community marked themselves *Fakir-Jogi*. The concept *Faqir* comes up from the native understanding '*those who have nothing, who do not love for the world and believed in God's help and did not asked for any assistance.*' The beliefs were more than other communities in the *Jogi-Nath*. Both spiritual and economic aspects were associated with them, every community members followed particular Pir who might be of the same area of from any other region, who were considered the problem solver, who will provide economic aid, solved physical and economic issues amulets were given to the followers which would solved the issues even the birth of boy.

Visiting pir, along with all family members once in a year practiced in *Dayah* community. All the members were follower of Shah Abdul Latif's shrine, some of the families who spatial mobile they have some pirs in Mithi and Thar districts. The reason for such visits was the blessings for the family and the economic prosperity. Though all the community members do alms to the shrine and to the pirs but their believed was more on the fate of their own. Among the other communities of the area shrines of Pir Sher Badal, Sachal Sarmast, Rama Pir, and Lal Shahbaz Qalandar were some prominent shrines among the snake charmers of Sindh province. They performed dances, which called (*Dhamal*) sung traditional folk songs on their Murli in shrines on Urs.

5.5 Religion

By religious point of view as stated earlier they belongs to Hindu religion but due to social acceptance in the area, both Hindu and Muslims are devotes of Muslim spiritual

leaders (pir). When question asked regarding their participation and interpretation of the world around them, key informant stated,

'Here in Sindh we all communities shared same religious understanding, every religious community does practice their own beliefs, but they respect others' understanding and devotion.'

Another important factor documented in the community that they buried their dead rather than burnt them as other Hindu did with their deceased. The reply of the key informant was,

'The God is one, you Muslims has Allah and we also has one God otherwise Lord Shive, Vishnu and Brahma are the disciples of that one. When we all worship one God in certain different ways e.g. dancing, praying, reciting this is the beauty of religion which provide ways to express the feelings for God in any form.'

The key informant astonished researcher when he discussed things in such a philosophical ways. They do *Puja* to their main three Lords, the concepts and the types of such practices shared later. In the community, they do not have any temple but in the village and city Umer-kot there are many temples where they free to go and worship.

5.5.1 Shiva

The Lord Shiva is the God of Hindus. He is 3rd God in Hindu Trimurti in which Brahma is the creator of the universe and Vishnu is the preserver of it. It was said that the Lord Shiva destroyed the world ones with his powers, but Brahma created it again. Shiva was very powerful and supreme God among these three Gods. Shiva had a *Shesh-Nang* (black cobra) around his neck. It was shown in different figurines, pictures and in long statue in India that the Lord Shiva had a Black-Cobra around his neck which increased the importance of Black-cobra among the Hindu religion. The black-cobra considered the *avatar* (disciple) of the Lord Shiva that is why killing black cobra prohibited among Hindu community. The Lord always seated on a tiger skin and wore skin of a tiger, his vehicle was a bull known as *Nandi*. All the *Jogi* community worship Lord Shiva, because he had black-cobra in his neck, the

important thing was the birth of Guru GorkhNath, which was the blessings of Lord Shiva.

5.5.2 Guru GorkhNath

He was the devotional saint of all the *Jogis* in Pakistan and India. The GorkhNath considered an *avatar* of Lord Shiva. The Guru was born with the wishes and blessing of Lord Shive. The story was very interesting, every *Jogi* know the story as,

There was one of the devotees of Lord Shiva. He visited daily the shrine of Lord Shive and prey for a child, because he had not any child since 20 years of his marriage. One day the wife of Lord Shive, *Parvati* said to the Lord that '*he is your devotee and wishing every day for a child, so you give him a child with your powers*'. The Lord took some ash from the fire which was for the pray of Lord and gave it to the devotee and said, '*feed it to your wife*'. The devotee brought that ash at his home with great love and care, because the Lord directly gave it.

He gave it to his wife and said, '*you must eat it, after eating it you will pregnant.*' His wife feels pity with those ashes, so she threw out it on cow dung. The husband become very ashamed, went back to Lord, and shared the entire story. Lord ordered him to go back home and took that dung and came back; devotee saw a child under dung, and carries him to the Lord Shiva. Lord gave him grass for his clothing and said to his wife *Parvati* that bore his ear and place the big earring in them according to the caste of his father. The father was from *Jogi* faqer community. The son was known as guru GorkhNath. When the guru grow up, he become the performer of yoga. Later pm the Guru had 9 Nath and 84 Siddhas.

5.5.3 Goga Chohan

Goga Chowhan, was a devotional saint of *Jogis* and had spiritual power, snakes were under his command. He slept over the bad of snakes, and sucks venom from snakes with his eyes. He bitten by a snake and died. According to the natives, 'Goga Chowhan, had spiritual powers and he helped poor *Jogis* in terms of economy and other aids. All snake charmers' communities respected him and tried to obey. *Lundi* (is a type of snake which crawl in circular form, the snake was cursed by Goga Chohan) a poisonous snake which found in Thar and Rajahistan deserts. The lore shared by the key informant,

'Lundi was very much angry on the Goga, because of his act of sucking venoms. Venom is the only way of survival among the snakes, without it, they are not able to hunt or kill any reptile for their food. They only lived seven to fifteen days without eating. The act of goga, in other words, was a try to forced snakes towards their natural death of hunger. There was no snake, who fight for others, because every snake was afraid of after effects. According to lore, Lundi thought if he attacks on goga directly, that would be harmful for the snake or he might be dead on its effort. Lundi was very much popular for its instincts, it hide in shady places, or in objects and suddenly appear to bite the pray. Therefore, the snake hide at the entrance of the house on a tree in the nest of birds, when goga come home and on way to enter his house, Lundi jumped on him and bite him. He cursed Lundi that 'you will never run straight again, and not able to through your poison on the victim.' He died but the Lundi still suffered with that curse.'

Still, Lundi moved in round shape and not able to jump and attack humans or any of the pray through its venom. *Jogi* does not charm it because of its sinful act, if someone does capture it; charmers leave it after some days.

According to snake charmers, they endowed with super human powers passed down to them through the generations like a cannibalistic ritual.

The story goes that on the death of Goga Choha, his body meat eaten by the heirs so that they can get the power of Goga. The air of mystery that surrounds the snake charmers has always kept them a breed apart from the mainstream. They still following many of their original have their own calendar and marry within their respective tribes more specifically they considered other Jog-Nath and did not prefer their own Nath.

Jogi Dhamaal

The *Jogis* were very fond of *dhamaal* (spiritual dance at the shrine), collective representations, and single *dhamal* observed. It was spiritual dance and were conceptualized as,

‘Fold dance which linked the existing world with the world of sky, divinity, commitment, love and affection were some of the prominent traits which was associated with the dhamal. It was shared by the respondents that, *‘Dhamal, is the way to interact with God, it was done due to the deep devotion to pir and for the personal healing.’* There were three types of Dhamal in *Dayah* community. One for Urs, second for marriages and third for other general ceremonies, in all three Dhamals, Murli and drum would be the central part or the tool for this get together.

5.6 Socialization

Socialization and training of the children in their early ages done by the community elders, and of relatives. Without any specific teacher, there is no way to learn the skill. In the *Dayah* community, every child must learn the techniques how to catch up a snake and how to make themselves safe from them. If someone might bite by snake in that cases how to survive from poison. *Guru*, in the community the grandfather of the key informant was *guru*, he spend all his life in snake charming in India before inception of Pakistan and now in Pakistan. The age of the *guru Hurban* was almost 81, but he looked quite young. When asked about his health, the guru stated,

‘We had consumed pure food, and drinkables still I eat three baked bread and 1 KG milk. This pure food and daily exercise made me strong to live a happy life up till now. My wife was died five years ago, i have four sons, two daughters, now i am teaching my fourth generation’s child.’

5.6.1 Risky Lifestyle (myths)

The growing shortage of forests and snakes has forced snake charmers to change their livings. Snake charmers wandering through the deserts in search of snakes for centuries, a task and tradition they continue today. A snake charmer leads a risky life, as he carries between two to three snakes with him all the time. According to a respondent,

‘A genuine snake charmer is never afraid off snakes, because a snake would not bite a true snake charmer.’

The customs and traditions of snake charmers based on several myths. All the snake charmers devotee of Lord Goga Chohan, a mythical spiritual leader, the natives shared,

'He was our Murshid, he handed us the power to enslave all snakes. He used to sleep on the bed of snakes in every night and cut heads of all the snakes in the morning.'

Another myth related to Goga Chohan shared by the natives,

'Goga Chohan, went to capture a great python with his Murli, but the python escaped into the sea, and would create a river belt wherever he moved. The old river belt 'Hakro' is said to be the work of that python. It was spread over five districts of Sindh and did not used for irrigation purposes.'

When a boy born to a family of snake charmers, after a few days the snake poison given to him/her as they believed it to be an 'Anti-dot-of-snake-venom'. The other factor of that was the strength of child for capturing snakes.

5.7 Hindu and Muslim

Within snake charmers both Muslim and Hindu religious groups existed. The Hindu snake charmers still obey and transferred their traditional customs from generation to generation but Muslim snake charmers changed a lot according to the situation of their livelihood. In back days according to a respondent,

'Snake charmers do travel from Peshawar to Kolkata.'

Another respondent shared,

'In old days the River Hakra guide us, when we were on the search of snakes. We do travel in both (Indian and Pakistani) lands, but now this is not possible to travel. We used to slip through sand dunes looking for snakes but now they build wire border walls.'

5.8 Black Cobra

The cobra although poisonous, it has high value among the snake charmers, it did not bite unless provoked. Snake charmers feed it goat milk. They have attached several myths with cobra, which are part of their folklore. It is the Sufi snake according to a myth,

'If you kill the partner, he will seek revenge. Apparently, it visualized the image of its partner's killer and traveled hundreds and thousands of

miles in search of the killer. The cobra would spit poison in the milk, or hide in the shoe for bite. Snake did not able to approach sleeping bed or cote.'

All snake charmers advised to the people not to kill the black cobra, *'if anyone finds a snake in his path, he must offer him an oath of Lord Goga and Pir Dastgeer (Shahbaz Qalandar) and he leave the path.'*

5.8.1 Cobra uses Jewels to attract prey

A childhood favorite, it was said that cobras possess within them a jewel of exceptional value known as the 'Nag-Manka'. At night the cobra open its mouth and reveal the jewel and attract prey with it. The cobra would surrender its prized possession either to a person who manages to torture it to the limit or as a token of gratitude for a noble deed.

It is very common among the children and snake charmer communities that, if you want to snatch the Manka you have to do some of the things. According to the modern lore, the Manka could be obtained by dropping the cow dung from a tree under that the cobra busy in drinking milk. The cobra is then supposed to drop the Manka into the picture due to the sudden shock and the clay or dung will hide it. The snake would try to find out the Manka but due to snitch of dung he flee. The believe would be originated in many ways. In Sub-continent it was common that snakes were custodian of treasures.

5.8.2 Lore of Snakes

Over 40% of snake charmers died because of snake bite, said by the key informant. The cause of death rarely disclosed because if people know about the cause of death they might doubt the snake charmers about their skills. However, the death of non-snake-charmer announced publicly.

Snake fascinate so many people, one can argue that it is a way of life for snake charmers. But some out caste (Nath) worked hard to learn how to capture snakes. They feed milk to poisonous snakes, which have proved themselves as disloyal and they developed snake frames without knowing which one could turn out to by disloyal. While in other way round, snake charmers were well aware of the characteristics of snakes and how much the venomous when get angry.

5.9 Other Social Evils

Old snake charmers, who lived in the permanent settled colony and owned shops, stated that in some of the *Jogi* communities they engaged in evil activities e.g. some of the families do prostitution along with bagging. It disrespect the whole *Jogi* community. Whatever changes time might inflict upon snake charmers, *Murli* and snake would always remained the symbol of a *Jogi*. As the poetry of Bhagat Kabeer attracts a snake charmer, the *Murli* attracts a snake. Some of the snake charmers played *Murli* internationally and won different prizes.

5.10 Customs and Traditions

The customs and traditions of snake charmers based on several myths. All the snake charmers devoted of Lord Goga Choha. According to the key informant,

'He transformed his powers to enslave all snakes to us. He used to sleep over the bed of snakes and cut their heads on every morning, which showed his understanding that such creature is not trust worthy.'

Another respondent narrated,

'Snake Charmers are still afraid of 'Lundi', as it caused the death of their saint, so no one risk their life to charm a lundi.'

5.10.1 Capturing Snakes

A boy from *Dayah* community not able to get married un-till he charm a snake. It considered a test of maturity and manhood. When a woman marries, she receives a snake, a dog and *Mankah* (snake beet) which was produced by the Cobra and used as anti-snake bite in her dowry.

Snake charmers sell *Mankah* to snake bite victims and guide them on its proper usage. The victim is supposed to put it in cotton, serve it with milk twice a month and is forbidden from touching it when on is impure.

In Sindh there are number of snake charmer communities, only some of them charm snakes by their own remaining purchased snakes from them because it is a long and time taking activity. Due to deforestation and presence of humans in deserts, now the presence of snakes was low. According to the respondent,

'Cobra and pythons was the favorite species, cobra preferred because it stands and raise its head, with hood display it looked spectacular. In addition snake charmers keep many non-venomous snakes.'

Most snake charmers used snakes without poison fangs, which have been remove to avoiding the risk of biting. Such snakes fail to eat their pray, because they cannot utilized their venom to kill the rat or other insects and will died in five to six months. This is the reason why snake charmers replace snakes in every couple of months. A few snake charmers keep poisonous snakes with fangs. They used their venom and herbs to produce medicine to heal snake bites, some also sell it as good luck charms.

With the passage of time, things are changing, even the snake charming profession, and their life style. They are forced to beg because of a sharp decline of interest in their art form, they are now turning to the cities in search of a better life as discussed in occupational groups of the community.

Chapter Six

Festivals of *Dayah* Snake Charmers

6.1 Festivals of *Jogi* Community

Every culture consists of lots of practices and gatherings for social interaction and recreational activities. Every practice come up for a specific time e.g. happiness, sorrowful moments, occasional gatherings each of them have their particular characteristics. Every community has same type of practices but different in their process. Every community has their particular culture, which mainly depends upon the followers of particular culture. Such type of cultural practices, efforts made the culture prominent and do enrich the practical life of the followers.

The *Dayah* community have Hindu, Sindhi origin, practices and cultural values come up from both the segments. Religion always played an important role in personality formation, local understanding, as well as way of life for the followers. Social life majorly influenced by the surroundings, the fact of such amalgamation observed in the community. Natives belonged to Hindu religion but people around them do practice Muslim religion. Natives had both the practices e.g. they do visit Muslim shrines and respect regional spiritual leaders who provide the way of prosperous lifestyle to the inhabitants of Sindh province.

A long list of Hindu festivals documented through different scholars and work of the Hindu communities as well but in Pakistan, the *Dayah* snake charmer community practice all the festivals practiced by the *Jogis* of Sindh province.

6.1.1 Holi

Around the world Hindus perform *Holi* as the festival of color for arrival of spring. The festival is predominantly practiced in India and in all other South Asian countries which have Hindu community. It was the festival of color, festival of love and the forgiveness and the festival of re-build broken relationships among the loved ones. Hindus do practice Holi, in the starting of spring, which depicted the ending of winter and starting of colored weather and season. The festival is the second major festival among the Hindu community. The Holi 'as the festival of color' attracted other communities who also participated in this festival at specific day. In Pakistan, in every educational institute where Hindu students enrolled they also performed Holi

along with other students which come up with the social integrity and social cohesion among the community members.

Dayah community, perform *Holi* in the start of spring; March is the most colored month in Pakistan. Due to geographic differences in the country, start of Spring stretches one month. Natives prepare, sweet eatables in their homes, they greet each other and distributed sweets among the family members and community.

There is lore among the *Jogis* of Sindh,

‘Celebration of the Holi is not about only the colors of spring, or love of happiness, it was linked to the story of a father and his daughter’s devotion to lord Shiva. I back days there was a Raja governed the sub-continent back centuries ago; he forced the people to prey and gave respect like a God. People forced to act according to the wish of the Raja, because there was no other way except his acceptance. He had a daughter, she disobeyed the order of her father which create dis-trust among the inhabitants. The father asked her daughter if you will not obey my orders or did not accept me as the God over your father i’ll drop you fire. She asked if she was not accepting his father as God, she put into fire and then she realized there is no God except her father. On a specific day, she dragged into fire, but remained safe and come out without any harm. The father realized his mistake and sorry for his behavior. The people on that day celebrate the festival of colors because their lives become colorful and they lived happily.’

The lore comes up with some modification and changes in the actors in different parts of Pakistan. However, content of the lore remained same.

6.1.2 Diwali

The word ‘Diwali’ or ‘Deepavali’ comes from the word ‘Deep’ mean oil lamp used in back days in sub-continent for lightening. The concept of ‘deepavali’ means the row of light (lighted lamps). The festival is the largest Hindu religious festival, which has *Rnagoli* the central ingredient. The festival was the worship of Lord *Ganesh* and Goddess *Lakshmi* both has a very prominent space in Hindu religion. Former was the god of welfare and prosperity and the later one is wealth and wisdom. The festival

celebrated in *Kartikamasam* (Hindu month name which falls in October and November). The festival celebrated on the victory of Lord Ram, on Ravan after his 14-year exile from the land. No exact numbers of days for its celebration, in some areas festival celebrated for contentious five days, in some areas it had three days, but no specific days at all, the festival spiritually signifies as the victory of light (Ram) over darkness (Ravan). Temples, shops, business-centers and streets lighten during the whole celebration.

During the month of October, *Dayah* community members celebrate the Divali festival, in this festival fire-works, distributing sweets and given children money for fire-works were some of the prominent aspects of the festival.

6.1.3 Nag-Panchami

It is the traditional as well as religious festival, which have central point of 'snake worship'. In this festival, the sculpture of snake deities made of wood, stone, silver and paintings on the wall bathed with milk firstly and then worshiped. The festival observed in July or August in every year. Followers of Hindu religion celebrated this festival generally and the *Jogis* specifically. Lot of stories linked with this festival. On the day, milk and cooked rice offered to snakes. Some does fast for the day. Snake temples decorated Hindu community members along with *Jogis* visited temples and worship there. Black cobra has significant place in the culture, so on the day of celebration the *Shehs-Nag* decorated with colors, saffron and other fragrant pigments mixed together to make color which were used to decorate snakes on the day.

According to the natives,

'Good and bad snakes treated according to their fate. Lord Shive had a snake with around his neck which protect him for evils were remained the family member. Like in the families both good and bad children lived together, if someone do punishable act, he punished to realize him his mistake. Same in the case of snakes, those who bite humans and or animals and create disturbance and destruction in the community punished to death. In the festival, a fireplace prepared for bad snakes and they burnet to death.'

A number of folklores available among the community members for the positive and negative aspects of the snakes, but majorly the impact of the snake and the relationship (positive) among the snake and human beings identified for the greater description and continuation of the healthy relationship in a certain environment because both of the creatures lived side by side.

6.1.4 Raksha Bandhan

'Raksha' means protection and 'Bandhan' means tie or the collaboration, collectively known as the 'protection from every bad evil or the bond of protection'. The festival celebrated in August every year. On the day, sister tie an amulet, or talisman which known as '*Raki*' on the wrists of their brothers and in return they get gifts from them, this is the share of responsibility among brothers and sisters. The festival had very significant among the married sisters. Sisters pray for their brother's long and healthy life and in return, brothers promise to protect them until their lives.

According to the lore shared by the respondent,

'There are lot of stories regarding the love of brother and sister, it is not only restricted to the blood brother-sister relationship it also deals and had great importance in brother and sisters from other mothers.'

Dayah community members do visit their sisters' home with gifts to them. Due to the tradition 'parents did not allow to visit their daughter's home; brother share the burden of emotional attachment with their parents; they visited the married sisters and taking care of them. They go with sweets to visit sister's houses. In every family according to their economic status natives cooked sweet eatables. Due to observance of low economic status of the *Dayah* snake charmer community, sweets purchased from shops and distributed among the family members and relatives.

6.1.5 Maha Shivaratri

It is the annual festival, which has religious significance among the Hindu community. The festival celebrated in evening so, it has major importance, which was for the celebration of night of the marriage of Lord Shiva. The festival celebrated in Shiva temple, which is known as '*Jagran*' the full night festivity. The day for the celebration was fall in the months of February or March.

The festival discussed by different scholars some who from the Hindu religion and those who come from different school of religious thoughts. One lore was the heavenly dance of creation, destruction and preservation. Devotes dance in Shiva's temple and on chanting of hymns and remember Shiva's presence. The other lore was to some extent different, scholars discussed the wedding night of Shiva and Parati.

At that night, snake charmers do fast, which started early in the morning and ended at mid night. Fasting was prominent aspect of the festival/ritual.

The area has a significant value among the Hindu community. The Shiv-Mandir in Umer-kot has holds the 250,000 individuals for this religious ceremony. Hindus generally and *Jogi* particularly attend Shivrathri. The Shivrathri was organized by the All Hindu Punchyat of Umer-kot which is the informal conflict resolution mechanism. *Dayah* community members, participated hole-heartedly in the ceremonial event of Shivrathri do to the infinite love with Lord Shiva.

6.1.6 Bhajan

The word '*Bhajan*' literally means the sharing. It referred to the religious songs with religious thematic representation in it. The *Bhajan* was the word, which were used to describe chanting from different Holy books (Geeta). If we discussed the Bhajan, it did not have any prescribed form or to some extent any formal structure. It could contain poetic description of the Lord(s), lore and beliefs connected to them, chanting from different religious books.

Bhajan consists of different ingredients e.g. spiritual ideas, melodious tools and number of individuals for sung. In the community (*Dayah*), during the festival of Shivrathri, natives sung *Bhajan* with their *Murli* (flute). Different *Ashlok* chants were sung with low tune of flute, or sometimes the tune of flute played in the particular rhythm which described the meaning.

According to the respondent,

'For Shavrathri, we developed new rhythms for appreciation and love of Shiva for his devotees, our love and respect which is beyond imagination was portrayed vid our songs.'

Jogi communities of the area, celebrated *Ramapir* every year in the month of Shawal which is known as *Bhajan*, but some of the Naths do participated in this activity, *Dayah* was not practicing *Ramapir* because the community is divided into permanent settled and spatial mobile groups. Those who settled they limited in numbers and did not performed *Ramapir* at very large scale.

6.1.7 Sacred Food *Prasad*

The word *Parsad*, come up with different meanings, divine food, divine blessings after interaction with the divine power, divinity after exchange between devotee and the Lord. The word come up with the material meanings as well. It was further documented during interviews that, '*it is the spiritual food for the devotee.*' The concept described as,

'The material goods and eatables, given to the deities by the devotees for their forgiveness, and for their honor are known as Parsad.'

Like at different shrines in Pakistan, the *lunger* distributed among the devotees who come from different areas, which has some spiritual power in it due to the blessings of God Almighty. It observed that food which cooked by the devotees, distributed by them, but before distribution of the food the prayer to the divine made it scared. Same in the case with *Parsad*, which given by the devotees but when returned back to them contains blessings from Lord Shiva.

Parasad identified sacred food to the Lord. During the worship, deity, devotee, and Arti (A plate which consists of eatables according to the economic status of the devotee) which presented to the deity for his/her blessings. Among the *Dayah* community members the ritual was practiced which contains water, flower, rice and some other eatables offered to the deity. Natives believed that such offerings made with yearning heart and given to the Lord, will support them and provide them protection as well as fulfilled their physical desires with the grace of Lord and all the blessings come back to them in the form of '*Parsad*'.

A respondent shared,

'After eating Parsad, we become fearless and the heart filled with the grace and love of Lord Shiva.'

6.2 Art of Snake Charming in Sindh

As stated in introduction and conceptualization of the thesis, there were around 12 castes, who performed snake charming and called themselves *Jogi/yogi*. There was a common perception that with the help of flute, charmers caught snakes and they mesmerized them through their melodious tunes through flute. But, it is a bitter reality that snakes are deaf. They have wave detectors/sensors in their bodies they identify certain waves as good or for caution of possible threats. Therefore, they react accordingly and we conceptualized them as ‘dancing snakes’. Certain practices were associated with the art of snake charming, how they are significant.

6.2.1 Snake Charming Objectives

Before going into case studies and interviews of snake charmers, their daily used objects during their spatial mobility and permanent settlement discussed to make the reader more enrich.

6.2.1.1 Cloth Bag (Godari)

A shoulder hanging bag which contains, *been, snake box, gider singhi, manka, some of cloths, plastic shopping bags* and some eatables. In everyday, the snake charmers left their homes to earn livelihood. According to the need of the profession the cloth bag had all the necessities. As stated about the economic activities those who only beg, they had empty shoulder bags, which were used to collected eatables. Most of the time according to the respondents,

‘People do give flour preferably rather than wheat bread. I had received cooked food three times in last one month. The bag provide a good support because in rainy or sunny days, it is not possible to carry the eatables in shopping bags so we put all things in one parcel/bag so carried easily’

6.2.1.2 Snake Basket (Patari)

The *Patari*, snake-carrying box majorly purchased by the community members. The making of snake box was documented in city market of Umer-kot. There was a shop and the sales man sated,

‘It was made with the same material which used for making wheat bread carrying plates, which was known as ‘*Kanjeer*’ made by two different materials long sticks were joint together and wrapped by date leaves in a circular form like a rope. The rope

wrapped in circle over one another loop until the proposed height. It covered by the lid made by the same ingredients.

Those who performed only snake dance they carry snake box with them in cloth bag. The box had not enough space of carry lot of things, so, only one snake basket kept in it. The size of the basket depends upon the size of the snake. It was shared by the respondent that,

'The size of basket always upon the size of the snake, because they moved all the time in the basket, so we take care of their movement as well. It is very common that only one basket carried by snake charmers or if they caught some beautiful forest snake (which had lot of colors on skin), they do have two baskets. Carrying snakes is for the earning purposes, so which creature attract the attentions would be the companion of the day.'

6.3 Snake Dance

Snake charmers and snakes were object of amusement in back days. Wearing a cloth bag (known as *Jhoola*), visiting different places for snake charming doing performance and get flour, money and other eatables from crowd and from door to door were the prominent activity of living. Cloth bag were used for putting Snake box (called *Patari*), been along with eatables. Due to uncertain situation in the country, as well as due to modernization now people avoided to interact with them.

According to a respondents,

*'In old days when we perform flute in streets, children, community members gathered/grouped in streets and requested for snake dance. We performed three to four time in each Muhallah and in return, we earn our livelihood. Now, TV, Films more specifically mobile phones (camera mobile phones) affected our life style. People (children) not much concerned with snake dance (*Tamasah*) and we earn down to desk.'*

Another respondent stated,

'Being a Jogi is looked like curse today. At every police check post, they demand for complete check-up. They though we are thief, we do

snatching and used our cloth bags and snake box for illegal drug transportation. We have no voice, our political leaders did not respond on such issues. Some of the time during performance, policemen to dispersed mob and we forced towards begging rather than making our livelihood through performance.'

Snake charmers do have some other tricks to continue the interests of the crowd, disappearing money notes, some tricks of cards was documented when they visited area to area for begging and performing their skills.

The perspective of the charmers observed that, '*headed snakes attract people*' those snakes who have large head they attract people that is why Cobra used for amusement and entertainments. It is fighting snake with the movement of *Been*, (considered been as the opponent), cobra attracted to been and try to bite on it, with this movement of been and cobra, it looked dancing snake which amused mob. The been was made up with different colors which inspire cobra to react instantly. It was not bite again and again like other snakes, because it bites ones and consume all its venom. When cobra spread its head, it looked beautiful and was not able to bite in that standing and open head position. It was additional benefit for the charmers.

The other important aspect for selecting cobra was the beautiful skin of the creature. People liked it, because of its beautiful head. When snake box open it stand up for fear and fighting with charmer. After opening the box, due to fear the snake could run charmer sit one arm distance in active position, if in case of escape they can capture the snake again. During snake charming its teeth made sour, with sour teeth cobra was not able to bite or if it bites, the cure is very easy.

According to the respondent,

'It is very common phenomena, making sour teeth of cobra helped during first months of companionship. After removing fangs, in cobra it come up early than other snakes. It needs more care than other venomous snakes.'

Charmers feel proud and satisfied when they had cobra. Cobra did not bit occasionally, but for safer side they took all precautionary measures e.g. Manka, herbs to heal the poison. *Jogi* had a skill to forced snakes to go inside the *Patri*. A piece of

cloth or lid of the box placed on the head of the snake from the backside and snake sits in the box.

6.4 Caring of Snakes

Making the life with the charmers comfortable some tricks used on snakes for starting new companionship. The concept of adopting snakes is very much common, *'they are not our pets, and are our family members'* a key informant said. After two or in some cases three months' captivity, snakes were prepared for dancing and presentation to mob. According to the respondent,

'We used some form of opium for our snakes to make slow down their consciousness. However, we removed their fangs but due to their forestry nature, they always try to run from their captivity. We used medicinal herbs to control their consciousness which were mixed in their drinkables as well as Jogi Mantras.'

The name of herb and the *Mantras* was not shared with the researcher on the forbidden nature of that indigenous knowledge, *'it's forbidden for us by our ancestors that outside the Jog-Nath, the sharing of knowledge is prohibited.* The snakes had two phases of their lives, one at home, where they stayed calm and among the community where they were disturbed multiple times for earning purposes. Respondent stated,

'Averagely, seven to nine times a day, the snake performed in streets. In evening, they become tired and try to escape or bite back. A herb were used to make them calm in starting of the day, it developed laziness and less to re-act and helped them to perform till evening.'

6.4.1 Snake-lets

Reproduction is a natural process. Captive snakes sometimes produce eggs and after certain time snakelets come out. For black cobra, the days for birth of snake-lets were one month and seven day. The female cobra kept eggs and did not move anywhere to eat. Due to hunger, she most of the time eat snake-lets, those who escape from their mother survived. According to the respondent, *'snake had very specific digestive system without digesting previous food if they feed more they vomit, their bellies worked like balloons.* In snake boxes when female cobra lay eggs, the charmer do care of it as well. They fed snake and taking care that she would not eat any of snake-lets. After one week or more than one week without touching by bear hands to the eggs, it

was transfer into water pitcher, half filled with soil. The snake-lets usually six to seven inches long and sold by the charmer for economic purposes. By birth cobra snake-lets venomous, they also had strong venom but they did not bite.

6.4.2 Problems in Arranging Snakes

Livelihood activities forced snake charmers to other economic earning activities. Those who involved in their ancestral profession shared number of problems faced by them in their profession if it would not be resolved those who practiced it might left it.

6.4.2.1 Home Snakes

Snakes kept in homes for a certain time and used for performance. Whenever, snakes captured their fangs removed to make them harmless. For removal of fangs, a piece of cloth fixed in the fangs and with the jerk it was removed or pull out with the tool (plier). Seldom tubes of venom burned by using the burning stick as it might harm the snake or it might dead. Second method of making snake non-venomous is that, charmers do not pull out teeth but they make their teeth sour as stated earlier by pouring down drops of specially prepared medicine. In this way snake cannot bite but if bites they did not able to inject venom. In this way, the snake survived long time. The teeth of the cobra made sour and the fangs of all other snakes pulled out. so, there comes a difference of snake bite at home and in jungle.

6.4.2.2 Death by Snakes

According to respondent, in jungle, the situation is different, there we do not have any Manka with us so we used herbs and medicine for poison of snakes. Manka is most precious thing that is why it kept in very safe place most of the time in homes. In cobra it was very deadly if pulled out the fangs so, keeping teeth sour was the only way for its survival. A story narrated by the respondent about the death of one of the fellow in his hut.

‘Mussri, was very good in snake charming, he was 39 year old. Due to lack of people’s interest in snake dance, our most of the snake charmers changed their profession from performing to begging. It was April, 2009; we were living in Badin at that time. It was early of the morning a dweller from nearby area come up and requested to go with him because there was a snake in the house. Mussri’s hut was in the first of the settlement he asked me for companionship. I accepted and we reached at

the home, which was hardly ten minute walk from our settlement. We informed that snake was in grain storage room. He started searching for it. After five mints we located the snake it was cobra with length of seven feet. We were happy, because it was very significant if anyone had cobra. With the help of cloths and long sticks the head of the snake pinned down and he captured the snake with bear hands.

We received PKR 2000/- as reward from the family and the snake, i had received one thousand and remaining one thousand and snake received by Mussri. The time was 10 AM at that time, all the members of the crew was ready to go for begging, i joined them and go for begging. In evening when we came back, we heard the news that Mussri bitten by cobra and dead in noon and snake escaped. Everyone was sad on this incident, after inquiring it observed that when he was souring the teeth, the snake bites on his finger which he ignored that caused his death.

Taking care and perfect counting of snake cleaning days are must for the survival of snake charmers as well. Snake charming is the profession in which all the charmers remained at stake a slight mistake killed them.

6.4.2.3 Feeding of Snakes

Food given to the snakes after six to seven days, before feeding the snake, they were placed outside the snake box for some exercise. Charmers placed the food e.g. sparrow, mice or clean meat pieces into its mouth. Without fangs, it was not possible for them to swallow the food by self. So, charmers pushed the food into their mouth. Sometime straw used for inserting food inside then by using fingers sometime. The issue was only with eating, for drinking a pot filled with water placed near the snake, snake drink it by own. Very few women taught to handle snakes for childhood. For tamed snakes, food placed in the snake box, and snake drawn outside the box for some time. Old cobra drink milk from milk-pot, but new ones feed through tubes and milk put into the mouths of snakes. There was only Black-cobra and other same gene snakes that drink milk.

6.4.2.4 Catching and Cleaning Snakes

Looking trail of snake on the ground snake charmer made judgments about the directions of movement of snake. They investigate trail for its origin and directions of

snake. The trail also helped them about the time, weight, length of the snake. Due to their profession, God had bestowed ability upon them. Snake tail always remained more powerful because with the help of its tail it hold the pray till the last breath and then eat it.

Without venom, snakes lived fifteen to thirty days. Snake have tubes in their upper cavity, when snake charmer cleaned it; they removed fangs and marked the tube with burning iron road. There is another method for destroying tubes, a piece of coal was applied on venom tubes and tubes smashed. Snake does not survive in this way, after removing the venom tubes snake charmers believed that now it would not be harmful anymore. In back days there was a person in *Thar* city, which purchased all the venom from them but now people contacted them for venom.

The venom extracted in a glass. The opened the moth of snake and fixed it on glass, it bites the glass and charmer pushed the head in this process the venom pocket brushed and venom slide into the glass. This venom supplied to the laboratories. Snake charmers feel proud that they catch snakes with bear hands and non-snake charmers did it with sticks. Snake has venom tube in the upper cavity, with produce other venom pockets in one month. In homes, the snakes were cleaned every seventh day. If the process disturbed due to any reason, the snake become weak after this extraction.

6.5 Women of Snake Charmers

Women of snake charmers did not catch and charm snakes. They took care of the families and all other household chores when male member of the family out for livelihood. The bagging is now the major profession of the snake charmers, women of them do participated in begging and take care of their children when come back. As stated in the chapter, women and girls come back in evening before the nigh spread because they have to do cooking and cleaning of huts and babies. A respondent stated,

‘Though they are part of our lives, they do all the household work, taking care of us and our children, snake charming needs lot of time and travel which is not possible for them because they have small children who needs their mother the most. So, participating of women in snake charming is not practiced in our Nath.’

In Chohan, Dewaro there were three females who charm the snakes. After death of their husbands, now they are taking care of their families. They begged and in certain cases showed snake dance to the mob in cities, shared by the key informant.

6.6 Functions of Snake Charmers

The traditional function of snake charmers were flushing out snakes from homes, through their *Murli* and healing people from snake bites. Goga Chohan, a mythical figure, and the greatest magician ever lived. The story was seven days and seven nights long which used as lore for socialization of children among *Dayah* snake charmers. The elders of the family usually tell the story to the young ones and shared how Goga tamed the snakes and how snakes were the cause of his death, the ultimate concern of the story was to make the children understood about the harsh situation of life. All snake charmers claimed to possess a precious magical root that belonged to the great Goga. According to a respondents,

'We make our children how to smell and gave them power to smell snakes from a distance; this was the power of Saint Goga, we have it because we are the direct decedents of him.'

Another respondent stated,

'When we catch a snake, we make a scared contract with it, pledging to use its services for a certain time period, without take exerting its poison. After this period we are honor bound to set, it free. If we break this period se shall be foe ever cursed by Goga Chohan. Snake charmers traditions has it that seven snake charmer are required to catch a single Cobra strikes only two and a half time, it spits out a substantial amount of venom for a distance. All the (seven) charmers make ditches behind them till with water and climbs inside with only their heads visible on the surface. They started enchanting tunes of their Murli to lure the cobra. Silently reciting magical mantras, at the same time. Charmers slowly come close to the cobra, those who were right behind of the snake they capture it from behind because it is easy to catch cobra from behind when it was in standing position.'

6.7 Snake Charming a Dying Art

The exotic sight of these mystical men enticing snakes to dance to the music of flutes has long captured the imagination of foreign tourists. The practice of snake charming catching and keeping them in captivity for extended period of time, and training them to perform has traditionally been passed from father to his sons. For generations it has provided a critical means of support to many families.

Large numbers of snake charmers once could be seen walking in the streets and towns in major cities of Sindh province. Though number of snake charmers also present in Punjab but the numbers was low from those who reside in Sindh. Many snake charmers left their forefather's profession due to abject poverty. A few of them carrying their cloth-covered baskets are now begging near traffic signals and in streets from door to door for their survival.

A respondent stated,

'It is positive that snake charmers possess a unique ability to handle venomous snakes with a tremendous knowledge of the different species and their behavior. They are also called by local farmers to retrieve snakes from agricultural fields or human inhabited areas who could otherwise killed any human being.'

They belonged to the lower Hindu caste system that defines India's social structure but they are highly respected rather than other low caste communities for their ability to take care of snakes, which worshipped by Hindus. Traditional Hindus however still maintain that snake charming is an act of wonder and mysticism. Whether or not the scientific or mystic explanation hold true.

Chapter Seven

Practices and Beliefs of Naga Lord

7.1 Introduction

Society is rooted in social interactions, which provides a way to formulate the social order. All the social institutions have their values and customs but some groups may practice all and some only do particular to become the part of the mainstream society. Like the other parts of the country, Umerkot have very diverse culture with major influence of Hindu customary ways of life and wellbeing. Different customs, folkways, values, norms existed there and community practices it as per the traditional values. In the previous chapters the overall geographical location and the characteristics of the population discussed which clearly state the higher number of Hindu population which belonged to the lower caste Hindus e.g. Bhail, Snake charmers, Kohli etc. All the said castes belonged to the lower cater of the Hindu Verna system and consider very low castes. The discrimination of the Verna system does exist in Pakistani Hindu communities but here they are in low numbers so the discrimination due to caste system is less than discrimination as minority or the vulnerable group.

As discussed earlier the occupational distribution and engagement of the community, every occupation has its own problems but they are trying to cope it positively. Marginalization is only in the context of their identity but in selection of occupation for their livelihood. Due to certain rules and regulation and the wildlife protection acts (discussed in chapter two), they are forced to move other occupational engagements. Generally, the community members do not have any skill other than snake capturing, charming and venomous collectors. Other occupational engagements at one hand changing the social and cultural life on the other forcing them to left their centuries old traditional practices which directly linked to their Holy profession of Snake Charming.

7.2 Snake Charmers

Snake charming refers to the snake's training through instrument and making them hypnotize, handling of many poisonous and dangerous snakes including in this deadly profession. The profession originated from India in this region which discussed in detail in the primary data chapters. Hindu religion considered the mythological religion

which carried out lot of tails, narratives and concepts of world around them. The creator from all three holy gods, presented with snake on his neck and head besides the head. In different picture the poster and the depiction varies. As per such religious understanding, Hindu considers snake charmers as holy men influence by the gods.

7.3 Folklores of Snake Charmers

The word folklore embedded in the lives of countries old human population. It took ages to mature and spread in far and wide through generations. Majorly folklores were categories into three a) moral based b) religious based and c) historical continuation of generations. The story may be fabricated through time but the moral and the results of the story always based on facts and realize the belief of human beings on good deeds. How they evolved in different cultures, it is very interesting and important question of inquiry. Narratives, folklorists and anthropologists are working to find out origin of folklore but did not able to provide concrete evidence. Partially, they are observations of elders' experiences through time to time and some fiction of truth.

Like other communities, snake charmers have their own folklores for the socialization and stories of children. At greater context, folklores depict who the snake charmers keenly observed the environment around them, how much cautious they are when they are in forests and traveling. How they think about snakes and built bond among animal and the human (master and slave), as well as how herbs can save lives. Interrelatedness and conceptual boundaries of clan made folklores rich in nature to provide a complete detailed evidence based stories. Lore spread from upper generation to lower generation, after passing through each generation some fictions may add to made it more interesting but the actual moral of the lore remained same. Every folklore are objective and moral based narrations to made the children aware that after so many obstacles human can earn what they want.

Pakistan is the agricultural country, variety of seasons, different occupational groups field related work and livestock are some of the traits which forced them for close interaction with fields, land, pastures, water and deserts which are full of different kinds of reptiles. Changing in seasons, rural-urban migration, sprawling of human population to the forests, deserts provides a close interaction with animals that are living far away the human population. Spread in human population reducing the actual space of all such reptiles, so the encounter is very common in rural and urban areas. Snake is one of the frequent encounter reptiles in the country; either in field,

forests etc. medical care for such encounters is meager in most of the areas. People rely on such snake charmers for their lives which they claimed they could help in snake-bite.

Snake charmers had a very important place in the rural communities because they saved lives and do some magic and snake dance shows for the children to earn their livelihood. With the advent of modern medicine and the presence of medical health facilities far flung areas of the country, their effectiveness decreasing. With such inventions a culture is on its edge of destruction. And wild-life protection acts adding fuel to fire. It was evident that snake charmers worked as local *hakims*, which provide medical assistance to the local community. So their folklores most of the time surrounding the health issues, fight of snake and humans, snake magic and why they worship snake are some of the common folklores which ended on healthy morals. Their wilderness and skill to catching snakes made them more fascinating story tellers who capture the attention of audience with their words.

7.4 Serpent Worship (Ophiolatry)

Snake worship is the spiritual practice which reaches back to the oldest known civilization all around the world. In Hindu, Buddhist and Jin religious practices, serpent worships could be observed which are known as '*Naga*'. Naga is the powerful spirit which is frequently portrayed in shrines, temples and scriptures. Naga is worked like cult in Hindu religion. Archeological evidences have been found on seals and terra-cotta pieces from Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa with various postures and pictorial representation of serpent worship.

According to the respondents,

'Serpent worship dates back to the ancient Indus valley civilizations. We listen from our forefathers, this was the oldest religious animal on the plant, which protected the Lord Shwa.'

The guru 'Bichu' shared folklore from his personal learning from his 'Guru' that,

'Different Vedas are full of the stories and the spiritual power of the serpents for the construction and protection of gods in Hindu religion, the story of Storm god 'Indra'

and the battling with the mighty Vritra (the cosmic serpent), most of the time shared with the students of guru to make them aware the power of Naga.'

Another respondent shared,

Atharva Veda, is full of the healing and medicinal purposes of the snakes and 'Nag-many' for the wellbeing of human race. Snakes at one hand poisonous but on the other they are life sever, so we worship them for their spiritual nature of protection of the followers and anger to the destroyers.'

The followers of Lord Shiva and Lord Vaishnu practiced serpent worship according to the snake charmer who quit the profession and now running a merchant shop in the colony stated,

'In Ramayana, there were two Naga lords who run the world in ancient time, they rule the human population and protect them from evil spirits, in the Mahabharata there is a whole story on Naga legends. The godheads have been made by serpent, in some cases to show the close intimacy of lords with the reptile.'

7.5 Cobra as Serpent

Generally all over the South Asia, serpent worship is being practiced but the strong hold of the serpent worship can be observed in Hindu religion. Particularly, cobra have the opportunity to take advantage over all snake races. In Hindu religion 'Naga' worship is very common and as per shared by the respondent,

'There is no temple on the earth where you find no 'naga' deity.'

Another respondent 'Guru' shared in his interview regarding the importance of Naga in the region,

'Overall, in the region of Pakistan and India, if we consider them one country as it was before 1947, the Naga worshipers have two basic intensions, those who are living to the south they understand Naga as the female and those who are living towards the North they found it male as regarding to the gender of the reptile. That is why the worship practices are slightly different in both the regions but they equally respect all intentions associated with the Naga cult.'

He again narrated the representation of the Naga and with them associated phenomenon,

'Generally, Naga have been presented into three forms irrespective of material and the postures, one appeared as the normal human being with one or more Cobra heads above his head like the crown of cobra heads over the human head; two the snake with more than one hooded heads on his/her body (which you can see in movies), two headed, and occasionally five headed which are joint in the form to make a hooded head if you looked it from some space; the third one as the human upper-body (chest) with cobra head(s).

Another 'Guru' shared the importance and the practices associated with each type as,

'The snake which have human chest/upper body usually displayed on the pillars of the temple, and considered the protector of the temple. The first type which was shared by my 'Guru', that has more cobra heads installed on the first entrance of the temple before the sculpture of lord Vishu.'

7.5.1 Naga-Kal

The most important ritual is the walk around the stone slab which is known as *Naga-Kal*. A respondent shared the whole process of the stone and the ritual was shared by the female respondent as under;

'Those who have difficulty in conceiving baby, visit the Naga-Kal and do 108 time walk in circle around it for the 45 consecutive days. After completing the walk and days with the grace of Lord they recovered from health issue and can easily conceive baby. At my third child I had the same issue, doctor prescribed me lot of medicine for this complexity, she said due to malnutrition I am not able to conceive, I have two girls and wanted a boy child, my mother-in-law asked if I visited Naga-kal, Lord will help us, now I have three girls and two boys and all are the blessings of lord.'

When asked the Guru about what is *Naga-kal* and how it worked he narrated that,

For the statue of the Naga-lord, the place was marked by a stone rather than a statue of the Naga, most of the time it is marked by a stone slab or a plan stone. The stone covered by the depictions of the Nagas, and before taking it to the temple or the sacred place most of the time the tree of Pipal or Neem are considered more spiritual

for the placement of Naga-kal to maximize its powers. Before placing the stone, it often at the bottom of any well full of water and chant mantras on it. It becomes more powerful and then placed to the sacred place for worship.

7.6 Agricultural Production

Some other rituals have been associated with the occupational engagement of the followers of Jogi clan. As discussed in previous chapters most of them now switching from charming to other small businesses and skills; a number of Dayah community members worked as tenants in the fields along with Kohli community members.

Another ritual which are associated with the initiating of agricultural work at Naga shrine discussed by the respondent as,

At the time of bad weathers, like rain in monsoon and other seasons, draught, hot weather, storms, community members slaughter a goat or sheep (due to less resources and lack of economic stability this slaughtering is not being practiced since years), sweets and milk are offered to the Nagas.

A respondent shared,

'Now most of the young boys switching towards the agricultural profession, and offering sweets and other things we adopted from other relatives in India, here our community was not engaged with the agriculture so we did not practiced it before. The milk was offered on the eleventh day following the birth of a new calf, sometimes it there is no statue or stone the large anthill will be decorated with the expensive silk, jewelry and covered them with vermillion.'

7.7 Monsoon Rain and Serpents

During the monsoon season in Pakistan after mid of July and end of the August, a number of festivals and rituals observed in the community, the rituals are known as the *Nag-Pachami* rituals in the honor of serpent and Nagas. The monsoon season known as the 'renewing of nature season' among the community, because according to their believes in monsoon the weather and the earth open-up all the wealth.

A respondent shared the rituals as,

'The Nag-Pachami rituals have been observed in the favor, love and honor of Naga and serpents. People from the clan and those who are living around Umerkot, offer

milk and leave it on shrines. The villagers spend the whole time period with their beds raised off the ground, because during monsoon days lots of reptiles observed in the area and this is done for the safety of the individuals.'

'Guru' of the village he is now owning a small merchant shop in the villages shared the festival and ritual details as,

'Before the starting of the festival, people of the village try to find out Cobra, for the search of Cobra all the male and female participated and worked in different groups, lots of snakes have been captured in the time frame for the search of Cobra all the snakes have been collected in a big pot at one place till the start of the festival.

One the day of festival all the snakes released at shrine and offered them rice-confetti. The whole day spent at shrine with offering milk and chant Mantras for the blessings from Lord.

A woman respondent shared,

'During the festivals, snake figures are often painted on the walls, inside and outside the door of the houses. The decoration looked fascinating this is not the only decoration but the love with Lord Naga.'

According to another respondent,

'At my paternal family they draw a line and spread cow-dung at the boundary wall of their properties, because at the time have been drawn to maintain the property areas.

7.8 Lord Shiva and Vishnu Traditions

Some of different rituals and practices have been associated with the Lord Shiva and the Vishnu and shared by the Pundat of the village. He narrated,

'Arjun, the hero of Bhagvat-Gita in his adventures encountered lot of problems and succeeded to cross all the hurdles, at one point he caught into the serpent-realm and for the survival of his life he married to a Nagin, (Ulupi), she has fallen in love and according to some narratives all the Nagas are offspring of the couple.'

Another story was narrated by the 'Guru',

'When Krishna was child, he was wandering in the fields and when he reached at bank of river Yamuna, he found a snake slipping towards jungle, he rain and pick up the snake, as he was child but have very strong powers because of his pure and holy

spirit. He never fears the cobra, and betting the snake as the washer-man cleaning cloths, after betting and dancing over his head Naga submission his loyalty to the Lord Krishna and he leave it to the bushes.'

A story have been narrated by a female respondent as,

'Naga King Vasuki, he is the Lord of all Nagas and serpents. The sister of Lord Vasuki is known as goddess Manasha, which is more prominent as the antidote of snake poison. If someone get bit by any snake and there is no Naga-mony existed in the village the oath on the name of Manasha (sacrifice) saved the patient.'

It was evident that the Naga and serpents were identified as the magical power holders.

As per the Guru,

'Naga are moved through invisible legs which are only seen by other snakes, and you cannot see their ears, they listen voices through their eyes'.

When community members talked about Naga they particularly referred Cobra as the serpent and Cobra rose at very high rank of the divine creature.

A respondent stated that,

'Nagas are identified by their Cobra hood, because without its hood there is no serpent. From all the reptiles, Cobra have the divine power of safeguarding his master. He is the only one snake which is more interactive with human beings, and due to his hood it looked very aggressive.'

The world of Nagas were identified by the Jogi, and Guru was the *Nagalok*, the serpent realm and how it looked like shared by the 'Guru' as,

'All the walls of the plane made of gold, covered with jewels, crystal staircase and a water channel from one side to another and mysterious environment which provides the secure and pure space for reproduction. Due to this mystic environment, when Naga come into the forest in humanly world they become more powerful than wild snakes they can able to blind the opponent with their breath and shoot fire on enemy with their eyes. With their mystic power they can re-shape themselves as the manmade objects or the natural objects even change into human body as the birhaman priests.'

7.9 Powers of Cobra and local Beliefs

Powers of the Cobra were discussed by various respondents in their interviews. A very old Jogi his age was around 89 years old (the approximate is given here because no one in the village ever know about the exact age of the jogi), shared the mythological conception of Naga Lord in the lives of Hindu and in Hindu religion.

He narrated the story of Naga as,

'In 'Atharva-Veda' both types of powers associated to the serpents (cobra) the curse with suffering or blessings with protection was discussed with some folklores that, if a Cobra get angry it can destroy the drinking water channels by his breath, fire the forest by its eyes etc. The Veda discussed the dual nature as well as the acts which made them (cobra) angry and they destroy the human world.'

He again narrated the story,

'In India when I was there (he migrated in 1950 with his two sons and wife), lot of conception have been associated with the killing of snakes some of them are as under; killing of snake caused inauspiciousness, if you kill a snake bury his body or burn it because if you do not do so the second partner will search and hunt to down. If you do not respect the serpent/Naga, this may cause you itching, leprosy, skin diseases and sometimes eye diseases as well. Likewise, if you disturb the pair of mating snakes it may dispose the life of offender, his/her shelter, property and offspring. Most importantly the effect is on Karma which remained on the offender in all his/her lives (seven vernas) and expending to the offspring. If anything above happened un-intently the sufferings would be removed by offering the sacrifices to the Naga Lord and to visit or plan a pilgrimage to the shrine of Lord Naga with his family for his blessings and removal of sins.'

He again narrated,

'Naga is not so cruel all the time they blessed the lives of its followers, in response to their blessings we offer festivals for their good deeds. There are various concepts associated to the Serpents, such as, the serpent are the responsible for rain in monsoon because in monsoon they left their hiding place due to water and wandering for safe and secure place but in vain due to water and rain everywhere. The Indus river and the civilization/communities settled around the river observed various myths regarding the cobra and their direct involvement with the nature.'

Three in-depth interviews have been collected to present the beliefs of community towards cobra in the village. Data showed the belief of the community members regarding the water in monsoon season as *'water is necessary for living (human, animals, plants and all living organism), during the festival of monsoon as discussed earlier, the whole monsoon season started when serpents leave their hiding places. In Pakistan Indus river is the longest river which provide basic necessities to the inhabitants of the Pakistan. Due to heavy monsoon the water level rose and it provide more benefits to the human population and this is all because of the serpents, that is why the whole area is full of water and the nagas.'*

Another belief which was associated to the rainbow by the community members, a respondent stated that, *'it is due to the Vasuki's hood, the rainbow originated from the jewels of Vasuki's head, or from the hoods of pregnant snakes.'*

Another important belief which was observed was about the treasure and the magical powers of the serpents (cobra). The respondent shared,

'Snakes (cobra) stealing from natural treasures and keep them in their hiding place that most of the time pitfall of wild rates. The can steal through magic and only provide those who are in need or the beloved follower who offer milk more and sacrifices.'

Another belief was about the Jewel irrespective of 'Naga-mny', *according to the natives of the village there was a common belief that the cobras have pure and precious jewel(s) inside his/her throat that is why they can easily see in darkness. When there is darkness they spit it out and the surrounding become visible to them.'*

Chapter Eight

Summary and Conclusion

8.1 Summary

The study deals with the overall understanding and the practices done by snake charmers in Umer-kot. The thesis comprised of six chapter every chapter's summary is as under;

The chapter first was about the conceptualization of the study. The understanding of the term 'nomads' in social and context according to the characteristics of the group in their respective fields. Trainers of performing animals, Snake charmers, Magicians, jugglers, musicians, dancers, beggars, fortune tellers, potters and weavers along with other nomadic artisans and performers/entertainers filled the colored of joys and happiness in sedentary societies since the known history. Knowingly, the term 'nomad' or the 'nomadism' more often used for the pastoralism or the herders and rather than using all the personalities under the umbrella of 'nomad' communities which were mobile e.g. hunter-gatherers, gypsies and the travelers. Definitional discrepancies existed in conceptualization of the term nomadism, the pastoral activities that is why the other communities of nomads had very limited literature. That is why the knowledge of spatial mobility as the survival strategies for the human population was limited.

All the groups either pastoral or non-pastoral, in every group the spatial mobility directly linked with the subsistence strategies. In some communities it could be due to the physical conditions, in some it could be due to political, economic each strategy related to the particular group of humans. Patterns of mobility as well as living standard provide number of variables which deals with the conceptualization of the study. Due to number of issues discussed in the literature and first chapter and limitation of nomadic theories and conceptualization in the spatial mobile groups, the present research study conceptualized the model of subsistence spatial mobility among Snake Charmers of Sindh. The study focused on the Snake-Charmer community of Sindh Province at Umer-kot. For documentation of the study three major objectives were identified and formulated e.g. documentation of the beliefs of the community; exploration of the livelihood characteristics and their economic

practices as well as documentation of the practices and social organization of the community. Every specific region has its own wealth of cultural art and crafts, which represent the skill, taste, and devotion of the people for the region. Present research study documented the living patterns, beliefs and practices of the *Jogi* community in Umer Kot, Tharparkar. The *Dayal* community from Umer-kot selected due to their dual characteristics. The majority of the community members lived a mobile life, they spend half year in their permanent settlements in Umer-kot and remaining all the months were spend in nomadic life style. Present research study might contribute to the anthropological literature and research for understanding and conceptualizing non-pastoral nomadic communities in Pakistan. It will also provide the ways to analyze the patterns and the mechanisms, which might be used for the documentation of other nomadic communities to make comparative studies for universal theoretical frameworks like in the pastoral nomadic studies. This anthropological study provides valuable information about the belief system of Snake Charmer and their subsistence strategies around the year.

Chapter two, consists of previous studies to conceptualize the existing study. It includes all the aspects as well as development of term nomad and its functions to understand the mobile communities. The review chapter was writing down in the context for justification of new and previous techniques for the study of Snake charmer communities. The word snake charmers used for *Dayah* community. Dyson-Hudson identified that pastoral nomads 'nomadism' was an ideal cultural traditional model, which was not helpful to understand the social system of other nomadic tribes. He suggested that the 'nomadism' was discussing two different phenomenon which internally linked but did not have same characteristics e.g. spatial mobility and herding. Gulliver (1975) stated pastoralists did not move only for physical environment they were consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly participating in social systems. A number of studies discussed internal and external factors of spatial movement among nomadic communities but did not discuss the spatial movement separately. If we come up with the cross-cultural development of the model than spatially mobile groups remained confined due to lack of other pastoral characteristic. Meanwhile, Salzman (1978) stated it is not possible to make a generalized statement for the pastoralists' spatial mobility because there is very limited literature and work available. These spatial mobility groups, interacting with

sedentary population and the pastoralists as well but this interrelated interaction was still missing to find out the characteristics and analytical model for generalization. In this regards, traveling artisans, paddlers and animal performers/entertainers were some of the major communities in spatial mobility because they have dependence on spatial mobility inherited for subsistence activities. So, both the groups discussed.

The observation of Spooner (1973) find out there is no common cultural traits in all nomadic groups as well as there is no exclusive trait which existed in nomads. This diverse finding of the nomadic groups made them more prominent in the aspect that they different among their 'Khanabadosh' community. Berland (1986) in his study discussed four types of 'Khanabadosh' and their sub-groups along with the role formation and particular group characteristics discussed in detail in chapter two. Interaction of snakes and human beings has a long history before the inception of sedentary communities when snakes were deadly reptile. Because of its killing and hunting nature, man remained the pray and vice versa. The interaction of human beings with nature recognition of animals with their sound and physical attire started a new way of understanding the world around them. Human civilization started with hunter-gatherers societies, than domestication of animals and the cultivation broaden the horizon of human cognition. The domestication of animals for the subsistence developed into the domestication of pets e.g. dogs, cats etc. and then petting of venomous and predator animals e.g. lion, wild cats in cage homes. Human beings learned the way, how to pet them and trained them for performances/human entertainment.

The critical goals of a research are to frame questions and to discover answers of those questions. Research methodology is the critical part research. The quality of data depends on the type of techniques employed by the researcher. During the course of research, different tools and techniques employed at different stages. The present study employed ethnographic research methods. Through ethnography, individuals studied in their own particular time and space in their daily lives. Observation is the prominent and most important tool for data collection in anthropology. It includes being close to the people and making them feel comfortable enough with researcher so that he/she can observe and record information about their lives. According to different social scientists rapport building is one of the most essential part of the research and most difficult and time consuming for the researchers. This helped in

collection of accurate information about the people's behaviors and attitudes. Key informant method used in customary anthropological field research. Key informants were foundation of particular information such as financial systems, family and kinship associations, and cultural as well as religious philosophies and practices, they were the valuable source of data validation. Two key informant selected for the study one was female and other was male (husband of the female). Due to gender limitation, female key informant was necessary for validation of the data and the data gathered through observation, interviews, and case studies.

For data collection with the help of purposive sampling mechanism, two categories identified in introductory chapter, the group divided into two segments 'settled and mobile' certain number of interviews conducted from each segment. In order to probe the key objectives and the perception of community members 30 members from the community (15 from spatial and 15 from permanent settled) members selected after informal discussion. From them, 19 in-depth interviews consisted of 11 females and 8 males conducted. For data collection, unstructured interview tool administered among the snake charmers of the village, Wachoon-Bandhal Umer-kot. The tool for data collection based on the research objectives. The interview guide prepared and approved by the supervisor which was divided into three portions, such as; the first part of interview guide contained questions related to the demographic information of the community. The second part of the interview guide stretched upon the beliefs of the community regarding their personal lives, the concept of religion and religious practices and in third part the contained questions regarding the rituals and practices of the community either religious or seasonal. Case study method provides comprehensive knowledge about the phenomenon under study because in this method the researcher profoundly involved and willingly knows the respondents' real life and practical experiences. In the current research, 7 case studies conducted for detail description of information about the research topic.

Since the present study was about the beliefs and the practices of the community. Before taking interviews, researcher informed the respondents about what kind of research they were taking part in and how the data would be later on used. Respondent was concerned about the information they have given to the researcher by asking different questions which were replied accordingly. FGDs were very helpful in getting different opinions on selected issues, in this method researcher gave a topic to

the group of natives for their understanding regarding the survival strategies of the community in this time of inflation and fewer earning opportunities. Accordingly, two Focus Group Discussions were conducted by selecting about 6-9 natives. One FGD conducted from male and one from female of the *Jogi* community.

Chapter four deals with the overall understanding of the locality, district, taluka and then village of Umer-kot for better understanding of the socio-economic and demographic information of the community. Available govt. facilities as well as the necessities also documented by key informants and the community members. The area, which selected for the present research, is part of the great Thar Desert, which is spread in India and Pakistan. Most of the Thar Desert lies in the Indian state of Rajasthan and is extended till Haryana and Gujarat. In Pakistan, this desert lies on the eastern border of Sindh Province and is extended up-till Southeastern parts of the Punjab where it joins the Cholistan desert. Umer-kot is the district of Sindh, that was listed at northern edge of Thar Desert. The district was known as Umer-kot by the Muslims and Amerkot by the Hindus. Umer-kot is one of the oldest cities of Sindh and has much to offer in terms of history, culture, and stories of glorious past. The area ruled by Rajputs, Rathors, Sumras and Mughals. Umer-kot was given the status of a district in April 1993, but abolished in 2000 and merged into the district Mirpur Khas again as a Tehsil. According to the census, total number of individuals in the district was 1073146. It documented that in the district only 20 transgender present.

The Umer-kot district divided into two areas according to the geographical sight e.g. the irrigated area at north and west of the district and the desert in the south and east, which contains the *Jogi* communities and other spatial mobile communities. The climate of the both the portions was slightly different. District has a unique cultural amalgamation but the *rajhistani* culture dominate among all. These *Jogis* categorized to their casts and sub-casts, or according to their religion and occupation. Major Muslim clans of the area were *Arabs, Syeds, Soomras, Samejos, Halepotas, Panhwars, Samas, Memons, Dal, Khosas and Rinds*. Major Hindu clans were *Brahman, Lohana, Malhi, Rajputs, Khatri, Bheel, Meghwar, Jogi and Kohli*. In the area, there were eight sub-castes of *Jogis* e.g. Markhat, *Dayah*, Chohan, Dewrha, Rathore, Leria, Sandharyan and Arbabanyarn documented. The *Dayah* was selected due to a number of reasons e.g. a) community was still involved in snake charming, b) half of the community households engaged in spatial mobile groups, c) begging is the

major profession for survival, d) other earning professions was adopted rapidly. The community had 18 households, which contains 178 individuals among them 94 were male and 84 were females. The age groups documented as, 10.6% people have less than ten years old among them there were 52% females and 48% males. In second category, which 14%, comprised of 56% male and 44% females of 11 to 20 years' old. The third category had 22.4% of the total population contained 52.5% females and 47.5% male. The fourth category had highest number of individuals, which were 23.0% of the total population containing 54.7% male and 45.3% female. In fifth category 15.7% comprised of 57.1% male and 42.9% of females. In last category, 13.4% had 54.1% male and 45.9% females. The category three-four-five had highest number of population 110 individuals who all engaged in earning professions. Majorly households need proper maintenance, but due to economic issues, they only have to eat not for saving or spending on households.

There 33% hut houses, the people who lived in the temporary houses were not able to construct even *katcha* houses; more than 80% of the hut residents were spatial mobile and lived most of the time in temporary tents/huts which they carry with them during their mobility; 44% of families lived in semi-katcha households made of mud and mud-bricks. The natives divided into six groups according to their professions e.g. 8.9% of the laborers; only 3.3% individuals from the age category of four and five owned small shops (home based shops). There were only 6.1% engaged in motor-workshops profession. Bagging was the second most common profession in general, but first profession among spatial mobile families for their subsistence. According to the research findings, 34.8% of the community members engaged in begging which made it the first profession of earning. Only 17.9% of the community members involved in snake charming and all were men. In last almost 28.6% women from the whole population of 178 individuals housewives. They do not go for begging; spend all the time in their tents/huts. Remaining all females participated in economic affairs of the families.

The level of formal education was zero due to the nature of the community. Both segments of the community faced lot of issues regarding education of their children in the community there were 19 boys and girls which consists of 10.6% of the total sample size. The social organization of the villagers mainly based on their family structure. Early marriages often preferred by the community therefore almost all of

the families were endogamous but exogamous among other Nath. Early marriages common among all the eight lineages, the marriage age for males was 16-18 years and for females it was 14-16 years old. The pattern of living in the locales was extended by nature, parents of married couple lived with their siblings. Socialization of children was very big issue among the *Jogis*. They wanted to see their children prosperous but they wanted them to be the custodian of their ancestors' profession as well. Child socialization process would be the responsibility of fifth and sixth age category (table No. 4) of the family members. They spend most of the time in huts/houses and have very good interaction with early age children in the phase of socialization. The power holding authority in the community was a committee comprised of 8 elder individuals (ranging from 46-50 years old). The functions were the settlement of disputes (i.e. economic disputes, domestic disputes etc.) and for the wellbeing of the community. Each Nath had their own leaders for their representation. According to the natives of *Dayah* community, since they settled in the village, no major issue broke out among *Jogi* and *Kohli* community.

In the village both the communities were living in closed vicinity, both belonged to the Hindu religion and minorities, but have their own traditional justice system. In the village, all the eight castes wear their traditional dresses. The wear saffron-colored clothing in the form of long shirt and under trouser, females of the snake-charmers' community also wear *Shalwar-Qamees* along with large *Dupatta*. Male wear *Shalwar-Qamees* along with a piece of cloth on their shoulders, they also wear *Sindhi* cap in certain cases but the youngsters only wear *Shalwar-Qamees* without any cloth on shoulder or cap on their heads. Wearing turban was common in old days among all the snake charmer's castes but now a day the concept is vanishing. The women of the snake charmer's (*Dayah*) community wear bangles up-till elbow in white and sometimes in saffron color. It looked like the bangles, which worn by the women in Thar Desert. For footwear, comfortable Slipper (*Chapal*) common among both male and females. According to the research findings, among 37% households, the food was cooked to and consumed daily, only 5% respondents consumed meat after a week, remaining were categorized into three categories, one those who could eat meat after two weeks were 18% of the total sample size. Those who used meat after three weeks were 21% of the sample size and those who took after one month were 19%. Kerosene oil lamps used by the permanent settlers and mobile families for light in

nights. In Taluka, Umer-Kot, Mithi and Baden there were Tehsil Hospitals for the inhabitant of the population. Number of dispensaries was also present in city of Umerkot but there was no BHU, RHC or any basic health facility in the village. Some of the health camps established by HANDS in the community, the major area of interest was cleanliness among the *Jogi* communities.

Chapter five, composed of overall beliefs of the community regarding their life style and the religion. A number of beliefs recorded according to the perception of the community from snake charmers and spatial nomads. A very common belief documented by different scholars and community members were similar to the Bull belief of Hindu community that the world is laying on the horn, when he tired he changed the horn which caused earthquake; the story was same but here bull was replaced by the snake. Black Cobra snake who had five heads carrying the world on his one head. He switched his head when get tired that would cause earthquake. Another belief documented about the killing of snakes; snakes considered the family members when they were pet among snake charmers. Captivity of the snakes done by some rules; making a promise to released, after a certain period in forest was must among *Dayah* snake charmers, the beliefs were shared in the chapter. According to the natives, what you eat becomes your strength or weakness. Eat healthy and live healthy is not commonly applicable in snake charming community. Among the different Naths, the concept of using Slat is not existed. A number of musical instruments used by snake charmers for capturing snakes such as, flute/traditional Bansuri/been or *Murli*. The *Murli* come up with number of other uses and composition. The *Murli* used in catching snakes and in ritualistic practices. For bagging purposes, they had a specific type of *Murli*, which known as *Sadha* among the *Jogi* community in Sindh province.

Snake charmers sung the poetry to entertain the people. They play murli in different versions of folk music. *Sami*, *Kaput*, *Sanyasi*, *Soother*, *Lahoti*, *Kankat* and *Kapri* were the prominent names used by Saha Sian in their poetry. Like other parts of the county snake charmers do believed in shrines and pirs. Visiting pir, along with all family members once in a year practiced in *Dayah* community. Among the other communities of the area shrines of Pir Sher Badal, Sachal Sarmast, Rama Pir, and Lal Shahbaz Qalandar were some prominent shrines among the snake charmers of Sindh province. They performed dances, which called (*Dhamal*) sung traditional folk songs

on their Murli in shrines on Urs. Within snake charmers both Muslim and Hindu religious groups existed, Hindu snake charmers still obeyed and transferred their traditional customs from generation to generation but Muslim snake charmers changed a lot according to the situation of their livelihood.

The Lord Shiva is the God of Hindus. He is 3rd God in Hindu Trimurti in which Brahma is the creator of the universe and Vishnu is the preserver of it. It said that the Lord Shiva destroyed the world ones with his powers, but Brahma created it again. Shiva was very powerful and supreme God among these three Gods. Shiva had a *Shesh-Nang* (black cobra) around his neck. It was shown in different figurines, pictures and in long statue in India that the Lord Shiva had a Black-Cobra around his neck, which increased the importance of Black-cobra among the Hindu religion. The black-cobra considered the *avatar* (disciple) of the Lord Shiva that is why killing black cobra prohibited among Hindu community. Guru Gorkh-Nath was the devotional saint of all the *Jogis* in Pakistan and India. The GorkhNath considered an *avatar* of Lord Shiva. The Guru was born with the wishes and blessing of Lord Shive. Goga Chowhan, was a devotional saint of *Jogis* and had spiritual power, snakes were under his command. He slept over the bed of snakes, and sucks venom from snakes with his eyes. He bitten by a snake and died. Without any teacher, there is no way to learn the skill of snake charming. In *Dayah* community, every child must learn how to catch a snake and how to make themselves safe from them. If someone might bite by snake in that cases how to survive from poison, some of techniques learned by the children in very early age.

The growing shortage of forests and snakes has forced snake charmers to change their livings. Snake charmers wandering through the deserts in search of snakes for centuries, a task and tradition they continue today. A snake charmer leads a risky life, as he carries between two to three snakes with him all the time. The customs and traditions of snake charmers based on several myths discussed in chapter five.

Chapter six; contained practices and gatherings in specific time e.g. happiness, sorrowful moments, occasional gatherings each of them have their particular characteristics. *Dayah* community have Hindu, Sindhi origin, practices and cultural values come up from both the segments. Religion always played an important role in personality formation, local understanding, as well as way of life for the followers.

Social life majorly influenced by the surroundings, the fact of such amalgamation observed in the community. A list of Hindu festivals documented through different scholars and work of the Hindu communities as well but in Pakistan, the *Dayah* practiced all the festivals. The first one was *Holi*, performed as the festival of color at arrival of spring. The festival predominantly practiced in India and in all other South Asian countries, which have Hindu community. *Dayah* community, perform *Holi* in the start of spring; March is the most colored month in Pakistan.

The word 'Diwali' comes from the word 'Deep' mean oil lamp used in back days in sub-continent for lightening. The festival was the largest Hindu religious festival, which has *Rnagoli* the central ingredient. The festival was the worship of Lord *Ganesh* and Goddess *Lakshmi* both has a very prominent space in Hindu religion. Former was the god of welfare and prosperity and the later one is wealth and wisdom. The festival celebrated in *Kartikamasam* (Hindu month name which falls in October and November). The festival celebrated on the victory of Lord Ram, on Ravan after his 14-year exile from the land. The Nag-Panchami was the traditional as well as religious festival, which have central point of 'snake worship'. In this festival, the sculpture of snake deities made of wood, stone, silver and paintings on the wall bathed with milk firstly and then worshiped. The festival observed in July or August in every year. Followers of Hindu religion celebrated this festival generally and the *Jogis* specifically. The festival of Raksha-Bandhan means protection from every bad evil or the bond of protection. The festival celebrated in August every year. Maha-Shivaratri is the annual festival, which has religious significance among the Hindu community. The festival celebrated in evening so, it has major importance, because it was the celebration of night of marriage of Lord Shiva. The festival celebrated in Shiva temple, '*Jagran*' the full night festivity is the synonym. The day for the celebration was in February or March according to the Hindu calendar. The '*Bhajan*' referred to the religious songs with religious thematic representation in it. It contained poetic description of the Lord(s), lore and beliefs connected to them, chanting from different religious books. It consists of different ingredients e.g. spiritual ideas, melodious tools and number of individuals for sung. In the community (*Dayah*), during the festival of Shivrathri, natives sung *Bhajan* with their *Murli* (flute). Different *Ashlok* chants were sung with low tune of flute, or sometimes the tune of flute played in the particular rhythm, which described the meaning.

Like the other parts of the country, Umerkot have very diverse culture with major influence of Hindu customary ways of life and wellbeing. Different customs, folkways, values, norms existed there and community practices it as per the traditional values. In the previous chapters the overall geographical location and the characteristics of the population discussed which clearly state the higher number of Hindu population which belonged to the lower caste Hindus e.g. Bhail, Snake charmers, Kohli etc. All the said castes belonged to the lower caste of the Hindu Varna system and consider very low castes. The discrimination of the Varna system does exist in Pakistani Hindu communities but here they are in low numbers so the discrimination due to caste system is less than discrimination as minority or the vulnerable group. Marginalization is only in the context of their identity but in selection of occupation for their livelihood. Due to certain rules and regulation and the wildlife protection acts (discussed in chapter two), they are forced to move other occupational engagements. Generally, the community members do not have any skill other than snake capturing, charming and venomous collectors. Other occupational engagements at one hand changing the social and cultural life on the other forcing them to leave their centuries old traditional practices which directly linked to their Holy profession of Snake Charming.

Snake charming refers to the snake's training through instrument and making them hypnotize, handling of many poisonous and dangerous snakes including in this deadly profession. The profession originated from India in this region which discussed in detail in the primary data chapters. Hindu religion considered the mythological religion which carried out lot of tales, narratives and concepts of world around them. The creator from all three holy gods, presented with snake on his neck and head besides the head. In different picture the poster and the depiction varies. As per such religious understanding, Hindu considers snake charmers as holy men influence by the gods. Majorly folklores were categorized into three a) moral based b) religious based and c) historical continuation of generations. The story may be fabricated through time but the moral and the results of the story always based on facts and realize the belief of human beings on good deeds. They are observations of elders' experiences through time to time and some fiction of truth. Like other communities, snake charmers have their own folklores for the socialization and stories of children. At greater context, folklores depict who the snake charmers keenly observed the environment around them, how much cautious they are when they are in forests and traveling. Pakistan is

the agricultural country, variety of seasons, different occupational groups field related work and livestock are some of the traits which forced them for close interaction with fields, land, pastures, water and deserts which are full of different kinds of reptiles. Changing in seasons, rural-urban migration, sprawling of human population to the forests, deserts provides a close interaction with animals that are living far away the human population. Snake is one of the frequent encounter reptiles in the country; either in field, forests etc. medical care for such encounters is meager in most of the areas. People rely on such snake charmers for their lives which they claimed they could help in snake-bite.

Snake worship is the spiritual practice which reaches back to the oldest known civilization all around the world. In Hindu, Buddhist and Jin religious practices, serpent worships could be observed which are known as '*Naga*'. *Naga* is the powerful spirit which is frequently portrayed in shrines, temples and scriptures. *Naga* is worked like cult in Hindu religion. Archeological evidences have been found on seals and terra-cotta pieces from Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa with various postures and pictorial representation of serpent worship.

Generally all over the South Asia, serpent worship is being practiced but the strong hold of the serpent worship can be observed in Hindu religion. Particularly, cobra have the opportunity to take advantage over all snake races. In Hindu religion '*Naga*' worship is very common and as per shared by the respondent,

During the monsoon season in Pakistan after mid of July and end of the August, a number of festivals and rituals observed in the community, the rituals are known as the *Nag-Pachami* rituals in the honor of serpent and Nagas. The monsoon season known as the 'renewing of nature season' among the community, because according to their believes in monsoon the weather and the earth open-up all the wealth.

8.2 Conclusion

The study documented nomadic community under the greater emphasis on their beliefs and practices. Nomads persisted interesting point of identification among anthropological literature due to the rich socio-culture life of the communities. The study conducted only beliefs and practices of the snake charmerrs (*Dayah*) community. A number of *Jogi* tribes were living in Sindh province with certain characteristics about their socio-economic, political, and cultural lives but *Dayah* community was significant among them on the bases of its dual character e.g.

sedentary and mobile population. Study conducted in Umer-kot for the sedentary population and those who were on foot interviewed at their respective location in the city. Some of the families come back one month ago, because of the moon-soon season, in this season all of the nomadic families come back to their origin and repair their huts and houses.

Study concluded that, due to emergence of new technology, shift in leisure activities the profession of animal performance is about to vanished. The constitutional and legal amendments for the protection and preservation of the animals is the major hindrance for promotion of such arts e.g. Dancing bear, performance with goat, snake performance were some of the skills which were the reason of livelihood.

The community was living a very rough-tough life. There was no alternative for them except begging. New generation children had lot of reservations on their ancestral profession. During data collection the factor of indulging in other income professions associated with the skills they have. *Dayah* community members (first and second generation) had only snake charming skill, but the third generation now inclined towards other technical skills which on one hand provide them livelihood strategies and on the other consumed all the time of children that is why they do not participated in snake charming learning classes. Parents also motivated to send their children to learn vocational skills rather than begging because it was not a good profession. The govt. in last but not least must have to take care of such native indigenous people and document their cultural and social life for future. However, the community members suffered a lot but they loved their traditions and do not wanted to leave it.

Their skills and knowledge might be used in modern world. As specialists in dealing with the snakes, their fang removal, collection of venom for poisonous snakes, they might be appointed in zoo or in different snake parks. For awareness among the general population, they might be appointed as field supervisors and field assistance. Playing *Murli* in different occasions with different rhythm might be interesting and compiling people in other way it would provide a way of nourishment.

8.3 Suggestions

The community was living in a very rough-tough life. There was no alternative for them except begging. They have faced number of issues ranging from residential patterns to the livelihood strategies. A number of recommendations and suggestions

were derived from field data which may be helpful for policy makers to help them in the development of their social and economic lives.

- a. The residential colony near the *Umer-kot* had very limited facilities. There were structures of houses present but the facilities e.g. drinking water, water for daily use, electricity, gas for cooking, health facilities for healthy body.
- b. Allotment of the plots and the houses to the *Jogis* again under the political influence there was no accountability and follow-up of the process.
- c. The second major issue was the lack of job opportunities.
- d. As stated in the chapter that due to lack of education they pushed side-line to the mainstream society e.g. Muslim and Educated etc.
- e. There must be a center which may provide facilities on the bases of vulnerable groups and trained the community members towards skills which open new ways of survival.
- f. At last but not least, community representatives must be included in the part of policy and advocacy programs run by the government for their development.

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