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### Gaddi Tribe of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh: An Introduction

**Yashopal Singh**

Assistant Professor, Department of History, Saini Bar College, Bulhawal, Hoshiarpur, Punjab, India

Corresponding Author: **Yashopal Singh**

#### Abstract

There are so many tribal communities exist in the Himachal Pradesh state of India and each community have their own social, cultural, religious and geographical identity. In Chamba District of the state of Himachal Pradesh is also known for its tribal history, socio-cultural values, which

makes it differ from other regions of Himachal Pradesh. In this paper the researcher trying to present an overview of the Gaddi Tribe (ST community) existed in Chamba District of H. P. by exploring their historical background, their social, religious and cultural values.

**Keywords:** Gaddi Tribe, Caste, Himachal Pradesh

#### Introduction

The name of Gaddi, along with the memory of a well-built man or woman and a herd of sheep and goats with a specific dress, the speech in the form of suspended speech and the feeling of the bleating of the herd are naturally mental. It seems to happen on the table, but under the influence of modernity, the complete and real philosophy related to today's thrones are becoming rare. According to Amar Singh Ranpatia's 'Gaddi Tribal Folk-Culture and Arts', "Gaddi tribe is a special caste in a limited sense, which is originally a resident of Bharmour. In a broad sense, Gaddi is a resident of Bharmour, irrespective of caste or class. Relates to." "Infact Gaddi is a caste name, under which Brahmin, Rajput, Khatri, Thakur, Rathi and Harijan castes are included." These people believe that their forefathers migrated to the lower regions at various times to escape the tyranny of various Muslim invaders, such as- Reached by running away from places like Punjab, Delhi etc. Dr. Gautam Sharma describes the distressed Bharmour-area as the abode of Gaddis. According to him- "This caste is settled in the areas of Chamba Bharmour. Their settlement is called 'Gadderan' which means 'the house of thrones'. Now this caste has settled in places like Mandi, Kangra, Bilaspur etc. leaving its original place. Is." In relation to their migrant life, Dr. Shyam Singh Shashi says – "The Gaddi people leave their homes and go to the lower hills in October. Kangra, Nurpur, Pathankot and Jammu etc. places have to earn livelihood for six months of winter. Let's put it in food. They start returning to their homes as soon as the summer starts in the month of April. After spending a few days here, they again have to leave for Chamba-Lahul with their herds. One or two members stay at home for taking care of the house and doing agricultural work.

#### Methodology

An introductory historical approach has been adopted for this research and also data has been collected from various published or unpublished sources.

#### Objectives

The main objectives of this study is to;

1. Elaborate the historical overview of Gaddi Tribe of Himachal Pradesh.
2. Present the evolution process of Gaddi Tribe.
3. Highlight the various factors related to Gaddi Tribe's Economic System.
4. Identify their religious beliefs for better understanding of their life style.

#### 1.1 Origin and Evolution of Gaddi Tribe

The Gaddis have their own dialect of conversation which they call 'Gaddi'. Traditional dress is their special identity. In fact, due to the privacy of personal speech, dress, conduct and customs, they have maintained a different identity from other people of Himachal. Dr. Gautam Sharma describes Chola, Dora, Safa, Luanchadi, Chadar etc. as their simple traditional dress under the dress of distressed Gaddis. He further writes that these people are fond of tobacco. Overall, "the main occupation of the

Gaddis of Bharmour is animal husbandry and farming.” This is a primitive community living on the initial surface of the culture, which has a different way of life, living, customs, speech, religious tendencies and belief in witchcraft from other people. In the modern environment, the feeling of permanent residence has been awakened in it, so that one can get freedom from the struggling life of Yayavari. Some Gaddis are appointed to higher government posts after getting higher education. Basically, as a result of these changing circumstances and the availability of new means of employment, education and state development announcements etc., the nomadic tendency of the Gaddis who lead a struggling life along with flocks of sheep and goats is also getting limited.

### 1.2 Concepts of Gaddi Naming

There is no definite evidence available in relation to when and why the people of Gaddi tribe were designated by the name ‘Gaddi’. Various scholars have presented their estimates on the basis of rational facts in this subject – According to Hutchison and Vogel quoted in Vanshi Ram Sharma Krit – ‘Mythological Tribes of Himachal’ – the word ‘Gaderan’ is the word ‘Gaddar’ of the culture is made of. In Sanskrit ‘Gaddar’ means – sheep and ‘Gadarik’ means – row of sheep. The person who grazes the sheep is still called Gadariya.” Mr. Nand Kumar has also presented the same opinion in his own words –“ The word ‘Gabdika’ for this area was also prevalent in the Panini period, which today is synonymous with Gaddi. Cracked up to be. Panini has written the people here as ‘Gabdik’ and their country as ‘Gabdika’.” According to Manohar Lal Gupta in this regard – “Since ancient times, the capitals of various princely states of India have been addressed as ‘Gaddi’. Since in Bharmour also the throne remained in some form or the other. Due to being related to Gaddi, the residents here must have been addressing themselves as ‘Gaddiwale’, which later became Gaddi. The sage’s name was ‘Gadhi’ whose son was Vishwamitra. He used to live in this area. Gradually his children increased and they came to be known as ‘Gaddiya’ tribe. Later on this ‘Gaddiya’ was transformed into the name of Gaddi. Happened. After looking at all the above-mentioned opinions – although all opinions are based on many strong facts – it is very difficult to draw any conclusion due to the inconsistency of opinions. Panini has called the people of this region ‘Gabdik’. Hence ‘Gabdik’ It seems natural for the word to be degenerated or synonymous, however, the word ‘Gabdik’ again expects a solution regarding its etymology.

### 1.3 Economic Condition of Gaddi Community

The means and efforts of Gaddi Community for livelihood are seen as a gross economic system and the main operations of their economy are mainly dependent on traditional economic resources or activities in which they had large groups of sheep and goats for grazing. They called them Dhan which means money, which shows the importance of that type of economic resources in their day to day life. Nevertheless, with the modernity they have shifted their economic dependency upon some modern businesses or activities with whom they got more comfortable occupations than traditional ways. They got

educated and taking interest in jobs rather than traditional ways with this they have opened their self-owned businesses in the form of shops, small scale industries. According to Dr. Amar Singh Ranpattiya, “ The members of this community are now indulging their self to server their community and nation as well. They have appointed on various Military and administrative posts, which gives them a boost. These modern environment increased their standard of living by providing them a handsome income. Overall, they have changed their selves with the changing era of modernity. They have made so much changes in their ways of livelihood and changed the way according to the time.

### 1.4 Religious aspects of Gaddi Community

The members of gaddi community are basically belongs to hindu religion. This thing is proved by their customs and cultural aspects that the centric point of they have widely dependent on Hindu religion. They have full faith on all the hindu customs, ways of worship and other ritual as well. They believes in God, Devil, rebirth, Karma, Destiny etc. They worship God and goddess because they believes that anything which is happening in their life is just because of the God or Goddess. The most worshipped God by gaddi Tribe is Shiva (God Shiva), Naga Devta, Lakshna Devi, Narsingh, Shri Ganesha and Mata Kali. So many festivals, yataras and festivals are celebrated in regard to the Gods.

### 1.5 Conclusive Findings

After analysis the researchers have find that there are so many ancient tribes belongs to Himachal Pradesh state and Gadd Tribe is also an important and one of the ancient tribes found in Himachal specially Chamba District of the state of Himachal Pradesh. They have evolved with time or in simple words they have grown up from traditional living to modern living. Gaddi’s have improved their personality, economic condition and so many things as per the modern world. There is a wide range of diversity within the Gaddi’s. Within time they have changed their livelihood according to the demand of world and get educated. Now days they are successful to create their own Identity by getting highest academic, administrative and defence force posts. There is a probability that gaddi’s have turned their selves as a major Tribe of chmaba District.

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