

SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Name of The Element: Gaddi Jatar

Community/ies: Gaddis are a Scheduled Tribe community of Himachal Pradesh inhabiting the Dhauladhar range of the Western Himalayas. The Gaddis practise agriculture and sheep rearing. Agriculture forms part of their subsistence economy and sheep rearing generates cash economy. The Gaddi shepherds and many agriculturists practise seasonal migration, moving down in winter to low valleys of Kangra district lying across the Dhauladhar on the southern side. In summer they move back to their original homes in Bharmaur Tehsil in the Chamba District of the State. Gaddi community organizes itself on caste lines: Brahmins, Rajputs, Khattris, Thakurs and Ranas are high ranking castes, whereas Sippis, Reharas and Halis are the low ranking castes. The title Gaddi is also applied as a caste name for the Rajputs, Khattris, Thakurs and Ranas.

Region: Bharmaur Tehsil in Chamba District in the Indian State of Himachal Pradesh in the North Western Indian Himalayas is the traditional homeland of the Gaddis.

The slopes and forests that stretch from the high passes of Lahaul in the northeast to the forests of Kangra in the south and southeast form the natural resource base and traditional habitat of the Gaddi shepherds and agriculturists. The principal rivers that flow across the district are Ravi and its tributary, the Buddhal.

The Gaddi homeland lies on the upper Ravi valley along the banks of the Buddhal and comprises five valleys - Kugti, Tundah, Samara, Holi and Bharmaur. These five valleys constitute the Bharmaur Tehsil.

Gaddi settlements are also found outside Bharmaur, in the neighbouring parts of Ravi valley towards Chamba and in some parts of the Kangra district.

Brief Description: The Gaddis are devotees of Hindu deity Shiva and believe that they were created by him while he was seated on his gaddi (royal seat). Shiva called this human - Gaddi and bestowed upon him his own garb of chola (coat), dora (belt), chunji topi (pointed cap) and also his nomadic lifestyle of a shepherd. This bond with Shiva is celebrated year after year through ritual fairs and festivals which fall under the generic category of what the Gaddis call the Jatar. These Jataras besides celebrating the sacred bond with Shiva and other village deities focus on seasons and agricultural cycles.

Jatar also constructs, presents and celebrates the Gaddi identity. Music, dance, drumming, trance, healing, ritual worship, singing oral sacred narratives and pilgrimage journey are some of the outstanding features of these Jataras that are celebrated throughout the Gaddi land in the month of August and September. Some of these important Jataras are: a seven day Bharmaur Jatar held in the ancient temple complex of Chaurasi in village Bharmaur dedicated to different deities whose shrines are located in the complex; Chattrari Jatar in village Chattrari dedicated to Shiva-Shakti, the divine consort of Shiva; Guggal Jatar dedicated to a cluster of five deities collectively called 'Panj Biri/ Panj Piri led by local deity Gugga Mandalik and his sister Guggadi; Mani Mahesh Jatar also called Nahaun

(Holy Bath) is a pilgrimage journey to Mount Mani Mahesh, the holy abode of Shiva where he lives with his divine consort Gorja in eternal bliss.

Photographs

Video

Community Consent

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