

BEYOND LABELS: EXPLORING THEMES AND PERSPECTIVES IN THE CRIMINAL TRIBES SYSTEM

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Abstract:

This research paper aims to identify and analyse the underlying themes or patterns that emerge from the study of the Criminal Tribes System. This could include themes such as social exclusion, stigmatization, resistance, identity, power dynamics, and the impact of colonialism on these communities. This paper also aims to examine different perspectives or viewpoints related to the Criminal Tribes System. This could involve understanding the perspectives of the communities labelled as criminal, the perspectives of the authorities who implemented and enforced the system, and the perspectives of scholars and researchers who have studied the system.

Keywords: Criminal Tribe Act, Colonial perspectives, Ideological Accounts.

INTRODUCTION

This case study begins with a brief overview of some primary sources and secondary research on the criminal tribal system in British India. It is not intended as a "literature review" in the traditional sense. My goal is not to provide a comprehensive overview of the scope of the literature, nor to compile a chronological overview of the development or current state of the field. Instead, I have three goals for the following discussion. First, to identify some of the key works and common

themes found in the literature of criminal tribes. Second, use this discussion of these topics to familiarize the reader with the contents of the vast literature on Criminal tribe system design and operation. Finally, this Article serves as a general introduction to the topic of criminal tribes and provides new readers with a broader historical context for the topic, before proceeding to a more detailed presentation of the historical development, goals, and methods of the system. which make up the bulk of this paper. This section introduces

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main themes that recur in writings about criminal tribes.

I begin with a discussion of primary sources and adopt Rachel Tolen's term "administrative literature" to describe those in which the dominant theme is the discourse of criminal tribes as extraordinary challenges to legal and political order. The Criminal Tribe system as an acceptable and necessary response. I then turn to the secondary literature and identify broad themes around which important works in the field can be grouped.

IDEOLOGICAL ACCOUNTS

The Criminal Tribes framework as a limit inconvenience of majestic control on Indian communities, supported by 'orientalist' philosophy groupings are not implied to be categorical or to pigeon-hole scholars or person pieces of work solely inside them. They are a novel set of groupings expecting to offer my reflections on where the adjust of accentuation lies over the extend of those accounts. In this way, I point to highlight a unused understanding into the broad subjects beneath which conspicuous researchers have looked for to investigate the beginnings and underpinnings of this framework. I too trust that this paper will give a adequate diagram of the authentic subject and the common topics.

ADMINISTRATIVE

LITERATURE:(Criminal Tribes as remarkable challenge and reaction) Obviously, the major topic in primary

sources written by British colonialists and specialists, these works characterise the presentation of the Criminal Tribes Act (and its forerunners back to the anti-Thuggee campaigns of the 1830s) as sound reactions to a already obscure and outstandingly challenging shape of sorted out criminality.

Rachel Tolen in her exposition **Colonizing and Changing the Criminal Tribesman** employments the term '**administrative literature**' to characterise these sources, and as a depiction of both the creators, the expectation, and the gathering of people, it is an compelling one that I will utilize within the same pattern.¹

These works regularly centre upon the diverse ways in which hereditary criminality presents itself in numerous tribes, their favoured criminal exercises, ceremonies, appearance, area and geological spread, and dialects or unmistakable shapes of slang ('argots'). The approach is subsequently anthropological, in its unique nineteenth-century design, and ethnographical, but once more entirely inside the advanced European epistemological system of withdrawn perception, 'scientific' drives towards plans of classification, and the suspicion of a social and civilizational superiority.

These works take after the case set by **William Sleeman's Ramaseeana**, his account of 'Thug' groups, their social and family structures, way of life, and their

particular vocabulary, distributed within the 1830s.² Here I will recognize **Mullaly's Note on Criminal Classes of the Madras Administration (1892)** as the primary critical work to center on Criminal Tribes and **Thurston's Castes and Tribes of Southern India(1909)** as a critical commitment to the regulatory writing on the subject.³ An illustration of this pattern of work is nearby police officer **E. J. Gunthorpe's Notes on Criminal Tribes...**, which presents the pursue to nineteen tribes in and around the regions of the Bombay Administration, Berar and The Central Provinces.⁴ The European epistemic drive towards classification and categorisation can be clearly seen in Gunthorpe's division and sub-division of tribes, such as his portrayal of the **Pardhi's (Takenkar)**

‘Takenkars or Tukkarees are one of the six tribes of Pardhis, who reside in or frequent the Deccan, and are all Hindoos. They are true Bowries or Wagriss, and obtained their present name, Takenkar, in these parts, still retaining their caste name of Wagri, by which -and also Moghya they are known to one another. “Takenkar” is derived from the Mahratta verb “ tankan,” to chisel (stones), and the suffix “ kar,” doer. The remaining five tribes are also off-shoots of the great Bowrie family. All immigrated into Khandesh, Berar, part of the Nizam’s Dominions, Central Provinces, and Deccan many generations ago from Guzerat’⁵

A further characteristic of work in this vein is the categorisation of tribes’ alleged preferences in criminal activity. To take an analysis of Gunthorpe representative of the wider style and way of committing crime of pardhi’s

‘For the purpose of committing violent crime a Wagri wraps a dhotur tightly round his body, two corners being tied in a knot between the shoulder- blades, and the remaining two in the small of the back. The face is muffled, showing only the eyes. Should there be occasion to speak whilst committing a dacoity or highway robbery, Hindustani is invariably used. Takenkars are most expert burglars’⁶

Compare this with Gunthorpe’s assessment of the “inveterate robbers and burglars by profession. the Takenkar ‘Takenkars are the most expert burglars. An entrance made by one of this tribe may readily be recognized by the breach, which is dug sloping gently downwards into the house, the sides being quite straight, not inclining inwards at the end, as in an ordinary burglar’s work.’⁷

And another example of this can be found in Kennedy’s work

‘Those with criminal prosperities wherever met with are addicted to Dacoity and robbery often especially by Takankar’s accompanied with great violence even murder house breaking with great violence even murder sheep stealing grazing their cattle in riot’s field theft of crops, cotton, and grains from grain pits’⁸

And some of other works focus on biological markers of pardhi's As follows

'Pal Pardhis, who are a totally different tribe, and who are looked upon with great contempt. The men never cut or shave the hair on their heads. Sometimes a necklace of onyx beads is worn. The women dress like the ordinary Maharatta female, but wear necklaces of round glass beads of a dark colour with yellow about them. Children until attaining a certain age invariably have on onyx bead necklaces. Both men and women have a very dirty, untidy appearance'⁹

He also continue to mark the biological features of lungotee Pardhi one of the sub group of Pardhi 'The Lungotee Pardhi is simple in his clothing, a dliotur round his loins, a white sheet over his shoulders, and a similar-coloured turban on his head completes his toilet. The hair of the head is cut once when quite young and never again touched by scissor or razor. When first the tribe reached these parts the women wore laingas or petticoats, a tight jacket (cholee) fastened behind like Rajpoot women.'¹⁰

'As a class, wandering Párdhis vary in complexion between brown and dark, are of medium stature, very hardy, active, with great powers of endurance and keen senses. They cannot possibly be mistaken. The male, with his long unkempt locks, his large metal ear-tings, the dirty rag doing duty as a turban, his scanty nether garments, general wild, squalid appearance, his sneaking gait and black

wooden whistle hanging from his neck with which he imitates the call of the partridge, is unmistakable wherever he goes. The female Pardhi is more elaborately attired than the male'¹¹

And as the next versions of these writings and patterns of comparative physical identifiers of in born guiltiness in Thurston. 'A advance case of that modern fashion can be found in **Risely's The people of India**, which contended for prove of intrinsic culpability and social rank by anthropometric estimations, counting the width of the nose. In case these topics strike us as reminiscent of the scandalous criminal anthropometry of Cesare Lombroso, they ought to – ideas of genetic culpability in British India were unequivocally referenced by Lombroso as portion of the conceptual back for his work.'¹²

In expansion to reductive organic markers of wrong doing, the modern regulatory writing too contained a number of works committed to the interpretation of the different argots of Criminal Tribes. The authoritative writing tends to contend that these coded pro dialects were utilized by individuals of tribes to communicate exceptionally particular data with productivity or to talk with individual tribesmen cautiously whereas within the company of others. **Bhargava** spends a brief time talking about the presence of a 'patois' of 'special words and signals' inside each of the tribes, and gives a four-page Reference section covering key terms and their variety between the

different tribes inspected within the book.¹³ A comparative, though littler, file is advertised as an reference section in **Gunthorpe**. Both creators offer a slick arrangement of key terms cross-referenced by tribes known to utilize them.

The Pārđhi's home language is a corrupt guttural mixture of dialects in which Gujerati predominates. It has a strong family likeness to 'Bāori-bhāsha.' They can also talk Hindustani, and corrupt Marāthi or Canarese according as they live in the Deccan or the Carnatic. As a rule they talk very loud and in the presence of strangers in Hindustani.

Dialect and peculiarities of speech.

Slang used. The following are some of their slang expressions:—

Slang.	Meaning.
rāj	.. chief constable.
khapai	.. constable.
mul	.. to run.
khapai āwas mul	.. run, the constable is coming.
kiloo	.. police officer.
wassai	.. theft.
khonukus	.. gold.

Enquiry shows that slang expressions in use in one part of the Presidency are not always understood in another.

Source: M Kennedy (1985). P.136

SLANG VOCABULARY OF THE MALPOORA BOWRIES, TAKUNKARS, LUNGOTI PARDHIS, DECCANEE KUNJURS, DOOKUR KOLHATEES, AND MANGS.

	Bowie (Malpoora).	Takunkar.	Lungoti-Pardhi.	Kunjur (Deccanee).	Dookur Kolhatee.	Mang.
Dacoity.	Kamin.	Koto.	Koto.	Gamee.	Rota.	Ihooga.
Highway Robbery.	Dogreo Lootoo.	Wudulla.	Koto.	Bola.	Kanall.	Wanj.
Burglary.	Duddoo, Buglae.	Cheko.	Cheko.	(No slang.)	Madarna.	Kowdee.
Theft.	Kagleo, Kamsi.	Issaleo.	Kamal.	Holeo.	Gimra.	Kowdee.
Stolen property (Ornaments or cash).	Bhogeoo.	Peypndoo.	Peypndoo.	Gamee-ka-Mal.	Gimri-da-Mal.	Kowdee Mal.
Stolen cloth.	Cheytdoo.	Cheytdoo.	Cheytdoo.	Rachada.	Gimri-da-Sapad.	Satla.
A rapoe.	Dhaleo.	Dhaleo.	Dhaleo.	Teeva.	Teeva.	Boorka.
Gold.	Khono.	Khono.	Khono.	Bona.	Beona.	Seokla.
Silver.	Dholeo.	Dholeo.	Dholeo.	Nandoo.	Nandoo.	Rapa.
A gun.	Rakloo.	Peoktee.	Peoktee.	Kaleo.	Nundook.	Peoktee.
A sword.	Patodo.	Tupleo.	Weyhuti.	Chimleo.	Narwar.	Darkee.
To escape.	Nachaja.	Nasoo-ja.	Nasoo-ja.	Nasoo-ja.	Konaseo-ga.	Potul.
An European.	Wanadoo, Khalb.	Ratho, Khalb.	Ratho, Khalb.	Topia.	Noora.	Zoomance.
A Policeman.	Londoo, Kapoo.	Kaloo.	Kaloo.	Tara.	Jomer.	Zoomance.
A man (not of the tribe).	Mankow.	Madkow.	Madkow.	Chupka.	Dunbee.	Kompla.
A man (of the tribe).	Bowrie.	Wagri.	Bowrie.	Batoo.	Batoo.	Chneng.
A woman (of the tribe).	Bawan.	Wagon.	Bawan.	Cheepkee.	Batanee.	Tulareo.
A boy (of the tribe).	Cheoo.	Cheoo.	Cheoo.	Tabur.	Chora.	Solpa.
Shoes.	Khakudoo.	Khakudoo.	Khakudoo.	Turka.	Goonia.	Gowna.
A bullock.	Dhando.	Dhando.	Dhando.	Tareo.	Nyle.	Naklee.
A dog.	Londoo.	Hudkee.	Bhurboota.	Jakul.	Kota, Dukul.	Kakul.

Source: Gunthrope. (1880). P.113

टुक (Tuk)	= Bread.
माणखो (Manakho)	= Man.
मान्सी (Mansi)	= Woman.
बाव्री (Bauvri)	= Bauriah man.
बावन् (Bauvren)	= Bauriah woman.
डीक्रा (Deekra)	= Male child, son.
डीक्री (Deekri)	= Female child, daughter.
आगो (Aago)	= Father.
आयि (Aayic)	= Mother.
भायि (Bhayee)	= Brother.
बहण् (Bahun)	= Sister.
बहाणिये (Bahaniyei)	= Sister's husband.
जमायि (Jamayee)	= Son-in-law.
वहुरिय (Vahuria)	= Daughter-in-law.
कुवारि (Kuvaree)	= Unmarried girl.
बिवाह् (Bivah)	= Marriage.
आङ्ग (Aangh)	= Finger.
देह (Deh)	= Body.
हात (Hath)	= Hand.
गोडो (Godo)	= Feet.
चावल (Chaval)	= Rice.
पाणी (Pani)	= Water.
बण्टो (Banto)	= Chembu (A vessel).
छोर (Chora)	= Son (a term of endearment).

Source: Gayer G W¹⁴

The drive towards generation of full lexicons too driven to auxiliary insightful talk about and talk on the veracity of such endeavors an early case in point being Leitner's A detailed examination of Abdul Ghafur's Dictionary of the terms used by criminal tribes within the Panjab from 1880.¹⁹ Leitner subjects Ghafur's unique to basic investigation, comparing existing

CT terms to cognate terms in other neighbourhood dialects to affirm or challenge the latter's explanation, and distinguishing inconsistencies that undermine the claims of the first.

Nothing can be more misleading to a police officer on the scene of a crime than to be told that "ari dhandal" is "a crowd of

gamblers,” and “dhándal arí” “a crowd of constables” two pages further on.¹⁵

The work on Criminal Tribes cant ought to be seen as a coordinate relative of Sleeman's Ramaseeana which catalogued similar specialist terms in utilize among Thugs used prior within the century. In both cases, the depiction of obscure, mystery dialects clearly fortifies the talk of remarkable challenge common to the administrative writing on both subjects. This technocratic and regulatory method is kept up within the distributions by colonial specialists on the subject of Criminal Tribes. One case being the Criminal Tribes Organization Manual from the Punjab (comparative manuals existed in other jurisdictions.)

The manual is an operational archive for neighbourhood police strengths that laid out the arrangements of the existing Criminal Tribes Act nearby records of as of now enrolled tribes within the region, current settlements in operation over the zone, and the extra rules and directions for the operation of Reformatory Settlements for Criminal Tribes. Another unmistakable include of many primary source works could be a centre upon the devout convictions and custom action of Criminal Tribes. No question a great bargain of this interest can be followed to Sleeman's outstanding treatment of Thuggee as a religiously-motivated kill religion, which had caught the 'orientalist' creative ability of well known scholars on India. Sleeman's Thuggee work made a capable original of extraordinary shapes

of colonial culpability that conditioned subsequent elucidations and reactions to clearly comparable phenomena.¹⁶

We can see this in Bhargava, whose 6th chapter is devoted to the 'Religious Convictions, Signs and Ordeals' of the Criminal Tribes he studies explaining

‘For a member of the criminal tribes, crime is his 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...’¹⁷

In his chapter, Bhargava lists the gods and spirits the tribes prayed to for protection, the omens they used to determine whether a planned action was auspicious or should be abandoned as well as oaths and "tests" used to bind members into a common bond. cause and prove their guilt or innocence when accused of violating tribal conventions. Once again, this is precisely the type of discourse that allows administrative documents to present the challenge of criminal groups as entirely exceptional of an order and scope different from anything ever encountered before This. The final feature to note among contemporary “administrative” or literary works is the language of punishment and redemption. The language of punishment includes

examples of dehumanizing criminal tribes, such as Sir Richard Temple's equation between criminal tribe and others.

They wander about, and settle down like a small flight of locusts, on any piece of land that might be available; and the neighbours soon find their property slipping away from the bit by bit.¹⁸

He is joined by Mullaly, who is obsessed with the appearance ("dirty and unkempt objects") and eating habits ("any description of animal food") of the sinful tribes. Violation "not only offended the standards of British administrators but was also considered tainted by the elites from whom the authorities had obtained much of their information. The humiliating and punitive qualities of these and similar works are not reflected in the literature of the Salvation Army that emerged as the organization assumed an increasingly prominent and important role. in the administration of criminal tribal colonies across India in the early 20th Century.

Salvation Army literature generally has a predictably paternalistic tone, preferring to describe most, if not not all, the members of the criminal tribes are capricious and childish, in which "redemption" and "reform" are the ultimate goals of military intervention. Commissioner Frederick Booth Tucker (leader of the Salvation Army in India) bluntly rejected the government's preference for "conventional methods of detention" in its efforts to deal with

criminal tribes.¹⁹ Brigadier General Arthur Hughes, who established CT colonies on the Andaman Islands. also condemns the traditional prison system as "just vindictive" in favour of a model of "disciplinary schools that provide education and correction."²⁰ In the context of this thesis, an intriguing aspect in the Army's approach to Salvation is the emphasis on intergenerational formation of new ways of life. We often see the younger members of the tribes as having the greatest potential for reform, but are juxtaposed against the cruel figures of the older generation who keep the young people bound to the evil ways of the elders. For example, in Hughes

In spite of the old folks clinging to the ancient and backward practices, the change since I remember first seeing [the Bhantus] in 1921 has been prodigious. The second and third generations are arising, and unlike the older people are educated. The young are susceptible to new ideas.²¹

Following Hughes, I will refer to this as the "rising generation" approach throughout this case study. The clearly intergenerational perspective of the Salvation Army program was also recognized by Commissioner Booth-Tucker himself; when he praised the work his organization did not only to reform individuals but also to standardize equip those individuals to put the reform agenda at the centre of their lives. community Rebuilding lifestyles from within.

There are more than a million people needing our rescuing hand of help. And, what is more important, we have trained men and women from the Tribes themselves, who can now become the saviours and leaders of their own nations...²²

CONCLUSION

One point to note throughout what follows is that the sources reviewed here are not intended to answer the central question on which this case study focuses. Many of these studies aim to answer the historical reasons for the criminal tribal system; why it exists, why certain groups and not others are targeted, and so on. A few are interested in how the mechanism works; how the tribes in question were targeted, how they were treated, what life was like in the colonies, etc. But most of the studies and article move away from these traditional historical investigations. looking for the why and how, if any Research will; why certain tools and approaches are favoured by the authorities in their conception of the system of criminal tribes, why the concepts of hereditary crime, restrictions on movement, are not Controlled space and, in particular, constitute the toolbox of imperialist responses to the “problem” or perceived challenge of the criminal tribe system.it is the new challenge and area which future studies must concentrate this article serves as small hint for that method.

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