

Gujjars and Bakerwals:-Potential for Cultural Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir With Special to Rajouri District

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ABSTRACT: The Gujjars, who live Nomadic life today, have once ruled the entire Northern India. Presently Gujjars live in one dozen States of India, with their distinctive life style; these States include Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, M.P, Uttaranchal and Gujarat, besides a few areas in Delhi. The frontier, Baluchistan and Punjab province of Pakistan also have number of colonies of Gujjars. The State of Jammu and Kashmir had been the advent of Gujjars during 9th and 10th century A.D. This was the period when Islam was spreading in northern India.

The Gujjars and Bakerwals, the third largest ethnic group in Jammu and Kashmir after Kashmiri and Ladakhi, constitute more than 20 per cent population of the State. They are the state's most populous Scheduled Tribe having a population of more than 20 lakh as per the 2011 census and one fourth of them are living nomadic life. Out of the total nomadic Gujjars and Bakerwals, 66 percent population of nomad Gujjars-Bakerwals who fall under Scheduled Tribe groups in the state of Jammu & Kashmir are living Below Poverty Line, revealed a survey conducted by Tribal Research and Cultural Foundation (TRCF), a frontal organization working for the cause of Indian tribes.

The paper is conceptual in nature and tries to study the tribal group Gujjars-Bakerwals which are rich in terms of Cultural Heritage. They have their own language GOJRI which is an offshoot of Indo-Aryan language and have their own costumes, traditions, food habits, living habits and art, and craft. The data was taken from interviews conducted by researcher, papers published in journals and National Human Development Report of India. An attempt is made to promote the tribal group Gujjars-Bakerwals of Jammu and Kashmir as a Cultural heritage Wealth for Indian tourism.

INTRODUCTION

There are 533 tribes as per notified Schedule under Article 342 of the Constitution of India in different States and Union Territories of the country. The

blissful Northeast India to splendid Orissa, fascinating Chhattisgarh and balanced Jharkhand, the tribal population of India has so far managed to preserve their prehistoric rituals, customs and culture even in today's modern world the population of tribal

people in India alone represents about eight per cent of the country's total population

Majumdar gives an elaborate definition, which can be applied to the ground reality to distinguish tribes from non-tribes. He describes tribe as "a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous, with no specialisation of functions, ruled by tribal officers, hereditarily or otherwise united in language or dialect, recognising social distance with other tribes or castes without any social obloquy attaching to them, as it does in the caste structure, following tribal traditions, beliefs and customs, illiberal of naturalisation of ideas from alien sources, above all conscious of a homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration.

✓ ***From the above given definitions the following inferences could be drawn.***

- First, the tribals are the earliest inhabitants on the land and live in a contiguous territory mostly in forests and hill-tracts.
- Secondly, they speak a common dialect, though every community has not been able to develop its own language.
- Thirdly, they possess a social system and a culture common to them, though it varies in different regions and localities.
- Fourthly, they practice endogamy and strictly follow their social and political customs, and owe their loyalty to an elder member of the tribal community, called the tribal chieftain.
- The last but most important feature, however, is that members of a tribe feel that they have more

in common with each other than with neighbouring groups. This sense of commonality binds the members of a tribe together and distances them from the non-members of the tribe.

According to Oxford Dictionary "tribe is a group of people in primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding them as having a common ancestor.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study origin and the Culture of Gujjars and Bakerwals of Rajouri and Punch Districts.
- To ascertain the Potential for Tribal Tourism in the study area.
- To study the demographic features of the practitioners of tribal and folk art & culture within the region.
- To study the existing opportunities facilitating the preservation, promotion and dissemination of tribal and folk art & culture.
- To suggest way and the method to promote tribal tourism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Review of Literature

The studies on various aspects of scheduled tribes have not attracted the attention which it actually deserves.

- **N.K.Ambasht, (1970)** found that there exists social distance between the teacher and the pupil in the tribal areas.

- **S. M. Dubey, (1972)** carried a study on education, social change and political consciousness among tribes of north east India and concluded that tribes are illiterate and backward, and there is a need of creating political awareness among them.
 - **R.P.Khatana, (1976)** studied on marriages and kinship among Gujjar and Bakerwals in Jammu and Kashmir and concluded that these scheduled tribes marriages within the community and within the clan strictly and also studied some aspects of transhumance in mountainous traits during the year 1976. Subsequent workers like **B.Zutshi (1981)** **Kango& Dhar (1981)** and **Nau Nihal Singh (2003)** have also contributed on studying various aspects of Gujjar and Bakerwal scheduled tribes.
 - **K.S.Chalam, (1993)** studied on educational policy for human resource development, and concluded that there is a need of educational reforms for the development of scheduled tribes.
 - **J.Daswani, (1993)** gave a report on “Tribal study synthesis report and a summary of significant findings. **Department of Education, (1993)** the department of education under ministry of human resource development analysed the status of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes and made certain support schemes for the development of education of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes.
 - **D.K.Behera, (1999)** made a study entitled “contemporary societies, tribal societies” studies on various social concepts about the tribes and concluded that tribals are socially and educationally backward.
 - **Sahu Chaturbhuj, (2006)** made a study on some aspects of tribals in the book entitled aspects of tribal studies.
 - **P.Dash Sharma, (2006)** studied on Primitive Tribes in India and concluded that there is a need of special programmes for their sustainable development.
 - **Aparna Mitra, (2008)** studied on the status of women among scheduled tribes in India and concluded that tribal women are less educated comparatively and gender equality among tribal group is a complex phenomenon.
- Amaresh Dubey, (2009)** studied on scheduled tribes and concluded that scheduled tribes are facing the problems of poverty and under nutrition and there is a need to pay attention on them, Thus from the above literature, it can be concluded that despite few attempts have been made to study the certain aspects of Gujjars and Bakerwals Tribe of Jammu and Kashmir. But it appears that no attempt has been made to study the cultural aspects of Gujjars and Bakerwals of Rajouri District. It is in this context, the study is being undertaken to analyse the Gujjars and Bakerwals: Potential for Cultural Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir with Special to Rajouri Districts of Jammu & Kashmir.

STATE PROFILE

1.1 General

The state of Jammu & Kashmir is strategically located in the north-west corner of India. It shares its borders with China in the east, Pakistan in the West, Afghanistan and Russia in the North and plains

of Punjab and Himachal in the south and south-east. The state of Jammu & Kashmir stretches between 32° - 17' N to 37° - 05' North latitude and 72° - 31' E to 80° - 20' East longitude. From North to South, it extends 640 Kms in length and from East to West over 480 Kms in breadth.

The total area of state is 2, 22,236 sq. Kms. But the area under actual control is 1, 01,387 sq. Kms only, as the great chunk of the territory is under illegal occupation of Pakistan and China. Lying in the northern most part of the country, the state of Jammu and Kashmir formed on 26th October, 1947. The state enjoys special status on account of Article 370 of Indian Constitution. It has its own Constitution and various provisions of Acts. Laws and Regulations enforced by Government of India are enforced in the state only after they are ratified by the state legislature. The latest administrative setup of the state consists of twenty two districts, eighty two tehsils, one hundred forty two blocks, four thousand one hundred twenty eight Panchayats and seven urban agglomerations.

The Jammu & Kashmir is divided into 22 districts: Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur, Poonch, Rajouri, Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban, Reasi, and Samba in Jammu Division and Srinagar, Budgam, Anantnag, Pulwama, Baramulla, Kupwara, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Kulgam and Shopian in Srinagar Division and Kargil and Leh in Ladakh Region.

S.NO.	Description	As per Census, 2011
1	No of Districts	22
2	No of Tehsils	82
3	No. of Blocks	143
4	No. of Panchayats	4128
5	No. of Towns	86
6	Number of Cities with Million Plus Population	2 (Srinagar & Jammu)
7	Total Area	2,22,236 sq. Kms

Table 1.1 Administrative Information

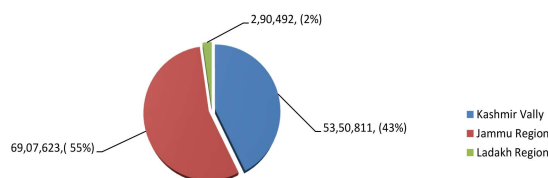
1.2 Demography: - It consists of three distinct regions – Kashmir valley, Jammu, and Ladakh.

The area and population of the three regions is –

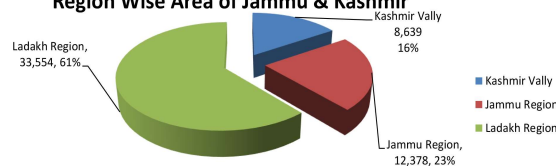
S.NO.	Region	Areas (Sq. Miles)	Population 2011 census.
1	Kashmir Valley	8,639	5,35,0811
2	Jammu Region	12,378	69,07,623
3	Ladakh Region	33,554	2,90,492
	Total	54,571	1,25,48,926

Table 1.2 Demographic Profiles

Jammu and Kashmir Population 2011 Census.



Region Wise Area of Jammu & Kashmir



ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Jammu and Kashmir is also globally familiar for its tourism, may it be the case of adventure, leisure or pilgrimage tourism, all of these three major forms of tourism witnessed boom in the last couple of years.

There were 12.3 million

tourist visited in the State during the year 2012 and this trend remains continue for the subsequent years. Besides tourism and handicraft, States agro climatic conditions also suites for horticulture and floriculture. Horticulture and floriculture contribute a lot to rural economy of the State.

Talking about the agriculture which is the primary sector of the economy of the State, Jammu and Kashmir is gifted with sufficient agricultural and natural resources. The basmati rice is the speciality of Jammu region; world famous Kashmiri apple is cultivated in the area of Kashmir region. Besides apples, cherries, pomegranate, peaches, walnuts are also grown in this region. Jammu and Kashmir is the single State in India, which produces maximum apples; it is this apple which is supplied in domestic and international market.

However tourism remains the prime feature of the State, may it be pilgrimage tourism i.e. Shri Mata Vaishno Devi, Amaranth, Shiv khori, Old Monasteries/Gompas of Leh either adventure or pleasure tourism products, all of these forms are very much prominent in the State. Because of unmatched scenic beauty of the State earlier it was known as “Paradise on Earth”. Jammu and Kashmir has two capitals i.e. summer and winter capitals. Below table mention the bifurcation of pilgrims visited to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra, and Shiv Khori of Jammu region.

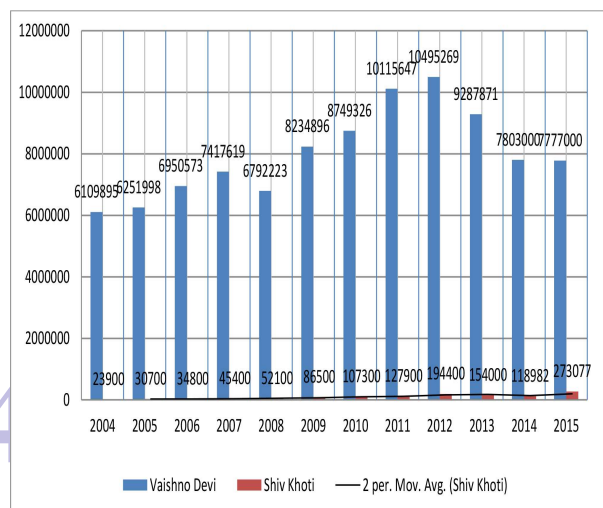
S.No.	Years	Vaishno Devi	Shiv Khori
1	2004	6109895	23900
2	2005	6251998	30700
3	2006	6950573	34800
4	2007	7417619	45400
5	2008	6792223	52100
6	2009	8234896	86500
7	2010	8749326	107300
8	2011	10115647	127900
9	2012	10495269	194400
10	2013	9287871	154000
11	2014	7803000	118982*
12	2015	7776000	273077

*April 2015

Table 1.3 Administrative Information

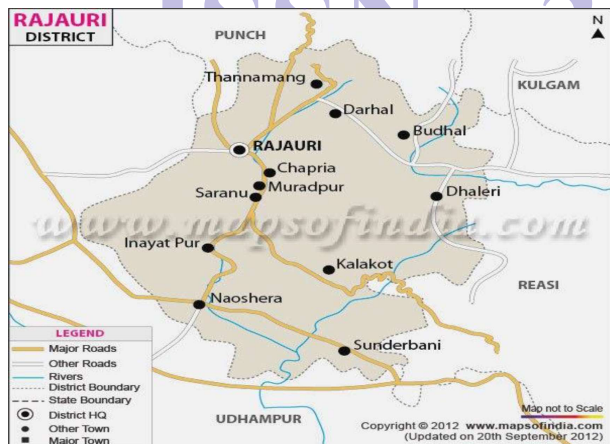
Source: Respective Shrine Board

From the above given table it is clear that nearly 1.0 crore pilgrims visited to the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine during 2011. Similarly in the subsequent year i.e. in the year 2012 there were 10495269 pilgrims visited to this cave. This was an increase of 3.23% over the year 2011. In Shrine Shiv Khori which recently came into lime light received pilgrims 127900 during the year 2011, if we compare the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine with shiv Khori during 2011 only 1.26% pilgrims visited to this cave over Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine.



Overview of District Rajouri

MAP



Geographically

Geographically, Rajouri is situated between 70° to 74° and 40' (minute) East Longitude and 32° to 35' (minute) North Latitude. It is located in the foot hills of Peer Panchal ranges. The district is bounded in the eastern side by Reasi, Line of Control (LoC) bypass to its Western side, in its North Poonch and in South side Jammu District is located. It is 154 Kilometres away from the winter capital of the State. The atmosphere of Rajouri diverges from semi tropical to temperate zone in the mountainous areas. The normal precipitation (rainfall) is 996 mm while the temperature varies from a minimum of 7.4 °C to maximum of 44 degree Celsius. Literacy rate of the district is 68.17 % according to the census of 2011. The average person household accounted for 6 members per household.

The population of the District is 5.12 % of the entire population of the State. Density of population is 244 people per square kilometre in the district as against 100 in the state. Races like Gujjars, Bakerwals, Punjabis, Paharies and Dogras dwelling in various parts of the district. People of a range of faiths, castes, and creeds are living peacefully and in cordial atmosphere in the district. Gujjars are mostly residing

on the slopes of the mountains, they are having small pieces of lands for cultivation, and most of them are living below poverty line. They comprise 36.24 % population of the district. Bakerwals are the offshoots of the Gujjars. They are having linguistic, religious and cultural similarities with Gujjars. Most of them are nomadic types and rear herds of goats and flocks of sheep. They are scattered in the district and migrate from one place to another in search of pastures for their cattle.

Paharies people are living in most of the villages in the district apart from municipalities. Paharies means mountaineer and those who speak Pahari dialects, although they are Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, whose cultural similarity keeps them together. Apart from this, Dogri speaking people also inhabit in some pockets of Sunderbani, Kalakote and Nowshera, while some Kashmiri families are residing in Thanamandi and upper reaches of Budhal. Historical aspects of Rajouri

Historically, Rajouri remained an important region in the ancient times. It was initially known as 'Rajapuri', the land of Rajas. In the 1036 A.D, Alburani came to Rajouri along with Masood who was the son Mehmood. He wrote in his document i.e. in "Kitab-Ul-Hina" that the forename of Rajouri as Rajvari. Srivar the author of 2nd Rajtringni, which was authored during the rule of Zain ul Abidin, he also wrote Rajori as Rajvari. Thus slowly and steady over a long period of time, the name changed from Rajvari to Rajour and finally to Rajouri. District Rajouri was carved out as an independent district from the erstwhile Poonch District in the year 1968 with 2 tehsils Rajouri and Nowshera. As per Rajtringni (Kalhana) Rajouri became principality around 950 A.D and Raja Prithivi Paul became the first ruler of the area. Paul Rajas ruled up to 1194 A.D, when a Muslim Prime-Minister Noor-Ul-Din revolted against Pauls and became the

Raja of Rajouri since there the Muslims ruled up to 21st October, 1846 A.D. In 1846 A.D, when the whole state of Jammu & Kashmir was purchased by Raja Gulab Singh from the Britishers and thereafter he became the Maharaja of J&K State, Rajouri principality also came under his regime and Mian Hathu became the first Governor of Rajouri. Dogras ruled this area up to 1947. After the happening of 1947, Rajouri became the part of district Poonch. On 2nd September, 1967, the Government separated Rajouri from Poonch district and so Rajouri district came into existence.

District Rajouri Population

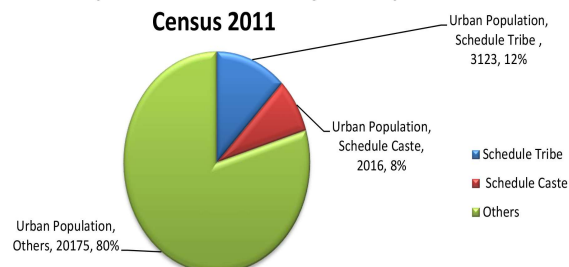
Detail of population of district Rajouri is mentioned as break up of Rural and Urban Population. The population size of the Rajouri as report of the Census, 2011 is 6, 42,415 comprising 34,535 males and 29,706 females.

Population of Schedule Tribe and Schedule Caste as Per Census 2011 in District Rajouri is as under. There are approximate 39% schedule tribe, 8% schedule cast and 53% others are living in rural areas of Rajouri. In addition to it, 6% schedule tribes, 4% schedule cast and 90% other population are also living in the urban areas of Rajouri rural population.

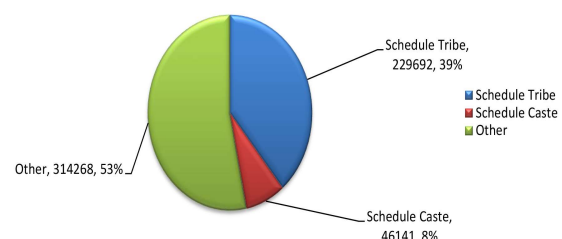
Rural	Schedule Tribe	Schedule Caste	Others	Total
Population	229692	46141	314268	590101
Percentage	38.92	7.81	53.26	100
Urban	3123	2016	20175	52314
Percentage	5.95	3.85	90	100

Table 1.4 Administrative Information

Urban Population of District Rajouri as per Census 2011



Rural Population of ST and SC as Per Census 2011 in District Rajouri



Origin of Gujjars

The Gujjar tribals have settled in the heartland of Himachal Pradesh. The Gujjars are also called as Goojar, Gujar & Gurjara. They are mostly residing in the northern western part of Himachal Pradesh. The origin of this tribe is quite interesting it was said that during the time of invasion of Hunas the Gurjara tribes moved into northern India and the Himachal Pradesh. It is assumed the Khazar tribes are the ancestors of the Gujjar tribe. The term Gujjar has arrived from Khazar. In India, Gujjar populations are found mainly in Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, northern Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The semi-nomadic Gujjar groups are found in the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and north-

western Uttar Pradesh. The name for the state of Gujarat has derived from “Gurjar”. Gujar are rich in terms of Cultural Heritage. They have their own language GOJRI which is an offshoot of Indo Aryan language and have their own costumes, traditions, food habits, living habits and art, and craft.

Bakarwals

The term “Bakarwal” is derived from the combination of two terms “Bakri” meaning goat/sheep and “wal” meaning “one who takes care of”. Essentially the name “Bakarwal” implies “high-altitude goat and sheep herders”. Bakarwals are primarily pastoral nomads rearing goat and sheep in high-altitudes of Greater-Himalayas during summer and spend their winter in plains and foot hills of Shwaliks. They are special nomadic tribes mainly found in the Pirpanjal range of mountains located between the two states of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. Bakarwals are also found in every corner of Northern provinces of the Himalayan range, namely the states of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. In Jammu and Kashmir Bakarwals are stretched out in all the three regions of the state Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. (Sofi, 2013)

Culture of Gujjars

Gujjars are culturally very much depictable by dancing, religious rites and customs etc. The tribes have got inclination towards religion. Some of them have converted themselves to Hinduism and also Islam. They are the tribes who strictly follow old traditions and customs. They still follow custom of

early marriages, where girls are married at an age of 14 - 15 years and boys at 17-18 years.

OCCUPATION

The tribals herd animals like sheep's, goats and buffalo. Semi-nomadic people of Gujar community are in the habit of migrating to upper parts of Himalayas along with their cattle during the summer season and back to the plains with the onset of chilly winters. There is dearth of trained Gujar artisans in various handicrafts. Therefore, they are constantly dependent on the items needed by them from the market and the Barbers, Blacksmiths, cobblers and other artisans also move with them to various locations. These people have adopted their own way of life and Gujjars have accepted them as part of their social group.

PEOPLE

The Gujar tribal communities have an exquisite tribal way of dressing style for both men and women which are of distinctive pattern.

- They have colourful turban with unique style of wrapping which has been a mark of the Gujar tribal Community.
- Topi which is also called as Afghani hat is worn by the aged Gujar men.
- Gujar females have greatly enhanced beautiful clothes called Dupatta which looks like a shawl. They are also fond of jewellery and have a fascination for the necklace with a triangle

pendant, studded with a beautiful stone in the centre of it. It symbolizes 'evil eye' and mainly utilized to avert bad luck.

- Bakerwal Gujjar mostly wear Shalwar Qamiaz, Vaskat, Angoo and Pagheri (Headgear) while the women folk wear long gone called Jubo, Pheerni, Shawal, Cap and Jotti, Jora.

- Dodhi Gujjar wears Pagh, Qameiz and Tehmad while the ladies wear shirt with strips choridar shalwar and Jotti.

FOOD

Mostly they depend on milk products as their staple food besides cereals, wheat and maize. They may be vegetarians and non-vegetarians. The favourite dishes of Gujjar are "Maki ki Roti" Ganhar, Sarsoon ka Sag, Lassi, Kalari, Karan, etc. It is surprising that Gujjar are mostly vegetarians.

LANGUAGE

The Gujjar tribal community has the beautiful language called as Gojri. The language belongs to the Rajasthani language group. The communities have also developed fluency in other languages such as Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, Pastho, Pahari languages like Kangri and Dogri.

ECONOMY

Gujjars Tribe has always been an exploited component with Gujjars politics which is related to the poor economic condition of this down trodden

community. The basic characteristics of Gujjars Economy are:

- Labour Class
- Agriculture Class
- Service Class
- Business Class
- Dealing with Milk and Milk Products
- Dealing with Mutton and Woollen products
- Other business related Activities
- Artisans Class: The people associated with professional handicrafts, handloom and all semi skilled activities.

According to historians there are 3 major reasons for settling of Gujjars in Jammu and Kashmir.

- First wars for throne in Gujarat and adjoining States, resulting in fighting and exodus of Gujjars after their defeat.
- Second the frequent earth quacks and intolerable secession in Gujarat, Rajasthan and neighbouring States.
- Third to explore new meadows and pastures for sustenance of life and cattle.

CONCLUSION

From the above study it is clear that the Gujjars and Bakerwals of the Jammu and Kashmir are the rich potential for tribal tourism because of their distinct culture. It has been said, "Nothing destroys culture

faster than poverty". Tourism is a viable solution for boosting the local economy and supporting local pride and creativity. Tribal members can create a home-based economy to provide the tribal members the opportunity to work in the local area and stay close to family and traditions. Tribal members can develop businesses that include traditional practices.

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