



ROLE OF REFORMISTS IN SOCIO-LEGAL UPLIFTMENT OF THE TRIBALS IN SOUTHERN RAJASTHAN

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ABSTRACT

Bhils are the ethnic group of Adivasis generally found in the western region of Rajasthan. It is said as one of the oldest tribes. They are known as the wild tribe in India, who belongs to the Hindu religion and the language spoken by these people is of Dravidian origin. They are the bowman of Rajasthan. They are the good archers and are fond of dancing. Their culture is rich and unique. Earlier they were of Superstitious belief and various evils. Various calamities which occurred ruined the life of this tribe. But with the passage of time various reformists stepped forward for their upliftment. This article deals with the socio-legal reformatory steps taken by these reformists.

Keywords:- Adivasis, good archers, reformists,

INTRODUCTION

Bhils are one of the oldest tribes in India. Earlier they ruled in parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Malwa, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. They are the bowman of Rajasthan. They are the good archers. Their language is of Dravidian origin. Bhils are from Hindu religion. They worship deities of forests and evil spirits, they perform puja of Lord Shiva and Durga. Some of them even follows Christianity. They are fond of dance and music with traditional tune, flute and drum. During their ceremonies they enjoyed drinking and dancing whole night. The Bhils of each village has their own deity to worship known as Gramdev. Every family has their own

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dev (Jati dev). The Bhils believe extremely and staunchly in superstition. If they are sick either physically, mentally or psychologically they take their treatment from Bhopas and strongly believe them. They celebrate various Hindu festivals and enjoys fairs or mela which are held in distinct places. The main sources of their recreations are folk songs and dances. But now in modern era, some of them are literate, but in some areas they are downtrodden. So for the development of the Bhils in the various reformatory steps are taken of which the movement started by Govind Giri is very specific. Still even today bhils follows Govind Giri.

In 18th Century, Durlabh Ram ji was preacher of bhakti movement. Their status deteriorated after the Mughal Empire. Mavji stepped forward to reform their position through bhakti movement. He asked his disciples to spread bhakti movement among the community through bhajans and kirtans. Mavji was also one of the social reformers. He does not believe in caste system.¹

Mavji took various reformatory steps for the upliftment of Bhils. He emphasized the abolition of various evil practices which were being practiced during that era such as Dapa Pratha should be abolished. He also advised rebuttal of Brahmanism. He believed in widow remarriage. He was inspired by Meera, Kabir and Sufi saint.

Before 19th century the reformatory movement took place against religious and social evils. Sant Surmal Das was a social reformer started the practice of Bhakti movement while burning sacred fire in his village. His teaching was also widespread in Southern Rajasthan. He was against Dapa pratha.

In 19th Century there was a draught in Rajasthan which ruined the life of Bhils, they again started illegal practices.

Govindgiri who was also known as Govind Guru (1858-1931) was a religious and social reformer in 1900 in the Adivasis areas of Rajasthan and Gujarat states in India. He was popularized for Bhakti movement

Govindgiri was born in a Banjara family of Bansia District in the state of Dungarpur which is now in Rajasthan. He got his primary education from a pujari in his village. He was reported to be an 'hali', which means a person who has described as worker "not employed at their own convenience but maintained as permanent estate servants and not regarded to be in position to resign services." During the famine of 1900, Govind giri's, wife and son died after which he visited the Sunth state where he married his brother's widow and there he became the disciple of a Hindu Monk (Gosain) Rajgiri, in the honour of Rajgiri Vinda change his name into Govindgiri. Later in 1909 he along with his wife and children returned to Dungarpur State to the village of Vedsa.

¹ Kothari K.L : Tribal Social Change in India, Page 47

Govindgiri stepped forward to remove all such evils². Govind giri stressed on improving the moral character, habits and religious practices of adivasis. He organized Samp Sabha to preach Adivasis. He preached monotheism, forsaking crimes giving up superstitious beliefs. He encouraged his followers to tend Dhuni (fire pit) and hoist flag outside their houses where women were degraded and he said that the position of women in the Bhil Community was much better than their position in upper castes. He also criticized Rajput custom of women infanticide and then the prohibition of widow remarriage in Rajputs and Brahmins. He aimed at social and religious reforms. He was a strong critique of hierarchy and exploitation of the adivasis by ruling classes. Govindgiri preached that the Bhils³ were the rightful owner of the land. He envisaged the establishment of the Bhil Raj (Bhil state) in the hills of Sunth and Banswara state. He stressed in forbidding liquor to his disciples. He started Bhakti movement and propagated vegetarianism.

Govindgiri organized Sampa Sabha at Sirohi in 1905 and led the Bhils rising at Mangarh in 1908. He made Bhils conscious of their degraded position. The liquor contractors and the rulers opposed Govindgiri, affected the revenue receipts in the Bhil inhabitants in the state of Dungarpur, Banswara, Sunth and Idar. Then pressure was brought to induce the bhils to resume the habit of drinking alcohol and gambling among bhils. He instigated bhils not to be the bonded labour and asked them to demand for fair price for labour and struggle for their rights if being infringed. The Bhagat movement of Govind giri was on top, so the rulers of Dungarpur, Banswara and Santrampur were worried.

The followers of Govind giri and Govind giri travelled to Mangarh.

The border area of the princely states of Banswara and Santrampur situated in dense forest is known as Mangarh. In October 1913, all assembled at Mangarh, they were to attend a religious fair in hindi month of Kartik and organized large havans and oath. There was a large collection of Bhils of about a half lakh to attend the religious ceremony. This huge collection of Bhils made the rulers worried, they were feared of the armed rebellion by the bhils, they took the help of britishers. The political regent of British R. E Hamilton took prompt step to curb the rebellion. Santrampur, Dungarpur, Banswara and a detachment of Mewar force moved towards Mangarh.

The forces of british and princely states jointly under the command of Colonel Sherton who was assisted by major Bailey and Captain Stiley. Unlike Jalian wala bagh Massacre, the force surrounded Mangarh from all sides, even automatic machines were used. There took place on 17th November 1913 and in this barbaric attack about one thousand five hundred people died.

²Mann R.S. – The Bhil Religion, 1978

³ Mehta Jodh Singh : Aadi Niwasi, Bhil, Page 79-81

Govindgiri's teachings were originally aimed at social and religious reform but he gradually "developed a strong critique of hierarchy and exploitation" of the adivasis by ruling classes. He advised the adivasis that their destitution was caused by princely rulers and *jagirdars*. Govindgiri preached that Bhils were the rightful owners of the land and they also the right to rule over it.^[9] He envisioned the establishment of a Bhil *Raj* (Bhil state) in the hills of Sunth and Banswara states, restoring a Bhil kingdom that existed eight hundred years back.⁴

Within a short time, Govindgiri gathered a large following among the adivasis in the states of Sunth, Banswara, Dungarpur and the British districts of Panch Mahals. He faced active opposition from the rulers of the states in which he preached. Reasons cited for the opposition include decreased revenues from liquor sales (because of Govindgiri forbidding liquor to his disciples) and the subversion of the ruler's authority because of Govindgiri's growing influence.

Govindgiri's activities after 1907 received opposition from state officials and liquor contractors, and the Dungarpur State arrested him in late-1912 or early-1913. The state accused him of deceiving his followers, confiscated his savings and pressured him to stop his movement by imprisoning his wife and child (or children). However, he was released in April 1913 without being tried and ordered to leave Dungarpur State.⁵

The ruler of Dungarpur imprisoned Govind Giri but, apprehending a commotion among the adivasi people, released in April 1913 and was exiled from Dungarpur state. Between then and October 1913, Govindgiri moved from one village to another under harassment by local rulers. After an attempt by the ruler of Idar State to capture Govindgiri while he was in the Idar territory, Govindgiri and his adherents formed a defensive position at Mangadh, a hillock on the borders of the former states of Banswara and Sunth State.

The adherents of GovindGiri captured a couple of police personnel of the Sunth State on October 31st 1913. And were sent up the hill for reconnaissance. On November 1, 1913, the adherents attempted an unsuccessful attack on the Parbatgadh fort in Sunth State and looted the village of Brahm in Banswara state. Apprehending danger, local rulers sought British assistance, and the Mangadh was besieged by local and British troops, including the Mewar Bhil Corps and troops from the states of Banswara, Dungarpur, Sunth and Baria.

⁴ Doshi. S.L. : Bhils between societal self awareness and culture synthesis, Page 54

⁵ Mathur L.P : Resistance movement of tribal's of India, A case study of bhils of Rajasthan in the nineteenth century, Page 59-62

“On 12th November 1913, he wrote a letter to the Political agent, Saheb Bahadur, Rewa Kantha, representing the Sarkar, he wrote that formerly he built a hut in the village of Vodasa in Dungarpur and lived there with his family the people who came to my hut there he used to advise to behave like savkars (i.e., the higher classes). Through the Providence of the Almighty (i.e., as prearranged by God in some of our former births) those people Nugaras (wild) as they were, expressed a desire to be made Sugaras (i.e. civilized) and to have me as their Guru (priest). He undertook to preach these people of Vedasa and surrounding country and made them his chelas (disciples). I showed them the path of religion and truth ; and preached them to worship God ; not to commit theft, adultery, deception, etc ; not to cherish feelings of enmity with others but to regard all as the progeny of the same parents (the Creator) and live peacefully with others ; to follow agriculture and to maintain themselves (thereby) ; not to believe in Virs, Vantaras, Bhopas, etc. (i.e., ghosts, witches, enchanters and other superstitious beings); but as a safeguard against them to establish Dhunis (firepits) and nishans (flags) and to worship these ; he asked them that those who were by disciples should wrap round their heads yellow coloured safas (Fetas), should wear rosaries of Rudraksh (heads of different sizes resembling the seeds of hericis and produced in Nepal) round their necks ; should not carry dangerous weapons such as swords, rifles, bows and arrows, etc., He also wrote that he preached them the path of truth should bathe and wash themselves every morning, should not kill animals of any kinds. In this way he preached them the path of truth.

These people found all that to be so good and easy (i.e., acceptable and practicable) that the number of disciples went on increasing; so much so that at present there are about four or five lakhs of people among whom, this Bhakti creed has spread. Rajas were misinformed by their officials to the effect that this Bava (meaning Govindgiri ji) is a pretender and is looting (i.e., deceiving) the riots. The Rajas through egotism and arrogance of their position (kingdom) did not inquire into the truth (or otherwise) of the report and the Raja of Dungarpur arrested and imprisoned him all of a sudden; attached his (little) saving which he earned out of begging and threatened him very much to make him swerve from his religious faith; so much so that his wife and children were also placed under police custody. But the Creator is the Protector of Truth and helped him in getting released from imprisonment after three days. He wrote that he ran away at once from that place and repaired to the village of Rojada in the Idar State, where he lived (established himself) among the Banjaras of his caste. As he lived there this religion spreaded there, the Raja of Idar attempted to arrest him. Govind Gir was aware that their intentions was to desecrate and molest the religious Bhakti (worship) which was preached by him then he left that place ; and in view of such constant great harassment he came to this intense and formidable jungle. No sooner did he enter this jungle than the Jamadar of the out post of the Sunth State came there and instantaneously attempted to drive him away and made julum on him (harassed him). Then ran away and (then) made a false report that a free-booter bava (meaning Govind Giri) had come to the jungle and had burnt the Police Station on the frontier and killed a Jamadar. Without inquiry into the truth or

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falsity of this report, you were informed of this. He then sent men to request the Sunth Durbar that out of the flags of Dhunis, tongs, Safas (fentas), tamburas, etc., which the Durbar had ordered to be confiscated in preventing my disciples from worshipping and which were in the lying in each of the Police Station of the State, those that were in Khedapa outpost. But before his disciples entered (their premises) and without asking them any question (as to their object of coming) they fired upon; and fourteen of the disciples of Govindgiri were shot dead then and there. There are dead bodies of some of them still lying there if prompt inquiry be made about them all will soon be clear and others were wounded too. Being in this way greatly harassed, Govind Giri along with my disciples moved towards the hill only with the object of saving their lives and worshipping (God) out of sheer fear. He wrote that his disciples in Sanjeli, Kadana, etc., will be harassed and so he requested that these their grievances should be redressed. He also wrote that he is a poor and innocent Sadhu. He fled from place to place, being constantly harassed, to continue Bhakti (worship). He requested them that being the ruler of the four corners (i.e. of the world) so should (please) redress the following grievances.

1. In every village the firepits of his religious sect have been dug out and Mahomedans have been made to make water on them, tongs, safas, flags, religious books, cocoanuts, etc., have been ordered to be confiscated by the Sunth State and in the possession of the fojdars of the State. These should be ordered to be returned.
2. In all villages the firepits and flags of the religion should be re-established as they originally were.
3. As before, people should be allowed to attend the fairs to have right of (and pay respects to) the Dhunis and nishans (firepits and flags) on the new moon day, full moon day, the eleventh day and other holidays of the Hindus.
4. To erect a house for him to live in, the Kharaba land of this hill should be ordered to be granted to himself.
5. The State (Sarkar) should offer no interference with the income to be derived by him from the firepits and flags.
6. It should be arranged that the State should in no wise object to his disciples visiting his place of residence (the holy Guru Dwar- the door or residence of the priest).
7. Except the State no subordinate servants should be allowed to take exact price from my disciples and none should take from his disciples anything cheaper than at the ordinary price.

8. All bribes taken by the State officers in connection with his religious faith should be ordered to be refunded to them.
9. Proper enquiry should be made as to the murder of his disciples without reason by the Thanedar of the fort (of Partapgadh) and he should be compensated for dishonouring .
10. he has not appointed any body as the head of his disciples. But yet, some of the principal (respectable) disciples are suspected as being seditious such as Punja Dhira, Patel of Dungar; and Patels of Batakwada, Partapgadh, Kyar, Bandara, Ghughas, Molara, Babari, Patwel, Aptalai, etc., so proper bandobast should be made so that after this matter has settled the Sunth Durbar Saheb may not harass them on account of the above suspicion of sedition.
11. He should not harassed or prevented from going with his disciples from village to village for preaching.
12. Free (Dharmada) timber should be granted from the reserved forest for erecting roofs over my Dhunis (firepits) in monsoon in every village.
13. Permission should be given to me to erect samadhis or deris (small temples) over the tombs of my two deceased sons, who are interred at Molara village (as he intend to do).
14. Except the Raj (i.e., the Raja) the uncle of the Raja should not take veth from the disciples.
15. The Raja Saheb employs such persons as dewan as he likes and passes harassing orders on the ryots. This should be put a stop to : and the British Government should appoint a Dewan of its own for the protection of the ryots and myself ; such as the Parsi Dewan in the time of (the late) Maharana Pratapsingji, who (parsi Dewan) fixed the vighoti (settlement).
16. For his protection, a battalion of 200 Bhils-his disciples-with rifles should be employed by the British Government in the Sunth State; and permission should be given to him to retain 100 reifles.
17. My disciples should be paid at Rs. 2 per 1000 bundles of grass that they are made to cut for the State. At present people of Rampur Division are paid at Re. 1 and those of

other villages at Re. 0.4-0 per 1,000 bundles of grass cut by them. This should be put to a stop to and they should be paid at the above rate.

18. Two men of Babrol who were my disciples have been prosecuted and imprisoned without evidence. The papers of this case should be sent for and looked into and they should be released.
19. His disciples have been forced to drink liquor; and food cooked on the Dhunis (firepits) has been polluted by sepoys. What is their object in such desecration ?
20. His disciples do the veth of the State. It should be taken from them in an equitable manner.
21. His disciples should not be prevented from putting on ornaments and coloured clothes necessary for their religious rites.
22. The security bonds of Rs. 500 taken from my disciples for coming to me should be cancelled.
23. Punjo Dhirji, Patel of Dungar, is innocent and yet warrants have been issued to the police to arrest him. Again the Thanedar of Kherappa has repored falsely that he (Punja) burnt the Gadra outpost and killed a Jamadar. Punja has not done any such thing : so he should be declared innocent and given immunity.
24. At present the State servants take their rounds in villages and threaten to arrest and beat his disciples. So their rounds should be stopped and the Sunth Darbar should give assurance to them that they will not be harassed and should be given immunity.
25. Darbar Saheb (i.e., the Sunth Raja) calls his children (i.e., his ryots) by sales (i.e., wife's brothers). This being abusive should be stopped; and the Rajas attachment to debauchery should be checked and he should be led to the path of religion.
26. Through fear of the State and of being murdered , his disciples have run away to jungles; and so their crops have suffered. The State should not increase the vero (land revenue), and should give remissions to those whose crops have suffered much. Civil suits and execution of decrees of Savkars should be postponed this year.

27. Govind Gir appointed Sheth Gulabchand Hamirchand of Rampur as his Mukhtyar to come to him and obtain the replies and explanations. So the State should not object to his keeping such men as he wants; and proper bandobast should be made that no harassment is offered to him or to his men subsequently.
28. In making enquiries into the truth or falsity of all this, the servants and ryots of the Sunth State should not be allowed to mix (i.e. have a hand in it).
29. When the matter is settled, a Tharav (document of decision) bearing your honour's seal and signature should be given to him.

He wrote that above are the grievances of Govind Giri and his disciples . he wrote that "You are the sole lord (authority) to save us from them and to save the lives of the millions of people."

30. This ryot is of the Rajaji and yet they have to suffer a great deal in building houses. For, when they apply for free grants and timber for houses, they get them after about two years and that too insufficient (i.e., only sufficient to make a mala, i.e., a temporary shade on four posts erected in fields to watch crops). Moreover all intestate property (escheat) is taken by the State. Therefore the Mahalkari should follow the old practice and give the State.⁶ Therefore the Mahalkari should follow the old practice and give sufficient timber promptly. The prohibition to cut bamboos should be removed and the State should not take the intestate (escheat) property. Moreover opium is sold at 4 bhars (tolas) for a rupee in Vaghad (in the adjoining territory) it is sold at 2 bhars (tolas) for a rupee here. There should be the same rate for opium here and in Vaghad. Firewood is the sole means for the poor people to protect themselves from cold. So that there should be freedom to the people to get dry firewood (i.e., there should be no restriction to people fetching firewood from the jungle).⁷
31. No interest should be charged (by the state) on taqavi advances; the levies on fruit trees and fees on stones. Chunam kankar should be done away with.

⁶ Mann R.S. – Structure and Role Dynamics among the Rajasthan Bhil, Volume II.

⁷ Jain Bhagwati Lal : Swatantrata Sangram me Bhagat Andolan ka yogdan (Sadhu Govind giri or Bhagat Andolan), Page 22-23

32. The vighoti (land revenue) fixed or to be fixed should be remitted on all land cultivated by the poor people; and the land revenue should be assessed according to the old custom. Ryots should be given permanent permits to keep swords and guns such as are given to the frontier people.
33. Our fair is to last for one month and a half and seven days more. So we sit quietly and repeat the name of the Lord. My residence is in the middle of two boundaries. Here we have facilities of water and firewood and so my disciples come here to pay their respects on the fair days such as the new moon and full moon. I have buried (i.e. forgotten) all my wordly miseries and have confined myself here; and yet my disciples have been subjected to harassment. You should be considerate and careful for what you do. On one side (our side) is the word (divine word); on the other (i.e., your side) is order (i.e., power or authority). One party (we) is vedi (i.e. knower of truth) the other party (your) is bhedi (i.e. practiser of all wordly activities). Speak out, sir, don't ask about (i.e., look to) our actions and it is not for us to ask about (i.e., to look to) the actions of the State. Pray don't intimidate the people; let them do their Bhakti (worship). They are all your ryots; if they do not obey your laws, tell me (i.e., I may be answerable for it). But if you will kill them while they are doing their worshipping. You will have to answer for it before the Lord. I do not admit among my disciples (such persons as) the eaters of pigs and cows, drinkers of liquor, the greedy, the practisers of falsehood and deception, back-biters, thieves, liars, the debauched and such other doers of evil deeds. Females of Baniyas, Brahmins and Rajputs become child-widows and then practice immorality. Can they be called Satis (chaste) or papis (sinners). These (Bhils) are poor people-worms of earth- they till land and throw a handful of grain in it. A wallet and gourd (a beggar's all) is my lot and I accept that without asking. Therefore, pray do not harass me. I have a claim over nobody. In the month of Diwali (i.e., the last Hindu month) I travelled to my garden (probably the hills) but even there have been harassed. The thanedar of Idar, the Thanedar of Lunawada and the uncle of the Darbar, these asked for bribes from him; and as he refused to give it to them, they said they would ease themselves on his Dhunis (firepits) and kill fowls and goats in them and would molest his flag. So saying they came to arrest GovindGiri ; and then because of their fear Govind Giri have hidden himself in the Mangad Hill. In this age of "Kaliyuga" (Iron age) this Empire is on the full swing; so you should tender justice to use and discriminate milk from water and save the lives of crores of living being. The authorities in Sanjeli have burnt away flags; the Sunth Darbar practiced great Julum on Govind Giri and his disciples. "I have completed six years of his worship and six (more are remaining. I shall meet you. You are great indeed). I am innocent I (Govindgiriji) am the disciple of Rajugarji, who was a disciple of Solagarji, who again was disciple of Ghotagarji of the great Akhada (institution) of Bundi (a town in Rajputana). I am a Sansari, i.e.,

worldly man All have to die, (so) have Do Not Pratise fraud or falsehood on me. Do not attack me through anger. If my intentions be frauduleut towards the Raja or ryots then let the very Bhekh the religion swallow me. And if you practice any fraud against me then let your religion swallow you. Let our respective religions swallow us (if we practice any fraud against each other). He who digs a pit will fall into it. As one sows, so he reaps. As one acts so he reaps the fruits of his actions. You should decide all this and tender us justice and then go your way; otherwise your field will be spoiled (i.e., perhaps the whole affair will be spoiled). I am Guru of these people; there are three things for a Guru (priest) to raise these people (from their wild habits). Guru-mantra (some sacred formula to be communicated by the Guru to all disciples and to be constantly repeated by the latter); the word of Guru. I have with me nothing else-no pretensions or deceptions. I rely upon the name of the Lord. I have accepted the one) divine Word (as true); I have faith in the Bhekh (life of a beggar) which is the attribute or symbol of God. You are great. Pray do not throw a five – seer weight (i.e., a heavy weight) on an ant. Sooner or later all have to go (i.e., to die). Righteousness will be lasting, the Divine Word is the protector of Jogis righteousness. I trust your word and then if there is any breach of trust in this, then we will fight till death, and my children will be in a helpless condition. If you will annoy the Bhagats (my worshippers) it will not have good results.⁸

Here in my place of residence every morning as many as one thousand Sadhus are fed. To meet this expenditure, you should ascertain and fix the amount my dues from all communities. I appoint the following persons on my behalf to settle this matter in obedience to your honour's orders :-

1. Sheth Sarafali Salemanji of Rampur.
2. Mehta Chhaganlal Punamchand of Rampur.
3. Vanjara Lakha Jivan.
4. Paragi Gendal Jorji of Batakwada
5. Salji Jorji of Batakwada.
6. Munia Teja Gala and Munia Punja Gala of Garadu in the Jhalod Taluka.
7. Vanjara Dudha Kashala.

I appoint the abovenamed persons as my mukhtyars to settle this matter. The above is the application of this poor Sadhu.”

Dated, 12th November 1913.”⁹

⁸ Erskine – Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, Rajputana, 1908.

⁹ Reports on the Political Administrations of the Rajputana States – Mewar Agency, 1865-1916.

This application of GovindGiri explains how he and his disciples were being harassed, firepits or dhunis were destroyed, flags were burnt by the Muslims and Rajputs, how they were exploited socially and economically. On one side he appreciated the greatness of the British Empire.

The British Empire declared Govind Giri as true sadhu and asked them to vacate the Mangadh hills and assured the bhils to return back to their places and no one will restrain them and in the midnight of 13th November they were provided 104 riffles from Baroda and 7th Jaat Regiment containing machine gun reached to Mangadh.¹⁰

On November 17th 1913, the troops attacked Mangarh, an action in which several Bhils died ” and Govindgiri and his lieutenant Dhirji Punja were captured.¹¹

Govind Giri and his disciples were asked to collect relevant evidences to conduct trial against them. They were arrested at Mangadh and were tried on 2nd February 1914 , the person arrested in Mangadh out of which 30 were tried and rest were released where a special tribunal were appointed consisting of one Major Gough and one Major Allison who was ICS. Govindgiri was sentenced to be hanged,

Punja Pargi (a lieutenant of Govindgiri) sentenced to life imprisonment, and the rest to three years of imprisonment. On appeal, Govindgiri's sentence was reduced to life imprisonment, Pargi's sentence was confirmed, and the sentences of the rest of the accused were reduced to six months of imprisonment. Punja Dhirji was sentenced to life imprisonment and sent to the Andaman Cellular Jail where he died after some years.¹²

Legal Aspects of the Movement:-

The object of social cultural movements being organized during this period was to remove the social evils from the society, as a result of which social awakening took place among the tribals which Britishers considered as political movement against themselves and took legal action against Govind Giri and his disciples who were the reformers who started bhagat movement and they were even sent to jail but GovindGiri assured the British authorities by his justifications that their social movement was not against government then they were released from jail, after release from jail Govind Giri and his disciples took active

¹⁰Vyas N.N. – Rajasthan Bhils, A Contemporary View, 1978.

¹¹Sahagal K. K.: Rajasthan District Gazetteers, Banswara, 1947

¹² Rajasthan District Gazetteers,

participation in the Nonviolence Movement organized by Mahatma Gandhi for the freedom of India, as a result many Bhagat Bhils even went to jail.¹³

Due to these movements the feeling of self-confidence self-respect¹⁴ and unity originated among bhils, as a result there was changes in their living standard, the teachings given by the preachers effected their life so much that they boycotted Dapa, Nata, Devar batta, polygamy and drinking of wine and such other evils which were in practice. Thus they were then respected by the high society. The Bhils then stopped theft, looting and dacoity, there spreaded the faith in Bhakti movement spread among them.

According to the preaching of Govind Giri they opposed the murti puja and believed in God they started Guru Shishya Parampara. The interest of Bhagat Bhils was increased towards education. Their belief in superstition deteriorated.¹⁵ The spread of Christianity was banned. As a result there was improvement in their economic status. This resulted into social and political awakening among bhils as a result of which they actively participated in Freedom Movement in India.

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¹³ Erskine : Rajputana Gazetteers, Mewar Residency, 1908

¹⁴ Mathur, L.P. : Resistance Movement of Tribals of India (A Case Study of the Bhils of Rajasthan in 19th Century, Udaipur. 1988).

¹⁵ Ojha Gouri Shankar Heera Chand : Rajputana ka Itihas (Banswara).



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