

Traditional Costumes, Ornaments, and Handicraft of Gaddi Tribe: A Study of Cultural Heritage in Jammu and Kashmir

Bushan Kumar

Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Prof. Rajendra Singh (Rajju Bhaiya) University, Prayagraj.
(Formerly Allahabad State University, Allahabad)
Email: [bushankumarrgr952\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:bushankumarrgr952[at]gmail.com)

Abstract: *The Gaddi Tribe of Udhampur District in Jammu and Kashmir has distinct rituals, traditions, cultures, norms, values, customs, and belief systems that differ from those of mainstream society. The tribal people of Jammu and Kashmir live close to forests and face unfavourable climatic conditions. The Gaddi Tribe of Jammu and Kashmir is a semi-pastoral and semi-agricultural tribe in Udhampur District. They are identified by their traditional dress, comprising Chola, Topi, Dora, Shawls, Gardu, and Gardhi. This tribe supports smoking hookahs or smoking pipes, which is known as "Chajari Tobacco" in the Dogri dialect of the district's people from other communities. The Gaddi tribe also used "Katori Tobacco" or "Chilam" (small hookah) in their pockets for smoking due to the tough topography and harsh climate conditions. These people have developed unique costumes, ornaments, and handicrafts, which they manufacture and use. In this paper, an effort has been made to document the costumes, ornaments, and handicraft products used by the Gaddi tribe of Jammu and Kashmir.*

Keywords: Gaddi tribe, Costumes, Ornaments, Handicrafts, Jammu and Kashmir.

1. Introduction

Gaddi tribe of Jammu and Kashmir is a semi-nomadic tribe, also called the "shepherd tribe" of Jammu and Kashmir. They live in Bhaderwah, Doda, and Udhampur districts of Jammu and Kashmir, and have their own costumes, ornaments, and handicrafts as heritage of the Gaddi tribe. The Heritage of the Gaddi Tribe means the album of the Gaddi tribal community, which includes everything their parents, grandparents, and ancestors passed down. This includes tangible heritage, such as the tribe's handicrafts, tools, Temples, old houses, etc., and intangible heritage, such as their songs, dances, rituals, dialect, way of cooking and eating, and way of life.

Culture

Culture is all that is socially transmitted rather than biologically inherited in human society. At the same time, common-sense usage tends to point only to the arts. Culture, in its broadest sense, is the way of life of a social group. The group's total artificial environment, including all the material and non-material products of the group's life that are transmitted from one generation to the next. It is used in two senses: general and specific. In the general sense, it implies the total of those characteristics which are unique to humanity and which have no parallel in the animal kingdom. In the specific sense, it refers to the totality of the life ways and behaviour patterns of the community or a group (Saumya, 2018).

The term "world culture" has, in fact, been used in different ways. In both implicit and explicit uses, it contrasts culture with nature. The things that humans produce or do are cultural, whereas the things that exist or occur without human invention are part of the natural world (Christopher Jencks, 1993).

Culture is sometimes seen as a state of mind. Someone becomes cultured by moving toward the idea of perfection, a goal or aspiration of individual human achievements or emancipation. From this perspective, culture is seen as a quality possessed by individuals who can gain knowledge and develop the qualities considered desirable in a cultured human being. (Holborn, 2020)

"The culture of society is the way of life of its members, the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share, and transmit from one generation to another". (Linton, 1945).

2. Objectives

To understand the various types of traditional costumes, ornaments, and handicrafts among the Gaddi tribal communities in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir.

3. Methodology

The researchers used both primary and secondary sources of data to explore and understand the traditional costumes, ornaments, and handicrafts among the Gaddi tribal communities in Jammu and Kashmir. In this study, the researchers used various books, journals, and research articles. The researchers also used observation and face-to-face interaction with the Gaddi tribal communities in Udhampur District of Jammu and Kashmir.

Costumes of the Gaddi tribe:

Gaddi tribe has its own costumes for men and women. The main costumes are Cholu, Dor, and Topi, etc., whereas the women's costumes are launchari, Dora, and Lang Dupatta, etc. These costumes are Different from other Communities. The following costumes are as under:

Men's costumes:

- **Chola or Choloo:** Is the name of the traditional dress worn by Gaddi men as an upper garment, which is usually made of coloured 'Patti' of soft and thin wool. Its length is 18 to 25 meters. It is required to make a chola, and it reaches below the knee. It is constructed with full sleeves and deep, broad-hanging collars, where the wearer can stuff cotton, needles, threads, etc. The chola is closed Crosswise over the chest and tied around the waist by a cord 'Dora'; thus, it remains loose above the waist, and the space formed is called Kokh/womb, which can be used to carry essentials like food, newborn lambs, and kids during migration.
- **Dora:** It is tightened around the waist over Chola with a black colour, sturdy wooden cord, also called Gatri, which is made of sheep wool and is up to 60 meters long. Especially for men, it is considered an extraordinary part of the Gaddi dress. Women and children probably used it to support the waist and back while moving in the mountains. It also plays an important role in keeping the person warm. It also serves the purpose of a rope for a number of their chores when the Ordinary rope is unavailable. In its folds, various utilitarian objects are tucked like bansuri (flute), kulhari (axe), mandua (leather pouch), darat (iron sickle), runka (flint iron), chilam (small hookah), etc.
- **Suthni or Unali:** It is the local name of traditional Churidhar pajama (warm trouser) worn by men. It is loosely fitted up to the knees, tightens below the knee, and has a close or tight fit till the ankles. In summer, wear cotton suthani. In earlier times, Gaddi was generally preferred to being bare-legged in summer.
- **Kurta or Kameez:** The Gaddi man wears a colored shirt under Chola, and it is stitched out of wooden cloth, Patti. In summer, the Gaddi men Prefer Cotton. The Gaddi men also like to wear kurta pajama while working on agricultural Land.
- **Coat:** is a tailored jacket worn over a Kurta pajama. It is a customized clothing construct out of 'Patti'. It has pockets at waist level and at chest level on the left side. The inner line also has a pocket on the right side, close to the chest.
- **Topi (Peak cap):** It is a wooden cap worn as a head dress. And Different from the others. It has flags on two sides and a peak-like projection that represents the 'Kailash Parvat' of Lord Shiva. Usually, the two flags are kept folded up, but during the chilly winter, they are pulled down. These flags are pulled down over the ear and neck.
- **Safa or Pagadi (Turban):** A cotton cloth is worn by Gaddi men as an ordinary head dress in daily use. It is worn by giving several folds to a long, colored cotton sheet. They decorate their turban with flowers, especially on marriage and fairs. It represents their symbols of respect and dignity.

Women's costumes:

- **Launchari:** It is the upper garment worn by Gaddi women. It is a frock-shaped, full-length dress made out of 15 to 20 meters of cotton cloth.
- **Dora:** It is a wooden, black cord tied over the launchari around the waist. This cord is 45 to 50 meters long.
- **Suthan:** It is a cotton Chooridar pajama trouser, loose at the thighs and fitted below the knee level, and has some

horizontal folds referred to as chooris at the ankle level, worn as a lower garment by Gaddi women. Even old Gaddi Women Prefer to wear woolen suthan.

- **Kurti:** It is also a colored shirt with a front pocket, which is worn under launchari. The collars and cuffs are fully ornamented with Gotas, laces, and buttons, as these are the only visual parts of the Kurti when launchari is worn over it.
- **Chola:** It is also worn by Gaddi women in winter instead of launchari and is made of white coloured patti but is short in length. Then one used by men and worn over the Kurti.
- **Footwear:** Gaddi women also make crude leather footwear, but it is lighter in weight and designs, with colorful handicraft work. They also wear flat footwear and slippers purchased from the market.
- **Shawls:** Shawls for women are woven with a simple bowl and design with a border of multi-colored designs. It is softer than men's shawls, and Gaddi women wrap it around the shoulders in cold weather.

Traditional Ornaments of Gaddi Tribe:**Men's ornaments:**

- **Dur:** It is a gold earring worn by men. Traditionally, the groom must wear a dur at the time of marriage.
- **Chain:** This is the chain, either made in silver or gold, worn around the neck.
- **Chanderhar:** It is worn by the groom at the time of His wedding.
- **Chatta:** It is an exclusive ornament with a mirror and hanging colorful beads or tassels hanging downward. It is worn by men around their waist over their traditional dress, chola, when they are dressed up for folk dances.

Women's ornaments:

- **Chiri:** It is worn on the forehead. It is approximately 140 to 150 grams and is fixed on the forehead with the help of Stings. It is given in place of Mangtika. It is considered the most important ornament for a married lady.
- **Clips:** It is like other ordinary clips. These are connected with silver connections which fall over the Plait, where clips are fixed on both sides.
- **Jhumka:** Earrings are called Jhumka. Its weight is 15 to 20 grams, and its shape may vary.
- **Pari:** Pari is Payal. It is worn on the ankle and makes a loud sound while walking. It is the symbol of the presence of a newlywed in the house. Its width is 5 to 10 centimeters, and it weighs 300 to 500 grams.
- **Chanderahar:** It is a big-sized necklace made up of silver with Mina work over it and worn in marriages and fairs. Its weight is 300 to 600 grams. It is hung with Chola Dora. Can we wear it with salwar kamij.
- **Chack/ chonk:** It is put in the back portion of the head. It is circular in shape; two small round structures called Chakdi, in uniform size, are also attached with the help of silver strings, which are fixed on both sides of the main part of the mounting. It is worn over the head with the help of a string called Dori. This is also an important symbol for married women.
- **Singi:** Small-sized necklace. It is light in weight and clings to the neck. It is 25 to 30 grams.

- **Gorju:** It is a bracelet. It is given in pairs. It is 100 to 120 grams in weight and narrow in width.
- **Toke:** These are also flat bracelets. Compared to Gojru. Tokes are also given in pairs. It weighs 140 to 150 grams.
- **Beeni Chack:** It is round in shape and fixed over the plait, after combining hair properly.
- **Phullu:** It is meant for bearing on the toes. It has different shapes and designs. Although most women wear these, it is mandatory for newly married women.

Handicraft of Gaddi Tribe:

Blankets:

- **Gardu:** It is a blanket that has a black and white square pattern. Alternatively, the specialty of the Gaddi community, with lengths of 45 to 60 meters, is called Patti. Then two pieces are joined together; Broad Possessions of Gurdus are considered the status symbol of a Gaddi family. It is so warm that it protects the Gaddi shepherd from both Snow and rain.
- **Gardi:** It is a blanket that is small in size and lighter in weight than Gardu. It also has the same pattern as Gardu. It is smaller in size.
- **Dodh:** It is generally of one colour, that is, white or grey, and equal in size to that of the Gardu. It can be decorated with coloured threads.
- **Patti:** It is a cloth woven in a single colour, such as off-white or black, and is narrow in width. Its length is approximately 5 to 6 meters. It is generally used to make coats, cholas, Suthan's, Kurtis, and Topis, etc.
- **Shawls:** These are woven for both men and women, but there is a remarkable difference. Shawls made for men are in one colour or in black-and-white checks, whereas shawls for women are in multicolour designs. Male shawls are large in size, whereas female shawls are small in size.
- **Thalch:** It is an intricate rope made from goat hair, and it is 8 to 10 meters in length. This rope is used to carry loads or dry wooden clothes. The goat hair is first Spun and then woven to make thalch.
- **Khalari:** It means skin. It is a big bag made up of the skin of a sheep or goat. The whole skin of a sheep or goat is taken off, dried, and the hair or fur is removed; openings are stretched to make a bag. It is used to keep flour, grains, etc. The bag prepared from lamb and kid is used for keeping jewellery by Gaddi ladies. Sometimes, the small bags are also used to keep money. Goat skin is also used to make dolls.
- **Thobi:** It is a carpet made up of goat hair. It is very rough in texture, but very durable.

4. Conclusion

In the end, we may say that the Gaddi tribe is the most populous tribal community in Udhampur District of Jammu and Kashmir. They have their own cultural heritage, costumes, ornaments, and handicraft practices. They have traditional costumes such as Chola, Dora, Suthni, Kurti, Top, and Patka. They also have their own ornaments: clips, Chiri, Jhumka, Chain, and Chatta. Therefore, they have their own handicrafts such as blankets, Patti, Shawl, Thalch, Khalri, and Thobi.

References

- [1] Anu H Gupta, S. K. (2025). Lifestyle and traditional costumes of Gaddi lohar in Punjab. *South Asian anthropologist*, 197-207.
- [2] Anuj Kapoor, P. K. (2008). Handicraft Heritage of Gaddi Tribe of Himichal Pradesh. *Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge*, pp-62-66.
- [3] Bhekam Pal Singh, B. K. (2021). Traditional handloom weaving : A Cultural Heritage in jeopardy among Gaddi tribe of Bhadrewah (J&K) North West Himalayas. *International Journal of Applied Reseaech*, 7(12), 24-31.
- [4] Gupta, P. S. (2021). Traditional costumes and Ornaments of the Gaddi Tribe of Himichal Pradesh. *Journal of Xi an University of Architecture and Techonology*, 481-485.
- [5] Holborn, H. a. (2020). *Sociology : Theme and Perspectives*. london: Collins, an imprints of harper-Collins.
- [6] Saumya, D. r. (2018). *Sociology*. New Delhi: Jawahar Publisher and Distributers.
- [7] Slariya, D. M. (2025). Contribution of environment in understanding culture: A comparative analysis of tribal and non-tribal culture group in Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh. *International Journal of research and innovation in social science (IJRISS)*, 4443-4453.