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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EFFECT OF MODERNISATION ON LIFESTYLE OF GUJJARS OF PAHALGAM

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Gujjar families in Pahalgam area of Kashmir Valley are facing a variety of difficulties and are not aware of the impacts of Modernization. They all are dominated by their traditional customs and bonds. They are internally different from other gujjars but major population among them gave response to Interview Schedule. They want to achieve modern impact to change their lives and society in all sectors like Lifestyle, Education, Health, Communication and Transportation, Economy etc. and want the government to know about their problems. In the present article it was generalized that modernization has affected as well as changed the lifestyle of the tribal people (gujjars of Pahalgam) in positive direction.

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Introduction

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has a 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 the country or to trace the circumstances of their conversion to Islam. Some of the gujjars have inter-married with the Sheikh, adopted some articles of their dress and settled down to agriculture. But they may inter-marry with the gujjars but not with the Sheikh. They still depend predominantly on the herding of cattle, sheep and goats for their source of livelihood. These herdsmen are semi-nomadic, they move in and out of the area with their flocks, seeking the heights of mountain pastures in summer and returning in autumn before the winter frosts and snow arrive.

Modernization is a process of removing imposed restrictions of one's culture in order to create an open broad concept of each way of society on its members. The most common conceptualization of modernization is a dimensional process of impact of new technologies and developmental process that has been occurring on every rapid pace in current times i.e.; the increasing modernity, culture, language, education, lifestyle etc. facilitated by the new ways of life. The evidence for such modernization in recent decades can be found in the wide spread developed countries and societies or even abolition of regulatory backwardness and restrictions. It is the process in which the society goes through Industrialization, Urbanization and other changes that completely transform the lives of individuals. Verma (1959- 1960) has discussed the socio-cultural organizations of the Sanria paharias, Mal-paharias and Knmarbhag of Rajasthan. He has examined various phases of the tribal life, pregnancy and birth, puberty, widow remarriage, place of women in the society, religion, village council and institutions. Bakshi and Bala (2000) present the socio-economic status of several scheduled tribes inhabiting in various regions of our sub-continent. Their life-style, customs and traditions are quite different to population in our rural and urban areas.

Pandil (1954) studying the Gujjars of Kashmir as an Anthropologist, in the District Anantnag of Kashmir Valley and identified three categories of nomads as Bakerwals, Gujjars, Baniaras. According to him, Gujjar and Bakerwals are quite close to each other by way of their dialect, ecology and social organization. They keep Buffaloes, Sheep and Goat, while Baniaras are the traders and the ones who act as links between nomadic and settled population. In the present paper the author attempts to highlight the impact of modernization on the tribal people (Gujjars) of Kashmir with special reference to Pahalgam region.

Methodology

a. Area of Study: For the purpose of the present study, the gujjar territory in Pahalgam of district Anantnag has been selected. The district has a rich tribal heritage. The tribal groups in the district are far away from cultural contamination among the other castes. Gujjars are the tribes which the present study has focused upon, as it is relatively the groups under the vestiges of Pahalgam surrounded areas. In the view of the limited resources the disposal of the investigation of gujjar tribe in Pahalgam have selected, however it may be mentioned that the comparative study of this tribe in the whole district may bring out interesting facts which may help in progress and development of the concerned tribe of the district. The selected area has an importance and history of its own as compared with other places; because the place Pahalgam being a famous tourist spot and Hindu Pilgrimage site called "Amarnath".

The Gujjars are distributed in surrounded areas of Pahalgam area, for the purpose of the present study all the household members numbering 300 have been included in the research keeping in the view of their social anthropology and nature of the study.

b. Field Problem: In exercise of the Interview Schedule the village ladies; particularly the old Muslim ladies put a lot of hesitation and even few resisted not to insist them for such queries. Besides, the old tribal people could not be easily convinced of the utility of such work and therefore refused to furnish relevant information.

Results and Discussion

Themodernization in regard to gujjars in various fields is a great change for them to change their way of life, but at the same time they are facing variety of difficulties in the region like culture (i.e. Dressing, Language and Way of Life etc.) Education and Urbanization etc. some gujjar families are those who have not given a response up to mark because they are not aware about its impact. They all are dominated by their traditional customs and bonds. They don't want to emerge themselves for the specific experience of modernization. They are internally different from other gujjars.

Table: Impact of Modernization in educational way

S.No	Change in life style	No. of Respondents	Percentage	Has modernization affected?	In Educational way	
1	Yes	167	55.67%	If yes, In which way?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
2	No	133	44.33%		300	100%
	Total	300	100%			

100% gujjar families gave response, out of which 55.67% as mentioned in above Table want to develop modern ways with all facilities. They don't want to bind themselves by traditional customs and want to achieve the modern impact to change their lives and society. They need the change in all sectors, i.e. Health, Lifestyle, Communication and Transportation, Economy, Education etc. and if they will be provided with proper means of education upto at least secondary level, they could achieve the higher position rather than being ascribed. Our findings are also reported by sociologists like Sinha (1957), Verma (1959-60), Dean (1973), Mathur (1977), Doshi (1978), Roy Burman (1978), Rao (1978), Sharma (1980), Bose (1981), Pameche (1985), Nag and Saxena (1958), Sarkar et al. (2003) etc. while studying various aspects of the different tribes along entire South East Asia including India. The parameter's including life-style, socio-cultural conditions, economic status, education, agriculture, developmental programmes, both intra communal and inters communal perspectives, land alienation, ethno-graphic surveys, regional geographic complexity, dress, beliefs and practices, historical life and nomadic character etc. were studied by them.

Being an isolated society, the gujjar communities prefer modernization through educational modification for their generation to achieve good social position but there lies a problem in terms of their skills, income and caste. They need to be recognized and analyzed to remove the boundaries between their caste, social isolation and their traditional way of life. It was observed that they want full awareness in each step to lead their society and its culture. They want to enjoy the real facts of culture, which pervades every aspect of their society and make its culture highly complex. The gujjar communities want to convey government to provide them such schemes which can improve their economic crisis which they are facing in their day to day life. They want concrete roads in their area, so that

they will not face any problem in their domestic affairs. It should make them aware about the modernization and modernity to change their life style and their traditional ways of living.

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