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Title One Criminal Tribes

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THE CRIMINAL TRIBES

A SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY OF
THE PRINCIPAL CRIMINAL TRIBES
AND CASTES IN NORTHERN INDIA

BY

Bhawani Shanker Bhargava. M.A., Ph.D., LL.B.

With a Foreword by Shri A. V. Thakkar

and

an Introduction by Dr D. N. Majumdar

Published for the Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society,
United Provinces, by the Universal Publishers Ltd,
The Mall, Lucknow, India.

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Price Rs. 8/8

Printed by B. R. Bhargava, at the Bhargava Printing works,
La-Touche Road, Lucknow.

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OUR BAPU'S COMMANDER, FOR THE
SALVATION OF THE HARIJANS AND THE
CONSOLIDATION OF BHARATVARSH.

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FOREWORD

During the ten years of my work of social welfare of Bhils of Panch Mahals in Gujarat, 1922 to 1923, I came across several caravans of Banjaras which transported hundreds of bags of grain from interior to the Railway station to and fro I often thought myself why I should not sometimes be a member of this caravan and enjoy the Banjara life for a month or two. But I failed to do so. Later about the year 1937 when I was travelling in the then state of Kalahandi in Orissa, I came across two or three caravans of Banjaras with salt laden animals from the coast to the interior. My old instinct then revived but I satisfied myself by being friendly to Banjaras in their camps and chatting with them for some time.

While dealing with the word 'tribes' we make such a confusion between the words (i) aboriginal tribes, (ii) primitive tribes, and (ii) criminal tribes as defined and scheduled by the Criminal Tribes Act that we decide that all aboriginal tribes are criminal and that all tribal people are such that we should beware of them and shun them. Unfortunately India is a land of castes and tribes. Our British rulers for the purpose of administration and enforcement of law and order, got several volumes written, on almost all provinces of India detailing the customs, manners and social status of all castes high or low, from the highest Brahmin to the lowest Shudra and thus in a way put an official stamp upon the classification of castes and tribes. Generalities are mostly deceptive. Habits and customs cannot be general amongst all members of a caste or tribe, merely because a very large group of thousands and lacs of people are born in a particular caste or tribe. But the British administrators wanted to enforce law and order strictly and therefore they branded particular castes and tribes as criminal from their very birth and called them by the degrading name of 'Criminal Tribes' which are usually abbreviated as C. T. The result was that thousand and lacs of innocent persons were classed as criminals because of the criminality of a few or a very small percentage amongst them. In fact it may be said that a much larger percentage of these tribes were led into criminality by giving them the stigma of criminal tribes. Criminality cannot go by groups, but by individual persons. A retired judge of the Madras High Court once condemned our present Criminal Tribes Act as one of the darkest spot on

our statute book. The time is now ripe when this Act must be repealed or at the most substituted by Acts like the Habitual Offenders Act or similar preventive Acts. Some provinces like Madras and Bombay have already taken a lead.

Dr. B. S. Bhargava, the author, has written a very instructive, informative, interesting and useful book on the subject after making firsthand investigations. I strongly recommend that best possible use of the information and study should be made by our administrative authorities. Everyone of our public men interested in the reformation and reclamation of these unfortunate and condemned people should study this book. They may also make firsthand investigations like Dr. Bhargava. The Governments of our provinces and state unions may now give more attention to the reform of these people by gentle and practical methods as detailed by Dr. Bhargava or as may be discovered from time to time as a result of practical and firsthand investigations than by old stereotyped police methods and thus save these voiceless people from the everyday *zulm* of the village police men.

I am obliged to Dr. Bhargava for asking me to write a Foreword for the book. I congratulate him for the critical treatment of the subject in this Introductory Volume and wish that he may do greater justice to the subject in his detailed work on the subject which he proposes to publish shortly.

Delhi.
20-8-49

A. V. THAKKAR
Vice-President, Servants of India
Society,
General Secretary,
Harijans Sewak Sangh, Delhi.

PREFACE

In these pages an effort has been made to detail briefly in as simple a manner as possible, the social and economic life of the principal criminal tribes and castes of Northern India. The subject is both interesting and vital, and even a feeble attempt is worthwhile, particularly, in view of the projected changes in the machinery of administration concerning the stigmatized people and the methods of rehabilitation suggested by expert committees set up by the Provincial and Central Governments.

The Criminal Tribe is probably an Indian peculiarity. In no part of the world is there to be found such a distinct division of society nor an Act like the Criminal Tribes Act. It does not mean that it is only in India where crimes are committed. In other countries of the new as well as of the old world, the incidence of crime is high indeed, but the crimes committed here are due more to economic causes than anything else, as is evident from the fact that the barometer of crime and criminality in India rises and falls with the condition of the harvests and the prosperity or otherwise of the masses.

As an earnest of our efforts to reform and reclaim these people, the administration of the country enacted the first Criminal Tribes Act in 1871 and since then the special needs and requirements of control of the criminal population were met by amendments and notifications till today we are constrained to evaluate our efforts in the light of changed cultural and political life of the country. We feel however that this stigma of crime on the tribes has been an unfortunate fact and nothing much has been gained by the continuation of the Criminal Tribes Act in the form it has been handed down to us. There is not only sentiment that prompts me to state that the presence of the Criminal Tribes Act on our statute book is a great blot on our social life and more so in free India, which bids fair to lead the vanguard of cultural renaissance in the East. People are punished and bound down when they commit an anti-social or an illegal act; we cannot be fair and just if we start punishing innocent people in the expectation that their activities are likely to be antisocial and illegal.

It is an established fact that a critical and detailed field-study of the Criminal Tribes is a terrible venture and is attended with risks and dangers. Had it not been for the opportunities and facilities which the Reclamation, Police, Criminal Intelligence and the Indian States offered me, the investigation could not have been completed even in its present form. I must thank the authorities concerned and the individuals (whose

names space forbids me to mention here) who have actively supported me in this enquiry. I gratefully acknowledge their assistance.

The material recorded in this volume which is only an introduction, as it were, to my detailed work on the subject which I propose to publish soon, was collected by first-hand investigations under the direction and supervision of Dr. D. N. Majumdar, M. A. Ph. D. (Cantab) Reader, Department of Economics and Sociology, Lucknow University who has added an introductory note to this volume. I visited the places where these tribes live in settlements, reformatories colonies and villages. My tours gave me an opportunity of living with these people and of acquiring a first-hand knowledge of their social, economic, religious and criminal activities.

I first set myself to gather all available information from the police and settlement records. The intimate information of gang organization and criminal habits which was supplied to me by various chaukidars, constables, village teachers and employees of the different institutions who lived in constant and close contact with these people was carefully sifted, tested and verified by the questionnaire method. Most of the details, however, are original. In the course of my enquiry, I had to face many difficult situations, particularly when I wanted to collect data about their intimate domestic life, religious and quasi-religious ceremonies and worship-festivals; but the sympathy I had for these people aided my efforts at understanding their view points and also smoothed my relations at times when further investigations would have led to serious consequences.

It is evident that an enquiry into the criminal habits, gang organization and the socio-religious life of the criminals cannot be exhaustive for the obvious limitations inherent in such enquiries. But I have tried my best to detail the life of these people as faithfully as possible and further investigations are still in progress, the result of which I propose to put forward in a bigger volume. At any rate this is a preliminary review of the problem of criminal tribes and their social life. I am grateful to the Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society U. P., Lucknow, for publishing this monograph, to Dr. D. N. Majumdar of the Lucknow University for writing the Introduction and to Shri A. V. Thakkar, M. C. A. and General Secretary, Harijan Sewak Sangh, for the Foreword.

Naya Bazar, Ajmer.
August 1949,

B. S. BHARGAVA.

Introduction

Dr. B. S. Bhargava has obliged me by asking me to write an introduction to his book on the Criminal Tribes. I was not prepared for it, as I thought he would publish his bigger work on the subject, so that I would write on the race elements among the criminal tribes to make it a complete book on the subject. He now tells me that there is going to be some delay in putting his detailed study into print; the next best thing he could do was to give an introductory volume, and I am happy to be associated with it for the reason that a book on the Criminal Tribes has been a long-felt desideratum. I commend this brief survey to those who want an authentic and competent information about the stigmatized elements of our population. As the subject is of particular interest to me I would take this opportunity of saying what I feel about our criminal tribes and the paragraphs I present below, have been compiled from the papers I had from time to time contributed to different journals and periodicals during the past eighteen months or so. Even though I have not offered the same solution as Dr. Bhargava has suggested in the book, I agree with him in most points and the difference is incidental to the different angles with which we have viewed the problem.

There is a general misconception in the mind of the average citizen in India that a criminal tribe is of the same racial and cultural stock as the aboriginal tribes except that the former have taken to crime as their hereditary profession and means of livelihood and have utilized their primitive tribal structure characterized, as it is, by a phenomenal group solidarity and cultural homogeneity, for anti social purposes. A tribe is a geographical or territorial social group, the members of which speak the same language or dialect, are integrated as an economic unit and do not recognize any hierarchy of function as exists in the caste structure. A tribe is an ethnic group and is ordinarily endogamous, organized, into clans or phratries, based on a mysterious association with an animal or plant species, or owning kinship on the strength of contiguity of residence, such kinship developing a blood bond which forbids intermarriage within the clan or the exogamous unit.

There are tribes today who have suffered disintegration in their cultural life by contacts with more dynamic social groups and are scattered all over the land. They have lost their language and have adopted a particular occupation or avocation on the same lines as the castes have, though the rigidity characteristic of the latter is absent. It is true that many primitive tribes in India like the Sonthal, the Munda and the Ho of Chota Nagpur have increased in number, so much so, that they have over-stepped the limits of subsistence available in their tribal moorings and have in recent years moved out to plantations and liminal towns in response to the demands of the contractual labour needed there; but some of the tribes like the Bhil have become 'criminal', though their honesty and truthfulness, their gay and care-free disposition and tribal record for discipline have been undermined in proportion to the degree of disintegration of their indigenous cultural life. The nomadism of the primitive tribes has been conquered in recent years with astonishing quickness, and many a tribe who moved from forest to forest in search of game and edible fruits and roots, obtained wife by capture or by stealing, offered human sacrifices to serve their magico-religious beliefs associated with their productive pursuits, find in settled life a chance for survival and more and more of these nomadic groups are taking to land and crude agriculture to eke out an existence of a sort. It is probably the nomadism of the primitive tribes that has made many confuse them with the criminal and vagrant population.

The Criminal Tribes of Northern India like the Bhatu, the Sansi, the Karwal, the Habura, the Tagu, the Pakhwara, the Mina, the Bawari, the Harni, and many others who combined a career of crime with some ostensible means of livelihood like the Pasi, the Dom, the Nat and the Chirimar have been described as belonging to the Dravidian race or predominantly of the same stock. Language, is no indication of racial affiliation, but even if it were so, it is not easy to identify a linguistic group in India with a racial stock. The Dravidian language is spoken in India by at least three racial types: a long headed mesorrhine type, a long headed platyrrhine type and a broad headed leptorrhine one, all belonging to the Peninsular India. Speakers of Dravidian language or its dialects are found in Northern India, the Gond, the Saora, the Majhwar and many other tribes retain a large portion of Dravidian vocabulary and competent scholars find in the lay out and construction of their dialects evidence of Dravidian

influence in no uncertain way. Most of the criminal tribes speak several dialects belonging in some cases, to more than one family or sub-family of language besides a code language understood by the criminal elements alone. Signs and symbols reinforce their mutual bonds and some of the tribes like the Bawaria are skilled linguists and can speak fluently half a dozen languages or their patois to cover their identity.

Besides the Mongoloid elements in the cis-Himalayan region, northern India has a mixed population composed of a dolichocephalic (long-headed), leptorrhine (fine nose) and light coloured and a dark complexioned, dolichocephalic, platyrrhine (flat nose) type mixing in various proportions, the racial status more or less follow the order of social precedence from the Brahmin to the hybrid Kahar or down to the aboriginal Korwa, the most primitive tribe in the United Provinces, the shape of the nose indicating in a general way the racial status of the social group. The criminal tribes who prey upon the urban community or prosperous villages carry their profession of crime through the women of their tribe. The attractive features of the women and their easy virtue, help in their tempting overtures to men of substance and leisure and thus consciously or unconsciously they have canalized alien blood into the veins of the tribe, so that the racial purity of the criminal tribes like that of the castes, high and low in the province, is a myth. While there are tribes like the Eastern Dom who are nearer the Pre-Dravidian tribes like the Korwa and the Chero, the Sansi and the Bhatu are very much remote from the latter. The majority of the criminal tribes in northern India belong to the general Indo-Aryan type though unlike the Pre-Dravidian tribes they have blended with various mixed castes producing a constellation which may for all practical purposes be regarded as distinct from the rest of the castes and tribes.

On the basis of anthropometric and serological evidence,* the criminal Bhatu and the Habura can claim separate consideration both from the high castes and the tribal elements in Northern India. In blood groups, the criminal tribes show a very high incidence of B and less of A, and if they belonged to the Indo-Aryan stock their serological distance from the Brahmins and Kshatriyas would not have been so marked. The latter possess a high A percentage. The exterior

* Eastern Anthropologist Volume I. No. 1, 1947.
Report on the U. P. Anthropometric Survey by P. C. Mahalanobis, D. N. Majumdar and C. R. Roy. Sankhya, Vol, 9, Parts 1-3, March, 1949.

castes in Bengal, the Muslims and other peripheral people whose mixed origin is obvious, also show a high incidence of B blood which may mean that the criminal tribes have a similar blood group frequency to that found among the mixed and hybrid elements and the criminal tribes are mixed groups as their methods of recruitment clearly indicate.

The Bhatu and the Sansi of Moradabad, for example, show a high incidence of long and convex nose, their nostrility in some cases distinguishes them from the high as well as the artisan castes. Their complexion varies from olive to sallow, though dark brown or copper colour is not infrequent among them. The Dom are not of uniformly dark complexion nor are their features all Dravidian, if by the latter we mean proto-Australoid. Leaving aside the large hybrid elements among the Dom which competent eyes would trace to their general laxity of the marital code, the average Dom of the United Provinces is certainly of lighter complexion and possesses occasionally a narrow or fine nose. It is not wholly true to say that the laxity of morals of the Dom women has resulted in a lot of illegitimacy and hybridisation but it is equally a fact that the incidence of pretty and attractive features among the Dom women is a cause rather than a consequence of such miscegenation. Whatever the cultural status of the Dom may be, their dissociation from the tribal groups of Mirzapur or from the Mongolian tribes of the Tarai and their affiliation to the Bhil and in some respects to the criminal Bhatu and the Habura is definite. It is just possible that the Dom's low social status and caste inferiority are due to social or political disabilities imposed on them from outside. The racial analysis that we have given of the criminal tribes, is corroborated by the traditional accounts of origin of the criminal population who trace themselves from the Rajputs and their clan names today repeat those of their supposed progenitors. Whether there is any ethnic type as the Rajput or not, the suggestion that these tribes had an important role to play in medieval India cannot be seriously discounted and the mercenary character of the aid they rendered to aspiring adventurers and disgruntled claimants to property and kingdoms, find expression in their greed for reward which must be tempting and immediate. However, the criminal tribes are a legacy of medieval feudalism.

As a people divorced from land, may be for historic reasons and without ostensible means of livelihood, the criminal tribes wander in batches of ten to twenty families under

the leadership of a strong patriarch whose cunning and enterprise hold the families together. Each particular gang or fraternity had to evolve a distinct *modus vivendi* for crime and many of these gangs or tribes can be identified today by the nature of crime they are known to commit, from cattle lifting to crop stealing, from pick-pocketing to dacoity with or without violence. Several groups of families or gangs have combined under an able and powerful adventurer and have proved a source of terror to the countryside and the needs of discipline and secrecy have welded different groups or gangs into a homogeneous commune or clan with a restricted code of social relationship developing into endogamous units. Each gang or a group of gangs or tribe has a Panchayat which is a closely knit body normally working under the guidance of a hereditary leader and this body has jurisdiction over all the activities of the members of the gang and can even open disputes between families or individuals long dead. Often the sons, grandsons and great-grandsons of the deceased members are made liable for offences committed by their ancestors. These disputes usually refer to family feuds or maldistribution of the loot or booty or personal injury or insult which keeps alive the memory of the descendants. Had it not been for the most efficient gang organization and strong Panchayat the integrity of the criminal tribes would have long been disrupted.

Each tribe particularly if it is actively engaged in crime has a code of conduct traditionally prescribed and zealously guarded by the Panchayat, the latter ruthlessly suppressing individual initiative and development of personality within the tribe by rigid adherence to tribal norms, while the sanction for crime and criminal activities is derived from the tribal deities on the one hand and the economic competence of the Panchayat to cater to the needs and requirements of the families and individuals owing allegiance to it, on the other hand. The scheme of crime insurance detailed by Dr. Bhargava in the book, liberal compensation for injury or death while engaged in crime at the behest of the latter or for the care and maintenance of destitute families left behind, protection of the members of the tribe, training and equipment, all provided by the gang leadership have tended to perpetuate the crime culture of the tribes. Effective and competent criminal activities are applauded by the leader, rewards liberally paid and individual merit receives social approbation even enhancing eligibility of the individual in respect of marriage. Each tribe today presents a pattern of culture worked out through centuries of

“trial and error” and there are common elements like aggressiveness, clan solidarity and tribal discipline, which produce a consciousness of kind among members of the tribe wedded to crime.

The problem of the criminal tribes, their rehabilitation and weaning them away from crime is a complex one and mere legislative action may not be enough to convert a lawless fraternity inured to crime from birth to a self respecting and law abiding community. An entire tribe cannot be criminal, nor a large section of it. A few families or a gang may be prone to commit non-bailable offences, but it is not necessary to dub a tribe as criminal merely for administrative expediency. A restriction of the activities of the leaders of a gang or group would serve the cause of administration. Many members of criminal tribes do not commit any crime nor do they have any ambivalence towards it. Even the most criminal of the tribes have supplied responsible warders and watchmen in Settlements whose integrity is beyond cavil. No attempt has ever been made to treat individual criminals of these tribes different from the tribe itself. Figures of crime incidence among the Criminal Tribes are not reliable, but if an effort is made to isolate crime from the criminal, much of the incidence of crime would be traced to economic conditions which force them to a career of crime.

Criminal tribes have often been confused with gypsies. The latter are found widely scattered. They are found in Asia as well as in Europe. They trade and exchange goods, deal in drugs and narcotics and indigenous medicines and are often welcomed in fairs and markets for the confidence with which they forecast and predict the future of their clientele. Mere nomadism is no offence. The Ahirs and the Gujars and many primitive tribes lead a nomadic life, but they are not criminals. The quaint and grotesque life of the gypsies, their peculiar dialects, their dress and habits, their material effects, chattels and moveables which they are wont to carry with them create an atmosphere of suspicion in the minds of the ordinary people and the gypsies have been more harmed against than they have harmed others.

Criminal activities are largely emphasised by the cultural pattern of the tribe concerned. If the unproductive social and ceremonial expenses of a tribe could be eliminated by education and propaganda, by concerted efforts on the part of the leaders of the tribe, the incentive to crime would have been very much less than it is today. Certain criminal tribes have got their

sanction for criminal activities in their religious beliefs and practices. The sanction is often derived from their tribal gods who are believed to revel in crime.

It is not possible to control the activities of the entire population described as Criminal Tribes. Even the most competent system of police administration will fail in its objective. It is therefore necessary to devise ways and means for providing employment to the members of criminal tribes. A regional distribution of industries may help the criminal tribes to transfer their allegiance from crime to a career of security and settled life. One of the facts which is not usually taken into account by the administration is the mental pattern of the criminal tribes which makes it necessary that an immediate relationship should be established between work and wage, between efforts and rewards. Agriculture may not be a substitute unless there are cooperative societies which would advance money while the crops are growing in the fields. Labour in industries which makes immediate payment obligatory, will probably aid reformation.

Under the present arrangement, the children of criminal tribes grow up under parental care and take to crime more readily than they otherwise would. Some of the children of the Criminal Tribes whom I have examined were found to be highly intellectual. Is it not a pity that this promise of manhood should find no response in later life. Many of the children and students from Criminal Tribes have expressed dissatisfaction with their parental supervision and have readily responded to the suggestion of transfer of allegiance and place. It is necessary therefore that these children should be segregated from their parents, put in healthier surroundings away from the influence of their parents as also from the tribal elders. It is not possible to win the habitual criminals away from crime, they can be looked after by the police but the generation which has no stigma of crime as such must be protected against infection and deterioration.

There are two ways of doing this. As soon as the children are four years old they should be sent to boarding schools and kept there till they are old enough to learn a trade or calling. The other method is to select particular families and transfer them to cities or industrial centres where the parents can be profitably employed and children looked after in schools run for them free of all charges. The latter method would not be resented by a large section of the tribe but then the families must be selected on the basis of their social stand-

ing, i. e., their desire to live an honest and useful life. This of course involves a competent organization for rehabilitation and relocation which may not be possible to finance all at once, but a beginning may be made. The Criminal Tribes should be a Central subject and not Provincial, when alone the question of jurisdiction or finance will not worry the provinces. At present the same tribe is scattered over many provinces and states and restrictive control in one area can safely be evaded by migrating to the other.

I would again plead for a careful perusal of the book by Dr. Bhargava, and I am sure, it will serve the purpose for which it is written viz, to create an informed interest in a people who have been more sinned against than sinning. I do not believe that any scheme which does not meet the larger demands of the case, should be given a trial, as a mere ameliorative measure; piecemeal legislation will not solve the problem of the Criminal Tribes. A concerted action, backed by experience and finance necessary to carry it into effect, is the minimum that we should countenance under the changing pattern of our social life and culture.

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22. VIII 49.

D. N. MAJUMDAR

CHAPTER I.

SOCIAL ORIGINS OF THE PRINCIPAL CRIMINAL TRIBES AND CASTES.

India is notorious for its numerous castes and tribes, which are further sub-divided into innumerable sub-divisions. To trace in a reliable manner the origin or continuous history of any one of these is an exceedingly difficult, if not an impossible task. Beyond a certain point which varies with the importance and purity of the caste or tribe, their history is lost in obscurity and we have to depend on legends and hear-say. This is particularly true of the criminal-tribes which cannot claim to belong definitely to any of the recognized or reputable castes or classes of India. Most of the authorities are unanimous about their mixed composition and origin. The criminal tribes have never cared to preserve their separate identity or purity like other more zealous castes and tribes of India. Their numbers have been swelled by recruits from all classes, consisting generally of adventurers, refugees and out-castes, who are always welcome into their fold.

Several theories have been advanced regarding the origin of the criminal tribes. According to one view they have descended from the gypsies. ~~Gypsy tribes are found all over the world and it is believed that they all have emanated from a common origin.~~ But there is little evidence to show that our criminal tribes belong to the same stock as the gypsies found in the present-day Europe or other parts of the world¹. Again it is held by some that the criminal tribes owe their origin to the aborigines of the old, who had been displaced from time to time by the incursions of the inhabitants of Central Asia. According to this view those aborigines who could not find suitable habitations had to roam from place to place. In due course of time, wandering became a habit with them and they began to feel quite at home in the nomadic mode of life. Some of them found it convenient to supple-

1. They sometimes are referred to loosely as gypsies in the sense of a wandering or vagrant tribe without connoting any strict racial identity with others bearing this designation elsewhere.

ment their honest earnings by petty theft and pilfering. While there may be some element of truth in this view, we find from first-hand investigations among these tribes that most of the criminal tribes claim Rajput descent and bear Kshatriya clan names. In course of time there has been, however, so much of miscegenation of these tribes with other people that now it is difficult to distinguish them from other castes and tribes. In features and traits some of these people resemble high caste persons. But even the higher caste people who joined the criminal tribes and became amalgamated with them could not raise the tone of their cultural pattern or do any substantial good to them owing to the rigidity of the caste system.

Most of the Hindu criminal tribes of upper India trace their origin from Rana Pratap of Chhittorgarh in Rajputana. By some legend or other they generally date their social degradation from the time of the siege of Chhittorgarh by Alauddin Khilji in 1308 A. D. They ascribe their nomadism chiefly to their efforts to save themselves and their religion from the inroads of Islam. This is borne out by the fact that most of the criminal tribes, who follow the Mohammedan faith, consist of those people who during the Muslim rule had to embrace Islam under threat or force. The existing evidence before us goes to prove that the nomadic tribes have always been recruiting their members from practically all sections of society, and naturally therefore, the social origins of different criminal tribes differ in various particulars. Definite historical information about their past being meagre or unobtainable, it would not be out of place to give here the legends which have gathered round the various tribes.

Bawaria

Platts derives the word Bawaria from the Hindi word *Baola* or *Baora* meaning crazy. Dalton draws it from the Sanskrit word *Varbar*—a barbarian. But Ibbetson derives it from *Bawar* or the leather noose used to snare wild animals. John Shakespeare connects it with the word *Shagalkhore* (jackal eater) under which designation he includes the Badhaks, the Kanjars and the Haburas. They are also said to be related in some way or other with the Bawartiyas who are described in the *Tulfat ul Kirain* (name of a book) as a Sindhi tribe of beggars, pick pockets, quacks and astrologers.

It is said that they are divided into three sections, viz., the Bidawati of Bikaner, who trace their origin from Bidawar

(name of a place) in Jaipur state; the Kalkamalia - the weavers of black blankets, generally found in Ferozepore and Sirsa districts in the Punjab and Kaparias who are found in large numbers in the neighbourhood of Delhi. Out of these the Kalkamaliyas and the Kaparias still retain their nomadic character and are professional hunters. The Bawarias of the Punjab are divided into seven exogamous sub-castes, viz., Santyan, Solanki, Panwar, Dhandal, Chauhan, Dhandara and Dabi. But according to Blunt, there are only four sub-castes, viz., Turai, Pachchada, Gola and Khagi.

A number of legends are current which throw some light on the origin of the Bawarias. It is heard that once Emperor Akbar demanded a *Dola*¹ from King Sandal of Chhittorgarh. When the latter refused to satisfy the Emperor's lust, a battle was fought near a *Baoli* (a large well with staircases leading to its bottom). On being defeated, a number of Rajput warriors began to pass their days by the side of that *Baoli* as a mark of their shame or humiliation. In course of time these Rajputs began to be called *Baolias* or *Bawalias* meaning the residents of the *baoli*. Our Bawarias are believed to be the descendants of these people. Somewhat similar is another version which says that when King Ferozeshah invaded Chhittorgarh Bhatti Rajputs from Jaisalmer, Panwars from Abu, Chauhans from Ajmer, and Dhandals from Bikaner came to the Rana's rescue who fought against the Pathans near a *Baoli* at a distance of about 14 miles from Chhittorgarh. They lost the battle and some of them began to live in the proximity of that *baoli* and were called *baoliwalas*—residents of the *Baoli*. They then took to crime in the absence of other paying occupations and began to keep concubines from low caste people. When the Rajputs saw their brethren thus demoralized they excommunicated them.

A legend connects them with the Chauhan Rajputs of Jaisalmer who went on a pilgrimage to Gujrat, where they sacrificed a buffaloe in the name of *Bawari Mata* at her temple and gave a feast wherein its beef was freely consumed. Thenceforth people began to call them Bawariyas after the *Bawari Mata*, while their brethren are still known as Chauhan Rajputs.

It is said that after the capture of Chittorgarh a number of Rajputs ran away into the jungle and began to live a nomadic life. One of them fell in love with a Rajput maid and

1. A palanquin containing young damsels offered as tribute or present.

married her. But he would not give up his nomadic mode of life although the parents of his wife strongly disapproved of it. They began to call him *Baola* meaning mad and later on his descendants came to be known as Bawarias.

The Bawarias also claim their descent from the family of Chanda and Jora who had served Fatah and Jaimal, the joint Rulers of Chhittor as musketeers. They also connect themselves with Pardhi (a boatman) of Raja Ramchandra's days.

In the time of the Marhattas they took to dacoity on a large scale. Some of the Marhattas also joined them in their expeditions. For a long time they continued to live in Gujrat and Sind. Later on a good number of them have migrated into Rajputana and the Punjab. Generally in the United Provinces are to be found the *Sindhwal* and the *Delhirwal Bawarias*, their names proclaiming their places of origin.

A note on the tribe Bhavri published by the Madras police, derives the word Bhavri from *Bavdi* or *Baoli* meaning a pond. It is said that these people originally used to settle on the banks of large *Baolies* and hence the name Bawaria.

Waterfield in a note ascribes the origin of the Bawarias to the time of Emperor Akbar. A Rajput Chief of Gujrat presented a Royal Princess to the Emperor along with a number of attendants. The Princess did not like the idea and preferred committing suicide to living in the Emperor's harem; while she was passing by a *Baoli* (tank), she expressed a desire to drink water; and availing of the opportunity she drowned herself in the *Baoli*. Her disconsolate attendants refused to return to their homes and began to lead a nomadic life making the *Baoli* as their headquarter in memory of their Princess.

Bhatu

The Bhatu belong to an aboriginal tribe which did not come under the civilizing influence of the advanced communities. Now a good number of them have adopted Hindu customs and practices. Recently some of them have come under the influence of Christianity and Islam. Some authorities are of opinion that the name of the tribe has been derived from the Sanskrit word *Bhanti* meaning *Varieties*. In fact, the tribe is composed of various mixed elements. William Crooke holds that the Bhatu are a branch of the Sansias known elsewhere as Berias, Haburas or Kanjars. Some writers connect them

with the Bhats, (bards or poets) as a number of them act as bards even to this day, while Nesfield classes them with the Natts. The author learns that the word Bhatu is derived from the Hindi word *Bahutor* meaning arm-breakers, referring to their favourite device used against their opponents. They are divided into following 11 exogamous sub-clans known after their ancestors: Jisan ke, Dhapo ke, Chireilley ke, Sadhey ke, Banswale ke, Dholia ke, Meeney ke, Gadoo ke, Kodan ke, Timachiyon ke, and Gahiey ke.

Out of these the first, viz., the *jisan ke*, came under the influence of Islam in the time of Emperor Akbar. Later on, most of the converts re-embraced Hinduism. The Muslim Bhatu differ in their social life from other Bhatu only in this respect that they bury their dead instead of cremating them, and contrary to the Islamic faith they do not hesitate to eat pork.

In appearance the men of the tribe are generally wiry and muscular, while the women are fair and good looking. They recognize the Berias as a branch of their own tribe but they do not admit of any affinity with the Haburas, the Kanjars and the Sansis.

Beria

The Beria is a tribe of vagrants found everywhere in Northern India. The social and economic life of these people is very much like those of the Sansis, the Kanjars, the Haburas and the Bhatu with this difference that the Berias openly allow their womenfolk to supplement their income by prostitution. In Bengal the term Beria is used for a number of nomadic groups. Rajendra Lal Mitra has given a detailed account of this tribe inhabiting Bengal. According to him, they are noted for their light, elastic and wiry build very uncommon in the people of Bengal. The sharpness of features seen in them is not to be found in any other aboriginal race in India. They are a mixed race and are usually grouped with the outcastes. A number of them are known as *mal* and earn their living by snake-charming. It is very seldom that they build permanent houses and take to agriculture.

The Berias are expert hunters and keep a variety of birds for medicinal use. They are adept in all the usual gypsy trades. 'In lying, thieving, and knavery he is no inferior to his European gypsy brother, and he practises everything that enables him to pass an easy life without submitting to any law

of civilized Government'. He is a Hindu or a Mussalman according to the community with which he identifies himself.

The Berias of North West Frontier Province and Oudh are in a much worse condition than their brethren in Bengal. They claim to belong to 3 principal sub-clans; Chauhan, Raghuvanshi and Kamchor. In Oudh the tribe claims seven exogamous sub-sects and traces its original home to the city of Navkhera in Etah district. These people are said to have peculiar degrading marriage customs. Among them marriageable girls are often reserved for prostitution which is a recognized source of income among them. It is said that they even punish with fines and social outlawry those who marry women of their own tribe as it deprives them of her earnings as a prostitute. Probably such peculiar marriage customs led Crooke to think that marriage is not a recognized institution among them. But the author on close personal investigations did not find the prevalence of any such rigid custom or practice. They enjoy the earnings of their womenfolk and purchase brides from other castes, probably due to the paucity of women among them.

Bhedkut

It has been admitted by the Bhedkuts of the Punjab that originally they were Bhatu and they still make matrimonial alliances with them. Those Bhatu who migrated into the Punjab began to be known as Bhedkuts due to their notorious habit of stealing sheep and breaking their necks so that they might not be able to bleat. In fact, the word Bhatu and Bhedkut are used for one and the same tribe.

Biloch

William in his book 'Wandering Criminal Tribes' mentions the Bilochs as the aborigines of the Gangetic plain. Ross quotes an account given by the Bilochs themselves in which they claim to be the descendants of Rind.³ *hote*, *jatoi* and *rind* are well known Biloch clans. It is clear from their appearance and features that these people are neither the Haburas, nor the aborigines, but are the descendants of the Bilochs from the Frontier Provinces. Somewhere about the end of the fifteenth century these Bilochs migrated into upper India from Bilochistan and served as mercenary soldiers

3. Haburas also claim him (Rind) as one of their ancestors.

to the Afghan invaders. When the power of the Afghan kings dwindled during their stay in India, the Bilochs, their mercenary soldiers, hid themselves in jungles and led a vagrant life with crime as their principal source of living. Gradually they settled in the upper Punjab and the neighbouring states, learnt the local patois and in course of a few centuries forgot their own identity. At present we find little similarity in features between the Bilochs belonging to the criminal tribes and the genuine Bilochs.

Professor Maxmuller identifies the word *Biloch* with the Sanskrit word *Mlechchha* meaning a degraded person and an outcaste. Colonel Mockler is of opinion that their very name suggests that these people are turbulent, reckless and daring. It is said that the Bilochs originally came from Alaf in Syria and claim to be the Arabs of the Quraish tribe who were exiled for helping Hussain, the martyr nephew of Prophet Mohammed.

The Bilochs of Karnal and Ambala form a criminal community. They say that they were driven away from their native land in the time of Nadirshah who adopted severe measures to check their activities. Although the origin of the criminal Bilochs is the same as that of settled or zamindar Bilochs, they differ very much in their temperaments and general character. The Criminal Tribe '*Bilochs*' are not to be confused with Bilochi camelmens who visit India for trade, nor they have any connection with the respectable sections of the tribe; they always marry in their own group and never seek for wife in other castes and tribes as is usual with practically most of the criminal tribes.

Dom

Crooke finds the origin of the Doms in the Dravidian menial castes who were the aborigines of India. Ancient writers have described them as blood-thirsty executioners and murderers. In the past they were forced to live on the outskirts of a town, eat dirty food, wear the clothes of the dead and were excluded from all social intercourse. Generally they are low-statured and dark-complexioned. The existing evidence goes to prove that they do not belong to a pure race; but are more or less a hybrid group of outcastes and menials.

According to a legend prevalent in the Punjab, the ancestors of the Doms were the Brahmins who by and by degenerated because they worshipped malevolent gods and

goddesses and accepted alms on cremation grounds. Another story current in the United Provinces traces the origin of the Doms from Raja *Ben* or *Ven* and therefore the Doms at some places are called *benvasi*. Generally the Doms are divided into three classes, viz. the race of wandering homeless vagabonds who inhabit Bihar and Bengal, the Doms of the hills and those belonging to the musician class who are also known as *dum* or *dum-mirasi*. They are said to divide the country into circles or areas for begging and thieving. The Ghatwala Doms at Banaras and other sacred places rightly represent *svapaka* meaning feeders on dogs mentioned by Manu. There is one more kind of Doms known as *Banward*, who draw their origin from *ban*, the fibre on which they work. Those who began to work on bamboo, are called *Bansphors*. Another offshoot of the Doms is *Dharkars* (Dhar-Rope: Kar-maker) meaning rope-maker who have adopted rope weaving as their means of subsistence.

Ibbetson has made a clear distinction between Dum and Dom, the former being the Mirasis of the plains while the latter are executioners and corpse burners. From Sherring and Elliot's Work it is clear that at one time they enjoyed a position of power and importance. The Doms residing in the Eastern districts have the following sections: Maghaya, Bansphor, Litta, Dharkar, Hatyara, Domra and Harchauni.

The Maghaya Doms are said to have derived their name from Magadha where they formerly lived. Some authorities are of opinion that the existence of such towns as Dompura, Domali, Domigarh, etc. shows that there was a Dom kingdom at one time. On the other hand, some writers are of opinion that when fresh tribes came from Central Asia, they drove the original inhabitants living in the plains to remote places which are named as mentioned above by the new comers.

There is a legend prevalent among the Doms that once Mahadeo and his consort Parwati invited the representatives of all castes to a feast. Supach, a fervent devotee of Shiva, whom the Doms claim as their chief ancestor, reached late. As there was no spare food, he did not object to consuming the remains from the dishes of other people. It is said that since then the Doms fell in social status and began to be looked down as the lowest of the menials.

Another legend puts the origin of the Doms as far back as the time of Raja Ramchandra. While Rama was wandering in jungles in search of his spouse, Sita, a Dom committed theft in his tent and removed his belongings.

Being annoyed Rama cursed him that he and his descendants would always lead a shameful and degraded life.

Habura

Crooke derives the word Habura from the Sanskrit word *Hori* meaning crooked or dishonest. It has been proved that the Haburas are an offshoot of the Sansis. According to E. A. H. Blunt, the Berias, the Bhatas, the Haburas, the Karwals and the Sansiyas possess similar features to such an extent that they may safely be regarded as offshoots of a single nomadic race.

The Haburas profess to be the descendants of Rana Pratap of Chhittorgarh. When the Rana was defeated and driven to the forests from his native land, his followers were forced to lead a nomadic life. There they had no other means of livelihood except begging, hunting and stealing.

According to a legend prevalent among the Haburas, it is believed that *RIG*, one of their ancestors, cruelly chased a hare and killed it. When Sita, the spouse of Rama, saw this pathetic scene a curse came to her lips that he and his descendants would always lead a shameful life of begging, stealing and hunting.

They generally claim to belong to one of the four under-mentioned exogamous sub-sects, which are named after well-known Rajput clans, viz., Solanki, Chauhan, Rathore, and Panwar. They recognise twenty exogamous Gotras, i.e., Badhak, Chiryamar, Dabi, Dom, Kargar, Lodh, Pasia, Bina, Brijbasi, Gwala, Lilahari, Kachhbandh, Kanjar, Sapera, Jogi, Kalabaz, Natt, Geedhia, Gujrati, and Bahelia.

Harni

Some writers are of opinion that the Harnis have rightly acquired their name from their former habit of hunting deer. It is a Muslim criminal tribe mainly found in the Punjab. Most of them possess landed property and it is only a small minority of them who are incorporated in the criminal tribes. The word 'Harni' means a thief, a very appropriate term to be applied to them. A number of writers are of opinion that the word Harni is derived from any of the following:—

Harna—which means the unfailing or the invincible.

Har—means a road in Sanskrit. They can cover long distances in short times and hence probably they were thus named. *Har* also means a herd of cattle. As some of their

ancestors were dealers in cattle, their descendants came to be known as Harnis.

Hari—means a hunter. Originally they were expert hunters and hence the name Harni.

The theory that Harni is an aboriginal of India or Central Asia is based on the possibility that centuries back the descendants of Indian aborigines who had fled to Central Asia at the time of early Aryan invasions returned along with the Pathan and the Mughal invaders and settled here. The descendants of these vagabonds took to a life of crime and adopted the Islamic faith to please their masters.

It is traditionally believed by the Harnis of the Punjab that their original place of residence was Harnipura in Bikaner.¹ When they left their native land on economic grounds, some of the families came under the influence of Islam and yielded to the temptations offered to them by the Mughal kings.

The Harnis of Ludhiana (a district in the Punjab) claim that they are the descendants of one Najafkhan, a Pathan Chieftain, who joined the Mughal Army and received Jagirs and honours from the Mughals for his valuable services. He happened to marry a Rajput woman. Her children who settled at various places are claimed by the Harnis as their forefathers. But Warburton holds that the Harnis are of the same stock as other nomadic tribes.

Kanjars

Kanjar is a name usually applied to a number of nomadic tribes of gypsy origin. Crooke derives it from the Sanskrit word *Kananchara*—a wanderer in the woods.

In the United Provinces and the Punjab, the Kanjars are generally classed in 12 sub-divisions: Kuchbandh, Natt, Turкта, Beria, Beldar, Chamar—Mangta, Sansiya, Dom, Bhatu, Kalandar, Bahelia and Jogi. In Rajputana the Kanjars are sub-divided into 23 sub-castes: Shishodiya, Rathore, Kultha, Chauhan, Beera, Malawat, Karmawat, Gudrawat, Jhanjhawat, Repawat, Udawat, Bhangawat, Shedawat, Jalphawat, Thiawat, Ramawat, Kasrawat, Heerawat, Lumbawat, Desawat, Chatravat, Ramlawat and Barot.

The Kanjars residing in the Punjab and Rajputana profess that they originally served the Jats and the Rajputs as Bhats.² By and by their profession became less remunerative

1. A state in Rajasthan Sangh.

2. Bards are poets keeping the geneological account of the fam

and per force they had to supplement their income from other sources. Some of them still remember the geneology of their clients and get customary dues from them. Colonel Todd has written that the Kanjars did menial work for different castes and gradually a clientele was fixed for every individual which lead to a sub-division among them on the basis of the caste they served.¹ This view is further corroborated by the fact that in Rajputana, the different Kanjar sub-divisions connect themselves with different castes: for instance, the Bamnavats are the Kanjars of the Brahmins, the Bhangawats of the Bhangies, (sweepers) the Shedawats of Rawats, the Jalfawats of Kolis and Thiyawats of Ahirs.

The Kanjars trace their origin from Mana who is better known among them as Mana Guru. Mana and his wife Nathia Kanjarin lived in forests and earned his living by hunting and crime. He was a strong and sturdy man. Once when he was passing from Delhi, he challenged the Imperial wrestler and got the better of him in the twinkling of an eye. This won him fame and the Mughal Emperor liberally rewarded him.

A legend connects the Kanjars with Bhajori, a female dancer who entertained the Gujar kings on ceremonial occasions. Once when Bhajori was entertaining her masters with a rope dance, the Chief offered to reward her with gold bangles if she would succeed in catching those bangles while dancing. She succeeded and was duly rewarded. The Chief further offered to give his kingdom to her if she succeeded in repeating her feat with her both eyes closed. She was really a very adept dancer and was about to accomplish the dance as the Chief had desired; but at this juncture her rival dancer who was present at the scene, out of envy slapped one of Bhajori's children, which disturbed her and she fell from the rope and sustained serious injuries. While breathing her last she gave some valuable advice to her kith and kin; she prohibited them from (i) dancing on ropes, (ii) sitting in the month of June under a *Pipal* tree, (iii) using a pad on the head while fetching water in pitchers, (iv) making illuminations on the Dewali festival and (v) drinking water from a flowing river. Her descendants follow these instructions even to this day. On the other hand, she cursed the rival dancer that she and her descendants would always earn their living by dancing, singing and prostitution.

According to the Census Report of 1931, the Kanjars are

1. Todd Rajasthan -- History of Rajputana.

divided into 4 sub-castes, the Jallads, the Koochbands, the Sangkats—the stone cutters—and the Rachbandhs. But Nesfield in his account of this tribe divides them into five clans: the Mariyars—the worshippers of Mari, the Bhains—the buffaloe-keepers, the Sangkats—the stone cutters, the Gobras—the catchers of iguana, and the Sauda.

Karwal

The Karwals and the Bhatu claim a common origin and assert that they are one and the same tribe. The existence of different names is owing to their inhabiting different provinces in the past. Hollins is of opinion that the word Karwal is derived from the Arabic word *Qarwal* meaning a hunter. Tribal legends also throw light on the fact that the Karwals were the hereditary huntsmen of the kings in ancient times. Gradually, they acquired nomadic habits in the absence of any other lucrative occupation and began to live on wild animals and birds.

The Karwals have intermarried with the Berias, the Haburas and the Sansiyas to such an extent that they have lost all tribal identity of their own and have adopted the customs and practices of these tribes. According to Hope Kavanagh, the Karwals in eastern districts of the United Provinces claim to be Kshatriyas and are very conservative. Blunt writes that the Karwals admit that they were originally Kols. They intermarry with Berias but unlike them do not allow prostitution in their family.

Some Karwals explain the word Karwal as having been derived from the Hindi word *Kar Bal* which means Power in hand. They are divided into 8 exogamous groups, viz., Gaddo, Chhari, Dhapan, Dholi, Mahayas, Geedhia, Sadhey and Begwan.

They believe themselves to be the descendants of one Gulphi, a notorious robber of the sixteenth century. It is evident from their appearance and features that they have aboriginal Naga blood in them. Their connection with the Berias and their belief that immortality lies only in illicit connections with their own people is responsible for their mixed blood. They are of hardy constitution with dark colour, oblong faces, and broad chests.

Mahtam

Mahtam is a tribe whose title has been probably derived

from the Sanskrit word *Mahatm*, which is the superlative of *mahatva* meaning great. It would, therefore, ordinarily signify little of honour, unless its use was ironical like the term *Mahtar* which in Persian means very high and exalted. They follow Hinduism of a somewhat higher order than the Sansis. A large number of them are *sahajdhari sikhs* in the Punjab.

The Mahtams claim to be descended from pure Rajputs. They say that one of their ancestors, Jaspalsingh, was Kanungo during the time of Emperor Akbar, who, having been pleased with his work awarded him the title of Mahat, from which the word Mahatam has presumably been derived.

Another legend connects the Mahtams with the Raghuvanshis of Ayodhya. They claim that Raja Mahtab Singh, a descendant of Maharaja Dasarath was asked to give his daughter in marriage to Emperor Akbar. When he refused to comply with the Imperial orders, he was driven away to the deserts of the Punjab, where he established a new kingdom of his own. The Mahtams claim that they are his descendants and explain that the word Mahtam is drawn from king Mahtab.

In spite of all these traditions, society considers the Mahtams to be of exceedingly low caste and groups them with the untouchables. Ibbetson writes that "by origin they are vagrants, and in some parts they apparently retain their wandering habits, using nooses like those of Bawarias". The tribe is a large one and only a few of them have been declared as belonging to the criminal tribes.

Mina

Major Powlett writes that "the minas were formerly the rulers of much of the country ruled by the Chief of Jaipur"¹. They still hold a good social position in the Rajput circle. They are the most trusted guards in the Jaipur state. Minas appear to be of Indo-Aryan origin and have striking resemblance with the Rajputs and the Jats of the territory around Jaipur. Amber or Amer was their capital and Nahargagh Fort² is still guarded by them. It is said that Sawai Mansingh, one of the Governors of Emperor Akbar, gave a death blow to the Mina kingdom and established the Kachhawa dynasty (the present Ruling family) in its place. In the beginning of Kachhawa rule

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1. A State in Rajasthan Sangh.
 2. An old fort in Jaipur City.

the State as well as the person of the king was committed to the trust of these people. Even now when a new king is enthroned, one of the members of the tribe puts a *Tilak*¹ on the new king's forehead with his blood as a mark of his sovereignty. This shows the social position and honour enjoyed by them in Rajput circle.

Minas together with Meos, who are allied both in name and race, have been for many centuries the chief cultivators of Jaipur and Alwar states. Both draw their origin from clans which are identical in name. A story is extant of the *Sisbadni Mini* which shows that Minas and Meos used to intermarry.

In Rajputana the Minas belong to two classes; the *Zamindari* and the *Chaukidari*. This division dates from the downfall of the Mina kingdom of Ambar. Those who yielded to the conquerors were given lands and villages, while those who continued rebels were deprived of their acquisitions. In due course, these people took to crime. The administrative authorities began to appoint chaukidars from amongst these vagabonds so that they might desist from crimes and get the tribal miscreants arrested. In course of time those entrusted with the watch and ward work began to be called Chaukidari Minas; some individuals among these Chaukidari Minas are declared to belong to the criminal tribes for their habitual crimes. For years it has been customary in Rajputana that peasants in villages pay blackmail or a kind of tax to the Minas in return for a guarantee that the latter would respect their life and property.

Pakhiwara or Pakhiwala

Pakhi is a Hindi word which means a reed shelter, and *Pakhiwala* is he who lives in a *Pakhi*. All wandering gangs who lived in portable shelters are usually called 'Pakhiwala' or 'Pakhiwara' or *Pakhiwas*. But now the word *Pakhiwara* is especially used to denote a Mohammedan criminal tribe. Sir Denzil Ibbetson is of opinion that *Pakhiwaras* are a branch of the *Sansis*. They are also known as *Machchhimars* (fish-killers). The *Harnis* claim that the *Pakhiwaras* are one of their own offshoots; but, on the other hand the *Pakhiwaras* do not consider them as their brethren. They are also known as *Meos-dwellers* of rivers and are mostly found in the district of *Sialkot* in the *Punjab*.

1 Caste mark usually put on the fore-head.

A tribal legend, extant among the Pakhiwaras, shows that their ancestors belonged to one of the Rajput ruling families. Once a Rajput king being displeased with one of his near relations sentenced him to death. The wretch ran for life closely pursued by the Royal troops. Seeing no possibility of escape he implored the help of a wandering tribe. The Chief took pity on the refugee, took him to a tent, where his daughter lay asleep, hid him in her bed and drew a quilt over them. Just then the Royal troops came and searched for him in every tent; but they could not trace him for they would not insult the Chief by looking into his daughter's quilt. The fugitive gratefully agreed to marry the Chief's daughter, but for whose shelter he would have lost his life. This man could not adopt any other profession lest he should be caught, and he chose to be a robber. The Pakhiwaras claim to be his descendants.

Another story connects them with Suryavanshi Rajputs. On the death of a king there developed a civil war which forced two of the princes to flee to the Punjab to save their lives. One of them settled as a zamindar, while the other preferred to live in a Pakhi, and hence his descendants came to be known as Pakhiwaras. During the reign of Aurangzeb they embraced Islam.

Tagu

The Tagus claim to be Brahmins and state that Bengal was their place of origin. Raja Janmejai invited them to the Punjab for exterminating snakes. Their ancestors performed the Great *Havan* (sacrifice) by means of which Janmejai proposed to end the entire species of snakes. They are not hardened criminals like the Sansis and the Bawarias but are only petty thieves and pick-pockets, who have adopted crime simply to supplement their income from cultivation.

The word Tagu is drawn from the Hindi word *tyag* which means renunciation. It is said that a number of them ceased to perform certain religious ceremonies. Their caste fellows being annoyed, excommunicated them, and since then the relations between the two sections became more and more estranged, so much so that the two sections have nothing in common except that both wear sacred thread, keep *choti* (top-knot) and bear similar *gotras* (names of ancient sages claimed as their ancestors). It is immaterial whether this account is correct or not but it is far more probable that the Brahmins

excommunicated these people on account of their objectionable practices and crimes. They are not to be confused with *Taga* or *Tugga*, another Brahminical tribe of the Punjab, who are peaceful agriculturists.

Sansiya

The origin of the Sansiyas is traced to Mewat and Ajmer. They are broadly sub-divided into two exogamous sub-divisions: the Kalka and the Mala.

Maclagan in his 'Glossary of tribes and castes' has classified the Sansiyas into two divisions: (i) the settled and (ii) the nomads, who again have two main branches: the Birtwan and the pure vagabonds, also known as Rehluwalas, as their women play on Rehlus (a musical instrument) while singing.

The word Sansi is usually derived from the Sanskrit word *Shwasa* meaning breath. The Sansis claim Sahasmal as their first ancestor. According to some writers, the Berias, the Haburas, the Bhatas and the Kanjars appear to be the subdivisions of this great tribe. Their place of origin is said to be Bharatpur, where they were minstrels to the Jats. Out of the two broad divisions the Kalkas are deemed to be pure Sansis, and Malas as mixed because only one of their parents was a Sansi. The Sansis, residing in Sialkot, state that once a king banished his daughter for immorality. While she was in exile a male child was born to her who was named Sansi. Later on the child grew to be a notorious criminal. He had two sons Baindu and Mala, who are responsible for bringing forth 23 Sansi gotras.

The Sansis of Rajputana and Bengal claim Sahasmal, a notorious dacoit who resided in Lekhi Jungle (Rajputana) as their principal ancestor. According to the version of the Sansis living in Jhang (Punjab) they are of Panwar Rajput origin. In Rohtak they are known as Kanjar-Sansis. The Sansiyas inhabiting Gujranwala and Gujrat are Mohamedans but in the Upper Punjab, they are Hindus.

According to Crooke the tribe is composed of outcastes and are the near kinsmen of the Kanjars, the Berias, the Haburas and the Bhatas. He is of opinion that at the time when the Agnikula (fire-born) races came into existence, the Chauhan Rajputs appointed the Sansis to serve them as their bards. The degraded members of the tribe recognized three exogamous sections, viz., the Chachadib, the Karkhand and the Bhains. Those who are advanced lay stress upon their

alleged Rajput descent and profess to be Chauhans, Phagies, Gahlots and Sambhars. They are said to recruit new members from all tribes except the very lowest ones.

The Sansiyas residing in the United Provinces have three sub-divisions ; Bhains Ke, Chhari Ke and Karakhal Ke. These three sections are further subdivided into 9 Gotras: Jhagru, Maiya, Manhaura Timaichi, Padarath, Khaderia, Barke, Rangila and Sadhaulia.

The author on personal investigations came to learn that Sahasmal had 3 sons : Karkhar, Mahayas and Chhari. They gave birth to a number of sons and from the name of these sons various sub-divisions draw their origin. Karkhar had nine sons : Chirelly, Gahla, Kodan, Sahaiya, Timaichi, Mahta, Rangoo, Masta, and Janga. Mahayas produced seven sons : Mina, Nandu, Naurang, Jasawati, Jasan, Narnaula and Ganju. Chhari, who was not a pure Sansi, had two sons : Roshania and Rattupara. Thus after the above eighteen sons of Sahasmal the Sansi *kuls* or *Gotras* have been established. The descendants of Gahla, for instance, call themselves Gahle Ke and so on.

There is no reliable evidence to determine the period in which Sahasmal flourished. But considering the fact that the offshoots of the tribe are scattered all over India under different local names, we can safely say that he flourished long before the Mohammedan conquest of India. It would not be correct to say that all Sansiyas claiming various Gotras are descended from Sahasmal for there must have been large accretions by the recruitment of outcastes and stray persons from other castes and tribes. Though they claim Rajput descent, they are not unconscious of their present low social status.

In the Eastern Punjab, the Sansis allow prostitution by their women and are known as Kanjars, while in the Western United Provinces they are known as Haburas. Now most of the eminent writers are unanimous that the Kanjars are an offshoot of the Sansis and that the Bhatu and the Sansi are synonymous.

Thus from the above study it is evident that the criminal tribes are a part and parcel of our society. They are composed of men and women recruited from practically all castes and tribes. The recruits mostly belong to such social strata of Society as had no landed property, no education, and no social status worth the name. Some of them are those who failed to readjust themselves after being once displaced by

stronger people. Practically all Hindu criminal tribes profess to be Rajputs and connect their pedigree with some or other notable Rajput Chieftain. It is beyond doubt that they are of mixed origin. In short, all that can be confidently said of the composition of the criminal tribes is that they constitute that section of the society which is habitually addicted to crime.

CHAPTER II.

METHODS OF CRIME AND SPECIALIZATION IN CRIMINAL PRACTICES

Crime has been defined as a violation of law at a particular place and at a particular time. When there are no laws, there can be no crime in the technical sense. Just as laws have been different throughout the ages, so also have been men's conceptions of crime and punishment. As countries advance in civilization, old laws become obsolete and new laws take their place, bringing in their turn new shapes of crime. Crime is not necessarily sin. Nor all sins are crimes. It is a mistake to confuse crime with immorality. If crime is considered from the social point of view without any regard for its degree of severity, or importing into it any notion of sin or immorality, it appears to be no more than a kind of failure on the part of the criminal to adjust himself to the circumstances and environment in which he happens to be placed.

Just as there are different kinds of crimes, so also there are different types of criminals. Attempts have been made to classify them on the basis of heredity, environmental factors, age and the nature of crime. There are certain tribes and sections of people in India known as the 'Criminal Tribes' who regard crime as a hereditary calling and have developed an elaborate code of discipline, formalities and even rituals. They adopt crime as profession and engage in anti-social activities as if they were traditional observances sanctioned by religion. They lead more or less a nomadic life and wander from place to place in search of opportunities for theft and robbery. There are various types of criminal tribes in India. Some are still vagrant and earn their livelihood by exhibiting dancing bears, playing on instruments, singing, dancing and the like. Others, however, follow more serious occupations having settled on land as agriculturists, or working as labourers in fields and factories. But whatever occupation they follow, they generally supplement their income by crime ranging from petty theft and pilfering to robberies and dacoities attended sometimes with even murders.

The *modus operandi* of crime of these people differs from tribe to tribe and from locality to locality. In one district a tribe is addicted to one crime while the same tribe in another province may be prone to an altogether different type of crime. The specialization in certain crimes by a tribe in a particular area depends very much on the local conditions or the surroundings and environments of the place concerned. The Geographical situation of a place, the fertility of the soil, the climatic conditions and the general prosperity or poverty of the masses determine the nature and volume of the crimes committed at a particular place. ⁴On the whole, the crimes committed in India are due more to economic causes than anything else as is evident from the fact that the crime level of India rises and falls with the nature of the harvests and the prosperity of the masses. ⁵ However, it is not an easy task to distinguish between the crimes committed and the methods adopted by various criminal communities in different parts of India unless a study of each tribe is made with special reference to its anti-social activities and specializations. Hence the following few pages deal with the result of an attempt made to achieve this end.

Bawaria

In the past the Bawarias were notorious for committing day light dacoities. They have now adopted less violent forms of crime and more shrewed methods which render their detection a matter of great difficulty. Though they are mostly illiterate and scattered all over India, they have kept intact distinctive language, customs, and code words. And thus they are able to be in close communication with the entire tribe throughout India and Burma.

They are particularly notorious for committing thefts from camps specially of Government officials and are probably the most clever of camp-robbers and tent-cutters to be found in India. They are equally adept in *nakabzani*—removing goods from a building by gaining entrance through a hole made in the wall. They have an interesting custom connected with this. On reaching the house they want to burgle, they throw 3 small stones one after the other to ascertain whether the inmates are fast asleep. While this is probably no more than a measure of precaution or safety, they say that in this way they decide their course of action. According to them if a man gets up on this warning, it shows that he has earned

money by hard and honest labour; if he continues to sleep, they conclude that he has acquired money by dishonest means. Hence, if one does not wake up, they consider themselves justified in robbing him and distributing his wealth among those who have a better claim to it. Sometimes, they enter the camps of pilgrims in the guise of ascetics and steal ornaments and other valuables when the inmates are asleep.

They now very rarely resort to dacoity on the highways. Burglary is their speciality and they commit it only when they are sure of a large haul. Before preparing for an expedition omens are sought by counting grains of boiled wheat. If the omens are favourable they set out on the expedition in guises best suited to their requirements. Every now and then they also receive instructions in this connection from the various spies specially employed to assist the various tribal gangs in their depredations. They generally pass as *fakirs* or *sanyasis*¹ or *gosains*. The Jamadar becomes the principal *mahant*², while others follow him as disciples. They carry their weapons concealed in their clothes and bundles of corn, while bamboo sticks are carried openly in the hands. At one time they may be clean-shaven, at another they might have grown a beard and a moustache. At the time of committing the offence they usually put on a mask to avoid chances of recognition and operate during dark nights. For breaking into houses, they make use of the following devices :

Bagli Naqab

A hole into which a hand can be inserted is made in the wall at the side of the door frame and at the level of the latch. The arm is entered through this hole and the door is unfastened from the inner side.

Naqab

When they are aware of the exact place at which a certain property is placed in a room and are sure that the property can be removed from outside without personal entrance, they simply make a hole at the place in question and secure their booty through it.

When committing burglary they are said to carry with them a wax ball and a small packet containing some grains

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1. Mendicants belonging to different religions.
 2. High Priest.

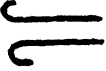

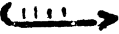






of wheat. On entering a room either a wick is lighted or grains of wheat are thrown about for locating property. When a Bawaria is searched he explains the presence of these things on ingenious grounds. He usually explains that the grains of wheat are the blessed offerings of some deity and he uses them as medicine for some ailment or other, while the wax ball is meant to be lighted when offering prayers to the deity. During a single night a gang of Bawarias can successfully commit a number of offences. Usually they do not indulge in their anti-social activities in partnership with any one who does not belong to their tribe. They are expert counterfeiters of coin and are adept in circulating base coins. Their chief weapon is *Gyan*¹ which they often call *Gyandass* as if it were the name of a fellow disciple to delude other persons. It is mainly used to dig holes in the walls of houses and the cupshaped end is used to remove the displaced matter from the mouth of the hole.

GAYER in his lectures and the Gazetteer of the Central Provinces for the year 1906 gives a vivid account of the Bawaria coiners. According to these accounts they travel with their families from place to place and represent themselves as beggars or famine-stricken Rajputs in search of employment. Their usual method of uttering a spurious coin is to tender a Farrukhabadi² Rupee in payment of a small purchase. When the seller does not accept the coin, he asks with an affected innocence to be shown a genuine coin, which he handles and retains returning a base coin in its place. Counterfeit coins are generally kept concealed in a bamboo stick which they always keep with them and stock genuine coins in a pocket just below the hips on the left side of their *dhotis*.

When Bawaria camps are searched one invariably hears a peculiar sound produced from the throat which is considered as a warning to others to escape if possible.

They use a regular and wide spread system of signs when they are engaged in their criminal activities. Some of the signs used by them are:—

1. It is about a foot in length, tipped at one end with 3 inches of steel tapering to a point and shaped at the other end like a cup.
2. Coin which is current in Farrukabad only.

-  The curved arc points out the direction the gang has chosen.
-  Three persons are hiding in the vicinity.
-  Four persons have gone in the direction of the arrow.
-  Two persons are hidig in the well.
-  There are four persons in the temple.
-  It is an indication that property has been secured and the gang has escaped in the direction of the line.
-  The gang is encamping in the village.
-  The gang encamped in the vicinity for 3 days and has now left for the new destination.
-  The gang has in its possession property worth Rs. 400/- and has gone towards the direction denoted by the arrow.

While going to a place one of them so drags his stick on the way that it leaves a track behind. Their accomplices easily follow the track so left and reach the rendezvous at the appointed time.

Where the road is metalled or the ground is such which cannot conveniently be marked they make piles of stones and leaves alternately every few furlongs to guide other accomplices.

Bhatu

The Bhatu represent another dangerous criminal tribe. Their activities are regulated by traditional customs and usages. Criminal expeditions are usually undertaken by them on new moonlit-nights and always after invoking their tribal god *Maharaj*. They indulge in all sorts of crimes and do not at all hesitate to adopt brutal and violent means to achieve their

objects. They seldom go with men of other tribes for professional work. The accomplices of a gang are very loyal to each other and it is very rare that any substantial information leaks out from a member of the gang. They keep in touch with the local goldsmiths and other unscrupulous men of influence either by giving a share of the spoils or through the influence of their womenfolk over them. It is only due to the sincere support of such intermediaries that the crimes go undetected.

The Bhatu generally adopt the manners of well-to-do Brahmins and Thakurs and carry on their profession successfully in Indian states and adjoining territories. They are greatly assisted by their womenfolk in their plans. Their standard of morality is low and they have generally no objection if their women enter into immoral intimacy with outsiders so long as they are faithful to the tribe and help its anti-social activities. Their women do not ordinarily acquire a genuine feeling of love for an outsider and seldom prove faithful. Sometimes a Bhatu woman enters the house of a rich man as a domestic servant or as a mistress, whilst her tribesmen frequently visit her as hawkers or mendicants or as near relations and gather all possible information about the house. When a suitable opportunity offers itself they make away with the valuables.

They usually keep a knife tied on the back and make use of a Gahdala¹ for breaking open the doors and walls. Their favourite weapon is a short thick bludgeon which they can throw with great force and accuracy. At times they have been arrested with firearms in their possession.

Biloch

Criminal Bilochs are mainly found in the Punjab. Although some of them possess agricultural lands, they do not utilize them to earn their living. They are daring and arrant thieves and it is very difficult to secure their conviction. They are careful not to commit any serious crime in the neighbourhood of their own district. Besides, they endeavour that their neighbours should form a good opinion of them and to achieve this end they occasionally oblige them by doing odd jobs. Generally they leave their womenfolk and children behind during their expeditions and work in groups of 8 to 10 persons. The gang chooses its own leader, who meets the expenses and the requirements of the gang and their dependants. When

↓ Gahadala is a weapon used by Bhatu.

their rendezvous happens to be at a place of sanctity they pose to be pilgrims. Very often they are seen in the guise of Punjabi merchants. The leader represents himself as the proprietor while the accomplices pass as his assistants and servants. They mostly stay in *serais*¹ and make friends with their keepers to obtain information regarding the wealthy and well-to-do persons of the locality. The *serai* keepers also help them in securing temporary service in the houses of such wealthy people.

It appears from the cases reported against them that they prefer to enter a house either from the roof or by scaling the walls. They sometimes make use of a novel method of effecting their entrance into a house. They tie a rope round the body of an 'Iguana' (a creature well known for its capacity to cling tenaciously), or a giant lizard, and throw the reptile on the roof of the wall top to which it clings firmly while the Biloch climbs swiftly on the roof with the aid of the rope. They also scale walls by means of a bamboo fixed along them. Generally they select dark nights for such operations.

When returning home by railway train they do not alight at the station nearest to their destination but elsewhere and cover the remaining distance on foot to avoid suspicion and to bluff the police or other pursuer. On completing a theft successfully they always leave two or three spies in the vicinity to watch and report the activities of the police.

Giloi Bilochs generally go out on a criminal expedition in gangs of 8 to 12 men in the guise of Syeds, or Kureshi fakirs². They stay at odd places where necessary information may be conveniently gathered. In travelling, they sometimes make use of horses and camels and carry their merchandise on them. In day time, the gangsters scatter in different directions apparently to beg alms but really to gather information for their night activities. At night they all assemble, compare notes from the experience gathered during the day and plan their course of action.

Doms

Webster has described Doms as 'a tribe hopelessly wild and savage in their nature' and noted for their rooted aversion to regular work of all kinds; originally not given to stealing,

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1. A place where a traveller can stay gratis or on making a nominal payment.
 2. Mendicants belonging to different Mohammedan sects,

but according to Hollins the Dom has now laid aside his superstitious abhorrence of the burglar's iron and has added robbery to his resources. He is a social outcaste. Jail has no terror for him, but he stands in mortal terror of the lash. Bramley's report on 'Inter Provincial Crime' also confirms the statement. Most of the Dom women are of strong constitution and with much readier wit than their husbands but of easy virtue. Elderly women hawk herbs and drugs claiming wonderful results, and manage to gain entry into the houses of rich persons to procure necessary information for the tribal gangs.

Sir William Crooke does not mention any organized Dom gangs. He simply writes that they live in forests, and subsist by hunting wolves, hare, other wild animals and birds. They also supplement their income by gathering and selling roots and vegetable products which do not require any cultivation and by extracting juice from palm trees like other gypsy tribes.

But on investigating the author found that the Doms practice *Tappa Bazi*¹. on a large scale. Thieving now has become a pastime with them. Each Dom is generally armed with a knife and one of his usual methods of committing burglary is to enter a house with a pot of live charcoal in his hand. If he is detected and pursued by any body, he would throw the fire on the person who tries to seize him and thus manages to escape with the booty. They also specialize in snatching ornaments from the persons of sleeping women and children.

Habura

One of the most interesting and dangerous criminal tribes is that of the Haburas who wander about in gangs and waylay caravans and wedding parties whenever they get an opportunity. They start with throwing stones and missiles and end with a violent onslaught on their victims in which they freely use quarterstaves and deadly weapons.

The fact that a large number of Haburas have been convicted of violent crimes proves the dangerous character of their activities and makes them object of dread. Blunt has referred to their ferocious methods and also to their use of deadly weapons, but Sir William Crooke who wrote much earlier makes no mention of these facts. The latter wrote that the violence of which the Haburas are accused is visible

1. passing brass for gold.

only at the time of self-defence. Usually they do not carry any weapon except a bludgeon.

They adopt various disguises : Some times they claim to be Brahmins on pilgrimage, at times they dress themselves as constables and organize mock search parties ; occasionally they lie in ambush and all of a sudden attack a passing cart or a party of men. Sometimes the wandering Haburas represent themselves as professional mendicants ; and when they go in batches of twenty to forty they assume the guise of beggars.

Harni

Harnis seldom commit any offence locally beyond the occasional theft of corn and standing crops. They pass themselves as *fakirs*¹, beggars, quacks, travelling merchants etc. and proceed in gangs of 10 or 12 able bodied tribesmen to other districts to commit serious offences. When they pass as grain merchants they keep with them a few bags of corn on donkeys for the sake of appearance. They sometimes keep large herds of cattle with them and pass as butchers or cattle dealers. Generally they make use of many a weapon in their criminal pursuits. They call their weapons 'Rizak Devi', which means giver of food, and worship them on criminal occasions.

In the evening, the members of different gangs gather together at a particular spot and discuss the results of their enquires and proceed to fix up fresh engagements. After a short time they disperse in different directions in small groups and at the appointed time meet in the vicinity of the rendezvous taking every possible care against suspicion or detection. One party would then start for the actual destination, while another group would be left outside the village to watch their shoes and discarded clothes, while the third party would dispose itself in such a manner as to be in close touch with the principal party. One of them would hide himself in some lane or suitable corner near the place of the proposed burglary and keep a strict watch over the chaukidar or any other passer-by. Another would quickly dig a hole in the wall of the house and enter, leaving the third at the mouth of the aperture to receive the goods passed out to him. One who enters keeps a dim light in his hand to be able to see the desired articles and to use the knife tied on one's back to

1. Muslim mendicants.

cut open the springs of leather boxes, and neclaces worn by sleeping women. Having accomplished their work, they meet at a place outside the village and after proceeding some distance put on their shoes and clothes and return to their destination where they carefully conceal the booty and their weapons.

They continue this kind of activity during the dark half of the month on almost every night till the moon-lit nights come making such work risky. They then turn their attention to disposing of the goods through local agents or receivers. They always prefer to sell the articles at distant places to avoid detection. One of them is placed in charge of the money realised. The articles which cannot be sold are stuffed in huge bags, the mouths of which are packed with cotton or hemp.

Besides burglary, they frequently commit '*Tappa*'¹ from the roofs or courtyards where women and children sleep in the hot season. When it is not possible to make use of a rope for climbing a wall, they stand one upon another in such a way as to enable one of them to reach the roof. They use the same method for coming out when it is not possible to open the main entrance from within. Sometimes two or more members of the gang enter the courtyard or climb up the roof in which case they would often stand over the sleepers with their sticks ready to strike them if they utter a syllable.

At times, the members of the gang bolt the entrances of the neighbouring houses from outside, so that in case of alarm, the neighbours may not be able to come to the victims' rescue. One of them enters the courtyard of the house and manages to open the main door to admit his accomplices. Even if the inmates wake up, the burglars do not mind as they are stronger and greater in number and hence confident that they can overpower them and escape before any help could reach from the neighbours.

Their chief weapon of burglary is '*Sabbal*'.² It is never kept in their houses, but is always concealed elsewhere. Before starting on an expedition, they observe omens, eat sweet rice and smoke their pipes. While digging a place they do it so quickly that it does not disturb a man sleeping nearby. When the aperture is large enough to admit a man, he rounds

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1. A name given to such daring thefts which are committed by entering a house either by means of a rope or by jumping in. The fellow simply removes whatever he can from the body of sleeping women and without opening the doors.
 2. An instrument of iron like a long nail without the head.

his shoulders as far as possible and enters the hole after plunging his hands and head forward. On entering the room he quickly chooses the valuables which are worth removing. If he can break open the boxes, he does so; otherwise he opens the locks with the least possible noise. Then one of them enters the room, the other comes to the entrance of the hole and waits there. In case any of the sleeping persons wakes up, the burglar hides till all are fast asleep again. In case the inmates become suspicious he goes away. So expert are the burglars in entering houses through holes in walls and roofs that they can make their way through holes of comparatively very small size through which ordinary people cannot pass.

Being conscious that the police often trace criminals through foot-prints, the Harnis wrap a cloth round their feet when engaged in their unlawful activities, thus rendering detection through footprints a sheer impossibility.

Although the Harnis are subjected to various restrictions of the Criminal Tribes Act, they manage to evade them and continue their nefarious trade by various devices, such as:

- (a) by obtaining passes to visit villages in distant parts of their own district or other districts;
- (b) by securing passes for long periods to carry goods on camels from place to place;
- (c) by obtaining passes from Criminal Tribes Settlements on the plea of visiting their sacred places or Harni villages for fixing up the engagements of their sons and daughters. (In fact, they either do not go to the place mentioned in the pass or if they go at all, they do not stay there for the prescribed time and thus find time for their unlawful pursuits);
- (d) by joining the Harnis living in Indian states, where the administration of criminal tribes is comparatively lax;
- (e) by boldly transgressing the conditions written on the pass on some pretext or other;
- (f) by joining the Harnis who have passes for their whole life to work on camels.
- (g) by secretly absenting themselves for long periods or during nights when they are expected to remain in their houses.

Sometimes it is found that one of the Harnis disguises himself as a *sadhu* or *sant* and establishes his own *kuti* (hut) near some important crossing where he entertains the *passers* by

with cold water and tobacco. During his conversation with the visitors he gathers all necessary information.

Like Bhatu women, females among the Harnis are also handsome and manage to enter the houses of rich people as maid servants or mistresses, and live there for a considerable length of time. When they get an opportunity, they pass the jewellery of their masters to their male relations or themselves make off with it. In so doing they leave their children born to them in their new abode with their masters in memory of their alliance. If, however, the master discovers the secret beforehand she would face him boldly and threaten him with public exposure. Under such circumstances, the victim, usually a respectable and prosperous person, prefers to hush up the matter and keeps quiet.

Karwal

The Karwals are notorious for cattle lifting. They steal goats so stealthily that detection is impossible. They are familiar with the most vulnerable parts of the animal's body, for instance the neck, which they squeeze in such a way that it is not possible for the victim to even bleat. Women can hide goats under their *ghagras*¹ without detection, ghagras which they wear on such occasions are made of sixty to eighty yards of cloth. They have got a peculiar method of stealing corn from moving carts. They would make a hole in the bag of corn and tie a cloth beneath it so that the corn may collect in it while the cart is moving. As the cart proceeds on its journey they go on collecting the corn by changing the cloth as soon as it is full.

In self-defence or when they are threatened with detection, they do not hesitate to resort to violence; they always carry a thick stick about 2 feet long and strike their opponents on the head.

Mahtam

Among all the criminal tribes which are addicted to petty pilfering, the Mahtams have the worst reputation as thieves of standing crops and of grain from threshing floors. They are notorious cattle thieves as well. At times when they know that a cattle fair is going to be held at a particular place, they would hide themselves in bushes and bridges near the

1. A dress worn by women below waist.

highways and when a herd of cattle passes by the road, they somehow manage to steal a number of cattle. It is said that they also commit burglary and make use of skeleton keys for opening locks.

Mina

Of the two classes of Minas, i.e., (i) the *zamindari*, (ii) the *chaukidari*, the latter is generally addicted to crime and is governed by the Criminal Tribes Act. They are divided into *thok* (groups) and each *thok* has its own *thokdar* (Leader) who is responsible for the welfare of his *thok*. Ordinarily, the *thokdar* does not leave his village for committing any crime. They generally leave their headquarters in gangs after celebrating *Dasehra*¹ and return by the time of *Holi*².

The Minas usually disguise as Hindu mendicants, Brahmins, Rajputs, wood-cutters, grass dealers etc. Moonlit nights are used in marking down a suitable number of houses and gathering necessary information about them, while they commence their actual work when the dark nights approach. They generally visit sacred places and commit theft in the tents of pilgrims. They cultivate friendly relations with rich and thoughtless women who are fond of displaying their ornaments out of vanity. For such purpose they also make use of their womenfolk when necessary.

One of their usual methods of creating confidence in the hearts of the inhabitants of a place selected for their operations is to start a small business or a shop in the locality and settle with their wife and children. In due course when they find that they have gained the confidence of the inhabitants and have gathered all essential information about the wealthy persons of the locality, they call their tribesmen who clear away after achieving their objects. Their implement for house breaking is called *rumal* (handkerchief) in their slang. To enter a room they bore a hole in the wall, generally very clumsily made near the corner.

Pakhiwara or Pakhiwas.

They are expert burglars and haunt railway trains and sacred places. When they go out they leave some persons behind making them responsible for looking after their families

1 & 2. *Dasehra* and *Holi* are prominent festivals observed among the Hindus.

and for supplying them with information regarding the efforts of the police to trace the absconders. When on active work, they represent themselves as pilgrims, *Banjaras*¹ *Kanojas* or cattle dealers according to circumstances.

In effecting entry into a house, they are not partial to any one method but generally it is seen in cases of theft committed by the Pakhiwaras that they make a hole just above the level of the floor. It is said that the Pakhiwaras after making a hole keep the displaced material in the room near the opening of the hole so that the investigating officer may be led to suspect that the hole was bored from inside. At times they make tunnels to reach a place.

In winter when the inmates of a house are mostly in, making housebreaking a difficult affair, they take to railway thefts, as it is comparatively easy in the railway compartments to remove the luggage of the travellers.

Tagu

Tagus are adept in petty pilfering at fairs and marriage occasions. Gang organization among them is not so well developed as among the Bilochs and the Sansis. The Tagus do not commit serious offences like them. We do not hear of any cases of cattle lifting and burglary in which they were involved. Their practice of visiting fairs and other occasions where people assemble in large numbers is so well-known to the public that sometimes people engage them on such occasions so that their brethren may not come and steal, specially when their own tribesmen have been made responsible for all the losses. They are generally agriculturists with farms of their own and adopt light crime to supplement their meagre income from agriculture.

On bathing ghats they keep a vigilant look out for opportunities to steal clothes and other goods of the pilgrims. As soon as they get a chance, they manage to remove such articles as they can lay their hands upon. One of their devices is to move about the ghat with their own clothes in their hands, as if in search of a suitable place to bathe. As soon as somebody is off his guard they remove his clothes or exchange them with their own which are no better than rags.

One of their favourite tricks for snatching ornaments from the person of a well dressed woman in crowded places is to prick a needle in her back. Taking advantage of her

1. Grain merchants who carry their stocks on mules and carts.

inevitable confusion they manage to snatch or cut her bracelet and make off.

At times they take a trained child of tender age who cannot be suspected of any foul play to a crowded place where well-to-do men and women congregate. One of them would pretend to beat the boy cruelly on some pretext or other; when the boy raises a hue and cry a large number of onlookers soon gather to find out the matter. At this moment the boy darts forward and clings closely to some kindly looking well dressed woman entreating her to save him. Before the bewildered woman is able to gather her wits, the boy manages to cut one or more of her ornaments with a piece of sharp steel and vanishes into the crowd.

A gang of Tagus consists of three men and is called by them a *Jut*. The men are called *Uprendas* and the boy is known as *Chhawa*. When a good *shikar* is visible, the boy is sent to the *shikar* and the *Uprendas* post themselves at convenient places. They use secret signs for communicating with each other during an operation. When the leader gives the first signal the boy becomes ready and at the next he snatches some articles of the unfortunate person, and passes it on to one of the *Uprendas* who manages to escape along with the booty. If at this critical moment the leader sees that the boy is likely to fail in his attempt, he makes another signal directing him to move away without the object. If the boy is caught red handed in his attempt to steal, the *Uprendas* intervene as if they are kind strangers. They after chiding and warning him tell him to run away and to be careful in future.

Sansi

The Sansis may be divided into two sections, i.e., those who have settled upon land and those who still lead a nomadic life. The former do not themselves commit serious crimes, but they occasionally help the latter section, the vagrant Sansis are a menace to the countryside where they wander. They are a notorious tribe of burglars and highway robbers, who attack passengers or drivers of vehicles unawares with stone showers. They sometimes dress themselves as constables and organize mock searches of travellers in order to seize all that they may find in their possession.

Some Sansis keep large herds of cattle. When they intend to steal others' cattle their usual trick is to drive their own cattle into the herd of others. One of them would divert

the attention of the herdsman by busying him in idle talk while his associates detach some cattle from his herd and drive them off with their own. They are often brought into conflict with agriculturists for stealing crops and for grazing their cattle in their corn-fields. When the corn is ripe, they would go to distant fields and after shearing off the heads and filling them in sacks bring them to their camps. When they rob threshing floors, they take their women as well with them for carrying away the corn.

It is said that the Sansis do not themselves make counterfeit coins, but are proficient in uttering base coins in their transactions. One of their usual tricks in passing base coins is that they pretend to sell a cow or a buffaloe at a low price and go away with the money thus received ; but return after a short time entreating the purchaser to give back the cattle as their brother or some other relation does not agree to part with it at such a low price. The innocent purchaser returns the cattle and receives an equal number of spurious coins in place of his own good ones.

The Sansis are habitual lifters of articles from moving carts and other conveyances. They steal blankets, cooking utensils and clothes carelessly left on the ground by the cultivators. They are expert camp-thieves. When the shop-keepers are idle or careless, they also lift articles from their shops.

While committing burglary they prefer to effect entry through windows or by climbing up the walls than by boring a hole in the wall. They do not hesitate to use their staves when they meet with opposition or resistance ; but they are generally content with incapacitating their opponents and are rarely guilty of wanton murder. This is corroborated by the fact that fracture of legs and arms are common in dacoities committed by Sansis. They make a thorough search of the persons of their victims for ornaments and other valuables. When they go on a highway robbery, they are well equipped from top to toe to meet any resistance or misfortune. A special feature of Sansi dacoity is the suddenness of the attack and the rapidity of the lathi blows. After finishing their work they sometimes leave some articles of the booty in the vicinity of the village to create suspicion in the mind of the investigating police.

They prefer staying on river banks and on the boundaries between two police stations, so that neither authority is zealous in their watch over them, leaving it to the other party. A number of them are permanent absconders and it is these who

arrange for and commit serious crimes, as in their case detection becomes difficult. A section among them is always out, giving innocent performances like singing, dancing and snake charming to country people. While giving performance in the villages, they mark the houses of rich people.

They usually dispose of the plundered property in any of the following ways:

1. Bury it under a tree or bush.
2. Hide it under the legs of their cots and sometimes under their hearths.
3. Conceal it under the tent poles or under the pegs to which their cattle are tied.
4. Silver and gold ornaments are melted down and concealed in hollow tent poles.
5. Cash is generally converted into currency notes and sewn in quilts or donkey packs.
6. Women hide jewellery and cash in the hidden pockets of their underwears.

Stolen property is disposed of through the *Kalals*¹, and goldsmiths. The intending purchaser has to accompany them to the jungle where the actual transaction takes place. It is said that they are honest in their dealings with such customers.

The Sansi gangs are generally divided into two groups, (i) a mobile gang composed of young persons and (ii) a less active gang consisting of old men, women, and children. This division enables the young people to committ crimes with greater vigour and quickness and also escape easily when threatened with detection or arrest. The group consisting of old men, women and children, move independently and more slowly according to their convenience. Generally the members of the two groups do not allow themselves to be seen visiting each other and do so only when it is absolutely safe. This division also explains the fact that when a Sansi camp is raided it has always been seen that only old men, women and children are found there. They are fond of keeping a large number of dogs to guard their camps and also to help them in securing food by killing jackals and other animals.

Bengali Sansi

Bengali Sansis are another kind of Sansis who are mainly found in Bengal. Some of them have now migrated

1. Country-liquor sellers.

to the Punjab. On the whole, their customs, habits and methods of crime bear similarity with those of ordinary Sansis.

The Bengali Sansis are expert thieves. When out on burglary they keep spears and pick axes for breaking into houses but on being questioned they give out that the instruments are meant for killing jackals and other wild animals. They can effect easy entry into houses through comparatively small holes, but they knowingly make clumsy apertures of varying sizes to produce an impression that a rude and an inexperienced burglar had been at work.

They go in gangs to commit crimes. Having prepared the way for entry, they post two or more men according to the requirements of a place to keep a strict watch and to bolt all the adjacent houses from outside to prevent the neighbours from coming to the help of the victims. They like Bawarias first test whether the inmates are asleep or awake by throwing few pebbles into the room. On being satisfied that the inmates are fast asleep, one or two of them would enter the room and locate the valuables either by lighting a match or by groping. If at this moment anybody wakes up, they imitate the voice of mice to lull the suspicions of the inmates into the belief that the disturbance was simply due to mice. When they encounter dogs, which prove troublesome or hinder their activities they quiet them by offering *churi*¹ or such other stuff.

They keep a long steel needle to locate property underground. When they suspect that valuables are buried under the courtyard, they examine the ground by means of a needle. It easily penetrates the earthen floor but is stopped when it encounters a hard object. When asked they explain that they use this needle for sewing curtains and repairing tents.

They are usually found to adopt any or all of the under-mentioned devices according to their requirements when committing crimes:

On reaching a place they visit most of the neighbouring villages in the guise of mendicants and physicians. It is during their house to house visit that they come to know about the wealth of individual families. Later on this information is utilized when they actually commit crimes. They pretend to possess a jackal's horn which in fact they themselves manufacture but inform innocent people that one jackal out of thousand is horned and that this horn has the power to control evil spirit and to get anything desired. On finding a suitable

1. Bread powder mixed with jagree.

victim, they make friends with him, by presenting him this horn and telling legends about it. Then they suggest to him some other charm which has the quality of doubling anything with which it is placed for three days. If the person in question appears somewhat credulous they further volunteer to place the charm with his valuables themselves and to recite a *mantra* so that full effects of the charm may be obtained. Probably the object of this trick is to know the place where valuables are stored. They are very skilful in extracting vermin from the roots of teeth and ears. They successfully make use of this skill in gaining necessary information about new places which they visit and of the inhabitants of that locality.

Another device by which they obtain entry into the houses of rich persons is their pretended skill in snake-charming. Some of them are in the possession of tamed snakes, whom they cunningly introduce into the house they want to inspect closely. The actual procedure is something like this. The tamed snake is made to enter into the house in question from the back side. The burglar then goes to the front portion or to the main gate of the house and after snuffing for two or three minutes informs the owner of the house that there is a venomous snake in his house and that he can catch it. After the usual preliminaries of music etc. he enters the house and makes a thorough search in practically every nook and corner and then catches the tamed snake.

At times a gang of Bengali Sansis would hide themselves near a village and shower it with pieces of stone three or four times every night for four or five nights continually apparently with no aim; but really with the object of harassing and tiring down the villagers; when the bombardment ceases, the harassed and sleepless villagers feel assured and begin to sleep soundly. At this time the gang would avail the opportunity to commit a number of thefts in the vicinity with greater safety and without any fear of opposition from the inhabitants.

Sometimes in full view of a village a party of Bengali Sansis start throwing stones when they are pursued by the majority of able bodied villagers, another party of their brethren enters the village from the back and quickly removes everything it can lay its hands upon.

A group of four or five Sansis would go to a shop apparently to make some purchases. One of them would order the shop-keeper to supply a few articles and to attract his attention he begins to count the money to show that it is

quite enough for the purchases of his companions also. His friends too ask the shop-keeper to show certain goods to them. In the meantime the shop-keeper is made to understand any how that the men with the purse would make payments for all. By and by others finish their purchases and disperse, leaving the purse bearer alone. He also makes two or three purchases and makes payment for them. When the shop-keeper asks him to pay for others as well he pretends not to be acquainted with them and goes away.

On coming to a new village where they apparently settle, they first create confidence in the heart of all concerned by making prompt payment for the articles purchased by them. They gradually increase their dealings on credit as they gain more and more confidence of the shop-keepers. At first the interval between the purchases and payment is short; but with growing confidence they are allowed credit for longer periods. When they see that a considerable amount of debt has accumulated they inform the businessmen that they have some valuable goods in their camps and that he can purchase them at a very low price. This is enough to induce the shop-keeper to go to the place with a good amount of cash.

A safe place is then chosen where ornaments and jewellery belonging to their womenfolk; are shown to the businessmen; while the price is being settled a Sansi disguised as a police constable is seen approaching the spot and the shop-keeper is told to run away instantaneously lest he be involved in serious troubles. They arrange the whole show in such a way that the purchaser also leaves behind his own money which he brought for making the purchases.

One of the devices to snatch money from travellers is to dress a young girl of their tribe in a very charming manner and leave her alone on the road side and hide themselves near about. When a traveller comes and sees a beautiful damsel alone, who also responds to his looks, he throws caution to the winds. She is ready to meet him more than half way and is willing to sell herself for a few rupees. The traveller does not mind the petty amount and is even prepared to pay a larger sum. At this moment the hidden Sansis come out and threaten the traveller, who is so terrified that he consents to give any thing they demand for having made advances to their wife or daughter.

Thus we see that the *modus operandi* of crime of these people differs from tribe to tribe and from locality to locality. It is also clear from the above that the different tribes follow

or adopt particular devices which they have mastered in their pursuit of crime. Their anti-social activities are mostly against property, and include burglary in houses, dacoity on highways, pickpocketing in crowded thoroughfares, religious centres and railway stations ; theft from granaries, threshing floors, railway compartments and other vehicles, cattle lifting and uttering spurious coins etc. It is in very rare cases that they resort to violence. For achieving their aims they adopt a number of disguises and even tolerate immoral intimacy of their womenfolk. They take every possible precaution against being caught red handed not only at the moment of committing the crime but also when disposing of the stolen property through trusted agents. Their women act as spies and prove very useful to their profession of crime. At the same time, we should not lose sight of the fact that these tribes had practically never owned any property in the past nor do they possess any today, except a very few who have permanently settled on the land. They have been nomadic for generations and have taken to crime as a profession in the absence of any other adequate means of subsistence.

CHAPTER III.

CRIME CULTURE AND APPRENTICESHIP.

At the present day there is a general consensus of opinion that crime is an outcome of social environment rather than of individual wickedness. '*Criminals are made and not born*' is the revised modern version of the old saying. From this it is not to be concluded that the factor of the influence of heredity in the making of a criminal is altogether ignored or minimised. Without entering into any abstruse discussions regarding the exact roles of heredity and environment in the making of an individual, it may safely be accepted that both are important and decisive factors. But when we consider the problem from the practical point of view, such as with the motive of social reform, it seems desirable to emphasize the social factor or environment in the incidence of crime, because it is more obvious and capable of being tackled readily and effectively.

In the case of criminal tribes, we have to consider why and how a tribe continues its course of crime for generations and how its younger members are initiated into a life of crime and grow into full fledged criminals. We have first of all to admit the possibility of an inherited predisposition to crime. If there is anything which goes by the name of heredity and lawlessness it is ingrained in them from the very beginning. But this is further developed and accentuated by the environment in which they are brought up. From the very moment of their birth, as it were, they are suckled into crime at their mother's breast. Some of the factors in the environment which are responsible for their criminal career are their poverty, general low standard of life and culture, the absence of anything approaching moral or civic consciousness in them and finally their mode of life which releases them from all such obligations as settled life in a place imposes. These are enough to turn even ordinary people with normal instincts into criminals. When we add to these other special circumstances which are to be found amongst the criminal tribes we can no longer wonder why these people persist in their evil ways. Among these special circumstances may be mentioned a perverted notion of crime almost amounting to its idealization,

and an efficient and well guarded organization reminding us of the vice-rings or the rackets of America and Europe providing facilities to its members and threatening severe punishments on deserters.

There are therefore strong reasons and inducements which attach these people to a life of crime in spite of its hazards, penalties and growing restrictions. They are actuated not only by the blind adherence to the traditional profession but also by the natural desire to supplement their meagre income by crime as a sort of subsidiary industry. To these we should add the joy of the wandering life, the call of the open and adventure, the dread of a humdrum and settled life which is so strong with all nomadic people. There is also, in the case of the criminal tribes, the dangerous lure or attraction of crime, of living by one's wit, which call into play all the resources and the abilities of a person. Many far superior and educated persons have chosen a life of crime carried away by its fascination and tired of the monotony and drudgery of a respectable life. Standing beyond the pale of society they rejoice in waging a remorseless war with it, resenting its superior attitude and attempts at their reform, looking on its members with infinite contempt and scorn as dull foolish people born to be fleeced by the more intelligent and clever.

Irresistible as these influences are to make the members of these tribes inclined to crime, they do not however leave the criminal initiation of its young men only to natural instinct and chance. They consciously and deliberately subject them to a strict and systematic course of education and training in crime. As soon as they are sufficiently grown up and capable of noticing and observing things, their education is seriously taken in hand by the elders and the women-folk.

Just as a normal human being endeavours to acquaint his children with everything desirable and good in life, similarly the members of criminal tribes try their best to teach their children the essence of their experience and acquisitions. So long as a child is not sufficiently grown up to accompany them on active duty, the best possible theoretical training is imparted to him in the home, which may enable the juvenile to prove his or her worth in times to come when he is to earn his living by adopting his ancestral profession.

Long before the children receive practical training in the commission of varied anti-social acts they are orally taught everything regarding the disguises and principal code words which they might be required to use for earning their living.

They are so efficiently trained and taught that it becomes almost impossible to see through their disguises. They are actually made to play different roles in the presence of elderly members prior to their being sent out on an expedition. They are so thoroughly conversant with the mode of living, customs, manners and traditions of the people whom they impersonate that they are unhesitatingly accepted as such without raising the slightest suspicion in the minds of others.

Their success in the art of impersonation is mainly due to the fact that a man specializes in only a number of roles according to his capacity and aptitude. It is not an easy task to successfully pass oneself as a person belonging to a particular trade unless one is well acquainted with necessary information regarding the profession in question.

The importance of cooperation and loyalty amongst the tribesmen is impressed upon their children. They are also enjoined to observe the strictest secrecy in all matters affecting the tribe, specially in the presence of strangers and outsiders. The elders play upon the instinct of fear and desire for reward of the youngsters in inculcating this habit. They are expected to observe everything intelligently but are strictly warned to keep their information to themselves, so much so that so long as they are not asked they are not supposed to bring it to the notice of their own tribesmen or parents. The children are so frequently tested and cross-examined that they become past masters in giving vague and evasive replies. People who have to deal with criminal tribes know that at times it is easier to ascertain things from the elderly people than from their children on account of their secretive nature. Although the matter enquired may be quite harmless, yet the youngsters fear to disclose anything and invariably try to put off the investigator on some pretext or other.

It has been observed that the children of criminal tribes are very quarrelsome amongst themselves and they often become the cause of unpleasantness among their parents. But while dealing with the children of other people, these children too, like their elders, become one, forgetting for the time being, their personal grievances and differences. Whenever there is a dispute between a member of the tribe and an outsider, they are not to see whether their fellow children are right or wrong. the foremost duty of every child is to stand by their own brethren. Thus under all circumstances. they stand united against an outsider. This instinct develops in them to such an extent that sometimes it begins to prove harmful to them.

School teachers who have to deal with the children of criminal tribes complain that such boys cannot resist the temptation of helping their brethren dishonestly even at the time of examination. They consider that this help is fair and they are justified in giving it in spite of the instructions of teachers whom they look upon as mere outsiders.

Although the children stand united when dealing with an outsider, yet amongst themselves they are very quick at reporting against each other. Probably this is due to the fact that the elders encourage this habit from the very outset and whenever anybody reports a substantial matter, he is suitably rewarded and the defaulter chastised.

The moral background for the commission of crime is strengthened by the conviction instilled in them from their childhood that it is their birth right and sacred duty to earn their livelihood by committing anti-social acts even though by so doing they put society to great inconvenience and hardship. Such views are imprinted so indelibly on the minds of the juveniles, that at a later stage no amount of advice and reformatory effort can turn the child from the path of vice chalked out for him at his tender and impressionable age. In course of his investigations the author had several opportunities of discussing with the criminal tribes people the injustice and hardship which are wrought by their anti-social activities upon innocent people. The defence which they put forward shows that their criminal activities do not at all prick their conscience. They feel perfectly justified in following the traditional mode of earning their living, specially when all other avenues are practically closed to them and society is not even prepared to tolerate their existence. This brings to light an important truth often ignored that the aptitude of the public towards these people is an important factor and has considerable influence on the extent of crimes in a country. They hold that so long as the Government does nothing substantial to improve their general lot they are not morally justified in interfering with their activities and imposing the present restrictions on them.

This firm belief and conviction in the justness and reasonableness of their activities is one of the greatest factors in alluring or encouraging them to crime. They readily acknowledge the magnanimity and kindness of the government and other charitable institutions in spending large sums of money for their reformation and reclamation. But at the same time they do not hesitate to declare openly that they do not feel particularly indebted to the authorities concerned who, they allege, have

probably their own axe to grind. They believe that what these institutions are doing is their due and hardly deserving of their special gratitude in view of the loss and trouble which they are put to owing to the restrictions imposed upon their activities in settlements and colonies. In their hearts they chafe against the limitations imposed upon them by the Criminal Tribes Act. They think that they would have been much better off and happier had they been left free as other people. This attitude encourages and confirms them in their life of crime and goes a long way in making all efforts towards their reformation and reclamation practically useless. Unless they have a moral regeneration or a change of heart from within, which in its turn will depend upon a change of approach and method in dealing with them, no amount of external reform and coercion will succeed in transforming them into law abiding citizens.

The ideals that are placed by the elders before the children are those of notorious robbers, and dacoits; they are made to believe that their gods and ancestral shades are pleased with such conduct specially when at the expense of outsiders. In other words, we may say that they encourage in them the idea that their traditional anti-social acts would even save them from the curse of their ancestors and gods. They take pride in committing crimes and in their society honour and respect for a person varies according to his success in his criminal-career. Thus from the very outset, a keen desire to be regarded as a hero and excel in their traditional profession is enkindled in the heart of every child. A person who has no taste for crime is looked down as a coward and he commands no respect. A number of customs are prevalent in the various criminal tribes which directly or indirectly encourage their members to adopt crime as a principal source of earning their living. For instance the Bawaria Panchayat does not allow a young person to appear with a turban on his head before the *Panchs* until he qualifies himself by giving a proof of his capability to commit a successful theft. In most of the criminal tribes under investigation, every boy is required to prove his mettle as a successful criminal before he is permitted to marry. The existence of such customs and ideals is a sufficient temptation for the young lads to go in for crime and try to excel therein. In short we may say that all possible efforts are made to convince the lads that the highest aim or ambition of their life lies in crime and if they want to prosper in this as well as the other world the best way open to them is to become anti-social.

It is interesting to note the reasoning by which a

Bawaria justifies his crime. He says that he does not commit the so-called anti-social acts of his own accord. When he receives intimation or inspiration from the gods or the ancestral shades, he has to comply with their behests. This he has to ascertain by such tests as throwing three pebbles by way of warning the inmates. If the victim be an honest man and his wealth the result of the sweat of his brow, the gods wake him; otherwise they lull him to sound sleep so that his wealth may be at the disposal of those who have a better claim to it.

They not only inculcate such perverted moral notions in their young ones but also relate inspiring encounters and anecdotes of their predecessors. Outdoor games like *Daku Daku* (Robber-Robber), *Chor Thanedar* (The thief and the police inspector), are enough to fan the latent aptitudes of the children towards crime. From playing at crimes they easily and naturally proceed to the actual commission of crimes. They are told that the proceeds of crime are in no way less sacred than the wages of honest labour. All this results in changing the whole moral outlook of the young lad. He anxiously awaits the time when he will grow up and amass wealth by surpassing the deeds of the most notorious criminals of the past.

In their moral code or in the *Panchayat* conventions, stealing, robbing, deceiving or telling lies to others do not constitute an offence, but on the other hand, are recognized as desirable for their welfare. When a child demands anything from his mother, the article demanded is not actually given to him but he is told how to get it for himself by various underhand means. If the child is successful in such attempts, the mother pets and encourages him and if caught red handed the parents manage to get him released.

On market days and fairs the parents and other trained children take the young novices with them. While they pretend to purchase something from a shop, the new learners would handle some of the goods and try to steal them. If successful they are made much of; otherwise the elders outwardly rebuke them and purchase the desired articles for them to save appearances.

At times, three or four of them would pretend to buy an article from a shop after posting a number of their friends at convenient places. When a shop keeper is busy, they manage to handle the goods in such a way that if the dealer is careless for a moment, they hide it or pass it on to the member of their group. Even if suspicion arises in the mind of the shopkeeper

he cannot find the lost article or articles with the persons standing at the shop.

At times a number of children would begin to quarrel of their own accord in a market or any other public place and would create such a disturbance that it would attract the attention of the neighbouring shop keepers and bystanders. In the meantime their brethren who are specially appointed for removing articles of careless traders, do their work and escape undetected.

The children are made to accustom themselves to such physical exercises as may make them wiry and muscular, so that they might easily manipulate their body in any way, and jump, climb, or creep as the occasion may require.

Nearly every child is taught the art of keeping small things such as a gold ring or a few coins in his throat without being easily detected. This they are able to practise with the help of a lead ball in lime. Gradually, a receptacle is formed in the cavity leading to the throat and they become accustomed to keep things in it. They can easily eat or drink with the articles lodged in the cavity.

The female children are taught to hide articles in certain pockets of their underwears so that it is not easy to detect them. Some women are able to hide articles even in their vaginal cavity. These children are taught to steal or snatch articles from the persons of others children while they are playing or sleeping.

The female children are specially given the training of attracting outsiders into their confidence, so that when they grow up they may prove a good source of information to the tribal gangs and fetching money to their parents. They gradually become dead to all sense of shame or morality and begin to believe that immoral intimacy with an outsider for the benefit of the tribe is not a sin but a virtue.

Whenever elderly men go out on professional work, they always keep young boys and sometimes young girls with them in order to give them a practical training in the commission of crime. When they see that a child seems to have picked up the rudiments, they make him practise their craft in their presence. If they see that he is timid and hesitating to commit some crime, they deliberately place him in some difficult situation to develop his initiative; for instance, they would leave him alone in the house and hide themselves to see how he faces the situation. If the young offender is successful

so far so good; otherwise they come to his assistance and help him out.

From the facts cited above it is evident that the culture and apprenticeship in crime of the children of criminal tribes commences at the earliest possible age, viz, when they begin to notice and understand things. From the very beginning, they are brought up in an atmosphere where crime is not only an amusement or pastime but the only source of their livelihood. Every thing, even the games and sports is directed to this one end, viz., to instil the idea of the desirability and necessity of their traditional profession. Under such circumstances it is but natural that when these children grow up they prove to be clever and hardened criminals.

CHAPTER IV.

GANG ORGANIZATION.

On the efficient organization of the gang depends mainly the success of the criminal tribes in their anti-social activities. However primitive or backward a caste or a tribe may be, it has been found that the customs and practices which might prove useful in their occupation and daily life have been evolved and followed by them almost spontaneously and intuitively. The Indian criminal tribes belong to such social strata as have long led a vagrant life in jungles, hills and deserts with no fixed abodes. They wander about with their bag and baggage, and pitch their tents on the out-skirts of a village or a city or in some secluded and out of the way place. The difficulties and hardships of earning their living by crime have taught them to live in batches or groups consisting of ten to twelve families; whosoever happens to be the strongest in the batch or commands the confidence of the majority is the head or the leader. Other batches may also voluntarily seek and accept his leadership.

In the absence of any substantial means of living, these homeless poor people have to subsist on begging, cattle lifting and crop stealing. In early times their life was easier; but gradually with the advance of civilization in the country the struggle for existence became more and more acute for these nomadic people and they had to face increased hardships in their criminal career. Instinct and necessity forced them to cooperate and organize their gangs on scientific lines, which, in due course, led to the formation of a tribe or a group from a gang or a number of gangs, under hereditary leaders who usually exercise unlimited powers over the members.

When some promising adventurer comes into prominence, a new gang would gradually spring into existence. The authority and prestige exercised by a gang leader depends on his individual strength, ability and organizing capacity. He has generally plenty of men and money power at his disposal. He may be compared to an entrepreneur who undertakes to meet all necessary expenses of the party, as well as, the families left behind by the members.

From times immemorial the hold of the *Panchayat*¹ over its members has been great so that it has been wielding practically unlimited power over their person and property. This absolute authority of the *Panchayat* is a satisfactory guarantee to the members that if any accomplice behaved dishonestly or proved disloyal to the gang, the *Panchayat* would set him right and arrange for the reimbursement of the aggrieved party. In some cases the *Sarpanch*² and other *Panchs*³ also act as gang leaders at the time of conducting criminal expeditions, as they enjoy the support and confidence of the majority of the tribe.

In some cases the organization of a gang or a number of gangs have developed to such an extent that in due course they began to be called a particular clan or a subclan of the principal tribe. To ensure secrecy, they restricted even their social activities to their own groups. This segregation gradually led to the establishment of a separate exogamous clan or sub-tribe. It has been found that some tribes are named after their gang leaders who flourished in the past. As for instance, the Sansis are named after their leader Sahasmal, a notorious freebooter of the sixteenth century. It is also found that when a number of gangs belonging to a tribe migrate to other provinces they are known by different names.

The gang organization among the criminal tribes is very closely connected with that of the *Panchayat*. It is no exaggeration to say that the one would not be possible without the other. The gangs belonging to the various criminal tribes are legacies from the past. Organizations based on mutual understanding of a limited number of people cannot be accepted to serve for centuries. The tribal laws of almost all criminal tribes provide for the settlement of disputes upto seven generations to the satisfaction of all concerned. There are even today numerous cases pending regarding the maldistribution of booty, realization of loan or any other social misunderstanding as old as one to two hundred years. No facts about the different claims are to be found in black and white. The *Panchayat* relies on the oral evidence of even the grand or great grand children of the real contesting parties, who died long ago in some stealing or robbing expedition. This type of sanction often proves a source of great difficulty to innocent persons, who had no hand in the matter. But the confidence that a case is never time-barred increases the sense of responsibility among the members of the tribe, for every-

1. Tribal Council.

2-3. Head Leader and leaders of the tribal council,

body is made to realize that there is some governing body which will administer justice and arrange for the compensation of the aggrieved party whenever the defaulter or his children are in a position to do so. This assurance acts as a great stimulant to their criminal activities and helps considerably in the smooth running of their gangs.

The members of a gang need not, however, worry about such details as the distribution of the booty, individual risks, liabilities, or any other specific conditions. They need not even take extra pains in selecting accomplices as the members of the tribe are all reliable. All that they have to do is to be ready to start for the expedition and everything else is provided for and arranged most satisfactorily by the tribal council. In the case of criminals not belonging to the criminal-tribes, the problem of finding suitable accomplices is a serious one. Moreover, the absence of any authority whom all acknowledge and obey, leaves the individual members in a helpless state when there is any dispute arising from maldistribution or misappropriation of booty. In some cases, the members of a particular gang belonging to a criminal tribe set out on their expeditions after having previously settled special conditions regarding the distribution of the booty and individual liabilities. If the members comply with the conditions of their own accord it is all right; otherwise when an aggrieved party refers the case to the tribal *panchayat*, it is settled according to the established rules and conventions without any regard to their individual undertakings. The motive of the tribal Council in disregarding special contracts in the presence of time honoured conventions is to strengthen the gang organization and to discourage the more ambitious members of the tribe from exploiting their brethren and setting a bad example to others.

Tribal Laws Inspiring Mutual Confidence:—

In a well regulated gang, all members are individually and jointly responsible for mutual safety. If any body is hurt or killed, all the accomplices are expected to compensate the nearest relations of the injured person. As for instance, the reimbursement among the Bhatu is according to the following schedule: somewhat similar sanction of compensation is permissible in other criminal castes and tribes. Besides these, there are a number of other penal provisions for maintaining law and order within the tribe and for getting the social customs and religious practices observed by all alike.

Schedule.

<u>Nature of Injury.</u>	<u>Compensation in Rupees.</u>
Injury to head so that the person is unable to carry load. ....	... Rs. 200/-/-
Injury to ear ....	... Rs. 30/-/-
" " eye ....	... Rs. 60/-
" " teeth ....	... Rs. 30/- — per tooth.
" " upper jaw ....	... Rs. 10/-/-
" " lower jaw ....	... Rs. 5/-/-
" " hand ....	... Rs. 60/-
" " leg ....	... Rs. 140/-/-
" " pointing finger ....	... Rs. 1/12/-
" " middle finger ....	... Rs. 1/8/-
" " ring finger ....	... Rs. 1/4/-
" " little finger ....	... Rs. 1/-/-
" " nose ....	... Rs. 80/-/-
" " vital organs leading to impotency but not death	to ... Rs. 250/-/-

Fracture of ribs:—

First rib ....	... Rs. 30/-
Second rib ....	... 35/-
Third rib ....	... 45/-
Fourth rib ....	... 65/-
Fifth rib ....	... 75/-
Sixth rib ....	... 85/-
Seventh rib ....	... 105/-

Injury to pregnant woman leading to abortion :

First month ....	... Rs. 10/-
Second " ....	... 15/-
Third " ....	... 20/-
Fourth " ....	... 25/-
Fifth " ....	... 30/-
Sixth " ....	... 35/-
Seventh " ....	... 45/-
Eighth " ....	... 55/-
Ninth " ....	... 65/-

For the loss of a child aged six months
and under. Rs. 30/-

For the life of a person who has once
suffered from small-pox and completely
recovered from it. Rs. 500/-

For the life of an adult who has not
yet suffered from small-pox. Rs. 400/-

Besides awarding an initial lumpsum in cash to an injured accomplice or his dependants, the tribal council also fixes monthly allowances to such dependants of the deceased or injured person as are themselves unable to earn their living, and have no body else in the family to support them. In the case of a widow, this allowance continues so long as she does not remarry.

When a member of a gang is arrested or sentenced to imprisonment, all the accomplices are made to contribute equally towards the expenses of litigation. In case any body is not in a position to subscribe his share, he becomes indebted to the extent of his share and the amount is recoverable from him or his decendants to the seventh generation.

The presence of such conventions proves very exacting in some cases, when the amount earned in an expedition falls short of the penalties that the accomplices are made to pay. But from the point of view of crime, the imposition has the effect of making the accomplices respect the safety of each member to their utmost. It also leads to an unending chain of mutual obligations on practically all the members of the tribe which individually instigates them to commit further crimes in order to pay off the past debts.

If it is suspected that anybody is likely to turn into an approver, the tribal council orders his immediate death. In case the person in question somehow manages to escape and through his information to the police or his evidence, the gang or a member of the gang gets into trouble, his family members upto seven generations are held responsible for the loss borne by the individual member or members of the particular gang. The knowledge that a suspected approver runs the risk of his life and is also liable to pay a huge amount by way of compensation is enough to frighten them away from such a course.

A gang leader is generally responsible for the following :—

1. To enroll the members of his tribe in his organization.

2. To bear the expenses of the gang when on duty and to provide their family with food and clothes. On receiving the proceeds from the gang, the expenditure is deducted before distributing it amongst the individual members. For this, the leader has to maintain a regular account of all the members of his gang who have been financed through him. Sometimes he has also to take loans from other persons for the expenses of the gang. The leader does not usually charge

any interest for the money so provided but receives greater share on the distribution of the booty. Sometimes it so happens that the gang earns much less than what has been actually spent on the expedition. In such cases the balance is debited to the accounts of respective members for which they and their decendants upto seven generations become responsible.

3. To keep his gang informed about the activities of the police and to supply them with all necessary information.

4. To arrange for suitable intermediaries for the sale of stolen property without being detected.

5. To select the districts or particular places in them, where the gang is to commence its activities and also to settle other details such as the disguises to be adopted, and the like.

6. To arrange to hand over to the police a number of youths and boys of the tribe in order to save real offenders, when there is danger of any member or members of the gang being arrested. Thus substituted in place of hardened criminals, the young boys are, of course, entangled and made to suffer for no fault of theirs; but it is considered essential from the stand point of the tribal welfare, for the protection of habitual criminals, and for the training of juveniles.

7. To arrange for the special training of young girls who are to be sold and resold to rich persons in various parts of India. Thus the sale of the girls brings money directly to their parents and indirectly facilitates the work of various gangs by supplying them with adequate information for their criminal activities.

8. To maintain an efficient system of espionage for gathering all possible information about a locality. Suitable women of the tribe who are specially trained are employed for gathering useful information. They somehow manage to enter the houses of rich and prosperous persons in disguise of beggars, hawkers, domestic servants and gather necessary information.

9. To arrange in the neighbouring villages places of refuge, where the offenders may hide themselves with the stolen property if the necessity arises.

10. To inspire and instigate the young people to embrace criminal career. Among the criminal tribes, one who is incapable of carrying out a successful thieving expedition or raid is deemed ineligible for even marriage. Hence it is essential for everybody to offer himself to a gang leader to give him an opportunity to prove his worth.

11. To arrange for a fair distribution of the booty among the parties concerned and settle all misunderstandings and disputes. The leader is at liberty to invite the intervention of the tribal council if he sees that he is unable to cope with the matter himself.

12. To decide the person or persons who are to be delivered to justice when a crime is traced to a gang. Generally the leader comes to an understanding or compromise with the police on some such basis that 2 out of 5 or 3 out of 7 are to be surrendered to justice. The leader sends for the *Bhagat*, who after counting grains in the name of number of persons, announces the guilty person or persons, who are then surrendered to justice. Curiously enough, these men generally confess their guilt without any hesitation, as they are confident that the chief and their brethren will provide food and clothing to their dependants under all circumstances. If an innocent man is convicted the real offender is made to look after his family. They have a deep sense of unity among themselves when they are involved against an outsider.

Distribution of Booty

The question of distribution of booty is an important one. The principles of distribution are the same in almost all tribes, but the actual process and the ratio of distribution differ in different tribes according to their own conventions and customs. For instance, the Bawarias after deducting all the expenses incurred in an expedition set aside five per cent of the booty for Pooja, five per cent is distributed among the daughters of the members of the gang, two per cent to the *bhat*, two per cent to the *brahmin* who serves them on occasions of marriage and death ; while one per cent. is reserved for widows and other members of the tribe in distress. Ten per cent is allowed to the central organization, i. e. the *Panchayat* for meeting various expenses. Thus some percentage of the booty is earmarked in equal shares among all the members of the gang with the exception of the leader, who is generally allowed double share for his special services.

The method of distributing the proceeds of crime among the Sansis is somewhat different. They first give one-tenth of the booty to the leader. After this the expenses of the expedition are deducted and the due amount is given to the party who met the preliminary expenses. The rest is equally divided among the members of the gang. Goods which are obtained through the joint efforts of a number of tribesmen are

sometimes hidden for a considerable time if they suspect any danger of their being detected, or the goods proving indivisible, till they are in a position to assemble and participate conveniently in the distribution

From the facts cited above, it can be concluded that the gang organization among the criminal tribes chiefly depends on the activities of their respective *Panchayats* and the gang leaders. Formerly the gang-leaders used to be hereditary and had unlimited sway over the members. The traditional conventions, understandings, and customs no doubt inspire mutual confidence amongst the gangsters and assist the smooth operation of their criminal activities. The control which the tribal *Panchayat* exercises on its members keeps all satisfied and united. These tribal councils were at first brought into existence for organizing and controlling the social activities of the tribes concerned. In course of time, the ancient institution of the *Panchayat* has gained considerable strength and has become today the main stay or pivot of the criminal activities of these tribes.

CHAPTER V.

THE PANCHAYAT ORGANIZATION.

The institution of the *panchayat* is universal throughout India and is found in some form or other in almost all castes and tribes. The authority, functions and the powers of a *panchayat* vary according to the civilization and socio-economic conditions of the caste, group or tribe concerned. Undoubtedly the institution is a very old one and has come down from the very dawn of human society. Man has always lived in groups and moved in hordes, because in company he is better able to face the hardships and vicissitudes of life. The climate, flora, fauna and economic resources of a place have no doubt determined the size and solidarity of his group or association. He preferred a social life perhaps due to the fact that society offered him certain advantages such as protection, facility to earn more with minimum efforts, though at the same time it has imposed certain limitations and obligations on him and his free activities owing to the exacting demands of his group-mores and standard.

With the rise in the standard of living and general advancement, his economic activities have centred more and more round himself and his family rather than the whole group. Yet in social matters he has to submit more or less to the customs and practices prevalent in the society to which he belongs even though they may hinder the development of his individual personality. In almost all the so called old societies of India we see that an individual acts according to the traditions and customs of his society and has to obey the tribal council's decisions in an humble manner for fear of being deprived of the social privileges. This conservatism and meek submission to the Society is found in some degree in almost all classes of people in India.

The criminal tribes are primitive and backward. Practically the same kind of *panchayat* organization is to be found among them as is prevalent in other primitive castes and tribes of India. There is, however, only one important difference, viz., that the tribal councils of the criminal tribes are not only meant to control and regulate the social life of their

members, but they are also meant to organize criminal gangs, provide them with all possible facilities and assist the members of the tribe in committing anti-social acts.

Among the criminal tribes, there are a number of tribal elders who determine the limits of personal liberty and regulate the social and criminal activities of the individual members. The number of persons who constitute the *panchayat* varies in different tribes. In some tribes all the male adult members form the council, while in other tribes, five to seven members constitute the council of elders.

The criminal tribes like other primitive and backward tribes are very superstitious and believe in ghosts, spirits, ancestral shades and also worship trees and animals. They are so credulous about the power exercised by these deities and spirits that they ascribe almost all calamities or losses to their displeasure. They well know that if one violates a taboo, the taboo or the deity governing the taboo is sure to punish the defaulter. As, for instance, the Haburas believe that when a corrupt or unchaste woman is married to any member of the family, *Kaladev* becomes displeased with the family and punishes it by sending some disease or calamity. They also believe that the deity can be propitiated by proper sacrifices and prayers. Similarly, among the Karwals, if any body forgets to perform a *pooja* (Religious offering), the defaulter or his relations will have to pay for his negligence; it has been seen that when their *Bhagat* (a quack whom they consider to be a favourite of one of their powerful deities) declares that illness or death or any other calamity is due to the non-observance of *pooja*, on the part of a certain relation, the relative concerned is made to perform that *pooja*. In case any body dies before the *pooja* is performed, the defaulter is made to compensate the aggrieved party. When the author was conducting his investigations in the Aryanagar Criminal Tribes Settlement of Lucknow, he came across such a case. A Karwal, Jhamman by name, resident of Fazalpur in Moradabad district had come to Lucknow to perform a *pooja*, the negligence of which he believed had caused his maternal grand child to be seriously ill for a long period. This shows how the taboos and tribal deities are believed to rule over their fortunes.

With the rise in the standard of life and culture among the members of a tribe and specially with the growth of feeling of individuality among them, the force of group-mores and taboos diminishes. It has been generally seen that the

hold of a *panchayat* over its members diminishes in proportion to the rise of the cultural level and the general standard of life in a community. This is also true of the *panchayats* of our criminal tribes as well so far as their control over the social activities of the individuals is concerned. But in the matter of crime, we find that the hold and activities of the *panchayat* have increased in proportion to the advancement in methods of crime detection and strictness in the administration of criminal tribes.

The criminal tribes are lawless and uncontrollable so far as their dealings with outsiders are concerned. In their own tribe or social group they have a deep sense of group solidarity. Their social solidarity is exhibited in the authority of the *panchayat* which among them controls the criminal as well as the moral behaviour of the group. Their nomadic life and criminal profession has necessitated the observance of strict discipline among themselves and a rigid solidarity or sense of unity when confronted by outsiders. It is really surprising to note how faithfully and strictly the time-honoured customs and religious practices and beliefs are observed by them. Their non-observance or violation is adequately punished by the tribal *panchayat*. In some cases, even if the violation of established usages and the disregard of traditional belief is not punished by the social authority, the members themselves do not like to be guilty of such lapses for fear of displeasing the deities. They maintain law and order within the tribe, specially on such occasions as during a sitting of the *panchayat* or at the time of distribution of booty. They have also definite sets of rules clearly defining the penalties and fines to be paid to the aggrieved party in case of injury or death.

Whenever there are disputed claims or breaches of social etiquettes, the party or the parties concerned call the tribal *panchayat*. Generally there are permanent *panchs*, but in extraordinary cases special *panchs* are appointed. According to the importance of the case and the status of the parties concerned, the *panchs* charge regular fees for themselves and also for other caste fellows who attend the sitting. Just as there are lawyers in law courts to plead for and against the contending parties, similarly during the sitting of a *panchayat*, their own tribal advocates or agents are employed to plead for their clients. These people are well versed in tribal law as well as in case law. Sometimes intelligent and clever persons are sent for from distant places which often involves expenditure of hundreds

of rupees. Usually the members of criminal tribes feel more satisfied with the judgments delivered by the tribal *panchayats* than by law-courts. They avoid going to the law court as far as possible to get their inter-tribal disputes settled. An enquiry into the amounts spent in holding the various tribal *panchayts* would convince that they are very expensive. But still they continue to resort to them arguing that the money spent in holding the caste *panchayts* for settling their grievances goes to their own brethren. They also plead that when some punishment is meted out by their *panchayts*, nobody except the caste-fellows know about it; while in the case of punishment awarded by law courts, the public at large also comes to know of it which lowers them in general esteem. Moreover, in their eyes the importance and the binding force of a judgment delivered by the tribal *panchayts* depend on the expenses incurred in holding the sitting. Hence they are of opinion that if litigation before the *panchayts* is made cheaper, the efficacy of the judgments will be proportionately reduced.

The *panchayat* of each caste or tribe has its own problems to deal with. The duties of the tribal *panchayat* are not everywhere the same. But usually matters of common interest are settled by the *panchayat*. Right and wrong are not absolute concepts and different societies have different ethical standards. Honesty and truthfulness may be regarded as virtues in one society, but vice in another. For instance, enticing women from another group is, of course, praiseworthy among the criminal tribes; while stealing the wife of a clansman is certainly not so. The superstitious regard for the *panchayat* and its decisions is due to the firm conviction of the illiterate masses that the gods of justice reside in the *panchayat*. The parties to a dispute address the *panchs* as representatives of God of justice on earth.

The panchayat usually deals following type of cases :—

Intra-tribal Immorality

Cases of intra-tribal immorality are strictly dealt with by the tribal *panchayats*; but cases of extra-tribal immorality are ignored, nay encouraged at times, as they are essential for fresh recruitment and for getting useful information for the tribal gangs. Sometimes the suspicion of intra-tribal immorality arises when a member does not recover from illness for a long time. In such cases a *Bhagat* is consulted, who after counting a few grins of corn in the traditional manner pretends to discover

the source of the trouble and points out the culprit who has no alternative but to abide by his decision.

Among the Bawarias the process of purification of a corrupt woman is a curious one. A young sheep is sent for and the woman suspected of intra-tribal immorality chops its neck in the name of *Lagdata* (a tribal god) and throws the body away. Then she bathes and again sacrifices a she-goat and walks three times round the altar. After this the near relations carry all things touched by her to a lonely spot. A branch of *Heek* (a shrub) is brought and an earthen vessel containing fire, salt, chillies and oil is kept on the leaves. She drags the branch with the vessel placed on it three times round all the relations and the household articles. Afterwards the woman goes away towards the jungle for a few hours and then returns home. This process is believed to purify the household articles, the relations and the woman herself. Among the Bawarias, after the marriage of a girl, a *Bhagat* is usually asked to count grains in her name, if the *Bhagat* declares her unchaste, her parents are sent for and they are forced to pay expenses of *pooja* meant to purify their daughter in the terrible fashion.

Unlike the Bhatu the *panchayat* among the Bawarias does not permit any compensation to be paid to the husband for the prenuptial lapse on the part of the bride. There is no particular punishment. If the person suspected happens to be a Bawaria and he agrees to pay the bride-price and marriage expenses, the woman concerned is given to him in marriage.

Among the Haburas in cases of rape, the injured party can claim an amount upto Rs. 120/-, and in cases of adultery a fine of Rs. 5/- is imposed on the offender. When a Habura woman has an immoral intimacy with an outsider, which does not prove to be of any use to the tribal gang, she is branded with a piece of hot iron on her forehead. If she still persists in her delinquency, she is either expelled from the tribe or is handed over with the consent of her husband to some other relation who is in a position to control her better.

Among the Bhatu and the Karwals, if a married woman belonging to the *Dholias* is discovered carrying on an intrigue with some one, the offender has to pay a fine of Rs. 160/-. If she is an unmarried girl a sum of Rs. 12/- is deposited with her parents to be given to the would-be husband by way of compensation; while in other Bhatu and Karwal sects, molesting unmarried girls is punished by a fine of Rs. 60/ and for adultery a fine of Rs. 80/- is imposed.

Among the Doms, the Bhatu and the Haburas the woman of bad character has her hair cut, her face painted black and chastised in the presence of all; she is not allowed to touch any household articles until she is purified in the tribal fashion. Usually she is deemed to be purified when she gives a common dinner to caste people, in which pork and wine are liberally served. Formerly among the Doms a person who committed rape on a tribal girl was fined Rs. 7/8, now there is no fixed punishment for this offence; but if the *panchayat* comes to know that the father of the girl in question has connived at the intra-marital indulgence of his daughter, he is definitely outcasted.

Adultery

The shaving of half of the beard and moustaches is another punishment for adultery. After having his *choti*¹ cut and his face blackened, he is seated on a donkey and paraded in the village streets. Whosoever meets him strikes him with a shoe on his head. In short, they resort to all sorts of humiliating punishments for intra-tribal immoralities.

Outcaste

First of all an outcaste is ordered to take a dip in the sacred water of the Ganges and to distribute alms to deserving persons. On his return, he entertains his caste-fellows with *hukka*,² followed by a sumptuous dinner. While everybody enjoys the *hukka* the outcaste is also allowed to share it with his brethren. Finally they announce his formal readmission into the folds of the tribe.

Disobeying Panchayat

A person who refuses to carry out the order of the *panchayat* is not only outcasted, but has also to undergo other indignities and even tortures. Sometimes a pit about a yard deep is dug and one leg of the offender is put into it and then the pit is filled with earth. When he is thus unable to move, a string is passed through his nostrils and some eatables are

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1. Topknot, *shikha* or pig tail.
 2. Indian smoking pipe. Participation in the common *hukka* is symbolic of a person's social equality and exclusion from it mean excommunication.

put before him and he is ordered to eat them like an animal without using his hands. As he stoops to eat, violent jerks are given every now and then on the string running through his nostrils causing him extreme pain.

It is noteworthy that while the *panchayat* takes such a serious view of moral lapses so far as the male offenders are concerned, it takes a very lenient view of similar delinquency on the part of their women, since they remain attached to the tribe and help it by divulging secrets and giving valuable information through their intimacy with outsiders.

Marriage Contracts

The tribal *panchayat* severely penalizes those who violate marriage contracts after the formal betrothal ceremony has once been performed. If the person concerned persistently refuses to abide by the promise, he is compelled by them to pay the other party the expenses incurred by them for the betrothal ceremony. In all the criminal tribes under investigation the respective tribal *panchayats* have fixed a maximum amount as bride price. If any body charges more than the fixed price, he is liable to be fined heavily by the tribal *panchayat*. But generally they evade the punishment by secretly taking a larger amount than the fixed one. If the marriage does not take place, on some reasonable ground, only the fixed price sanctioned by the *panchayat* is returnable to the party concerned. For instance, among the Doms, the *panchayat* has fixed a nominal sum of Rs. 15/- as bride price, but the parents of the bride charge much more than this sum surreptitiously from the parents of the bride-groom. But in a case of divorce, only Rs. 15/- and limited expenses of marriage are to be paid back to the parents of the bride-groom.

Maldistribution of Spoils

The *panchayat* is very frequently called upon to decide disputes arising out of maldistribution of spoils, because one of its essential functions is to ensure that the booty is distributed in an equitable and just proportion. A person found adopting dishonest means is severely dealt with.

Litigation

If, in course of an expedition, some members of a gang are arrested by the police, the remaining gangsters are held

responsible for all expenses incurred in their trial in a court of law. In such cases, all have to bear such expenses equally. Whenever there is any dispute in this connection, the *panchs* have to settle it.

Death or injury during criminal expeditions

If four persons proceed on a criminal expedition, according to the tribal laws, all the four are jointly responsible for the safety of each other. In case anybody among them is killed or wounded, the other three have to compensate the relatives of the injured or deceased person, as the case may be, for the loss sustained by them. When such payment is not properly made to the relations of the person or persons concerned, they put the case before the tribal *panchayat*.

Violation of Social Customs

The members of criminal tribes are very strict in enforcing their social customs. When a person does not properly observe a social custom, he is made to pay a fine to the tribal *panchayat*. For instance, if any body does not perform *Chhota¹ Kam* or *Bara Kam²* after the death of a family member, the Panchayat will force him to do so. If he does not acquiesce in the decision of the *panchayat* he is declared to be an outcaste or is punished in other ways.

Non-observance of Pooja

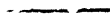
The criminal tribes are backward and animistic in their beliefs. They believe that if they enter into matrimonial alliance with a family which has not observed a certain *pooja* or sacrifice then the offended deity may vent its wrath upon them also; if after marriage, some family member falls ill and the *Bhagat* attributes the illness to non-observance of *pooja* or sacrifice, the defaulter has to perform the necessary *pooja* and compensate the injured party.

Small-pox is much dreaded by the criminal tribes. If a girl has not suffered from it before her marriage and thereby earned immunity, the bride price is reduced by Rs. 60/-. In case the guardians of the bride insist on full payment they must undertake to shoulder the entire risk and make them-

1 and 2. Ceremonies after the death of a person in which, caste people are fed.

selves responsible to the bride-groom for the bride-price and marriage expenses, if the bride dies within 3 years of matrimony, or until she gives birth to 2 children, whichever is earlier.

Thus in our brief survey of the *panchayat* system, we have given an account of its jurisdiction and the nature of offences the *panchayat* of a criminal tribe has to deal with. The main purpose of this organization is to provide adequate facilities to the members so that they may organize their gangs in the best possible manner and to check such activities of the members as are likely to weaken the organization of the gang or prove detrimental to the interests of the group.



CHAPTER VI.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, OMENS AND ORDEALS.

Social customs, religious beliefs, omens, ordeals and standards of morality vary from tribe to tribe and from one social group to another. There is no doubt that economic conditions alter social habits. For a member of the criminal tribes, crime is his criminal hereditary calling. He has an ethical sense which justifies his action and finds full expression in the social structure and religious life of the tribe to which he belongs. His social customs and religious beliefs are perfectly in-keeping with his criminal career. Therefore, in order to understand him fully, it is essential to probe deep into his social and religious life without which no study of criminal tribes can ever be complete. From times immemorial the members of the criminal tribes have been following Hinduism in its crude form. Those tribes which have come under the influence of Christianity, Islam or Sikhism follow their respective religions in some form or other and feel pride in belonging to them. Most of them are still very conservative in their religious outlook and continue to cherish their traditional blind faith in a host of goddesses, *pirs* and evil spirits. Their nomadic life necessitated the observance of a number of omens and the administering of countless oaths in their daily life. Their settlement on land has obviated the need for observing them, but their social life has not become free from them. This is proved in the subsequent pages where an account of the religious beliefs, omens, oaths and ordeals observed by different criminal tribes are discussed.

Bawaria.

Bawarias are mostly Hindus and generally copy them. They believe in Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Their ideas about life and death are similar to those of the high caste Hindus. They believe that if the gods are properly propitiated, they would help human beings into their worldly affairs; so when they go out in their criminal pursuits, they first obtain the goodwill of certain gods by dedicating a definite share of the spoils

exclusively to them. When the Bawaria gangs start on their criminal expeditions, they always offer some pieces of torn-out clothes and sweets to *gudder pir*¹, their deity who, they believe, is responsible for the success of such enterprises. Prominent among their deities are these three. Firstly, *Pooja* which is maintained by all the heads of families; this usually comprise of a square yard of cloth, conch shells, grains of wheat, a beg, a piece of red cloth, a broom of peacock feathers and a bottle of Ganges water; secondly, *Devi Ka Sthan* (place where the goddess Kali resides) which is worshipped when somebody is ill in the family or when some impending danger threatens any member of the tribe. On such occasions, a goat is sacrificed to propitiate the *Mata*; thirdly *Lagdata*, a local deity, who is also propitiated in the same manner as the second deity. All these are worshipped after consulting *Shana* who is supposed to control a vast number of mischievous spirits and *pirs* like *Syed, Pret, Mai Masani, Kalisingh* and *Phullen Dahe* of Kaithal.

Omens

1. In case a beautiful woman is seen in a dream, a Bawaria takes it to be a good omen promising profitable work and money, thinking that the goddess of wealth is favouring him.

2. While starting on a thieving expedition, if they see certain kinds of birds, particularly the *Garud* or *Neilkanth*,² it is taken as a good omen which ensures success in their mission.

3. If they see a tooth falling in a dream, they interpret that a young man will die; and if a jaw, they take it as indicating the death of an old man.

4. While going early in the morning, if a snake or a hare passes from left to right, they consider it auspicious.

5. It is taken as a good omen, if at the time of starting a calf is seen sucking its mother.

6. It is inauspicious to see a Teli (an oilman), a barber, a police constable, and a cock-eyed man early in the morning.

7. If, while starting, a crow flies towards the right-hand side it is good; but if it flies towards the left it is considered bad.

1. Gudder - a Hindi word meaning rags. The deity is supposed to live on a particular tree in the Bawaria colony, Jhinjhana, district Muzaffarnagar.

2. Names of birds which are considered auspicious all over India.

8. To hear a partridge on the left side while starting and on the right side while returning is auspicious.

Oaths

Among the common oaths such as swearing by the *Ganges*, cow, *Pooja*, *Mata Ka Than*, etc, an oath commonly known as *Lota-Namak* is most effective and binding in cases where a matter is to be kept confidential. This oath is like this.

A little quantity of salt is dissolved in a tumbler of water and every body is asked to take an oath that if any one discloses the matter, may the Almighty Father ruin the traitor and his entire family in the same way as he has made the salt in the tumbler dissolve and disappear. This oath is so highly respected and considered binding that a serious action is taken in the case of its breach by the tribal *Panchayat*.

Bhatu

Kalka Devi or *Kali Devi* is believed to have great power over evil spirits and the Bhatu take out a number of *Kauries* (conch shells) in Kali's name and keep them on their persons to avoid evil spirits. *Makdoom Pir* of Kachhcha in district Faizabad is famous for blessing women who want children. The *Bala Pir* of Bahraich (a district in the United Provinces) is worshipped for the destruction of one's enemies. Besides these deities they have also faith in the Sun and offer *Arghya* (water) to it and on the full moon they have *Satynarayan's Katha*. They also have great faith in the Devis of these places. Nagarkote, Gurgaon, Dholagarh, Karaula, Hinglaj, and Karauli.

Omens

1. It is a notion prevalent among the Bhatu that in case a bludgeon falls down before any one of them launches on a thieving expedition it is definitely inauspicious. But the danger can be averted provided he is able to pick it up unnoticed.

2. They gain courage when on reaching their destination they hear *Bharuka*—a peculiar sound produced from the nostrils of a she-goat.

3. A Bhatu gang would not proceed further on their expedition if they come across a woman urinating. It is an

ill omen indicating that whosoever proceeds further is bound to encounter calamities.

4. If, on starting for a particular work, the braying of a donkey or the mewling of a cat is heard from the front side it is considered as a good omen, but inauspicious if the same is heard from the back side.

5. If the howling of a jackal is heard, a Bhatu would not proceed further on his expedition.

6. Similarly if the twigs of *golberi*—a kind of inferior fruit, come rolling from a direction, they would leave that way believing that it abounds in dangers.

Oaths and ordeals

1. The most binding oath is considered to be that of *Khanta* or *Gahdala* (a kind of pick axe). The suspected person or his agent is purified on a day prior to the actual administering of the oath. The iron blade of the *Khanta* having been made red hot, five or seven leaves of the *Pipal* tree are kept one above the other on the palm of the person concerned. The burning blade is then put on his palm, and in that condition he is asked to cover an allotted distance. In case he successfully covers the distance, without dropping the *Khanta*, he is declared innocent; otherwise, he is declared guilty of the offence.

2. After purifying the person concerned or his agent in the tribal fashion he is asked to be in water for an allotted time. In case he is able to remain for the prescribed time in water, it is alright; otherwise he is definitely declared to be false and dishonest.

They believe that neither the palm of an innocent and honest person can burn nor can he get drowned; their belief is that however clever a person may be he cannot deceive the tribal gods of fire and water.

3. A frog is caught and painted with mercury oxide. The suspected person cuts open its belly and swears that his stomach too may burst if he is false or he has committed a particular offence.

4. After heating wine and *gur* (jagree), the person concerned is made to take an oath on it.

5. *Lota Namak*—Where the offender takes an oath that if he is responsible for the offence, he and his family may perish.

BHEDKUT

In the Punjab, the Bhatu are known as Bhedkuts. Those who have not come under the influence of Sikhism, Arya Samaj or any new religion believe in the same deities as the Bhatu. They frequently worship *Guga* and *Ramdeo* who have become famous among the Rajputs. The criminal members specially worship Kali, whom they consider as their protector and blessing.

Some of them have been influenced by Sikhism. They regularly attend Gurdwara, sing songs in praise of the *Gurus* and share the *Kara Prasad*,—a kind of pudding. Those who have become Arya Samajists are regular in their *Sandhya*, *havan* and *kirtan* (prayers). The influence of reform on Bhedkuts has been most marked and civilized members among them have given up the worship of innumerable Pirs, Devis, Ghosts and spirits. But so far as omens and ordeals are concerned, even the educated Bhedkuts blindly follow and observe them. A few years' education and change of environment cannot revolutionize their entire outlook. Gradually, they are giving up objectionable religious practices. Some of the omens which they observe at the time of committing crimes are :—

1. If in the village intended to be plundered they meet or happen to hear a cat mewing, they return without attempting their pursuit.
2. If on reaching a rendezvous they see that the sky over their head has grown red, they give up the idea of committing any dacoity or burglary at that place and consider it a blessing if they return safe. They firmly believe that if they commit the intended crime, bloodshed is inevitable.
3. If a mad jackal is met howling alone in night at left side, it is an auspicious indication.
4. Meeting a sweeper at the time of departure with a broom and basket in his hands proclaims success.

BERIA

Beria is a sub-tribe of Bhatu. Most of them are not declared as criminal tribes. Inter-marriage between the Bhatu and Berias is permissible, hence their religious practices, beliefs in evil spirits, omens, and ordeals are to a great extent similar to those of the Bhatu. The only difference between the Berias and the Bhatu is in their mode of earning their living. Contrary to the Bhatu, the Berias earn their bread by leading a shameful life of prostitution, dancing and singing.

Their profession is paying, a major portion of the earning is usually spent on wine and sacrifices of pigs and goats to a host of gods and goddesses who are supposed to favour them in their daily life. Their principal deities are *Jwalamukhi*, *Kali* and *Syed*. They also worship ancestral shades and have implicit faith in them. On ceremonial occasions, they do not engage the services of Brahmins; but do whatever is necessary themselves.

BILOCH

Bilochs are the followers of Islam and worship Pirs and Syeds. They freely use wine, their persons and their houses are very dirty: In fact, the Bilochs are totally ignorant of their religion. They neither know the principles of Islam nor do they observe any religious practices. It is said that they were originally Shias, but now they belong to the Sunni sect. Some of their omens are:—

1. When they see an ass braying behind a gang at the time of departure, they consider it auspicious.

2. They consider it a good omen, if at the time of departure, wind is blowing from the north-west.

3. When a gang of Bilochs reaches a place, one of them who is supposed to be an expert in interpreting omens, after putting off his clothes and taking a naked sword in his hand, counts the omens. If at this time any native (local person) happens to see him, he is immediately put to death to do away with the inauspiciousness. They consider it an ill-omen, if after achieving their object the booty is distributed in the vicinity of the rendezvous so they generally postpone doing it till they reach another place.

4. If they hear a crow they take it for granted that there are no chances of success in the expedition.

5. If a deer passes across their path, it is definitely a bad omen.

6. If they meet an ox bellowing on reaching their destination it is considered a bad omen.

HABURAS

Religion.

Haburas worship *Thakurji* only when they are faced with some trouble or danger. Their idols and the principal articles of worship such as purses, *cauries*, fans, grains of corn, *Sankh*-conch, and a frying-pan are kept by their *Bhagat* at

his own house. It is he who organizes *kirtans*, on festivals like, *Holi*, *Dewali* and *Dasehra*. The main deities of the Haburas are *Jwala Devi*, *Sankata Devi* of Gonda, *Bhawani Devi* and *Lalta Devi* of Neemsar.

Oaths.

In addition to the oaths of red hot *Khanta*, *water-diving*, etc. which are commonly prevalent among all the criminal tribes, the oath of *Lota Namak* is most binding. A special feature of this oath among the Haburas is that the person who swears has to make a promise ranging from five days to a month that if he suffers any loss or calamity within the promised time, he would be taken as a culprit and made to compensate the injured party.

Omens.

1. Early in the morning while going on some important work if one happens to meet a sweeper or *teli* (oilman), it is believed to be definitely inauspicious. They also believe that a look at the teeth of the sweeper and dipping a stick in the *teli's* oil can avert the inauspiciousness.

2. If at the time of going out on an expedition, an ass brays, they interpret that success is almost impossible and so they put off the expedition.

3. If they meet a leopard on the way it is considered a very bad omen.

4. If they meet a *Shama* bird (a specie of dark bird) on their left, it is a good omen, ensuring success, and if it is seen perched on a tree it is still more auspicious.

5. A mongoose if met at the time of departure is auspicious and foretells victory and success.

DOMS

The Doms believe that if *Bhawani Devi* is propitiated properly, she can remove the sterility of woman. *Kali Devi* and *Baba Gorakhnath* are highly respected. They believe that trees are inhabited by evil spirits and at times they sacrifice pigs to gain their favour. The Maghaya Doms are very superstitious and are terribly afraid of the ghosts of drowned people and periodically offer libations to satisfy their ancestors. A successful thieving expedition is always celebrated by a sacrifice and a feast in honour of *Gandak*—the god of success,

The Khanta and the water oaths are also prevalent among the Doms. They consider the Dhobi to be the lowest of all castes. In Gorakhpur they neither serve the dhobis (washerman) as sweepers nor even touch their food. The food touched by a washerman is called *narak* (hell) by them. When anybody wants to prove his honesty and truthfulness, he swears that in case he has committed such an offence, he eats the *narak* (food) of a washerman's house. The most common oaths that are current among them are those of *Baba Gorakhnath*, *Khaki Baba* and *Basia Devi*. They have a superstitious belief in sowing crops on Wednesdays and cutting them on Fridays. Their libations to deceased ancestors are offered on *Amawasya*—the last day of *Sraddha* (offerings made for the benefit and salvation of the dead).

Omens

1. When a *Roopa* bird (a bird with white silvery feathers) is seen sitting on a tree, it is considered as an omen of victory.
2. An owl hooting on the left foretells victory.
3. It is a bad omen to meet with a bundle of wood or cowdung cakes.
4. If at the time of starting on an expedition, a hare is heard, they take it as a very bad omen.

HARNI

They are strict Sunnis, but their religion does not prevent them from having a particular fondness for alcoholic liquors. They hold in high esteem the *Syeds* and respect *Qadri* and *Hanafi* sects of Islam. *Pirshah Abdulkarim of Delhi* (a saint) is their ideal. When a Harni of the Bhati gotra or clan dies, his relations instead of placing one cloth over the corpse on its way to the grave, spread several. This is done to maintain the traditional superiority of the Bhati over other Rajput Gotras and clans.

Omens

1. If a couple of Shama birds is met chattering while proceeding on professional work, it is an inauspicious sign.
2. The cry of a newly born child at the dead of night when out on adventure is a very bad omen.
3. A fox howling at the time of starting for an expedition or looking back when running is a sure sign of victory.

4. A sneeze from the back at the time of departure foretells victory.

KANJAR

Like other criminal tribes, a Kanjar also believes in a host of gods and goddesses and has much faith in his ancestors. When some body is ill, it is assumed that some ancestor has been displeased; when an ancestor is not properly propitiated, the spirit visits the defaulter and demands the due sacrifice. In order to satisfy them, it is customary among them to bury delicious eatables like chicken soup, pork, wine etc. on road crossings.

Besides believing in water and fire ordeals which are commonly prevalent among practically all the criminal tribes, the Kanjars have a great regard for *Pipal* tree. If a Kanjar is wrong or false, he will never dare to assert his truthfulness before this sacred tree.

Omens

1. A Kanjar would prefer to postpone his programme of going out on professional work if he is interrupted by a woman at the time of starting.

2. If on reaching the destination, a cow lows from the front, it is good ; else it is an indication of an imminent danger.

3. If while going on professional work, a snake crosses the way, it is interpreted as highly inauspicious.

4. If a jackal howls, it is a clear indication that the gang which has gone ahead will escape with much difficulty or someone will be arrested.

KARWAL

The Karwals have much faith in *Gulphi*, *Jhar Pir* and *Kali Devi*. They are very strict in observing their *pooja*. They believe that in case anybody forgets to perform a *pooja*, the deity concerned is sure to take revenge upon the defaulter or his relations. At times they promise a particular type of *pooja* for success in criminal adventures.

Women whose children do not survive sacrifice a cock in the name of *Bhawani*. A child who is supposed to be under the grip of an evil spirit is made to wear a silver ring in his ear. When the child attains majority, this ring is sold and the tribal council is entertained with the proceeds. A person who

is supposed to be troubled by the ghost of a woman who died at the time of delivery, is made to take a bath on a road crossing and a young pig is sacrificed to propitiate the goddess *Kali*.

Besides observing the oaths and ordeals prevalent among the Bhatu, the Karwals strictly observe the following omens:

1. While going out on professional work, they always prefer to eat sweet things. In case they eat anything sour, they believe that they will have to face hindrances.

2. They return from half way while proceeding on a thieving expedition, if they happen to meet a woman easing herself.

3. If they hear a donkey, an ox, or a partridge on the right side while going on their duty and on their left while returning, it is considered very auspicious.

4. If a leaping frog passes their way, it is auspicious; if it is from the right hand to the left, it is inauspicious.

KOOCHBANDH

Koochbandhs are one of the most backward criminal tribes who have been least influenced by education and the contact of civilized people. They are as primitive as ever. In fact they are most dirty and idle people who always blame some deity or other for their misfortunes. There are very few Koochbandhs who have left their old religion and adopted another such as Sikhism, Hinduism or Islam. In short they are still totemistic and animistic in their beliefs.

These are some of the omens that they observe :

1. To cut the neck of a hen at the time of starting on professional work is considered very auspicious.

2. If a hare is heard from the front side, it is auspicious; if from the back very inauspicious.

3. If the neighing of a horse is heard from the right it is good, if from the left, it is an indication of some impending danger.

4. An owl is considered as a very inauspicious bird, whenever it crosses their way, they refuse to proceed further.

MAHTAMS

The majority of Mahtams are Hindus and live like Brahmins. Those who have adopted Sikhism or Islam follow the preachings of their respective congregations. In spite of this they have great faith in evil spirits and ancestrol shades. The Hindus among them have great regard for the Ganges

and the cow. The fire and the water ordeals are very common to them. They believe that in case a she-jackal howls on the left side, there is some imminent danger; if she is heard on the right, it is in their interest. If *Kocher* (a bird) is seen on the right, it is quite good, but if on the left, it is a clear indication that some one in the gang would be hurt in the encounter. If at the time of departure a weapon falls down from their hands, it is supposed to be very inauspicious.

MINAS

They are Hindu Rajputs. Their social status is considered to be much higher than that of other tribes. The Rajputs treat them as their brethern. Their religion and beliefs are similar to those of other Rajput clans. The criminal Minas are mostly Hindus and their religion is more or less of an orthodox nature. They respect the Brahmins and regard the deer as a sacred animal. The Minas hold in high esteem the shrines of *Jodha Bhagat* at Shahjehanpur, *Three Satis* at Minnana and the temple of *Kaso Mora*. These are specially worshipped on the occasion of child birth, marriage and death. They spend one tenth of the proceeds of their criminal earnings in the name of *Kali*, and regard the dagger as very sacred. Their principal deities are *Jeen Mata*, *Bhairon*, *Sheetla*, *Khetarpal*, *Pachpir*, *Hanuman*, *Thakurji*, *Jujhar Baba*, and *Mahadeo*.

As regard omens they consider that if an elephant trumpets at the time of their departure, it is a very bad omen. If they happen to find a piece of bread on their way, they consider it very auspicious. A corpse seen burning or being buried foretells success.

SANSI

The Sansis worship their tribal gods specially when they face some trouble or danger. Their prominent deities are *Kali* and *Lalta*. They also fear the spirits of dead ancestors and other mischievous spirits and offer sacrifices to propitiate them. For the cure of a child suffering from ill health, they worship *Masan Devi* and sacrifice a pig in her name. The usual process is to cut its head and cover it with cow-dung and pray to Masani to have mercy on the child.

They worship *Hetam*, *Toto Jambhu*, *Kulka*, *Sidh Bina*, and *Miyan*—the king of serpents—, attention and prayer to whom procures immunity from snake bite. The shrines of *Pir Sakhi-Sultan* at Nagha, Phalaudi (in Jaisalmer), Bibrain,

(in Bikaner), Bajranggarh (in Aligarh District), Jwalamukhi (in Kangra), Naukhera (in Etah District), are much revered by these people. They hold an annual festival at selected places in different districts in order to facilitate the settlement of intra-tribal disputes and the celebration of marriages.

The real Sansis expose their dead in the jungles. Those who have been influenced by Islam bury their dead. Only very few among them practise cremation. In Gujrat and in the Punjab a good number of Sansis are called *Deendar Sansis* and follow Islam.

Besides other oaths commonly prevalent among a number of criminal tribes, the following two are commonly observed by them :

1. They kill a cock, pour its blood on the ground and swear over it.
2. They put some salt into a cup of wine, sprinkle it on the ground and swear over it.

Omens

1. Brahmin seen with a religious book and a *Tilak* on his forehead is auspicious.
2. They take it as an ill omen if, at the time of departure, anybody's head dress falls down.
3. If they meet a well dressed widow, it is considered as a bad omen.

BENGALI SANSI

They worship the shrine of *Baba Kalu* a Jhiwar saint of Panchnagar. When a boy attains his fifth year, he is taken to this shrine where his head is shaved and offerings are made to the saint.

Conclusion

A study of the religious beliefs, omens and ordeals of the criminal tribes indicates that most of them, except the Bilochs, were originally Hindu Rajputs. Now the present reformatory machinery has brought a number of them under the influence of Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. They are all very superstitious and fear evil spirits and ancestral shades. Omens are strictly observed and their success is believed to depend on an auspicious omen. They worship a host of petty deities, *pirs* and *devis* and offer sacrifices of pigs and goats to propitiate them. In case of serious illness and trouble, they worship *Thakurji* and a number of other deities.

CHAPTER VII

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF SETTLEMENT ON LAND.

The settlement of a nomadic criminal-tribe on land is bound to revolutionize the life of the tribesmen. A number of far reaching changes in their economic and social life are inevitable. The changed mode of subsistence of the settled tribe, the new environment and close contact with settled and civilized people play their own part in shaping their cultural life. In Criminal Tribe settlements, colonies, reformatories, and villages, where they have been rehabilitated, one can study how these people have adjusted themselves to new conditions and surroundings. Most of them have either given up their traditional profession or have reduced their anti-social activities. They have now adopted new means to earn their living ; some of them have learnt farming and become agriculturists ; while others who have learned new arts and handicrafts are either working independently or as labourers in industrial concerns. A very small number among them are employed as teachers, and clerks.

Habitations

The habitations of criminal tribes vary in different provinces according to the economic conditions of the tribes concerned and the flora, fauna and climate of the region they inhabit. The condition of their houses also depend on the occupation which a tribe has adopted, e. g., agriculture, manufacture or menial service in private houses and also on the cultural level attained by the tribe as a whole. In their vagrant stage they had no houses of their own. Whatever they possessed was either carried with them or buried underground at odd places for safety. These nomads kept a minimum of luggage with them which they could carry easily on bullocks or ponies. They found it convenient to go from place to place and apparently preferred to earn their living by begging, selling jungle products, or giving musical and other kinds of performances. Generally their possessions consisted of a number of bamboos, *sirki* mats, 2 or 3 utensils, cots and a few clothes.

When they were nomadic they always preferred to carry their cots with them. They never allowed their women to sleep on the floor for fear of their being kidnapped by other gangs. They believed that when they slept on cots with their womenfolk, it prevented the kidnappers from capturing women. In the past a gang had to be very cautious and on its guard against the depredations of other gangs at night. At times the capture of women had been the cause of serious bloody encounters in which deadly weapons were freely used. Marriage was not universal among them, so the nomads used to satisfy their lust by capturing women from other camps. Moreover, it was considered a great honour to capture a woman from another camp.

Since their settlement on land, they have begun to imitate their neighbours to their utmost in all walks of life, with such success that in some cases it becomes difficult to distinguish them from ordinary law abiding people. Their habitations are similar to those of their neighbours. Those who live in criminal tribe settlements, colonies and villages occupy fairly good houses and enjoy everything that a house and household promise. Today they appreciate the use of furniture, sewing machines, cycles, gramophones, harmoniums and other articles of luxury and possess them. They now have beddings, ornaments, trinkets, books, photographs and similar other articles of ordinary use. All these luxuries they could not afford when they lived their wonted life in jungles. Those who have settled and have adopted honest means of livelihood possess almost everything that a normal member of society can be expected to have in a particular station of life. The houses of well-to-do persons among them are in no way inferior to those of prosperous and cultured people amongst us. This does not mean that an average householder among them possesses all the paraphernalia of modern civilized life, but those who can afford, enjoy life like respectable citizens. Those who are still addicted to crime and are fortunate, live in an extravagant fashion.

Some of the prosperous tribesmen have now begun to own landed property in the form of agricultural fields and residential houses. As for instance, in the Bawaria colony, Jhinhana, district Muzaffarnagar, the writer came across the house of a Bawaria with a beautiful garden, servant's quarter and a cattle-pond; the owner of the house was found on enquiry to be absconding with a party of eight men, evidently on some nefarious project. Similarly in Nanakpura (a village of the Bawaria Colony), one Nankia possesses about 500 Bighas

of land, six wells, a spacious house, a large number of cattle, and several other modern luxuries. Others who are not economically well off are living in small, dilapidated huts with the minimum of personal belongings in the shape of furniture, dress and utensils. When they have to meet major expenses like marriage, child birth, *pooja* and death ceremonies, they have no other alternative than to resort to house breaking, dacoity, or stealing and thereby procure the requisite money. Somewhat similar condition of habitations is found in the Punjab, Ajmer Merwara and Rajputana, with this difference that where they have adopted agriculture as their occupation, they live like agriculturists, and where they live by working in mills and factories, their mode of living is similar to that of such labourers. Moreover, the habitation and the mode of living of a settled tribe depend to some extent on the new religion which it has adopted. Adoption of various professions has also brought about a considerable difference in the mode of living of the individuals concerned. A number of them who are holding jobs in schools and offices are living in a way quite different from that of their brethren, who are working in mills and factories as labourers.

Money or economic condition is not the only factor which determines the type of habitation occupied by a tribe or individual members of a tribe. Some people are by nature averse to cleanliness while others love it. For instance, the Koochbandhs are indolent and easy going and appear to rejoice in keeping themselves dirty. A cultured Bhedkut's house compared with a Koochbandh's would be found much cleaner and better kept in all respects. This difference is not due to the comparative poverty of the Koochbandh or his miserliness, but is an outcome of a perverted notion that it is a sheer waste to spend money and energy on cleanliness and in purchasing household goods; he would prefer spending money on wine or pork or some such indulgence.

Dress

Life in the jungles did not require any superfluity of clothes and very often they went either naked or else put on a few rags and leaves round their loins.¹ Following their settle-

1 When these nomads were first admitted into criminal-tribe settlements, it was found that in night time they usually lived naked under the open sky. It was after much difficulty and persuasion that the settlement authorities could induce them to put on clothes and sleep in covered places. They avoided sleeping under a roof as they were not used to it and for the fear that the roof might not fall on them.

ment on land, they have been compelled to put on more clothes. Their dress has undergone a vast change. When they were nomadic, men would usually wear short *dhotis*, while women put on rustic *ghagras*. On ceremonial occasions the males would put on an upper garment better known among them as *bakhtari*, a rustic type of waist-coat while women would put on heavy *ghagras* made up of fifty to sixty yards of cloth and a *chadar* for the upper part of the body. At times women also wear tight-fitting trousers. Their contact with civilized people has made them leave their old dress and take to the dress of the respectable gentry. Now their dress is not much different from that of other civilized people; some wear shirts, shorts and coats; while others put on trousers. The younger generation who desire to appear fashionable go about in silken suits. A similar change is also discernible in women's dress. They are also found dressed in fine sarees, jumpers and blouses made of fine cloth. But old people still stick to their traditional dress. The younger generation, as is natural, has been comparatively more progressive so far as dress is concerned. It is not easy to distinguish them from ordinary people when they are well dressed. But improvement in dress is not visible to the same extent among tribes which are living in remote parts of the district due to their lesser contact with civilized and advanced people, and also to poor economic conditions.

A similar change has been observed in their mode of decorating their hair and persons. Young boys and girls residing in suburbs have begun to imitate the ways of the civilized people. Women have replaced their old ornaments *hansli*, *hamel*, *danda*, and *jhumka*, by modern ornaments which are commonly used by women in urban areas.

Occupation

In the past they used to wander with their bag and baggage from place to place in search of jungle products, wild animals and opportunities for theft and robbery. They still do a good business in selling dry roots and medicines, which they collect in jungles. They often pass themselves as physicians claiming to cure diseases quickly and at negligible cost. At times, it must be admitted that their medicines do prove efficacious. They were also expert at snake charming and magic. Thus they used to earn their living by practising various traditional gypsy trades and some of them who are still nomadic continue to pursue them.

Their favourite haunts for pitching tents and portable reed shelters were hills, forests, outskirts of village or other secluded places where they could safely leave their superfluous luggage, women and children. They used to hide themselves at convenient places near bridges, road crossings and mountain passes. Their methods of crime were far more brutal than those of their brethren today. Murder and mutilation of limbs were commonly committed for even small gains. Nor were their crimes so well organized as in modern times. In the past the principal crimes they committed were cattle and farmyard thefts. They had their own gang leaders who arraged the expeditions and provided them with all necessary expenses and facilities. Discipline was very strict and it was very rare that a gang was involved in difficulties due to want of discipline and co-operation.

Now this mode of life is being gradually replaced by agriculture and other industrial pursuits. But there is no appreciable amount of difference in the number of crimes committed by these tribes today. The reason is that there are very few members of criminal tribes who have settled and really availed of the benefits of reformation and reclamation. (*vide* Chapter XI). Although they are being trained in useful arts, industries, and agriculture, there are very few among them who make use of this training for their livelihood after being discharged. Those who have got permanent jobs in mills and workshops are seldom tempted to indulge in anti-social activities; but those who have no employment or who do not get adequate opportunities to work, have to commit crimes in spite of their training and education. The adoption of agriculture and new crafts could have checked criminal activities to a considerable extent had it enabled the members to earn a regular satisfactory living.

Ariculture

Gradually they have come to possess lands of their own. In settlements they are either exempted from the payment of land revenue altogether or have to pay a very nominal rent. Some of them have picked up the technique of cultivation and have begun to understand the value of good seed, plough, draught cattle and irrigation. In the beginning when they settled on land and were asked to cultivate it, they did not make proper use of these facilities, with the result that their crops had mostly been failures. Later on, it was against their

will that they were made to adopt agriculture as their means of subsistence. In the Punjab, Criminal tribes have shown remarkable progress in agriculture, their produce is in no way inferior to that of other agriculturists. Agriculture in our country being a sort of gamble in rains, does not appeal as a definite and regular source of income; and in years of scarcity their economic condition becomes desperate with the result that they have to fall back upon begging and pilfering.

In the united Provinces, Ajmer-Merwara, and Rajputana, these tribes have met with little success in agricultural fields. Efforts are being made to improve the state of affairs. The failure is partly due to the paucity of fertile agricultural lands and irrigation facilities; and partly due to the carelessness of these tribes, their apathy and disinclination to hard work. When a profession does not satisfactorily remunerate a man for all his labours, he gradually ceases to take keen interest in it. This is particularly true of our criminal tribes. They know that even with their best efforts, the yield from land would hardly suffice to meet their bare expenses, far less leave any surplus. Moreover, the profession of agriculture needs very hard labour and patience. These people had never been accustomed to hard and continuous labour; for they believe in brief spells of exciting activity followed by long periods of ease and indolence. They cannot resist the temptation of earning thousands in a single night which they can never hope to earn during a life time by honest labour.

In villages where the members of criminal tribes live under police surveillance as agriculturists, they have adopted some subsidiary occupation or other according to the natural resources of the place. For instance, the Bawarias of District Muzaffarnagar have begun to sell ghi (clarified butter), *Reh* (a kind of salt used in washing), and grass used in making brooms. The Doms prepare soaps and other useful articles of sirki in their leisure hours. The Haburas have taken to making baskets, chucks, modhas, and other such articles. The Kanjars of Ajmer-Merwara polish and repair shoes. Some of the Sansis of Jodhpur and Jaipur states have begun to keep herds of sheep for wool and in spare time gather bones of stray cattle.

Similarly, other tribes have also adopted a number of subsidiary occupations. On the whole, the members of criminal tribes have proved to be less efficient in the cultivation of land than peasants of other castes. Perhaps this is due to their being amateurs in the field of agriculture and a number of

other handicaps from which they suffer by being subjected to the special provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act.

Until they are provided with adequate lands, and necessary facilities, their settlement on land will not do any substantial good to them except aggravating their poverty. They, of course, crave for land and landed property provided it enables them to meet their requirements. Where adequate facilities have been given as in some places in the Punjab, they have proved themselves quite successful agriculturists and the fear that they may be deprived of their land if they commit any crime acts as a deterrant on their traditional anti-social activities and ideas.

Training in arts and crafts

Generally speaking, industries and occupations are chosen for these people, firstly, with a view to enabling them to earn their living, and, secondly, to keep them engaged in honest work throughout the day so that they may not get a chance for indulging in their favourite crimes and evil ways. With this aim in view various kinds of crafts and industries have been taught to the members of the criminal tribes. They are working as labourers, in mills, factories and at private houses. Some of them are employed at railway workshops and other industrial centres. Facilities in the shape of employment and training are provided in Criminal Tribe Settlements and Reformatories, in carpentry, weaving, tailoring, smithy, painting, furniture polishing, manufacture of sports material, carpet making, cane work, embroidery and laundry. Individual tastes and aptitudes are carefully studied and new arts and industries are taught to them accordingly. Those who show promise are given higher education. Primary education has been made compulsory for all boys and girls.

Such training and employment in various industries has had very healthy effect upon the criminal tribes. Some of them have become efficient artisans earning a decent income. This has also brought them in contact with most of the respectable and higher castes and sections of people with the result that their mode of life has been profoundly influenced by their association. This is most visible in the women of criminal tribes who were formerly given to dirty, slovenly ways, and knew nothing beyond begging and rustic cooking. They have now become neat and clean and take pride in keeping their houses and persons neat and trim like those of their respectable neighbours.

Economic Condition

In their old unregenerate days, their life economically was very irregular. At times they lived extravagantly after successful expeditions, while at other times, they passed their days in abject poverty and dearth of even the bare necessities of life. Mostly they had to live on fruits, tubers and half-cooked food. Besides the sale proceeds of jungle products, their principal sources of income were begging, stealing and robbing. They however maintain that their economic condition in the past was much better than today, as previously they could easily afford to spend large sums on wine, sacrifices and dissipations. Moreover, they used to levy a sort of toll or blackmail on people in the countryside, who used to fear them and whenever they passed through villages, offered them food so that they might not lay their hands on their crops. At harvest time, grain was liberally given to their women and children.

Their settlement on land has deprived them of these sources of income and so has considerably reduced their earnings. It is no longer possible for them now to earn huge amounts in one night and spend them over merry makings and sacrifices. The economic condition of those who have settled on land is no better than that of the ordinary peasants and agriculturists. Like them they are also over head and ears under debt. They have to pay very high rate of interest to their creditors and in years of famine and scarcity it becomes very difficult to meet even ordinary expenses, what to say of extraordinary items. The monetary condition of those who have learnt useful arts and crafts is far better than those who have adopted agriculture.

Social Status

In the past their social status was very low and society considered them as untouchables on account of their dirty and objectionable mode of life. They suffered from a very unsavoury reputation in society owing to their criminal activities and where ever they went they were most unwelcome and avoided by the people at large. But now they have gradually been able to inspire confidence in their neighbours. So far as untouchability is concerned it is regrettable that there has not been appreciable change.

The villagers do not allow the members of criminal tribes

to use their wells or to mix with them socially as neighbours. This is due to the fact that most of them have not given up their objectionable practices and some of them are considered even worse than sweepers. As for instance, the social status of Sansis in Jodhpur state is even inferior to that of the sweepers. The Sansis of that region consider the sweepers as their gurus and do not object to taking food given or touched by them. But a sweeper would not accept food given by a Sansi, nor will he remove their night-soil. On enquiries being made it was revealed that the Sansis inhabiting that region do not hesitate to eat even the corpses of cows and other sacred animals. But this does not however mean that the social status of all criminal tribes throughout northern India is equally low. In the Punjab and the United Provinces some criminal tribes, like the Bawarias and Bhedkuts are not considered as untouchables at some places. Those who have adopted new religions have risen in social status to the extent that some upper caste Hindus even accept food from their hands without the least hesitation. Those who have adopted Islam, Sikhism, or Vedic religion freely move among the members of their respective denominations. This is also true of those who have been converted into Christianity.

Moral Character

Immorality and dishonesty in all walks of life is ingrained in the criminal tribes from the very cradle. The only redeeming feature in their character is their loyalty to the members of their own tribe against an outsider. The institution of marriage was never a sacrament among them. The chastity of women had always been at a discount. The women who misbehaved were not seriously taken to task by the tribal council or the *panchayat*. The liaison of women furnished the tribal gangs with useful information. The women were used to lure men of other castes and tribes into the arms of the tribe and thus afforded a constant source of recruitment.

Since they have settled on land, habitual prostitution has come into vogue among some of them. The women and young girls of practically all the criminal tribes, except those who are reformed, are notorious for easy virtue. Extra-tribal immorality has increased of late. Although the tribal *panchayat* strongly guards against intra-tribal immorality and such cases are severely dealt with, yet no stigma attaches to a woman who may bear illegitimate children. Among some

tribes, as for instance, among the Bhatu and Karwals, there is a custom of paying *Tanka money* to the would-be husband of a girl by way of compensation for pre-marital indulgence.

Those members who have availed of the benefits of education and reform have no doubt higher standard of character and morality, and are zealous to protect the honour of their women. But the establishment of the backward members in cities and industrial centres has encouraged their women to earn money by prostitution and some of them have actually adopted it as a regular profession.

Traffic in Women

Sale and resale of women is common among all criminal-tribes in northern-India. The existence of bride-price has led some parents to sell their daughters even to outsiders. The Bhatu and the Karwals sell their girls to the Berias who earn money by training them as professional singers and dancers. Among some tribes a special training is given to girls who are to be sold in various districts. These girls live for some time with the purchasers to supply necessary information to their criminal gangs and when they find an opportunity they abscond with the valuables and return to their original tribe.

The Death and Birth Rates

The Census statistics and the various records maintained in the criminal tribe settlements reveal that their population is gradually increasing though the increase in the birth rate has been followed by a corresponding increase in the death rate among these tribes; yet the survival rate has gone up. The increase in death rate is probably due to the sudden change in their mode of life and especially to the new climate and dietetic conditions, to which they are not accustomed. Now they are not so healthy and robust as they were in the past. In cities they do not get fresh air and healthy quarters. They mostly suffer from bad eye sight, sore eyes, indigestion and skin diseases.

Cattle

Formerly they were not in a position to keep cattle but now they have begun to maintain a large number which supply them with milk and help them in ploughing their fields

Their women have learnt to manage their household affairs economically for example they have learnt to utilize dung for manure and fuel purposes which they rarely did in their former mode of life.

Household work done by women

In the past their women used to beg where ever they could and sold roots, tubers and oils extracted from venomous insects and reptiles; but now they manage all the household affairs like the wives of other agriculturists. They grind flour, sweep their houses, bring fuel and fodder from the jungle, cook food and take it to their husbands in their fields. Thus their routine of life has become like that of an ordinary agriculturist. Women whose husbands are working in mills and factories do all the necessary household work like other women. They sometimes supplement their income by making baskets, chicks and modhas.

General knowledge

The settlement has widened their outlook on life and their knowledge of worldly affairs. Now they are not so ignorant as they were in the past. They very well know the provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act, the Criminal Tribes Manual and those sections of the Penal and the Criminal Procedure Codes which concern them. If any injustice is done to them, they know how to ventilate their grievances, and attract public opinion. In short, they now do not live like brutes or savages but are fast learning to become members of civilized society appreciating its amenities. Cultural as well as vocational education have changed them altogether from what they once were. They have now begun to feel and realize the various hardships from which they suffered in the past and clamour for their rights and powers.

Hard work

Formerly they had instinctive aversion to hard work; in fact they were most lazy and indolent. In the beginning when they came into criminal tribe settlements, they refused to work on the ground that they were not labourers, and had not come there in search of employment. Now, continued training in arts and crafts has prepared them for a life of hard and honest work. In other words, they have now learnt the lesson of the dignity of labour. Those who have begun to take interest in work do not like to sit idle for a single moment.

The adoption of new arts and crafts has disciplined their life and convinced them of the desirability of pursuing an honest means of livelihood.

Check on their Extravagancy

Money earned by hard toil is rarely spent lavishly on unnecessary items. The days are gone when they used to spend huge amounts of money on sacrifices, meat and wine. Now they have learnt thrift, and have become sobre and responsible. The habit of gambling is also fast disappearing. Now they do not find any time to indulge in their old objectionable habits and practices. They have begun to realize the value of money, human life and leisure. In the past they had no consciousness of the value of human life and murdered innocent men and women for petty sums. Disciplined life has made them more law abiding and God-fearing. Some of them are now awakening to a sense of justice and showing a marked change in their disposition.

Conclusion

From the facts cited above it is clear that in their vagrant stage these tribes had no houses of their own, possessed minimum of luggage, ate coarse food and lived semi-naked. Their settlement on land has brought about an all round change in their entire economy of life. In place of vagabonds and criminals we now find agriculturists, gardeners, dairymen, artisans, merchants, labourers, mechanics, teachers, clerks and chaukidars. They are now no more dreaded as parasites and outlaws by civilized people, and have come to be recognized as citizens. Minor changes have crept in their dress, house and ornaments; and substantial changes are visible in their economic condition, social status and occupation. They have now begun to keep cattle and household goods, like other people. Immorality and traffic in women have, however, increased. On the whole, the social and economic conditions connected with their settlement on land should be regarded as having immensely improved their condition and, what is more important, have helped in shaping a new outlook on life amongst them and in bettering their conditions. If they are afforded greater facilities in their economic life, the day will not be remote when our society will rid itself of the stigma of harbouring a considerable criminal tribe population, for it will merged and become one with the genral life of the nation and share in the collective march to prosperity and progress.

CHAPTER VIII

EFFECTS OF SETTLEMENT ON EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CUSTOMS

The settlement of criminal and vagrant tribes on land as agriculturists, artisans and labourers has been followed by profound changes in every sphere of life. The education, language, social customs, beliefs and the *panchayat* organization have all undergone considerable transformation as a result. Moreover, the cultural and vocational education imparted to them have had the effect of making them altogether new creatures. Social customs and modes were in perfect accord with their criminal activities. Altered conditions of life have led to the adoption of peaceful customs, manners and traits of their neighbours who lived a settled life. Today they are in a state of transition. In the matter of language, for example, they have either forgotten their own dialect or have relegated it to a decadent state; so that now they speak the language of the people with whom they associate.

Education

It is only through education that we can expect to reform unruly and backward people permanently. We may have reform even without education but its effects would be short lived. Education means the drawing out of the latent faculties of the mind, therefore reform effected through education must needs be from within and hence permanent. In some provinces primary education has been made compulsory for all boys and girls of the criminal tribes. This has resulted in diverting the attention of these children from crime to some extent. In course of time when the old generation will have passed away, the majority of their descendants would be literate. Education has produced such a salutary effect upon the minds of their children that they are gradually forgetting their past patois, beliefs, customs and practices. It is gradually widening their outlook with the result that their ignorance and backwardness are fast disappearing.

They are being educated according to the courses prescribed by the Provincial Board of Education. There is no

special curriculum for them, both, boys and girls are being given the same kind of education. If a special curriculum of studies be introduced for boys and girls of these tribes separately, it is likely to expedite the work of reformation. The highly desirable advantages of education can be reaped fully only when the vicious atmosphere in which their children grow up is done away with. This is not possible without segregating the children from their parents and keeping them in recognized special schools where it may be possible to give adequate individual attention to develop their mental faculties without any adverse influence from undesirable elements.

Vocational or technical education has opened up to them new avenues of employment. It has made them peace-loving artisans, labourers and mechanics. It has also improved their economic condition and made them self-supporting, honest and earnest workers. The undeniable aim of all kinds of education and training must be to equip a man for life or, to enable one to earn one's livelihood and lead an honest and law-abiding life. Education has already radically changed their occupation and means of subsistence. It has also resulted in altering the general outlook of the people, specially of the younger generation. A large number of boys belonging to criminal tribes are receiving higher education in schools and technical colleges, other than those situated in the settlements.

Language or Patois.

One of the remarkable effect of their settlement on land is manifest on their language. This change is marked specially in the younger generation which has also availed of the benefits of school education. The criminal tribes which are living in various settlements, colonies and under police surveillance are able to understand and speak the local language of the place they inhabit. Formerly it was not possible for them to express their thoughts in Hindi or Urdu as spoken by the ordinary civilized people. It does not, however, mean that they have now forgotten their mother tongue. In presence of strangers if they want to communicate with their tribesmen, they usually speak in their own patois. Those gangs which still commit crimes have their special words and signs which even other members of their own tribe cannot understand. The fact that they know two or three languages or patois is of great help to them in their criminal profession, for it enables

inter-communication between the members of the tribe in the presence of strangers. Fortunately the younger generation possesses only a smattering of their indigenous dialects and does not fully follow the mother tongue of their parents.

The effect on language has not been uniform in all the criminal tribes. It varies according to the extent to which they have come in contact with the cultured sections of society. Ordinarily the patois which a tribe has adopted is based on the dialect of the district or province in which it mainly resides. It does not, however, mean that the language of different tribes residing in the same district or province is the same. A list of few words used by different criminal tribes is given in Appendix A.

Social Customs

Although no particular efforts are being made to change their social customs and practices, yet they are being moulded by their new social environments. The social life which they are leading now contains still a large admixture of the past. Social customs and practices do not die easily and have a way of persisting by sheer momentum of the past, as it were, even when they have lost their hold in the convictions of the people. Even the educated members among them have not been able to forsake their old customs and practices and are still continuing them lest any unforeseen calamity may fall on the family. Although their belief in the efficacy of certain customs and practices has been shaken and they do not understand their significance, they prefer to adhere to the old order due to their conservatism. In some cases it has been seen that men have but little time and energy to spare for such practices due to their busy and active life, but women who are idle most of the time remain addicted to them.

A critical study of ceremonies connected with their birth, marriage and death will show that these tribes have not yet ceased to propitiate their old gods and goddesses. They are still continuing to cherish a blind faith in a host of *pirs*, *devis* spirits and ghosts, with the result that sacrifices are every now and then made to appease them.

Child Birth

Formerly their faith in tribal gods and goddesses was so great that they attributed everything to them. Consequently during the ceremonies at the time of child birth among all

criminal tribes, offerings and sacrifices to these deities predominated. Their superstitious nature and belief in witchcraft are responsible for a number of customs, such as mock sale of the baby at a nominal price on the twelfth day after birth among the Doms and dropping the mixture of ass's dung and water in the mouth of a new born babe among the Bilochs. As they came under the influence of civilization and educational agencies, their belief in these old absurdities is growing weaker and weaker. But they are unable to abandon them altogether due to reverence of the old and fear of the new. They, however, have discontinued some, as now they cannot afford to spend huge amounts lavishly on feasts and sacrifices. They are obliged to observe certain customs in obedience to existing conventions and for maintaining their self-respect among the caste fellows. In this connection it may be pointed out that the criminal tribes are not alone guilty of blind obedience to tradition in their social customs and practices even when they are pernicious. This is equally true of Indian society in general irrespective of its education and social status. India is notorious for its innate blind conservatism and the large dead weight of absolute and harmful practices which are being slowly shed with passage of time. In this respect, there is only a difference of degree and not of kind, between the criminal tribes and the rest of India. Therefore, adherence to superstition and meaningless practices of the criminal tribes need not fill us with despair.

Marriage

Formerly regular and stable marriages were rare among these nomads. If marriage was ever performed it took place at an early age. Marriage by capture was very common without any distinction of caste or creed. Since their establishment on land, the institution of marriage has become universal and the previous practice has come to an end with the result that many of the tribal customs and practices connected with marriage have undergone significant changes. They have now begun to adopt a number of customs of their more settled and civilized neighbours. Since society treated them as untouchables and the services of Brahmins on such occasions could not be secured, they had their sons in law and nephews to perform the task of the Brahmins.

Bride Price

There has been an enormous increase in the rate of bride price and thus marriage has become difficult for the

average member of the tribes. For instance, among the Bhatu the *panchayat* has fixed Rs. 600/- as maximum bride price for *Dholi*, *Gaddo* and *Marwari* sub sects and Rs 500/- for *Chireilla*, *Dhapo* and *Kodan* subdivisions. Similarly, among the Haburas the bride-price varies from Rs. 21/- to Rs. 500/-. The Sansi *panchayat* has fixed Rs. Rs. 87/- while the Doms allow only Rs. 15/- as bride-price. The Karwal *panchayat* permits *Dholias* to charge Rs. 600/-, *Popats* Rs. 500/-, *Mahayas* Rs. 400/- and *Dhapans* Rs. 440/- as bride price.

Since the decline in the power of the *panchayat*, there has been an enormous increase in the rate of bride price in spite of the fact that the Criminal Tribes Act has fixed Rs. 200/- as bride price and Rs. 75/- for wedding expenses of an unmarried girl; while for the remarriage of a divorced woman or a widow Rs. 150/- and Rs. 100/- are respectively fixed inclusive of wedding expenses. Yet the actual bride price is much higher than that fixed by the government and in some cases it exceeds even the limit fixed by the tribal *panchayat*. As for instance among the Bhatu and Karwals, the tribal *panchayats* have fixed Rs. 600/- as maximum bride price. But the actual bride-price paid for a girl belonging to either of these tribes ranges from Rs. 900/- to Rs. 1100/-. Formerly, at the time of marriage the sanction of the *panchayat* was deemed very essential, but now it is not so.

Early Marriage

The members of criminal tribes have always been in favour of child marriage. Formerly, they sometimes married their children after seating both of them on plates. Ordinarily their girls were married at about the age of ten and boys at twelve. People living in the settlements and colonies are not allowed to perform such early marriages now. To check this evil practice, the government has made a rule to the effect that those who have settled must not perform marriage without the final sanction of the manager or managers of the respective settlements. But whenever they get an opportunity they prefer to celebrate the marriages at an early age.

Omens and Beliefs in Godlings and Evil Spirits

There has been a considerable change in the attitude and ideas of the criminal tribes in recent years. Today those who have lived in the criminal tribe settlements and colonies are

not so superstitious and believers in evil spirits as their nomadic ancestors were. Formerly they were animistic to the extreme. They still worship a host of malevolent and benevolent spirits, godlings, plants, animals and also have ample faith in the potentiality of omens and vulgar superstitions.

Although their settlement on land has obviated the need of following a number of omens and superstitions which were the product of their nomadic life in jungles; they yet observe most of these omens as their belief in their efficacy has not been completely shaken. They still fear the evil eye and the evil tongue, and believe that calamities are due to the displeasure of evil spirits and dead ancestors. They hold that so long as the requisite *pooja* and sacrifices are made the mischievous spirits and ancestral shades remain satisfied, but when any *pooja* or sacrifice is omitted, calamities in some form or other are bound to befall. Consequently even today, every adult member among them performs the *pooja* twice or thrice an year. The expenses of an ordinary *pooja* roughly range from fifteen to twentyfive Rupees. It is interesting to note that whenever anybody happens to possess some money the due *pooja* is immediately performed. Generally they sacrifice a number of pigs to appease the godling concerned; sometimes they also offer *Malida*-a preparation of pounded cakes, ghee and sugar. Their first thought in illness or any other accident would be to propitiate an evil spirit after consulting a *Shana* who is supposed to be a *Witch-Doctor* and the *leech* of the tribe. But among those who are living in Criminal Tribe Settlements or who reside near large cities, where prompt medical aid is available, the belief in the curative power of evil spirits is gradually disappearing. But when we consider the proneness to absurd superstitions among the general masses of India, nay even in highly civilized countries in some form or other, we will not be surprised at their continuance amongst these tribes for some time to come although in gradually lessening degrees.

Death Ceremonies

Like high caste Hindus, the members of criminal tribes have now begun to cremate their dead and send the ashes to Hardwar or other sacred places of pilgrimage. Formerly they used to bury the corpse, throw it into a river, or expose it into the jungles. Some tribes used to pack the corpse into

a jar after dismembering the limbs and buried it deep under the earth.

Today those who have been influenced by Christianity or Islam bury their corpses while others who have adopted the Vedantic religion or Sikhism follow the customs and practices of their new faiths. Those who are following their old religion, i. e., Hinduism in a crude form, do not observe *Sradha* like high caste Hindus, but offer libations to the ancestral shades. Generally wine and sweets are offered to the dead ancestors and on special occasions pigs and goats are sacrificed to appease them.

Panchayat

The authority and binding force of a tribal organization depends upon the utility and services of the organization to its members. In the past, nomadic life and criminal activities were coordinated through mutual help and cooperation. Discipline was the central idea behind the tribal organizations. The interest of the majority always predominated over that of the individuals. In the past it was not possible for them to withstand the struggle for existence and so they had no other alternative but to submit meekly to the decision of the majority. The passing of the Criminal Tribes Act in 1871 and subsequent efforts at reformation and reclamation afforded them an opportunity to learn agriculture, new arts and industries. Gradually they began to realize the injustice done to them by the tribal or caste organizations and centred their economic activities more and more round themselves and their families than round the whole group or tribe. This has brought about a proportionate decrease in the power and authority of the organization.

The establishment of these people on land has resulted in diminishing the power of the tribal organization. The power to chastise offending members remains no longer in the hands of the hereditary leaders. Gradually they have lost their old privileged status which has been brought down to the level of that of the ordinary members of the tribe. Now settlement and police authorities depute their own favourites to act as leaders or *panchs*.

Thus the settlement of these tribes on land had led to the displacement of hereditary leaders by nominated ones. As the governing authorities have no hold over social and religious matters, the new leaders must needs have little or no

voice in regulating the social and religious activities of the tribesmen. This has led to the emancipation of these people in social and religious matters. Moreover, the tribal authority in general has considerably weakened due to their poverty. Agricultural pursuits and employment in industrial concerns provided them with a hand to mouth living only. The supervision and strictness of the administrative authorities considerably checked them from supplementing their income by indulging in their traditional anti-social activities. The power to sanction a sitting of the *panchayat* lies in the manager of the settlement or the Station Officer concerned. As frequent sittings of their tribal *panchayats* prove a source of disturbance, permission to hold a *panchayat* is not easily given. This has further reduced the importance of the part played by the tribal organizations.

The sanction of the tribal *panchayat* to the tribal women to enter into immoral intimacy with outsiders for the benefit of the tribal gangs has degenerated into habitual prostitution. In the past such lapses were punishable by the tribal organization; but now it has become a nonentity in such matters. The tribal *panchayats* of the unsettled tribes still continue to exercise their old authority and prestige. Those who have been reformed are practically outside the pale of their old tribal organizations.

Miscellaneous

Formerly the main duties of the caste organizations among the criminal tribes were to organize criminal gangs, distribute the booty, maintain peace and order among the tribesmen, sanction marriages, and enforce social customs and practices among the members of the tribe. But now the tribal organizations of those tribes which have peacefully settled have but little voice or hand in these functions. The interference of tribal *panchayats* in maintaining peace and order among the tribesmen is no longer required. The *panchayat* still possesses some authority in enforcing the observance of social customs and practices, but this too has declined much as the economic condition of settled tribes is not such as may permit them to perform social functions in strict conformity with the past conventions. Contrary to the usual practice they have now begun to commit crime in the company of outsiders after settling special liabilities, risks and shares. So in such cases, the question of intervention by the tribal

panchayat does not arise. The failure of the tribal *panchayat* to satisfy the contending parties has also led some of them to file suits in law courts.

Conclusion

From the foregoing study one can safely conclude that the criminal tribes are no longer so illiterate and backward as they were in the past. Education, vocational as well as cultural, is revolutionizing their primitive mode of life. The younger generation is gradually forgetting the tribal patois and a time will soon come when they will forget it altogether. Further their settlement on land has reduced the expenses incurred in observing social customs and practices. Also the orthodox view so staunchly adhered to by these tribes of marrying very small children has undergone a vital change, leading to a marked decrease in the number of such marriages. The bride price has increased tremendously and marriage has become difficult and an expensive affair for an average member. A good number of them have come under the influence of Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and Aryasamaj. They have begun to follow the customs and practices of their respective sects or denominations in all social matters. Belief in evil spirits, gods, trees and other minor deities is gradually vanishing. Objectionable practices connected with death ceremonies are also being abandoned by some of the reformed members. The power and prestige enjoyed by the tribal *panchayat* in the past has become a legendary matter. Hereditary leaders are sinking into obscurity and losing their importance while new ones who manage to come into the good books of the administrative authorities are coming into prominence.

CHAPTER IX.

PRESENT DAY SETTLEMENTS AND COLONIES.

The administration of nomadic tribes having criminal tendencies, prior to 1871, when the first Criminal Tribes Act was passed was quite different from that of the present one. Previously, police station officers had to be very careful about these nomadic gangs for the safety of life and property in their jurisdiction. When a nomadic gang would arrive in the jurisdiction of a police station, two or more constables according to the number of members in the gang would be deputed to escort them out of their jurisdiction. When the boundary of another police station was reached the same process of escorting upto the next police station was repeated. Thus whenever the nomadic gangs went they were a problem for the police. Mostly the police constables failed to restrain them from their undesirable activities as very often the gang used to overpower or win them over.

Moreover, it was not possible for the few constables to keep a strict watch all the twentyfour hours, as they were obliged to leave them alone for some time when they had to attend to their unavoidable personal necessities, such as food, toilet etc. They were expected to see that their wards passed through without committing any crime. So, whenever anybody among them was arrested or involved in some difficulty, it was in the interest of the constables to certify that the person or persons concerned were with them and were not responsible for the crime in question. The nomads also abstained from committing any serious crime as far as possible while in the custody of the constable incharge of them. Thus the problem of controlling crime was temporarily solved for the time being by mutual accommodation and courtesy which neither did any good to the criminals not to the society. It only served to keep law and order within the jurisdiction of one police station without bothering or caring for the anti-social acts committed elsewhere, such as places which were situated on the borders of two police stations because neither of the authorities would show any zeal for their detection and punishment. Usually they did not commit any crime in the vicinity of the place where they

inhabited, but would always prefer to go in the remote corners of the jurisdiction of other police stations or into the Indian states.

Before the enactment of Act No. XXVII of 1871, there was no special legislation with which the members of so called criminal-tribes were dealt with. They were governed by the provisions of the ordinary law of the country as other people. The government of India being confronted with the difficulty of controlling the illegal activities of the habitual criminal gangs belonging to various castes and tribes enacted Act No. XXVII of 1871, according to which the Local Government, the District Magistrate and the Superintendent Police got some effective powers of registration, restriction and surveillance of these people. The Act was further amended in 1897 by Act No. II 1897, according to which the power of notifying criminal tribes was delegated to the Provincial Government. Under Section 17 (a), the Local Government was empowered to segregate the children of the members of criminal tribes from the company of their parents and to establish reformatories and other useful institutions where these people could be kept. Later on according to the requirements, a fresh Act No. III of 1911 was enacted for the administration of the criminal-tribes by which it was made obligatory on them to get themselves registered and allow their finger-prints to be taken by the authorities. In the year 1919, the problem of the criminal tribes was further reviewed and Act No I of 1923 was passed by which these people got some relief. To incorporate all these amendments and changes in the original Act, a fresh Act No. VI of 1924 was enacted in 1924 which consolidated the provisions of the various previous Acts. Further in the interest of criminal-tribes, in 1947, Act No. I of 1947 was passed. Now Act No. VI of 1924 as amended by Act No. I of 1947 is our present statute book by which we control and administer the criminal-tribes in the dominion of India. The Act authorizes the local government to declare any tribe, caste, or gang as a criminal-tribe and direct the registration of all or some members of such groups. Section 10 of the Act requires the Registered members of a criminal tribe to report their movements, while under section 11, they may be restricted to a specified area or may be committed to a criminal-tribe settlement. Under Sections 21 to 24 special punishments are provided for those who transgress the provisions of the Act.

Criminal tribe settlements and colonies have been established with a view to reforming these people by giving

them adequate facilities in their every walk of life, so that their permanent assimilation into law abiding citizens may be possible, where they are settled on land as agriculturists, they are given training in new arts and crafts and accustomed to a disciplined mode of life. Agricultural education is imparted to them by means of practical training, as well as by books and magazines dealing with methods of scientific cultivation, rotation, improved varieties of crops and advantages of good seed and manure. Industrial settlements provide means of subsistence to the settlers, accustoming them to a disciplined life and systematic work, and reforming them through combined educational, religious and economic agencies. But these are only stepping stones to the ultimate solution of the problem of criminal tribes which lies in their settlement on land. Their permanent reformation chiefly depends on improving their economic conditions and changing the entire outlook of the younger generation by religious and moral teaching and adequate supervision to eradicate their anti-social instincts.

The reformatory machinery which is at work in various provinces is different throughout northern India, although the administration of the Criminal Tribes Act is uniform. The success achieved by various provinces in reforming and reclaiming the criminal tribes has varied according to the practicability and efficacy of the methods adopted.

THE UNITED PROVINCES

At present there are four agencies which are engaged in the reclamation of criminal tribes in the United Provinces, viz., the Government, the Salvation Army, the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and the Harijan Sewak Sangh. The local government is generously financing the social agencies which are engaged in the salvation of these tribes. To reform and reclaim these tribes, six Criminal tribe settlements and a number of colonies have been established. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha at Lucknow is managing the Aryanagar Criminal Tribes Settlement, the Gorakhpur settlements is being managed by the Harijan Sewak Sangh, Delhi; settlements at Kanth, Fazalpur and Sahibgunj are being run under the supervision of the Salvation Army; while the Provincial Government itself manages the Kalyanpur Criminal Tribes Settlement, the Bawaria Colony at Jhinhana, and a number of other colonies and villages in which the members of criminal tribes reside.

With the exception of the Sahibgunj Settlement, other settlements consist of a cluster of houses surrounded by high

boundary walls with a central gate, which is punctually closed at sunset and opened in the morning. Before closing the gate in the evening a roll call of all settlers is taken, and again in the morning when the central gate is opened general attendance is recorded. If at the time of the roll call a settler is found missing, he is challaned and prosecuted according to the provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act. During the night the chaukidar on duty keeps a strict watch and calls aloud the names of settlers to ascertain from their response their presence in the settlement. During the day time also if a person is suspected to have absconded attendance is taken. Passes are issued by the manager of the settlement concerned for allowing the settlers to visit the market, to seek employment or to do any other work.

The settlements of the United Provinces can be divided into three categories:

- (i) Agricultural.
- (ii) Agricultural *cum*-industrial.
- (iii) Industrial.

The settlements at Sahibgunj, Kanth, and Lucknow are purely agricultural while those at Kalyanpur and Fazalpur are industrial-*cum*-agricultural. The Gorakhpur settlement merely sends the Doms to the local Municipality to be employed as sweepers ; although it has a small handloom factory which remains mostly idle for want of yarn.

The settlements at Sahibgunj, Kanth and Lucknow possess some agricultural lands. In these settlements the inmates are given land according to the number of members in a family, and facilities such as advances for purchasing seed, cattle and manure are also given to the settlers. Training in scientific agriculture is also imparted and efforts are being made to arouse their interest in the cultivation of land. The experiment has not met with complete success because in some settlements, irrigation facilities are very poor. For instance, at Sahibgunj there is neither any canal nor sufficient number of wells. The earth becomes soft during rains else it is hard. The water level is about fortyfive feet deep. Their economic condition is so bad that they sometimes borrow corn for eating and sowing purposes at a rate of interest which comes to nearly 50 per cent. Similar is the condition of settlers in the agricultural settlement at Kanth. Even with the greatest efforts, they are unable to meet their ordinary expenses. It is from the proceeds of their past savings and present crimes that

they are living. The land belonging to the settlement at Lucknow is of an inferior quality and full of white ants, which are injurious to crops. In the above agricultural settlements, the economic condition of the settlers is no doubt relieved to some extent by casual earnings in the adjoining fields as day labourers and wood-cutters in the surrounding jungles.

The criminal tribes settlement at Fazalpur is the largest industrial *cum* agricultural settlement of the province. Here facilities in the shape of employment and training exist both in the factory which manufactures long cloth, towels, bed sheets, cotton and moonj-carpets, as well as, in the agricultural fields. A brick kiln has also been started to provide training in brick making. Generally such factories are not being run on proper economic lines. The inevitable result of this unscientific and uneconomic way of production is that a large number of people have to remain unemployed or are partly employed, which fetches extremely low income to them. This constitutes the seed bed of discontent among the settlers and often induce them to abscond and commit crimes.

The settlement at Kalyanpur is more of an industrial than an agricultural nature and has the distinction of being the only one in the province, which is working economically. Perhaps it is due to the fact that the government is patronizing it by placing orders for military and police uniforms. A good number of settlers belonging to this Settlement are employed in cotton Mills at Cawnpore.

The settlement at Gorakhpur is inhabited mainly by the Doms. Most of the settlers are employed by the local Municipality as sweepers. The Harijan Sewak Sangh of Delhi is making sincere efforts to improve the condition of the settlers.

Facilities Provided to the settlers

Every family is provided with a rent free house. At times, lime and bricks are also supplied free of cost to the settlers for repairing their houses. They have the advantage of free medical aid. Arrangements have also been made for compulsory primary education where books and stationery are supplied to children free of charge. Intelligent children are awarded scholarships according to the classes in which they study. In the Aryanagar settlement at Lucknow, land is given free to the settlers for agricultural purposes; while in other

settlements it is given to the settlers on a nominal rent. The inmates also get some help in the form of seed and manure from the authorities. In the industrial settlements, the settlers easily get employment. Thus to some extent they are relieved of the anxiety of searching means of livelihood. They appear to like their new habitats for another reason, viz., it relieves them from the usual harassing searches made by the police authorities.

Bawaria Colony at Jhinjhana

The Bawaria colony at Jhinjhana in Muzaffarnagar district comprises of these villages : Khanpur-Bawarian, Dera-Bawarian, Rampura, Khooksa, Lavdinpur, Doodhli, Nayabas, Kheri, Ahmednagar, Abhainagar, Athkhera, Jatan-khanpur, Nanakpura and Imamnagar, situated within an area of about four miles. The colony is under the supervision and control of a manager and adequate staff. About 1500 Bawarias including women and children are living in the different villages of the colony. The colony offices and the staff quarters are centrally situated. During nights the attendance of these people is recorded.

The administrative authorities have appointed a *mukhia* and a *chaukidar* for each village from among the Bawarias. Sometimes, only one *chaukidar* is deputed for a group of villages. These local officers are expected to report the activities of their brethren to the authorities concerned. This system of indirect rule through officers recruited from the tribe itself is meant to check their criminal habits, as they are expected to know about the movements of their brethren better than any body else.

From enquiries made among these people, it was found that these *chaukidars*, *mukhias* and *panchs* have formed a clique among themselves and are abusing their authority and power to make money for themselves by extortion under threat or by financing the tribal gangs. Refusal to obey these tribal officials means unnecessary harassment to the Bawarias and thus willingly or unwillingly they have to come to terms with them. Among the tribal population of India where ever the system of indirect rule is maintained by the administration, the tribal officers become responsible to the local authority and not to the people from whom they are recruited. This system instead of catering to the needs of the tribal population, has become a source of their exploitation. Similarly, the

tribal officers who are responsible to the administration, use their derivative influence for personal aggrandisement against the interests of the tribal people whom they are supposed to look after. The various *panchayats* which have been established by the Reclamation Department are a mere farce and have utterly failed to achieve their object of checking their anti-social activities.

There is no other ostensible means of livelihood except agriculture in the Banana colony. About half of the Bawarias have no land to cultivate, twenty five per cent. of those who possess land have uneconomic holdings. There are very few wells in the colony and the water in the canal is insufficient for irrigation purposes although all possible efforts are being made by the authorities. The result is that the crops depend solely on precarious rain fall. Therefore to meet their daily expenses, the cost of litigation and to pay off old debts and the government revenue, the Bawarias have to resort to all sorts of evil practices such as absconding, committing crime and even selling their wives and daughters. Another drawback worth pointing out is that education is not popular among these people and there is no adequate arrangement for the right type of education except four or five primary schools. Thus left to themselves or what is worse to the care of the degenerate elders, the children from the very beginning acquire a criminal aptitude and training consciously or unconsciously. Unless there are drastic changes in the administration of criminal tribes and the entire Criminal Tribes Act is repealed, it is useless to expect encouraging results.

The Habura Colony

The Habura Colony is situated at the extreme corner of village Sataran in Moradabad district. About fifty Habura families have been established in the colony. They have been given by the Court of Wards, Sahaspur some land for cultivation. Each family has been given eleven bighas of *chain land* (good quality) and about fifteen bighas of *Kallar*, land on which dense vegetation has grown and which has been not used for agricultural purposes for a long time. But here too, they labour under many handicaps. They have practically no facilities for irrigation. The existing wells are insufficient. They have to depend mostly on uncertain supply of rain water. At night they have to keep awake to watch their crops and protect them from the inroads of wild animals which abound in the vicinity. The owners of neighbouring *chein*

lands are Thakurs. On enquiry it was discovered that one reason for the visitations or depredations of wild animals in the fields of these people was that their fields were obtained by clearing the jungles where these wild animals lived formerly. The economic condition of the new settlers is far from satisfactory. Somewhat similar conditions prevail in other villages and colonies inhabited by these tribes.

It is clear that the settlement of the criminal tribes on land and their initiation into the agricultural profession has not been followed by the success that might have been expected. There might be several reasons for this. They have not only to contend against the difficulties which confront the agriculturists in general in India, such as dependence on weather, an uncertain rainfall and poor irrigation facilities. In addition to these, the tribal agriculturists have to put up with certain special handicaps such as the inferior quality and situation of lands allotted to them, lack of credit facilities, apathy of neighbouring cultivators, and finally vexatious conditions regarding daily attendance. At times when they are not allowed to remain on their fields in the night time, wild animals do much damage to their crops. Success can only be achieved when the above handicaps have been removed or minimised. It is only then that we can hope to reap the best results of colonization and government expenditure over their reformation and reclamation.

THE PUNJAB

The Punjab offers better reformative and reclamative facilities to the criminal tribes in their settlement on land than other provinces in Northern India. A special feature of the Punjab is that all its criminal tribe settlements and colonies are being directly managed by the government. Formerly philanthropic societies were allowed to run these institutions but on realizing the superiority of direct management they have abandoned the practice. At present there are about twenty-five settlements, the majority of which are agricultural-settlements¹. While Chhanga Manga, Chichawatni and Shahpur Jand are forest settlements, Amritsar is a reformatory-settlement, Kussamsar Chak 21/W.B. is an agricultural-reformatory settlement, Mughalpora and Lyallpur are industrial-settlements,

1. Kotmandyal, Kot Dhingranwali, Kot Jhandu, Kot Goindka, Kot Mokhal, Kot Adia, Kussamsar 23/WB, Kusamsar 18/WB, Chak 27/21, Chak 47/3R, Chak 39/3R, Chak 53/5L, Chak 109/9L, Chak 19/9RE, Chak 19/9rw, Chak 16/9R & Chak 91/108.

while at Burewala there is a reformatory with two farms, viz., the Adult-farm and the Borstal-farm where prisoners on probation are given facilities to live independently.

Procedure of Committing

When a member of a criminal tribe is found to have committed any crime he is challaned and punished according to the crime. On being released he is sent to Amritsar reformatory settlement for five years if he happens to belong to a settled tribe and for ten years if he is from a wandering tribe. On completing this training period, he is allowed to go home with the consent of the police; or he is sent to the agricultural reformatory settlement at Kussamsar, or to any of the industrial or forest settlements according to the class—agricultural or labour, to which he belongs. This period of sentence is again five to ten years. After this he is permitted to go home. In case he has no house or any other place of business where he can go, he is sent to any of the agricultural settlements and provided with land to earn his livelihood. These various procedures probably have the effect of deterring those who had once embarked on crime from lapsing into it, lest they should be required to repeat the procedure from the Amritsar Reformatory to their permanent settlement on land.

Agricultural Settlements

In agricultural settlements, the principal occupation of the settlers is the cultivation of land. The six settlements situated in Sialkot district viz. Kot Mandyal, Kot Dhingrawali, Kot Jhandu, Kot Goindka, Kot Mokhal and Kot Adia are old settlements; here except wells no irrigation facilities are available, and consequently the economic condition of the settlers is not satisfactory as in the settlements situated in other *Chaks* where canals are available. The condition of the houses of the settlers and other equipment also is comparatively poor.

In all agricultural settlements adequate agricultural facilities are given to the settlers. A spacious set of rooms and a courtyard for keeping cattle is provided to every family. A cooperative supply shop and a cooperative credit society is maintained in nearly all the settlements on sound lines. These societies enable them to purchase all necessary articles

at a reasonable price and encourage habits of thrift and economy. Educational, medical and religious facilities are available to all. Every settlement possesses a primary school and a dispensary. Sometimes a single school or a single dispensary is made to serve two or more settlements situated not far from each other. The services of religious preachers are available to the settlers at a nominal cost. In some settlements, there are night-schools for adults. Besides the above facilities, there are *Red-cross societies, St. John Ambulance classes, Scouting troops, Better-Farming and Better-Living Societies* which are doing useful work in reforming the lives of these nomads.

The economic condition of the settlers in most of the agricultural settlements in the Punjab is satisfactory and in some cases it is even better than that of the neighbouring tenants. The settlement authorities see that their average income is enough to meet their necessary expenses. When there are bad harvests and the produce is little, the cooperative shop supplies them with necessary articles on credit, and when they need advances or loans, the Cooperative Credit Society comes to their aid.

Forest Settlements

Forest Settlements are situated amidst dense forests in which wood cutting and lumbering continue all the year round. Spacious quarters are supplied free of rent to all settlers under the general supervision of a manager. The manager remains in direct contact with the forest authorities for employment of his wards. Men generally do the strenuous part of the work like cutting of trees and carrying heavy logs while women help them in light work like loading and unloading of the waggons. Some of them are employed on monthly wages; while others get piece wages. The manager draws the wages of all settlers directly from the forest authorities, and then he himself distributes it among the settlers after adjusting their dues towards the Co-operative Supply shop and the Co-operative Credit Society.

Amritsar Reformative Settlement

Amritsar Reformative Settlement is one of the largest settlements of the Punjab. This is a primary institution where an offender, is sent for training after his release from the prison. The settlement is under the charge of a Superintendent who is

also a first class Magistrate with summary powers. It provides training and instruction in carpentry, weaving, tailoring, *ban*-twisting, furniture polishing, manufacture of leather goods, chucks, carpets, sports material and other useful industries. All these branches of instruction are under a factory superintendent and a factory assistant. They choose the nature of instruction to be given according to the aptitude and capability of a person. While under training, the workers are given wages according to the number of mouths they have to feed.

There are two schools in the settlement: (i) Reformatory School and (ii) Settlement School. The settlement school is meant to provide primary education to the children of criminal tribes; while in the reformatory school, juvenile offenders belonging to other castes and tribes get their education and training in useful arts. For moral instruction of the inmates, there are religious preachers. There is an adequate arrangement for prompt medical aid, new arrivals are first put in *observation wards* for at least a month where they are subjected to a detailed psychological examination.

Industrial Settlements

The Mughalpura and the Lyallpur settlements are the principal industrial settlements. At Mughalpura the settlers are employed in the railway workshop, while at Lyallpur in industrial concerns. The settlers are given free-quarters and other facilities similar to those given to the inmates of agricultural settlement. Some of them are now good mechanics and specialized workers earning from Rs. 15/- to Rs. 50/- per month.

Agricultural Reformatory Settlement

Chak 21/WB at Kussamsar is an agricultural-reformatory settlement. Here lands have not been permanently given to the settlers as in others agricultural settlements. This settlement serves as a training centre for those members of the criminal tribes who belong to the agricultural classes. Scientific methods of agriculture and the use of improved modern appliances are taught to them practically. The economic condition of the settlers here is not so satisfactory as in other agricultural settlements as they are required to pay double the ordinary land revenue. Besides a primary school, there is also one industrial institution in which carpentry, tailoring and furniture

polishing are taught. Boys from this as well as from the neighbouring two settlements attend it and avail of the instructions

Borstal School at Mughalpura

This is situated adjacent to the Criminal Tribes Settlement at Mughalpura. It is meant for orphans from criminal-tribes as well as other ordinary juvenile offenders. Here primary education and training in useful arts and crafts is given to the inmates. The whole programme of the school is so arranged as to inculcate the habit of hard work, straight forwardness and honesty in the young people. They receive instruction and practical training in playing on bands and are often given opportunities to visit the city and countryside for recreation and broadening their outlook. When a boy finishes his training period here, he is sent on probation to Burewala Reformatory.

Burewala Reformatory

The Reformatory has two farms known as the Borstal-Farm and the Adult-farm which are situated at a distance of two miles from each other and are under the superintendence of two officials. The central office of the farms and the headquarters of the superintendent are situated midway between the two farms. The Adult-farm contains a number of quarters and a large cattle-shed. It is used for probationary period of adults while the Borstal-farm is intended for discharged juvenile offenders from Mughalpura. Here facilities are given to the probationers to earn their living themselves by agriculture or by practising any other art or trade which they have learnt. The authorities always come to their help in times of adversity and necessity.

Colonies and Villages

Some villages are under the direct control of the Criminal-Tribes Department, while others are under police surveillance. The settlers are practising agriculture and allied industries as means of their subsistence, but their economic condition is not so satisfactory as in the settlements. They often abscond and commit crimes to meet their necessary expenses.

Achievements

The strict control over the criminal tribes people coupled with all round facilities for their advancement and the fear of their being reverted to other settlements where economic advantage and personal freedom may be reduced has brought a solitary effect on these gypsy tribes. They have now begun to realize the futility of a life of crime and depredation. They now like to settle on lands as agriculturists, labourers or specialized workers. The reformatory efforts have resulted in turning thousands of men and women with deep seated anti-social instincts into decent and civilized people. Some of them have adopted Sikhism, Islam or Hinduism in one or the other form; they have themselves built mosques at 3 places, a Gurdwara at one place and are zealous in their attendance in these sacred places. Men who once thought nothing while pawning their women for petty sums have now developed self-respect and have begun to guard their honour zealously like civilized people. Discontent with their changed mode of life is fast disappearing as they are getting accustomed to a settled life and as their economic condition is improving. Technical education is enabling them to lead an independent honest life after release. People who once feared living in houses and had a rooted aversion to the amenities of life such as fresh food, milk, clean clothes and bath have now begun to appreciate them. They now build houses for themselves, know the value of fresh and nourishing diet, revel in bath and live in a neat and tidy manner.

The younger generation is growing in a healthy atmosphere and shows encouraging promise. Anti-social activities of the criminal-tribes people have become a thing of the past and they are now no longer a terror to their neighbours. These people themselves admit that what the jails could not do the settlements and reformatories have achieved in no time. Most of the confirmed criminals now live in the settlements while those who are still at large, shirk to stoop to crime for fear of being sentenced to settlements, and have voluntarily settled down to peaceful occupations.

The spirit of self-respect and sense of responsibility has been fostered in them by reposing greater trust and confidence and by delegating some powers to their *panchayats*. Everyone is at liberty to follow the religion of his own choice. Efforts made towards removing social evils like child-marriage, excessive bride-price, reckless expenditure on socio-religious

ceremonies and gambling have met with appreciable success. Their womenfolk have now given up their notorious, idle and vicious habits and are now helping their husbands in the cultivation of land and management of household affairs.

RAJASTHAN SANGH AND AJMER-MERWARA.

In Rajasthan most of the leading states make use of the provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act after adapting it to their requirements. There is, however, not a single settlement or reformatory institution run on modern lines throughout the Rajasthan Sangh and Ajmer Merwara. Generally the administration of criminal tribes is in the hands of the police authorities. There is only one settlement of criminal tribes at Dehbru in Jaipur State which is under a police outpost. The settlers make their living by cultivating land and doing casual labour. In Jodhpur State there are four colonies: Jor Doodar, Pali, Sojat and Sadri. The colonies are being managed by low paid *number-dars* and literate constables. Here too, the main source of livelihood are cultivation of land and sale of fuel. Some people are employed in stone quarries. The land is generally of inferior quality, and is situated at the farthest extremity of the locality. Much time of these people is wasted in observing attendance formalities. Some of them serve as *chaukidars* in the neighbouring villages and get *Rabri Roti*¹ from the village people. This condition is more or less general among the criminal tribes in Ajmer Merwara and other states of the Sangh.

In Rajasthan and Ajmer Merwara the aim of the administration has never gone beyond checking the anti-social activities of these tribes and keeping them under control. There are no philanthropic institutions in Rajasthan whose object is to reform and reclaim these tribes. Those who are settled near cities like Ajmer, Jodhpur and Udaipur seek for manual labour. The Kanjars and Sansis have adopted shoe-polishing and shoe-repairing recently and some of them are working in industrial concerns. In the colonies and villages of criminal-tribes there is practically no provision for any kind of education. No sincere and substantial efforts are being made to settle them and train them in useful arts and crafts. In short the reformation and reclamation of these tribes is most neglected in this part of the country.

1. Food at harvest time or its equivalent in cash.

Conclusion

The passing of the first Criminal Tribes Act and subsequent Acts and amendments have done away with the old practice of escorting nomadic gypsy gangs out of the jurisdiction of one police station to another, with no other aim than to maintain law and order within a particular area. Administration of nomadic gypsy tribes with a view to their permanent absorption in peace-loving population is of recent growth. The criminal tribe settlements, colonies, reformatory schools and other reclamative institutions are meant to make a complete success of the aims with which these people were subjected to the special provisions of the Act which is unique in the world. It is evident from the foregoing study that the administration of these tribes in different parts of the country depends for its success mostly on the work done by the various philanthropic institutions. Generally, the running of such institutions is expensive. As the funds for the uplift of these tribes are limited, it is not possible to start the requisite number of institutions, for their proper institutional treatment. Now under the present circumstances these institutions are serving only a limited section of these people. Besides, the discharges from these institutions are generally few for want of reclamative facilities outside. For achieving our aim, a programme of *after-care* is most essential, without which the work of our reformatory institutions will ever remain incomplete. The present state of affairs is not very encouraging. Every care should be taken to see that an individual gets proper education and training in the direction in which he needs them most and in which he can shine out later on in his practical life. There is no use wasting national money and energies on useless projects. The present policy of restricting the activities of a very limited number of offenders, while keeping a majority of them at large cannot be of any substantial benefit to the society. We have to set our reformatory machinery in such a way as to enable us to reclaim as many offenders as possible.

CHAPTER X

PANCHAYAT AND SOCIAL UPLIFT

Among the criminal tribes the *Panchayat* organization and their social uplift are so closely related to each other that the latter is hardly possible without the former. There is no other institution so powerful and popular as the tribal *panchayat*. It is a unique institution which wields great influence over a tribe. In previous chapters it has been amply clarified that among the criminal tribes education in crime, juvenile apprenticeship, gang organization, criminal expeditions, observance of social customs and even their character and morality are largely controlled by the *panchayat* and the conventions established by the *panchs*. A critical survey of these tribes would convince one that for the majority of their objectionable practices, anti-social activities and extravagance, the tribal *panchayat* is directly or indirectly responsible. Hence in order to uplift these tribes socially and to win them over from their traditional occupation, it is most necessary that their undesirable customs, practices, beliefs and activities should first be systematically tackled. The eradication of these defects is not possible so long as the masses remain uneducated and the present *panchayat* organization is not reorganized on sound lines.

For devising a useful and practical programme of social uplift it is essential that all these defects and objectionable practices which come in the way of their uplift must be abandoned and replaced by either new ones or the old ones should be modified. At the same time, it would also be necessary to reorganize the *panchayat* system on sound and scientific lines so that it may prove a source of reformation and uplift rather than corruption and deterioration. For an effective reorganization of an institution like the *panchayat* with a view to doing away with its evil influence and effects, it is essential that those defects must first be brought to light and the people be convinced of the harm they bring about. Without this background of healthy opinion among the tribes people, all attempts at their reform would be a mere waste of energy with no permanent result. To give some idea of the scope of

activities and the sphere of influence of the *panchayat* organization among the criminal tribes, it may be pointed out that it is responsible among others for the following:—

1. *Extra-Tribal Immorality.* Among most of the tribes the chastity of women is at a discount. The liaison of women for the benefit of tribal gangs has been in vogue for a very long period and those women who indulge in them are admired all the more in the community. The existence of such customs as the payment of *Tanka money*¹ and the adoption of the wife of an imprisoned man as one's own wife till her husband returns², the sale and resale of women to unscrupulous people and the notion that immorality consists in sexual relations with the members of the tribe only, gives us some indication of their standard of morality. A widow is considered an asset like any other material possession belonging to the heirs of the deceased person. On her remarriage, the legal masters have to be compensated. A woman is free to divorce her husband and return to her parent's house on payment of the customary bride-price (not the actual bride-price which is usually heavy) and the expenses of marriage. On divorce, the female spouse ceases to have any right over the children, who are supposed to belong to the male spouse. In case the mother wants to take any child with her, she has to pay for the child.

2. *High bride-price.*

3. *Extravagance* in social functions and on ceremonial occasions such as child birth, betrothal, marriage, *Chhathi*,³ *Mundan*—first hair crop, and death. They observe some of these customs due to their superstitious beliefs and others to maintain their reputation amidst their brethren. In case one cannot afford to spend money on entertaining the caste people and observing the ceremonies, he is taken to task by the tribal *panchayat* and is forced to take loans to perform the usual ceremonies. Their improvidence and short-sightedness on these occasions are, to some extent, responsible for their career of crime.

4. *Performing the prescribed sacrifices* for their own welfare and for the safety of their relations and friends. The

-
1. Compensation to the would-be husband of a girl for her pre-marital indulgence or sex-licence.
 2. Prevalant among the Haburas, the Bhatas and the Sansis only.
 3. A ceremony on the sixth day of child birth, in which the family deity is propitiated and caste people are served with palatable dishes.

defaulters are either made to perform the sacrifice or compensate the injured party, as the case may be.

5. The custom that so long as one does not prove one's mettle in some criminal exploit, he is not allowed to appear before a sitting of the *panchayat* with a turban on his head. Again for his marriage with a tribal girl one has to show ingenuity in the hereditary profession.

6. The custom of realizing past debts and arrears upto the seventh generation

7. The practice of sharing the expenses of litigation by all the accomplices of a gang equally.

8. Fair distribution of booty.

9. Efficient system of espionage.

10. The traditional understandings and liabilities of compensating an injured gangster and in case of his death, supporting his dependants so long as there is nobody else to finance them.

11. Outcasting defaulting members and recruiting new ones.

12. Expenditure of large sums of money in summoning a sitting of the *panchayat*, imposing peculiar punishments and exorbitant monetary fines.

13. The sanction of consuming prohibited food.

14, *Social status*. Their criminal activities and recruitment from all sections of the society are mainly responsible for the low social status of the criminal tribes. In fact, their neighbours dread them and avoid them like infection. This is amply clear from the treatment which these unfortunate people are receiving in their new habitats. Even the rural population does not show any sympathy or offer any help to them and instead make things hard for them by placing difficulties in their way. To admit them into its social orbit is out of question.

15. *Foundness for meat, wine and gambling*. Unless the *panchayat* is reorganised it will not be possible to put an end to the objectionable customs, practices and conventions that have been established and are being strictly followed more or less by all. The reformatory efforts that have been made so far have no doubt weakened the hold of the *panchayat* to a little extent in some directions. A thorough overhauling of such an institution is not an easy task. For this purpose we shall have to work on the ideas and ideals of the people concerned. In place of the old *panchayat* organization, we shall have to devise an attractive alternative so that the

people might be induced to join the new organization wholeheartedly and sever their connections with the old. In bringing this about we should depend more on persuasion than coercion. For the success of the new organisation, it would be essential to invest it with special powers and adequate control. Careful propaganda along scientific lines will be needed for reorganizing or abolishing such a deep rooted system. Permanent success will only be possible when education and other amenities of life are liberally brought within their reach.

An effective reform of the existing *panchayat* system is not possible without the active cooperation of the entire society, viz., the Criminal Tribes Department, the Police, Philanthropic societies, Municipal and District Boards, Educational institutions, Capitalists and also other Official and Non-official bodies and individuals. From past records, we find that efforts made in the past to organize the *panchayats* of some castes by official bodies only did not meet with the desired success¹. The reorganization should ultimately aim at the gradual abolition of present day *panchayats* as their very existence would be a menace to the new organization.

There is no use building a grand structure on the same old foundation after removing some of its defects. We have already seen that the new *panchayats* based on the old faulty foundations fail to bring about the desired effect, and on the contrary prove detrimental to our efforts to reclaim them. It is clear however, that the reorganization or the removal of the present *panchayat* system can only be expected after a period of at least twentyfive years, at a generous estimate. This being the minimum in which we can hope to raise a new generation brought up in normal surroundings. For the healthy growth of the new generation we shall have to create a congenial atmosphere which will be free from the traditional handicaps and evil influences. We should split them into small groups or colonies and restrict, as far as possible, all opportunities for

1. In the Bawaria Colony at Jhinhana a *panchayat* has been established by the administrative authorities. It has proved to be a failure as the persons in power have formed a clique among themselves and the new system instead of improving their condition has become a source of their exploitation. Somewhat similar is the condition of the *panchs* appointed by the police authorities at the Habura colony at Sataran district Moradabad). The main reason of such failures is that the office of the *panchs* carries great responsibility without any equivalent remuneration for their pains. Moreover, these new *panchayats* have no power or attraction which may induce the tribesmen to rally round it as in the case of the traditional *panchayats*.

free social communion on a large scale. When they have been thus scattered, the present *panchayat* will automatically lose their authority and in due course of time cease to exist or become mere figure heads. The establishment of these people at distant places will naturally result in reducing the expenditure on social customs and practices. Moreover, the help which the *panchayat* now renders in facilitating crimes will then become out of question. These are but negative and coercive measures. For permanent success we must rely on education which will sooner or later result in changing their entire outlook. But, at the same time, we should not forget that for an all round social uplift, a sympathetic attitude on the part of the caste Hindus is of the utmost importance.

An alternative method as suggested by the report of the Criminal Tribes Committee of the United Provinces dated 26th July 1938, is to establish Reform Panchayats in place of Criminal Panchayats in every district. The plan is like this.

Every district should have one central organization in which all official and non-official bodies are to cooperate wholeheartedly. The district Magistrate will be the President of the District Committee and the Deputy Collector its Secretary, as they are likely to find land and employment for the distressed tribesmen; under this central organization there would be the thana (police station) and the primary *panchayats*. The primary *panchayat* would consist of all adult members who would form the executive and elect one of themselves as *Sarpanch*. The Thana Panchayat whose jurisdiction would be the area of the police circle would consist of at least five members, four of whom are to be elected by *panchs* and *Sarpanchs* of the primary *panchayats*, and the fifth will be either a non-official social worker or the Police Station Officer. The Thana Panchayats would organize general meetings where the main transactions would take place such as speeches explaining the advantages of reform, announcement of exemption or relaxation of restrictions granted to well-behaved members, grant of sanads and rewards for good work, announcement of any facilities for education, agriculture or employment and also complaints from the members. The final authority which would exercise all control in the district would be the District Committee. The members of this committee would consist of important officials and non-officials holding responsible posts in the district and ten members elected from among the members of the criminal tribes. Out of these members an

executive committee of eleven members would be formed who would carry out the work in the interests of the criminal tribes.

The principal obstacles that are likely to hinder the progress of the above organization are:—

Hostility of the more cunning and desperate members of the old Panchayats due to the loss of their former power and privileges; abuse of *panchayats* by *panchs* and other local men of influence; and lack of resources for the economic, educational and social betterment of the tribes with the result that the *panchayats* would have little to attract the members of the tribes.

To encounter these impediments the authority and prestige of the Reform Panchayats should be enhanced by consulting the *panchs* in coercive as well as ameliorative measures concerning the tribes, viz., preventive action, investigation, grants of scholarships to children, provision for employment or grant of land to the unemployed members of the tribe. In the meetings of these *panchayats* all possible efforts should be made to turn them into centres of social life

No doubt such a scheme would be quite satisfactory, if it can be rendered practicable. The scheme contemplates a Reform *panchayat*, which should include all the members of criminal tribes of a district. How can it be possible to substitute one consolidated *panchayat* in place of several tribal *panchayats*? The scheme appears a trifle over-ambitious and takes little account of the fact that the stuff or material with which it has to deal are human beings and not inanimate objects. The scheme, if earnestly inaugurated, may to a limited extent succeed in stamping out some crime and in rallying the members of different criminal tribes round the *Reform Panchayat*. It is not possible, however, to reform people permanently by law alone. Reformation requires something over and above law and brute force. It must be based on inner sympathy and goodwill. To achieve any real reform we must win their hearts, by convincing and persuading them.

Nor can any permanent amelioration be achieved merely through the internal reorganization of the *panchayat* among the criminal tribes and castes. The reformed *panchayat's* code of social conduct and morality needs to be supported by the entire rural community. As long, however, as the general rural population of the country treats them as untouchable or unapproachable, the *panchayat* would not be able to succeed

much in the reform within the tribe in such an uncongenial and disheartening social atmosphere. The crux of the problem of social uplift lies, therefore, in the change of attitude of the caste Hindus towards the criminal tribes and castes. In social status, a criminal tribe or caste is grouped with the lowest menials of the village and in some places they are considered even inferior to the sweepers who are the lowest of all castes in India. Hence the removal or reform of the existing social stigma attached to the criminal tribes is every essential if their social uplift is to be our aim.

Conclusion

Social uplift is only possible when the present *panchayat* is reorganized, or abolished altogether. The foregoing account makes it abundently clear that most of their social customs, objectionable practices and crimes are an outcome of this institution. It is vain to expect to change the deep rooted customs and practices of superstitious and illiterate people by any sudden or drastic measure. We can achieve our aim only by gradual processes, e.g., by educating the younger generation, giving it sound ethical and religious instructions and creating in it a genuine desire for honest living. Those who have not yet adopted any new religion and who profess that they are Hindus should be made thoroughly acquainted with the tenets and principles of their religion. Inducements are to be offered to them to leave their past vicious customs and habits. When some of their glaring defects and attachments to objectionable practices have been got rid of, their neighbours will no longer shun their company. Efforts should be made by philanthropic bodies to create a favourable social attitude towards the criminal tribes among the civilized population so that they may be treated with sympathy and goodwill. The present attitude of untouchability and aversion is detrimental to the reformative efforts which are being made to reclaim these tribes and encourages in them bitter anti-social feelings and prompts them to lay their hands on the property and persons of the general population. When the barriers of untouchability and unapproachability are removed, the criminal tribes people will regain their sense of civic and social responsibility and would begin to love society instead of hating and praying upon it.

CHAPTER XI

RECLAMATION AND REFORM

The Criminal Tribes are a peculiar feature of Indian social life. In no other country of the world do we find whole tribes classed as criminals, nor children adopting crime as a hereditary calling as a matter of course. But this does not mean that crime is particularly rampant in India or that the number of criminals is the highest here. The incidence of crime in other countries of the world is in no way less in number or virulence or nature than in this country. The crimes committed here are due more to economic causes than to anything else, as is evident from the fact that the *crime-barometer* of India rises and falls with the harvests and the general prosperity of the masses. The crime situation in India is somewhat different from that in the Western countries, in the sense that here in India poverty and ignorance are at the root of these crimes, while in the west depravity of nature, perverted outlook, unwholesome moral and physical surroundings are mainly responsible. The population of the criminal tribes in India is fairly large. In the whole of India there are about four million persons coming under the category i. e. who are supposed to adopt crime as a hereditary profession. Most of these on enquiry will be found to be victims of poverty and unfavourable circumstances.

An Act like the Criminal Tribes Act of India is to be found in no other country of the world; although gypsy tribes addicted to crime and vagrancy are to be found everywhere. In other countries, the system of their administration and control is by means of the ordinary law of the land. Those who commit an offence are penalized. There is no legal system anywhere else as in India of separating whole tribes and gangs, and grouping them under a special class as criminal-tribes in order to control and minimise their criminal activities. Punishment is meted out in other countries to an offender when he commits a crime; but the activities of whole groups or sections of people are never restricted to a particular locality on the presumption of their future misconduct as is done in India. Had the declaration of an undesirable individual as belonging

to a particular class of criminals depended on the merits of his own case, it would have been more tolerable. But here there is no individual treatment based on the criminal's character and behaviour which is the basic principle of the scientific and equitable treatment of crime. Throughout the West, criminals are not treated as born miscreants. Every effort is made to prevent crime by attacking its cause in the first place, and secondly by changing the criminal into a mentally and physically healthy personality fit enough to live in society.

The criminal habits of the tribes under survey appear to be determined more or less by the prevailing economic conditions of the tribes concerned. The absence of any definite occupation, the difficulty of securing adequate means of livelihood which is accentuated by the divorce from land add to the miseries of these tribes and compell them to fall back on their traditional occupation of pilfering, theft and robbery. It has been found that the jail population increases with the extent of economic distress and decreases with the return of favourable conditions. This fact alone is enough to indicate the importance of the economic factor in the incidence of crime and criminality. But economic life is only one aspect of the culture pattern and unless efforts are made to tackle the entire pattern, their permanent reformation and reclamation will not be possible.

Unless a social group has lost all interest in life, it must adjust itself to the changes which come in the way of progress. At every stage of social progress, social customs and religious practices need adjustment, for what was once beneficial for a group or a society may latter prove to be a handicap under changed circumstances. Those tribes which have not been able to keep pace with the rapid march of time occupy the lowest rung in social order and are known as primitive tribes. The criminal tribes are not only primitive but have also adopted anti-social conduct, and so have earned the designation of criminals for themselves. They live in a vicious circle. Their nomadism removes them from the healthy influence of a fixed habitat and this exclusion from a normal settled life confirms them in their vagrancy and undesirable habits.

The permanent solution of the problem of criminal tribes will depend upon continued improvement of their economic and social conditions, the education of the younger generation and also on effective supervision and check on their criminal activities. Every possible effort must be made to provide some decent occupation for them so that they might adjust

themselves to the society in which they have been placed. The discharged settlers from criminal tribe settlements should be treated with care as convalescents after a period of prolonged illness. When this is achieved, the necessity of removing them from society will not arise. As referred to in Chapter IX¹, the provincial governments of different provinces are administering the criminal tribes in accordance with the Criminal Tribes Act and have established a number of settlements and colonies for the reformation and reclamation of these unfortunate people. The success met by even the most advanced provinces is far from satisfactory, due to the faulty methods employed by them. But in order to improve the present methods, it is essential to build on a better foundation and unless the criminal Tribes Act which is the backbone of the entire system is properly revised, or repealed altogether, it is idle to expect any substantial results. At present only the acute symptoms are treated leaving the main disease untouched. The expenditure incurred on their reclamation does not therefore give full benefit as only a limited number among them who happen to be committed to criminal tribes settlements are benefitted. Others, and these include the majority who live in distant villages and colonies have little chance of being reclaimed. As these vagrants are a blot on our society, it is absolutely essential to reform them. If necessary steps are not taken to achieve the object of the criminal tribes Act viz. the reformation and uplift of these people, we are not justified in enforcing some of the stringent provisions which impose harsh restrictions on them and even stand in the way of their earning a free livelihood.

Criminal tribe Settlements

Criminal-Tribe-Settlements are generally very expensive and so their number in different provinces is very limited in proportion to the population of criminal tribes in that area. For instance, in the United Provinces only 1881 registered and 1587 unregistered members are deriving the benefit of reformatory facilities offered in the criminal Tribe Settlements while the rest of the tribes numbering about 39000 registered and 1,400,000 unregistered have no satisfactory arrangement for their reclamation.² In other words it may be said that

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1. Present day settlements and colonies.
 2. Report of the Criminal Tribes Committee July 1938 U. P.

except for 23 per cent of the criminal tribes population committed to settlements proper, no satisfactory arrangement exist for the reform of 99.77 per cent of the notified and approximately 82 per cent of the registered population. In Rajasthan and Ajmer-Merwara, the condition of reformatory machinery is worse than that of the United Provinces. These two have practically no institution for the reformation of the criminal Tribes. The state of affairs in the Punjab where about 13000 registered and 1,32365 notified persons constitute the criminal tribes, is somewhat better as 25700 persons are under the direct control of the criminal tribes department in various settlements, colonies, villages and reformatory schools

At present most of the settlements only serve as centres of preventive detention where some of the dangerous members of the criminal Tribes are detained for a long period and allowed to earn their livelihood by cultivating land or working as labourers in jungles and industrial plants. The Criminal Tribe Settlements are for all practical purposes no better than prisons. The settlers are treated as outlaws and it is but natural that they should be disgusted with such a treatment. They are always anxious to escape from the settlement whenever they get an opportunity. The managers of the settlements should try to develop friendly relations with them, and understand their difficulties instead of dealing with them in a rather harsh and official manner. They should of course do everything to maintain discipline in the settlements; but at the same time they should try to be more intimate with them and take personal interest in their activities and thus win their confidence. Once the Officers gain the confidence of the settlers, the work of rehabilitation will be a matter of course and is bound to be a success.

There should not be only one kind of settlement as at present in most of the provinces. They should vary according to the need and the degree of criminality of the persons sent there. At present all are placed in one type of settlement and treated on the same footing without any discrimination. There should be separate type of settlements for different kinds of criminals. This is only possible when a proper classification is made on the basis of a psychological study of the entire personality of the criminals. The classification should be such that the evil influence of one group or of an individual may not influence the other. At present a large settlement contains almost every type of criminal. The best advantage of the existing facilities of reformation can be

derived only when the entire population of a settlement is homogeneous. Different classes of criminals require different kinds of treatment and it is not possible with one set of officers to adopt different standards of treatment in the same institution. Criminal tribe settlements are institutions like hospitals for the benefit of society. It has now been universally recognized that crime should be treated like a disease. If criminals are to receive the reformatory treatment as patients we shall have to classify them in the same way as we classify patients in a hospital, according to individual ailments and requirements. But the work of a manager or a superintendent of a large settlement under the present circumstances is very heavy and complicated and consequently he can hardly be expected to give the necessary amount of care and attention to diagnosis and treatment of individual cases. Although the officials make their best efforts to give such individual attention, they fail to extend the desirable facilities to most of the settlers. The present attempts at reformation and reclamation may, indeed, be compared with an attempt to cure all the patients of a hospital by administering them only one medicine like the panacea of old days.

Agricultural settlements should also be established at such places where land and water are available in plenty. The settlers should be taught scientific farming. Generally it is seen that an average settler proves an inferior agriculturist in comparison to an ordinary peasant. This is perhaps due to his lack of experience and training. Another outlet for the employment of settlers can be found in making arrangements with various industrial concerns which might be willing to employ them as labourers. It has been noticed that when a large number of persons live in a settlement, the work of reclamation becomes somewhat difficult. Individual attention cannot always be paid. Therefore, if criminal tribes are encouraged to settle as peasants in batches of ten to fifteen families in small colonies under the charge of experienced sociologists, who are endowed with a real zeal for missionary work, it would furnish the settlers with fine opportunities to improve their lot.

The past experience in colonization of these wandering tribes show that concentration of these tribes in large numbers at one place is not so effective as the establishment of many small colonies consisting of ten to twelve families in separate places. In this connection Lt. Col. Hutchinson, Inspector General of the Punjab Police has written thus in 1873, 'We

must be prepared to produce a state of partial starvation before one of these Ishmaelities will do honest work enough for his support, but I strongly advise no attempt be made to collect them in masses anywhere which my experience of the *Sansi Kots* of Sialkot teaches me to believe, leads to their encouraging each other to starve sooner than work and make them numerically strong to resist all good influence. I consider that we should rather strive at keeping them broken up, or breaking them up in small parties, completely isolating each little party from the other and bring to bear on each party all the best influence and encouragement we can elicit from the headman and respectable men of influence in the village in which or near which, the party is located.'

The authors of Harikrisna Tomkin's Report have also reached to a similar conclusion: "Our investigations in 1914 have led us to the same conclusions as Col. Hutchinson formed in 1873 that as far as possible we should avoid collecting these people and should endeavour to isolate each party from the other———". Thus the key to permanent reclamation and reformation of our criminal tribes lies in establishing small agricultural colonies, where they will be more susceptible to the good influence of civilized population than in large colonies where they abound. In these they will not be in a position to stand by themselves as a self sufficient community nor bully the peaceful citizens as they do in localities where they predominate. At the time of establishing such colonies we shall have to give them some subsidy in the beginning for the construction of their cottages, purchase of cattle, seed, plough and for improving the condition of the land, both by way of inducement and as a matter of necessity to make their venture a success. We shall also be required to train them in scientific agricultural methods and bear their necessary expenses for some time so long as they yield from their cultivation is not sufficient to supply them with all necessaries of life.

In fact the settlements should serve as a sort of clearing house from which refractory members should come out reformed, and be absorbed in the masses. So far discharges from settlements have been few, because firstly there are no arrangements outside for the after-care of the discharged, secondly the settlers themselves are not prepared to face an uncertain existence outside. It would be better if the procedure of committing the criminal tribe's people to different types of settlements be somewhat on the following lines:

The convicted members of criminal tribes should be first sent to a reformatory for learning useful profession and submission to discipline. When the preliminary training is finished satisfactorily the question of transferring them to an industrial, agricultural, a labour supplying or an industrial-*cum* agricultural settlement should be considered on individual merits. Similarly in the settlements the question of discharge should be taken up when the authorities are satisfied that a settler is reformed. If a settler has picked up a craft or a trade he should be encouraged to develop it outside the settlement without imposing the usual restrictions. Their houses should be built on a uniform pattern and some grant should be advanced to them. For those who prefer an agricultural life, small colonies should be founded. As soon as the majority of the settlers are reformed, the settlements should be abolished and converted into a colony with some supervision in the beginning. Later on no supervision might be deemed necessary. Those who are not yet reformed should be transferred to other settlements.

For the reform and control of the members of criminal tribes, both official and non official agencies should work simultaneously. The official agency will have effective discipline and control over the employees and consequently the possibilities of corruption would be minimized. On the other hand non-official agencies are in a better position to enlist public sympathy and raise subscriptions for the benefit of the settlers. Here the services of public spirited citizens can also be secured. The non-official agencies can command greater public support. To stimulate a healthy spirit of competition and variety in social experiments it is essential that different philanthropic societies should be allowed to share the work.

Every care should be taken to see that a settlement does not have the look or atmosphere of a prison. The aim of the Settlement is order and discipline on one hand and cure, care, and sociability on the other. Emphasis should be laid equally on cultural as well as vocational education and attention should be concentrated more on imparting knowledge than teaching them to read books. Competent practical training in handicrafts in accordance with individual cases and inclinations should be given, as after release the inmates would have to support themselves by practising the traits of their choice. In imparting vocational education the attention should be focussed on the fact that training should be given only in those industries which the inmates can practice

profitably when they come out after being reformed. The training and technical education which are being imparted at present in the various settlements and reformatories are not satisfactory as the discharged settlers usually do not make use of any of the industries learnt there. The inevitable result of the faulty training is that the reformed settlers are again forced to resort to crime.

Some of the settlements should be situated at places where training in agriculture, gardening and dairying may also be conveniently given. As ours is an agricultural country, no other technical education can be so useful and profitable as scientific training in agriculture. The hunger for land is as strong with these people as with other classes and the prospect of a grant of land is a great incentive to good behaviour, while the living it provides helps to remove the temptation to crime. The scheme of practical and theoretical training for the female settlers should be different from that of the males and domestic arts like cooking, sewing, embroidery and midwifery may be taught to them so that they may later on become useful housewives. The settlement authorities should give them as much freedom as possible. The lesson of freedom and self respect should be thoroughly impressed on them. The relation between the settlers and the settlement authorities should be as amicable as possible. In the internal administration of the settlement, the settlers should be given every responsibility to hold responsible position in order to create the feeling that they are in no way inferior to other normal citizens. It is a well established truth that when law-breakers become law-makers, they begin to realise the real value of law and order.

The settlement staff is also one of the most important element which contribute towards the success of the settlement as a whole. It is not the machinery or the measures which matter so much as the spirit in which they are worked. This is particularly true when dealing with human beings. No measures for dealing with the criminal tribes are likely to be successful unless they are administered by the right type of person in the true spirit. So long as the present untrained and unsympathetic staff and police surveillance continues, it is futile to expect any appreciable difference in the condition of settlers. A settlement officer should be as pleased to see a criminal returning to society as a doctor when he sees a case of serious illness cured permanently. As a matter of fact every punishment is the application of force of some sort or

the other. It should be just enough to correct the shortcomings of the offender. It is better to prevent settlement offences than to cure them. Generally offences committed by the settlers are the direct outcome of the treatment given to them.

Criminal Tribes Act

At present when a child is born he is considered to be a criminal from the very beginning and on his attaining the age of majority, he is automatically registered even though he might have been totally innocent. Under such circumstances, they are made to feel conscious of their criminal nature. It is thus not a matter of surprize that the criminal tribes population has been multiplying inspite of efforts extending over sixty years to reform it and reduce its strength. There are various gangs and individuals who have nothing to do with criminality, yet their names are included among those of the criminal tribes. While some of those who are notorious for their misdeeds have not been incorporated among them. At present uniform status is given to all, without taking into consideration the degree of criminality of individual miscreants. To remove this great defect, two ways are open to us : we must either repeal the existing Criminal Tribes Act in entirety or re-model the present Act by cancelling some notifications and incorporating new ones to suit our present requirements.

Case for Modification

Modification is particularly necessary in the case of the hereditary criminals or members of the criminal tribes as distinguished from the mixed gangs of ordinary criminals who are included among them due to their habitual anti-social activities. We shall have to study the members individually and modify or cancel the notifications on the merits of each case in the following manner :—

1. By exempting, those who have improved their character from the stringent provisions of the Act.
2. By cancelling some of the unnecessary and exacting clauses.

3. By amending in a suitable manner, those provisions which fail to achieve the object for which they were introduced.

Considering the crimes committed by a large number of them, no one can object to the strictness or question the utility

of the 'Criminal Tribes Act' but when it brands the innocent children born to them as criminals, one feels that it has failed in its object. Attempts should have been made to remove the children of these tribes from the evil influence of their parents and this could have been done by legal sanction. If uniform treatment is continued to be given to all, reformation of the really deserving is difficult, as innocent people grouped with them have also to bear the inconvenience and hardship. It is only because of this and other stringent provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act that in some quarters, it is viewed as a very repressive and inhuman measure. Those who hold such an opinion fail to recognize that the restrictive provisions of the Act and fear of removal to settlements have furnished very effective checks on the evil propensities of hereditary and professional criminals. It should be clearly borne in mind that the criminal Tribes Act is a measure which diverts the course of habitual criminals by imposing certain restrictions on them. Thus furnishing a system of temporary treatment for checking their criminal tendencies. It is intended to create a hiatus in the criminal career of habitual offenders with a view to isolate them from their past traditions and associations. This ofcourse does not afford any remedy towards their permanent reformation. During this period of transition efforts are being made through criminal tribe settlements to create in them habits of hard work and honest living. The real cure lies in providing them with suitable means of subsistence after their release. The settlements simply fit or equip them for certain callings during their period of detention.

The restrictive provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act are no doubt intended as a temporary measure to assist the reclamation of these tribes by restricting their activities to particular areas and by committing the recalcitrant members to settlements and colonies. The application of the criminal Tribes Act to cattle lifters has proved very successful. The taking of security under section 110 of the Criminal Procedure Code has been found ineffective, but notification under the Criminal Tribes Act with the accompanying social stigma and restrictions have proved useful deterrants. Reclamation rather than the restriction is the real way to produce permanent improvement. About fifty per cent of the inhabitants of the settlements are still apt to commit crimes if they get an opportunity.

Case for Repealing

The achievements of the Criminal Tribes Act, so far as

temporarily restricting the anti-social activities of these people are concerned, are quite consoling and we thank the Act that it has considerably saved the society from the depredations and anti-social activities of these people. But when we consider the price and the sacrifice which we have to pay, we feel sorry and submit that the temporary immunity from the anti-social activities of these people has been purchased by us at an exorbitant cost and sacrifice of these people. Let us be content to say that in 1871 and afterwards, the Act was a necessity for order and peaceful enjoyment of property; but now the times have altogether changed, we now do not require the present Criminal Tribes Act in its present or any other form. The sooner it is repealed the better it is. The existence of the Act in fact and in reality is a stigma and a blot on our society and the free India. We do not envisage such a repressive and inhuman legislation in any part of the civilized world. As in everything else, so in legislation too, we must keep pace with other independent nations of the world. We should no longer tolerate such a repressive, inhuman and unjust Act on our statute books. The United Provinces Criminal Tribes Enquiry Committee 1947, in para 47 of the report has remarked: "The psychological effect which the removal of the stigma of '*Criminal*' will produce on the tribes particularly on the younger generation will be healthy. The anti-social feeling and resentment against society for condemning them from their birth as criminal and demanding their automatic registration on attaining the age of fifteen will be removed. Children will not have the undeserved shame nor the inferiority complex among their class mates belonging to other castes nor will adults suffer any disability in employment as employer shy off on getting to know that their employee was a member of a Criminal Tribe. Despair at their lot should no longer induce crime, nor should the common tie of the Criminal Tribe bind all the members good, bad and indifferent into common profession of crime and prevent the play of natural tendencies leading to the diffusion of the group into the general body of public and the isolation of the criminal elements."

The consequences of repealing the Criminal Tribes Act would be far too many. We should not be afraid of the denotification of the tribes and removal of restrictions and bindings. Gradually things will take their own shape and in due course we shall find everything normal. Of course, initially we shall have to face some practical difficulties which we can

boldly face and punish the miscreants under the provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code. Like *History-Sheeters* amongst ordinary people, we can also place some of these hardened incorrigibles under police surveillance and proceed with our reclamative and reformative schemes with redoubled vigour and energy. If necessary, we may enact other Acts, like the Habitual Offenders and Vagrants Act, which may administer justice alike without making differentiation of caste, tribe or creed. The most important idea underlying the theory of repealing the existing Criminal Tribes Act is to permanently wash away from the minds of the members of these tribes and the general public at large the idea of a born criminal and the social stigma attached to it.

The absence of public sympathy is the greatest drawback in reforming these tribes. Public cooperation instead of ill informed and ungrounded criticism is essential. District associations should be formed with such help from the local officers, as might be deemed essential to enlist the cooperation of the private employers in securing work for the members of these tribes. For encouraging them, it is essential that a number of posts may be reserved by legal sanction for qualified members of these tribes. Spirit of thrift and economy which is generally lacking in them should be inculcated by scientific propaganda of the cooperative movement, which would also save them from the clutches of money-lenders.

Reclamation of Criminal Tribes Outside Settlements

It has already been discussed above how the majority of criminal tribes are living in distant villages and in colonies under the surveillance of the police. Only a very limited number of these nomads are in the settlements, hence it is very essential to find means of reform in the villages themselves. Besides providing adequate facilities for education, work, employment and social reform, it is vitally important to reorganize the Panchayat system. This is the only institution most suited to reform villagers. In chapter V, mention has already been made of the functions of the Panchayats of criminal tribes. This leads one to the conclusion that their complete abolition is essential for they are a serious obstacle to any reformative work. Unless drastic steps are taken no scheme of reformation can succeed. What is actually needed is a complete change in their outlook. Therefore, attempts

should be made to teach them new ways of living by making them economically self supporting. Whereby they may learn the valuable lesson of the dignity of labour. As members of criminal tribes are blind followers of their religion, religious instruction coupled with a proper moral atmosphere can be one of the effective measures for their reform. Necessary facilities for such instruction should be provided in all the places where they have settled themselves.

Segregation of Children

The influence of adults upon children is considerable. In chapter III, we have seen that children instinctively learn all vices from their parents and neighbours. No doubt in the settlements, primary education is given to children but it does not bear any good fruit, as the company of the parents while at home is more than sufficient to neutralize the benefits derived from education. If children can be removed from the baneful influence of their parents and neighbours, and through education, if they are made aware of the evils of anti-social conduct, these will surely go a long way in reclaiming these tribes from the path of vice. The best way to separate them from the evil influence of their society is to open gurukul type of institutions where these people should be induced to send their children. In order to create further interest in education, every kind of facility should be given to them. The Government should increase the present support given to the tribes by encouraging them to educate their children. Substantial concessions should also be made and the children thus trained should be properly employed. The helpless orphans among them should be directed to approved local orphanages, where they would be free from the evil influence of their brethren.

Social Reform

The foregoing chapters clearly show that to a certain extent the social customs and religious practices of these tribes are responsible for their anti-social activities. They draw their inspiration from these practices and customs, which dominate their entire outlook, encouraging them to be antisocial and inhuman. Hence their social reform deserve our immediate attention, if we wish to curb and put an end to their undesirable activities. We can expect to get the best results from our efforts only when the objectionable practices preva-

lent among them have been done away with. This has to be done by educating them and by convincing them of the utter futility of their social customs and religious practices. Steps should also be taken to remove the handicaps and hardships that they have to undergo by being subjected to the Criminal Tribes Act.

Employment

The Society should continue to take all possible care of the members of criminal tribes so long as they are not adequately trained and are capable of earning a decent independent living. If it is not possible to provide the unfortunate members with desirable facilities and opportunities for honest living, the money and energy spent by society in training and educating them would be a sheer waste. We can hope to merge them in society only when the factors which are responsible for their degeneration have been eradicated.

Aftercare

The ultimate reformation of all kinds of criminals depends very much on a well planned aftercare programme, without which even if the discharged settlers wish to lead an honest life they cannot do so for want of opportunities for work. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that there should be philanthropic institutions and individuals to help them if full benefits of our efforts are to be reaped. It is not enough to cast adrift the products of a few years training with some money and a few words of advice. This can never protect them from relaxing into their old habits or falling into the clutches of their old companions, who continue their career of crime. The difficulties of discharged settlers are too many. They are like cripples attempting to walk and likely to tumble down at the slightest push or obstacle. A man after living in a settlement under strict vigilance develops a peculiar temper or attitude of mind, which many a time tempts him to a life of crime. Our society is so constituted that it is not prepared to sympathise with them. To help the discharged settlers and to create a good public opinion, discharged Prisoners' Aid Societies are very helpful. Lord Gorschan, sometime Governor of Madras has said, 'I can conceive of no work which renders a more humane and unselfish service than that which is done

by the Discharged Prisoner's Aid Society, which has for its object the restoration of the fallen to self respect and his employment in useful work.'

Conclusion

Crime is mostly due to poverty and an unjust distribution of wealth for which Society and not the individual criminal is responsible. Criminals are just like other law abiding citizens with the difference that they fail to adjust themselves to the norms of the society and the environments in which they happen to be placed. In fact, our penal system does not justly deal with anti-social conduct. It is only when social injustice, poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, and alcoholism, have been removed that we can hope to wash away crime from among the criminal tribes. Motives of revenge, retribution and deterrance should find no place in our treatment of criminal tribes. We should give curative treatment to the individual members by removing the cause of crime from their midst and by segregating some of them so long as they remain anti-social and dangerous. For eradicating the criminal tendencies we shall have to repeal the Criminal Tribes Act and the present methods employed in reforming them. We can ill afford to turn a deaf ear to modern researches in the science of Criminology and Penology. We shall have to take a note that men do not develop in a social vacuum and nothing short of a complete overhauling of the entire social and economic system can stamp out crime from our Criminal Tribes. So long as social and economic organizations do not offer equal opportunities to all, temptations will exist and criminals will continue to yield to them. Our ultimate aim should be to make them useful members of Society as early as possible and settle them on land so that their assimilation in the general body of the agriculturists may be possible.

Attention should be paid towards suitable employment of the educated and cultured members of these tribes. The best way to solve this problem is to throw open the police and military services to them. Out of the posts meant for the scheduled and depressed castes, a certain number should be reserved for deserving members from amongst these unfortunate people. Land offers greatest inducement to them to settle and pursue honest means of livelihood, so it is essential that the Government should always have some land available for this purpose. Land hunger is as strong with these people as is with other classes and prospect of a grant of

land is a great incentive to good behaviour. The progress made by small agricultural colonies makes one feel that the key to the rapid reform of criminal tribes lies in the establishment of small agricultural colonies. Efforts should be made to reform them from within and the best method to change the outlook of the younger generation is to impart them the best possible religious and moral instruction. The home is a fundamental institution and exercises a considerable influence upon children. But it is very often seen that the homes of these people themselves are a source of demoralization. Most of the houses of the members of the criminal tribes are so over-crowded that decency is hardly possible there. The child from the very beginning becomes acquainted with the scenes from which he should be protected. Next to home comes the influence of friends and companions at school or at the place of business. The influence of too much or too little leisure may not be ignored, as the former tempts to hatch criminal schemes while the latter leads to mental depression and immorality. But in our attempts to do away with the causes of crime and the handicaps from which these people suffer we should be careful that the treatment should not be so attractive so as to tempt others to avail of the opportunities. They should of course be trained and disciplined in useful arts so that the spirit of self-respect and self-confidence may develop. The treatment is to be given according to the requirements of individual offenders. One medicine, i. e., commitment to criminal tribe settlements or reformatory schools cannot cure all. The crimes resorted to by our criminal tribes are mostly for the sake of profit, and so they should be dealt with in such a way as to convince them of the unprofitableness of crime. Modern penal system is characterised above all by an attempt to discover curative and reformatory procedures in every delinquent so that he may be rehabilitated and restored to society.

Appendix

WORDS USED BY DIFFERENT CRIMINAL TRIBES, THEIR DIALECT OR PATOIS

BAWARIA

<i>Hindi</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Bawaria Patois</i>
Chalna	Walk	Heend
Bhagna	Run	Jhali le
Ma	Mother	Ai
Sipahi	Constable	Tekha
Susra	Father-in-law	Khakara
Putra	Son	Deekra or Chhera.
Larki	Daughter	Dhi
Rupia	Rupee	Theekri
Laumri	Fox	Lonkri
Billi	Cat	Bilarki
Bakra	Goat	Tat
Zamin Main Mal Garna	To bury wealth under- ground	Narak Diya
Chori Karna	To steal	Sona Chandi Karna
Bahri Manushya	An outsider	Manas
Aurat	Woman	Bir
Larka	Boy	Damkeya
Patang	Kite	Khumri
Soowar	Pig	Hur
Thanedar	Police Inspector	Mlipetter
Hakim	Magistrate	Moto Modhno
Bher ka Ghosht	Mutton	Bhaji
Tang	Leg	Goda
Chaku	Knife	Dhatun
Kutta	Dog	Londiyo
Ganna	Sugarcane	Khanto
Jalane ki Lakri	Fuel	Mohanio
Safa	Turban	Potia
Bhaj Jana	Run away	Pharo Jana
Sona	Sleep	Khoee
Lal	Red	Ratan
Accha	Good	Sahu, Khoo
Tez	Fast	Tatta
Sahib	Sir	Khabab
Gaon	Village	Gaumro
Dhire Dhire	Slowly	Moorea
Ungli	Finger	Aunga
Ata	Flour	Lote
Kapray	Clothes	Lagroo
Roti	Bread	Rokhla
Kabutar	Pigeon	Paralar.
Hiran	Deer	Susee

Gosht	Meat	Roda
Sunar	Goldsmith	Thongaria
Kanta	Hook	Ronda
Chor Ka Chaku	The thief's knife	Hatarka
Mal Chhipao	Hide the booty	Chhata Kara
Jail Gaya	imprisoned	Sukhi hogaya
Talwar	Sword	Dharki
Tashtri	Plate	Dadoni
Sona	Gold	Pila
Beti	Daughter	Batni
Makan	House	Khonji
Khana dene wala	Food giver	Rizakdev
Chor	Thief	Nakhra
Sathi	accompices	Pothi
Chandni Rat	Moonlit night	deva
Larka	Boy	Butt

KANJAR

<i>Hindi</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Kanjar-Patois</i>
Sipahi	Policeman	Dhabra
Thanedar	Police Inspector	Nanadar
Police ke Deputy	Deputy. Supdt.	Khapti Khab
Rupia	Rupee	Balwa
Sona	Gold	Boona
Pani	Water	Ghee
Jat ki aurat	caste woman	Bhatni
Bacchi	child	Bori
Gair Zat ki aurat	Outside woman	Jhabri
Bania	Mahajan	Kania
Brahman	Brahmin	Chhamak
Gujar	Gujar	Jubak
Jat	Jat	Pat
Rajput	Rajput	Tata
Musalman	Mahomedan	Burak
Gai	Cow	Gulchi
Dhobi	Washerman	Khubi
Raigar	Leather worker	Bola
Pet Reh jana	Pregnancy	Paipullia Reh gaya.
Chana	gram	Nana
Gehun	Wheat	Khesu
Jawar	Barley	Bomly
Makka	Maize	Narey
Sharab	Wine	Khel
Teil	Oil	Neegla
Ghee	clarified butter	Ravta
Thakurji	God	Nakerji

DOM

<i>Hindi</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Dom Patois</i>
Phaikdau	Throw away	Akhewarja
Kuwa	Well	Bheeta
Larki	Girl	Tikori
Chaku	Knife	Bana
Danda	Stick	gena
Jao Chori Karo	Go and steal	Go Lisu Ao
Sipahi	Constable	Gilheria
Rupia	Rupee	Gumni
Bahar Ka Admi	An outsider	Kaja
Lai Hain	Have brought	Lailwani
Hasli	Necklace	Nasli
Pakka Am	Ripe mango	Gopi
Kuwa	Well	Noowa
Dhoti	Dhoti	Mardani
Agunthi	Ring	Muneri
Soover ka gosht aur	Pork and rice	Jharey Bhat
Chawal		
Zamin main garna	Bury underground	Bhukwar Sa
Settlement Ka Manager	Settlement Manager	Nahab

HABURA

<i>Hindi</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Habura Patois</i>
Katori	Cup	Billi
Roti	Bread	Took
Beta	Son	Deekra
Pota	Grandson	Putra
Janwai	Son-in-law	Pahuna
Juta	Shoe	Khakra
Yahan se Jao	Go away from here	Nakhi ja
Sipahi	Constable	Kapli
Gari	Cart	Charhawani
Kameiz	Shirt	Adania
Larka	Boy	Aiwado
Namak	Salt	Mintho
Gau	Cow	Jangheria
Larki	Daughter	Deekri
Bap	Father	Baba
Kapre	Clothes	Langaria
Kan	Ear	Khabar Wano

HARNI

<i>Hindi</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Harni Patois</i>
Oont	Camel	Balkherna
Sirhi	Ladder	Rori

BHATU

<i>Hindi</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Bhatu Patois</i>
Admi	Man	Kodmi
Aurat	Woman	Chitni, Tyagi Naiyar, Pankhlt
Paisa	Pice	Dokra
Ajnavi	Stranger	Kaja or Kaji
Pandit	Teacher	Nadhana Wala
Khet	Field	Reit
Kapre	Clothes	Reechrey
Ghar	House	Khaula
Dusri Zat Ki Aurat	Woman of other caste	Tahi
Hasli	A silver ornament put round the neck	Khasaliya
Roti	Bread	Teepi
Dal	Pulse	Khadal
Joota	Shoe	Gauria
Sipahi	Constable	Cheevart
Kapi	Exercise book	Rapi
Kirab	Book	Nitab
Mein School Mein	I am going to study	Main Akhulai Padhba
Parnne Ja Raha Haun	in the School	Jai Raho
Bell	Ox	Natiya
Rupia	Rupee	Bogia or Dokra
Darogaji Agaye bhag ja	Run away police has arrived	Dagra Ahi Gaya
Police A Gai	Beware Police has arrived	Khanti Ja
Joota	Shoe	Gilharia
Ek Jawan Larki pakri gai hai	A young girl has been captured	Pahari
		Tokra par Rakh kar Bhejdi

BILOCH

<i>Hindi</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Biloch Patois</i>
Bania	Shop keeper	Rorka
Hukka	Smoking pipe	Bhookna
Ghi	Clarified butter	Lal bal
Bhala	Spear	Santwa
Ghora	Horse	Potla
Bhagna	Run	Thugja
Gosht	Meat	Tumri
Ajnavi	Stranger	Gidhya
Rupia	Rupee	Kirya
Bakra	Goat	Markan
Safa	Turban	Agasa
Afim	Opium	Kasaili
Chaku	Knife	Khuriya
Chaukidar	Watchman	Thikarwala

KARWAL

<i>Hindi</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Karwal Patois</i>
Gai	Cow	Bhangl
Bhagja	Run away	Podija
Thanedar	Police Inspector	Khagra
Rupia do	Give mony	Valua depi do
Nahin Chorun ga	shall not leave	Nodung Nahin
Bakri	She-goat	Khavi
Bakra ya bher	Goat or Sheep	Makki
Kutta	Dog	Durkna
Chandi	Silver	Ober
Sar	Head	Terna
Roti	Bread	Sukri
Juta	Shoe	Nali
Admi	Man	Bidna
Aurat	Woman	Bidni
Katori	Cup	Khangna
Chaddar	Sheet	Vingra
Doodth	Milk	Bemb
Chor	Thief	Bageta
Ghora	Horse	Jala
Thanedar	Sub-Inspector	Haisa
Utthana	To lift	Jan lewa

SANSI

<i>Hindi</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Sansi Patois</i>
Ana	To come	Asana
Dena	To give	Depna
Bakri	She goat	Chalia
Admi	Man	Kodmi
Pani	Water	Pania
Roti	Bread	Tapi
Sipahi	Constable	Cheewar
Thanedar	Sub-Inspector Police	Danedar
Munshi	Clerk	Bunshi
Sona	Gold	Bona
Chandi	Silver	Bani
Anguthi	Ring	Gunthi
Police A gai hai bhag jao	Police has arrived run away	Dhula A gai Khinti Jao
Teen Tola Sona	Three Tolas of gold	Bona Tre Balve bhar
Razi	Consent	Karaji
Das	Ten	Khas
Bahar Lana	To bring out	Khijlana
Jaldi dauro	Run fast	Bhitari Bhitari
Nakhun	Nail	Khanoon
Bap	Father	Bapta
Chacha	Uncle	Khachacha

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