Cultural Study of Gujjar Tribe Community: A Mind-mapping Through Practices and Beliefs

Kritika Sharma¹, Dr. Harry², Dr. Munmun Mondal³

¹Research Scholar, Department of Sociology in Lovely Professional University, Punjab 144411

²Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology in Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab, India

³Assistant Professor, Department of History in Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab, India

ABSTRACT

The world's tribal communities are found in India and there are 705 distinct ethnic tribal groupings inside Pakistan, and they are spread across more than thirty states and union territories. The concept of tribal communities in India is covered under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution. Since the beginning of time, tribal societies have been a mostly segregated and isolated segment of society; their way of life, culture, and traditions are completely distinct from those of other societal social groups. One of them, the Gujjar community, currently calls Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan home. After the Ladakhi and Kashmiri communities, it is the third-largest community in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The present study is examining the social cultural practices and beliefs of the Gujjar tribe in Jammu and Kashmir. The data collected with the help of primary as well secondary source through primary observation and interview, besides, secondary sources use the websites, etc. Initially, results shown the societal cultural and literacy rate among Gujjar community is low as comparison to other schedule tribe community in this state. But, the commissioner for schedule caste and schedule tribe asserts that unless exploitation among the tribes is combated and eliminated through education and with education welfare and NGO’s can uplift their social pattern.

Keywords: Culture, Gujjar, Gender Status, Region, Tribes.

INTRODUCTION

Tribal people in India are known as Adivasis or Janajatis. They comprise 8.6% of India’s population according to the 2011 census. They have a large population in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odessa, and West Bengal, North-Eastern states and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India. They are known as adivasi for being the original inhabitants of India. They have been categorized as scheduled tribes by the Indian constitution. India has the largest concentration of tribal population anywhere in the world except perhaps in Africa. The scheduled tribes in India are broadly composed of 250 tribal groups speaking about 105 languages and 225 subsidiary dialects. The scheduled tribes in India have been specified, as per provisions contained in Article 342 of the constitution of India. And
particularly in the state of Jammu and Kashmir a lot of tribes are their but Gujjar tribe is one of the major tribe in the state. The states of Jammu and Kashmir situated in the foot hills of Himalayan region and share the boundary with Ladakh, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. The state is having rich cultural values and vast number of tribal population. The Gujjar tribe is the 3rd largest tribe of Jammu and Kashmir. In the state of Jammu and Kashmir, the concentration of Gujjar tribe is seen in the different district of the state like Jammu, Poonch, Rajouri, Doda, Anantnang etc and in some hills like Patnitop, Nathatop etc. Gujjar tribe is an ethnic nomadic, agricultural and pastoral community, residing mainly in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan and it divided internally into various clan groups. The historical role of gujjars has been quite diverse in society in one end they have been founders of several kingdoms and dynasties and at the other end some are still nomads with no land of their own.

**Relocation Structure of Gujjar Tribe**

Gurjar or Gujjar are pastoral rural ethnic gatherings with populaces in India, Pakistan, and a modest number in north eastern Afghanistan. Elective spellings incorporate Gurjara, Gurjar, Gojar and Gujjar. Gurjars are phonetically and religiously various. In spite of the fact that they can talk the dialect of the district and nation where they live, Gurjarshave their very own dialect, known as Gujari. They differently pursue Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism. The Hindu Gurjars are for the most part found in Indian conditions of Rajasthan, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Plains and Maharashtra, while the Muslim Gujjars are for the most part found in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Indian Himalayan districts, for example, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Garhwal and Kumaon divisions of Uttarakhand.

The general consensus is that Gujjars from Gujarat (through Rajasthan) and the Hazara district of the North Western Frontier Province to Jammu and Kashmir. The Gujjars are a pastoral semi-nomadic people who once gathered animals including sheep, goats, and buffalo. They travel from the lowland plains in the winter to the Himachal Pradesh's upper peaks in the summer. They exclusively keep sheep, goats, and buffalo for the purpose of selling the milk they produce. Nonetheless, many Gujjar have currently adopted various alternative professions like porters or pony men for the tourists and pilgrims who go hiking in the Himachal Mountains and holy locations in order to keep up with the needs of the changing surroundings. They speak Gojri language.

Gujjars are culturally very much depictable by dancing, religious rites and customs etc. the tribes have got inclination towards religion. Some of they have converted themselves to Hinduism and also in Islam. They are the tribes who strictly follow old traditions and customs. They still follow custom of early marriage, where girls are married an age of 14-15 years and boys at 17-18. Siddiqui (2014) refers to as Gujjars in his investigation indicated that Gujjars, the Nomadic Muslim Tribe, are primarily goatherds and shepherds. The Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir live in the state's high altitude meadows on the move and are socially and economically marginalized. The Gujjars, who make up about 20% of Kashmir's population, have long suffered from various forms of exclusion because of the nomadic, uncertain lifestyle that is so ingrained in their culture. They lack access to very fundamental and necessary amenities including electricity, running water, pharmacies, and ration cards. Due to their innate tendency for the career that their ancestors had chosen for them, their children do not have and live their life in poverty.
Gender Status of Gujjar Tribe

The Gujjar tribe woman of the Himalayas was breathtaking and primarily pastoral. They go around the entire year looking for nice pastures for their cattle to graze. They built their homes, or deras, out of the grass, leaves, and wood that was close. These houses were only temporary, thus after changing grazing sites, they were destroyed or abandoned. The Gujjar women of Jammu and Kashmir's tribal Gujjar community lived in utter poverty as a result of their nomadic lifestyle, illiteracy, early marriages, superstition, and poverty.

Gujjar women in Jammu and Kashmir have more issues and endure more hardship than any other lady who belongs to one of the 12 state tribe groups. It is a well-known fact that the Gujjar women in Jammu and Kashmir worked harder than the women from other tribes. Sadly, ignorance and superstition still cast a pall over her existence.

The Gujjar women were being used unfairly. All household chores, including as cooking, selling milk, and helping their husbands with farming and cattle feeding, were expected of them. She works long hours from early in the morning till late at night, which causes her to become emotionally and physically fatigued. In addition, the nomad Gujjar women did not hold the same respect or status in the tribal society despite their severe effort and had been the target of superstitions. Women and girls were obliged to transport children and household items over great distances while tending to their herds all day long because they were mostly nomads. They had to cook meals, do some laundry, and clean up during their brief stopover.

This study “Morphological and regional variations in body dimensions of the Gujjars of different localities in North-Western India” explain that the founder effect, genetic drift, selective breeding, and geographic isolation of the populations under study may be responsible for these findings rather than secular trends. The results have also been contrasted and debated with other local population results from northwestern India R. S. Balgi (2003).

“Social Exclusion of Gujjar Tribes in Anantnag District of Jammu and Kashmir” this article is shown as a result of discrimination based on their ethnicity, color, religion, caste, gender, handicap, etc., some groups are consistently disadvantaged. This process is known as social exclusion. Today, social isolation has taken center stage in India. They lack access to necessities including food, housing, healthcare, education, etc. Javaid Ahmad Rather & N. R. Surash Babu (2017). The majority of tribal hamlets in remote locations lack road access and have not yet been electrified.
Ahmed & Godyial (2020) presenting the “Seasonal Migration of Gujjar and Bakarwal Tribes of District Rajouri, Jammu & Kashmir and its Impact on their Primary level Students” this study explaining the Gujar Tribes in particular migrate from their permanent location to a transitory location in the summer in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) dominating areas of the Jammu district of India. Because it has a negative influence on their regular classes or studies, seasonal migration is a significant problem and challenge for students in these places.

“Understanding the Gujjar-Pahri Fault line in J&K: A Pahri Perspective” this paper is presenting there are numerous castes, creeds, sects, and faiths among the Paharis. They are Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs who are only connected to one another by the language they were born into, Pahari, while having very different social, economic, and historical histories. According to Fredric Dew, the author of "The Northern Barrier of India," Paharis are a powerful and well-known race that is strong, resilient, rugged, brave, and active KD Maini (2011).

**Purpose of the study and Techniques**

This Contemporary study is shown the socio-cultural Practices and Beliefs of Gujjar tribes in Jammu and Kashmir. The random sampling technique has been used for data collection. Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study. Primary data collect with the help of open-ended questions and field observation method and the secondary data have been collected from the various books, research papers, newspaper articles; official websites etc.

**Consequences of Cultural Practices and Beliefs**

**Cultural Heritage:** In the Jammu and Kashmir region, the Gujjars are the ruling group of people. They each have a typical social personality, a particular dialect that they use in a variety of vernaculars, a variety of occupations, music that they enjoy, a unique style of living, and clothing that is unique to them. They are well-liked for growing cattle, sheep, and goats. In any case, there is a lack of awareness among the general public regarding the need to preserve the history, archaeological discoveries, and cultural traditions of the Gujjars tribe. In order to maintain their heritage, we must build an open exhibition space for protection of their legacy.

**Settlement Structure:** From the archaeological and chronicled confirmations it is, in any case, apparent that however the Indo-Afghan was the transcendent race in the antiquated populace of Kashmir, there was positive admixture of different races every now and then. The Gujjars who had been a migrant clan are broadly getting to be inactive having a settle life in this district. However, creature rising is as yet polished; the arable agribusiness has likewise accomplished a noticeable quality in the control of the Gujjars. The comparable kind of clan and practices is found among the general population of Afghanistan, Baltistan, Gilgit and Punjab territory. These individuals talk the Dardic lingo which was like the Pisachas of Sanskrit writing of old period.

**Pastoral and Agricultural Practices:** A significant section of the Gujjar people are herders who prefer a peaceful existence, but a portion of them have taken up farming. These are handsome tall race males that appear pretty stupid and have large, noticeable teeth. The peaceful life was prominently reflected in Indian tradition and history. According to the Bhagavat Purana, the Yadava cowherd lords moved from Mathura to the Saurastra region in search of new pastures. Similar kinds of theories can also be used to investigate Gujjars in Jammu and Kashmir.
Sheep and Goat Pastoralism: Goats and sheep continue to work in the early farming. One can benefit from the ethno-natural practices and oral traditions of the area's current sheep and goat pastoralists. Their oral histories might summarize the social memory of their antecedents. The networks of pastoralists who raise sheep and goats ensure that they come from a horticulture family lineage. These individuals identify with the previous network that the Shiva Purana alluded to. According to the Shiva Purana, Parvati asked Shiva if he could get her some sheep. He created a smash and amazement to enchant her. These two eventually multiplied into a big bunch and became annoying. Parvati then asked Shiva to take the sheep away, effective immediately.

Population History and Biological Relatedness: Frame and structure of bones and teeth convey important information about a population's historical background and its relationships to other populations, especially since this morphology is, in any case, primarily determined by hereditary factors. Relationships between human groups have long been a key source of interest in human studies. The assessment of relatedness or uniqueness across populations or subgroups within populations based on the examination of polygenic skeletal and dental traits is known as organic distance or bio-separate.

Ancient DNA: Following Ancestry: The research of DNA from archaeological remains offers alternative and conceivably ground-breaking approaches for catering to a considerable number of the concerns presently under the domain of bio-separate examination of skeletal and dental morphology alone. These and other difficulties in human studies relating to regional and global relationships between and inside populations may be addressed by this new frontier in bio-separate analysis. New perspectives on the origins of the population in diverse inborn zones are brought about by the analysis of DNA in contemporary and extinct populations.

CONCLUSION

Verifiably and archeologically, this locale has a high potential that can investigate and remake the past, which thusly would pick up data that will help us in understanding the present situation. From the above talk one can state that, there is a colossal degree for the investigation of Gujjars people group from the Ethno-archaeological point of view. One of the central points which have added to the reinforcing of the territorial character of Jammu and Kashmir is the Gujjars culture and their personality. Various researchers have considered in detail of the Gujjars clan from the present point of view, for example, their specialty, culture, history and so on. In the light of the above discoveries, it is very evident that, for recreation of territorial personality of Jammu and Kashmir one needs to consider the crucial pretended by the Gujjars in the public arena and history. Subsequently, this methodology leaves plentiful extension for the students of history, archaeologists and anthropologist to cooperate and draw from one another discoveries and display their grant in a way which would enhance their particular teaches as well as would fortify the Gujjars personality in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

REFERENCES


Balgir, R. S. ((September 2003)). Morphological and regional variations in body dimensions of the Gujjars of different localities in North-Western India. jstore, pp. 275-285 (11 pages).


Website