

Cultural Status of Gujjar Community in Kashmir (With Special Reference to District Kulgam)

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Abstract

Gujjar Community is the second largest Muslim community in Kashmir valley, having its unique cultural identity sometime this community claims that they are the original inhabitants of Kashmiri territory, since from decades this particularly community settled at the upper reaches of every district in Kashmir valley. Generally this community is defined as a social group usually living in a defining area, having a dialect cultural homogenate and unified social organization thus this group is the territorial group with its own culture, language, values, and unified social organization.

Key words Gujjar, bakerwalls, sheep, zamenders, culture. Language, community.

Introduction:

Gujjar and bakerwalls are the two major scheduled tribes of jammu and Kashmir the term bakerwall is derived from the word “Bakri-wala” meaning goat and sheep herders and rearer. It is said that they originally belonged to the gujjar stok, which are divided in three groups namely Gujjar, Dodhi Gujjar, Bakerwall. The settled Gujjar are small zaminedars who are yet to studied, Gujjar communities primary occupation is agriculture supported by animal husbandry, the dodhi Gujjar practice pastorals and nomadism, some of them nowadays taken up the jobs in organized sector. Every Gujjar community wheather of common kashmires or Gujjars of kulgam. Having main source of income agriculture and horticulture but unfortunately most of the people are living below poverty line. 77.62% population of Kashmir is Gujjar and 22.38% is living in urban areas. But all the Gujjars are living in Gujjar areas, Every 2th person of Gujjar community in kulgam is living below poverty line. Their socio-economic status is very low as compared to the rest of the population, their socio- economic conditions has a human dimension when people have no concern towards their communities, lack of patriotism to help the needy, who actually need assistance due to low socio – economic status and lack of opportunities for survival vulnerability is lack of protection to the poor, which may lead to other risks such as crime, alienation Migration, injury due to violence, from undesirable elements. Those who have low socio- economic status are separated from rich not only by their current standards of living but also of their greater vulnerability to socio-economic catastrophe, Gujjar Communities economy depends mostly on traditional forms of occupation or agriculture and horticulture. The state is being affected by continued violence and insurgency. Economy is an undeveloped one,

unaffected and unaltered by modern day industrial developments and changing times. The indigenous traditions occupations are farming, animal husbandry and horticulture.

Kulgam is a picturesque town is situated at 75⁰ 268'E longitude and 33⁰ 1584 N latitude nested in the lap of peer panchall ranges overlooking the left bank of river Veshawo. The district has super abundance of natural water resources in the shape of various famous springs such as Kosernag(ahead of Aherbal) waseknag (kund) Khee nag (khee jogipora) etc. Gujjar Communities is the second largest community after common kashmiris and are sunni Muslims. They occupy upper reaches of kulgam majority of them are settled in a particular region of kulgam namely Nadwow, their customs, traditions Values, mores have unique identity, so far as their cultural status is concerned is same from centuries which is better to be studied.

Objectives of study

1. To study their complete way of life
2. To known about the profile of respondents.
3. Low economic status have become a source of alienation in Gujjar community forced particular community for seasonal migration.

Profile, Culture and Their Problems.

This Para attempts to analyze the social backgrounds of the respondents in terms of their demographic characters such as occupation, culture, education, health, income, problems, etc it also includes the their family profile.

In all societies, primitive or modern simple or complex human sex urges requires established and society. Recognized channels of s satisfaction. Gujjar Community still maintains the traditional family- kinship frame work, same crucial problems have also been found or experienced. Sociologically speaking, the Gujjar community in general may be categorized as the traditional society which maintains the joint family, comprising three or more generations and living in a traditional environment and patriarchal authority is found. The family is patriarchal in nature and patriarchal in character.

Marriage is found as early as possible among the Gujjar community each class or caste would prefer to enter into matrimonial alliance with persons belonging to the same class and if suitable matches were not available, they did not hesitate to marry in other cast or class, mostly enter thus both endogamous as well as exogamous marriage were preformed in this community.

Level of literacy is undoubtedly one of the most indicators of social, cultural and economic development. The literacy level of Gujjar is very low then the other communities of district the overall enrollment level in the Government school, are very low because of low intentions of poor people towards the education and few

years of struggle in the school poor child feels that education is not his cup of tea and he drop out. In villages of kulgam there is not any facility of higher education. All Gujjar families the families having lower socio-economic status find it difficult to send their children to private institutions or to other places where the institutions or to other places where the institution of higher education are available and most of the children give up their studies. Poor health and illiteracy among Gujjar communities pose a peculiar problem in development. The normal health of the Gujjar people cannot said to be very bad, but the fundamental question arises in this context is that how much of modern amenities in public health in percolating down to the poor strata of Indian society. As in case of kulgam district the overall infrastructure for modern particular villages of kulgam in most of them as there is no primary health centre (PHC) present. In some villages there is only one Junior Nurse and one Nursing orderly, who are available thrice a week, usually most of the people visit Distinct Hospital kulgam and least percent of people visit Anantnag and Kashmir Srinagar respectively for major health problems. Because of low economic conditions and lack of transport facilities in Gujjar areas. People rely on sub district hospital kulgam during winters they even do not move from villages particularly at the time of snow fall it became dead impossible for pregnant ladies as well to reach the hospital and sometimes some of them last there lives. The most of common diseases in their villages are chronic Bronchitis round worms hook worms, gastro- intestinal dysfunctions tuberculosis etc but there are some diseases which can neither be diagnosed nor treated.

Emergence or evolution of Gujjar community in Kashmir

Evolution of Gujjar community in Kashmir, the diffusion and spread of Gujjar community in the state of Jammu and Kashmir is not known with certainty. the state has sizable. Gujjar population there is no written history of these people, therefore it is very difficult to fix the precise date of their Migration to this part of county or to trace the circumstance of their conversation to islam. But the Gujjars according to the historians originally belongs to Rajputana region of Gujjar (Kashawad) and due to famine and other hostile conditions. They migrated to this area. Historians could not trace out their exact date of migration but as per Rajtarangni the famous book of Ancient Kashmir they were living on the borders of Kashmir in 9th and 10th centuries. And after some time they embraced Islam. The Gujjars themselves tell several stories of their migration to this area. Some old Gujjars say that their ancestors had entered the territory of Kashmir at the time the sultan “Ordered the tenth month should be repeated after every two years and nine months, thus raising the number of months in the year to thirteen”. This event occurred during the reign of sultan Shamsuddin of the Shahmir family (A.D 1339-42). Others reported that their ancestors had entered Kashmir when Vijay Singh was the ruler of the area beyond Pir Panjal. King Vijay Singh, to whom this story apparently refers, was the ruler between A.D. 1127 and 1157. Clearly, therefore, the accounts given by the Gujjars themselves do not help us to date precisely their entry into Kashmir.

Efforts to Raise Socio-Economic Condition

So far as Gujjar area of district kulgam are concerned it is 80 percent backward and among them 90% are Gujjars according to backward commission report, being in Gujjar outlook the facilities to trade and business are very less. There are no small scale or cottage industries present in villages. Except a few retail shops to uplift their socio-economic conditions so they have no market for their labour work within the district Kulgam particularly during winters, so they have no market for work are labour particularly during winters, 50 percent of male members left their homes for almost whole winter due to heavy snow and rainfall because their labour work is not possible. They move towards other states of country like Punjab, Delthi, UP, MP, Bengal etc for their labour work. But outside the state their nature of work remained different as they work like slaves, as they under Jamadar. (Jamadar is a representative of labours or owner of the products they sold). He exploit or suppress them through different ways eg he is not giving them proper wages or interests as per their work. So when they return home their economic conditions remained same another effort of them for the upleftment of the socio-economic conditions is worst than later e,g Beggry, one of the worst conditions of any individual in society is when he begs before any other individual or human being. But this process is common among the Gujjar people of kulgam particularly of those who belongs to Nadwow region, most of them are illiterate population of the district kulgam is of Gujjar community. Who are Gujjars and are living at upper reaches of Distric Kulgam. Due to unemployment and illiteracy most of the Gujjar prefer to beg particularly during winter season they made it a profession however their health condition is too good. Young boys and male members prefer begging because they feel begging a better option than labour work and left their homes for beggry in the same ways they go for labour. Since from decades they chose urban areas or plains of some districts like Anantnag, Pulwama, Shopain, kulgam as well etc this is alarming situation for the particular area which as yet not be studied.

Conclusion

All societies or communities are gradually changing from agricultural to industrial one and from Gujjar to urban so for as Gujjar community of Rural Kulgam is concerned their cultural values, status, position socio-Economic status way of life remained constant or same because of poverty, alienation, migration, faulty administrative policies, developments, lack of infrastructure, scarcity of irrigation facility or water, illiteracy unemployment, seasonal migration, beggry, etc these all factors lead to shortage of basic requirements, hence most of the population live below poverty line, it has also affected their educational medical facilities, sanitation, employment etc.

Their problems are generally neglected and avoided, the access to basic amenities including employment, nutrition, health, education has recede in Gujjar areas of district kulgam with more and more people falling in to the darkness of poverty. The study hold poverty has become responsible disease and conflict, it is

situation where a section of society has been deprived for their basic necessities of life for their false efforts and problems.

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