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**Lodhas as “Criminals”: Navigating  
Colonial Narratives in India**

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# **Lodhas as “Criminals”: Navigating Colonial Narratives in India**

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In Indian context, criminal tribes policy was less discussed despite its operation spanned from 1871 onwards and continued after independence. By this act, hundreds, thousands and millions of peoples came under strict surveillance and restricted movement and personal freedom. Using Lodha community as a case, this study examines the narratives of colonial administrators on the process of labelling wandering communities and tribes as ‘criminal tribes’, and consequently brought under the ambit of the amended CTA in 1911. By analysing narratives, an attempt has been made to understand the colonial perception about these wandering communities and motivating factor in branding these groups as ‘criminal’. It also attempts to document the ways the Lodhas as groups or gangs operated criminal activities as observed from colonial rulers’ texts. It is argued that though Lodha as community forced to engage in some petty criminal activities due to change in economic context, they are still bearing the stigma of criminal tribe despite denotification in post-independence period.

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