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12th, December, 2021

Topic: Tribal issues

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- State Government committed towards welfare of Gaddi community: CM

Issue:

- Strict measures are taken against the violators involved in the theft of sheep and goats from the Gaddi community.

Action:

- The State Police has issued Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on this subject, according to which the responsibility of the police administration has been fixed so as to ensure safety of life and property of the community.

Other issues:

- The chief minister said that the Gaddis should be compensated without delay for the loss of their sheep or goats due to a natural disaster or pandemic.
- He asked the officers concerned to ensure that Gaddis sheep and goats are vaccinated in a timely manner to protect their herds against various serious diseases.
- He also asked the relevant officers to consider separately the issues raised at the meeting regarding the opening and upgrading of health and educational institutions in tribal and difficult areas.
- He directed the concerned department to ensure that no one transfer the grazing permit issued to them to other person as this would be viewed seriously.

Historical Background:

- Jai Ram Thakur said that it was due to the benevolence of late Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee that Gaddi community was given this special tribal status in the year 2003.
- He said that all the Gaddi community of the state had got tribal status as earlier, this tribal status was not available to Gaddi community living in the merged areas of Punjab in the state after the year 1966.
- He said that the State Government would consider including adequate representation of tribal people in Scheduled Castes Scheduled Tribe Commission so that the participation of the Scheduled Tribes must be ensured.
- He said that steps would be taken to make adequate provision of budget for tribal people living in non-tribal areas.

Few important facts about Gaddi Community:

- The popular festivals of Gaddis are Dholru, Lohri, Holi, Janmashtami, Baisakhi /Baso, Diwali and Shivratri.
- They sing folk songs and dance to amuse the folks on such occasions. Traditionally, women were limited to their homes, but on occasions like this, they participated in dances in public places.
- Folklore and dances are common in every area.
- Folklores and folklores generally proclaim the heroic actions of their ancestors and the glory of the woman.
- They generally follow different formations of circles, dancing to the sound of music and drums.
- It continues to other heights at the beat of the drum until they get tired.
- Hypergamy (marrying someone from superior caste) and consanguineous marriages are considered taboo as per their customs.
- Gaddis is monogamous and they never favor polygamy (practice or custom of having more than one spouse at the same time) unless the wife is barren or dead.
- The usual symbol for a married woman is a nose ring and a Choor, but this is not strictly observed now.
- Giving of at least 60 silver coins as Reet(dowry) or lag was common, but today it has been given way to voluntary dowry given in kind depending upon the economic status of the family.

Five types of marriages are prevalent among Gaddis are:

1. Elopement (running away)

2. Jhind Phuk or Brar Phuk marriage: if a girl elopes along with her lover without the consent of her parents, they solemnize the wedding by burning a bush wood and going round the fire eight times.

3. Hanjrara: this wedding is by elopement, consent, agreement and mutual agreement among the relatives.
4. Ghar Jawantri or Batta-Satta: wedding by exchange-the boy gets his partner in exchange of his real or cousin sister.
5. Dan-Pun marriage: the girl is given as a 'Dan' to her husband and this sort of wedding has social, religious and administrative sanction .

Costumes:

- Gaddis are essentially shepherds by profession and have to live in extreme weather conditions, Patti (A woven woolen cloth) is used for making their costumes. A loosely-sewn Pattu (hand- spun coat) popularly known as Chola reaching below the knees is worn on the body.
- It has a heavy collar that hangs loose in two lappets in front. The Chola is tight around the waist using a black cord, called Dora, which is composed of sheep wool, which can reach 60 m in length.
- The legs are lined with patti pyjamas, called unali suthan.
- The headgear is marked totally different in comparison to other areas. The headgear of a man is a cap called, topi with a peak-like projection and flaps around the margin. The peak of the cap is claimed to represent the mountain Kailash peak. The flaps are used to cover the ears during the winter season.
- The front of the cap is adorned with dried flowers, a tuft of feathers or a string of beads. Shoes are generally made of leather, typically called Mocharu are very heavy and run for a longer period.
- During the wedding, a Gaddi boy wears a very gorgeous dress.
- It's an extended red or maroon colored cotton frock with same colored yolk and adorned with different types of mirrors, frills and pippins.

- It is called as Kadd or Luancha. It is tied at the waist with white and a yellow cotton piece, called as Patka.
- A red or maroon coloured shawl is also additionally taken over it. On the head, they wear a very intricate sehra made by native people.
- Female costume consists of luanchari, Dora along with a long dupatta with frill, called Ghundu. Luanchari is a frock with contrast coloured yolk and also adorned with different types of frills and pippins. luanchari requires about 20 m of fabric in its making .
- It is tied at the waist along with a black colored Dora, which is 40-50 m woolen string weighing 1.5-2 kg Besides being a part of the costume, it is conjointly used to carry loads on the back.
- Sometimes, it is dyed in black if the colour is dull or uninteresting . Like men, some of the women also wear white coloured woolen Chola during winters instead of cotton one. But the length varies from the one worn by men.

Ornaments:

Some of the ornaments of gaddi tribe are:

- Chiri: It's worn on the forehead. It weighs some 104-150gm. It is given in place of mangtika. It is an important ornament meant only for married ladies.

- Jhumka: These are earrings that weigh from 15-20gm and may vary in shapes.

- Pari: It is payal that is worn on ankles and makes sound while walking. It symbolises the presence of newly wedded women in the house and weighs from 300-500gm.

- Chanderahar: It is a big size necklace made up of silver and mina work over it. Its weight is about 300-600gm.

- Phullu: These are meant for wearing on toes and are obligatory for newlywed women.

- Dur: Dur are gold earrings worn by men. It is mandatory for the bridegroom to wear dur at the time of marriage.
- Balu: Balu is a big sized nose ring, made up of gold which weighs approximately 150-200 gm. Historically, all the jewelry of the Gaddis was created manually, however now with modified trends it has been replaced with machine work.
- Fulli :Fulli is the big sized nose pin, made up of gold. It weighs up to 3 gm and is spherical in shape, customarily a red coloured stone is placed in the middle of fulli. It is also considered as the symbol of a married woman. (suhag).

RITUALS:

- Nauala is a prestigious or transformative ceremony held particularly as thanksgiving after the performance of certain rituals of passage, consisting of invocation and propitiation by offering.
- A male goat as the sacrificial animal.
- The ritual is performed by Shiva's chelas, the Sippis, who enter into trance; possessed, as it were, by Dhudu. The trance possession is considered auspicious and with it the ceremony begins.

(Source: CMO Himachal and researchgate)

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