

UNDERSTANDING HIMALAYAS

KADAMBARI SHARMA



ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF HIMALAYAS SERIES

# UNDERSTANDING HIMALAYAS

*Edited by*

**KADAMBARI SHARMA**

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## PREFACE

World renowned 'Himalayas' are not only a great mountain range having the privilege Highest Peaks in the world.

A barrier to snowy winds from Mongolia and middle Asia to the south Asia, many great rivers originate from the Himalayas. A legendary range in Ancient Indian literature—many myths, realities and maxims are associated with Himalayas.

The present work in four volumes is encyclopaedic in nature which elaborately discusses all the major aspects viz. Geography, Economy, Fauna and Flora, Tourism, species, history and culture etc. Based on authoritative information, the four volumes, are grouped as follows:

- Understanding Himalayas
- Eastern Himalayas
- Eastern Himalayas
- Central Himalayas
- Western Himalayas.

I am thankful to all the learned authors and scientists whose writings are cited or substantially made use of in the present encyclopaedia. I am also grateful to Mr. J. L. Kumar, Managing Director, Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi for undertaking the publication of this project.

This work will prove a standard reference for the students, scholars and teachers in the field of geography, economics, environment, and sociology of the Himalayan regions.

—Kadambari Sharma

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## Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>vii</i>
1. Area and People	1
2. Understanding Himalayan Ecology	13
3. Ecological Setting	40
4. Managing the Environment for Making a Living	48
5. Tectonics of the Himalaya and Recent Crustal Movements	66
6. Seismicity of Himalaya	74
7. Problems of Forest Conservation	81
8. Economic Importance of Himalayan Flora	87
9. Himalayan Flora and Physiography	90
10. Biosphere Reserves in the Himalayas	95
11. Mid-phalangeal Hair Variability in Some Himalayan Populations	98
12. Land Utilisation in the Tons Valley	101
13. Economic Adjustment in the High Himalaya	121
14. Development and Change	127
15. Watershed Management in the Himalaya	133
16. Rejuvenation of Degraded lands in the Himalaya	164
17. Problems of Landslides in Himalaya	154

18. Conservation of Biological Diversity in Himalaya	164
19. Himalayan Heritage and Conservation	170
20. The Tribal Himalayan Zone	175

# 1

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## Area and People

### The population

The Gaddis live in Chamba and Kangra Districts of Himachal Pradesh. They inhabit valleys of Beas in Kangra and Ravi in Chamba District respectively. Their chief area of concentration is in the Ravi Valley particularly in Bharmour Tehsil. The history of Bharmour has been such that the area was culturally isolated much of the time. However, judged by the nature of the change in religious beliefs, its isolation was never complete, at least after 7th century. We will eventually demonstrate that the selective adaptation was due to ecologic factors but not due to physical barriers. Although the physical environment is imposing, the Bharmour area saw a large influx of Gaddis around 7th and 8th centuries.

The term Gaddi is a generic name and under it are included Bhramour, Rajputs, Khattris, Thakurs and Rthis. Gaddis are a people who inhabit some districts of Himachal Pradesh. There are three popular usages of the term Gaddis which conflict with each other. According to the Census, which conflict with each other. According to the Census, any person who wishes to call himself a Gaddi may do so. Secondly, any permanent inhabitant of the Bharmour Tehsil, is a Gaddi. Thirdly, those who live in Gaderan, the land of the Gaddis and wear the kind of dress worn by the people in the neighbourhood of Bharmour, are known as Gaddis to outsiders. These people consider themselves as belonging to the Rajput, Thakur, Khatri or Rana caste.

The local inhabitants draw a distinction between the four classes:

- (1) The Brahmins;
- (2) The Gaddis, Rajputs (formed by the union of Rajputs, Khattris, Thakurs or Ranas over several hundred years);
- (3) The Sipis and
- (4) Reharas and Halis etc.

The Gaddi cast is a result of union of Rajput, Khattris, Thakurs, over several hundred years. Historical evidence suggests that they came from Lahore and Delhi. Whatever the origin of these groups may have been, they now form a single caste instead of three castes. "Thus in the Bharmour Tehsil of Chamba District instead of the sub castes amalgamating. This process does not apply to the Brahman group, who remain an

endogamous group at the top of the ladder. It does not apply to groups at the bottom of the caste ladder". The Gaddis are divided into four class the title of Gaddis is disputably applied as inhabitants of the Gadderan. Thus the term Gaddi is a caste term in Bharmour, but there is some confusion now-a-days as Brahmans and Sipis are also calling themselves Gaddis, because the people of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are entitled to financial benefits such as free education and free medical attention. Gaddis have become a tribe. They have been declared as a tribe mainly for the purpose of development in view of their social and economic backwardness. The Gaddis of Kangra which was part of Punjab till November, 1965 are yet to be given the status of Scheduled Tribes.

There is some difficulty in defining the exact meaning of the word Gaddi, as the term refers to a territorial group, to a special class of people wearing special clothes such as Dora and Chola; to the union of the castes of Rajputs, Khattris, Ranas and Thakurs. This makes it difficult to form a definition. The Gaddi people of Himalayas occupy an area in the Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh and along certain foothills of Dhauladhar in the Kangra District. They are principally found in the Bharmour Tehsil of Chamba District along both the banks of the upper Tavi river and its tributary the Budhal Nallah. So the term Gaddi will be used as territorial term to describe the residents of Bharmour Tehsil. A number of residents of the Bharmour Tehsil own property both in the tehsil and in Kangra. Many of the Bharmour villagers who keep sheep and goats spend at least half the year grazing them in Kangra. Many of the Villagers in Kangra are Gaddis by caste, although they no longer wear any distinctive clothing, and have developed customs that are somewhat different from those in the Bharmour Tehsil. Nevertheless, the recognised cultural centre of the Gaddi and allied castes is Bharmour which is situated on a tributary of the Ravi known as Budhal Nallah. Bharmour which is situated on a tributary of the Ravi known as Budhal Nallah. Bharmour was once the Capital of the Kingdom, and is now the Administrative Centre of the Tehsil. Bharmour has its main significance in its magnificently built Chaurasi temples, dedicated to Lord Shiva.

### **The Area**

Bharmour Tehsil is spread over 251 villages out of which 112 are inhabited. Administratively these villages are grouped to establish Gram Panchayats. This was established by a Himachal Pradesh Act and started in Bharmour in 1954. The Gram Panchayat represent a group of villages. This group does not run along the natural boundaries of the Barton relationship, but is identical with the administrative boundaries of the Patwar Circles a purely administrative unit. Till 1972, the Bharmour Tehsil was divided into 14 Patwar Circles and 14 Gram Panchayats. But the unfortunate results of arranging Gram Panchayats boundaries on purely geographical lines has been excessive factionalism between different villages and between groups in villages. Some of the difficulties of organising the Panchayat system in Bharmour have been caused by regarding the boundaries of Gram Panchayat as a purely administrative question and not a social question. In order to solve these problems, the Bharmour Tehsil was reshuffled to form 26 Gram Panchayats within 14 Patwar Circles.



Roughly speaking, on the basis of the information available on the general geographical and economic condition of the people, the whole area of Bharmour Tehsil can be divided into five valleys.

#### ***Kugti Valley***

Comprises villages beyond the Bharmour village in the interior along the Budhal Nallah and in the area extending up to this side of Pangi Valley. The means of communication are difficult and small villages are interspersed with large forest area. Due to rugged hilly terrain, agriculture, although the main occupation of the people, does not satisfy their needs. The people have, therefore to supplement their income from agriculture by rearing sheep and goats in the surrounding vast Inner Himalayan (Alpine) grazing lands. The people are economically less developed. The area experiences heavy snow fall in winter, so the people migrate in winter.

#### ***Tundah Valley***

The comprises the villages on both banks of the Ravi river and Tundah Nallah, and along and near the road from Chamba to Bharmour. The valley, due to contacts with outside world and its situation on the main line of Communication, is comparatively more developed economically. The main occupation of the people; in this valley is agriculture.

#### ***Samra Valley***

This valley includes villages around Samra Nallah and Ravi river. People living here are mainly agriculturists with some handicraft work like making wooden utensils and toys. This valley, due to contact with outside world, specially with Dharmasala city of Kangra District through an easily accessible pass, is economically more developed than the others.

#### ***Holi Valley***

It comprises the villages in the interior along the river Ravi and in the area extending to Dargah District. Agriculture is the mainstay of the people, while rearing of sheep and goats is practiced to a limited extent. The people migrate to the plains in search of work during winters.

#### ***Bharmour Valley***

It comprises the village around the Bharmour Block Headquarters along the Budhal Nallah. Being the Block Headquarters, the economic condition of the people here is much better. Agriculture is the mainstay of the people along with rearing of sheep and goats.

Each of these five sections forms an independent unit with a similar ecology, similar type of Hindu religious system and a similar type of local administration. But there appears to be considerable variation in details of culture and society from one Panchayat circle to another as result of cultural drift. Berreman has attempted to describe the general process of cultural drift by which the pahari culture has diverged from the plains culture, and by the same process now its several subcultures have diverged from each other.

### Population of Bharmour Tehsil

According to the Census of 1981, the Bharmour Tehsil is inhabited by 29,944 persons, out of which 3975 are Scheduled Castes and 24,639 Scheduled Tribes. Density of population per square kilometre is 16. Sex-wise distribution of population is males 16,012 and females 13,932, percentage of female population to total population is 46.5 and number of females per 1000 males is 870. Literacy rate is rather low. Out of the total population i.e. 6737 persons are literate (5478 males and 1258 females) only 22.50 per cent of the total population is literate. Number of literate males per 1000 males is 342, while number of literate female is still less, it is 90 per 1000 females.

### Facilities available in the Tehsil

The most important area in the Bharmour Tehsil is Bharmour Patwar Circle. Lying at the distance of 64 Kilometers from Camba, Bharmour is the headquarters of the Bharmour Tehsil. Once it was the capital of Chamba. This place was ideal in case of war. By virtue of being the Tehsil headquarters, the villages in the area are growing rapidly. The area looks prosperous, with the presence of facilities which are absent in other areas.

In the Bharmour Tehsil, there are 79 primary schools, 14 middle schools and five high schools in 73 villages, while remaining villages have no education facilities in the village itself. Student have to walk between two to four kilometres to avail education facility. There is one hospital, two primary health sub-centres and nine dispensaries in the Tehsil, which cater to the needs of 40.26 per cent of the total population. 28 villages have only health workers to cater to their needs.

All the villages in the Tehsil have drinking water facility. 55 villages have tap as the drinking water source, 18 villages depend upon river water and other villages have more than one source of drinking water. 21 villages of Bharmour Tehsil have post office facilities, while only one village has both post and telegraph facility. Ways and mean of communication are so poor, that only eight villages have bus stops. There are no motorable pucca roads in the Tehsil. Electricity for domestic purposes has been given to 30 villages in the Tehsil.

To bring change in the life and living standards of Gaddis Community Development Block was established on second October 1957 with the National Extension Service which obtained its II stage in 1962. The administrative complex, which is located primarily in Bharmour and a building was constructed to house various wings of the Scheme.

The administrative complex, which is located primarily in Bharmour village, includes offices of the Magistrate, Block Development office, Excise Sub-Inspector and Employment Office. Besides these, the village has a Primary Health Centre under the charge of a Medical Officer and Maternity and Child Welfare Centre, Veterinary Hospital, High School for boy, Middle School for girls and a Police Post. The Postal Department maintains a Branch Post Office. There is a Bank also.

Bharmour serves as a small marketing centre for the surrounding areas. There are twelve shops, four of which are of general merchants, one of a confectioner, three of tailors, three small tea and snacks stalls and one of barber who comes only in summer. A

shoe maker also comes from Mandi to ply his trade. All the goods are imported from Chamba or, in some cases, from Amritsar and other places. On account of difficult means of communications the rates of commodities are higher. Because a good number of the residents are government employees, teachers and their families, the atmosphere is one of transience. As an outpost of Chamba town in its composition and culture, it is beginning to influence the village of Bharmour. Roads are being built with village labour. Community radios have been set up in many villages and family planning posters are found everywhere. Health teams go through the area, vaccinating the people and spraying the houses and the villages with D.D.T.

In addition to the continuing services provided by the Government in health, education, civil order etc., an important aspect is the impetus to change provided by Block Development Programme. Its purpose is to produce its effectiveness has been greatly limited by lack of personnel, lack of funds, inadequate roads, corruption and lack of interest on the part of both the officials and people of Bharmour.

The major social consequence of Bharmour being the administrative centre has been the introduction of a new population. Most of these outsiders do come from Himachal Pradesh, but usually from the more orthodox educated regions, particularly the more urbanised district headquarters. Their superior position sometimes forces Bharmouries to behave towards them in ways that are at variance with Bharmourie values and customs. It is a restricted and conscious behaviour calculated to minimise friction and maximise personal gain. There are social and economic advantages to be gained at the villagers now feel that many things can be accomplished with bribes and as a result, the rich have got richer, while the rest who cannot afford to meet such demands, remain poor.

### **Organisation at Panchayat Level**

Bharmour Tehsil with an area of 1,327 square Kilometres is spread into 251 villages, out of which 112 are inhabited. This whole area is divided into 26 Panchayat circles of about 51 square kilometres and an average population of 1040. Each circle is further divided into several villages. Panchayat and Tehsil Panchyat. The office of all these three Panchyats are situated in Kardar Kothi. In Bharmour, Sachuian, Malkota, Bari, Goshan, Goa, Seri, Dhalkauta, Patti, Khree and Bharmani.

Within each Panchayat Circle there are several extension workers, village level workers (Gram Sevak), veterinary stock assistant, medical workers, trained midwife, one primary school teacher for every 35 students, their official servants or peons since Circle now coincides with Patwar Circle, there is also one revenue assistant (Patwari) who maintains land records, classifies newly developed land and determines the land revenue accordingly.

The Panchayat duties are numerous and include building and maintenance of roads, Bowlies, Panihar, Springs, Panchayat buildings, primary schools, sanitation; control and maintenance of grazing lands, fairs, markets, cremation grounds and places for disposal of dead animals, child and maternity welfare and registration of birth, marriages and deaths.

In addition to its administrative activities, the Panchayat has judicial functions. It does not deal with every dispute or fights in the village, only few cases are brought to the Village Panchayat. Some disputes are settled within the Al or Gotra by informal counselling by respected elders of the caste concerned in the respective villages. The circle Panchayat attempts to reconcile the two parties, sometimes the violator is fined. The Panchayat, loose control on cases where the disputants invoke police or resort to the courts. But it is usually avoided because of the expense involved and it can lead to lasting antagonism.

To deal with Civil and revenue cases up to the value of Rs. 100/-and minor criminal cases, Nyaya Panchayat been formed. The Nayaya Panchayat in Bharmour was established in 1958. The cases are brought to Nyaya Panchayat either by Samjhotoa Committee (sub committee of three to five Gram Panchayat members) or directly. Samjhota committees are generally appointed for arbitration of the cases between two rival parties. If the cases are not solved at this level then are brought to Nyaya Panchayat.

The Nayaya Panchayat, has fifteen members called Panches. These include one Sarpanch and Naib Sarpanch. The members are elected by direct voting. Lack of funds, interest, encouragement from above, a spirit of co-operation and any strong desire for improvement, have prevented many Panchayats from being effective, but where there is a strong local leader, interested in improvement of local conditions, these problems can often be overcome or circumvented.

In most cases these various officials are posted in a circle for two years. But since Bharmour is considered an undesirable location, it is the first experience on the job for most Panchayat level workers or they are there for having done poorly in their previous postings. Those on the first round tend to be fresh out of school and unmarried. They are all from hills, even from areas more remote than Bharmour in some cases. As such they do not present any problem. Berreman found in Tehri Garhwal cases of plainsmen looking of living in down on the hill people, but unable to cope with difficulties of mountains. Since their effectiveness depends on their personalities, attitudes and individual abilities. Some are very respected while others are merely tolerated, pointedly ignored or feared. Contact between Panchayat level officials and villager depends greatly on distance between villages, being much greater with those who live nearby and increasingly less with those who live farther away.

### **Communication**

Bharmour lies 64 Kilometres from Chamba. The Chamba Kharamukh road starts from the Chamba Banikhet Road. The length of the road is about 50 kilometres. It is motarable, single lane and fit for heavy vehicular traffic. From Kharamukh the journey to Bharmour is by a 14 kilometres long road. The road first follows the right bank of the river Ravi and then crosses over to the left side at Bagga up to Kharamukh. Here it crosses over to the other side of the river over a rickey suspension bridge and enters Bharmour Valley. A lake was formed in the Ravi river. For crossing, a temporary Trangri was built and being used by people. The bridge is still under construction. It was only jeepable throughout, and terminated at Bharmour. The Bharmour Kharamukh road is always under

construction. It was valuable mostly to official people or travellers. It was of little importance to the villagers since they still walked. Winter snows, summer rains, land slides, fallen rocks and collapse of some weak sections prevent the road from being open more than a few months of the year. Almost at the end of the road was Bharmour, the headquarters of the Panchayat level workers live here. Due to difficult terrain, the transport and communications are very few. People use suspension bridges, Trangaries, ropes to cross the rivers.

In Bharmour, distances from one village to another are only approximate and range between one quarter and two kilometres. Because of the terrain, communities are more isolated than the map suggests. Many villages originate when a household decides that it lives too far from its fields and builds houses nearer to them. It takes many years before the change is officially recognised in the government records.

#### **The setting: Bharmour Patwar Circle**

888.6 hectares of Bharmour Patwar Circle consists of six revenue villages (eleven hamlets) cultivated area, uncultivated area and forest. Bharmour Patwar Circle lies in the lap of Bharmani forest. There is a famous shrine of Bharmani Devi. On the right side of Budhal Nallah, there are cliffs with bush wood. At some places these cliffs stand erect. The terrain like this leave no place for agriculture. On left side of the Nallah, valley has Ban forests, gradually turning to pine forest with increase in altitude. However, with their own ingenuity, Gaddis have been able to terrace the land for agriculture. The land is fertile and productive and depends on rain. The natural water supply is plentiful and small snow-fed streams flow throughout the year to unload their waters into the Ravi at Kharamukh. The most important of the small Nallahs of the region is Bharmani Nallah. This has enough water to run 40 Gharats (water mill) of surrounding villages. The water of Bharmani Nallah has been harnesses to generate hydro-electric power for Bharmour Patwar Circle. Above the Malkota village, there is sacred Bharmani shrine. Gaddis go there in groups singing devotional songs. Besides the shrine, there is a water pool. The shrine is under the care of a Chela, Administratively these villages represent a Gram Panchayat. As already mentioned, this group does not run along the natural boundaries of the Barton relationship, but is identical with the administrative boundaries of the Patwar Circle.

All these villages are inhabited by the Transhumant Gaddi population who spend their winter on lower hills. For the micro study, I have taken Sachuien Revenue Village composed of three different castes. It is somewhat artificial to take one particular village and to describe this area as though it were somehow entirely different from the surrounding areas. The costume of the Gaddis of both men and women is characteristic and striking, consisting of head dress with a flap round the margin and a peak-like projection in the centre, Chola And Dora and pyjama in case of males. Women wear Luanchari. The dress of the Gaddis, though seemingly awkward and unweildy, is advantageous in rough weather, and the voluminous hold created above the waist by the Dora is often pressed into service for keeping anything from small articles to newly born kids and lambs. Utility and the adjustment of clothing to the wearer's activity, has been



given the attention that it deserves. Aspect like freedom of movement, reinforcements of wear-areas receptacles for tools, loops and Dora for support of pouches and equipment, and proper distribution of weight over the body have been taken into account. Another important factor in the Gaddi dress is the durability and availability of material. They spin and weave their own pattus, that they utilise for making clothes.

#### **Sachuien Revenue village : A Profile**

Sachuien is a medium-sized village of Tehsil Bharmour, District Chamba, Himachal Pradesh. At 2165 metres Sachuien possesses the representative traits or rural folk residing in this part of the country. The village is linked with Chamba by a motorable road. It is about 64 kilometre's from Chamba. The village is connected to the road by a footpath. For revenue purposes, Sachuien along with other villages, comes under one Patwar Circle. The Patwar Khana is in Sachuien. Each village under this circle has its won separate social existence. The area is mountainous and varies in altitude.

This is a congested village and has little room for expansion. The village is located on steep slope and the houses are not systematically planned. At some places there is mushroom growth and at other places the houses are a little spaced. The lanes and by-lanes are narrow and untidy. Each household has a courtyard paved with slates which is also used as Khalyam and is enclosed by a parapet wall about 60 to 90 cm. high. In fair weather, cattle, goats and sheep are tethered in the courtyard. This is also used for sunning the grain, cutting fire wood, washing clothes, dyeing wool and other domestic chores. The houses are generally two to three storeyed. Due to shortage of building space, the emphasis is, on building multistoreyed houses.

The dress habits and house designs prevalent in the area, are intimately linked with local economy and availability of raw materials either locally or in close vicinity.

Sachuien is divided into two principal residential hamlets named Sachuien and Gothru. Sachuien Section has 78 houses with a population of 666 (375 males and 291 females). The Gothru section has 4 households with a total population of 47 (26 males and 21 females). Their total area is 401 acres (162 hectares) or which 212 acres 986 hectares) is cultivable. Administratively, Gothru is included in Sachuien, but socially it is a separate unit. The village Sachuien comprises two parts the upper and the lower. As the village is situated on a slope those who are higher level. Thus, the Rajput houses are clustered together on the higher level, and the lower portion or 'Sperka' of Sachuien has all the households of Sipis. Upper Sachuien is composed houses, a village shrine, a number of public trees under which people can sit and chat.

The source of drinking water, Panihar is near the village centre. This is fed by the Bharmani pool through pipes. The 'Sipi' have a separate 'Panihar'. Surrounding the village is the agricultural land.

As one moves upwards from the Bharmour road to Sachuien, there is a Patwar khana, with a tin plated roof. The headquarter of Kailash Co-operative Society is situated near Patwar Khana. This society was established in 1951. The scope was limited to advance loans for purchase of cattle, seeds and repairing of houses. Initially it had 48

members, and it started with capital of Rs. 319/- each member contributing Rs. 5/- as membership and admission fee. Afterwards the society multiplied its activities and quotas of sugar, salt, wheat, rice and other controlled articles were allotted had share capital of Rs. 1,355-and membership of 93.

Sachuien is a territorial unit, and is at a distance from other such units. It has a well defined physical boundary which its inhabitants know well. The village is recognised as a unit by District Block Development Authorities, and the Post and Telegraph Authorities for their administrative activities. 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 AIs and Gotras. Each family belongs to an endogamous group called caste. The caste ties stretch outside the village to unite people of the same caste together. The village into a number of castes plays a part in actual social interaction, because social interaction is limited by membership of different castes. Member of the different castes are expected to behave differently and to have different values and ideas. These differences are sanctioned by religion.

The castes residing in the Sachuien village are Rajputs and Sipis, while Gothru is inhabited by Brahmans. For the purpose of the present study Gothru hamlet is included along with Sachuien because administratively they are treated as one. The population composition of the Sachuien revenue village.

The Brahmans and Rajputs form the high castes and the Sipis are lower to them in ritual status. 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 Sachuien Brahmans are cultivators living in the village and in the 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 Brahmans are no wealthier than Rajputs or Sipis.

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 these 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 local population. They thus became fused into one caste. Below the Rajput caste come Sipi and Reharas in caste hierarchy. An interesting aspect of life in Bharmour Patwar Circle may be mentioned here. There are no washermen, cobblers or barbers as such. As a result the high caste people have to undertake activities which would create caste-problems in the more traditional and orthodox plains, and which would be considered as 'infra-dig' for many twice-born. A traditional occupation is not associated with any caste in Bharmour Patwar Circle.

Occupationally, the people of Bharmour Patwar Circle depend for their livelihood on an array of activities. While agriculture is a subsistence base for most of the families, sheep and goat rearing also plays a vital part in their lives. Along with these two primary activities, there are also certain subsidiary activities such as spinning and weaving,

carpentry, tailoring, flour grinding (running Gharats or water mills), shopkeeping and government services. Thus, we have families who are predominantly engaged in sheep rearing with partial dependence on agriculture and other subsidiary activities. Even a family that depends primarily on flour grinding or spinning or carpentry, engages in agriculture and sheep rearing to some extent.

In a community where agriculture is one of the mainstays of the economy, land, which is the basic asset, determines the nature of socio-political relations among its constituents on the basis of land ownership. The social structure of any such village rest on the "critical relations" which pertain to land and its ownerships. Change in the land ownership might result in changes in social structure. The position of the various caste groups in the social hierarchy is not solely based on ritual hierarchy, but is determined and influenced by their economic status. Economic status in agricultural communities is primarily determined by the possession of the cultivable land. The dominant position of a caste is not determined by its numerical strength or by ritual status, but by combination of the two accompanied by its economic status. The situation however, is different in Sachuien Revenue Village, as there are no big landowners and cultivable land is little in proportion to the number of people residing in the village. In the case under study all landholders have small holdings. Historically speaking, the situation was more or less the same in the days of the Rajah who gave only as much land to a family as it could cultivate. This meant an equitable distribution of land-holdings. In the post-independence period too land holdings continued to be small because of two factors viz.:

- (a) The size of population increased while the amount of available cultivable land remained the same, and
- (b) The nature of the terrain does not permit large-holdings. Thus, though largely and agricultural community the social group under study does not bear out Firth's hypothesis as far as social dominance and interrelationship are concerned.

Authority and power in the village and in the circle 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, 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.

It must be realised that Bharmour, Sachuien are transition villages, standing as they do between the outside world and all the other villages in the circle in terms of progressiveness, adaptiveness and educational level. Comparatively most Rajputs and Sipis in Sachuien are economically better off than the other Gaddis of Patwar Circle. There are households that are currently engaged in mercantile activities, shopkeeping and other non-agricultural pursuits. A young man of Sachuien Shri Thakur Singh was the Pradhan of Panchayat Samiti and owns a chemist shop in Bharmour and has become a M.L.A.



(Member of Legislative Assembly of the State). As such he has influential contacts with District Administrative Officers. Literacy in Sachuen and Gothru is 29 per cent. People in this area prefer allopathic treatment because the Primary Health Centre is situated in Bharmour Block Headquarter. However, they do believe in supernatural treatment by Chelas.

The extent of modernisation in Bharmour Patwar Circle is far behind that of Chamba town, but it is more advanced than other parts of Bharmour Tehsil. 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.

Authority in the community and region does not devolve on the eldest male. In Sachuen, it is the eldest brother of the household 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.

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 who usually reside not in the circle but in Chamba town. Such authority is not trusted, it is simply a force to be contended with and one that is usually repressive in the eyes of the villagers.

In long range terms, 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. The Brahman has never been a social model locally, and it is the Brahmins who have chosen to conform to the customs they found when they arrived in order to gain social acceptance.