

PROSPERITY IN THE HILLS: UNRAVELING ECONOMIC DYNAMICS AMONG THE JAD TRIBE OF HIMACHAL PRADESH, INDIA

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Abstract

Development strives to improve various facets of human life, encompassing physical, mental, and spiritual growth. This research examines the economic transition of the Jad tribe from nomadic trading to settled agriculture, exploring the socio-economic transformations and underlying driving forces behind these changes in North-western Himalayan region of India. A sample of 300 respondents from the Hangrang valley (comprising eight villages) in the Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh has been purposively selected. The study examines land ownership, occupation, irrigation practices, livestock management, and income levels to understand the socio-economic changes in border communities. While livestock rearing is crucial, challenges like small landholdings, limited job opportunities, and traditional irrigation methods persist. Interventions such as modern agricultural tools, better irrigation, and vocational training can promote sustainable growth and empower these communities.

Keywords: *Economic Development, Jad Tribe, Settled Agriculture, Tribal Communities.*

Introduction

Economic development improves the life of people. The development in modern sense refers to the planned, directed and stimulated upward

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movement of the entire social system economic and non-economic toward overall desirable goal of a society. Development includes the transformation of a tradition or authority bound society into a modern, innovating, experimenting, progressive one (Grabowski & Shields, 1996; Weiner, 1966). Thus, major indicators of economic development are more goods and more income, which can increase in material welfare through increased productivity. Geographical isolation, unique culture, language, religion and backwardness are the main characteristics of tribes. Indigenous communities in certain regions are known by various terms, each carrying a distinct connotation. Some of the common nomenclatures include adivasi (first inhabitant), vanvasi (forest dwellers), vanyajati (primitive ethnic groups), janjati (folk communities), and anusuchit janjati (scheduled tribe) (Ghurye, 1963; Sahoo, 2005; Thakur, 1986).

The Constitution of India has recognized tribal communities in India under 'Schedule 5' of the constitution. There are around 650 tribes in India. According to Census of India, 2011, the total population of India is 1,21,08,54,977 and Schedule Tribes' population is 10,45,45,716, which is 8.63 percent of total population the country (Government of India, 2011). Meanwhile, in Himachal Pradesh, the Scheduled Tribes population is 3,92,126 out of a total population of 68,64,602, making up 5.7% of the state's total population (Government of India, 2011).

There are many tribes in Himachal Pradesh like Bhot (or Bodh), Gaddi, Gujjar, Jad (also known as Lamba and Khampa), Kanaura (or Kinnara), Lahaula, Pangwala, Swangla, Beta (or Beda), and Domba (also known as Gara and Zoba) (Negi, 1976; Panchani, 1994). The Jad people are a semi-nomadic tribe that live in the Himalayan regions of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, India, and Tibet. They are also known as Lamba and Khampa. In 2001, the Indian government classified the Jad people as a Scheduled Tribe under Article 342 of the Constitution of India. In Himachal Pradesh, Jad tribe are the inhabitant of upper Kinnaur one of the tribal districts of state. The upper Kinnaur comprises north eastern part of the district that is the area between Pooh (town) and Hangrang valley

extending up to international border with Tibet. The people of Hangrang valley are Mangoloids. They follow Mahayana Buddhist religion. In some folk tongues 'Jad is equivalent of Tibetan'. Jad Lamas used to visit Himachal territory not to settle down here as a community but on adhoc errands mundane(Negi, 1976).

Literature Review

Tribal development in India has been a complex and multifaceted issue, with various stakeholders and perspectives shaping the discourse (Joshi & Upadhyaya, 2017). The literature encompassing this domain delves into diverse themes, ranging from socio-economic conditions and educational attainment to land rights, agricultural practices, and the impact of government policies and programs. Several scholars have explored the historical context and narratives of tribal communities, shedding light on their traditional ways of life, cultural practices, and the impact of modernization (Ghurye, 1963; Gupta & Basu, 2012; Haksar, 2011). Authors like Desai (1969) and Shukla (1987) have examined the transition of tribes from their traditional modes of subsistence to modern economic activities, and the associated social and psychological implications.

Education and literacy have been identified as crucial determinants of tribal development. Studies by Duary (2010), Mohanty & Biswal (2009) and Pradhan (2011) have analyzed the disparities in educational attainment among tribal communities, the challenges faced by government-run tribal schools, and the need for a more inclusive and culturally relevant educational framework. Land rights and the prevention of land alienation have been central themes in tribal discourse. Researchers like Patel (2011) and Shroff (2013) have examined the legal frameworks and policies aimed at protecting tribal land rights, while others like Sengupta (2013) and Shangpliang (2010) have explored the intrinsic connection between tribes, land, and natural resources, particularly when shifting cultivation and forest-based livelihoods.

The socio-economic development of tribes has been a focal point for many scholars. Authors such as Rao (2010), Paul (2005) and Jain (1999) have studied the patterns of tribal agriculture, the challenges of modernization, and the impact of development programs on various tribal communities. Researchers like Parmar (1992, 2011) and Sharma (1994) have comprehensively assessed tribal development policies and their implementation in states like Himachal Pradesh. Several studies have highlighted the inter sectionality of caste, class, and tribal identities, and their implications for social and political participation (Sharma, 2001; Patel, 2014;). Authors like Rathor (2007) and Regan (2014) have explored the role of decentralized governance and community-driven development approaches in addressing tribal issues.

The literature underscores the multidimensional nature of tribal development, encompassing economic, educational, cultural, and political aspects. While acknowledging the government's efforts through various policies and programs, many authors emphasize the need for a more inclusive, participatory, and culturally sensitive approach that recognizes the unique identities, aspirations, and rights of tribal communities in India.

Research Methodology

Research Objectives

The present study aims at analyzing the level and pattern of agriculture, livestock and income among the Jad tribe of Himachal Pradesh. To achieve this aim, following objectives have been framed:

- (i) To examine the impact of land ownership patterns and fragmentation on agricultural practices and economic stability.
- (ii) To explore the role of occupational diversification, irrigation systems and livestock rearing practices on the socio-economic well-being and livelihood strategies.
- (iii) To analyze the distribution of annual income levels and understand the proportion of respondents falling within different income brackets.

Data Sources

The present study is an empirical investigation conducted through field surveys. The Jad tribe is concentrated in the Hangrang valley, which has eight villages, namely Chango, Leo, Nako, Shyalkhar, Hango, Chulling, Malling, and Sumra. The total population of these villages is 4,545 persons, making it the least populated valley in the district. A sample of 300 respondents (6.60%) has been selected from this target population, with careful consideration given to factors such as age, socio-economic background, education and gender. The study uses purposive sampling method to select the respondents. In this study, secondary data has also been used to corroborate the primary data.

Research Tools

The present study employs descriptive analysis, comparative analysis, and percentages to examine data and draw insightful comparisons, as well as quantify findings. Additionally, graphical representation of the analyzed data is utilized to present information visually for enhanced comprehension.

Results and Discussion

The Jads reside on the border and their economy relies heavily on trade. They participate in the Trans-Himalayan trade. However, with China's occupation of Tibet, this trade has come to a halt. Their way of life has undergone significant changes, leading them to settle in border areas. The transition of the Jads' way of life due to the halt in Trans-Himalayan trade highlights significant socio-economic changes within their community (Minhas, 1998). The findings of the present research provide a comprehensive look at how these changes manifest, particularly in terms of land ownership, occupational distribution, irrigation practices, livestock holding, and annual income.

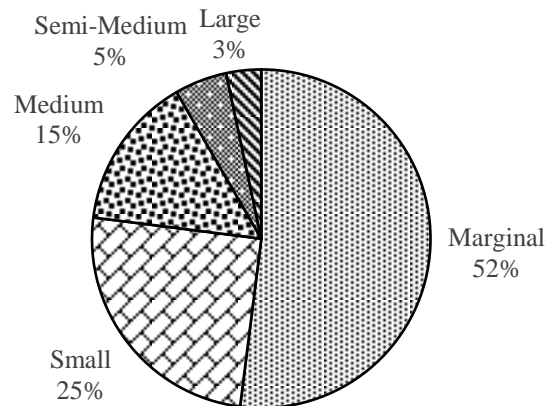
Table 1 illustrates the permanent residency of the Jads in Himachal Pradesh, as evidenced by the land they own in bighas. The land categories

range from marginal to large, with corresponding ranges of land ownership in bighas. Figure 1 illustrates that most respondents, comprising 52 percent, fall into the marginal land category, owning land between 1 and 10 bighas. Following this, 25 percent of respondents are categorized as small landholders, possessing land ranging from 11 to 20 bighas. The distribution then continues with smaller percentages for medium (14.67%), semi-medium (5%), and large (3.33%) land categories, representing respondents owning land between 21-30, 31-40, and over 41 bighas, respectively.

Table:1 Distribution of Respondents based on their Ownership of Land

Land (in Bighas)	Land Category	Response	
		n	%
1-10	Marginal	156	52.00
11-20	Small	75	25.00
21-30	Medium	44	14.67
31-40	Semi-Medium	15	5.00
41 and above	Large	10	3.33
Total		300	100

Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents based on their Ownership of Land



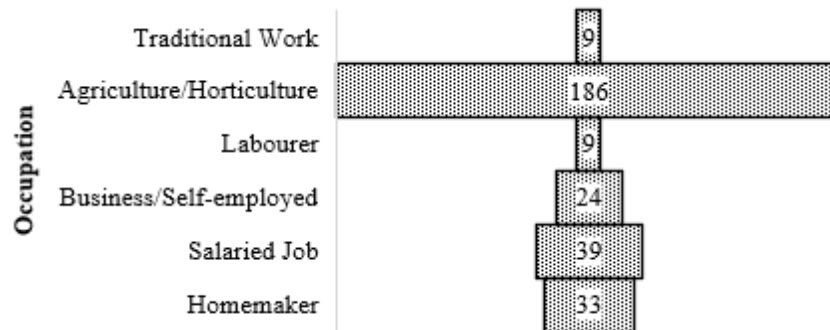
One of the key aspects explored is land ownership, which exhibits a skewed distribution. A substantial portion (nearly half) of respondents have been classified as marginal landowners, possessing between 1 and 10 bighas of land, indicating a fragmented agricultural base. This fragmentation likely results from the division of family land over generations, coupled with limited access to larger agricultural plots.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents based on their Occupation

Occupation	Response	
	n	%
Traditional Work	9	3.00
Agriculture/Horticulture	186	62.00
Labourer	9	3.00
Business/Self-employed	24	8.00
Salaried Job	39	13.00
Homemaker	33	11.00
Total	300	100

Table 2 displays the distribution of respondents according to their occupations. Most respondents, constituting 62 percent, are engaged in agriculture or horticulture activities. Following this, 13 percent hold salaried jobs, while 11 percent identify as homemakers. Other occupations, such as traditional work, labourer roles, and business/self-employment, are represented to varying degrees, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of livelihoods within the community.

Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents based on their Occupation



A smaller proportion of respondents are involved in business or are self-employed (8%), traditional work (3%), or are labourers (3%). Figure 2, through a funnel chart, also provides insight into the occupational diversity among the respondents, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the local economic structure. The occupational distribution underscores the community's reliance on agriculture and horticulture. However, there is also a notable presence of salaried jobs, homemakers, and limited involvement in business, self-employment and labour, suggesting a gradual diversification of economic opportunities.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents according to their Sources of Irrigation

Sources of Irrigation	Response	
	n	%
Kulhs	214	71.33
Pipes	68	22.67
Rainfed	18	6.00
Total	300	100

Table 3 vis-à-vis Figure 3, presents the distribution of respondents based on the sources of irrigation used. Most respondents, constituting 71.33 percent, rely on kulhs for irrigation. A smaller proportion, 22.67 percent, use pipes for irrigation purposes. A minority of respondents, comprising 6

percent, depend on rainfed methods for irrigation. Irrigation practices remain predominantly traditional, with a significant reliance on kulhs. This highlights the community's adaptation to their environmental context but also the limitations in accessing advanced agricultural infrastructure.

Table 4 and Figure 4 distributes respondents based on livestock holding. According to the survey data, 267 respondents (89%) reported owning livestock, while 33 respondents (11%) indicated they own no livestock. The Jads own various types of animals, including cows, goats, sheep, yaks, and horses.

Figure 3: Distribution of Respondents according to their Sources of Irrigation

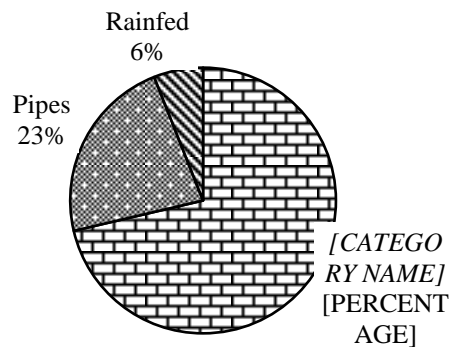


Table 4: Distribution of Respondents based on their Holding of Livestock

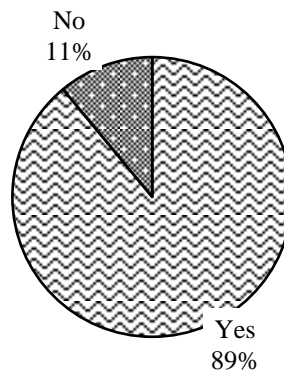
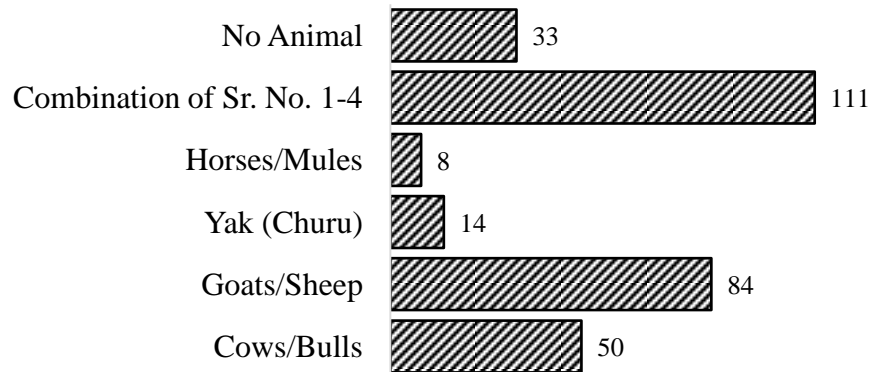


Table 5 and Figure 5 presents the distribution of respondents based on their type of livestock holding. Among the respondents, 16.67 percent (50 respondents) own cows or bulls, while 28 percent (84 respondents) have goats or sheep. A smaller portion, 14 respondents (4.67%), keep yaks (churu) and eight respondents (2.67%) own horses or mules. The largest group, comprising 37 percent, owns a combination of the livestock types listed (cows/bulls, goats/sheep, yaks, and horses/mules). Additionally, 11% reported having no livestock.

Livestock remains a cornerstone of the Jad economy, though its role has evolved from primarily transportation and trade to agricultural purposes and sources of food and wool. The diversity of livestock, including cows, goats, yaks, and horses, demonstrates adaptive strategies to the high-altitude environment and the need for multifaceted veterinary and feeding strategies. The shift from horse-dominated herds to more cows, sheep, and goats reflects changes in economic practices and animal husbandry techniques.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents according to Type of Livestock they Hold

Type of Livestock	Response	
	n	%
Cows/Bulls	50	16.67
Goats/Sheep	84	28.00
Yak (Churu)	14	4.67
Horses/Mules	8	2.67
Combination of Sr. No. 1-4	111	37.00
No Animal	33	11.00
Total	300	100

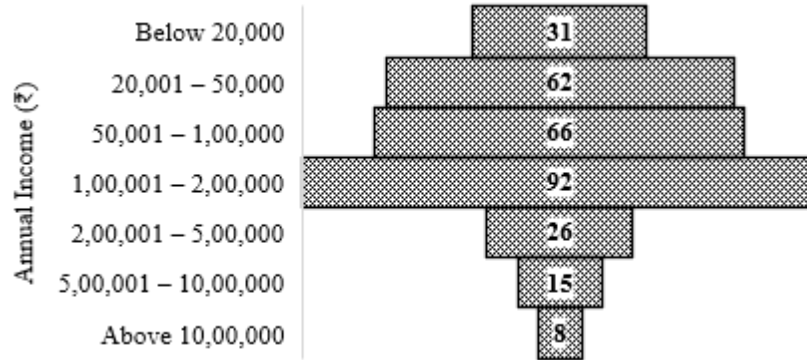
Figure 5: Distribution of Respondents according to Type of Livestock they Hold**Table 6: Distribution of Respondents according to their Income**

Annual Income (₹)	Response	
	n	%
Below 20,000	31	10.33
20,001 – 50,000	62	20.67
50,001 – 1,00,000	66	22.00
1,00,001 – 2,00,000	92	30.67
2,00,001 – 5,00,000	26	8.67
5,00,001 – 10,00,000	15	5.00
Above 10,00,000	8	2.67
Total	300	100

Table 6 vis-à-vis Figure 6, funnel chart, presents the distribution of respondents based on their annual income. The data shows that the largest proportion of respondents, 30.67 percent have an annual income between ₹1,00,001 and ₹2,00,000. This is followed by 22 percent of respondents earning between ₹50,001 and ₹1,00,000, and 20.67 percent earning between ₹20,001 and ₹50,000. Only 10.33 percent of respondents have an income below ₹20,000. A smaller portion of the population, 8.67 percent,

earns between ₹2,00,001 and ₹5,00,000, while 5 percent earn between ₹5,00,001 and ₹10,00,000. The smallest group, comprising 2.67 percent, has an annual income above ₹10,00,000.

Figure 6: Distribution of Respondents according to their Income



The annual income distribution reveals a predominance of lower to middle-income brackets. This economic vulnerability underscores the importance of diversifying income sources and enhancing educational and vocational training. The introduction of high-value cash crops like apples, peas, and potatoes, coupled with government initiatives and the establishment of an agricultural research center, have played a significant role in increasing crop yields and income.

Beyond agriculture, the Jad community has diversified its occupational activities, with many members engaging in business, running establishments like hotels and shops, particularly in tourist hotspots. Salaried professions, such as teaching and defense services, have also gained prominence, reflecting a broader economic diversification. The economic advancements in agriculture, horticulture, and diversified occupations have led to improved living standards among the Jad people, with most households enjoying a higher standard of living and access to modern gadgets and technologies. This modernization has also enhanced educational opportunities, healthcare access, and overall quality of life, contributing to the community's socio-economic development.

Overall, the Jad community's transition from nomadic pastoralism to a more settled and diversified economic model reflects their resilience and adaptability. The integration of modern agricultural practices, diversification of occupations, and the continued significance of traditional crafts and livestock underscore a dynamic socio-economic landscape, fostering enhanced living standards and positioning the community for a sustainable future amidst evolving challenges.

Conclusion

The Jad community, formerly nomadic traders, has settled permanently in Himachal Pradesh's border regions, prompting occupational changes, and now are engaged mainly in agricultural practices. The transition of the Jad community's way of life, spurred by the cessation of Trans-Himalayan trade, underscores significant socio-economic adaptations. This study reveals a nuanced transformation manifesting across various dimensions including land ownership, occupational structure, irrigation methods, livestock holdings, and income distribution.

Land ownership patterns indicate a predominance of marginal landholders, reflecting fragmented agricultural bases and limited access to larger plots. This has implications for agricultural productivity and economic stability within the community. The occupational structure remains heavily reliant on agriculture and horticulture, characteristic of rural economies, with limited diversification into business and salaried jobs. This narrow occupational spectrum highlights economic vulnerabilities to external changes.

Traditional irrigation methods, particularly the use of kulhs, dominate agricultural practices, pointing to both environmental adaptation and infrastructural constraints. Livestock is pivotal to their economic and social progress, providing food, income, employment, soil fertility, and transportation. Livestock holdings are extensive, showcasing adaptive strategies to the high-altitude environment and underscoring the integral role of animal husbandry in the community's economy. Income distribution

data reveal economic vulnerabilities, with much of the population in lower income brackets and limited upward mobility.

These socio-economic changes have improved living standards, though disparities and vulnerabilities persist, highlighting the need for ongoing support and development initiatives. Policy implications include supporting Jad community with modern agricultural tools, irrigation infrastructure, and livestock management programs. Investment in education and vocational training can enhance their skill sets for diverse employment opportunities, fostering sustainable development and economic growth in border regions.

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