

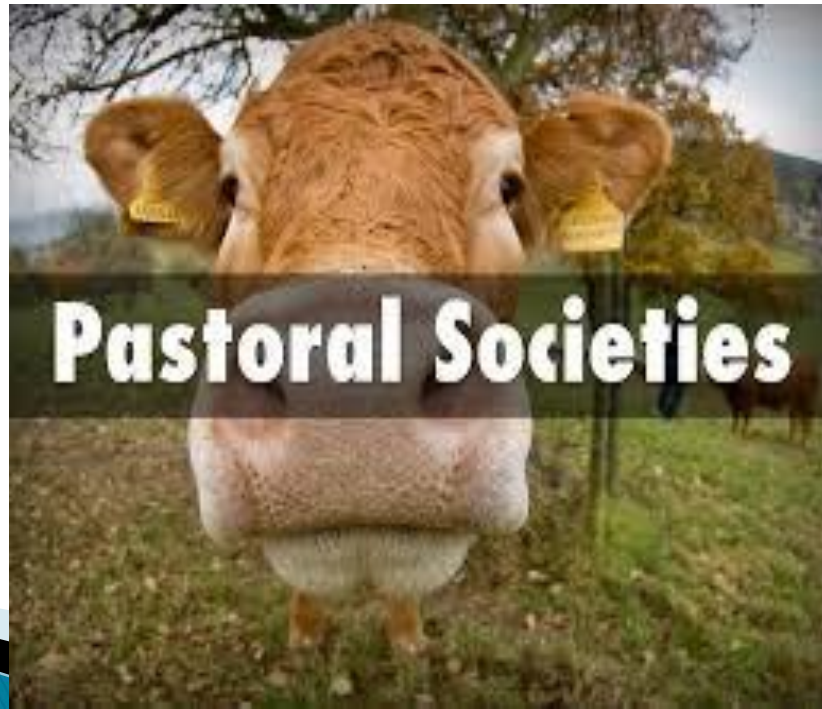
Pastoral Life of Muslim Gujjars: A Study of Life of Gujjar in Mandi District, Himachal Pradesh, India



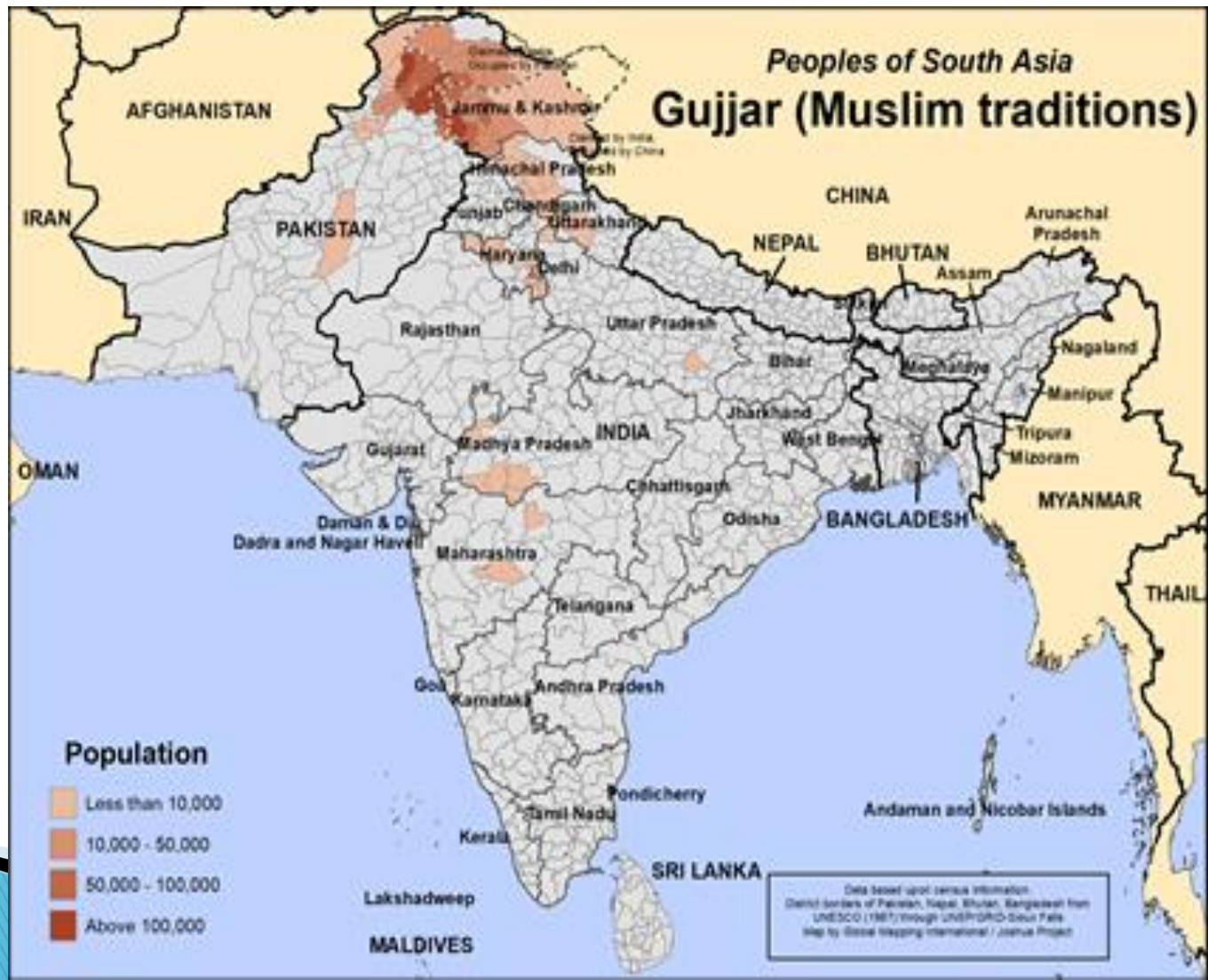
**Presented by
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A pastoral society is a social group of pastoralists, whose way of life is based on pastoralism, and is typically nomadic. Daily life is centered upon the tending of herds or flocks.

When humans made use of animals for domestic purposes, started raising and herding animals.

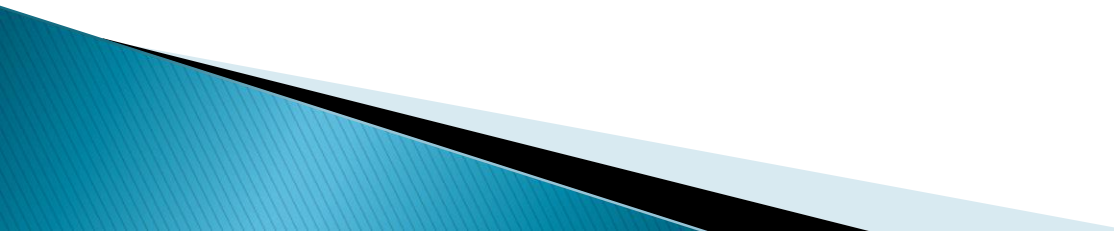


India is home to a large number of Pastoral Groups



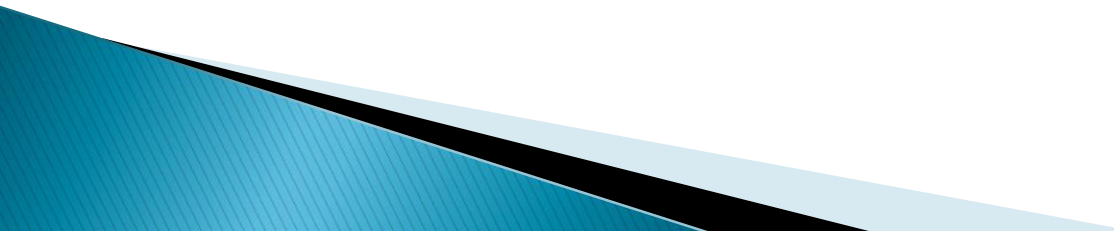
Introduction

- Gujjars constitute one of the major pastoral tribes of Himachal Pradesh and account for 23.6 percent of the total Scheduled Tribe population of the State.
- The Gujjars of HP have two sects Hindu as well as Muslims. The Hindu Gujjars are leading a settled life whereas Muslims are completely nomads and are pastorals

- ▶ These tribal groups are known to use a large number of wild plants for various purposes like medicine, food, fodder, fuel etc.
 - ▶ Therefore, forests have maintained the very existence of these tribes.
 - ▶ The Muslim Gujjars are found exclusively in the Himalayan region leading a pastoral, semi-nomadic, semi-agricultural life in transhumance.
 - ▶ They live in these regions in complete biosocial and geographic isolation.
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- ▶ They are eco friendly as they don't indulge in any sort of clash or conflict with their environment.
- ▶ As far as ecology is concerned, they are the stewards with their traditional knowledge of ecology and its management.
- ▶ Islam forbids wasting of resources and destroying the environment. The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered the Muslims not to cut trees during the war. He emphasized the conservation of the environment and the prevention of its destruction. Therefore, conserving the environment is a religious duty of every Muslims.

- ▶ Their basic economy revolves around rearing of buffaloes, and they survive by selling milk and milk products to the settled villagers. They often rely upon middlemen, owing to whom many are now indebt. The nomadic Gujjars have difficulties in having land ownership, and at times are subjected to eviction from their camp sites. But the settled Gujjars have a more comfortable life and have resorted to pastoralist

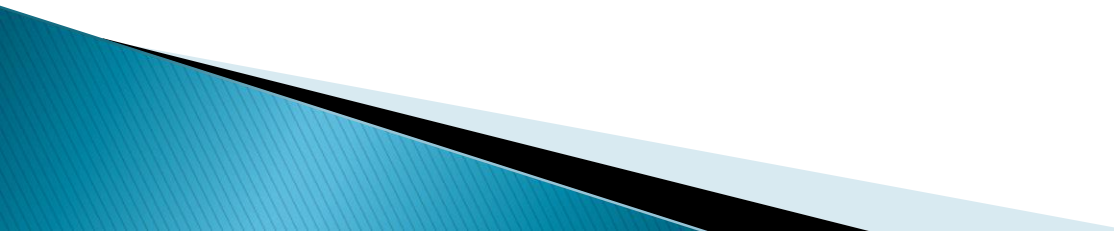
- ▶ The Gujjars of Himachal Pradesh are one of the most marginalized communities of the country owing to their tribal and nomadic status. Living in the far-flung areas, these tribal groups are the first to be hit by vagaries of nature, such as drought, flood, infectious diseases, economic and cultural displacement, etc.
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Meaning of Gujjar

The name Gujjar is derived from the principal profession followed by the tribe: cattle-breeding (the Sanskrit word for cow is gau and the old Hindi word for sheep is gadar)., though "Gujjar" has come from "Gurjar" which is a Sanskrit word which according to Sanskrit Dictionary has been explained Gurjjar; 'Gur' means 'enemy' and 'jar' means 'destroyer'. The word means "Destroyer of the enemy". The word "Gurjar" predicts the qualities of a warrior community.

Research Methodology

- ▶ The study was based on primary and secondary data. The primary data was gathered from 250 Muslim Gujjars of Mandi District of Himachal Pradesh, India. A questionnaire was designed to get responses of the respondents. Reviews of secondary data related to Muslim Gujjars were also undertaken.
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Limitations

The topography of Himachal Pradesh is not only diverse but also difficult to survey. The settlement pattern of Gujjar is very scattered due to hilly topography. Limitation of the study lies because of time constraints also.

The purpose of the paper was to examine

- ▶ To understand the socio demographic profile of the Gujjars in Himachal Pradesh.
- ▶ Recommend a new strategy to empower and enable them to take up livelihood opportunities based on sustainable and equitable use of natural resources in Himachal Pradesh.

Results and Discussions

The study has been conducted with a broader scope and from variety of socio demographic perspectives. Hence, after the data was collected, the information has been classified, tabulated and interpreted in simple frequency distribution and percentage was taken out accordingly.

- ▶ While observing the overall social and demographic conditions of Muslim Gujjars in Mandi District of Himachal Pradesh, India, it was found that the majority of the respondents are illiterates and females. They are still maintaining the joint family housing structure. They have not been provided with any kind of permanent settlement so the majority of them are Nomadics.

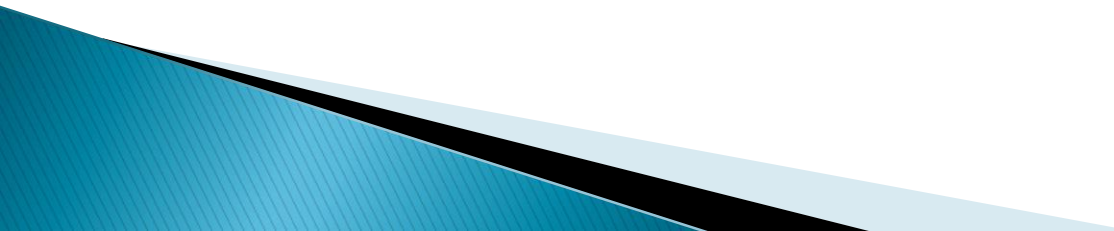
- ▶ The study revealed that child marriage is prevalent despite the fact there is legal age of marriage because of the lack of exposure to the mainstream society. Muslim Gujjars have total dearth of basic amenities and their economic conditions compel them to live in the unhygienic and filthy conditions and as a result they get number of diseases.

- ▶ They are still socially conservative and economically pastoral. They preserve their own traditional cultural identity and strictly follow old traditions and customs
The study also revealed that Gujjar women have a secondary status to men but play a very important role in the economic activities of the family

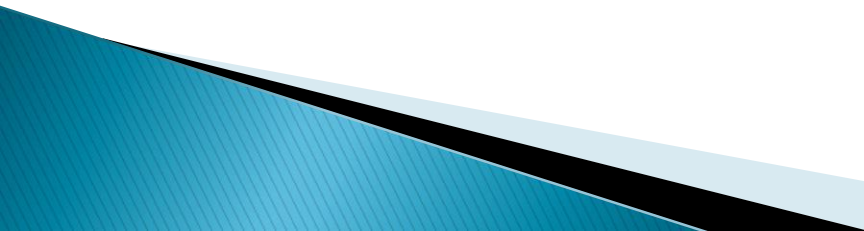
- ▶ There is an effective organization among the nomadic Gujjars of Himachal Pradesh which is known as *Dera* or a group. There is a *Biradari Panchayat* which deals with the cases involving sex, property, and status. Their houses are constructed of muds which are called 'Kotha'. The study concluded that the participation of Gujjar women in agriculture has always been high for settled Muslim Gujjars and it has also increased during the past years because of the migration of immense number of men to get paid work in other parts of India

- ▶ The study also revealed that they are not aware of schemes started by State and Central Government for their upliftment.

Recommendations

- ▶ The Government should take necessary steps for the settlement, betterment and upliftment of the nomadic Gujjars and the policies should be framed after having the discussion of the problems being faced by the community.
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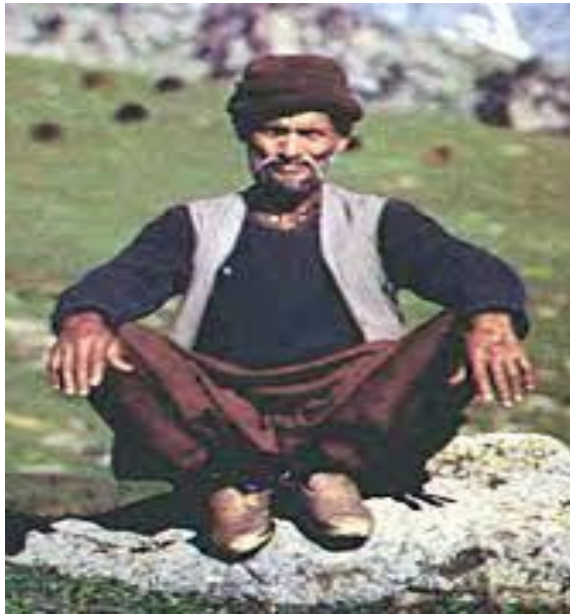
- ▶ Gujjars who live in the rural areas of Himachal Pradesh contribute significantly to the rural and urban economy by providing milk and milk products. Being committed to their cultural tradition, it is imperative that special attention be given to this tribe of Himachal Pradesh so that they are able to improve their socio-economic condition through improved dairy farming. Various developmental agencies should concentrate their efforts on dairy development for the Gujjars

- ▶ Conservative Gujjars should be educated to scientifically improve their breed of buffaloes. Providing free insurance cover to nomadic people for their animals will be a positive step towards their livelihood security and economic empowerment.
 - ▶ Promotion of veterinary health services to look after the health of animals is highly essential.
 - ▶ Development of pasture land with the help of Forest Department and cooperative societies can be established.
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Conclusion

It can be concluded that the pace of transformation among Muslim Gujjars of Himachal Pradesh with the changing environment is very low therefore various Government and Non-Government agencies should come forward with plans of development without harming the culture of Gujjars so that they can be uplifted and become a part of mainstream society. Now it is hoped that these people will also come forward in line with other prosperous communities provided sincere efforts are put.

Dresses of Muslim Gujjars of Himachal Pradesh, India



Thank You

