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- Where are they located?
- What are their lives like?
- What are their beliefs?
- What are their needs?
- Prayer Points



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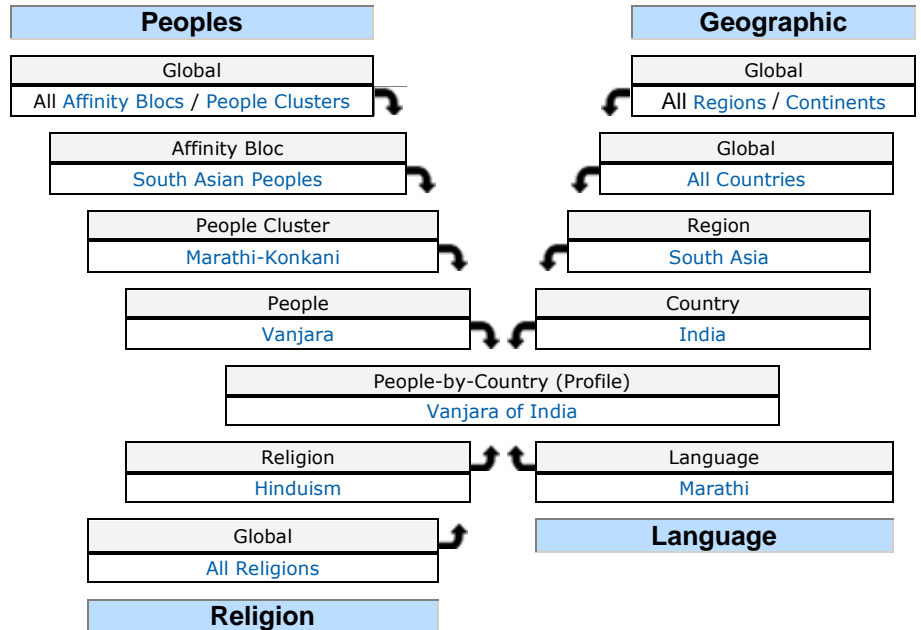
www.everyculture.com/South-Asia/index.html

Web Audio Links

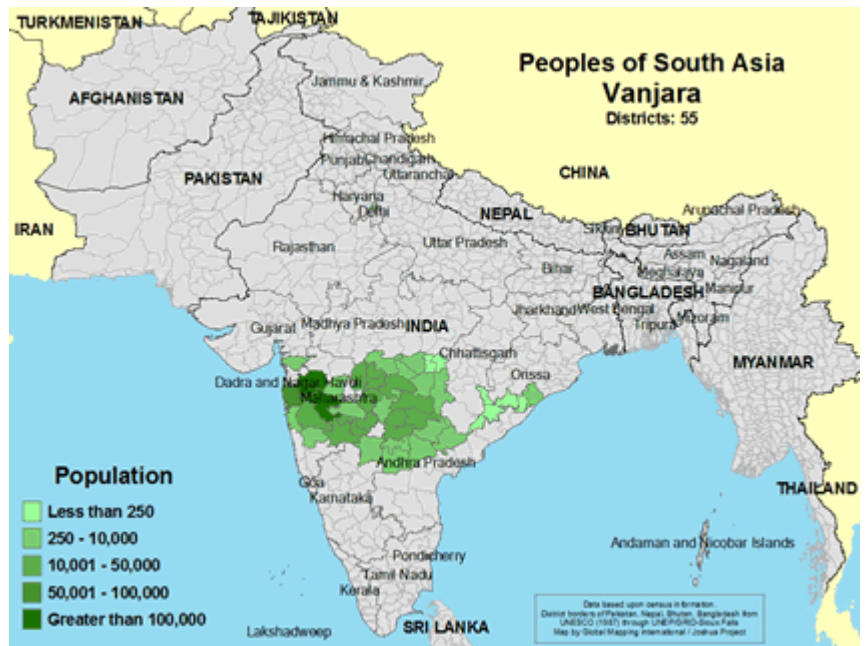
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media.inspirationalfilms.com/?id=mrt00
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Vanjara of India



Vanjara of India



Maps

Submit Map: [▶ GO](#)

Ethnolinguistic Map: [University of Texas map collection](#)

Geography

Submit Update: [▶ GO](#)

Country: [India](#)
Continent: [Asia](#)
Region: [South Asia](#)
Country Persecution Rank: 22 ([Only top 50 ranked](#), 1 = highest persecution ranking)
[10/40 Window](#): Yes
Country Details: [World Factbook](#)
Population in this Country: 859,000
Largest States on file: Maharashtra (716,000) Andhra Pradesh (105,000)
Karnataka (7,500) Orissa (500)
Gujarat (300) Delhi (70)
Madhya Pradesh (Unknown)
Total States on file: 7

People
Submit Update: [▶ GO](#)

People Name This Country: Vanjara
People Name General: [Vanjara](#)
Alternate People Names: Vantari Vindhar
Wandhara Wanjara
[People Code](#): 113879
Population in this Country: 859,000
Population in all Countries: [859,000](#)
[Least-Reached](#): Yes

Ethnic Tree

[Affinity Bloc](#): [South Asian Peoples](#)
[People Cluster](#): [Marathi-Konkani](#)
People Name General: [Vanjara](#)
[Ethnic Code](#): CNN25j


Language
Submit Update: [▶ GO](#)

Primary Language: [Marathi](#) (673,000 Speakers)
[Language Code \(16th\)](#): mar [Ethnologue Listing](#)
[Language Code \(14th\)](#): MRT
Secondary Languages: [Telugu](#) (97,000) [Hindi](#) (1,200)
[Konkani](#) (700) [Kannada](#) (600)
[Gujarati](#) (200)
Total Languages Spoken: 6

Religion
Submit Update: [▶ GO](#)

Primary Religion: [Hinduism](#)
Major Religions: [Buddhism](#) 0.00 %
[Christianity](#) 0.00 % (Evangelical: Unknown %)
[Ethnic Religions](#) 0.00 %
[Hinduism](#) 100.00 %
[Islam](#) 0.00 %
[Non-Religious](#) 0.00 %
[Other / Small](#) 0.00 %
[Unknown](#) 0.00 %

Joshua Project Progress Indicators

[Least-Reached](#): Yes
[Progress Scale](#): 1.1  [Few, if any, known believers. Christian Adherents <=5%.](#)

Need-Ranking Score: 77

[Details](#)

Other Progress Indicators *

None Reported

Bible Translation Status

Submit Update: [▶ GO](#)

Bible Portions: 1807-1957
New Testament: 1811-1982
Complete Bible: 1821-2002
Possible Bible Sources: [Forum of Bible Agencies](#)
[World Bible Finder](#)
[World Christian Resource Directory](#)

Ministry Tools and Links

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Audio Recordings: [MegaVoice Audio Bible and Stories](#)
Audio Recordings: [Faith Comes By Hearing Listing](#)
Audio Recordings: [Global Recordings Listing](#)
Film / Video: [Gods Story Listing](#)
Film / Video: [Jesus Film Listing](#)
Film / Video: [World Christian Videos](#)
General: [Bible Visuals Listing](#)
General: [Evangelism Toolbox Listing](#)
Printed Matter: [Literacy & Evangelism International](#)
Printed Matter: [Multi-Language Media](#)
Printed Matter: [No Frontiers Literature](#)
Printed Matter: [World Christian Tract Ministry](#)
Printed Matter: [World Missionary Press](#)
Radio Broadcast: [Radio Broadcasting Listing](#)
Scripture: [Bible-in-Your-Language Listing](#)
Scripture: [World Scriptures Listing](#)

Ministry Activity

Register Ministry Activity: [▶ GO](#)

Description: [Register](#) your ministry activity among this people group.
Contact the [Adopt-A-People Clearinghouse](#) to learn about others that might be focused on this people group.

Data Sources: 

Vanjara of India



* **Notes:** Significant effort is made to match photos with people groups. In most cases the photo source has identified the people group. However, in some instances when the exact people group is not identified Joshua Project has made educated attempts at matching. As a result some photos may be representative of the people cluster rather than the specific people group. Mismatches are the fault of Joshua Project, not the photographer. Please [contact us](#) if you believe a photo is not matched with the correct people group.

Percentages may be printed as '0.00%' because of space limitations, but some are slightly greater than zero.

The exactness of the above numbers can be misleading. Numbers can vary by several percentage points or more.

People group population figures are now maintained as a percentage of the national population. [Click here](#) for details.

Joshua Project does not have specific ministry activity data supporting the "Other Progress Indicators."

Discrepancies may exist between "Other Progress Indicators" because of the varying sources of information.

Joshua Project does not know the exact content of web audio recordings. In general they are Bible

reading and teaching.

As on-site realities are understood, barriers of acceptance may be found in many of the larger people groups that will require multiple distinct church planting efforts.

This data may contain errors and needs continual correcting and updating. [Click here](#) to send feedback.

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W.S.V. Satyanarayana vs Director Of Tribal Welfare And Ors. on 16/1/1996

ORDER

Motilal B. Naik, J.

1. Petitioner who is a student of II Year MBA Course in Nagarjuna University, Guntur is before this Court. Petitioner states that he secured a seat in I year MBA Course for the academic year 1990-91 in the month of July, 1990, in a seat reserved for S.T. Community on the basis of his claim that he belongs to Konda Kapu Community which is recognised as Scheduled Tribe as per the Presidential Order. His claim that he belongs to Scheduled Tribe is based on his further claim that his mother belongs to Konda Kapu Community from Bodlanka (Agency area) of Addateegala Mandal in East Godavari District. He claims that his father, a retired Excise Inspector belongs to Baliya community, and married his mother Satyavathi who is stated to be from Kondakapu community from Agency area. Basing on his claim that though his father is from Baliya community, on account of his mother being a Konda Kapu, he is entitled to be treated as Scheduled

Tribe in terms of G.O.Ms. No. 371, dated 13-4-1976, issued by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, he has been granted admission into I year MBA course on a caste certificate issued by the M.R.O., Ongole to the effect that the petitioner is a Konda Kapu, in a seat reserved for S.T. candidate.

2. According to the petitioner, his maternal grand father is one Sri Nukaraju who is a Konda Kapu, which is recognised as Scheduled Tribe. His mother being the eldest daughter of said Nukaraju and also her mother's two sisters and brothers have all been recognised as Scheduled Tribe community members and have secured admissions in various schools under Scheduled Tribe quota. It is stated by the petitioner that his father Mr. Venkateswarlu married his mother somewhere in the year 1965. His parents have two sons including the petitioner. He started his school education in Kovuru and later studied in Christian High School at Machilipatnam, Krishna District. He has studied from 6th to 9th class in St. Theresa High School, Ongole. He completed his X class in P.V.R.M. High School, Ongole during the academic year 1983-84, two years Intermediate and also three years B.Com. in CSRS Sharma College, Ongole during the academic years 1984-85 to 1989-90. It is stated by the petitioner that having succeeded in the entrance examination for the MBA course held in the year 1990, he secured admission in

MBA course in Nagarjuna University in July, 1990. According to the petitioner on account of the marriage of his father -Venkateswarlu who is a Balija with his mother Satyavathi - who is a Konda Kapu which is recognised as Scheduled Tribe, in the light of G.O.Ms. No. 371, dated 13-4-1976, he is entitled to be treated as Scheduled Tribe and he is entitled for all the benefits reserved for Schedule Tribes.

3. Petitioner had no problem in obtaining certificates to indicate that he belongs to Schedule Tribe on the strength of the certificates issued by the then Tahasildar, Ongole to the effect that the petitioner belongs to Konda Kapu community on the basis of the certificates issued by the Tahsildar, Yellavaram, Addateegal Mandal for the two sisters of his mother. The father of the petitioner has also declared his two children as Scheduled Tribe members and has obtained certificates to that effect way back in the year 1990 in terms of G.O.Ms. No. 371, dated 13-4 1976. Petitioner claims that he is entitled to claim the social status of Konda Kapu on the basis of his mother being Konda Kapu, in terms of G.O.Ms. No. 371, dated 13-4-1976.

4. Instances are glaring despite measures being taken by Universities at the time of admission into professional courses, to weed out the bogus claims, have

not yielded the desired results, with the result, the benefits meant for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are being knocked away by unscrupulous means by the infiltrators.

5. As per the guidelines and instructions issued by the respective Universities for admission into Professional Courses, a candidate seeking admission in a particular course on the basis of his social status claim, has to necessarily get his social status claim cleared by the concerned Directorate. For this purpose, the candidate has to undergo enquiry before the respective Directorate. At the stage of enquiry by the respective Directorate, a beneficiary who has obtained a seat on his claim to belong to a particular category, fails to face the enquiry which is contemplated by the respective Directorate on being informed of the admission granted by the respective college, approaches either the High Court under Article 226 by way of Writ Petition or by way of filing civil suits in civil Courts. At the threshold, such type of candidates obtain interim direction which enables them to continue the course for which admission has already been granted to them provisionally. The beneficiaries make false allegations in their writ petitions as well as in the civil suits and obtain interim orders. At times, the beneficiaries fail to make

the respective Director as a necessary party in the litigation with the sole intention to keep the respective Directorates in dark about the orders that are likely to be obtained by them. By the time the respective Directorates knew about the interim orders obtained by the said candidate and when steps are being taken to vacate it, it becomes a stupendous task for such Directorates, as it would be too late to set the mischief done. At that stage, unfounded sympathies are invoked in Courts and the Courts also take a liberal view on the ground that the party has already completed the course and allow them to enjoy the booty. The resultant effect in all these cases is the genuine beneficiaries are denied their seats, thereby the constitutional scheme is frustrated.

6. The modus-operandi of such poachers to knock away the benefits meant for these sections vary from person to person. Some claim that though a particular community is recognised as Scheduled caste or Scheduled Tribe, their names being similar to the name indicated in the Presidential order, and claim that they are entitled to be treated as Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe. To narrate an incident, Bariki community is recognised as Scheduled Caste. Taking ponitical affinity of Bariki, Barikas - a backward class are seeking to snatch away the benefits of Scheduled Caste. This apart, few claim to belong to Scheduled Caste

or Scheduled Tribe on the ground that their mothers belong to Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe and seek benefits under G.O.Ms. No. 371, dated 13-4-1976.

7. There are instances, in few cases, it is claimed that a particular sub-caste is synonymous of a major caste and seek to claim benefit as if they are part and parcel of the major caste notified in the Presidential Order for the purpose of recognising them either S.Cs. or S.Ts. For instance, Lambadi/Sugali community is recognised as Scheduled Tribe in the State of Andhra Pradesh by the Presidential Order, 1976. Few persons who belong to Vanjari, Wanjara community also claim that they are entitled to the benefit along with Lambadi/Sugali as their groups are synonymous to Lambadi/Sugali community. Though the Presidential Order recognises Lambadi/Sugali as S.T. and yet many persons claiming to be Vanjaris and Wanjaras obtain S.T. Status certificates from concerned authorities and knock away the benefits meant for S.T. Few executive orders, for instance, G.O.Ms. No. 371, dated 13-4-76 and other guidelines issued by the Government from time to time to the concerned authorities to be followed at the time of issuance of caste certificates, say G.O.Ms. No. 245, dated 30-6-1977 and annexures thereto, opportunists exploit the situation and obtain S.C./S.T.

certificates and knock away the posts meant for S.Cs. and S.Ts. By the time the mischief is detected, substantial damage is done to these sections. The Constitutional Scheme meant to assist these S.Cs. and S.Ts. gets bogged down in the mist of manipulation.

8. This is yet another case where the benefits meant for Scheduled Tribe is being knocked away by the petitioner very intelligently by adopting a different modus-operandi. In this case, the petitioner admits that his father is a Balija community member which is not recognised as Scheduled Tribe. However, he claims that his mother is a Konda Kapu hailing from the Agency area of East Godavari District and as such, being the child born out of the said wed-lock, is entitled to get Scheduled Tribe Certificate. He further claims that his mother's two sisters were given certificates as Scheduled Tribe and basing on these certificates, he has obtained certificates as to belong to Scheduled Tribe from the then Tahasildar, Ongole and M.R.O., Ongole also.

9. It may be true that the petitioner's mother belongs to Konda Kapa Community. It may also be true that his mother's sisters obtained certificates that they belong to Scheduled Tribe. But the petitioner, in my view, is not entitled to claim the benefit as if he belongs to Scheduled Tribes. G.O.Ms. No.

371, dated 13-4-1976 contains administrative instructions. The benevolence of the Government though laudable, but the said G.O. cannot extend benefits to such sections which are not recognised by the Presidential Order. If the Government desires to extend benefit to these categories as envisaged in G.O.Ms. No. 371, it is open to it, to create separate categories and keep certain percentage of seats for these categories. But it is not permissible to allocate certain seats from the seats meant for S.Cs. and S.Ts. The Government has no such authority to do so, as long as there is no change in the tenure of Presidential Order while notifying certain communities as S.Cs. and S.Ts. The said G.O.Ms. No. 371, Employment and Social Welfare Department, dated 13-4-1976 has been considered by K. Ramaswamy, J. (as he then was) in W.P. No. 14875/85 dated 19-2-1986 and held that the said G.O. runs contrary to the constitutional scheme and it is ultra-vires of the executive powers and of the Constitution. I respectfully agree with the view expressed by K. Ramaswamy, J. The scheme formulated under the said G.O. tries to extend benefits to the children born to the couple of inter-caste marriages, mother being either S.C., S.T., or B.C. This G.O. runs contrary to the Constitutional Scheme.

10. Article 366(25) of the Constitution of India defines "Scheduled Tribes"

which means such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this Constitution. Article 342 of the Constitution of India postulates that the President after consultation with the Governor by public notification specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State. Thus, by a Presidential notification, 33 communities have been recognised as Scheduled Tribes in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

11. It is no doubt true that Konda Kapu is recognised as a Scheduled Tribe. But the petitioner is born to a Baliya father. Indian Society recognises birth for the purpose of declaring one's social status. Father is the centre of the family. The social status of the father automatically devolves on the child irrespective of whether the mother of the said child is either S.C. S.T., or B.C. For instance, if a Brahmin marries a Scheduled Caste woman, the child born out of the said wed-lock would be treated as a Brahmin only. Therefore, the rationale behind the claim of the petitioner that he is entitled to be treated as Scheduled Tribe on the basis of his mother being from Scheduled Tribe

community is not acceptable. G.O.Ms. No. 371 dated 13-4-1976 is in the nature of administrative instructions which is ultra-vires the powers of the executive and the said G.O. cannot extend benefits to the children of such couple which are not recognised in the Presidential Order. The said G.O., by all means, cannot over-ride the Presidential Order. As discussed by me above, in W.P. No. 14875/85, K. Ramaswamy, J. (as he then was) has held that the said G.O. is ultra-vires to the powers of the executive and runs contrary to the Constitution, by an order dated 19-2-1986. Therefore, the petitioner's claim that he is entitled to get the benefit under the said G.O. is meaningless as the said G.O. has been held as ultra-vires by this Court way back in the year 1986.

12. Petitioner had secured admission in the I year MBA course on time basis of his claim that he belongs to Scheduled Tribe Community. No doubt, he has obtained certificates from the M.R.O., Ongole in the year 1990 on the basis of G.O.Ms. No. 371, which is held to be ultra-vires by this Court in the year 1986 itself. Therefore, when once a G.O. is held to be ultra-vires, no benefit could be available from such an executive order.

13. Individual claims of social status have to be necessarily verified and

cleared by the respective Directorates. As long as the Social status of the candidates is not cleared, their admissions are only provisional. As per the procedure, the third respondent intimated the first respondent as to the grant of admission to the petitioner in MBA Course and further sought clearance of the social status of the petitioner from the first respondent. The first respondent by letter dated 13-5-92 has informed the second respondent under intimation to the third respondent that the social status certificate issued by the fourth respondent to the petitioner is not in accordance with G.O.Ms. No. 289, Social Welfare Department, dated 28-11-1986 and as such the petitioner cannot get the benefit as to be treated as Scheduled Tribe. Basing on the intimation dated 13-5-1992, the third respondent has issued the impugned memo dated 9-6-1992 seeking explanation of the petitioner as to why the admission granted to him in a seat meant for Scheduled Tribe candidate shall not be cancelled. However, the petitioner without submitting any explanation to the said memo, straightaway approached this Court by way of the present writ petition and obtained interim suspension of the memo dated 9-6-1992. The petitioner then moved this Court by various miscellaneous applications in the year 1993 seeking a direction to the third respondent to issue his transfer certificate without insisting payment of

tuition fees as by that time he had completed his two years Course. The Court by an order dated 27-4-1994 granted interim direction also. Thus, the petitioner has succeeded in completing his MBA Course and has obtained his transfer certificate for reaping further benefits without clearing dues to the third respondent, even though he is not entitled to get a seat in I year MBA against S.T. seat.

14. This is one such effort made by the non-tribal candidate to reap the benefits, snatching a seat meant for genuine Scheduled Tribe candidate. As discussed by me, unscrupulous methods adopted by the infiltrators vary from person to person to deny the benefits meant for S.Cs. and S.Ts. Unfounded sympathies are evoked from this Court on the ground that the petitioner has already completed his course and shall be left free. I am clear in my mind that unfounded sympathies cannot be extended in each and every case, thus making the Constitutional Scheme a misnomer. This Court is conscious of the fact that Courts must function within the framework of the Constitution. Unfounded sympathies cannot be invoked to harm the interests of Dalits. It is the endeavour of the Constitution to protect the weak. It shall always be borne in mind that a benefit which has not been granted by the Constitution, the same

cannot be granted by the Courts also.

15. Sri Nayani Krishna Murthy, learned Counsel for the petitioner pleaded for taking a sympathetic view. I am afraid, this Court cannot assist such person who has not approached this Court with clean hands. Admittedly, the petitioner is born to a Balija father. Whether his mother belongs either to S.C., S.T. or B.C. does not matter as in my view, social status of the children will go with the social status of the father but not with the mother. It may be true that the husband and wife being one, that concept cannot be extended for secular purposes. Wife becoming on her husband's death, a surviving half of her husband and her becoming the sapinda of her husband is based on spiritual and not on secular considerations. Thus, the off-spring born out of the wedlock of inter-caste marriages cannot claim the social status of the mother. As held by the Supreme Court in *Bhaiya Lal v. Harikishan Singh*, , in order to determine whether or not a particular

caste is a Scheduled Caste within the meaning of Article 341, one has to look at the public notification issued by the President in that behalf. Any person who claims that he belongs to the same status by reason of the fact that he belongs to a particular caste which is a sub-caste of the caste declared by the

President cannot be accepted unless it is expressly mentioned in the public notification under Article 341(1). An enquiry of this kind would not be permissible having regard to the provisions contained in Article 341.

16. Thus, it is clear that persons belonging to categories of caste indicated under Articles 341 and 342 alone are to be recognised as Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe, No claim from persons of third categories as provided by the Government of Andhra Pradesh in G.O.Ms. No. 371 dated 13-4-1976 be accepted for the purpose of granting benefits to the children born out of the inter-caste marriages from out of the quota meant for either S.C., S.T. or B.Cs.

17. Having regard to the above discussion, I hold that the petitioner is not entitled to be treated as 'Konda Kapu' and he is also not entitled to the benefits meant for Scheduled Tribe candidates. The third respondent shall issue notification withdrawing the M.B.A. Certificate issued to the petitioner, if the said certificate is already issued. The petitioner is not entitled to use the educational certificates obtained on the basis of his admission to colleges in a seat meant for Scheduled Tribe candidate pursuant to G.O.Ms. No. 371 dated 13-4-1976 for the purpose of employment or for any other purposes intended to



get benefits which are exclusively meant for Scheduled Tribes.

18. In the result, I do not find any merits in the writ petition and the same is accordingly dismissed. No costs.

Bring nomadic Sikhs into mainstream: Bibi **Our Correspondent**

Phagwara, August 30

Former SGPC President and Akali MLA Bibi Jagir Kaur today demanded that 11 crore "Sikligar and Wanjara" Sikhs belonging to nomadic society in 22 states of country should be brought into Sikh mainstream and a Sikh mission set up for them. These Sikhs lived outside Punjab, particularly in Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and other southern states and followed Sikh tenets, claimed Bibi who recently was given the title of "Wanjara Mother" by these Sikhs at a national-level function held near Nagpur. Punjab has many apostate (patit) Sikhs but there is no "patitupuna" among the Sikligars and Wanjara Sikh tribes, she asserted.

However, she was non-committal over the issue of voting right to Sehajdhari Sikhs in SGPC elections. When asked whether or not Sehajdhari Sikhs be given voting right in SGPC polls, Bibi said those who believed in Gurbani, holy Granth Sahib and philosophy of Guru Nanak were Sikhs. However she said she was opposed to "patitpuna", (apostasy), she said. When told that her successor i.e. Mr Jagdev Singh Talwandi had threatened to move the Supreme Court if Sehajdhari Sikhs were given voting right, Bibi again sounded vague and quipped that it was the headache of the SGPC to move court or get the SGPC Act of 1925 amended by Parliament.

On the Union Government's move to grant amnesty to police personnel guilty of excesses during militancy, Bibi said those who had committed mistakes should face law, which should take its own course. However those who did no wrong should not be wronged, she quipped. I favour or oppose nobody over the issue, she said tersely. Bibi was in the town to attend a social function.

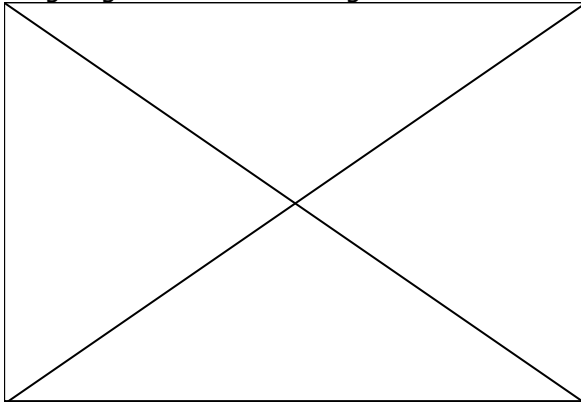
VANJARAS

Numerically the Vanjara tribe is the most important, spread all over South India. Vanjaras are among those Sikhs who irrigated with the blood of whole of their families, the plant of Sikhism. They were so brave that men like Bachitar Singh turned away elephant by hitting his steel covered head with spear; so knowledgeable that after Bhai Gurdas, whatever interpretation of Gurubani has been done, it was by a Vanjara Sikh, Bhai Mani Singh, who got his pores cut for Sikhism.

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Vanjaras are among those Sikhs who irrigated with the blood of whole of their families, the plant of Sikhism. They were so brave that men like Bachitar Singh turned away elephant by hitting his steel covered head with spear; so knowledgeable that after Bhai Gurdas, whatever interpretation of Gurubani has been done, it was by a Vanjara Sikh, Bhai Mani Singh, who got his pores cut for Sikhism. Vanjaras like Makhan Shah sacrificed his wealth to search out the Guru and Lakhi Shah burnt his own house to cremate the body of Ninth Guru.

Guru Nanak came in contact with numerous Vanjaras during the udasis. He composed rhymes addressing Vanjaras. Janamsakhis record Bhai Mansukh as the first Vanjara Sikh who got associated with the Gurughar and inspired the emperor Shivanbh of Sri Lanka to embrace sikhism and thus helped spread Sikhism outside the boundaries of India. There was another Sikh of the Sixth Guru Haridas Vanjara, the daroga of Gwalior fort. During Guru Hargobind's imprisonment Sikhs like Babe Buddha, Bhai Gurdas, Bhai Ballu, Bhai Parana and Bhai Kirtia would often come to him from Punjab. He would not only inform the Sixth Guru of all the news of the royal court but also provided all facilities. When Guruji was asked of his release from Gwalior, he explained his important role as follows; One day Haridas Daroga come to me and side," When Emperor Jahangir sleeps in his palace he sees dreadly faces and threatening shrieks resound in his mind asking him to release the 'Peer of Hind' whom he has incarcerated in Gwalior fort" (Guru Kiran Sakhian, P. 34) "Wazir Khan gave the Daroga his message to release the prisoners. After watching the massage all those prisoners undergoing were left. I asked the Daroga, "What is written in the letter about remaining prisoners". He replied with folded hands. Those who could not be released now could escape by holding the robe of the Guru" The Daroga was a Sikh of the Guru. I asked him to get a large sized robe stitched. By morning all the kings got freed holding onto Guru's robe. (Guru Kian Sakhian, P. 35-36)



Makhan Shah was associated with Sikhism since the Sixth Guru. Bhatt Vahis testify this " The cavalcade of Bhai Makhan Shah who was the Sikh of Guru, was going to Kashmir. The satguru joined him there. After pilgrimage of Mutton Martand along with Bhai Dasa and Bhai Aru Ram, he reached the place of Bhai Makhan Shah at Mota Tanda. Bhai Dasa, father of Bhai Makhan Shah breathed his last there."

The Seventh Guru stayed with him in Kashmir, This is mentioned in 'Guru Kian Sakhian' and 'Bhatt Vahi " Guru Har Rai Jee, the Seventh Guru, Son of Baba Gurditta Jee arrived in Srinagae in the year seventeen hundred seventeen, Krishan pakh, Panchami of Jeth month. Makjhan Shah, son of Bhai Dasa, grandson of Binai, maternal grandson of Beheru, Sub caste Vanjara came to him.' (Guru Kian Sakhina, P.40) The Guru stayed at the Tanda of Makhan Shah in Kashmir for four months. (Bhatt Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jeend).

The account of Makhan Shah Vanjara declaring Guru Teg Bahadur Jee the Guru is mentioned thus in Sakhis :

"On the festival of Diwali of 1721, people from far and wide came to seek blessings of the Guru. There was a big spectacle in the village Bakala. Makhan Shah Banjara came with his people to seek blessings of the Guru. His ship was stuck in the whirlwind in the river near Tremu harhour. He pledged 100 coins and came to Bakala town. At first he was led to the house of Dheer Mal by the attendants of this fake. Makhan shah gifted five coins. Dheer Mal saw him off after bestowing siropa on him. Makhan shah came to the court of Guru Teg Bahadur there after and gifted five coins. Guru said," Makhan Shah! Your wife has brought coins in a red bag with a green string. The bar is with your elder son who is standing behind you." At this his Chandu Lal bowed his head before him and his son gifted the bag. Makhan Shah came out and shouted thrice," O mistaken Sangat ! I have found the Guru. ". Guru Jee blessed him to be a true Sikh (Guru Kian Sakhian, P.61-62)

Makhan Shah Banjara remained Guru's devoted Sikh and his son Kushal Singh attained martyrdom fighting along with the Guru's forces in Lohgarh fort. More touching is the story of Lakhi Shah Banjara who brought in the body of Guru Teg Bahadur from Nakhas Chowk stealthily and made his own home the cremation pre. Nayak Bhagwant Singh did not care for his title of Panj Hazari given by Auranzzeb and made his house a safe haven for Sikhs.

The number of sacrifices made by this tribe to Preserve Sikhism is unprecedented. Over 100 Vanjaras Sikhs have been listed here as an example, but they number much more. From the list we find three brothers, Bhai Dayala boiled alive in pot(tegh), Bhai Mani Singh was cut limb, Bhai Jagat Singh was skinned alive and Bhai Mani Singhs son Chitar Singh wastied with spokes. Their six other brothers also achieved martyrdom similarly while preserving Sikhism. Just as their grandfather Ballu sent his own brother Nanu and three sons Nathia, Dassa and Suhela for martyrdom in the battles of Guru Hargobind, Bhai Mani Singh, also sacrificed all his sons Chitar Singh, Bachitar Singh, Udai Singh, Anik Singh, Ajaib Singh, Ajaib Singh, Bhagwan Singh and, Udai Singh, Anik singh, grandsons Keso Singh, Saina Singh, Sangram Singh, Ram Singh, Mehboob singh, Fateh Singh, Albel Singh, Mehar Singh, Bagh Singh, Maha Singh, Seetal Singh, uncles Nathia's sons Sangat Singh Bangeshwari, Ran Singh, Bhagwant Singh, Kaur Singh, Baj Singh, Sham Singh, Sukha Singh, Lal Singh, Nand Singh etc. Almost whole of the family of Bhai Mani Singh has entered the list of martyrs.

Besides these, martyrdom of 40 other Banjaras at Alowal near Multan on October 11, are recorded in Akbare-e-Darbar-e-Muala, October 11, 1711, 10 Ramzan Hizri 1123, Year Pancham Bahadurshahi. "Sarbrah Khan Kotwal received orders that 40 Sikhs have been brought in the Kotwali from Multan. Ask them to accept Islam, otherwise kill them. The Emperor was told that they did not yield. An order was given that they be killed."

The Sikh population of the world, as broken down by Dr. Dalvinder Singh Ji is as follows:

(Dr. Dalvinder Singh Ji has put these figures down in 'crores, 'lacs' etc. I have attempted to standardise them in western terms for ease.)

Mainstream Sikhs in India 20,000,000 (many many youth are monas)

Sikligar 40,000,000

Vanjaras 50,000,000

Satnamias 10,000,000

Johari (Maharashthra) 20,000

Assami (20 villages in Assam) 20,000

Bihari - Kishanganj and Patna in Bihar 20,000

Tharu - Bijnaur, UP 20,000

Lamas - Larmapa and Naingmapa tribes of Tibet origin 100,000

Sindhis 200,000

Canada, America, UK, Australia, Thailand, Malaysia, Kenya etc. 1,000,000

Other Sikhs * 1,000,000

TOTAL 122,380,000

Other Sikhs * include: Nirankari, Namdhari, Radhaswami, Sehajdhari, Satkartari, Gangushahi. Suthreshahi, Nirmala, Ramdasia, Ramraia, Bandai, Niranjani, Mahima Shahi, Singhji, Nanakshahi, Bihari, Brandavani Hiradasi, Gulabdasi, Gahir Gambiri.

This is the first time I have seen anyone take a serious look at world Sikh population figures and also to break down the figures.

Most of these various 'Sikh' tribes live below the poverty line and are regarded as indigenous tribes, but they are all linked to Sikhi in one way or another and as such should be considered part of the 'Sikh' population. Bachitar Singh who plunged a spear into the forehead of an enraged elephant and turned it back, was a Vanjara. Bhai Mani Singh was a Vanjara Sikh. Makhan Shah

was a Lubana Sikh, to name a few prominent ones.

My purpose of writing this is because our (world) population is still being bandied about as being between 20 million to 30 million in different publications of authority. The Sikh Times of UK once put our population down as around 155 million without much substantiation. Dr. Dalvinder Singh has attempted a breakdown and comes up with 122,380,000 (122.3 million).

It is time that our scholars took a serious look at this issue so that our population can be stated more accurately, and with some validation, so that figures of Sikhs in so-called western official publications like Encyclopedias, information on internet like Wikipedia etc. can be standardised.

I also recommend that Dr.Dalvinder Singh's article is read by all. In fact i strongly recommend that as many of us contribute to and read the Sikh Review besides other Sikh publications.

Recalling the Forgotten Sikhs

November 21st, 2008 Source: worldsikhnews.com

by Jagmohan Singh in Sholapur



SIKHLIGAR GHETTO, SHOLAPUR: Meet Poonam Kaur. 12 years old, wearing a simple salwar kameez with the dupatta over her head, demure, shy but knowledgable. She knows that the



Prime Minister of the country is Manmohan Singh. She also knows that the young sons of Guru Gobind Singh were seven and nine years old when they were bricked alive. What she does not know is how her parents did and forefathers land up in a filthy ghetto in the heart of this city.

Meet Sonu Singh. He studies in the eighth standard. He uses basic water colours to paint Bollywood stars and artistes. Besides regular school, he attends National Cadet Corps sessions. He has no spare time. As soon as he returns home, he does not do home work, he works with his father to convert old drums into usable agricultural equipment. He too does not know how his parents landed up in this place, called Dera by the inhabitants and otherwise derogatorily called, Basti.

These are two of thousands of such children of Sikhs who form part of a section of the Sikhs, called Sikhligaar Sikhs. In Maharashtra alone, their number is nearly six thousand. Just a hundred kilometers from Sholapur is the hometown of Bhagat Namdev, whose Bani is included in Guru Granth Sahib. The other two Bhagats- Bhagat Trilochan and Bhagat Ramanand whose Bani is included in Guru Granth Sahib are also from this region. Takht Hazur Sahib is also not very far away.



The Tercentenary Gurta Gaddi celebrations were an opportunity for fifteen of them to go to Hazur Sahib and partake Amrit. Some of them proudly told me that they 'get up at Amrit vela and do paath.'



Living in abject penury, far from their homeland Punjab, with virtually no connection with Sikh thought and the Sikh world, they are ironsmiths who eke out a daily living by making utensils, knives and agricultural implements. Whatever little history is available, tells us that they were weapon-makers since the times of the sixth Master, Guru Hargobind Sahib.

Learning the skills through the generations, even today they produce excellent hand crafted Kirpans and other hand-fighting gear. While it may not be wise to categorise the martyrdom according to caste or origin, it is said that a number of martyrs were from this section of the Sikhs including Bhai Dayala, Makhan Shah Lubana and Bhai Mani Singh.

A 'prosperous' Sikh community somehow forgot them for some two hundred years or so. They did not forget their roots. Travelling from one part of Maharashtra to Karnataka to Andhra Pradesh to wherever they could get a foothold, they became a nomadic tribe –unsettled, unread and unattached.

Significantly, this became their strength. No amount of Christian or Brahminical influence could take them away from their roots. Knowing only the name of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, they stuck to their fundamentals –their Kesh are intact and they have the crowning glory of Turban on their heads.

No one knows their exact numbers. From the lakhs to the thousands –described with various nomenclatures -nomadic tribes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Each Indian state has a different categorization for them and the Sikh world simply calls them Sikhligar Sikhs.



The sheer numbers have been off-putting to some. Others see it as a hope of strengthening the demographic power of the Sikhs. Hopefully, we will have the first-ever official census of Sikhligar, Vanjara and Lubana Sikhs in the coming months thanks to the efforts of the National Commission for Minorities. NCM member Harcharan Singh Josh, told this correspondent that, “it took two years to convince the NCM co-members that Sikhs too are poor, in fact, these Sikhs are poorest of the poor –living below the poverty line.” Extensive field studies have been undertaken by the NCM all over the country and a report is expected soon.



Poverty and pressure of the police have known to subdue many a people in settled societies. Not the Sikhligar Sikhs. In Sholapur, the police harass them whenever there is trouble even though they are not even remotely involved in any way. In this particular ghetto, the families living cheek by jowl under tin and thatched roofs do not pick up fights every now and then. One of their coordinators proudly said, “We have no police case pending against any of us.”

Their temporary habitat is now in danger. Galloping land prices in towns and cities due to a skewed development model of Special

Economic Zones and malls has resulted in threats to those Sikhligars who are settled in shanties on the outskirts of cities like Hyderabad. Those living here too do not own the lands though living at this particular spot for more than thirty years.

This chapter of Sikh history is ready by many and flipped over. Not any more. I accompanied Balvinder Singh and Sanmeet Kaur, software engineers from Bangalore and Kulwant Singh -a mechanical engineer and Jaspal Singh – a lab technician from Mumbai, who are part of a silent educational revolution for the Sikhligar brethren. They are optimistic activists who instead of crying over and repeating the problem ad-nauseam, are part of a movement called Akhar –Service of Humanity, initiated by young Sikh professionals from Bangalore. Working alongside Guru Gobind Singh Study Circle Maharashtra and Gurmat Missionary College Mumbai, these and other volunteers have ‘adopted’ this ghetto and three other localities in Jalgaon, Ichalkaranji and Srirampur in Maharsashtra catering to the needs of 200 children.



Every few weeks, they visit these ghettos, stay there and monitor the education and sanitation programme launched for the kids that live in sub-human conditions.

It is time to be part of the solution so that as we eye 400 years of Guru Granth Sahib, we are sure that ‘Sikhs being illiterate is a rumour.’ Would you like to join them?

Jagmohan Singh may be contacted at jsbigideas@gmail.com

Banjara Tribe

Banjaras are nomadic tribes found in [Andhra Pradesh](#), [Bihar](#), [Madhya Pradesh](#), [Himachal Pradesh](#), [Gujarat](#), [Tamil Nadu](#), [Maharashtra](#), [Karnataka](#), [Orissa](#) and [West Bengal](#). The banjaras are believed to be descendants of the Roma gypsies of Europe who migrated through the rugged mountains of Afghanistan, to settle down in the deserts of [Rajasthan](#) in India 2300 years ago. These tribes are related to European gypsies, who probably migrated from India.

Banjaras are known by different names such as Lamani, Lambadi, Bangala, Banjori, Banjuri, Gohar-Herkeri, Goola, Gurmarti, Kora, Labhani Muka, Lambara, Lavani,

Lemadi, Lumadale, Sugali, Tanda, Vanjari, Waji, Gormati and Singali. They speak Lamani language.

Their occupations are gathering of forest products and agriculture. Banjara women wear a full length skirt with borders embroidered in mustard and green thread. They also wear pretty silver anklets. Silver, brass, gold, cowries, ivory, animal bone and even plastic are used in making a Banjara wardrobe. These tribes are experts in traditional hand embroidery with mirror works.

They worship [Lakshmi](#), the Goddess of prosperity. The hundreds of cowries that the Banjara tribal women wear are very auspicious as they represent Lakshmi. Banjara tribes of Andhra Pradesh celebrate [Holi](#). A variety of dance forms are performed during this occasion.

Why are Sikligars, Vanjara Sikhs Neglected, Ignored?

[Ik Dard Bhari Dastaan](#)

Why are the SIKH Vanjaras grossly neglected by all and sundry ?? This question has always bugged me..but first..to those who dont know what i am talking about....

Who are the SIKH Vanjaras..also called the SIKLIGARS ?? These are a kaum of transient wanderers..often likened to GYPSIES..who trade in bhandeh, iron smithies work like making locks, baltees, pails, iron utensils, weapons..etc etc. Their population is about 100 MILLION while the total population of Sikhs in India is only about 20 Million. These Vanjaras became SIKHS of Baba nanak during his Udasees throughout India...since then they have called themselves SIKHS, their lives and rituals centre around a GUTKA of Japji Sahib...but they are also some of the poorest of the poor..and in INDIA..a poor man is worthless..hence to the WEALTHY SIKHS of Punjab that constitute the Khalsa Panth..these 100 million Sikhs of Baba Nanak are a worthless commodity and hence completely sidelined never to be mentioned in sikh circles. After Guur nanak Ji sahib the next Guru that is mentioned briefly in Sikligar history is Guru hargobind Ji sahib. Guru Ji called some sikligar Sikhs to help in the manufacture of weapons.

Thus apart from knowing just these two Guru Sahibs names...the Sikligars are not familiar with naythign else Sikhi is famous for...and neither has the Punjab Sikhs shown any keenness on their part to go out and cultivate ties with this huge population of Sikhs outside of Punjab. For the past 500 years these Sikligar Sikhs have not forgotten the two Guurs..Guru nanak and Guru hargobind Ji and called themselves SIKHS although they have no idea about even the SGGS. Their lives centre around Japji Sahib in Gutka Form only.

Sikhs are never tired of claiming that ALL SIKHS are well off..Sikhs have no Beggars etc etc...but this is a fact that the 100 million Sikligars are SIKHS..and they are not well off...and they scratch the earth daily for food like chickens...at night most sleep without knowing when the next roti will come from. They have no houses but tents, no properties except a few utensils and their tools of trade. It is also a fact that many among them are HIGHLY SKILLED in their TRADE – locksmiths, iron smiths, weapons manufacturing etc etc...BUT sadly lack of education, capital etc means they are unable to rise above the poverty line..generation after generation.. BUT they are SIKHS..YES..POOR SIKHS..YES..BUT NO “beggars”. They live strictly by the Gurmatt way that baba Nanak Ji taught them..Kirt Karo...and although circumstances force them to be “no wand chhako” types....and lack of resources and spiritual sustenance

may also cancel the naam japoo characteristic..BUT the mere fact that they have NOT abandoned SIKHI for the past 500 years living in a hostile environment, have not abandoned their KESH..while living amongst non-kesha hindus and muslim majorities...shows their mettle.

These Sikligar Sikhs are the true inheritors of the GURU KI GOLAK GREEB ka MOOHN..but sadly the Sikhs have handed over their Golaks either to the POLITICIANS..or to the Good for nothing wehlarr SAADHS/SANTS who run DERAS for their own PRIVATE BENEFITS. Who AMASS WEALTH privately in the GURUS NAME..open Private Colleges named after themselves, offer posts in them to their own relatives..and chelas..while continuously blowing the GURU HORN to befool the Sikh Sangats into giving them GOLAKs and charawwas decade after decade..with absolutely no accountability....they wash their hands off this by saying..Guru Janneh... aapeh GURU saza devegah..guru deean guru janneh..blah blah blah...and thus these wehlarr saadhs get bolder and make more trips abroad to collect even more dollars and pounds. POLITICIANS ans PUJAREES/SAADHS/DERAWALLAHS etc have no dhram..no sense of conscience..all they are interested in are SELF PRESERVATION..vote banks, power and amassing wealth. Tomorrow IF the rest of the SIKHS also become impoverished like the Sikligars..there will be no effect on the politicians or the derawallahs...they will just move on to greener pastures...this is also one reason WHY these DERA WALLAHS always stay away from SOLELY SIKH SANGATS...they PREFER a MILGHOBHA.....a mixture of Hindus, keshadharee hindus look alike Sikhs, sikh-hindus, hindu-sikhs, christian-sikhs !!Sikhs who pray at Muslim Pir Graves/samaadhs..etc etc BECAUSE then their NET stays WIDE...TRAWLER NETS that sweep the Ocean Floor...."everything is welcome" !!because to them MONEY is PRIME..not DHARAM...so what if their Shardhaloo "sikh" prays to a muslim Grave...he is still a shardhaloo who will also matha tek to his golak..so why chase him away/chastise him ?? THIS is the Main REASON the DERAS are so popular..everybody is welcome..to do whatever his heart desires..as long as the Guru ji gets his cut !!

The Sikligars have such a great pool of Talent that can be literally ignited if given the chance...investment in their EDUCATION..their SKILLS DEVELOPMENT..and MARKETING of their Products..such a huge pool of SIKHI...that can overnight BOOST the SIKH population from 20 million to over 100 million and all over INDIA. IF these people have guarded their SIKHI so jealously for 500 years in such ADVERSE CONDITIONS..what wonders can they achieve if given the RIGHT ENVIRONMENT. SIKH Gurdwaras raise BILLIONS in GOLUCK Collections yearly..WASTE colossal sums on GURU KA LANGGARS to feed the already OBESE SIKHS !!

No one has even looked at the sikligars seriously...not the SGPC with its multi krór budgets...not the Delhi Gurdwara Committee – also with multi million charawwas yearly...no one is willing to help them.

The entire Sikh Khalsa Panth should hang its head in SHAME. We have neglected such a big portion of us..the poorer section of our Panth..is forced to live hand to mouth. Just a small capital outlay towards establishing workshops to employ these master craftsmen..and a little advertising or Marketing their produce can send them on the path to prosperity....and we can make good use of our GOLUCKS....to help our fellow SIKH. Right now they are approaching the Indian govt in New Delhi for help..but I am not hopeful...the Govt is also not a party that helps genuine cases...it is also politically motivated....so they are going to be disappointed there as well...the ORDINARY SIKH is their BEST BET...IF the Ordinary SIKH is made aware of their

plight..and each SIKH takes it upon his head that he is going to ensure his local GURDWARA helps the Sikligars..then a concerted effort can be set moving... CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME..and the SIKH HOME is so Crammed FULL of the NEEDY...yet we close our EYES and pretend all is A-OK..what a FARCE. Its time to RIGHT that WRONG being done for the past 500 years...

Gyani Jarnail Singh 'Arshi' Malaysia
MAKE SPN THE SAWA LAKH COMMUNITY
Recalling the Forgotten Sikhs

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Significantly, this became their strength. No amount of Christian or Brahminical influence could take them away from their roots. Knowing only the name of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, they stuck to their fundamentals –their Kesh are intact and they have the crowning glory of Turban on their heads. No one knows their exact numbers. From the lakhs to the thousands –described with various nomenclatures -nomadic tribes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Each Indian state has a different categorization for them and the Sikh world simply calls them Sikhligar Sikhs. The sheer numbers have been off-putting to some. Others see it as a hope of strengthening the

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Their temporary habitat is now in danger. Galloping land prices in towns and cities due to a skewed development model of Special Economic Zones and malls has resulted in threats to those Sikhligars who are settled in shanties on the outskirts of cities like Hyderabad. Those living here too do not own the lands though living at this particular spot for more than thirty years.



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19 November 2008

[WSN-Core-Religion-Recalling the Forgotten Sikhs](#)

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great pool of Talent that can be literally ignited if given the chance...investment in their EDUCATION..their and MARKETING of their Products..such a huge pool of SIKHI...that can overnight BOOST the SIKH population 100 million and all over INDIA. IF these people have guarded their SIKHI so jealously for 500 years in such what wonders can they achieve if given the RIGHT ENVIRONMENT. SIKH Gurdwaras raise BILLIONS in GOLUCKS on colossal sums on GURU KA LANGGARS to feed the already OBESE SIKHS !!

not the sikligars seriously...not the SGPC with its multi krór budgets...not the Delhi Gurdwara Committee – also was yearly...no one is willing to help them.

the Sikh community should hang its head in SHAME. We have neglected such a big portion of us..the poorer section of our community and to mouth. Just a small capital outlay towards establishing workshops to employ these master craftsmen..and marketing their produce can send them on the path to prosperity....and we can make good use of our GOLUCKS....to help them now they are approaching the Indian govt in New Delhi for help..but I am not hopeful...the Govt is also not a good case...it is also politically motivated....so they are going to be disappointed there as well...the ORDINARY SIKH Ordinary SIKH is made aware of their plight..and each SIKH takes it upon his head that he is going to ensure the welfare of the Sikligars..then a concerted effort can be set moving... CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME..and the SIKH HOME is in a NEEDY...yet we close our EYES and pretend all is A-OK..what a FARCE. Its time to RIGHT that WRONG being done by the Sikhs...

Sikhi' Malaysia
SIKH COMMUNITY



Ignored Sikh Tribes; Vanjaras, Sikligars and Satnamis

From SikhiWiki

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Most Sikhs will be surprised to know that there are more than 12 crores (120 million) of ignored Sikh tribal people in India. The majority of them are from three tribes.

The Vanjaras, the Sikligars and the Satnamis.

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The Vanjaras

Numerically the Vanjara tribe is the most important, spread all over South India. Vanjaras are among those Sikhs who irrigated with the blood of whole of their families, the plant of Sikhism. They were so brave that men like Bachitar Singh turned away elephant by hitting his steel covered head with spear; so knowledgeable that after Bhai Gurdas, whatever interpretation of Gurubani has been done, it was by a Vanjara Sikh, Bhai Mani Singh, who got his pores cut for Sikhism.

Numerically the Vanjara tribe is the most important, spread all over South India. The Vanjaras are among those Sikhs whose families blood (comparing Sikhi to a growing plant) irrigated the plant of Sikhism. They were brave men like Bachitar Singh who turned away an elephant by hitting his steel covered head with his spear; so knowledgeable that after Bhai Gurdas, whatever interpretation of Gurubani has been done, it was done by the Vanjara Sikh Bhai Mani Singh who had his body cut to pieces over his love of Sikhi. Vanjaras like Makhan Shah who sacrificed his wealth to search out the Guru and Lakhi Shah who burned his own home to cremate the body of our Ninth Guru.

Guru Nanak came in contact with numerous Vanjaras during the udasis. He composed rhymes addressing Vanjaras. Janamsakhis record Bhai Mansukh as the first Vanjara Sikh who got associated with the Gurughar and inspired the emperor Shivanbh of Sri Lanka to embrace sikhism and thus helped spread Sikhism outside the boundaries of India. There was another Sikh of the Sixth Guru Haridas Vanjara, the daroga of Gwalior fort. During Guru Hargobind's imprisonment Sikhs like Baba Buddha, Bhai Gurdas, Bhai Ballu, Bhai Parana and Bhai Kirtia would often come to him from Punjab. He would not only inform the Sixth Guru of all the news of the royal court but also provided all facilities. When Guruji was asked of his release from Gwalior, he explained his important role as follows; One day Haridas Daroga come to me and side," When Emperor Jahangir sleeps in his palace he sees dreadly faces and threatening shrieks resound in his mind asking him to release the 'Peer of Hind' whom he has incarcerated in Gwalior fort" (Guru Kiran Sakhian, P. 34) "Wazir Khan gave the Daroga his message to release the prisoners. After watching the message all those prisoners undergoing were left. I asked the Daroga, "What is written in the letter about remaining prisoners". He replied with folded hands.

Those who could not be released now could escape by holding the robe of the Guru” The Daroga was a Sikh of the Guru. I asked him to get a large sized robe stitched. By morning all the kings got freed holding onto Guru’s robe. (Guru Kian Sakhian, P. 35-36)

Makhan Shah was associated with Sikhism since the Sixth Guru. Bhatt Vahis testify this “ The cavalcade of Bhai Makhan Shah who was the Sikh of Guru, was going to Kashmir. The satguru joined him there. After pilgrimage of Mutton Martand along with Bhai Dasa and Bhai Aru Ram, he reached the place of Bhai Makhan Shah at Mota Tanda. Bhai Dasa, father of Bhai Makhan Shah breathed his last there.”

The Seventh Guru stayed with him in Kashmir, This is mentioned in ‘Guru Kian Sakhian’ and ‘Bhatt Vahi “ Guru Har Rai Jee, the Seventh Guru, Son of Baba Gurditta Jee arrived in Srinagae in the year seventeen hundred seventeen, Krishan pakh, Panchami of Jeth month. Makjhan Shah, son of Bhai Dasa, grandson of Binai, maternal grandson of Beheru, Sub caste Vanjara came to him.’ (Guru Kian Sakhina, P.40) The Guru stayed at the Tanda of Makhan Shah in Kashmir for four months. (Bhatt Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jeend).

The account of Makhan Shah Vanjara declaring Guru Teg Bahadur Jee the Guru is mentioned thus in Sakhis :

“On the festival of Diwali of 1721, people from far and wide came to seek blessings of the Guru. There was a big spectacle in the village Bakala. Makhan Shah Banjara came with his people to seek blessings of the Guru. His ship was stuck in the whirlwind in the river near Tremu harhour. He pledged 100 coins and came to Bakala town. At first he was led to the house of Dheer Mal by the attendants of this fake. Makhan shah gifted five coins. Dheer Mal saw him off after bestowing siropa on him. Makhan shah came to the court of Guru Teg Bahadur there after and gifted five coins. Guru said,” Makhan Shah! Your wife has brought coins in a red bag with a green string. The bar is with your elder son who is standing behind you.” At this his Chandu Lal bowed his head before him and his son gifted the bag. Makhan Shah came out and shouted thrice,” O mistaken Sangat ! I have found the Guru. “. Guru Jee blessed him to be a true Sikh (Guru Kian Sakhian, P.61-62)

Makhan Shah Banjara remained Guru’s devoted Sikh and his son Kushal Singh attained martyrdom fighting along with the Guru’s forces in Lohgarh fort. More touching is the story of Lakhi Shah Banjara who brought in the body of Guru Teg Bahadur from Nakhas Chowk stealthily and made his own home the cremation pre. Nayak Bhagwant Singh did not care for his title of Panj Hazari given by Auranjzeb and made his house a safe haven for Sikhs.

The number of sacrifices made by this tribe to Preserve Sikhism is unprecedented. Over 100 Vanjaras Sikhs have been listed here as an example, but they number much more. From the list we find three brothers, Bhai Dayala boiled alive in pot(tegh), Bhai Mani Singh was cut limb, Bhai Jagat Singh was skinned alive and Bhai Mani Singhs son Chitar Singh wastied with spokes. Their six other brothers also achieved martyrdom similarly while preserving Sikhism. Just as their grandfather Ballu sent his own brother Nanu and three sons Nathia, Dassa and Suhela for martyrdom in the battles of Guru Hargobind, Bhai Mani Singh, also sacrificed all his sons Chitar Singh, Bachitar Singh, Udai Singh,

Anik Singh, Ajaib Singh, Ajaib Singh, Bhagwan Singh and, Udai Singh, Anik Singh, grandsons Keso Singh, Saina Singh, Sangram Singh, Ram Singh, Mehboob Singh, Fateh Singh, Albel Singh, Mehar Singh, Bagh Singh, Maha Singh, Seetal Singh, uncles Nathia's sons Sangat Singh Bangeshwari, Ran Singh, Bhagwant Singh, Kaur Singh, Baj Singh, Sham Singh, Sukha Singh, Lal Singh, Nand Singh etc. Almost whole of the family of Bhai Mani Singh has entered the list of martyrs.

Besides these, martyrdom of 40 other Banjaras at Alawal near Multan on October 11, are recorded in Akbare-e-Darbar-e-Muala, October 11, 1711, 10 Ramzan Hizri 1123, Year Pancham Bahadurshahi. "Sarbrah Khan Kotwal received orders that 40 Sikhs have been brought in the Kotwali from Multan. Ask them to accept Islam, otherwise kill them. The Emperor was told that they did not yield. An order was given that they be killed."

The Sikligars

If we consider the dedication and commitment to Sikhism, this tribe is among the first. Lacking any help from any quarter and living in penury they still remain in high spirits. Their poverty however, has kept them beyond the attention of so called Sikh Sardars. Neither any Gurdwara Committees has paid any attention to them nor any worth while Sikh organization has tried to help them.

The days are far behind when Guru Hargobind ji wore the swords of Meeri and Peeri to save the masses from the tyranny of Mughals and when he felt the need of arms he remembered these Marwar brothers. These were the same Marwari brother whose chief Rana Partap was inspired by Sri Chand Jee the son of Guru Nanak, to sacrifice his every thing for religion. He fought the Mughals valiantly losing the battle of arms but not of mind. They accepted of vagaries of forests but not the servitude of Mughals. They adopted the profession of manufacture of arms and took upon themselves to supply these to fight the Mughals. On invitation from the Guru, they permanently got attached to the Guru Ghar. They would not only manufacture arms for Gurughar but also fought battles attaining martyrdom. When Gurujee sent Bhai Jetha and Bhai Bidhi Chand to look for artisans, Bhai Kehar Singh Rajput was the first one to offer his services. Men brought by him made weapons that were used by the Sixth and Tenth Gurus in all the battles with Mughals. In between, during the period of non-violence their occupation was affected adversely. Some of them returned to Marwar. The residents of Chittaurgarh did not behave well with their forelon brothers and they returned. Marital relationship was formed within the tribes and tradition of exchange also began due to need of times.

Some Sikligars associated with Guru Teg Bahadur also went with him to Assam and kept supplying weapons for royal armies. Their fate took a turn towards the positive when the Tenth Guru took over. He called upon his followers to bring weapons. Sikligars also contributed their mite. First of all came Bhai Veeru and provided the details of his brethern. The Guru asked him to exhibit weapons. He ordered Bhai Nand Singh and Bhai Chaupa Singh to check exhibited weapons. Guru Sahib too paid a visit to the exhibition.

The weapons were extremely beautiful and shining brilliantly. These were so sharp that they would have severed the heads of elephants. The makers of these weapons themselves were such warriors that they could each fight alone with a lakh and quarter. Observing the shine of their weapons the Guru himself named them 'Sikligar' and after

observing their valour bestowed them with the title of his favorites. The swords, arrows and other weapons made by them were adopted enthusiastically by the Guru.

The weapon manufacturing activity started in the fort of Lohgarh under the supervision of these Marwari artisans. According to Bhai Santokh Singh, "Marwaris were very active in making weapons." They prepared four types of weapons (1) Amukat which can be used with hands like swords (2) Mukat, which can be released from hand, and (3) Muktamukat, which can be used both ways. Bhai Ram Singh was responsible for manufacture. He was the first to be baptised in to Sikhism among the Sikligars and became Ram Singh from Ram Chand after baptism at the hands of Tenth Guru. He belonged to Bugiana. Though he could not become one of the Panj Piaras but he was among the Panj Piaras (Guru Kian Sakhian, p 116). He showed his fighting skills in the battle of Chamkaur intimidating the enemy valiantly.

He would clean the weapons with much dedication. Once he was cleaning a Tegh by putting it under his feet. A group of Sikhs chided him, "Why are you touching the sacred weapon with feet?" They went away saying this but all Sikligars kept sitting with the weapons on their heads. When Guruji noticed this he asked Ram Singh the reason for the strange act. As Ram Singh told of the comments passed against them, Guruji laughed and said "Just as a sculptor makes a sculpture pressing it under his feet and making people to worship it, likewise you also clean the weapons with much dedication and honour. So you are excused from the ill effects (Giani Gian Singh Twarikh Khalsa, part 3, p. 931). The account of bravery of Ram Singh in the battle of Chamkaur before he attained martyrdom is described in Suraj Parkash, part 8.

Bhai Badan Singh and Bhai Modan Singh gave company to the Tenth Guru till Nanded. After the Tenth Guru this tribe got divided into small groups and started roaming in towns and villages manufacturing and selling their ware. Some served the royal houses. Later some of them came in the service of Maharaja Ala Singh and contributed a lot in getting thousands of Hindu men and women released from Abdali. When Maharaja of Nahan asked for weapons and weapons makers from Maharaja Ala Singh, the Sikligars Mohan Singh, Madan Singh, and Tehal Singh were sent. During the period of the queen Aas Kaur Misar Naudh revolted. Sikligars Kesar Singh, Mehtab Singh, Khum Singh, Ghulab Singh, Margind Singh, Jawahar Singh showed their mettle and won the battle. This earned them honour in the court but they were put to death treacherously by the Misar.

During Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time they started making guns and rifles also. These rifles were famous with the names of Toredar, Kotli, Pata, Churidar and Sada. These were manufactured on a large scale in the workshops of Lahore. The British period hit them very hard. Ban was ordered against their weapon manufacture and they were declared a criminal tribe. For sustenance, they started roaming on carts and started making small household implements, these did not earn them even their lively hood.

They are scattered in different parts of India now. In Punjab, they are in Ludhiana, Chamkaur Sahib and Baba Bakala (Basnie), Patiala, Sirhind, Gobindgarh, Ferozepur, Moga etc. (Ladnie), and some are still wanderers (Uthnie) around Ablowal, Karnal, Panipat, Bachitar Nagar etc. Outside Punjab they are in large numbers in Maharashtra, Andhara, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

The writer has gone and seen their condition in different areas and found that they are living in utter penury and their profession has lagged behind the machine age. Their pride does not let them to do service. On top of that, they are illiterate. They don't own land or homes. They do not get proper food and clothes. They eat whatever they earn, sometimes once a day and at the most twice. They don't have finances to construct Gurdwaras to keep them associated with Gurughar. These Sikligars who partook amrit from the Tenth Guru have remained associated with Sikhism, tying turbans and keeping hair. They also abstain from intoxicants. They follow, to an extent the Sikh norms but now deprivation is taking them away from Sikhism. Many have started shearing their hair. Some have joined other faiths. If these are not attended to in time the Sikhism would lose its big chunk.

The main sources about Sikligars are - 'Mahan Kosh' by Bhai Kahn Singh, 'Sikligar Qabila' by Sher Singh Sher, 'Sikligar Parsang' published by Buddha Dal, Dr. Harjinder Singh Dilgeer's 'Guru De Sher', Kirpal Singh Kazak's 'Sikligar Kabile Da Sabhyachar', Giani Garja Singh's 'Shaheed Bilas' and 'Guru Kian Sakhian', the 'Sikligar Vanjara' issue of Gurmat Parkash (December 2002), Dr. Dalvinder Singh's articles on Sikligars in, 'Sikh Review', 'Sachkhand Patra' and 'Des Punjab'.

The Satnamis

Very few people know that numbering more over one crore and spread in the areas of Jharkhand, Bengal and Chhatisgarh, Satnamis are those Sikhs who had taken on Emperor Aurangzeb at the behest of Guru Teg Bahadur against his decision to charge jeziya and destruction of temples and teaching centres of Hindus & Sikhs. Rebelling against Aurangzeb, for a considerable time, they had in their possession the whole areas of Southern Haryana and North Rajasthan. These Sikhs associated themselves with Sikhism during the visit of Guru Nanak. They recited Satman and have kept themselves associated with Satnam till date.

In 1667, Aurangzeb declared that all Hindus would pay five per cent Jeziya tax. On April 9, 1669 he passed orders that all Hindu temples, and educational institutions be destroyed and their religious activities be banned. This decision was implemented ruthlessly (Masir-e-Jehangiri 1947, p. 51-55, Sarkar, History of Aurangzeb Part 3, p. 265). On hearing these orders, Guru Teg Bahadur started from Assam towards Punjab in December 1671 and reached Delhi in January 1672 (Punjab Past and Present, April 1975, p. 234). In Delhi he gave the call "bhai kau ko det nahi, na bhai manat aan" (Neither I cause fear to anyone nor I accept fear). It were these Satnamis who implemented this call of the Guru.

When Guruji was in Delhi, the leader of Satnamis came to pay obeisance along with his associates and described the details of atrocities leased on Hindus. Guruji understood that the time had come to face the tyranny and that by sitting in fear, Mughals would only be more enthused. This was the main reason he called upon every Sikh to be fearless. It included Jagjivan Das also.

On receiving the call, Satnamis congregated and decided that they being followers of Guru Nanak would not pay anything to anyone else except the Guru. When government officials came to their houses to collect taxes they declined. The soldiers tried to force; but were beaten back. The ruler of the area attacked them, they retaliated. The Mughal

forces fled from the area of Narnaul Rumour spread in the area that the Satnamis were blessed hence they cannot be defeated by anyone.

On the other hand, fear spread in the royal circles. The fact that Satnamis could not be defeated would result in rebellion in other parts as well. Situation would go out of control. Aurangzeb lost his sleep over this. He was already worried due to the rebellions in Afghanistan and Peshawar. Afghanistan had already been seceded for long to a rebellion. Rebellion at Narnaul being so near the capital could cause serious repercussions possibly resulting in loss of power also.

The Satnamis were not sitting complacent either. They had fortified themselves under the leadership of Jagjiwan Dass Chandel and were prepared for any eventuality. The entire information was constantly relayed to Aurangzeb. He had the task in hand to break the fortification of Satnamis and to break the myth of their being invincible.

Understanding the need of the hour, Aurangzeb decided to tackle this rebellion on a large scale. He prepared a contingent of forces under his general Salar Sayyad Ahmed Khan. He wrote with his own hands the ayats of quran on the thwart any magic. Addressing the forces he said, "The ayats on your flags will keep you safe and nobody will be able to defeat you because you are going to annihilate the Kaafirs (Mahan Kosh, P. 147)

Armed with guns and weaponry these forces reached Narnaul and encircled the few Satnamis. How could these unarmed Satnamis take on the heavily armed enemy for long? None of the Satnamis surrendered. They reached Madhya Pardesh gradually, closely following by the Mughal forces. Along with their families they scattered themselves in the forest of what is now Chhatisgarh. Aurangzeb, army was recalled as they were required else where.

Since then these Satnamis remained in these forests. Worse happened when they were oppressed a lot by the rich and strong sections of local rich population. Satnamis lived in their huts reciting satnam and remained aloof from the rituals of Pandits. Later Ghasi Ram united them, thwarting the oppression of Pandits and spreading education among them. When the Britishers came they converted some of them to Christianity. Former Chief Minister Ajit Jogi's family is one of those Satnamis, who become Christians.

Few years back, the house of a Satnami near Dhamtari caught fire. Everything in his house was destroyed except a wooden box which contained a Granth. The news spread far and wide. The Script of the Granth could not be understood by the educated locals. Few Punjabis also lived in the area. Once of them visited the site and found that this was an ancient beer of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The housekeeper informed that his ancestors used to read and worship the Granth (Dainik Bhaskar, Raipur Education, November 8, 2003).

Where people of Dhamatri came to know of this, they expressed a wish to construct a Gudwara there. The housekeeper gifted the land for the Gurdwara and realising there his ancestors were Sikhs, Partook amrit himself. From then on, many of the Satnam Foundation of Raipur assisted by Scottish Sikh Council, alongwith other associations, which continues even now.

The welfare of these three tribes

Few organizations are contributing their mite for the welfare of these three tribes. Besides organization approved by the Panth, these include local organization, as Gurmat Parchar Sanstha Nagpur, Satnam Foundation Raipur, Guru Angad Dev Educational and Welfare Society Ludhiana, Trust for the Welfare of Vanjara and Other Weaker Sections of Society Chandigarh etc. But the monetary part is taken care mainly by foreign organization, prominent amongst them being the Scottish Sikh Council, British Sikh Council etc. These efforts keep them attached with the Gurughar. For this the whole Sikh community needs to made efforts unitedly at global level.

May God give us every strength.

References

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"Indigenous knowledge and wisdom on the utilization of bioresources is of immense value to biodiversity planners and scientists in developing strategies in conservation, utilization and generation of wealth. Moreover, documentation of ethnobotanical knowledge in the form of database is also useful to protect IPR rights of the indigenous societies and prevent the same from misuse. These recent driving forces accelerated botanization worldwide from viewpoint of utility and trade. This book embodies the results of ethnobotanical forays of the authors in Jalgaon district. It informs the availability of wild and cultivated plant species with hitherto undocumented potential for exploitation.

The introductory chapter informs on geography, topography, geology and soils, general vegetation and climate of the district, apart from history, people and their culture, ethnology of tribes, festivals, games, crops, plant-based industries, previous explorations and methodology adapted. The main text contains information on human ethnomedicine, ethno-veterinary medicine and other miscellaneous uses. It also documents plants/their parts or products associated with beliefs, rituals, fasts, worships, ceremonies, festivals, agricultural practices, Gods/Goddesses, songs, proverbs, riddles, puzzles, customs, deaths, births etc. Interestingly, philology of vernacular plant names in the district is indicative of in-depth study of the authors. This aspect of

the study, apart from concrete and abstract relationships, offers insight into usage and provides glimpses of the culture of people.

The knowledge of indigenous tribal and rural people is still basic and crucial to their physical, spiritual and social well-being. Their ethnobotanical wisdom is collected, analyzed, classified and documented. It is hoped that the book will be adored by teachers, students, research workers in botany, apart from policy makers, environmental planners, enthusiasts and scientists in industry, pharmacy, forestry and agriculture." (jacket)

Battle for survival

The future of the Nationalist Congress Party hinges crucially on its electoral performance this time in Maharashtra, the home State of its leader Sharad Pawar.

LYLA BAVADAM

in Mumbai

FOR the first time in democratic India, all the major political parties have begun to acknowledge the inevitability of coalition governance at the Centre. It is this factor that gives some hope to the newly formed Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). The party's survival is by and large linked to its showing in Maharashtra in the Lok Sabha elections. Sharad Pawar, its leader and former Union Defence Minister is playing a high stakes political game.

Of Maharashtra's 48 Lok Sabha seats, the NCP will contest 39 and support the Peasants and Workers Party (PWP) in one. It has offered eight seats to its partners in alliance collectively called the Progressive Democratic Front (PDF), who include the two factions of the Republican Party of India (RPI), the Janata Dal (U), the Samajwadi Party (S.P.) and Sharad Joshi's Swatantra Bharat Party.

Pawar is a shrewd politician, but this time he faces serious disadvantages. First, he lacks the organisational infrastructure of his rivals. Second, in order to build his party he had to attract influential Congressmen, but very little time was available for him to do this - hardly two months, between the formation of the NCP and the beginning of the election campaigns. And third, compared to its opponents in the State, the NCP is strapped for cash.



VIVEK BENDRE

Nationalist Congress Party leader Sharad Pawar releases his party's manifesto in Mumbai on August 28. Former Lok Sabha Speaker and NCP leader P.A. Sangma is to his left.

Despite these shortcomings, Pawar asserts that he will win a majority of seats in the State. Relying on his 32 years' experience in public life, vast rural support base and tremendous grasp of issues pertaining to the State, Pawar hopes to capitalise on the voters' disillusionment with the four-and-a-half-year-old Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party rule, marked by scandals and corruption charges.

The saffron combine relies largely on the division of votes between the Congress(I) and the NCP. It also hopes to cash in on Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's public

meetings in the State. As a BJP source admits, "Atalji's public meetings here are very important to us."

Both the NCP and the Shiv Sena-BJP do not consider the Congress(I) a formidable opponent because of its weak local leadership. A source in the NCP said: "In the 1998 Lok Sabha elections in Maharashtra, 44 per cent of the vote went to the Congress(I). After splitting away from the Congress, we expect to get at least 22 per cent of that share. The Shiv Sena-BJP had 42 per cent of the vote at that time. This time the NCP will take away about 15 per cent of that vote. Plus we will get 4 per cent of the vote through the RPI. Our tally thus comes to 41 per cent. The coalition government's tally drops to 35 per cent." Thus the fight in Maharashtra is between the Shiv Sena-BJP and the NCP and its allies, the NCP leader argues.

Pawar's power in the State was amply demonstrated in the 1998 Lok Sabha elections when the Congress(I) and its allies won 37 of the 48 seats, compared to the 15 seats it had won in 1996.

Pawar himself attributes the 1998 victory to "the hatred that the people had developed for the Shiv Sena and BJP" as well as to the popular acceptance of the alliance between the Congress(I), the RPI and the S.P.

Immediately after forming the NCP, Pawar set about roping in Congress(I) members. Fifteen MPs (14 from the Congress(I) and one from the RPI) of the dissolved Lok Sabha joined Pawar right away. This gave the NCP an edge.

Maharashtra has six district regions - western Maharashtra, north Maharashtra, Marathwada, Vidarbha, Konkan and Mumbai. The highest number of Lok Sabha seats, 12, are in western Maharashtra, which has the rich and powerful sugar cooperatives that have traditionally supported the Congress. In fact, this is the only region where the NCP is engaged in a clear tug-of-war with the Congress(I). In an effort to consolidate his party's position, Pawar won over four of the 11 Congress(I) MPs from here. In the constituencies of the remaining seven, including Baramati which is Pawar's constituency, the NCP has a strong winning chance, except perhaps in Karad.

North Maharashtra has six Lok Sabha seats, of which the Congress(I) won five last time. The region has three reserved constituencies. Two Congress(I) MPs from this region joined Pawar's party. While Dhule, Nasik and Malegaon (where the Janata Dal (U) has a strong candidate) are safe constituencies for the NCP, the party will face a tough fight in Nandurbar, Jalgaon and Erandol where the fight is between the BJP and the Congress(I).

Marathwada has eight Lok Sabha seats, of which the Congress(I) won six and the BJP two in the last elections. Pawar won over the Congress(I) MPs from Hingoli and Parbhani. The NCP appears to be strong in Beed and Jalna, where the BJP member in the dissolved Lok Sabha, who has not been renominated, is believed to be working against the party candidate. The NCP appears to be weak in Nanded, Aurangabad, Latur and Osmanabad. The Latur seat has consistently gone to the Congress candidate and former Speaker of the Lok Sabha Shivraj Patil. His devoted following is referred to as MaMuLi, an acronym for "Marwaris, Muslims and Lingayats".

Marathwada is crucial to Pawar. With its large Dalit and tribal populations, the region has been a centre of social turmoil for decades. In 1996, the Congress(I) lost almost all of Marathwada but regained most of the region in 1998. The Shiv Sena, which had grabbed four seats in 1996, is unlikely to repeat that performance. Pawar claims that Shiv Sena "shakhas are being closed and their boys are joining the NCP. They are very disillusioned." The Renapur Assembly constituency in Beed district has evoked special interest since Deputy Chief Minister Gopinath Munde of the BJP is in the fray here. Munde has a large following among his Vanjara tribe but alleged acts of high-handedness by the members of his family during Shiv Sena-BJP rule could work in favour of the NCP candidate, Radhakrishna Patil, who was a member of the last Lok Sabha.

On September 4, Munde's brother Pandit Anna Pandurang Munde was stabbed by a group of 50 men allegedly belonging to the Congress(I) and the NCP. His attackers alleged that Munde's brother, while campaigning, had been announcing to the crowds that the local NCP and Congress(I) candidates had withdrawn their candidature.

While touring Beed, Pawar was greeted by ecstatic party workers who assured him that Munde's chances were damaged by his brother's behaviour. Party workers said that Munde was "so worried about his chances here that he is not leaving his constituency". Munde got Vajpayee and Pramod Mahajan to address public meetings in Renapur. While Vajpayee addressed one meeting, Mahajan addressed some half a dozen. Former BJP MLA Vimal Mundada has shifted to the NCP. Mundada had for long complained of being sidelined by Munde.

Vidarbha, which has 11 Lok Sabha seats, has had a record of being politically volatile. In 1998 the Congress(I) won all the seats here; whereas its 1996 tally was just two. The 1998 victory was largely because of the alliance with the RPI. This time the RPI is fractured; two factions are with the Congress(I) and two with the NCP. Pawar has achieved some success here by winning over the Congress(I) members of the last Lok Sabha from Bhandara and Wardha. The Congress(I)'s morale, however, received a boost because of the alliance with the Prakash Ambedkar and R.S. Gavai factions of the RPI. Ambedkar's group is strong in Akola, Washim and Mumbai, while Gavai is strong in Amravati. The RPI faction led by Ramdas Athavale, which is an NCP ally, has support all over Maharashtra. While it is difficult to be specific about Athavale's areas of influence, the merger of the Khobragade faction with the Athavale faction has improved the prospects of Pawar's alliance in Marathwada and Vidarbha.

There has been considerable shuffling of seats between parties and candidates in Vidarbha. The Congress(I) member in the dissolved Lok Sabha from Bhandara Praful Patel, contests on the NCP ticket this time from Chimur, where he is pitted against Joginder Kavade of the RPI faction that has allied itself with the Congress(I). Kavade represented Chimur in the previous Lok Sabha. The Congress(I) has put up Dr. Shrikant Jhichkar against the NCP's Jagdish Nimbathe in Bhandara. The relatively unknown Nimbathe is expected to benefit from Praful Patel's campaigning. In Washim, former Chief Minister Sudhakar Naik, who has joined the NCP, will campaign for the NCP candidate, Javed Khan. The NCP is expected to win a big chunk of Muslim vote as well as the Banjara (Naik's community) vote. There is considerable uncertainty in the Ramtek constituency since all the candidates are new.

The NCP is strong in Yavatmal, where it has fielded former BJP MP Rajabhau Thakre. Thakre lost in 1998 to the Congress(I) by less than 60,000 votes.

The coastal Konkan region, which has five seats, is the chink in the Congress(I) armour. In 1998 the party got just one seat in the region. Pawar admits that the region has been neglected. In the Kulaba constituency, the PDF will support the Peasants and Workers Party candidate, Ramshet Thakur, who is expected to retain his seat. Janata Dal (S) stalwart Madhu Dandavate, who contests from Rajapur, the southern-most constituency in the State, faces Suresh Prabhu, Shiv Sena member in the last Lok Sabha.

Mumbai, a Shiv Sena bastion, has six seats. In 1996 the Congress(I) did not win any seats, but in 1998 it won three with the help of its allies. The NCP and its allies contest all seats in Mumbai.

Although Pawar has consistently ruled out any alliance with the BJP, it is believed that the BJP had considered a mutually beneficial alliance with the NCP in the State. Such an alliance would have benefited the BJP, which has lost considerable strength, especially in Mumbai, because of the strong-arm tactics and corrupt ways of the Shiv Sena.

LOBANAS VANJARAS SIKLIGARS -OUR FORGOTTEN BRETHREN

Historical Background

These Sikhs tribes are forgotten brethren of Sikhs. Sikligar name was given by the 10th Guru to those descendants of Bhai Ram Singh (Marwari Lohar) who would manufacture weapons for war and then polish them (Sikli means to polish). According to history there are two Ram Singhs, one described above and another Ram Singh Parmar, grandson of Bhai Mani Singh, who fought alongside Guru Gobind Singh at Chamkaur Sahib. He was expert in wielding weapons, and was arrested alongwith Banda Bahadur and martyred in Delhi. Sikligar history is traceable only after 1595 AD. Three Marwari tribes are intimately related to Sikhism and suffered martyrdom since Guru Hargobind's time. These are Rathores, Pawars / Parmars and Chauhans. Earlier, Maula Bakhsh used to manufacture Guru's weapons, but later the Guru sent for Marwari weapon makers, Bhai Kehar Singh Rajput's services were availed of. With him came many others in the trade. When peace prevailed after Guru Hargobind's times, these craftsmen returned to Marwar but were disowned by their brethren. Thus they became Vanjaras, roaming artisans. Suddenly good days returned during Guru Gobind Singh's time as weapons were required again, Vanjaras came into Sikh mainstream. For all practical purposes Lobanas, Vanjaras and Sikligars fall in the same clan.

Their number and famous members

It is very difficult to give a definite assessment of their number. According to Dr Harbhajan Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala research, they number about 5 crores and are settled in 20,000 clusters called Tandas, they claim their origin from Rajputana and as said before call themselves Rajputs. Right from Guru Nanak's time under the influence of Bhai Mansukh, Sri Lanka's King Shiv Nabh embraced Sikhism.



Makhan Sha Lobana declaring that 'the Guru has been found'

There are some well known Lobana Sikhs, Makhan Shah Lobana who identified Guru Tegh Bahadur out of 22 imposters at Baba Bakala, Bhai Lakhi Shah Vanjara took the martyred body of Guru Tegh Bahadur from Chandni Chowk in 1675 AD and cremated it, putting his house on fire (Rakab Ganj Gurdwara in Delhi is the site) Bhai Uday Singh, Bhai Bachittar Singh, both brothers were Vanjaras, the latter attacked the drunken Mughal elephant at Guru Gobind Singh's command. Vanajaras and Sikligars helped Banda Bahadur with both men and material in his campaigns of Punjab especially Sirhind. Banda Bahadur appointed Bhai Baj Singh Rajput, as the Governor of Sirhind.



Bhai Bachitter Singh fighting the drunken elephant with the Nagni Spear

Nearer home, 13 Ragi Jathas and 30 granthis after training at Sach Khand. Nanded are busy in propagating the Guru's message. During Guru Gobind Singh's times these Sikligars used to manufacture swords, rifles and pistols but due to legal restrictions now they are reduced to making only steel pans and kettles. When masands stopped Guru Tegh Bahadur from entering Harimandir Sahib, Makhan Shah Labana was accompanying him. Bibi Jagir Kaur, Ex-President of SGPC belongs to Labana community. Her father-in-law Baba Harnam Singh, a Minister in

Punjab Cabinet converted lots of tribals of West Punjab to Sikhism. After partition his headquarters shifted to Begowal, Distt. Kapurthala.

SGPC Role

SGPC has taken bold initiatives in ameliorating the condition of these tribes. A Vanjara Trust with Chief Justice Harbans Singh as President and Dr Kharak Singh as Secretary with Rs. 15 lacs as corpus money has been started at Chandigarh. Some of the suggested tasks for their improvement are :-

1. Granthis and preachers be provided after establishing Gurdwaras in Labana villages and Sikligar Tandas. Gurpurbs be celebrated in these Gurdwaras.
 2. Their children should be given basic teaching in Punjabi language.
 3. Vanjaras have lands but no means of productivity. Financial assistance will be very valuable. This assistance must reach the users. An effort was made to settle them as farm hands in rural Punjab. The Punjab farmers were keen to employ them, two batches of them were shown around the countryside of Punjab and were ensured employment. The batches went home happy but never returned to take up jobs in Punjab. It appears they are reluctant to take the risk of coming over alone. Even with families, they are reluctant to come. Although they belong to an enterprising community of Sikhs, they seem to have lost their nerve over years. They require to be rejuvenated, resuscitated and re-ensured. If Bhayyas from UP, Bihari and inhabitants from other provinces can come to Punjab to make a labour force and technical hands, why not these Sikh brethren ?
 4. Small scale industries may be started for Sikligars.
 5. Preference be give to Sikh Vanjaras and Sikligars as labour force to keep them above the poverty line.
 6. Their women folk be trained in tailoring, knitting and day-care help for children.
- EXCERPTS from a visit by Major Singh staff reporter Daily Ajit, a Punjabi daily from Jalandhar.

His visit to Talegaon near Nagpur, Maharashtra brought out :-

- a) Sikhs there consider cutting their hair as turning their back towards the Guru;
- b) that their roots are in Rajasthan, they are Rajputs;
- c) their population is about 2 crores, for centuries they are gypsies staying in jungles;
- d) inspite of their poverty, they are still addressed as Sardars;
- e) their next generation is sore since they have been neglected by rich religious and political leaders from the cities;
- f) these people are still illiterate, their children have no access to any school;
- g) they are well entrenched in Sikhism and no amount of efforts by other communities have lured them away;
- h) In provinces of Maharashtra, Andhra and Madhya Pradesh these tribes call themselves Sikhs. They also suffered humiliation / harassment during 1984 Sikh massacres;
- i) they are only Gurus disciples and not given to belief in witch craft, and spurious sants,
- j) they believe in manual labour;
- k) remarriage among women folk is not permitted;
- i) birth of a girl child is not considered a burden. Infact, they have all pristine Sikh virtues, no modern Sikh vices, poverty is their crushing problem.

Vanjaras

Vanjaras consider themselves followers of Guru Nanak and Lakhi Shah Vanjara (Labana) their leader and legacy. They number 71 lacs in Andhra, 67 lacs in Karnataka, 62 lacs in

Maharashtra, 58 lacs in UP, 52 lacs in Rajasthan, 47 lacs in MP, 33 lacs in Orissa, 35 lacs in Bihar and 18 lacs in Gujarat. About 80% of Vanjaras are below poverty line and are illiterate. They organised a demand march from Gurdwara Rakab Ganj to Parliament house (a large hall in memory of Lakhmi Shah Vanjara has been built in this Gurdwara). They demanded that according to Mandal Commission, out of 27% reservation for backward classes, 7% be reserved for Vanjaras. Their abject poverty is evident when not only two square meals are a problem, they do not have enough to cover their bare bodies. These are hair-raising revelations. I am sure, Sikh community is prosperous, is generous, is benevolent but is oblivious of the plight of Sikligars, Vanjaras and Labanas. We are in deep slumber.

I feel, to save them from being devoured by other faiths we the Sikhs should

- i. Through SGPC and Dharam Parchar Committee keep their faith in Sikhism aloft and ablaze. It is a gigantic task but we can do it by institutional co-operation.
- ii. Involve other Sikh institutions like Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, Institute of Sikh Studies, latter for highlighting their plight in Sikh fora.
- iii. Large Gurdwaras like Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, Sector 34, Chandigarh and such other gurdwaras adopt villages or cluster of villages of these poor tribes and provide religious and financial help directly or through the Vanjara Trust..
- iv. Gurmat Prasar Seva Society, Chandigarh and other missionary institutions can provide Sikh missionaries for preaching Sikhism, teaching Punjabi, distributing Gutkas, providing Guru Granth Sahib Birs and help establish Gurdwaras in their villages. In some villages they perform all their religious ceremonies around a Gutka as they have not seen Guru Granth Sahib.

- v. All the schemes require liberal finances, we should mobilise funds ensuring their transparent utilisation. It is a gigantic task, let us make a collective beginning.

Time is running out. Whereas Christianity is spreading by persuasion/propaganda, Islam is spreading by all means, Sikhism, the universal religion is shrinking, at least not spreading. Here is a God-sent opportunity to serve the cause of Sikhism through amelioration of the plight of these tribes, so that they can make their contribution towards glory of the Panth, as respectable members and equal partners. It is a duty of all Sikhs, particularly the affluent section to contribute liberally for programmes of education, religious preaching and economic development. They are still holding on to Sikhism, let us bring them in Sikh mainstream.

References

Gurmat Parkash, October 2002 (pages 11-43) Monthly Journal of Dharam Parchar Committee, SGPC, Amritsar.

Guru Shabad Ratankar Mahan Kosh

Sikligar Kabila - Sher Singh Sher

Sikligar Parsang - Buddha Dal

Guru De Sher - Dr Harjinder Singh Dilgeer

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE THE FOLLOWING WEB SITES:

www.nishkam.org

www.nishkamcanada.org

Lobanas Personalities

- Sant Baba Prem Singh
- Sant Majha Singh (1866-1971)
- Sardar Bahadur Mehtab Singh Galowal
- Dr. Sunder Singh
- Sardar Bahadur Gopal Singh
- Bawa Harnam Singh
- Major Sharam Singh
- Chaudhary Lakhi Singh
- Giani Chet Singh
- Giani Harcharan Singh
- Bibi Jagir Kaur
- Gulzar Lahoria

Lobana Villages

AMRITSAR DISTRICT : Doburji, Pandori and **Verka**

GUJRANWALA DISTRICT : Chakian, Daliyanwalik, Dholan, Garala, Gunaur, Kajikot, Kurikot, Mandiran, Manjpur, Mirzapur, Garala, Nangal Dunna singh and Wando.

GUJRAT DISTRICT : Hatka, Bazurgwal, Baramla, Bhakhrewali, Buddhan, 28 Chak, Gujgrain, Khori Dunna Singh, Mehsam, Peroshah, Qila Sura Singh, Quankh, Surkhpur and Tanda.

GURDASPUR DISTRICT : Balarhwal, Behrampur, Bheni Paswal, Bhulechak, Dhianpur, Chak Shreef, Dhupsari, Galrhi, Ghot Phokhar, Jago Chak Tanda, Jhanda Lobana, Khojkipur, Kri Afgana, Kishanpur, Kotli, Manchopra, Mari Buchian, Mari Tanda, Mehre, Mirthal Tanda, Naushehra Nalbandhan, Nawan Pind Bahadur, Nirsiha, Saidowal Khurd and Shaale.

HOSHIARPUR DISTRICT : Budhabarkt, Chuhrian, Galowal, Himatpur, Khuridan, Mahadpur, Naraingarh, Passitbet, Salohpur, Tahli, Tanda Ramsahai, Terkiana and Uchi Bassi.

JALANDHAR DISTRICT : Bhatnura, Narohi, Patial and Rajpura.

JHANG DISTRICT : Chak No. 485.

KANGRA DISTRICT : 4 Tandas

LAHORE DISTRICT : 37 Chak Pattokji, Gopal Singh Wala, Paar Sadh, Shahpur Kanjra, Innobhati Jhugian Khasrian.

LUDHIANA DISTRICT : Balbgarh, Dholanwal, Garhi Fazal, Gopalpur, Lubangarh, Mangli Tanda, Rur, Sasrali and Tanda Kishan Singh.

LAYALLPUR DISTRICT : 13 Chak, 447 Chak, 476 Chak and 444 Chak, 115 G.B., 441 G.B., 77 G.B., 32 G.B., 202 G.B., 358 G.B., 301 G.B., 84 G.B., 518 G.B.

MULTAN DISTRICT : 24 Chak, 34 Chak, 36 Chak, 45 Chak, 50 Chak, 86 Chak, 88 Chak and 90 Chak.

SARGHODHA DISTRICT : 115 Chak South, 113 Chak South, 133 Chak S.B., 135 Chak S.B., 109 Chak S.B.

SHEIKHUPURA DISTRICT : Awan, Babakwal, Bhago Dial, Bhukanpur Aar Da, Bhukanpur Paar Da, Nangal Bhuchar, Nangal Bawa, Bohar Wala Ahiya(Ahiya Khurd), Ahiya Nagar Kalan, 32 Chak, 41 Chak, 48 Chak, Dhamkian, Dinga, Fatrehan, Garangwala, Ghuchli, Hitkipur, Kharial, Lubanwala, Mangat, Manjwala, Mansa Singh Da Ahiya, Maschak, Mehmatpur, Mikhawal, Mirpur, Muradpur, Najar Purana, Niranjani, Paarda Ahiya, Pindidass, Qaji Murali, Ratniwala, Bukanwal, Saad Amba, Sarawan, Shaam Ke, Sharihpur, Sindiala, Tibba Toria, Wadda Najar, 22 Chak, 23 Chak.

SIALKOT DISTRICT : Bhagowal, Bhodi, Chhana Atalgarh, Garhi Bhura, Khokharwali, Kunanpur, Nangal Shahu, Rajja, Shana Gopalpur, Baradari.

ROPAR DISTRICT : Graangan , Khokhar, Dalla, Behrampur Bet, Rampur Phasse, Tapprian Amar Singh, SallahPur, Makkowal Chotta , Sultanpur, Lobangarh, Bikkapur, Maddoli, Gochar.

LUDHIANA DISTRICT : Chak Lohat, Sherpur, Sehjomajra, Burj Kacha, Raipur, Behlolpur, Kanpur , Chakkli, Tanda, Hambowal, Pautt,

PEHOWA DISTRICT : Fatehgarh (Pipli Plot), Vada Siana, Chota Siana, Miana, Ghula, Cheeka, Puuna, 4 Number, Shambi, Ladwa.

Other Parts

Other parts of India

Besides Punjab, these tribes are also found in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharastra, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar and Gujarat. In these areas, they may not necessarily follow Sikhism.