

Transhumant Practice and Problems: A Study with Special Reference to Gujjar Tribe of Rajouri District (J & K)

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ABSTRACT: Transhumance is the seasonal movement of communities with their livestock between the fixed summer and winter pastures in the mountain region (vertical transhumance). The Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir are great herders of buffaloes, cows, sheep and goats. In winter, they move to the upper Shivalik hills of the State with their livestock and, in winter, they move back to the plains of the State with their livestock. It suggests higher pastures in the summer and plane valleys in the winter. This study aims to focus on the problems faced by the Gujjar tribe during migration. This study mainly focuses on the Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used for this study. Primary data was collected through a random sampling method, and secondary data is collected through articles, journals, reports, books etc.

KEYWORD: Transhumance, Gujjar, Livestock, Migration, Rajouri

Introduction

Transhumance is the long-lasting movement of people with their livestock between the fixed summer and winter pasture in mountain regions (vertical transhumant). They move to higher grazing land in the summer and lower valley in wintry weather. Humanity is more vulnerable to disruption from climate, economic or political change in the context of horizontal trans. Transhumance is also used to describe nomadic, regular migration of people and livestock over time, and during the revolution, they began to domesticate animals for their livelihood.

Tribes in India

India is a pluralistic and multicultural country with a rich cultural, religious, linguistic, and racial diversity. The population of the country comprises different castes, communities and other social groups. India is the second-most crowded country in the world after South Africa, where the concentration of the tribal population. These scheduled tribes constituted 700 groups and subgroups distributed in this country's different proportion state and union territory. The total population of the country's scheduled tribes constitutes 8.6 percent of the country. These tribal communities are spread

all over the country but mainly reside in forests and dales of the country. Tribals settled in India in prehistoric times, primarily in the spare parts of the Himalayan hills and forests and in some of the mountainous belts of central India between Narmada and Godavari, and in the southern parts of the Western Ghats, extending from Wayanad to Kanyakumari.

Tribes in Jammu and Kashmir

This tribe migrated to Jammu and Kashmir from Gujarat (via Rajasthan), the Hazara district of the northwest frontier region most properly in the 15th and 10th century A.D. The Gujjar and Bakerwal are the third major community in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. They constitute 8.1 percent of the total inhabitants in the State, according to the census of 2011. The Gujjar and Bakerwal tribes have a larger population in Jammu and Kashmir than the other tribes. These are highly concerted in the districts of Poonch and Rajouri, but most of the population lives in these two districts, at 39.34 percent and 30.31 percent, respectively. In the Jammu region, there is more than the valley of Kashmir because the Jammu region is the mountainous Himalayas with grazing land.

The constitution of Jammu and Kashmir has notified twelve communities, Balti, Bede, Bot, Change Garra, etc. Among these tribes, gave schedule tribe status in 1989, The Gujjar, Bakerwal, Gaddies and Sippis were notified of the scheduled tribes by the order reconsideration Act 1991.

Table 1:- Percentage of Schedule Tribes in Jammu and Kashmir

S. No	Name of Tribe	Total Population		
		Total	Male	Female
1	Gujjar	980654	510710	469944
2	Bakerwal	113198	59621	53577
3	Balti	51918	26473	25445
4	Gaddi's	46489	23808	22681
5	Sippi	5966	3064	2902
6	Bot, Boto	91495	45295	46200
7	Brokpa, Dropka, Dard Shin	48439	25240	23199
8	Changpa	2661	1355	1306
9	Garra	504	275	229
10	Mon	829	418	411
11	Purigpa	39101	20119	18982
12	Beda	420	216	204
13	Other Genetic Tribe	111625	59663	51962
14	Total	1493299	776257	717042

Source, Census 2011

Gujjar Tribe

The Gujjar's are the tribal community residing mainly in the foothills of the Jammu and Kashmir State, primarily set up in the districts of Poonch, Rajouri, Anantnag, Kuphwar, Baramulla and less number in the rest of the districts. The Gujjar's are mostly settled, take care of buffaloes, cows, and in some cases, a small number of goats, mostly engaged in farming on hilly terrains. Gujjar's are bodily

strong and tall persons, wearing a turban, khan dress (a kind of loose kurta with collar and a Patiala type pyjama) for men. Women of the Gujjar tribe wear frock-type kameez and a salwar. All Gujjar women, irrespective of their age, have adorned hair with thin cord-like designs usually mend by the clan's female.

Importance of Transhumance in Jammu and Kashmir

The State of Jammu and Kashmir is very suitable for rearing buffalos, cows, sheep and goats due to its favorable physical topography and climatic conditions. It has rich alpine Pastures, peer panjal valley, and other natural endowments favoring cattle rearing. Sheep and goat rearing is the central activity of the rural community in the State. It plays a very important role in the socio-economic upliftment of weaker sections of society. Gujjar, who have adopted buffalos, cows, sheep and goat rearing as their primary occupation and way of life, prefer to migrate in search of pastures to feed their livestock, thus following transhumance activity. According to estimates, in Jammu and Kashmir, 0.13 percent of the State's gross domestic product (GDP) is contributed by this part. The valuable livestock is the State's wealth in the form of cattle-buffalo, sheep, goats, poultry, etc. The domestic animals and poultry amongst all the livestock are measured as the most important tool for developing the rural economy in the absence of industrial activity. Therefore livestock production in the State has a huge scope for development, rendering quick economic returns.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Azhar Ud Din (2015), in his study "**socio-economic condition of Gujjar and Bakerwal tribe of Jammu and Kashmir**," The author discusses the itinerant of Jammu and Kashmir. Particularly the author discusses the two main nomad's tribes Gujjar and Bakerwal, of Jammu and Kashmir. Gujjar and Bakerwal are the important ethics and linguistic groups in Jammu and Kashmir, representing 20 percent of the State's total population. Gujjar and Bakerwal of Jammu and Kashmir are mainly Muslim and carry themselves as traditional living modes. Most of them are still untouched by the influence of the outside world. The author also studies the social and economic aspects of the life of Gujjar and Bakerwal.

Mohd Tufail. (2014) in his article "**Impact of climate change on the seasonal movement of the Gujjar and Bakerwal: Community perception**." The author has conducted a study in which he talks about the economy of the Gujjars and Bakerwals tribe. Gujjars and Bakerwals invariably depend on the forest for their day-to-day needs. They go to the forest to collect woods, leaves for their animals, wild fruit for market sale and household conception. This study shows that the only source of income for them their livestock. Due to climate change and unseasonal rainfall, snowfall, hails, etc., they lost their animals, which destroy their economy because they depend upon their livestock. This study reveals that the economy of Gujjar and Bakerwal from the past few years shifted toward other occupations.

Kuvita Suri and Deepshikha Hooda (2014), in their study "**Impact of Militancy on the Gujjar and Bakerwal tribes In Jammu and Kashmir**." In this study, the author examines Gujjar and Bakerwal, two important schedule tribes of Jammu and Kashmir who are primarily in nature. The Gujjar and Bakerwal move to the upper range of the Himalayas in search of better pastures for their livestock. Both these tribes suffered due to militancy which is erupted in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Their economy is totally base on livestock. This study seeks to explore the impact of militancy on these tribes and understand the current echoes of the conflict. Due to the militancy and conflict, their economy and daily life are disturbed.

Objectives of Study

1. This study is to find out the problems faced by the Gujjar tribe during seasonal migration.
2. To know about the changing practice of transhumance in the Gujjars.

Research Methodology

The present study based on descriptive research that focused on the Gujjar tribe of the Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir. This study will be based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data collected through interview scheduled and secondary data collected through different libraries, articles, journals, newspapers, thesis, books, etc. The study was conducted in the four-block of Rajouri district. For the present study, 140 samples were selected, and data was collected through a random sampling method. The researchers are also inhabitants of this district. Therefore, to obtain extra information, the researchers formulate the schedule in the native language to keep away from errors while interacting.

Area of the Study

The present study area is the Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir. The actual line of control bounds it lies to its West, Poonch district to its North, Reasi district to the East and the Jammu district to its South. The district headquarter is in the main city of Rajouri. Presently Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir has been divided into thirteen tehsils. Rajouri district has 121 villages. The Gujjar Tribe has the main concentration in Rajouri and the Poonch district of the Jammu region. Therefore, the present study is limited to the Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir. The main goal is to select this district due to the high concentration of nomadic Gujjar tribe that lives there.

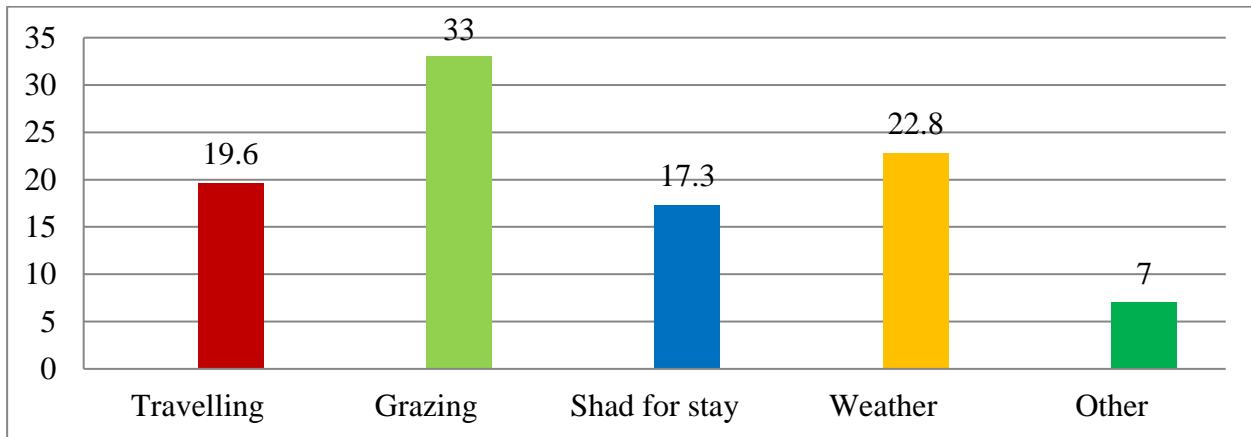
Results and Discussion

Table 2:- Distribution of respondents as per migration practice increase or decrease

Does seasonal migration increase in Gujjar Tribe	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	38	27.1%
No	102	72.9%
Total	140	100%
Source: Primary Field Survey 2020		

The Gujjars are Tran's nomads and hence they migrate from hot to cold areas in summers and from hills to plains during winter. The seasonal migration seemed to be decreasing every year. The reasons are numerous. Some of them are the need for a stable lifestyle. The above table shows whether seasonal migration has decreased. The data shows that 72.9 percent of the total respondents say that their seasonal migration has not increased. Rather, it has decreased, while 27.1 percent of respondents said that it has increased. Their movement is still stable because they can't live in the hot season during summer due to traditional habits. Therefore, their movement same, but grazing land are decreasing from comparatively a few years back.

Figure 1:- Problems faced by Gujjar tribe during migration



It is no doubt transhumant face lot of problem during movement. In the above diagram, one clearly shows what type of problem they face. The majority of respondents said that problem of grazing. Around 20 percent says that problem of weather more than 17 percent the problem of travelling. These problems increase because most other people cover land and are not allowed to interfere with others. The weather problem is the biggest problem for Gujjar: very harsh and cool weather in Panjal, mostly snowfall. The government not fully supports their moment in Pir Panjal. There has no shad for staying. So, all these conditions affect their seasonal movement. Only 8.6 percent of respondents said that properly staying during the summer season in Pir Panjal.

Table 3:- Distribution of Respondents as per problems of transport

Problem of transport	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	105	75%
No	35	25%
Total	140	100%

The mountain passes zones are covered with snow and devoid of vegetation and are difficult to cross. Here the melting of the snow, strong winds and slippery grounds pose many problems and sometimes cost heavy loss of people and animals. In the above table No 3 data show that around 75 percent of respondents said they faced the transport problem. The remaining 20 percent hasn't transport problem. They are mostly those people who are economically sound travelers with the hiring of vehicles. On the other side, 43 percent says the problem of both shad and transport. It isn't easy to provide a shad facility for every person in the Pir Panjal range. Here the paths are narrow and the mountain streams are covered with wooden bridges. Around 26 percent of respondent says that sheds are the main problems. After analysis, it observed they face a lot of problems.

Table 4:- Distribution of Respondents as per problems of weather

Problems of weather condition during migration	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	122	87.1%
No	18	12.9%
Total	140	100%

In table 1.3 shows the problem of weather conditions and their causes. Then 87.1% of the respondents voiced their opinion in agreement and the remaining people thought otherwise. The around 87.1 percent give response high effect during the travel in Pir Panjal, remaining 12.9 percent respond that they are not highly affected during migration. The Gujjars are used to immensely harsh climates and weather conditions. The weather is changing any time and the snow blasts and snowstorms are very common in the Pir Panjal range. Over the years, the weather change is much more spontaneous and hence is problematic to the Gujjar when they are migrating with their cattle. The Gujjars have changed the way of migration now, they hire a transport to take their cattle to the destination and it takes very little time. But the traditional migrates are still facing changing weather problems.

Conclusion

In this study, while conforming about seasonal migration, whether seasonal migration increases or decreases, around 73 percent of households said that their seasonal migration seemed to decrease every year. The Pir Panjal transhumance route was the most disturbed area, which holds 70 percent of the seasonal migration. Many of them either change this route or left the seasonal movement practice. Mostly the Gujjar are disturbed by the grazing problem. Around 80 percent of respondents respond increasing population and decreasing grazing lands are the main problem for the Gujjar community. The land occupies by the government for the construction of roads and buildings. More than 87 percent of Gujjar give the response that they can face weather problems during seasonal migration. The problem of transport is the main reason for decreasing transhumant practice. It is no doubt the Mughal road is providing a big facility for the travelling pir panjal range for the last few years. But it is most beneficial for those people who are economically sound. During migration, there were no shad's facilities for staying. This area is a highly land slide area during the rainy season with a maximum loss of human beings and animals during migration.

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