

Chapter - III

Ethnography of Pardhi

Adivasis

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Ethnography of Pardhi Adivasis

The overall view of Pardhis shows that they are presently distributed in an extremely scattered manner. The number of Pardhis in Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh are smaller number although history indicates the origin of Pardhis as being Rajasthan and Gujarat region. In the state of Madhya Pradesh, the Pardhis are found mainly in Chhatisgarh, Jabalpur, Satna, Baghelkhand and Malwa region. They are still relatively closer to forests. Those who are close to townships like Jabalpur and Mumbai, however, are in a greater cultural stress as compared to those in the areas near forests.

In the state of Maharashtra the Pardhis seemed to belong to Maratha region. At the time of the 1901 census most of the Pardhis were found in Khandesh districts and the rest were in the Cutch state, Nasik, Sholapur, Bijapur districts. In this area many of them talked a dialect of Gujarati. Presently they are primarily found in the Khandesh, Kolhapur, Osmanabad, Buldhana, Satara, Amravati, Chandrapur and Mumbai districts. Pardhis settled through Government programmes are found in Khandesh, and Berar areas, and those settled by Chatrapati Shahuji Maharaj are found in Kolhapur. In the areas near Amravati region, Gayake Pardhi traditions still exist although the Pardhis identify themselves as Phanse Pardhis. Phanse Pardhis are an unsettled tribe. With their wandering nature, they are found fairly scattered and often in small groups. Those who were, stressed due to loss of their livelihood migrated on their own for survival. They are found on the pavements of Mumbai. Their total number is recorded in Greater Bombay district, as 382 having 194 males and 188 females (Chaudhari 1986). Their literacy and educated persons are counted as 27 males and 18 females. The illiterate males are 167 and females are 170. This figure reveals either there was less number of Pardhis migrated to the street at that time or all the members were not listed in record. There is no official latest record, which reveals the census data of Pardhis in the city. It is evident the major population of Pardhis is socially, culturally, as well as spatially in a flux.

III. 1. Meaning of the term Pardhi

The name Pardhi appears in various anthropological, cultural, legal, and general texts to indicate a group of hunters, trappers and snarers. The word Pardhi is derived from the Marathi (state language) word 'Paradh' which means hunting (Russell & Hiralal 1916 and Enthoven 1922) and Sanskrit word 'papardhi' which means hunting or the game to be hunted (Singh, 2004: 1655). Shikari (the common term for a native hunter) is an alternative name for the group particularly applied to those who use firearms (Russell 1916). The tribe is also known by the name 'Adivichanchar'. Adivichanchar is derived from Sanskrit, which consists of the words 'atavi' meaning forest and 'sanchar' meaning wandering (Ghare & Aphale, 1982: 52). Russell (1916) described Pardhi adivasis as wandering fowling and hunters belonging to a low caste. Pardhi adivasis are also known as Jogi Shikari and Vadland Jagaria (Singh 1994: 979).

From their different methods of hunting or fowling some were named 'Vaghri Pardhis' and others were called 'Phanse Pardhis'. Vaghri is derived from the Sanskrit word 'vaghur' meaning a net to entrap hares and the Pardhis who use nets are called Vaghri Pardhis. The word 'phanse' means noose or trap. Pardhis who catch pig, deer etc. by means of a rope to which nooses are attached are called Phanse Pardhi (Singh 2004: 1655). Enthoven (1922) states that Phanse Pardhis are different from the bulk of the Pardhis in some of their social and religious customs.

III. 2. Origin and History

Precise details of Pardhi's origin are not available and the task of discovering the same by interaction with them is rendered almost impossible primarily because of the wandering nature of their life-style. Their belongings are modified in a variety of manner from time-to-time due to the impact of assimilation of localized social customs and cultural and ecological features prevailing in the areas. Even Pardhi's own perception of their origin accordingly varies from place to place depending on the memory of elders in the group. From the available literature the following history has been developed for this study.

According to Enthoven (1922: 169) Pardhi is a heterogeneous collection of people from Rajput, Koli, Vaghri, Dhangar, Kabbligar and Korchar communities. Singh (2004:1656) states that the Pardhi tribes' Rajput origin is confirmed by the fact that they have Rajput clan names. Singh (1994: 986) states that the Pardhi tribes trace their origin from Rajputana where they used to be appointed as watchmen by the Rajput rulers. Russell and Hiralal (1916: 359) are of the opinion that Pardhi tribe is a mixed group composed of the Bawaria and other Rajput outcastes. Bawaria is also spelt as Bauriah.

Bhargava (1949) narrates number of legends about the origin of Bawarias. One legend says that once Emperor Akbar demanded a Dola from King Sandal of Chhittorgarh. When the latter refused to satisfy the emperor's lust a battle was fought near a Baoli (a large wall with stair cases leading to its bottom). On being defeated, a number of Rajput warriors began to pass their days by the side of that Baoli as a mark of their humiliation. In course of time these Rajputs began to be called Baolias or Bawalias meaning the residents of the Baoli. Bawarias are believed to be the descendants of these people.

Another version says that when king Ferozeshah invaded Chhittorgarh Bhatti, Rajputs from Jaisalmer, Panwars from Abu, Chauhans from Ajmer, and Dhandals from Bikaner came to the fight for Rana Pratap the king of Chittorgarh. They fought against the king Ferozeshah near a Baoli at a distance of about 14 miles from Chhittorgarh. They lost the battle and some of them began to live in the proximity of that Baoli and were called Baoliwalas, meaning residents of the Baoli. They then took to crime in the absence of other occupations and began to keep concubines from low caste people. When the other Rajputs saw this state of their brethren they excommunicated them.

It is said, that after the capture of Chittorgarh a number of Rajputs ran away into the jungle and began to live a nomadic life. One of them fell in love with a Rajput maid and married her. But he would not give up his nomadic mode of life although the parents of his wife strongly disapproved of it. They began to call him Baola meaning mad and later on his descendants came to be known as Bawarias.

The Bawarias are claimed descendents from the family of Chanda and Jora who had served Fatah and Jaimal who were the joint rulers of Chhittor.

The Pardhi tribe claimed to have their origin from Rana Pratap. Their forefathers were with Rana Pratap. However gives another version where Rana Pratap wanted to exterminate them on the suspicion that they had helped Akbar the Mogul emperor. They fled to Gujarat and styled themselves as Pardhis (Gare & Aphale 1982:52). In the Kutch district of Gujarat they claim descent from Valmiki the composer of the epic Ramayana. According to them Valmiki was a Pardhi (Singh 1994).

Another legend narrates the story of a Rajput chief of Gujarat who presented a princess along with a number of attendants to the Emperor Akbar. The princess did not like this and preferred to commit suicide. While passing by a Baoli (tank) the princess expressed a desire to drink water. And availing of the opportunity she drowned herself in the Baoli. Her disconsolate attendants refused to return to their homes and began to lead a nomadic life, making the Baoli as their headquarters in memory of their princess (Bhargava 1949: 4).

A legend connects them with the Chauhan Rajputs of Jaisalmer who went on a pilgrimage to Gujarat where they sacrificed a buffalow in the name of Bawarimata at her temple and gave a feast where beef was freely consumed. Henceforth people began to call them Bawariyas after the Bawarimata while their brethren are still known as Chauhan Rajputs.

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

Mr. H. G. Waterfeild a retired I. P. officer, who was in charge of the Criminal Tribes Investigation Department in the Gwalior State tried to show that the majority of the tribes known as criminal tribes in Northern India had sprung from a common folk. In support of this theory, he referred to the great similarity in secret terms used by these tribes and certain

amount of contact kept by them with one another (Ayyangar 1949). According to Kennedy (1985) and Bhargava (1949) most of the Criminal Tribes are believed as originated from the stock of Bauriah Tribe. Pardhi Tribe is one of them. Pardhi tribe has its ancestral root in Bauriah tribe. In other words Pardhis are a sub group of the Bawriah tribe. The reports of police interest, however, show them as an off-shoot of the Bauriah tribe which is considered as the origin of a variety of criminal tribes.

The criminal tribes were found in the north and in the south, except Kerala (southern state). In Bauriah Tribe it has been recorded the youngsters belonging to that tribe could not get girls in marriage unless they specialized in committing crimes. If a member of the criminal tribe was convicted and sent to jail, the others supported the victim's family during the period of trial (Ayyangar 1949).

Almost all the criminal tribes were wandering, nomadic, earning livelihood through traditional way. The profile of criminal tribe revealed almost all of them lived through begging, hunting, making baskets, making ropes, singing, dancing, doing menial jobs like scavenger, watch men, field guard, mendicants, labour work, agriculture, cattle rearing, netting game in jungles, snake charming, doing odd jobs.

As wandering bands of hunters and fowlers the tribe offered asylum to individual outcastes or broken fragments of other tribes or castes. It is therefore a somewhat heterogeneous group. Some anthropological studies indicate that they appear to be groups originated from mixing of Rajputs either with Bawari who are outcastes or with other social derelicts. Pardhis have also assimilated lower castes like Koli, Wagri, Dhangar, Kabbaligar and Korchar (Russell 1916; Gare & Aphale 1982; Enthoven 1922).

Some Pardhis say that they are descendents of the Pardhi Mahadev who, during the period of Mahabharata, challenged Arjuna on the issue of hunting of wild boar. According to some Pardhis from the community the legend they believe is that Rana Rajputs who, under the threat of extermination from Maharana Pratap for having sided Akbar, the Mogul emperor fled to Gujarat, styled themselves as Pardhis. After which they moved south and eastwards.

Russell, Gare, Aphale & Enthoven confirms to this origin (Russell 1916; Enthoven 1922). In the jungle they stayed with tribals. In due course of time inter tribe / race interactions and relationships multiplied. According to this view, then the Pardhi tribes originated from the Rajput race. Pardhis' Rajput origin is confirmed by the fact that they have Rajput clan names and still speak Rajasthani dialect among them. The Phanse Pardhis have common names like Pawar, Sindiya, Chavan etc.that are found in Rajasthan and adjoining areas (Singh 2004). The Pardhi adivasis are belonging to the great predatory tribe of Gujarat, which scattered under different names all over India. In Andhra Pradesh they are found mostly in the Rayalaseema and the Telangana areas (Singh 1998). From Gujarat 250 years ago they migrated to Maharashtra (Gare & Aphale 1982). They are found only in settlement areas of Maharashtra (Singh 2004).

The Pardhis are nomads traditionally engaged in hunting and food gathering. They hunt birds, animals and trade meats and items of forest produce (Fuchs 1973). The permanent and established way of earning the livelihood is the accepted occupation under the caste system, whereas Pardhis are condemned to a perpetually unsettled life. On account of this, these nomads have only a minimum of interactions with others.

The social customs peculiar to the tribe tend to vary from time to time and from place to place. They wander in gangs, numbering even a hundred and more. During the fair weather, Pardhis wander from place to place in bands of three to six families. The men walk ahead carrying nets and baskets, followed by the women with wooden cots and children with earthen pots. Occasionally they own a bullock or a buffalo, on which loaded blankets, baskets, are bamboo sticks and mats. While on the move they live in makeshift tents, moving from place to place (www.hssworld.org dated 7/11/07). They make tents outside of villages, under bamboos covered with matting or under the shade of trees. If overtaken by rain, they take shelter in the nearest village. During this process of travelling from place to place they rob food grains. This robbing character is attributed as criminal character (Majumdar 1944).

Even today, they practice the traditional primary economic activities like hunting of small games like rabbit, deer, mongoose and trapping of birds like pigeon, peacock and partridge.

However the settled population with better technology at their command progressively takes over the resources of the hunter and food gatherer. Ultimately very little is left for nomads to forage (Mishra 1969). Pardhi adivasis drift into petty thieving because there is nothing else for them to collect and to forage. Due to their thieving tendency no other community is confident to relate with them. They are deprived of labour because nobody trusts them. As a result they follow the path of crime for their livelihood even today. They are forced by the prevailing adverse circumstances to practice -thieving -that is collecting various household items such as -grass for their animals, fuel, fruit, vegetables, grains and animals. Every time a theft, robbery or dacoity takes place, all the Pardhi men in the adjoining places are rounded up and taken into police custody (www.hssworld.org dated 7/11/07). They play hide and seek with the police and their life is highly risky and unstable (Singh 2004). When the police take male members for undergoing imprisonment women take up begging and petty thieving. Struggle for livelihood, ostracism and prejudice are part and parcel of their lives. They are generally poor and dirty and have a very low social status (Ayyangar 1949). These nomads leave their native villages in the month of November and return in the month of May (Singh 1988).

III. 3. Present day Distribution –

According to the 1901 census the total number of Pardhi population was 12,214 of which 6,320 men and 5,894 women. During the same period in the state of Madhya Pradesh in the cities of Bhopal, Raisen and Sehore the total population of Pardhis were 1831. In the same state Bahelias and Chitas are also grouped with Pardhis. According to the 1981 census their number is 8066. In Gujarat in 1981 census, Pardhi population is 814. In Maharashtra the Pardhi population is 95,115 (census data, 1981). According to 2001 census the total population of Pardhis in Maharashtra is 1, 59,875. They are mainly spread over the districts of Amravathi (20,568) Akola (17578) Buldhana (16428) Jalgaon (16849) Yavatmal (8129) Osmanabad (9959) Pune (7230) and the other districts they are scattered (see, Bulletin, Tribal Research and Training Institute 2008). The Pardhi population data of Mumbai is not available in the census record.

III. 4. Physical Characteristics

Wandering Pardhis are varied in complexion, between brown and dark. They are of medium stature. Singh (1998: 987) states they are thin and moderately tall. They have great power of endurance and sharp senses. Kennedy (1985) describes the male Pardhis are wearing large metal earrings and turban. In general they have wild appearance. They have black wooden whistle hanging from their necks. The Pardhis have long hair.

III. 5. Family, Clan, Kinship and other Analogues Divisions

III. 5. 1. Family

Phanse Pardhi is patrilineal and patrilocal with a nuclear family, a social unit consisting of husband, wife and their unmarried children. Nuclear family is more accepted among them, as their livelihood pattern is robbery. Being patrilineal the eldest son succeeds in the matter of family property. Young married Pardhi couples construct a hut near their parent's huts and live independently.

III. 5. 2. Sub- Groups among Pardhis

In the state of Maharashtra Pardhis are divided into different sub groups (Russell & Hiralal, 1916; Enthoven 1922; Singh 1994&1998; Gare& Aphale 1982). Phanse Pardhi or noose hunters are a sub group of the Pardhi community. Phanse Pardhi is also referred to as Pal and Langoti Pardhis (Singh 1998). Pal Pardhi derive their name from the words 'pal' (tent). The people who live in small tents and huts are called Pal Pardhi. They have migrated from Rajasthan (Singh 1988). Pal Pardhi have the following sub groups:

Langoti Pardhi who wear only a narrow strip of clothe around the waist.

Takankar, who make grinding stones. Takankar comes from the word 'Takne' meaning to tap or chisel. They travel from village to village. They roughen the household grinding

stones and mills. Takaris or hand mill makers are found chiefly in Khandesh, Nasik, Ahmednagar and Sholapur (Parts of Maharashtra). Takaris are grouped under Pardhi in Maharashtra (Singh 1994). Langoti Pardhis and Takankars have strong criminal tendencies (Russell, 1916). All these groups are endogamous and marry within themselves.

Pardhis in the Khandesh district is known as Vaghri Pardhis. The Vaghri of Gujarat and Kathiawad are quite distinct from Vaghri Pardhis. Nirsikari or Shikari or Bhil Pardhis use firearms (Singh 2004). Nirshikaris are the same as Haran Shikaris or Pardhis, who were notified as criminal tribe in the Bombay state (Ayyangar 1949). They are a wandering tribe. They differ from the Vaghri or Takankar Pardhis.

The other groups in the Tribe are:

- Chitavale, who hunt with a tamed leopard.
- Gavake Pardhi, who carry their prey behind a bullock. They sit on the cows and roam in the jungle. They live even now in the jungle.
- Gav Pardhis live in the village.
- Gosain Pardhis dress like religious mendicants in ochre cloth and do not kill deer but kill only hares, jackals and foxes.
- Pal Pardhis live in pals.
- Gai Pardhis shikar with trained cows.
- Shishi Ke-Telvale sells crocodile oil.
- Bandarwale goes about with performing tricks with monkeys (Ghare&Aphale 1982:52).
- Bahelia has a sub group known as karijat, the members of which kill birds of a black colour. Some Phanse Pardhis style themselves as Raj Pardhis.

In Madhya Pradesh Pardhis are known as Mogia and Bagri living in Jhansi and distributed to 28 districts. Pardhis living in the Bastar area are called Nahar. Bahelia and Chita Pardhi are also belonging to the Pardhi group (Singh 1994). In Andhra Pradesh Pardhis are known as Pittalollu, Phanse Pardhi or Nirshikari. Lately they have adopted as Lal and Singh.

In some parts of India Phanse Pardhi is known as Meywarees. In Karnataka Phanse Pardhis are known as Haranshikaris, Advichanchers or Chigribatgirs. In Cutch Pardhis are snake charmers. In Northern India a similar class of people are known as Bahelia and in central province they are known as Bahelias and Pardhis. They merge into one another and are not recognized as distinct groups (Russell 1916).

Another branch of the tribe is known as Telvechanya Pardhis. They are vendors of a certain mineral oil and usually sold in the Deccan. It is commonly believed that this oil restores lost vitality.

Few Mohamedan Pardhis are found in Cutch, Khandesh and Dharwar. They follow Mohammedan faith. They embraced Islam during the Muslim rule under threat or force. There is sub division of Pardhi known as Cheetawalla Pardhis who are numerous than all other groups.

The Constitution (Scheduled Tribe Order 1950) notified Pardhi including Advichincher and Phanse Pardhi as Scheduled Tribe without any synonym (Gare & Aphale 1982; Singh 1988). In Gujarat Pardhi, Advichincher and Phanse Pardhi have been notified and separated as schedule tribes in selected districts.

III. 5. 3. Exogamous Divisions

According to Enthoven (1922); Russell (1916); Gare & Aphale (1982) Pardhis have exogamous divisions, based on surnames. The exogamous divisions are Dabhade, Chauhan, Pawar, Solanki and Sonavani. In addition to the ones mentioned above Enthoven (1922) recorded Dabhade, Malve and Shele Kuls as exogamous division.

The exogamous groups of Pardhis are all those of Rajput tribes, such as Seodia, Pawar, Solanki, Chavan, Rathor (Russell 1916). Pardhis are divided into a number of clans, namely Sonavani, Dabhade, Solanki, Pawar, Chavan, Shinde and Suryavanshi (Singh 1998). The Bawarias got seven exogamous sub castes. They are Santyan, Solanki, Pawar, Dhandal, Chavan, Chandara and Dabi.

The exogamous divisions of the Pardhis in Andhra Pradesh are Dholaga, Chathodgad, Dharagad, Pawargad, and Bundigad. Hassan (1920) stated that Pardhi of Hyderabad state have divisions like Pal or Langota Pardhi and Chitewale or Phanse Pardhi with exogamous divisions of Pawar, Dongle, Jadhav, Chavan and Kare (Singh 1988).

Takankar's patriarchal exogamous lineages are called Kur and the surnames are Malve, Chavan, Solanki, Rathor, Pawar, Kavade, Sonaane, Khanande, Dhakarde and Khurade (Singh 2004).

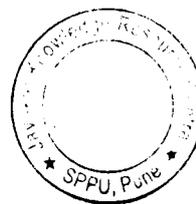
Pal Pardhis are divided into several clans namely Pawar, Bhosale, Chavan, Mane, Rawat, Yadav, Tirola, Khaja, Kale, Solanki, Sindhia, Phulmal (Singh 1998: 2771).

Phanse Pardhis are divided into several clans Chavan, Bhosale, Pawar, Kale and Shinde (Singh 1994: 989, &1998: 2772, 2004: 1660). Solanki, Pawar and Chavan are the common exogamous division in Bawaria tribe and Pardhi tribe. Therefore Pardhi tribe has ancestral roots in Bawaria tribe.

III. 6. Dwelling, Dress, Food, Ornaments and other Material Objects

III. 6. 1. Housing

Takankars live in villages. They have houses. They neither leave their own districts nor wander into distant states. Wandering Pardhis live in grass huts or pals. They generally camp where there is water and food grains and they can snare game (Kennedy 1985). Their huts have only one door in front and there are no windows. Their huts are seven feet by four and five feet high with walls. The houses have slanting roofs of straw matting, which they can roll up and carry off in a few moments. In villages they live in a cluster of huts in the outskirts. It is known as Pardhiwada.



III. 6. 2. Dress

Some women wear the sari like the Maratha women of the Deccan, others wear a small skimpy petticoat (a long jacket) switched by themselves. All wear the choli or bodice (tight blouse) covering the chest. The dhoti(long stuff tied around the hip as a trouser), and the shirt worn by the male is usually dyed to a shade of brown or originally white, has become a dirty brown colour by wear. The male's head dress varies between an old tattered rag, which twisted into a rope barely encircles the head and a well-worn pagri (turban) through which the crown of the head is visible. It is said that wandering Pardhi devotees of certain goddesses, will not wear garments (cloth) of particular colours. It would be seen that this custom was at one time observed by Bauriahs, who had similar restricts regulated by the particular colour dedicated to deity worshipped by them. It is a further proof of the relationship between these two tribes (Kennedy 1985).

The settled Pardhi women wear the lahainga (a long loose skirt) with odni (half sari) like the poorer women of Gujarat. The odni is folded over the head falling from right to left. Some of them wear sari and choli (blouse or jacket). Women were forbidden to wear silver below the waist. No Pardhi women hang her sari on a wall, but it must always be kept on the ground.

A typical Phanse Pardhi male used to be half naked wearing a langoti (loin cloth) and a pairan (a full sleeved closed shirt) with grown dishevelled hair. The headman wore a full dhoti, a Nehru shirt or zabba and a big turban. One end of turban hangs down over his back. Almost touching the ear lobes a pointed big moustache, run across both the cheeks. Woman wore a nine-yard saree with a typical kasota. Pardhis of all kinds are chiefly distinguished by their scanty dress and general dirty appearance. Their hair is neither cut nor combed nor as a rule is the beard shaved.

III. 6. 3. Ornaments

Both men and women wear a necklace of coloured beads, bangles, earrings and chains they wear for adornment. Ornaments are made with tin, copper and brass. They wore various types of ornaments made of silver and brass (Singh 2004).

III. 6. 4. Food

Chavan women do not ride on a cart or drink liquor. Pawar women may not ride on a cart but may drink liquor. They do not eat anything, which lives in water. They eat the flesh of goat, sheep, deer, fowls, peacocks and birds and almost all feathered game and fish and drink liquor.

Pardhi men feed their women, because they believe in the legend, which says in olden times women poisoned their husbands and children. Takanakars do not eat food cooked by Phanse Pardhi, but the latter partake of food prepared by Takanakars. While selling birds and medicines, Pardhis accept uncooked food items. They accept food and water from Brahmin, Rajput, Kunbi, Vani and a few more communities (Singh 1988). Some of them eat fish (except, who worship water) and meat. Though many of them do not eat beef and pork, some of them occasionally eat beef. Their staple food was bread made of jowar or bajri. All Pardhis are much addicted to drink. They consume country home made alcoholic liquor namely gavthi.

III. 6. 5. Migration

Wandering Pardhis move from place to place with their families in gangs of varying strength numbering even a hundred or more. The women and children, carrying the pals and a variety of goods, follow the men with their snaring nets and nooses and baskets. Sometimes their things are loaded on cows or buffaloes.

The dogs, cattles, fowls etc. are camped along with them, in the temporary camps. During the rain, Pardhi gangs collect in the vicinity of towns or villages. When the season of harvest, they break up into small parties and wander from place to place.

III. 7. Environmental Sanitation, Disease and Treatment

III. 7. 1. Medicines

The Pardhi adivasis have unique medicinal practices. They don't go to doctors or take any medicines, due to their low economic status. It is also because they are very superstitious. They use turmeric (saffron) powder to heal wounds. Laxman Gaikward himself a Pardhi describes number of their traditional medical practices in his book Uchalya. Once his father beat his mother with a stick on her head. She started bleeding. His father filled her wound with turmeric powder and dressed it with a piece of cloth. Another time his Tatha (grandfather) suffered from severe pains in his stomach. But no one ever took him to a dispensary. The family treated him at home burning his stomach with a kulwa (burning part of the cigarette) The family also used Jakam Jodicha Pala, a herb which stopped the flow of blood. Another incident Laxman Gaikward describes about himself. When he was a boy had many boils on his head. They were filled with pus and worms. His mother immediately assumed that her son had a terrible disease that was afflicted on him by the goddess, because she gave up fasting on Tuesdays. She prayed and fasted on both Tuesdays and Fridays that the Goddess would cure her child. Besides these she smeared his head with ash and applied it to the sores. She ground neem leafs (a tree) with saffron, made a paste in coconut oil, and then applied on all the sores. He was then made to sit in the sun. Pardhis also treat epileptic patients. For curing the patients they make the person sniff some strong odour.

The role played by reptiles in tribal medicine is important. The major reptiles are lizards, crocodiles, snakes, tortoise and turtle. They are used either alone or in combination with other animals and reptiles. The monitor lizard (*Varanus Bengalensis*) is used as medicine by more than 25 tribes, including the Pardhi tribe. Cold, cough and rheumatic pain is treated.

The Pardhi tribe in Raipur district uses the fat of the monitor lizard to cure the swelling on the neck of a bull. They apply the fat externally on the affected part twice daily until the animal is cured. They also use the flesh boiled in alsin oil (mustard) to arrest bleeding. They apply the oil on wounds of cattle externally once or twice. When they suffer from blood in sputum they grind the carapace of a tortoise in water and orally administer it twice daily for 4 to 5 days. The Pardhi tribe in Bastar get a snake bite they grind snake bones in water and give it to the patient two to three times. This helps the patient to get better. Thus several medicinal applications are used with the help of a forest product and parts of animals.

III. 8. Language

Pardhis speak Gujarathi in northern origin. In southern Maratha region they speak Kanarese (Enthoven, 1922). In their home they speak a corrupt mixture of dialects, in which Gujarati predominates. In Andhra Pradesh they speak a dialect, which is close to Marathi. They are also conversant in broken Urdu, Hindi and Telugu languages. Pardhis use Devangiri and Telugu script (Singh 1998). In Madhya Pradesh they speak the Dravidian language, Gondi and they have forgotten their original mother tongue Halbi an Indo Aryan language. Takaris who are grouped as Pardhis speak a dialect of the Indo Aryan language 'Marwari'.

In Maharashtra they speak a dialect, which is a mixture of Gujarati, Marati, and Hindi. They also know Marati and Urdu. In Jalgaon and Dhule district they speak Marathi. In Solapur district they speak Gujarathi. Their dialect became a corrupt Gujarathi, as they migrated from Gujarat. The Pal Pardhi speaks a Rajasthani dialect among themselves besides Marathi, Hindi and Gujarathi, which they have adopted to communicate with the neighboring population. The Phanse Pardhi has their peculiar dialect, which is a mixture of Gujarati, Rajasthani and Marathi. The Phanse Pardhi of Khandesh region speaks Ahirani dialect (Singh 2004:1655). They have their own secret dialect known as argot or slang in English. This dialect is known and spoken within the group itself. While talking to strangers they make use of this dialect in order to trace and confirm their identity. This is known as Parasi or Farasi in Marathi. Though Pardhis speak Marathi and Urdu fluently their original

language is Gujarati and their talk is said to resemble that of men newly arrived from Gujarat (Kennedy, 1985).

As a rule they talk very loud in the presence of strangers. The following are some of their slang expressions.

Table 4 - Slang language and its Meaning-

Slang	Meaning
Raj	Chief constable
Khapai	Constable
Mul	To run
Khapai was mul	Run, the constable is coming
Kaloo	Police officer
Wassai	Theft
Khonukus	Gold
Barbara	Dacoity
Ishali	Theft
Joopda	Burglary
Koomai	Petty grain theft
Kooto	Petty robberies and dacoitites
Kutturna	House breaking implement
Kali kutri	Policeman
Gobur	Stolen property

Source: Kennedy, M.1985:137,266

III. 9. Economic Life

III. 9. 1. Traditional Occupation

The traditional occupation of Pardhis is trapping of birds and animals. They catch pigs, antelopes, peafowl, partridges, rock quails and parrots. This occupation as game hunters favours a nomadic lifestyle. Pardhis are very skilful in making horsehair nooses. Cheetawalla Pardhis catch young panthers and cheeta cubs, which they train and sell to Rajahs. Some of them, exhibit their preys and for this reason they are called as Raj Pardhis. In addition of selling cheeta cubs Cheetawalla Pardhis also snare birds and sell herbal

medicines. Some have given up catching cheetas and have taken snaring deer and are therefore known as Baheilias. Some serve as messengers and servants. Some others work as labourers and carriers. Takankar Pardhis make grinding stones. They also repair grinding stones. Another common occupation of Pardhis is cutting stones, the chiselling of grinding wheels and grinding stones. Many Takankars have given up their hereditary occupation of hunting and have taken to new pursuits. According to the 1981 census 43.42 percent of their population are listed as workers. Of them 60.78 percent are agricultural labourers, 20.03 percent are cultivators, and 79.7 percent are engaged with livestock and forestry. The remaining 11.22 percent are distributed in various occupations. Some of their children work as wage earners (Singh 1994). Though still fond of hunting many Takankars have taken to labour and agriculture and some are employed as village watchmen.

Advichincher, Langoti Pardhis and Shikari are occasionally employed as village watchmen. Wandering Pardhis beg, snare game, prepare and sell drugs obtained from roots, plants etc. They are also involved in deals with black and white beads known as bajar battoo. This is used for protection from casting evil eye. In some areas they collect and sell items of forest produce. They are expert in catching and netting game. Their net 20 to 40 feet long are most skilfully fashioned. Their nets are strong enough to hold even pig and deer. They skilfully trap the animals into the net. Hares and partridges are caught with these nets. The nets are thrown over the mouth of a well or spread on the ground. Quails and small birds are driven into the nets. Pardhis are skilfull to imitate very naturally the call of partridge. They call with the whistle carried round the neck. They also can produce by mouth the sound of peacock, quail, jackals, hares, foxes, etc. Even today Pardhis basic economic activities are hunting of small game like rabbit, deer, mongoose and trapping of birds like pigeon, peacock and partridge. A division of Pardhis called Jgires and Dharwar make black stone vessels of various sizes, which are used for keeping pickles (Enthoven 1922). Women sell indigenous medicines. The Pardhis of Jabalpur area depend on catching birds, hunting leopards, jackal, and fox. Pardhi women make palm leaves mat, broom and other house hold articles and sell in the local market and village. Pardhis are also working as cultivator, agricultural labour and in forests in Chhattisgarh area. Pardhis of Bastar collect minor forest produce like

mahua, doli, avla, harra, silk cocoon, honey etc. All men, women and children go for fishing for own consumption in rainy season.

The Pardhis are sometimes employed by the cultivators of a village jointly for watching the crops. The Pardhis do this for two or three months and receive a fixed quantity of grain. Some of the Phanse Pardhis make baskets and sell them. Today Pardhis do not have a stable economy. Many of the Phanse Pardhis make their living mainly by committing robberies.

III. 9. 2. Crime as Mode of Livelihood

In the famine of 1896 Pardhis largely went in for dacoity. Gunthrope says later on Pardhis have changed from dacoity to burglary. They try to find a suitable place for robbery. Pardhis when committing crime gird up their loins and wrap their faces with a cloth. They break open the houses, steal sheep and cattle and rob crops. They openly rob the crops from the field. If the landlords refuse to Pardhis they rob the entire crop from the thrashing place. Some of them forcibly enter into the house and some of them protect their comrades by giving assistance. Pardhis work in small gangs of two, three or four.

Pardhis do not as a rule injure the people from whom they rob. If the households do not give them any trouble, Pardhis do not hurt them. However if households resist them Pardhis do not hesitate to beat them. Ordinarily when committing crime they are armed with only sticks and stones. They do not use any other weapons.

In committing burglary they do not have any particular mode of operation. They sometimes dig neatly through a wall. When a hole is made big enough to get through, the leader strikes a match which he holds between finger and thumb with his fingers stretched out so as to form a shade. Hold this light in front of him to shield his features.

Pardhis also play a role in cheating villagers, for the sale of robbed gold ornaments at low price. However the ornaments usually are fakes. For this purpose they use a villager as middleman who is familiar to villagers. The villagers do not suspect the middleman and buy ornaments in a very profitable manner. The villagers are cautioned that the ornaments are

stolen property and must keep them hidden for a month or two till there is no enquiry by police. The purchaser eventually takes the ornaments for use. They realise by then that they are cheated. The purchasers are in a vulnerable position to give police complaints due to the dishonest deal they had with Pardhis.

Phanse Pardhis' plough their camp before they begin the robbery. Pardhis previously visit the house during the day on the pretext of begging for robbery. After which they rush into the village at night. Sometimes they create uproar with cries of Din. If the watchmen try to defend Pardhis beat up on their head with a stick. After that they raid the building. If the inmates resist Pardhis severely beat them up. After the robbery sometimes they set fire to the house for creating diversion.

During the day Phanse Pardhis roam for begging from cultivators. During this process they note the position of grain pits. If they are given grains they refrain from abusing the donors. They loot only from those who refuse to comply with their needs. After harvest Phanse Pardhi pay attention towards thrashing place. The stolen crops they mix with other grains stolen from other fields to prevent identification. As a rule they carry only small quantities of grain. They do not drop the grains on the way back. This way they try to minimise the risk of being caught by police. Stolen grains are stored away from the place of camp. Sometime stolen property is buried in beds of rivers, fields or somewhere near the back of the camp. Sheep and goats are mostly slaughtered and consumed at once. The skin is disposed of in a distant bazaar or sold to the village Chambhar or Dhor. The goat and sheep, which cannot be killed immediately is carried off to a convenient hiding place before disposing it finally. Cattles are lifted up from the field while grazing and carried away to far away place before they are sold.

The favourite instruments used for house breaking are a sort of chisel called kinkra an iron rod with a wooden handle called khantia, kettur or kusa (plough share). Wandering Pardhis often conceal their stolen property in holes dug in the ground. The property is placed into this hole. The entrance of the hole is covered up and over it one of the gang occasionally takes rest. Pardhis seldom dispose of valuables till a considerable time has elapsed since the

offence. Goldsmiths, liquor vendors, agriculturists, village officers etc. receive the stolen goods. While changing the camp stolen property is carried by a single member of the gang ahead of them. They anticipate police search while they are on the road. Women conceal small valuables by tying them as a bandage round the leg covering an imaginary sore or the women conceal between the legs. The men and women together try to protect themselves. The search for a culprit is rather troublesome for the police. The Telvechanya Pardhis manufactures a brand of oil. While anointing the oil on the palm of the victim, a trick is played through which they cheat the victim. Takankars seldom admit their guilt or disclose the names of their accomplices even if they are caught red handed by the police.

The Pardhis have moved to places far and wide. Paper reports show that some of them are living in Delhi. They are called Chaddi baniyan giroh. These seem to be the off-shoot of the Langoti Pardhis of Madhya Pradesh who are known for being engaged in small thefts and at times in robberies. They are of course associated with crime in these areas but one needs to understand the dynamics of their livelihood options and survival endeavours before branding them as criminals (Jha 2008).

III. 10. Life Cycle

III. 10. 1. At Birth

Pardhi adivasis follow many rituals. At birth gandh (ointment) is applied to the forehead of the baby. A little jaggery (clumps of row brown sugar) is put into the mouth of the baby for five days to remove the saliva. On the fifth day both male and female children, observe the mundane ceremony meaning shaving the head. Naming ceremony is performed on the 12th day. Brahmins are called to conduct all the ceremonies except the funeral rites.

III. 10. 2. Initiation

After having attained puberty in the case of girls a puberty rite is performed. A ceremony is performed by the women folk of the tribe popularly known as oti bharan (celebration). For this they offer a handful of rice or wheat with tamarind to a girl. If child marriage has taken

place, after this ceremony the girl is sent to the husband's house. The marriage is proposed from the groom's side to the bride's party and a meeting is held to make arrangements for the engagement. Bride price ranges from Rs.250 to even Rs.1000. No daughter is exchanged in marriage unless the bride price is received in cash or in cash and kind.

III. 10. 3. Marriage

The Pardhis celebrate marriages all the year round. Inter-marriage among some subdivisions of Pardhis is forbidden. Thus a Takanakr Pardhi may not marry a Phanse Pardhi. The similarity of devak is a bar to inter-marriage. They marry from fathers' sisters', mothers' sisters' or mothers' brothers' daughters. Two brothers may marry two sisters-the elder brother being married to the elder sister and the younger brother to the younger sister. A man is allowed to marry two sisters. As a rule Langoti Pardhi marries girls from another subdivision thus a Chavan would marry a Pawar girl. Polygamy is allowed and practiced but polyandry is unknown in this community. Girls are married at the age of fourteen to sixteen and boys around the age of twenty-five. The offer of marriage comes from the boy's father who has to pay a bride price. If he cannot pay the amount the bridegroom may serve in the house of his father-in-law for a period agreed upon. In the case of well-to-do people child marriages take place.

If a caste man seduces a girl he is compelled to marry her after a Brahmin has purified her and he and the girl's father are fined and made to give a dinner to the caste people. If the seducer belongs to another caste the girl is allowed to remain in the caste after being purified and may marry any caste man. If the offence is committed several times the girls are excommunicated.

The principal ceremonies of marriage are: i. Kunku Lavaane or Sagai that is the betrothal, which takes place some days before the marriage. ii. Halad that is rubbing the boy and the girl with turmeric paste. iii. Rukhavi or carrying sweet meals to the boy's house by women from the girl's house.

Marriage verses are repeated and sacred grains of rice are thrown over the couple. This is the binding portion of the ceremony of marriage. The bridegroom returns to his house with his bride. The girl's party holds shiravanti or reception of the bridegroom in a temple.

Phanse Pardhis differ from the bulk of the Pardhis in some of their customs. They are strictly endogamous. They marry within the tribe only. A marriage outside the tribe is looked upon as inauspicious and is liable to the punishment of excommunication from the tribal group. They observe clan as well as surname exogamy. A member of the Bhosale clan will not marry a member of the same clan or surname. They marry their girls at any age. One's mother's brothers' daughter is held as one's first choice. A maternal uncle can make objection if his nephew marry a girl other than his own daughter. Marrying a sister of the deceased wife is also in practice (Singh 2004:1657). On the marriage day a pandal (a stage) is erected by peepal or mango leaves. The groom wears garlands of mango leaves and flowers hanging on both sides of his cheek. Turmeric (saffron powder) is applied to both. The marriage is performed in the presence of a Brahmin or an elder from the tribe. The skirts and dhotis are knotted together seven times. The guests throw red rice over them and the marriage is completed. A marriage feast is given by either of the parties in agreement with the contract. A married woman wears a chain of black beads around her neck.

Among Phanse Pardhi *oti bharan* is performed for the first pregnancy. An old experienced woman conducts delivery in the traditional manner. The umbilical cord is cut with the help of a scissor.

Laxman Gaikward himself a Pardhi has narrated his wedding ceremony. He along with his family travelled to his wife's village. They were taken in a procession along with a band from the border to the village to the place where the ceremony was to be held. Turmeric powder was applied on the bridegroom and he was given a ritual bath. A marriage gift was supposed to be offered to the bridegroom's father by the bride's family. However a gift was not offered to his father. He was lifted and carried to the raised platform of the pandal. At one spot the in-laws from both sides exchanged betel nuts and embraced each other in a close fashion.

He was then dressed in the clothes given to him as his marriage present and brought to the marriage pandal with the accompaniment of musical instruments. All the guests received rice as Akshata (rice smeared with vermillion) to shower on the bridegroom and the bride at the auspicious moment of the marriage with the chanting of the ritual hymns. When the marriage presents were being given, his relative sat to receive the marriage presents on his behalf. When a present is given the givers name and the present given were announced on the microphone. Whenever a present was given he would announce it on the microphone and Thata would receive it. The travel expenses of the guests had to be shouldered by him. A marriage procession was taken out in the village at night. The towel on his body was tied at the end in a knot with his wife's sari. His wife followed him as he walked.

III. 10. 4. Divorce

Husband can divorce a wife if he cannot agree with her or her conduct is bad. A wife can divorce a husband, if he is impotent or suffering from an incurable disease like leprosy. A divorced woman can marry again, after paying a fine to the caste panch (community leader). A person accused of adultery or grievous sin, has to pick a copper coin out of a jar of boiling oil. If he/she picks the coin out without harming his/her hand he/she is declared innocent. Between the Phanse Pardhi either party can break wedlock on various grounds such as adultery, dislike or failure to pay the bride price. Divorce traditionally declared in the presence of the nyaya (tribal council). The divorced wife is not entitled to receive any compensation from the husband. Children belong to the father.

III. 10. 5. Widow Remarriage

The remarriage of widows is permitted among Pardhis. A widow cannot marry her father's sister's, mother's sister's or mother's brother's son. She may marry a younger brother of her deceased husband, provided she is more than two years older. If a widow has no children by her deceased husband, her intended husband has to pay a fine. If the intended husband also is deceased, husband's brother has to entertain the caste people to a dinner and pay the fine. A widow remarriage is celebrated on a dark night. The widow and her new husband are

seated on two low wooden stools side by side and the Brahmin priest ties the ends of their garments into a knot. Next the couple feed each other with two or three mouthfuls of food, which completes the ceremony. On both sides a Barber, a Brahmin and the caste panch are present. The caste follows the Hindu law of inheritance. Among Phanse Pardhi polygamy and widow marriage are allowed. Phanse Pardhi community widows, widowers, and both divorcees are allowed to remarry.

III. 10. 6. Death Ceremonies

The dead are buried in a lying position with head to the south. In Cutch district before the burial the great toe of the right foot is burnt. The persons who have visited the shrines of their family Goddesses, burn women who die in childbirth. The bones and ashes are thrown into water. On the tenth day after death rice balls are offered to the deceased and caste men are given a feast. For the propitiation of the deceased ancestors a ceremony called Mahalaya (ceremony to remember the ancestors) is performed in the dark half of the lunar cycle.

The Phanse Pardhi, who can afford, burns the deceased body. Others bury the dead body. The family God of their division is found at Pavagad or burial place. According to Laxman Gaikwad, Yamadoot (a messenger of YAMA, God of death) conjures up the image of death and anyone confronted with it freezes with fear that Yamadoot will take his life away. He narrated the rituals performed five days after his father's death. They got a little lamb cooked it and carried it to the cemetery along with the things his father liked. All these things were placed at the spot where body was cremated. They bowed in obeisance before the offerings. When a crow touched the offerings it signified that his father had no more earthly desires left and his soul was finally delivered.

III. 11. Religion

According to (Enthoven, 1922; Gare & Aphale, 1982; Russell, 1916) Pardhis follow Hindu religion. A few were recorded at the 1901 census as Mussalman (Enthoven 1922). According to the 1981 census 98.65 percent are Hindus and 0.46 percent as Muslims, Christians and Sikhs (Singh 1984). The Hindu Pardhis worship deities like Ganesh, Ram,

Laxman, Sita, Amba Bhavni, Jarimari, and Khandoa. Chavans worship Amba, Pawars worship Mari Mata, and Solankis worship Kali. All their deities are called Bowani. Gunthrope says that they are very religious. In Madhya Pradesh in the 1981 census 99.56 percent of the Bahelia Pardhis were Hindus and 0.44 percent professed other religions. In Bhopal, Raisen and Sehore districts 100 percent of the Pardhis were Hindus in the 1981 census (Singh 1994:989). Those residing in the Belgaum district chiefly worship Lakshmi and Durga. In Cutch they worship Gayatri Mata. They also worship all village Gods. Musaalman saints are venerated. When an epidemic breaks out the Gods are propitiated with blood sacrifices. They do not go on pilgrimages and have no spiritual head. Pardhis are firm believers in fortune-tellers and observe various rules by which they think their fortunes will be affected. They consider even numbers lucky and odd numbers bad. They practice a low form of Hinduism without giving up animism.

The Phanse Pardhi adivasis also belong to Hindu religion. Each clan has a separate deity for worship. The special objects of their worship are Yellamma, Tulja Bhavani and Venkatesh whose images are kept tied in cloth and are taken out once a year on Marnavami in Ashvin and worshipped with an offering of milk. They also have a sacrificial offering such as a male buffalo or a lamb on a day of fair in the new moon night. Phanse Pardhi normally go to the fair before going on a robbery where they suck blood from the offering and receive the blessings of the bhagat in order to be successful in the operation. They do not observe any of the Hindu holidays and make no pilgrimages. They believe in witchcraft and soothsaying. Takaris follow the Hindu law of inheritance and chiefly worship such minor Gods as Khandoba, Devi etc. They keep Gods images in their houses. They also worship all local Gods and observe the usual fasts and feasts.

Laxman Gaikward narrates the religious ceremony. In procession a lamb was carried with the accompaniment of drumbeats. Everyone applied Haladi-Kunkum (saffron and vermilion powder) and bowed before the Goddess. Water was sprinkled on the sacrificial lamb and all bowed before the Goddess. The lamb was laid on the ground on its back and holding its neck on the edge of the ditch, the throat was slit. Blood filled the ditch in front of the

Goddess to the brim then the head of the lamb was severed and the legs were cut and placed before the goddess. The lamb was cut and put in baskets for people.

Laxman Gaikwad says that they would kill a sturdy pig on Makar Shankranti day. If a pig was not available then a cow was killed. A hefty blow was given on the neck of the pig, which made the pig to die a slow death. It was roasted, cut and distributed to the others who ate it hungrily.

Table 5 - Pardhi Gods in Mumbai-

Name of the Clan	Name of the Goddess
Bhosale	Bhawanimata
Kale	Durgamata
Chavan	Mariamata
Pawar	Mariamata
Shinde	Laxmimata

The bulk of the tribe however is divided into totemistic divisions worshipping different devaks of which the principal one is: Thorns of aria shrub (*mimosa rubricaulis*), Thorns of the bore tree (*Zisypus jujuba*), Leaves of the shami tree (*Prosopis spicigera*), Mango, Jambhul (*Eugenia Jambolana*) and Umbar (*Ficus gomerata*). The peepal tree is held especially sacred. There is a legend about this tree, which connects with the custom of refraining from the use of peepal leaves after answering a call of nature. A Pardhi went on a journey and being fatigued lay down and slept under a peepal tree, which grew beside a river. On waking up he went and eased himself. He took a peepal leaf to clean himself. There of resulted a grievous sore from which he suffered much torment and was about to die. Then he had a vision. The Devi appeared to him and told him that his troubles arose because of disrespect to peepal leaf. As a result the man confessed his sin and did penance before the panchyat. Instantly he was cured of his sore (Kennedy 1985).

III. 12. Customs and Practices

The Pardhis of Chatisgarh have several varieties of folk dance. These are karma in Karma pooja, Bihave nach in marriage, Rahas in Holi etc. Their folk songs are also of several

varieties. These are Bihaveget for marriage, Karma geet in Karma dance, Suageet in Diwali etc. Their musical instruments are Dhol, Dafada, manjira, mohari etc.(Jha 2008).

In the Chattisgarh area they never wear shoes and say that goddess Devi made a special promise that they will be protected from any insect or reptile in the forest. The fact, however, is that the shoes make it impossible for them to approach their game without disturbing it. Further, from long practice the soles of their feet become almost impervious to thorns and minor injuries. The Langoti Pardhis wear a narrow strip of cloth around their loin. The actual reason probably is that a long one would be unmanageable and impede them by getting caught in the wood. The explanation given by them, however, is that an ordinary dhoti or loin-cloth if worn might become soiled while hunting and therefore would be unlucky. Pardhi women eat at the same time as the men. They explain this custom by saying that on one occasion a woman tried to poison her husband and it was therefore adopted as a precaution against similar attempts.

III. 13. Education

According to the 1981 census in Maharashtra, the total literacy rate among Pardhis is 20.05 per cent. The male literacy rate is 29.87 percent and the female literacy rate is 9.88 percent. In Madhya Pradesh the literacy rate of Bahelia Pardhi is 8.36 percent. The male literacy rate is 13.07 percent and the female literacy rate is 3.57 percent (Singh 1994).

III. 14. Status of Women

Women have equal status with men among Phanse Pardhis. Along with women men do all labour such as domestic work, committing robberies etc. Women's activities include agricultural labour, collection of fuel, bringing potable water, begging, participating in religious rites and rituals. Women are engaged in various economic activities and contribute to the income of the family.

III. 15. Structures of Social Control and Leadership

III. 15. 1. Pardhi Panchyat

They had their own traditional council known as Jat panchyat. The traditional panchyat deals with the disputes of the community. The headman of the panchyats called naik (leader). Their community council operated at three levels. A Mukya (elder member) was the head of a nomadic band of three to five families. The Naik (elder member) was the head of the base village and the Pudari (elder member) was the head of the community for the whole region. This post is hereditary and reserved for the people holding surnames Kale (Singh 2004). They have their panchyat, a council of five members chosen from the tribe. It controls and regulates the social life of the tribe and also organises criminal gangs and assists them in committing anti social acts. It passes judgement in cases of immorality. It was already noted that a person accused of adultery or a grievous sin has to pick a copper coin out of a jar of boiling oil. If he refuses to put his hand into the jar or it is burnt he is dismissed from his caste. If a woman has extra marital relations with any person within the tribe it is always considered immoral and is condemned by the people and the panchyat. Relations with people outside the tribe are appreciated and sometimes encouraged as the woman often can serve as a successful spy. By sanctioning such behaviour the panchyat has generated habitual prostitution. Sometime the parents and the husbands also allow this practice, as it is an additional source of income.

When a person does not properly observe the social customs he/she is made to pay a fine to the panchyat. The panchyat is called to settle disputes arising out of misdistribution of wealth, acquired by theft or robbery. The essential function of the panchyat is to ensure that the wealth is distributed in an equitable and just manner. A person who violates this rule is severely punished. The panchyat keep a record of the members who organise the crimes, steal or commit dacoity. It collects the robbed items and distributes them among the members according to their respective shares. When any member is arrested while committing a crime the panchyat provides financial supports for the litigation. The panchyat organisation maintains its authority by strict discipline. It also imposes individual contributions to the panchyat fund to meet its expenses for litigation. Compensation is provided to the family of

the victim if the police catch the robber. If damage is done to any of his limbs there is a regular scale of compensation to be paid to the injured. The compensation is made according to the importance of the limb and the nature of the injury. The compensation to which a member is entitled is passed on to his wife or children in his absence. According to Fucus (1973) the heads of the family groups manages the disciplinary and juridical matters among the nomadic food gatherers and hunters.

Phanse Pardhis have their own peculiar system of justice. The head of the tribal council is the senior headman (Mukya). The council holds its meeting for settling disputes. Disputes are often settled by giving a fine in cash up to Rs.500/-, a feast to the tribe's men, excommunication etc. If the accused is not in position to pay the fine, they may sell a daughter to get the cash.

Pardhi occasionally convened deokarias (meetings). In these meetings ways and means were discussed as well as disputes related with past offences were settled. They consumed much food and liquor on these occasions. At these deokarias there was no fixed ritual. Sometimes a buffalo was offered. If they could not eat the flesh it was given to a lower caste of the Bowri tribe called Hadoti, which lives in Hyderabad, Deccan territory.

For every offence the penalty was much liquor. The left ear of both men and women guilty of adultery was cut with a razor. A Pardhi guilty of sexual intercourse with a prostitute was punished as if he had committed adultery. Pardhi women were said to be virtuous. At the deokara a large fry pan called karai was brought in. Ghee and sugar boiled in it. The Pardhi who was pious or seized by the goddess with his hand took sweets and meats out of the boiling oil. A Pardhi whose ear was cut was not allowed to be near to the karai.

Pardhis have their tests. i. An accused person having taken oath is told to take out a coin from a vessel of boiled oil. If not guilty his hand is protected from burning. ii. The accused gets into the well on a ladder. While he is on the ladder disconnects the ladder by the others. If the accused is guilty he is drowned for his act. iii. Two men stand within circles drawn in the sand of a riverbank about seven bamboos distance from one another. Accused stand on

one edge run to touch the opposite person on the other edge and returns. While accused runs to touch a man dives under water. If the accused finishes his run while the man is beneath the water the latter was judged as innocent. If the diver could not remain in the water the accused was guilty and expected to vomit blood and die.iv. They heat axe till it becomes red colour. After which they tie twenty-one leaves from the peepal tree on the palm of the accused. Over the leaves they lay the heated red-hot axe. The accused is expected to walk ten feet without dropping the axe. If the accused succeeds in this test the client is considered as innocent.

Pardhi adivasis have many unfavourable sites such as-

- i . Seeing an empty water pot
- ii . A dog flapping its ears
- iii .The bellowing of cows but a bull is considered as good sign
- iv . Mewing of a cat
- v . Howling of a jackal
- vi . Sneezing
- vii. A snake passing from left to right but snake passing from right to left is considered as good sign.

III. 15. 2. Pass System

Pardhis were required to have a pass when leaving their village for any purpose. The pass was issued by Village Patil (Village Officer). This was called taking dakhla and was an informal business. This system had been introduced by police officers. The dakhla was not supposed to be given except for legitimate purposes. A Pardhi absent from his village had to produce his/her dakhla as proof. However a Pardhi never bothered about getting dakhla. Hence if a dakhla had been taken out it was believed that a Pardhi had left his village to commit crime. Experience showed that the Patil in almost every instance was aware of the real motive for which the pass was taken out.

III. 16. Cultural Values: Unique Identity

The Pardhis had their unique culture inherited from their forefathers. They lived with in their culture in their traditional habitat and practiced various customs, which added meaning to their life. This culture and customs bound them together. Their cultural life is integrated with social norms and beliefs. They valued their unique identity. They were forced to give up their forest, due to the administrative policies of British and Indian Governments. They moved away from the forest to nearby small villages and towns, took up different occupations for their survival. They also adapted criminal behaviours to earn their livelihood. As a result they were stamped with the stigma as criminals. However their criminality was not a hereditary character.

III. 17. Migration to Mumbai

Gradually with the advent of industrialization they migrated to Mumbai in search of a better livelihood. The migration to city began over the last three decades. In 1970's and 1980's many Pardhis from Barsi taluka and other small towns and villages migrated to city. Today there are many Pardhi families scattered into small groups living in makeshift shelters at different parts of the city.

The Indian railway network crisscrossing the different parts of the state of Maharashtra helped the Pardhi adivasis in the process of migration. Most of them travelled ticket less in these trains passing through the towns and villages to Mumbai, landed at Mumbai CST. On their arrival in the city they looked out for the members of their community in the city. Finally they occupied Appapada, a hilly area surrounded by forests in Malad west, which was similar to their native surroundings. In this new habitat they were able to build their houses exactly in the same way as their ancestors had made in the forests and near by villages close to the forests. They were able to continue nomadic mode of life with their culture and tradition because of the similarity of the old and new habitats. They fetched water and firewood from the forest and started to graze animals for their livelihood. They

used to go to parts of Mumbai, especially South Mumbai in search of livelihood and some times stayed over there for few days but always returned to Appapada after they had earned enough to meet their needs for a few days.

The Government of Maharashtra decided to drive away the Pardhis at Appapada as they encroached and illegally occupied the forestland. Further the Government agencies enforced strict implementation of forest laws and encroachment removal drive. As a result the government agencies pushed these adivasis to the street of Mumbai from encroachment and illegal occupation. As a result most of these Pardhis of Appapada were displaced to the pavements of Mumbai in early 1990's.

Some of the Pardhis settled at pavements of Reay Road, Dockyard Road, and Nallasopara. A very few families settled at Appapada along the fringes of the forest. Most of the Pardhis lead a kind of nomadic life without any permanent shelters, on footpaths and under the bridges. Most of the scattered Pardhis live in the pavements in small groups. They live in make shift shades. They look for water and light while making shift shades. They take up a means of livelihood, either through selling katchra works or begging.