



ORIGIN OF PAHARI COMMUNITY, THEIR DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC, EDUCATIONAL, LITERACY AND LINGUISTIC COMPOSITION: A CASE STUDY OF RAJOURI DISTRICT (J&K)

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ABSTRACT:

Paharies is one the largest ethnic group of Jammu and Kashmir UT. Pahari ethnic group which constitute a social group of its own in the western part of Jammu region and possess mainly tribal culture. They constitute 8.18 percent (estimated) of the total population of the UT. Pahari community is distributed throughout the UT but their major pockets are found in the districts of Rajouri, Poonch, Barmullah, Kupwara and Anantnag. Their educational status is low as compare to the other communities of the UT. They have their own mother tongue i.e. Pahari. Pir Panjal region is considered as the homeland of Pahari tribe. They ruled this region for centuries together and are considered as the warrior tribe and best fighter. since ancient times. Although, the literary meaning of Pahari is (Mountaineers) which itself is indefinite, yet in Jammu and Kashmir, it is restricted to those people whose mother tongue is Pahari language and resides in mountainous areas. These people have distinct culture and historical background in the overall scenario of Jammu and Kashmir UT. The paper tries to find out the origin, Demography, education level and linguistic composition of Pahari tribe and possible measures to overcome the problems in the Rajouri districts.

Keywords: Pir Panjal, Pahari, Demography, Language, Literacy.

INTRODUCTION:

1. ORIGIN OF PAHARI

In Jammu and Kashmir, those who are non-Dogra, non-Kashmiri, non-Gujjar and non-Punjabi are claiming Pahari identity. Pahari ethnic group which constitutes a social group of its own in the western part of the Jammu region and possesses mainly tribal culture. These Pahari speaking people have remained relatively backward for obvious reasons and now demand their pond of flesh. A deep study of these striving people is essential to know their origin, approximate number, their location, their customs and traditions, natural economy their level of literacy, communication facilities, employment avenues, their main grievances and how far these can be accommodated without hurting the legitimate

rights and claims of other socially backward groups.

In fact, India is broadly, a country of immigrants like North America. While North America (USA and Canada) is a country of new immigrants, who came mainly from Europe over the past four or five centuries, India is a country of old immigrants in which people have been coming in over the last ten thousand years or so. Probably about 2% people living in India today are descendants of immigrants who came mainly from North-West and to a lesser extent from the North-East. There is perhaps not a single instance of an invasion from India to outside India. India was a suitable paradise for pastoral and agricultural societies like Gujjar, Bakarwal including the Pahari, since it has hundreds of rivers, forests which make her rich

in natural resources. The word Pahari must be as old as Aryan Civilization. There is no direct evidence about it, but it might have taken hundreds and thousands of years.

The note Urdu poet Firaq Gorakhpuri in a couplet has tried to answer this question as under:

“Sar Zamin-e-Hind par, aqwaam-e-alam ke Firaq. Kafilay chaltegae Hindustan Banta Gaya.” Which means” In the land of Hind, the caravans of the people of the world kept coming in and India kept getting formed”.

Pahari have different dialects, different traits and different culture which show that most of them are Aryans and also aboriginals of India. At one time it was believed that the Dravidians were the original inhabitants of India, However, the view has been considerably modified subsequently and now the generally accepted belief is that the original inhabitants of India were the pre-Dravidians aboriginals i.e. the ancestors of the present tribes or advasis (schedule tribes) living in various parts of the country, particularly, southern Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh etc. Similarly an analogy can be drawn about Gujjar, Bakarwal, Gaddie, Sippie and Pothoharie of Jammu and Kashmir. If we consider the other view that Gujjars and Pahari are Aryans who have come from Asia or Europe, Bakarwal seem to have come from Taskand, Samarkand or Yarkand-Russia. Gaddie, Sippie and Pothoharie are aboriginals of India. However, Bakarwal claim that their original home was ‘Swat’ near Rawalpindi (which is on the border or POK) from where they migrated to Jammu and Kashmir around second century BC. Now the question arises as to how the word “Pahari” has been attributed to a particular ethnic group. Actually in old Days the main occupation of the people was to rear and graze

cattle and the people during summer, used to go to high altitude in search of pastures and during winter they used to bring cattle back to the areas of low altitudes. Therefore people living there are called Pahari. Since word Pahari got wider dimension and it can be presumed that such persons who live in the mountains can be referred as Pahari.

For example, in Jammu and Kashmir Dard, Bhaderwahi, Pothoharie, Gaddie, Sippie, Gujjar and Bakarwal can be categorized as Pahari. In olden times illaqa Khoistan (Pir Panjal) was referred to as Pahari area. These tribes from centuries together are leading safer life, while preserving their culture in that particular area of Pir Panjal which is an offshoot of the Himalayas.

2. Demographic composition of Pahari-Brief Introduction about their distribution in Jammu and Kashmir

Pahari speaking people live in the Pahari region situated along the actual line of control/ line of control (LOC). These people have beard huge loss both in terms of property and lives from three wars (1947, 1965 and 1971) between India and Pakistan. There are a number of divided families who are living on both sides of border. The hostile and conflicting environment is still continue for Pahari people who are living along or near the LOC. Obviously, they could not make their existence felt nor have they been able to get a due share of benefits for their upliftment and betterment during the last seven decades of development activities. This community has been striving for Schedule Tribe status since 1875. Their struggle towards their cause sharpened in 1991 following the conferring of Schedule Tribe status upon Gujjar and Bakarwal of the state. This creates a definite consciousness among the Pahari community who launched a full flagged

movement in order to get the said preferential treatment, fearing the identity concerns. Till now there is no official survey has been conducted by the State/UT Government.

In order to ascertain the actual figure of Pahari community scattered in the whole UT a survey has been conducted by using available resources. The survey of Pahari speaking people is based on the primary inputs of intensive field work. To realize this objective various variable of the primary and secondary nature like census 2011 and use of existing infrastructure are taken into consideration.

Pahari constitute 8.18 % of the total population of Jammu and Kashmir UT. Pahari speaking community is distributed throughout the UT. Major pockets are found among the foothills of the Pir Panjal with major concentration in Poonch, Rajouri, Baramullah, Kupwara. Beside these four major pockets their habitation are also found in Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian, Pulwama, Budgam, Ganderbal and Bandipura district as well. From the census 2011, it has been found that the districts of Rajouri (56.10%), Poonch (56.03%), Kupwara (11.84%), Baramullah (14.0%) and Anantnag (7.86%) have high population whereas all other districts shows very thin population as shown in the Table 1

3. Age composition of Pahari (Sample Household)

Age composition is also known as age distribution. It is vary among countries and states due to differences in the levels and trends of fertility. A population with high birth rate has a large percentage of children and small percentage of aged population.

In order to know about the age distribution of Pahari a sample household survey is conducted in the villages of Rajouri district. The villages of Lam, Sialsui, Galhutti, and Kandigala are

selected for the household survey. Among these villages the village of Sialsui has highest (20.33%) of population between the age group 0-5 year and (24.73%) population between age group 6-9 year, whereas the village of Kandigala has highest (21.93%) population between age group 10-29 year and village of lam shows (27.85 %) of population between age group of 30-59 year. There is great variation in the age composition among these villages as shown in the above Table 2.

4. Sex ratio of Pahari (Sample Household)

Sex Ratio is an important indicator to measure the fairness between the males and females. Sex ratio is defined as the number of females per thousand males in a population. It is expressed in the following form;

Sex Ratio=Number of Females/ Number of Males* 1000

The sex ratio of Jammu and Kashmir as per 2011 census is 889 females per 1000 males which is lower than the national sex ratio i.e. 943. Whereas, the Sex Ratio of Rajouri district is 860. Females per thousand males which is also lower than the UT and National sex ratio. The Household survey is conducted in four villages of Pahari community on the basis of simple random sampling to know the sex ratio. After going through the survey it has been found that these four villages i.e. Lam, Sialsui, Galhutti and Kandigala have almost similar sex ratio as compare to the Jammu and Kashmir UT sex ratio as shown in the Table 3.

5. Linguistic composition of Pahari (Sample Household)

Pahari language is an off-shoot of Ando-Aryan Family of Languages comprising various dialects as recognized in the linguistic survey of India by George Garrison. Language is the most potent cultural maker providing for group

Identity and is also a trade mark for a particular tribe. In Jammu and Kashmir UT there is a linguistic diversity. In Jammu and Kashmir there is many dialects spoken by different communities, as Kashmiri is spoken by Kashmiri, Dogri by Dogras of Jammu, kathua and udhampur, Pahari by Paharies of Rajouri and Poonch districts, Gojri by Gujjars and Bakarwals etc.

A household survey is conducted to know the linguistic composition of Pahari. After going through the household survey, the linguistic composition shows that among the selected villages about 91.37% people speaks Pahari language whereas only 8.63% people speaks other languages or both as well as shown in the (Table 4)

6. Literacy composition of Pahari (Sample Household)

As there is no official census available on the Pahari, the exactness of literacy composition is unable to find. Due to the lack of data sources, the household survey is conducted in the Pahari dominant villages of Rajouri Districts. The villages of Lam, Sialsui, Galhutti and Kandigala are selected for the household survey. After going through the survey it has been found that these villages have low literacy rate as shown in the (Table 5).

7. Educational level of Paharies (Sample Household)

If we analyze educational level of Pahari, it is somewhat good at elementary (up to 8th) stage but one find less representation at higher secondary level, but it is fairly good as compare to representation of Gujjar and Bakarwal at

High Secondary stage. There is no hindrance in the way of education of Pahari because they are permanently settled at one place. They avail the benefits provided by the government time to time in educational sector as well.

CONCLUSION:

In nutshell, it can be concluded that Pahari tribe has their origin from Asia. They are mostly the descendents of Hilly and mountainous areas of India and Pakistan. Paharies are Aryans and the aboriginals of India. This tribe from centuries together is leading safer life and preserves their culture particularly in the areas of Pir Panjal range. In Demographic characteristics we observe that this community have its existence in almost all the districts of UT but Rajouri and Poonch districts are dominated by Paharies. Paharies have sex ratio much similar to the Sex Ratio of Jammu and Kashmir. There are great variations in the age composition of Paharies. Paharies are preferably speaks their own mother tongue Pahari along with other languages also. The literacy composition of Paharies is low but it is better in comparison to Gujjars and Bakarwal.

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- Source: State Advisory Board for Development of Pahari speaking People of J&K, Data Based on 2011 Census.
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Table 1. District-wise Population of Pahari of Jammu and Kashmir 2011 census

S.No	Districts	Total Population	Pahari Population	Population in %age
1	Anantnag	1078692	84742	7.86
2	Budgam	753745	5283	0.70
3	Bandipura	392232	16993	4.33
4	Baramullah	1008039	141157	14.00
5	Doda	409936	0	0.00
6	Ganderbal	297446	17497	5.88
7	Jammu	1529958	0	0.00
8	Kathua	616435	0	0.00
9	Kishtwar	230696	0	0.00
10	Kulgam	424483	3738	0.88
11	Kupwara	870354	103082	11.84
12	Pulwama	560440	3992	1.59
13	Poonch	476835	267194	56.03
14	Rajouri	642415	360409	56.10
15	Ramban	283713	0	0.00
16	Reasi	314667	0	0.00
17	Samba	318898	0	0.00
18	Shopian	266215	13427	5.04
19	Srinagar	1236829	540	0.04
20	Udhampur	554985	0	0.00
Total		12541302	1022982	8.18%

Source: State Advisory Board for Development of Pahari speaking People of J&K, Data Based on 2011 Census.

Table 2. Age Composition of Pahari in Rajouri District (In Percent)

Age Group	Lam	%age	Sialsui	%age	Galhutti	%age	Kandigala	%age
0-5	32	20.26	37	20.33	24	18.04	34	18.19
6-9	26	16.46	45	24.73	30	22.56	31	16.58
10-29	34	21.52	34	18.69	26	19.55	41	21.93
30-59	44	27.85	43	23.63	36	27.06	48	25.67
60 <	22	13.93	23	12.64	17	17.79	29	15.51
Total	158	100.0	182	100.0	133	100.0	187	100.00

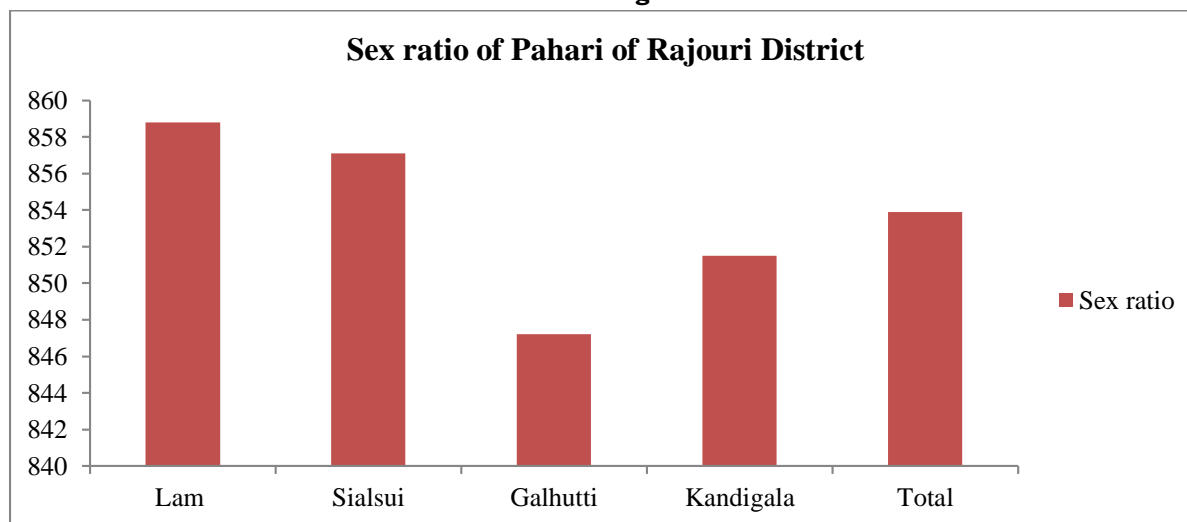
Source : Household Survey, 2020

Table 3. Sex Ratio of Pahari of Rajouri District

S.No	Villages	Males	Females	Sex ratio
1	Lam	85	73	858.8
2	Sialsui	98	84	857.1
3	Galhutti	72	61	847.2
4	Kandigala	101	86	851.5
Total		356	304	853.9

Source: Household Survey 2020

Fig 1



Source: Household Survey 2020

Table 4- Linguistic Composition of Pahari of Rajouri District (In Percent)

S.No	Villages	Total No of Persons	Pahari Speaker	%	Other Speaker	%
1	Lam	158	147	93.03	11	6.96
2	Sialsui	182	169	92.85	13	7.14
3	Galhutti	133	126	94.73	7	5.26
4	Kandigala	187	161	86.09	26	13.90
Total		660	603	91.37	57	8.63

Source: Sample Households survey (2020)

Table 5- Literacy composition of Pahari of Rajouri District

S.No	Villages	Total Persons	Total Literate	Literacy in %
1	Lam	158	33	20.88
2	Sialsui	182	51	28.02
3	Galhutti	133	35	26.31
4	Kandigala	187	63	33.68
Total		660	182	27.57

Source: Household Survey, 2020

Table 6- Education Level among Pahari of Rajouri (In Percent)

S.No	Villages.	Below Primary	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Grad. & <
1	Lam	24.2	33.3	18.2	9.0	12.1	3.0
2	Sialsui	25.5	31.4	17.7	15.7	3.9	5.9
3	Galhutti	25.7	28.6	14.3	17.1	5.9	5.7
4	Kandigala	30.2	25.4	14.3	11.1	7.9	11.1
Total		26.9	29.12	15.9	13.2	7.7	7.1

Source: Household Survey (2020), Note Sample size 150