

Marginalized Communities: A Study Of Gujjar And Bakerwal Community In Jammu And Kashmir

Hilal Ahmad Wanie^{1*}

Abstract

Marginalization is a cycle that prompts the sidelining of a specific community /individual to the periphery of the social space at last compelling their life decisions in political space, social discussion, and economic bargaining. A complex challenged umbrella term is inseparably connected with the idea of inequality inside the marginalized community. As a matter of fact, inequality and marginalization are normally at the connection point in that the two of them cooperate and build up one another. Minority groups are among the people who experience serious avoidance, segregation, and persecution. Be that as it may, worry about 'marginalization' is relatively ongoing, and checking the developmental trajectory of the Gujjar and Bakerwal people in Jammu and Kashmir. They are the third biggest ethnic group in Jammu and Kashmir. They are the state's most populous planned tribe having a populace of in excess of 20 lacks according to the 2011 census and one-fourth of them are living on with nomadic life, out of this 66% populace of traveling Gujjar and Bakerwals fall under scheduled tribe in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir are living beneath the destitution line, uncovered by a survey conducted by Tribal Research and Cultural Foundation (TRCF) working for the cause of Indian Tribes. Both these tribal groups play a crucial role in meeting the requirement of milk and meat for the cities and towns and hence contribute significantly to the livestock sector of the state. Hence in this connection, the present study will analyze the problems and hurdles they faced during their seasonal migration from the plains of Jammu region to the upper reaches of Kashmir valley. This study investigates the fundamental cycles through which Gujjar and Bakerwal people are being marginalized deliberately in various spaces of life. The thrust of this study is to comprehend and investigate the Gujjar and Bakerwal socio and financial circumstances to investigate the determinants and elements of their poor health and know the status of awareness among them about government schemes. Finally, some recommendations will be put forth for the development of Gujjar and Bakerwal community so that this community can thrive and contribute more to the economic development of Jammu and Kashmir.

Keywords: Gujjar, Marginalization, Social Status, Kashmir.

Introduction

The beginning of the Gujjar and Bakarwal tribe are very fascinating. It is said that the Gujjars are excessively called Goojar, Gujjar, and Gurjara. It is said that the start of this tribe was extremely entranced and one can drive from the hour of assault of Hunas the Gurjara clans moved into northern India and Himachal Pradesh. It is normal that the Primogenitor of the Gujjar clan was known as the Khazara clan. So the term Gujjar has its starting point in Khazar and furthermore showed up from Khazar. In any case, the term Bakarwal is derived from the mix of two terms 'Bakri' meaning goat/sheep, and 'wal' signifying "one who deals with". Basically the name 'Bakarwal' implies "high-altitude goat and sheep herders". Bakarwals are essentially peaceful wanderers raising goat and sheep in high-altitudes of more prominent Himalayas during summer and spend their colder time of year in fields and foot slopes of Shwaliks. They are extraordinary migrant clans principally found in the Pirpanjal scope of mountains situated between the two

^{1*}Research Scholar, Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh

territories i.e. Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. Bakarwals are additionally tracked down in each side of Northern territories of the Himalayan range, in particular the provinces of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab.(Zaheer, 2018)In Jammu and Kashmir State there are 12 scheduled tribes in particular Balti, Shin, Changpa, Garra, Mon, Purigpa, Gujjar, Bakarwals, Gaddi, and Sippi. Gujjar and Bakarwals lived between high fields and the low height of shivalik and the Jammu plain.They are spread out in every three regions of the state. The Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has five significant Sub-Clans of Gujjars and bakarwals which incorporate: Banhara Gujjars, Bakarwal Gujjars, Alahiwal Gujjars, Kanhari Gujjars, Semi-nomad Gujjars. However, the Gujjars and the Bakarwals are the third biggest ethnic group in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. .They are the most packed booked clan having a general population of 17, 56,849 according to the statistics of 2011 yet a significant level of them are economically, socially and educationally in reverse. Gujjars are wealthy with regard to social legacy. They are extremely rich in culture and have differentiation over different characters of the State. Gujjars and Bakarwals have their own vernacular Gojri which is a part of the Indo-Aryan language. They have their own ensembles, customs, food propensities, way of life, and expressions and artworks which fluctuate from one region to another.(Mohd, 2014)The Gujjar-Bakarwals guarantee a common ancestry from the Gujjars and Bakarwals are one clan famously known as Gujjar or Gurjars in South Asia. Gujjars have many names like Ajjadh, Dohdhi, Banhara, and Vanvasi. Gujjars who rear goats and sheep are called Bakarwals. Gujjars and Bakarwals share a similar history, culture, language, sub-castes, and racial character. Indeed, even all anthropological and hereditary examinations led by Gujjars-Bakarwals say that they are not isolated characters at all. Bakarwals have a place with a similar ethnic stock as the Gujjars and relationships openly happen among them. (Mir)

Problems during seasonal migration

As the Bakarwal tribe deals with the raising of goats and sheep, these traveling clans move from fields to slopes in the late spring and from slopes to fields prior to propelling winter. In the current paper, the subtleties of obstacles and hardships faced by this tribe are gotten while interacting with individuals from this tribe. It came to see that their life isn't happy yet defenseless as they stay in remote spots where they can track down pastures for their animals in bounty interaction with the members, who have encountered difficulties of itinerant life, uncovered that they confronted a parcel of difficulties during the movement.(Khatana, 1992)The group of Bakarwal tribes of the Reasi Region particularly Arnas, Bhomaag, Chaan, Bhullar, and Shikari climbs to Anantnag, Kulgam Pahalgam, and Gulabgarh seasonally. The challenges they face during their movement while communicating with this tribe they uncovered that precipitation, snowfall, thundering, and lightning is the fundamental obstacle during their course of movement through tough terrains which makes passage hazardous and furthermore raises different issues more regrettable like hell of finding shielding and slipping and falling of animals. They additionally added that the Assault by wild savage creatures panthers, wild canines, and even snakes and bugs is one more reason for stress. Previously, they saw a few episodes of panther assaults on the existence of their kids and domesticated animals. The most grave problem of this nomadic tribe is traffic problem and road accident during their seasonal journey and it takes several weeks on the route, they need a secure place for halt or rest. It must be spacious which cater their livestock and must have water availability. The members who are on escort of herd during the journey told that long journey cause fatigue and tiredness usually after travelling 15-20 km they needs rest. Male members and young people are on duty to escort the herd and they are guided by experienced head that have knowledge of passage and spots where they can stay.(Bhagat, 2020) The strange and abrupt changes in temperature, whether low or high, lead to extreme effects on newly-born livestock in winter as well as in summer pastures. Simultaneously, when they begin summer relocations Walk is when sheep and goats bring forth infants. To no one's surprise, they get through the passes toward the finish of April. The climatic impacts compel them to move from the get-go in the period of spring. Because of changes in climatic circumstances, shortage of water and deficiency of fodder from the get-go in

Spring drive them to move too soon to the mid-year pastures. The quandary is this, assuming that they hold to remain at winter pastures late; they should deal with the issues of high temperatures with a lack of grain and water that isn't suitable for their domesticated animals. On the other hand, the compulsion of early migrations also affects livestock with the low temperature at high altitudes. Carrying the new-born livestock at their back is too difficult to climb on high elevations. Thus, unusual weather conditions make their cycle of seasonal movement much more difficult than in normal conditions, due to unusual snowfall, they had to face a collateral loss and majority of this nomadic tribe were trapped in the pathway of their journey at different mountainous areas during their seasonal migrations in search for livestock pastures. (Tufail, 2014) The Gujjar and Bakarwals are called timberland occupants and wanderers of high slopes in the distant of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly at the time of summer grazing pastures. Steep slopes are excessively sharp for a simple ascension; accordingly, more often than not, their animals roll down to death. Land sliding Torrential slides is likewise a deterrent to their free movement. Steep slopes are generally inclined to land sliding. While their seasonal movement "More often than not the military stops them and poses numerous inquiries, really looks at their personality, and bothers them. Such practices are making issues for nomads. At last, it prompts the nomads to move to far regions for pastures. (Kheraj, 2017) To wrap things up transportation assumes a significant part in the improvement of any country and furthermore might be a mark of advancement. Transportation assumes an urgent part in the improvement of humankind and it makes numerous issues for the transhumant in some manner. In the pathway of their seasonal migration, sometimes they themselves and most of the time their sheep and goats got crushed by the speedy trucks during their seasonal movement. Another problem is the lack of proper transport, so it is difficult to go for the whole journey without any transport facilities. The increasing number of accidents with a growing number of vehicles on the road is a dangerous sign for the transhumant pastoralists. In the heavy traffic, it is too difficult to move on the road with huge herds, all these problems end with the loss of cattle and shepherds too. (Mohammad, 2020)

Marginalization

Gujjar and Bakarwal communities overall are confronting segregation and rejection from standard society, which has prompted restricted admittance to resources and opportunities. Stereotyping and segregation were recognized as significant issues, with these tribes being frequently named "in backward" and "primitive," (Gojur) prompting underestimation and avoidance. Discrimination in view of their ethnic and social character additionally intensified the issue, adversely affecting their social and economic mobility. Exclusion from mainstream society was also identified as a key issue faced by these communities, with limited access to employment opportunities, education, and healthcare services being major factors contributing to their exclusion. This resulted in economic and social inequalities. (Dar, 2020) The Gujjars and Bakarwal tribes of Jammu and Kashmir face huge difficulties connected with poverty and joblessness, restricted admittance to monetary assets, credit facilities, and market opportunities, absence of economic opportunity and financial resources within the community is an essential contributor to poverty and joblessness. The tribes' essential occupation is domesticated animal raising and farming, which frequently return little benefit because of the hilly landscape and unusual weather patterns. Subsequently, a major part of the community battle to get by, with many living below the destitution line. Furthermore, restricted admittance to monetary assets, credit facilities, and market open doors, obstructs their capacity to put resources into their vocations and advance their financial circumstance. The absence of financial resources represents a critical hindrance to schooling, medical care, and other essential necessities. They are unable to expand their businesses, purchase modern equipment, or take advantage of new opportunities due to limited access to credit facilities. (Harihar Bhattacharyya, 2010) Political exclusion is a huge issue for the Gujjar and Bakarwal clans of Jammu and Kashmir. These people are underrepresented in the legislative assembly, with just a few of them having representation. This absence of political representation could bring about the disregard for the novel requirements and difficulties faced by these communities. Moreover, not very many ancestral government officials

stand firm on chosen situations, demonstrating that the Gujjar and Bakarwal people groups might be underrepresented in the political field. This absence of representation could prompt further marginalization of these communities and the breaking point of their capacity to advocate for their freedoms and interests. The literacy rate among these tribes is exceptionally low, with just a small extent of the populace being educated. Poverty, lack of access to education, and discrimination were identified as contributing factors to this problem. Barriers to education, including lack of transportation and discrimination, are significant obstacles that contribute to children dropping out of school. In addition, limited access to healthcare services negatively affects the overall health outcomes of these communities. The lack of healthcare facilities in these nomadic tribes is a major concern. In order to improve access to healthcare services, including mobile medical clinics as well as mobile sanitation facilities, would be beneficial in addressing this issue and improving the health outcomes of these communities. (Tawssef Iqbal Bhat and Rahil Gupta, 2014)

State Response

The improvement of tribal areas in the state of Jammu and Kashmir has been a main concern. Indeed, even in 1966, endeavors were made to distinguish the border development community blocks for exceptional treatment in view of their peculiar problems and issues. In the proposal of different groups that visited various parts of the state now and again, a few economically backward areas were recognized in 1966 for unique consideration in the budget allocation. On the suggestions of different panels comprised occasionally, unique sub-plans were drawn up for a portion of the recognized bad pockets. Keeping in view these particular issues, the government set up an advisory Board for the improvement of Gujjars and Bakarwals in 1974. During the seventh five-year Plan endeavors were made to enhance the part of these communities, by raising literacy levels, opening mobile schools, awarding scholarships, developing hostels, supplying books, and reimbursement of examination fees. Other than these, different plans aimed at socioeconomic advancement, for example, housing subsidies, advancement of housing colonies, and development of shopping complexes, and so on. Improvement of pastures and munching land in sub-tropical, temperate, and alpine pastures, for which an arrangement of Rs. 161 lacks has been proposed and 100% benefit of this scheme goes to this particular community. In addition to that Extension of the scheme supply of books and uniform to students up to 5th class and Construction of girl's hostel at Jammu and two transit halts at Srinagar and Jammu and opening of mobile dispensary for migratory grazers etc. (Sofi, 2013). Ladakh region in 1989, eight backward communities were granted the status of scheduled, which was additionally stretched out to the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities of Jammu and Kashmir regions in 1991. Nonetheless, the members from the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities feel that giving of S.T. status has not helped them by any means. Dumbfounding as it might appear, the numbers of Gujjar and Bakarwal administrators have really gone down after the community granted the tribal status. The heads of these communities alluded that the reservation, which they are qualified for, in different divisions, is profited by the powerful high society just and the advantages have neglected to permeate to the grassroots level. With the exception of a couple of civil servants and technocrats, the utilized Gujjars and Bakarwals are for the most part dealing with monitoring unimportant posts. Any development programme initiated for the alleviation of poverty and socio-economic underdevelopment cannot achieve the desired objectives, unless it is effectively implemented. The past experience shows that the benefits of all the poverty alleviation schemes have not yielded the desired results. In fact the benefits have not reached the concerned population. The success or failure of any development strategy largely depends on its effective implementation, rather than its mere introduction. An ineffectively coordinated program will undoubtedly demonstrate a failure notwithstanding its gigantic venture since it leads to various shortcomings, viz., slow and unfortunate choice, and absence of co-ordination of activities, unfortunate detail of obligations, defilement, and struggle among the members. (Xaxa, 2008). An endeavor has been made in this part to survey the execution of the special program schemes at the grass root level and look at its job in eradicating poverty and financial backwardness. Integrated Rural Development

Programme (IRDP) among different formative projects, the IRDP might be viewed as the center one for the improvement of rural regions. IRDP was the primary program of its sort which was in the country in 1978-79. It has given help to the rural poor as subsidies and bank credit for productive employment opportunities through progressive arrangement periods. Subsequently, “Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Supply of Improved Tools Kit for Rural Artisans (SITRA)”, etc. were presented as sub-programs of IRDP to deal with the particular necessities to the country rural populace. Special funds are being given to the State government by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India for the creation and up gradation of infrastructure expected to carry the tribal regions at standard with the remainder of the country. This plan is additionally executed through the concerned District Development Commissioners who are the nodal organizations for the execution of the plan.(Tripathy, 2000)

Conclusion

To conclude we can say that the govt. should direct awareness drives in the tribal regions. The associations that are working with the government assistance of tribal regions in J&K should be engaged with these drives. It is better to involve people belonging to these communities in the awareness campaigns. Awareness area should be broadened by including awareness regarding policies and programs meant for them, educational facilities, medical facilities and advancements, benefits of the small family system, maternal health-related issues, hygienic methods and use of sanitary napkins in periods, scholarship facilities, and more importantly to aware them regarding their rights and information related to exploitation of their rights. Policies and schemes should reach the common people at the ground level and this is a real challenge and deserving often gets neglected due to lack of awareness to few people. Thus, it can be observed that the pastoralist transhumant is facing the problems of both changing climate and increasing urbanization. They are facing the problems around the year to some extent but particularly, in the mid-way of the seasonal migrations. These problems mainly start from the commencement of their seasonal movements and even not end with the completion of their sessional movements. They are confronted with the shrinking of grazing pastures mainly due to the ever-increasing population and also due to the policy of govt. Land occupancy etc. Apart from these, unusual and severe weather conditions also create so many problems in their ways of living. Bad weather, shrinking of grazing grounds, lack of transport facilities, etc. and increasing of vehicles crowd on the road also an obstacle in the way of pastoralist transhumance’s economic activity. These all problems compel them to leave their age-old hereditary activity. These are the problems that weaken their economy. Due to all these problems, most of the household of the tribes are abandoning their hereditary practices and started sedentary way of life, mostly who belongs to Gujjars community. With the passage of time, such seasonal migration is going to change by different reasons, viz., Political Turmoil, unpredictable weather, hurdle in traveling route, etc. Bakarwals and some Gujjars who are practicing seasonal migration are economically and socially weak and backward, low level of education, and unskilled. Tribes and forest are interrelated and have a co-existence. So, they must have forest rights including traditional forest based livelihood, collection of timber, and grazing of cattle should be allowed. There are several scheme launched by central Government for welfare of tribal people but due to lack of education, these tribes are unaware about it. Secondly due to lack of permanent settlement enrollment on educational institution also low. The only way for their advancement and bringing them in main stream is education and awareness so that these tribal people can use various schemes that are there for tribal people and can get financial assistance at subsidized rate and start their own business or set up small scale industry. The lack of use of modern technology and digital illiteracy is one of other key reasons behind hardships they face today. Only if they are aware of advancements of information technology, and know how to use them for accessing prior weather forecast and GIS systems. They can plan their migration journeys in better way according to weather predictions.

References:

- Bhagat, N. K. (2020). Socio-Environmental Hurdles and Difficulties in the Seasonal Migration of Bakarwal. *Vidhyayana- An international Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed E-Journal*, 2454-8596.
- Dar, F. A. (2020). Social Exclusion and Marginalization of Gujjar and Bakarwal Tribal Communities in Kashmir: A Critical Analysis. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education*, 9469-9472.
- Harihar Bhattacharyya, P. S. (2010). *The Politics of Social Exclusion in India: Democracy at the Crossroads*. New York: Rutledge.
- Khatana, R. P. (1992). *Tribal Migration in Himalyan Frontiers: A study of Gujjar Bakarwal Transhumance Economy*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Kheraj. (2017). Sesonal Migration of Gujjar and Bakarwal in Poonch District of Jammu and Kashmir. *International Journal of Academic Research and Development*, 364-368.
- Mir, B. A. (2020). A study on Socio-Economic and Cultural Status of Gujjars and Bakarwals in Kashmir. *International Conference on Health Science, Green Economics, Eductional Review and Technology*, 273-284.
- Mohammad, T. A. (2020). Assessment of Physical Factors on Seasonal Migration: A Case Study of Gujjars And Bakarwals of Rajouri District. *Purakala (UGC Care Journal)*, 28-38.
- Mohd, T. (2014). An Over View of the Economic Characteristics of the Gujjars and Bararwals: Acase Study of the Jammu and Kashmir. In J. Rahi, *the Gujjars vol-4 (Gujjars History and Culture)* (pp. 325-332). Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Acacademy of Art, Culture , Languages , Jammu.
- Sofi, U. J. (2013). Paradox of Tribal Development: A Case of Gujjars and Bakarwals of Jammu & Kashmir. *Journal of Sociology and Social Work*, 01-08.
- Tawssef Iqbal Bhat and Rahil Gupta. (2014). Tribal population and development policies in the Himalayan state of Jammu and Kashmir: A critical analysis. *Int J Human Social Sci Invent*, 18-26.
- Tripathy, S. (2000). *Glimpses on Tribal Development*. India: Discovery Publishing House.
- Tufail, M. (2014). Impact of the Climatic Change on the Seasonal Movement of Gujjar Bakarwals: Community Perception. *Journal of Environmental Science, Toxicology And Food Technology*, 41-46.
- Xaxa, V. (2008). *State, Society, and Tribes: Issues in Post-colonial India*. New Delhi: Pearson Longman.
- Zaheer, A. (2018). Socio-economic conditions of Gujjars and Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir. *International confrence on Social Science and Humanity*, 159-187.