

**Life Styles and Constitutional Provisions for Educational and Cultural  
Upliftment of Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir.**

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Parliament of India passed the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act in 2019** is containing provisions to reconstitute the Indian-administered state of Jammu and Kashmir into two Indian-administered union territories called Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, on 31 October 2019. A bill for the act was introduced by the Minister of Home Affairs, Amit Shah, in the Rajya Sabha, on 5 August 2019 and was passed on the same day. It was then passed by the Lok Sabha on 6 August 2019, and it received the President's assent on 9 August 2011.

**Gujjars:**

A country like India is a place to a variety of population with their separate culture, traditions and living styles. India is home to almost more than half of the world's tribal population (Agarwal, 2009). The Gujjars are additionally called as Goojar, Gujar & Gurjar. Gujjars are living in Lakhs of numbers in J&K divided into three tribes, settled, half-settled and homeless Gujjars.

The settled Gujjars are those who are settled at one place and staying in villages, and they do agriculture. Half settled Gujjars are those who live in villages and do agriculture profession, but for six months of summer, they leave for Peer Panjal Gujjar Region with their cattle where pastures are available to graze on. From centuries these people are living in the laps of hills and on the banks of rivers. Some of Gujjars of Jammu and Kathua are big farmers. The homeless Gujjars can be divided in two tribes, Dodhi Gujjars and Bakerwal Gujjars. Dodhi Gujjars-In Jammu and Kashmir State one tribe of Gujjars is known as 'Dodhi 'or

‘Banyara ‘Gujjars. These people keep buffaloes and lead a nomadic life. In summer season, these people stay in Reasi, Udhampur and Kathua’s lower areas. Some Dodhi Gujjars go up to Pathankot and Gurdaspur also. When the summer sets in, these people start moving to the heights of Himalaya where green grass is available sufficiently for their cattle. They sell milk and ghee for their sustenance. Bakerwal Gujjars, other tribes of the homeless Gujjars, is known as Bakerwal Gujjars. These people mainly keep sheep and goats besides other animals, and these are their main sources of livelihood. Gujjars of Jammu & Kashmir were socially and economically deprived people who were not integrated into the mainstream regional culture and social status (Shahbaz, 2015). The vast treasure trove of cows, buffaloes, goats and sheep has always been a critical resource for the tribe, providing them with dairy proteins in their diet, labour and manure for their fields and yes, surplus income through the sale of milk and its by-products (Akhtar & Hussain, 2016).

### **Gujjars as a Tribe in Jammu and Kashmir**

In 1989, eight communities were given the status of scheduled tribes in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. These communities were Bot, Changpa, Garra, Mon, Beda, Brookpa, Bakerwal and Purigpa. Later in April, 1991 the Govt. of India while recognizing the backwardness of Gujjar, Bakerwal, and Gaddi and Sippi community of Jammu and Kashmir declared them as Scheduled Tribe through Scheduled tribe amendment act. All the twelve scheduled tribes were counted officially by census department of India for the first time during the census 2001; the population of the twelve Schedule Tribe’s was recorded as 1,105,979. As per the census 2011, the total population of the Scheduled Tribes in the state was 14, 93,299, comprising 11.9% of the total population of the state and about 1.5% of the total tribal population of the India (Census, 2011). Gujjar and Bakerwal tribes are predominantly found in Jammu region of the state. These tribes found in high numbers in Anantnag, Budgam, Pulwama, Kupwara, Rajouri, Poonch, Kishtwar and Jammu districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The word tribal specify to a group of people living in primitive conditions (Singh & Negi, 2016). The tribal communities like Gujjars develop their skills for survival and ways of transmitting language, skills, knowledge, beliefs to their children which help them to prepare for their future. The nomadic pastoral community of Gujjars and Bakerwals, in India’s northernmost state of

Jammu and Kashmir, is always on the move, from the plains to the mountains in summers and from mountains to plains in winters, along with herds of livestock, which is its mainstay.

### **Physical features of Gujjars:**

Physical Gujjars are healthy and strong, tall stature, long nose, big head and flat forehead. They possess sporting beared, majestic white and grey turbans, colorful waist-coat and salwar kameez. Gujjars women have also tall and medium height, long nose. Gujjars mostly wear traditional costumes and jewellery (Din, 2015). The men wear a turban with a unique style of wrapping which has become an exclusive mark. The young women wear plain suits or suits with bright floral prints. Aged women wear plain suits. They also wear 'Topi'. Gujjar women are fond of wearing jewellery. But presently young boys and girls belong to Gujjars has influenced by modernization wear jeans and shirts and following current design and fashions. In Jammu and Kashmir Gujjars speaks Gojjri or pahari. Gojjri is also known as Gojjri, and the language belongs to Rajasthan group of languages (Gupta and Beg 2012).

### **Religious beliefs of Gujjars:**

Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir follows Islam as a religion and belongs to Sunni sects. They offer five-time Namaz, Namaz Jumma, also offer Namaz of Eid-ul Fitr and Eid al Adha. During the month of Ramadan, they obligated to fast. In short, as a Gujjar researcher, I conclude that they follow five pillars of Islam. They also offer a prayer of Namaz Jinaza on the death of any Muslim. They follow Sufism and have remained interested in Sufiana Kalam, singing and listening. Almost in every village people recite melodious see-horrifies, Baits, Baramassian and poems. Gujjars, like other Muslims, believe in hell and heaven.

### **Games among Gujjars:**

Gujjars are brave, and hard-working society plays some outdoor games like.

Bugder: means weight lifting. This game is played by the Gujjars at marriage and yours ceremonies.

Chhing: means wrestling; this is also a popular game of Gujjars. In this game, players try to keep his back away from the ground, because touching of the back with the ground means defeat.

Beeni-panjo; means arm holding, this is a game played by Gujjars commonly.

Gullidanda, Suntoolas are also games that are played by the children of Gujjars. Due to the educational and social advancement, Gujjars presently plays all the modern games in Jammu and Kashmir like cricket, kabadi, kho-kho, volleyball, football, chess, table tennis etc.

### **Educational status of Gujjars:**

Education is the best way for the development of human for survival and development. Education plays a major role in the development of any nation and community; unfortunately, some communities deprived of educational access and faced discriminations. Gujjars also come under deprived and marginalized group. For the upliftment of this society government also started certain programmes. In Gujjars tribe, many children remain out of school due to lack of proper infrastructure, seasonal migrant, parental poverty, lack of interest, bad teacher attitude and social discriminations. India made a constitutional commitment to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14, nearly 60 years ago. Due to some constitutional commitment and government initiatives, gradually literacy rate among Gujjars is increasing from a few decades.

### **Constitutional provisions for Educational and Cultural Rights (Articles 14, 15, 15(4), 16, 17, 29, 46 and 350):**

Article 14: Equality before the law and equal protection law.

Article 15: States Prohibition of discrimination on the ground of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Article 15(4): Empowered The State is permitted to make any special provision for the advancement of the SCs/ STs.

Article 15(5): The state is empowered to make any special provision for the advancement of the SCs/STs regarding their admission to educational institutions (including STs) both in public or private, aided or unaided school by the state, except the minority educational institutions.

Article 16: Provide Equal opportunity in matters of public employment.

Article 17: Committed Abolition of Untouchability and prohibition of its practice.

Article 29: Gives Protection of language, script, and culture of minorities through educational institutions, including STs.

Article 46: Directive Principle of State Policy directed that the state shall promote the educational and economic interests of STs and protect them from social injustice and types of exploitation.

Article 350: The Constitution also gives the right to every person to submit a representation for the redress of grievance to any officer or authority of the Union or a State in any of the languages used in the Union or in the States as the case may be.

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