

Impact of Traditional & Modern Mass Media on Development Communication among Gujar Tribe of Chamba District in the Western Himalayas of Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract:

The Himachal Pradesh State Government, along with the Central Government of India, has initiated various development programs aimed at the Gujar tribes, similar to those for other tribal communities in India. However, the actual benefits of these programs are often delayed, and in many instances, the intended beneficiaries are unable to access them. This situation is primarily attributed to a lack of education and effective development communication within the Gujar community. Despite some modest improvements in their social conditions, the overall circumstances of the Gujjars have largely remained unchanged. Traditionally, the Gujjars lead a nomadic lifestyle as herders, which limits their access to educational institutions and modern mass media, thus impeding their ability to improve their socio-economic and political standing. Historically, only a small number of individuals within the community received informal education. Presently, a considerable portion of the Gujar population continues to inhabit traditional dwellings, which do not conform to contemporary human rights standards for living conditions. Although the Gujjars were designated as a scheduled tribe in 1950, alongside other scheduled tribes in the Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh, the benefits of reservation and other constitutional provisions have not yet been fully realized by them because of illiteracy and not aware about developmental communication on various developmental schemes being run by the governments for their human development. It would be beneficial to explore the underlying causes of their ongoing marginalization. Various factors contributed to Gujar tribe's predicament including administrative inefficiencies, a lack of awareness and media engagement within the community, their nomadic lifestyle, and the absence of effective non-governmental organizations or political representation. This minority Gujar tribe of Churah Sub-Division of Chamba District in the Western Himalayas in Himachal Pradesh has experienced significant changes over time; however, in the current era of information and communication technologies, modern mass media platforms are beginning to draw the attention of Gujar tribe towards development communication and education, access to modern mass media for aware on developmental schemes and highlight the importance of education for enhancing their growth and empowerment across all aspects of life, which is essential for human development as time progresses. Nonetheless, challenges remain. It is yet to be determined if their recent move towards modernization will allow them to achieve acknowledgment in mainstream society. Although modernization signifies a beneficial progression, it is essential for the Gujar tribe to understand the significance of safeguarding their historical and cultural legacy along with their education and

development communication. A sample of sixty male and female respondents was selected from different remote rural areas and urban areas in the Churah Sub-Division of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh for this research study. The findings suggested that the age and educational background of respondents significantly affect their mass media usage frequency and development communication awareness, which was categorized as high and medium. The study found that Gujjar tribe of Chamba do not want to change their original abode but at original abode they face difficulties as there is shortage of roads, schools, hospitals, electricity, and water and have no forest rights to graze their cattle and some of their traditional pastures are now part of wildlife sanctuaries in Chamba District. In this context, now Gujjar tribe of Chamba is awakening and tried to draw the attention of the government, administration through mass media channels.

Key Words: Gujjar Tribe, Traditional & Modern Mass Media, Development Communication

Introduction:

Chamba District in Himachal Pradesh is inhabited by approximately 11,000 Muslim Gujjars, while the population of Hindu Gujjars of Chamba is around 300 are an ethnic groups engaged in pastoral agriculture and the rearing of buffaloes, who migrate between mountainous and plain regions in accordance with seasonal changes. Due to their nomadic lifestyle, the Gujjar community in Himachal Pradesh largely remains outside the purview of government development initiatives. As per the 2011 Census, the population of Muslim Gujjar Tribe in Chamba, District of Himachal Pradesh of India, was recorded at 11,000 out of which 97.12% are Muslims. While according the census of 2011, the total population of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh was 519,080. The Gujjar tribe of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh face significant challenges in integrating into the mainstream economy, society, culture, and political systems, rendering them vulnerable to isolation. Furthermore, according to **Guru, Shivaram, Kumar & Rajagopala (2015)** that media has not effectively communicated the various schemes, programs, and services aimed at uplifting tribal communities, nor has it conveyed the success of tribal development initiatives to policymakers and implementers. Media can serve as a powerful tool for promoting social change and should be regarded as a vital element in the development communication process. Media thinker **Roger (1976)** says “Development communication is defined as the application of communication strategies to educate, transform, and inspire changes in attitudes and values, ultimately leading to developmental objectives.” **Mathiazhagan, Nandan, Meshram, Chand, & Meena, (2007)** describe “Development communication is a broadly participatory process of social change aimed at achieving both social and material progress for individuals within a society. Despite the availability of various traditional and modern communication media, tribes tend to favour interpersonal communication methods.” Historically, the concept of a tribe can be understood as a social entity that exists independently of civil society. A tribe comprises a distinct group of individuals who rely on their land for sustenance, exhibiting a high degree of self-sufficiency and lacking integration with broader civil societies. This term is perhaps the most familiar and widely recognized by the general populace. It is estimated that there are approximately one hundred and fifty million individuals belonging to tribes globally, representing around forty percent of the indigenous population. While the majority of tribal individuals are indeed indigenous, some may not originate from the regions they currently inhabit. The term ‘**Tribe**’ is contentious, as it was defined by external observers during the colonial era. It lacks a universally accepted definition, whether in terms of political structure, kinship ties, or cultural identity. Critics argue that it carries a negative implication of an unchanging, timeless existence. To mitigate these connotations, some prefer to use alternatives such as ‘ethnic group’ or ‘nation.’ Etymologically, the English term ‘Tribe’ can be traced back to 12th century Middle English literature, where it referred to one of the twelve tribes of Israel. This term derives from

the old French word ‘**Tribu**’, which in turn comes from the Latin word ‘**Tribus**’, denoting the original tripartite ethnic classification of the Ancient Roman State.

The tribes of India constitute a significant segment of the overall population, representing a vital component of Indian society that is intricately woven into the cultural mosaic of Indian civilization. The tribal demographic accounts for approximately eight percent of the India’s total populace. Numerous tribes inhabit various regions across the country, each exhibiting different levels of socio-economic development. Their presence spans from the foothills of the Himalayas to the southernmost territories of Lakshadweep, and from the plains of Gujarat to the mountainous areas of the North-East. According to the 2011 census, the population of scheduled tribes in India was recorded at 104.2 million. Madhya Pradesh has the highest concentration of tribal communities, followed by Maharashtra and Odisha. Tribes such as the *Kurumba*, *Irula*, and *Panga* in South India; the *Asura*, *Saora*, *Oraon*, *Gond*, *Santhal*, and *Bhil* in Central India; and the *Bodo* and *Ahom* in North-East of India are referenced in ancient classical Indian literature. At present time as of 2022, the Scheduled Tribe (ST) population in India is around 10.4 crores, which is around 8.6% of India’s total population. This tribal community is spread across India, with a higher concentration in forest and hilly regions or Himalayan regions.

Traditional Media & Modern or New Mass Media:

In the contemporary digital landscape, the methods by which information is conveyed, received, and disseminated have experienced profound changes. This evolution can be primarily linked to the rise of two distinct media categories such as traditional media and new media. Traditional media includes the established forms of mass communication that have developed over time, such as printed newspapers, television broadcasts, radio, and physical books. Conversely, new media or modern mass media encompasses contemporary communication methods and technologies, which include the internet, social media platforms, mobile devices, virtual reality, and various other digital channels.

Concept of Development Communication:

‘Development communication’ encompasses the strategic use of communication to foster social development. It involves engaging stakeholders and policymakers, creating supportive environments, evaluating risks and opportunities, and facilitating information exchange to drive positive social change through sustainable development. Techniques employed in development communication include information dissemination, education, behaviour modification, social marketing, social mobilization, media advocacy, communication for social change, and community involvement. This field has been referred to as the ‘**Fifth Theory of the Press**,’ with its core objectives being ‘social transformation and development’ and ‘the fulfillment of basic needs.’ **Jamias** articulated a philosophy of development communication based on three fundamental concepts: purposive, value-laden, and pragmatic. **Nora C. Quebral** further elaborated on this definition, describing it as ‘the art and science of human communication applied to the rapid transformation of a nation and its populace from poverty to a vibrant state of economic growth that enables greater social equality and the broader realization of human potential.’ **Melcote** and **Steeves** characterized it as ‘emancipation communication,’ focused on addressing injustice and oppression. According to **Melcote (1991)** as cited in **Waisbord (2001)**, the ultimate aim of development communication is to enhance the quality of life for individuals, which includes increasing income and well-being, eradicating social injustice, promoting land reforms, and ensuring freedom of speech.

Significance of the Study:

Development communication represents both an art and a science, focusing on the effective exchange of information to facilitate the rapid transformation of a nation from poverty to a robust state of

economic advancement. This process fosters greater economic and social equity, as well as the realization of human potential. The concept of development encompasses various aspects, including improvements in quality of life, enhanced nutrition, better health outcomes, and both individual and societal transformation. Modern smart media tools like smart TV, radio, digital media, and social media platforms have emerged as a powerful tool for democratizing communication, thereby increasing public participation in development and social change initiatives. To effectively connect tribal development programs with their intended beneficiaries, a structured media intervention is essential. The development of tribal communities necessitates a comprehensive media strategy, which should be integrated as a vital component of the broader tribal development framework. The media holds a social responsibility to address the developmental needs and aspirations of the general populace, with particular emphasis on tribal communities.

Review of Literature:

For review of literature of the present research, we have reviewed other research studies on tribes of India including the tribes in the foreign countries to reach and delve into the present study in order to understand the Gujjar tribe from their past angle and their present status. According to the 2011 census of India, the Churah Sub-Division of Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh had the largest Gujjar population conducted a survey involving 252 households, which included a total of 651 individuals, comprising 310 men and 341 women from various hamlets of the Gujjar tribe in Churah Sub-Division of District Chamba. The previous research findings indicated that the Gujjar tribe in India was experiencing varying degrees of malnutrition. Specifically, 23.9% of the tribal population was classified as suffering from Grade 3rd malnutrition, while 63.1% were identified with Grade 2nd malnutrition, and 11.2% were affected by chronic energy deficiency. Notably, only 1.5% of the individuals surveyed were considered to be in a normal nutritional state. The study included responses from eight hundred mothers of children under six years of age. Results revealed that 60.88% of the households had access to electricity, while 39.12% relied on oil lamps. The previous research found that a significant portion of the tribal population (54%) was illiterate, primarily due to limited access to educational institutions. Instances of school dropout were noted after middle school. Additionally, around 25% of the tribal members utilized radio as a means of self-education, while 60% engaged with radio for entertainment purposes. **Siddalingappa, Hoogar, Pradeep, and Renuka (2016)** examined the tribal population residing in seven selected hamlets, encompassing 171 households and 705 individuals in the vicinity of the Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Bandipur Taluk, Mysore District, through a cross-sectional community-based descriptive study. The results indicated a literacy rate of only 47.0% among women and 56.1% among men. Furthermore, the prevalence of child marriage among the tribal population was reported at 71.5% as according to the previous research studies. **Guru M. C., Shivaraj, Gundlupet, & Kumar (2015)** had collected primary data from 397 respondents consisting of stake-holders of tribal women empowerment (91) and tribal women beneficiaries (306). It was found that majority of the stakeholders of tribal women empowerment and tribal women beneficiaries were not aware of most of tribal developmental programmes being run by Central Government of India and State Government. These researchers had indicated that traditional media were more useful sources of communication than the new media among the tribal population. They described that 6.30% of the respondents knew about the Central Government's developmental schemes through traditional media and 1.76% through new media and 10.75% of the total respondents were aware of their State Government's developmental schemes through traditional media and 2.61% through new media, for example, scholarship and educational facilities (traditional media-33.50% and new media-09.07%), Health and family welfare programme (traditional media-14.36% and new media - 06.30%) and self-employment programme (traditional media-16.37% and new media - 07.56%).

Narayanappa, Rajani, Kumar, and Manjunath (2015) carried out a community based cross-sectional study over a span of more than two years, involving 4,207 children aged 0 to 15 years from the Jenukuruba tribal community. The findings of these researchers revealed that approximately 53.4% of these children exhibited varying degrees of protein-energy malnutrition. The study highlighted the significantly poor health and nutritional status of the Jenukuruba tribal children and recommended the implementation of immediate intervention programs to enhance their health and nutritional conditions. Another researcher **Kajekar (2015)** examined the tribes across three districts namely Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, and Uttara Kannada of State Karnataka, identifying several factors contributing to the low educational levels among the tribal populations. Key reasons included (i) the perception that formal education was unnecessary for fulfilling social responsibilities, and (ii) the prevalence of extreme poverty among most tribal communities. **Kumar and Mahesh (2014)** investigated the awareness of development programs among women Panchayat members and male representatives in Dodda Hejjuru Grama Gram Panchayat, which had the involvement of an NGO, compared to Kottegala Grama Panchayat, which did not. This study found that 62% of women were informed about the development initiatives in the village supported by the NGO. Approximately 70% were knowledgeable about the timing and agenda of Gram Panchayat meetings, as well as the powers vested in the Gram Panchayat. Furthermore, about 56% of respondents believed that women could effectively serve as Gram Panchayat representatives. They demonstrated awareness of housing-related issues under various schemes, such as Indira Awas Yojana and the Ambedkar housing scheme, and recognized the income sources of their Gram Panchayats. In contrast, only 48% of women in Dodda Hejjuru Grama Panchayat attended meetings regularly, while 61% did not participate consistently due to their husbands managing household affairs. **Manjunatha and Annapurna (2012)** also investigated the issue of school dropouts among three significant tribes: Soliga, Jenukuruba, and Betta Kuruba in the Chamrajnagar district of Karnataka. The study selected approximately 300 families, identifying 198 children who had dropped out of school within the age range of 6 to 14 years.

Guru, Shivaraj, Gundlupet, & Kumar (2015) also conducted a study on the basis of systematic survey research method and primary data was collected from 397 respondents consisting of 91 tribal women empowerment and 306 tribal women beneficiaries using interview schedules. It was found that majority of the stakeholders of tribal women empowerment and tribal women beneficiaries were not satisfied with the role of media in the empowerment of tribal women. Also they were not happy with the media support for various tribal development projects and perceived that media did not play a crucial role in the empowerment of tribal women.

Furthermore, **Roy, Hegde, Bhattacharya, Upadhy & Kholkute (2015)** reviewed the studies carried out on the health of ethnic tribes of Karnataka State of India. Their research highlighted the potential of integration of the rich traditional practices of these tribes with the present day knowledge. Further, it was found that the degree of effectiveness of various schemes in terms of programme implementation in the areas of health, education and poverty reduction was not evident.

Manjunatha and Annapurna (2012) conducted a study on school dropouts among three significant tribes: the Soliga, Jenukuruba, and Betta Kuruba tribes in the Chamrajnagar district of Karnataka. The research involved approximately 300 families, from which 198 children aged 6 to 18 who had dropped out of school were identified and contacted. The findings of these researchers indicated that 51% of Jenukuruba children dropped out at the primary level, 57% of Bettakuruba children at the higher primary level, and nearly 36% of Soliga children at the high school level, with an additional 5% of Soliga children discontinuing their education at the pre-university level. The primary factors contributing to these dropouts included insufficient income, learning disabilities, health issues, lack of transportation, and migration. The study recommended an education that is relevant to the lives of tribal

communities, advocating for the integration of mainstream education in a manner that avoids feelings of deficiency and social oppression.

Individuals engage with various media content and interpret it through their unique perspectives shaped by their understanding of mass media, which in turn influences their needs, interests, attitudes, and shared values in diverse ways. A study conducted by **Ilse Devroe (2004)** entitled '**This is not who we are**': **Ethnic minority audiences and their perceptions of the media**' indicates that participants exhibited varying degrees of identification with their racial groups, as evidenced by a linguistic analysis of focus group discussions. The manner in which participants referred to ethnic minority groups in the media, using terms like 'us' and 'them,' highlighted significant dissatisfaction with these representations. Conversely, respondents who were primarily children of mixed heritage expressed their views using 'they' and 'them,' demonstrating a more nuanced, albeit critical, perspective on the portrayal of ethnic minorities in media content. In a separate study, **Phuntsho Rapten (2001)** explored the role of mass media in both rural and urban areas of Bhutan in his research titled '**Mass Media: its consumption and impact on residents of Thimphu and Rural Areas.**' The findings of this research revealed that the distribution and consumption of media differ significantly between these areas, leading to varying impacts. In rural regions, where literacy rates are low, radio serves as the primary medium for disseminating information about national and global events. The author suggested that had Television been available instead of radio in these rural areas, the impact would have been markedly different. Television's visual components provide urban residents with access to a wider array of news and entertainment, enabling them to express opinions, engage in public discourse, and expand their understanding beyond traditional boundaries, thereby enriching their perceptions and ideas.

Manashi Mohanty and Pritishri Parhi (2011), in their research titled '**Folk and Traditional Media: A Powerful Tool for Rural Development**' conducted an analysis of three coastal districts in Orissa State of India. Their findings indicated that a significant number of respondents believe that folk media plays an important role in rural development due to its cultural relevance. However, they also note that in the current age of information and communication technology, the importance of folk media is diminishing. In today's context, mass communication has become a pivotal element in international relations across economic, political, and cultural dimensions. It offers vast opportunities for gaining insights into global advancements, as highlighted by **Norizan Abdul Razzaq and Jalaluddin Abdul Malek (2008)** in their study '**Bridging Digital Divide in Malaysia: Cyber Learning for the Marginalized Communities**'. Their research indicated that marginalized communities, often residing in remote and socially isolated areas with limited income, can engage more actively in e-inclusion initiatives if provided with adequate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) resources and infrastructure. Furthermore, the study emphasized the necessity of focusing on grassroots efforts to develop learning materials that are pertinent and beneficial to these marginalized groups.

Effective communication is a fundamental element in achieving sustainable development. For marginalized populations, the mobilization of community members for development initiatives is crucial; however, this mobilization can only occur when the communication process is efficient. To assess the role of communication in the advancement of rural communities, **Mary Olufunke Adedokun, Comfort Wuraola Adeyemo, and Edith Oluwafunmilola Olorunsola (2010)** conducted a study titled '**The Impact of Communication on Community Development**' in 2010. The findings of this study indicated that effective communication is vital for promoting community development. With well-structured communication strategies, community members can engage actively in various development initiatives. The authors recommend that community members should be made aware of the significance of communication in the development process. To achieve this, community leaders or development agents should facilitate the effective dissemination of information among participants through suitable channels.

Comparatively, reviewing the previous researches on tribes of other parts of India even foreign tribes, the researches concerning the Gujjar Tribes (Gujjars are a nomadic pastoral tribe in India with many clans and sub-tribes) has been relatively limited. Gujjars are primarily involved in agriculture, forestry, milk production, and rearing livestock. They are classified as an Other Backward Class (OBC) in some Indian States, but they are designated as a Scheduled Tribe (ST) in Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. Hindu Gujjars are usually members of the Kshatriya Varna, but some communities are classified as Brahmin. Gujjars can also be Muslim, Sikh, Christian, and possibly Buddhist. One notable study, titled '**Demography, Social and Cultural Characteristics of the Gujjars and Bakarwals: A Case Study of Jammu and Kashmir**' conducted by **Dr. Tufail** in 2014, examined various aspects such as the origin, culture, demographics, settlement patterns, and linguistic diversity of the Gujjar Tribes. The findings of this research indicated that the Gujjars and Bakarwals (Bakarwals are a nomadic ethnic group in Jammu and Kashmir and in some Districts of Himachal mostly in Chamba District) constitute the third largest community in the Jammu and Kashmir region of India, with the highest population residing in Jammu, followed by Kashmir. It is suggested that the Gujjars migrated to Jammu and Kashmir from Gujarat, passing through Rajasthan and the Hazara District of the North Western Frontier Province of Pakistan. The author noted that modernization has brought about changes in all facets of their lives, affecting the Gujjars and Bakarwals in social, political, cultural, and economic dimensions. While numerous studies have addressed the development of marginalized communities, research specifically focusing on the Gujjars has primarily concentrated on their historical, cultural, and linguistic identities. There is a notable lack of investigation into the media usage among the Gujjars. Therefore, this research paper warrants attention as it represents a pioneering effort to explore the media interactions of the Gujjar community.

Tribes in Himachal Pradesh: Origin and Composition:

The Gujjars represent one of the numerous tribes that inhabit the peripheries of Himachal Pradesh. This tribe is also found in various regions of the Western Himalayas, particularly in parts of Jammu and Kashmir. Additionally, a significant population resides in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Western Rajasthan. Historians have proposed multiple theories regarding their origins; however, the prevailing view suggests that a substantial invasion by Central Asian peoples occurred in the early 6th Century A.D. in what is now Western Rajasthan and Punjab. Many believe that these invaders were the Gujjars, who subsequently established themselves in these regions and migrated to other areas of the subcontinent. The term '**Gujjar**' first appeared in literature in the 7th century A.D., as noted by the renowned poet Ban Bhat in his work, Harshacharita. The term is derived from '**Gurujar**,' which in Sanskrit translates to "a valiant individual destined to vanquish enemies." Over time, the term evolved from "**Gojjar**" to its current form, **Gujjar**. Historically, the **Gujjars** led a nomadic lifestyle, primarily focused on seeking green pastures for their livestock, a practice that continues to be a significant source of income for many today. In terms of ethnic relations, **Denzil Ibbetson** asserts that Jats, Gujjars, and Ahirs belong to the same ethnic group. Within Himachal Pradesh, the Gujjars are currently categorized into two main groups: the Gujjar Hindus, predominantly located in the District of Mandi, Kangra, Sirmaur, Solan, and Bilaspur, and the Muslim Gujjars, who are spread across the District of Chamba, Mandi, Bilaspur, Shimla, Solan, and Sirmaur. Regarding their linguistic heritage, the Gujjars possess a unique language known as **Gujari** or **Gojri**, which exhibits regional variations but is closely related to several dialects of **Rajasthani**. The language does not possess a distinct script. However, in the context of the Western Himalayas and the regions of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, the **Gujari** or **Gojri** spoken by the inhabitants is closely associated with the Western Pahari language (Hilly Dialect) group, with many speakers incorporating their variant of **Gujari** or **Gojri** within the Western Pahari framework.

As per the 2011 Census, the population of Himachal Pradesh stands at 6,864,602, with 392,126 individuals (5.71%) classified as belonging to Scheduled Tribes, while Himachal Pradesh accounts for 0.57 % of India's population in 2011. Himachal Pradesh has the total population of 6,864,602, with 3,481,873 males & 3,382,729 females. Himachal Pradesh has a total size of 55,673 square kilometres, while Himachal Pradesh has a population density 123 people per square kilometre, which is lower than the national average of 382 people per square kilometre as per census of 2011. The State of Himachal Pradesh recognizes five designated tribal regions: **Kinnaur, Lahaul, Spiti, Pangi, and Bharmaur**. These areas have experienced notable social changes, particularly in literacy rates, educational trends, and societal structures. Traditional practices such as polyandry and polygamy are witnessing a decline, and the prevalence of child marriages has significantly reduced across nearly all tribal regions. Currently, the majority of residents in these areas communicate in Hindi and English, in addition to their native tribal languages. The trend towards nuclear families has become more pronounced than that of joint families, reflecting a shift in the social landscape of the tribal communities. Overall literacy rates in the region have improved, with female literacy rising dramatically from 7.31% in 1971 to 50% in 2001, thereby reducing gender disparity. Furthermore, there has been a notable increase in primary education enrolment, which surpasses that of secondary and higher education. While housing and sanitation conditions have seen improvements in certain tribes, particularly in Kinnaur, Lahaul, and Spiti, some tribes, such as the Gujjar community in the Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh, continue to face dire circumstances as mentioned in previous researches.

In another study '**Studies on Lifestyle and Livelihood Options of the Gujjar Tribe of Tissa Region of District Chamba, Himachal Pradesh in the Western Himalayan**' by **Dipika Rana, Anupam Bhatt and Brij Lal (2019)** also threw light on the social life of the Gujjar Tribe. The Gujjars are referred to by various names, including '*Goojar*' and '*Gurjara*'. This tribe is believed to have originated during the era of the **Huna Kingdom** (The Huna Kingdom was a group of Central Asian tribes that assaulted the Indian Sub-Continent in the 5th or 6th century and occupied areas as far south as Eran and Kausambi of India and Huna weakened the Gupta Empire in India but were ultimately defeated in 528 CE by a coalition of Indian princes) and has since migrated to northern India, where they have established a long-standing presence in Himachal Pradesh. Their seasonal migration to the **Dhars**, which are high-altitude pastures, occurs annually from May to June, following the sowing of maize, and continues until September to October, when the maize is ready for harvest. This temporary migration involves female members of the tribe, who are responsible for cooking and managing household tasks at the secondary settlement known as '*Adhwari*.' The Gujjars navigate between mountainous and plain regions in accordance with seasonal changes, which limits their access to government welfare and development programs. Consequently, they experience significant delays in various aspects of development.

Author **C.G. Parsons** posits that the settlement of the Gujjars in the Chamba region of Himachal Pradesh occurred during the mid-nineteenth century. He contends that the Gujjars are a relatively recent addition, having arrived within the last forty to fifty years, and are typically found with their herds of buffaloes and cows on the slopes of various mountain ranges in the Ravi Valley of Chamba District. Their migration patterns generally involve moving between the outer hills and the higher ranges during the spring and autumn seasons, although they do not traverse the Pir Panjal Range (Pir Panjal Range is a group of mountains in the Lesser Himalayan region). Parsons' assertions, along with my own field surveys conducted in Chamba, indicate that the Gujjars primarily roamed within the two principal Himalayan ranges: the Dhauladhar and the Pir Panjal. It is evident that they did not cross the Pir Panjal Range. The Gujjars residing in Chamba often recount their migratory origins from the Jammu region. They narrate that they accompanied the Rani / Queen of the then Jammu State, who was wed to the

Raja/King of Chamba State and were reportedly dispatched by the King of Jammu to supply milk to her and the inhabitants of the then Chamba State.

Kamal Prashad Sharma's research further substantiates the existence of a legend prevalent among the Gujjars of Chamba, which recounts that "the Gujjars were invited by the queen of Chamba approximately 300 to 350 years ago to provide milk for the royal family and the populace of the then Chamba State." Additionally, Sharma references another narrative among the Gujjars regarding their migration into the Chamba region, stating that "the Gujjars were permitted to enter the former State of Chamba as a reward for an elderly Gujar woman who had saved the life of a close relative of the royal prince during that era."

These legends, however, substantiate the migration of the Gujjars to Chamba from the Jammu region. The abundance of grazing lands, forests, and water resources in Chamba made it an attractive destination for the Gujjars. Colonial documentation, including the gazetteers and forest reports of Chamba, corroborates that the Gujjars settled in this area primarily due to the availability of grazing opportunities, particularly in the Saal, Churah, and Lihal valleys. The Gujjars would acquire grazing land through auctions and were required to pay a grazing tax, known as '*Trini*' to the State for the use of these pastures. It is likely that the Gujjars migrated to the Jammu and Kashmir region from areas such as Rajputana, Gujrat, and Kathiawar. The following tribes were identified in the 1941 Census of India: Bhot, Bodh, Gaddi, Gujar, Jad, Lamba, Khampa, Kanaura, Kinnara, Lahaula, Pangwala, Swangla, Beta, Beda, Demba, Gara, and Zoba. A famine known as the 'Satahsiya Famine' occurred in the regions of Rajputana, Gujarat, and Kathiawar, prompting the Gujjars to seek areas with available fodder for their livestock. Consequently, they migrated to Jammu and Kashmir as well as Punjab. Additionally, there appears to have been a subsequent migration of Gujjars from the town of Gujrat in undivided Punjab to Kashmir. This indicates that the Gujjars residing in Jammu and Kashmir may have originated from either Rajasthan State of India or the town of Gujrat State of India in the then undivided Punjab. In the Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh State, the Gujjars settled in the deep forest areas known as '*Dhars*' (Dhars mean High-altitude pastures or hill ranges or mountains and holy places at hills), which are part of the Dhauladhar range of the Himalayas. These '*Dhars*' are located within the villages of Chamba, with some villages containing two or more '*Dhars*'. The Gujjars occupied the *Dhars* in the Sadar Chamba, Churah, Bhattiyat, and Bharmour wizarat.

The Sadar Chamba is characterized by a triangular shape and is situated within the Dhauladhar range of the Himalayas. In contrast, the Churah valley of Chamba extends across the Saho range, while the Bharmour valley of Chamba encompasses the Tundah range. During the British colonial era, Gujjars traditionally migrated to these *Dhars* in the month of April and returned to the plains of Chamba in the month of October. However, some Gujjars chose to settle in the hills, assimilating as ordinary *zamidars* (Zamidars were feudal landlords in the Indian subcontinent who used to collect taxes and revenue on behalf of the government) during that period. Each family maintained its own designated *Dhars* or grazing grounds in the mountains, to which they consistently returned. A number of families have established permanent residences in the hills. Even after India gained independence in 1947, Gujjars continued to be associated with these *Dhars*. The 1981 Census report for Chamba district indicates that a small number of Gujar families have become permanent residents, particularly in the Churah, Chamba, and Bhattiyat Tehsils, as well as the Salooni sub-Tehsil of Chamba District. Additionally, some Gujjars migrate to the District Chamba during the summer months to graze their cattle in the high pastures, returning to the plains before the onset of winter.

Gujjars in Chamba continue to reside in these Dhars, benefiting from the availability of grazing and water resources. They typically descend to the plains during the winter months. Consequently, Gujjars generally spend their summers in the Dhars and migrate to the plains of Chamba, Kangra, and Una

Districts of Himachal Pradesh in the winter. The Dhars, where Gujjar communities remain established, include Shugand, Sara, Jamuhar, Ainpukhar, and Joul dhars in Chamba. The primary livelihood of these Gujjar tribes is derived from the sale of milk and dairy products in local markets, which is facilitated by their access to natural pastures throughout the year. As summer approaches and the availability of grass and fodder diminishes in the lower altitudes, the Gujjars migrate with their herds to higher pasture lands. These pastures are allocated to various Gujjar families through permits issued by the local forest department, ensuring effective management of the forest resources. The Gujjars travel with their buffaloes, bringing along essential supplies for their daily needs. This seasonal migration follows a predetermined route that is typically traversed in approximately two to three days. Communication within the Gujjar community occurs in the *Gujari* language, also known as *Gojri*. The tribe upholds distinctive customs, rites, and rituals that are passed down through generations. Their strong bond with nature necessitates the use of natural resources in their daily lives. While residing in the high-altitude areas known as Dhars, the cattle graze, and the community relies heavily on various edible plants found in the forest, reflecting their extensive knowledge of ethno botanical resources.

Livelihood and Family:

Our research indicates that the majority of Hindu Gujjars lead a settled lifestyle and enjoy a relatively prosperous economic status, with only a small number identifying as nomadic. In contrast, the Muslim Gujjars in Himachal Pradesh display a range of lifestyles, including semi-nomadic, settled, and fully nomadic. Those who are nomadic, regardless of their religious affiliation, tend to remain apart from mainstream society and largely preserve their traditional cultural identities. Conversely, many settled Gujjars continue to prioritize buffalo rearing as their primary family occupation. Predominantly, Muslim Gujjars engage in the traditional practice of selling milk and dairy products to local customers or in markets. As most of them are pastoralists, they do not typically engage in patron-client, landlord-tenant, or cultivator-labour relationships. Additionally, many possess inheritance rights or '*Warisi*' (Waris means 'Owner') to specific grazing lands and forests. The joint family system is predominant among the Western Himalayan Gujjars residing in Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, although the nuclear family structure is also becoming increasingly common. In a joint family, the eldest male member is recognized as the head, referred to as '*Sayana*' (Sayana means eldest male member in the family like Grandfather or father). All family members under the '*Sayana*' share a common kitchen, known as *Chullah* (Fireplace), and the livestock, including buffaloes, is regarded as collective property of the family. Conversely, the emergence of numerous nuclear families reflects a gradual shift towards modernization and social change among the Gujjars. Both Gujjar Hindus and Muslims in the region engage in various social and religious rituals that largely align with mainstream religious practices.

Nomadic Gujjars:

Nomadic Gujjars, predominantly Muslims in the region, possess highly organized social structures. The primary unit of their social organization is the herding unit, typically comprising five to six families that travel together to elevated areas for the purpose of grazing their buffaloes. During these grazing journeys, each herding unit manages its buffaloes collectively and shares fodder among its members. Beyond the herding unit, the *Kafila*, or convoy, serves as another essential social organization unit. Nomadic Gujjars form a *Kafila* when migrating from high altitudes to the plains in anticipation of winter. The number of families within a *Kafila* can vary. Once established, the members elect a *Kafila* leader known as *Buzurg* (Elder male in the family), who is the eldest and possesses extensive knowledge of the routes to be taken. This leader is chosen by consensus, and once appointed, all members adhere to the directives and guidance provided by the *Buzurg*. Throughout the migration process, any disputes or issues arising among families are resolved by him, often with the assistance

of other senior members of the *Kafila*. An additional significant and effective organization among the nomadic Gujjars of Himachal Pradesh is known as the *Dera*, which refers to a collective of families residing in a single location. Each *Dera* (Temporary abode) is led by an individual called the '*Lambardar*,' who is chosen from among the elder members of the *Dera* through a process of consensus. The *Lambardar* is responsible for maintaining social order and promoting the welfare of the group, acting with authority and impartiality. His role also encompasses serving as a moral anchor for the group, ensuring cohesion, which earns him the respect and obedience of all members. The primary social structure among the nomadic Gujjars is the *Biradari Panchayat* (Fraternity Assembly), typically formed by the amalgamation of several *Deras*. The leader of the *Biradari Panchayat* is referred to as the '*Zaildar*,' who is selected based on his age, efficiency in promoting the welfare of the *Biradari*, and prior experience as a group leader. In the event of a dispute, the group initially attempts to resolve the matter internally. Should an individual remain dissatisfied with the outcome, the issue is escalated to the *Biradari Panchayat*, which addresses cases related to matters of sexuality, property, and social status. The decisions rendered by the *Biradari Panchayat* are deemed final.

Statement of the Problem:

The issue at hand pertains to the significant barriers to effective communication in rural regions, which encompass illiteracy, inadequate communication infrastructure, and the diverse linguistic characteristics of rural populations. Additionally, the disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds of the Gujjar tribal people have hindered their educational goals. The Gujjar tribal community of Chamba face various social, political and economic challenges, including employment, education, and other detrimental practices. Furthermore, the current educational curriculum lacks relevance for the Gujjar tribal individuals because of their nomadic life along with their cattle for earning livelihood of daily life and dependent on this profession they cannot provide education to their children neither they are aware about the developmental schemes being run by Central Government of India and H.P. State Government for the empowerment of the tribal people. The previous researches are based on reveal the problems of the Gujjar tribe of Chamba District but these past researches not covered the transformation and change existed among the Gujjar Tribe with the passage of modern mass media platforms such as social media platforms, digital media and internet based media and awareness through these modern media regarding their socio-economic, political development and their human and fundamental rights. In light of these circumstances, it is essential to evaluate the role of modern mass media for development communication and participation of Gujjar Tribe in developmental schemes run by the government aimed at the upliftment of Gujjar tribal communities of Chamba District.

Methodological Research Gap:

Earlier several researches conducted on Gujjar Tribe of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh in the traditional way research on the life of Gujjar Tribe and their socio-economic status but these existing researches have not focused on Gujjar Tribe's new transformation and awareness on the things associated with their development through modern mass media reach to them and present educational, political, economic and social development among the tribes being done by the Central Government of India and Himachal Pradesh State Government for the growth and empowerment of the nomadic Gujjar Tribe.

Research Objectives:

- (a) To examine the usage of modern mass media by Gujjar Tribe of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh in comparison to the usage of traditional media on their developmental communication

related to attain education to influence the frequency of usage of modern mass media platforms regarding development initiatives being run by both Central and State Governments.

Hypothesis:

- (a) Usage of modern mass media in comparison to traditional media is impacting on the transformation of Gujar Tribe of Chamba on their awareness on development communication and attaining education to influence the frequency of usage of modern mass media platforms related to the developmental schemes being run by Central Government of India and Himachal Pradesh State Government.

Null-Hypothesis:

NH-1. Age does not significantly influence the frequency of usage of modern mass media among the Gujar Tribe of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh.

NH-2. Education does not significantly influence the frequency of usage of modern mass media among the Gujar Tribe of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh.

Research Methodology:

As per the 2011 Census, the population of Gujar Tribe in Chamba, District of Himachal Pradesh of India, was recorded at 11000 out of which 97.12% are Muslim Gujar Tribe. The Churah Sub-Division of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh has the largest Gujar population. A sample of 60 male and female respondents was selected from different remote rural areas and urban areas in the Churah Sub-Division of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh, which has the highest concentration of Muslim Gujar tribal population in the Chamba District, utilizing a probability sampling method. The research was conducted between May 2023 and July 2023. A meticulously designed questionnaire was employed to gather primary data concerning the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and their engagement with traditional media such as radio, Television, print media i.e. newspaper, and word of mouth communication, as well as new modern technology based mass media including the internet based media, social networking sites, WhatsApp, You Tube and Facebook platforms to evaluate the extent of mass media reach among this tribe. Secondary data was sourced from newspapers and online platforms about this tribe awareness and their socio-economic problems published in newspapers and digital news platforms and developmental schemes being run by Central Government, Himachal Pradesh State Government and government offices at district and Tehsil level for the growth and empowerment of Gujar tribe. Through present research study methodology, the earlier traditional research methodology gap has been filled by modern mass media awareness among Gujar tribe to influence their awareness on attaining education and development communication for their growth and empowerment, while in the earlier or existing researches the influence of development communication among Gujar tribe was ignored or not subsumed in the existing research works. For data analysis, the use of Minitab Statistical software has been used.

Analysis of Data and Findings:

To examine the impact of modern media on the tribe's awareness of various development initiatives launched by both Central and State government, it is essential to comprehend the nature of development communication within the Gujar tribe towards their education. Observations and survey indicate that the Gujar tribe utilizes a distinct language for internal communication, which differs from the widely spoken languages such as main four tribal languages of Himachal Pradesh- Sptitian, Nyamkad, Chhitkuli and Kanashi and other Gaddi, Pahari Kinnauri, Mahasu Pahari (Sirmauri and Jaunsari). However, they know Hindi. Consequently, they experience challenges in comprehending these prevalent languages or word of mouth communication related to their development communication

and education awareness. This change among the Gujjar tribe is existing due to modern mass media platforms to aware on the importance of education and economic growth. As result of the modern mass media awareness in comparison to traditional media, Gujjar tribe's literate generation is switching on towards education and economic growth and knowing about the importance of modern media and development communication. That is why literate Gujjar tribe, exposure to mass media and access to internet conveniences taking by Gujjar tribe are proved for the economic growth of these tribe people, and also are not following the influence of the traditional Panchayat and traditional lifestyle among the Gujjars in certain areas both in rural and urban. Nevertheless, the nomadic Gujjars, who inhabit a broader territory, now began to rely on modern mass media platforms for their awareness on developmental issue. However, due to their limited literacy, they are now tending to avoid their formal and traditional way of tribal systems and staying in permanent abode and also associating with local market for selling their traditional products grains, milk and butter. The wild plants not only form an integral part of the culture and traditions of the Himalayan tribal communities but also contribute largely to the sustenance of these tribal communities as they use large varieties of wild fruits, vegetables, fodder and medicinal plants for meeting their day to day requirements. However, tensions are emerging within these communities, as some aware individuals are beginning to challenge the authority of the *Sayanas/elder male in the family*, who oversee the traditional Gram Panchayat of Gujjar tribe, and are increasingly inclined to embrace modern legal frameworks. Notable shifts are occurring, with some members of the Gujjar tribe starting to place their trust in the effectiveness of contemporary democratic institutions and legal justice systems and focusing on their education through which adopting modern lifestyle to grow themselves as colleges and schools are opened in the remote rural areas of the Gujjar tribe in Churah Sub-Division of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh. They are increasingly willing to bring their disputes before the courts not in traditional court/Panchayat, moving away from reliance on traditional methods for conflict resolution as modern mass media is educating and influencing them. This shift indicates a growing awareness of their rights, reflecting their political, economic and social evolution and communication development for achieving these goals for their human growth like other developed humans in the common human society. In nutshell, the research study findings suggested that the age, educational background and awareness on developmental communication on developmental schemes by the governments for the Gujjar tribe of respondents significantly affected their modern mass media usage frequency due to expanding their education rate, which was categorized as high and medium among Gujjar tribe and this awareness is also enhancing the development thoughts of the Gujjar tribe of higher age, higher modern mass media access and education. The study found that Gujjar tribe of Chamba do not want to change their original abode but at original abode they face difficulties as there is shortage of roads, schools, hospitals, electricity, and water and have no forest rights to graze their cattle and some of their traditional pastures are now part of wildlife sanctuaries in Chamba District. In this context, now Gujjar tribe of Chamba is awakening and tried to draw the attention of the government, administration through mass media channels.

Economic, Education & Modern Mass Media Usage Demographic Profile of the Gujjar Tribes:

The participants in this study were drawn from various rural areas and urban areas within the Churah Sub-Division of Chamba District, located in the State of Himachal Pradesh. 70% of the respondents were in the age group of 50-60 years from both rural and urban majority of respondents were illiterate, while 30% age group of 18-45 of the respondents were 10+2 pass. Similarly, rural people with meagre income i.e. less than Rs.2500 constitute 42.67%, which is in contrast to the 7.67% urban respondents earning more than Rs.10, 000. Around 18.65% of the men respondents from rural and urban were highly aware of all the Central Government of India and H.P. State Government's developmental programmes and most of the women respondents from rural and urban of around 63.54% have low

It is evident that according to age groups, majority of the respondents from rural and urban areas of around 43.67% depends on interpersonal communication. Urban respondents watching television is found to be 26.67%, excess by 10% when compared to the rural respondents using radio of around 18.67%. In both age wise and education wise classification of the respondents, interpersonal communication plays a major role as the respondents from both rural and urban 43.67% and 45.33% respectively. The interpersonal communication is found to be very frequently used than any other traditional media of communication stated in the study.

The role of media in creating awareness of these programmes among rural mass is questionable as there is lack of required modern media infrastructure in these remote villages and the media players do not prefer to be purely non-commercial in the geographical areas of low earnings of the villagers/rural people living in remote hilly areas. Therefore, the probability of knowing about these programmes through word of mouth is high.

Next, it shows that compared to usage of Social Network Sites and WhatsApp & You Tube and Facebook respondents using internet is marginally higher both in urban and rural areas. It is evident that only those respondents who completed 10+2 school education and also who are undergoing collegiate education were using new media or social media platforms like WhatsApp & You Tube and Facebook.

The impact of demographic variables on the frequency of usage of particular media has been studied by testing the hypotheses relating demographic variables with the frequency of usage.

H_{N1}: Age does not significantly influence the frequency of usage of media.

Using the regression method, the relationship between age of the respondents and the frequency of usage of traditional and new media of communication has been studied as under.

The regression equation shows that the age groups 45-50 years and above 50 years carry high weightage of 85.9% and 68.7% resulting in the high frequency of usage of mass media. The null hypothesis is rejected and thus age significantly influences the high frequency of usage of media awareness. Around 48.05% of the men respondents and 27.93 women respondents partially aware of these programmes.

The age group 18-45 and 50-60 constitute 80% and 85.8% weightage in deciding the medium frequency of usage of media. Therefore age significantly influences the frequency of usage of media. The age groups 18-45 and 50-60 years have influenced the low frequency of usage of mass media. The null hypothesis is accepted suggesting that age does not significantly influence the frequency of usage of modern mass media.

H_{N2}: Education does not significantly influence the frequency of usage of media

Using the regression method, the relationship between education of the respondents and the frequency of usage of both the traditional media and modern mass media has been analysed as under that in comparison to illiterates, respondents who have done middle school and 10+2 school education contribute to high frequency of usage of modern mass media. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus education significantly contributes to the frequency of usage of modern mass media by literate respondents. The above analysis shows that the same group of respondents as in the previous analysis contributes to medium frequency of usage of modern mass media. Thus education status significantly contributes to frequency of usage of modern mass media for aware on development communication.

Discussion & Conclusion:

Though the Himachal Pradesh State Government and the Central Government of India declare several development programmes for the Gujjar tribes like other tribes of India, the actual benefits to them are delayed and in several cases, the intended beneficiaries are unable to avail. This is due to lack of education and development communication among the Gujjar tribe. The circumstances of the Gujjar community remain largely unchanged, although there has been a modest enhancement in their social conditions. Traditionally, Gujjars are nomadic herders,

a lifestyle that restricts their access to educational institutions and access to modern mass media, thereby hindering their ability to elevate their socio-economic and political status. Previously, only a few individuals among them received informal education. Currently, a significant portion of the Gujjar tribe population continues to reside in traditional 'Gujjar Kotha' dwellings, which do not meet contemporary human rights standards for habitation. The Gujjars were classified as a scheduled tribe in 1950, alongside other scheduled tribes in the Chamba district; however, the advantages of reservation and other constitutional provisions have yet to reach them. Investigating the underlying reasons for their continued marginalization would be worthwhile. Several factors may contribute to their situation, including administrative shortcomings, lack of awareness and media awareness within the community, their nomadic lifestyle, and the absence of effective non-governmental organizations or political leadership. This minority tribe from the Western Himalayas in Himachal Pradesh has undergone significant changes over time but in the modern era of information communication technologies and modern mass media platforms are attracting Gujjar tribe towards development communication and understanding the importance of education to amplify their growth and empowerment in each arena of life as this is the requirement of human development with the passage of time. However, it remains to be seen whether their recent shift towards modernization will enable them to gain recognition within mainstream society. While modernization represents a positive advancement, it is crucial for the tribe to recognize the importance of preserving their history and cultural heritage.

Suggestions:

It is advisable for the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, along with sociologists and anthropologists, to investigate the root causes of the Gujjars' socio-economic challenges. There should be comprehensive research accompanied by effective policy interventions at both political and bureaucratic levels to transform their current state of backwardness into prosperity, facilitating their integration into mainstream society. A comparative analysis of the Gujjar tribes should be conducted to document the socio-economic advancements with the aim of replicating their success stories for the benefit of the Gujjars. It is anticipated that the government should implement corrective measures promptly, ensuring that the constitutional rights and benefits afforded to tribal communities are realized, thereby enhancing their status and improving their conditions over time through effective political, development communication and bureaucratic efforts. Furthermore, those in positions of authority should refrain from excessive interference in the tribe's internal affairs, as such actions could undermine the overall development efforts.

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