

# Impact of Tribal Development Approaches on the Gujjar Tribe of Jammu & Kashmir: A Sociological Analysis

Manawar Ahmed

Research Scholar,

Department of sociology, A.M.U Aligarh.

---

## Abstract:

There are numerous tribal communities in India for ages. They have their distinct culture, traditions, languages, and way of living. All these tribal communities are socially, economically, and educationally backward. Tribal constitutes 8.6% of country total population. Scheduled tribe constitutes more than 11.91% population of the state (Census, 2011). Gujjars constitute 69.1% of the total scheduled tribe of Jammu & Kashmir (Census, 2011). They have preserved their traditional and cultural values throughout the ages. However, still, their condition in Jammu & Kashmir is not at all satisfactory. Despite lots of policies and programs for Scheduled Tribes of Jammu & Kashmir, they are still lacking behind in every aspect. So, two main objective are explained in this study. This paper discuss the tribal development approaches and the impacts of these approaches on Gujjars tribe of Jammu & Kashmir. The study is purely based on secondary sources like books, journals, magazines, articles and newspapers.

**Keywords:** Tribal, Gujjars, Schedule Tribes, Jammu & Kashmir.

---

Date of Submission: 05-06-2023

Date of Acceptance: 15-06-2023

---

## I. Introduction

There are numerous tribal communities in India for ages. They have their distinct culture, traditions, languages, and way of living. All these tribal communities are socially, economically, and educationally backward. Scheduled tribe constitutes more than 11.91% population of the state (Census, 2011). Gujjars constitute 69.1% of the total scheduled tribe of Jammu & Kashmir (Census, 2011). The concept of tribe is broader and comprehensive. Anthropologists and sociologists have given specific definitions of tribes. **Bogardus** defines tribes as a tribal group based on the need for protection, ties of blood relationships, and the strength of common religion (Sinha, 1965, p. 45). Indian Sociologist **D. N. Majumdar** defines tribes as a collection of families or a group of families bearing a common name members of which occupy the same territory, speak the same languages and observe certain taboos regarding marriage profession, or occupation, and have developed a well-assigned system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligation (Srinivasan, 1977, p. 265). The govt. of India act 1935 used the term 'backward tribes'; however, the "Indian constitution" of 1950 has retained the term with minor alterations as 'scheduled tribes.' Article 342 of the Indian constitution authorize the President to specify the tribal communities or parts of or group within the tribes or tribal communities which shall be deemed to be scheduled tribes (Goswami, 2003, p. 38).

### The objective of the study

1. To analyze the tribal development approaches in India.
2. To study the impact of tribal development approaches on Gujjar Tribe of Jammu & Kashmir.

Tribal studies have been studied by certain European and western scholars, which frightened Indian anthropologists and sociologists to focus on tribal studies and their approach to tribal studies. Generally, three major approaches are being followed in India. These approaches might suitable for understanding Gujjars tribe of Jammu & Kashmir.

### 1. The Isolationist Approach

This approach suggested by Verrier Elvin in his book "the Baiga" (1939), which clearly advocates the establishment of a sort of "national park" in a wild and largely inaccessible part of the country under the direct control of the tribal commissioner. Inside this area, administrators should allow tribesmen to live their life with utmost possible happiness and freedom (Purkayastha, 2015, p. 630). Non-tribal would be required to take a license to enter into this settling. Tribal culture would not destroy, and tribal freedom would be adequately

maintained. No machinery would be allowed to break the tribal culture and social life. Verrier Elvin, in another book, "The Aborigines" (1943), mainly divides Indian tribes into four classes. The **first** class is the purest of the pure tribal group. These highlanders have alive their tribal culture and characteristics, ideally these tribes reside deep isolated in hilly tract areas and don't have contact with the outside world. **The second** class, as Elvin mentioned, as a group retains their tribal culture and mostly resides in villages. Village dormitories preserve their culture and traditions. Members of these tribes are less honest as compared to class first. These tribes have come in contact with the people living on the periphery, i.e., civilized people. Members of **third**-class tribal groups constitute the most significant tribal population. This group of tribes is in a particular stage of transition. This tribal group retains some characteristics; however, they look like lower sections of Hindu society. They have been affected by the socio-cultural impact of Hindu society and Christian machinery. During the British period, these tribes had lost their cultural influences, and largely accepted mode of production, as were millions of cultivators and artisans living under the British govt. class **fourth**, tribal consist of the old aristocracy of the country represented by great *Bhils* and Naga Chieftain, *GondRajas*. These tribes have retained their characteristics but secured the benefits of civilizations without attaching themselves. They observe the element of tribal religion despite adopting the full Hindu faith and modern style (Purkayasta, 2015, p. 630-31). This approach believes that tribes needed protection from traders, moneylenders, and Hindu and Christian missionaries, all trying to reduce tribes' to detribalized landless labor.

## **2. The Assimilation Approach**

This approach was followed by Indian sociologist GovindSadashivGhurye's book "The Schedule Tribes" in 1959. Ghurye describes the nature of the assimilation of tribes into Hindu society and divides the tribes into three sections. The first section is made up of Raj Gond and others who have successfully waged the struggle and are organised as members of relatively high rank in Hindu society (Purkayasta, 2015, p. 631). The second group is a sizable population that has been largely Hinduized and has had close interaction with Hindus. The third category is the hill sections, which have demonstrated greater resistance to the alien culture that has gone through their borders (Purkayasta, 2015, p.631). A large number of tribes in India, according to Ghurye, *Santhal, Munda, Oraon, Gond*, etc., speak languages that either belong to the Mundari group of the Dravidian family. Based on this, these tribes must assimilate into the general Hindu population. Many tribal languages don't have their script but are verbally spoken only. Ghurye believes that the British policy of revenue collection pattern, its central police system, and its judicial system have broken the solidarity of tribal society in India (Purkayasta 2015, p. 631). According to Ghurye, the tribes of According to *Ghurye, Santhal, Munda, Oraon, Gond*, and others, a vast number of tribes in India speak languages from the Mundari group of the Dravidian family. As a result, these tribes must integrate into the larger Hindu community. Many tribal languages have no script and are only spoken verbally. Ghurye says that the British strategy of revenue collecting pattern, central police system, and judicial system have shattered tribal society's cohesiveness in India.

## **3.The Integration Approach**

This approach is followed by Jawaharlal Nehru. According to Nehru, tribal people cannot be kept in isolation, and they should not be assimilated into Hindu society to prevent the loss of their customs and culture. Therefore, oppose tribe integration and seclusion. He claims that treating tribes in isolation and as "*museum specimens to be observed and written about*" is disrespectful to them. It is also incorrect to enable tribes to be "*engulfed by masses of Indian humanity*" as part of the assimilation process (Purkayasta, 2015, p.632). Nehru supports assimilating tribes into society while preserving their unique social structures and cultural practices. His Panchsheel ideals serve as the foundation for his integration strategy. Two different types of initiatives for tribal development are derived from his integration policy. These two are promotional and protective actions. Five (Panchsheel) fundamental principles were established for tribal development in India after independence (Purkayasta, 2015, p.632).

These five principles are as follows:

1. Nothing should be forced onto people; instead, they should create a long line of their own talent. Instead, we ought to work to support their own art and culture.
2. It is important to safeguard tribal rights to lands and forests.
3. We should attempt to construct a team of our own people to handle administrative and development tasks. There will initially be a requirement for some outside technical expertise. But we should be cautious about bringing in too many foreigners in indigenous areas.
4. We shouldn't administer them or overburden them with too many plans. Instead, we ought to develop our own social and cultural organizations.
5. Rather than using statistics about the amount of money spent, we should evaluate results based on the evolution of human character. (Rita, 2015, p.76).

### **Schedule Tribe of Jammu & Kashmir (Census 2011)**

In exercise of the power conferred by clause (1) of Article 342 of the constitution of India, the president, after consultation with the government of the state of Jammu & Kashmir, made the following order (Jammu & Kashmir) schedule tribe order, 1989 in which following twelve communities had been recognized as scheduled tribes, which are *Bakerwal, Gaddi, Balti, Beda, Brokpa, Champa, Garra, Gujjar, Mon, Bot, Purigpa, Sippi*. Schedule tribes constitute 11.9 % population of the state (Census 2011). *Gujjars* are the third biggest ethnic community in Jammu and Kashmir, following Kashmiris and Dogras. *Gujjars* make up 69.1% of the union territory's overall tribal population. Jammu & Kashmir *Gujjars* who are mainly Muslims carry with them the age-old traditions and customs of prehistoric ages they trek along with their sheep, goats, and cattle from the plain to the higher reaches in search of green pastures in summer. The *Gujjars* are predominantly a tribal community that has now settled down to a large extent and has become settled in permanent villages in the plains as well as in the mountains. *Gujjars* move from one place to another shifting habitation in search of subsistence. The main language spoken by *Gujjars* is *Gojri*.

### **Historical background of Gujjar**

The origin of *Gujjars* is obscure. Generally, there are two views in this regard, one who claimed them as foreigners. Other nationalist scholars claimed them as the original inhabitants of India. Crooke, in his book "Caste and Tribe of North-Western India" stated, that *Gujjars* came from Georgia in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C and belongs to Central Asian origin. Most scholars agreed that they came from Georgia between the Caspian Sea and the black sea in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. This claim might be valid because several medieval Persians called Georgia *Gurjistan*. Within Georgia *Gujjar*'s original habitats were between the *Black Sea* and the *Caspian Sea*. Communities around the Caspian Sea areas are said to be called the names *Khizar, Guzar, Gurjar, Gurjara, and Gujjar* (Dewan, 2011, p. 42). AbulFaraj (1241) an Arab writer, has categorically stated that the Georgians or (*Gurges*) were the same people as the *Khazars* or *Khozars* (Dewan, 2011, p. 43).

While those favoured that *Gujjars* are the original inhabitant of India they claimed that the word *Gujjar* has been derived from the Sanskrit word *Gurjara*, "*Gur* and *Jur*" (i.e. destroyer of the enemy) mentioned in the Hindu literary text and the language spoken by *Gujjar* are Indo-Aryan (Rahi, 2012). There was a powerful kingdom of *Gujjar* in Kathiawar (Gujarat) during the 5<sup>th</sup> century named *Gujrata*. Historians have mentioned that in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries there was a powerful kingdom in Rajasthan known as *Gurjara-Desa* (country of *Gujjars*). In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, there was also a powerful *GujjarPratihara* kingdom in the north and north-western India (Rahi, 2012).

General Cunningham in the archeological report has identified *Gujjars* with a *Kushanor Yuchi* or *Tochari*, a tribe of eastern tartars (an endo- Scythian tribe). He argued that *Gujjar* is the only race whose tribal names seem to offer a probable clue to their descent from the *Tocharo* or *Kushan*. He compared the word *Korso* which appears on the *Kushan* coins, to the form of *Gorsi* or *Gorasi*, from which, believes Cunningham, the term *Gujjar* is derived (Cunningham, 1865).

*Gujjars* are a shepherd agriculture ethnic group in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, according to Agamani Saha's research. They may communicate in the language of the country in which they dwell, but they also have their own language, known as *Gojri*. Indian anthropologists have identified *Gujjar*'s fair complexion, towering stature, large nose, and broad forehead. They practise Islam, Sikhism, and Hinduism. They are categorised as OBC in several Indian states, but S.T in Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh (Saha, 2018, p. 200). Historians G.S.Sharma says that *Gujjars* organized themselves in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries and start forming small kingdoms. From the 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century *Gujjar* ruled large parts of northern India. Originally *Gujjar* were all *Hindus* but part of the *Gujjar* tribes was eventually converted to Islam during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb in the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Manku, 1986). According to *Mughul* sources, the *Gujjars* in the hills of Punjab and Kashmir were very powerful during the *Mughul* rulers and they settled along the imperial road leading to Srinagar (Khattana, 1992, p.55). The *Gujjars* were converted to Islam during Aurangzeb's reign. There was a pact between the Aurangzeb and the *Rajputs* that if the *Rajputs* lost the war between them and the *Mughul* holy war (jihad) and if they lost the holy war too, a section of them would embrace *Islam*. When the *Rajputs* lost the wars, a section become Muslims and was known as *Gujjars* (Nusrat, p.18).

### **Impacts of Tribal Development Approaches on Gujjar Tribe of Jammu & Kashmir**

If we look at all three methods objectively, we can see that they all share the common goal of bridging the gap between modern society and pre-industrial societies. Some tribal members have found success with these methods, however it varies from place to area. The *Gujjars* are an ancient, nomadic tribal society with their own culture and traditions. They have buffalo herders, and during the summer, the buffalo travel to higher altitudes in search of new pastures. **Pandil (1954)** classified nomads into three groups: *Bakarwals*, *Gujjars*, and *Baniaras*. According to him, *Gujjars* and *Bakarwals* are very similar in terms of dialect, ecology, and social

organisation. However bakerwals are declared a separate tribe in Jammu&Kashmirtribal list.They raise buffaloes, sheep, and goats, while Baniaras are traders who serve as liaisons among nomadic and settled populations. **Darshan Singh Manku**, The Gujjar Settlements: Gujjars, an old group that has traditionally led a nomadic and pastoral life with main professions such as herding cattle and breeding cattle, are now changing to different jobs in modern social life. Since 1947, many changes have occurred in the livelihood activities. Cattle rearing is no longer their primary activity. Though few families still raise buffaloes, milk and milk products are primarily for home consumption, except in communities near towns.

The policy of isolation by Verrier Elvin have no relevance at all in present times where everyone want to connect with the outer world. The globalization, westernization, and modernization by and large dominate the modern society where goods are sold in Multinational Corporation through modern technological source. In such a circumstances tribal can't kept in isolation, they too worked and trade with the outer world. That is why Nehru criticized the isolation as "*museum specimens to be observed and written about*" is *disrespectful to them*. The isolationist approached by and large rejected because the tribal can't be kept in isolation, because Gujjars are scattered in almost the whole union territory of Jammu & Kashmir. There is no commitment to this strategy over the long term.

Similarly ifwe discussed the tribal to **Assimilation** into Hindu society or into majority section as mentioned by G.S Ghurye "*tribal are backward Hindus*" and they should come under the umbrella of Hindu society, this approached was somehow successful as several central Indian and north-east Indian tribal become Hindus and adopted the culture and traditions of Hindu society, but by doing so they have lost their own tribal customs and rituals.According to Ghurye, the lack of complete integration into Hindu culture is to blame for their backwardness. Contact with Hindus has resulted in the gradual adoption of Hindu values and practices by the indigenous tribe of India. Tribal people were able to mix with the non-tribal neighbors because of the assimilation strategy. Assimilation efforts in India have led to the growing adoption of Hindu culture among indigenous tribal groups in various regions This approach of integration of whole tribal into Hindu society by Ghurye is also a great threat to tribal culture, customs, traditions, rituals and their sufficient tribal economy also.

Hence, the approach of **assimilation**of tribal can't be applicable to Gujjartribe. Because the topography and demography of Jammu & Kashmir is purely different and Gujjars tribe of Jammu & Kashmir is devoutly Muslims. They followed strict Islamic practices in their day to day life. Their way of living is Islamized. Still they follow their tribal rituals, customs, traditions and culture proudly. Their tribal culture must be protected and promoted. Gujjars face unique difficulties in assimilating into mainstream culture in the context of predominantly Muslim states. The survival of the species depends on keeping their cultural practices and traditions alive.Singh, Gopal, and Kamal Manohar. "Social Transformation of the Gujjars Tribe of Himachal Pradesh" in Tribal Development Tribal societies differ from other societies primarily in their ecosystems, degree of separation, social practices, and beliefs. This is not to say that no interaction occurs beyond the boundaries of various communities. There is obviously interaction with other societies, but it is restricted and uncommon. A tribe is also defined as a familial group that makes up a community. A tribe's members consider themselves to be related by kinship relations. The law of endogamy normally maintains the limitation of kinship relationships inside the tribal boundary. And this restriction helps to strengthen and establish tribal identity.

Nehru's strategy of integration the tribal people into Indian society was the catalyst for the tribe's actual advancement. Nehru discovered protective and promotional measure for tribal development. Both of these measured are well equipped by Jammu & Kashmir government, on one hand government protect Gujjars tribe rights with constitutional provisions and policies while on the other hand tried to promote their traditionsand culture. Using a strategy based on tribal development has helped open lines of communication and piqued the interest of the general populace among numerous tribes in central and northeast India. Jawaharlal Nehru's Panchsheel ideals promote the all-around progress of tribal communities.In the early stages of developing government policy for tribal development, Article 46 of the Indian Constitution mandates governments to promote special care for tribal people's educational and economic interests. Tribal peoples should be provided with social justice and safeguarded from exploitation by special legislation. Governors of states with tribal regions are given specific authority to protect tribal values. The governor has the authority to alter federal and state laws in relation to tribal territories, as well as to create regulations to preserve tribals' right to land and to protect them from the exploitation of moneylenders. The nomadic herders of the Gujjar tribe in Jammu & Kashmir have benefited from scheduled tribal status since 1991. The participation of these Gujjar tribe is a hopeful sign for their future prosperity. Nehru's Panchsheel ideals are well suited to the lifestyle of the Gujjars tribe of Kashmir, who traditionally live as pastoralists. Some laws enacted by the Indian government safeguard citizens' liberties. Every year, the Indian government issues permission to the tribal Gujjars so that they might relocate to greener pastures. The government of Jammu & Kashmir has formed a tribal welfare board to advance the interests of the state's tribal communities. Although many members of the Gujjar tribe in Jammu & Kashmir

do own small plots of land, the majority of the tribe's members live in dispersed communities around the union territory. Every year, Gujjars move their herds and flock to lush summer pastures.

To a similar extent, the Gujjars tribe has been able to establish its own infrastructure thanks to the reservation system in place at the national and state levels, as well as in all local authorities and the Panchayat Raj system. Nehru's strategy of fostering tribal development through indigenous organizations and practices deserves recognition. The nomadic Gujjars have special needs due to their primitivism and lack of education. The reservation system and Jawaharlal Nehru and Ambedkar's moderate integration strategy helped bridge this divide. In order to preserve the Gujjars' unique culture and traditions, specific laws have been enacted. Mohd Bashir Magray (2003), in his paper *Tradition and Change: In truth, the Gujjar population has been completely sedentarized and redirected to agriculture and other business ventures, particularly in Jammu. Apart from agriculture, many Gujjars have entered trade and business, as well as being employed in the service industry. They have now permanently established themselves in practically all of the villages and towns. The trend of sedentarization is also a logical by-product of the spread of knowledge and an overall improvement in living standards. When a pastoral nomad acquires a certain level of prosperity or obtains some education, or both, the desire to escape the trials and ambiguity of pastoralism by pursuing agriculture, trade, or service as a substitute source of survival emerges. Sudden rise of income levels, alternative source of income, and improvement in literacy rate and socio-economic conditions somehow determines the phase of development among Gujjars community in this decades. State, national and international level of scholarships and fellowship benefitted the tribal students. Similarly their culture and traditions is being preserved and protected by organizing cultural festivals, cultural program and on certain common platform. In short we can say, protective and promotional measure given by Jawaharlal Nehru was a bedrock for the overall development of tribes in the country.*

## II. Conclusion

Considering these three points of view, it's clear that Verrier Elvin's concept of isolation doesn't work for the Gujjar tribe in their current form. The research shows that the Gujjar tribe are already culturally, economically, and educationally poor, therefore they cannot be isolated for a long time. Secondly, the Gujjars tribe are not a good fit for G.S. Ghurye's notion that tribes can be successfully absorbed into Hindu civilization or the general population. Because the vast majority of Jammu & Kashmir's Gujjars tribe population is devoutly Muslim, and they have maintain many of their religious and traditional cultural practices. The Gujjar assimilation into mainstream society poses a threat to their cultural heritage and traditional way of living. The Gujjars community can only find useful guidance in Jawaharlal Nehru's concept of integration. In this view, constitutional protections provided by both the central and state governments allow tribal to improve their social situations while also protecting and promoting their unique culture and customs. Because the Gujjars tribes are so far behind the rest of the country in every aspect, special constitutional protections are needed to help them catch up and compete economically, while also ensuring that their rich cultural heritage is passed on to the next generation.

## References

- [1]. M.N. Srinivas, (1977). *Social Change in Modern India*, (Second edition) Delhi Orient hangman, P-26521.
- [2]. Goswami, R. (2003). *Constitutional safeguard for Schedule caste and scheduled tribes*. Jaipur: Rawatpublication. ISBN 81-7033-763-1.p.38
- [3]. R.P Khattana (2007). *Gujari languages and identity in Jammu & Kashmir*, Kashmir news network: language section.
- [4]. Parvez, Dewan, (2011). 'The people and culture of Jammu and Kashmir-Ladakh. Manas publication, Darya Ganj New Delhi.
- [5]. Javaid. Rahi (2011) *history of Gujjar volume 1*
- [6]. Andrabi, Azad Ahmed. "Development of Education of Schedule Tribe in Jammu and Kashmir." *International journal of social sciences*, volume 2, no 4.
- [7]. <https://www.preservearticles.com/social-science/short-essay-on-the-generalcharacteristics-of-a-tribe/13511>
- [8]. Virendar, Koundal (2014). *Livestock Economy of Nomadic Gujjar: A Case Study of Udampur District of J and K*. volume 4, issue 8. August 2014
- [9]. Cunningham, Alexander. (1865). *Archaeological Survey Report of India 1862-63*. (volume II.p. 73) Delhi: Indological Book House.
- [10]. AbassZaheer, Ahmed Jameel, Israr Ahmed (2015) "Socio-Economic and Educational Status of Tribal (Gujjar and Bakarwal) of Jammu and Kashmir. *The International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. Published January 2015.
- [11]. Sinha Manoj k, Kumar Sanjay (2018). 'Social and Educational Problems of Gujjar Students: A Study'. *An Int. Journal of Education and Applied Social Science: Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 221-228, December 2018*.
- [12]. Purkayastha, Nabarun (2015). *Tribal Development Approaches in India*. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*. Vol. 2, Issue: 8,630-633, Aug.
- [13]. Malache, Rita. (2015). *Approach of Tribal Development: A Critical Perspective*. *International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*. Vol.2nd issue 2<sup>nd</sup>: 72-81 April.
- [14]. Subash, Neharica. (2021). *Marginalization of Nomadic Tribe: An Overview of Decline in Seasonal Migration*. *Indian Journal of Applied Research*, 11(07) 45-46. ISSN NO: 2246-555X. DOI: 10.36106/ijar.
- [15]. Gulzar, Danish. (2021). *Inclusive Policies and Their Impact on Tribal of Jammu and Kashmir: A Case of Gujjar Tribals*. *International Journal of Rural Development, Environment, and Health Research*, 5(03), 14-19. ISSN NO: 2456-8678. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijreh.5.3.2>
- [16]. <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/tribes/various-approaches-to-tribal-development-in-india-essay/4356>

- [17]. Saha, Agamani. (2018). Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir. International Research Journal of Human Resources and Social Sciences, (Volume 5 p.200).
- [18]. Sharma, B.D. (1978). Tribal Development: The concept and the frame. SahyogPustak Trust, New Delhi.
- [19]. Manku, Darshan Singh. (1986). theGujjarSettlements: A Study of Ethnic Geography. New Delhi. Inter-India Publications.
- [20]. Pandil (1954), Rao Gopala N. (1978). Land Alienation- A Menace of Tribal Economy, Tribal 10 : (4)
- [21]. Mann, R.S and Vyas N.V. (1980). Indian Tribes in Transition. Jaipur: Rawat Publication.
- [22]. Singh, Gopal and Kamal Manohar. (1998). "Social Transformation of Gujjar tribe of Himachal Pradesh" in Tribal Development: Appraisal and Alternatives. Ed. Gupta, S.K, V.P Sharma and N.K. Sharda. New Delhi. Indus Publishing Company.
- [23]. Margay, Mohd, Bashir, (2003). Tradition and change: from Nomad to Sedentarization, Jammu. Oberoi Book Service.