POLITICAL MOVEMENT AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE AMONG THE BHILS

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

MOOL CHAND MEENA

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067
1984

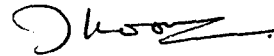# JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SOICAL SYSTEMS

Certificate

This Dissertation ~) entitled "Political Movement and
Social Structure among the Bhils" by Shri Mool Chand Meena
for the degree of Master of Philosophy has not been previously
submitted for any other degree of this or any other university.
We recommend this Dissertation should be placed before the
examiners for their consideration for the Master of Philosophy.

(SUPERVISER)   (CHAIRMAN)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. J. S. Gandhi for his valuable guidance and cooperation which has made possible the writing of this dissertation. He has borne with tremendous patience my long periods of inexplicable silence for which, too, I am grateful.

I have to thank my family members for the security and support they have always given me and for tolerating to vagrancies of my moods and activities.

I am grateful to my friend Sanjay Sinha for contributing in various ways to make my years at the university a memorable experience.

Last but not least, I wish to thank Mrs. Kunjamma for deciphering my hand writing and typing the dissertation.

MOOL CHAND MEENA

Contents

Chapter I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Social Scientists are challenged by the problems of
life. There are paramount problems in today's world deal-
ing with the rise of newly independent nations, the forma-
tion of new societies within former colonial frontiers,
rapid change in societies, traditional societies whose
leaders desire to modernize them and the relations between
societies within one humanity. All those who have to deal
with such practical problems demand scientists to procure
for them insight into the dynamics of the process.

I have chosen tribal problems because the tribals in
India display a distinct cultural and demographic position.
Despite their comparative insulation, they have maintained
a unique place in the Indian history and civilization.
They are ecologically more or less isolated, demographically
concentrated in certain contiguous geographical regions,
economically wedded to land and forests, culturally enjoying
a distinct style of life, characterised by distinct language
and heritage, forms of religion, love for freedom and
respect for self identity. There are numerous instances of
their participation in the socio-cultural life of the country
as a whole although historically their self-awareness may be
of limited range and depth. For the last two centuries the
tribals have been undergoing a variety of socio-economic
transformations a large number of which were initiated by
the penetration of colonial rulers.

Among numerous tribes in India, my study particularly concentrates on Bhils. I belong to one of the states where they are concentrated namely Rajasthan. The Bhils are one of the tribal aboriginals of our country. After Gonds and Santhals they are the third most numerous among the tribal people. The Bhils seem to have become quite conscious about power in the modern political changing system at the village level. A political socialization of the Bhils is leading to the discontent in the nature and creating more social problems. There appears a fear for the disintegration of a group closely integrated.

There is no recorded history of the Bhils and almost no light on them is thrown by the stone inscriptions, old coins or ancient literary works. The accounts of the bards of the Bhils and the hear say is mostly confusing and un-reliable. My work is primarily based on secondary sources and I have not undertaken any field-work for this study because of shortage of time and resources. I have consulted the materials relevant for my study in libraries. Some of them are useful because of government sponsored research programme. Further some field surveys and data given by eminent social scientists have helped me a lot in this study. The topic was interesting for me because I belong to one of those states where Bhils are concentrated widely.

Apart from this chapter, there are five chapters in this study. In the second chapter, the focus is on the profile of tribal studies in India and a general review of tribal research in three historical phases: In this part, I have reviewed the literature on Bhils, and the researches undertaken on the Bhil tribal community during three historical phases. Tribal studies, which figured prominently in the history of anthropology in India, were given priority by the British administrators and scholars, as well as by foreign missionaries and travellers for purposes of (i) colonial administration; (ii) cultural historical study of religious conversions; and (iii) adventureujmemories.

The third chapter is, named as 'Sociology of Social Movements: Global and Indian Perspective'. In this chapter, I have reviewed the literature available on social movements and discussed various theories attributes or factors and types of social movements. After that, I have tried to lay stress on tribal movements in India with a particular emphasis on Bhils. Social movements logically belong to the area of processes having connections with structure and change. Of social movements in India, the most notable is the self conscious socio-political movement aimed at asserting political solidarity of a tribe or a group of tribes vis-a-vis the non-tribals.

The fourth chapter deals with ecological profile and social organization of Bhils. The Bhils are distributed

over the hilly tracts mostly concentrated in the states of
Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh in India.
Most of the area is covered with dense forest producing
commercial timbers and giving shelter to wild animals. The
Bhils constitute an endogamous tribe. Socially they are a
patrilineal tribe and traditionally a community of good
archers.

The fifth chapter is named as 'Movements Among
Bhils in India'. It discusses the politics of Bhil move-
ments in pre-independence and post-independence period.
After that an effort has been made to show continuities
and departures in Bhil society. I have also discussed
cultural integration and disintegration among Bhils. While
in pre-independence period the movement started by Motilal
Tejawat was a challenge to British Government and although
it was suppressed it led to the demand of responsible
Government in future, in post-independence period the move-
ment was mainly because of economic reasons. The tribal
culture is assimilating between societal self-awareness and
cultural synthesis, integration and disintegration.

The last chapter ends with the concluding remarks
of the whole work. One notices a good sign of Bhils becom-
ing conscious of their rights, but it is also dangerous
because this self-awareness is leading them to the narrow
communalism which our Constitution and democratic liberalism
has rejected.

Chapter II

PROFILE OF TRIBAL STUDIES IN INDIA

The tribals living in different parts of India belong to various racial, linguistic, economic, social and religious categories and among themselves, there are numerous inter-tribal differences. There is, again, a wide range of variation in their levels of development, participation in different spheres of national life and their level of socio-cultural integration.

But there are also certain similarities. The tribals as a whole are technologically and educationally backward. The tribals are isolated in ecology, demography, economy, politics and other social behaviour from other ethnic groups. Such a historical image differentiates the tribals from the Hindu castes and provides them a "tribal identity".[1]

The concept of "tribal identity" has been further strengthened, specially after independence, because of the constitutional provision which confers special rights and privileges on the tribals and safeguards their interests. It is unfortunate that this provision instead of levelling up the weaker sections of tribal communities had led to the politicisation of tribal problems.

---

1. See, Sinha, D.P., Culture Change in an Inter-Tribal Market, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1968.

Tribal culture fits into the broad Indian civilisa-
tion in its tribe caste continuum process. The caste
system of India is an important feature of its civilisation
and the tribal group works as a prefix to the system.
Again, it follows as a suffix in a few cases. From an
anthropological point of view, tribes in India appear to
be gradually merging with the caste system. Ghurye opines
that some communities listed by the Government as tribes
are not isolated from the Hindu castes of the plains in
distribution, language, economy or religion and he regards
them as backward Hindus.[2]

General Review of Tribal Research

Tribal studies have figured prominently in the
history of anthropology in India, and this emphasis
continued till recently. These studies were given priority
by the British administrators and scholars, as well as by
foreign missionaries and travellers, for purposes of (i)
colonial administration, (ii) cultural-historical study of
religious conversions, and (iii) adventurous memories. The
history of anthropology in India till recently has been the
history of tribal studies. Such a history can be best
understood in the light of the reviews of research activi-
ties made from time to time by scholars like S.C. Roy,[3]

---

2. See Ghurye, G.S., *The Scheduled Tribes*, Popular Depot
   Bombay, 1959.

3. Roy, S.C., "Researches in Anthropology in India," *Man in
   India*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1921, pp. 11-75.

D.N. Majumdar,[4] G.S. Ghurye,[5] N.K. Bose,[6] S.C. Dube[7] and L.P. Vidyarthi.[8]

Roy recorded a bibliographical account of the publications on anthropological studies as early as in 1921.[9] His effort, though the first of its kind, records fairly systematically, information about the early publications in the field, and it clearly reflects the exclusive dominance of the British administrators, foreign missionaries, army personnal and travellers, etc. in initiating and promoting anthropological researches in India.

---

4. Majumdar, D.N., "Special Report on the Teaching of Social Anthropology," The Teaching of Social Sciences in India, UNESCO Publication, Universal Publishers, Delhi, 1956, pp. 161-77.

5. Ghurye, G.S., "The Teaching of Sociology, Social Psychology and Social Anthropology," The Teaching of the Social Sciences in India, UNESCO Publication, Universal Publishers, Delhi, 1956.

6. Bose, N.K., Fifty Years of Science in India: Progress of Anthropology and Archaeology, Indian Science Congress Association, Calcutta, 1963.

7. Dube, S.C., "Social Anthropology in India," in T.N. Madan and Gopal Savna (eds.), Indian Anthropology: Essays in Memory of D.N. Majumdar, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962.

8. Vidyarthi, L.P., Rise of Social Science in India: An Anthropological Orientation, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1970.

9. Roy, S.C., op. cit.

8

D.N. Majumdar presented a very competent appraisal of teaching and research in anthropology in India in the context of the development of cultural theories elsewhere.[10] One of his comments, in this regard, deserves to be quoted as it clearly reflects the status of social anthropology at this time. "Social anthropology in India has not kept pace with the development in England, in the European continent in America. Although social anthropologists in India are to some extent familiar with the work of important British anthropologists, or of some continental scholars, their knowledge of American social anthropology is not adequate.[11] Ghurye, in the same volume, evaluates the emergence of Bombay as a centre for sociological studies, and of Calcutta and Madras as centres of social anthropological studies, while he looks upon Lucknow as a composite centre of economic, social anthropological and sociological studies.[12]

In this review of fifty years of anthropology, N.K. Bose briefly made reference to the earlier researches and reviews regarding the progress of anthropology in India under three sections: (i) pre-historic archaeology, (ii) physical anthropology, and (iii) cultural anthropology. Devoting considerable attention to a review of researches

---

10. Majumdar, D.N., op.cit.

11. Ibid., p.164.

12. Ghurye, G.S., op.cit., p.154.

done in the fields of village studies and marriage and family, he leans heavily on the discussion on caste.[13]

S.C. Dube highlighted the weaknesses of contemporary Indian social anthropology. Here, his main concern is with 'what ought to be rather than with what is,' and in view of this, he puts forward a number of suggestions, of theoretical, methodological and substantive nature to be profitably followed in social anthropology in India.[14] In the same volume, F.G. Bailey wrote an exploratory paper; and his main concern was to highlight the inadequate researches that have been done in India "in proportion to the richness of social anthropological laboratory situations that demand adequate research in the field of structural explanation of the complex society".[15]

These sporadic and adhoc reviews have been followed by a systematic appraisal from an anthropological angle, of the rise of social sciences in India. Vidyarthi makes a systematic and detailed survey of researches in tribal studies, village studies, urban and industrial studies, caste studies, and studies in the fields of culture and personality,

---

13. Bose, N.K., op.cit.

14. Dube, S.C., op.cit.

15. Bailey, F.G., "The Scope of Social Anthropology in the Study of Indian Society," in T.N. Madan and Gopal Sarna (eds.), Indian Anthropology: Essays in Memory of D.N. Majumdar, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962, pp. 254-66.

applied and action anthropology and Folklore in various parts of India.[16] Half of this book is devoted to a review of the tribal studies in the four belts namely The Himalayan Region, Middle India, Western India and Southern India with coastal islands. A chapter is devoted to highlight specially from the methodological point of view, the studies of social change among the tribes of India. Vidyarthi has made a valuable contribution by reviewing major tribal studies and identifying gaps with a view to suggesting priorities for further researches by social anthropologists and other social scientists.

Historical Phases in Tribal Studies

Historically, the development of tribal researches in India may be reviewed under three phases namely 1774-1919, 1920-1949 and 1950 onwards. It should be remembered that these phases are not mutually exclusive and that the different rate of development of anthropological researches in various parts of India leads to regional distinctiveness and delimitations. It would be worthwhile to spell out the state of anthropological researches during the three phases at all India level.

First Phase: - Since the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1774 the British administrators, missionaries,

---

16. Vidyarthi, L.P., op.cit.

travellers and a few other anthropologically oriented individuals collected data on tribal and rural groups and wrote about their life and culture in various journals.[17] Along with other historical and geographical information, they also collected ethnographic data and published a series of district gazetteers and hand books on tribes and castes and also a number of monographs, especially on the tribes of Assam.

Some scholarly British administrators posted in different parts of India[18] wrote encyclopaedia inventories of the tribes and castes of India which, even today, provide basic information about the life and culture of the peoples of the respective regions. Their importance can be judged from the fact that the Anthropological Survey of India has prepared a flow to reprint some of them with suitable additional notes. In addition to the hand books on the tribes and castes of different regions, general books on Indian ethnology were also published by administrators like

17. These journals were Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (established 1784), Indian Anliquary (established 1872) and later in the Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society (established 1915) etc.

18. For example, H.H. Risley, E.T. Dalton and L.S. Vidyarthi, 'Malley in East India, E. Thurston in South India and West Crooks in Northern India.

J.M. Campbell,[19] R.S. Latham[20] and Risley[21] with a view
to acquainting government officials and private persons
with classified descriptions of tribes and castes in India.

Their generalised works about the land and people
of the regions were followed by efforts to prepare detailed
accounts of specific tribes and some castes. Among them,
mention may be made of J.Shakespeare,[22] P.R.T. Gurdan[23] and
a few others who wrote competent monographs on specific
tribes. All these scholars were specially influenced by
British anthropologists like Rivers,[24] Radcliffe Brown[25]

19. Campbell, J.M., "Ethnography of India," _Journal of_
    Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol.35, 1856.

20. Latham, R.S., _Ethnography of India_, Voovst, London
    1859.

21. Risley, H.H., _The Tribes or Castes in Bengal_, Bengal
    Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1891.

22. Shakespeare, J., _The Lishai Kuki Clans_, Part I and II,
    Macmillan and Company, London, 1912.

23. Gurdon, P.R.T., _The Khasis_, Macmillan and Company,
    London 1914.

24. Rivers, W.H.R., _The Todas_, Macmillan and Company Ltd.,
    London, 1906.

25. Radcliffe-Brown, A.R., _The Andaman Islanders: A Study_
    in Social Anthropology, Cambridge University Press,
    The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinuis, 1922.

and J.H. Hutton[26] who worked on the tribes of India and
published their monographs. Under these influence, the
first Indian to write exhaustive monographs on the tribes
in India was S.C. Roy who published his first epoch-making
work on the Munda tribe in 1912.[27]

Second Phase: Social anthropology in India witnessed a
phenomenal change when it was included in the curriculum
of the two important universities in Bombay (sociology in
1919) and Calcutta (anthropology in 1921). These two centres
for sociological and anthropological researches attracted
academicians and trained scholars to undertake significant
researches. Very soon, specialized subjects like kinship
studies, social organization etc. were undertaken by trained
scholars like Ghurye,[28] K.P. Chattopadhyaya,[29] Srinivas,[30]
D.N. Majumdar[31] and a few others.

---

26. Hutton, J.H., "Ethnographic Notes by Various Hands,"
    Census of India, 1931, Vol. II, Part III B, 1931, p.243.

27. Roy, S.C., Mundas and Their Country, City Bar Library,
    Calcutta, 1912.

28. Ghurye, G.S., The Aborigines So-called and Their Future,
    Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona, 1943.

29. Chatoopadhyay, K.P., "Some Malayalam Kinship Terms,"
    Man in India, Vol.2, No.2, 1922.

30. Srinivas, M.N., Marriage and Family in Mysore, New Book
    Company, Bombay, 1942.

31. Majumdar, D.N., A Tribe in Transition: A Study in
    Culture Pattern, Longmans Green and Company, London,
    1937.

During this period, a few anthropologists, provided some theoretical leads in social anthropological researches. They studied and analysed their data critically and brought about a certain amount of the critical sophistication in anthropological researches. For instance, Srinivas's work[32] and N.K. Bose's publication[33] were a turning point in Indian anthropology.

The entry of Verrier Elwin and the publication of his problem oriented studies on the tribes of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa like the Baiga,[34] the Agaria,[35] or Maria[36] gave further recognition to Indian anthropology. Furer-Haimendorf's publication on the tribes of Hyderabad[37] and other publications specially on Reddis[38] and Chenchus[39] provided refined models for research workers in India.

32. Srinivas, M.N., op.cit.

33. Bose, N.K., "Marriage and Kinship Among the Juangs," Man in India, Vol.8, No.4, 1928, pp.233-42.

34. Elwin, Verrier, The Baiga, John Murray, London, 1939.

35. Elwin, Verrier, The Agaria, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1942.

36. Elwin, Verrier, Maria Murder and Suicide, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1942.

37. Furer-Haimendorf, Von-C, The Tribal Population of Hyderabad, Hyderabad Revenue Department, Hyderabad, 1945.

38. Furer-Haimendorf, Von-C, The Reddis of Bison Hills: A Study in Acculturation, 2 volumes, Macmillan and Company London, 1945.

39. Furer-Haimendorf, Von-C, The Chenchus: Jungle Folk of Deccan, Macmillan and Company, London, 1943.

Thus Indian anthropology, which was born and brought up under the influence of British anthropology, matured during this phase also on the lines of British Anthropology. Except for a few studies of Indian institutions like caste by Briggs,[40] Hutton[41] etc. the tradition of moving tribal studies the almost exclusive focus of anthropology continued till the end of the forties of this century on the lines of anthropology taught at that time at Cambridge, Oxford and London,Indian anthropology was characterised by ethnological and monographic studies with a special emphasis on researches in kinship and social organisation.

Third Phase: - After the Second World War, and particularly after independence, there was a positive increase in contacts with the American social anthropologists. Some American anthropologists like M.E.Opler, Oscar Lewis, David Mandelbaum and several students from the United States came and stayed in India with their research teams and created an atmosphere first, for a systematic study of Indian villages with a view to testing certain hypotheses, second, for refining some of the methodological framework developed elsewhere, and third, to assist the Community Development Programmes in the Indian villages.

40. Briggs, W.G., The Chamars, Association Press, Calcutta, 1920.

41. Hutton, J.H., Caste in India, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1946.

In addition to the village, caste, and urban studies
as well as the problem-oriented researches of power struc-
ture and leadership, of religion, of culture and personality
which emerged in this period, the tribal studies were also
given an analytical and action-oriented approach. Efforts
are now being made to study the tribal communities in terms
of inter-relations as well as in terms of differences and
similarities among the tribal and non-tribal communities.
Here, mention may be made of D.N. Majumdar's[42] and G.D.
Barreman's[43] studies of polyandrous Khosa, Surajit Sinha's
study of the Bhumij,[44] Vidyarthi's of the Maller hill village[45]
and a mixed tribal village of Chotanagpur,[46] and Edward Joy's
study of a Muria village,[47] Majumdar presented a comprehensive
study of the polyandrous khasas and brought out the characte-
ristics of tribe-Hindu continuum.[48] Berreman, however,

42. Majumdar, D.N., Himalayan Polyandry, Asia Publishing
House, Bombay, 1963.

43. Barreman, G.D., Hindus of the Himalayas, California,
University Press, Berkeley, 1963.

44. Sinha, Surajit, "The Media and Nature of Hindu Bhumij
Interactions," Journal of the Asiatic Society, Vol.23,
No.1, 1957.

45. Vidyarthi, L.P., The Maler: A Study in Nature-Man-Spirit
Complex of a Hill Tribe, Book Land Private Ltd., Calcutta,
1963.

46. Vidyarthi, L.P, Gnaghra: A village of Tribal Bihar,
Census operations, Delhi, 1965.

47. Jay, E.J., "A Tribal Village of Middle India,"
Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta, 1970.

48. Majumdar, D.N., op.cit., 1963.

accepts these people as Hindus without any doubt.[49] Sinha's theme in the study of Bhumij Manbhum[50] is similar to the above studies as his analysis brings out clearly the prevalence of the Bhumij-Rajput continuum.[51] Again Vidyarthi's work on a tribal village of Chotanagpur, shows how the Manjhi tribe has attained the status of a caste in the Munda village of Ranchi.[52] These researches open up a new era of understanding regarding changes among tribes in the setting of the mainstream of Hindu Social Organisation.

Robbins Burlings, on American anthropologist, is the first to publish a village study on a tribe in India.[53] His study of Renganggri, a Garo village, with special reference to family and kinship provides a first rate model to be followed by a researcher in tribal ethnography in India. Vidyarthi's study of Maler culture was the study of a tribe in terms of nature-man-spirit complex.[54] This work provides an alternative model for understanding tribal complex in terms of the inter-relatedness of ecology, economy, society

49. Berreman, G.D., op.cit., 1963.

50. Sinha, Surajit, op.cit., 1963.

51. Sinha, Surajit, "State Formation and Rajput Myth in Central India," Man in India, Vol.42, No.3, 1962.

52. Vidyarthi, L.P., op.cit., 1965.

53. Burlings, Robbins, Rewgawggri, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1963.

54. Vidyarthi, L.P., op.cit., 1963.

and spiritual beliefs and practices. A few other unconventional studies have also been attempted by the Anthropological Survey of India under the guidance of N.K. Bose. Among these, the study of material culture of India, the land use survey in a Juang village by S.Bose,[55] etc. deserve special mention.

The constitutional commitment of the Government of India to ameliorate the conditions of the tribal communities gave further filip to the study and evaluation of the processes of change in tribal communities. In course of time, a number of tribal research institutes were established[56] to undertake problem-oriented researches for the effective formulation and implementation of development programmes in tribal areas. Some scholars from the universities also undertook some researches of an applied and action-oriented nature along with their fundamental researches. Several publications like the tribal number of the Journal of Social Research in 1959-60, the comprehensive book on applied anthropology edited by Vidyarthi[57] and several reports and papers bearing on the

55. Bose, S., "Land Use Survey in a Juang Village," Man in India, Vol.41, No.3, 1961, pp.172-83.

56. As for example, at Chhindwara in Madhya Pradesh (established 1954), Ranchi in Bihar (established 1954), Calcutta in Bengal, Bhubaneswar in Orissa (established 1955), Shillong in Assam, Udaipur in Rajasthan (established 1964), Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh and Poona in Maharashtra.

57. Vidyarthi, L.P.(ed.), Applied Anthropology in India: Principles, Problems and Case Studies, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1968.

tribal problems prepared the ground for the introduction of the teaching of applied and action anthropology in several universities in India.

The Anthropological Survey of India, though not directly related to development programmes, covers various branches of anthropology.[58] It has created a very favourable climate for anthropological researches in India since 1946 and through its regional branches in Shillong, Nagpur, Mysore, Port Blair, and Dehra Dun (recently started), the survey has conducted a series of tribal studies which have been published in its bulletins and special monographs.

The census organisation of the Government of India has also intensified its schemes of tribal studies during 1961 under their social studies section and have published a number of studies on tribal culture of different parts of India.

Review of Literature on Bhils

Bhils are found throughout the region of western India.[59] With a brief introduction about the development of

---

58. Physical, Cultural, Linguistic and Psychological.

59. The Western Tribal belt includes the pockets of tribal concentration in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan.

anthropology on an All India level, it is necessary to examine the researches undertaken on the Bhil tribal community during the three historical phases because my topic is specially concerned with them. Although the early British administrators took up the study of some of the major tribes like the Bhils, their enthusiasm and effort was far less than those of the workers in north-eastern and middle India. The Census Organisation, however, continued its usual operations to record some details about the tribal communities of this region. In the absence of any full fledged department of anthropology in any of the universities, the task of tribal studies fell on the sociologists who, by and large, were interested in the non-tribal societies. Some of the anthropological societies like Anthropological Survey of Bombay (established in 1887), the Gujarat Research Society (established by an enlightened social worker, P.G. Shah,) and the Indian Branch of the Anthropos Institute also shared the responsibility with a few sociology departments to undertake tribal studies. In addition to a few sociology departments[60] and anthropological societies, tribal research institutes were started after independence in Maharashtra (at Poona), in Gujarat (at Ahmedabad) and in Rajasthan (at Udaipur). Of late, these institutes have published a few monographs and

---

60. Bombay, Baroda and Udaipur.

books about the tribes of the respective states. The Human
Factor Study Division of the Central Arid Zone Research
Institute, with its small team of researchers, has conducted
researches in the tribal and non-tribal desert villages and
published their results.

The tribal studies in Maharashtra which were initiated
by early British administrators and the Census Organisation,
were followed by eminent anthropologists and sociologists of
Bombay University and Deccan College, Poona. Among the early
scholars, mention may be made of E.T. Gibbs, A. Gibson,
E. Hedberg, Hippolytus and a few others. Gibbs wrote a
paper of the Bhils of the Dangs[61] while Gibson wrote about
the economy of the Bhils to the north of Nerbuda.[62] Hedberg's
interest remained confined to the study of proverbs and
riddles among the Bhils of Khandesh.[63] He also describes in
details the celebration of Dewali by the Newali Bhils.[64]

---

61. Gibbs, E.T., "Bhils in the Dangs," Indian Antiquary,
Vol.5, 1876, p.83.

62. Gibson, A., "Notes on the Bhils of North of the Nerbada,"
Journal of the Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society,
Vol.9, 1867-70, pp.1-11.

63. Hedberg, E., "Proverbs and Riddles Current Among the
Bhils of Khandesh," Journal of the Anthropological
Society of Bombay, Vol.13, 1924-28, pp.854-98.

64. Hedberg, "The Celebration of Divali by the Newa Bhils,"
Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay,
Vol.14, 1928-32, pp.364-99.
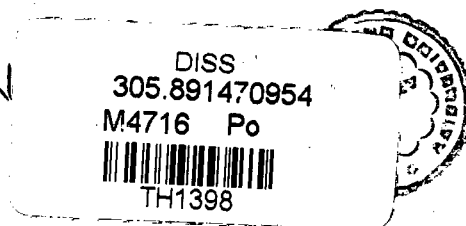
Hippolytus wrote an analytical paper regarding relations between religion and morality among the Bhils.[65] It may, therefore, be said that the earliest tribal studies by British administrators and enlightened scholars in Maharashtra remained confined to the Bhils who obviously are the largest tribe of the state.

Ethnographic references about the Bhils and other little-known tribes of Maharashtra also find place in the census reports, especially in one prepared by H.T. Sorely[66] for the census of 1931 and edited by Hutton. The handbook on the tribes and castes of Bombay was prepared rather late by R.E. Enthoven in three volumes.[67] Here we find the first systematic notes on the different tribes and castes living in the Bombay Presidency.

Anthropological researches in Maharashtra were vigorously followed by Irawati Karve of the Deccan College, Poona. She combines on interest in the study of both tribal and non-tribal societies, in the physical and social dimensions of anthropology as well as in the synchronic and diachronic study of Indian Society and culture. From the

65. Hippolytus, "The Relations Between Religion and Morality Among the Bhils," Primitive Man, Vol.4, 1931, pp.49-53.

66. Sorely, H.T., "Note on the Aboriginal and Hill Tribe Found in the Bombay Presidency," Census of India 1931, Vol.I, Part III B, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, 1935.

67. Enthoven, R.E., Tribes and Castes of Bombay, 3 volumes, Goverment Central Press, Bombay, 1920-22.

point of view of tribal studies, her papers on the Bhils
of West Khandesh are of direct interest.[68] Her another
paper on the tribes of Maharashtra gives a clear picture
of the geographical distribution, demographic setting, and
the contemporary tribal situation in Maharashtra.[69]

According to Fuches, "The Bhil Movements are marked
by a definite tendency towards Hinduization."[70] He has
reported about a series of revolts in Khandesh (1817-18),
Dhar (1831), and Malwa (1846), Bhil revolts, and also about
reform movements named after Lasodia (1890-1900), Govindgiri
(1900), Gulia, Vishwanath and Mavji.[71] These movements
spread into different Bhil areas. The work of non-Bhil
leader namely Motilal Tejawat for socio-political emancipa-
tion of the Bhil merits detailed investigation. The author
is concerned mainly with messianic movements, but the
general characterization of such movements, as given by
him, may be of interest to students of social movements.
These characteristics also show why and how such movements
originate and what major forms are acquired by them.[72]

68. Karve, Irawati, "Bhils of Western Khandesh," Journal of
    Anthropological Society of Bombay, 1958.

69. Karve, Irawati, "The Tribals of Maharashtra," in
    Beharilal Abbi and Satish Savarwal (eds.), Urgent
    Research in Social Anthropology in India, Institute of
    Advanced Study, Simla, 1959.

70. Fuchs, Stephen, Rebellious Prophets, Asia Publishing
    House, Bombay, 1960, p.238.

71. Ibid., pp.238-52.

72. Ibid., pp.1-16.

Fuchs finds difficulty of getting unpublished records inaccessible to most students of the subject. But this is a partial explanation. Anthropologists become averse to the past and to history because of the tradition of empirical study of cultures as they are. This accounts for the neglect of the study of socio-political movements which are mostly a matter of part, or the roots of which lie deep in the past.

A long paper on the Bhils of Gujarat bringing out the historical setting of the Bhils was written by M.P.N. Majumdar.[73] In a long paper, P.G. Shah discusses the historical setting of the Bhil and proves that they are the earliest inhabitants of Gujarat.[74] In another paper, he brings out the non-Hindu elements in the culture of Gujarat and identifies the stages of acculturation among them.[75] While he brings out a large number of variations from the orthodox Hindu culture, he is also intrigued with the core of similarity between orthodox practices of the Hindus and those of the Bhils, and he observes that it is

73. Majumdar, M.P.N., "The Bhils of Gujarat," Modern Review, Vol.41, 1927, pp.296-303.

74. Shah, P.G., "Bhils, the Earliest Inhabitants of Gujarat," Journal of the Gujarat Research Society, Vol.I, No.4, 1939.

75. Shah, P.G., "Non-Hindu Elements in the Culture of the Bhils of Gujarat," in J.P. Mills and others (eds.), Essays in Anthropology Presented to Rai Bahadur S.C.Roy, Maxwell and Company, Lucknow, 1942, pp.164-86.

a controversial point whether these practices originated with the aboriginal races and were copied by the Aryan invaders or vice-versa. ,

Next to Shah, Y.V.S. Nath made an intensive study of the Bhils and submitted his doctoral thesis on the Bhils of Ratanmal to M.S. University of Baroda in 1956.[76] In this monograph, Nath gives a background of the historical, geographical and ethnological settings, and then goes on to describe the economic organisation social structure, clan and lineage, family local community and witchcraft. In his analysis of data he has greatly been influenced by the British social structuralist school and specially brings out, under this influence, the interrelatedness of the economic, social and religious systems of the Bhils of Ratanmal. This study, however, ends abruptly, and unlike many monographs, it neither refers to the theoretical nor the applied nature of conclusions.

T.B. Naik conducted field researches among the Bhils of Gujarat under the guidance of D.N. Majumdar who initiated him into field work in 1943. His work[77] fill an important gap in the ethnographic map of the country. Dr. Naik's work on the Bhils of this region

76. Nath, Y.V.S., _Bhils of Ratanmal_, M.S. University of Baroda, Baroda, 1960.

77. Naik, T.B., _The Bhils: A Study_, Bhartiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, Delhi, 1956.

may help in a comparative analysis of the Bhil problem.
He gives a complete all-round picture of Bhil culture.
All aspects of life have been touched upon. Dr.Naik's
book has been enriched by a detailed account of Bhil
mythology, a description of their language and specimens
of their oral literature. This has been due to his
mastery of the Bhil dialect. To this may also be attri-
buted his intimate knowledge of the people and of their
problems. The last chapter dealing with the Bhils in
transition may have been treated at greater length in
view of the importance of culture change in current
anthropological literature, and also for its bearing on
the problems facing the Bhils. Dr.Naik dwells on the
evils of contact with cultures which the Bhils have
undergone for many centuries past. Their tribal organiza-
tion has disintegrated and they seem to have lost the joy
of living, and also the courage to live on. It may be
expected that in such a sorry state of affairs, their
population may be diminishing or, at any rate, increasing
at a slower rate. But as this is not the case it seems
that the disintegration has already given place to reinte-
gration of the Bhils with their changing social milieu.
The Bhils like most of the agricultural tribes of Bihar
seem to have a great capacity for readjustment with
changing conditions. The latter have not lost their zest
for life either.

We do not find the early British administrators
directly interested in undertaking anthropological
researches in western India, including Rajasthan. We
find an early interest by administrator T.H. Hendley,
who gives an account of the Maiwar Bhils.[78] Later,
Barnes wrote a paper on the Bhils of Western India.[79]
Along with these foreign scholars, mention may be made
of Sarat Chandra Roy who wrote a long paper on the
customs of the Black Bhils of Jaisamond hills in Rajputana.[80]
G.M. Carstairs carried on field researches in the rural and
tribal areas of Rajasthan and wrote about the Bhil village
of western Udaipur in which he brought out the factors
that lead to resistance to change.[81] He also wrote a
paper on the cultural characteristics of the Bhils of
Ketra Bhoma.[82]

78. Hendley, T.H., "An Account of Maiwar Bhils," Journal
of Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. 44, 1875, pp. 347-88.

79. Barnes, "The Bhils of Western India," Journal of
Asiatic Society of Arts, Vol. 55, 1907, pp. 324-36.

80. Roy, S.C., "The Black Bhils of Jaisamond Lake in
Rajputana," Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research
Society, Vol. 10, 1924, pp. 97-113.

81. Carstairs, G.M., "Bhil Villages of Western Udaipur:
A Study in Resistance to Social Change," Economic
Weekly, Vol. 4, 1952, pp. 231-33.

82. Carstairs, G.M., "The Bhils of Kotra Bhoma," Eastern
Anthropologist, Vol. 7, 1953-54, pp. 169-181.

Vyas studied the Bhils of the border areas of Rajasthan[83] and has attempted to (1) investigate the problems emerged on account of partition, (ii) investigate the relationship of Bhils and their economic dependence on Rajputs and Muslims of the border areas of Barmer, and (iii) to assess the prevailing socio-economic conditions of the Bhils of selected border areas. Vyas goes into the historical, geographical and ethnological settings of the international boundary in Rajasthan, and then makes a socio-economic study of the scheduled tribes and scheduled castes of ten villages selected from the Barmer district of Rajasthan. He brings out the impact of partition of India on the Bhils who have been adversely affected. Their trade in jute, cotton, wool, hides and skin which was flourishing prior to partition has been stopped completely and it has not yet been possible for them to develop alternative markets. Vyas goes on to discuss the dependence of the Bhils of the border area on the Muslims and the Rajput landlords of Jagirdars which makes them slaves. The socio-economic disparities are immense in this area. Moreover, the entire economy of the desert region is different from that of the plain region. Again, the area is of geo-political importance. Considering all these points, Vyas emphasises

83. Vyas, N.N., "The Bhils on the Border of Rajasthan - An Emerging Situation," (Read in the seminar on Tribal Situation in India, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla), 1969.

the urgency of improving the lot of these border people and suggests programmes of improved farming, drinking water facilities, small-scale industries, animal husbandry which would increase employment opportunities. This paper,[84] though explaratory in nature, draws attention to the needs for a close study of the unique problems arising out of the partition of India in this sector.

K.S. Saxena presents a systematic account of the political awakening in Rajasthan from 1857.[85] The author has rightly selected the title 'Political Awakening,' as it correctly describes the essential nature of the movement. For its presentation Dr. Saxena has carefully utilized contemporary archival records in English and Rajasthani including some source material belonging to private agencies. It deals with a connected account of the forces and counter-forces working within and without Rajasthan. The text has been enlivened by the inclusion of some of the little known, but significant events associated with the life of the participants. The writer has skilfully integrated the national progress with the great events that determined the entire course of the history of Rajasthan for nearly a century. Saxena's work is useful for both the lay reader

---

84. Ibid.

85. Saxena, K.S., The Political Movements and Awakening in Rajasthan (1857 to 1947), S.C. Chand and Company Pvt. Limited, New Delhi, 1971.

and the expert researcher, who wish to have in a simple, concise and comprehensive for a connected account of the history of political awakening in Rajasthan. A chapter of this book gives a good account of Bhil risings.[86] According to the author, the history of Rajasthan is the history of sacrifice and valour. The heroic battles fought by the rulers of Mewar and Marwar against the Arabs, the Turks and the Mughals and later against the British, served as a source of inspiration to the people of these princely states who subsequently rose against the autocratic rule of the Rajput princes and demanded establishment of 'responsible government'.

In the light of his field and library work on the Rajasthan tribes, especially the Bhils and the Mina, and some library work on the tribes of other parts of India, Chauhan develops the concept of "tribalisation" to explain the cultural history of the tribes.[87] His broad survey of the chief Rajput principality in Rajasthan reveals the earlier existence of tribal groups in different parts of the region. These groups held an effective control over their territories till they were over powered by the Rajputs. The conflicts between the conquered and the conquerer continued and the tribals sought a more interior place. For instance, Bhils escaped to the geographically inhospitable interiors to preserve their

---

86. Ibid., Chapter V.

87. Chauhan, B.R., "Tribalization," Tribe, Vol. 2, Nos. 1-2, 1966, pp. 5-11.

independence.[88] Chauhan refers to some materials about
the Bhil rulers in Maharashtra, and goes on to establish
that the Advāsis were recognised in some way as significant
units of the political order. The process of social with-
drawal of an existing homogeneous socio-political unit from
the mainstream of the larger culture as well as its physical
withdrawal by re-defining its own world-view, etc. has been
termed 'tribalisation' by Chauhan. This concept obviously
is helpful in understanding the nature of those groups
which were at one time part of the wider social organisa-
tion and which have since been reduced to a tribal form.
In the light of the formulation of the concept of tribalisa-
tion, Chauhan makes a plea to look at the tribal situation
in India/ in a new perspective.

The concept of tribalization obviously breaks new
ground in the study of tribal culture. The concept is
valuable and needs to be tested in the light of detailed
historical study of the tribal communities in different
parts of India. In addition to his own field inquiry in
Rajasthan, Chauhan quotes a few authors in support of his
concept of tribalization. However, he fails to give full
bibliographical references to their publications. Moreover
it is also evident that all tribals cannot be brought
under the only concept of 'tribalisation'. There are bound

88. Navalakh,S.K., "Authority Structure Among the Bhumij
     and Bhils: A Study of Historical Causation," _Eastern
     Anthropologist_, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1959.

to be some 'cultural survivals' of the evolutionary phases of development. However, Chauhan has given an alternative approach to the study of the tribal situation and more researches need to be undertaken to verify this approach. In another work,[89] Chauhan has reported on the religious movements led by Mavji Maharaj and on a comparable movement led by Govindgiri.[90] He has also mentioned a movement at Malgarhi in 1933 demanding an autonomous Bhil state for the advasis. This was put down by military action taken by the British.

Conclusion

Tribal studies have figured prominently in the history of anthropology in India. These studies were given priority by the British administrators and scholars, as well as by foreign missionaries and travellers, for purposes of (i) colonial administration, (ii) cultural historical study of religious conversions, and (iii) adventures memories.

Historically, the development of tribal researches in India may be reviewed under three phases namely 1774-1919, 1920-49 and 1950 onwards. It should be noted that these phases are not mutually exclusive and that the different

89. Chauhan, B.R., _Towns in the Tribal Setting_, National Publishing House, Delhi, 1970.

90. _Ibid._, p. 18.

rate of development of anthropological researches in various parts of India leads to regional distinctiveness and delimitations. During the first phase, along with other historical and geographical information, British administrators, missionaries, travellers and a few other anthropologically oriented individuals also collected ethnographic data and published a series of district gazetteers and handbooks on tribes and castes and also a number of monographs, especially on the tribes of Assam. In the second phase, Bombay and Calcutta centres for sociological and anthropological researches attracted academicians and trained scholars to undertake significant researches like kinship studies, social organization etc. During this period, a few anthropologists studied and analysed their data critically and brought about a certain amount of the critical sophistication in anthropological researches. After the Second World War, and particularly after independence with the positive increase in contacts with the American social anthropologists an atmosphere was created first, for a systematic study of Indian villages with a view to testing certain hypothesis, second, for refining some of the methodological framework developed elsewhere, and third, to assist the community Development Programmes in the Indian villages. In this period, tribal studies were given an analytical and action-oriented approach.

The early British administrators took up the study of some of the major tribes like the Bhils, but their enthusiasm and effort was far less than those of the workers in north-eastern and middle India. In addition to a few sociology departments and anthropological societies, tribal research institutes were started after independence in Maharashtra (at Poona), in Gujarat (at Ahmedabad) and in Rajasthan (at Udaipur). These institutes have published a few monographs and books about the tribes of the respective states. The earliest tribal studies by British administrators and enlightened scholars in Maharashtra remained confined to the Bhils who obviously are the largest tribe of the state.

Chapter III

SOCIOLOGY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: GLOBAL AND INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

Although, there is a considerable body of theoretical literature on the sociology of social movements, this area of specialization is still in the formative stages. A body of concepts have, however, been developed which enables a scholar to interpret the genesis of movements, the formation of ideology, the sources of identity, organization and leadership, the event structure, the internal dynamics, and the social consequences. Social movements logically belong to the area of processes having connections with structure and change.

(A) A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are few books and only some chapters, usually short ones, in text books of sociology which deal with social movements. One of the earliest is H. Contril's book concerning the psychology of social movements.[1] The first part contains an exposition of certain concepts of social psychology, such as "mental context", its structure and variations, "motivations," "ego", "organisation of experience," etc. While the second part contains an analysis of some social movements and their interpretation in terms of the concepts explained in the previous part.

---

1. Cantril, H., _The Psychology of Social Movements_, New York, 1941.

Mclaughlin gives us representative definitions of social movement.[2] Social movements range "from religious to secular, from revolutionary to reactionary, from co-operative to schismatic", and so on.[3] Mclaughlin identifies two main types of social movements: "Revolutionary movements" and "reform movements," and uses both these types as a continuum. He distinguishes the two types as follows: "Both seek to influence social order but revolutionary movement attacks existing norms and values and attempts to substitute new ones while the reform movement accepts existing norms and values and uses them to criticise the social defects it opposes."[4] The general principles commonly found in all types of social movement are: "(1) shared value system, (2) sense of community, (3) norms of action, and (4) organisational structure."[5]

The types presented here show extreme diversity, notwithstanding the availability of some fairly wide ranging classifications available on this subject. These appear as independent formulations and nothing has been done towards evolving a precise and representative typology

---

2. Mclaughlin, Barry, "Analysis of Social Movements," in Mclaughlin, Barry (ed.), Studies in Social Movements, Free Press, New York, 1969, p.3.

3. Ibid., p.4.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

of social movements. Apart from all these, the author is capable of sewing a limited and preliminary purpose for the study of social movements, Mclaughlin's assessment ends with the assertion that "actually, social movements deserve to be studied in their own right as phenomena".[6]

Paul Wilkinson is concerned with the formulation of a working concept of social movement rather than with giving a precise definition. According to Wilkinson the major characteristics of social movements are: "conscious commitment and participation".[7] "Social movements are multidimensional and Kaleidoscopic,"[8] and emerge from a variety of reasons or motivating factors. Wilkinson is concerned with a pragmatic 'typification' of social movements[9] rather than with a typology based on any conceptual principality. His ten-fold classification includes categories such as - religious movements (millenarism and sect), movements of rural and urban discontent, nativist, nationalist and race movements, imperialism and pan movements, moral protest and reformist movements, revolutionary resistance and counter-revolutionary movements, intellectual movements, youth movements, women's movements. Though,

---

6. Ibid., pp. 3-6.

7. Wilkinson, Paul, Social Movements, Pall Mall, London, 1971, p. 47.

8. Ibid., p. 46.

9. Ibid., pp. 51-52.

38

Wilkinson's approach is capable of serving a limited and preliminary purpose for the study of social movements, the types presented here appear as independent formulation and nothing has been done towards evolving a precise and representative typology of social movements.

Wallace exclusively deals with only one type of social movement - "revitalisation".[10] He defines a revitalization movement as "a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture".[11] Wallace lists several subtypes of revitalization movements. According to him they are "evidently not unusual phenomena but are recurrent factors in human history".[12] The types of revitalisation movements as pointed by Wallace are - (1) Nativistic movements, which are characterized by strong emphasis on the elimination of alien persons, customs, values, and material from the mazeway (after Linton); (2) Revivalistic movements, which emphasise the institution of customs, values and even aspects of nature which are thought to have been in the mazeway of previous generations but are not now present; (3) Cargo cults, which emphasize

10. Wallace, A.F.C., "Revitalization Movements," in Mclaughlin, Barry, Studies in Social Movements, Free Press, New York, 1969, pp.30-52.

11. Ibid., pp.31, 32.

12. Ibid.

the importation of alien elements into the mazeway, but do not necessarily involve ship and cargo as the mechanism; (4) Milenarian movements, which emphasize mazeway transformation organized by the supernatural; (5) Messianic movements, which emphasize the participation of a divine saviour in human flesh in the mazeway transformation. By mazeway Wallace means "individual's mental image of his total society and culture".[13] Wallace's work is important analytically and provides an interesting example of how an anthropologist deals with social movements.

A far more serious study is done by Heberle.[14] His aim is to provide theoretical tools with which to investigate particular social movements. Heberle is concerned with the role of ideas and ideologies and their relation to group interests, considers motivations and personality factors and tries to establish their typology, analyses the social background of movements, takes into account geographical and ethnic factors and describes structures and hierarchies. According to Heberle a social movement is a collective body ready for action which aims at a change or innovation or restoration of a previously existing state of affairs.[15]

13. Ibid., pp. 30-52.

14. Heberle, R., Social Movements: An Introduction to Political Sociology, New York, 1951.

15. Heberle, R., "Observations on the Sociology of Social Movements," American Sociological Review, Vol. 14, 1949, p. 349.

But would net a cabinet of ministers, or an army, or arts society fall under such a definition?

A more modest effort is presented in C.W. King's study on social movements in the United States,[16] which in fact is not restricted in its concepts to the American scene, but rather illustrates them with examples taken from America - past and present. In some respects his analysis and theoretical findings are more fruitful than those of his predecessors. He attaches greater importance to the objective context of social movements and postulates certain exact attributes of the phenomena described like factors of time and space. King defines social movement as a "group venture", which exceeds the limits of a local community or a single occurrence and which leads to a systematic effort to initiate changes in thought, behaviour and social relatives.[17] This definition seems to be better than Heberle's in so far as it postulates certain minima of space and time excluding all kinds of phenomena restricted geographically and chronologically. Doubts rise, however, as to the meaning of "group venture". How many people constitute a group?

Herbert Blumer's definition of a social movement as "collective enterprises to establish a new order of

---

16. King, C.W., _Social Movements in the United States_, New York, 1956.

17. _Ibid._, p. 27.

life"[18] has been considered as a classic definition. Social movements "have their inception in a condition of unrest and derive their motive power on one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and on the other from wishes and hopes for a new scheme or system of living".[19] Blumer's treatment of social movements deals with three kinds - general social movements, specific social movements, and expressive social movements. Blumer's article is illustrative. His notion of general social movements - the relatively undirected and essentially unorganized change of people's values in a common direction - is an important contribution to any discussion of the relationship between social movements and social change. Gradual and cumulative changes in culture give rise to new expectations, new demands, and new lines of action. In this way general social movements are the soil from which specific social movements spring. Blumer divides specific social movements into two main types: revolutionary movements and reform movements. While both seek to influence the social order, a revolutionary movement attacks existing norms and values and attempts to substitute new ones, whereas a reform movement accepts existing norms and values and used them to criticke the social defects it opposes.

---

18. Blumer, Herbert, "Social Movements," in Mclaughlin Barry (ed.), Studies in Social Movements, Free Press, New York, 1969, p.8.

19. Ibid.

M.S.A. Rao considers social movements as being characterised by three important features: collective mobilization,[20] ideology and orientation to change. Examining three theories explaining the genesis of social movements namely relative deprivation, the strain theory and revitalization - he shows that the latter two do not adequately explain the ideological underpinnings of a social movement and the consequent social changes. Ideology is considered to be a crucial aspect of any social movement. As regards the problem of the organization of a social movement, Rao discusses the aspects of recruitment, commitment and leadership. He suggests that when a movement develops a high degree of formal organization with sanctions of rewards and punishment, it closes to be a movement.[21] Discussing the nature of social changes brought about by social movements, Rao discusses, three levels of structural change: reform, transformation and revolution.[22] As regards the methodological question, Rao points out that the study of social movements involves acquisition of the skills of a historian and adoption of diverse field techniques such as participant observation, survey, interviews, content analysis and working out social networks. For a

20. Rao, M.S.A., "Conceptual Problems in the Study of Social Movements," in M.S.A.Rao (ed.), Social Movements in India, Vol.I, Manohar, New Delhi, 1978, pp.1-15.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

sociological analysis, intensive field work is a necessary complement to the analysis of documentary data.

The term 'social movement' or its equivalent in other western languages is being used to denote a wide variety of collective attempts to bring about a change in certain social institutions or to create an entirely new order. Cantrial deals primarily with the psychology of social movements and he fails to give a detailed account of socio-political aspects of a movement. Mclaughlin's study is useful for its representative definitions of social movement. He says that social movements deserve to be studied in their own right as phenomena. But Mclaughlin does not give a precise and representative typology of social movements. Paul Wilkinson's study also lacks a precise and representative typology of social movements. He is concerned with the formation of a working concept of social movement. Wallace's analysis of 'revitalisation' movement is important analytically and provides an interesting example of how an anthropologist deals with social movements. Though, Heberle fails to give a precise definition of a 'social movement', he provides theoretical tools for investigating particular social movements. King attaches greater importance to the objective context of social movements and postulates certain exact attributes of the phenomena described. However, doubts arise as to the meaning

of the term 'group venture'. Blumer's definition is more
fruitful than those of his predecessors because it gives
the idea of social change. Rao's study is classic because
he considers ideology to be a crucial aspect of any social
movement. He analyses important features, genesis and
organization of social movements. He also points out the
levels of structural changes brought about by social move-
ments and lastly he discusses the methodological question.

At various times and under various conditions the
legitimacy of a society if customary institutions or values
may come under attack from different parts of the society.
New arrangements are advocated, but the demand for change
meets with resistance, and old habits and arrangements are
maintained. Thus it comes about that groups face each other
in some form of conflict.

A social movement has an ideological component -
that is, a set of ideas which specify discontents, prescribe
solutions and justify change. Thus, social movements are
socially shared demands for change in some aspect of the
social order.

(B) ATTRIBUTES OR FACTORS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

A social movement thus viewed, seems to be a form of
manifesting the will of some strata of the population in
certain circumstances, just as public opinion or party, or

a lynching or a revolution might constitute other forms. These different forms are not necessarily opposed to each other on separated; we find mostly concepts that overlap; and only occasionally are there opposites, such as "mass revolution" and coup d'etat. Proceeding from the view that social movements are specific historical forms of human groupings and activity, different or opposed in relation to other forms, often easier to understand and define, we find a number of indispensable attributes or factors constituting the concept and forming thus the basis for a definition.[23]

(1) Physical Attributes

The Factor of Numbers: - A social movement exists only if it embraces a fairly large number of participants in relation to the whole of society forming the basis of historical process; a number so large that the movement could mark its presence as an independent factor within the historical process and influence its course and results.

The Time Factor:- A certain minimum of time is another attribute of any social movement, as time is necessary for an 'embryo' to mature.

23. Katz, H., "Social Movements - An Essay in Definition," The Polish Sociological Bulletin. No.1, 1971, pp.64-75.

The Space Factor:- A certain minimum of geographical area is necessary for the expression of a social movement. This prerequisite excludes isolated local movements, but not movements, imbued with a strong local character, yet forming parts, often of an autonomous nature, of wider movements.

The three 'physical' attributes of social movements are interrelated (and relatively interchangeable).[24] Usually a growth in numbers goes together with a widening of area and duration in time: Usually an increase of any of the three elements leads to the growth of the other two. But then a rapid increase of one of the factors, e.g., numbers could make up for a relative slowness shown in the growth of another factor; e.g. space, or vice-versa.

(ii) Sociological Attributes

The Masses:- The "masses" a class and strata situated between elites and the social margin, i.e., classes and strata that are non-privileged, underprivileged, or enjoy only limited previleges (e.g., peasants who hold land - in relation to the landless; skilled workers - in relation to the unskilled; the ordinary white settlers in French, Algeria or in Rhodesia)[25] 'Masses' are usually highly

---

24. Two of the physical factors are included in C.W.King's definition of a social movement, which is according to it - a group venture transcending the limits of a local community and a single occurrence. Ibid., p.118.

25. Kartz, H., op.cit., p.68.

stratified, yet often they show signs of unity of interest
and sentiment, and congregate into movements against this
or that elite or all of them.   But they could be also
strongly divided into different opposing groups, parties,
movements - at times extremely hostile. It happens more
often than not, that one mass group tries to win rights
and privileges at the expense of another mass group, and
that a group with certain limited privileges, based on
property, class, religion or nationality, congregates to
fight for the preservation of its status.[26]   What matters
is that through congregation a sufficient force arises to
make its presence felt and influence exercised on the
course of events, and thus a social movement is born and
launched into action. Movements as expressions of mass
groups have the capacity to grow into larger numbers, to
spread over a large area and to endure; here is the link
between this sociological factor and the physical factors.

The Ties Factor:- Ties are indispensable to any common
action but they are of different order and degree of
organization and formality in different human groupings.
In social movements they consist of two elements namely a
certain minimum of leadership and means of communication.
It has a formal character when a movement is formally

---

26. Ibid., p.69.

organized ở some organization forms its clear leading
nucleus. But in many movements the leadership clearly
exists without a formal sanction. It may be the editor,
or editorial board of a newspaper, a national here (like
Garibaldi) who leads by magic of name, or force of
personality. Means of communication must exist at least
minimally and bind the participants of the movement,
especially the leaders and the led. They might be very
abundant and formalised, as they usually are in modern
societies; they might be also very primitive and poor,
but allowing nevertheless the union of many people in
different places in a common cause, adopting the same or
similar ideas, slogans and ways of action. Wandering
preachers might form the proper links; a leaflet or a
parliamentary speech, published in a newspaper, might be
very efficient means of communication; unwritten rules
and orders, passed from mouth to mouth, might form strong
ties in a guerilla movement.[27]

Ties may and do change from informal into formal;
they may become stronger or weaker. Split in leadership,
or its disappearance is usually a concommitant, but some-
times a result or even the cause of the split and weakening
of the movement. Disappearance of means of communication,
e.g. due to an extreme terror, will split the movement into
incoherent fragments or lead to its end.[28]

27. Ibid., p. 70.
28. Ibid.

The "Common Cause": - Participants of a social movement
must have the understanding of a common aim or aims, and
must agree on certain general lines of action, necessary
to achieve this aim (or aims). A social movement rises
and exists because large numbers of people find it
necessary and expedient to congregate in order to achieve
certain aims which could not be achieved through any other
form or institution. The possession of a common cause
(including both the aim and the basic means) does not
exclude differences within the movement, sometimes of
greater depth, but they would be relating to matters other
than those which are included in the common cause. Diffe-
rent groups within the movements might differ in aims of
a larger-range, or in particular lines of action of short-
range, subordinated to the common aim and the general lines
of action, adopted by all, are most important to all the
participants. The "common cause" is not to be confused
with the phenomena of "similar causes" adopted by a mass
of people when both aims and means are similar, or even
identical, but bear a strong individual character, such as,
e.g. a 'gold rush' or adoption of a new technical device by
large masses of people, etc.[29]

The Factor of Spontaneity: - A movement arises only when
there exists a spontaneous drive of fairly large numbers to
coalesce and participate in the pursuit of the common aim.

_____

29. Ibid., pp. 71-72.

No leadership could 'create' a movement. A strong propaganda drive, heavily financed, might produce a stir, a commotion, which would be of short duration, if there is no felt need on the part of a large section to fill the framework provided by the initiators, or pioneers.[30] Because of the lack of this factor many initiatives were still born. Often a movement loses its spontaneity after victory. This may be due to a number of causes: the pursuit and realization of the common aim it left now safely in the hands of the victorious leadership, possessing the full means to achieve the goal set or too many participants are drawn within the government apparatus and become parts of rigid hierarchies, obeying orders or giving them and fulfilling strictly set tasks; or a disillusion might prevail as to the results achieved, and creates passive attitudes, or it may channel some of the still existing energies into new movements.[31]

The Moral Factor:- A social movement may or may not possess a coherent ideology, but its participants must hold the conviction of moral virtues and values embodied in their cause, even if they are aware that the movement aims at material gains and benefits.[32] They have to believe that

---

30. Ibid., p.72.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

their cause is a just one. This would apply not necessarily
to all, but to a great proportion of the people joining the
movements. Some cynical individuals (often among leaders)
may not hold these values, and yet propagate them, but if
such a mood of cynicism spreads among the mass of the parti-
cipants it will eventually destroy the movement, lowering or
annihilating the spontaneity factor, and changing the essence
of the common cause.

The Emotional Factor:- The rise and development of a social
movement is conditional upon a fairly high intensity of feel-
ing, imbuing, not necessarily all, or not all to the same
degree, but large segments of the participating groups. A
pure feeling of dissatisfaction with the existing state of
things and a pure desire for a change would not lead to the
formation of a movement, if at the same time there exists
an emotional feeling of despair and disbelief in the possibi-
lity of effecting such a change of fear it paralyses the will.

The Factor of Activity:- An activity on the part of large
segments of participants, though not of equal worth and
intensity, must in general be of a high level. Individual
or collective acts are indispensable to any form of human
grouping, but the activity of a social movement is of a
special kind, it is larger in scope and frequency and the
numbers participating are greater in relation to the total.[33]

_____

33. Ibid., p.74.

The character of the acts and deeds depend to a large extent on the character of the movement. This constitutive element of a social movement is correlated to the spontaneity factor and is inter-connected strongly with the rational and emotional factors, more as their result than cause, but sometimes also as a spur. Yet intensive activity by itself is not sufficient to produce a social movement.[34] A political party might show a very intense level of activity which would be due to an excellent apparatus of paid workers and bureaucrats. It is also possible that despite the existence of all other attributes, activity may not be forthcoming because of extreme suppression and terror.

Towards Definition: - Finally, the definition of a social movement in brief will be, thus - social movement is a grouping within a certain minimum time and space of fairly large numbers of people, belonging mainly to the non-privileged or lesser privileged social strata (i.e. the lower and middle strata), who bound by ties of leadership and in possession of certain minimal means of communication, engage in activities of high intensity, spontaneity and emotional feeling and endeavour to realize a common cause possessing for them moral and possibly other important values.

---

34. Ibid., p. 75.

There have been several attempts to classify social movements using one or another criterion. Thus, on the basis of the criterion of the consequence of a movement, there are some movements oriented towards bringing about reform in some area of life or the other, involving new relationships, activities, norms and values. Other movements are oriented towards bringing about changes in super ordinate and sub ordinate relationships which may be designated as transformative. Still others work towards bringing about revolutionary changes in all spheres of life and in all basic values.

On the basis of the criterion of locus, movements may be classified into linguistic, religious, sectarian, caste, peasant, worker, tribal, ethnic, faministic and student.

Movements may also be classified on the basis of their scale and spatial spread. According to this criteria movements may be classified into macro and micro level. While some may be of national level, others may be regional and local.

Another criterion of classification is the dominant issue of interest such as temperance, women liberation and a distinctive expressive art form.

It is necessary to emphasise that classification only helps to identify the main features of a movement; it does not fully explain its origin, growth, dynamics and consequences. Any classification is bound to remain inadequate, for a movement tends to acquire new features during its course and any classification can only be relative to a particular phase in its development, while locus provides the substantive aspect, the criteria of ideology and consequence provide the analytical foci of a movement.[35]

Political Movement:- Sometimes the term 'social movement' is used in distinction from political movement. But as political movement occur in society and tend to affect, directly or indirectly, the social order, it would be permissible to apply the term social movement for it. Although it is sometimes convenient to distinguish between social and political movements, it should be noted that all movements have political implications even if their members do not strive at political power.[36]

Social movements are a specific kind of concerted action groups; they last longer and are more integrated than mobs, masses, and crowds and yet are not organised like political clubs and other associations. A social

---

35. Rao, M.S.A., op.cit.

36. See, Beberle, Rudolf, op.cit., 1951.

movement, may, however, be comprised of organized groups without having one overall formal organization (for example, the labour movement, which comprises trade unions, political parties, consumer cooperatives and many other organizations). Group consciousness, that is, a sense of belonging and of solidarity among the members of a group, is essential for a social movement, although empirically it occurs in various degrees.

The classical concept of social movement implies the creation of an entirely new socio-economic and political order, especially as concerns the institutions of property and the distribution of power. To justify these aims, all major social movements develop a more or less elaborate, more or less consistent set of ideas which its members must accept more or less uncritically, as members of a religious group would accept a creed.[37] From these 'ideologies', or 'constitutive ideas,' are derived 'action programmes' of a more changing nature. Social movements tend to spread beyond the boundaries of states or national societies and to extend over the entire area of a civilization, or even beyond as far as the social order that is their target reaches.

In the attempt to justify their aims, modern social movements typically resort to abstract principles concerning

37. _Ibid._

the nature of man, his destination, and his natural rights in combination with a critique of the existing economic, political and cultural institutions. The ideas of liberty and equality are common to all major social movements, sometimes in combination with the idea of national unity and independence.

The power structure of social movements varies from diffusion of power to concentration of authority at the top level.[38] Supreme authority may be institutional, that is, derived from the office to which a person has been promoted by legal procedure, or it may be charismatic, that is, derived from the relief in the extraordinary, quasi-superhuman powers of a particular person who, in turn, is motivated by the belief in his singular gifts, his call to leadership, and mass political 'mission'. The founders and early leaders of social movements often come close to this type. However, genuine charisma is not to be confused with popularity of a leader.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize that although movements may, and often do, utilize both public policy and personal persuasion, they may shift their

emphasis from one to the other. The ways in which movements become politicised is thus one of the important problems in the field. The religious expression of discontent may substitute for political expression.[39] The contrary trend is also found; for instance, studies of millenial movements in Melanesia show that religious movements are capable of turning into rationalistic political rebellions.[40]

Sociology of Tribal Movements in India

Of social movements, the most notable is the self conscious socio-political movement aimed at asserting political solidarity of a tribe or a group of tribes vis-a-vis the non-tribals. They arise out of ecological cultural isolation, economic backwardness, a feeling of frustration vis-a-vis the advanced sections.[41] Tribes who are either too isolated or too integrated with the Hindu Social System are not involved in these movements. Furthermore, agrarian factors and urge for maintaining a cultural identity are the root causes of tribal unrest.[42] These phenomena are spread

39. Lipset, Seymour M., *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*, Garden City, N.Y. Doubleday, 1960, pp. 97-100.

40. See, Warsley, Peter, *The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of 'Cargo' Cults in Melanesia*, Macttibbon and Kee, London, 1957.

41. Sinha, Surajit, "Tribal Solidarity Movements in India: A Review," in K. Suresh Singh (ed.), *Tribal Situation in India*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, 1972, pp. 410-23.

42. Sachchidanand, "Tribal Unrest in India," paper presented in ICSSR-sponsored conference of Anthropologist, New Delhi, 26-28 May, 1972.

throughout the tribal areas. And, with the political
culture of the tribals undergoing a radical transformation,
that is, from a "subject political culture" to a "participant
political culture," these are likely to influence the situa-
tions considerably. The democratic movements of our country
planned and executed to get ride of despotism, oligarchy and
bureaucracy have a long and chequered history. These move-
ments had an enormous appeal. Each of the British Indian
provinces and erstwhile native states experienced special
pride in organising these movements and in intensifying the
struggle for freedom.

Roy Burman writes about the general characteristics of
tribal movements in India.[43] He identifies eight kinds of
responses of the tribals to the different challenges that they
faced: response to threats to access to and control of re-
sources; response to description of traditional roles in the
total interaction set-up; search for new meanings of the
relationships between man and nature; search for new meanings
of the relationships between individual and society; search
for new frontiers of identity; search for a more satisfactory
system of organization of community power at all levels.
These responses, however, are neither mutually exclusive nor
have all of them resulted in movements.[44]

43. Roy Burman, B.K., "Challenges and Responses in Tribal
India," in M.S.A. Rao(ed.), Social Movements in India,
Vol. III, 1978, Manohar, New Delhi, pp. 101-22.

44. Ibid.

During British rule, alientation from land, due to faqulty legislation pertaining to forest lands, and lack of understanding of the tribal social organization were responsible for tribal uprisings. Although they had diverse ideological overtones, the main theme was the millenavian - waiting for the day of deliverance from an acute situation of relative deprivation.

Tribal movements since independence have been characterized by two features. There is a strong tendency towards establishing tribal ethnic identities. They find new meanings regarding the relationships between mand and nature and individual and society by reinterpreting their own traditions and myths. The second major trend is in the direction of agrarian movements in the context of political ideologies, including the Naxalite one.

The Bhil Movements

In pre-independence days the nature of the sporadic Bhil rising was a kind of unrest due to an apprehension of being deprived of their individual liberty and tribal freedom which they were enjoying for long.[45] The experiments in new reforms tried by the Darbar and the Residents resulted in greater oppression and injustice. Hence, by

45. Saxena, K.S., *The Political Movements and Awakening in Rajasthan (1857 to 1947)*, S.Chand and Company Private Limited, New Delhi, 1971, p. 166.

rising and defying the authority of the state they formulated a case for their liberty and even attempted an overthrow of state governments, because they were not prepared to mend their ways. The attitude of the states encouraged the semi-independent tribes to adopt various patterns of opposition to taxes and census operations introduced by the British. Moreover, the sectarian factor also whipped up the local population, at one time or the other, thus resulting into a conflagration. Thus the Bhil rising, in a way, helped in the emergence of national consciousness by opposing an alien government at different times and at different places.

In the pre-culture contact period the structure of Bhil society was marked by homogeneity.[46] Segmentation or divisions in the tribe were only on the basis of kinship, say, clan or lineage. There was no stratification among the groups. The members of the tribe provided a solid and united front to all kinds of eventualities. The Bhils realized the value of the higher social and religious ideas connected with the Hindu way of life with increased culture contact and proximity of the Bhils and the various Hindu castes. This effort led to the growth of new social formations which were non-existent prior to the seventeenth century. This trend led to further divisive tendencies among Bhils.

---

46. Mann, R.S., "Structure and Role Dynamics Owing the Bhils of Rajasthan: A Case of the Bhagat," in K. Suresh Singh (ed.), Tribal Movement in India, p.309.

According to Fuchs, "Bhil movements are marked by a definite tendency towards Hinduization".[47] He has reported about a series of revolts - in Khandesh (1817-18), Dhar (1831), and Malwa (1846), Bhil revolts and also about reform movements named after Lasodia (1890-1900), Govindgiri (1900), Gulia, Vishwanath and Mavji.[48]

Under its new policy purview, independent India could not afford the isolationist's policy towards Indian tribes. Rather, a number of special provisional for the progress and safeguards of the tribal people were included in the Indian constitution, and to carry them out at practical level, massive programmes of tribal development have been launched. Inspite of all this, a lot remained to be done. After a long hybernation the Bhils are awakening and becoming self aware. The feeling that they exist, that they have privileges, has moved them towards ego-maximisations. The Bhils are not now ready to bear the stigma of belonging to a backward group. They are fully aware of the rights, special privileges and security to be enjoyed by them under the Indian constitution. They are being benefitted by the Government policy and programmes and do not hesitate in demanding more for the benefit of their community.

---

47. Fuches, Stephen, Rebellious Prophets, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1965, p. 238.

48. Ibid., pp. 238-52.

Conclusion

Social movements logically belong to the area of
processes having connections with structure and change.
There are few books and only some chapters, usually short
ones, in text books of sociology which deals with social
movements. Social movements are socially shared demands
for change in some aspect of the social order. The
ideological component of a social movement specify dis-
contents, prescribe solutions and justify change. As
social movements are specific historical forms of human
groupings and activity, different or opposed in relation to
other forms, we find a number of indispensable attributes or
factors constituting the concept. In brief, social movements
is a grouping within a certain minimum time and space of
fairly large numbers of people belonging mainly to the non-
privileged or lesser privileged social strata (i.e. the
lower and middle strata), who bound by ties of leadership
and in possession of certain minimal means of communication,
engage in activities of high identity, spontaneity and
emotional feeling and endeavour to realize a common cause
possessing for them moral and possibly other important
values.

There have been several attempts to classify social
movements on the basis of the criterian of locus, scale and
spatial spread and the dominant issue of interest such as
temperance. Apart from this, on the basis of the criterion

of the consequence of a movement, there are some movements oriented towards bringing about reform in some area of life or the other, involving new relationships, activities, norms and values. Other movements are oriented towards bringing about changes in super ordinate and subordinate relationships which may be designed as transformative. Still others work towards bringing about revolutionary changes in all spheres of life and in all basic values. It is necessary to point out that classification only helps to identify the main features of a movement. Any classification can only be relative to a particular phase in its development because a movement tends to acquire new features during its course.

Sometimes the term 'social movement' is used in distinction from political movement. But as political movement occur in society and tend to affect, directly or indirectly, the social order it would be permissible to apply the term social movement for it. Although it is sometimes convenient to distinguish between social and political movement, it should be noted that all movements have political implications even if their members do not strive at political power.

Of social movements in India, the most notable is the self conscious socio-political movement aimed at asserting political solidarity of a tribe or a group of

tribes vis-a-vis the non-tribals. They arise out of
ecological cultural isolation, economic backwardness, a
feeling of frustration vis-a-vis the advanced sections.
Tribes who are either too isolated or too integrated with
the Hindu social system are not involved in these movements.
Furthermore, agrarian factors and urge for maintaining a
cultural identity are the root causes of tribal unrest.
These phenomena are spread throughout the tribal areas.

In pre-independence period the tribal movement of
Bhils helped in the emergence of national consciousness by
opposing an alien Government at different times and at
different places. The increased culture contact led to
the growth of new social formations which were non-existent
prior to the seventeenth century. After a long hybernation
the Bhils are awakening and becoming self aware. After
independence the feeling of privileges enshrined in the
constitution has moved them towards ego maximisations.

Chapter IV

ECOLOGICAL PROFILE AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF BHILS

(A)   ECOLOGICAL PROFILE

The Bhils are distributed over the hilly tracts of India and Pakistan in the west.   They are mostly concentrated in the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh in the Republic of India.   Their sporadic distribution are also found in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Mysore. Their traditional home constitutes an area covering the hills like Arvalli, Vindhya and Satpura and the plateau like Rewakantha.   This lies in between 20° north and 25° north latitude and 73° east and 75° east longtitude.[1]   The altitude varies from the level of sea to 3,000 feet above the sea level.[2]   The climate is tropical.   On the hills a temperate climate is recorded.   In this area a general aridity is caused due to the proximity of the Thar desert.   The temperature is not uniform.   It varies from 30° F to 110° F.[3]   The rainfall is also not uniform.   An average annual rainfall varies from 20 inches to 60 inches.[4]   The area has an undulating topography characterised by red soil and solid gravel.   Most of the area

---

1. Bhowmik, K. L., _Tribal India - A Profile in Indian Ethnology_, World Press, Calcutta, 1971, p.62.

2. _Ibid._

3. _Ibid._

4. _Ibid._, p.63.

is covered with denseforest producing commercial timbers and giving shelter to wild animals.

Ecological Distribution

In 1961 census, they were mostly enumerated in the penisular region of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. Madhya Pradesh inhabited the highest proportion of Bhil population (31.95 per cent). Their concentration pattern in the sub-regions of these states shows that they settle in a natural region with plentiful availability of natural resources for their subsistence.

Similar to the character instinct of an agrarian society, Bhil are predominantly settled in rural areas. Their rural urban distribution shows that about 97.6 per cent of Bhils live in rural areas.[5] The urban proportion (2.4 per cent) constitutes the population who have moved out for economic reasons.[6] Such distribution pattern of Bhil reflects on their strong ties to the village origins by bonds of Kinship, marriage customs, language and social systems.

(B) DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF BHILS

The Government of India have recognized some 217 communities as Scheduled Tribes. The total tribal population

---

5. Chaudhari, N.R. and Kumar, Ravindar, "Demographic Profiles of Bhils," in The Eastern Anthropologist, Vol.29, No.3, July-September, 1976, pp.273-79.

6. Ibid.

of India, according to 1961 census, is over 29.8 million, i.e. 6.87 per cent of the total population. Population-wise the three major tribes are Gond, Santhal and Bhil. The Bhil population counts over 3.8 million forming 12.8 per cent of the total tribal population in the country.[7]

Growth of Bhil Population:- During the decade 1951-61, the Bhil registered an increase from 2.3 million to 3.8 million, an increase of 64.50 per cent.[8] Table I shows the decadal variations in the Bhil population. Though,

Table I

GROWTH OF BHIL POPULATION, 1911-61

| Year | Population | Percentage variation | | India |
		Bhils	Scheduled Tribes	
1911	10,67,792			
1921	17,95,808	68.18	-5.05	-0.31
1931	20,13,177	12.10	-15.29	11.00
1941	22,48,152	11.67	6.18	14.23
1951	23,30,278	3.65	6.13	13.34
1961	38,33,331	64.50	32.58	21.49

Sources: 1. Mamoria, C.B., Tribal Demography in India.
2. Doshi, S.L., Bhils.

there has been negative growth rates among Scheduled Tribes (1911-31) and nations population (1911-21), the Bhil have

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

consistently shown a fluctuating positive growth rate - the highest being during the decades 1911-21 and 1951-61. The fluctuations in their growth rate patterns are due to the changes made by state authorities in the class average of 'Tribals'.[9] Of the five decades (1911-61), 1911-21 is the only one which registered an actual decrease in India's population (-0.31 per cent). This phenomenal negative rate of growth, under the assumption that the extent of under enumeration of the population count at these two census points of time was the same, suggests that the deaths in the decade were more than births. Evidences are available which show that severe famines and epidemics had spread during the years preceding the census; the most devastating was the nation wide influenza epidemic of 1918. Inspite of these rates for India as a whole, the Bhil showed the highest positive growth rate of 68.18 during this decade. The epidemic did not spare Bhil population. Their saving from this epidemic must have been due to the ecological factors and the type of settlements patterns they live in.

Interestingly the Bhil showed a declining growth rate for the decades 1921-31 to 1941-51. During these decades

---

9. Before independence, the census authorities were not so particular in classifying the individual tribes. It was only after independence that Government of India adopted a policy to integrate tribals with the rest of the population. See Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Part I.

69

Christianity was widely enlarging its followers, and this decline in growth rate is perhaps the result of massive conversion of Bhil to Christianity.[10] The first phase in 1911-21 witnessed the establishment and intensification of the Christian Missionaries in tribal pockets. It was only during these decades that considerable headway was made in terms of educating and enlightening the tribals, whereas the undercurrent of the acceptance of faith was already created in the subsequent decades.

Age and Sex Composition of Bhil

At a particular point of time, the age structure of a population is the living record of its demographic history in the past. This cohort of population also throws light on the present and prospective availability of manpower in the labour market. It is apparent from Table II that the bulk of Bhil population is in the younger age groups. Their composition forms a broad base with a cylindical distribution upto age 47 and then steeply closes at the apex. Such a distribution of population is the result of significantly high fertility and high mortality levels.

In 1961 census, 56.6 per cent of Bhil were reported as workers,[11] whereas only 54.0 per cent of the total population

10. Chaudhari, N.R. and Kumar, Ravinder, op.cit.

11. Census of India, 1961, Vol.I, Part II-B(1).

Table II

AGE AND SEX COMPOSITION OF BHIL, 1961

Age	Males	Females	Sex ratio*
0-15	893426 (46.0)	86519 (45.82)	968
15-44	807718 (41.58)	799585 (42.35)	990
45 +	240471 (12.38)	220475 (11.68)	917
ANS	750 (0.04)	808 (0.04)	1077
TOTAL	1942365	1888063	972

Note: *Females per thousand male population.
Figures in brackets show the column percentage.
Sources: Census of India, 1961, Vol.I, Part II-6(i).

constitute the economically active population (15+).[12]
Inspite of the fact that all members in the economically
active population cannot be assumed to be engaged in some
occupation or the other the worker's proportion still over-
weighs this population. This is due to the early age partici-
pation of children in gainful employment.

The sex-composition of Bhil shows a tendency similar
to that of India as a whole: males over number the females.
In 1961, the sex-ratio in the population of India was 941
females per thousand males while for Bhil it works out to
be 972 females per thousand males. Table II shows that the
sex ratio is highest for the population in the age group
15 to 47 (990 females per thousand males) whereas for the

12. Since data on smaller age groups are not available,
this estimate corresponds to the higher side.

population aged 45 years and above it is 917 females per thousand males. This shows that Bhil females do not survive for long ages and their expectation of life at birth is less than that of males.

Fertility

The Bhils form a corporate class which provides and controls to a high degree the means of subsistence and the destiny of its members. Such social structures tend to enforce permanance of marital relations and raise the level of fertility.[13] Among Bhils higher fertility is attributed to their economy, education, sexual laxity, polygamy and psychological factors as economic assets to the family.

Migration

Migration has usually been studied as residential mobility of the inhabitants. The distribution of their settlement patterns show that they are scattered in various natural regions of the peninsula. Such a distribution pattern must be the result of their mass movements. Their individual movements are very negligible. They are socially and culturally tied to the community structure and feel very insecure in moving out individually.

---

13. See Kumar, Ravinder, "Human Fertility: An Assessment," Population Centre, Bangalore.

Among other studies, Karve has referred to the social status of Bhil migrants.[14] Of the 102 immigrated Bhil families in west Khandesh a significantly large proportion (90 per cent) had moved out for economic betterment. About 40 per cent had migrated because of the incentives propagated by the recent community development programmes. Migration for marriage was very negligible. This throws light on their strong ties with their social system. Even marriages are settled within the village communities. The individual migration of the population is not encouraged.

(C) CULTURE - MATERIAL AND NON-MATERIAL

Origin

The Bhils claim their origin from Chittorgarh in Rajasthan. They ascribe their dispersal to imbalance in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh and economic and political conditions. The words Kirat and Vanechar in Jain scripts and terms Vyadh and Guha in Brij literature give evidence of their existence.[15] According to Roberts Shaiffer, Bhil settlements in the Mahabharat period ranged from the Ganges Plan to the Himalayas. He said that the Yadav clan in

14. Karve, Irawati, "Bhils of Western Khandesh", Journal of Anthropological Society of Bombay, 1958.

15. Pal, H. Bhisham, Historic Rajasthan, Sagar Publications, New Delhi, p. 84.

North India was responsible for the extinction of the Bhils of these areas.[16] The Yadavas not only established their physical supremacy from Mathura to ꬶꬶꬶ but also married Bhil girls to assimilate their culture. Russel refers to the tract frm Khandesh to the Satpura hills as the abode of the Bhils.[17]

An interesting legend is attached to the birth of the origination of the Bhil clan. A beautiful damsel passed through the spot where Lord Mahadeva was in agony from fever. The sight of girl relieved Mahadeva of his suffering and latter he married her. She gave birth to seven male children. One of them was ugly. Mahadeva could not bear the sight of him and vanished him. It is said that all the Bhils are his descendands.[18]

Another legend in the Bhagavat Gita states that the Bhils are the descendents of Raja Ban, son of Raja Augsacthus and saints, harassed by Raju Ben's autocracy, cruelty and atheism pronounced a curse on him which resulted in his death. There was turmoil in the society after his death but with the blessings of God, a dwarf named Nishad sprung from Raja Ben's corpse, Nishad was dark and ugly. All Bhils are his descendents. The Agnipuranas authenticate this legend.[19]

---

16. _Ibid._, p. 85.

17. _Ibid._

18. _Ibid._

19. _Ibid._

There are a number of versions prevailing with regard to the origin of the Bhil.[20] Bhils seem to be the pygmies of Ktasias (400 B.C.) who described them as "black and ugly, the tallest being only two feet high, their hair and beards were so long that they served as garments, and they were excellent bowmen and very honest." But, the name by which they are at present known cannot be traced far back in Sanskrit literature. The term "Bhilla" seems to have occurred for the first time about 600 A.D.[21] It is believed that the Bhils are among the oldest inhabitants of the country. Colonjal Tod calls them 'Van Putras' or children of the forest. The Rajputs had also recognised them as the original occupants of the land.[22] So far as the Rajputana is concerned the Bhils had rendered a remarkable service to the Guhilet rulers of Mewar and as a token of appreciation the towns of Dungarpur, Banswara and Deolia[23] were all named after some Bhil chieftains. Even in the time of Maharana Pratap the Bhils services were highly commendable. And during the British rule Mewar Bhil corps was organised in 1840 which assisted the British to suppress the mutiny of 1857.

---

20. Erskina, K.D., Rajputana Gazetteer, Mewar Residency, 1908, Vol. II A, p. 227.

21. Ibid.

22. Tod James, Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, Vol. I, p. 184.

23. The old capital of Partabgarh.

Race and Language

The Bhils speak a variety of dialects referred to
generally as Bhilli. Their dialect contains a number of
non-Aryan words, some of which have come from the Mundari
dialect and others from the Dravidian dialect. Again, this
dialect is influenced by Gujarati, Marathi and Marwari
dialects. It seems to be the fact that the Bhils had once
a dialect of their own, which is now lost. As to the origin
of this dialect Grierson assumed a Mundari origin and
recognised an early Dardic influence.[24] Their traditional
tribal neighbours are the Gonds, the Bhuiyas, and the
Kalarian tribes. Besides, they live with the members of
different casts in different localities. As to their caste
neighbours, the Bhils share the most intimate relationship
with the members of the Rajput caste.[25]

Race:- Racially, they are characterised by dark brown
complexion, few with lighter shades: wavy to curly hair with
a shade of dark choclate brown approaching black; sparse
beard and no or little body hair; dolichocephalic to Meso-
cephalic head; nose mesorline to platyrrhine, often depressed
at the root; round or oval face; straight or somewhat
reteating forehead; supra-orbital ridge well developed; jaws

---

24. Bhowmik, K. L., _Tribal India - A Profile in Indian Ethnology_,
   1971, World Press, Calcutta, p. 63.

25. Ghurye, G. S., _The Scheduled Tribe_, Popular Press Private
   Limited, Bombay, 1963, p. 218.

broad and massive; eye colour brown or dark brown a few with light brown eyes; chin round or oval and slightly receding, stature medium to short; and well built body. They are regarded as the western brands of the pre-Dravidians by Haddon, as Dravidian by Risley as well as by crooks, as a proto-Australiads by Guha.[26] Majumdar has suggested that the Bhil's are racially quite distinct from the pre-Dravidian and the Negrito races; and the term Bhil is a generic name given to the older and simpler people of the land by the other invading people.[27] The Bhil represents Bhilla meaning bow-man. In the early Sanskrit literature they are classified as belonging to Pulinda or Nishada races.[28]

Food and Economic Life

The Bhils are economically a group of settled agriculturists. In 1901 Luard stated that Bhils returned agriculture as their original occupation and that, though they were still a wandering population, they were being settled as regular cultivators. He observed: "A hundred years of peaceful rule in central India has not completely reformed them and weaned them away from their former habits. They are no longer turbulent as they were in the days of unsettled rule in Malwa"

---

26. Bhowmik,K.L., Tribal India - A Profile in Indian Ethnology, 1971, World Press, Calcutta, p.63.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., pp.63-64.

and that "many of them every third or fourth year desert their village and settle elsewhere."[29]

Traditionally the Bhils were famous for their nomadic habits. The present day Bhils live in the stage of food producing economy, which is dominated by agriculture and is supplemented by domestication of animals. Moreover, they utilise the nature around for getting a steady supply of food-stuffs through fishing, hunting,and collection of edible fruits, roots, tubers and honey. On the other hand, many of them have became wage earners, after being engaged in commerce,industry, and administration. As regarded the occupational mobility among the Bhils we find a trend shifting from community centred food gathering economy via family - oriented agriculture economy to a dependent economy of wage earning.[30]

The Bhils cultivate various crops like Maize, Millet, wheat, rice, barely and pulse. They practise shifting axe-cultivation in the forest with the help of hoe and permanent cultivation in the plains with the help of plough. Formerly, they were famous for shifting axe-cultivation, but now the practice has been overshadowed by the method of intensive plough cultivation. Both in the hilly slopes and in the plains

---

29. Census of India, 1931, Vol. I, Part III, p.57.

30. Bhowmik, K.L., Tribal India - A Profile in Indian Ethnology, World Press, 1971, pp.63-64.

they do the shifting axe-cultivation. In hill slope cultiva-
tion[31] they select a plot of land during the period of April
and May. Small trees are cut down, thick bushes become up-
rooted and tall trees are stripped off their branches. The
wood is then set on fire before the showers usher in. All
of these activities are carried out by the males only.[32]
Next, the man spread the ashes over the field as evenly as
possible, while the women sprinkle water over it. In the
next phase of work the seeds are sown on the slopes. In the
plans locally known as dajia, they cut down small trees and
thick bushes, and bring those to a field in the plans. Next
they burn the wood and spread the ashes evenly on the soil
with the help of rake. Then they sprinkle water over it and
do the sowing.

Plough cultivation has now-a-days, become very much
widespread and the method followed by the Bhils is more or
less uniform. Their farming is characterised by the rotation
of different crops, like Monsoon crops and winter crops, on
the same plot in different seasons. Ploughing and levelling
are the only two techniques to till and prepare the soil
before sowing. The seedlings of paddy are raised at a nursery
bed, located at one corner of the field. In the next phase of
work, they do the transplantation. The seeds of other crops
are sown directly by broadcasting method. Next they do the

---

31. Locally known as Chhimata.

32. Ibid., p.64.

necessary weeding and afterwards keep constant watch over crops in the field till the harvesting is over. In addition to the main crops, they cultivate Indian sunhemp (san) for rope manufacture and tobacco for domestic consumption as well as for trading.[33] They also produce a number of vegetables like brinjal, papauya, gourd, pumpkins and others. The agricultural implements include plough, crow-bar, hoe, rake, sicle, iron point digging stick axe and weeders. Moreover, they harness animal power in cultivating their fields as they employ a pair of bullocks to draw the plough.

The Bhils domesticate bullocks, buffaloes, goats, and fowls. The herds of the whole village are grazed together in the area reserved for the purpose. A man from the Gori caste does this work. The Bhils share an intimate relationship with their cattle. On the day of diwali the horns of the cattle are painted red, and they are worshipped. Formerly, they did not like the idea of taking milk. But now-a-days some of them do use milk as food and also prepare ghee (clarified butter) from it and sell in to outsiders. Beef is traditionally tabooed to them. The goats are used both for milk and meat. As well as, it is often offered as a sacrifice to the gods and goddesses. The fowls are used mostly as food. Eggs and flesh are freely eaten by them. Moreover, they often make use of eggs and fowls in their religious offerings.[34]

---

33. See, Ibid., pp. 64-65.

34. Ibid., p. 65.

The Bhils are experts in catching fish. They make use of nets as well as traps. Fishing is usually done by women through the participation of men is not unknown.[35] In addition to all individual fishing expeditions, they also carry on fishing collectivity. The women of a village in the morning go to a nearby stream and do the fishing. Sometimes, women of the village also participate in such fishing expeditions.

Formerly, they were good hunters.[36] At present they occasionally practise hunting. Their weapons are bows and arrows. They employ various traps for catching wild pigs, tigers and other game animals. Moreover, they fully utilise the advantage of collecting edible roots, shoots, rubber and fruits. The practice of collecting is a monopoly of the women and children, though the participation of the men is not unknown.[37] They are also experts in extracting oil from dried fruits of Mahua (Bassia lutifalio). Some of them do the practice of collecting honey by smoking the bees off from the comb.

The Bhils consider fire to be sacred. They always pay respect to fire and the place of fire. They are usually accustomed to take two meals in a day. In the morning Kodri and rice are eaten with soups of pulses and grams and/or

---

35. Ibid., p.65.

36. Ibid., p.66.

37. Ibid., p.66.

vegetable curry. In the evening they take manda, i.e. round cakes made from the flour. Occasionally eggs of fowls are eaten. Meat of goats as well as fowls is costly, and is, therefore, eaten only on festive occasions. Fish is added to their menu as and when they catch fish. They are habitated to drink liquor, distilled from Mahua (Bassia latifolia). They are found to prefer tadi whenever they can get hold of it. They freely smoke tobacco. Among some of them to eat opium and to smoke ganja are well known.[38] The weapons of war and chase include bows and arrows and big knives. They are also experts in throwing stones and missiles from slings. Also, they have the knowledge of making various traps and snares. Nets and traps of different sizes and shapes are used in fishing. They have no knowledge of pottery or basketry. They use a large variety of earthern ware. These are purchased from local markets. They collect basket, mat and winnowing fan made of bamboo from the Kotwals. They have a large number of musical instruments like tomtom, flutes of different sizes and shapes, drums and others.[39]

Religion

The religion of the Bhils is basically animistic. They worship a number of spirits and ghosts. In the forest

38. Ibid., pp. 66-67.

39. Ibid., p. 67.

or anywhere they offer earthern horses, jams and beehive
shaped vessels to ghosts and spirits. Also they offer goats
and cocks, and afterwards eat the sacrificed animals and
drink liquor. Due to this age old contact with Hinduism
they have adopted a number of Hindu gods and goddesses. The
practice of ancestral worships is prevalent among them. In
fact, most of the gods and goddesses are the mythological
heroes and heroines who are regarded as their ancestors. They
have a number of deities who govern over agriculture, water,
forest, hill and festivals. They have no temples to house
their gods and goddesses. There are a few idols of their
deities . These are housed in small huts thatched with grass
and open on all sides. The Bhil festivals are mostly
connected with the ancestor cult.[40]

In addition to these, they have adopted three Hindu
festivals. These festivals are those of the spring equinox
(holi), the autumn equinox (dasahra) and feasts of light
(divali) at the full moon in October and November. The first
two being forms of sympathetic magic, are expected to promote
the growth and ripening of the crops. These are accompanied
with rude merriment and some idencency. Pujaro is their
priest who worships the deities on all occasions, and for
this he receives some grains at the harvest from each family
in the village. The act of propitiating malignant spirits
is assigned to bhagata or badwa. He is also regarded as a

40. Ibid., p.75.

medicine man to practice black magic is also condemned. A witch is always subjected to cruel ordeals, and physical torture, and even sometimes is killed. There are a large number of omens, both good and bad. Each and every tree has a meaning of its own and a motif behind. They think that in dreams their dead relatives appear and tell them what they want, while other dreams forecast the events ahead.[41]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Socially the Bhils are a patrilineal tribe and traditionally a community of good archers. The Bhils of western India do not form a linguistic, cultural or racial group. The criterion of their basis unity is in the fact that every where they are known by the term 'Bhill' and that the Bhils from different areas recognise themselves as fellow members.

Landless persons generally resort to farm labour. They work as Halis a system akin to slavery. Under this system a man binds himself for work in lieu of some money which is advanced to him free of interest. The Hali is almost mortgaged and till the principal amount is paid in full he has to work for the master. He is given food and clothing. The loan amount is usually taken for celebrating

41. Ibid., p. 75.

a marriage or for arranging a funeral feast. Sometimes,
this loan is taken to pay off old debts, generally when a
Bhil Hali works for another Bhil family, he gets a generous
treatment. Females also work on farms. They carry the
work of weeding the grass and harvesting the crop.[42]

The Bhils do not seem to be business like. They
know very little about the changing market trends. Whenever,
they are in need of money, they visit the weekly market to
dispose of their surplus grain. Like other farmers, they
know very little marketing.

The Bhils families do not very much differ from one
another in their economic condition. Their sources of liveli-
hood are more or less the same. Their living standard is
almost stereotyped. All Bhils live in bamboo huts, eat maize
bread with or without pulses and put on coarse clothes. The
difference in their economic grading is meagre. Their items
of expenditure are also almost identical.[43]

The Bhils constitute an endogamous tribe. This
endogamous tribe is composed of two exoganous moieties.
Each moiety includes brothers, cousines, clansmen and a
still wider circle of relatives on the paternal side. All
these members belong to a moiety share a haga relationship
in between them. This relationship includes non-marriageable

42. Doshi, S.L., <u>The Bhils: Between Societal Self-Awareness and Cultural Synthesis</u>, Sterling Publishers (P) Ltd., New Delhi, 1971.

43. <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 70-74.

relatives. A member of one moiety shares a hagwadia relationship with a member of another moiety. This relationship gives an expression to their marriageability. There is no customary rivalry between these two moieties, though some songs sung at the time of marriage do show that even while joking there is akeen desire of denouncing the opposite moiety. Each moiety is divided into a number of exogamous patrilineal clans. Some clans are territorials named after a particular village or a place where the group originally lived. Some are names of other tribes taken by them as clan names. The other clans seem to have a totemistic origin. A totemic clan is named after a plant or animal and asserts the existence of totemic descent, totemic taboos totens tattooing, and a high degree of reverence towards the totens. Each clan is again divided into a number of exogamous lineages. Each lineage is structured with a depth of five or six generations. A lineage is composed of a number of families.[44]

Family Pattern

The family type among the Bhils may be divided into two main groups and five subgroups.

Family Type

Nuclear   Joint

Independent   Dependent   Large Size   Intermediate   Small
                                                    size

---

44. Bhowmik,K.L., *Tribal India*, World Press 1971, pp.68-

The classification between the nuclear and the joint
family has been made on the basis of the number of persons
composing the household by Bowman[45] (Bowman 1954:131) and on
the basis of the distance of relationship between the members
and the orientation of actions of the individual members by
I.P.Desai[46] (Desai 1964:29) on the basis of the residence and
the dependency by Ram Ahuja[47] (1966:29-42). Apart from this,
S.L.Doshi[48] (pp.75-76) thinks that primitive Bhil family is
based on individualism and does not represent in any way the
joint family system of the Hindus, for when a grown up son
marries, he separates from his parent and establishes a new
family. The nuclear Bhil family consists of the male head,
his wife (or wives) and unmarried children.

The Bhil family is known as Vasilu. The Bhil family
is a unilaterally related group of persons, connected through
fathers usually it is a small group consisting of a man, his
wife and their unmarried children. The most occurance of
this parental type of family is a marked feature of the Bhil
social structure. Sometimes married brothers, their wives and

---

45. Bowman,H.A. (1954), Marriage for Moderns, New York,
McGraw Hill Book Company.

46. Desai, I.P., 1964, Some Aspects of Family in Maluwa,
Asia Publishing House, Bombay.

47. Ram Ahuja, 1966,"Family Pattern Among Bhils"in Eastern
Anthropologist, Vol.1, pp.29-42.

48. Doshi, S.L., op.cit., pp.75-76.

and unmarried children and/or married sons, their wives and
unmarried children live together, and thus they constitute
an extended family. To live with a married sister or daughter
is not very uncommon which constitutes a type of joint family.
Usually they practise patrilocal and/or virilocal residence.
The occurance of patri-uxorilocal type of residence is also
not uncommon. The authority in the family lives with the
eldest male. All earnings of the members of the family are
pooled with him and he directs the expenditure. He distributes
the daily work among the members of his family, and if it is
not properly done he rebukes the defaultes. In all family
rituals he takes the leadership the eldest female in the
family distributes the femine work among her daughters and
daughter-in-law and supervises their work. The grown up
boys graze the cattle and the daughters assist the mother.[49]

According to the Bhils, a child is conceived in the
womb as and when the male semen meets the female secretion.
The cessation of menstrual flow indicates a conception life
does not enter into the foetus till after three months
according to some and till after five months according to
many.[50] Thus, an abortion after five months is regarded as
a crime. By the fifth month, parents start observing various
parental precautions. Co-habitation is prohibited when the
sixth month is over. According to their belief a girl is

_____

49. Bowmik, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

50. Ibid., p. 69.

born exactly after nine months and a boy after nine days

past nine months from the date of conception. It is a boy

when the foetus quickens much in the womb. It is a girl

when the foetus does not trouble the mother. A Bhil midwife

attends the expectant mother. She cuts the umbilical cord

with a bamboo chip and buries the same in a pit outside the

house. After child-birth the mother and the baby are

considered impure for a period of five days on the followed

by a social feast.[51]

Kinship and Authority Pattern

The Bhil kinship system is distinguished by classifi-

catory terminology. As for example, all persons of father's

age are addressed by a classificatory term _Kaka_ and all women

of mother's age by a term _jiii._ The customary rules of

marriage have greatly influenced the Bhil terminology. As a

result of having the practice of cross-cousin marriage the

same term _mama_ is used in addressing mother, brother, father's

sister's husband and father-in-law. Similarly, mother's

brothers' wife, father's sister and mother-in-law are addressed

by the same term _mami._ They have also denotertive terms like

father, mother etc. and descriptive terms like grandfather,

grandmother etc. Among the Bhil the following kin can joke

with one another: husband's younger brother with elder

---

51. _Ibid._

brother's wife, husband's sister with brother's wife, cross-cousins with each other, sister's husband with wife's brother, sister's husband with wife's sister, a man with younger girls on his wife's side, and a man with his/her son's or daughter's parents-in-law. They also avoid certain kin.[52] No interaction is permitted in between a younger-brother's wife and a husband's elder brother. A girl and her husband's father also do not talk to each other. A man is not expected to address her husband, his elder brother, and his father by their names.[53]

Descent is patrilineal. A child gets the family name through his father. During a divorce the children are left with their father. The property of a Bhil man is divided among his sons in increasing proportion according to seniority.[54] The eldest son always gets the largest share, the youngest owns the smallest share, and other sons usually inherit equal shares. Some also divide the debts of their father among themselves according to the rules of inheritance. A daughter has no right to have a share of her father's property.[55] In case of a widow marriage, the widow and her children by the new marriage have no right in the property of her first husband. And when she is married to her deceased husband's younger brother and has already a son by

---

52. Ibid., pp.72-73.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., pp.72-73.

55. Ibid.

her first husband, her children by the second marriage do
not earn any right to the property of her first husband.
But when there is no child by the first husband, children
by the second inherit that property.[56]

Marriage

The Bhils do not marry outside their own tribe. If
he does so, he is at once thrown out of his own tribe. He
may be taken back as and when he pays a fine to his village
council. Besides thisstribal endogamy, they also practise
regional endogamy. The reasons behind this territorial
endogamy are there that an intimate contact can be easily
maintained by her with her father's family and her dualities
are likely to be more assimilative. The rule of exogamy
associated with family and lineage is very much rigid. To
go against this rule meansthe involvement in incestuous
relation. In such a case both the parties are thrown out
of the tribe. The practice of clan exogamy prohibits the
marriage of a clan member with a member of the same clan.
The premarital sex relation within the clan is not encouraged.
They are conscious of their practice of moiety exogamy. A
marriage negotiation becomes postponed if they can trace haga
relationship in between the contracting parties. If they
find it after a marriage is completed they arrange an earlier

---

56. Ibid., pp.70-71.

divorce. They also have a practice of territorial exogamy in which they seek of a marriage partner outside the defined and definite territory which may be a street, a village, a group of village, or a district. Besides these rules of selecting brides, they have certain rules of preferential or kin marriage.[57]

They practise a symructrical type of cross-cousion marriage in which the ego can marry his father's sister's daughter as well as his mother's brother's daughter, if she is in either case, younger to him.[58] Widow marriage is customary among them. A widow may marry anyone, but the usual preference goes to her deceased husband's younger brother. Thus, the Bjilis have a practice of Junior levi-rate.[59] After the death of a wife a Bhil may marry his deceased wife's younger sister. This type of junior sorro-rate is not compulsory on either side but is a preferred form of marriage. The Bhils practise Monogamy. Polygamy is not unknown but polyandry is prohibited. These are the following ways of acquiring a mate: marriage by purchase, marriage by exchange, marriage by service, marriage by intrusion, and marriage by elopement.[60] The most popular one is marriage by purchase where the bride's father

57. Ibid., p.70.

58. Ibid., p.71.

59. Ibid.

60. Karve, Irawati, "Bhils of Western Khandesh," Journal of Anthropolitical Society of Bombay, 1958.

receives a good amount of bride price from the groom's father.

Karve has shown in her study on Bhils of West Kahndesh the significance of bride price in their marriage systems.[61] Its implications, by and large have created many economic and psychological conflicts in their social milieu. In marriage by exchange no payment of bride price is made. Two families exchange their daughters. In marriage by service also no bride price is made but the groom serves the family of his father-in-law for a period of seven years. Afterwards the couple may settle elsewhere. In marriage by intrusion an unmarried or married girl may go to the house of the man of her choice in view of living with him as his wife. She enters the house of the man she loves, and communicates her intention to his mother when all attempts in changing her mind fail she is received by the man who pays the bride-money to her father in case she is unmarried and to her husband if she is married. In marriage by elopement the boy and the girl run away from their Kinsman to a place where they live as a husband and a wife. This is usually a result of premarital sex congress which is not very much looked upon by the Bhils.[62]

---

61. Bowmik, K.L., op.cit., p.71.

62. Ibid., pp.70-71.

The stage of negotiation takes a longer period out. Several visits and discussion are followed to conclude the decision of marriage. Before the actual marriage ceremony is performed they observe a good number of rituals.[63] In particular, a ritual may be mentioned in which a paint of turmeric mixed with rice and liquor is smeared on the person of the groom as well as the bride. This is observed on the second day preceding of marriage. Moreover, they have a practice of sending turmeric from the groom's house to the house of the girl on the day of marriage a procession from the house of the groom comes to the house of the bride. The groom sits in a good bullock cart and a small boy or girl accompanies him. In the bride's village they pass the night in a house allotted to them. On the next morning they go to the bride's house. The rituals observed in marriage ceremony are the smearing of vermillion at the parting of her hair, the worshipping of Gods with paddy and leaves, the killing of a chicken in the name of the Gods, the binding of ends of their clothes by the sister of the bride, the exchanging of liquor cups, and the participation in dance with others.

The father's brother of the bride place her in the cart. As the cart proceeds the people from the bride's

---

63. Ibid.

side make a mock attack on the groom's party with dust and
pebbles. After coming to the house of the groom the bride
is first shown the hearth. On the ninth day after marriage
the pair comes to the house of the bride parents. There
they stay for a night and return home the next morning. A
Bhil man is at liberty to divorce his wife at times when
their relationship becomes incompatible to live together.
He calls the people of his village and of her village.
There he makes a report of his intention. The conclusion
of divorce is made when he ties, five rupees to her scarf-
end and tears off a little piece from his turban which is
given to her as symbol of breaking their relationship for
ever.[64]

Disposal of the Dead

Cremation is the rule of disposing the dead bodies
among the Bhils. The dead bodies of very young children
and of those who die unnaturally are usually buried. When
a person is dead, all weep loudly. A widowed woman cooks
rice, morsels, a fowl and some dried fishes which are tied
in a cloth piece. This bundle is put in a new basket which
is placed on a new winnow. This winnow is placed on the three
stones outside the house. Then the cot bearing the dead is

64. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

brought out on the courtyard. The body is washed in hot
water. It is then decorated with clothes and ornaments.
A coin is put in his mouth. In case of husband, his wife
is to lie with the dead body for sometime, and when it is
wife, the husband is to do the same. Any four of the
mourners carry the cot while a man with a sword goes in
front of the carriers. In the burning place (Mahan) they
put down the cot with the head of the corpose to the north.
A funeral pyre is made of fire wood and the cot is moved
around it five times. The cot is then placed on the pyre
with the head again to the north. An old man feeds the
dead on behalf of the deceased's family and other relatives.
Then the pyre is lighted by the same old man from the head-
side. Next, all the mourners go to the stream nearby.
There they batheand wash their clothes. Afterwards, they
go back to their houses. On the second day the old man and
two other Bhils go to the cremation ground. If the body is
nöt properly burnt they put some fire-wood there and set
fire to it. On the third day the Bhils of the village gather
together. The moustaches and beards of deceased's relatives
are shaved. On the twelfth day dinner is given to all the
friends and relatives of the family.[65]

Village Organisation:- The various aspects of the unity of
village community are exhibited in various ways: ecology,
agriculture, and socio-cultural patterns. The people living

65. *Ibid.*, p.72.

amidst hills and forests, fully engaged in agriculture as
a principal occupation, having identical birth, marriage
and death rites possess a vast body of common experience
and have a strong sense of conciousness of kind. The unity
is further solidified by a common religion which the
villagers have adopted. The resultant variation in econo-
mic calling has weakened the unity. For them, therefore,
it becomes difficult to adjust and accommodate with the
caste Hindus in matters affecting the village, thus
rendering social intercourse between them a bit difficult.
After the attainment of independence, serious efforts have
been made to raise the lower sections of society and they
have gradually been raised to a higher level of culture.
The movement for the uplift of tribal people has created
a feeling of social distance between the Bhils and caste
Hindus.[66] This feeling is sometimes so vehement that it is
expressed by the villages revengeful and vindicative acts.

For the Bhils the individual has little recognition
in isolation from the community. The trader would first
enquire about the village of the Bhil and then advance any
loan. In the settlement of marriage, the rank and status
of the village to which the prospective bridegroom belongs
carries weight. The unity of the village is so pervasive
in the community life that no individual is identified

---

66. Doshi, S.L., op.cit., pp. 51-53.

without a reference to the village of which he is a member.
The status of the village is eventually the status of the
individual.

The authority in their social structure is maintained
by the village organisation which is the most effective unit
in regulating their socio-cultural behaviour. This organisa-
tion is headed by a village headman.[67] This post is heredi-
tary and it may be held by a particular family over genera-
tions. When the headman dies, his son succeeds the office
of his father though he may be a minor boy. This village
headman renders his services in advising or assisting the
villagers in times of crisis. Moreover, the duty of maintain-
ing social control is assigned to him. Thus, he plays the role
of an arbitrator in matters of social as well as economic
disputes. In addition to all of thesesecular responsibilities,
he shoulders some sacred duties too. He takes the initiative
for appearing the angry gods who often inflict small pox or
cattle diseases in the village. He also holds a key-position
in festivals, In community level of rituals his participation
comes first. Besides all of his tradition oriented duties,
he also acts as a representative of the government in the
village. Whenever the government assigns a job to a village,
he gathers the villagers and directs them to complete the
job. Similarly, on behalf of his villagers he speaks to the
government on all matters of public concern. For his services

---

67. Village headman is often known as Vasav.

he receives from the government either an annual payment in cash or a grant of some free land for cultivation.[68]

Leadership Pattern

In village communities there are some persons who stand out from the rest; they direct, while others listen, submit and follow. The leaders are of different types and exhibit different traits. "There are many qualities, praise-worthy and otherwise, by the possession of which a man may earn for himself a position which commands the respect and obedience of those around him. Wealth, age, intelligence, honesty, kindness, being born of a good family - all these and several factors make a man important. But all these are neither possessed by one person nor are they all essential hallmarks of popularity".[69]

Bhangjarias

Besides the Rawat who is respected by all by virtue of the dignity attached to his post, the Bhangjaria is the leader of the village and has practically the top most position amongst the villagers. He is the village compro-miser. In Bhil villages it is very common to hear the

---

68. Bhowmik, K.L., op. cit., pp. 72-73.

69. D.N. Majumdar, Caste and Communication in an Indian Village, p. 127.

people speaking about the important and decisive role played by a Bhangjaria. In fact there are various categories of this form of leadership. All Bhangjarias whether belong to para, village or pal are important personalities respected by the people.[70]

The functions of Bhangjaria are very complex and delicate. He gains the confidence of not only the two individuals or parties who approach him with their disputes but sometimes of two or more villages. He is the village diplomat who deals with various matters relating to the village. The Bhangjaria is rewarded for his labour and he is invited by the villagers on occasions of births and marriages. In major disputes, the winner offers him a dinner or a liquor party. A high status is attached to this indigenous form of leadership.[71]

Sarpanch:- The villagers pay respects to the Sarpanch of their gram panchayat. Next to Sarpanch is the panch who represents the village Bhagat Guru - Bhagat Guru is a leader who believes in perfection of human behaviour. The Dharn Panthis (members of a religious cult) call the reformer 'Kotwar' and he is the guardian and upkeeper of the moral hygiene of the people. It is his job to see that the people practise the philosophy of Bhagatism in practical living.

---

70. Doshi, S.L., op.cit., p.49.

71. Ibid., pp.49-50.

Traders:- The village trader is, too, a non official leader who enjoys the confidence of the people. He can be relied upon for financial help in times of a crop failure or a cattle disease. He is supposed to know a good deal about wordly affairs and can guide the people properly. Patwari is a functionary leader of the village.

The Brahmin as a priest is not present in the Bhil socio-religious life. In certain rituals the village headman does the function of priest. While in other rituals one of the Bhils does the job. This latter person is known as punjaro.[72] He is also an expert medicine man. His office is not hereditary. The pardhan, meaning a minister, is another village official. His office is hereditory. He is regarded as the second representative of the government in the village who is expected to do the job in absence of the village headman. The vartanio is the man who caries out the commands of the village headman. His office is hereditary and he is paid an annual salary of some tax free land for the services he renders. He is also regarded as the real attendant by the Government. They have a village council which is not at present a formal institution. The elderly men of the village meet for all important matters and confer among themselves. The eldest and wisest person or the

---

72. Bhowmik, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

village headman takes the initiative in starting the
discussion. The decision made by this body is respected
by all. Besides this village organisation, the Bhils
have a higher territorial group consisting of ten to
twelve neighbouring villages. This unit headed by
deshmukhs.[73] Formerly, they had the institution of chief-
ship which has now become completely lost.

---

73. Ibid., p.74.

Chapter V

MOVEMENTS AMONG BHILS IN INDIA

(A) POLITICS OF BHIL MOVEMENTS IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

The Bhils have often voiced their feelings against
an alien government and they have resorted to violence at
all times against it. They rose against the Marathas in
the 18th century and were severely punished. They rebeled
against the British in 1800 but the diplomacy of colonel
Tod[1] succeeded and on 12th May 1825 Bhils entered into an
agreement which was signed by Bainum Soorat and Doodah
Soorat with the company. The following were the main
provisions of the agreement:[2]

1.   We (Bhils) will deliver our bows, arrows and all
weapons.

2.   Whatever plunder we may have obtained during the
late disturbance we will move good.

3.   In future we will never commit any depredations in
towns, villages or public roads.

4.   We will not give refuge to theives, plunderers,
Grassiahs or Thakurs or any enemies of the British Govern-
ment in our pals (villages) whether they belong to our own
country or any other.

---

1. Colonel Tod was the first political agent appointed at
   Udaipur (Mewar).
          (C U), Comp.
2. Aitchison, Collection of Treaties, Engagements and
   Sanads, Relating to India and neighbouring countries,
   Vol. 3 Nedcl; Karaus Reprint. 1973.

5.　　We will obey the commands of the company and present ourselves whenever required.

6.　　We will not take more than our just and old established dues from the Rawal's and Thakur's villages.

7.　　We will never refuse to pay the yearly tribute to the Rawal of Doongarpur.

8.　　Should any person, subject of the company, stop at our villages we will give him protection.

9.　　Should we not act in the above manner we will be accounted criminals against the British Government.

Apart from these terms and conditions of agreement one cannot deny the fact that the Bhils preferred independent living. But when the British Government took over the administration from the East India Company on November 1, 1858 a number of reforms were introduced, which proved to be checks on the rights enjoyed by the Bhils. Thus in 1868, Bhils of Kharwar Pal in the hilly district of Mewar indulged in lawless activities and began to defy the state authorities.[3] State officials like Mehta Ragunath Singh and Moti Singh were behaving cruelly and unjustly with the tribesmen. The officials were charging double taxes and imposing heavey

---

3. Saxena, K.S., The Political Movements and Awakening in Rajasthan (1857 to 1947). S. Chand and Company (Pvt.) Limited, New Delhi, 1971, p. 166.

fines by employing force.[4] The Maharana had to send his troops to suppress the Bhils.

Again, the introduction of a number of reforms in 1818 provoked the Bhils and led to the general uprising of 1881. The main reforms were the introduction of census, the prohibition of the manufacture of liquor and to arm out liquor contract to one man, establishment of police or customs post in Bhil areas, ban on witch-swinging which ultimately led to the official interference in Bhil areas and with their age-long customs and conventions.[5] The Bhils were unable to understand the object and advantages of these reforms and it caused dissatisfaction among them. Various types of doubts were created and rumours were spread, as soon as the operations were started by the state officials. Some of the leading rivals of the state thought that the British Government wished to levy a 'Barar' (tax) as contribution towards the cost. Afghan war, while among the Bhils a general apprehension arose that numbering was being done to see how many able bodied men could be recruited to fight for the British Government at Kabul.[6] Some thought that a scheme was being prepared to attempt for the gradual extinction of the Bhil population, others thought that fat women

---

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p.167.

6. Ibid., pp.167-68.

would be assigned to stout men and the lanky to the lean,
etc., and that new taxations would follow the census work.[7]

The Bhils of the Bara Pal and Rakavanth were all in
revolt which led to the murder of a 'thanedar' of Bara Pal,
eleven sawars and sepoys, two men and their wives, one girl
and the loss of seven horses.[8] While explaining the circum-
stances, this was stated by colonel Blair.[9] The demands of
the Bhils were that if a woman was suspected of being a
witch should be killed without any further investigation,
secondly, that no police outposts should be kept in Bhil
areas and thirdly, if they quarralled amongst themselves
the Darbar should not interfere. Besides all these demands,
their most important demand was the "no future census should
be taken of them, as they were sure that the census was only
made with a view of taxing them".[10]

Colonel Blair, however, had conducted the necessary
enquiries into the matter and had assured the Bhils that the
British Government and Maharana's order regarding census
were only for knowing the number of the huts and in no way
about their women or their cattle. But, as a result of the
Maharana's personal intervention, an agreement[11] which

7. Shyamaldas, Kaviraja, Vir Vinod (in Hindi), Vol. II,
   Mewar Agency Report 1880-1881, p.2217.

8. Saxena, K.S., op.cit., p.169.

9. Col. Blair was the commandant of the Mewar Bhil Corps.

10. Saxena, K.S., op.cit.

11. Ibid., p.173.

consisted of twenty one articles, was concluded on 19th
April 1881 between the Darbar and the Bhils of Mewar
according to which Maharana agreed with the terms that the
houses of Bhils were not to be counted; census officials
were not to be allowed to live in Rakhabdeoji, the accused
of the murder of thanedar and sepoys in Paduna and Bara
Pal was to be pardoned; land was not to be measured soon.
But in spite of the agreement peace could not be restored
immediately and disturbances continued on 13th June, 1881,
a number of Bhils, apparently of the Barai Pal, attacked
and brutally murdered nine Mckvanis and a Fagir, who were
providing towards salumber in search of employment.[12]
Meanwhile, in the months of June-July 1881, there had been
a number of Bhil raids on the Mewar-Mahikanta border and
the railway iron was stolen away. On enquiry, the main
cause of these raids was 'the enhanced price of salt' and
'to secure the attention of the Darbar' to their difficul-
ties. But with the help of the Sirohi twoops the railway
iron stolen was recovered Idler stage. Fines were imposed
on the Bhils ranging from Rs.50 to Rs.130 or cattle of
equal value and a guarantee for their future good behaviour
was obtained.[13] To prevent the Bhil raids in future on the

12. _Ibid._, p. 173.

13. _Ibid._, p. 177.

frontier, it was suggested that the strength of the police must be increased to avoid such occurrences.

The Bhils of Borai had suffered a lot since the outbreak of 1881, but, however an agreement was concluded on 28th February, 1883, according to which the Bhils gave up all guns and swords in their possession, promised to keep no arms except bows and arrows, agreed to re-establish their 'pal' on the lands given to them for the purpose and to pay a fine of Rs.2,000 to the Darbar. They also promised to pay up the revenue of Rs.3,000 to give up within a month and or a month and a half the Bhils guilty of the murder of Makvani's and of an attack on Dayalal, etc.[14] As a result of this agreement peace and order could be re-established in the Mewar territory and the proposal to hold a conference at Abu was finally abandoned by the British Government. The Maharana of Udaipur also advised the British Government to follow a 'slow and gradual manner' policy with the Bhils of the country who were an ignorant race and whose deeds were divorced from rational deliberations and were always a result of chaotic impulse and extreme ignorance.[16]

The Bhil risings of 1881 and 1882 were suppressed with a heavy hand. Victory vested with the authorities. Their opponents over reacted themselves by their unscrupulousness and their passion. But the triumph of the authorities

---

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

was brought about at the expense of the disunity of the
Bhils. The forest dwellers of different regions never made
a common cause. This facilitated successful operations of
the troops of the Parbans and the British to suppress them
separately. But fortunately in 1922 and onward a lead came
from Motilal Tejawat, who made them concious of their rights
and prepared them to take a stand against the authorities.

In the year 1921-22 a number of Bhil distrubances
occurred in the districts of Mewar, Idar, Dungarpur, Sirohi,
Panta and Other places.[17] The main cause of the Bhil agita-
tion was the different systems of land revenue and pattas
enforced in the states of Mewar, Sirohi, Dungarpur, Palo,
Danta and Idar. Their principal demand was to abolish the
different systems of taxation and to replace them by one
uniform system throughout the whole area inhabited by the
Bhils between Rajputana and Gujarat proper.[18] For the first
time all the Bhils under the leadership of Motilal Tejawat
rose against the states and the British Government. Bhils,
looked upon him as their veritable 'Messiah' who had come
for their eternal deliverance.[19] The states and the British
Government looked at the agitation as a challenge to their
authority. The Idar Darbar issued a proclamation banning

17. Ibid., p. 179.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

the "gathering of Bhils and the entry of Motilal Tejawat or give him shelter or protection as an offence."[20]

While discussing Bhil movements in pre-independence India, it is also important to lay stress on missionary activities and their effects on the Bhils of Mewar. In Rajasthan, and particularly, in Banswara; Dungarpur and Sirohi, the areas where Bhils live in large numbers the missionaries set about their business among these people who were very poor, superstitious and backward. Taking advantage of their ignorance and innocense, the Christian missionaries could easily convert these Bhils to Christianity by offering help in cash and kind during famine and other natural calamities. Thus a number of missionaries came into Rajasthan in the name of reviving the people but actually to convert them to Christianity. As a result of their activities a general dissatisfaction prevailed in Udaipur and finally it was decided by the Government to stay the 'conversion' movement.[21]

Vanvasi Sewa Sangh,[22] an important organisation was established particularly for the welfare of the Bhil community and to awaken them socially and politically. The

_____

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., pp. 184-85.

22. The members of the Vanvasi Sewa Sangh's executive were Sarva Shri Rajkumar, Man Singh, Bhurelal Baya, Bhogilal Pandya and others.

Sangh was successful to a great extent in attaining its object so much so that a number of Bhils pledged not to drink and to take opium in future. The Bhils also demanded the responsible Government.

Bhagat Movements: - Roopsinghwrites about socio-religious movement of the Bhils of Udaipur, Dungarpur and Banswara districts of Rajasthan.[23] The analysis contained in this paper is based on his personal observations and discussion with a number of individuals and critical examination of published as well as unpublished material. An attempt has been made to construct certain hypothetical propositions on the basis of this empirical study. In the background of comprehensive definition of tribe he examined how far the Bhils have adopted norms different from these and developed a tendency to adopt caste characteristic as a result of Bhagat movement. The Bhagat movement was mainly responsible for the inception of caste features in the Bhil tribe. According to Roop Singh, "The Bhagat Movement is nothing but a crude imitation by the Bhils to follow the external terms of the Hindu religion and its rituals."[24]

The oldest Bhagat movement among the Bhils is that of Mavji. It is over three centuries old but suffered a set back which lasted a long time and was revived, as a Vaishnavite movement, only in the last century. It not only

---

23. Roop Singh, "The Role of Bhagat Movement in the Inception of Caste Feature in the Bhil Tribe," Eastern Anthropologist, 1970, Vol.23, p.

24. Ibid.

involved the Bhils but also some non-tribals like the
Bhai Kumar Kurmi and even Brahmins. The Bhagats of this
sect are also described as Baneshwar Dhamis or Baneshwar
Dham Panthis. Their temple is known as the Dham, an abode
of a Maharaj. The region of its impact is Banswara and
Dungarpur. Along with the worship of the trinity of Brahma,
Vishnu and Mahesh the Mavjis also instructed the Bhils about
their social, spiritual and economic upliftment.[25]

At the same time, the Bhils liberally donate to the
Krishna temple which is looked after by the present guru.
Mavji compiled and wrote his teaching in many volumes. The
conditions for becoming a dham panthi or Mavji Bhagat are
many. These are connected, directly or indirectly with
various aspects of the life to follow.

Another set, started by Govidgiri, a religious leader
and social reformer, is known as Lasodia.[26] This is
comparatively popular in the Dungarpur and adjoining Bhil
areas of Udaipur, Banswara and Gujarat Govindgiri, a
Banjara by caste received enlightenment through meditation.
The origin of this sect could be traced to the first
quarter of this century, around 1910. Govindgiri came to
Dungarpur and launched his reform movement among the Bhils.

25. R.S. Mann, "Structure and Role of Dynamics Among the
Bhils of Rajasthan: A Case of the Bhagats," pp. 309-23,
in Singh, K.S. (ed.), Tribal Movement in India.

26. Jain, Nemichand, Bhil, Bhasha, Sahitya and Sanskriti,
Indore Mira Bhaiya Prakashan, 1964, p. 15.

He became popular in a short time. He encouraged the Bhils to create a new society. It was reported that at one stage around 1913-14, Govindgiri thought of establishing his own kingdom. He was charged with ¢ conspiring the over throw of the Rajput rule and establish a Bhil state while addressing a huge rally of the Bhils in Banswara. The then ruler of Banswara managed to arrest Govindgiri after he had addressed a huge gathering at Mangadi hill. He was exiled. Later he died. This caused a temporary set back to this movement. Today it is one of the leading sects of Bhagats.[27] The Bhagats worship Mahadeo and Krishna. It is like the Mavji sect. The method of conversion is almost the same.

In addition to the above mentioned major sects of Bhagats which are active among the Bhils of Rajasthan, there are a few others, but they have not gained in popularity. The history of these sects, too, is not very old and they are of recent origin. The followers of these sects are scattered and as such have no specific areas of concentration. These sects include, (a) Kamdia/Ram Dev Panth; (b) Nathji Panth; and (c) Kabir Panth.[28]

The Bhil followers of the Kamdia Panth are called Kamdia Panthis. The movement, originated by the Kamdia

---

27. See, Bhatnagar, N.C. "Bhagar Andolan," _Journal of Social Research_, Vol. I, No.1, 1950, Directorate of Social Welfare, Jaipur, Rajasthan, p.31.

28. R.S. Mann, "Structure and Role Dynamics among the Bhils of Rajasthan," _op.cit._, pp.318-19.

sect does not appear to have influenced the Bhagat Bhils
to the extent that they have given up their original faith.
The Kamdia sect, which is say about forty years old, is
also known as Dasnami. The missionaries of Kamdia sect
have, all along, been more liberal in their approach to
converting people to their fold. There are more or less
no restrictions on social intercourse between a Dasnami and
a non-Dasnami Bhil. The same person may act as a priest for
the Panchami and Dasnami faiths. The Dasnami Bhagats worship
Ram Deoji who is symbolized by a metal horse. Among the
Bhils, Ram Deoji is also called Jargati. They are assigned
a lower status by the Bhils than Bheru and Megra Baba, indeed
Jargaji is considered to be an assistant to Bheru. The Ram
Deoji sect is yet far short of achieving much popularity.
This sect is believed to have originated in Jodhpur and was
brought to the Bhils by Hindu missionaries.[29]

The sect of Shambhu Nathji has even smaller following.
Many of the Bhagats from this sect express their devotion to
Shambhu Dal or Nathji or Dhuriwala. The Movement is new
among the Bhils and is believed to have originated in
Ujjain. The Bhagats of this sect greet each other by
pronouncing 'Jai Sita Ram'.[30]

Another Bhagat Movement among the Bhils of Rajasthan
is the one introduced by Kabir. As a matter of fact, some

29. _Ibid._

30. _Ibid._, p.320.

of the Bhils, as a result of alien efforts and initiatives, began to sing the prayers and hymns composed by Kabir. The Movement has caught the imagination of only a small section of Bhil society. Those who became Kabir panthis are very strict about the observances enjoined on them.[31]

In addition to the traditional divisions in Bhil society like Palvi and plain or Ujale and Mele, the Bhagat Movements have created yet another area for division. The old lines of social divisions have given way to a new kind of segmentation and stratification. The Bhagat and the non-Bhagats are segregated. At the same time, in the case of intra-Bhagat segments, there have developed considerations of superiority and inferiority for instances the Bhagats of Lasodia, Mavji and Kabir panth do not rate the Ram Deoji and Shambhu Bhagats as socially and ritually equal. The social position of the Bhagats is superior to that of the chalu. Bhagats and non-Bhagats or ordinary Bhils, who are placed in the lowest rung of the social hierarchy. This has led to the growth of new levels of stratification and differentiation.[32] Elements of subordination and supraordination have crept in. In terms of social interaction, the feeling of distance grew and the Bhagats became an endogamous group. The Bhagat Bhils do not marry non-Bhagats,

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., p.321.

the chalu Bhagats being the exception. Relationship of commonality are affected, the Bhagat do not eat, drink and smoke with the non-Bhagats. Anybody doing so is ostradized. This attitude provided a new determinant of social boycott.

Certain marriage and death customs of the Bhagat and non-Bhagat Bhils also differ: Dewar vatta, Natra, Dapa, Polygyny, etc. and the associated rights, duties and privileges do not find acceptance among the Bhagats.[33] Sharing a drink with Kinsman while deciding on Dapa is not a convention which the Bhagats accept. Non-payment of Dapa also affects the Bhil-money-lender relationship. The Bhagats rarely participate in the traditional functions of the non-Bhagats. In certain cases, new role complications have cropped up. If a Bhagat Bhil boy, of his own, marries a non-Bhagat Bhil girl, they often fail to pull together because of the divergent natures of the respective behaviour patterns for them. She cannot cook for the husband and his family and would need a separate kitchen for herself. She can join them in such activities only if she accepts Bhagatism. Sometimes they go to absurd lengths. In a village in the Kherwara Tribal Development Block, the Bhagat Bhils withdrew their children from a school because they had to take water along with non-Bhagat Bhil boys from a common pot.[34]

---

33. _Ibid._, p. 321.

34. _Ibid._, pp. 321-22.

With the decline of the Bhagatis' faith in their
traditional religion, their dependence on the pat Bhopas,
Bhopas, Punjaras and other religious functionaries also
declined.[35] The kind of relationship which had existed
for centuries between the religious leader and the community
could no longer be back took place in the case of the
authority of the Da Mota (tribal council or elder's council)
and Graneti, the village headman, and their ways of resolv-
ing conflicts. The Bhagats, having assumed social and
spiritual superiority, did not find it appropriate to
submit to the guidance of the traditional leaders. They
would not accept traditional punishments and fines which
normally involved the offerings of a few bottles of liquor
and poultry. Their philosophy went against consumption of
such things.

The Bhagats incorporated certain new cultural traits
in their material styles of living. One of the added
dimensions, identified among the Bhagats Bhils, is the new
system of symbols. Marks on the forearm and the forehead,
use of rosary, sacred threads and knots are symbols of the
faith. Even the forms of greetings underwent a change.
There were sartorial changes. The clothes of the Bhagats,
which were white, saffron or light red in colour, were
supposed to reflect virtue and simplicity. The habit of

---

35. Ibid., p.322.

cleanliness was encouraged regular baths and wearing of clean clothes are among the essential requisites of a Bhagat.[36]

An important feature of almost all the movements, is that they were not initiated from within the community. Probably the tribals themselves could not attain such awareness on their own. The movements were carried forward by the non-Bhils, who belonged to various caste groups, from Brahmin to Banjara.[37] In subsequent stages, however, some Bhils - Bhagats began to act as the mediators of the philosophy and principles of the Bhagat movements.

There are also some other features. The Lasodia movement had a political motive. In no time, it spread like wild fire. The political objectives of creating an independent kingdom, emerged out of Bhagat movement based on religious beliefs. The Mavji Movement on the other hand remained religious. The Bhils accepted the new faiths because they were passing through a stage of degeneration caused by the influence of the dominant and powerful groups who were outsiders. The Bhils were psychologically prepared to accept anything that could promise an improvement in their existing conditions. However, the opposite phenomenon of reversion to the old faith is also in evidence. Many of those who hurriedly got converted to Bhagatism, often in an

---

36. Ibid., p. 322.

37. Ibid., pp. 322-23.

effort to seek temporary relief from adverse conditions prevalent at that time., started reverting to the old faith when they realized the uselessness of conversion and when the restraints of Bhagatism became unbearable.[38]

The Bhagat movement can also be considered in terms of their relevance to the two historical approaches to the tribal people. The Mavji or Lasadia sect are for 'assimilation' into 'shereas' the Dasnami Bhagats are for 'integration'. The former have denounced the traditional society, the songs, dances, mythology, eating and drinking habits and marriage practices of the Bhils. But the latter being reformists continue to accept many features of the traditional life. The Bhagat and non-Bhagat Bhils have a divergent reaction to the programmes of planned change and development. For instance the development of poultry and fishery activities as part of nutrition programme among the Bhils are resisted by the Bhagats, while the non-Bhagat Bhils put up no such barrier to change, as it is supported by their value system.[39]

The Post-Independence Phase of Bhil Movement

Many years later, another tribal movement took place in Dhulia district. About 37 per cent of the population of

38. Ibid., p.323.

39. Ibid., p.323.

the district consist of Bhils,[40] the most prominent Adivasi tribe in the state. This movement is of recent origin and is just a decade old. However, it has achieved significant results and is held as an example of Adivasi Movement in the state.[41]

With increased ownership of land in the area, the non-Adivasis began to oppress the Adivasis in various ways. Landlessness and poverty forced the Adivasis to work as Saldare or casual labourers on non-Adivasi owned farms for low wages and long hours. Instances of the flogging of Bhil labourers, rape of Bhil women, burning huts and other atrocities began to increase in number. Since the non-Adivasis practically controlled all seats in the state legislature and had good contacts with government officials at all levels in the districts, their crimes against the Bhils went unnoticed and unpublished.[42] Political parties in the area paid lip service to the welfare of the Adivasis but did little to redress their grievances. Sarvodaya workers in the area were the first to take any action. Shri Vinoba Bhave had in his Boodan Yadna toured this area and a Sarvodya Ashram was established at Bhadgaon in the interior of the

---

40. D.S. Kulkarni, "The Bhil Movement in the Dhulia District (1972-74)," p. 266, in K.S. Singh (ed.), Tribal Movement in India.

41. Ibid., p. 266.

42. Ibid., p. 266.

Satpura mountains, one of the Sarvodya Ashram workers was
a Bhil and he proved the leadership to the movement.

Thus the Bhil movement in Dhulia started in real
earnest only from 1970 achieved considerable success in
only a few years. The Adivasis in the area have gained a
sense of self-respect. They can no longer be harassed as
dumb animals by landlords, money-lenders or lower level
government officials. The movement has received wide
publicity in newspapers and a number of young people from
cities like Poona and Bombay have taken part in organizing
the Adivasis. Some young Adivasis are also working as full
time workers of the Sanghtana. [43]

After the proclamation of the Emergency in June 1975,
some of the workers of the Sanghtana were arrested probably
at the instigation of local vested interests. They were
released after a few months. Some of them have been arrested
again recently. The Sanghtan is now concentrating its
attention on the education of men and women, implementation
of land restoration acts and similar activities. [44]

Comparison Between Pre-Independence and Post-Independence
Bhil Movements

The comparison among various Bhil movements (both pre-
independence and post-independence) can be attempted in the
following four-fold schemes:

---

43. Ibid., p. 267.

44. D.S. Kulkarni, op. cit., p. 266.

(1) Issues

The exploitation of Adivasis in general and Bhils in particular by money lenders, traders and contractors on the one hand and the government on the other has been one of the major causes of the movement. The practice of bonded labour, low wage rates and the atrocities of money lenders and trader made the Adivasis conscious to fight for self-respect. The Bhagat movement was for some a socio-religious renaissance. At times, it appeared to be a socio-politico-religious movement. Other treated it as an effort for religious upliftment designed to bring the Bhils within the orbit of Hinduism. In certain cases, it led to social reform.[45] The post-independence tribal movement in Dhulia district of Maharashtra was for agrarian reforms.

(ii) Recruitment

All available accounts and sources of the structure of Bhil society in the pre-culture contact period are virtually unanimous in underlining the fact that it was marked by 'homogeneity'.[46] Segmentation or divisions in the tribe were only on the basis of Kinship, say clan or lineage. There was no stratification among groups. The members of the tribe provided a solid and united front to all kinds of eventualities. At the initial stages, the emergence of the two divisions namely the Palvi and the

45. R.S. Mann, op.cit., p.309.

46. Ibid.

Plain Bhils did not lead to separate identities. They met almost on an equal social plane. However, in the course of time and as the ways of life of the member of the two groups began to diverge, a rigid stratification and segmentation ensured between the two. In many areas, their social intercourse gradually came to an end. In some places they even went to the extent of declaring each group endogamous. Furthermore, the Bhagat movement has created yet another area for division. The Bhagats, the non-Bhagats and to some extent the chalu Bhagats are segregated. At the same time, in the case of intra-Bhagat segments, there developed considerations of superiority and inferiority.[47]

The Dhulia Movement received wide publicity and support from political parties and social workers. The movement · against the exploitation of Adivasis was organized under the leadership of Mrs. Godavari Parulakar, a leader of the Communist Party. It received wide publicity and support from political parties and social workers. A Sarvodaya worker, Ambar Singh Suratwati, a Bhil himself, started to organize the Adivasis in 1967. He was a local leader and was educated up to matric. He visited different villages and asked the Adivasis to unite to fight the atrocities committed against them. He was backed by some Sarvodaya workers and educated youths.

---

47. Ibid.

(iii) Leadership

The leaders are of different types and exhibit different traits. Wealth, age, intelligence, honesty, kindness, a good family background - all these and several factors make a man important and by the possession of which a man may earn for himself a position which commands the respect and obedience of those around him. But all these factors are neither possessed by one person nor are they all essential hallmark;of popularity. The nature of tribal leadership has been of traditional and charismatic type depending upon the type of movement and nature of issues involved. There is no uniform pattern of leadership, it differs from one region to another. A high status is attached to the indigenous form of leadership.

(iv) Course of the Movement

The movement against the exploitation of Adivasis organized under the leadership of Mrs.Godavari Parulakar succeeded in emancipating bonded labour, raising wage rates and ending the atrocities perpetrated by the money lenders and traders. Above all it created a sense of self-respect among the Adivasis. No longer did they remain meek and humble to be oppressed by police constables, Talathis (the village revenue officials) and forest guards. In the course of the growth of the Bhagat movement, two distinctive trends

have appeared. Under one, there was no disturbance of the
original order. Instead, the propagators of the movement
added additional items to the traditional beliefs and
practices and did not spend their energy in undoing the
old order. Under the second, which appeared almost
simultaneously, the supporters of the movement hit at the
roots of certain features of the old system. In this case
it was a substitution of the old by the new order.[48] Apart
from this in pre-independence period, the Bhils under the
leadership of Motilal Tejawat rose against the states and
the British Government. Bhils, looked upon him as their
'Messioh', who had come for their eternal deliverance. The
states and the British Government looked at the agitation
as a challenge to their authority. Vanvasi Sewa Sangh was
successful to a great extent in attaining its object of the
welfare of the Bhil community. After this the Bhils started
demanding responsible government.

Bhil Society: Continuities and Departures

(1) Economic

Better transport because of the railroad and motor
cars led to the introduction of a new technology in the form
of new tools and implements, pumping sets, persian wheels,
chemical manure etc. and this has to some extent, revolutionised

48. Ibid., p.320

the traditional outlook of the people. Their traditional
economy has also changed as many of them have started
raising commercial crops and working for new industries.
The spread of urbanisation has affected the social and
economic set up of the people. The use of urban garments,
Gandhicaps, allopathic treatment and the acceptance of
urban decorative articles such as rubber combs, goggles etc.
have raised the members of the tribe from a level where
they were anthropological specimen.[49] Above all the
economic backwardness has been comparatively surmounted by
the Bhils of the villages of the plains who exhibit a skill
in practising agriculture. The villagers in the hilly region
still practise primitive agricultural methods with the result
that their returns are barely sufficient.

(ii) Socio-Cultural

The changes in the total Bhil culture can be explained
with reference to the interplay of the factors of technology,
economy and urbanisation, which has been going on for a quite
a long time. The changes created in the rural environment by
the Government sponsored activities of village development
programmes during the last fifteen years have further accle-
rated the tempo of transformation. There are innumerable
facets of culture dynamics which have brought in their wake
the use of money, the market and modern amenities of life.[50]

49. Doshi, S.L., op.cit., pp. 238-39.

50. Ibid., p. 235.

The backwardness of the Bhils is evident from their outward modes of living, eating and drinking habits. The Bhils of the hilly region are much more backward for they do not bath regularly or cut hair and nails. They are extremely unhygienic in their personal habits too. The Bhil food, consisting of maize bread and salt of some vegetables, represents a poor standard of living. Such practices are apt to be looked upon as crude and wild. The Bhil habit of excessive drinking, even to the extent of exchanging ornaments, cattle, and sometimes wives for liquor, all these make them acquire a low position in social hierarchy. Illiteracy, the root cause of the backwardness and social disabilities of the tribe, is rampant through cut the length and breath of the Bhil villages.

(iii) Religion

The tribe as a social group possessing a deep socio-religious affinity nurtured by the sentiments of the 'we feeling' has been divided into three classes, viz., original Bhils, Christian Bhils and Bhagat Bhils.[51] The classes which have thus emerged, do not have social relations and intercourse between themselves. Both the Bhagat and Christian Bhils follow a new form of marriage which has made their life and character different.[52] Furthermore,

---

51. Ibid., p. 238.

52. Ibid.

the adherence of liquor and meat daily boths and prayers and wearing of the sacred thread (janau) by the religious movement of Bhagatism have brought them nearer to the Brahmanical culture though most of their other social customs and rituals bear greater resemblance to the scheduled casts of the region. Bhagatism also imparts some universal traits of behavioural patterns to its adherentes which raise the morale of the members of the tribe to the extent that they do not commit crime and exhibit ^{a}subtle way of life. Apart from this, the religious outlook of the hill dwellers is still manifested in animistic outlook and thus they worship tree, river and rock.

(iv) Politics

With the introduction of political parties, most of the Bhils have acquired political consciousness and membership of such organisation. The grants of Taccavi loans, credit facilities and matters relating to the revenue department are expedited with the help of the party leaders. This facility has promoted the popular feeling of the desirability of joining a particular party. The political leaders in their efforts at party organisation have divided the villages into different groups and they belong to one party or the other. It is common to hear people remarking that a particular village belong to a particular party. The area being scheduled one, the Bhils have been trained

by the parties to contest elections on the basis of
parties.[53] A separatist tendency which is political, is
found among the Bhils. The secessionist mentality is fed
by the race for power in which the consolidation of back-
ward areas serve as a handicap. In recent days, one notices'
the spirit of the 'consciousness of kind' which can be aptly
described as Bhilism, in which, the Bhils are concerned only
with the interest and benefit of the members of their own
tribe even at the cost of non-tribals.

Cultural Integration

Along with the rest of the Bhil community in the
plain have came into closer contact with alien cultures
resulting in consequent opportunities for acculturation.
The incoming of the caste of Patidars from the state of
Gujarat and their settlement in the plains have largely
influenced the Bhil primitive way of agriculture. Their
growing tendency to raise three crops in a year is due to
this immigration. Further, the Bhil pattern of monogamy
widely prevalent in the villages of the plains is a
promising integrative factor which enables them to attain
a form of marriage which is practised by all the higher
cultures of the country. Yet another trend of integrative
dynamics found in Bhils is the religious movement of

---

53. _Ibid._, pp. 237-38.

Bhagatism. Further, the integrative pattern evolved
through the means of transport and communication is visible
in the outward ways of living of the people. In the plains
the housing pattern and the mode of food and dress are
nearly similar to that followed by the higher cultures.
Moreover, the changes in the naming pattern of the Bhils
of the villages of the plains in favour of the Hindu naming
fashion is a welcome integrative change. Furthermore, the
accumulative impact of democratic forces have given opportuni-
ties to the Bhils to come nearer towards their good of
integration with higher groups. The spread and consequent
prevalence of education and urbanization has also paved
the way for the assimilation of the tribe. The integrative
trends in the field of education are visible again in the
villages of the plains which has been accessible to transport
and communication. The cumulative efforts of the interplay
of the factors of cultural change operating through the last
several decades and their acceleration in the present period
of planning and technology has offered much ground for
integration.[54]

Cultural Disintegration

A few of Bhils social, political and economic
handicaps as manifested by their ignorance, attitude to
disease and unhygienic living, their diffidence and self

---

54. Ibid., pp. 240-41.

indulgence generate grave problems for the operation of assimilative tendencies.[55] Further, the dogma 'Bhil for the Bhil' - has come out as a great impediment to their integration. The problem is further aggravated by the favoured treatment accorded by the Government on the basis of tribe or caste instead of on the basis of general backwardness. Dr. Irawati Karve has therefore, rightly observed that it is necessary "to legislate not in terms of certain castes and tribes but in moye general terms, e.g., economic or educational backwardness, which would become applicable to all citizens."[56] Yet another handicap in the way of assimilation is the inaccessibility of the hilly regions. Absence of road transport and the hills and forests impede the penetration of civilization. Besides their backwardness, the physical isolation has rendered the Bhils poor, illiterate and given to crime.

Another impediment in the way of assimilation is that tribals are suspicious of outsiders who, they believe, are exploiters, with the result that they are unfriendly. Yet more disintegrative tendencies are found in the human relations of the tribe. The sexual relations which nearly verges on 'tolerated promiscuity' is looked down upon by

55. Ibid., p. 241.

56. Karve, Irawati, Hindu Society: An Interpretation, Deccan College, Poona, 1961, p. 158.

the non-tribals. The high caste Hindus resent it most.
The backwardness of the Bhils in their outward models of
living also create difficulties for their assimilation.
The eating and drinking habits of the tribe are other
disintegrative traits. Illiteracy is the foremost dis-
integrative trait found in the tribe. Further, the
religious outlook of the hill dwellers is yet another
factor that hampers integration. Moreover, the socio-
economic factors of disintegration in the hill dwellers
and a few psychological considerations found in the Bhils
of both the hills and the plains imepede the process of
assimilation. They have an inferiority complex which has
its origins in their socio-political subjugation and near
impossible life conditions. Still another psychological
weakness is found in their attitudes towards the govern-
ment and its various activities. They look at government
welfare measures with an eye of distrust. In brief,
considering the totality of all the disintegrative
tendencies of the tribe which has served as a handicap
to integration, we are led to the analysis that these
impediments are not quite peculiar to the Bhils only, but
are common to some extent at least, to many other rural
farmers. That is why Doshi says that the tribal problem
is not basically different from the common agrarian
problem.[57]

---

57. Doshi, S.L., op. cit., pp. 244-45.

Conclusion

In pre-independence period, the states and the British Government looked at the agitation led by Motilal Tejawat as a challenge to their authority and thus took every step to suppress it. Vanvasi Sewa Sangh was established for the welfare of the Bhil community. All this led to the demand of responsible government. In post-independence period, the exploitation of Adivasis in general and Bhils in particular by money lenders, traders and contractors on the one hand and the government on the other has been one of the major causes of the movement.

The cumulative effect of the interplay of the factors of cultural change operating through the last several decades and their acceleration in the present period of planning and technology has offered much ground for integration. Apart from this, the socio-economic factors of disintegration in the hill dwellers and a few psychological considerations found in the Bhils of both the hills and the plains impede the process of assimilation. Though the plains have some disintegrative tendencies, they have comparatively speaking come closer to assimilation.

Now that the process of acculturation with all its forces of integration and disintegration is on, the changing trends have brought about the rise of self-awareness among

the Bhils. After a long liberation the community is
awakening to self awareness. The feeling that they exist,
that they have privileges, has moved them towards ego-
maximisation. This societal awareness that they are
second to none, though in its initial stages, has been
washing out the stigma of belonging to a backward group.
They are prepared now to jealously guard the special
privileges, rights and security they enjoy under the Indian
Constitution. Reservations of seats in electorates both in
the Panchayats and in the legislatures have given them an
opportunity to sit shoulder to shoulder with members belonging
to higher castes. Whatever the merits or demerits of such
systems, self awareness has asserted that the community
exists. This societal self-awareness is being manifested
in the following forms:

1. Rise of Bhilism

2. Ever expanding cultural integration with the high
   castes

3. Social conflict in ideology and behaviour in
   the use of liquor and acceptance of monogamy

4. Jealousy for rights

5. Increasing criticism of government machinery in
   panchayat samiti meetings.

The rise of the Bhilism as a dangerous trend the
product of dirty politics adopted during elections. 'Vote
for Bhils' is a common slogan we come across during the

election periods. This has weakened party affiliations.

This self-awareness has made them conscious of the need to adopt Hindu cultural modes in their life. Their marriages and deaths, food and dress, fairs and festivals all the vertically rising status assimilation impacts on Bhil life. Hindu fasts are increasingly being observed. No less is the contribution of the expansion of education in tribal areas on setting afoot this process of acceleration. The greater social interactions, facilitated by political, educational and communicational situations has been adding this assimilation.

Thus this tribal culture is assimilating between societal self-awareness and cultural synthesis, integration and disintegration. Neither do they want their community to become extinct through integration. This self-identity awareness is leading them towards the acceptance of the culture of high caste Hindus with all the dangers of losing their traits and traditions. It is good that they are becoming conscious of their rights; but it is dangerous that this self-awareness is leading them to the narrow communalism which our constitution and democratic liberalism has rejected. If a cultural synthesis leads to our cherished goal of social integration, it should be accelerated.

Chapter VI

C O N C L U S I O N

Modern social movements in their attempt to justify their aims typically resort to abstract principles concerning the nature of man, his destination, and his natural rights in combination with a critique of the existing economic, political and cultural institutions. The ideas of liberty and equality are common to all major social movements, sometimes in combination with the idea of national unity and independence. Briefly, social movement is a grouping within a certain minimum time and space of fairly large numbers of people, belonging mainly to the non-privileged or lesser privileged social strata (i.e., the lower and middle strata), who, bound by ties of leadership and in possession of certain minimal means of communication, engage in activities of high intensity, spontaneity and emotional feeling and endeavour to realize a common course possessing for them moral and possibly other important values.

In India, the most notable of social movements is the self-conscious socio-political movement aimed at asserting political solidarity of a tribe or a group of tribes vis-a-vis the non-tribals. They arise out of various social, economic and religious problems. Some problems are basically inherent in the life of the tribals who have been conditioned, to a great extent, to face them. Economic system of varied

forms regulate their way of life and the associated
problems there of. Furthermore, certain customs and
traditions in tribal culture have, directly or indirectly
contributed a great deal to the creation and continuity
of some problems. Apart from this, illiteracy and ignor-
ance of the tribal people have been taken advantage of
for exploitation and other ends of similar nature. It is
also important to note that many problems took birth under
the situation of culture contact, specially with caste
Hindus and others who got settled, at various stages, in
the tribal areas. Lastly, unsystematic approach of
administrative and other officials, in many cases and
specially in the past, has caused hardship in certain areas
of tribal life.

Further, it appears that a problem is not always
independent of other. The interconnection of various
problems is not ruled out. But because of the difference
in potential, human and material and in other contributing
conditions, the nature of problems does vary from region
to region.

During British rule, alienation from land, due to
faulty legislations pertaining to forest lands, and lack
of understanding of the tribal social organization were
responsible for tribal uprisings. Tribal movements since
independence have been characterized by two features. There

is a strong tendency towards establishing tribal ethnic identities. They find new meanings regarding the relationships between man and nature and individual and society by re-interpreting their own traditions and myths. The second major trend is in the direction of agrarian movements in the context of political ideologies, including the Naxalite one.

Till recently, the history of anthropology in India has been the history of tribal studies. These studies were given priority by the British administrators and scholars, as well as by foreign missionaries and travellers, for purposes of (i) colonial administration, (ii) cultural-historical study of religious conversions, and (iii) adventurous memoirs. Historically, the development of tribal researches in India may be reviewed in three phases namely 1774 to 1919, 1920 to 1949 and 1950 onwards. It should be kept in mind that these phases are not mutually exclusive and that the different rate of development of anthropological researches in various parts of India leads to regional distinctiveness and delimitations.

In the first phase, since the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1774, the British administrators, missionaries, travellers and a few other anthropologically oriented individuals collected data on tribal and rural groups and wrote about their life and culture. Along with other historical and geographical information, they also

collectedethnographic data and published a series of
distinct gazetteers and hand books on tribes and castes
and also a number of monographs, especially on the tribes
of Assam. In the second phase, social anthropology in
India witnessed a phenomenal change when it was included
in the curriculum of the two important universities in
Bombay and Calcutta. These two centres for sociological
and anthropological researches attracted academicians and
trained scholars to undertake significant researches.
Very soon, specialized subjects were undertaken by trained
scholars. During this period, few anthropologists studied
and analysed their data critically and brought about a
certain amount of theoretical sophistication in anthropo-
logical researches. Thus, on the lines of anthropology
taught at that time at Cambridge, Oxford and London,
Indian anthropology was characterised by ethnological and
monographic studies with a special emphasis an researches
in kinship and social organisation. The third phase was
characterised by a positive increase in contacts with the
American social anthropologists. The tribal studies were
given an analytical and action-oriented approach. Efforts
were made to study the tribal communities in terms of inter-
relations as well as in terms of differences and similarities
among the tribal and non-tribal communities. The constitu-
tional commitment of the Government of India to ameliorate

gave further filip to the study and evaluation of the
processes of change in tribal communities. In course of
time, a number of tribal research institutes were establi-
shed to undertake problem-oriented researches for the
effective formulation and implementation of development
programmes in tribal areas.

Now, some observations about Bhils must be made as
my work is particularly concerned with them. The Bhil
rising, in a way, helped in the emergence of national
consciousness by opposing on alien Government in different
times and at different places. In pre-independence days
the nature of the sporadic Bhil rising was a kind of unrest
due to an apprehension of being deprived of their indivi-
dual liberty and tribal freedom which they were enjoying
for long. The experiments in new reforms tried by the
Britishers resulted in greater oppression and injustice.
Hence, by rising and defying the authority of the state
they formulated a case for their liberty and even attempted
an overthrow of state governments, because they were not
prepared to moral their ways. The attitude of various
patterns of opposition to taxes and census operations
introduced by the British.

In the pre-culture contact period, the structure of
Bhil society was marked by 'homogeneity'. Segmentation or
divisions in the tribe were only on the basis of kinship,

say, clan or lineage. There was no stratification among the groups. The members of the tribe provided a solid and united front to all kinds of eventualities. The Bhils realized the value of the higher social and religious ideals connected with the Hindu way of life with increased culture contract and proximity of the Bhils and the various Hindu castes. This effort led to the growth of new social formations which were non-existent prior to the seventeenth century. This trend led to divisive tendencies among Bhils.

The changes in the total Bhil culture can be explained with reference to the interplay of the factors of technology, economy and urbanisation, which has been going on for quite a long time. The changes created in the rural environment by the Government sponsored activities of village development programmes have further accelerated the tempo of transformation. There are innumerable facets of culture-dynamics which have brought in their wake the use of money, the market and modern amenities of life.

With the introduction of political parties most of the Bhils have acquired the membership of such organisation. The grants of loans, credit facilities and matters relating to the revenue department are expedited with the help of the party leaders. This facility has

promoted the popular feeling of the desirability of joining
a particular party. The political leaders in their efforts
at party organisation have divided the villagers into
different groups belonging to one party or the other. It
is common to hear people remarking that a particular village
belongs to a particular party. The area being scheduled
one, the Bhils have been trained by the parties to contest
elections on the basis of parties. Thus, the Bhils as a
social group possessing a deep socio-religious affinity
nurtured by the sentiment of the 'we feeling' has been
divided into three classes, viz., original Bhils. The
classes which have thus emerged do not have social relations
and intercourse between themselves. The Bhagat and
Christian Bhils follow a new form of marriage which has
made their life and character different.

The Bhagat movement inspired Bhils to imitate Hindu
religion and its rituals. The cumulative effect of the
interplay of the factors of cultural change operating
through the last several decades and their acceleration
in the present period of planning and technology has
offered much ground for integration. Bhagatism imports
some universal traits of behavioural patterns to its
adherentes which raise the morale of the members of the
tribe to the extent that they do not commit crime and
exhibit subtle ways of life. The accumulative impact of

democratic forces have given opportunities to the Bhils
to come nearer towards their goal of integration with
higher groups. The spread and consequent prevalence of
education and urbanisation **has** also paved the way for
the assimilation of the tribe. The integrative trends
in the field of education are visible again in the
villages of the plains where the region has been accessi-
ble to transport and communication.

Apart from this, a separatist tendency which is
political is found among the Bhils. The secessionist
mentality is fed by the race for power in which the
consolidation of backward areas serves ass a handicap.
The idea of 'Bhilism' which the Bhils are concerned only
with the interest and benefit of the members of their
own tribe even at the cost of non-tribals is a major dis-
integrative tendency. Absence of road transport and the
hills and forests further impede the penetration of
civilization. Besides this, the physical isolation has
rendered the Bhils poor and illiterate and thus they resort to
crime. The Bhils are also suspicious of outsiders who,
they believe, are exploiters. Furthermore, the style of
living and religious practices of the Bhils are also quite
different from non-tribals. Apart from these socio-
economic factors of disintegration, there are a few psy-
chological factors which impede the process of assimilation

of the Bhils with non-tribals. This can be understood in the light of Bhil's inferiority complex and their notion of doubt about governmental programmes and schemes.

Thus, the changing trends have brought about the rise of self-awareness among the Bhils. They do not want their community to become extinct through integration. This self-identity awareness has resulted in the maintenance of old traditions and traits. On the otherside, the same self-awareness is holding them towards the acceptance of the culture of high caste Hindus with all the dangers of losing their traits and traditions. They are prepared now to jealously ground the special previlages, rights and security they enjoy under the Indian constitution. Reservations of seats both in the Panchayats and in the legislatures have given them an opportunity to sit shoulder to shoulder with members belonging to higher castes. It is good that the Bhils are becoming conscious of their rights, but it is dangerous that this self-awareness is leading them to the narrow communalism which our constitution and democratic liberalism has rejected.

Now, I will like to end my concluding remarks with methodological enquiry by pointing out certain gaps and priorities. Full pledged monographs on the Bhils of Rajasthan yet remain to be attempted. But despite this regional gap, by and large we notice the rich tradition of

tribal studies in India. It also shows that, in spite of the co-existence of the various phases of ethnographic studies in certain areas, there is, for the country as a whole, a changeover from the earlier tradition of combining racial, historical, linguistic and folklore researches with descriptive ethnographic material to the modern analytical and dynamic social anthropological researches of a functional and empirical nature.

Tribal culture is being rapidly transformed and it is high time that researches are directed to study their process of transformation from primitivism to civilization, from folk economy to industrial economy, from kin oriented leadership to democratic experiments, from the preliterate society to the emergence of tribal elites and from isolated, stagnant and closed societies to dynamic and open societies. Thus, the study of tribal dynamics deserves special consideration.

Concepts like tribalisation, detribalisation, tribe-caste continuum, Sanskritization, revitalisation movement, also need to be studied in terms of long, middle and short range history. There are a few case studies that reflect transformation of specific tribal societies owing to certain processes of change in terms of Hinduisation, Christianisation, urbanisation, industrialization, constitutional safeguards, democratic experiments, educational programmes and other

welfare schemes. These case studies should be reviewed
with a view to understanding the nature, direction and
effect of change at regional and national levels, and
identifying gaps for further research.

Many of these case studies are based on short range
history. The need for long and middle range historical
researches to clarify the complex problems of tribalisa-
tion, migration and changing status in the Indian society,
is, therefore, being increasingly realized. An archaeolo-
gical study of the early history of the tribes will be very
useful in this context. In the field of tribal dynamics,
again, the study of the role of education and constitutional
safeguards leading to political consciousness, and emergence
of tribal elite and leadership need to be studied at the all-
India level. Furthermore, it would be a fascinating project
to study the role of women in selected tribes of different
cultural types. Here, customs, laws and social events need
to be described from the women's point of view.

India, needless to say, provides ample scope and
opportunities for a systematic study of cultural types which
may throw light on societies moving from primitivisation to
civilization. India is a country where different evolutio-
nary levels of economy and technology namely hunters,
shifting cultivators, nomads, pastoralists are found in
several states. As there cultures are fast dying out under

the impact of modernism, it would be of immense anthro-
pological interest to have a few well formulated projects
to study the hunters, the shifting cultivators and the
nomads on an all-India basis. There, have been sporadic
efforts by different scholars to describe the types of
communities mentioned above; but a comprehensive study of
the styles of life revolving round distinct types of
economy yet remains to be done.

The study of tribal labour also provides a new
dimension for research. The main problem of the tribals
is to improve the underdeveloped condition of their economy.
The changes brought about by migration and industrialisa-
tion mean diversification in the tribal economy, which ¢
eventually leads to basic changes in tribal culture.
Thus, the nature, type and problems of tribal labour can
be fascinating areas of research on all-India pattern.

Lastly, in the interest of filling in the gaps in
tribal studies, it may also be suggested that an adequate
machinery should be created for research work. It is also
evident by the work of anthropologists that the gap
between research and publication is great, and that some
excellent work never sees the light of day. This gap
must be noticed and effective ways to remove it must be
devised by Indian Council of Social Science Research and
its committee on documentation services. We also observe

some cases of duplication of work due to lack of coordina-
tion among research programmes. Such duplication may be
avoided if a suitable machinery is evolved to coordinate
the researches in progress and to encourage wider communi-
cation among the researchers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahuja, Ram, "Family Pattern Among Bhils," in Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. 19, 1966.

Aitchison, (C.U.), Comp. Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads; Relating to India and neighbouring Countries, Vol 3 Nendel; Karpus Reprint. 1973. p. 13.

Banley, F.G., "The Scope of Social Anthropology in the Study of Indian Society," in T.N. Madan and Gopal Sarma (eds.), Indian Anthropology: Essay in Memory of D.N. Majumdar, Asia Publishing House, Bombay 1962.

Barnes, "The Bhils of Western India," Journal of Asiatic Society of Arts, Vol. 55, 1907.

Berreman, G.D., Hindus of the Himalayas, California University Press, Berkely, 1963.

Bhowmik, K.L., Tribal India: A Profile in Indian Ethnology, 1971, World Press, Calcutta.

Blumer, Herbert, "Social Movements" in Mclanghlin Barry (ed.), Studies in Social Movements, Free Press, New York, 1969.

Bose, N.K., "Marriage and Kinship Among the Juangs," Man in India, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1928.

_____, Fifty Years of Science in India: Progress of Anthropology and Archaeology, Indian Science Congress Association, Calcutta, 1963.

Bose, S., "Land Use Survey in a Juang Village," Man in India, Vol. 41, No. 3, 1961.

Bowman, H.A., Marriage for Moderns, New York, Mcgraw Hill Book Company, 1954.

Briggs, W.G., The Chamars, Association Press, Calcutta, 1920.

Burlings, Robbins, Rewgawggri, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1963.

Campbell, J.M., "Ethnography of India," Journal of Asiatic of Bengal, Vol. 35, 1856.

Cantsil, M., The Psychology of Social Movements, New York, 1941.

Carstairs, G.M., "Bhil Villages of Western Udaipur: A Study in Resistance to Social Change," Economic Weekly, Vol.4, 1952.

_____, "The Bhils of the Kotra Bhoma," Eastern Anthropologist, Vol.7, 1953-54.

Chattopadhyay, K.P., "Some Malayalam Kinship Terms," Man in India, Vol.II, No.2, 1922,

Chaudhary, R.R. and Kumar, Ravindra, "Demographic Profile of Bhils," in the Eastern Anthropologist, Vol.29, No.3, July-September 1976.

Chauhan, B.R., "Tribalisation," Tribe, Vol.II, Nos.1-2, 1966.

_____, Towns in the Tribal Setting, National Publishing, Delhi 1970.

Census of India, 1961, Vol.I, Part II B(1).

Dave, P.C., The Guasias, Bhartiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, Delhi, 1960.

Desai, I.P., Some Aspects of Family in Mahuwa, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1964.

Doshi, S.L., The Bhils Between Societal Self-Awareness and Cultural Synthesis, Sterling Publications (P) Ltd., New Delhi, 1971

Dube, S.C., "Social Anthropology in India," in T.N. Madan and Gopal Sarna (eds.), Indian Anthropology: Essays in Memory of D.N. Majumdar, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962.

Elwin, Verrier, The Baiga, John Murray, London, 1939.

_____, The Agaria, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1942.

_____, Maria, Murder and Suicide, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1942.

Enthoven, R.E., Tribe and Castes of Bombay, 3 volumes, Government Central Press, Bombay, 1920-22.

Erskine, K.D., Rajaputana Gazetteer, Mewar Residency, 1908, Vol.II A.

Fuchs, Stephen, Rebellious Prophets, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1960.

Furer-Haimendorf Von-C., The Reddis of Bison Hills: A Study in Acculturation, 2 volumes, MacMillan and Company Limited, London, 1945.

_____, The Tribal Population of Hyderabad, Hyderabad Revenue Department, Hyderabad, 1945.

_____, The Chenchus: Jungle Folk of Deccan, MacMillan and Company, London, 1943.

Ghurye, G.S., The Aborgines Socalled and Their Future, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona, 1943.

_____, The Scheduled Tribe, Popular Press Private Ltd., Bombay, 1959.

_____, The Teaching of Sociology, Social Psychology and Social Anthropology, The Teaching of the Social Sciences in India, UNESCO Publication, Universal Publishers, Delhi, 1956.

Gibbs, E.T., "Bhils in the Dangs," Indian Antifuary, Vol.5, 1876.

Gibson, A., "Notes on the Bhils of North of Nerbada," Journal of the Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society Vol.9, 1867-70.

Gurdon, P.R.T., The Khasis, Macmillan and Company, London, 1914.

Heberle, R., Social Movements: An Introduction to Political Sociology, New York, 1951.

_____, "Observations on the Sociology of Social Movements," American Sociological Review, Vol.14, 1949.

Hedberg, E., "Proverbs and Riddles Current Among the Bhils of Khandesh," Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, Vol.13, 1924-28.

_____, "The Celebration of Divali by the Newa Bhils," Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, Vol.14, 1928-32.

Hendley, T.H., "An Account of Maiwar Bhils," Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol.44, 1875.

Hippolytus, "The Relations Between Religion and Morality Among the Bhils," Primitive Man, Vol.4, 1931.

Hutton, J.H., "Ethnographic Notes by Various Lands," Census of India, 1931, Vol.I, Part III B, 1931.

_____, Caste in India, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1946.

Jay, E.J., "A Tribal Village of Middle India," Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta, 1970.

Jain, Nemichand, "Bhil Bhasha, Sahitya and Sanskriti, Indore, Mira Bhaiya Prakashan, 1964.

Karve, Irawati, "Bhils of Western Khandesh," Journal of Anthropological Society of Bombay, 1958.

_____, "The Tribals of Maharashtra"in Behari Lal Abbi and Satish Sabarwal (eds.), Urgent Research in Social Anthropology in India, Institute of Advanced Study, Simla 1959.

Katz, H., "Social Movements - An Essay in Definition," The Polish Sociological Bulletin, No.1, 1971.

Kaviraja, Shyamaldas, Vir Vinod (in Hindi), Vol.II, Mewar Agency Report 1880-81.

King, C.W., Social Movements in United States, New York, 1956.

Kulkarni, D.S., "The Bhil Movement in the Dhulia District (1972-74)," in Singh, K.S.(ed.), Tribal Movement in India.

Kumar, Ravindra, Human Fertility: An Assessment, Population Centre, Bangalore.

Latham, R.S., Ethnography of India, Voorst London, 1859.

Libset, Seymour M., Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics, Garden City, New York, Double day, 1960.

Majumdar, D.N., <u>Caste and Communication in an Indian Village</u> Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1958.

_____, "Special Report on the Teaching of Social Anthropology," <u>The Teaching of Social Sciences in India</u>, UNESCO Publication Universal Publishers, Delhi, 1956.

_____, <u>A Tribe in Transition: A Study in Culture Pattern</u>, Longmans Green and Company, London, 1937.

_____, <u>Himalayan Polyandry</u>, Asia Publishing House, Bombay 1963.

Majumdar, M.P.N., "The Bhils of Gujarat," <u>Modern Review</u>, Vol.41, 1927.

Mann, R.S., "Structure and Role Dynamics Among the Bhils of Rajasthan: A Case of the Bhagats," in Singh, K.S. (ed.), <u>Tribal Movement in India.</u>

Mclaughlin, Barry, "Analysis of Social Movements," in Mclaughlin Barry (ed.), <u>Studies in Social Movement</u>, Free Press, New York, 1969.

Naik, T.B., <u>The Bhil: A Study</u>, Bhartiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, Delhi, 1956.

Navalaka, S.K., "Authority Structure Among the Bhumij and Bhils: A Study of Historical Cansertion," <u>Eastern Anthropologist</u>, Vol.12, No.1, 1959.

Noth, Y.V.S., "<u>Bhils of Rajasthan</u>, M.S. University of Baroda, Baroda, 1960.

Pal, H.Bhisham, <u>Historic Rajasthan</u>, Sagar Publications, New Delhi.

Radcliffe-Brown, A.R., <u>The Andaman Islanders: A Study in Social Anthropology</u>, Cambridge University Press, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1922.

Rao, M.S.A., "Conceptual Problems in the Study of Social Movements," in M.S.A. Rao (ed.), <u>Social Movements in India</u>, Vol.I, Manohar, New Delhi, 1978.

Risley, H.H., <u>The Tribes or Castes in Bengal</u>, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1891.

Rivers, W.H.R., <u>The Todas</u>, MacMillan Co.Ltd., London, 1906.

Roy, Burman B.K., "Challenges and Responses in Tribal India," in M.S.A. Rao (ed.), Social Movements in India, Vol. II, Manohar, New Delhi, 1978.

Roy, S.C., "The Black Bhils of Jaisamand Lack in Rajsthan," Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society, Vol. X, 1924.

_____, "Researches in Anthropology in India," Man in India, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1921.

_____, "Mundas and Theiry Country; City Bar Library, Calcutta, 1912.

Sachchidanand, "Tribal Unrest in India," Paper presented in ICSSR sponsored Conference of Anthropologist, New Delhi, 26-28 May 1972.

Saxena, K.S., The Political Movements and Awakening in Rajasthan (1857 to 1947), S. Chand and Co. (Pvt.) Ltd., New Delhi, 1971.

Shah, P.G., "Non-Hindu Element in the Culture of the Bhils of Gujarat," in J.P. Milts and Others (eds.), Essay in Anthropology Presented to Rai Bahadur S.C. Ray, Maxwell and Co., Lucknow, 1942.

_____, "Bhils: The Earliest Inhabitants of Gujarat," Journal of the Gujarat Research Society, Vol. I, November 4, 1939.

Shakespeare, J., The Lushai Kukiclans, Part I and II, MacMillan and Company, London, 1912.

Singh, Roop, "The Role of Bhagat Movement in the Inception of Caste Feature in the Bhil Tribe," in Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. 23, 1970.

Sinha, D.P., Culture Change in an Inter-Tribal Market, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1968.

Sinha, Surjeet, "Tribal Solidarity Movements in India; A Review," in K. Suresh Singh (ed.), Tribal Situation in India, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, 1972.

_____, "The Media and Nature of Hindu Bhumij Interactions," Journal of the Asiatic Society, Vol. 23, No. 1, 1957.

_____, "State Formation and Rajput Myth in Central India," Man in India, Vol. 42, No. 3, 1962.

Sorely, H.T., "Note on the Aboriginal and Hill Tribe Found in the Bombay Presidency," Census of India, 1931, Vol. I, Part III B, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, 1935.

Srinivas, M.N., Marriage and Family in Mysore, New Book Company, Bombay, 1942.

Tod, James, Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or the Central and western Rajboot states of India. Rev. ed. 2 V. Calcutta, SK Lahiri 1994.

Vidyarthi, L.P., Rise of Social Science in India: An Anthropological Orientation, Asia Publishing House, Bombay 1970.

_____, The Males: A Study in Nature-Man-Spirit Complex of a Hill Tribe, Book Land Private Ltd., Calcutta, 1963.

_____, Ghaghra: A Village of Tribal Bihar, Census Operation, Delhi, 1965.

_____, Applied Anthropology in India: Principles, Problems and Case Studies, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1968.

Vyas, N.N., The Bhils on the Boarder of Rajasthan - An Emerging Situation (Read in the Seminar on Tribal Situation in India), Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, 1969.

Wallace, A.F.C., "Revitalization Movements" in Mclanghlin Barry (ed.), Studies in Social Movements, Free Press, New York, 1969.

Wilkinson, Paul, Social Movements, Pall Mall, London 1971.

Worsley, Peter, Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of 'Cargo' Cults in Melanesia, MacGribbon and Kee, London, 1957.