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Marriage practices and rituals among Gujjars and Bakerwals of district Baramulla of Jammu and Kashmir: An Overview

Posha Parveen

Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, U.P., India

Abstract:

Bakerwals and Gujjars a famous tribe is pastoral and a nomadic tribe, constituting more than 11.9% of the total population of the state (Census, 2011);. Gujjar and Bakerwal tribe use to graze sheep or cattle. They do a seasonal migration to rustle the cattle within the sectional limits of their areas. Gujjar Bakerwal tribe is a tribe having its unique features. An analysis has been made on the basis of secondary data census of India 2011 several journals books and reports and field work at first hand.in this paper to see the marriage patterns amon Gujjar Bakerwal tribe of District Baramulla Jammu and Kashmir. The study showed that there has been a change in marriage patterns of Gujjar Bakerwal tribe

Keywords: Tribe, Gujjar and Bakarwal, Marriage, changing patterns

Introduction: Having a considerable percentage of scheduled tribal population .In the constitution of India scheduled tribe got first advent as a term in the Article 366 (25) where Scheduled tribes or communities of tribal people is defined as "such **tribes** or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such **tribes** or tribal sss as are deemed under Article 342 to be **Scheduled Tribes** for the purposes of this **constitution.**" Verrier Elwin pointed the term tribe as a derivation of Tribuz basically a root in latin having a term in english middle which is having meaning of the three divisions in which the romans of early times were clustered. Which later on came into being as English tribe or modern English tribe. (Singh, 1959). As per the Oxford Dictionary ""tribe is a group of people in primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding themselves as having a common ancestor". Jammu and Kashmir's total population as per the census of India 2011 is12,541,302. Out of the total population the Jammu and Kashmir is comprising 35.02% which is in aggregated with the increase of 387,320 that of 2001 to 2011. For Verrier Elwin, the word 'tribe' has been derived from the Latin root, the middle English term "Tribuz" meaning the three divisions into which the early Romans were grouped, came to evolve into the modern English tribe. (Singh, 1959) As for scheduled tribe in Jammu and Kashmir is considered in 2011 first census data was

collected. Consisting of tri regions Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh. The Bakerwal and Gujjars do add up an identical great also noticeable tribal- folkloric assemblage in the sections of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This nomadic tribe of Jammu and Kashmir needed to go through a lot of various kinds of passages whether social economical or any such for the survival. By the period of division after independence of India in 1947 the Bakerwals and Gujjars got settles at the hills between the divided India and Pakistan. Hence a displacement among this nomadic tribe was observed which disturbed their actual setting whether their living style of their occupation. As their migration for their actual portion came in vale so the variation in their work or occupation came into being. As this tribe Gujjar and Bakewrwal were goat and cow hunders but after the divide of 1947 they adopted different other work sets because of the then force accelerated by their poor condition by displacement and migration .(Sharma, Sharma and Panda, 2005). P.N.K Bamzai in his "A History of Kashmir" (1973) observes that they are said to be Rajputs who migrated from Rajasthan and adopted Muslim faith (Jawahar Lal 2003). Despite being a Muslim tribe they constitute many sub grouped castes. As this tribe of Jammu and Kashmir is unique in the social manners including their dress pattern their house pattern their food habits their culture, language etc. being endogamous in nature mostly they do not allow their off springs or relations to marry outside their clan. Gujjar Bakerwal is a Muslim tribe as for as Jammu and Kashmir is concerned and in other parts of India the tribe namely Gujjar do also consist a good number of Hindu religion people as well. So in this paper my focussing point is the changing Marriage patterns in the Gujjar Bakerwal tribe of District Baramullah Jammu and Kashmir. Islam is practised by 68.3% in the Jammu and Kashmir followed by Hindus having 28.45% total population, then comes Sikhs comprising 1.9%, Buddhism 0.9% and Christianity 0.3%. known by the titles of Gujjar Gujaria Goojar, still the origin of this tribe is a debate. Having multiple aspects regarding their origin few are like this tribe is having connectivity with the Khazer. During the time of Hunas bout this tribe Gujjar Bakerwal stirred in the northern India and Himachal Pradesh. The population of Gujjar Bakerwal tribe is ainly found in different parts of India including Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, Himachal Prades, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana Punjab. So it si said that the Gurjar is the term from which the name of the state of Gujarat has been based on. This nomadic tribe is enriched with the legacy of cultural aspects already mentioned above regarding their uniqueness. Gujjar and Bakerwal are the subgroup of same tribe where Bakerwal means bakri that is the urdu word for goat and sheep herders. They usually do rear goats and sheep, in the high altitudes of greater Himalaya. They do migrate in summer to such greats and in winter they usually do come down to the plains.

Population of Jammu and Kashmir.

State/Region	Total Population (Census 2011)	ST Population (Census 2011)	Percentage of STs
Jammu and Kashmir	12,541,302	1,493,299	11.9
Jammu	5,378,538	810,800	15.07

Kashmir	6,888,475	464,306	6.74
Ladakh	274,289	218,193	79.54

(Note: Census of India, 2011.)

Scheduled tribe population in the Jammu Division

Region/ Districts	Total Population (Census 2011)	ST Population (Census 2011)	Percentage of STs
Jammu Division	5,378,538	810800	15.07
Doda	409,936	39,216	9.56
Jammu	1,529,958	69,193	4.52
Kathua	616,435	53,307	8.64
Kishtwar	230,696	38,149	16.53
Poonch	476,835	176,101	36.93
Rajouri	642,415	232,815	36.24
Ramban	283,713	39,772	14.01
Reasi	314,667	88,365	28.08
Samba	318,898	17,573	5.51
Udhampur	554,985	56,309	10.14

(Note: Census of India, 2011.)

Notified in the Census 2011, the over-all population division of Kashmir is 6,888,475, having the scheduled population as 464,306 which is the 6.74 percent of the total population. In the three divisions of Jammu and Kashmir the Kashmir Division comprises less or lowest percentage comparatively to the other two divisions namely Jammu and Ladakh. In Kashmir division Ganderbal is having highest scheduled tribe population, nearly followed by the district Bandipora. In lowest terms of having scheduled population in the division of Kashmir comes Srinagar followed by the district Budgam. Anantnag having the number of tribal figure as 116,006 is at the top when we talk about the actual population and in the lowest comes Srinagar having only 8,935 Scheduled tribe people.

Region/ Districts	Total Population (Census 2011)	ST Population (Census 2011)	Percentage of STs
Kashmir Division	6,888,475	464,306	6.74
Anantnag	1,078,692	1,16,006	10.75
Bandipora	392,232	75,374	19.21
Baramulla	1,008,039	37,705	3.74

Budgam	753,745	23,912	3.17
Ganderbal	297,446	61,070	20.53
Kulgam	424,483	26,525	6.24
Kupwara	870,354	70,352	5.08
Pulwama	560,440	22,607	4.03
Shopian	266,215	21,820	8.19
Srinagar	1,236,829	8,935	0.72

(Census of India, 2011.)

Marriage Patterns: Muslims witness nearly rudimentary beliefs of Islam in following procedure of marriage although dissimilarities have been seen in the practices which are actual there the different Muslim groups in various regions. As the Gujjar Bakerwal tribe of District Baramulla is purely a Muslim tribe so the marriage rituals and ceremonies in a whole procedure is being observed as per the Islamic rules and regulation. Marriage as an institution is considered as devotion (Ibbadat) and muamlaat that is how to deal as per the jurists of Islam. There is a tradition of the Prophet (saw) practised that very tradition is now followed by the Ummah of Prophet (saw) which evidently springs a religious gist to marriage. As per that tradition, the Prophet (saw) Hazrat Muhammad saw observed "Men marry for beauty, for rank, for wealth, for piety: choose piety. Marriage is my sunnat and those who do not obey it are not my followers". Quoting here Hedaya " Marriage is a legal process by which the sexual intercourse and procreation and legitimating of children between man and woman is perfectly lawful and valid" (Al-Bukhari). As per the R.P.Khatana, (1976) who made a study on marriages and kinship among Gujjar and Bakerwals in Jammu and Kashmir and analysed by saying that marriage is being preferred and do happen strictly only in their clan. He did study on some aspects of transhumance in mountainous traits during the year 1976. As for as Gujjar Bakerwal tribe is concerned an institution like marriage is having great inviolability like other Muslims who do follow Islam. Elders of the family who do have the responsibility of the younger one's including that the marriage of the youngsters of their family are supposed to stay 'not worry free' until and unless these elders or parents do get their offspring's like daughters and their male children getting married happily. In the life span of a social being marriage plays a key role. It is taken as Sunnah in Muslims and Sunnah means those practices practiced and said to follow by the Last Messenger of the Creator Prophet Muhammad (saw) making it obligatory for the Ummah to follow this Sunnah at the stage where a girl or Boy reaches the age of Marriage by not thrusting the decisions but by their consent it is necessary for Parents or Guardians to find a suitable match. As this paper is regarding the Marriage Patterns among Gujjar Bakerwal Tribe of District Baramulla Jammu and Kashmir so the marriage practices and rituals among this nomadic tribe is mostly still having a uniqueness and beauty in it. So the different marriage ceremonies among the nomadic tribe of District Baramulla Jammu and Kashmir are as

Lafz. The lafz in this nomadic tribe is meant for the word by the girl to be bride's parents or guardians to the would be groom's parents. This ceremony is proceeded by sharing sweets which are taken along with the boys parents. As this is a nomadic tribe so the lafz mostly is done during the childhood of the girl and boy. As now the Gujjar Bakerwal tribe is going towards development so now that lafz from childhood is changing in the adulthood of the boy and girl apprehended via appeasement by the parents of bot. consanguineous kind of marriage mostly takes place, following by many ceremonies enjoyed at both houses that of Bride and groom

Engagement. Engagement was not so popular among this nomadic tribe earlier but now the term or concept of engagement is found. Engagement is a ceremony where firstly the boys family and relatives along with the boy go to the girl's home carrying gifts like few clothing cosmetics and ornaments of silver, whereas nowadays gold items are also used by the well settled families. After the engagement it is the Grooms' social duty to see the wardings of daily chores done or identified for males in their particular community. The time between engagement is also getting decreased as earlier there was a vast gap found which is now very less as for as time is concerned. After engagement at every eve whether Eid or some other special day different gifts are used to send from the boy's side. After engagement comes the time of Nikah. So here before the nikah ceremony both the would be bride and groom make their friends. The friend of bride is known as dharambehn who is there to apply mehndi to the bride. This very special friend made for the nikah ceremony specially is giving responsibility of the bride regharding whole process of the day of marriage including the makeover choice of clothes and applying henna etc. same is with trhe boy he also makes a friend for this particular day of his marriage. Similarly the boy is also given whole ref. to take care of the groom. Before one night of reception whole night the family and friends of both Bride and Groom enjoys by singing songs and playing different games for amusement including chowki (charpayi) where demad od gifts is being done by the person who wil take this chowki under his control. During one day before Reception the girls friends do decorate avessel to get water from a river body. And in the same evening the henna which is supposed to be applied at the hands of brides hands and feet is sent by the grooms family. And at the day where the Imam of the particular tribe used to give Nikah khutba (lecture based on religious texture) where all males sit at the one side of that room by making partition of that room by a curtain. During nikah ceremony meher (dower) is being finalised in favour of girl from the boy's side. In Nikah nama it is written that hoe much and what kind of meher will be given to the bride by the Groom. At the time of arrival of Groom (baraat) there is a ritual called as stone lifting. Stone lifting as by name is clear. So here those persons accompanying the Groom are supposed to lift that heavy stone to show their physical strength. It is king of game there between the two sides that of girl and boy .(Bride and Groom). At the time of final arrival of the Groom for taking the Bride. The groom attires headwear like lungi, waistcoat, shirt and shalwaar in addition with red hankie in his fingers and "SEHRA" giving addition to his elegance and splendour. Scheduled the event of festivity of marriages they recite and narrate rhythmical recitals as of the books like c-harfi, Soni-Mahiwal, Saif-ul-Maluk which makes the audience happy and excited.

(Rahi,2011) sharbat giving is also a ritual from the bride's side. The groom is given sharbat by the most nearer one of the brides' family. The clothing and veil especially for such day is given by the grooms' side. In their marriage functions earlier (bhaaji) a term used by this nomadic tribe in their dialect for the curd(Dahi) gifted by friends neighbours and relatives as well taking it as a responsibility towards the brides and grooms family. Also one or few kind of dishes prepared are used. Later on at the final departure of the girl from her parental home girl is accompanied by her family parents and friends who are given gifts at the arrival in the grooms home. After reaching the grooms home sometimes bride do make a demand of something, which is fulfilled by giving any kind of property whether movable or immovable. After the two days of the nikah ceremony and reception gifts like furniture and crockery items are given by the bride's family.

Conclusion: So marriage rituals among the Gujjar Bakerwal tribe of District Baramulla is having unique significance. Every ritual is being carried out in a simple and specified manner. Which starts from the lafaz to the eve of engagement. After engagement to the journey of marriage having Nikah ceremony, with reception and final departure of the girl from her parental home to her husbands' home which is Patrilineal in nature where property is being hereditaries via the line of father side. Not all but few rituals and ceremonies are being modified by the younger generation of this nomadic tribe.

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