

BRITISH POLICIES: FAMOUS THEFTS, VERSED UNDER BAURIA TRIBE

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Abstract

A study of the dacoits under the Bauria tribe in India was to determine what special circumstances exist to make them to take to dacoity. It has been determine that economic, political, and societal factors have played a crucial role in the occurrence of crime. This paper deals with a study on historical background of Bauria tribe, Criminal tribe act 1871, British polices related to tribe and tribal dacoits. In India during British rule since the 1870s were collectively called the Criminal Tribes Act (CTA). They criminalized entire communities by designating them as habitual criminals. In this research paper thefts related to Bauria Tribes in India has been analyzed in depth.

Introduction

Indian history has always been a center of attraction for the people of India and the other countries. It covers almost a span of five thousand years since the period of its first known Civilization. The beauty of Indian society lies in its unity in diversity from the beginning of the history which has been shaped by its geography. There is where our history begins. Before the discovery of Indus Valley Civilization people believe that the dawn of Civilization started with Aryans. But before the Aryans another civilization was developed and spread in India which we know as the Indus Valley Civilization. The main feature of the life of the people of this civilization was that this society was a female dominated society. The Aryans came to India after this civilization and they came as a clan or family. These tribes are mentioned in historical sources from time to time. The Vedic tribes some of which are mentioned above, including Bharat, Kurus, Trtsus, Krivis, Yakshus, Pakthas, Alinas, Bhalanas, etc. Later on classic writers have been also referred to a number of tribes at the time of Alexander. Different culture of these

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civilizations of India is mix under these states. Along with them many kinds of tribes which are a part of the society in the same way they also develop with them.

People of different culture, religion, language, traditions, caste and creed lived in India. Every state of India has its own culture and traditions. Among them tribal people is one such group that needs to be emphasized. Due to the presence of these tribes, India receives various flavors and real treasures. The tribal people of India are also known as adivasis. Major populations of tribes are found in many parts of Indian states.

It can be said about the smallest definition of the Tribal community that the communities wherein smaller or bigger groups live in such administrative measures that they live for fulfilling the fundamental conditions to achieve common purpose of life instead of achieving personal purpose only. These types of familiar group or groups of family can be called tribal communities.

The provinces of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and the Northeastern Region are densely tribal people are populated. In the Punjab, there are some indigenous people living in the area.

Meaning of Tribe

Before examining the characteristics and structure of any society, it would be helpful to understand the meaning of the word Tribe. In order to clarify the nature of the tribe, scholars have tried to determine some of its features which serve to highlight the distinct existence of these groups, such as:

According to G.P. Murdock, "A nation is a society in which there are many races, nomadic groups, villages or other small groups who prefer a place, a different language, a mixed culture and whether it is the same political party or at least the same determination against strangers."

As stated in the Imperial Gazette of India, "A tribe is a group of families with the same name, speaking the same dialect, adopting or assuming the same place and generally not agreeing, although it may be possible at first."

According to Bogardus, "The tribal people or groups need for protection from the bonds of blood ties and the power of mainstream religion." This nation is a group of people with one

clear place, common language, common name, common religion and common cultures. They are united by blood relations and have a different political party.

The following are the chief characteristics of tribe:

1. Common or General area or Territory: The people of the tribe live in one place keeping in view their needs and community.
2. Sense of Unity: The members of a tribe are possessed of a sense of unity.
3. Common Language: Members of the tribe speak the same language.
4. Blood Relationship: Blood ties are very strong in the tribe.
5. Political Organization: Each and every tribe has its own political organization. There is a tribal chief who exercises authority over all the members of the tribe.
6. Importance of Religion: Religion plays an important part in the life of tribal people. Members of the tribe worship the same ancestor.
7. Specific Name: The tribes living in India have their own names that determine their identity. People living in a society, regardless of their religion or creed, Similarly the tribe can be distinguished by its name.¹

Meaning of word Bauria

Bawaria or Baori is derived from the banwar creeper, or tendril of the vine, which is why it is derived from the original plant and is used to hold animals, this is one of the main activities and the primary occupations of this clan member. The Bagris and the Bariarias are sometimes regarded as separate societies, but it is doubtful whether there is a real difference between them. The Bawaria also claim to be from the family of Chanda and Jora who served Fatah and Jaimal, the joint rulers of Chittitor as musketeers. They also associate themselves with Pardhi (the boatman) of the days of Raja Ramchandra. During the Mahratta's period, they took dacoity on a large scale. For a long time, they continued to live in Gujrat and Sind. Later, most of them moved to Rajputana and Punjab.

The Bauria tribe has been living with substantial amount of population on the land of Punjab for a long time. This community or tribe considers itself a Rajput Kashatri whose forefathers once ruled in the region of Rajasthan. The clan of various kings belonging to the different states of Rajasthan like Chauhan, Parmar, Solanki, Bhatti and Rathods belong to the

major clans of this tribe. Of these, Rathods (Marwar, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Kishangarh, Ajmer), Bhatti (Ajmer), Chauhan (eastern state), Parmar and Solanki being low in number belong to different states.² Reasons arising during the Mughal period compelled them to leave their territory and move to different regions. These people refused to extend marital relationships with Mughals and deny giving the hands of their young daughters to Mughals for which they had to fight battles against the Mughals in which they lost. As a result of losing in such battles, these masses left the plain regions and started living in the areas of the Aravalli Hills of Rajasthan scattered in various groups. They became dependent on the wild hunting for food. Living in this place to meet the needs of their daily life like eating and clothing, they started robbing and looting the nearby people living in plains. Fed up with the plunder or theft of the tribe, the nearby people appealed to King Jahangir who set fire to the forest to teach them a lesson. Thus, the tribe left these hills and roamed the dense forests of northern Punjab. Here they met the Sikh community under whose influence this group changed its form by changing its language and dress. At that time Punjab was divided into smaller states. The kings of these states often came to the forests to hunt and they also came in contact with the Bauria tribe who helped them in hunting. During this time the people of this tribe were also stolen and nurtured their family.³ At the time when such thefts took place in the tribe, the condition of the tribal people was very bad. As a result, the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 was established by the Indian Government, and came into operation in the NWP, Punjab and Oudh. The Act is based on the fact that the courts have refused to allow the legitimacy of certain policing practices. This has led to legalization for similar practices. In short, the law of 1871 gave the police a great deal of power over a large number of people. Under this sweeping piece of legislation, individuals from communities identified as criminals must register themselves and their families with the police. They were not to leave the village without a temporary license from the police, which operated only within the district limits. They were to announce the change of police station, and the license was to be displayed at all police stations on the way to another district. Any member of the Criminal Tribe (CT) community who is found to be without a second permit should be sentenced to three years in prison. Zamindar was made responsible for the accuracy of the registration of members of the criminal gang and the availability of registered members.⁴ The British Government, in view of the policies of these tribes in different parts of India, laid down two main bases for the

implementation of the Criminal tribe act in India. 1. All people born into a particular group or category are criminals by birth. 2. Which of these tribes and groups, once considered criminals, become criminals forever.⁵ Many factors were considered responsible for the subsequent criminalization of these communities. It was now officially recognized that Britain's economic management policies, which focused on fundraising, had made traveling communities economically and economically disadvantaged.

Famous Theft and versed under Bauria Tribe

In Punjab, the two Baurias of Ferozepur district, Teeku and Panju, were so well versed in stealing that their exploits have taken the form of folk songs in Punjabi. They used to take off the loaded bag from the moving train. These popular verses are recited by the people of the tribe as follows:

Teeku & Panju karan churiya, (Teeku&Panju commit thefts)

Chaldi gaddi wich olauan boriya. (Remove sacks from the moving vehicle)

Once he stole opium silos from the fort of Maharaja Harinder Singh of Faridkot while keeping them inside 9 locks. This theft was done by giving prior warning to the Maharaja. Some versed about this incident are also famous in the tribe.

Raje ne noo tale vich silara khiya, (The king places the seals in the nine locks)

Teeku Panju ne pehredara to bacha chakiya. (Teeku&Panju steal the seals escaping from the guards)

After the theft was successful, he also showed his skills before the Maharaja. Maharaja Harinder Singh of Faridkot promised to give them ten bighas of land. But instead they had to give assurance of not stealing in future so they turned back this gift.⁶

There are many other famous stories of such thefts in Bauria Tribe which we know from the people of Bauria tribe.

Dacoity at Narsinghpur

One of the hostages' looting took place in the city of Narsinghpur, which Russell mentions in his book, dated February 1822, when a caravan of about 30 men marched in the evening with sticks in their hands. When the sentries guarding the cantonment asked about them, they said that they were herdsmen grazing and their cattle were coming after them. Going a little

further, the hostages immediately set fire to the torches filled with flammable substances as soon as they reached the front of the houses of the very rich merchants. They started looting in the houses of the traders. Anyone who tried to make a fuss or protest against the hostages was immediately stabbed in the stomach by the hostages. Within 10 minutes, the hostages looted from the homes of wealthy merchants and fled. Only twelve people were found dead or injured at the scene of the attack, but no trace of the hostages was found later.⁷

Dacoity at Baji Rao Pehwamehal

Similarly, the Bandhaks carried out another famous operation during which they attacked the palace of Bajirao Peshwa from a place called Bithoor near Kanpur. Reports indicate that the attack was carried out by about 80 men. The Bandhaks came in the guise of passengers who carrying Gangajal, with the help of a boat and some security guards, made a trek of about 96 miles across the river Ganga and forcibly entered the palace of Bajirao Peshwa at Binur at 10 pm. The 80 Bandhaks further injured 18 protesting men and looted more than Rs.2,50,000 worth of treasure, mostly gold. After the looting, all the hostages passed through the forests of Oudh and reached their homes safely without any loss.

Gajrāj: Robin Hood of Gwālior

Gajrāj had risen from the name of bandarwāla (a monkey show) to become Robin Hood of Gwālior. In place of decacoit he was general governor of dacoits. Durbar appointed him to keep ghāts or ferries over Chambal, which he did in a way that was most beneficial to them and to himself, and no one entered or left the country without paying money. A very famous story of looting at Jhansi by Gajraj is as follows. Weak man were sent back to carry out the plunder, and strong and courageous man took up the arms. This loot was done at the house of famous moneylender of Jhansi who had a lot of money. Before doing this work, it was found to be auspicious for the time, for which 'Aakut' method (Kan Ginkar) was used. Jhansi city wall was crossed with ladder. At this time, the group of robbers entered the cities and the procession was going ahead of them and it was released by the people that they were the part of procession. The shop of gold Smiths were closed and 20 men broke into the shop with Gajraj after breaking the locks and 30 others were deployed to guard the roads outside. They assembled all the goods

found and left the shop and after 2 days, they reached Mandegari safely. The goods consisted of diamonds, pearls, gold, silver, money etc. Nobody was either injured or killed in this theft, about which William Henry Sleeman has written in his report.

Bandhak chief Meherban Singh

Sardar Meher Ban Singh disguised as a hindu prince and went on a campaign for robbery. The other men of his gang followed him as bodyguards. On one occasion, assuming this character, he followed up a boat laden with Spanish dollars which was being sent from Calcutta to Banaras; having attacked it on the outskirts of Makrai, he killed one and wounded ten of the guards and took \$ 25,000 from the Spanish currency and twenty-six dollars from the company. Some members of the gang were rushed to reach the predetermined location. Clement himself with his women and walked towards the same place. Holding the personality of a local sovereign he stayed here for two days to commend the Holi celebration. He gave a lot of whole of cash in the nursery to plant a mango tree close to the tank to serve explorers, on behalf of Rājā Meherbān Singh of Gaur in Oudh; and promised him further alms on future occasions of pilgrimage if he found the work progressing well, saying that it was an incredible disgrace that explorers ought to be constrained as he had been to stop without cover for themselves or their families during the warmth of the day. He showed up securely at his quarters in the timberland and was gotten in the standard design by a parade of ladies in their best clothing.

Such stories are related to different places in India but the people associated with them are not considered bad under this tribe. The situation of the tribe has changed a lot in the present time. He has started to work hard for his family.

Conclusion

In India, where people of different castes and religion live, tribes have a special place among them. These tribes have an important place in Indian culture. Their dressing, food, life style and religious practices are different from the society. These tribes live in different part of India. Of these, the Bauria tribe lives in different state of India. This tribe came to be settled in Punjab during the Mughal period. The word ‘criminal’ is associated with the tribe which is preserved in culture even today. This was associated with them due to the atrocities committed

by the British. At the time of partition of India, this tribe was placed in the category of ST while some in category of SC. If we talk about this tribe in modern India, then the people of this tribe have given up their ancestral profession and changed themselves today. As a result, they have gained an important place in society. No matter, how much the atrocities on the tribe have affected their standard of living, they have improved their standard of living by overcoming these difficulties.

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