Chapter-2

Theoretical Framework and the Review of Literature

A number of serious attempts towards the formulation of theoretical approaches for the explanation and understanding of crime have been made in the past few decades. An analysis and interpretation of deviant behavior being too complex inevitably leads one to the use of interdisciplinary approaches.

The sociologically oriented approach to crime assumes that the criminal is not an isolated individual; he is the product of his society. Instead of looking for the causes of crime within the individual himself, as hypothesized by the biological and psychological theorists, the sociologists take the criminal as a member of his social group, viewing him as a phenomenon whose criminal conduct originates in the abnormalities of his social existence or in the behavior of the society towards him. The main argument being that any solution to the problem of crime can be found in an analysis of the criminal relationship to his social environment, (Schafer, 1969). There is an attempt by Schafer to classify theories relating to criminal behavior into ‘offensive and defensive’ categories. Theories of the offensive category are those which ‘attack the criminal’ whose ‘free will’ reacts to social injustice and provokes him to direct his aggression towards the society in the form of crime. Theories falling within the purview of the defensive category view crime as a product of a disorganized society or as an outcome of social pressures. Here the emphasis is on social defense rather than on criminality, as criminal conduct is a product of the social context. It is further argued by Schafer that the main assumption in the ‘offensive’ approach is that it is the individual who decides of his own whether or not to engage in crime. The criminal comes to realize that his aspirations cannot be satisfactorily made because his society is either unnecessarily constraining or is partially or wholly unjust. Unable to attain his aspirations, through available institutionalized means he attacks society by deviant means for the attainment of material ends denied by the normative channels of legitimate means, on the one hand, the basic theoretical
element in the ‘defensive’ approaches to crime is the interaction between the criminal and his environment, while at the same time the personal responsibility of the criminal is also acknowledged, (Schafer, 1969).

However, this categorization of various theories on crime into ‘defensive’ and ‘offensive’ categories by Schafer, does not bring out any major differences between the two. The role of imperfect socialization and social structural disorganization is made very clear and given consideration simultaneously in both these orientations. This in turn leads one to ask the points of departure between the two approaches, to which Schafer’s explanations are inadequate.

In the sociological theoretical approaches to the problem of crime, one view holds that culture with its conflict in values and norms is responsible for leading a man against the criminal law. “In a society which is characterized by dynamic quality, complexity, material insistence upon the importance of status, restricted group loyalties, survival of frontiers traditions, tolerance of political corruption, acceptance of a quasi criminal exploitation there will be many conflicts often taking the form of crime”, (Taft and England, 1964). Such types of theories contend that there are inconsistencies in the social structure and an uneven distribution of values, means, goals and rewards. Durkheim’s explanation of anomie is a situation characterized by lack of rules, absence of norms, lawlessness or weakened norms, which may lead to deviant behavior. Thus when the balance between cultural aspirations and social opportunities is lost, anti-social or deviant behavior is likely to develop.

Merton relates deviance and social structure basically using Durkheim’s idea of anomie. He differentiates man’s cultural aspirations from the institutional means available for their satisfaction. An effective equilibrium is maintained as long as satisfaction accrue to individuals who conform to both the constraints, the satisfaction from achieving goals and the satisfaction with the institutionally set modes of striving towards these ends. Aberrant conduct therefore may be viewed as a symptom of disassociation between culturally defined aspirations and socially
structured means. The Mertonian argument is that, “a society places great emphasis on individual success, while at the same time it excludes part of the society from achieving this success. Deviant behavior is not generated simply by the lack of opportunity rather a comparatively rigidified class structure, a feudalistic or caste order, may limit such opportunities”, (Schafer, 1969).

Albert K. Cohen considers Merton’s ‘anomie’ lacking in explanation for certain kinds of deviant behavior. The explanation for non-utilitarian and destructive nature of much deviant behavior is not given its due share in this approach. The fact that even under such circumstances as explained by the theory a majority of the persons do not behave in a deviant manner, while other do, also remains ignored in this theory.

Marvin E. Wolfgang and F. Ferracutti in their theory of the ‘sub-culture of violence’ try to provide an explanation for criminal behavior. Their theory drawn from:

(a) Sociological theory of culture, social and personality systems, culture conflict, differential association and value system.

(b) Psychological theory of learning, conditioning, developmental socialization and differential identification

(c) Criminological research on criminal homicide and other assaultive crimes.

It is argued, that, the crimes of violence are most common among a relatively homogenous sub-cultural group, in any large urban community and also in some rural areas. From psychological point of view it is hypothesized that the greater the degree of integration of the individual into the sub-culture of violence the higher the probability that this behavior will be violent in a variety of situations. Sociologically, there should be a direct relationship between rates of homicide and the extent to which the sub-culture of violence represents a cluster of values around the theme of violence. The overt use of force or violence either in inter personal relationships or in group interactions is generally to be viewed as a reflection of basic values that stands apart from the
dominant, the central or parental cultural. The following corollary propositions are offered in this approach for its support:

1. No sub-culture can be totally different from or totally in conflict with the society of which it is a part.

2. To establish the existence of a sub-culture of violence does not require that the actors sharing these basic value elements should express violence in all situations.

3. The potential of willingness to resort to violence in a variety of situation emphasize the penetrating and diffusive character of this culture theme.

4. The sub-cultural ethos of violence may be shared irrespective of age in a sub society, but it is more prominent in a limited age group, ranging from late adolescence to middle age.

5. The counter norm is non-violence.

6. The development of favorable attitudes towards and the use of violence, in a sub-culture usually involve learned behavior and a process of differential learning association or identification.

7. The use of violence in a sub-culture is not necessarily viewed as illicit conduct and the users therefore do not have to deal with feelings of guilt about their aggression.

(Wolfgang-Savitz and Johnson, 1970).

Gibbons and Ahrenfeldt take the definition given by Gordon, of sub-culture, “........ a sub division of a national culture composed of combination of factorable situations such as class, status, ethnic background, regional and rural or urban residence and religious affiliation, but forming in their combination a functioning unity which has an integrated impact on the participating individual”, (Gibbons and Ahrenfeldt, 1971).

It is contended by Gibbons that, “there have existed throughout history, in very different countries and cultures, rigidly and elaborately organized groups for whom serious form of
crime, including violence and murder, has constituted a way of life or a substantial element of their social and cultural pattern of behavior. Some of the socio-economic components of the social pattern may be there, as influencing and controlling factors, in these groups, there may entire economic, political, religious and other components, and not in frequently several of these are inextricably interwoven in the social pattern”, (Gibbons and Ahrenfeldt, 1971).

However, the sub-culture of violence and the other sub-culture approaches, though being a blend of a number of socio psychological approaches for explaining the phenomena of crime causation, are not without their short comings. The theorist themselves, in the first place, are not clear about how a sub-culture whether that of violence or constituting of any other criminal activity originates. The basis of the integration of the sub-culture also lack explanation. What follows from these constructs is that the act of murder is taken as one of the main indicators of violence. But the act of murder is not so simple if we see it in terms of the motivations of the murderer. Even taking the act of murder as an indicator of violence, one has to simultaneously ask; what kind of gain it is leading to, individual, collective or ideological gain?

Further one cannot also argue that murders on a large scale but as separate incidents are possible because there are societal mechanisms by which one can escape or stand a good chance of escaping legal punishment and retain the profits of the crime? It raises the doubt that more or less such behavior is a function of social stratification and its relationship with the mechanisms of social control. In this situation, can it not be the case that the sub-culture of violence is being maintained in the interest of the ‘sub-culture of orderly behavior”? In such an approach, the precise content of supposed sub-cultural differences, require a clear specification. “It is possible for example that rather than a sub-culture of violence, something like a sub-culture of muscularity exist with violence being only one of many possible outlets and not necessarily the preferred one”, (Erlanger, 1974). Due consideration therefore, also
needs to be given to the origin, continuation and the relationship of a sub-culture to the social structure.

The main contention of Cortes and Gatti is that there is a lack of consideration of psychological variables in the sociological approaches and vice versa. After organizing various orientations of empirical knowledge Cortes and Gatti arrive at the theoretical formulation that, “criminal and delinquent behavior are the result of a negative imbalance within the individual in the interaction between (a) the expressive forces of a psychological and biological characteristics and (b) the normative forces of familial, religious and socio-cultural factors”, (Cortes and Gatti, 1972).

In order to provide theoretical formulation for the explanation of dacoity in Chambal Valley, accounting for its origin, continuation and a sort of social acceptance of it in the society it is very clear that all the theoretical formulations given above are quite inadequate. Even the ‘bio-psycho-social approach’ along with its other shortcomings, can be criticized partly, as another traditional theory. This approach appears to be ‘non-structural’ and ‘historical’ in terms of its mode of analysis.

By limiting the analysis to factors which are manipulable within existing structural arrangements, the impact of political economy has not been given any consideration. “From this point of view deviance is ‘in’ but not ‘of’ our contemporary social order. Theories that locate the source of deviance in factors as diverse as personality structure, family system, cultural transmissions, social disorganization and differential opportunity-share a common flaw: - They attempt to understand deviance apart from historically specific forms of political and economic organizations”, (Spitzer, 1975). The lack of a sense of historical development views deviance as an episodic and transitory phenomenon rather than as an outgrowth of a long term structural change. In the efforts towards the formulation of a theory, an attempt
should also be made towards the establishment of a relationship between deviance, social structure and social change.

**Studies in Dacoity (A Review of Literature)**

Many books have been written both in Hindi and English, but mostly they are fictional, biographical or journalistic in nature and fail to analyse the problem scientifically. Even published works lacks in many ways. This is true of Criminological work in general. The former Director of The Bureau of Police Research and Development, India, commented on the fact that “….the (criminological) research that has been done (in our country) does not display either a sense of direction or much depth”, (Gupta, 1977).

**Khan (1981)** in his book titled ‘Dacoity in Chambal Valley’ has tried to encompass various aspects and issues related to the Chambal Valley and dacoity. He touched on various issues like ecology of the region and the socio-cultural paradigm existent there, the major dacoits and dacoit gangs, the psychosocial background of the dacoits, their formation and functioning and the problem of dacoity along with some remedial measures. The author found that the jagged ravines are the distinctive feature of physical environment. Talking about the socio cultural considerations, the caste groups commonly found in Chambal Valley are Brahmans, Kshatriya and Shudra. The first two castes have remained socially, economically and politically dominant. Family structure is patriarchal and follows joint family system. Khan has described about 51 dacoits and their gangs, which were active in the Chambal Valley briefly describing the background of how each joined dacoity. Contrary to the popular conception, the majority among the recorded dacoits is not from Kshatriyas. Caste wise majority are Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Gujjars and Kachhis. In his concluding chapter the author has put down some social measures like general education, social education which will facilitate the growth of intellectual faculties of individuals, prominent role of village
panchayat\textsuperscript{1}, public opinion mobilisation, economic measures like reclamation of ravines, agriculture, as an occupation, cattle breeding, industrialization and better transport will encourage toning up of general administration. Police measures mentioned were like proper functioning of police and solving their problems related to duty.

\textit{‘Socio-Economic Development of a dacoit affected area in Chambal Valley’}, (1976), a product of Research and Development Unit of Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development surveys the problem of dacoits in its entirety. In the year 1972, Joura, a small Tehsil town in the Morena District of Madhya Pradesh, witnessed a unique event of hundreds of the dreaded dacoits of Chambal Valley voluntarily laying down their arms in the presence of Shri Jayaparakash Narayan. To consolidate the gains of the event, Mahatma Gandhi Sewa Ashram, the agency instrumental in bringing about the change of heart took up the follow up developmental work in the region.

The study made a comprehensive survey of the phenomenon of Chambal’s dacoits in all its dimensions-historical, sociological, economic and psychological. The follow up work, which was of a pilot nature, covered 23 villages in the Joura Block. In one chapter the socio-economic profile of the block has been described covering physiography, population, settlement size, soil type, agriculture, irrigation, infrastructure, transport facilitates, education facilities etc. Programs for economic development covered irrigation, land shaping animal husbandry, setting up of cottage industries. For the social infrastructure electrification, providing health facilities, educational facilities, social education and leadership training were covered. A detailed chapter is devoted on project proposal covering all accounts related matters.

\textit{“Ashraya Yojna”} is a proposal compiled by P. Somkuvar, Jail Supdt. of Madhya Pradesh for Prisoner Rehabilitation, Ravine Control and Eradication of Dacoity Menace. The objectives

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{1} Administration in rural setting
\end{footnotesize}
mentioned in the proposal are social, economic, environmental related and control of crime along with growth of economy used on agriculture and animal husbandry. The methodology adopted for the functioning of the plan involves selection of prisoners who have spent 10 years or above in jail; covering relocation of their families, leveling of the notified land, training for persons involved in reforestation of land or social forestry and training for persons who want to go in the field of growth of energy generation resources. The main benefits as a result will be help in eradication of dacoity menace, leveling of ravines in the region, better socialization of prisoners after release, savings of state funds and better utilization of labour of prisoners. The proposal tries to cover the issue of eradication of dacoity in the Chambal region with the main thrust of rehabilitation and re-socialization of prisoners after their release.

Jatar & Khan (1980) authored ‘The Problem of Dacoity in Bundelkhand and the Chambal Valley’, which deals with the perennial problem of dacoity associated with the Chambal Valley and Bundelkhand region. The book gives a descriptive account of the two regions covering different aspects like the physical environment, population, occupation and other things. It also gives a retrospect on this problem dating back 12th century as when Tomar rulers were forced out of Delhi by Prithviraj Chauhan to the 20th century dacoity patterns where dacoit gangs are found structured predominantly around weapon-power.

The book elaborately describes the menace of dacoity including the gang dynamics, the various gang activities which used to rein a state of terror in the region. The role of police covering its organizational and personal aspects, the book details the problems they face in time of duty. Some anti-dacoity efforts like using intelligence and doing encounters resulted in some arrests and property recovery which have been mentioned in the book. A full chapter has been dedicated on the different issues related to the surrender of dacoits in 1972, where the reasons for surrender and the idea of surrender have been shared. In the concluding part
of the book, the authors have discussed the queries related to permanent solution for peace after the surrender of dacoits, emphasizing that until social and economic development is taken up, the efforts won’t be apparent.

‘Societal Determinants of Deviance- A Case Study of the Dacoity System of Central India’ (Singh, 1978) was published in *Social Defence*, a quarterly journal, in July 1978, which gives review of the policies and programs in the field of prevention of crime and treatment of offenders. It deals with criminal legislation, judicial system, police, prisons, probation, and parole and after care. In the article, the scope of the paper is limited to the theoretical reviewing of social structure which creates conditions conducive to the origin, growth and continuance of dacoity system. It has also mentioned that root of dacoity in modern times may be seen in the widespread inequality and injustice characterizing the structure of rural society and the consequent feuds and conflicts over property or power. Increasing population, the social obligation to support too many non-working dependents, lack of job opportunities, social and economic backwardness and poverty force a large number of people to take to dacoity.

Other major cultural causes include traditionalism, educational backwardness, a fosse sense of self respect, spirit of revenge and rebellion, love of violence and poor societal resistance to the dacoity system.

The main object of the paper authored by R. G. Singh, *(Singh, 1978)* is to critically evaluate the role of communication in eradication of dacoity in Chambal Valley. Consequently, an attempt has been made to analyze and examine the part played by the various communication techniques in anti-dacoity campaign in this area and to suggest the measures to improvement they need.
The area of the study covered dense forests and services of Chambal in north M.P. where major concentration of dacoits was found. It consists of Gwalior, Guna, Shivpuri, Datia, Bhind and Morena district of old Gwalior Division.

Talking about the dacoity problem, the author says, since long the area of Chambal valley has been worse affected by dacoits. The normal social life was very much disrupted by them and their huge gangs. From the early British period efforts were made to deal with dacoits. But the traditional techniques of exerting pressure were found to be superficial and ineffective in society where dacoity has long penetrated in society. For this reason, the policy of persuading the dacoits to self surrender, which was once rejected in 1962, was readopted in 1972.

Coming to the main topic, there are two major aspects of communication in controlling the dacoity:

(a) Awareness of the Government & Welfare agencies with the first hand information regarding the events which usually lead a person towards dacoity. The following are the matters which have been found generally responsible for the growth of dacoity:

(i) village faction and partisanship
(ii) family feud and disturbances
(iii) disputes relating to land property
(iv) caste tensions
(v) Injustice and oppression of Patwari, Police, Shahookar\(^2\) and powerful persons of the area.

(b) To give quick information about the movement and actions of the dacoit gangs to police so that counter measures can immediately be taken up.

The remedial measures adopted so far to eradicate dacoity can broadly be grouped into three categories, namely, curative, treat mental and preventive. Doing a critical review of means of

\(^2\) Revenue Officer
communication, in traditional means, author says majority of the population lived in rural areas cut off from the winds of change. In such area the traditional means of communication like fair and festivals, Katha Kirtan, visits and gatherings were found effective. Apart from the above traditional means, contacts and visits were most powerful agents of communication in rural areas. The news was carried from village to city by the following 2 types of visitors, government agents or public workers.

The modern mass media of communication are press, cinema and radio. Press being a powerful media, keeps the public and the government informed about the different events. Besides, it also conveys the public opinion and problems to the government on one hand and communicates the government policies to general public on the other hand. Although most of them were illiterate and rate of literacy was too low, they could see and listen. Audio visual means of communication served an alternative to press for them. But the films too were related to dacoit life and used to be full of stunt and romance, hardly educational. Radio was a powerful communication media but it also didn’t give importance to programs of social reform and welfare.

In the conclusion part, author gave some suggestions to improve the situation, emphasizing on the fact that the attitude of the local people needed to be evoked so that dacoits could not find any place in society. It also highlighted on the role of local newspapers which should give due place to news items of social reform.

The paper also emphasizes on the role of films and documentary films on anti-dacoity crests which if possible should be shown on a regular basis. Regular visits by government officers and leaders should be emphasized. Exhibitions, seminars and camps of social workers and students should be organized on the problem of dacoity eradication in rural areas.

‘Dacoits of Central India- A study in sociology of deviance’, (Singh, 1979), has done a descriptive study, based on a sample of a hundred dacoits selected at random from among the
dacoits who surrendered in 1972 and who are now placed in the open prisons at Mungaoli and Laxmipur. Information regarding the demographic characteristics (age, sex and marital status), residential patterns, socioeconomic and educational background, etc of the dacoits has been collected on the basis of a predesigned schedule.

In the article, the author describes the background of the prevalence of dacoity in Northern and North-eastern regions of M.P. and the adjacent areas of U.P. and Rajasthan. Further he says, in the present century (20th century) these outlaws have managed to extend their sway over the entire rural area of Chambal and Bundelkhand including the urban hinterlands.

Talking about the pattern of dacoity, he said that a number of gangs were engaged in murder, loot and kidnapping. They not only raid dwelling houses but also looted travelers, lorry convoys and passenger buses on the highways and on the rural routes. By virtue of its power to do violence and spread terror each gang sets up its rule and exacts tribute from the people in the villages, from merchants and man of business, from contractors, from those who own buses and lorries, and so on in the area where it operates. The dacoits treat their victims and especially those who oppose them, most brutally by chopping of their noses, ears, tongues, or even their private parts, by pulling out their eyes, by cutting off their hands and legs, and hacking the body into pieces. When a new gang emerges and establishes its sway over an area, it usually makes a sudden impact by inflicting heavy devastation, by committing mass murders, by molesting women in front of their men and by razing down entire villages.

The major findings of the study was that majority of the dacoits were from M.P. especially the Chambal and Bundelkhand regions. The men under study belonged to different levels of criminality. Their status also varied widely. Describing the demographic characteristics, most were married, at an early age because of backwardness. Men who took up dacoity were generally between 15 & 20 years of age. Before they took up dacoity, most were engaged in agriculture and majorities were illiterate.
The authors (Singh and Jatar, 1980) in the beginning of the article ‘Compensation to the Victims of Dacoit Gangs in the Chambal Valley’, mentions that the problem of dacoity in the Chambal valley in central India has been popularly associated with dacoity and other forms of violent crimes. Although the offence of dacoity in the Chambal valley is in no way peculiar to any part of country, it is reported that in the Chambal Valley certain features that set it apart from those perpetrated elsewhere. In support to this statement, the authors further elaborate on this by stating a few facts. First of all, a unique feature of Chambal dacoits is the permanent or semi permanent structure of gang which is made up of members who are firmly committed to dacoity in a professional way. Secondly the offenders are proclaimed to outlaws, yet they are not socially regarded as fallen or depraved. Thirdly, although for all practical purposes the bandits at large forsake community life, they receive active popular support and supplies. Fourthly, in respect of crime specialties the bandits in these regions stand apart. Lastly, the simple inexpensive and paying technique of kidnapping for ransom has always been popular with the outlaws in the valley.

Mentioning about the research studies done in this field viz. Kapur (1960), Katare (1968), Garg (1965), Khan (1973) and Jatar and Khan (1974) have explored different aspects of the problem in the valley as well as in the adjoining area of Bundelkhand. However, the authors have emphasized that a victim centered study who have been suffering social, psychological, mental, physical and material loss for more than a century is need of the time.

Elaborating on the methodology for the aforementioned paper titled ‘Compensation to the Victims of Dacoit Gangs in the Chambal Valley’, the authors have attempted to study the compensation paid to the victims by society. The paper attempted to study the hypothesis that the measures of compensation adopted by the society are such as to be satisfactory to the victims and all concerned. The paper focused mainly on the provisions for compensation and
the type of compensation actually given. Further, the compensation paid to the police victims working in the dacoit infested area was also considered.

In the study, two districts of Bhind and Morena, Madhya Pradesh were covered. The individual respondents included 184 victims, 170 eye witnesses and 31 police officers. Three sets of schedules had been developed, pre tested and standardized for victims, eye witnesses and police officers. The data had been analyzed at Delhi University Computer Centre, using the SPSS program. Statistical tests of chi-square contingency coefficient and rank correlation had been used.

In the findings, the author said till that time (when the research was conducted) there had been no provision for compensation to the victims of crime. Even for the victims of dacoit gangs, prior to the 3rd October 1972, no such scheme was in force. According to the Government Notification, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh (Home Department Notification No. 9158/580/11B (1) dated the 3rd October 1972 victims are entitled to compensation. It is rather an ex gratia payment as a kind of help. In fact even dacoits who unconditionally surrendered to the government of MP can avail it. So, the scheme is not exactly victim-oriented. For explaining the hypothesis formulated for the study, the authors analyzed the different forms of help given by the government.

The author (Katare, 1981) in the article titled, ‘A Gloomy Decade of Dacoity in India’, has briefly given a statistical outlook to the decade of 1969 – 1978 regarding the prevalence of dacoity. Taking help from Crime in India3 he has delineated the various facts and figures which indicate the trend of dacoity. He highlighted the fact that though government has taken various conventional as well as unconventional measures to curb or contain it but all has been without much success.

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3 Annual publication of the National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India
In the year 1969 alone, there were 6,049 incidents. 11,193 incidents took place in 1977, 10,411 in 1972, 13,697 in 1974, 10,910 in 1976, 12,339 in 1977 and 11,497 in 1978. Thus dacoity has continued on its chequered career during 1969-1978, sometimes hitting the crest and sometimes touching the trough. On the basis of analyzing the data, high concentration was noticeable in the Indian heartland, comprising the states of UP, Bihar and West Bengal. The volume of dacoity per lakh of population for the decade (1969-1978) revealed that high concentration of dacoity (4.0 to 6.0) was found in UP and Bihar.

In the concluding note author calls dacoity to be a very complex phenomenon, as it has proved to be a serious evil for the last three centuries. Highlighting the 1969-1978 decade, he says that it has not only a material foundation but a regional dimension too. The noted rising tide of dacoity portrayed a gloomy social order and a deep social malady. Therefore, without eradication of the root causes efforts are bound to fail.

Another article titled, ‘A Chapter on Bundelkhand Dacoits’, (Sharma, 1974), the author has elaborated on the issue of Chambal dacoits from the perspective of an investigating officer. He has mentioned on the strategies and plans he worked out to nab the dacoits and the problems which he had to go through while he was posted in Chhatarpur, Bhopal, and MP from July 1966 to middle of September, 1967.

When the author and his officers tried to find out the hideouts and movements of dacoits, villagers and even ‘chowkidars’ or watchmen were afraid of to reveal any information. Finding this tendency, he instructed the police officers to encourage the villagers to talk about movements of the gangs in the past and then to quietly go and look up the places where exactly the gangs belted so that if in future the gang came to a particular Khoh (cane or grave) or forest, they would be able to surround and search it without the help of any local villagers. He got certain areas combed first as Shikaris do. This operation gave them close knowledge of the deep forests. He had worked on enhancing the police’s public morale and consequently
made dacoits nervous. Once the relation between police and public got better many minor
dacoits like Ram Pharan Ahir, Bhagwandas Ahir, Mangal Singh of Pooran Singh gang,
Sukhu Mali of Reghubhir Singh and Pahalwan Singh gangs were shot dead with help from
local villagers’ information.

According to his classification of 5 gangs which were prevalent in that region, gangs 4 and 5
were liquidated, gangs 2 and 3 surrendered alive till he left the district on another assignment.
The gang of Pooran Singh had already changed his area of operations to Sagar district of MP
and Jhansi of UP.

In the article on ‘Society Menace’, the author (Sen, 1985) has given a descriptive over view
of the menace of dacoity. In the introduction, he has given some back drop of the problem.

For a very long time dacoity has been a constant feature of India’s rural life. During the
interregnum between the fall of the Mughal Empire and consolidation of the British rule in
India, organized gangs of bandits merely operated freely in different parts of country. The
Thugees created havoc by strangling to death unsuspecting travelers and pilgrims and
plundering their belongings. In the 18th century different parts of India were also ravaged by
the gangs of notorious Pindaris who used to commit unspeakable barbarities on the poor
villagers. The suppression of the Pindaris took place as a result of the successful military
operations launched against them by the British Indian Govt. under Lord Hastings during the
period from 1817-1819.

Giving some facts and figures assembled from National Police Commission, the author
mentions that the numbers of dacoits have increased in the country from 6,384 in 1969 to
10,948 in 1979, an increase of 71.5% over the figures of 1969. The volume of dacoity per
lakh of population during this period rose from 1.2 to 1.8.

He further says that certain disturbing features of present day dacoities deserve special notice.
Now a day’s often the dacoits resort to the use of fire arms while committing dacoities.
Another disturbing development in this connection is that the dacoit gangs are now very often resorting to kidnapping for ransom as they find this crime less risky and more gainful. In recent years the banks are becoming very tempting targets of the professional dacoits. Another unsavory facet of the operation of the dacoits also deserves notice. In the past, the dacoit gang seldom used to dishonor woman while committing their operations, as this was considered something repayment to their moral values.

The position has now changed. He mentioned that while during his service, during supervision of many dacoity cases, he encountered that while perpetrating dacoities, they rape the females.

As the author, an IPS who was DIG (P), CID (crime), Orissa and served in Orissa, his descriptions were more Orissa-centric. He elaborated on the various aspects, as formation of dacoit gangs, investigation of dacoity cases, fake encounters, and collection of Intelligence and Village defense Parties.

In his concluding remarks, he summarizes that ultimately the success of the police operations against the dacoits will depend upon the support they get from the members of the public. In his suggestions, he emphasized that in dacoity affected areas, the police will have to function with dedication and sincerity to win the confidence of the people so that the latter will voluntarily come forward to give evidence against the criminals. In order to boost the morale of people, there should be proper recognition of the courage and bravery displayed by the villagers with generous pensions and grants to the dependents of the villagers killed in the encounters with the dacoits.

The author (Solunke, 2000) in his article, ‘Dacoity Crime: Necessity of Teamwork’, has emphasized on detection of property crime to be a matter of joint venture. Detection of sensational property crime like dacoity is still a difficult task in policing. Dacoity is a very sensational property crime as it involves much of violence and terror. The terror created by
this crime is most of the times so excruciating that the localities affected by this crime remain panic-stricken till the offence is detected.

Talking from the investigating body perspective, he mentioned that police have to undertake joint efforts both for the prevention as well as detection of this crime. For its prevention, police have to identify vulnerable areas, deploy effective patrolling, organise ‘Nakabandis’ or vigilance to check the movements of the criminals and to prepare a scheme to systematically exercise policing. The involvement of the public in the prevention of this crime is very essential as it sends proper message in the people regarding the operational preparedness of the police. It creates conducive atmosphere to reduce public fear and to muster public confidence to fight the menace of dacoity.

In a nutshell, literature on Chambal dacoity speaks about the dacoity in general, the gang dynamics etc. These studies and reports only reveal the dacoity from general point of view. None of the authors explains the changing pattern of dacoity. The subsequent chapter will highlight the changing pattern and how it takes the form of an organized crime.