



## Gaddis of Himachal Pradesh

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**ABSTRACT** Transhumant Gaddis who reside in the area of Bharmour *Tehsil* in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh are extremely backward. They spend the summer in their permanent homes in Bharmour and cultivate their lands. In the winter, they migrate to lower hills along with their sheep and goat in and around Kangra hills. The Gaddis of Bharmour have been given the status of a Scheduled Tribe by the Government of India and are entitled to certain financial benefits. The important economic strategies of the people in the mountain regions seem to be the utilisation of the different biotopes at various altitudes. The economy of Gaddis is agro-postural. Land, livestock and the considerable knowledge of the skills necessary to exploit them effectively are the principal economic resources. Supplementary but nonetheless of considerable importance, is the income from non-traditional resources. The cash value of the products of village artisans is relatively insignificant as compared to the return from agriculture and pastoralism but products themselves are vital to the village economy. Although agriculture provides the bulk of the staple food, Gaddis themselves give major importance to sheep and goat rearing. There is no weaver caste in the village as such, however spinning and weaving is done in every household in the village. This is an important supplementary occupation among the Gaddis and both men and women engage in it. The woollen cloth required for preparing their woollen apparel is woven by the people out of the wool spun themselves. Gaddis maintain a short-term ecological balance with the environment through migrations and winter dispersal, whereby the intensity of utilisation of pastures is adjusted to the carrying capacity of the different pastures at the different period of time, while the long-term balance between flocks and pastures is beyond the control of Gaddis. The Gaddis also maintain an approximate economic and political balance with surrounding areas mediated through market exchange, and the institution of *Panchayat* and *Biradari*. For the present form of organisation to persist, the Gaddis must be in demographic balance. Since the Gaddis are partially isolated within the larger population of the area, the factors involved in this balance are both biological and social.

### INTRODUCTION

The Bharmour *Tehsil* in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh in the mid Himalayan zone is extremely backward. The people residing in the area are 'Transhumant Gaddis' who spend the summer in their permanent homes in Bharmour and cultivate their lands. In the winter, they migrate to lower hills along with their sheep and goat in and around Kangra hills. The term Gaddi is a generic name wherein Rajputs, Khattris, Thakurs or Ranas and Rathis are included. Nowadays, however, even Brahmans and Sipis of this area call themselves Gaddis, because Gaddis of Bharmour have been given the status of a Scheduled Tribe by the Government of India and are entitled to certain financial benefits. Gaddis of Bharmour have become a tribe by circumstances, mainly for the sake of development in the view of their social and economic backwardness. The Gaddis are entirely Hindu, both in origin and their social organisation. The Hindu

state in Bharmour was established around the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The Brahmans and Rajputs are supposed to have arrived during 780 to 800 AD, from Brahmans and Rajputs castes on the Punjab plains. The population has been stable in the area for quite a long time. It has not been dominated or strongly influenced by the Muslim, Gurkhas, Tibetans or British. The area is isolated and contact with the outside world is minimal. The Gaddi people of Himalayas occupy an area in the Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh and along the foothills of Dhaura Dhar in the Kangra district. They are principally found in Bharmour *Tehsil* of Chamba District (Bhasin 1990).

The *Gaddis* of Himalayas are extremely backward because of the dispersal of their population over enormous difficult hilly areas, which lack adequate educational facilities, means of communication, productive and irrigated land, medical facilities, mechanised cultivation and big irrigated holdings.

In addition to the Gaddi of Bharmour *Tehsil*, Gaddis of Kangra district regard themselves as

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directly derived from the Gaddis of Bharmour or claim a common or collateral ancestry. In most of the villages of the regions through which the *Gaddis* migrate and in many villages and towns of the Chamba district, there is a considerable sedentary population of Gaddi origin. Some of these are third and fourth generation settlers while others are from the time of Muslim persecution. In some of the villages of Kangra, the whole population regards itself as a settled section of the tribe, while in other places the settlers are dispersed in family groups. Gaddis of Bharmour and Kangra speak the language of the Indo-Aryan group, using a dialect close to the Chambiali of Chamba District, and most tribesmen know Gaddiali, Punjabi, Kangri and Hindi. Adjoining them on most of their route are people speaking Chambiali and Gaddiali. The population at high altitudes on Lahul side speaks Lahuli, and at the lower altitude, the Gaddis residing in Kangra speak Kangri. All these people are associated with the Gaddis of Bharmour in a way and come in contact during Gaddis' yearly migrations. Though Gaddis of Bharmour *Tehsil* and Kangra District share common cultural pattern and socio-economic characteristics, only the Gaddis of Bharmour have been designated as a Scheduled Tribe by the Government of India.

### Field Area

The area for the investigation was Bharmour *Patwar* Circle in the Bharmour *Tehsil* of Chamba District in Himachal Pradesh. Himachal Pradesh is bordered by Jammu and Kashmir in the north, Punjab in the west and southwest, Haryana in the south, Uttar Pradesh in the southeast and Tibet in the east. The state is therefore, strategically situated, being adjacent to China and Pakistan. It is situated between 30.3°N and 65.3°E. Its altitude ranging from 450 to 6,700 metres above mean sea level. The reasons that dictated the choice of the location were that the population has been stable in the area for quite a long time. It has not been dominated or strongly influenced by the Muslims, Gurkhas, Tibetan or British. The area is isolated and contact with the outside world is minimal. There have been no recent changes in technology or the economy that are great enough to bring rapid changes in the social organisation.

The former princely state of Chamba is one of the thirty-one mountain states that merged in 1948 to form the Union Territory of Himachal

Pradesh. The district is situated between north altitude 32°-45' and 33°-13' and east longitude 75°-45' and 77°-33'. Chamba district exhibits a pattern of vertical life zones, and these life zones are integrated with humans who are into resource exploitation strategies.

The habitable area of Chamba District is divided into three geographic zones, roughly separated by the four mountain ranges of Hathidhar, Dhaula Dhar, Pir Panjal or Pangi Range and Zanskar Range. The district comprises of five *Tehsils*, namely, Chamba, Bhattiyat, Churah, Pangi and Bharmour, and two sub-*Tehsils* of Salooni and Sihunta. Chamba has a great variation in the topography of the various parts of the state. There are also marked differences in the vegetation, as the state borders from low snow-free outer hills to the high peaks with permanent snow. Animal husbandry is an important part of the economy of Chamba. The extent to which a family depends for its subsistence on livestock varies according to the locality. In Chamba following adaptations have been observed, none of these is however totally independent of the other.

Transhumance based on buffalo herding without agriculture as practiced by Muslim Gujjars in Churah and Bharmour

1. Transhumance based on goats and sheep with an equal emphasis on agriculture as practiced by the Gaddis and other residents of Bharmour
2. Transhumance based on cattle, sheep and goats which is secondary to agriculture as practiced by the people of Northern Churah and Pangi
3. Sedentary farming with limited livestock raising as practiced by the people of Bhattiyat, Chamba and southwest Churah. Northwestern Himalayas are traversed by various transhumant groups, and their movements have led to degradation of mountain ecosystems. Man-environment interaction

Forests account for about twelve percent of the whole of the Chamba District and pastures 80.5 percent. Net area sown is only five percent and most of it is already being farmed (Statistical Abstract, District Chamba 1973-74). The highest ratio of cultivated land to pasture land and forests lies in the southwest or outer zone and progressively decreased in the middle and the inner zones.

Northwestern Himalayas are traversed by various transhumant groups, and their move-

ments have led to degradation of mountain ecosystems. Man and environment interaction studies, which analyse the influence of transhumant groups on different ecology zones, have become important, and several studies have been carried on these pastoral groups in different parts of western Himalayas (Singh 1964; Newell 1967; Khatana 1976; Goldstein and Masserschmidt 1980; Kango and Dhar 1981; Rao and Casimir 1982; Bhasin 1988; Bhasin 1996a).

The important economic strategies of people in the mountain regions seem to be the utilisation of the different biotopes at various altitudes (Guillet 1983). However, Goldstein and Masserschmidt (1980) have shown that vertical control is not generally applicable for the whole of the Himalayas. Transhumant groups of Chamba District utilise different biotopes at various altitudes as basic economic strategies. The example of Gaddis will illustrate this. In Chamba District, transhumance with or without agriculture becomes profitable, where high pastures are available. Where winters are severe, it becomes necessary to retreat or to limit the size of the flocks. Although about half of the population of Chamba practices one or the other of the three types of transhumance, transhumant groups are found in every part of the district at least during some season, however agriculture is the mainstay of the economy.

The following text describes the society and culture of the transhumant Gaddi population of the Bharmour *Tehsil*, Chamba District in Himachal Pradesh in terms of a general ecological viewpoint. This study shows that Gaddi's cultural adaptation is the response to a particular set of environmental constraints. They follow a peculiar strategy based on agropastoral and transhumance, each segment of which is intricately intermeshed with the others. It is associated with the movement of people and animals in a vertical pattern, as the interaction of altitude, climate and soil fertility has been shown to set upper limits on agriculture and pastoralism. The main elements of Gaddi culture are the result of "demands of food production and cultural historical influences". Most of the following chapters describe different aspects of this adaptation. Starting with the elementary units of family or households, a description is given of progressively larger groups of *Al*, *Gotra*, caste and Baron groups. These structural groupings and their organisational forms serve to maintain the Gad-

di society as an organised and persisting unit in relation to the outside area.

The Bharmour *Tehsil* lies approximately between the north altitude 32°-11' and 32°-41' and the east longitude 76°-22' and 76°-53'. The lowest altitude is about 1,340 metres and the highest about 5,900 metres above the sea level. Bharmour *Tehsil* is remarkably mountainous, and level and flat pieces of land are exceptions to be met with. Cultivation ranges, approximately, between 1,400 metres and 3,700 metres. Because of the steepness of the slope, in the rainy seasons the good soil cover is lost and soil conservation becomes a real hazard. Land sliding is a common feature in this area. Depending on altitude, which determines the length of the growing season, the soil is suitable for maize, wheat, coarse cereals, pulses, millets, potatoes, temperate fruits, tobacco and certain spices. Depending upon the altitude the climate varies a good deal. Taken as a whole, the climate is temperate with well-marked seasons. The winter lasts from December to February (both inclusive) and is characterised by snowfall, which is generally heavy and descends lower in the inner valleys. Higher still, the semi-arctic conditions prevail along the main ranges, and from November to March the passes are blocked with snow. The annual average rainfall is 1,264.4 mm (Working Plan for the Upper Ravi Forests 1954-55 to 1968-69). The streams and rivers are mainly snow-fed and receive large quantities of water from the melting of high-level snow during the hot weather. Perennial springs are also common. The water supply in the area is ample, but in localities, which have been denuded of their forest covering, it becomes difficult to obtain an adequate supply of water. Agricultural lands are mostly rainfed. The gorges are so deep that no economic channels for irrigation have been taken out. Forests occupy an important place in the life of Gaddis. The Bharmour forest consists of 44,962 acres (18,191 hectares) of land. Out of this, the reserve forest is 8,395 acres (3,393 hectares), protected forests are 9,067 acres (3,669 hectares) and pastureland is 27,500 acres (11,129 hectares), after the implementation of the Working Plan for the Upper Ravi Forests (1954-55 to 1968-69).

The rights in all the reserve forests were settled between 1879 and 1882. They consist of grazing, collection of firewood, cutting grass and torchwood, lopping oak trees for fodder and rights of ways, etc. Transhumant people of the

area have been given privilege for temporary halting of their flocks during their marches to and from the higher pastures.

In the rocky area and those subjected to severe erosion, the vegetation is usually grass, scrub brush, dwarf oak and chil (*Pinus longifolia*). Other vegetation falls into three classes of fodder, fuel and commercial. Many shrubs, creepers and other plants are eaten by grazing animals or lopped and collected as fodder.

Among the various land-use categories reported by the Government of India, four can be considered as grazing resources, that is, forests, permanent pastures and other grazing land, cultivable wastelands, and fallows. Out of the total geographical area, forest is 13.1 percent, land under pasture and other grazing land is 83.2 percent, which supports a large livestock population of Bharmour (cattle = 18,270; buffaloes = 80; sheep = 58,840; goats = 41,407; horses = 145; mules = 38; donkeys = 30; poultry = 731; total = 1,19,549) from Statistical Abstract of Chamba District (1981). No fodder crops are cultivated in Bharmour. Agricultural waste and crop residue is a source of forage. Net area sown is only 3.12 percent. Several crops are grown on this meagre land, like wheat, maize, barley, other coarse cereals, pulses, potato, other food crops, oil seeds and other non-food crops.

### Size of Holdings

The average size of holdings is small in Bharmour. The small size of landholdings is attributed mainly to the hilly terrain and partly to the division of the property on the break-up of a joint family. In Bharmour very often, the different fields belonging to a family are widely scattered. Almost all the cultivable land has been brought under the plough. Little virgin land has been left, and that too in far off places at considerable height. Whenever a joint family breaks up each field is divided in two smaller parts, leading to extremely small, scattered fields. Historically speaking, all the lands used to belong to the Rajah of Chamba who would rent out small fields to different families. A person was given the right to only as much land as he and his family could personally cultivate. This type of land distribution has prevented the emergence of any significant group of large landholders. Male residents could acquire the right to cultivate land for their personal use irrespective of

their caste or *Gotra*. After obtaining permission to cultivate a tract of land, it was necessary to level the land, clear it of rocks, stones, trees and to build retaining walls. This was a very arduous and time-consuming process. It required the cooperative effort of the whole family. Non-availability of labour, made the amassing of land fruitless. After independence, when the idea of private ownership was introduced the problem of non-availability of labour remained as it was, as a result, large landholders did not emerge as a group. At present, virgin land available is at a considerable height and far-off from the residential villages. It is not economical to cultivate such land, as much time is wasted in walking from one field to another. For cultivation of whatever land it has, a family has to depend entirely on its own manpower resources, since no hired labour is available (Bhasin et al. 1991).

Short working season, absence of irrigation, fragmentation of the land, resulting in small fields thus preventing the mechanisation of agriculture practices, absence of surplus labour, shortage of chemical fertilisers and improved seeds, and extremely simple technology are the factors, which arrest the agricultural production in these areas, and the agriculture technology is extremely simple and time consuming. The only non-human power so far utilised is that of oxen in ploughing and thrashing and of water mills for grinding.

### Economic Pursuits

The economy of Gaddis is agro-pastoral. Land, livestock and the considerable knowledge of the skills necessary to exploit them effectively are the principal economic resources. Supplementary but nonetheless of considerable importance, is the income from non-traditional resources. The cash value of the products of village artisans is relatively insignificant as compared with the return from agriculture and pastoralism but products themselves are vital to the village economy.

Although agriculture provides the bulk of the staple food, Gaddis themselves give major importance to sheep and goat rearing. From this source they obtain additional food in the form of meat and milk, and wool for clothing. Due to heavy snowfall for about three to four months during winter, the Gaddis generally migrate to lower hills and plains along with their flocks of

sheep and goats. During this period the main source of livelihood is sale of wool and employment of their women and children as domestic servants. A small percentage of population is left behind to look after the cattle and fields, and for the spinning and weaving of woollens (Bhasin 1996b). The migration is necessitated because the pastures and grazing lands are covered with snow, and it is difficult to maintain the large number of sheep and goats, and secondly, for the selling of raw wool, which is available in large quantities without market facilities. Other secondary traditional pursuits in the area are collecting minor forest produce, various kinds of household industries such as spinning and weaving, tailoring and beekeeping, medicine, and religious and Para-religious activities. More recently the increase in mercantile and government activity has created new sources of income in transport, road building, construction, wholesale and retailing. Horticulture, while not yet significant, may become a major source of income provided there is improvement in ways and means of communication and transportation.

Dry terrace cultivation, carried out on hill slopes, produces two crops each year. The *Kharif* (summer) crops are sown from April to June and harvested from August to October. The Rabi (winter) crops are sown in October and November and harvested in May and June. The main *Kharif* crop is maize and other coarse cereals grown throughout the district. Other *Kharif* crops are pulses, potatoes, tobacco, beans, *Gandholi* (pumpkin) and cucumber. The main Rabi crops are wheat, barley and oil seed. Where the soil is too hard to grow these crops, coarse cereals like *Phullen* and *Bhares* (*Phaseolus aureus*), *Kodra* or *Ragi* (*Elensine corocana*), *Chana* (*Cicer anentum* Linn.), *Chaula* (*Caseania eliptica* wild), *Seul* (*Xylasomo longifolium* clas), *Koni* (*Baeobotrys indica* Roxb), and *Barjrbhang* (*Ocium ocimides* Linn) are grown instead (Bhasin et al. 1991).

The crops in Bharmour are grown for one's own consumption. The costs of cultivation incurred within the village are generally paid in kind. The payments to artisans within the *Barton* system are largely of this nature. After one's own needs and *Barton* obligations are provided for, some of the remaining crops like *Rong* and *Mash*, (pulses) are sold for cash to merchants of Chamba, who visit Bharmour for making such deals.

It is important for the Gaddis to have cash to pay his land revenue, to get salt for the sheep and goats, to purchase consumer goods from Chamba or Kangra markets. There are no potters or cobblers in Bharmour. Gaddis have to buy pots and shoes. In addition to the money obtained through the sale of some agricultural commodities cash enters the village economy from selling of raw wool and woollen clothes, from wages and salaries earned outside the village and from governmental funds such as housing and pitloom subsidies, etc. Agriculture work in Bharmour is very arduous (Bhasin and Bhasin 1993). Terracing of the fields is necessary. The Gaddis have a pre-wheel culture in which the human back lifts and moves everything. The only non-human power so far utilised is that of animals in ploughing and thrashing.

With the given simple technology and rugged terrain Gaddis manage by growing multitude of crops, many of them quick maturing, hardy and drought resistant. The great number of crops, mixed sowing and placement of fields far apart are all attempts to reduce the risk. But even then, in Bharmour, agriculture is insufficient by itself as a subsistence base. They compensate for the agriculture deficit, by utilising the grazing grounds in the area by rearing sheep and goats. Agriculture production is reduced by the shorter working season and low temperature. The high altitude combined with higher precipitation results in a greater accumulation of snow. It tends to accumulate through the winter and the remains at some place in Bharmour up to March and April. The shorter season and absence of irrigation eliminates rice (most productive per land unit) as a food crop. These features serve to restrict the agricultural production and the number of animals that can be kept during the winter season as draft animals who are left behind have to be provided with stored fodder throughout the months of winter. No parallel restriction limits the possibility for summer grazing. Upper ranges of these mountains are noteworthy for their large, lush meadows, and other good summer grazing. However, these pastures are only seasonal, and Gaddis cannot rely on them for year round sustenance. Consequently patterns of transhumance are developed to utilise the productive mountain area in its productive season, while relying on the other areas the rest of the year.

It cannot however be said, that the environment alone drives them out of Bharmour during winter, as the economic reality is equally responsible. There are families in Bharmour who do not have enough land or do not rear enough sheep and goats to meet their economic need throughout the year. They have to look for odd jobs in lower hills, where they migrate. They work on daily wages as road labourers, woodcutters, etc., and their women and children work as domestic help, thus earning their livelihood for winter months. Apart from this, wool and woollen products need some way of disposal, which is not possible if they are stagnant locally. As all the local people rear sheep and goat (even if they have few) they cannot sell or exchange wool and woollen products, except by way of their own consumption (Bhasin 1990).

### *Animal Husbandry*

In an agro-pastoral economy like that of Bharmour where mechanisation of agricultural operations is not possible, cattle are kept not only for providing protective food like milk, but also for the valuable drought power and manure essential for agriculture. Sheep and goats are reared for sale, meat and wool purposes. Although animal husbandry mostly provides subsidiary means of livelihood to the agriculturist, livestock raising is an integral part of the agricultural itself. Animal husbandry supplements agriculture to a major extent.

The Gaddis keep cattle, mainly bulls and cows. No one keeps a buffalo, as the climate is not conducive to the proper rearing of a buffalo. The total number of cows is not enough to ensure adequate milk supply to the population of the entire village, and accordingly they suffer from lack of this nutritive food. Still the cows and bulls have their economic importance. The manure of these animals is used to maintain the fertility of soil, to which it is applied, and is vital for good crops. It is acknowledged by all the villagers that soil fertility depends largely on the manure. As chemical fertilisers are not yet popular because of price and unavailability, this animal manure is of great importance. The availability of firewood (from the forest) makes it unnecessary to use cow dung for fuel, as is mostly done in the plains.

The breed of the cattle is very poor in Bharmour. The typical cow today gives one to two kilograms of milk a day after its calf has been

weaned, but it goes dry within a few months especially during the winter when it subsists mainly on corn stalks. No fodder crops are grown, although chaff, stalks and occasionally grains, are fed to them. The animals subsist on wild fodder, which they forage and that which is gathered for them comes from forest trees, bushes and grasslands. Thus, animals are a crucial link in the mountain ecosystem.

Gaddi flocks consist of both sheep and goats, although sheep produce more wool, they are less hardy and give less milk and meat. Goats are also able to live on poorer pasture after they have grazed for a certain length of time, as their sharp hooves cut the turf, exposing the top soil, which is blown away by the wind (Bhasin et al. 1991).

There are about twenty percent more sheep than goats, and this proportion appears to have remained the same for at least the last ten years. The ratio of the sheep and goat is 3:2 (58,840 sheep and 41,407 goats according to the Statistical Record Chamba (1980-81). Even though the destruction by goats of the topsoil is greater and the tax is heavy, every shepherd requires both animals.

Pastureland for grazing the herd is essential to the Gaddi lifestyle. Cultivation of land for raising fodder crop has been unknown. General shortage of cultivable land and the availability of pastures in Government Land Settlement records have curbed the need for fodder crop.

At present the main source of fodder are hay made out of grass growing on the *Ghasnis* (privately owned or occupied grasslands), stalks of maize, chaff of wheat and pulses and foliage of trees, which either on the land of cultivators or in the State wastes are lopped, as and when necessary. The quantity available from above sources is inadequate. As the area remains snow bound during winter season, Gaddis have to migrate to warmer grazing lands with their flocks. The pressure on the grazing lands is heavy because of large flocks of Gaddis. Secondly, erosion has played havoc on pastures, and thirdly intense cold renders all alpine pastures inaccessible for a considerable period. The system of stall-feeding has still not taken its roots in Bharmour.

Gaddis or professional grazers have occasionally been given privileges for temporary halting of their flocks during their marches to and from the alpine pastures. Formal records of rights have not been prepared for all protected forests.

The alpine pastures are sold for annual grazing on prescribed fees between 15<sup>th</sup> April and 15<sup>th</sup> October. Permits are required for digging and collection of *Dhup* and other medicinal herbs from these areas on payment of nominal fees.

Gaddis had access to all demarcated forests, but forest authority has the right to close the areas for specified times in case of erosion and bad condition of forests for the rejuvenation of forest cover. These areas were sometimes closed for ten years at a stretch. The pastures are directly allotted to the shepherds by the Forest Department. Previously there was a "contract system" in the region. The contractor used to allot these pastures to the shepherds subject on a condition that they would keep the flocks on the fallow land for droppings during night. In return, contractor would get grains from the field owners, which he was sharing with the shepherds. But now due to direct allotment, the shepherds have got full rights in the fields allotted to them.

Winter pastures are poor but extensive, while the pastures at higher elevation at this time are covered with snow. As spring progresses and pastures at low and middle elevation begin to dry up, migration to the higher pastures begins. The autumn season is generally poor throughout, but then the harvested fields with their stubble become available for pasturage. In fact most owners encourage the Gaddis to graze their flocks on harvested or fallow fields, as the local people recognise the value of the natural manure.

Despite the fact that pastoralists control their animals migrations, they are nevertheless, very closely bound by the limitations of their habitats. Because of their dependence on the habitat, pastoralists share an intimacy with nature and its cycles that characterises most other pre-industrial people. Their settlement patterns and productive activities are closely attuned to changes in nature, as their entire way of life also is responsive to these changes. The entire tenor of life changes seasonally among pastoralists. An important aspect of this seasonality is that their group composition changes seasonally. Another adaptation to their milieu is the way in which their groups fragment as a result of habitation pressures.

The flocks of sheep and goats are usually cared for by men. While the onerous work of farming may be done by pregnant women, the handling of stock requires the masculine freedom from child bearing and probably also the masculine kind of maculation. The male control of animals creates a predilection for patri-ori-

entation in residence, filiations and heritage. It also tends to reduce the social role of women though not their economic value. Youth is generally given the responsibility for flocks while still serving under an authoritarian father, thus combining both the independence of action and the acceptance of authority.

Between 400 and 1500 of sheep and goats comprise a flock. Generally, two to four persons and several dogs accompany the flocks, which camp out night and day all the year round. If a man has got many sheep and goats, he takes one or more *Puhals* (hired shepherds) with him, but commonly the man accompanying the flock are its owners. If a man has only a few sheep and goats, he does not accompany them himself, but engages a kinsman or friend to take him with his flock.

In Sachuien the number of animals owned by a family varies to a great extent. There are families that own eleven hundred sheep and goats, while others own only thirty to forty. Usually three or four families pool their animals, and make up a number of about 400. Two shepherds or *Puhals* are then placed in charge of these. *Puhals* are generally hired in the summer season, when nobody can be spared from the family to look after the flock (Bhasin 1996a).

### *Pastoral Cycle*

For the flocks of sheep and goats, other than *Ghareri*, is a definite cycle of activity, which repeats itself every year. The traditional law facilitates the organisation of the Gaddi migration. Traditional routes, schedules of departures and the duration of occupations of the different localities are followed strictly. The combined route and schedule, which describe the locations of the household at different times in the yearly cycle, are known to all the households. Their rights to pass on roads, forests and over uncultivated lands and to graze their flocks on allotted pastures are recognised by the local population and the authorities. In the beginning of cold weather, that is, October and November, these flocks are driven to the low hills of Kangra, Nurpur and Pathankot. There, the Gaddis pasture their flocks on the field before the *Kharif* crops are planted and receive payments from the landowners for doing so. They remain in the valley all winter until, as spring approaches, the pastures at low and middle elevation begin to dry

up, and they return to Bharmour either through Dalhousie and Chamba along the main road or over the first snow free pass. In this season no *Puhals* are hired, as some family members can be spared for the purpose. They are brought back in April to their village to manure the field, and in June, they are entrusted to a shepherd for the summer months. After a month in *Trakar* pasture, *Kat* or *Katohar*, some flocks are led to the Dhars of Churah and Bharmour and other parts and others are taken over the passes of the Pangi range to Gahars of Pangi and Lahaul, where they remain till August. In the beginning of September, shepherds travel slowly down the valley below Kugti to Bharmour, and flocks are brought back to *Trakar* pastures. In October, they are brought to the village field for manure. When flocks are in *Trakar* pastures or in the village fields, the Gaddis join in the various activities of the season of the year. For this migration generally *Puhals* are hired as very few members of the family can be spared from agricultural activities to look after the flocks. As autumn continues, they travel up the Ravi over nearly all passes between Hoi and Baijnath. They remain on the tops until snow drives them to the Kangra plain. Total travelling is around six hundred kilometres. Migration towards summer pastures starts in May. It takes around two months to travel a mere hundred kilometres. Much of these two months are spent in Bharmour valley, as Gaddis have permanent homes and fields here. Shepherds and flocks walk about eight to ten kilometres in a day. They do not walk on regular tracks. The length of the stay at a halt may be day or weeks depending upon the availability and condition of grazing. During the migration, Gaddis travel through varying altitudes. Winters are spent in the scrub jungle at 600 metres, the villages of the Ravi and Budhal valleys at 1,800 to 2,300 metres, and the summer pastures Dhars at 3,000 to 3,500 metres. There are five *Jots* (passes) of Pire Panjal-Kugti pass (16,000 feet), Rohtang pass (13,200 feet), Hampta pass (16,400 feet), Kalicho pass (16,720 feet) and Jalsu pass, which Gaddis cross during the course of their migration. Different passes are crossed to reach the allotted pasturelands. The Jalsu pass is crossed in May and the passes of Pir-Panjal are crossed at the end of the June. Gaddis coming from the Mandi-Bilaspur cross the Dulchi pass (7,500 feet). During winter migrations, the family may accompany shepherds on the way, till they reach the place of migration. Some fam-

ilies come via Pathankot and Chamba, by bus and jeep, while others who come by foot starting their journey from late April. Men, women and children struggle over the passes. They travel in groups but everybody does not cover the same distance in a day or halt at the same place. Parties with old, lame and children cover a shorter distance. They start early in the morning, stop for lunch, smoke and rest, etc. Gaddis travel without tents, as there are no camping grounds, but take shelters under projecting rocks or caves. Every one carries their own rations, cooking pots, girdles and water cans. Firewood is no problem. They sleep on the spread *Gardus* or on the ground and cover themselves with more *Gardus*. The main route is only a slippery, stony path, barely a track up the Parai Nullah. The path crosses the forest of oak and rhododendron trees, box and laurel scrub and bamboo trees with dense undergrowth. On their way to high summer pastures at the end of May to early June and returning back in the middle to the end of September, shepherds with their flocks spend couple of weeks in the vicinity of their home village, where shearing of the sheep takes place. High passes are crossed when the snow has melted enough to be able to cross in a single day. In an average year, this is towards the end of the June. As a result, the area is overcrowded. At this time of the year at this altitude the grazing is insufficient for such large numbers. These recently clipped and thin animals readily succumb to colds and coughs. The passes are crossed early in the morning because snow softens as the sun rises and makes the climb difficult for tired, starved and weak flocks. Another reason for the preference for predawn crossing of the high passes is the ever-present danger of stone falling, which becomes loose after the frost melts. The terrain of high passes is inhospitable with frightening glaciers, crumbling rocks, avalanches, frost and eroding winds. In the Lahaul side, there is a vast tract of land about 260 square kilometres in area known as the Lingti Maidan. This tract is uncultivated and unhabitated and has a maximum elevation of about 4,270 metres. The plain is a good grazing ground where the pastures are really good with growth of the *Niru*, the blue grass and the *Mat* and *Morar* grass. After crossing the pass, shepherds start moving towards their summer pastures. The grass varies considerably from year to year, depending upon the quantity of snow and spring rain. This grass is extraordinarily nutritious. The pastures are directly allotted to the shepherds by the Forest



Department. Previously there was a contract system in the region. The contractor used to allot these pastures to the shepherds subject on a condition that they would keep the flocks on the fallow land for dropping during nights. In return, contractor would get grain from the field owners, which he was sharing with the shepherds. But now due to direct allotment, the shepherds have got full rights in the fields allotted to them. However, in some areas, in addition to official taxes, a token payment is still sometimes made to local villagers or the Thakur or his descendants, comprising two young rams or a breeding goat. If there are four or five men accompanying the flock, after reaching their summer pastures, one of them may return home to assist in agricultural activities until he is needed for autumn migration. At the beginning of the summer, the flocks use the lower part of the pasture allowing the growth on the higher slope. Sheep and goats are grazed separately.

Under the Gaddi transhumant system there is a contrast between the permanent villages and the pasturelands. In the former live the older men, women and children, with few cows and bullocks for nine months of the year. This village is the centre of agricultural and social activities in general. At the pastures live the young men (whether *Puhals* or owners) in charge of the flocks. It is seldom that a wife or a girl lives at the pastures. The village has permanent, firmly built houses with material embodiment of the social structure of the family group, which inhabits it.

There are clearly two different patterns with respect to the looking after of the sheep and goats. In summer migrations, *Puhals* (hired shepherds) look after the sheep at higher pastures and during winter migrations, *Mahlundi* (owner shepherds) accompany the flocks. It is not necessary for the entire family to accompany the *Puhal* or *Mahlundi*. During winter migrations, the family may accompany the shepherd on the way, till they reach the place of migration. Here the family divides, shepherds move on to the pastureland, which is away from the villages. Women and children are hired as house-help for pounding rice and other agricultural work.

Shepherds carry some light utensils of aluminium and a *Tawa* of iron. They invariably keep a *Hukka* in one hand with a *Khalru* of cereals, other essentials and limited articles, loaded on their backs, they walk behind their flocks. They carry their tobacco in a leather pouch. They do

not carry any spare clothes and wear a traditional *Chola* in whose pockets some newborn kids and lambs are carried. Since they do not keep any tent with them the Gaddi shepherds sleep under the open sky. During bad weather they lie under the shadow of a tree or a projecting rock or in a cave. Failing these, they lie among the sheep and goats. A *Gardu* is their bedding and *Dora* serves the purpose of a pillow.

If the *Puhal* is hired for a season, foodstuff has to be supplied to him by the owner. The principal diet of the *Puhal* is bread or *Chapatti* made of the flour of maize, a *Chutney* made of *Amlu* leaves available in the hill sides near the snow line, and goat's milk. Meat is also eaten when an animal dies in an accident or is offered as sacrifice to some deity. Animals are not killed merely for the sake of meat. The payment, which is made to a shepherd who is hired, is as follows:

- i. Maize at one kilogram per head per day with salt and chillies. This may be given either in cash or in kind. Milk from the goats and sheep generally goes to the shepherd.
- ii. One pair of shoes
- iii. Two sheep
- iv. Wages at four rupees a month
- v. One blanket
- vi. One woollen dress.

Some Gaddis pay the *Puhal* two kilograms of raw wool plus the gift of one sheep for a small flock per season. But rates vary and hired shepherds are becoming increasingly unwilling to take responsibility for flocks other than their own family's.

Sheep and goats are generally herded together with flocks of up to 300-400 to two shepherds assisted by dogs. About one ram is required for every five ewes to ensure maximal fertility in the flock, whereas in the case of goats the capacity of a single male appears to be much greater. The natural rutting seasons are three, falling roughly in June, August/September, and October, and the ewes consequently throw their lambs in November, January/February, or March.

Lambs and kids are usually herded separately from the adults, and those born during the long migration are transported in the Gaddis dress for the first couple of weeks. Easy weaning is achieved by placing the lamb temporarily in a different flock from that of its mother. The animals have a high rate of fertility, with moderately frequent twinning and occasionally two births a year. However, the herds are subjected to irreg-

ular losses by disaster and pests, mainly heavy frosts at a time of lambing, and foot and mouth disease, and other contagious animal diseases. There are other losses of livestock by accident or otherwise.

The products derived from sheep and goats are milk, meat, wool and hides. These products are variously obtained and processed, and are consumed directly, stored and consumed, or traded. Milk and its products are most important. Sheep and goat's milk are mixed during milking. Milk is not consumed fresh, but immediately heated, and treated off by a spoonful of sour milk, and it then turns into sour milk. Sour milk is a staple food, and particularly in the period of maximal production in the spring it is also processed for storage. Sour milk is churned to produce butter and buttermilk. The butter is eaten fresh or made into *Ghee* (clarified butter) by heating, which is either traded or stored for later consumption.

When animals are slaughtered for meat, these are eaten fresh and never smoked, salted or dried. The meat is cooked in *Ghee* and spices. The hides of slaughtered animals are plucked and turned inside out (*Khalru*), and used as storage bags for water, sour milk, buttermilk and grains, etc. The hides of lambs and kids are sold in the market. For Gaddis, wool is the most important product. Wool is shorn from the sheep thrice a year. The influence of climate and altitude is clearly seen in the growth and quality of wool produced. Soon after the end of winter, sheep are sheared in March-April (*Hium Keni*), when they yield 150 grams of wool per sheep. This is done in Kangra. After returning to Bharmour and before the upward journey for the highest pastures begins, a second shearing (*Basandi*) takes place at *Trakar* pastures, which yields about 350 grams of wool. Then after returning from high pastures, when winter sets in, a third shearing is done, when each animal yields about 500 grams of wool (*Saere*). For shearing, mostly Sipis are employed and they get two and half kilograms of wool after shearing of 25 sheep. Shearing of 80 to 85 sheep can be completed in a day. The sheep are washed before shearing. For clipping fleece from sheep, locally prepared scissors, '*Kat*' are used. The sheep's wool spun and woven is sold as well as self-consumed. Goat hair is spun and woven.

In the days of regional isolation and comparative local self-sufficiency, wool was the only material used for clothing. Today, wool is still

used for making blankets and traditional dresses, but mill made cotton and wool led cloth has also entered the village scene.

The blacksmiths make and repair all agricultural implements. There are two families of blacksmiths in the Bharmour *Patwar* Circle, who live on the outskirts of the village of Bharmour. They belong to Sipi caste, Japatra *Gotra*. According to the *lohar* (blacksmith) in Bharmour, he receives one *Sup* of maize or wheat per plough but there is no hard and fast rule. He makes agricultural implements from the raw material provided by clients. Unlike *Purohit* and Rehara, the *lohar* has no personal relationship with his clients and rarely attends the *rites de passage* in families, which he does not know personally. All the Sachuian farmers deal with a *lohar* at his residence in Bharmour village, and he is paid in cash and kind both. The *Lohars* of Bharmour *Patwar* Circle are involved in *Jajmani* relations with the families of only Bharmour village. *Lohars* derive substantial part of their income from this trade. Carpenters and masons are paid for by the day. Anyone with a considerable skill can be a carpenter. In Bharmour *Patwar* Circle, there is one qualified carpenter who is constantly in demand. In most villages there are one or two men who are more adept than others and who do carpentry for their kinsmen, when they have time to spare from their own work in fields. They are paid less money for this than the qualified carpenter. In Sachuian, there are three carpenters, part of whose income is derived from the carpentry. They fashion wooden handles for the agricultural implements with metal blades and make other wooden implements.

These various skills and occupations fall into three categories:

1. Traditional skills and occupations,
2. Skills that have developed in the last 40 years,
3. New occupational skills and work that have emerged only as a result of movement money and contracts in the region.

The traditional skills of bee-keeping no longer exist because D.D.T spraying has cut down the number of bees in the region. For the most of the castes of Bharmour *Patwar* Circle, the connection between caste and occupation is not strong. The people who cease to pursue their traditional occupation either became farmers, earned money in animal husbandry or found

government jobs. Except for agriculture, people make no effort to invade the traditional occupations for other castes, and no one tried to enter the profession of the blacksmith. Apart from agriculture and animal husbandry, office jobs (peons, etc.), teaching in school, military, shop-keeping and other occupations are adopted by villagers when they cannot earn an adequate income in the traditional occupation. A combination of occupations is common in Bharmour *Patwar* Circle. Sachuien and Gothru are unusual for having a number of people who make a significant portion of their income from non-agricultural and non-livestock sources. Being near the Bharmour Block Headquarter, the sources and facilities available there have made such a situation possible.

Maize is the staple diet. In Punjab it is considered the poor man's food, but in Bharmour, it is usually preferred to wheat, as well as being the only grain regularly available. Although agriculture is the mainstay of the people, yet the food produced is not enough for the whole year.

There are 502 persons above the age of 12 years. Assuming that a child below 12 consumes half of what an adult does, the effective population becomes 607. If the rate of consumption of cereals is one kilogram per head per day, then the daily intake of the whole village is 607 kilograms. The average annual production of cereals in the village is 1,17,120 kilograms. Thus, the food for 192 days or 6 months and 12 days is grown in Sachuien. Therefore, the people have to buy food for the remaining months. For this they need cash. To compensate for the deficit food requirements, the Gaddis have to look for other avenues of income. The climate, habitat and presence of grasslands (*Dhars*) in the area facilitate transhumant adaptation. Pastoralism plays an important part in the economic scene of Gaddis. By this, they earn cash to buy other necessities of life.

It is difficult to assess the number of new births, say in a flock of hundred every year. But the Gaddis hold that if a person has 400 sheep, he can sell 40 every year, without reducing the size of his flock. In case of goats, the corresponding figure is 70. Taxes have to be paid to the Forest Department for grazing, at the rate of for sheep and goat. Higher rates are charged for goats, as they are more destructive to vegetation than sheep. In Lahaul, the seasonal tax is almost double of what it is in Chamba. The comparatively cool temperature and dry weather of Lahaul help in a greater growth of both meat and

wool. Pasturing is profitable in spite of high taxes. Gaddis have to pay taxes twice a year, one for summer pasturing in Bharmour or in Lahaul, and the other for winter pasturing in Kangra, where they remain for two to three months. Besides grazing, each animal has also to be provided with one kilogram of salt every year. This is considered to be indispensable for the health of the animal.

It is important for the Gaddis to have cash to pay his land revenue, to get salt for the sheep and goats, and to purchase consumer goods from Chamba or Kangra markets. The costs of cultivation incurred within the village are generally paid in kind. The payments to artisans within the *Barton* system are largely of this nature. After one's own needs and *Barton* (obligatory) obligations are provided for, some of the remaining crops like *Rong* and *Mash* are sold for cash to merchants of Chamba, who visit Bharmour for making such deals. There are no potters and cobblers in Bharmour, and so Gaddis have to buy pot and shoes from outside. In addition to the money obtained through the sale of some agricultural commodities, cash enters the village economy from selling of raw wool and woollen clothes from wages and salaries earned outside the village during the course of winter migration and from governmental jobs and funds such as housing and pitloom subsidies, etc. (Bhasin 1996a).

A great number of the necessities of life are thus obtained by trade. Sugar, tea, spices and rice are entirely obtained by trade. Materials for clothes and shoes, cooking utensils, glass, and China articles and few luxury goods like travelling radio, torches, watches and patromax lamps are also purchased.

### **Industries**

In Bharmour, which is entirely a rural area, agriculture forms the main occupation of people. Industries are usually run during slack agricultural seasons at the residence of the artisans as their secondary occupation only. In these industries, mostly family labour is employed and the work is carried on manually in the absence of power. The goods are predominantly manufactured for personal use. As the means of communication are difficult, the goods have not been standardised. The other factor is the absence of markets, which has not promoted the place of industry in the society. These factors make the

industries local in nature, and they form an integral part of the economy of the area. In the days of regional isolation and complete local self-sufficiency, these industries have played an important part. Artisans and menial castes are not found since each family generally does their work. As a special skill is either not required, or skilled workers of any caste do it, the proliferation of secondary and specialised skills has not taken place.

The important household industries carried on by the people in Bharmour are spinning and weaving of wool, tailoring, flour grinding, carpentry, oil crushing and blacksmithing. There are two sawmills in Bharmour.

Spinning and weaving are done in every household in the *Tehsil*. There is no weaver by occupation and the woollen cloth required for preparing their woollen apparel is woven by the people out of the wool spun themselves. The Gaddis prepare *Pattis* and blankets locally called *Gardus*. The *Patti* is used for preparing *Chola* or the coat as the case may be, and the *Gardus* serve as cover cloth. The *Gardus* are of really fine quality and command a ready market in the low-hills where people sell them during their stay there in the winter months. The production, however, is limited and just sufficient for their own needs. In view of the importance of weaving the industrial sector is under developed, though the natural endowments of the areas are capable of supporting a large number of industries. The topography and the fragility of the mountain environment, together with lack of infrastructural facilities, go against the establishment of many heavy industries in the mountains. Industrial development therefore, is limited to medium, small and cottage industries. The constraints in industrial development in Bharmour are power and raw materials, and the duration of work.

#### ***Power and Raw Materials***

The households engaged in these industries use only manual labour. In the case of flour grinding and oil crushing industries, however, water and bullock power respectively, are used. The raw materials too, are locally available or purchased from the adjacent villages. The tools are indigenously prepared and no improved tools, although having a wide scope, are in use in the area.

#### ***Duration of Working Period***

As stated earlier, agriculture is the principal occupation of the people. These industries are

run seasonally during the slack agricultural season. The working season of the households who do not migrate with their sheep and goats to the plains during winter extends from October to March. The migrating households, on the other hand, spin during the period of migration and the weaving is done during the summer and rainy season from June to September when they are partly free from agricultural operations.

Flour grinding is done during the rainy season from June to September when sufficient quantity of water is available in the *Nallahs* to the *Gharats*.

Since the farmer does the construction and repair of houses and sewing of new clothes for the fairs during the slack agricultural season, the peak working period of carpentry and tailoring also falls in these seasons. It was seen that on an average spinning and weaving of wool and flour grinding have a working period for 4 months, carpentry of 6 months and tailoring and other industries of 5 months in a year.

It was seen that the gross income from the spinning and weaving of wool, which is the most common industry in the area, is very little. In the absence of markets, the exploitation of the people by the middleman is extensive. Absence of advance technology is the prime factor and the development of the industry on modern lines presents a great scope for the economic betterment of people. There is a large scope for utilising the idle capacity in case of spinning and weaving of wool industry by providing necessary incentives and required facilities to the households (Bhasin et al. 1991).

The idle capacity in the region is because of the following factors:

1. Lack of finances
2. Difficulties in procurement of right type of raw material
3. Heavy snowfall
4. Pre-occupation in agriculture, illiteracy and lack of technical guidance

#### **Environmental Conditions and Cultural Adaptations**

The environmental stresses to which human population in this area has to adjust to are rugged topography, poorly developed soils, marginal availability of certain nutrients, low temperature, frequent frost and excessive snow. Means of transportation and communication are

few due to difficult terrain. People use suspension bridges, *Trangries* or ropes to cross the rivers. The Bharmour *Tehsil* headquarters lies 62 kilometres from Chamba and is connected to Chamba by a motorable, single lane road and fit for heavy vehicular traffic. The road terminates at *Tehsil* headquarters. The road is useful for officials and travellers since the Gaddis, the people residing in the area, still prefer to walk. During monsoon season, after a heavy shower, at few places, the road usually sinks or stones and dust fall on the road, thus blocking the only link with the outside world.

Villages in the area are found on sloping ridges 600 to 3,000 metres above the sea level. They cannot be placed next to the river because of the very steep sides and frequent floods, nor can they be placed above 3,000 metres, as the season is too short, between the melting of the snow and the new snowfall for the crops to mature. At places where the plain is wider, the villages are placed one above the other or adjacent to one another. The residential pattern is of the village surrounded by their fields. Since the riverbed is deep, water cannot be used for irrigation. Agricultural lands are mostly rainfed. With the increase in population and pressure on land, the fields close to the house were not enough to provide for the family. As a result, people had to look for more land in the nearby villages or for cultivable wasteland. Thus it came about that Gaddis gradually ended up with land not only in their own villages, close to their residence, but also fields as far as five or six kilometres from their homes.

The nature of the terrain has a twofold effect on the settlement pattern. Firstly, the ruggedness of the terrain leads to hamletting of communities. Secondly, large tracts of barren and rocky land lead to their dispersal. Landholdings are very small, and very often, the different fields belonging to a family are widely scattered. The smallness of the landholding is the result of the nature of the tract, steepness of the slopes, and fragmentation of land consequent upon break-up of a joint family. Steepness of the slope does not permit terracing out of large fields (Bhasin 1990).

The socio-cultural system found in Bharmour is a reflection of the way in which the Gaddis have, by tradition, adapted to a mountainous, rugged environment. To combat the environmental stresses, Gaddis have developed a mixed

agropastoral economy. Land and livestock are the principal economic resources of Bharmour. By simultaneously practicing agriculture and sheep and goat rearing, Gaddis have developed a broader base for spreading risk factors across two different economic activities. Although agriculture provides the bulk of the staple food, the Gaddis themselves give major importance to the care and value of their sheep and goats. From these animals they obtain additional food in the form of meat and milk, wool for clothing and cash for buying other essentials. It has been calculated that food for 192 days or 6 months and 12 days is grown in a sample village, Sachuien in Bharmour Block. Therefore, the people have to buy food for the remaining months (Bhasin 1988). For this they need money, which is obtained by selling wool and woollen products. The presence of *Dhars* (grasslands) in the area facilitates sheep and goat rearing. Historical conditions and events have of course played their part, but they too were influenced by ecological factors. The area remained comparatively isolated up to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The isolation was never absolute in the sense that Gaddis have always been aware of the practices and beliefs of other people. They have been in touch with the people of the lower hills while grazing their sheep and goats. During the same period their families have been working in the homes of the people in the Kangra Hills. The limited nature of the resources and specific nature of the agriculture and herding cycle are the result of the ecological conditions of the area. The grazing of sheep and goats brings them in the vicinity of lower hills or plains in the winter months. Immigrants into the Bharmour area adopted the local customs, caste, kinship, marriage and religion thus indicating that ecological adaptations mould the social relations to fit local conditions. Rajputs and Brahmans came from the plains and adjusted themselves to ecological conditions different from those of the plains. Their religious beliefs, practices and caste system, though modified by the harsh environment, still retain vestiges of the original.

The ecological conditions in Bharmour have several effects on the economic life of Gaddis. Agricultural production is reduced by the short season, low temperature, high altitude and smallness of the landholdings. Historically speaking, all the land used to belong to the Raja (King) of Chamba who would rent out small fields to dif-

ferent families. A person was given the right to only as much land as he and his family could personally cultivate. This type of distribution prevented the emergence of any significant group of large landholders. To compensate for the agricultural deficit Gaddis raised large flocks of sheep and goat. The mountain meadows and grazing grounds in the area facilitate the raising of sheep and goats. Accumulation of snow in winter months prevents the year-round sustenance of large flocks. Consequently, a pattern of transhumance was followed. Due to heavy snowfall for about three to four months during the winter, the Gaddis generally migrate to lower hills and plains along with their flocks of sheep. During this period the main source of livelihood is sale of wool and employment of their children and women as domestic servants. The migration is necessitated because the pastures and grazing lands are covered with snow, and it is difficult to maintain a large number of sheep and goats, and secondly, for the selling of raw wool, which is available in large quantities without any local outlet. Other secondary pursuits in the area are collecting minor forest produce, various kinds of household industries such as spinning and weaving, tailoring and beekeeping, and specialised occupations such as carpentry, iron-smith, medicine, religious and Para-religious activities. More recently the increase in mercantile and government activity has created new sources of income in transport, road building, construction, etc. Horticulture, while not yet significant, may become a major source of income. It cannot however be said that the environment alone drives them out of Bharmour during winter, as the economic reality is equally responsible. There are families in Bharmour who do not have enough land or do not rear enough sheep and goats to meet their economic needs throughout the year. They have to look for odd jobs in lower hills, where they migrate. They work on daily wages as road labourers, woodcutters, etc., and their women and children work as domestic help, thus earning their livelihood for winter months. Apart from this, wool and woollen products need some way of disposal, which is not possible if they are stagnant locally. As all the local people have sheep and goats (even if they have few) they cannot sell or exchange wool and woollen products, except by way of their own consumption (Bhasin 1996a).

### Population of Bharmour *Tehsil*

According to the Census of 2011 of District Chamba, the Bharmour *Tehsil* is inhabited by 39,108 persons of which 4560 are Scheduled Castes and 32,116 are Scheduled Tribes as per District Census Hand Book, District Chamba 2011). Sex-wise distribution of 'population is males 20,109 and females 18,999. The literacy rate is rather low. The rate of population growth in Bharmour *Tehsil* in 1961-71 and 1971-81, 2001-2011 is quite low as compared to Chamba, Himachal Pradesh and India. (District Census Hand Book District Chamba 1971, 1981, 2011).

The socio-cultural system as found in the Bharmour *Tehsil* is a reflection of the way in which the Gaddis have, by tradition, adapted to a mountainous, rugged environment through agriculture and pastoralism. Nuclear family households are the norm in the Bharmour *Tehsil*, which seems related to the prevailing house style. The villages are congested and there is little room for expansion. They are located on steep slopes and houses are not systematically planned. In Bharmour, the basic family group, which emerges as a legally independent, more or less self-sufficient unit, will hereby be called the nuclear family. This may be described in a preliminary way as a man, his wife and children. A daughter leaves it when she marries and joins her husband's nuclear family.

In the course of study, information regarding 472 family units of different caste groups in all the five valleys of the Bharmour *Tehsil* was collected. The total number of individuals in these families is 2,854 giving the average size of the family as 6.0. It shows the number of households (394) collected includes all the three castes in the Bharmour *Tehsil* from five valleys along with the number of joint families, nuclear families and the number of families in joint families.

As stated, earlier, the nuclear families predominate the Gaddi society. Geographical mobility, nurtured by transhumance, reinforces the prominence of the nuclear family. Joint living is ideal, but the divergence of interests and activities between the brothers and their wives usually surpasses the compromising limit. Partition is, therefore, a normal occurrence. However, because of the many different activities required to take care of specialised fields, a relatively large labour pool must be available along with some means of dividing up and coordinating the vari-

ous tasks. A nuclear family has neither the size nor the organisation for this. There is no denying the fact that the joint extended family has its economic advantages, provided the family can increase its landholding in proportion to its size. But the increased return does not appear to be enough to counteract the pressure and forces that tend to pull the family apart. Lacking hired labour, cooperation between families and *Barton* (obligatory assistance) obligations have become the compensating factors through which households communicate socially and a stable labour force is ensured when a man is in need.

### Domestic Units

Though there is no edge or wall to demarcate the village boundary, the villagers are quite aware of the demarcation. This territorial unit consists of a number of households, each household having a family, which traces its descent through *Als* and *Gotras*. Pine logs, planks, earth, cow dung, rocks and slate slabs are used in house building. Wood being a bad conductor of heat is ideal for protection from chill during winter. The houses are generally two or three storied with a balcony and a courtyard. Due to shortage of building space, the emphasis is on building multi-storied houses, and the lower storey consists of *Obra* for keeping cattle and agricultural implements. The first and second floors are used for living. Each household has slates paved in the *Khalyan* (courtyard), enclosed by a two or three feet high parapet wall. The *Khalyan* is used for spreading, threshing and cleaning and grains, cutting firewood and performing other household jobs. This is also used for sitting and chatting purposes.

The *Khalyan* in front of the *obra* contains steps leading to the first floor called *Thor*. This is the main room of the house and a sort of multipurpose room. If there is a second storey it is called *Mandeh*. There is no separate kitchen or bathroom.

The number of rooms depends on the need and economic condition of households. The houses are constructed near the fields, as the manure has to be carried out there. During the harvest season the crop must be guarded day and night from birds, etc., and transportation of ploughs and other implements also become difficult if the field is far removed from the house. Thus the productivity of land correlates directly

with the distance of the land from the owner's house.

The number of windows is limited, their size is very small and hence the houses are under ventilated. Each household has a courtyard paved with slates. The streets are uneven and only a few are paved with stones.

One-room houses can efficiently hold only a small nuclear family. When one of the sons or brothers marries, he usually builds a new house or at least a room attached to the house if space is available. This is symptomatic of the emphasis on nuclear families. In villages with few houses there is usually little difficulty in attaching rooms to a house.

This structure is the home of a small family group. The average number of persons in a family is 6.0. The household is built around one elementary family of a man, his wife and their children, with the occasional addition of unmarried or widowed or divorced relatives who would be otherwise alone in their house, or wife and children of a married son, or the most recent son to be married.

The household is a commensal and property owning group. Though titles to animals and some other valuable items of immovable property may be vested in individual members of the household, the right to dispose of such is controlled by the head of the household, and the income from such is used in the joint economy of the household. A daughter leaves it when she marries and joins her husband's nuclear family. She has no judicial rights of ownership or inheritance in her father's family. Sons remain within the village together with their wives and children. Though they tend increasingly to achieve a considerable degree of autonomy together with physical and economic separation, yet married sons do not become entirely independent of their father until his death. Polygyny is not the ideal but is practiced when the elder or younger brother dies leaving a wife behind, or the wife is barren. The term 'nuclear family' in this present account is used to express the basic position of the group in Bharmour society. It is the smallest, independent, corporate kin group. A number of nuclear families are linked together by a web of genealogically defined social bonds to form the more amorphous group, the extended family. A family or household is a member of a patrilineage. The patrilineage is called a '*Khandan*' by villagers. Such *Khandan* is divided into the *Khinds* named after the ancestors where the split

is supposed to have taken place. A *Khind* consists of number of *Tols*. Each *Tol* consists of only two or three generations in depth and might consist of one or more brothers and share a common hearth. Another term also used is *Shariki*, which is a larger unit than a *Khandan* and all the villagers of the same caste can be said to belong to one *Shariki*.

The male members of the *Tol* are closely related agnatic kinsmen like grandfathers and grandsons, fathers and sons, uncles and nephews, and siblings and cousins. The female members are the spouses of the male members and unmarried females are their sisters and daughters.

### Domestic Organisation

Within each household there is a distribution of authority and considerable division of labour among the members of the household. All households have a recognised head, who represents the household in all dealings with the government offices, and with villagers and strangers. Where the household contains an elementary family, the head is universally the husband in that family, even when a widowed father or senior brother resides with the family. Where the household is occupied by an incomplete family, the senior male is the head. Only where there are no adult male members of the household or where they are temporarily absent, is a woman ever regarded as the head of a household.

However, with respect to decisions in the domestic and familial domain, men and women are more nearly equal, and the distribution of authority between spouses is a matter of individual adaptation. Labour is divided among household members by sex and age, but few tasks are rigidly allotted to only one sex or one age group.

Two sex statuses are employed. Men are shepherds and cultivators, women till the lands, cook and raise infants. The sexual division is rather complete, but certain phases of agricultural labour fall to men, but women shepherds exist under rare circumstances. Both sexes participate in ceremonies, but men shoulder the major responsibilities. In most households the husband and wife can efficiently do all the work, although it is not easy during the period when there are young children who must be constantly watched by the mother until an older child is able to do it for her. A child of ten is considered capable of taking sheep and goats to graze for

the day or to watch younger children. In Sachuien most children of this age attend school. Infants are tied into a shawl and carried on the mother's back, while she grazes the animals, weeds the crops, cuts grass for fodder and collects firewood. It is also the job of the adult women and teenage boys to cleanse the animal pens of manure and take it to the fields. Almost all women work in the fields and take the animals to graze. The only work they do not do is ploughing. At home they prepare food, get water, milk the cattle, wash clothes, clean and spin wool and do the various other household chores. The work done by women is constant, diverse and often arduous. The work of men tends to be seasonal. In the men's light working season, many of them take up weaving clothes and blankets. There is practically no task, other than minding small children, which does not require cooperation of both sexes. In the field the duties of the male include sowing seed, ploughing, preparing soil, digging, building retaining walls and reaping. Women help the men by beating soil after ploughing with a T-shaped implement, adding manure, reaping and winnowing. In the making of clothes, men do the twisting of three threads on a spinner, weaving, making *Doras*, etc., while teasing and spinning the wool into thread is done by women. Embroidery, repairing clothing and dyeing of clothes are female tasks. Carrying the flour to the water mill, cutting and storing the firewood, collection of wild fruits and walnuts, etc., making *Sur* (beer) except mixing ingredients together are the jobs of men. Women do the pounding of *Dals* and other foods, making oil from seeds, stirring and making *Ghee*, preparing all the food, which has to be cooked at the *Chulah*, washing clothes, mixing ingredients for *Sur*, keeping the house clean and periodical plastering with cow dung. Male members of the family have to help outside in communal tasks such as building water channels for mills, carrying of the main beam for a new house, storing grass for the winter and feeding the cattle. These tasks are not flexed definitely within the family, but in a normal family of a father, mother, son and daughter they are usually divided in this fashion. The only exception is that no woman will ever plough.

All households of Bharmour try to optimise the ratio of people to resources. It is essential to maximise the adult labour force in order to cultivate all the widely scattered fields. Thus, deci-



sions have to be made accordingly about the numbers of people, ratios of sexes and ages and the allocation of the duties to extract maximum from the land. The labour force can be maximised in these patrilocal families by marriage, birth/adoption and incorporation. When a wife is infertile, polygyny is a means to seek an heir. When a woman is widowed, polygyny (through the mechanism of the levirate, that is, fraternal widow inheritance) is a means to provide her a husband within the family, retaining her labour and avoiding her separation from the children she has produced from the previous marriage. Incorporation of young male relations and *Ghar-jawantari* (a typical form of marriage) are the means to supplement labour force of the family. In this form of marriage the boy has to work as a helping hand in the house of his would be father-in-law for a specified period.

The role of women is not only of importance in economic activities, but her role in non-economic activities is equally important. Formation and continuity of the family hearth and home are the domain of women. Women's role as wives, mothers, and organisers, and as the basic foundation of other dimensions of social life is of utmost importance. Although Gaddis are patrilineal and patrilocal, yet due to the various factors listed, the family assumes a mother-centred with the children and some important decisions fall into the spheres of the women's intervention. Men are out for pastoral activities, so the socialisation of children automatically becomes the mother's business, in the early years of their lives at least. There is, however, a radical change as a boy grows older. By the age of seven or eight he is expected to begin helping with the cattle around the house, and soon after he accompanies an older brother or cousin or his father with the sheep and goats. Mothers now have little to do with the training of their sons, and father become sharply disciplinarians towards them. The boy-herder who loses a sheep or goat is likely to be beaten severely, and he who is clumsy in dealing with the animals is verbally castigated. The particular timing of these stages for a boy depends on the need for herding labour and the supply of herd boys available in his house. Mothers are usually warmly affectionate towards their sons but are separated from them in activities and interests (and often in residence) for long periods.

There is no corresponding change in the upbringing of girls. They remain continuously with their mothers until three or four years after

marriage. They gradually learn and share more and more of woman's conventional work at home and in the field. A girl might be beaten by an exasperated mother, but not heavily. Fathers have little to do with their daughter's training. By puberty a girl should be capable of doing all tasks of a woman.

The households bear the major responsibility connected with birth and the socialisation of the child. It provides food and shelter. In the event of illness, the household calls for *Chela* and nurse the sick. All these aspects indicate that the village is an aggregate of independent households.

The household economy depends on agriculture as well as livestock rearing. A description of resultant economy has already been described. It was seen that Gaddi with larger herds are making more profit. The net profits are used to buy the other necessities of life. Gaddis grow multitude of crops, many of them quick maturing, hardy and drought resistance. The great number of crops, mixed sowing, placement of fields for apart, are all attempts to reduce the risk. But even then, in Bharmour, agriculture is insufficient by itself as a subsistence base. They compensate for the agriculture deficit, by rearing sheep and goats. Estimates based on data suggests that after paying grazing taxes, money for one kilogram of salt for each animal every year, pay for hired shepherds (*Puhals*), the net profit per sheep and goat as per rate at that time, together with a considerable production of foodstuffs consumed directly, such as milk, milk products and meat.

### Continuation and Replacement of Households

The household units of Gaddis are based on nuclear families, and this means that after a new marriage, when the nuclear of a new family is established, this nuclear forms a new and independent household.

A woman joins her husband upon marriage and lives with him and his family. Joint living is the ideal, but the divergence of interests and activities between the brothers and their wives usually surpasses the compromising limit. Partition is, therefore a normal occurrence. It usually takes place after the death of the father. Each brother seeks to protect the interest of his own wife and children, and in doing so comes into conflict with the others. The mother, if alive, still tries to maintain the unity of the household, but

generally without success and her own conflicts with the daughter-in-law may aggravate the situation. The mother may stay with one of her sons. Her labour is always welcomed as long as she does not try to dominate.

A son has the right to demand partition even when the father is living, but in most cases a son accede to his father's desires and decisions. In few cases when the son does not accede entirely gracefully, the idea of competition between father and son begins, and it continues to grow. It grows slowly especially, at first, for men are brought and culturally conditioned to the fact that they must give way to their fathers for many years. Tensions and the idea of competition between father and son does not necessarily reach a serious level, or at least not for many years. Fathers do recognise and respect their sons' wishes to live separately. The situation is regarded as more or less inevitable and therefore must be accepted gracefully. Commonly, affection between father and son is enough to prevent the father to be too autocratic. In all these matters there is no external agency to regulate intra-family relations. This is part of the significance of the independence of a nuclear family. Although a nuclear family is part of the extended family, it is in no way a part of those groups in an overall authoritarian structure.

With the death of the father the authoritarian unity of his nuclear family ceases and the family breaks down into a number of independent groups. These groups together still compromise of the "family" of the father, but now these are the primary units of inheritance, and will be the nuclear families of each son. Conflicts between the brothers usually arise over the running of the household, allocation of duties and privileges, distribution of food and clothes. So far as sisters are concerned they are not deeply involved in these conflicts. They are married out of the household and are physically away from the natal home. They have no judicial rights over the property, and consequently are not any threat to the interests of the conflicts. During the lifetime of the mother-in-law they are all under her control. But when she dies, the eldest daughter-in-law takes her place, which is not appreciated by younger ones. If rights and duties are not clearly defined, bickering between sisters-in-law starts. The man desires to maintain good relations with his wife. He knows that if he or other members of the household do not

treat her well she will leave. Eventually the property will be divided anyway, and when it is a hardworking, responsible and attentive wife, she is of greater value than the cooperation of the brothers.

The establishment of a new nuclear family frequently coincides with at least informal division of land and other property. This is an issue that often creates tension in Bharmour, because as such a family must possess the productive property and control the necessary labour force to pursue diverse economic activities. All sons are entitled legally to an equal share of the family property. Consequently, a division of a family ultimately involves division of its total property. This process may take months or year. However, one point is clear, according to the people there, families have separated when they start cooking separately, that is, when the supply of raw food material is separated and cooked on separate hearths. The families may continue to live in the same house, cultivate their land together (although they divide the produce) and own most of the remainder of their property jointly (like sheep and goats and other animals), but at this point they consider themselves as separate families and so do the other villagers. Although, legally all sons are entitled to equal share of the family property, but here in Bharmour the eldest son gets a little more than the others called *Jaithhund* and the youngest gets the ready-made '*Chauka*' (Kitchen) of the parents. If a father has one wife, the property is divided among the male children called *Mundawand* (*Munda* meaning boy and *wand* meaning division). If a father has more than one wife, the property is divided among the number of wives one has. Afterwards wives divide the property among their sons. This is known as *Chundawand* (*Chunda* meaning women).

Agricultural land is also divided after the family separation so that each son receives an equal area. A family's landholdings are usually distributed among several small *Dungas* (fields), which are widely separated. Although the land could be divided equally to each family yet this is not usually done, as the quality of land differs in different *Dungas*. The other factor is the position and distance of the field from the house. So in some cases, each plot is divided. This form of property division leads to land fragmentation. The field terrace, which is already small, becomes less, as the partition walls have also to be erected. But sometimes, a few *Dungas* are not fit for

cultivation because of erosion, and may remain in joint custody.

Through such practices, the newly set up nuclear families are provided with land, animals and equipment, which they require to set themselves up as an economically independent household unit. But to maintain themselves in this position they must perform all economic activities connected with agriculture and pastoralism. This requires the cooperation of at least two to three persons, that is, a male head of the household who perform male tasks around the house and fields and connected with migration, a woman to perform domestic tasks and agricultural activities, and a male shepherd. Where the family alone does not contain this labour team, other arrangements must be made. Such arrangements may be of different kinds. A shepherd may be engaged, a child may be adopted by childless couples, and young male relations are incorporated.

There are many kinds of living arrangements and sharing of property. Unmarried sons tend to remain together especially if the father is still living. Because an economically viable unit requires at least two people. An unmarried man may remain with a married brother, but one son will usually remain with his parents or at least assist them, especially if they are elderly. Brothers who do not share a common hearth do not usually work their fields jointly.

Though physically and economically divided, a family remains nevertheless a part of the *Tol* or extended family. Sometimes, all the families of the *Tol* keep their flock together under the supervision of two shepherds and two *Tol* members (belonging to any family, who could spare male members at that time). A nuclear family sometimes includes a person, who, for the time being, joins in the pastoral and economic activities of the family, and whose flock (if any) are not distinguished externally. A man welcomes additions to his family labour force. A man with his nuclear family cannot achieve complete independence until he has sufficient labour to manage all the duties of pastoral and agricultural life. Consequently, a young man or one of early middle age, with only a wife attempts to attract young male relations to help. Occasionally a poor, unrelated man may become permanently attached to a family, acting as *Puhal* (shepherd) in return for food and shelter. Such a person becomes almost "one of the family". If they possess sheep and goats

of their own, such associates keep them in the relevant home of their adopted family. For many practical purposes like grazing, etc. their sheep and goats are merged into the flock of the family. Nevertheless, to some extent economically, but especially socially and legally, these sheep and goats are quite distinct from the flocks of the family, and this is clearly recognised and acknowledged by the people involved. This *Puhal* gets sheep and wages, and in course of time he may be able to raise his own flock. He may wish to strike out independently, or before that time may shift his allegiance to some other man. In either case his animals go with him, together with all their offsprings. When flocks are looked after by one other than the owner, there is a kinship connection, usually the mother's brothers' or sisters' son. Owners lack confidence in a non-kin to keep account honestly.

Occasionally when a marriage proves barren, the children's couple may adopt a close agnate of the husband, preferably his brother's son as his own child. When a woman is widowed in the family polygyny (through the mechanism of levirate, that is, fraternal widow inheritance) is a mean to provide her a husband within the family, retaining her labour force in the family. In case where there is no male issue, incorporation of a young male relation and *Ghar Jawantari* (a typical form of marriage) is the means to supplement labour force to the family. In this form of marriage the boy has to work or be a helping hand in the house of his would be father-in-law for a specified period.

All these devices serve to maintain the individual household as a viable unit by supplementing its labour pool from outside sources. Sometimes to facilitate the herding and tending of the flocks, all the families of the *Tol* keep their flock together under the supervision of two shepherds and two *Tol* members (belonging to any family, who could spare male members at that time). Gaddis feel that very small herds are relatively more troublesome to drive and control.

The relationship among members of a herding unit is always regarded as a partnership among equals. Household heads are free to establish a relation with anyone they wish who migrates to the pastures in the same area. By joining a herding unit, a household can persist without the full complement of personnel to make them viable as fully independent units. During their winter migration Gaddis travel to 32 differ-

ent places in Palampur, Dharamshala, Shahpur and Noorpur areas. The herding units are formed on the consideration of the pasture area and not on the nearness of kinship. While married sons initially tend to retain their flocks in the herding unit of their father, these bonds can be broken at any time. The composition of herding units depends on the area of migration, availability of labour, the size of flocks, and the distribution of friendship and mutual trust.

The terrain and climate in Bharmour prevent the development of markets because it inhibits the transportation of goods. The result of all this has been a subsistence economy with little variation at the economic level from one family to another or from one caste to another. The differences described earlier are minor compared with the differences that occur in the villages in the plains.

In a family such as these, family autonomy and self-sufficiency are necessarily high. Little emphasis has been put on local isolation because that appears to be a product of the economy rather than a causal factor. Contact with others is not of great importance. Regional isolation is, however another matter, and it is already apparent that those with significant outside contact are also developing new economic outlets and resources.

### **Social Interdependence**

The Gaddis are mostly owner-cultivators of smallholdings and agriculture is a way of life rather than a commercial proposition. Only such areas, which are sufficient to meet the needs of the family are cultivated. Earnings from agriculture are generally low and it is not economically feasible to hire labour for assistance in the agricultural operations.

The specific nature of agriculture and herding cycle is circumscribed by the ecological conditions of the area. In the months of summer, after their winter migrations when they return to Bharmour, the agriculture season starts. The concentration of the most agricultural work in the months from March to October produce a period of stress and strain for utilisation of manpower. During this period every hand is needed to plant and reap the harvest. There is a heavy demand of labour but all manpower is needed in their respective fields and no remuneration is sufficient to divert people from agriculture. La-

bour cannot be imported from outside, since people from outside would not prefer to go there as labourers because of the difficult and rugged terrain. Absence of markets and surplus prevented the immigration of labour to the area. There are no big landlords, so there is not enough cash to encourage the immigration of labour. It is natural in a community, which is not affluent, and where labour force can hardly be purchased, that there should be some arrangement for cooperation when a man is in want. The Gaddis have evolved two institutions to deal with this need for interdependence and to overcome the scarcity of paid labour. These institutions are cooperation between families and *Barton* (obligatory assistance).

### **Cooperation between Families**

Despite the fact that most activities are carried out by the nuclear family, there are some areas of cooperative assistance. This may be done at the discretion of individuals or two or more families. Funerals, marriages, house construction, etc. are different because these require the participation of every household in a village. Cooperation between families comes to surface at the time of thrashing when two or three families may help each other in turn, pooling their cattle to thrash the wheat and barley, and their own labour to husk the maize. Thrashing is done quickly to prevent germination of grain. These groups are basically friendship groups. Most of the residents of a small hamlet are kin, but within the hamlet, friendship and cooperation are governed by compatibility and not by closeness of the kin ties. Cooperation between families occurs on the same economic level and both sides feel that it is fully reciprocal, but it is consistently unwillingly given to kinsmen in a superior economic position because of the inequality inherent in the situation. A big landowner who needs help at ploughing or harvest time can also afford to hire labour. Such labour may be any low caste men and boys willing to take time off their own work. Such people are paid one or two rupees a day plus food. A kinsman, on the other hand, can only properly accept food, but he feels this is not adequate remuneration, if he cannot expect later reciprocation of his labour. Consequently, he prefers not to help. The man who is so poor that he has no choice but to work for wealthier kinsmen feels

he is accepting charity. At the same time he realises he is not being fully compensated for his labour. He resents the persons he is helping and feels he is being looked down upon and exploited (Bhasin 1996a).

### ***Barton* (Obligatory Assistance)**

The kinds of cooperation and assistance described above are at the discretion of the individuals. Some people readily respond to requests for help even when they know it will not necessarily be returned. Others always find excuse and refuse. House building, however, is one activity in which assistance must be given virtually by every household in the village, regardless of caste or religion. Each household that gives help at this time is said to have a *Barton* relationship with the household it assists. It can then expect this help to be reciprocated when it needs it. Failure to fulfil this obligation breaks the *Barton* relationship and creates great ill will.

Another time when the *Barton* relationship appears to operate is at funerals, when every household must send a representative and bring some wood for the funeral pyre. The white cloth called *Talli* placed on the dead body is contributed jointly by the members of the deceased's *Barton* groups. When a newcomer settles in the region, a *Barton* relationship is assumed unless he refuses to follow the custom, in which case he would not be helped with house-building, nor would his funeral be necessarily attended by every household in the village.

The other occasion when a *Barton* relationship comes into operation is at the time of marriage in the ceremonies called *Saj* and *Tambol*. Each family owns a book in which are recorded all those friends having *Barton* with the family either on the bridegroom's side (*Tambol*) or on the bride's (*Saj*) and who contribute some money. Initially the amount is small, but when a family member attends a marriage subsequently at the contributor's house he is expected to subscribe in his turn twice the amount he gave earlier. The amount continues to double until a maximum of about one rupee is reached when the obligation is cancelled or relationship created again at a small initial level. Nowadays, in Sachuien, members of *Barton* group are giving a utensil each in the *Saj*. The purpose of this ceremony is not so much to defray the costs of a wedding, as to assert publicly the number of *Barton* relationships a family has. The greater

the amount the more important the family. The *Purohit* receives the money on behalf of the bride and puts a *Teeka* on the forehead to each donor at *Saj*, but at *Tambol* the ceremony is purely secular with no *Purohit* present.

Newell (1960) has defined *Barton* as a "system of traditionally sanctioned mutual obligations and duties between individuals usually belonging to different castes". In 1962, he modified his definition to include all forms of mutual obligations between individuals or families other than obligations concerned with kinship relations (Newell 1967). Apart from the village *Barton*, which prevails in every village, there are certain other types of *Barton* obligations, which people of one caste have for another. Under this obligation each caste group is expected to give certain standardised services to the families of other castes. A blacksmith makes iron implements or a carpenter repairs tools, but they do not necessarily perform these services for everyone. Each man works for a particular family or group of families, and he is said to have a *Barton* relationship with his client's family. He would resent it if he were not invited to a *rite de passage* in the client's family. The relationship between a family and its Brahman *Purohit* is also of this type. A Brahman *Purohit* works for a family with which he has hereditary ties. His father worked for the same families before him, and his son will continue to work for them. This relationship operates without much exchange of money. The patron compensates his *Purohit* for his work through periodic payments in the form of grains, made throughout the year on a daily, monthly or bi-yearly basis but mainly on four main *Sankrant* (festivals). He receives up to ten *Seers* of five grains. Each *Seer* consists of five *Chhataks* and not usual 16. The *Purohit* may also receive benefits such as free food, clothing, the use of certain tools, etc.

The relationship between blacksmiths and other castes is of a different kind. It is not necessarily of a *Barton* kind. His work is paid for in cash. The blacksmith in Bharmour *Patwar* Circle has *Barton* obligations only in Bharmour village where he lives. He does not have similar obligations towards his other clients. These ties are like those of an employer and employee and are paid for in cash or kind. Similarly, the Sipi carpenters or plough makers have *Barton* relationships within the village and are paid for the services they provide to the others in cash. Skilled labourers residing in a village have *Barton* rela-

tions within the village and are repaid through periodic payments of grains. As Bharmour *Patwar* Circle is a caste-incomplete area, people of most villages have to seek for skilled help from other quarters. These skilled labourers are paid for in cash or kind.

As in Sachuien, the three castes residing in the village are Brahman, Rajput and Sipi, and people have to seek the help of Sipi blacksmith of Bharmour village, Rehara musicians of Goshan and certain Rehara families of Guggu village who provide leaf plates used for wedding feasts. Their services are paid for in cash or kind at the completion of the work. The relationship between villagers and the skilled labourers of the other villages may or may not be of a Barton sort. If they are of a *Barton* sort, they will be invited to all the ceremonies of rite-de-passage of the patron's family. The relation between Rajput and Sipi blacksmiths and Rehara families are not found in every village of Bharmour *Tehsil* (Bhasin 1998b).

### *Kwer*

The labour force is raised by means of an institution known as *Kwer*. *Kwer* are raised in the following manner, as amplified in Sachuien village. Every family, that is, every family having a separate *Chulah* for cooking has to send one person (male or female or child depending on the type of work involved) on the appointed day to the person or family that needs help. The villagers called to work may or may not be related to the needy person, but they will send their representatives if they live in the same village. If the labour force is still insufficient as it happens in case of small villages, the relatives from other villages are summoned. The labour force raised by the *Kwer* institution is not paid for in cash. In return of their work they are given a free meal and free *Sur* (beer) in the evening after work. The *Kwer* is requisitioned for certain tasks, which an individual is unable to perform by himself without the help of other co-villagers. This mutual assistance is necessary in certain economic and social activities, whether given willingly, grudgingly or obligingly. *Kwer* are raised on the following occasions and for the following purposes:

1. *House Building*: In house building *Kwer* are raised to bring timber from the forest, slates from the quarry, stones from the mountain streams and clearing the site for

the house. A day is set aside for the labour, and each family having a separate *Chulah* is informed. Whether the family is small or large, one person of the correct sex must be provided. In house building, *Kwer* comprises of all males. The task is difficult because the timber may have to be carried five or six kilometres. In the evening, all those who have worked together, are provided with a free meal and free *Sur* (beer). If the labour is not sufficient, relatives of the house builders are invited from other villages but this is on personal basis. For a village member to not send a member would be in a kind of insult to the host. To a person who is a member of a large family and who is not interested in making as much money on his own as possible, these work teams are very enjoyable, but to small ambitious families they are a heavy burden. Yet it is the small families who in their turn most require the assistance of a work team at the required time. The villagers' Barron group supplies unskilled labour and the skilled labour of a carpenter is paid by the day. *Gharat* (*water mill*) *building*: Male *Kwer* are raised to bring timber from the forest and stones from the mountain streams.

2. *To repair retaining walls*: Male *Kwer* are raised to repair retaining walls of the fields broken down by snow during winter.
3. *To repair houses*: Male *Kwer* are raised to repair houses, or to bring new crossbeams for the houses damaged during winter.
4. For clearing terraces and narrow paths leading to each piece of land, *Kwer* are raised.
5. *Funerals*: At funerals male *Kwer* are raised to cut wood for the pyre.
6. Female *Kwer* are raised to undertake the task of plastering a house with cow dung.
7. Children *Kwer* are raised to collect the stones, which have rolled on to the field. Children collect and pile up the stones. These stacks are ready to be packed into a wall. The rules regarding the payment for each task are the same that is, food in return of labour. These work teams are different from a group of common friends who pool their services for common task. For example, at the time when manure is carried to the fields from the cow-byres, girls from different families unite and work

together on each other's field for the sake of company. But no meals are provided for this work.

An underlying theme of the Gaddi social organisation is the general difficulty of a group activity on any large scale because of ecological conditions, which cause a widespread dispersal of population together with diverse and frequent movement. In addition there is the cultural norm of strong individualism, and there is neither particular need nor opportunity for the frequent assembly of kinsmen. The entire corporate groups are only nuclear families. The ties of common residence, daily cooperation and face-to-face relations in the local neighbourhood always tend to be temporary and exiguous.

A group's social organisation of social relations is an integral aspect of its adaptation to social as well as physical pressures in the habitat. The social structure of community is not a single set of roles of organised groups, but is rather a series of several sets of roles and groups, which appear and disappear according to the task at hand. Practically every household is a farming unit and the agricultural activities dominate the economic life of the village. In the type of economic scene, autonomy and self-sufficiency is necessarily high, but still in some quarters of life mutual help is needed. In a community where labour force cannot be purchased, the major function of the Barton system is to assure a stable labour supply when a man is in need. At the same time, the Barton group exercise has an enormous amount of control over society. Desired traditional norms and values are kept in order. The Barton relationships are, therefore internal regulators of Gaddi society, which bind relationships and caste organisation closely to each other. The interaction groups, either of the same caste or different caste, are important for the working of society. Even the lower castes are anchored firmly in a social system, as people who are responsible for carrying out specific functions, and are not only a marginal group (Bhasin 1998b).

Given these ecological conditions and the futility of having the specialisation of labour, people have developed a self-sustaining system, though at a minimal level of subsistence. But for certain particular necessities, like making of iron implements, ploughs, jewellery, etc., people have to depend on each other. The cash value of the products of the village artisans is

relatively insignificant as compared to the return from the agriculture and pastoralism, but products themselves are necessary to the village economy. While full time specialists are not there, every adult member of the village community has a significant role to play in a network of mutual dependence and help. The village blacksmith, village carpenter, the housewife, the *Purohit*, the *Chela* all of them are indispensable for the efficient functioning of the economic and social life of the village. As an instance of non-specialisation one might cite the case of a Sipi who may change his role from a highly respected *Chela* to a shepherd to a sheep-shearing labourer to a blacksmith. Whether it is a matter of mending the terraces of the fields or clearing of water channels for the *Gharats* or the erection or repair of beams in the houses, all these activities require mutual help from both a quasi-specialist as well as one of the specialists. The ecology of the area has thus produced a unique blend of self-sufficiency and mutual interdependence.

It has already been mentioned that Gaddis have small compact villages or hamlets in Bharmour. The members of these villages make up a clearly bounded social group, and their relation to each other as continuing neighbours is relatively constant, while all other contacts are passing, ephemeral, and governed by chance. In the cases where fields are dispersed and far apart and the distance from the residential village is great, the few members or one nuclear family may reside in the field dwelling or second house outside the village. A large extended family may own three or four field dwellings at different places. A field house is a small rock hut or a *Tapri*, where the farmer sits on guard against wild animals, especially bears. All the residents of the field dwellings are regarded by themselves and others as being members of the village community. They come to the village to attend ceremonies of marriage, birth and death and to fulfil their Barton obligations. They always think of the village as their home.

These field dwellings are regarded as the extensions of the village, occupied in order to take advantage of the cultivated fields. The allocation of the people to these field dwellings "is a significant social strategy in local demography, with important implications for social ecology. It facilitates optimal land use and maintenance of suitable ratios of people to land" (Bererman 1978: 351). These spatially separated

households are also a means of avoiding conflicts in the *Tol*, keeping it as a unit. It is a matter of organisation at the household level to exploit the resources otherwise out of easy reach of the village. The utilisation of these fields supplements the village production, which can support a larger population base thus avoiding the overtaxing of the carrying capacity of land. Then, there are cases of voluntary departures of the people, who have left the village to seek their livelihood elsewhere outside the orbit of Bharmour. They maintain their village houses and their families occupy the house and cultivate the fields. They are considered the members of the household and village.

The constantly changing membership in the households and village is a feature of the settlement pattern in the area. The development cycle extends to more than the domestic group. Just as the family divides when it becomes too large, so does the village by a similar process.

#### ***Al, Gotra and Dharm-Bhai Bond***

Most of the castes in the villages recognise large categories of caste-mates united by a myth that they were related by patrilineal descent from a common ancestor. Each of these categories is denoted by its own name and its members are found in several villages. These groups are called *Gotras*.

In the villages, where there are several *Gotras*, they are believed to have settled in the village at about the same time. The members of the same *Gotra* are the people who have common ritual practices and patronise a particular *Purohit*. Broadly speaking, one cannot marry a person of the same *Gotra* but intra-*Gotra* marriages are allowed in a few villages, which may be due to their small numbers, they might have neglected the exogamous system. The *Gotra* has been described as a 'clan' and the largest exogamous unit in determining marriage by some authors. However, here in Bharmour, because of intra-*Gotra* marriage in certain villages, the term *Gotra* cannot be synonymous with clan, as *Gotra* is primarily a ritual division and not always exogamous. Brahman and Rajputs preserve the Brahmanical *Gotras* of their original section. Prior to the land settlement in 1953, the *Gotra* was the principal method by which land inheritance was determined. The pattern of inheritance was sons, brother's sons and so on within the *Gotra* with no inheritance by women. The *Gotra* was

the residual owner of the land having ultimate control before it reverted to the Rajah. The *Gotra* in villages have been successful in preventing outsiders from settling there or sonless families from adopting. These *Gotras* are further subdivided into a lot of lineages, namely, *Khinds*, *Als* and *Jaths*. Most of the people incorrectly explain their *Als* as *Gotras*.

An *Al* and *Khind* and *Jath* are always an exogamous unit. Because of the caste endogamy, *Al* and *Gotra* exogamy, the village of Sachuien is an exogamous unit. Although there are more than one *Gotras* in the village, yet no marriages have taken place in the village.

There are no elements of ranking or stratification in the *Gotra* and *Als*. No *Gotra* is inherently superior or inferior to any other *Gotra* and no *Al* within a *Gotra* has precedence over other *Als*.

Each person in Sachuien stands at the centre of a particular network of formal, personal relationship with certain other men. Some of these relations are established by birth (patrilateral and matrilineal kin), some by marrying his sisters and daughters (affinal kins) and some by deliberate pledge (*Dharam Bhai*). A man looks to these people for friendship, sympathy, advice and affection.

A most remarkable characteristic in kinship structure of Gaddis is that of the sister's son *Bhanja*, who whether 10 years old or 10 days old, is treated as a senior relative. Though his advice is not sought for any purpose, he is regarded elderly in relation. His mother's brother called *Mama* whether 8 years old or 80 years old has to bow to his *Bhanja* by touching the feet. Wife of the *Mama* (*Mami*) too follows the same tradition. On ceremonial occasion, the *Bhanja* is considered a sacred and respected person. Among these Gaddis the mother's brother/sister's relationship is a method of reconciling the conflict inherent in any rigorously enforced unilineal descent system (Newell 1962).

*Dharam Bhai*s are not kinsmen, though relations with them have a pseudo kinship quality, setting those men off from unrelated persons. Essentially, the *Dharam Bhai* relationship rests on an informal contract in which the element of reciprocity is paramount. These brotherhood rituals are of two main types, that is, those between people of the same sex and those between people of opposite sexes. The most common form of ritual is Manimahesh Brotherhood. Two people of the same sex, make a pilgrimage to Manimahesh together, enter the water at the same



time exchange sweets and small gifts and mark each other's forehead with a red Teeka. These two people now have the right to stay in each other's house for a short or long period. The other type is between a man and women when the relationship becomes one of brother and sister. The main aim of such a ceremony is to create a relationship between man and the new sister's child, so that the child can always claim assistance from his mother's brother. A person can also become a *Dharam Bhai* or *Dharm Behen* of a newly married man or woman, respectively by opening the *Kangana*, the black thread, off the wrist at an appropriate stage of the marriage ceremony. There is no caste restriction on making anyone a brother or sister, although some restrictions on food, which operate already, continue to exist.

The general category of social relations can be divided into two classes, that is, those with whom a man's relations are especially close and lasting, and those with whom a man's relations are relatively distant and which tend to diminish through time, if not die away altogether. The first category exists in reference to close agnates, maternal kin (chiefly the mother's brothers), close affines, and the second category exists in reference to other maternal and affinal kin. The social ties are further developed through the system of *Dharam Bhai* bonds. Most villages in Bharmour contain all the members of a single *Gotra*, that is all the males born patrilineally, their unmarried sisters and daughters. Each *Gotra*, of course is made up of number of *Als* or extended families, but in very few cases can people trace any kind of genealogical link between these families.

In Bharmour the *Gotra* are exogamous, and therefore, there are no affinal links between the members. To each *Gotra* are ascribed certain specific procedures that its members must follow in their ritual activities. The general pattern of Gaddi ritual (concerning marriage, death, illness and so on) is common to all the people, but it is modified in its detailed observation by these *Gotra* prescriptions. Concomitant with this is necessary for all of the *Gotra* members, in fact, differences in the ritual prescriptions of different *Gotras* are usually quite small, and they never affect the more significant acts.

A *Gotra* forms a kind of corporate group sharing territorial lands, and it makes demands on the loyalty of its constituent members with each member being responsible to and for the

whole group. It is also especially useful as a landholding entity, serving as a broad basis for recognising and protecting land rights. The *Gotra* is a technique for introducing continuity and stability into a social system. The *Gotra* gives a greater degree of stability and permanence, but has in turn a limited flexibility and adaptability to new situations.

Internal relations within the *Al* are principally those between the heads of independent nuclear families. Cousins of all degrees do not have the same problems of readjustment, which prove so difficult between brothers. They inherit, as it were the pattern of relations already established between their fathers in the previous generation. There is not in general, therefore, the same sort of tension between cousins as there is between brothers. Relations commence on a basis of reciprocal rights, which have already reached a level of stability. The common source of inheritance is relatively remote and the individual's history of personal development to independence only indirectly connected with that of his cousin.

The *Al* association is a form of cooperation and mutual insurance, and through it a man maintains a range of significant interpersonal relations within the wider society in which he lives. This association is the core of social life through which an individual maintains himself as a full social being and not merely an isolated unit or even as the member of a small, isolated group. These associations are a reliable index of the strength and importance of social relations along with other values inherent in a person's closest relations. In Bharmour, residential ties and the day-to-day cooperation in affairs large and small that result from intimate, face-to-face relations among close agnates (extended family) are of real and considerable importance. Partly connected with such small-scale community relations, but extended also to the whole range of *Al* associates, is the provision of hospitality and general assistance. In ecological conditions, which pertain in the area, the chances of accidents and injuries are much more, and a person in these circumstances needs the help of his *Al* associates. Although this sort of help is reciprocal, yet members of the *Al* are always available as a ready source of help. This support of *Al* associates is a matter of their friendliness with an individual and the allegiance they owe him. This institution of self-help, physical support, obligation to assist and in giving moral and vocal

support to individuals, acts as a mutual insurance in these remote and isolated areas.

Because of the ecological conditions, the Gaddis have to be dispersed in winter and concentrated in summer and as a result the ties of common residence, daily cooperation and face-to-face relations in local neighbourhood always keep on changing. A person may not see many of his *Al* associates for lengthy periods, nor will he be aware of all their movements and activities, for they are likely to be scattered widely and arbitrarily over a large area, and both his and their locations change fairly frequently. The relationship of *Al* associates therefore, consists primarily in mutual assistance on the more important occasions of individual social life during the months of concentration. For much of the time relations are dormant, and being reactivated as an occasion requires.

Occasional pastoral cooperation may occur between *Al* associates. When the number of sheep and goats is small in a family and it is not economical for a family member to accompany his flock to the pasture, he makes arrangement with one of his *Al* associates for the grazing of flocks. The obligations of support in judicial affairs also exist, and these are more important as most disputes are settled in the traditional courts.

*Dharam Bhaïs* are the only type of associates whose ties are not coincident with kinship, but which, by virtue of reciprocal rights and duties, have a pseudo-kinship quality. A *Dharam Bhai* is a person with whom one informally contracts such rights for reasons of mutual convenience and trust. There is usually a strong element of genuine and proven friendship. For both persons there exists something closely approaching a business agreement. There is no strictly formal basis of the relationship and it is not established by any legal act. It consists primarily of this link of reciprocity. In this, of all social relations, if a man does not reasonably meet his obligations he will quickly forfeit his own rights and the association would fail, for there is nothing at all to support it. This type of bond-friendship can be contracted with any one, irrespective of age, social position, residence, caste or sex. Since the whole relationship rests on its obvious mutual convenience, care is needed not to overtax it by a too frequent or a one-sided exercise of rights. Either party is entirely free to break off the bond. On the whole, a man is always seeking to establish new bonds in these

ecological conditions, where help is always wanted. Through these ties a man is able to extend the effective range of his personal relationships beyond his relatively restricted and automatic ties of kinship. A man with *Dharam Bhaïs* becomes less dependent upon formal ties, where these have become irksome, or are made difficult by tension.

Because of the hostile nature of the environment and the unreliable nature of the rainfall resulting in the subsistence economy of Gaddis, no Gaddi feels quite secure in his habitat, and at any time he may need the help of another person. In the months of winter, when Gaddis are in Kangra Hills, they may go to an area where someone will stand surety for them in local, informal discussion. Kinsmen will serve this purpose, but their locations are fortuitous and not necessarily in the same neighbourhood. Through his friendships a man endeavours to ensure that he has a potential supporter in most or all of the areas to which, in any part of the year, he might wish to migrate. This is quite a conscious policy, and each Gaddi accepts the corresponding obligation to help a *Dharam Bhai* similarly.

Since there is a strong feeling that all those with a real or classificatory status of sister's son have the right to claim assistance in the homes of their mother's brothers, the affinal links form an extremely powerful network between the different villages within the endogamic restriction of caste where real kinships are missing, and obligations are established by brother/sisterhood.

A man can be sure of getting food and shelter and a warm welcome at the home of his *Dharam Bhai*. Under the indigenous system of self-help, is included also the duty of lending verbal, and if necessary, physical support. A similar type of institution occurs among the Gaddang of Pakak and Kabanuangun (Philippine), living in isolated hilly settlements. Gaddang participate in two interrelated mechanisms, trading partnership (*Kolak*) and a peace pact system (*Pudon*). Both are ways of establishing mutually beneficial relationships between individuals and communities. Once the *Kolak* (meaning 'sibling') relationship is established, a dependable source of friendship, trade, protection, food and lodging is available (Wallace 1970: 32-33). The foregoing study of family pattern of social relations among the Gaddis of Bharmour leaves one with overwhelming impression of flexibility and fluctuations. There are several levels at which the people of the village are related or bound to

one another, and there are several degrees of intimacy and permanence within these relationship or bonds. The three types of bonds, which have the effect of tying the households together in a village are patrilineal, matrilineal and affinal kinship. Whether it is a setup of family or the membership of a *Dharam Bhai* bond, there is no rigidity or permanence. Social relationships, as a matter of fact provide one with an index to the adaptation that the Gaddis have made to their ecology, as well as the adaptations they are continually making. While joint families are breaking up into nuclear units due to economic reasons, position of women and desire for independence etc., mutual help and cooperation continues between nuclear units. Not only this, the ecology imposes on the Gaddi a need for dependence on others and this is reflected in the custom of entering into *Dharam Bhai* bond. Thus, while on the one hand there is snapping of bonds, on the other new ties are formed, and this contradictory tendency is the result of the ecology to which the Gaddis have to adopt (Bhasin 1996a).

### Caste System

Like all Hindu communities, Gaddis are divided into endogamous groups called castes. The caste ties stretch outside the village to unite people of the same caste together. The village, which appears as a unit from the outside, reveals clear social divisions when examined from within. The division of a village into a number of castes plays a part in actual social interaction, because social interaction is limited by membership of different castes. Members of different castes are expected to behave differently and to have different values and ideas. These differences are sanctioned by religion. The castes residing in Bharmour *Tehsil* show:

1. A major division into high castes and low castes, with only minor hierarchical distinctions within each level.
2. Conspicuously fewer castes in any given area than is true of the plains.
3. Greater flexibility in inter-caste relations, and freer inter-caste interactions than on the plains, permitting more informal contact.

The Brahmans and Rajputs form the high castes and the Sipis, Reharas, Kolis, Halis, Batwals, Dagis and Meghs, etc. form the lower castes. The low castes, which constituted fourteen percent of the total population in Bharmour

circle, are collectively called *Chanal* or *Asuchit* (impure or unclean), *Bita* (low-born) or Scheduled Castes. The terms 'untouchable' and '*Sudra*' are not heard.

Brahmans are at the top of the ladder in caste hierarchy. The number of Brahmans, who maintain themselves mainly by priestly work, is small. Many Brahmans are cultivators living in the villages and in a style hardly distinguishable from that of other cultivators. High status in caste hierarchy is by no means always correlated with a high economic status and the Brahmans are no wealthier than Rajputs or Sipis.

Brahmans, although act as '*Purohits*', they do not have any special position, and this is because of the fact that village and caste deities are propitiated by respective caste '*Pujaris*'. Lyall (1882, 1889) writing about the Brahmans of the entire hilly zone, has pointed out that there are two distinct classes of Brahmans, and those who are willing to handle plough (known in Chamba as '*Halwaha*' or Ploughing Brahmans) are the descendants of the first Brahmans to enter the hills, and because of their immigrant status they were "forced to submit to various degrees of compromise and to mix with the surrounding population" (Barnes 1883: 121), and those who are descendants of the later migrants who mostly flocked the courts of the petty local rulers. In neither case did the Brahmans gain hold in the hills as popular priests. The public ministrations of the temples has always continued in the hands of original natives of the country, a class quite distinct from the Brahman class.

This is what seems to have happened to Bharmourie Brahmans. From historical accounts it is clear that the Hindu State in Bharmour was founded around the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Brahmans came from the plains to serve Rajputs and Khattris as '*Pujaris*' and '*Purohits*'. Sipis and Reharas are considered to be the original inhabitants or the area, though they were later on dominated by the Rajputs. Brahmans when they came could not alter the situation. Badly outnumbered and lacking economic and political standing, the Brahmans had little claim to social superiority and local hierarchy. The original inhabitants of the area were animists. They had an elaborate pantheon of gods and goddesses. They believed in deities, worshipped them and sacrificed sheep and goats. They have all along been trying to preserve their traditional practices and customs, even though they accepted Hinduism. The old way of worshipping the deities is still preserved

in various festivals and in every family in spite of their being Hindus, earlier names and rituals are still remained. Brahman priests have the right to perform ceremonies that, probably, had never been conducted prior to their arrival. Though Sipis accepted the Brahmans as ritually higher, they never let slip their own position as 'Chelasv'. Rather the achievement of the 'Chela ship' was considered a ladder to a superior position. The Sipis as 'Chelas' are attached to the caste shrine of others along with 'Pujaris'. Brahmans, who came in small numbers, had to resort to the techniques of 'Chelas', particularly trance, possession and divination, and adopted local customs. Most probably the religious beliefs and rituals in the Bharmour *Tehsil* were originally in essence demonolatry, ancestor worship and nature worship. This original form with the passage of time and with the entry of Brahmans into the area was retouched to form Hinduism. This transformation was achieved by the process of absorption rather than by that of eradication, with the result that, even today, the pantheon and the theology bears the marks of demonolatry and nature worship.

The Brahmans have had almost no impact on the social organisation of Gaddis. They have only succeeded in introducing some All-India Calandrical Festivals and Pantheon of gods worshipped elsewhere in Chamba. Most worship is still in households or in caste-shrines. The other castes do not attach much importance to Hindu ceremonialism and consequently to Brahmans as a high status group. The right to perform priestly rituals confers no particular prestige for the Brahmans, but a knowledge of writing does and is extended to a person of any caste who is learned in this respect. This is an achieved status, and it is generally assumed that a person who can read sacred texts is knowledgeable about other matters as well.

Even among the Brahmans themselves there seems to be little feeling of superiority over other clean castes, although this is changing through increased contacts with outsiders, who consider all Brahmans superior. The Brahmans know that Hindu scriptures ascribe to them the premier position, but they do not really understand why. They do not view their current status as a fall from a previously higher position, but simply as the way it has always been. As a result of greatest exposure to religious knowledge, the Brahmans are somewhat more obser-

vant of household rituals, but this is not a basis of social differentiation.

All the Brahman 'Purohits' in Bharmour *Patwar* Circle, who are associated with patrons, perform funeral rituals. This activity would lower their status in other parts of Chamba and on north Indian plains. In other parts of Chamba, Brahmans who perform funeral ritual are known as 'Acharaj' Brahmans and are considered at par with low castes. Proper Brahmans do not accept food or water from them nor intermarry with them. These 'Acharaj' Brahmans are not called upon to perform rituals of birth and marriage.

Thus, historically speaking, the Brahmans appear to have made a compromise with regards social customs, and in return, the rest of the population of Bharmour *Tehsil* has made compromises with regards to religious beliefs. The pantheon of god's festivals and cosmology to be largely in the great tradition. Brahman priests have the right to perform the ceremonies that probably, had never been conducted prior to their arrival.

Badly outnumbered and lacking any economic and political standing, the Brahmans had little or no claim to social superiority and the local hierarchy. Intermarriage with the Rajputs was a natural consequence of this state of affairs. The willingness of the Brahmans to exchange women also must have been necessary for social acceptance and acknowledgement of permanent residence. Such social acceptance usually takes two or more generations to become stable. In the meantime the Ranas had lost their social and political dominance. They continued to take Rathi wives and were also willing to accept Brahman wives, but would give their own women only to the Ranas or the Rajputs who had replaced the Ranas as the dominant caste in the state. However in Bharmour *Patwar* Circle there are no Ranas and Rathis now (Bhasin 1996a).

Below the Brahmans in the caste hierarchy, but far ahead of them in the political order, ranks the Rajput caste. Newell is of the opinion that the Rana, Rathi, Thakar, Rajputs and Khari groups, which now constitute the Gaddi Rajput caste, were originally separate endogamous castes, as they still are in Punjab. When they migrated to the mountains of Chamba in search of refuge from political oppression in the plains during Mughal rule, they came with an insufficient number of women and married among the local population. They thus became fused into one caste (Newell 1955: 105). Below the Rajput

caste come low castes. Bharmour is a caste incomplete area, as there are no washer men, cobblers, barbers or potters as such.

### **Organisational Problems, Caste Incompleteness and Occupational Generalisation**

The Bharmour *Patwar* Circle, as a region, is caste-incomplete. On the hamlet level this incompleteness is more pronounced. The process is largely circular. As a family migrates to a new location it is forced to rely on its own labour for most endeavours, performing many jobs that, on the plains, would be the province of different artisans and menial castes. The lack of any surplus prevents the family from hiring specialised labour, and its own range of skills renders it unnecessary. Artisan castes have not proliferated simply because they are not needed. On the other hand, unskilled labour is needed at harvest time but is not available.

Because of the fact that all castes, regardless of the rank in the hierarchy, have their own land, the family can usually provide sufficient income for economic independence. This acts as a natural deterrent to any inclination that the artisans and menial castes might have to practice a specialised trade or to hire themselves out as agricultural labourers. The high castes are unable to hire such labourer even if they can afford it, and this factor further promotes inter-caste and intra-family occupational generalisation.

It is interesting to note that fourteen percent of the people in this circle belong to low unclean castes, a far higher proportion than is normal for the north Indian plains. Historically speaking, perhaps it was also because of their large number that the high castes could not coerce them into occupational servitude.

Since there is no significant differentiation occupationally or at the income level, and rarely any hiring of a day labourer on a caste basis, one of the traditional basis and motivations for hierarchical differentiation is lacking. A caste that employs members of another caste is usually ranked higher than those it hires, simply as a result of economic power. In the absence of economic power a caste has no leverage to suppress, exploit or otherwise assume a superior position.

The economic reality in Bharmour *Patwar* Circle does not permit the maintenance of the kind of complex stratification found in the plains. Until very recently there was no land pressure in the sense that every household owned as

much land as it could use. Those families that are short of land now are almost equally distributed among the several castes, and so far they have been able to maintain their income level by road labour and other work that does not involve working for other local families. Families were, and still are, autonomous economically, socially and ritually. They are self-sufficient, but at the same time, due to land and labour limitations, they are unable to rise much above the average economic level of the region. Both land and labour are required for significant surplus. Amassing land is pointless if there is not sufficient labour available to make it productive either for agriculture or for grazing. Horticulture does present an option now but it has yet not brought about any significant change in the landholding patterns.

The nature of terrain has prevented the development of markets because transportation of goods was inhibited. With family self-sufficiency there generally was little or no need to buy local products. A proverb in the district says, "If the harvest is plenty, there is no one to buy; if the harvest is scanty, we must lie down and die" (Hutchinson 1910: 223). When a family harvests a good crop, others families do so too. This has generally been the case for the entire district has traditionally been little export market. The result has been a subsistence economy with insignificant variation in the economic level from one family or another. Specialisation of labour never came about and nor did an elaborate social system involving sharp hierarchical differences. Even at present the population is not large enough to make up or to support the socio-economic complexity of the plains (Bhasin 1996b).

An important factor responsible for the mildness of restrictions on inter-caste interaction is the need for social interaction coupled with low population density, problems of physical mobility and relative numerical balance between high and low castes. Interaction with people outside the family is low because of lack of opportunity or lack of a reason. Social interaction in Barton relationships does occur, and obligations are met accordingly. Festivals and ceremonial activities take place and involve all the villagers. With so few opportunities available for entertainment, individuals take advantage of whatever opportunities for socialising they can get. A person travelling to a distant village may have to stop for food, water or shelter. In case of a sudden storm, the high caste traveller may have to stop in a low caste house and may have to eat there.

Even if he does not accept food in a low caste household, he may have to spend the night if the weather is very bad. The people of Bharmour do not travel at night, if they can avoid it, not only because the paths can be treacherous but also because evil spirits may be travelling with them.

Social interaction tends to break down barriers and leads to more caste interaction. In a village, which has both Rajputs and Sipis, caste differentiation is completely ignored by children when they play. High caste adults constantly turn to low caste adults for conversation. There is also evidence to suggest that commensal and smoking restrictions are frequently ignored in this village, although they emerge on the surface whenever people from other villages are present. The high caste residents are likely to defend low caste individuals of their own village whenever there is a dispute. This is parallel to the individual friendship pattern. In some cases high caste/low caste proximity leads to greater social interaction, and there is likely to be less observance of the norms for inter-caste interaction on the part of the high caste individuals, than if they resided in a purely high caste village.

Under the circumstances it is surprising that restrictions on inter-caste interaction exist to the extent they do, and that castes are ranked. The reason for this would appear to be historical and external. The Gaddis migrate in the winter and through contact with outside people become conscious of the caste system. As the contact with outside world increases, awareness of caste and hierarchy also increases.

Caste divisions as they exist in the Bharmour *Patwar* Circle, do imply a certain amount of discrimination against the low castes particularly in the matters of commensal behaviour. This engenders emotional responses. Some people resented the caste system, their position in it or specific concomitants of their caste status. However, in this respect a new trend may be seen particularly among the educated high caste individuals who do not like the idea of discriminating against the low castes. These people prefer to select their friends on the basis of personality factors rather than on the basis of caste identity. Sometimes, the aggressive low caste individuals try to become friendly with high caste individuals in an effort to break down the barrier between the castes. Their aim seems to be to create a sort of equality, although a very limited and temporary one. In case where the two types meet, that is the high caste person who does not

discriminate and the aggressive low caste individuals, equality exists but in an atmosphere of conspiracy and discretion. In case of friendship between a high caste individual and low caste individual the friendship and equality manifests openly only when the low caste friend is insulted by a third party, in that case the high caste individual may come to his defence (Bhasin 1996b).

*Pujaris* are caretakers of caste shrines of the village. They can be of any caste. A *Chela* is receptive to the entrance of a deity into his body. This may be done by means of trance or other forms of possession. *Chela* can be of any caste, but usually a Sipi. At the village shrines rituals are performed by the whole village under the leadership of the caste's Pujari and *Chela* attached to the shrines. Neighbours are dependent on one another for the efficacy of the rituals that personally affect them in life's crises. As the Gaddis are dispersed in winter, all their festivals are distributed in the summer months, and the village is frequently assembling as a corporate group for purposive activities. It includes not only the ritual performance itself, but also the commensal feast from the slaughtered animal.

Economic adaptations that Gaddis have made reveal that they tend to share a basic pattern of economic activities during most part of the year. Comparative isolation and smallness of settlements have altered the normative caste relationships as they are in the plains. Although the people are caste conscious, they have significantly modified the caste system in accordance with their social and economic needs. Ecological conditions have resulted in an operational modification in the caste system and caste idiom. As an illustration, one may cite the example of *Puhals* or shepherds (who are invariably Sipis). When these *puhals* accompany Rajputs on migration, they eat, drink and smoke with the Rajputs. This is the reverse of ordinary circumstances in which a Rajput would never offer 'Hakka' to a Sipi, nor accept one offered by a Sipi, nor would he share his food with a Sipi. Another instance of the coexistence of caste consciousness and dilution of caste division is the case of the Sipi, traditionally a low caste. However, a Sipi is universally respected and revered when he appears in the role of a *Chela* and one might find a high caste Rajput or Brahman going to him and touching his feet.

In an area where labour is scarce, people have to depend on one another, and in doing so, the inter-caste relational pattern is diluted. Constant

interdependence can hardly be conducive to the maintenance of a rigid caste ideology.

The socio-cultural system of the Gaddis is influenced by the total ecological situation, that is, they have to be dispersed in winter and concentrated in summer, and this alternating pattern of concentration and dispersal makes for a certain fluidity in social organisation. A group that lives together in a unit requires a different sort of organisation from one that is fragmented into smaller units. Flexibility is required. It is generally true that all aspects of a socio-cultural system tend to be interrelated. One basic point in the Gaddi culture is that the whole community cannot stay together as a unit all the year round, and they cannot stay at the same place. They have to be on the move in search of pastures. In summer they go to high altitudes and in winter they move to low altitudes. In winter they move along with families, who also find employment in the Kangra District. They sell wool and woollen products in the Kangra market. Two important factors are at work here. Both of them, in broad terms, fall under the heading of ecology. First, there is the extremely heavy reliance of the Gaddis on the sheep and goats. Without the sheep and goats, Gaddis cannot survive. Of necessity, the Gaddis have to adjust their life ways to the grazing cycle of the sheep and goats. There is also the possibility of a more direct environmental factor at work, that is, the ruggedness of terrain, heavy snow and short working season in themselves inhabit the persistence of a wholly agricultural economy. The fragmentation of the community is a logical outcome of the ecological circumstances within which the community lives. This fragmentation of the community and the mode of living has given a certain kind of fluidity to the inter-caste interactional pattern at different times.

A review of the calendar of economic activities reveals the fluctuations of the inter-caste relations at different periods of time. In the month of April, after the snow, people return home. Communal tasks such as getting new crossbeams for houses, repairing water mills, clearing water channels for *Gharats*, repair of retaining walls broken down by snow during winter, etc. are performed. In these activities, all the people who have Barton in the village, irrespective of the caste, work jointly and some sort of communal harmony is created.

The following months of May, June, July, August, September and October constitute the

main agricultural season. During agricultural season, each family manages its own affairs and caste restrictions and distances are maintained to some extent. Then winter migration starts. People may travel in groups (of different castes) but once they reach the place of migration, they resume their distinct identity as Rajputs and Sipi. At the place of migration, all precautions are taken for showing caste distance. Here, a Rajput would not share his food or drink or offer a *Hukka* to a Sipi. But at this very moment, Sipi may be sharing a food, drink or *Hukka* with a Rajput at the *Dhars* (pastures). All their inter-caste relations depend on the time and place of the activities in which they are engaged. These activities are, in turn, governed by the ecological conditions of the area, which have modified their economy accordingly. The main thrust of the section, thus, has been to demonstrate the impact of ecological conditions on the caste system, as well as to show that operational modifications in the caste system have taken place as a result of social and economic interdependence, through fragmentation of a community as ecological adaptation, giving a caste system that is very different from that of the plains in inter-caste relational pattern.

At present there is no way to evaluate whether caste differences and restrictions on interaction will increase or decrease. There are forces working in both directions, and much will depend on which set of forces become dominant. The rapidity of the spread of education, the people who receive education, the caste affiliation of government workers posted in the Bharmour Block Headquarters, the type and extent of contact with outsiders, and factors that could increase or decrease economic differentiation, these are all potential influences, and it is too early to predict the direction of social change with respect to caste.

In Bharmour, authority and power is an elusive thing, seldom sought and only grudgingly delegated. Given the self-sufficiency of the nuclear family and the lack of economic differentiation, there are few ways in which a man can develop a base of power or authority. There is hardly any interest in community operation or community activities, and hence no group leader is necessary. Government officials do exist in the circle. It would seem that people seek power and authority as a means of increasing personal wealth, although the reverse may not be true. However, wealth and regional power do go hand

in hand to a large extent, partly because wealth enables a person to court government officials.

Authority in the community and region does not devolve on the eldest male. In Sachuien, it is the eldest brother who has been most successful in all respects, but the mantle is being taken over by his youngest brother, who is acknowledged to be the most qualified of his generation in the family and village. He is active in politics and has married a girl from Pathankot. Wealth and authority tend to go to those who seek it.

There seem to be ample opportunities in Bharmour *Tehsil* to diversify economic resources and increase household income provided a family is enterprising and hardworking. Most villagers are hardworking but are unwilling to do more than is necessary. They lack initiative and the willingness to take risks or try new ideas. One young man did try several different jobs and continually announced new ideas for making money. Several of these ideas would probably have been successful had he pursued them. However, his inability to follow through on any task, including weeding and protecting his maize fields, was so great that he rarely harvested enough food to support his family. Some of his land had been fallow for three years because he could not be bothered to cultivate it. Those who have prospered have found non-agricultural sources of income, increased their holdings, learned new skills and worked at improving their contracts with government officials and others who may be of value to them. The people in the prosperous families are viewed as highly sophisticated by local standards, and are sought out by people of other villages as sources of information, services and assistance not otherwise available (Bhasin 1996a).

As individuals their conformity to the norms is no better and perhaps worse than the rest of the population. They are not respected for being upstanding characters. But real power and authority lie with government officials, outsiders who have no permanent ties with the area and who usually reside not in the circle but in Chamba town. Such authority is not trusted, as it is simply a force to be contended with and one that is usually repressive in the eyes of the villagers.

In the long term, it seems unlikely that the people of Bharmour *Patwar* Circle will emulate more Sanskritic Indian tradition, as they increase their contact with the outside world. They are already aware of orthodoxy but see no advantage in it. Instead it is probable that they will

bypass sanskritisation and emphasise modernisation (Srinivas 1962: 42-62). The Brahman has never been a social model locally, and it is the Brahmans who have chosen to conform to the customs they found when they arrived in order to gain social acceptance (Bhasin 1996b).

As such there are perhaps fewer prejudices among the people that would inhibit its economic development, given adequate opportunities and adequate assurance that they are not endangering their economic position. The economy is sufficiently marginal and there is not much room for risk-taking. It is this aspect that has prevented more extensive development of horticulture and more intensive use of chemical fertiliser, both of which could significantly increase income.

Since ages the transhumant pastoralism has been sustained and promoted in the content of socio-economic and climate change in the mountains. In case studies from Nepal's western mountain the States, opportunities and contrails of transhumant pastoralism in the changing content have been analysed. The results featured that indigenous and traditional knowledge, feelings of cultural identity, collective ownership, income and mutual benefits have acted as motivating factors in sustain transhumant pastoralism for generation (Gentle and Thwaites 2016).

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The socio-cultural system as found in Bharmour *Patwar* Circle is a reflection of the way in which the Gaddis have, by tradition adapted to a mountainous, rugged environment through agriculture and pastoralism. Historical conditions and events have of course played their part, but they too were influenced by ecological factors. The area remained comparatively isolated up to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The isolation was never absolute in the sense that Gaddis have always been aware of the practices and beliefs of the other people. They have been in touch with the people of the lower hills while grazing their sheep and goats. During the same period their families have been working in the homes of the people in the Kangra hills. The limited nature of resources and the specific nature of the agriculture and herding cycle are the result of the ecological conditions of the area. Immigrants into the Bharmour area adopted the local customs, caste, kinship, marriage and religion, thus indicating that ecological adaptations mould the social relations



to fit local conditions. Rajputs and Brahmans came from the plains, driven thence by Muslim persecution and adjusted themselves to different ecological conditions from the plains. Their religious beliefs, practices and caste system, though modified by the harsh environment throw a great deal of light on the fundamental nature of the institutions.

The ecological conditions in Bharmour have several effects on the economic life of Gaddis. Agriculture production is reduced by the shorter season, low temperature, high altitude and smallness of the landholdings. The small size of the landholdings is the result of the nature of the tract, steepness of the slope, and fragmentation of land on the break-up of a joint family. Historically speaking, all the land belonged to the Rajah of Chamba who would rent out small fields to different families. A person was given the right to only as much land as he and his family could personally cultivate. This type of distribution prevented the emergence of any significant group of large landholders. To compensate for the agriculture deficit Gaddis raise large flocks of sheep and goat. The lush mountainous meadows and grazing grounds in the area facilitate the raising of sheep and goat. Accumulation of snow in winter months, prevents the year round sustenance of large flocks. Consequently, a pattern of transhumance is followed. The socio-cultural system of Gaddis is influenced by transhumance pattern, that is, they are dispersed in winter and concentrated in summer. This alternating pattern of dispersal and concentration makes for certain fluidity in inter-caste interactional pattern at different times. Operational modifications in the caste system have taken place as a result of social and economic interdependence through fragmentation of a community as ecological adaptation, creating a caste system that is different from that of the plains in inter-caste relational pattern. There is no rigidity or permanence in the social relations. On the one hand, joint families are breaking up into nuclear units due to economic reasons, position of women and desire for independence, and on the other hand mutual help and cooperation continues between nuclear units, and new ties of *Dharam Bhai* bonds are established with other people of their own or any other caste. This contradictory tendency of snapping of bonds and creating new ties is the result of ecology to which Gaddis have to adopt.

The ecological and environmental factors obtained in Bharmour *Patwar* Circle have given a special economic power to women, and hence an elevated social status and authority almost equal to men. Men dominate in public and community affairs and continue to play the role of head of the family and breadwinner, while women due to division of labour, enjoy special economic power, greatest say in family life and great deal of social freedom.

Severe limitation on the land available for cultivation, combined with low margin of productivity and a lack of market for exporting local products has prevented the emergence of either fulltime specialists or landless labourers. Lacking hired labour, cooperation between families and Barton (Obligatory Assistance) obligations have become the compensating factors through which households socially communicate and a stable labour supply is ensured, when man is in need.

The nuclear family is the basic social group among the Gaddis and is responsible for total economic welfare. The geographical mobility, nurtured by the transhumance, reinforces the prominence of the family. Further social ties are developed through the institutions of *Al, Gotra,* and Caste and *Dharam-Bhai* bonds. All the three institutions provide economic advantages and protection for the participants. This expansion of the circle of kinsmen and fictive kinsmen may be seen as an effective adaptive mechanism to the harsh and rugged environment. In this remote and isolated area, where danger and hostility of nature is prevalent, there is safety in alliance either through kinship or formalised friendship.

Among Gaddis the position of women is high, as they help in smooth functioning of the whole economic system, which is dualistic rather than unitary that is, both agriculture and herding are practiced. Economic power of Gaddi women has given them an elevated social status and authority almost equal to men. However, there are certain domains in which men continue to dominate, as is culturally required. Moreover, community authority still is in the hands of men. There is kind of duality observable here. Men dominate in public and community affairs, and continue to play the role of the head of the family and breadwinner, while women, due to division of labour, enjoy special economic power, greater say in family life, great deal of social freedom and several of their actions are condoned/ tolerated, which would not be the case if their economic importance were not so great.

Some of the crucial factors responsible for the degree of flexibility in social organisation in Bharmour appear to be the ruggedness of terrain, severity of climate, land distribution and settlement patterns. Coupled with these factors is the decline of the Ranas as the dominant caste and their replacement not by a local group, but by the *Rajah* of Chamba who ruled from a distance, and finally, the sex based division of labour. The influence of these factors on the caste system, marriage practices, the position of women, family self-sufficiency and religious practices, has led to a distinct social organisation.

The process of cause and effect described above is not entirely a direct one, but one in which land settlement and distribution pattern of economic resources became the focal point. These in turn have been primarily influenced by the physical environment. However, these patterns are now in a process of change because of land pressure and new laws that permit a family to own more land than was previously possible. This may eventually bring about changes in the caste system. Similarly, the declining importance of animal husbandry may reduce the economic importance and consequently the economic independence of women. Diversification of the economy and increased income resources may also lead to a more marked economic differentiation from one family to another. Until these new trends are clearly established whether along caste lines or otherwise, it is difficult to predict their precise influence on social organisation. It has sought to reveal that the ecologic and economic adaptations that Gaddis have made for a stable social organisation. Gaddis maintain a short-term ecological balance with the environment through migrations and winter dispersal, whereby the intensity of utilisation of pastures is adjusted to the carrying capacity of the different pastures at the different period of time, while the long-term balance between flocks and pastures is beyond the control of Gaddis. This depends mainly on fertility and mortality rates on the one hand and taxation on the other. The Gaddis also maintain an approximate economic and political balance with surrounding areas mediated through market exchange, and the institution of *Panchayat* and *Biradari*.

For the present form of organisation to persist, the Gaddis must be in demographic balance. Since the Gaddis are partially isolate within the larger population of the area, the factors involved in this balance are both biological and social.

The fertility rates among Gaddis being not so high, there is a net rate of natural growth within the tribe. There is no reason to think that this rate of increase is recent, or unique. Since there are no major changes in economy and organisation of the Gaddis, it may be assumed that their population is and has been in approximate demographic balance. That means there are processes, which help in maintaining demographic balance. Among Gaddis, the process affecting the flow of population from transhumant way of life in general is being sedentary. Among Gaddis, the process of being sedentary begins when a fully transhumant house of Bharmour begins to get rooted in land in Kangra due either to improvishment or enrichment. Generally, the whole household is sedentary but sometimes only a part of the patrilineal is so. The two modes of production, that is, pastoral and agricultural, exist side by side. One part of the patrilineal buys cultivable land and builds a house and starts staying there all the year round. The other members of the household from Bharmour come during the winter migrations and share the lodging and works on the fields as well. They make their own arrangements and rules on sharing of produce. More often it is childless couples, couples with only daughters and Gaddis belonging to small sibling groups show a higher frequency of sedentarisation. Though sedentarisation has been a normal process to balance natural growth of population, yet the present Gaddis' demographic balance and organisation cannot persist unless this population excess in every generation is drawn off somehow. An accumulation of population would lead to overtaxing of pastures and flocks, economic collapse and changes in social organisation.

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