



Colonization of Indian Forests : Crime- Prone Tribal Groups through the Lance of Administration

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Abstract: *Environmental awareness prevailed everywhere in human society. Perhaps the most significant of the decisions human society make's is its relationship to the natural world. Central to the internal conflicts of human society in the past has been the persistent attempts to resolve Questions about the natural world's natural, utilitarian nature. As human civilization has expanded and technology has improved throughout the world, the Question of legitimate use of the natural world has gained importance. With the progress of times, the need to resolve this unresolved Question is becoming increasingly available. This is Perhaps best explained by the Language of power. Human Society's conflict with the natural world can also be experienced in terms of this power. Environment is the most significant Medium of expression of power. Race, class, gender, Nationalism and these competing issues of power in the society must be equated with nature. Different layers of power relations, constant abuse of the natural world, the emergence of new technologies to exploit nature, and the increasing degradation of natural resources have complicated this age- old debate in ways never seen before. This has become a central and universal Question for the entire human society. With the progress and prosperity of human civilization, the issue of solving this problem is also getting longer. Writers, philosophers, historians, lawyers, administrators, and Thinkers are busy trying to solve this unresolved Question. Over the last two decades this important Question has taken on a new form and a new school of thought has emerged in the world of knowledge which can be called "Environment History. This article shows how the British Government in India in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century legitimized their claim on forests and outlawed hunting, food and logging in forests. And poachers, hunters and fisherman emerged as the main criminal groups and thus create a "New Class of wild Crimes".*

Keywords: *Ecology, Shifting cultivation, Forest Act, Criminal Tribes, Crime, Green Imperialism.*

Introduction:

Forests were considered part of the Spiritual world in ancient India and Monastic hermitages also developed the concept of forest and wildlife conservation. This ashram based on forest is called forest culture. A reverential fear of trees and wildlife was displayed for their Ecosystem usefulness and their economic importance. Ancient epics like the Ramayana have introduced this intelligence, when king Rama of Ayadhya set out to live a life of exile in the southern forests of the Gangetic Village, his Mother, fearing for his Safety, declared that no forest Elephant, Lion, Tiger or wild Buffalo can harm you. Rama chose the secret place to protect his wife. The forest was built on a specific plot of land where both Joy and Suffering took place. But

it was also a beautiful place. So dealing with danger and enjoying the beauty- this dual character of forest finds its place in the epic a well. (Grove, 1995)

Protection of elephants become an important issue from the time of the Mauryas. Arthashastra lays down rules for protecting forest elephants. Apart from the elephant forest, there were also forests whose main purpose was to protect forest wood, Tigers and Lions. Even in the Middle Ages various approaches were adopted to protect forests and wildlife. Babur in his autobiography has given important information about forests and wildlife.

After the Industrial Revolution, conservationists, pronouncements on this matter become clearer and stronger. Deforestation and land change foster Romanticism in the natural world. Various romantic works have Criticized the Industrial Revolution and attributed it to the degradation of nature. This gave impetus to the “Back to the Land” movement. William Wordsworth, John Ruskin and William Morris Contributed Significantly to this movement and played a Significant role formation of an environmentally oriented society in Europe. The Rapid disappearance of forests in Europe and America gave rise to a new concept of the wild, which was shaped by ethics, science and Taste.

Environmental History as a distinct genre flourished in America. It was here that the history of the first Self-conscious environment began to develop. American Environmental history developed as an ideological and social movement. And it drew inspiration from tradition. Evidence for this traditional view can be found in the work of researchers such as George Perkins Marsh and Frederick Jackson Turner.

The seeds of Environmental history in the United States germinated from within the American scene. The main reason for this is that Environmental history is completely independent of the conservation approach, which first appeared in America. But there is a marked lack of enthusiasm and lack of communication with the world in American Environmental historiography. But American historians are now earnestly trying to break out their narrow circle. (Chakraborty, 2007)

It was not until the 1970s that Environmental awareness or interest in the study of its impact on human civilization was noticed among historians. By the Mid- 1970s historians were implicitly framing Environmental issues in a narrower or broader context when writing economic, social and cultural histories. As a result, Environmental history is scattered among history, history of Lower classes, history of agriculture, history of tribals, social and cultural history etc. It is true, however, that except in the exceptional instance of such history has mainly emphasized arable land. Historians of this genre, naturally, did not discuss much about uncultivable land, cropland, leaf area. Sir Jadunath Sarkar who discussed the political history of the Mughal Period. He discusses the impact of Mughal military campaigns on the environment in South India. But there is very brief discussion about environmental degradation. In the historical world before the 1970s, the study of the history of medicine and public took on a special place in the environment. The history of crime, issues related to forest law, various types of Rural Justice movements and mini-discussions of mass culture take center stage in the environment. (Guha, 1991)

Environmental history can be divided into Stages-

i). Environmental history of the environment. ii). Cultural and intellectual environmental history. iii). Environmental history studies as a means of applying power. iv). Environmental history that comprises the above three. Composed of Environmental history deals mainly with biological and physical changes and how these changes are harmful to human society or how human activities and attempts to portray nature through various ideas, art and correspondence. They shed light on this unfolding process and the resulting environment. A third phase of environmental history highlights the environment as a means of exercising power. It includes concepts, laws and policies related to the natural world. Here, discusses how state power uses nature and how different interest groups Struggle in that regard. End stage environmental history deals

with one or more of the above. This history is Multifaceted and fascinating. The topic discussed in this article includes the studies of environmental history as a means of exerting power.

Objectives: The present article has been undertaken with following objectives :

- i) This article shows that the Ecological and social changes that have taken place since colonial rule, from the perspective of the of Indian public are quite different from earlier changes.
- ii) This article discusses the watershed of the colonial era forest laws in the context of Indian forest history in Ecological, economic and political Laws.
- iii) The article discusses that the decline of traditional society become inevitable with the advent of colonial rule and that traditional social and cultural trends of India changed under the pressure of Imperialism and new legal and administrative structures agrarian relationships.
- iv) In nineteenth century India, who were many communities depended on food gathering or hunting, as a result of state forest conservation, they were considered Criminals in the eyes of the law, as discusses in the article.

Methodology: The present study is descriptive in nature. Without concentrating on “ why” a certain occurrence happens, the descriptive research approach mainly focuses on characterizing the characteristics of a demographic group. In other words, it “ describes” the research’s topic without explaining “ why” it occurs. A quantitative research technique called descriptive research aims to gather measurable data for analysis. The researcher has followed different secondary sources like Journals, books, articles for collecting required information. Internet sources have also been followed.

Discussion: As the nineteenth century progressed, India’s vast tropical forest become one of the centers of power of the English colonial rulers. Here also two opposing currents clash between indigenous customs and western law and justice system. The colonial ruling class in India began to touch every aspect of daily life as new forms of power were established. It becomes necessary to examine the majority of human character or rules as insignificant in the pre- colonial period. When it came top private rights over land or natural resources, the colonial ruling class developed their sophisticated legal and administrative infrastructure. The main purpose of this passage is to show that the colonization of the forest was a means of exerting power in a larger way and aimed to impose a new cultural trend and new ideology among Forest and his people in the oppressed society. Foreign rule interacted with domestic society in various ways. And it remains to be seen what effect it had on the forest.

When the British gained control of India in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, large areas were covered with deep forests. These were Sparsely populated areas prior to colonial rule. Some of the people there lived by hunting, while others lived by shifting cultivation. Artisans lived in villages, many cattle, horses and Goats grazed there. Forest played an important role in supplying Raw materials especially wood to Farmers and artisans. Forests also played an important role in times of Famine and provided livelihood opportunities for people.

But in the 19th century, the British Government imposed various restrictions on the forests. Large Quantities of wood were required for the construction of various cities and for the construction of Railways in India. A monopoly over forest resources was initiated in 1849 when Governor General Lord Dalhousie wanted to bring several wetlands under the British empire. In 1952, he ordered to bring dry food, fuel forest resources under conservation. In 1864, the imperial Forest Department was established. The first Forest Act was passed in 1865 AD. The colonial Forestry Act of 1865 was a secondary objectives- i). Expected to receive revenue ii). Collection of Timber required for construction of Railways sleepers,iii). Amount of cultivable land and increased as per requirement. iv). Collecting Timber for Shipbuilding,v). Preservation the forest, vi). Establishing the monopoly of colonial rule. Vii). Increasing income from forest areas. The British

Government imposed its full control over these protected areas. Over the next few decades, various surveys were carried out on the forest and its inhabitants were documented. Later, in 1878, the second Forest Act was passed to further monopolize their rights over forests. According to the Forest Act of 1878AD, the forest is divided in to two parts- i) Reserved Forest ii). Protected Forest. The second Forest Act of 1878 gave more powers to the British Government. This second Act gave the British Government the right to bring unoccupied or water bodies under conservation. The colonial British Government passed another “ Forest Act 1927 AD. According to this Act, the vast is divided in to three categories, namely- i). Reserved Forest ii). Protected Forest iii). Unclassified Forest . By establishing full control over reserved Forests, the British Government completely prohibited cutting of tress in such forests. Tribal groups could collect Timber from protected forests for their personal use by customary rights, but they did not have the right to sell that Timber. From the point of view of the Indian public,the kind of ecological and social change organized after colonial rule is quite different from the earlier changes. In the context of Indian forest history, the colonial era Forest Law is considered a watershed in Ecological, Economic and Political terms. (Rangarajan, 2007)

The collapse of traditional society become inevitable with the advent of colonial rule. The traditional and cultural patterns of India changed under the pressure of Imperialism and a new agrarian relationship with a new legal people disciplined and administrative infrastructure developed. New agrarian relations and new relations between state and people made it inevitable to introduce a new regime. The introduction of private property rights in land and a western legal system become imperative for the two rulers of England. In remote areas of the Indian subcontinent, property rights could only be enforced by maintaining the rule of Law. It naturally became the main concern of the British authorities and their allies to discipline any population that might turn rebellious for any reason. New laws and administrative structures also changed the concept of sociality in indigenous societies. What is Crime, what is property, what is right, what is wrong, what is legal, what is illegal, everything is determined a new. It naturally become imperative to impose direct control over the people and strict state discipline. It become essential for the colonial rulers to maintain laws, courts, colonial police forces, prisons and an army ready for emergencies. All these elements were given a stamp of legitimacy in the interest of colonial rule.

In the pre- colonial era, the state tolerated these “illegal” activities which were of concern to the colonial rulers. At this time the process of codification of laws began. Bentham’s Utilitarianism acted as an important force in the codification of law. Bentham appeared as the “Indian solon” to Dundus, the president of the Board of control. He wrote his essay influence of Time and Place in matters of Legislation on the subject of the transformation needed in the introduction of legislation in India. According to Utilitarians, people has early era needed a “ severe Schoolmaster” as an organization of law before it could be disciplined. To them, public opinion and education were not as important as law. Law would control deviance through discipline and eliminate Crime through long statutes. This is the “ Instrumentalist” view of law. It is said that the law will act as an instrument in conforming to the needs and procedures and needs of the society. According to the “ Instrumentalist” view of the law, the law is not only a Vehicle for Controlling the public conflicts and social Crimes, but also as a transforming Instrument of society.In fact the law acts as a means of establishing order and the people act as Inspectors of their activities, their contacts and all their insignificant gestures. So the work of the law becomes to monitor the “Smallest fragment of life”. This new knowledge of man is not directly visible but actually exists. The actual machinery of order is formless but always observes everything. Society is also an organized and disciplined institution like a prison. Character, perspectives, probabilities, and Skeptics all document the modern State. (Chakraborty, 2014)

The significance and purpose of the Forest Acts 1865 and 1878 can be explained in this perspective. In one fell Swoop,, the government’s right to the forest was legitimized and hunting, food gathering or Logging by indigenous people become illegal or unlawful. Hunting, killing, and Stealing animals,fishing etc. are all considered Criminal Acts. Thus a new list of Crimes was created.

A number of human activities in the Indian forest and hill areas were treated as Criminal Acts which were unknown or little familiar in the eyes of the law during the pre- colonial period. Legislators expanded the boundaries of forest Crime throughout colonial rule, although the concept of Crime in general remained largely the same. Laws are made according to the interests of the ruling class. In terms of law enforcement, different ruling groups also extend the law in some areas. The colonial government gave legal legitimacy to its dominance over the forest. It naturally become necessary to provide social Stability to the British Raj. The state and its allies legitimized their own actions by enacting new laws. The law and administrative infrastructure in general and Forest Law and resistance in particular were the inevitable outcome of the political ideological needs of the British. Through this, Indians were disciplined into a Specific place and Specific role.

Restructuring of Forest System and Emergence of so Called Criminal Tribal Class: The people whose error in reconstructing the forest system of the East seemed Strangely foreign and unknown had been using the forest Since time immemorial. In 19th century, India there were many Communities who were partially or totally dependent on foraging or hunting. The state forest reserve undoubtedly regulated the activities of all these Communities. Many of these communities were not aware of the colonial Forest Laws. They denied the legitimacy of the government's Claim. They continue to cut-down trees as before, and hunt small animals for meat. Foragers and hunters defied the laws of wealth and entered the forest as it was a traditional occupation for them. But in the eyes of foreigners it was a “**Crime**”. Although the colonial state talking about Crime in an attempt to create a new sense of social Stability, the forest dwellers were not influenced by the rulers thinking in this regard. It is unfortunate that foreign laws and ideologies stifled the traditional economy and thereby started a social moral and ideological decline. The rulers of the first phase of colonial rule to go through all these problems. All the administrative structures of India seemed Strangely foreign and obscure to the native tribal people.

As hunter- gatherers, foragers, and Nomadic farmers, forest indigenous Communities faced a variety of pressures throughout the ages of agrarian civilization. But earlier this pressure was there Qualitatively some what different. After taking charge of state forests in the nineteenth century, they faced new problems. Earlier commercial exploitation of forest resources was limited to pepper, Cardamom, Ivory (Marquetry) etc. There exploitation or degradation has not caused any disturbance on the environment or daily life. But even forest Timber become an important commercial product, it brought about important changes in the environment and the use of forests. There is dispute that this forest reservation by the state affected the activities of ancient tribal communities and forced them to migrate. This forcible seizure of forests by the state created discontent among the forest dwellers. As a result, many anti- British movements were organized. Many forest dwellers were forced to migrate to unreserved areas. Deprived of the main source of income, tribal like Kichak, Badhki, Likha, to theft and robbery.

In the 19th century, the tribals who were displaced and out of work and took up dacoits various districts of Bengal were mainly offshoots of the Badhak communities of North India. Various robbery control information from the office sheds light on the lives of poachers. In the 18th century the king of Krishnanagar allowed this Barbaric community to settle in Bengal, they were given duty- free land and employed as hunters. The social unrest that arose after the arrival of the British in Bengal forced them to take dangerous paths like robbery. Barasat was the main center of hunter- gatherers. They were divided into two large groups one of which was towards the North – West. The other was in the heart of the district which extended from Bangur Thana in Sundarbans to Gobardanga in Nadia. The Chua community of Midnapore, which is a food gathering community like the Kichak tribe of Sylhet, was severely affected by the policies of the British authorities. This situation led the entire society astray. During this time new communities and social classes emerged. These grants often created resistance against colonial Forestry policies. But the colonial state was not interested in the economic sources of these movements. They saw it as a law and order

problem. The main adjective of the administrative infrastructure and ideology behind it was to regulate their role in specific activities within a specific area. (Major, 1999)

The Criminal Tribes Act was passed as a result of colonial emphasis on law and order and strict supervision of other sensitive communities. The Criminal Tribes Act was first passed to control of the Minas, a community in North India. Some other communities were considered dangerous (dangerous) by the British authorities. This Act empowered the administrators to declare any community, tribe as criminally dangerous. In 1897, 1911 and 1923 AD, the act was renewed. The Pitamalai Kallours community in Madura, Madras were identified as Criminals. Community members were criminally labeled as barred from gathering and other activities. They were ordered to be absent from the seam at particular times and consented to their location in places approved by the British authorities. The Criminal Tribes Act is inextricably linked with the British Forest Policy. The Criminal Tribes Act was inextricably linked to the displacement of forest communities. The Khakka tribe who were brought under this Act were a branch of the Bajakharas. These Bajakharas lived in the mountainous region of Nepal in Ayodhya. They entered the British territory almost casually, especially in the East in the 19th century when the various castes and tribal communities in the area extending from North India to Bengal were treated as Criminal communities. In 1916AD, the people of Medinipur were also declared as Criminals. The people were a very poor group. Their livelihood was traditionally based on the income they earned from the forest. They are driven away from their source of income and forced to adopt a life of theft and robbery.

Conclusion: It seemed to the British rulers that colonization in India would be incomplete if they could not dominate the “Jungles”. In one fell swoop, the British Government legalized their claim to the forests through its Forest Act and made hunting, foraging and logging illegal. Poachers, game climbers and fishermen emerged as the main criminal groups. A new class of wild crimes is thus created. All human activities within the forest which were previously unaccounted for, now come under the strict control of the state. Lawmakers increased the scope of their wild crimes throughout colonial rule. However, the general perception of “wild crime” remains the same. The government’s dominance over the forest received legal legitimacy. The new forest policy brings a sense of forest utilization. There is no doubt that the brutal commercial exploitation of the colonial rulers was responsible for the destruction of forests. Forests the British destroyed and then became the protectors of those forests on their own guise. The British were the real poachers but they blamed the indigenous people who had been making a living from the forest since childhood. Indigenous people lost their ancient forest rights. In many cases they defied the demands of the government and continued to do the work they had been doing for ages like forming, felling trees, setting fire to forests etc, at will. By destroying the wild animals in this way, European hunters tended to preserve themselves and romanticize tropical forests and animals.

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