

ETHNOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF TRIBES IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Bakarwal: The Bakarwal, one of the pastoral communities of Jammu & Kashmir state, are identified as goat and sheep herders. The name is derived from the word bakariwale, meaning goat herders or goat and sheep rearers. The SWAT region is considered and claimed to be the original homeland of the Bakarwal who started coming to Kashmir in search of green pastures. In the late nineteenth century, the community migrated to the Kashmir valley. They are predominantly concentrated in the districts of Rajouri, Poonch, Udhampur, Kathua, Jammu and Doda, though they are spread over almost all the districts of the state. They speak Kashmiri language and use Arabic script yet their dialect is identified as Gujri which is the main dialect of the Gujjars. The Bakarwals have a mostly vegetarian diet and their staple food consists of maize, rice, wheat and pulses such as moong (green gram), black gram, urad, brown gram, musur. There is no social division in the community but a slight differentiation on the basis of economic status, educational qualification and size of the sheep flock can be noticed among them. They perceive themselves of the middle rank of the regional social hierarchy but others place them on the lower rank. Endogamy at the community level is always maintained. Monogamy is the general practice though polygamy is also permissible in the community. The rules of residence are patrilocal. Women assist in the household work, milking of animals, collection of fuel, collection of fodder, bringing potable water, purchase of essential commodities and looking after the wounded cattle. The economy of the Bakarwal depends on their livestock. Though they possess agricultural land and are in different allied occupations, these are considered secondary occupations. They also earn money from the tourists by carrying their luggage to the valley of Sonemarg, Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Bhadarwah. The Bakarwals have their own Biradari Panchayat to settle the disputes within the community. The head of the panchayat is known as the Nambardar (headman) and is selected by voice vote. When they live in their original habitat, village statutory Panchayats also intervene in inter-ethnic or land disputes. These Panchayats work for the development and welfare of the village. Different Muslims festivals are observed by them in different months. Folk songs are sung by women on different social functions. They still favour their indigenous traditional medicare system because in certain areas where they camp the facilities of modern medicare are not available.

Balti: The Balti are a majority group among the Muslims (Shia) of Ladakh. Apparently they are the immigrants from Baltistan (Tibet Minor), a neighbouring territory having its capital at Skardo. They have their distribution all over Baltistan, Kargil and Ladakh. The people speak in Balti and write in Arabic script amongst themselves and speak in Urdu with outsiders. The Baltis are divided on the basis of achieved social identities. Endogamy as a rule of marriage is not observed effectively either at community level or at the village level. Marriages are permissible with cousins—both cross and parallel. The prohibited categories of kin for the purpose of marriage are: (i) mother and sister's children, (ii) siblings of common parents and (iii) progeny of a woman who has acted as a wet nurse. The general form of marriage is monogamy. The seal of marriage is put by nikah which is of types: nikah-e-inqatai (breakable marriage contract) and nikah-e-daimi (permanent marriage contract). The former is known as muta which is a recognized form of marriage among the Shia Muslims in general and among the Baltis in particular. The head of the family is invariably a male member who enjoys absolute powers on the allocation and distribution of the economic resources of the family. He represents the family in the interfamilial social interaction, commands respect from youngsters and showers affection on them. The Balti woman leads a life of activities not only within the confines of the house but even beyond. She walks 5 to 7 km a day for collection of juniper bushes that keep her home and

hearth warm during the long arctic winters. Women's participation in performance of rituals is at par with their male counterparts. The traditional economy of the Balti consisted of trade and agriculture. Since the Baltis have specialized in most of the artisan crafts such as masonry, carpentry, milling, shoe-making and tailoring they are not only self-sufficient but provide their services to the Brokpa for a prescribed fee.

Bodh: The Ladakhi Bodh, Ladakhspa or Botriksha are basically the inhabitants of Tibet and it is from this territory that they have derived their identity as Pot /Bot /Bhotta. Ladakh, in its past was inhabited by the Mons, a people of North India before the Aryan Dards started their immigration to Ladakh. The Mons were subjugated and were subsequently given a very low status in the Ladakhi society. The people are divided into a number of subgroups such as Gyalpo (rulers), Kahlon (ministers), Mangriks (farmers) and Ringan (lower occupation groups) in the order of hierarchy which is well defined and is manifested in the seating arrangements made during public functions. They live in Zaskar (the land of white copper), Nubra, Ladakh and Lahaul and Spiti (Himachal Pradesh), areas characterized by high mountains, scanty rainfall, heavy snowfall and a bare brown landscape capped by perennial snow on hill tops devoid of any vegetation. They speak Bodhi amongst themselves. Women enjoy the rights of inheritance and participate in all the socio-economic pursuits of the family, control family finances, indulge in self-employment activities and perform white-collar jobs. Marriage is performed at the bridegroom's house amidst storma prayers that protect the couple from evil spirits. The subsidiary economic resources are handicrafts, horticulture, small-scale industries, grinding, wood carving, transportation, etc. The goba heads the committee of the village elders to exercise social control by settling family disputes, issues relating to divorce, sharing of water, collection of livestock tax and intercommunity disputes. The Bodhs of Ladakh belong to the Mahayana sect of Buddhism with the Gelukpa (yellow shirts), Drokpa (Red shirts) and Neima sub sects. Polyandry too is declared as an undesirable practice. Elders, however, feel that adherence to faith is on the decline and at the same time they feel that they are being culturally engulfed by the surrounding majority communities. Lamas are proficient in drawing, painting, carving, and engraving. The Bodhs have attained a high level of literacy and they go to the universities of Jammu & Kashmir for higher education. Their attitude is positive towards family welfare measures and they believe in small families.

Brokpa: The Brokpa are the Muslim Dards who trace their ancestry from the Aryans. Brokpa is a compound of two terms broq (hills) and pa (people), hence 'the hill dwellers'. They call themselves Shin. The Brokpas are distributed in the villages in Kargil and Suru valley. They speak Shina amongst themselves but converse in Balti, Bodhi or Urdu with others. They use Balti script for writing. Educated Brokpas have attained a good knowledge of Arabic and Persian. Men do not show any symbol of identity but women can be distinguished by the traditional Dard caps adorned with typical ornaments and flowers grown in their own kitchen gardens. They are non-vegetarians and eat yak meat. Fish are not consumed but eggs are consumed moderately. Grim (baked barley) and Kachi (flour of parched grim) is the staple diet and mutton and leafy vegetables constitute side-dishes. Rice is consumed only occasionally.

Locally available fruits such as apricots and apples are consumed in plenty. Cha (tea) is their main drink. The people are divided into a number of Gatti (lineages). Each Gatti is composed of various Khandan (families). There is no hierarchy among the various gattis. It is traditionally an endogamous unit but, due to non-availability of suitable matches, intra-Gatti marriages often take place. The people are stratified into a number of groups in order of hierarchy such as Sheikh (artisan class). Another dimension of their division is the sect denomination. The Brokpa belong to both Shia (Ethna-e-Ashari) and Sunni and refuse to enter into matrimonial alliances with one another. Brokpa is a male dominated culture. Women participate actively in fuel collection, agricultural operations and ritual performance. Statutory village Panchayats have not been able to make any breakthrough or involve people in decision making processes. The people have participated in a number of elections since Independence and show a high level of political awareness. The Brokpa have a rich oral tradition of folk songs. The Brokpa attitude towards the various development programmes initiated by the State Government is positive and their response is quite enthusiastic.

Champa: The Champa or Changpa inhabit the frozen northern plains and deserts that separate Ladakh from Tibet. They speak Changskhat amongst themselves but converse in Bodhi with others. Their script is Bodhi. They are non-vegetarians and eat yak, kiang (wild asses) and beef. The staple food is tsampa (powdered barley) and meat of yak and kiang. Chang is the main beverage but the daily drink is salted tea (cha). The Champas are divided into two subgroups: the Fangpa (sedentary) and the Phalpa (nomadic). The ruling aristocracy among them is known as Nono. The stratification is based purely on the level of economy and achieved status. Inter-marriages among the three segments do take place without any reservations. Boys marry at the age of 18 years and girls at 16. Women have the right to inherit parent's property to the extent of one-third portion. They are actively engaged in the economic pursuits of the family. The Champas' major economic resources are their herds of yaks and goats. The people do not have their own landholdings but live on lands owned by the Hemis Gompa. Goba is the traditional forum for dispute management. The statutory Gram Panchayats have not been able to penetrate in this inhospitable tract. Goba is slowly losing its hold over the people in the process of emergence of regulated courts of law. They belong to the Drokpa sect of Buddhism. Religion occupies a central place in their cultural matrix. Hemis and Dharamshala are their places of pilgrimage.

Dokhpa/ Drokpa: The literal meaning of Drok or Dokh is a meadow, and Drokhpas or Dokhpas refers to the people of the meadow. The Dokhpas, it is believed, are the direct descendants of the Dards, said to have migrated from Gilgit. Historians refer to the Dokhpas as a brave people. The Dokhpa population is spread over four villages, namely Hanu and Da in Ladakh, and Darsik and Gorkone in Kargil. Agriculture and horticulture are the main occupations of the Dokhpas as water is available in abundance. The main crops grown are naked barley, buckwheat and millets. Tomatoes, apricots and grapes are their cash crops which form the main source of their income. The Dokhpas speak Droskhat amongst themselves but with others they converse in Ladakhi or Urdu. The script used by them is Bodhi. The distinguishing features of the Dokhpa dress are their

headgear, peculiarly half-shaven head and the gown. Women are especially interested in needlework. They consume meat, rice and vegetables as well. Cow's milk and its products, eggs and poultry are strictly prohibited. Gurgur chai (salted tea) is included in their diet. Fruits especially apricots and grapes grown in abundance, are consumed in large quantities. Chang, an alcoholic drink brewed locally from barley, is consumed by every member of the community. The Dokhpas comprise of a few clans called phasphuns among whom intermarriages is permissible. This is an occasion of great festivity marked by singing, dancing and drinking. Agriculture is the main occupation of the Dokhpas. Cattle and sheep rearing is another area of the Dokhpa's economic activity. Craftsmen and artisans like barbers, tailors etc. are conspicuously absent among the Dokhpas. The headman, called Makdom, is the only authority known to the Dokhpas. He is democratically elected. It is he who takes important decisions concerning the community as a whole and looks after the community's interests. They believe in gods, spirits and demons. Educational facility at the lower levels is provided. The percentage of boys and girls attending schools is very low. Even those who attend these schools do not seem to be benefited much.

Gaddi: The Gaddis are shepherds who inhabit mostly the mountaineous region of Jammu. Most of them are spread around the regions of Badherwah, Basoli, Ram Nagar, Udampur, Bilawar, Ramban and Batot. Their origin and history is shrouded in mystery as no authentic evidence is available. According to a popular belief, they originally lived in the plains of the united Punjab and Sind province. Moving from one place to another, the Gaddis reached the landlocked region of Bharmour (Himachal Pradesh) and settled there. Lord Shiva blessed them with gaddi, i.e. the reign, and ordained that nobody else except them would rule and live in the region. That is how these people were later known and called as the Gaddi. The Gaddis are non-vegetarians but they abstain from eating beef. Their staple food is maize and wheat, and rice to a lesser extent. They consume cereals and all types of pulses, and they use mustard oil for cooking. They chew tobacco and use snuff also. The Gaddis are divided into a number of sub sects such as Aralu, Beloria, Katoch, Chaak, Krokar, Jarwa, Lalhal, Shundal, Parihar and Veerpuri. Stratification of these substances appears to be based on the Brahman and Rajput lineages. People of other communities too do not have a high perception about the Gaddis at the regional level. They still consider themselves low in status in comparison to other Dogra communities of Jammu. The Gaddis practice endogamy at the community level and exogamy at the gotra level. Interpersonal relationships are cordial among the household members. Disputes are usually resolved through mutual reconciliation unless they are of criminal nature to be dealt with by the state's judicial laws. Women have a secondary status as compared to men in all walks of life, though they participate in all socio-economic activities, yet they do not compete with their menfolk on equal terms. Majority of women participate in agricultural and animal husbandry and other farm-related activities. They act as water carriers-cum-fuel collectors for their households. Most of the women have also taken to weaving of woolen blankets and clothes. Active participation of women in politics is practically absent though they enjoy their voting right. They are docile and submissive but at the same time are hard working. The major economic resources for the Gaddis

are land and forest. Shepherds by occupation, the Gaddis invariably have to move from one pasture to another and from one region to another with their livestock which comprises of sheep and goats. Settled agriculture and trade in selling of livestock are other economic activities pursued by them. The Gaddis, besides pursuing their ancestral occupation, are also settled agriculturists and their dependence on the formal market is considerably less. Village panchayats exists at the village level among the Gaddis. Village panchayats are of heterogeneous nature and their main job is to exercise social control though they have no statutory power. The Gaddis practice Hinduism. They observe all the major Hindu religious festivals such as Diwali, Lohri, Janmashtami, Shivratri and Rakshabandhan. They also celebrate seasonal festivals like Pitrolu and Shari. They play on a traditional musical instrument called ponoth. Both men and women participate in dances. Formal education is becoming popular among them, though boys are given preference over girls in its pursuit. Boys study up to high school level mostly and quite a few of them go to colleges. Girls usually study up to primary level but a few also reach high school level. The girls drop out from school due to social and economic factors. Boys have to give up their formal studies mainly due to economic reasons and for augmenting the family income. Though their attitude is favorable towards modern medicare, due to its non-availability, the Gaddis predominantly depend on traditional medicare.

Gara: The origin of the Gara, a community of blacksmiths in Ladakh and known as Garba in Kargil district, may be traced to Mongoloid stock. Their concentration is in Leh, and they are also sparsely distributed in Kargil district. Their habitations in Leh are perched at a high altitude on the Ladakh range overlooking the Indus River and its tributaries. They speak Ladakhi; a few can speak Urdu. Their written script is Bodhi. They dress themselves like other Buddhist Ladakhis. Men wear goncha (long coat), shakten (shirt), sherak, a belt around the waist, and boots made of leather and wood. The women dress themselves in goncha, perak, firoza which is a scarf on the head and chertor woollen or leather boots. The Garas are non-vegetarian and eat beef. Their staple food consists of grim (naked barley) and wheat. Pulses taken are gram, urad, moong and peas. Chang prepared from barley is a popular alcoholic drink. Smoking is not popular among them. Social divisions do not exist. There are, however, gyuts (blood relations) and rikanum (occupational groups) which are exogamous. The gyuts have no specific name but the villagers know of their respective gyuts. Endogamy is practiced at the community level. Under normal conditions, the Garas neither give nor take brides in marriage from the Mon, Beda and Bhotos (Ladakhi Buddhists). Monogamy is the usual form of marriage. Interpersonal relations are based on respect of elders and affection for youngsters. Women shoulder a major burden of the household duties. Tending to children, cooking food, fetching water and collection of fuel are major domestic works. They also work in the fields at the time of sowing and harvesting. The status of women is equal to that of men.

The Garas are a landless community. They serve the village community by repairing agricultural implements, utensils, iron hearths, etc. They prepare plough shares, sickles, spades hammers, knives, iron stoves, windows and doors. Besides meeting the needs of the village folk, they also sell their finished articles in the Leh market. Because of the Garas' low social

status, they do not hold any position of authority in the village council. They cannot hold the position of a Goba or village headman. They settle disputes through the elders of their own community and hardly take their disputes to the village council. In case of disputes with the Bhotos or Ladakhi Buddhists, a Gara is always at a disadvantage. Intercommunity relations are based on mutual interdependence. In the village, the Garas are considered as the service community by the dominant population of Bhotos (Ladakhi Buddhists). The community does not have entrepreneurs, scholars, members holding white collar jobs, doctors and, engineers. The Bhotos do not want a Gara as a school teacher because the Bhoto children will have to wish and salute him. The Garas are aware of the various development programmes. Formal education is favoured for the boys and girls, but the community is unable to send its children to schools due to prejudice from the members of the majority community. Drop outs are found more in this community.

The Garas are Buddhist by religion. Each family has a Chotkang (place of worship) in the house, generally in the kitchen where an oil lamp is kept burning. The members of the community have access to the Gompa but they are not allowed to become a Lama

Gujjars: The Gujjars are a well known semi-nomadic, pastoral community. They derive their name from Gujarat from where they migrated to Jammu & Kashmir. They are spread over Srinagar, Anantnag, Pulwama, Doda, Kishtwar, Jammu and other districts of the state. The climate of the region where they live and move in search of pasturage is cold with low humidity, and has low rainfall, thin forests and medium to heavy snowfall during winters. The terrain is hilly and surrounded by the Pir Panjal and Himalayan ranges. The language of the Gujjar is known as Gujri. They speak Kashmiri, Hindi and Punjabi while communicating with others. Dastar (long turban), beard, salwar and kameez (shirt) are the dress and identification markers of the community. Women put on a special type of cap (topi) on their head. Most of the adult members have their beard dyed with mehndi or henna. The Gujjar are non-vegetarians and consume meat of goat, sheep, chicken and fish. Their staple food consists of maize, rice and wheat and pulses such as moong (green gram) and moth (brown gram). They are fond of taking salty tea with bread. Social divisions among the Gujjars exist on the basis of religion and occupation. Among the Gujjars of Kashmir there are two sections, Jamindar and Dodhi. The Jamindar Gujjars are mostly engaged in cultivation while the Dodhi Gujjars subsist on sale of milk and milk products and rearing of buffaloes on contract basis. The Muslim Gujjars are divided into various exogamous sections or gotras such as Kasana, Chechi, Padhana, Lodha, Khatana, Paswar, and Bangri, which regulate the marriage alliances. They perceive themselves in the middle order of the regional social hierarchy and others also recognize them in the same way. Endogamy at the religious and the community level is always maintained and considered the rule of marriage. Both parallel and cross-cousin marriages are practiced and preference is given to the cousins while selecting a bride for marriage.

Marriages are settled through negotiations but love marriages also take place. Monogamy is the norm though polygamy is also permissible according to the Sharia (Islamic Law).

Interpersonal relationship among the family members is established with due love towards youngsters and respect towards the elders. The eldest member of the family is treated as the head and he takes the responsibility of looking after the family affairs. Among the Gujjars, the women have equal status and play important roles in the economic, social and religious spheres of life. They remain engaged in household works. Milking of cattle, collection of fuel and fodder, and bringing potable water are their duties besides assisting their men-folk in agricultural activities. Besides controlling the family expenditure, they contribute to the family income by engaging themselves in productive work. Among the Gujjars, the rituals connected with childbirth, marriage, death and other social functions are observed with great zeal and enthusiasm.

As mentioned earlier, there are two types of Gujjars in Jammu & Kashmir, Jamindar and Dodhi. The primary occupation of the Jamindar Gujjars is agriculture, besides animal husbandry, but the Dodhi Gujjars are exclusively pastoral people. They still move from low to high and high to low altitude hills in search of pastures for their buffaloes on which their whole economy is based. They live mainly on the sale of milk and its products. Sometimes, they rear buffaloes on contract basis. Agriculture is also taken up by them as a secondary occupation and is done only in winter when they stay in their original habitat. During other seasons, they give the land to the sharecroppers. Most of the milk and milk products are sold in the cities, but during their summer pasturage the products are sometimes exchanged with other essential commodities. The Jamindar Gujjars possess larger size of land than the Dodhi Gujjars. There is no bonded labour system among them but children of the family are sometimes engaged for paddy and maize cultivation. They also work as grazers. Pastoralism is still considered their traditional occupation, but they are now taking up other traditional occupations such as business, government and private jobs, and even defence services. The Gujjars have their own biradari panchayat to resolve the disputes within the community.

The Gujjars follow Islam. On different occasions, they visit the mosques and other sacred shrines. Id-ul-Zuha, Id-ul-Fitr, Shab-e-Qadr, Urs-e-Nabi, the Prophet's birthday Id-ul-Milad, and Miraj-e-Alam are also celebrated. On the birthday, the Prophet's hair relic is displayed at the Hazratbal shrine. They participate in the Urs such as Urs-e-Shah Hamdan. There is no exclusive art or craft of the Gujjars, but a few members have the skill of making certain woollen articles from sheep wool. On different social occasions, folk songs are sung by women, but there is no traditional musical instrument of the community. Since they move from one place to another from high mountain ranges to low along with their cattle in search of green pasture, they establish cordial relations with all the Muslim and non-Muslims communities of the region where they camp. Their relations with the Bakarwal are very close as they are considered a section of the Gujjar.

The attitude of the Gujjar towards formal education is not positive, particularly towards the girls' education, because they lead a nomadic life. Boys study up to the primary level and a few of them have reached higher level. Though a few mobile primary schools have been introduced by the Jammu & Kashmir government to provide education to their children, the Scheme could not be successful due to their short stay in one camp and their frequent movement to new places

having extreme climate and difficult access. They do not pay much attention towards modern medicare system and still prefer the traditional indigenous medicines.

Mons: The Mons are a community of musicians and flute players of Ladakh. They have no sub-groups, titles or synonyms. The Ladakhi Buddhists call them Dolba. The census Report of 1911 categorized the Mons as Rungnum (lower class). The major concentration of the community is in Leh district while in Zaskar and Kargil districts their population is sparse. The Mons inhabiting Leh are found on high terraces overlooking the Indus valley and its tributaries. Climate is extremely cold. They speak Ladakhi, which is of Tibeto-Burman origin. The script used by them is Bodhi. A few of them speak in Urdu with others. They dress themselves like other Ladakhi Buddhists. Men wear goncha (long coat), shakten (shirt), sherak (trousers), a belt of white coloured cloth around the waist, shoes made of leather or wool and Ladakhi cap. The women wear goncha, perak, cherton (woollen boot) and scarf on the head. They have prominent Mongolian features.

The Mon is non-vegetarian and eats beef. Their staple food consists of grim (barley) and wheat. Pulses taken are gram, urad, moong and peas. Mustard oil is the cooking medium. The main food item is sattoo, made from the flour of roasted wheat and barley; potatoes, turnips, gurgur (salty tea) and chang (barley beer), which are taken a number of times in a day. Among the Mons social divisions do not exist. There are, however, gyuts (blood relations), which are exogamous. The members of the community do not have specific surnames.

Endogamy is practiced at the community level, though not strictly followed. There are a few cases of marriage outside the community. Under normal conditions, the Bhotos or Ladakhi Buddhists do not give or take brides from the Mons, as they are considered of low social position. Consanguinity is not practiced. Families among the Mons are mixed-extended. The father is the head of the family. The Mon women have a role in agricultural operations and animal husbandry, collection of fuel, bringing potable water, caring of children cooking food, cleaning the house etc. Compared to the boys, the girls are nurtured with care as they bring bride-price. Women enjoy equal status with men.

Among the Mons, land is the main economic resource. In the past, it was the Raja or the monastery that provide some land to the Mons in return of the services rendered by them. Their primary occupation is playing on flute on the occasion of festivals and rituals. The members of the community are also engaged as wage labourers, or doing business or are employed in services. A few of them are in the armed forces. Owing to their low social status, they do not hold any office of authority in the village council. They settle their own disputes through the elders of the community. They Mons are Buddhist by religion. They have access to the Gompas /Monastery where they can worship and pay offerings to the idols of Lord Buddha.

Intercommunity relations are based on mutual interdependence. Set customary norms of behaviour and inter relationship exist between the Mons and the other Buddhist communities. The Mons renders their services to all the communities in the village and, in return, gets a fixed quantity of grains at the time of harvest. The Mons avail of the facilities of schools, primary