

The Position of Women in Patriarchal Denotified Tribes' Council



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ABSTRACT

The Indian social structure still has casteism deeply rooted in it. The British Government notified some of the tribes as criminal tribes after the Independence the same was denotified. Each tribe has its own customs and traditions. The system of governance, decision making and settlement are patriarchal and women suffer extremely low position and are subjected to brutality imposed upon them. These women are still secondary in the society as in other caste. They are victims to exploitation as the jat-panchayats have violent and oppressive rules. This paper is a venture to find the reason and make sound suggestions.

Introduction:

India its social structure still has casteism deeply rooted in it due to which some tribes were outlaw and resorted to criminal activities. The British Government notified some of the tribes as criminal tribes by passing The Criminal Tribes Act in 1871. The Criminal Tribes Act was repealed in 1952 after the Independence since then the tribes come to be known as Denotified tribes. Some tribes are recognized by Maharashtra government.

Each tribe has its own customs and traditions there a system of governance-decision making and settlement of matters. The jat-pachayat is responsible and plays influential role in the tribes. Every decision is made by jat-panchayat. The entire jat-panchayat is patriarchal and has violent and oppressive rules. The women are helpless vulnerable even in developed society, women are still secondary in the society as in other caste, how can the women of 'denotified tribes' be exception? They are victims to exploitation. Thus, the dominant jat-panchayat must be studied to know to status of these women in Denotified tribes (DNT's).

These tribes have distinctive features of their own;

- 1) There are distinctions in inter-dining and inter-marriages. Each nomadic tribe is an endogamous group
- 2) Except few, all are patriarchal and women suffer extremely low position and are subjected to brutality.
- 3) All most all the domestic rules are made by the tribe council. Only recently the police or judiciary is referred.

Sanctions imposed on women by tribes council:

The tribe council or jat-pachayat plays an important role in the tribes and its law and order. Nearly 90% of their rules are related to women. As the council male dominated and patriarchal women can hardly be doomed with justice. The matters referred to the council are relating women, viz;

- 1) Women are not given any office or post in the tribe council. If women participate in any discussion or try to advice, it is considered as an insult of the council.
- 2) Polygamy exists in the Berad tribe but polyandry is prohibited.
- 3) Child marriage is present in some tribes but no woman can remarry.
- 4) Any woman in Chhapparband tribe has no right to seek justice if she has been tortured, cheated or hurt physically, only her father, brother or husband can make a complain to the tribe council on her behalf.
- 5) A women in kanjaar bhhat tribe have to prove their chastity to the tribe council before marriage.
- 6) Offering girls to the goddess is decided by the tribe council.
- 7) No woman must argue with men, she must respect men.
- 8) A woman in Bhamta Rajput tribe must assist while committing a robbery, but she must not fall in love with a man out of her tribe. If caught while making a robbery, she must not reveal the slightest identity of her male partner(s).
- 9) The tribe councils woman as a consumable commodity and can be traded in the form of mortgage.
- 10) The tribe council controls the sexual behavior of women with its strict and rigid policy. Yet, its role is ambiguous regarding the sex labour of women; the male have right upon their income derived from that.
- 11) Women must not disrespect men as it is a severe crime against the tribe's policy and they have to face severe punishment for that.

Distinction between the punishments awarded to men and women by the tribe council.

The men and women form tribes are treated differently. Punishments to the women are quite different and reliant upon superstitions. In case there is

misbehaviour against the policy of the tribe council by a woman, she is punished in the form of, e.g. her nose is severed, her face would be blackened, she would be ex-communicated, her tongue would be burnt with a hot iron bar, sanctions would be imposed against her, she would be made drunk etc. In order to prove her innocence she would be compelled to take out a coin from boiling oil, walk on the burning coals etc. and other in human punishments for women .

Conclusion

- 1) Women have to face hardships and torture not only by other communities but also from men in their own tribe as the tribe had been called a criminal one.
- 2) Women cannot enjoy any social status due to patriarchal and male dominated system.
- 3) Women cannot raise their voice against injustice

done to them due to the male dominated caste system.

- 4) Women are victim to violence and injustice done to them in the patriarchal system.
- 5) Womens' psyche is not at all considered while abiding by the rules of their community. Their inter marriage, remarriage, divorce, child marriage, sexual behavior is always controlled by patriarchal tribe council.
- 6) Tribal women (DNTs) are more victimized to exploitation compared to dalit and adivasi women. Womens' education is almost absent or very low among these women, hence they are not aware about their rights and cannot raise their voice against oppression and social insecurity.

REFERENCE

- 1 The Oxford Dictionary defines caste as, Any of the four main division of Hindu society originally those made according to functions in society. The system of dividing society into classes based on differences in family, origin, rank or wealth. Also considered as varnas i.e. the Bhramin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Shudra as codified in Manu Smriti by the sage Manu.
- 2 The number of people from settlements were imprisoned in 1952 was 3627 the number soared later on.
- 3 As mentioned early that the British Government notified some of the tribes as criminal tribes by passing The Criminal Tribes Act in 1871 The Criminal Tribes Act was repealed in 1952 after the Independence. Thus the "notified tribes" labled as criminals were "Denotified" by this 1952 Act, hence they are known as Denotified. Though the CTA-1871 has been repealed, there has been no change in the social status of the denotified tribes it is necessary to impart professional skills of earning livelihood among these people. No person is a born criminal; unfortunately the entire tribe or clan was called criminal under that Act. Though the government had denotified such tribes as criminals, the social stigma is still felt in the society or among some individuals.
- 4 Berad ,Bester ,Bhamate, Kaikadi, Kanjarbhat, Katabu, Banjara ,Palpardhi, Rajpardhi Rajput Bhamte, Wadar ,Waghari, Chhparband, thus denotified tribes in list, The declaration by Maharashtra State government see, - saMkINa- 2008/maharaYT/ Saasana / 553/ maharaYT/ Saasana '26/9/2008.
5. Bosale Narayan, (2008), Batakyanchi pitrusttak jatpachayat ,The taichi Publication First adition
- 6 Generally to be found in the Tehisils of Ahemadnagar, Baramati, Malegaon, Jejuri, Sonari, Barshi, Aalandi, Rajapur, Annad, Lasure, Adul, Karamala, Beed, Kumbhari, Pathardi, Shigoli etc in the State of Maharashtra
- 7 These tribes mostly depend on natural resources for their livelihood. The change in ecology affects them seriously. Their economy mostly depends upon domesticated animal and also wild animals which are trapped and sold or used for entertainment. They also depend upon vegetation of forest, herbs and shrubs are utilized as medicine
- 8 Bosale Narayan, (2008), Batakyanchi pitrusttak jatpachayat , pp 68,69.
- 9 Bosale Narayan, (2008), Batakyanchi pitrusttak jatpachayat , pp 84,85,105
- 10 There is a quite liberty to men as the tribe councils are male dominated, women are not considered at all. If a man acts against the rule he is punished in the forms for e.g. shaving his head, making him sit on an ass and be ridicule through the village, pay a meager amount as a fine, feed the members of the tribe council with meat and alcohol, give the tea party to the community etc. If a man is ex-communicated he can pay some fine and will again be taken into the community
- 11 Gandhi Malli (2008), Denotified tribes Dimensions of Change, Tribes in Transition: A Study of Denotified Tribes pp. 9,10

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- Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary, Oxford University press, 7th ed. 2005