

The ethnohistory and socio-economic status of the Berad: A Denotified Tribe of Maharashtra, India

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Introduction:

The word 'Berad' is a degenerate term of 'Bedar'. The word 'Bedar' is assimilation of two words i.e. 'Be' and 'Dar'. 'Be' means without and 'Dar' means fear and etymologically the term 'Bedar' means without fear. It is informed that the word 'Berad' is a corrupt pronunciation of the word 'Bedar' by the upper caste Hindus and other communities people of Kolhapur and Sindhudurg District of Maharashtra. It is said the term 'Bedar' which derived from the Kanada term 'beda' means hunter. While in Marathi the word 'Bedaru' means hunting. As per the Berad people the term 'Berad' is coined with two words i.e. 'Be' means with out and 'Rad' means crying. Etymologically the word 'Berad' means without crying. Generally people said Berad never cry means it is a very strong and hardworking community. Colonel Meadows Taylor in his account 'Story of My Life' speaks of them as far superior to Bhils, Gonds and such classes.

The Berad community is considered as one of the fourteen Vimukta Jati and Nomadic Tribes (VJNT) of Maharashtra who is enlisted in OBC category in the Central list. They are mainly found in Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Gujrat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, etc. Earlier they were 'notified' as being 'Born Criminal' along with other more than 150 tribes across India territory during the British rule under the several version of 'Criminal Tribe Acts of 1871'. After the independence of India, some sort of imperative measures were taken to enrich the quality of life of socio-economically underprivileged people. To achieve this goal, a social engineering was developed by the scholars of India under the leadership of Indian Government. As a part of this process, the people who had been socio-economically disadvantaged were put under different social categories such as the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) to get the Government provided facilities.

The Berad, a hunter-gatherer community of Bombay presidency was among such notified communities who had declared as a criminal tribe in whole of the Province through the circular No.4583/2 dated 16th August 1929 by the British, mentioning due to inclination towards unlawful activities. After independence, the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 was repealed by the habitual offenders Act, in 1952 and all the notified communities including Berad tribe were de-notified (Vimukta Jati). In the post independent era, in some of the states the De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic tribes were included under the list of BCs/OBCs, SCs, STs to provide constitutional safeguard and socio-economic upliftment while in some other States this tribes have not been included in any of these categories rather these are kept aside as 'De-notified Tribes' (DNTs), Nomadic Tribes (NTs), Semi-nomadic tribes (SNTs) and Vimuktia Jati those have not been able to take advantage of affirmative development action programmes launched by the Union and State from time to time due to illiteracy and ignorance. As a result these communities continue to be the most disadvantaged and the most vulnerable section among the Indian communities.

Historical Background:

According to the Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency, Kolhapur district, 1886, the founder of the tribe a 'vyadh' or hunter named Kanada a great worshipper of Shiv. 'As per the local legend, the founder of their tribe was Kannaya (a fowler and hunter), a devout worshipper of God Shiva. Please with his devotion, Shiva and his wife Parvati appeared to him and offered him a choice of boons. Kannaya asked Shiva and Parvati, to make him and his descendants excellent shots and to make his and their land grow corn without much labour and water. Shiva granted his prayer –accordingly all Berads were good marksmen who lived by hunting, fowling and growing only rabi crops which require neither much water nor much labour' (People of India, Maharashtra, Vol -XXX, Part.1, p.198-219). In different Gazetteers of Kolhapur, Solapur and Belgaum the term Berad is mentioned in different names such as Beduru, Biadaru and Bedar. They associate their name with the Maharshi Valmiki, Bedar Kannappa, and Eklavya as their caste fellow. It seems that the original ancestors of the group were Pindaris. However, some claim that their ancestors were Tirole Kunbis.

This Sothorn India group of people came into Decan under the chief Kallappa Naik early in the sixteenth century and settled at Adhoni and Dhabala in the Raichur Duab. Considaring the political advantage of Krishna Raylu, the king of Vijayanagaram, and Ismail Adil Shah, the Sultan of Bijapur empire dispute area the Berads raided and plundered the surrounding districts. The Berads seem to have come to Kolhapur from Belgaum under a chief or naik Guddappa and settled at the village of Kuldini. Guddappa gathered a large band of Berads and committed gang robberies in surrounding districts (Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Kolhapur District, 1886 Vlo. XXIV, pp104). Colonel Meadows Taylor in his account 'Story of My Life' speaks of them as far superior to Bhils, Gonds and such classes.

Bahirji Naik one of the faithful spy of Maharaj Chhatrapati Shivaji for whom Shivaji won so many battles very easily with the Mughal, empire, Sultanate of Golkonda and Sultanate of Bijapur belonged to Ramoshi community. However the local Berads of Chandgad consider Bahirji Naik as their community fellow. At the time of Maharaj Chhatrapati Sihivaji the port of Pargad, Kalanandigad, Belgaum came under the rule of Maratha.

The bravest Pam Naik helped Sikandar Adil Shah, the last of the Bijapur Sultans, to put up restrain against Aurangzeb. As a matter of honour, the Sultan offered him a best jagir and bestowed the titles "Gajag Bahirand Gaddi Bahari Bahadur". His successor, Pid Naik Bahari strongly resisted the the power of Aurangzeb and defeted the imperial forces in the Pitched battle. Pid Naik introduced many reforms during his 31 years rule (1695-1726 A.D.). Most important among them was shifted the seat of government from Vakingira to Shorapur. The Boya Chief of Pulivendakonda and the Palaegars of Kotakonda- Kappatralla belong to the same hunting group. Gradually the power of Shorapur Nayak Rajas decline due to internal conflicts and mal-administration. Finally they merged with the Nizams of Hyderabad, whom they acknowledged as their suzerain lords, paying an annual tribute of 1, 45,000 rupees. As the Musalman power declined, the Beydur chiefs maintained their position, and though nominally tributary to the Peshwas, never performed actual service. If their district collections were interfered with, they plundered the Peshwa's country till the interference was withdrawn (Meadows Taylor, 1920, p.226)

The East India Company arrived to India at the port of Surat 1608 A.D with the aim of trading of cotton, silk, tea, etc. and within few years got *farman* (Royal order) to establishment of a factory at Surat and Gradually the company flanged its area for extort the huge resources of our country by establishing industries all over the country specially the feudatory States of coastal areas in Bombay, Calcutta and Madrash. Accordingly they stared intervening politically and captured one after another feudatory States by treaty and wars, imposing fine, and enforcing laws etc. Major D.C Graham, the first political superintendent of Kolhapur mentioned in his statistical report on Kolhapur which was duly forwarded to England in 1854 that In 1765 Rani Jijabai failed to defend her Kolhapur State from the British attack. Hence, Rs. 7,50,000 fine was imposed by the Company and agreement of establishment of a factory at Kolhapur in the choice of East India Company singned on 12 Januray, 1766. The decline of the princely States in Deccan due to internal conflict, poor administration made easy for the East Indian Company to extend their dynasty over Bomby presidencay and adjacent areas. They established train routes, and extend road facility, trading post, hill station like Amboli, and for safeguard their treasury and to maintain law and orders over the administrative areas and defend the rebels gradually incase its military power. Various cantonments like Belgaum were established in their administrative Head quater to reserve the regiment. The continuous political interfere of British and inhuman treatment, heavy taxation, exploitation, deprivation, imposing law and power, and irritating British overlordship made fuming in the local people of Bombay Presidency.

The numerous Berads revolted against the British and scarified their life during 1820 to 1942. Under the Peshwa, the village of Chikaddine about 12 miles north of Belgaum was the centre of a small Berad state. At the time of the British conquest of the country in l817 they had a strong organization under a naik or chief (Bombay Gazetteer Karnataka, Belgaum 1987, p.164). During that time the Berads or Naikas of Gokak, Pachapur regions of Karnataka were also upraised. In the early years of British rule they caused some trouble, but were reduced to order in 1820. The Great reveler Umaji Naik (1820-1831), who upraised against the British Empire, was a Ramoshi and this riot was known as '*Ramosha Ka Band*' (Interview taken from Dattarti Nagoji Naik, Dukkadwadi village on 02/08/2018). The Berads belive that Umaji Naik was form their community which is called 'Ramoshi-Berad' and they feel proud to the service and dignity of Umaji Naik.

At the same time the Berads fought in the great revolt of Kittur Channamma and Sangoli Rayanna in Karnataka in 1824-1829 to retrieve supremacy of Kittur from the British to maintain the sovereign which is still commemorated during the Kittur Utsava. In 1829 there was a great Bedar outbreak under a famous leader named Rajappa Sangoli (Bombay Gazetteer Karnataka, Belgaum 1987, pp 164), 290 Berads were captured as prisoners and among the imprisoned 19 Berads were publicly executed at Mudhol and Halagali

for showing their portest aginst disarmament Act of 1857 AD . Raja Venkappa Nayak, the last ruler of Nayak Dynasty of Shurpur, Dist. Gulbarga in Karnataka rebelled against the East India Company in 1857-1858 A.D. and accepted the death, Vasudev Balwant Phadake (1870-1880) also revolted against Britsih with the help of Berads like Daulati Naik.

Coming to recent history the turbulent and restless spirit of the Bedars was manifested in the Belgaum District in 1895 when they got out of hand and openly defied the law roaming the country in organized gangs of dacoits and fearlessly resisting all efforts to capture them. Measures on a large scale had to be undertaken with a view to the total and final extermination of these organized bands. A large armed police force was drafted into the disturbed area and the military were also requisitioned but owing to the nature of the country and the proximity of Native States little headway was made for sometime. Later, the offer of large rewards ultimately brought about the capture of some of the ringleaders. This broke the back of the organization and in a few months all the gangs had been brought to book, but not without loss to the police, of whom two of the Belgaum force, two of Sangli and one from Kurundvad met their death, two others being mutilated. Eight villagers were also killed by the Berads including two ' informares' and two were mutilated. Three Berads were shot by the police; over 200 were captured for dacoity, murder, etc., of whom a large number were sentenced to lengthy terms of imprisonment. Many receivers of stolen property were successfully dealt with, and steps were taken against certain rich land-holders who were conclusively proved to have harboured proclaimed offenders (The Crmimnal Classes, 1909, Bombay Presidency p.12-13).

Earlier days, they lead nomad way of life due to that posses less productive assets and almost no land in their hand, so scarcity of food led them to do more gang and highway robbery, dacoity, crop stealing, cattle lifting, burglary, petty thefts, killing of sahuikars (middile man), looting of treasury etc. To rid out from the situation, punished to the offenders, maintained law and order, more over to control the rebel communities the British Goverment declared the Berads of Bijapur and Belgaum districts as criminal offenders first in 1916, and further they Berads of whole Bombay Province were notified as criminal tribe through the Circular No.4583/2 dated 16th August 1929. These laws were enacted as crime was considered a 'hereditary' profession and this enactment of law and the suspect working nature of police created a social stigma among others surrounding communities. If any anti-social elements were happen, then they were arrested with out warrant. By virtue of this law, their settlements were kept in police sevelinc, registration of all members of such group were mandatory, attendance were taken at odd hours and issued identification passes to them. Hence, some of the Berads who were not interested to adopt crime as an occupation but by virtue of the said Act and lack of proper occupation dragged towards unlawful acitvites to fulfill the hunger. On the other hand the British government introduced reformatory schools to detain the children of crimanl tribe of 6-18 year age from their parents in the name of providing better education. Even they were shifted from thier original precincts to resettled aeras in the name of livelihood extention programme and reformation where the labour forces of the male and female members were extorted through productive works at nominal wages. Finally after indepence the Criminal tribe Act was totally repealed from all over India on 31st August, 1952 and there were denotified.

Migration of Berad Community:

It is assumed that the Berads are originally migrated from Tamilnadu to Andhra Pardesh and after that from Andhra Pardesh to Karnataka and further migrated from Karnataka to Maharashtra and settled in the southern boarder areas of Kolhapur district like Chadgad, Gadinglaj, Ajra, Kagal and Sirol blocks. A part from this area, they also found in the southern part of Sangli District and Northern part of Solapur district, western part of Chandgad i.e. Sindhudurg district, Belagum, Gujrat, Madhyapradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Tamilnadu etc. In Karnatak they are called as Bedar while in this particular area of Maharshtra i.e. Kolhapur and Sindhudurg they are called as Berad while Satar, Sangli, Solapur district and other parts of Maharashtra they are also called as Bedar.

The Study area and the People:

For the study, Chandgad Taluka was selected which comes under Kolhapur district of Maharashtra and falls under 15°45'16" and 16°03'21" North latitude and 74°01'12" to 74°27' 38" East longitude. It lies in the eastern side of western gaht region having elevation from sea level is 800 mts. It is surrounded by Ajara and Gadhinglaj taluka of Kolhapur District and Sawantwadi taluka of Sindhudurg District of Maharashtra State and Belgaum and Hukkeri taluka of Belgaum District of Karnataka state. The taluk covers a geographical area of 952.20 sq. km. For this study, the Chandgad Taluk was selected because the concentration of Berad population in Chandgad Taluk is higher than other talukas of Maharashtra.

Again it is price worthy to see the actual situation of Berad community who were historically wrongly treated keep in mind its geographical condition and political history in the light of progassiveness in the

area of agriculture, agro based industries, co-operative sector, transportation, health and education etc.

The community Berad is focus of the study which is prefixed as a community under Study of Denotified, nomadic and seminomadic communities of India by Anthropological Survey of India. Here in the Study area at present the Berad settled in village life like other Hindu castes. The average household size of Berad community in Chandgad is 5.43 members per household. Lack of homesteaded land, poor economic condition and delay in getting houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana is compelled them to stay in this poor condition.

Population:

According to the district gazetteer Kolhapur, 1886 Vol. XXIV, pp104, there were 5277 Berads reside all over the state of Kolhapur chiefly in Gadinglaj. At that time Chandgad was a part of Belgaum. Their population in the Belgaum district was 1,30,836 in 1984. According to the census 1901 their population was 177082 individuals in Bombay Presidency among them 88344 were males and 88738 were females. Due to non availability of caste wise census data since 1931, it is difficult to mention the exact figure of the Berad population over here. But According to our studied Taluk Chandgad, the population of the Berad community in the taluka is 9017 at present having 1661 Berad households (Mahila and Bal Vikash Office, 2018) in 42 villages. Where the total male population is 4386 and female population is 4631. Over all sex ratio of Berad community in Chandgad is 1056 females per thousand males which is higher than the state level figure i.e. 929, district level figure i.e. 953 and taluka level i.e. 1019 respectively. The Berad People considered Bedar as same to them and the estimated population of Berads/Bedars in Maharashtra is near about two lakhs as mentioned by the members of Berad Samaj of Kolhapur, Chandgad, Kagal, Ajra, etc. which need to be verified.

Methods and Techniques:

The study is completed in two phases of fieldwork. The first phase duration was 15 days for the pilot study and the 2nd phase was for 30 days detail in depth study. The primary data was collected canvassing the household survey, focused group discussions, interview with male and female, informants, Government officials and informants from other communities in three villages namely Waghotre, Yaratnatti and Dukkardwadi of Chandgad taluk of Kolhapur district. Secondary data was also collected from ICDS centers, mithanins, primary and secondary schools, B.D.O office, Taluk Office, journals, government records, books of local authors, internet etc. Out of 156 villages, 42 villages are inhabited by Berad community. Among them three villages namely Waghotre, Yaratnatti and Dukkardwadi from three different locations considering the proximity of forest, border and town area were selected for the present study.

Language:

The said community falls under the Dravidian linguistic group and though the mother tongue of this Berad people is Kanada but they speak more Marathi and less Kanada due to the dominance of Marathi language in Chandgad. The Berad of this region now assimilated with local dialect (antaricha boli) of Chandgad is called 'Chandgadi boli' which is admixture of the spoken form of Kanada, Konkani and dominated by Marathi. In home some speak Kanada while in outside they speak Marathi. Due to Marriage in the locality and school education in Marathi language, the mother tongue Kanada is gradually disappearing among generations.

Religion:

They follow Hinduism and worship Hindu God and Goddess. The Goddess Yellama of Sandhati in Karnataka is the guardian Goddess of Berads and Sandhati is the main pilgrimage to them. Besides this, each Clan (*kuli/ Bedagha*) has their *kul devi* or *Dev* namely Kareva, Chalowa, Matangli, Joitba, Naikbas, Mallikarjuna, Maruthi, Mahadev (Siva), Rama, Venkatesh, Durga or Durgavva, Laxmi which they worship since time immemorial. Though the Berad also admire the God Khandoba of Satara but it is the patron God of Ramoshi community. While the Bedar community of Solapur informed that Bedar Kannappa the great Shiv Bhakta of Kalahasti, in Andhrapradesh is their guardian God. They worship their ancestors and celebrate fairs and festivals, performing pujas in Nanadev Yatra, Laxmi Yatra, Kuldevi puja, Pancha Pandav etc. The Berad strongly believe in sorcery, witchcraft, black magic and soothsaying. Earlier they called black magician (*karani*) to get rid of black magic (*ghadi*) and vaidya (ethno-Medicine practitioner) to treat them during their illness.

Question of survival, Identity and Dignity:

After the Vimuktayan or Denotification for the main streaming and socio-economic upliftment of such marginalized and deprived communities several development initiatives were taken by the Indian Government. Even most of them included in the Category of SC or ST to give constitutional safeguard but few communities like Berad are still far away from such constitutional safeguards and provisions of benefits

resulting more deprived and marginalized than others. It made them victim of poverty, illiteracy, unemployed, indebtedness and force to lead live under extreme condition of marginalization and exclusion, losing fundamental right of dignity and respect. Several committees were formed for the development of the ex-criminal communities. Even a separate commission namely Vimukta Jati Bhatkya Jamati, Itar Magas barga, Bishesh Magas Praobarga Kalayan Sanchalanay was created only for the development of VJNT communities by the Maharashtra Government but no constructive changes have been noticed in their life. Moreover the Criminal Tribe Act repealed more than 65 years back but still the community has been suffering from the social stigmas like untouchability, honesty, dignity and ofcourse lack of livelihood opportunities. On the other hand this brave warrior community somewhere is being deprived from the socio-economic benefits of the Government

In this circumstance how those people will lead life in present days and what type of livelihood options they will adopt for recovery of their poor socio-economic condition and how to remove the social stigmas are the vital questions before the civilized and developing society.

Socio-economic status:

Economy

Berads were mainly forest dwellers and for the livelihood they were depended on hunting – gathering since long. In recent past there is a great change took place in livelihood in the community due to, their tag of criminality, new forest act and others various reasons. Hence, their livelihood becomes more complex and there is no existence of Berad who purely depend on hunting and gathering. Most of them landless and the Baerds of Yaratanhatti have land where they grow *kapush* (70%), *nanchnei* (10%), *singa* (15%), *makka*, *bhat* and *sugarcane* (5%) employing traditional method of cultivation resulting very less production. But they do not enjoy ownership of land because those are recorded under 7/12 land record means though they have been cultivating encroached land for few generations but do not have personal ownership. Earlier there was *godhi* (bondage labour), *golami* and *wet beagri*, system where they worked for higher caste families in a yearly contract or only in return of meal. These systems have gradually disappeared through time since one decade back.

Lack of higher education and traditional skill provide very little scope of occupational opportunity to them. Hence they more dependent in wage labours, animal husbandry, NTFPs collection, firewood collection, petty shop, distillation of country liquor (*Kajuka and Gulka or Gulika*) and construction workers. While shortage of grazing land (*gaira*), forest, communication and fear of wild attack the Berads of Waghotre and Dukkarwai do not keep so many milking cattle and goats. All the villages have huge numbers of dog to protect from the wild attack because administration does not allow villagers to keep fire arms.

With the change of climate and season their livelihood pattern also change accordingly. In generally June to September they engage in agricultural activity or earn from agricultural wage labours. The harvesting season begins in October with the cutting of paddy, Nachni, Makka, etc. and during that time to November they earn through grass cutting. At the end of October to February they remain busy in cutting of ush followed by collection of Cashew from February to mid of April. During March very few only among them collect honey. Few households of Yaratanhatti collect and sell firewood around the year except rainy season.

Burden on Traditional Livelihood compelled to 31 Berad individuals of Waghotre, 10 Berads of Yaratanhatti and 14 Berads of Dukkarwadi to migrate different places such as Goa, Pune, Belgaum, Kolhapur and Bombay for job in hotels, construction side and daily wage labour. Due to shortage of proper occupation two families of Shinoli Budruk migrated in Karnatak resulting now there are only 42 villages in Chandgad inhabited by the Berads.

Within very little financial restraint or adversity, agricultural purpose, household, marriage and medical purpose they force to borrow loan because lack of land and productive resources. They prefer to take loan from the Sahukars in interest of Rs. 5 per 100 rupees per month though there are co-operative societies and Banks because it is easier to get loan without any paper work. Except Dukkadwadi, the role of SHGs towards women empowerment is totally negligible in Waghotre and Yaratanhatti.

Social hierarchy:

Berads are aware about the social hierarchy of Hindu Caste System but they were considered as untouchable and lower caste people by the upper castes. Still in few villages of border and forest areas of Chandgad the untouchability exists and people are being debarted from the temples where as in other areas it is disappeared. They come under *balutedar* system. They seem as like other degraded communities and found themselves in the lowest strata of the society like the communities Mang, Mahar and Chamar.

Political System:

Previous there was a village level traditional political system (*naaynivada*) which solve all village level disputes called by *Panch* (5 selected members). The institution is headed of by *sarpanch* (a hereditary post) where *Gavde* (head of Maratha community), *patil*, *Kolkar* (messenger who belong to Mang community) and other village elders assist him in decision making. Along with this, the Naikas has their own head of the tribe called *naik* (community head) or *naddigye* or *nadigye* or *kattimany*. After implementation of Panchayatraj system, all the village level problems were solved by the members of the Panchayat but meanwhile Maharashtra Government introduced 'Mahatma Gandhi Tanta Mukta (mohim)' on 15th August, 2007 to settle down village level disputes through mutual understanding by a village level committee following by Panchayat level committee. If the case is not solved by the committee then it may go to the police and Judiciary.

Education:

The literacy rate among the Berad community is 70.66 as per ICDS data which is lower than State and district level but higher than the Chandgad Taluk. In case of our study villages the literacy rate figures are 63.51% in Waghotre, 53.96% in Yaratanhatti and 77.65% in Dukkardwadi respectively but the level of education has not increased. There is not a single person pass higher secondary school from Waghotre and only one Post graduate passed candidate found at Dukkardwadi. Only few passed high secondary at Yaratanhatti. No doubt Sarbashiksha Mission contributes to raise the education level but need to more action to raise the educational level among the Berads to bring them at the state and National level.

Health and Nutrition:

Previously the local Berad people, during any medical urgency called *Vaiyd*. But due to advancement of modern medicine and Govt. health facility infrastructure, the people of Chandgad gradually inclined towards modern medicine and treatment and engagement of ASHA worker under National Rural Health Mission is doing a lot to provide better health to the rural people. On the other side, the numbers of such traditional ethno-medicine practitioners are gradually decreasing from Chandgad. There are more than 1000 valuable ethno-medicine plants available in Chandgad forest but only one ethnomedicine practitioner namely Yallappa Parashuram naik, aged 75 of Vargaon, Berad Gali found during our study but now due to less visibility he is unable to identify the Medicinal plants, leaves which leads to permanent stop of the practice of ethno-medicine in this village. It is also observed that due to ignorance, unaware, few people affected from Malaria, dengue, Chicken pox, TB, Cataract, jaundice, polio. 100 % immunization and institutional delivery is registered among the studied villages. Excessive alcohol consumption by the male is one of the reasons of their uncertain death. Though the ASHA workers demand that they visit hamlets once in week but people respond regarding the ASHA work services cross cut such demands. In case of our studied community total 660 Berad children along 110 mothers are getting benefit of ICDS.

Development Programme:

A separate Ministry has created by the Maharashtra government especially for the development of all VJNT communities and various development programmes made for them. But Berads of Chandgad are unaware about many programmes. Therefore they are suffering various problems related to different Schemes and benefits. 14 Berad families of Waghotre, 28 Berad of Dukkardwadi, 26 Berad families Yaratanhatti village have registered under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act but after 2011 most of the beneficiaries did not get any employment opportunity under this scheme. 10 people of Waghotre, 3 Berad families of Dukkardwadi and 12 numbers of families of Yaratanhatti were benefited under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. But the people of Waghotre are still living in miserable condition due to poor quality of house results suffering a lot during rainy season for the leaking of water from the roof. Under the Swachhya Bharat Mission (SBM) two Berad households of Waghotre, three Berad families of Dukkardwadi and six Berad families of Yaratanhatti received toilets but most of the those toilets are defunct because of poor built material quality. Hence, Most of the Berad practice open defecation in nearby field and river bank. There are 12 families of Waghotre, 10 households of Yaratanhatti and 14 families of In Dukkardwadi have BPL cards who receive rice and other benefits at subsidies rate while rest families are out of such benefits though maximum are economically poor condition. There are 5 physically challenged persons in Yaratanhatti village among them only three persons are receiving Rs. 900/-pm as physical challenge pension and very few old persons are receiving benefits of old Age Pension. Though there are so many old age persons in the studied villages who are fit under the criteria but are not getting such benefits. Here lack of awareness, document problems and carelessness of the authorities of local administration are the main causes. Even during our field study, we witness a huge procession of physically challenged people of Chandgad showing their protest against present scheme, benefits, late payment of pension money and several other issues in front of the Tahsildar office at Chandgad. Not a single unemployed

Berad youth receive free skill development training or other alternative income generation opportunity through any of the State as well as the Central Government Scheme here in the study area.

Social Stigma:

Untouchability has been removing rapidly as the class room education is expanding its wings in the rural villages of Chandgad where the Berad children are being educated setting with other higher caste students in the class room. But during interview it is reported that Berads are debarted from the village temple in border areas like Waghotre, Kumbele etc. They are not allowed to enter in to the houses of higher castes and provide foods are served in separte plates and drinking with separate glasses which higher caste do not use in their domestic purpose again. In social gathering and in marriages foods are served to the Berads in separate row at little distance palce. In villages and hotels of Chandgad town, halkarni phata, Patana Phata area, the untouchability does not exists as it was in the last decades.

But good thing is happened that the stigma of crminallity almost vanished from the Chandgad and other communities do not seem them as criminal like past involment in Criminal activity, theft of house articales, gang robbery, animal lifting, and crop stealing etc. Now a days the Berad do not go through atrocities of criminal tag by the hand of negibour communities. Because the Berad themselves taking the opportunities to eran better income leaving unlawfull activity grapsing the opportunity bringing by the agro-industry, diary farming, etc. They are not being inhumiliated by their title in the society, political and governmental institutions except police authority.

Civil Identity and people's voice:

Historical chronicles narrate that all criminal tribes who were put in 'settlemnts' having similar characteristics but were taken out during 1960-61 safeguarding under different categories like Vimukta Jati, Nomadic Tribes, Scheduled Tribes, SC and OBC. In Maharashtra, Pardhi were included in ST while their co-settler like Berad included in Vimukta Jati and OBC in Central list. Berad and Bedar are same ex-criminal tribe but Bedar was included in SC category while Berad included in VJNT a special category of Maharsashtra. While in Karnataka, the Berad community was enlisted in ST category enjoying the constitutional safeguard and political advantages but in Maharashtra the same people are considered as VJNT outside side the classification scheme of Indian constitution because after formation of Maharashtra as per the new States Reorganisation Act, the people of Chandgad came to Kolhapur which was earlier part of Belgaum district of Karnatak region. The Berads are now raising their voice against such discrimination reservation in local as well national level alliance with veroius Sangathan like Jai Mallahar Karnti Sangathan, Akhil Bharatiya Berad, Bedar, Ramoshi Seva Samiti etc.

The educated Berad of Dukkarwadi, Mangon, Kare Kundi and Karve expreesed their demand for the reservation of some seats in State Legislative Assembly of Maharashtra to save the right and political partiapiation of Berads in dicission making process of the State. They demand caste certificate, Aadhaar card, physically challenged Card, home for landless, safe drinking water, road, oldage pension, employment garentee and other governmental benifits. There is no Ashram school for Berad in Chandgad, so being a retired education officer, Shri Dattarathi Nagoji Naik of Dukkarwadi demans that ashram school both for girls and boys need to estabilished for more participation in education and increase enrollment level among our community. He also said that keeping mind in the brave history of our community there should be a spartae Berad battalion created in Indian Army in hounour. Our forefathers might be envolved in such activities due to different reasons but still, the people of the administration especially the police see and treat them as crimninal. The Berad people informed that a biggest sugar factory in this area i.e. Doulat Sugar Factory of the Halkarni phata which is flanged over 500 acre land now shutdown only for political interventions and corruption issues which results huge number of unempolyemt including our community fellows and forced huge number of youth to migrate out side. Even there is discrimination about the distribution of benefits of welfare Schemes of the factory where most of the castes involved are the higher caste people. If we are criminal then are they righteous? Though there are no existance of such social institutions like golami, gadi, wet begari but still there is no fixed labour rate in this area for which our women recivs less wage price than male counterpart in respect of same work. Berads are not being discriminated to gate medical, ICDS facilities or access of public resources like drinking water, grazing land, community hall, but still they used separate cremation ground or bury their dead bodies in their privet land and their voice is not given so much importance in village level decision making. Most of the villages do not have appropriate and sufficient representative in the panchayat from this community. They are facing hardship to collect their caste certificates because they do not have land records or unable to produce school certificate due to lack of land and not enrolled in schools. Most of the villages those have their representatives in the Panchayat they do not know about the Schemes and they do not explain correctly to the people about the

schemes/programmes. Hence, they are left behind from the benefits of schemes or their benefits are enjoyed by others. It is also found that the Berads representatives who are more forward and good connection with the panchayat members they deprived their own community brothers and enjoy the benefit himself. The burning example found in Wagtre in connection with land distribution by the Government.

Resistance and adjustment committed by the Berads to counter discrimination, deprivation, exclusion at individual, family and community level.

The Berad community members are now gradually educated and they left their past profession now they get service in government and private companies. Now they use very common surname like Naik, Sanadi, Talvar and Ghastia as terms of reference in place of Berad, it may be to rid out from the inferiority complex. To mitigate the gaps of social-inclusion and alive community spirit, they pay donations in village ceremonies and the other community also accepts their donations during Yatra and worships.

To unite and awake their community, now they celebrate the birth day of Umaji Naik (freedom fighter) and the Government also ordered to the institutions to celebrate the birth day of Umaji Naik just few years back. Just like Marathas kept the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj almost in the same fashion the Berad people of Mangaon established a figurine of the first freedom fighter of Maharashtra, i.e. Umaji Naik in the month of February, 2019 and the Berads of Vargaon erected a stone drawing of a figure of Umaji Naik in the entry of the Berad gali to recall and unite the Berads.

To cope the situation as well as reduce the gap of social exclusion the Berads of Vargaon now took initiation of Vithal Dev and turned into fully vegetarian from non-vegetarian. On the other side the priests of Vithal Dev temple accept these people as sacred with large number when they come under shadow of Vithal Dev.

The educated youths and elders are showing their interest in village level politics like Dukkanwadi, Vargaon, Karve, Mangaon where Shri Sita Ram Naik plays good role to solve village and family level disputes and unwanted harassment despite going to police station. The educated persons of Berad constituted a Sangathan namely Jai Mallahar Karnti Sangathan in 2016. The main aim of this sangathan is to fight against atrocity, exploitation, struggle against trauma and stigma, and unite people to get benefits. For empowering the women a Mahila Sangathan has constituted just few months back.

Dr. Bhimrao contributed important role to abolish 'Devdasi Pratha' system and established Akhil Bharatiya Berad, Bedar, Ramoshi Seva Samiti to unite the Berad and Ramoshi samaj. A person named Shri Vijay Patil did inter caste marriage himself and gave scope to his son to do inter community marriage. Shri Dattarshi Nagoji Naik and Dhandi Ram Naik of Berad community try to raise their voices through writings. Social activist and writer like Shri Balkrishna Siddaram Renake through his Lokdhara Movement alliance organised 72 National Sangathan and 42 State level Sangathan for the justice, welfare, social status, human rights of VJNT, NT and depressed groups since last 50 years. He has a great contribution towards the development of this VJNT, NT and seminomadic tribes of India. Shri. Laxman Mane and Dr. Navnath Shinde have been trying their best to protect the rights of the deprived people and their identity through their writings, street plays and dramas.

Conclusion:

Berad community is considered one of the VJNT in Maharashtra who leads settled life like other agricultural communities but due to landless and impose restriction on their traditional livelihood practices they have gone through several challenges and uncertainty. Untouchability exists in the border and near forest inhabited villages but there is no stigma of criminality exists among the Berads and other communities towards Berad of Chandgad at present. However, there are several villages in Chandgad Tahsil, some of them are scattered, some of them like Yaratnatti and Kumbhele are composed entirely of Berads in which they live their life freely. Though the Chandgad is growing as important agro-industry and dairy farming in the map of India but due to lack of training, modern processing and technique, mis-management etc., it is unable to provide hopeful outcome which results high rate of migration and unemployment. The Berad community does not have any special art or skill, dance, song, handicraft like other traditional communities. So they need modern skills and training to provide employment opportunities under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Skill India and Make in India programmes and through other programmes.

In comparison to sadar villages, the people of border and forest dwelling villages of Chandgad are suffering various problems related to different Schemes such as MGNREGA, IAY/ PAY, toilets facilities, Old age and disability pensions, communication, skill development programmes, different basic infrastructure, unemployment eradication programmes, agricultural development programmes due to lack of awareness, low level of education, socio-economic backwardness and less participation in political matters, etc., which needs special attention for all-round development of the people of these people of said areas. Proper

attention of the local administration as well as the local political leaders are much required in the border and forest dwelling villages of Chandgad for the better life of the people and in concern with untouchability, more awareness is required in all the villages and all the communities in these areas to lead a harmony life with dignity and respect.

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