

TRIBES OF JAMMU & KASHMIR AND HIMACHAL PRADESH

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Abstract: The Kashmir valley is famous for its beautiful mountainous landscape and is a land of immense natural beauty. It is also called 'Paradise on earth'. The most magnificent of the Kashmir trees is the Chinar found throughout the valley. Mountain ranges in the Valley have dense deodar, pine and fir. Walnut, willow, almond and cedar also add to the rich flora of Kashmir. The literal meaning of Himachal Pradesh is Region of snowy mountains. Hima means snow in Sanskrit. The economy of the state is highly dependent on three sources: hydroelectric power, tourism and agriculture. Himachal is also said to be the fruit bowl of the country with orchards scattered all over the place. In the two states of India, different tribes exist that have been studied little. This is an earnest attempt to describe the different tribes and their culture and practices.

Keywords : Bakarwal, Balti, Dogra, Changpa, Brokpa and Gaddi.

1. TRIBES OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Jammu and Kashmir is inhabited by a few tribal communities. The tribal people and their customs, cultures and also means of communication makes the tribes of Jammu and Kashmir stand out. Most of the tribes of Jammu and Kashmir are believed to have descended from the Aryans. The tribes of Jammu and Kashmir converse with each other in the Dogri language which is a blending of other languages like Sanskrit, Punjabi and Persian dating back to the 'Indo-Aryan group of Sanskrit'. Tribal life of Jammu and Kashmir plays host to the artistic traditions of the various tribes who have settled here. Just like any other tribal group, the tribes of Jammu and Kashmir are rice eaters and wheat and pulses form their staple diet. The tribal populations of Jammu and Kashmir are primarily an agrarian society.

1.1. Bakarwal Tribe

Bakarwal tribal community of Jammu and Kashmir are special nomadic tribes, mainly found in the Pir Panjal range located between the two states of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. Bakarwal tribes are also found in the states of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Punjab. This tribe is also known as Dhangar in several parts of India. In Jammu and Kashmir alone, Bakarwal tribes are predominant in the areas of Jammu, which comprises of various districts like Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur, Poonch, Rajouri and the Kashmir Valley which consist of several districts like Srinagar, Baramulla, Kupwara, Pulwama, Budgam and Anantnag. They are also found in some parts of Ladakh consisting of Ladakh and Kargil districts. By tradition they are mainly goatherds and shepherds. Bakarwal is deduced from Punjabi, Urdu, Dogri, Kashmiri, and Hindi terms.

The word Bakarwal is derived from two terms with different meanings- 'Bakri' or 'Bakar' means 'goat', and 'Wal' connoting 'one who takes care of'. The lifestyle of Bakarwal tribes also throws some light on their culture and societal set up. They lead a very secluded and lonely life. Once in every year they take herds of sheep to the steep high mountain regions for grazing. During the summer seasons, when the nature is in its bounty, they easily move from one meadow to the other. In general these Bakarwal tribes move in pairs. Once in a while, however, they may go alone or in larger groups largely depending upon the number of sheep or goats they take for grazing. The physical characteristics of the Bakarwal males are that they keep long beards. Some of their characteristics feature along with their customs, language, manners and dressing sense match with the Gujjar tribes of Himachal Pradesh.

1.2. The Balti Tribe

Balti is a Scheduled Tribe of Jammu and Kashmir. Traditionally, the Balti tribe from Jammu and Kashmir are understood to have been descendants of Celtic communities settled in Scandinavia. It is believed that after the Baltic floods people of this region started to migrate and many of them settled in Jammu and Kashmir. The Baltis of Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir are, on the other hand, related to many other communities in Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine. Balti Tribes are settled in the Suru Valley of the Ladakh range and is a crossbreed between the Dards from Dardistan and Mongoloids from Tibet.

They belong to the Shia sect of Islam. Animal husbandry is their main source of livelihood. In addition to this, they also do occupations such as horticulture, business and unskilled and semi-skilled labor. These tribes rear goats and sheep for wool, milk, skin and meat. The daily recitation of the holy Quran is considered very auspicious by these tribes. Muta is a temporary marriage system followed by the Baltis. They speak the Balti Language.

Culture

The influences of Tibetan, Islamic and Indian cultures and religion are apparent in the Balti culture. However, Islam plays an important role in Balti culture. Tibetan influence can be seen in its architecture, where houses with flat roof painted white and sloping inwards are built, and the most notable artifacts of the Balti/Ladakhi architecture include Kharpoche in Skardo, Khapulo Khar in Khapulo, Chakchan and Shigar Khanqah and Baltit fort of Hunza. Mosques in Baltistan are mainly built in the Tibetan style, though several mosques constructed have wood-finish and decorations of Iranian origin which can also be seen in Ladakh and Kargil.

The Balti tribal are very friendly and hospitable people. Their architecture, costumes, cuisines, festivals, dances; language, script and epics make them unique. The local culture is a blend of both Ladakhi and Islamic rituals. They are devout Muslims, but have never distanced themselves from the cultural and linguistic ties to what ninety percent of the Baltis regard as Ladakhi cultural and linguistic heritage.

Religion

History of Islam in Baltistan starts with arrival of Ameer Kabeer Syed Ali Hamadani (A legendary Sufi Saint of the Muslim History) from Iran during 15th Century A.D. The entire region was converted to Noorbakshi order of Islamic Sufism. During the start of 19th century the predominant population converted to other Islamic schools of thought such as Shias and Sunnis. Today, the Baltis are: Shia' denominated (54%), Sufi Noorbakshi (43%) and Sunni sect (3%). Today, Noorbakshis are found in Baltistan and Ladakh regions of Jammu and Kashmir. Local Muslims, who converted from Bonpo and Tibetan Buddhism still retain many traits of pre-Islamic Bon and Lamaist rituals, which makes Islam of Baltistan and Ladakh unique from other Muslim societies. Swastika (Yung drung) sign is considered auspicious and is carved on wooden planks that can be seen in historical mosques and Khankas. Showing respect to Lha and Lhu (Bon Gods) is customary during many village rituals.

The Balti, who converted to Islam from Tibetan Buddhism in the 16th century, regard congregation in the Mosques and Khankah as an important religious ritual. The Khankahs are a kind of typical training school of Noorbakshi Sufis which was introduced by the early Sufi saints who arrived in the region. The Sufi students gain spiritual purity (tazkiah) through these trainings (meditations and contemplations) under well-practiced spiritual guides, who have already attained certain degree of spirituality. On every Friday, the men folk generally attend the prayers sometime a little after noon. All Muslims will fast in the day during the month of the Ramadan, and a celebration will be held at the end of the fast. Small pockets of Bön and Tibetan Buddhist believers amounting to 3000 people are found in Kharmang valley of Baltistan and in West Kargil.

1.3. The Dogra Tribe of Jammu and Kashmir

The people of Jammu and Kashmir possess a distinguishing lifestyle, depending upon the region they belong to. In the Jammu region majority of inhabitants belong to the Dogra community possessing umpteen religious sects and castes. Historians believe that the Dogra tribe of Jammu and Kashmir is the descendants of the Aryans, who had settled on the southern hilly tracts of Kashmir, stretching up to the Punjab Plains. The Hindu Dogra Rajputs and the Muslim Dogra Rajputs are martial races.

Religion, Art, literature and music

Dogri folk literature comprises of prose and verses. Dogri folk songs range from love to heroism and sacrifice. Ceremonial lyrics give analysis of human reaction to ceremonies. 'Biayian' are sung to celebrate the birth of male child, indicating gender bias. Family lyrics pertain to household members such as mother, father, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law and their relationships.

Marriage among Dogras

Some dogra still follow type of marriage which is called 'Dohry' (Double) - take a daughter and give them your daughter. 'Gotra' and 'Kula' exogamy is maintained. 'Chadar pana', or marrying the brother of husband by widow is also found in Jammu. Child marriage was common too (Girls 10–14 years, and Boys 15–18 years) but Maharaja Hari Singh banned this in 1940 and raised the age of marriage for girls to 16 years and boys to 18 years. In the hilly areas of Udhampur, Kathua and Doda people also take concubines termed as 'Duals'.

1.4. Dogra Cuisine

Wheat, maize and bajra are staple food besides rice and cereals. Mitha Madra is a favourite dish and is cooked from milk, dry fruits and semolina. Preparations of Rajmash (a special variety of red kidney beans), auria a dish of curd fermented by rye; ambal made from pumpkin, jaggery and tamarind are favourites, especially during ceremonial cooking. The expert cooks are called Siyans, usually Brahmins. Non vegetarian food was limited to Rajputs and Vaish (Mahajans). 'Khatta Meat' - mutton cooked with sour pomegranate seeds or lime juice and flavoured with fumes of a burning charcoal soaked in mustard oil. 'Keur' is one of the famous food of Dogras. It is prepared by flour and butter and served with sugar and curd. Mostly, it is served to bridegroom at the time of marriage by the in-laws. 'Kalaari' is also one of the favourite foods of Dogras in the rainy season.

It is prepared by flour mix, cottage cheese and milk cream with water with help of a small cup shaped pot. 'Kalari' is served with milk. 'Babbru/ Pathoru' are prepared by flour and fried in mustard oil. Babbru is served with maani/ potato/kheer/curd. Kheer is a dish prepared from milk by adding some rice and dry fruit in it. It is one of the famous foods of Dogras and served in almost all special occasions and festivals. Another popular exotic dish is 'Guchiyyan' (dried mushroom - black morel), usually added as an ingredient in pulao as it grows naturally in forests and cannot be cultivated and makes an excellent dish with mountain potatoes. Kesar is extensively used to flavour sweet dishes and for its anti-oxidant benefits.

Clothing

In Jammu, the Dogras have very simple dress that incorporates the long kurtas and pajamas with tight fittings at the ankles. Women wear tight bodice or jumpers over pajamas that resemble that of men folk. Turban and Kamarband are the added features of elderly males of the tribesmen of Jammu and Kashmir. In Srinagar, the Khan-dress or Pathani suit is the common dress among the males and Pheran (a long tunic) and salwar with the traditional Kasaba, a headgear is the most admired dress amongst women. The pheran of females have zari embroidery on the hem line, around pockets and mostly on the collar area. The Pashmina shawl and skull cap made of fur (karakuli) are the symbols of royalty among men. In Ladakh, the tribesmen don the long woollen gowns with the border made up of sheep skin and tied at the waist by blur coloured girdles. During harsh winters, multi coloured caps with ear laps made of velvet are worn, whereas women wear the turquoise studded head gear referred to as Parek with the exquisite multicoloured clothes. The bangles, hair pins, brooches and other ornaments are made up of semi precious stones.

1.5. Changpa Tribe

Changpa tribal community, are settled in different parts of Jammu and Kashmir. The Changpa tribes prefer to adapt to nomadic life. In the Jammu and Kashmir state, Changpa tribal community is found in several places like Changthang plateau in Ladakh ranges. Then Changpa tribe is yet another tribal community from Jammu and Kashmir, who have been enlisted legally as one of the Scheduled Tribes of India. They are however believed to have taken up to several occupations in the metropolitan India, moving a bit far away from their ancient cultural ethnicity. The main occupation of the Changpa tribal community is animal husbandry. Just like many other tribal communities, this Changpa tribal community engage themselves in cultivation. The Changpa tribes mostly cultivate barley and many of them these days

sustain their livelihood by small trading activities. Some of these Changpa tribes also gather salt from the northern shores of the Tsokar Lake in Rupshu region and sell it in the Ladakh area.

They also rear cattle and flocks of goats for Pashmina on the hill slopes. The Changpa camp at altitudes ranging from 3600 to 4500 metres, in extreme environment temperatures winter can drop as low as minus 50 degree C. The total population of Ladakhi Changpa is very less and an approximation cannot be made as they live in the high altitudes and is difficult to contact them. However, while “Changpa” is the generic term, they are not a single homogeneous community. Groups are divided by their place of origin, each having its own chief and its specified grazing areas. Ladakh is home to 14 such groups. One of these groups is Rupshu, with roughly 120 families. While local variations exist, essentially all the groups share the same way of life and the account given here applies in general to Changpa living throughout Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir. The cultural and traditional exuberances of the Changpa tribe is also quite high that is evident in several aspects, like housing, dance, music, festivals, etc.

This tribal community from Jammu & Kashmir prefers to reside in beautiful tents that are nicely prepared from the hair of yaks and goats. Like many of the tribal communities, this Changpa tribal community too is widely oriented towards religion and spiritual beliefs and customs. However, these Changpa tribes still retain their heritage of observing local religious rites and customs. Also in the Changpa tribal society, there is no dearth of local deities and goddesses. There are many members of this Changpa tribal community who have been converted to other religion like Buddhism. There are few among them who have converted to Muslims and celebrate the festival of Ramzan and Eid with reverence. The followers of Tibetan Buddhism, mostly belong to the Drukpa (Red Hat) sect. It has become a tradition for each of the family to send one son to a monastery to become a monk. They accept unquestioningly the Buddhist cosmic scheme of a world hierarchically structured in three tiers.

The uppermost level is inhabited by the gods; the lowest by spirits of the aquatic and subterranean world. People and animals live between the Gods and the spirits, in a world which is also inhabited by demons. The three worlds of the Changpa are categorized in terms of colours; white for heaven, red for earth, and blue for the aquatic and subterranean world. For the Changpas their livestock are sacred animals presented to them by the Gods and the families select animals to represent the three hierarchy. The selected animals are often males, and are selected on the basis of their strength and colour. Strong animals with well shaped horns are preferred in the selection process. The Changpas use the animals to invoke the blessing of the Gods. Wealth for the Changpa means sheep, goats, and yaks, both male and female. Till recently almost all the Changpa kept a large herd of sheep and goats, the better-off owning more than 1000 animals. The number of goats was less than the number of sheep.

This was because they could exchange wool with grain brought up by traders from villages in Ladakh's lower valleys, Zaskar or Himachal Pradesh. The selected animal reminds the people of the presence of the Gods, the demons, and the spirits. They show their respect to the Gods and the spirits by burning incense sticks and praying to the selected animals which are considered to be sacred. At the time of the annual prayer festival they are brought before the Rinpoche (abbot) of the monastery who blesses them, offers each of them a ceremonial white scarf, and ties a religious thread around their neck. Special reverence is shown to these animals at the time of shearing wool and combing pashmina. These sheep and goats are never killed or sold to butchers, and loads are seldom put on their backs. When they eventually die, young ones are selected to take their place. The transition is effected by tying a tuft of wool or hair from the deceased animal onto the back of the newly consecrated one. The SinoIndia war has displaced many of the Changpa tribes and they lost the traditional pastures as a large part of their land was usurped by the Chinese from India. This and other socio-political developments have had an adverse impact on the livelihood of the Changpa tribes.

1.6. The Brokpa Tribe

Brokpa tribal community of Jammu and Kashmir is mainly concentrated in several places like Dras (also spelt as Drass) Valley in the Ladakh ranges. Moreover, this tribal community has also been settled in different parts of all over India. Brokpa tribal community is considered as one of the Scheduled Tribes of the Indian Territory. The origin of the Brokpa tribal community has got a rich history behind it. According to the anthropologists, these tribes are supposed to be the offspring of the Dards of Chilas in the Gilgit region. Cultural exuberance of this tribal community is also depicted in numerous elements like exquisite dresses, ornaments, festivals and fairs. What is also interesting is to note that Brokpa tribal community follows the culture and ethnicity of the Aryans. The Brokpa males wear a large woolen dress held at the waist by a waistband. Woolen pants and a headgear constituting of a turban are some of the important dresses of the Brokpa males. Brokpa females deck up themselves in loose gowns.

The language of the Brokpa tribal community is popularly known as Shinna. There are some people of this Brokpa tribal community who also have fluency in the Balti language for communication. Brokpa of Dah-Hanu, Dokskat, Kyango are the alternative names, which are given to the Brokpa language, which also belongs to the famous Indo European language family. Just like many other tribal communities, this Brokpa tribal community carries on several occupations like husbandry, agriculture and allied occupations in order to meet their day-to-day requirements. The Brokpa tribal community has developed orientation towards religion and also spiritual beliefs. Quite a number of tribal communities of the Brokpa are the followers of Buddhism and Islam. Apart from these, a multitude of local traditions and customs have also been developed.

2. TRIBES OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

Tribes of Himachal Pradesh are scattered in different parts of the state. The tribal communities residing in different parts of Himachal Pradesh are sociable and by their own culture and tradition, they have marked their position in the Indian subcontinent. Dancing, musical melodies, festivals, fairs, etc., bore evidence to it. They are by nature nomadic people and their customs and social structure make them identifiable from each other. The tribes of Himachal Pradesh belong to the famous Indo-Aryan family group. As far as the physical appearances are concerned, these tribes of Himachal Pradesh also have got identifiable features that of an Indo-Aryan or Mongoloid.

The major tribes of this region include Kinnaura tribe, Lahaule tribe, Gaddi tribe, Gujjar tribe. As far as the occupations are concerned, these tribes of Himachal Pradesh have taken up the occupations including rearing of cattle and also raising of wool. There are quite a handful of tribes in Himachal Pradesh who have adapted to occupations like cultivation and also horticulture. Dress that tribes of Himachal Pradesh wear are quite exquisite to look at. The male dress include long coat and woolen pyjama, and also the women tribes of Himachal Pradesh have a woolen saree, popularly known as Dhoru as their attires. Shoes are made up of wool and goat hair. Although tribes of Himachal Pradesh celebrate all the important festivals, they also have added fervor to the festive season by incorporating their own traditional customs and beliefs.

2.1. The Gaddi

The concentration of these Gaddis tribes is mainly found on both sides of the Dhauladhar Range of the state of Himachal Pradesh. Quite a number of Gaddi tribes also dwell mainly in the Brahmaur region of Chamba District, in the higher regions of the Ravi River and also the valleys of the Budhil River. Other regions include Kangra district, chiefly in the villages of the Tota Rani, Khaniyara, close to Dharamsala. There are people of several castes in the whole of the Gaddi tribal society namely Thakur, Khatri, Brahmin, Dhangar, Rajput, and Rana. The people of this tribal community are oriented towards religion as well as spiritualism. Both the religions of Hinduism and Islam are practiced by a large section of the Gaddi tribal community. The distinctness lies not only among the people of Gaddi community but also in their dressing type. The Gaddi men wear chola, turban or safa and dora and women wear launchiri. Gold ornaments especially gold earrings are used by both the men and women of this community. The Indian anthropologists have duly highlighted another aspect; by nature, these Gaddi tribes are largely esteemed for their honesty, friendly disposition and peaceful life-style. Crime is almost obscure in almost all the villages of the Gaddi tribal community.

In order to meet the requirements of day to day living, Gaddi tribes have taken up diverse occupational activities. Since Gaddi tribes have built their settlements in the villages, they are not considered to be nomads. However, seasonal movement of sheep and goats to higher or lower pasture is a conventional practice. In general, Gaddi tribes go with their livestock to several pastures of the upper regions of the state at the time of summer season. As far as the languages are concerned, the majority of the Gaddi tribe speaks Gaddi language. For writing, however, this Gaddi tribal community uses Takri language. However, the language had gone into oblivion only few years back. Devangiri script is in vogue. Also under the impact of the modern day culture, the Gaddi tribal people have also mastered Hindi language.

2.2. Kinnaura Tribe

Kinnaura tribal community has been considered to be one of the Scheduled Tribes of the state of Himachal Pradesh as per the provision of the Constitution of India. This tribe is also known by the name of Kinor. In the western Himalayas, this tribal community is found in Baspa or Sangla valley that is located in high altitude of the Kinnaur district. Other regions where these Kinnaura tribes are located include Batseri or Bosering, Rakchham and Chhitkul. As per some scholars, the people of Kinnaura tribal community are the descendants of Kinners of Mahabharata. Another group holds

that Kirats are the ancestors of this tribal group. The history says that the Kirats, defeated by the Khasaas and Aryans fled and came to inhabit the lands of Trans Himalayan areas.

This is the reason behind the resemblance of physical features of the people of Kinnaura tribal community with the Aryans and Mongoloid races. The family structure of the Kinnaura tribes is joint family and the notable custom of this tribal group is their marriage. According to their custom, the brothers in a family share only one wife. Their families are a polyandrous family and practice fraternal polyandry. Though the main occupation of the Kinnaura tribes are raising wool and rearing sheep, some are also engaged in horticulture and agriculture. The culture of this tribal group maintains and reflects their ethnicity. Dancing, singing, celebrating festivals and languages are all reflection of their cultural exuberance. During their festivals they consume a special kind of drink known as 'Angoori'. The language of this tribal group is known as Kinnauri.

Moreover, under the influence of the tribal communities of Indian subcontinent, this Kinnaura tribal community has developed fluency in Hindi language. The Kinnaura tribes have the tradition of maintaining herds of cattle in their houses. Women of this Kinnaura tribal community are quite hard-working. Weaving is practiced mainly by the female groups of this community. The Kinnaura tribal community produces exquisite baskets and other utensils, which have demand not only on the local markets but also in the entire nation. The women also work in fields.

2.3. Lahaule Tribes of Himachal Pradesh

Lahaule tribes of Himachal Pradesh have been bestowed upon the status and prestige of being one of the Scheduled Tribes of the state. Mostly this Lahaule tribal community is found in several regions like Lahaul Valley, Pattan, Chamba-Lahaul, and lower Mayar valleys. The term 'Lahule' connotes the inhabitants of Lahaul. These tribal people are said to be originated from the aboriginal Munda tribe and Tibetans. The language of the Lahaule tribal community is Pattani. There are alternative names of this language, which are popular among the Lahaule tribal community. Manchat, Manchad, Patni, Chamba, Chamba Lahuli, Lahuli, Swangla, Changsapa Boli are some of the alternative names of their language. Apart from these, there are certain dialects of this language, which are also prevalent in Lahaule tribal groups. Though the people of the Lahaule tribal community are basically agrarian, some of them are also engaged in trade. They export wheat, barley, 'Kuth' a herb, to Kolkatta. Their society is ramified in upper and lower classes namely Brahmins, Thakurs, Lohars and Dagis. Marriage in the same clan is allowed among the Lahaule tribal community. Just like many other tribal communities of the whole of the Indian subcontinent, this Lahaule tribal community too is oriented to religious customs and beliefs. Most of the people of this community are the followers of Buddhism and they often visit their main temple of worship, Trilokinath. The people prefer to wear colourful attires and ornaments, which are a major part of their costumes. The culture and the tradition of Lahaule tribal community are quite exquisite is revealed from the fact that it has a plethora of dance forms, music, fairs and festivals.

2.4. Gujjar Tribe

Gujjar tribes generally reside in Himachal Pradesh and are the descendants of the Khajar tribes. Gujjars are also known as Goojar, Gujar or Gurjara. The anthropological evidences stress that the Gujjar tribes are reckoned as Scheduled Tribes. The major concentration of Gujjar tribe lies in the north western provinces of the Himachal Pradesh. The origin of these Gujjar tribes is quite interesting. Though the proper origin of the Gujjar tribes is not known but it is said that during the time of the invasion by Hunas the Gurjara clan moved to northern India and the Himachal Pradesh. However, there are various opinions that had been cited by eminent anthropologists. The famous scholar V. A. Smith, claimed that the Gujjar tribes were foreign migrants, perhaps belongs to the group: a branch of Hephthalites, better known as 'White Huns'. Also D. B. Bhandarkar (1875-1950) assumed that Gujar tribes migrated to India along with the Huna tribes. Another school of thought has assumed that the Khazar tribes are ancestors of these Gujjar tribes of Himachal Pradesh. Moreover, 'Gujjar', is a derivation of the 'Khazar'.

Interestingly, the Indo-Aryan languages are devoid of the use of the sounds 'kh' and 'z', which got converted respectively into 'g' and 'j'. To top it all, the 'Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency', the British official James M. Campbell also distinguished Gujjar tribes with Khazar tribes. The relation of these Gujjar tribal communities has also been established with other tribal communities, namely, Chechen tribes, etc. Cultural exuberance of these Gujjar tribal communities has nicely being depicted in several of its aspects like dancing, religious rites and customs, etc. This Gujjar tribal community has got inclination towards religion. Quite a handful of these Gujjar tribes have been converted to Hinduism and also Islam. Only few Gujjar tribal members are there who have adapted to other religions as well.

In order to carry on conversation, these Gujjar tribal communities use the beautiful language of Gujari, also called Gojri. This Gujari language belongs to the famous Rajasthani language group. In the ancient times, however, Rajasthani had been the main language spoken by all the Gujjar tribal community. In the present day, due to rapid interaction with the people of the modern community, many members of this Gujjar tribal community also have developed fluency in several other Indian languages. These are namely Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, Pashto Language, Pahari languages namely Kangri and Dogri, Dardic languages viz. Khowar and Kashmiri and Balti. Following the tradition of most of the tribal communities of the Northern hilly regions of Indian Territory, this Gujjar tribal community have adapted the occupation of semi nomadic tribal community. Majority of this Gujjar tribal community used to herd animals like sheep, goats and buffalo.

The Gujjar tribes migrate from the plains to the upper ranges of the Himachal Pradesh during the summer season. However to go hand in hand with the demands of the changing situations, many of the Gujjar tribes of the contemporary period have taken various other occupations. Gujjars are known for their exquisite tribal dressing style and their style of dressing in case of both men and women are of distinctive pattern. The colorful turban with the unique style of wrapping has been a style mark of Gujjar tribal community. Topi which is also called Afgani hat is worn by the aged Gujjar men.

However, Gujjar female beauty is greatly enhanced by the beautiful clothes called Dupatta. It looks like a shawl. Also these Gujjar tribal females are very fond of jewellery. These Gujjar females have fascination for the necklace with a triangle pendant, studded with a beautiful stone in the center of it. It has a religious signification. It symbolizes 'evil eye' and mainly utilized to avert bad luck. The societal structure too follows the trend of almost all the tribal communities of the Indian subcontinent. Patriarchal norms are prevalent. Gujjar males also are very much family oriented. It is the Gujjar tribal female who has the duty and responsibility of fulfilling all the activities of the households Festivals and fairs are also part and parcel of the life of this Gujjar tribal community. Apart from celebrating all the festivals of national significance, these Gujjar tribes too have incorporated their religious beliefs and customs.

3. CONCLUSION :

Though few tribes of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh have been stated, there exist some tribal's that are still left out, due to not much of awareness or the lack of documented data. An enormous section of tribal societal population depends on agriculture as their sole way for survival and their sense of traditional practices and festivals are as beautiful and colorful as ever. Typically Indian tribal societies possess their own set of languages, which are unwritten. At the same time tribal societies demonstrate an outstanding economy of design and have a compactness and self sufficiency surprisingly lacking in modern society.

The members of a tribe always speak a common language. These members generally marry within their own group, but now due to heightened contact with outsiders there are instances of tribal's tying the knot outside as well. The tribal's of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh are no different from the other tribal society. They also share the same resemblance to the people of different tribes found all over India.

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