



# Life Styles of Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir

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**Abstract:** *This paper deals with life styles of gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir. Here researcher studied about physical appearance, religions, customs, rituals, games and sports of gujjar tribe of Jammu and Kashmir. Researcher conducted interview of various people belong to gujjar tribe of Jammu and Kashmir. Researcher also took the help of previous research studies and literature for gaining information about these particular aspects of gujjar tribe of Jammu and Kashmir.*

**Keywords:** Gujjars, Jammu & Kashmir, physical Appearance, Customs, Religion, Sports

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Jammu and Kashmir UT

The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, which was approved by the Indian Parliament in 2019, contains provisions for the reconstitution of the Indian-administrated state of Jammu and Kashmir into two Indian-administrated union territories, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, effective October 31, 2019. Amit Shah, the minister of home affairs, filed a bill for the legislation in the Rajya Sabha on August 5, 2019, and it was approved the same day. On August 6, 2019, the Lok Sabha approved it, and on August 9, 2019, the President gave his approval.

### 1.2 Gujjars

A country like India is a place to a variety of population with their separate culture, traditions and living styles. India is a home to almost more than half of the world's tribal population (**Agrawal, 2009**). The Gujjars commonly have the names Goojar, Gujar, and Gurjar. In J&K, there are thousands of gujjars who are split into three tribes: settled, partially settled, and homeless. The settled gujjars are individuals who live in villages, are based in one location, and are engaged in agriculture. Half-settled gujjars are individuals who work in agriculture and reside in villages, but during the summer they take their cattle and move to the peer panjalgujjar area where there are pastures for their animals to graze them for six months. These people have been residing in the valleys of hills for millennia likewise along riverbanks. Several gujjars in Kathua and Jammu are significant farmers. There are two tribes of gujjars who are homeless: dodhigujjars and bakkerwalgujjars.

DodhiGujjars—In the state of Jammu and Kashmir, one gujjar tribe is referred to as "Dodhi" or "Banyara" Gujjars. These people live a nomadic lifestyle and raise buffalo. These people reside in the lower regions of Reasi, Udhampur, and Kathua during the summer. Moreover, some dodhigujjars travel to Pathankot and Gurdaspur. When summer arrives, these people begin to go to the Himalayan heights, where there is enough green grass for their cattle. They make a living by selling milk and ghee. The second tribe of gujjars who are homeless is called the bakkerwalgujjars. Together with other animals, these people primarily raise sheep and goats for their primary sources of income. Gujjars of Jammu & Kashmir were socially and economically deprived people who were not integrated in 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 sale of milk and its by-products (**Akhtar & Hussain, 2016**).

### 1.3 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 Bota, Changpa, Garra, Mon, Beda, Brookpa, Bakarwal and Purigpa. Later in April, 1991 the Govt. of India while recognizing the backwardness of Gujjar, Bakerwal, Gaddi and Sippicommunity 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 Bakarwal tribes are predominantly found in Jammu region of the state. These tribes found in high numbers in Anantnag, Badgam, 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 own skills for survival and a ways of transmitting language, skills, knowledge, beliefs to their children which help them to prepare for their future. The pastoral nomadic community of gujjars and bakarwals, in India's northern most 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.

## II. OBJECTIVES

- To know about physical appearance of gujjar tribe of Jammu & Kashmir
- To know the religion beliefs of gujjar tribe of Jammu & Kashmir
- To know the customs and rituals of gujjar tribe of Jammu & Kashmir
- To know the sports activities of gujjar tribe of Jammu & Kashmir

## III. METHODOLOGY

Researcher conducted interview of various people belong to gujjar tribe of Jammu and Kashmir. Researcher also took the help of previous research studies and literature for gaining information about these particular aspects of gujjar tribe of Jammu and Kashmir.

### 3.1 Physical Features of Gujjars

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

### 3.2 Religious Beliefs of Gujjars

Gujjars of jammu and Kashmir follows Islam as a religion and belongs to sunni sects. They offer five time nimaz, nimaz jumma, also offer nimaz of eid-ulfitr 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 prayer of nimaz jinaza on the death of any muslim. They follow Sufism and has remain interested in sufiyanakalam singing and listening. Almost in each and every village people recite melodious se-harifies, Baits, Baramassian and poems. Gujjars like other muslims believe in hell and heaven.

### 3.3 Customs and Rituals

Customs reflect the influence of religion among the gujjars of jammu and kashmir. Customs starts from the birth of child and continue till death ceremony. Circumcision is the first custom of a male child and is sunnat. Aqiqah custom is also celebrated by the gujjars on islamic pattern. This custom is not mandatory for all, only rich persons can celebrate it. Ring ceremony and wedding is also celebrated by the gujjars. In olden days early marriages are common in gujjars but present it due to the education this evil is not practiced Khattam or niaz, urs and bhandara is also observed among gujjars of jammu and kashmir.

### 3.4 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 urs ceremonies.
- **Chhing:** means wrestling, this is also a popular game of gujjars. In this game players tries to keep his back away from ground, because touching of back with 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, tabletennis etc.**

### 3.5 Educational Status of Gujjars

Education is the best way for the development of human for survival and development. Education plays a major role for the development of any nation and community, unfortunately some communities deprived from 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, teacher bad 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 the some constitutional commitment and government initiatives gradually literacy rate among gujjars is increases from few decades.

## IV. CONCLUSION

It is concluded that physically gujjars are healthy and strong, tall stature, long nose, big head and flat forehead. They possess sporting beard, majestic white and grey turbans, colorful waist-coat and salwar kameez. Gujjars of jammu and Kashmir follows Islam as a religion and belongs to sunni sects. Customs reflect the influence of religion among the gujjars of jammu and kashmir. Customs starts from the birth of child and continue till death ceremony. Gujjars are brave and hard working society plays some outdoor games like.

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