

## **Socio-Economic Scenario of Pahari Community: A Case Study of Rajouri District (Jammu and Kashmir)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Pahari's are one the largest ethnic group of Jammu and Kashmir UT. Pahari ethnic group, which constitute a social group of its own in the western part of Jammu region possess mainly tribal culture. They constitute 8.18 percent (estimated) of the total population of the UT. Pahari community is distributed throughout the UT but their major pockets are found in the districts of Rajouri, Poonch, Baramullah, Kupwara and Anantnag. Social characteristics which include, caste, religion and housing type, availabilities of basic needs like water, electricity, road connectivity, health status and literacy level are considered to be as an important indicator which determines the social status of Pahari's in study area. In this paper an attempt is made to study the socio- economic characteristics of Pahari's of Rajouri district. As these tribal communities were transhumant but situation is now completely different as most of them are sedentized. Religion, caste, housing type, availability of basic needs like water, health status, electricity, road connectivity and literacy level are the important social characteristic which decide the social status of this community. On the other hand the parameter like monthly income, monthly expenditure, savings, status of agricultural land holding, live stock ownership, household assets etc are also included to know the economic status of Pahari community.

***Keywords: Socio-Economic Scenario, Pahari Community, Rajouri District, Jammu & Kashmir***

### Social group and Religion

The Pahari's are sub divided into many castes like Jaral, Domal, Janjua, Khokher, Bhatti, Qureshi, and Khan Etc. The caste system is seen in both Muslims and Hindu Pahari's. In April 2020, after three decades of struggle, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir granted "Pahari Speaking People" four percent reservation for direct recruitment and admission and distribution of seats in professional institutions. The distribution of Pahari's by religion in four villages of Rajouri district shows that both Hindu and Muslims are living there. The village of Galhutti has 100 percent Muslim, Kandigala have 83.6 percent Muslim and 16.4 percent Hindu, Sialsui have 77.2 percent Muslim and 22.8 percent Hindu and Lam has 92.9 percent Muslim and 7.1 percent Hindu. These Pahari's are mostly settled and does farming in their own agricultural land but a small proportion of these Pahari's also do seasonal migration.

<b>Pahari's Household by Religion (In Percent)</b>				
<b>Religion</b>	<b>Galhutti</b>	<b>Kandigala</b>	<b>Sialsui</b>	<b>Lam</b>
Muslim	100	83.6	77.2	92.9
Hindu	0.0	16.4	22.8	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Source: Household Survey 2020.</i>				

### Housing System

Type of housing is an important indicator that determines the social condition of a society or a family. Housing system of Pahari's are classified into three main categories viz pucca, pucca- kucha and kucha. Pahari's are mostly settled and use to does farming in their own agricultural land for their survival. They construct houses permanently at one place. Some Pahari's are also transhumant but their migration is temporary and they only stay on higher pastures for 2 to 3 months.

Household survey shows that there is great variation in the housing types of Pahari's. The survey shows that the village Galhutti has 42 percent pucca houses, 30.7 percent kucha-pucca houses and 27.3 percent kucha house, Kandigala has 35.3 percent pucca, 40.7 percent pucca-kucha and 24 percent kucha houses, Sialsui has 28.7 percent pucca houses, 39.3 percent pucca-kucha houses and 32 percent kucha houses and the village of Lam has 19.3 percent pucca houses, 46 percent pucca-

kucha houses and 34.6 percent kucha houses. The overall ratio shows that these villages of Pahari's have maximum ratio of kucha- pucca houses.

<b>Housing system of Pahari's (In Percent)</b>				
<b>Type of House</b>	<b>Galhutti</b>	<b>Kandigala</b>	<b>Sialsui</b>	<b>Lam</b>
Pucca	42	35.3	28.7	19.3
Pucca-Kucha	30.7	40.7	39.3	46
Kucha	27.3	24	32	34.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Source: Household Survey 2020</i>				

The Pahari's households have separate kitchens and cattle shed. About 73% of the households have toilets whereas rest of the households have no toilets facilities. They avail toilet facilities because the Govt took initiative to constructs toilets for each and every household.

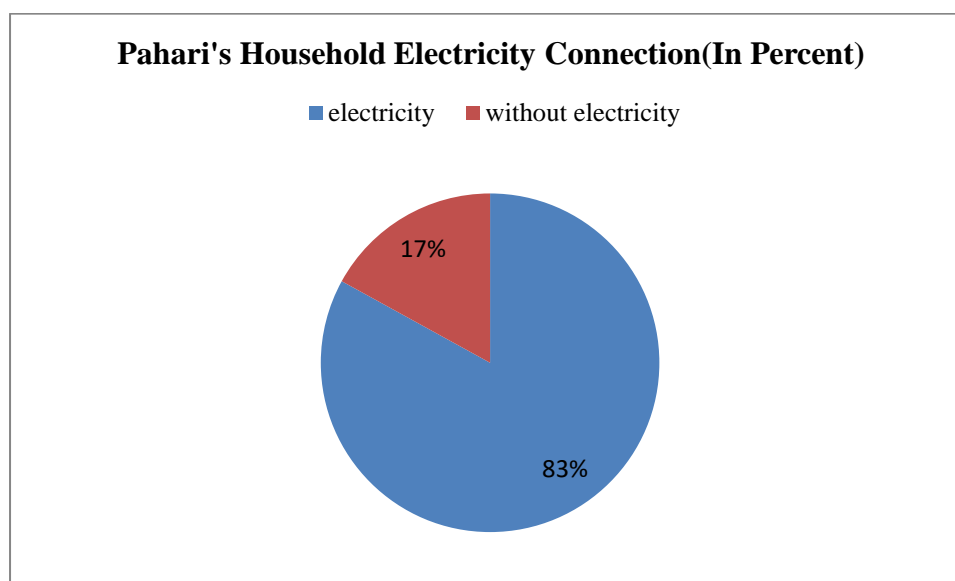
### **Water Facility**

Water is a basic amenity which is necessary for the survival of every living being. The Pahari's who are living in the hilly tracks of Pir Panjal range felt the shortage of basic water facilities. Government has made efforts to supply water to every home but due to hilly track the water pipe sometimes become unfunctional due to shortage of water and sliding. They mostly bring drinking water from wells which are natural. Moreover, they have to walk for miles to bring water for drinking and cooking purposes. Due to shortage of water, they use to stored water for many days. The shortage of water is felt during the months of May, June and July, as these months remains dry.

During the survey it has been found that availability of drinking water facilities to the majority of the household is very less. Household survey indicates that only 39 percent Pahari's respondents have proper drinking facilities whereas, 61 percent respondents do not have it. This shows that majority of household do not have proper drinking water facilities.

### Availability of Electricity

Electricity is the fundamental need for the human being, as electricity lights up our homes, classrooms etc. In the household survey, it is that most of the Pahari's households have access to electricity. About 83% have electricity connection and only 17% have no electricity connection and most of them are those who are living in very far flung and hilly areas. Even we find some households having electricity connection with wooden made poles.



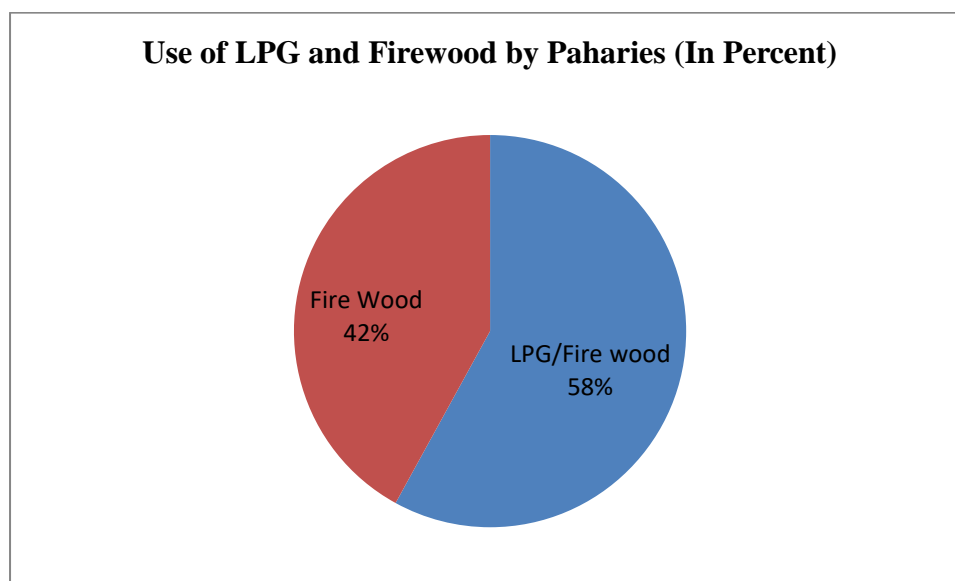
*Source: Household Survey 2020*

### Way of Cooking

Traditionally Pahari's used to cook their food mainly by using firewood and cow dung cakes. Fire wood and cow dung is the primary source of cooking food since time immemorial. During the household survey, it has been found that Pahari's are mainly depends upon fire wood which is collected from the forests and LPG for cooking food.

There is a great variation from village to village in the way of cooking food using LPG Gas and fire wood. Those Pahari's who are poor and are living in very miserable conditions usually cook food only by using fire wood and cow dung cakes. The Pahari's who are rich and well flourished used to cook food by using LPG Gas and electronic devices but they also used to cook food traditionally by using fire wood which is almost common.

The household survey shows that about 58% of the Paharies use both LPG and firewood and 42% use only fire wood in cooking food.



*Source: Household Survey 2020*

### **Access to Road Connectivity**

Road connectivity plays a significant role in the regional development of a region. It is a basic infrastructure required for the development of towns and villages. The development of any town or village is depends upon the condition of roads. A good road network is needed for promoting trade of agricultural produce, growth of service sector, commercialization and mechanization. The roads in the villages of Rajouri district are very bad. Many villages in the district are without roads. Mostly kucha roads are found in some villages which are in miserable condition. The road are almost absent in the selected villages of the district, as these villages are located away from the main road. We walked many kilometres to reach the villages for the collection of samples. This indicates that these

villages which are located on hilly tracks and are in far-flung areas have no access to road connectivity. Even I found some links roads which are mostly kucha with big pot holes and are not suitable for safe driving. In a personal talk with some Pahari respondents, they stated that they felt difficulties during rainy seasons due to lack of roads. Their children's education suffered badly due to absence of roads. Even they use to walk kilometres to reach the market to bring essential commodities for survival.

### **Status of Women**

The Pahari's women of Rajouri district live in utter deprivation. The women's are not aware of their rights and schemes launched by the government for health, social upliftment and education as they are living in remote and far-flung areas. There are inadequate facilities which are offered to these women.

Pahariess women still have to attend to all chores of the household from cooking to helping their men at farming and cattle feeding. They are undergoing through exploitation. The busy lifestyle and handwork from morning till late at night makes them physically and mentally unwell. They are not getting due respect and position in their society. Pahari's women have also subject to risks related to pregnancy and child bearing. The fertility rate is high and the fundamental maternity care is not available, they are particularly vulnerable. These women are not getting proper care and balanced diet during pregnancy. Due to malnutrition and lack of proper balanced diet they are subject to deficiency of Iron.

On the other hand, the Pahari's women who are well settled in towns and cities avails the benefits of government schemes in education, health and social upliftment. The condition of Pahari's women in villages is very miserable. In the household survey it has been found that 43% of the Paharies women have access to Primary Health Centres whereas majority of 57% have no access due to absence of PHC in the far flung and hilly areas.

### **Access to Anganwadi center**

Anganwadi is a rural child care scheme in India. It was started in 1975 by Govt of India, in order to control malnutrition and hunger. Its aim is to promote basic health development of every child under the age of 6 years. In order to know the access to anganwadi centres the villages of Sialsui, Lam, Galhutti and Kandigala are selected for the household survey. During the survey, i find that these villages have access to Anganwadi centres. The anganwadi workers are performing their duties properly and are providing basic nutrition to the needy. The respondents who are sending their children to these centres include the villages of Sialsui (65%), Lam (59%), Galhutti (55%) and Kandigala (47%) respectively. It been found that only those Pahari's who are sedentary have avail the facilities of Anganwadi centres whereas those who do transhumance practices have no access to anganwadi centres

### **Economic Characteristics of Paharies**

The section explains the changes in the economic characteristics of Pahari's. An attempt is made to analyze the share of livestock economy in the total income of the community, monthly income, monthly expenditure, cropping pattern, workforce participation rate and their economic problems. The data is collected from the selected villages of Rajouri district which is purely based on the household survey.

### **Occupation**

As the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is well known for its lush vegetation and green pastures which is preferably good for the rearing of sheep, goats and other livestock. Sheep and goats rearing is the main activity of people living in the mountainous region of the Jammu and Kashmir UT. The lush green vegetation and alpine pastures of the Jammu and Kashmir UT is utilized by these communities since time immemorial. These resources play a significant role in the economy of Pahari's. The main occupation of Paharies is the rearing of livestock and agriculture.

The Pahari's used to cultivate their lands along with the rearing of animals like sheep, goats, cow, buffaloes, horses etc. Wheat, maize, rice, pulses etc are the main crops grown by Pahari's. Maize is the staple food of Pahari community. The Pahari's sell the byproducts of these animals and earn their livelihood. In every household of Pahari's there is an average of 2-3 buffaloes or cows and 1 to 7 sheeps or goat. Along with some business activities or govt. jobs these Pahari's have their own livestock which fulfill their basic requirements.

Livestock is an essential part of the socio-economic structure of the rural India as a source of livelihood and provider of drought power, manure and energy. Over the last three decades livestock production grew faster than the crop sector as a whole and made significant contributions to agricultural growth, which is considered to be an important factor in poverty reduction in most developing countries. The livestock of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is also play a significant role in the economy at both UT and National level

### Household Income

Income is the main determinants of socio-economic profile of a household. It is through good income one can make his home stable and well flourished. Income help every individual to get desirous educational level, better job opportunities and well defined social status and also help to buy everything of one's need. In the survey we distinguished Paharies respondents into four categories on the basis of their monthly household income e.g. upto Rs 3000, Rs 3001 – Rs 5000, Rs 5001 –Rs 10000 and above Rs 10000.

<b>Household Monthly Income of Pahari's (In Percent)</b>					
<b>Income Group</b>	<b>Upto Rs 3000</b>	<b>Rs 3001- Rs5000</b>	<b>Rs 5001- Rs 10000</b>	<b>Above Rs 10000</b>	<b>Total</b>
Lam	15.7	28.7	24.7	31	<b>100</b>
Sialsui	20.3	29	21.3	29.3	<b>100</b>
Kandigala	17.3	27	22	33.7	<b>100</b>
Galhutti	16.3	27.3	30	26.3	<b>100</b>
<i>Source: Household Survey 2020</i>					



There is a mixture of income level in almost all villages but the income level of Rs 10000 and above in all the villages is almost good. Moreover, the households have income level upto Rs 3000 is low which is a good sign of low poverty rate.

### Monthly Household Expenditure

The selected Pahari's household is divided into four main monthly expenditure groups viz- expenditure up to Rs 3000, Rs 3001 to Rs 5000, Rs 5001 to Rs 10000 and above Rs 10000. During the household survey, I find that there are great variations in the monthly family expenditure. The expenditure between 5001 to 10000 ND above 10000 in Pahari's community is quite good which a sign of low poverty rate. The village of Sialsui and Lam has high percentage of monthly expenditure upto Rs 3000 as compare to Galhutti and Kandigala village. Moreover, the monthly expenditure of Rs 10000 and above is low in Lam (19 %) as compare to other villages. The percentage wise monthly expenditure of selected villages of Pahari's is suitably given.

<b>Monthly Expenditure of Pahari's (In Percent)</b>				
<b>Income Group (Rs)</b>	<b>Galhutti</b>	<b>Kandigala</b>	<b>Sialsui</b>	<b>Lam</b>
Upto Rs. 3000	16.6	21.7	29.5	28.6
Rs. 3000-5000	29.3	20.6	23.4	22.4
Rs. 5001- 10000	33.3	29.7	19.5	30
Rs. 10000 and above	20.8	28	27.6	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Household Survey 2020*

### Poverty Scenario

In Pahari community there is lack of financial resources and other basic essentials. These peoples are poor and are unable to afford all life supporting essentials. They are mostly agriculturist and survive on the day earning and also meet their needs by keeping animals. They use to sell agricultural produce, animals-their meat, milk and skin to help their families. In the household survey, the villages of Lam, Sialsui, Kandigala and Galhutti of Rajouri district, the Pahari's are classified into

four micro economic groups based on the monthly income e.g. very poor (monthly Household income upto Rs 3001, poor Rs 3001- Rs 5000, lower middle upto Rs 5001 – Rs 10000 and middle above Rs 10000.

The highest percentage of very poor Pahari's are found in the village of Galhutti (36.6%), followed by Sialsui (31.5%), Lam (31.2%) and Kandigala (28%). On the other hand, the highest percentage of poor Pahari's are found in Galhutti (31%) followed by Sialsui (25.7%), Lam (24%) and Kandigala (20.6%).

<b>Economic Status of Paharies (In Percent)</b>					
<b>Status</b>	<b>Income Group (Rs)</b>	<b>Galhutti</b>	<b>Kandigala</b>	<b>Sialsui</b>	<b>Lam</b>
Very Poor	Upto Rs. 3000	36.6	28	31.5	31.2
Poor	Rs. 3001- Rs. 5000	33	20.6	25.7	24
Lower Middle	Rs. 5001- Rs.10000	21	38.3	34.4	34.3
Middle	Above Rs. 10000	9.4	13.1	8.4	10.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Household Survey 2020*

### **Household Chattels/Asset**

Household assets are the things which have economic value which means one can sell it and convert them into cash. Household assets include cars, boats, tractors, furniture, electronic, clothing and jewelry. During the survey, i find that these tribal people have very limited number of assets, this is because of poverty and which they cannot afford. The poor Pahari's do not have much access to the household assets. They use to live a very simple life even their houses are made of wooden roof and mud walls. Poor Pahari's have very limited household assets which include some utensils of daily use, furniture, radio clothes, watches and very limited jewelry. On the other hand the Paharies who are educated have access to basic life supporting household assets which includes furniture, all modern electronic goods, clothes, cars, Jewelry etc and are well settled..

### Agricultural Land Holding

Agricultural land holding is an important indicator that determines the socio-economic status of a family engaged in the agricultural activities. In the recent study, the agricultural land holding is classified into four main categories viz, those without any land, ownership of landholding between 1 to 3 kanal, between 4 to 7 kanal and 7 kanal above (One kanal is equal to 20 marlas and 1 marla is equal to 272 square feet). The distribution of the respondents by ownership of land holding is given below.

<b>Agricultural land holding of Paharies (In percent)</b>				
<b>Land Holding</b>	<b>Galhutti</b>	<b>Kandigala</b>	<b>Sialsui</b>	<b>Lam</b>
No land	3.0	1.7	3.2	2.6
1 to 3 Kanal	36	37	34	40
4 to 7 Kanal	42	39.3	38	32.4
7 & above	19	22	24.8	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Source: Household Survey 2020.</i>				

From the above table it is found that majority of household have 4 to 7 kanal of land which they use for all agricultural activities. There are very few Pahari's who are sedentary have no land for agricultural use. These Paharies do agriculture on the other landlords who have excess of agricultural land.

### Livestock Ownership

Livestock play an important role in the economy of a country. Livestock provides livelihood to a bulk of population. Livestock provides food and non-food items to the peoples which includes, fibers and skin, draft, dung and other animal waste material, storage, weed control, sports and recreation, companion animals etc. The flocks are an important source of production and total income. Besides flocks of goats and sheeps the Pahari's also owns horses, buffaloes, cow, oxen, mules etc. The rearing of cows and buffaloes has been increased by the Pahari's from the last few years, as sale of milk is the major source from them. The size of flocks of sheeps and goats is mainly depending upon the size of family member.

The Pahari's who are poor do agriculture on contract basis to feed their families. They also kept cows, buffaloes, goats and sheep but their number varies from one family to another. The large families of Pahari's kept 5 to 10 animals, while the small and marginal families have only 1 to 3 animals per family. The animals are being care taken by the females of the families while the males do work in fields and also earn their livelihood by working in markets as laborer.

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