

Project Report

Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages  
**Gojapuri**

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Doda district is among the 22 districts of Jammu and Kashmir. It is among the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest district. The district lies in the middle of the outer Himalayan ranges and the district is mostly a hilly area. District Doda is located about 175kms from Jammu and 231kms from Srinagar. The district has mountainous terrains. The general approach to the whole of the district is through road transport.

The population of Doda is approx. 409,576. Percentage of total population is 29.07%. It is the 13<sup>th</sup> largest district in the state by population.

- District Doda consists of 8 blocks: Bhagwa, Assar, Doda(ghat), Gundana, Marmat, Bhaderwah, Gandoh and Thathri.
- Tehsils: 06
- Niabats: 16
- Villages: 405
- Panchayats: 232

Bhaderwah is a Tehsil of district Doda. The district is wealth of natural beauty with panoramic scenery and is extensively rich in forests. The region is surrounded by mountains from all sides and mighty river Chenab flows through it. The entire district is hilly and mountainous with a few plain.

The culture inventory of the district comprises of three major ethnic groups like Pahari, Dogri, and Kashmiri. The major languages spoken are Bhaderwahi (bhadewahi, bhalesvi), Kishtwari and Serazi, Khashali, Gojri and Punjabi. Besides these regional languages spoken in different areas there are also some other specific languages which are spoken in some remote pockets of the district like Khash, Gojapuri, Hassadi, Meashabi, Paddri.



AERIAL VIEW OF DODA

## LOCATION

The village Khalu is around 40km from the main city of Doda. Geo-coordinates of Khalu village is 33 degrees 2'47''N degrees 40'39E .The village is panorama of charming scenes of nature that brings a divine touch into human mind. Hence the village life is full of divine beauty. Khalu village lies in Tehsil Badarwah. Another newly created Tehsil known as Bala is about 12 Kms away from Khalu village. There is one block and six wards in village Khalu. Sarpanch is the head of the village namely Gh. Mustuffa Sheikh who is 80 years old. In the village Khalu there is a small area known as Baraila which is identified as the native place of Gojapuri language. Gojapuri is also spoken in nearby villages of known as Manva, Sinatra, Dige, Sinai, Chatra, Dorova.



AERIAL VIEW OF KHALU VILLAGE

There is no health centre in the village as people have to visit Manva village for their treatment. The village has no school facilities as children aspiring for education have to move around 4km from the village. The village consists of around 300-400 houses. It has been estimated that around 2500-3000 Gojapuri speakers live in the village. The houses in the village under questionnaire not

located in close vicinity to one another while as the houses are built at distant apart. It has been observed that each house has a lot of space around it. The village is on the hilly area surrounded by mountains.



AERIAL VIEW OF BARALIA VILLAGE

## **CLIMATE**

The climatic condition varies from Doda to Khalu village. In Khalu village forests influences winds, rainfall and temperature usually remains little cold. The moisture laden winds cause rainfall in the forests on the hills making the temperature to fall in summer. Thus the climate of Khalu village is comparatively mild than that of the Doda district. The rainfall also varies as the altitude rises.



CLIMATIC CONDITION

The climate in the Khalu village has its own peculiarities. Winter mostly remains cold, that lasts from November to March. During these months strong winds bring snow and rain. Spring begins after March as this part of the climate is marked by heavy rain fall which causes landslides. Landslides cause plenty of discomfort to the village folk. The entire village is surrounded with mountains and dense forests.

## **ORAL HISTORY OF GOJAPURI PEOPLE**

The Gojapuri people trace their origin with pre partition Punjab. According to the understanding of the elderly generation of the Gojapuri people, the land was quite affordable to purchase as compared to Punjab or other adjacent villages. Thus the people with limited financial resources can own the rich estate of land against quite meager price. This had been one of the reasons of their migration from Punjab to Khalu village. The availability of land has helped to explore new meadows and pastures for sustenance of life and cattle and trade.

## **CULTURE TRAITS**

The village is inhabited by two major religious groups – Hindus and Muslims. Brahmans constitute the upper caste in the social ladder of Hindu community and are mostly engaged with religious duties. Meyai and Bhagat are two other commonly known castes among Hindus. Gujar, Sheikh and Bhat are common surnames to identify the Muslim community. Early age marriage is prevalent among both the communities (i.e. Hindus and Muslim). The average marriage age for a girl is 14-15 years while as boys should not cross 17-18 years of age to marry.

## **HOUSES**

The houses are known as *DHOKE/KOTHA* and are made of mud, stones, wood, and straw. The roof is thatched and is also made of mud. Their houses are not very well built. These houses are rectangular or square in shape. There is no fencing surrounding the *Dhoke or Kotha*. Each house is at a distant apart from each other. The houses of the community are built with material obtained from the forest and local resources. There are also some pucca houses in khalu village.



STRUCTURE OF HOUSE

## PEOPLE

Villagers are least exposed to the external world. They are not so aware of modern technology and have least access to modern software or cyber world. They live in contained social conditions and have hand to mouth living. The people seem to be satisfied and happy in spite of the fact they hardly manage the basic necessities of life. The social cohesion is so strong that one feels that the whole community is like a single family. They share each other's problems and pleasures. Men folk shoulder the responsibility to earn bread and butter for the family while as women folk are engaged to manage domestic affairs. The society at large is characterized as patriarchal. The people are very simple in thought and behavior and are quite hospitable for strangers. Women are very shy as well as conservative.



## PHYSICAL FEATURES

They have a comparatively darker complexion and they also differ in their style of living, dressing patterns, and other facial features. The dress patterns of the community have tribal way of dressing style for both men and women. Men adore turbans on their heads in Mughal style along with long and loose *kurtas* or shirts with *salwar* over the shirt. To dress with vest-coat, known as basket by the community, over *kurta* is part of the dress among men and most of them have long beard. The use of *chaddar* or long shawl is also part of the dress among men as it protects them from cold. Women wear loose *kurta* (shirt) having collars and cuffs along with *salwar*. Women also wrap a *chaddar* around their heads. Women are also found of jewellery like necklace, nose rings and ear rings. However the use of golden ornaments is just a dream for women folk.



MAN AND WOMAN IN TRADITIONAL DRESS

## **FOOD**

Mostly they depend on milk products as their staple food. But cereals, wheat and maize comprise the part of the regular food for the people. The people are habitual of both vegetarians and non-vegetarians recipe. The favorite dishes of the people are *maki ki roti/sarson ka saag*.

## **LANGUAGE**

The community has Urdu and Kashmiri as lingua-franca for communication with the people other than their village fellows. The languages like Punjabi, Bhadarwahi, Dogri or Hindi also form the linguistic repertoire of the community.

The community has its own native language known as Gojapuri which is grouped among endangered languages. Gojapuri is a variety of Indo-Aryan family spoken by the community as their first language. Gojapuri has a limited functional domain in the community with the result the language is leading to extinct. The younger generations are moving out from the village for education or job and feel no relevance to retain their native language Gojapuri. The social outlook of younger generation is in the changing process while interacting with urban people. This trend in social change has due implications over linguistic change. It can be predicted that Gojapuri may not survive for a long in these social conditions.

## **FESTIVALS**

Festivals are part and parcel to depict social norms and culture of the community. Eid is one the main festival for their society which they celebrate with great festivity and enthusiasm. Holi and Diwali are also the festivals celebrated in the community.

## **ECONOMY**

The people of this community are very poor and backward the economy of the community is mainly agriculture. They depend directly upon agriculture which forms their primary source of income. People of the community are mainly engaged with farming both male and female. Community depends directly upon agriculture which provides direct employment to people. The main crops grown are pulses, corn, some vegetables and Apple. Cattle breeding are also one of the sources of that support the income for the community.



APPLE TREES



VEGETABLE FARMING



CATTLE REARING



CATTLE REARING



WHEAT FIELD

## **FIELD EXPERIENCE**

Field work has been conducted to the area in order to understand the life of the people and collect direct information regarding linguistic and cultural traits of the community.

A Field work was conducted for 17 days. The concerned JRPs left from Srinagar at 8am in a cab and reached Doda city at 4pm in the evening. A survey was conducted to get some information regarding the location of the village where Gojapuri language is spoken. The language is endangered as well as lesser known language in the region so it has become hard task to locate the area where Gojapuri is spoken. The JRPs devised strategies to reach the village of Gojapuri language. After succeeding to locate the Village Khalu where Gojapuri is spoken the JRPs

approached to Sarpanch of the village, Mr. Mustafa who is 80 years. He enlightened us about the culture and tradition of Khalu village. According to him the languages spoken in Khalu village are: Baderwahi, Kashmiri, Gojapuri and Dogri. Gojapuri language is spoken by approximately 2500 in number of people. After identifying the language and the speakers who use it, the task of data collection was taken off. The focus of JRPs had been to collect linguistic as well as social and cultural information from the community. Therefore scientific field work methods were adopted to collect maximum amount of data within the limited amount of time. JRPs admit with gratitude the cooperation rendered by the people of the village during field work. The language consultant engaged during the field work has been co-operative to the best satisfaction of JRPs.

Our special thanks to our personal investigators for all the care and continuous support during all these days. Also we would like to thank to our group to be so good Shahid, Javaid, Danish, Younis, Iram, Raiya and Farkhana.

