

PARAVĀRA AND GOLĀPŪRAVA: TWO MAJOR JAIN CASTES OF BUNDELKHAND

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Abstract

This article attempts to present a historico-sociological profile of two major Jain castes of Bundelkhand, namely Paravāra and Golāpūrava. Both evolved as castes from their respective formation called *anvaya* (group or tradition) in ancient Indic sources. Both have followers of Terahapantha Digambara Jainism. The literary and archaeological evidence of their presence in the Bundelkhand region has been available since the 9th or 10th century onwards. Since then, the two castes have constituted the bulk of the Bundelkhand Jain population which was enumerated at about 150,000 in the 2011 census. Traditionally a trading community, the Jains of Bundelkhand have increasingly been mobile as modern professionals as well as scholars of Indological subjects and Indian languages since the middle of the 20th century. The article also highlights the political, literary, and socio-cultural contributions of the two above-mentioned castes.

Jainism does not sanction the caste system. But, like other religious communities in India such as Muslims, Sikhs, and others, the Jains also could not remain immune to the Hindu caste system. The caste system among the Jains developed sometime during the medieval period (Premi 168-69), and scholars have identified more than 100 castes among the Jains in India today (Sangave 70; Singh 1327). Most of these castes, however, formed very small groups, and therefore have been unable to sustain the rule of caste endogamy which resulted in assimilation into other castes or further decline in their numerical strength. Presently, only four or at the most five dozen Jain castes must be surviving in India. Whatever their number, they have created a segmental division within the community and continue to be a sociological reality among the Jains. However, the working of the caste system among the Jains has not been as rigid as among the Hindus. According to Sangave (81), "...among the Jains the castes were not arranged in a hierarchical order of respectability, no restrictions were put on social intercourse between different caste members and there was no lack of choice of occupation."

It is against this background that this article discusses the two prominent Digambara Jain castes of Bundelkhand – the Paravāra and the Golāpūrava that have been, from the sociological perspective, very close to each other and have lived side by side for about a millennium. Before the two communities were identified as castes (Russell and Hira Lal 120), they were used to be known as *anvaya* (tradition) in Jain inscriptions and literary sources. Both castes claim to be of the *kṣatriya* origin and were the followers of *mūlasaṃgha* or *śuddhāmnāya* (original or pure tradition) since the 18th century of Terahapantha Digambara Jainism. For the past half a century or so, both have been ideologically divided over the issue of Kānajīpantha (Jain, P.C. 2020: 39-40; Jain, R.K. 117). The two together make up almost 90% of the Bundelkhand Jain

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population and, therefore, they can be regarded as synonymous with the Jain community of Bundelkhand.

Paravāra

Paravāra has been the most prominent Jain caste in the Bundelkhand region since medieval times. In old Sanskrit inscriptions found in the region, the Paravāras figure by the name Paurapaṭṭa or Puravāda (Jain P.C. 2020: 36). The earliest such inscription dates back to the 11th century CE. According to Phoolchandra Shastri, the Paravāras are the descendants of Paramāra Kṣatriya. In ancient times they were known as Prāgvāṭa or Paurpāṭa and were the followers of the *mūlasaṃgha* established some 2100 years ago by Guptigupta, a Jain ascetic and grandson of King Candragupta Maurya (Shastri 22). Nathuram Premi, however, has contested the ancient origin and continuity of the Paravāra caste and stated that none of the Jain castes existed before the 9th or 10th century CE (Premi 168-169). The Paravāras were initially spread in Gujarat and the Marwar region in present-day Rajasthan and Central India, including Bundelkhand. Historically, the Paravāras are varyingly known as Pramāra, Paramāra, Paṃvāra, Puravāra, Poravāra, Poravāda, Poravāla, Padmāvati Poravāda, Jāṅgaḍa Poravāda – sometimes as a separate caste/sub-caste.

Paravāra caste members are divided into 12 gotras and each gotra is divided into 12 *mūras* (*mūla*, i.e., place of original residence). Most of the 144 *mūra/mūla* names of the Paravāra caste are derived from village names in Gujarat and Rajasthan, some of which such as Idar, Rakhiyal, Naradpuri, Patwara, and others, still exist (Shastri, P. 73). We do not know how many of them survive today. During the 12th or 13th century, a majority of Paravāras had to leave Gujarat due to religious persecution instigated by the Śvetāmbara sect at the hands of rulers who had patronized Śvetāmbara Jainism. The migrants took refuge in Malwa, Ujjain, Chanderi, Sironj, Tikamgarh, Panna, Chhatarpur, and Orchha which were ruled by Paramāra/Candelā or other *kṣatriyas* friendly to Jainism. They were also attracted by the fact that the followers of *mūlasaṃgha*, namely Golāpūrava, Golālāre, Golasiṃghāre as well as Paravāra Jains were already residing in these princely states, and therefore their integration was relatively easier.

Numerically, the Paravāras have been an important caste among Jains. *All India Digambara Jain Directory*, 1914 gave the estimated total number of the Paravāra Jain population as 41,996 persons (Sangave 119). According to the *Paravāra Directory* from 1924, there were 48,074 Paravāra Jains in Bundelkhand. A majority of them were located in the vicinity of Betwa River, within a radius of 50 miles from Deogarh (Jain, Pannalal cited in Parwar Jain community). According to the same source, they were spread in 1,438 villages and towns, notably in Lalitpur (1,122), Sagar (595), Khurai (503), Mungawali (481), Bamora (374), Bina-Itawa (358), Khaniadhana (320), and Mandawara (304). Others were located in Jabalpur (1,058), Mandala (314), and Seoni (358). Since the 1924 estimates, we do not have any idea about the distribution or total population of Paravāras. Presently, this figure must be probably around 200,000. A majority of the Paravāra population is still concentrated in towns and villages mentioned in the 1924 *Directory*, although the proportion of rural population to urban one must have been reversed in favor of urban residents (Jain, P.C. 2020: 36-37).

For the past several decades, the Paravāras have been divided into two endogamous groups: (i) Aṭha Sake and (ii) Cau Sake. Sangave (91) points out that “the former will not permit the marriage of persons related more nearly than eight degrees, while the latter permits it after four degrees. The Aṭha Sake has the higher position and if one of them marries a Cau Sake, he is degraded to that group”. A third group among the Paravāras, called Binaikiyā, consisted of those who were the offsprings of irregular unions and of widows who remarried. This group is akin to *dasās* in some *baniā* castes and is also known by the name of Laharisena or Laghuśreṇi. To add further complexity, the Binaikiyā divided into sub-groups: Purāne Binaikiyās (old) and Naye Binaikiyās (new) and began to assert as an independent caste (due to the social status of the out-caste). Fortunately, thanks to the efforts of Kṣullaka Ganesh Prasad Varni and others during the first half of the 20th century, all the problems of social exclusion have now almost disappeared from the Bundelkhand region (Jain, P.C. 2023: 20; Varni 233-238, 284-286, 291-303).

Since about the late 15th century, a sizeable population of Paravāras has also been affiliated with a break-away subsect called Tāraṇapantha (Sangave 53; Jain, P.C. 2020: 38-39; Cort 280-282). Tāraṇapantha consisted of six groupings: (i) Cau Sake Paravāra (ii) Cāraṇagāre/Cārṇagar (iii) Asati (iv) Golālāre/Gulālāre (v) Do Sake Paravāra and (vi) Ajudhyābāsī/Ayodhyāvāsī. Of the six caste groups, the Paravāras have been numerically dominant. In 1914, the Tāraṇapanthīs numbered only 1,107 as per the *All India Digambara Jain Directory* (Sangave 120). During the early 1990s, the total population of Tāraṇapanthīs in India was liberally estimated at about 30,000 (Jain, D 108). It is reasonable to assume that it must have now gone up to about 40,000.

The impact of Islam is apparent in the Tāraṇapanthīs as there is no idol worshiping. Instead, they worship the *niraṅkāra ātman* (formless soul). At the altar of their shrines called *caityālaya* they place the *Samayasāra*, an ancient Digambar Jain text written by Ācārya Kundakunda, and the 14 books written by Tāraṇa Svāmī himself.² Because of this, Tāraṇapanthīs are also called Samaiyās or Grantha Pūjaka (worshipper of the books). This theory about the emergence of the sect is contradicted by a more credible theory which suggests that Tāraṇa Svāmī as a young man was deeply hurt by day-to-day discrimination of Cau Sake and Do Sake Paravāras at the hands of Aṭha Sake Paravāras. Between them, there were no inter-dining and inter-marriage relations, and they were not allowed to worship in Jain temples. All this led Tāraṇa Svāmī to have a break-away sect. Most Tāraṇapanthīs are settled in Madhya Pradesh, and some in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. Osho Rajnish (1931-1990) was a Tāraṇapanthī by birth. A former member of Parliament late Śrī Dal Chand Jain of Sagar was also a Samaiyā (Jain, P.C. 2020: 39).

Golāpūrava

Golāpūrava is the second largest Jain caste in Bundelkhand after Paravāras. Scholars differ about the meaning of the word ‘Golāpūrava’ as well as the place of its origin. Some assign their origin to Gwalior, others to Mahoba, and still others to an ancient South Indian territory

² The names of the 14 books are as follows: *Śrāvākācāra*, *Paṇḍita Pūjā*, *Mālārohaṇa*, *Kamala Battīsī*, *Jñāna Samuccaya Sāra*, *Upadeśa Śuddha Sāra*, *Tribhaṅgī Sāra*, *Mamala Pāhuḍa*, *Caubīsa Ṭhāṇā*, *Chadmastha Vāṇī*, *Nāma Mālā*, *Khātikā Viśeṣa*, *Sunna Subhāva*, and *Siddhi Subhāva* (Cort 278).

‘Gollarashtra’, or ‘Golladesh’ (Malaiya 32; Jain, B 16). “The other view is that they were Golaka Purāṇa Brahmins born out of the union between a Brahmin and a non-Brahmin. From Golaka Purāṇa the community’s name Golāpūrava is derived” (Samanta 395). One more theory of the origin of this caste assumes an ancient united Golāpūrava community that eventually got divided into Jain, Brahmin, and Kṣatriya Golāpūrava castes. Evidently, the two Hindu castes are still found to be living in several districts in north and central India (Jain, M. vii, 199-203). Similar claims of the ancient origin of the Golāpūrava caste have also been made by some scholars. These claims are based on certain paṭṭāvalīs of the late medieval period and are not historically authentic.

Notwithstanding the mythologies or theories of its origin, the Golāpūrava Jains have historically been residing in the vicinity of the Dhasāna River in Bundelkhand. Estimatedly, there were 10,640 Golāpūrava Jains in 1914 (Sangave 119). Their population increased to 12,569 in 1941 and 35,074 in 1996 (Jain, M. 165; Jain, S.K. 266). They were spread over 535 towns and villages, mainly in the Madhya Pradesh-Bundelkhand region. Their district-wise distribution was as follows: Sagar (11,680), Chhatarpur (4,830), Damoh (3,812), Tikamgarh (3,701) and Jabalpur (2,861). Lalitpur district of Uttar Pradesh had 1,100 Golāpūrava Jains, and 7,090 lived in the rest of India at 270 places (S. K. Jain 266). The current population of the caste may be estimated at around 60,000.

Golāpūrava caste has also been divided into a number of gotras. According to various versions of the *Varddhamāna Purāṇa* authored by 18th-century Golāpūrava scholars, there were 58 gotras among the Golāpūravas, but others extend this number to 68, and even 76 (Jain, B. 19-20). However, according to one estimate, of these, only 36 gotras were left by the 1990s (Malaiya 32). Like the Paravāras, the Golāpūravas also practiced caste endogamy and gotra exogamy, though this situation has been changing fast since the late 20th century.

The following table gives information about how the Paravāra and Golāpūrava Jains were distributed in India in 1914:

Table 1: Distribution of Paravāras and Golāpūravas in India, 1914

Province	Paravāra	Golāpūrava
Central Provinces	24,213	9,476
United Provinces	18,289	718
Rajputana and Malwa	11,707	376
Punjab	363	Nil
Bengal and Bihar	164	Nil
Bombay	60	Nil
Madras and Mysore	68	Nil
Total	54,864	10,570

Source: Adapted from Sangave (124-130).

Religion and Religiosity

Paravāras and Golāpūrava have been the followers of Terahapanthī Digambara Jainism, a conservative subsect in Jainism which is characterized by the ideal-typical *mokṣa-mārga* ideology, and abundance of religious rituals and overall orthodoxy (Jain, P.C. 2020: 36). In Ganesh Prasad Varni's accounts of the Digambara Jain community of Bundelkhand, the "doctrine and practice are closely tied up with each other" and that there is "a continuous and ever-increasing stress on the path of purification among Digambara Jain householders", which manifests in hierarchical differentiation of laity in the form of *brahmacārī*, *ailaka* and *kṣullaka* (collectively called *tyāgīs*) (Jain, R.K. 51). It must be pointed out here that both the castes have greatly contributed to the growth of not only this *tyāgī* class but also to that of naked ascetics and *āryikās* (female ascetics) (Jain, S.K. 14-19; Shastri, P. 213-234).

Thus, the householders' life is progressively imbued with religiosity and spiritual progress toward salvation (*mokṣa*). A survey of Jain youth in Sagar district found that all the respondents made a daily visit to the temple for *deva-darśana* and were in favour of imparting religious education to children in schools. While all the respondents stayed away from consuming alcohol and non-vegetarian food, about 50% of them did not eat food after sunset (Jain, P.C and Jain, H.C. 12).

The printing and publishing of Jain religious literature in the forms of magazines, books, and pamphlets by various publishing houses, NGOs, and associations and the introduction of exclusive Jain TV channels have been contributory factors in this regard. The *mokṣa-mārga* ideology is being taken quite literally in practice by its most adherents. Religious congregations of the monks are not only well-attended, but the laity-monk interaction is also frequent and intense.

An important expression of religiosity among the wealthy Jains of Bundelkhand has been the tradition of Pañcakalyāṇaka (five auspicious events) and/or Gajaratha Mahotsava (elephant-driven chariot festival) which is unique to the region. Those who sponsored this religious function have been decorated with the traditional honorific titles of *Siṃghaī*, *Savāī Siṃghaī*, *Seṭha*, and *Śrīmanta Seṭha* on account of their sponsoring Pañcakalyāṇaka and/or Gajaratha. The word *Siṃghaī* is the distorted form of the Sanskrit word *Samghapati*. This title is given to those who have sponsored at least one Pañcakalyāṇaka or Gajaratha. Those who sponsor two Pañcakalyāṇaka or Gajaratha are given the title *Savāī Siṃghaī*, in the case of three Gajaratha, the title is *Deoḍhiā* (*Deoḍhe Siṃghaī*), in the case of four Gajaratha the title is *Seṭha*, and in case of five Gajaratha, the title given is *Śrīmanta Seṭha*. Later on, even in the case of four Gajaratha the title of *Śrīmanta Seṭha* was given.³ These titles were given by the community members on the completion of the function. Some idea of the strength of this rich and elite class can be taken from the fact that as per the *Directory of Paravāra Jains* of 1924, there were as many as 1,022 *Siṃghaīs*, 161 *Savāī Siṃghaīs*, and 130 *Seṭhas* in the Bundelkhand region

³ As mentioned by Pt Phoolchandra Shastri (539), some 200 years ago, a grand *pañcakalyāṇaka* was organized at Chanderi in which the chariot was driven by elephants. Before this, there was no custom of elephant-driven chariots in *pañcakalyāṇakas*. Subsequently, according to Pt Jaganmohan Lal Shastri (15), the practice became commonplace in the entire Bundelkhand region and then spread to some other parts of the country.

(Shastri, J. 15). The comparable figures for the Golāpūrava caste for the year 1941 were 1183 *Simghaīs*, 281 *Savāī Simghaīs*, 478 *Seṭhas*, and 8 *Savāī Seṭhas* (Jain, M. 166). Needless to say, the rich and elite class function as community leaders and as such wields considerable power among the Jains and non-Jains alike.

Economic Profile

For generations, most Jains in Bundelkhand continue to be small-scale traders, bankers, *mahājanas*, and *ādhatīyās*. All over the region, general and provision stores and textile shops are particularly owned by the Jains. They are also into jewelry and sweets/confectionery business.

Some of them were also given the *zamīndārī* (the right of landholding and revenue collection) during the British period. After India's independence, a few Jains in the area were among the first to undertake certain entrepreneurial activities such as operating buses and trucks as means of transformation, setting up sawmills as well as flour, pulses, and rice mills, running restaurants and small hotels, and occasionally owning a petrol pump station. A small section of Jains from both castes are also engaged in modern education-based professions such as teaching, healthcare, engineering, law, chartered accountancy, information technology, and varying levels of government services (Jain, P.C. 2020: 28).

Due to their involvement in trade and commercial activities, the Jains in Bundelkhand are generally called *bāniā* or *baniā* – a label that carries both positive and negative stereotypical connotations. On the positive side, the Jains are regarded as wealthy, intelligent, enterprising, and receptive to education and learning. Negative stereotypes, on the other hand, portray them as misers, shrewd, exploitative, manipulative, and physically weak. In any case, for centuries the Jains have been very well integrated into the regional economy. In fact, a number of them were able to accumulate considerable wealth. Not surprisingly, this situation until recently had attracted the ire of dacoits, and many wealthy Jains in the region had been the worst victims of dacoity and kidnapping (Jain, P.C. 2020: 29).

Education and Occupational Profile

For over a millennium, an overwhelming majority of both caste members have been engaged in trade and commerce in their paternal or family occupations. The Sagar district survey of Jain youth conducted in 2011 by the author found that about 49% of the respondents were engaged in family shop-keeping business (Jain, P.C. and Jain, H.C. 10). The rest of them were reported to be serving as teachers, bankers, government servants, employees in private firms, etc. A privileged few were engineers, doctors, accountants, and IT professionals. Very few Jains served in railways, police, and army or Indian Administrative Services.

Jains from Bundelkhand have historically been migrating to numerous cities and towns outside the region. These include Indore, Bhopal, Jabalpur, Gwalior, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Amaravati and Nagpur. Apparently, this must have been done to seek better economic/employment opportunities at these places that also provided better educational opportunities for the next generation (Jain, P.C. 2020: 30).

Bundelkhand continues to remain educationally and industrially a backward region. Most Jain families are deprived of quality education as they have access to only government schools, where the medium of instruction is Hindi and written or spoken English is not taught properly. Thus, in the Sagar district survey, it was found that only 3% of the respondents had gone to English medium schools (Jain, P.C. and Jain, H.C. 10). Lack of knowledge of English not only hampers the further education of most Bundelkhand Jain youth, but they also succumb to long-standing family pressure to join either the family shop-keeping business or go for lowly employment.

Along with secular education, Sanskrit Jain *vidyālayas*, mostly established during the first half of the 20th century, had also been an important avenue for getting education and employment. Given the significant level of poverty in both the castes in the region about two to three generations ago, many of them used to send their wards to get educated to various Sanskrit Jain *vidyālayas* located regionally (e.g. Sadhumar, Papaura, Sagar, Morena), or as far away as Banaras, Arrah, Mathura, Jaipur, Mahavirji and Delhi (Jain, P.C. and Jain, H.C. 10). These *vidyālayas* provided free boarding, lodging, and tuition. It was also these *vidyālayas* that produced several generations of traditional Jain scholars (*paṇḍitas*) as well as modern Jain scholars of Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Jainology/Indology (Jain, P.C. 2020: 61-69). Among these, it is worth mentioning the following scholars: Guru Gopaldas Baraiya (1866-1917, Morena); Pt. Banshidhar Shastri Nyāyālaṅkāra (1890-1994, Mahroni, Lalitpur); Pt. Devkinandan Siddhāntaśāstrī (1853-1950, Baruasagar, Jhansi); Pt. Ghanshyamdas Nyāyatīrtha (1888-1924, Mahroni, Lalitpur); Kṣullaka Ganesh Prasad Varni (1874-1961, Hansera, Lalitpur); Pt. Nathuram Premi (1881-1960, Devari, Sagar/Bombay); Pt. Phoolchandra Siddhāntaśāstrī (1901-1991, Silawan, Lalitpur); Pt. Jaganmohanlal Shastri (1901-1995); Pt. Hira Lal Siddhāntaśāstrī (1904-1981, Sadumal, Lalitpur); Pt. Sumer Chandra ‘Diwakar’ (b. 1905, Seoni); Pt. Vansidhar Vyākaraṇācārya (1905-1993, Sonrai, Lalitpur); Pt. Balchandra Siddhāntaśāstrī (1905-1985, Sonrai, Lalitpur); Pt. Parmanand Shastri (1907-1977, Niwar, Chhatarpur); Dr. Panna Lal Jain Sāhityācārya (1911-2001, Parguan, Sagar); Dr. Darbari Lal Jain Kothia Nyāyācārya (1911-2000, Sonrai, Lalitpur); Prof. Khushal Chandra Gorawala (1917-1999, Madawara, Lalitpur); Prof. Mahendra Kumar Jain Nyāyācārya (1919-1959, Khurai); Pt. Neeraj Jain (1926-2014, Reethi, Katni); Prof. Rajaram Jain (b. 1929, Malthon, Sagar); Dr. Sagarmal Jain (1932-2020, Shajapur); and Dr. Hukam Chand Bharill (1937-2023, Baroda Swami, Lalitpur) (Jain, S.K. 44-50; Shastri, P. 237-270). Notably, Prof. Rajaram Jain was honored with the prestigious Padma Śrī Award in 2023 for his contribution to the field of ancient languages Prākṛit, Apabhraṁśa, and Sanskrit.

A well-known historical person who migrated from Bundelkhand was Manju Choudhary (1720-1785). He was born in Kumheri village of Lalitpur district. As a young man, he left his village in search of livelihood and after doing several odd jobs here and there finally reached Nagpur where in due course of time, he became a courtier of Rāja Mukund Dev. Subsequently, on behalf of the Bhonsle rulers of Nagpur, Manju Choudhary organized an army and attacked Orissa and was victorious in the battle. As a reward, he was appointed the administrator of Cuttack and was authorized to collect taxes from a market that is presently known as Choudhary Market. Dīvāna Manju Choudhary constructed a Digambara Jain temple and

hundreds of mountain caves for the traveling Jain monks to stay in. The well-known Khandagiri-Udayagiri caves-complex is one of them. His ninth-tenth generation descendants still live in Cuttack.

Kinship, Family and Life Cycle Rituals

Historically, the Jains of both castes shared more or less the same patterns of kinship relations and kinship terminology that prevailed among the Hindus of the region. Technically, these are known as the “Northern Zone patterns of kinship” (Karve 4, 104). As the trading castes, the Jains played the role of petty bourgeoisie among the vast Hindu peasantry. This differing class background was clearly reflected in the family structure and functions of the two communities. Apart from the basic similarities, the Jain families were generally a little more liberal, egalitarian, and receptive to education and social change. In recent decades, the Jain families have also undergone the following changes: a decrease in discrimination against a girl child, a decrease in domestic violence, an assertion of individuality about the choice of education, career and marriage partner, and the daughters turning out to be more reliable/dependable than sons (Jain, P.C. 2020: 82-83).

Among the life cycle rituals, the death rituals observed by the Jains somewhat differ from their Hindu counterparts. Thus, whereas the Hindus sub-merge the mortal remains of the dead body at pilgrimage places such as Prayagraj, Haridvar, Gaya, and others, the Jains generally disperse them in the nearby bushes, dry streams, or water bodies. Jain tradition does not sanction the rituals of *terahavīm* (death feast on the thirteenth day of death), *barasī* (annual death day), and the *śrāddha* (offering rice balls at a pilgrimage place to the deceased). Despite this, the practice of death feast is widespread among the Jains of Bundelkhand, particularly in small towns and villages. So much so that in some cases the number of guests can be one thousand persons or more. On such occasions, not only the Jains but selected members of the other communities from the neighboring villages also come to participate. The death feast was, and continues to be given for two important sociological reasons: (i) death, as well as marriage, are the two occasions when the Jains who have traditionally been merchants and traders can sort of gratify their real or potential clients by serving them food, and (ii) it is also a reciprocal practice on the part of the Jains as the custom is universal among upper caste Hindus (Jain, P.C. 2020: 125-126).

Caste Associations

Following the growth of the social reform movement and the formation of associations like Ārya Samāja, Brahma Samāja, YMCA, and others in the late 19th century, Jains were also inspired to have socio-religious reforms within their own community through appropriate associations. The earliest one to be formed in North India was Śrī Bhāratvarṣīya Digambara Jain Mahāsabhā established in 1895 at Mathura (Kothari 1).⁴ The outreach of the Mahāsabhā in the Bundelkhand region however had been nominal. Simultaneously, a number of national,

⁴ In the entire history of the Mahāsabhā spanning about 130 years, only two of its 33 elected presidents so far have been from Bundelkhand. Seth Mohanlal of Khurai was elected president of the Mahāsabhā in 1925 and Seth Chandrabhan of Bamrana/Sadumar in 1932.

regional, and caste associations had also begun to form among the Digambara as well as Śvetāmbara Jains of India. Among these, mention must be made of Dakṣiṇa Bhārata Jain Sabhā (1899), Jain Young Men Association (1899), Bundelkhand Madhyaprāntīya Digambara Jain Sabhā (1908), Bhārata Jain Mahāmaṇḍala (1910), Jain Political Conference (1917) and Akhil Bhāratvarṣīya Digambara Jain Pariṣada (1923) (Jain, P.C. 2020: 94). Although the Jains of Bundelkhand varyingly participated in some of these associations, perhaps the Bundelkhand Madhyaprāntīya Digambar Jain Sabhā was naturally closest to their needs, though it survived only for a decade.

Paravāra Sabhā

The 5th convention of the Madhya Prāntīya Sabhā chaired by Śrīmanta Seth Mohanlal from Khurai was held at Nainagiri, a major pilgrimage place in Bundelkhand. It became controversial in the sense that the dominance of the Paravāra caste in the Association was questioned by members of the Golāpūrava caste. Thereafter, Śrī Bhāratvarṣīya Digambara Jain Paravāra Sabhā was established in 1917 at Ramtek, and All-India Digambara Jain Golāpūrava Mahāsabhā was established under the chairmanship of Seth Dhan Prasad of Banda, Sagar in 1918. Much later an association called Tāraṇa Tāraṇa Digambara Jain Samāja came into existence sometime in the 1950s, which was short-lived and revived in 1977.

Bhāratvarṣīya Digambara Jain Paravāra Sabhā had held twenty conventions in different places, namely Ramtek, Seoni, Jabalpur, Sagar, Pappara, Bamora, Akaltara, Kurwai, Barchon, Bina-Barah, Khurai, etc. These conventions were chaired by the following distinguished Jains of Bundelkhand: (1) Seth Laxmi Chandra, Bamrana; (2) Savāi Siṃghaī Garibdas, Jabalpur; (3) Siṃghaī Pannalal, Amaravati; (4) Seth Pannalal Taraiya, Lalitpur (5) Śrīmanta Seth Lakshmichand, Vidisha; (6) Seth Ganpatlal Gurha, Khurai; (7) Śrīmanta Seth Puranshah, Seoni; (8) Śrī Amritlal Advocate, Malthon; (9) Seth Bhagchandra, Dongargarh; (10) Śrīmanta Seth Rishabh Kumar, Khurai; (11) Savāi Siṃghaī Dhanya Kumar, Katni; (12) Śrī Panchamlal Tehsildar, Jabalpur; (13) Śrīmanta Seth Birdhi Chandra, Seoni; (14) Siṃghaī Kunwarsen, Seoni. Besides these *seṭhas*, Pt. Devakinandan Siddhāntaśāstrī also chaired many regular and ad hoc conventions of the Paravāra Sabhā at various points in time.

The Paravāra Sabhā ceased to hold its annual conventions in 1953. Nevertheless, it was registered under the Madhya Pradesh Trust Act in 1955 and was located at Jabalpur. Paravāra Sabhā also published a monthly news magazine named *Paravāra Bandhu* which was edited by Pt. Jaganmohan Lal Shastri, and other scholars. The monthly magazine appeared during 1929-30 and then during 1939-44 only. Now the magazine has been discontinued for a long time, whereas its other counterparts like *Golāpūrava Jain* and *Tāraṇa Bandhu* still continue to be published from Sagar and Bhopal respectively.

In the early 1990s, Paravāra Sabhā's great achievement was the publication of a book in Hindi entitled *Paravāra Jain Samāja kā Itihāsa* (A History of Paravāra Jain Society) written and edited by Siddhāntācārya Pt. Phoolchandra in 1992. The book details the history of the Paravāra caste with numerous historical evidence based on hagiological lists (*paṭṭāvalīs*) of ascetics along with literary as well as archaeological evidence. In the book, Paravāra community's past

migratory movements and major settlement areas in present-day Bundelkhand, greater Bundelkhand and beyond, its distinguished members including *munis*, *tyāgīs*, *paṇḍits*, *seths*, and their achievements in various walks of life are also highlighted in detail. But apart from this publication, the Sabhā has been practically a defunct organization now since its registration in 1955 (Jain, P.C. 2020: 95-97).

Golāpūrava Mahasabhā

As already mentioned, All-India Digambara Jain Golāpūrava Mahāsabhā came into existence in 1918 and continued to operate for some time before it ceased to exist. The association was revived in 2002 with its first convention held at Nainagiri. Since then, regular conventions have been held at different places in Madhya Pradesh. Its central office is located at Sagar, and its regional offices are at Gwalior, Indore, and Jaipur. Its mouthpiece *Golapurv Jain* was also revived in 2002 and has been regularly appearing since then from its Sagar office (Jain, P.C. 2020: 97).

The two caste associations attempted to bring about many reforms in the Bundelkhand Jain community, namely cessation of child, elderly, and age-incompatible marriages, reforms in certain marriage rituals, promotion of Jain education and literature, renovation and restoration of Jain pilgrimage places (*tīrtha kṣetras*), establishment of widow help funds, and many others.

Socio-Political Contribution

In modern times, the members of both castes have played an important role in India's freedom struggle. At least 300 of them from the region went to jail, and some of them were hanged to death for their patriotic acts by the British regime. Four out of twenty or so Jain martyrs were from Bundelkhand: Amar Chand Banthia from Gwalior; Chaudhary Bhaiyalal Jain and Siṁghaī Prem Chand Jain, both from Damoh; and Saboo Lal Jain Baisakhiya from Garhakota, Sagar (Jain, Kapoor Lal cited in Jain, P.C. 2020 "Appendix 6":142).⁵ Of the six Jains nominated to the Constituent Assembly of India, one Ramakant Malviya was from Sagar. The Jains in Bundelkhand have also been active at various levels of electoral politics. To date only two Jains have been successful in getting elected as members of Parliament: Dal Chand Jain (1928-2011) from Sagar and Pradip Kumar Jain 'Aditya' (b. 1962) from Lalitpur (Jain, P.C. 2020: 31). To the state assemblies, several Jain politicians have been elected from time to time in Uttar Pradesh as well as Madhya Pradesh.⁶ These include Dashrath Jain, Chhatarpur (1926-2018); Jayant K. Malaiya, Damoh (b. 1943); Arvind K. Jain, Lalitpur (b. 1935); Shailendra Jain, Sagar (b. 1963); and Kapoor Chand Ghuwara, Chhatarpur (1945-2021). Compared to national and state-level politics, the Jains' involvement at the local level of politics is perhaps a little better, but the representation of women even at this level is practically nil (Jain, P.C. 2020: 32-33). In addition to politics, a considerable number of business elites, *tyāgīs*, and

⁵ Shri Syadvad Digambar Jain Mahavidyalaya, Varanasi, established in 1905 and a major stronghold of Sanskrit and Jainology students from Bundelkhand had also taken part vigorously in the 1942 'Quit India' movement in which about a dozen students were imprisoned for various length of time.

⁶ Madhya Pradesh is the only state in India that has the distinction of being served by six Jain Chief Ministers, but none from Bundelkhand (P. C. Jain 31).

NGOs from both castes have been involved in social work, particularly in the fields of education and healthcare.

Although there have been many literary figures in the Bundelkhand region, the profiles of only four outstanding ones are briefly presented here: (i) Pt. Nathuram Premi (1881–1960, Sagar/Bombay): Prominent publisher of Hindi, Sanskrit, and Urdu literature as well as Jain literature. He was an independent scholar, Jain historian, and editor of several Jain works, founder of Hindi Granth Ratnakar Karyalaya, Manikchandra Digambara Jain Granthamala and *Jain Hitaishi* magazine; (ii) Laxmi Chandra Jain (1909-1999, Chhatarpur): As poet, writer, editor, and manager he was an institution-builder. He helped establish Bharatiya Jnanpith, a literary publishing house and promoter of the prestigious Bhartiya Jnanpith Award for Indian literature and languages including English; (iii) Hukam Chand Bukharia ‘Tanmay’ (1921-1997, Lalitpur): A great romantic poet, lawyer, social reformer, and entrepreneur; (iv) Kailash Choudhry Madbaiya (b. 1944): In 2019, he was honored with Padma Śrī award for promoting the Bundeli language and literature (Jain, P.C. 2020: 34-35).

Concluding Remarks

It is obvious from the above discussion that the two ancient *anvayas*, consolidated as castes sometime during the medieval period, have maintained their respective name and identity ever since. These two Jain castes have been living together in close proximity to each other in hundreds of villages and towns of Bundelkhand for over a millennium now. The members of both the castes live together sharing neighborhoods, Jain temples, educational institutions, and many other aspects of socio-cultural life. The caste endogamy is fast disappearing in recent decades on account of the skewed sex ratio, and other sociological factors such as co-education in colleges and universities and thereby the opportunities and options of love marriage, and the girls’ preference for marrying service-class boys, etc.

Historically, inter-caste relations between Paravāras and Golāpūravas have been influenced by the demographic dominance of the Paravāras and the vocational competition between the two. A general perception is that the Golāpūravas have been economically less well-off and also suffer from ‘the minority complex’. Consequently, a certain amount of rivalry and mutual distrust between the two is also discerned in different walks of life.

Education and economic development have brought about significant changes in both the castes. The members of both the castes have diversified into various modern professions and thereby had to become geographically mobile outside the Bundelkhand region. Also, typical of the wider Jain community, the women have not lagged behind in regard to higher education and other life chances.

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