

Fighting the Plight of Hierarchal Dominance through *Budhan: A Play by Denotified Chharas*

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Abstract

The social structure of every nation is primarily built upon the hierarchal basis under the classification of specific criteria on either ground of earning, job, place, lifestyle etc. It is unavoidable to accept that the social structure rolls along with the time making people from every level of the hierarchal pyramid to cross their boundaries breaking the stereotypes to induce themselves from the holding back position of stag to push them through possible uplift, especially every community that has some or other upon to command them for. Colonial times across the world made this preexisting hierarchal variation more predominant with oriental touch of brutal approach, leaving back its severe imprints even after their retirement. India is not exception from the form and one such brutality left back is the life imposed on Denotified Communities of India through law. This paper attempts to probe through the social psyche of hierarchy with reference to *Budhan: A Play by Denotified*, serving dual contribution to the social norms and role of art in it.

Keywords: denotified communities, social hierarchy, domination, social dominance, labeling theory

1. Introduction

India being a vast secular nation, held countless Nomadic groups traversing across the nation with varied communal jobs. Even though some might have offensive accusation records, it cannot be generalized for the whole nomadic structure. Yet they are brought under distinguished focus of Criminals and treated as such leaving back the Independent India with hold on social discrimination for the same, the mentality of which can be analyzed through the Cesare Lombroso's 'Eugenic Theory' and Sociological 'Labeling Theory'.

The nomadic tribes of India were brought under the criminal suspects and were monitored for their individual communal lifestyle. The nomadic systems also brought them the chances to function as the medium of exchange or transportation of goods and news illegal to the systems of law. And they all were brought under the radar of suspect for robbery and harm. There were even traces leading to thousands of nomads being killed as a punishment by the colonials for being suspect of dacoits which served as induce over revolution after which the nomadic tribes are made to live in settlements. However the labeling of their lifestyle by the government and the society was unavoidable.

2. Plight of Hierarchal Dominance

According to the theory of Cesare Lombroso, the Italian Criminologist which states the crime mentality is genetically inheritable through generations. The 'Eugenic Theory' can prove as one of such predominant blunder psyche of the social norms that force a community to be underdeveloped out of social labeling. This respective theory co-relates with the 'Labeling theory' developed by sociologist during the 1960's which can be probed through varied fields, and on relating with crime it proposes that an individual or a group can be induced to take up the particular path of offensive mentality over the repeated labeling of the same making the subconscious to follow it. Stating the possibilities these theories made into social psyche as the solely predominant. (Acharya, A 2020)

When notified communities are judged for their nomadic life style as reflection of not having permanency over job, they are imposed with settlements to be locked up inside the territory to be monitored. In case of sensing the offensive behavior within the radar the suspect is subjected to brutality within the settlement. After achieving Indian independence, the government modified the law removing the communities from notified and announcing as

denotified. (Devi Vijay and Rohit Varman 2018) Yet the labeling is impossible to be removed and it prevails even to date in the collective conscious of society.

It is impossible to completely disagree on the false accusations made on irrelevant individuals by the police officials for the benefit of records which sometimes lead to unexpected unfavorable results. And these false accusations are most commonly made on the pre-accused or socially and economically dominated. (Devy, G. N 2006) The registry of such at times not only affect the particular individual but he whole respective community. Similar encounter of false accusation of Budhan Sabar in 1998 changed life for many across the boundaries.

(Devy, G. N 2012) Dr. Ganesh Devy who gave up his teaching at the Maharaha Sayajirao University to work for denotified communities, is also known for his contribution to Linguistics and for his initiation of Bhaashaa Research and Publication Centre. He along with Laxman Gaikwad found Denotified and Nomadic Tribes Right Action Group and also initiated Budhan Theater, in memory of Budhan Sabar who was falsely accused and killed by the police in Purulia village of West Bengal. The artistic director of the theatre, Dakxin Bajrange Chhara in his interview by Abhimanyu Acharya expressed how the story of Budhan inspired people of his Chhara community to step forward and voice out for the rights of denotified tribes and nomads through art in the form of plays.

Budhan Sabar a man, who lived with his wife and son, intends to remove himself out of the label tag given for his community, in spite of making a proper living through making baskets for Co-operative society was dragged and put under misery to die. (Devy, G. N 2013) Spotted in market he gets arrested where the claim is nothing of crime but for the fact that he belongs to Sabar Community, people of which are known for theft skills. Inspector Ashok Roy's statement is such "I see, a sabar! Come to the police station with me" (230).The play is too abrupt to make the blunder of the false accusation evident.

"You son of a bitch- I am very much aware that you have not committed any theft. But in the past ten days, seventeen thefts have taken place in this area... I have to prepare the reports of these thefts. Don't you understand?"(232).

Budhan Sabar gets arrested in the market when he is with his wife and was compulsively dragged to the police custody where according to the play he is being exposed to the statement of arrest which happens to be false claim for the purpose of fulfilling the records. (Fuchs, S 2018) The records of torture and continuous physical hurts are traceable in the play which includes compulsive feeding of alcohol with the demand of acceptance to the imposed false claims. All these take place by the repeated verbal statement from the police officials under the claim of Budhan being a Sabar. In spite of not finding any theft evidence from Budhan's house he is taken into custody under court order and once again indulged in brutal treatment until he is dies.

The fact that his death being attempt to be morphed as a suicide by the officials are out with the help of Mahasweta Devi, the Writer and activist is notable. (Klemke, L. W., & Tiedeman, G. H 1981) His corpse hidden by Shyamili, Budhan's wife and conductance of false cremation, after which through autopsy it's proven that Budhan's death, is not by suicide but by the excessive beating happened in the prison.

(Pratto, F., & Stewart, A. L 2011) Budhan's case can be taken into account for the probe under Social Dominance Theory. The theory examines the relation between various groups of social hierarchy and factors on the basis of which the hierarchal structure remains constant. The theory suggests that the social hierarchal structure exists as a result of the collective human mindset that expects it to be so. (Putul, A 2019) In the interview with Dakxin Bajrange Chhara who fights for the right and respect of the denotified communities, he mentions the draw backs of his community being placed under central government's Other Backward Class category instead of Scheduled Tribes or Caste category. The hierarchal system came to form by humans attempt to classify themselves and it exists up to date for the humans withhold to the formula under one or other certainties even by the same set of people who oppose the discrimination, placing the chances of alternatives at the stake and complication (SenGupta, R 2000).

Budhan's case is one among many such that happened for centuries in varied form of execution. The fact that it still prevails unnoticed cannot be denied. (Xaam.in 2013) The form of art taken by the similar communities from other side of the nation to voice out against the injustice shows the social inclination towards possible justifying changes and demands of such which can be served fruitful sooner or later.

3. Conclusion

Human's existence was built upon the social Stratification beyond denial and the possibility of eradication or alternate psyche is highly questionable. Taking cases similar to that of Budhan, the social psyche to identify specific community with relation to that of the thieves or such similar dominance are inbuilt and removal of the label is almost impossible to speak of the fact. But what the world can take up is the acceptance towards the changing social norms. The proposal of phenomenon by 'Eugenic Theory' might have had the possibility to sustain under the

restricted and inadequate social space in far past, for the subjected group of people blocking their ways to make variations to their betterment of life. Lot more changes happened to the social stratification in the past few decades of technological, scientific, educational and spiritual advancements. But notable problem is that the changes in the social stratification do not reflect the same upon the social hierarchal structure. The raise in the economical stratification of an individual does not insert its effect on the ethnical stratification of him, under the strongly built collective conscious of social hierarchy. Yet this might not impose life threatening effects upon the people with bottom ethnic stratification holding top raise in other categories such like wealth, education, occupation, social status etc. But people at bottom ethnic stratification with little or no raise in the rest of the categories are subjected to the presumption with respect to the 'labeling theory' or accused under the phenomenon of 'Eugenic theory'.

In the case of Budhan Theatre, the people were able to fight against the stereotypical social structure and dominance through the weapon of intellect. Social welfare activists in recent decades step forward to uplift the society by helping the socially dominated and suffered to find a respectfully recognizable spot in the world which is evident through the effects of Budhan's death in West Bengal making impact over the Chharas of Ahmedabad. The possible betterment can be achieved through the betterment in the collective psyche of the society which in turn can be achieved through the proper inbuilt of intellect in the contemporary collective conscious.

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