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## HILL TOURISM AS A SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD OPTION: A CASE STUDY OF GADDI POPULATION IN SOUTHERN ASPECT OF DHAULADHARS

### Doctoral Dissertation Abstract (2016)

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The evolution of the native “*Gaddi*” culture based on hill ecology across the outer Himalayan range of the *Dhauladhars*, particularly in the Kangra and Chamba valleys, has been independent of the outside cultural-contacts from generations. But the fast growing interaction with outside areas portends to radically alter this situation. The scattered hamlets along Bhagsunag, Dharamkot, Naddi, Dusalini, Rakkar, Bir and Chauntra habitats, overlooking the Kangra valley, have emerged as centres where the nomadic tribe of *Gaddis* has come in contact with various other ethnic entities. Much has changed in the name of development. The mountain ecology; the bio-diversity; the aesthetics of folk-arts; the herbal wealth and the healing systems are vanishing fast or undergoing degradation. The green social behavior of this community and its nature-based lifestyle is fast turning consumerist and contra-environmental. Therefore, this research focuses on as to how the native “*Gaddi*” culture can come out of the “self-imposed isolation”, and learn to balance the “ancestral” with the “modern” or the “emotional” with the “rational”.

### Objectives

The main goal of this research is to re-

discover, strengthen and synergise the traditional and modern aspects of livelihood sustainability of *Gaddi* population in southern aspect of *Dhauladhars*. To achieve this, the objectives defined are:

- To explore the livelihood sustainability of the *Gaddi* population in the historical perspective.
- To explore Hill Tourism as the primary economic option and to evolve mechanisms that offer protection against livelihood vulnerability.
- To analyse the hardships, risks and challenges to the traditional livelihood modes with the contact and allure of modernism.
- To compare the tourism livelihood option with prevalent leading models.
- To discuss, evaluate and evolve integrated strategy for making tourism as sustainable livelihood option.

### Methodology

The study is based on primary data collected through intensive field surveys of the Bhagsunag, Dharamkot, Naddi, Dusalini, Rakkar, Bir and Chauntara villages. Interdisciplinary approach and focused consultancies with traditional ecologists, the

village heads, vaidis (healers) and the representatives of *Gaddi* community are also carried out to generate primary information. The methodology also includes interviews with Tibetans, foreigners, and other tourists; community interactions with elected village-heads and voluntary organizations apart from the researcher's personal experience of living with the community. Detailed review of government policies and programs with regards to tribal development has also been carried out.

### **Organization of the Material**

The study is composed of five chapters. The first chapter introduces the theme, significance of the area of the study, statement of problem, review of literature, objectives, research questions, period and unit of study, data and methodology, institutional-policy network, rural tourism products and packages and limitations of study.

The second chapter deals with the *Gaddis* pastoral life, sheep-rearing, migratory routes, hill-habitats & hamlets, nature based livelihood-patterns & highland agri-cycles, tribal customs, culture, mannerism, traditional cuisine, hand spun woollen-wears, community based traditional regimes, religious traditions, *Gaddi* dialects & linguistics and folklores.

The third chapter focuses on to know how the native "*Gaddi*" culture can come out of the "self-imposed isolation", and learn to balance the "ancestral" with the "modern" or the "emotional" with the "rational". The problem-solution modes of this study are focused on choosing tourism as the primary livelihood and to create and strengthen rural institutional frameworks, innovative policy initiatives, action programs with voluntary community participation for gainful employment in tourism and resource conservation measures on sustainable lines.

This chapter takes a cautionary approach in reviewing and re-constructing the necessary policy-framework and devise tourism products and packages without causing drastic changes in the nature-based occupational patterns. The chapter deals with three institutional regimes, working in coordination with government departments, like Institutional regimes nursing and enriching culture, Institutional regimes managing natural resources and Institutional regimes conserving pilgrimages and introducing community oriented tourism.

Chapter four focuses on action examination of the concerned policies and the policy making exercise at the various levels of governance, like natural rights of hill tribes as per the Forest Rights Act 2006. Policies and priorities of the Government of Himachal Pradesh regarding; (i) forest (ii) tourism and (iii) hydropower are also discussed in this chapter. The chapter highlights the policies to check infiltration of hill-habitations by profiteers, contractors, builders and exploiters etc. Apart from this, environment impact studies regarding degradation of resources in the study area and case studies regarding shifting from nomadism to semi-nomadism and to settlers and change in livelihood patterns of tribes have also been discussed in this chapter.

Chapter five, deals with the rationale for involvement of local community in all stages of resource conservation, resource-use planning, policy making and policy implementation with the evolution of new thresholds of sustainability out of traditional moulds. The natives have to take a decisive shift from unrestrained commercialisation of cultural and natural resources in tourism economy towards nature-centric alternative livelihoods for the native community / stakeholders. Besides, the chapter focuses on integration of institutions, policies and programs with an emphasis on the need for creating and enabling conditions for

community participation, skill development and the need for building capacities through different training modules. A whole lot of physical, institutional, political, economic, social and technological innovative factors need to be taken into account in formulating a comprehensive approach to integrate the traditional sheep-economy with tourism economy.

Finally, the research illustrates the potential efficacy of this comprehensive approach in creating alternative livelihood

opportunities. Although in-depth analysis of the above factors is beyond the purview of the present research work, yet the research reveals that a strict precautionary principle is to be followed so that this resource conserving native community does not turn into a resource-wasting consumerist community. And the focused aim of ecologically sustainable tourism development is achieved by following the principles of inter-generational equity, benefit-sharing and pre-cautionary approach.