CRIME AMONG THE WADDARS
CHAPTER - IV
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Every society irrespective of its development, size and composition requires some rules to regulate the behaviour of its members. Every society is an amalgamation of both homogeneous and heterogeneous people. Homogeneous people are those who always work for the betterment of the society and addressed as the ideal citizens of the society. Where as heterogeneous people are those who always work as bottleneck to the smooth functioning of the society, and more over people of this category are badly hated by all and are termed as antisocial elements. Antisocial elements have their own specific qualities. These qualities will inturn makes them to commit more and more crime related things. These antisocial elements emerges from socially, economically and culturally backward castes. As a result
earning their lively bread is a difficult task for them and inorder to have this they indulges in all sorts of antisocial activities and disorganizes the entire society in course of time.

Every advanced country as well as every developing country in the world today has to face the growing problem of crime and delinquency. No society or community is free from this growing social problem. It varies in growth rate, degree and the pattern of committing. Through the centuries many criminologists, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists and in general, social scientists have debated heavily over the meaning and concept of crime. Before proceeding with the discussion of crime and criminality among the Waddars, the researcher would like to mention a few definitions of the term crime.

Etymologically the word crime is borrowed from the Italian 'crimen' which
means 'charge' or 'offence'. The Oxford English Dictionary (Vol.II, 1970:1172) defines crime as "an act punishable by law, as being forbidden by statute or injurious to the public welfare." While discussing about crime and punishments among the Hindus, the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (Vol.IV, 1935:283) mentioned that "most of the terms designating 'crime' or 'offence' in Sanskrit are essentially religious in their nature, and no strict line between sins and punishable offences has ever been drawn." The Concise Encyclopedia of Crime and Criminal (Scott, Hard, 1961:84-85) defines 'crime' as "an act or default which prejudices the interest of the community and is forbidden by law under pain of punishment."

Gillin, (1945:9) is of the opinion that crime is an "act that has been shown to be actually harmful to society, or is believed to be socially harmful by a group of people
that has the power to enforce its belief and that places such an act under the ban of positive penalties." While discussing the sociological meaning of crime Reckless (1940:9-10) says that "Crime is fundamentally a violation of conduct norms which contain sanctions, no matter whether found in the criminal law of a modern state or merely in the working rules of special social groups."

Observing the Economic and Social Aspects of Crime in India, Haikerwal (1934:98) says, "Crime or delinquency implies such behaviour of the individual which interferes with the order of human relationships, which society regards as a primary condition for its existence. Thus crime is due to mal-adjustment between the individual and the group which creates a critical social situation." Sethna, (1964:129-130) in his book "Society and the Criminal" discussing about the meaning and
nature of crime, defines crime as "an act or omission, sinful or non sinful, which a society or a state has thought fit to punish under its laws for the time being in force. The different acts or omissions, so punishable under the law, are known as crimes." Modern criminologists like 'Sutherland' characterizes crime as a symptom of social disorganization. This is because of the fact that the disorganized individuals will emerge as criminals later. Further, penologists are of the opinion that crime is a social phenomenon which is not approved by the society.

From the above discussion it is clear that crime is a forbidden act which is punishable by law. Crime is linked with social or societal norms (along with ethics and morality and hence with religious sin). And crime as a sociological phenomenon changed through the ages and will continue to change in the course of time. Therefore,
what may be crime today will not be the same tomorrow or Topsy tery. To substantiate this time concept while discussing the crime and delinquency in chamber’s Encyclopedia (Vol. VI, 1950:230) it stated “Because ideas and circumstances change, behaviour which is criminal at the time may be lawful at another and a crime may be considered as an act or omission opposed to the welfare of the state and forbidden by law under pain of punishment.” And thus crime is defined not only for a particular time but also for a particular region, what may be in one place or country, may not be regarded as a crime in another place or country. In support of this regional factor Encyclopedia Britannica (Vol.VI, 1969:754) explains “conceptions of crime vary so widely from culture to culture and change with time such an extent that it is extremely difficult to name any specific act universally regarded as criminal.”
Crime in India is bewildering in its variety. Bayley (1969:106) referring to region-wise diversity of crime, says, "it is the richness of social and geographical conditions that gives to Indian crime, its incredible and fascinating heterogeneity. It is unduly concentrated in the urban areas of any country rather in rural areas."

It may be recalled here that the Waddars-the subject of this study—are also urban dwellers and were treated as Ex-Criminal tribes at ones(Kennedy: 1985).

STUDIES PERTAINING TO EX-CRIMINAL TRIBE OF WADDARS

When an individual commits crime, it is never tolerated and he is looked down upon as a criminal. When a section of the people commits crime, it is viewed as a threat to the entire society. Crime becomes a matter of popular concern and it is felt that private and public property is in danger and threat. For non-criminal tribes criminal
activities are not the approved means of livelihood. But certain tribes who have traditionally committed criminal activities for their livelihood and who accept such activities as their way of life, were called as the criminal tribes. They started criminal activities as a career and they were professionally organized groups. Then crime has become a growing business and it is fed by the revenues from anti-social and illegal means. Such criminal gangs or criminal class or criminal tribes pose problems not only to individuals but also to the society and the nation. The problem of crime by the criminal tribes had attracted the attention of the administrators as well as social scientists. The Government of India under the British rule ordered for enquiry by some police and law enforcing authorities (Seksena, 1975:1). Deferent police and enforcing authorities took this problem seriously and conducted
some studies. Some of these studies may be mentioned as follows: (1) Major Gunturope, E.J. "Notes on criminal tribes" (Bombay, 1881), (2) Sir Mark Cubbon, commissioner of Mysore (Madras Presidency, 1856), on "Reports on some criminal gangs", (3) Mr. Hunt (1895), superintendent of police, Madras, an inquiry about a "criminal tribe of Madras Presidency", and (4) Naidu (1904) "The criminal tribes of India" in three volumes. He was also a railway police inspector in Madras Presidency. Horatio Rose, (1979) while editing, "a glossary of the tribes and casts of Punjab and North west Fortier province, has mentioned about a few criminal tribes. At this juncture it is quite essential to discuss the studies conducted on various criminal tribes and denotified communities. Bruce George (1968) has studied on the cult of Thuggees, Bonington (1933) on the Bhantus,
Saleatore (1935) conducted studies on the wild tribe like Kiratas, Sabaras, Bedara. Bhargava (1934) on the "Economics and social aspects of crime in India". Bhowmick (1963) on the Lodhas, Shersingh on Sansis (1965) and Sikligar (1966) of Punjab, Shaa (1967) on denotified communities, Biswas (1960) studied the ex-criminal tribes of Delhi state namely Nat, Kajars, Bhekuts, Bausias and others, Haikerwal (1934) conducted an elaborate study on the criminal tribe like Bhamatas, Tagoos, Soonarias, Minas, Haburas and Baurias and Kapadia (1952), has covered almost all the criminal tribes in his article "Criminal Tribes". Apart from all these studies a recent study was undertaken by Simhadri (1979) on "Yerukulas of Andhrapradesh" which brings out the total picture of the ex-criminal tribes in India. In general, quite a number of studies were undertaken by sociologists, Criminologists, anthropologists and law
enforcing authorities over the problem of ex-criminal tribes. But there is no substantial and independent study on the Waddars. Of course, here and there, incidentally references are made about the Waddars.

Under the British rule, in the then Madras Presidency, a few police officers conducted inquiry on criminal tribes including the Waddars. They have taken the Waddars into account. Naidu (1907) also conducted as inquiry. His report has been published under the title "the criminal tribes of India", in three volumes. In this work Naidu has dealt with the Waddars as one of the criminal tribes and mentions that these Waddars were once registered under the Criminal Tribes Act (XXVII of 1871) in Punjab, where they had their headquarter at Karnal (1907:72).

Ramunujam, (1979), a retired officer of the Indian Police Service in his book
"Prevention and detection of crime", has discussed about the activities of important ex-notified tribes and their modus operandi. He has made a reference to the Waddars in it.

Raghavaiah also has made a reference about Waddars (168:179-18) and 211-212) as trader nomads and criminal nomads.

In the state of Andhra Pradesh, in accordance with the list of ex-criminal tribes, notified under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, upto the introduction of the Habitual Offender Act of 1952, there were 59 criminal tribes (cited in simhadri, 1979: 44-45). Among them the Waddars (No.5 in the list) are one of the ex-criminal tribes.

Sudh Srivastava, in her unpublished Ph.D. Thesis entitled "Personality patterns of children of criminal tribe of Uttar Pradesh" had given a separate list of 32 criminal tribes.
TYPE OF CRIME AND WAYS OF COMMITTING THEM

Crime in Indian society is not only a fact of life, but also for some communities, it is a way of life. While discussing the criminal behaviour, Reckless (1971:41) states, "Finally, criminal and delinquent behaviour is seldom a way of life. The most obvious example of criminal behaviour as a way of life. The most obvious example of criminal behaviour as a way of life would be, of course, the action of the criminal tribes of India". From the above statement of Reckless, it becomes clear that crime is an inseparable act among the members of the criminal tribe. The families of criminal tribes are the training grounds for their women and children in the profession of crime. One of the functions of the family was and still continues to be, to teach the tricks of trade (crime) from childhood. Haikerwal (1934:115-116) states, "the first step taken in this direction was to fasten a
piece of string to a silver rupee and press it into the child's little throat so that it would form a socket which was gradually depended until in time it became large enough to enable to show away the coins and jewels he had stolen, the pocket being inside his throat was not likely to be detected." While committing crime, different criminal tribes adopt or follow different modes. Different taboos, rituals practiced, separate methods and peculiarities. This specialization has clearly been noted by many authors. Haikerwal has observed: "Bhamptas steal neither during day-time nor from the body of a person asleep. The Tagoos of Karnal, the minas of Shahjanpur in the Punjab give plenty to all those persons who come to them for alms" (1934:143-163). Kapadia's study on the "Criminal Tribes of India" furnishes detailed information about the nature and modes of the criminality among various criminal tribes of India.
He explains, "The Bhamptas are railway thieves 'par excellence'; the sansis of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan are more prone to dacoity and distinguished by special feature of pelting stones, the Kalian considers robbery as a duty and right sanctioned by descent. The Fadna are swindlers who pretend to turn metals into gold. The Gopalas engage themselves in cattle stealing. The Manggarudis are cattle prisoners and cattle, goats and sheep lifers, the Kolis commonly steal only bullocks and buffaloes. The Chapperbands are known for pilfering and petty larceny, counterfeiting coins. Lamanis kidnap women and children. The Kaikadis commit robbery and dacoity and disguise themselves as Jungams (Lingayat priests), fortune tellers, medicine men or shepherds to pick-up information. The chandrawedi will often disguise himself as a woman and travel in
the third class women's carriage and carry on his trade" (Kapadia. 1952:11-112).

Biswa being an anthropologist has studied the criminal activities like, gambling, begging, theft, Prostitution and addiction to liquor among the Nats, Kanjars, Bhekuts, Baurias and Bajigars of Delhi state (Biswa, 1960:93-110).

Sethna has made a special reference to criminal habits among a few criminal tribes. He states, "the chain Mallahs are clever pickpockets, the Breads of Bombay were noted for highway robberies, the Ghantichors of Deccan were expert bundle thieves, the Bhars and Pasis belonged to United Provinces, and commit burglaries and dacoities and sometimes commits murder if interfered with by their victim. The Bhils mainly subsisted on theft of crops" (1964:102-109). Ramanujum while suggesting the prevention and detection of crime, gave certain clues to curb the criminality among the criminal
gangs (ex-notified tribes). He says, "the Banjaras are expert cattle and sheep lifters as well as child lifters. The Brwars are expert thieves and dacoits and operate at fairs, pilgrims centers around festivals, but never resort to violence. The Dome in general and Maghiya Doms in specific and their favorite forms of crimes were burglary, highway robbery and dacoity, The Kepmaris or Thogamala Korwars of South India were specialized in each theft from post offices, banks, treasuries and business counters. The Scorpions, the very sign of scorpions was used for secret correspondence and mutual identification while operating in criminal acts like black mail, car and motor thefts and even gun-running" (1975:472-514).

Fuchs (1973:124-131) also mentions about the so-called criminal castes, Thugs and Pindaris of British administered provinces in India. Further he says that Sansis clam Rajput origin and were successful field
robbers and thieves. Chapperbands of Bijapur district, (Karnataka) were known as Fake coiners.

At present Waddars are a Scheduled Castes. Since they came under this category their involvement in committing crime has been reduced significantly. Yet one of my senior informants told me that these Waddars in the past were notoriously known for committing crimes particularly house robbery, dacoity and other things. Keeping in these tendencies in mind the informant told me about their modes operandi that the Waddars used to prefer such time which is more convenient and essay for them to rob the things accordingly the Waddars used to go in groups for the above said robbery and dacoity during the following times. (a) after sunset and before 11 p.m. (b) from 12 midnight to early 4 a.m. (c) 4 a.m. to 6 a.m. At the same time apart from committing these crime they were also
experts in pocket picking, gang robbery and lifting sheep's and goats etc.

From this discussion, it is clear that there are different types of crimes, different ways of committing them in different times and specialization or well-known habit of criminal activities. To add to this criminality of Waddars their women folk and the children also contribute their might. Here a brief picture is given about the involvement of women in committing criminal activities. Researchers observation supports the view of involvement by women folk of the Waddars who have gone to Bombay to practice prostitution remain these for a long period to pave the way for burglary.

This is because of the fact that they with the interaction of earning more and more wealth went to Bombay. In the initial stages they carry out the business of prostitution. When they did not get the expected wealth started glorying men of law
morals to commit offences like murder, dacoity and such other antisocial activities. Apart from this what all they learnt there is simply passed it on to their children and they supervised their children and even helped them to commit offences of greater type. To support this statement we seen their the women of Hakkipikki who are well versed in the art of beggary and stealing ornaments also.

Every body knows that committing crimes or offences require the association of many people. Ramanujam(1975:468) opines that the offenders and criminals of first order were helped by many people among them the association of a women folk is noteworthy. These women are specialist locating the houses of wealthy people. Since they go as beggars in the villages and by the virtue of visiting each and every house they will be knowing who is rich and poor and accordingly
feed the information to their men folk who in turn go there loot and robs things later.

The women folk of Waddar community were also not free from this menace in the past. They were the expert in sooth saying. As a result they used to there then the people also telling so many things in name of some supernatural powers. This is how they were working in coordination with their men in committing offences. Once they succeeded in dacoity or in burglary they enjoy it with all colour and pump. The association of woman folk in the committing offences is not of recent origin. It is women who drill all sorts of evil notions almost money, wealth and other luxurious items and are to be earned fast does not matter even are takes a wrong path in earning them. Specially in all criminal communities the family members teaches their children to become successful criminals. Since this present study deals with Waddars who are specialists ones in
committing Sevier offences. Kennedy (1985) opines that though all Waddars are criminals. But are of their classification such as Mannuwaddars (doing earth work) are the specialists in house breaking, stealing field produce, opening grain pits and petty thefts. They rarely commit more serious offences.

Bandiwaddars are expert burglars. They also indulge in sheep lifting and petty thefts. Occasionally they commit dacoity or robbery.

Kalluwaddars are said to be least criminal of all the subdivisions though some, now again take to burglary and sheep lifting etc. They do not as a rule commit serious crime. My informants told me that Ghatti Waddars are credited with being the most criminal of the class. They commit house or highway dacoity, robbery, house breaking, sheep lifting, theft etc. Their women and children are also gives to
pilfering and attend markets and fairs for the purpose. But this category of Waddars were not found in my area of study. Though the Waddars from the beginning involved themselves in crime and crime related issues, it is a wonder to know that in the last ten years not even a single case has been booked on them by the police people with regard to their crime and crime related activities.

According to Naidu (1907:62-72), Waddars are not trailing behind in training their children and youngsters in their profession. The Headman of Waddars in his family looks forward to make a separate dwelling for his son, but before that, he confirms himself whether his son is capable of doing so in his criminal career. After being trained in the family and within the community an Waddars youngster gets married, separates from the tent of his parents and starts an independent living.
The usual criminal activities of Waddars as told to the researcher by the informants are the following.

**CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES WADDARS**

**GAMBLING**

The instinct for gambling is universal. From time immemorial man has gambled in a bid to acquire wealth in a quick and early manner. Throughout the history of civilization there is evidence of man's propensity to gamble. But all religions and faiths have held gambling to be immoral. Because, gamblers use all sorts of tricks to win and it can be assumed that fair dealing in gambling is rare. It should be noted that gambling places and dens or houses are the centers of all evil deeds as people from every walk of life assemble there. Pace and Styles (1975:106-107) directly link gambling with street crimes. They observe gambling is an organized crime which is traditionally associated with criminal confederacy.
Criminologists like Don Gibbons, Walter Reckless and others have viewed that gambling causes mischiefs in society and their studies reveal that, those who are engaged in gambling as a business are identified as criminal elements.

The main occupation of Waddars is gambling. They depend upon gambling business. They are engaged in many types of gambling operations. Out of those, three important and lucrative ones are given here. The researcher likes to discuss the nature and operation of these three types of gambling in Dharwad district.

**ROTATING WHEEL**

This is popularly known as 'chkra'. This is a king of wheel rotating on its centre. The wheel bears the numbers from one to eight. Bidders or gamblers are asked to put money on the numbers.

A rectangular shape table normally of six feet length and four feet breadth or a
push-cart usually meant for the purpose of selling vegetables and fruits is being used for the frequenting between stations. While making such trips they always look around luggage’s of the co-travelers. Normally Waddars move with small gangs of four to five persons and one of them quietly lifts the bag and other belongings. They are better acquainted with nearby routes and the movement; they are approaching stations, without hesitation jump from moving trains and run away with valuable bags and belongings of the passengers. This is the common complaint against Waddars by railway police and station authorities with whom the researcher has made enquiries in Dharwad district.

THEFT

While discussing about thieving habit of Waddars, it is essential to quote the observation made by Ramanujam (1975:497), "In the commission of theft, their favourite
method is the 'Anti Bazi' or 'Anta Mari', that is the art of removing coins and currency notes from a pile by sleight of hand. They visit petty banks, shops or post offices and offer a hundred rupee note for change. If notes of particular denominations are offered they ask for other denominations and during the transaction, they remove one or two extra notes and walk away." This is the common experience of shop keepers and others. Waddars will go in group to any shop and purchase whatever they want but while paying for it, usually one or two will return without paying. In case the shop owner demands, the whole group argues with their 'big mouth' stating that all had paid promptly and thus they always create a scene. Most of the shop keepers and others are extra cautious because of the mischief played by Waddars around their camps and elsewhere.
In the foregoing pages of this chapter the researcher has discussed about the concept of crime, its nature and extent as also the ways and means adopted to commit it. In order to substantiate the criminal behaviour of the Waddars, the researcher used two different interview schedules, one with the police and the other with the neighbours.

**Opinion of the police About Waddars in committing crime**

As it is already mentioned, Waddars live in eight localities in different towns and cities of Dharwad district. In all these eight places eight police stations were chosen for the interview of the police. These eight police stations were selected from different towns and cities in which the localities of Waddars directly came under their jurisdiction. In each police station of five places ten respondents were selected. In three other places the number varied due to more population. In Dharwad it
is twenty, in Hubli and Gadag it is fifteen each. Thus totally one hundred police officials were interviewed. While selecting the respondents from each police station, the staff included from the station in-charge, i.e. the cadre of police sub-inspector to the police constable. The researcher avoided formal and official interview with the police. This enabled him to extract free, open, individual and unbiased opinion about the involvement of Waddars in criminal activities.

No police personnel interviewed denied the involvement of Waddars in criminal activities. There were differences of opinion about Waddars engaging in prohibited activities like gambling and other petty offences. When they were asked about the types of crimes committed by Waddars most of the police officials mentioned about gambling of different types, shop lifting, bag lifting, pick pocketing, etc. But almost
all respondents were unanimous regarding non-involvement of Waddars in heinous offences like murder, dacoity and other similar offences. They were of the opinion that Waddars are always engaged in petty offences for the purpose of small gains, but without involving in revengeful activities which lead to murder and other cognizable offences.

Gambling is the most potent type of illegal activity undertaken by waddars. Out of the one hundred police respondents a majority, i.e., 90% of them agreed regarding the involvement of waddars in this offence. Two percent of the police respondents discharged and 8% expressed their ignorance. About shop lifting and bag lifting, the police were of the opinion that, still the cult is found among waddars. Eighty-five percent for shop lifting and 83% for bag lifting have been opined respectively. But pick pocketing and thieving was stated to be
gradually declining among the Waddars. But still their involvement cannot be ignored. The police say that pick-pocketing depends always on the circumstances. But most Waddars are associated with the professional and habitual pick pockets. 68% agreed for pick pocketing and 59% agreed for thieving habit among Waddars. Anyway, street fighting is also common and still continues. Waddars are basically engaged in gambling business and it always carried out on streets and roadsides. A lot of money transaction and bidding or high stakes will be there in gambling operation. Waddars always try to hoodwink others. They use all sorts of tricks to cheat the people. Thus, it leads to frustration among the people who lose their money. Between these rise and fall or gain and loss, naturally frustration is the potent cause for fighting within the gambling operations. This is how the police viewed it 81% of them agreed regarding the
involvement of Waddars in street by the police. Waddars, while purchasing, selling or engaging in any social interaction, always try to cheat others and create a scene out of it. For this offence, 72% of the police agreed.

It if interesting to not that a majority of police officials disagreed on the involvement of Waddars in cognizable offences. Murder, dacoity or such other serious types of crimes and involvement of waddars in these are strongly denied by the police. They are of the opinion that, Waddars commit all sorts of crimes, but are not involved in committing any murder or serious dacoity. Such type of heinous offence which lead to culpable homide and other such crimes are not to be seen among Waddars. That is why the police hardly accept and strongly deny regarding these types of offences committed by the Waddars.
It is true that Waddars purchase and sell smuggled goods. The articles brought by them are the smuggled ones and that is why they can make great profits. Many of the materials like clothes, wrist watches etc. owned by them are from the black markets (chor bazaars).

From this discussion, it is clear that the above mentioned crimes are commonly committed by the waddars and that the police also observed them.

Further, discussing the criminality among the Waddars the police are the opinion that, there are certain causative factors which prompt Waddars into criminal activities. These opinions expressed by the police were in response to the query of the researcher. The police gave a number of reasons for Waddars being involved in such criminal activities.
Because of these possible reasons, the Waddars are engaged in criminal activities and are such a life.

The police also said that because the Waddars have no other sources of income to earn a living, they are forced to commit crime. 77% of the police agreed for this statements were unaware of any specific reasons as the cause for the crimes of Waddars.

The Waddars have continued to carry out such type of illegal activities through the ages. It is traditionally practiced and continues to be carried out from generation to generation. This is how 80% of the total respondents felt as to the cause of crime among the Waddars. 13% disagreed with this reason and 7% of them said they do not know. However, there is not much dispute over the reason, saying that such a type of practice is passed on by the parents to their offspring.
Police observed that there is no settled profession for them. A majority of them, i.e. 83%, agreed for this reason, 9% did not agree and 8% said they did not know. For this reason most of the police respondents agree and supported it. The Waddars do not have definite business or job. They go on changing their habits and professions. This is what the police observed on the above stated reason.

Due to lack of trust in the waddar by other communities, nobody takes them into confidence. Consequently they are not provided with a job or opportunities to earn their livelihood. This has made them to indulge in criminal activities. 74% of police agreed for this reason and 12% disagreed whereas 14% said don’t know. The societal attitude towards the Waddars is also one of the causative factors prompting them to commit crime.
These are the opinions of the police towards criminality among the waddars, gained from their personal experience and professional interaction with them. Many times, these respondents have acted as law enforcing authority in raiding and preventing the gambling operations of the waddars. Sometime the waddars were caught in one or the other criminal acts and such other police apprehensions. In addition to these common crimes, they are also involved in other types of offences. Some of the police personnel were of the opinion that the Waddars also engaged in smuggling foreign goods like tape recorders. Cassettes, watches, cameras and other such goods. Some of the Waddars were acting as receivers and escorts in purchasing and disposing of the stolen articles. By undertaking gambling and such other socially despicable ways of earning, the Waddars have established contacts with all sorts of
criminals connected with underworld activities. By association and cooperation with them other criminal activities are also being carried out by the waddars.