

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Indrial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	1422	Press ~~Mis~~
Dated	3 - 7 - 1867	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
3rd September 1867.*

Read the following papers:—

No. 33. From W. ROBINSON, Esq., C. S. I., Inspector General of Police, to the Acting Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Kotagherry, 17th August 1867, No. 1462.

With reference to G. O., No. 966, dated 14th June 1867, I have the honor to submit the reports of the local Officers on the matter raised by the District Moonsiff of Karcempudy, viz., the prevalence of female infanticide and murder amongst Lumbadies.

2. The District Officers discredit the information; and it will be observed that it cannot be substantiated in any way. The Moonsiff's information is worthless.

3. I am not myself prepared altogether to discredit the possibility of the existence—if not still, at least formerly—of the practice of female infanticide amongst the Lumbadies, as amongst many tribes of the same character in India. I have heard of it as vague hearsay, years ago: but I have never known of an authenticated instance. Their customs, as respects marriage, are expensive, and afford the usual temptation; a preponderance of females may be considered an inconvenience by tribes of the wandering habit of Lumbadies; and they are a rough, lawless race.

4. But it is not within the Presidency that any measures can be adopted in respect to these things. The homes of the Lumbady tribes are in Central India (the few who have settled in our Districts are cultivators, and live like ordinary ryots), and their pregnant women do not generally accompany their gipsy camps. The females who march with them are grown women and girls, who are usefully employed as cooks and carriers of domestic utensils, and whose destruction would, therefore, cause needless loss and inconvenience. They are further stalwart creatures, who could well hold their own. I do not think that murders take place with unusual frequency amongst the Lumbadies on the line of march; for they would be heard of, as these camps are specially watched by the Police, on account of the predatory habits of the people.

5. However, the Police has been warned to pay special attention to this matter.

From the Superintendent of Police, Kistna District, to the Inspector General of Police; dated Masulipatam, 31st July 1867, No. 188.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of the Proceedings of Government, No. 123, dated 14th ultimo, referred for report of the result of any inquiries that may have been made into the alleged prevalence of infanticide and murder of adults among the Lumbadies or Brinjarries, who traffic in salt and grain between Hyderabad and the Coast Taluqs of Kistna District.

2. I would beg to premise that the report of M. R. Sabhapaty, the District Moonsiff of Karcempudy, is by no means the first instance in which the existence of such crimes has been alleged, as they have been for many years attributed to the Lumbadies, but, unfortunately, only by persons who were never known to have any authority for such a belief, other than tradition or rumour.

3. When M. Sabhapaty sent his report to the Assistant Superintendent, mentioning he was informed from a "reliable source" that infanticide and adult murders were committed among the Lumbadies, I supposed it was calculated to afford some assistance in any inquiries that might be instituted.

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4. Therefore, before the despatch of Mr. Thornhill's letter to Government, I questioned M. Sabhapaty as to how he had elicited the hearsay intelligence detailed in his report, and whether his informants would be equally communicative to the Assistant Superintendent, to me, or to any Magistrate.

5. He replied that it was only with the greatest difficulty that he had induced them to speak on the subject, that he had called them separately to his house, and, after much coaxing and encouragement, prevailed on them to mention what they knew of such crimes; that he had assured them he was not making official inquiries; and that he was positive they would never repeat their statements to any one else, or help to trace the persons from whom they had derived their knowledge. Hence, I doubted that the "source" of M. Sabhapaty's information was "reliable" even to the extent of repeating a hearsay tale.

6. Still, I took care to say nothing that might tend to discourage him in his avowed purpose of throwing light on foul practices, which to that time had been suspected, but not exposed. I expressed myself anxious to obtain tangible evidence, so as to take up a case of the kind, and he, on his part, promised to report any further information he could glean.

7. The Assistant Superintendent, whose letter* I herewith forward, also failed, after a conversation with M. Sabhapaty, to find himself in a position to turn the information to any account. His inquiries showed the Magistracy and Police of that locality and neighbourhood had not heard anything to induce them to believe in the prevalence of such crimes.

8. The opinion of Deputy Magistrate Venkatachellam, in whose division M. Sabhapaty resided, is peculiarly valuable on the subject, as, from his long experience, as a judicial officer, of all classes of Native society, and his intimate acquaintance with the crime of the country, which few men have so unsparingly rooted up, rumours of infanticide and secret murders among so large a class as the Brinjarries could not have escaped his attention.

9. He informed the Assistant Superintendent that he discredited such rumours.

10. I recently met the Naik or Headman of a Tanda at Chimalapad in Bezvada Taluk. He had settled during the last 20 years in the neighbourhood with others of his class, numbering, with women and children, about 50, and cultivated land under the Zemindar. Up to two years ago he had also trafficked in salt. He came to me with the complaint that Brinjarries were losing their means of livelihood, and it was difficult in these days for many of them to earn their bread, as so many improvements had been made in roads and carriages, that Brinjarries and their bullocks were in much less demand by merchants than formerly.

11. I soon asked him about the habits of his class, and learnt, in regard to their families, that wives and children were generally left in their homes near Hyderabad, and that those seen accompanying a Tanda to and from the coast were only a small number of them; that the marriage of daughters was expensive, but that, if a man had more daughters than he could afford to bestow presents on at their marriage, he gave them away simply without such presents; that it was not true such girls were killed at their birth. He said "we keep and bring up as many daughters as we get. Why should we kill any of them?" adding, in a lower tone, "there are many men."

12. They looked up to the Gooroo or Priest, he stated, with much respect, but did not consider his word binding in a question of life and death; his Gooroo lived always near Bantumilly, and all Lumbadies who visited the coast on this side of the Kistna river likewise recognized him as their Gooroo, and paid him a fee for every bullock-load of salt. This Gooroo lives like a Fakcer, and is well known.

13. The Assistant Superintendent, in his letter, mentions that the Gooroos do not travel with the Lumbadies, and I have always heard the same. They cannot, therefore, be the cause of the sacrifice of adults along their routes, as would appear from M. Sabhapaty's report.

14. In conclusion, I would remark that it is not improbable that crimes of the kind are occasionally committed among the Brinjarries. They lead a wandering and unsettled life, travelling long distances daily, and avoiding roads for jungle tracks, on account of pasture for their

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cattle, and are exposed to much suffering and hardship. The number that carry away salt from the coast cannot be correctly calculated, as there are thousands of them; but it is almost impossible for infanticide and adult murders to prevail among them, to the extent supposed by the District Moonsiff, over a period of many years, without the occurrence of one or two cases being substantiated.

From the Assistant Superintendent of Police, Kistna District, to the Superintendent of Police, Kistna District; dated Masulipatam, 29th July 1867, No. 45.

With reference to the Proceedings of Government, referring back a letter addressed to me by the District Moonsiff of Karemputy, on the subject of suspected female infanticide and murder of adults among the Lumbady caste, I have the honor to report that, from the Moonsiff's statement to me, I am unable to credit the Naikwady's story. The Naikwady will not repeat his statements, and, even were he willing to do so, they are valueless, as he cannot point to his informants.

2. Travelling and wandering gangs are, as a rule, registered at the stations and outposts at which they halt, but with Lumbady gangs this is impracticable, passing as they do by hundreds a day *en route* for the salt depôts; they seldom or never remain more than one day at a place. The Deputy Magistrate of the Palnad Taluk assures me that he discredits these rumours, and from his long residence in those parts, and his knowledge of these tribes, his opinion is valuable.

3. Though stationed in close proximity to the Karemputy Moonsiff, the Deputy Magistrate has never received from him any intimation or report of the supposed occurrence of these crimes.

4. The Gooroos who are supposed to instigate adult murders among the Lumbadies are said never to accompany the gangs on their travels; they chiefly reside in the Hyderabad territory.

Remarks of the Deputy Inspector General of Police.

Many hundreds of Brinjarries pass every year through the hill tracts from the Nagpore Provinces to the coast, and are well known to our Police. They travel during the dry months, and settle in the Raipore and ——— country during the wet season. I should doubt female infanticide being general amongst them. We have never had a case yet reported, although our Jeypore and Hill Force are warned to watch for this particular crime. The women in general travel with the Tandass, and, doubtless, mortality is high amongst new born children, from bad climate, exposure, and the hardships necessary to a gipsy life.

2. On the other hand, there is no doubt but that they are a lawless class, and, in Central India, are notorious dacoits. From inquiries in Jeypore, the Tandass seldom go beyond Chatragar, and have no relationship with the Brinjarries of Upper India.

(Signed) T. E. TENNANT,

Deputy Inspector General.

No. 34. From W. ROBINSON, Esq., C. S. I., Inspector General of Police, to the Acting Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 29th August 1867, No. 1525.

General Department.

With reference to my letter, dated 17th August 1867, No. 1462, I think it right to submit a copy of a demi-official note just received from the Inspector General of Police, Central Provinces.

2. I think this Civil Moonsiff has been travelling far out of his record, in publicly ascribing to these tribes revolting criminal practices on the vaguest hearsay.

POLICE INSPECTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE, CENTRAL PROVINCE, NAGPORE, 20th August 1867.

MY DEAR MR. ROBINSON,

In a Madras paper, about a month or six weeks ago, I read that some Assistant Magistrate in (I think) the Bellary District had been making some investigation into the Brinjarries, and had

ascertained that they practised infanticide to a great extent, and that to each Tanda or Camp of Brinjarries a Priest was attached, who exercised great influence, and whose behests they implicitly obeyed in all matters, both temporal and spiritual. It was stated that the state of things described existed especially amongst the Brinjarries of Hyderabad and Central India. Having read this, I began to make inquiries, and had a census taken of all the Brinjarry camps settled in the Central Provinces during the rains, and they are very numerous. The papers are beginning to come in now, and none of those I have received confirm in any way the statements above referred to. The proportion of female to male children seems to show that infanticide is not practised; neither have any of the competent persons (Natives) whom I have consulted ever heard of such crimes being perpetrated by the Brinjarries, and there are no priests attached to any of our Tandas. Could you tell me who the gentleman is who made the inquiries in your Presidency, and what is his address? I rather think he is a Native, but am not sure. I would like to write to him, and ascertain upon what grounds he has formed his opinion, and amongst what particular tribe of the Brinjarries the practices he describes chiefly exist.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) H. D. TAYLOR.

No. 35. ORDER THEREON, 3rd September 1867, No. 1422.

In the letter above recorded, the Inspector General of Police submits the result of an inquiry made by the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Police of the Kistna District, as to the practice of infanticide and of adult murder of suspected sorcerers by the Lumbadies, who are engaged in the carriage of salt and grain in this Presidency, and whose homes are chiefly in the Central Provinces and in the Hyderabad country.

2. These alleged criminal practices were recently brought to the notice of Government by Mr. Thornhill, lately Collector of the Kistna District, who had received his information from the District Moonsiff of Karcampudy.

3. It was not to be expected that the District Moonsiff could substantiate the information which was given him at second hand, and the Police Officers of the district discredit the information furnished by the Moonsiff, but the Inspector General of Police considers that it is not improbable that the practices described above may prevail among the Lumbadies. Mr. Robinson observes that their customs as regards marriages are expensive, which would afford the usual temptation, and that they are a lawless race.

4. The information given by the Moonsiff of Karcampudy is supported by a report recently submitted to the Inspector General of the Medical Department, by Dr. Shortt, a most competent observer, who has given a very interesting account of this tribe.

5. Dr. Shortt says, "in some districts, they are addicted to thieving and Thuggee. These vices are chiefly confined to travellers, but they never attempt a similar practice in any station; they more frequently fraternize, but never molest each other. They have certain signs by which one tribe can distinguish another. Their Code of Laws prescribes punishments for all crimes, the verdict of which, when carried out, is never disputed. Their priests exercise the power of life and death over the community as the most absolute sovereign, but this is masked under the cloak of religion and supernatural agency; and, as a tribe, they are bound to secrecy whenever the extreme penalties of their laws are carried into effect. Unchastity is "strictly punished with death: frequently, both the woman and man suffer when

detected, and their corpses are buried or burned together, and neither the justice nor execution is ever complained of. Their social system is entirely distinct from other Natives of India: they recognize no authority, keep aloof from mankind generally, interfere with no one, and allow of no interference among them regarding their laws or customs, &c."

"I have every reason to believe, from personal inquiry in Orissa, Nagporé, Hyderabad, South Arcot, Vizagapatam, Jeypore, &c., that sorcery, witchcraft, human sacrifice, and infanticide prevail among different communities of the tribe. Their religious tenets combine all the superstition of the Hindoos with the fatalism of Mahomedans, and their religion partakes of both these creeds. Each community is localized by the term of 'Tanda', having its own priest, who is said to lead a peculiarly holy life; and the monastic lives and habits of these priests greatly influence the minds of the people composing the community. They are looked up to with much veneration and great awe, and their edicts, notwithstanding their severity or cruelty, are implicitly obeyed. Their religion and laws demand this implicit obedience, combined with the utmost secrecy, in all matters connected with themselves personally or the community to which they belong, as their priests are supposed to know all their actions by supernatural agency. So strict and binding do they consider all matters connected with themselves, community, or tribe, that they would rather forfeit life than divulge any single act concerning either their social habits and customs, or their deeds of rapine and plunder. On all occasions, the priest is first consulted as to the success or otherwise of their undertakings, whether it be as regards domestic or social ceremonies, or acts of plunder, robbery, or murder. The priests lead a life of celibacy, and, from their monastic habits, their wants are few and simple, each community providing them; but it does not appear clear whether the office of priesthood is hereditary in certain families or elective. On occasions of sickness among themselves, or murrain among their cattle, the priest is consulted, and should he attribute such visitations to sorcery, the priest fixes the guilt on some individual belonging to the community, when the supposed evil doer is immediately ruthlessly seized and murdered, in the manner dictated by the priest, to abate the evil. The execution is coolly and deliberately carried out in the most summary manner, and the dead is buried in oblivion."

"The practice of infanticide is in vogue among them, in consequence, it is said, of the large sums of money required to ornament their girls, in addition to a large dowry which they have to bestow on marriage. It is reputed that the practice is carried out by placing the new born infant in an earthen vessel or chatty, the mouth of which is tied over with cloths steeped in a decoction of turmeric, and ornamented with flowers; some trifling ceremonies being carried out, the chatty is taken to some remote place in the jungles, and there buried. Some of the Khond tribe carry out a similar practice as regards their female children."

6. The Governor in Council is satisfied that the Inspector General of Police will keep a strict watch over the Lumbadies, and that further and more exact evidence will be obtained as regards the extent to which the crimes of infanticide and murder from superstitious motives prevail among them. The Governor in Council concurs with Mr. Robinson in thinking that the discovery and repression of these crimes can be best effected at the permanent Head Quarters of the tribes,

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which are described as being in the Hyderabad country and in the Central Provinces.

7. These proceedings will be communicated to the Resident of Hyderabad and the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, with a view to such inquiries being made, and to such measures being taken, as they may consider necessary.

True Extract).

R. S. ELLIS,

Acting Chief Secretary.

To the Resident at Hyderabad.

„ Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces. } With Proceedings No. 966.
„ Inspector General of Police.
„ Magistrate, Kistna District.

Exd. J. H. Burns.

Judicial Department.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following letter from the
Inspector General of Police.

The letter of 17th August 1867. - 14.2
1575

Order thereon 17th Sept 1867

123-24
14-6-67

In the letter above
referred the Inspector General
of Police submits the result
of an enquiry made by the
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18/6

To the Resident at Hyderabad
Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces
Inspector General of Police
Magistrate, District District

with No. 21:966.

General 1867: Department.

No. 1422.

PROCEEDINGS OF GOVERNMENT.

12th 12th 1868

Dated. 3rd September 1868

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