

## ADODIAS IN SAURASHTRA

By J. M. MALKAN

Various tribes scattered in different parts of India have different patterns of behaviour and modes of living. Adodias, one of the ex-criminal tribes in Saurashtra, provide the sociologist with the opportunity of studying marginal characteristics, some apparently universal, in that part of India and others strictly local ones.

The author who has done some research in this field presents a lucid account of the custom, rites, rituals, dowry, bride-price, witchery, and significant family and clan and inter-clan relationships.

The adodian heritage appears to be strong enough to keep these traits alive down the ages. It is not enough. The misused energies of Adodias should be canalised into social, cultural, and educational channels.

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Adodias are generally regarded as one of the criminal tribes of Saurashtra. Many things have been found in their culture and life which are really interesting. Their main characteristics are a nomadic way of life and lawless activities, such as highway and house dacoities, house-breaking, shop-lifting, cart-robbery, looting, encampments and isolated huts, cattle and grain thefts, etc. Their women and children are habitual thieves and pilferers.

Nowadays many of them have adopted a settled life in urban areas where some of them are mill workers; a few of them are cattle breeders and cultivators. Still most of them mainly depend on their criminal and lawless activities, such as petty theft, preparation and selling of illicit liquor, etc.

Formerly, they used to travel about in gangs of varying strength with their household articles and live-stock. They never put up in towns and villages but usually one or two miles away from them. Thus, they used to live on the boundary of two villages, or states near the hills, or forests. Whenever they find it difficult to carry on their criminal activities and living, they used to migrate to other places. Before Independence, they were also given shelter by the petty kings who made use of them in harassing their neighbouring

kingdoms. That was how they continued their life in surrounding areas.

Adodias use specially trained donkeys and bullocks which at a signal from their master, attack the enemy or run away from the place with stolen goods. Thus, these animals are their defence weapons. While these animals attack, they manage to escape to a safer place either in a nearby jungle or on the top of a hill from where it is very convenient to defend themselves. They are the best marksmen and can hit any target with swings (*Jatarda*).

Generally, they dwell in a simple thatched folding tent which is triangular in shape and serves all the purposes of dwelling. It is known as *Danga*. Some of the settled Adodias have a small hut or temporary building. The well-to-do amongst them have now a fancy for constructing well-built rooms where there is sufficient light and air.

*Race and Origin.*—Adodias are not the original inhabitants of Saurashtra. They came from the unknown parts of Marwar. Their original home might be somewhere there. It is believed that, owing to famine and drought and also through fear of forcible conversion by the Muslims, they left Marwar and migrated to various parts of India.

On the other hand, it is believed that originally, they were Rajput warriors. During the Muslim rule in India, many Rajputs had to face them with sword. Many of them could not withstand the Muslims and were defeated. Others had firmly decided not to return to their original home unless they conquered it once again. During this period, these Rajput warriors had to run into forests and they had to lead a nomadic life for centuries together, change their name, caste and even had to adopt the social custom of wild tribes with whom they came in contact in order to save their life and faith from the rulers of that time. The defeat of Rajput power had made these people wander from place to place. Consequently, they scattered themselves in different parts of the country and led a nomadic life

throughout the period of Muslim rule. For their subsistence they committed thefts of agricultural produce.

Today, these people are broadly divided into various groups in different parts of India where they are known by different names. In Saurashtra, they are known as Adodias, in Gujarat as Chharas, in Marwar as Marwadas, in Maharashtra as Kunjars, in Mysore as Bhat, in Delhi as Chhansis, etc. Besides names, their occupation also varies. In Delhi, they profess to live by begging and singing; some of them live on prostitution of 'their wives. In Marwar, they are agriculturists; in Ahmedabad, some of them are textile labourers; in Mysore, they beg in trains, etc. But the main characteristic of the group is the lawless activities of the members.

Futher details are classified as follows:

<i>Region</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Name by which they are known</i>	<i>Main occupation</i>	<i>Side occupation</i>
Marwar	Jodhpur	Marwada	Theft and criminal activities	Cultivators
Gujarat	Ahmedabad	Chharas	...	Textile labourers
	Modasa	Chharas	...	Illicit distillation
	Dohad	Chhansias	...	
Saurashtra	Bhavnagar	Adodias	...	Labourers, illicit distillation, money lending, agricultural labourers
	Mahuva	...	...	...
	Limbdi	...	...	...
	Aniari	...	...	...
	Dhandhuka	...	...	...
Maharashtra		Kanjar	...	Illicit distillation
Mysore		Bhat	...	Begging in trains and singing
Delhi		Chhansis	...	...
Khandesh	Nandarbar	Kan jar	...	...

Besides, they are also found in Sholapur, Taloda, Kokermendi, Nelgoa, Poona, Nira, Bangalore, Hubli, Kolhapur, Bijapur, etc. They are all now in different stages of development, some of them are extremely criminal and leading a completely nomadic life. Others are to some extent settled near the urban areas, and commit crimes. For this reason, their mode of life, standard of living, type of crimes, cultural patterns, and customs differ from one another.

After leaving their original home, one of the groups had come to Saurashtra to settle near Rajula and Mahuva of Gohilwad district, but they could not settle there and continued their life of crime in various states. In Saurashtra, this group came to be known as Adodias. In Gujarati, 'Adodia' means a man who travels either by short-route or on an improper path, instead of following regular road (*Ade Marge Chalnara*). In other words, it is he who disregards the general rules of social morality

and engages himself into activities which are in conflict with the interests of society.

In appearance, Adodias resemble the Marwaris to some extent. Generally, they are of medium strong build, often wiry and agile. The women are often slender and beautiful. Both the sexes are experts in committing theft and crime, and possess a keen intelligence.

The whole tribe is divided into two main classes: *Ndlld* and *Bagad*. It is believed that Nala has originally descended from the Rathod Rajputs, and there are nearly ten sub-castes, such as Abhava, Batoo, Bhoge, Chunga Dalyu, Gazad, Gari, Gumara, Melakia, Netala, etc. *Bagad* has descended from the Parmar Rajputs and there are nearly eleven sub-castes, such as Bजारंग, Bangali, Bolia, Camadia, Chhansi, Indra, Machhar, Mina, Panoo, Tida, Temichi, etc.

Every group or sub-caste which consists of certain families has a chief known as *mukhi*. He represents his sub-caste in their dealings. He acts as their leader in all respects and wields enormous influence over his group. The names of the Adodias are not dissimilar to those of Hindus.

*Dress and Ornaments.*—Men wear dhotis, shirts, sometimes an old coat and a *faita* (Turban). They are accustomed to walk barefoot on thorny tracks and on hot soil in summer. Nowadays, with a view to avoiding noise, they usually wear canvas shoes during the house-breaking operations. In olden days, they possessed unlicensed arms, indigenous guns, *fursy*, and slings. These slings were singularly effective for self-defence.

The usual dress of an Adodia female consists of a short petticoat called *ghagra*, *kurties*, *choli*, and *odhani*. The *ghagra* is adorned in the usual Marwari style. It is about 20 feet in length and about four to five feet in breadth. It has a big pocket from

the inside and a border round the lower end. The *Odhani* is a sheet which covers lower portion of the body, the back, and the head.

They prefer to have ornaments which are worn in Marwar. Some wear *laving* (clove) in the nose, some also wear a pendant or drop in the septum of the nose, earrings, silver-rings on the wrists, finger-rings, *toda*, *kadala*, etc. Mostly, these ornaments are of silver.

*Language.*—Adodias have a peculiar dialect of their own which is generally Marwari, and even today, it is not different from it. But enormous influence of Gujarati is also found. Adodias speak Gujarati and Hindustani fluently. Besides, they have many code words which are used and understood only by their own group. For this reason, they can dare to send secret messages or discuss matters about theft, crime, and other lawless activities even in the presence of public and police constables.

Some of the typical words used by them are given below:

<i>Words</i> (along with code)	<i>Meaning</i>
<i>Balva</i>	Rupee
<i>Bit</i>	Bed
<i>Chhevak</i>	Constable
<i>Chhangali</i>	Liquor
<i>Chhitani or Nand or Bhathani</i>	Wife
<i>Chivad</i>	Policeman
<i>Chokany</i>	Spectacles
<i>Chubke</i>	Boy
<i>Chubky or Natali</i>	Girl
<i>Dole</i>	Money
<i>Gemifali</i>	Looting
<i>Ghukada</i>	Cock
<i>Gone</i>	Legs
<i>Hadali</i>	Dish
<i>Hando</i>	Basket
<i>Khakha</i>	Village

<i>Words</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
<i>Khilla</i>	Implement of house-breaking
<i>Khimat</i>	Buffalo
<i>Khol</i>	Dacoity
<i>Koni</i>	Anna
<i>Makhi</i>	Cow
<i>Makhiya</i>	Fly
<i>Potia</i>	Turban
<i>Khel Ja</i>	Go for play
<i>Nasi Ja</i>	Run away
<i>Kutane thok</i>	Take meal

One peculiarity of their language is that the words of neuter gender are always followed by the verbs applied after the words of the masculine gender. In other words, there is nothing like neuter gender in their dialect. Besides, their language has no script of its own.

*Folk-songs.*—Like other tribes and Hindu communities, the Adodias too, have folk songs dealing with their life, custom, manners, joys, and sorrows. All these songs when sung are pleasing to the ear. Devotion to the goddess is also one of the central themes of a number of *bhajans* (devotional songs). Many of them are mostly sung by women on certain occasions.

Adodias celebrate festivals with great enthusiasm and earnestness. The most important among them are *Holi*, *Dashera*, and *Diwali*. Men and women put on the finest clothes and their faces beam with joy. They take liquor on these days.

These festivals also provide opportunities for sale and purchase of ornaments and clothes. On *Navratry* and *Dashera*, they enjoy taking part in folk-dances which are known as *Ras-Garba*. Of course, it is almost a lost art today. They are adopting a Gujarati type of *Ras*. They also offer their homage and prayer to *Shri Ram Dev Pir*, on the eighth day of the *Navratry* festival.

This roving community has no opportunity of sending children to school. The standard of literacy is very low amongst these people.

*Food and Drink.*—They eat *joari* and *bajari* bread, boiled rice, and *dal*; they also consume wheat and vegetables when they can afford them. For dinner they take *khichadi*. They consume flesh except that of jackals. They carry plenty of dried meat in bags and fat in earthen pots. Country liquor which is generally prepared by them from *gur* is no more a luxury, but is one of the necessities of life.

*Social Custom.*—During the period of menstruation women do not mix with others and stay apart for five to seven days as other Hindus do. In the sixth or seventh month of pregnancy, the bride's parents do not go to the house of the bride to present sari and cloth as is done among other Hindus. Even the pregnant woman is not sent to her parent's home two months before delivery. Owing to their uncertain ways of nomadic life, they are unable to follow the ancient custom of the Hindus.

The delivery is attended by experienced old women of the house. When a child is born, the grandmother conveys the message to others by beating a vessel with a wooden hammer or stick accompanied by rejoicing and feasting. The grandmother receives five rupees as present and the child is given presents in kind by relatives and caste-women and *sugar* and *gur* are distributed amongst them by the parents.

On the sixth day after the birth, the child is given a name by Brahmins. The clan goddess is also worshipped; she is supposed to write the child's fate on his forehead during this night. The caste-women are entertained and wine is sprinkled on all household articles to purify them. Sometimes on this very day, the child is anointed with

*naldi* or *pithi* (dry tumeric) which is specially brought by the child's *mama*, the brother of the child's mother. For bringing this *haldi*, wine is asked for by the brother of the child's mother. On such a demand the child's father arranges a wine party. Thus they enjoy the whole of sixth day.

The mother moves out of her confinement on the forty-first day. She nurses her child for about 18 months or until the next delivery. There is no regular time of feeding. Ceremony of *maiden* removal of hair of the male child is performed after at least one year has lapsed. This ceremony is known as *balmavala*.

Children just grow up being attended to by older siblings, and there is no formal training and education. They learn how to commit thefts and other crime. When they are in their teens, they are adepts.

*Marriages*.—Girls marry at the age of fifteen. Usually they never marry before they have reached full maturity. Adultery is looked upon by this wandering tribe to be a heinous offence. The only punishment for it is death. This belief exists in spite of the fact that divorce is customary. Formerly, prostitution was an unknown thing. For this reason, there was absolutely no venereal disease among them. Nowadays, this evil is gradually increasing. Polygamy is allowed but not practised.

Widows are permitted to remarry. The remarriage is known as *ghar gharnu*. Feasts and other ceremonies are not arranged on this occasion. It is not compulsory for a widow to marry a younger brother of her husband. This second husband cannot claim any legal right over his step-sons. It is the responsibility of the grandfather and his relatives to feed and look after these children. Generally, they are reared up by them. The system of *ghar-jamai* (bridegroom living with the bride's parents) is also prevailing amongst these people.

Divorces are frequent. Usually, it is the women's relatives who seek divorce because of ill-treatment, dissatisfaction of the woman, or the prospect of a good bride-price obtainable on the occasion of remarriages.

Child betrothals are rampant, but child marriages are rare. An Adodia is forbidden to take wife from his own clan or sub-clan; thus, the blood relationship makes a marriage unlawful. They see that a man marries outside the clan of his father and of his mother. Generally, this community is composed of two main clans, *Nalas* and *Bagad*. Of course, there are a number of sub-clans. The candidate of *Nala* and its sub-caste can be given in marriage to those of *Bagad* and its sub-clans and vice-versa, but the members of the sub-caste of both the clans do not marry among themselves.

Engagements are generally arranged when an Adodia boy is between ten and fourteen years of age and the bride slightly younger. Generally, betrothal is managed by parents if both parties agree; then they decide upon engagement known as *sagai* in which the boy's father with a few relatives goes to the girl's house with presents which include *chundadi*. The bridegroom's mother gives this *chundadi* to the bride.

The bridegroom has to pay a sum of Rs. 2/00 as fee to the *panchayat* of their community. This settlement declared amongst others by distributing molasses on behalf of both parties. On this very day, they also decide before the *panch* the amount of the bride-price (*dahej*) which is to be paid at the time of marriage ceremony. It amounts to Rs. 1200/00 in all; giving Rs. 400/00 to the father of the bride and Rs; 400/00 to the *panch* and the remaining amount is spent on fine clothes and ornaments for the bride.

In marriage proper, the main ceremonies are: the bride and the bridegroom are anointed with *haldi* in their own homes. They

offer *puja* to Ganpati and both the bride and bridegroom have to sit before Ganpati. At the bridegroom's house a marriage *mandap* is erected and at night the marriage folk-songs are sung by the caste-women. The bridegroom's party known as *Jan* goes to the bride's residence where they are warmly welcomed by *samaiya*. They are all given shelter in a special tent or house known as *janivas*. Then the bride and the bridegroom meet in the *mandap*. During this period, a glassful of liquor, along with five rupees in it, is offered to the bridegroom by his father-in-law, and then members of both parties drink liquor saying: "Let us now drink the liquor of marriage". This liquor costs Rs. 200/00 to 300/00, and the bride's father has to foot the bill. Then the hands of bride and bridegroom are joined and the hems of their garments are also tied. A banquet follows, and other minor rites are performed. Brahmins are consulted on this occasion. At the end of the ceremony, both the bride and bridegroom are given *kansar* to eat. During this period, bridegroom's party pays the bride-price of Rs. 800/00 in cash and ornaments in the presence of *panch* as it was decided at the time of betrothal. The marriage ceremony lasts for a day only. Vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes are served at the marriage feast. In case of any suspicion about the moral character of the bride, it is brought before the *panchayat* and necessary steps are taken to remove them. If she is found above board, the bridegroom's party goes with her to their own village. After a few days, they offer homage to Ram Dev Pir or Somal Mata. The bride is not sent back to her father's house very often.

*Funeral Ceremony.*—The dead bodies are cremated but usually they are buried. This system might have been adopted to avoid heavy expenses of fuel.

These people have little fear of death, and do not think about it and live entirely in the

present. The dying person is placed on the ground. They use a new cot known as *khatla* (bier). They break one foot of the cot. Then dead body is washed and cleaned and new clothes are put on. The mourners put two rupees or silver coins in the mouth and grain balls in the hands of the corpse and wrap the body in a new sheet and then tie the dead body to the bier. The widow of the dead man removes her jewels and ornaments from her person.

Four men carry the bier to the funeral ground led by a near relative carrying a smouldering dung-cake in his right hand. All the way the mourners shout *Ram bolo bhai Ram*. (Repeating the name of God Ram.) Women follow them, upto the outskirts of their village and go to a nearby well, or a river, to take bath.

Before coming to the funeral ground, it is customary to take four rounds a nearby *ved-tree*. Then the body is burnt; the mourners take bath in a river or tank and return home. After coming home a big bread is cooked by the elder son of the deceased. The pieces of this bread are given to the mourners. They put it in a leaf brought from the funeral ground and throw it away. Later, mourners are feasted. Thus, while a dead body is being disposed of, the nearest relatives of the deceased eat sweets without shedding a tear.

On the following day, the pieces of bones of the burnt body are collected in an earthen pot and it is buried somewhere near their residence. Besides, all the relatives are invited on this occasion to the funeral ground. There is also a funeral banquet and *churma* made of wheat bread, *gur* and ghee is distributed among the invited relatives.

The *shraddha* or *barma* ceremony is also performed with pomp on the twelfth day. A son who cannot feed his relatives and caste-brothers on this occasion of *shraddha* ceremony of his deceased father is looked

down on by the society. Generally, this dinner is served in a nearby field under babul tree. After the funeral banquet, rice, ghee and sugar are served.

On any suitable day, all the relatives and caste-brothers are invited to the house of the deceased and liquor is served. Before serving it, a few drops of liquor are sprinkled on the ground. At this moment the son of the deceased says: "Oh my dear father, you are dead. Here, I dedicate this liquor to you".

It is also customary to give a turban to the son of the deceased by relatives.

*Religion.*—Adodias are Hindus by religion. Ram Dev Pir is universally worshipped. They also have a faith in other Hindu gods like Rama, Krishna, Mahadev, Hanuman, Ganesh, etc. Besides, they also have their own clan-gods and goddesses who they pay respect. Their favourite goddesses in Saurashtra are Somal, Shikotar, Khodiar, Kalka, Meldi, Masani, Chamunda, etc. Some of the sub-clans have faith in Bhensa Sur, a buffalo-god.

A small temple known as *Sthanak* or *Math* is found in their locality. On every religious festival, men and women, the young and the old, go to the temple; prayers are offered to the goddess. Sweets like *churma* (wheat bread, ghee and gur) or *lapshi* is offered as homage. It is known as *Neivedhya*. Formerly, goats and cocks were also sacrificed. Besides, a general caste-temple, a separate *math* of a clan-goddess is also in their houses where a *neivedhya* is offered.

A number of superstitious belief in witches, ghosts and demons also prevail among these people. The sorcerers known as *bhuva* can drive out such witches as are possessed by anyone. Each group has such a *bhuvd* or a religious chief. He is obeyed and respected by all. Besides, all the spiritual and religious

matters are conducted by them and believed to be competent enough to pilot them.

When a man is attacked by fever or disease, a *bhuvd* is called, instead of a physician. After paying a visit to the patient, he gives a few grains of wheat, or rice, packed in a piece of cloth to be tied in the neck of the patient. A few days after the patient is cured, *neivedhya* or homage is offered to the goddess.

These people are afraid of ghosts. They believe that any man is capable of being possessed by a ghost. By chanting verses *mantras* and giving a good beating to the possessed, a *bhuvd* can drive out evil spirits. This is considered the best remedy for it.

With a view to driving out a witch that possesses a woman, a small statue of a witch is made out of grain-flour around which twenty-one needles or thorns are planted. Then it is packed in a piece of cloth torn from the sari of the woman and it is inserted in an earthen pot with a pound of sweets, one lemon, and oil. The pot is buried in the cremation ground by the *bhuvds* along with portions of the head and legs of a goat which is slaughtered as a sacrifice to the goddess. It is believed that in this process, the witch is believed to be done away for ever.

Like other primitive tribes, these people take intoxicants while offering prayers, and the practice of consuming liquor is widely prevalent among them.

*Panchayat.*—One would be struck dumb with wonder to learn how the standard of intra-tribal morality is maintained and how the standard of extra-tribal immorality is overlooked in the interest of solidarity of society.

The *panchayat* has an enormous influence over these people. Consequently, it has become one of the great unifying factors of their social life. The *panchayat* also controls

their criminal and normal behaviour. It enforces caste-rules and punishes transgressors. The chief of each sub-caste is an active life member of the *panchayat*. The head of the *panchayat* is known as the *panch-patel*. He exercises an enormous influence over the people, and presides over the meetings of the *panchayat*. The *panchayat* has wide jurisdiction and powers, but it does not interfere unless it is called upon by the aggrieved person. Whenever disputes or claims about bride-price, divorce, kidnapping, rape, petty thefts, etc., or breach of social etiquette arises *Tapali*, secretary of the *panchayat* is consulted.

After consulting the *panch-patel* and the members, the *Tapali* convenes a meeting of the *panchayat*. He is the proper person to approach the *panchayat* and thus serves as a link between the *panch* and the public. He is a lifetime member. By virtue of his superior intellect, cleverness, honesty, and selflessness, people repose trust in him. Without his help, it is hardly possible to carry on the work of the *panchayat*.

Generally, the *panchayat* meets very often during the monsoon. The aggrieved persons who call the *panchayat* have first to pay each member and the *Tapali* an allowance to meet his expenses. An equal amount is charged as court fee and as wages.

The persons found guilty by the *panchayat* have to bear the expenses of the meeting. The verdict of the *panchayat* is considered final and binding. It has the authority to impose punishment not only extending from a small fine to expulsion from caste but also to sentence to death!

*Caste Rules and Panchayat.*—An Adodia cannot commit a more heinous sin than to fall in love with the girl of his own clan. Though such instances are rare, they do occur. They cannot be tolerated by their

society. Such lovers who are expelled from the caste are known as *chhinalavas* and the deed is known as *chinalavu*. For their inclusion in the caste, a ceremony of purification is performed. In this connection, the male wrong doer is considered more guilty than the female. With a view to punishing the wrong doers, locally made grinding stones are placed on their chests and one pound of wheat or *adad* is ground in the presence of the *Panch*.

Besides, Rs. 360/00 are to be paid as penalty for this sin. *Gur* worth Rs. 25/00 is purchased on behalf of the wrong doer and is distributed among the caste-mates. It means that the sin is distributed and its burden is lessened. Later, a feast is arranged. All the invitees sit together with the youth and *churama* is served in one large dish made from seven leaves of *Parash peapla*. By taking the meal together, it is believed that the excommunicated young man is taken back in the fold. As a sign of purification of life, the girl wears white clothes and takes her meal with women of her caste. When the feast is over, it is customary for men to smoke a locally-made *bidi* which is puffed first by the young man. Thus, he is believed to be completely absorbed in their group.

If, on examination, the girl is found pregnant, the society takes no notice of it, but her father is obliged to arrange her marriage with a youth belonging to another clan; under any circumstances she is not allowed to marry the young man of her own class. Of course, the illegitimate child is given to its biological father.

A romance carried on outside the clan is not considered unlawful. If bride's parents object to this, the wrong doer must make good the wrong done to the bride's father by paying Rs. 200/00 or Rs. 250/00 or the sum stipulated by the *panchayat*.

The Adodias are very quarrelsome people. They often fight amongst themselves during the proceedings of the *panchayat*. *Dharias*, axes, swords, *lathis* are taken out by the *Tapali* before the situation takes a serious turn. Under all circumstances, the ruling of the *Tapali* is obeyed by everybody. This type of discipline is found only among these people. Soon after the marriage ceremony is over, a bride is taken to a separate room by the women-folk of the guests of bridegroom to find out whether she is chaste or not. Surprisingly, the women of this community have a thorough knowledge of sex which can hardly be expected of other Hindu women. If the women find it difficult to come to the conclusion whether the bride is chaste or not, the *panch* takes up the issue and orders the bride to sleep with the bridegroom for a night. If the bridegroom does not find any oozing of blood, she is considered guilty and the *panchayat* forces the bride to disclose the name of the person with whom she had slept. The culprit is forced to pay Rs. 100/00 to Rs. 150/00 to the father of the bridegroom. If he is an outsider, the bride's father is penalised and the compensation is paid to the father of the bridegroom.

*Punishment and Leakage.*—One wonders how the causes of intra-tribal immorality are controlled and the instances of extra-tribal immorality are over-looked. With a view to cultivating a sense of social solidarity, very stern steps are taken when the secret information about criminal and lawless activities are revealed. First of all, a thorough inquiry is instituted and a man providing the police with secret information is found out. If the guilt is not confessed, red-hot axe is branded on his arms. If any sign of burning is found on the skin of his arms, he is not considered innocent, and the punishment is imposed according to the gravity of default.

Economically, socially and educationally, the Adodias are a backward community. Most

of them are very poor and do not possess any adequate sources of income and what does a starving man not do? Highway dacoities, house-breaking, shop-lifting, cart-robbery, looting encampments and isolated huts, cattle and grain thefts, and distilling and selling of illicit liquor are the sources of their income. It is said that even today many of them, have distilleries in their houses.

They have not been able to adjust themselves to the proprietary conventions of a settled economy. Most of them are associated with anti-social activities. Of course, nowadays many of them desire and try to settle in life. As a result, some of them are mill-workers, cattle breeders, and cultivators.

Their standard of morality is very low. Some of them remain villains. The root cause of all these is their poverty and unemployment. In order to regulate their lawless and criminal activities, an Act was passed in 1924 under which they were classified as "criminal". They could not leave their places of residence at night nor could they move out of the areas of their residence without permission. They were being registered as "criminals". Their liberty was restricted but nothing was done to wean them from their life of crime and to absorb them into society. This Criminal Tribes Act of 1924 was repealed in 1952, with the result that the Adodias now enjoy freedom like other citizens.

Individually, an Adodia is very lazy. He does not like to move unless he is compelled. Women and children are also habitual thieves. Women of poor families work as labourers and collect fuel from the neighbourhood and do domestic work.

Among these people, no importance to taking bath is attached. They take bath only twice or thrice in a month. Both men and women relieve themselves in open fields.

Water is not used after evacuation. Theirs is a criminal mind. Even the minds of their children are instilled with criminal ideas. Consequently, their lives from the cradle to the grave are profoundly influenced by criminal activities. They come into the world as human beings, learn the way of criminal life from their culture and environment, and become criminals.

Besides, they have very peculiar social custom and very strange things in their culture. The best that is in them must be brought out

and their misused energies should be canalised into social, cultural, and educational channels.

After the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act in 1952, the then Government of Saurashtra had undertaken several welfare schemes for their socio-economic betterment, such as education, agriculture, housing, cottage-industries, medical aid, etc. Besides, with a view to rehabilitating and making them economically self-supporting, subsidies are provided to those who desire to settle on land and take to agriculture.