Chapter II

GUJARA BAKARWAL TRANSHUMANCE: LAND AND THE PEOPLE

(A BACKGROUND)

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Since our dissertation is concerned with man's interaction with non-human nature, it would be advisable to have a general idea about the social group, their ecological background, main features of their economy as well as their oscillation in time-space continuum. It is intended to provide such a background in this chapter, with a view to describe the wider implications of the transhumance patterns which have been the focus of our analyses in the foregoing chapters.

The Gujara Bakarwals are sheep and goat rearing transhumants, who oscillate between high and low altitudes in the hill tracts of Jammu and Kashmir with their Revar (flocks) and household goods (plate 2.1). Their economy mainly depends on the products of their flock and the use of natural pastures round the year. A majority of them are seen in different seasons of the year in the areas extending from Poonch to Khatua in the south, and over the Greater Himalayan ranges in the north. This strip of land from south to north is roughly rectangular in shape. It is approximately 250-300 kilometres long and 200-250 kilometres wide. The entire area traversed by them is a succession of ranges and valleys comprising Siwaliks, Pir Panjal,
PLATE 2.1  FLOCK GRAZING ON SEASONAL PASTURES

(a)  FLOCK GRAZING ON SARDIYON KI CHARGAH
(b) FLOCK GRAZING ON DHOKS AROUND SON MARG.
(COURTESY- J & K GOVT. DEPTT. OF TOURISM)
Kashmir valley, Side valleys and the Greater Himalayan ranges. In this strip of land the Transhumant Gujara Bakarwals plan their annual activities according to set schedules.

2.1 HABITAT

The habitat of Gujara Bakarwals at present in the state of Jammu and Kashmir in which they oscillate annually for economic activities in roughly extending from the Cease Fire Line in the West to 76° 15E longitude in the East and from south 32° 30N to 34° 15N latitudes in the North. This habitat situated in the hill terrain of the North-Western Himalayas from 32° 30N to 34° 15N latitudes, spans a considerable ecological range. It includes the following altitudinal zones of varying heights above sea level from south to north.

1. Siwaliks or Outer hills (610-1830 metres MSL)
2. Narrow valleys of the middle mountains (1220 metres MSL)
3. Middle mountain ridges (2440 metres MSL)
4. Pir Panjal range (3335 metres and above MSL)
5. Valley of Kashmir (1525-1830 metres MSL)
6. Side valleys (2135-2440 metres MSL)
7. Greater Himalayan ranges (4570 metres and above MSL).

2.1.1 Climate

The climate in this mountainous habitat varies from arctic cold of Ladakh in winters to the tropical heat of
Poonch and Jammu in summers. The average rainfall in the whole state may be taken at 1064.01 mms. But this varies considerably from season to season and region to region. As we move from south to north the rainfall goes on decreasing till it is only 10 mms. at Leh.

The southern parts of the habitat receive rainfall mainly from monsoons which are expected on the 1st of July and withdrawal by the beginning of September. The monsoons feed the areas of Jammu and Kashmir valley regions. The northern parts of habitat receive precipitation during winter and then as a snow in the higher regions. In the winter season the southern areas upto 1220 metres height sometimes experience light snowfall and rains, from December to February.

As the snowfall plays an important role in transhumant activities in this region, the snow map (Fig. 2.1) of the state of Jammu and Kashmir explains the following characteristics:

The areas down to the contour level of 1220 metres in the south on the outer-hills do not receive snowfall in winters. This area includes the parts of Poonch, Rajouri, Reasi, Udham Pur, Jammu and Khatua districts. The Gujara Bakarwala occupy these areas during winters.

The areas from 1220-2440 metres contour level on the southern side of the Pir Panjal range mainly
GUJARA BAKARWAL HABITAT
(SNOW MAP)

AREA UNDER SNOW

GLACIERS

3 OR MORE MONTHS

LESS THAN 3 MONTHS

NO SNOW

FIG. 2.1
the middle mountain ranges of Rattan Pir Shah, Golgulab Garh, Ladha Dhar, Dudu Basant Garh, Sarthal and some central parts of the valley of Kashmir receive snowfall for less than three months.

The higher areas of Pir Panjal range and the Greater Himalayan ranges upto 4880 metres contour level are covered with snow for more than three months a year. The Gujara Bakarwals occupy these areas during summers (Plate 2.2). The areas which are above the contour level of 4880 metres are under glaciers throughout the year.

Thus, the sharp climatic variations in this mountainous habitat give way to seasonal oscillation for economic activities. When the high mountains of the north are under snow during winter, the outer-hills in the south are available for pastures. In summers, when the outer-hills are under scorching heat the pasturage is available at the cooler higher altitudes in the mountains of the north.

2.1.2 The Pastures

The natural pastures utilized by the Gujara Bakarwals are seasonal and are shown in map (Fig. 2.2). This map explains that the winter season grazing areas are located in the south below 1220 metres contour level when snow covers
PLATE 2.2
DHOKS ON ALPINE PASTURES

(a) KHALI PASTURES
(COURTESY- J & K GOVT. DEPTT. OF TOURISM)
(b) PASTURES NEAR A GLACIER
(COURTESY - J & K GOVT. DEPT. OF TOURISM)

(c) THE DHOKS AROUND SINIH VALLEY
PLATE 2.3  BUSHES AND GRASSES IN THE DHOKS

(a)  BUSHES ON THE DHOKS

(b)  WANGAT VALLEY
GUJARA BAKARWAL
SEASONAL PASTURES (MARGS)

FIG. 2-2
the higher altitudes the grazing is available here. The winter grazing areas are exhausted everywhere by the end of April each year. Then the pasturage is available at higher and cooler altitudes on the middle mountain ranges at an altitude of 2440 metres above sea level. These grazing tracts in the middle mountains are utilized by them only during spring and autumn migrations for about 15 to 20 days only when going to summer areas and returning to winter areas.

The summer grazing areas are in the Greater Himalayan ranges at an elevation ranging between 2745 and 4570 metres above sea level. These grassy lands are known as marga or dhoka. The grazing areas which are utilized by the Gujara Bakarwals in this habitat are seasonally located are as follows:

(1) Winter Season Grazing Areas: Some of the winter grazing areas are in the forest divisions of Poonch, Rajouri, Udham Pur, Jammu and Khatua. They graze their animals on the hill slopes around the villages of Mendhor, Garsani, Mada, Dharamsial, Lamberi, Anah, Kural, Kurliyan, Kharak, Panja, Samaj, Tata Pani, Kalakot, Meetka, Katwari, Satru, Mogla, Gudhar, Chingash, Dagani, Baramdal, Jata Sadda, Cheni, Parat, Bakhar, Sowat, Dhandki, Janghar, Rajal, Dhala Jakran, Dhanwa, Pootha, Schalki, Tiryath, Keri Kalajhang, Jhathi, Andhroot, Dangi, Dakeri, Sarnukot, Palam, Dhangri, Sirainsar, Mansar, Talwara, Garh Panjwa, Hathiyal, Thillo, Dombergi, Arnas, Sehal,
Kori, Berkh, Poni, Jandra, Goran, Bhatindri, Bakhla, Sambha and Billawar.

(11) Intervening Pastures: The winter grazing areas are exhausted everywhere by the end of April each year. The Gujara Bakarwals take their animals to the higher and cooler altitude on the middle mountain ranges of Rattan Pir Shah, Goigulab Garh, Ladha Dhar, Dudu Basant Garh, Sarthal and Pir Panjal ranges, where the grazing is available in spring season due to the melting of snow. These intervening pastures of the Gujara Bakarwals are lying 2440 metres contour level. Again on return journey from the summer areas, they graze on these pastures for about 15 to 20 days.


Gujara Bakarwals step on these pastures for 2 to 4 days after crossing the Pir Panjal Mountain passes, for rest of the period these pastures are occupied by the graziers from the valley of Kashmir.

(iii) Summer Grazing Areas: The summer grazing areas are on the slopes of Greater Himalayas at an elevation ranging from 2745 to 4570 metres above sea level and are known as margs. These margs are numerous on the slopes of the mountains encircling the valley of Kashmir, but they are only usable during summers for grazing; in winters they are under the snow (Plate 2.3). Major summer grazing areas of the Greater Himalayas of the Gujara Bakarwals are:


(c) Son Marg Region Grassy Grounds (Margins): Lach Pathri, Khila Marg, Matayan, Drass.


(e) Wardwan Region Grassy Grounds (Margin): Sukh Nei, Sainee Nala, Ganar, Qudarat Nala, Azgha, Kanlyi Nar, Danak, Tal, Palwas, Darwabe, Kachwari, Hafti Nala, Wasanum, Burshjan, Kanwar Gam, Wan Kadal, King Doom.

(g) Bhadarwa, Doda and Kistwar Region Grassy Grounds (Margs): Sinthan, Singhpura, Matarwa, Sondar.

(h) Some Gujara Bakarwals transhumants go to the pastures of Naristan, Paristan and Yubistan in Doda district.

2.1.3 Agriculture

Agriculture offers the main subsistence of the population in the entire habitat, though not to the Gujara Bakarwals. The cultivated areas and settled population are found mostly in the middle zone in the valley of Kashmir around the elevation of 1525 to 2135 metres and also somewhat more sparsely or less in the side valleys up to 2440 metres. The valleys in the middle mountains are also well-cultivated up to 1830 metres. The short growing season for agriculture is a peculiar feature of the area consequent upon the climate.

The settlements in the highest zone of the north and middle in mountains is very sparse. But the valley of Kashmir is thickly populated. The ethnic composition of the habitat is complex.

2.2 THE TRIBE

As the Gujara Bakarwals are not enumerated at the census, we do not have the demographic statistics of a tribe, but figures provided by the various sources indicate
that their transhumant section constitutes roughly 3 per cent of the total population of the state. In addition to the Gujara Bakarwal nomadic population, there are Gujara Bakarwal sedentary groups, which have settled in most of the villages of the area through which their annual routes of migrations pass. These sedentary group claim a common and collateral ancestry. This sedentary population of the Gujara Bakarwals is of recent origin. Most of them settled very recently, after 1947 A.D., and others, a little earlier. It is found that in the side valleys of Erin, Madhumati, Sindh, Liddar and Bring there is a notable section of the recently settled population of Gujara Bakarwal origin.

It is to be noted here that our investigations in this study are only about the Gujara Bakarwal transhumants who annually migrate, but there are other nomadic groups of the Gujars who are operating in the state of Jammu and Kashmir; one such group comprises Gujara Banihara or Dhodhi Gujars.

The Banihara or Dodhi Gujars, tend buffaloes and sell dudh (milk) and milk products and for this reason they are known as dodhi (milkmen). They reside in Bana (forests), for this reason they are also known as Banihara (the residents of forests). This classification of nomadic groups is based on the types of animals they rear for their economic pursuits. The Bakarwals tend sheep and goats.

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whereas the Banihara rear buffaloes.\(^1\) The former goes from the lower altitude to higher altitudes and sometimes traverses a distance of more than three hundred kilometres in the high altitude terrain of the north-western Himalayas during their annual migration. The Banihara encumbered with heavy cattle is confined within forty to sixty kilometres in a year. So, the Banihara are able to maintain contact with their winter resorts even during the time they are staying at summer pastures, and they leave their families behind but the Bakarwals on the other hand have to forget about their winter resort till they return to them again in late autumn. The Banihara supplement their income from agriculture: the Bakarwals do it on a very minor scale.

Since our study is limited only to the Gujar Bakarwals, who keep large herds of bakri (goats) and for this reason they are called Bakarwal. It is further found that the Gujar Bakarwals also distinguish themselves as Kunhari Gujar Bakarwals and Illahiwal Gujar Bakarwals. This they derive after the name of the areas from where their ancestors migrated to the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

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1. The suffic and prefix of Bakarwal and Banihara or Dadhi respectively were applied by the non-Gujarás to indicate their profession; and with the passage of time these words became their clan names just to identify them as a separate group from their parent tribe of Gujarás.
The Kunhari Gujara Bakarwals claim that their ancestors came from the valley of Kunhar. The Kunhar valley lies in region of Kagan (Pakistan) consisting of the tributaries of the Kunhar, Bogar Mang, Konash and Saran river valleys. These streams rise from the northern hills of the tehsil Mansera and flow through Pakhli and Tenawal in the district of Hazara (Pakistan) and for this reason they call themselves as Kunhari Gujara Bakarwals. The Illahiwal Gujara Bakarwals claim that their ancestors came from the region of Illahiwal, consisting of the tributaries of the Nandhar, Rajawari, Kala Dhaka, Kohistan and Swat (Pakistan) valleys, for this reason they are called Illahiwal. Even to this day their dress, customs, names, and dialect are influenced by their former neighbours of Pushto speaking groups. All the Gujara Bakarwal groups speak Gujari language, which is their mother tongue.

The Gujara Bakarwals claim common or collateral ancestry from the ancient Gujara tribe of India. This Gujara tribe has given its name to the Gujarat as well as Gujaranwala districts in Pakistan, and to the Peninsula of Gujarat or Kathiawar and the tract known as Gujaragarh in Gwalior. Some scholars are of the opinion that they are of foreign stock representing those pastoral nomads from the steppes of Central Asia, who entered India either with the Hunas or a little later. Others are of the view that
they are of an indigenous origin. This issue about their origin has attracted the attention of several scholars.¹

There is no written history of these people in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It is difficult to establish with exactness the essential features of their migration to the hills of Jammu and Kashmir. Some of the reasons of their immigration in the past to this area are believed to be political and economic in nature, but the main immigration was on account of search for pasture lands.

The Census of India² 1941 remarks, about the advent of the Gujaras of Kashmir that, "it is believed that the

¹. (See for details, theories on the origin of Gujaras)
Bainses, Ethnography, Strassburg, 1912, p. 44.
Bombay Gazetteer, Vol. I., Part I, pp. 471-78. (Where it is contained that the word 'Gujara' is an Indian form of Khaser's, a tribe that entered India along with white Hunas). Bhagwan Lal Indraj, X.A., XIII, p. 72.
Cammell, Bombay Gazetteer, Vol. IX, Appendix B.

part of the tribe migrated towards the State of Jammu and Kashmir after the outbreak of a serious famine in the regions inhabited by the tribe, now known as Rajasthan and Gujarat. It is assumed that the time of their migration was in the time of 'Satabasiya Famine'. Some sections of the migrating tribe moved to the Punjab plains, whilst the others moved further north to the regions of Kogan, Swat, Hazara and Kashmir. The Gujarats now living in the state are parts of two separate migrations, one direct from the Gujara tribe of Rajasthan and Gujarat, the other later migrated from Gujara tribe settled in the Punjab plains."

These Gujarats set up their powerful kingdom in the Punjab plains, in the ninth century A.D. Gujarata families now living in Rajouri, Reasi, Jammu, Poonch, Udhampur and Khatua regions claim their ancestors from the Gujarat district of Punjab (Pakistan) and migrated to these hills after the outbreak of serious famine.

The Mughal sources suggest that during the times of Mughal rulers these Gujarats were very powerful. They

1. A. Stein (Trans), Rajatarangini, Vol.I and II, Book V., verse 151. (Many scholars have quoted the famous verse 151 of the fifth book of Rajatarangini, with a view to suggesting some clash between the Gujara King of Western Punjab and the King of Kashmir).

2. Babar has referred to Gujarata settlements in the hill country between Nilab (fifteen miles below Attock) and adjoining to the hill country of Kashmir (Babarnama, Vol.II, p.102). Further, on his arrival at Sialkot, he
settled along the Mughal imperial road for many generations leading through Rajouri to Srinagar.

Dr. Bisaria\(^{1}\) observed during field work, "some old persons told that their ancestors entered, the territories of Kashmir, when Sultan had ordered, that after every two years and nine months, the tenth month should be repeated, thus, raising the number of months to thirteen. This event happened in the time of Sultan Shamsuddin of Shahmir family in 1539-42 A.D. The other story about their migration tells that when Bijay Singh was the ruler of the area beyond Pir Panjal, their ancestors entered the territories of Kashmir. This event is related to the King Vijay Singh (1127-1154 A.D.)."

But the history of immigration of the Gujara Bakarwals is of later period. In their folk tales, they say that their ancestors came to these areas some seven or eight generations back (in the nineteenth century) from the valley of Kunbar and the valley of Illahiwal in search of pastures. Till today all the Gujara Bakarwals claim their relatives in the

noticed the Jats and Gujarases regularly pouring down in prodigious numbers from their hills and wildest in order to carry (Ibid, p.163).

2(b) In the Waki-at-i-Jahangiri, the Mughal emperor records that when Emperor Akbar was proceeding to Kashmir he built a fort on the other side of the river, and made the Gujarases who had been either to devoted to plunder, dwell there. This place was consequently named Gujarat and formed into a separate pargana (Elliot and Dowson: History of India, vol VI, P.303).

areas of Kunhar and Illahival regions and some of them even remember the name of their common ancestors and pedigrees. They also claim that before 1947 A.D. they used to visit their relatives and join them in their marriages and death ceremonies.

History revealed by their traditions, claims that the Gujarwa Bakarwals came to occupy these territories, in the form of three major Kafilas. These Kafilas included many families of different Gotras. The first major Kafila came under the leadership of Chirya Gorsai and occupied the areas in the hills of Poonch in winters and the summer areas on the Pir Panjal range. The most of the member families of this Kafila now have settled in and around Gorsai village in Mendhore valley. The second major Kafila came with Dadda Muqadam Gazi Khatana along with Chaudhari Basi Alafkhan and set up their winter resorts on the hills around Poni, Barakh and Reasi. Later on some of the member groups shifted to the hills around Udhampur, Jammu and upto Kathua. At present, majority of the groups of this parent Kafila cross over the Pir Panjal Range through the Banihal Pass. Some of them use the Budhil,

1. The Gujarwa Bakarwals claim that their ancestors migrated to these areas because of feuds among the Gujaras and Pathans in the area of Kunhar and Illahival valleys over the pastures. Consequently they shifted to the Jammu and Kashmir hills in search of new pastures some two hundred years ago.
Rupari, Konsarnag and Didam gali Passes. The summer pastures of these groups are located in the mountains around Phelgam, Matayan, Maru and Wardwan areas. Recently, some sections of this Kafila have shifted to the Sarthal Pass route to approach their summer pastures around Kishtwar, Padder, Maru and Wardwan.

The third major Kafila came with Baba Larvi Bajran and Dadda Bagga Bajran along with Choudhari Mehandi Khan. At present, the sections of this Kafila have split up into smaller groups. In winters they stay in the hills around Naushera, Chingash, Rajouri, Mendhore, Surankot and Poonch. They approach their summer pastures during annual migrations through Chor gali, Jamiyan gali, Nur Pur gali, Toshmaidan Pass, Pir Panjal Pass, Nanansar gali, Darhal Pass and Rupari Passes over the Pir Panjal range. Their summer pastures are located in the areas around Gurez, Matsil (Machal) Naushera, Tilel, Sonmarg and Matyan regions.

Apart from these three major Kafilas many other smaller groups of Gujara Bakarwals followed them and came to these hills. This immigration continued up to 1900 A.D. After 1900 A.D. few Gujara Bakarwals seems to have immigrated to these areas in the form of big Kafilas; rather they entered in the form of family groups and joined their relatives in these areas; who came earlier with these Kafilas.
2.3 ECOLOGY OF THE MIGRATION CHANNELS

The pastoral economy of the Gujara Bakarwals mainly depends on the utilization of extensive pastures. The availability of pastures is markedly seasonal in character. While snow covers the mountains in the north, relatively poor pastures are available throughout the winter in the south. In spring the pastures are plentiful and good in the areas of low and middle altitudes, but they progressively dry up, starting in early April in the south. By late April the winter pastures are exhausted. While the scorching heat of the summers is dessicating the pastures in the south, usable pastures are found in the north above 2745 metres, where melting of snow gives way to green pastures. The relative availability and lushness of pasturage, therefore, varies from place to place within this habitat. Thus, both the winter and summer zones are characterized by availability of pasturage in a defined part of the year. This leads to oscillations between summer and winter zones.

While the coming of summers is signalled by the drying up of the pasturage in the south, they take the animals during this time to higher or cooler altitudes in the north. When the highland pastures are covered with snow and severe cold affect the health of their animals at high altitudes, they come down to the areas which are free from snow. Every year they repeat this cycle of migration.
between summer and winter resorts. Thus, the Gujara Bakarwals organize their annual migrations from winter resorts to summer and back for fulfilling the needs of their animals.

Each of the major Kafila has its traditional Rasto, which it travels in its seasonal migrations. The major oscillation channels of the Gujara Bakarwals are shown in map (Fig. 2.3) and Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Major Oscillation Channels</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Jamian gali</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Tosh maiden Pass</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Nurpur gali</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Pir Panjal Pass</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Darhal Pass</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Rupari Pass</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Budhil Pass</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Konsar nag Pass</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Didam gali or Zeji marg Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Banibal Pass</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Sarthal Pass</td>
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</table>
The Gujara Bakarwals' annual oscillation channels pass over mountainous region between the Siwaliks and the Greater Himalayas traversing through the Pir Panjal mountain Passes and the valley of Kashmir. They ford many hill torrents, streams and rivers. They ascend and descend ridges of varying altitudes. The starting and closing points of these annual migration channels are in the winter areas in the south of the habitat. However, the Gujara Bakarwals' annual migration start through these channels from their winter resorts in the last quarter of April every year from the outer-hill ridges at a height of 610 to 1220 metres above sea level.

In the State of Jammu and Kashmir, all the tracks of the Gujara Bakarwals start from their winter bases 610 to 1220 metres in the area of winter dispersal, south of the towns of Rajouri, Reasi, Udhampur and Sambha. The number of tracks in this zone are numerous. They are hill tracks joining one settlement to the other in the forests of outer-hills. These village-cross-routes join with one another and unite at different junctions to the main tracks of annual migrations and pass closely by the market towns of Rajouri, Reasi, Udhampur through the narrow valleys northwards. These tracks pass over low ridges besides many ups and downs over spurs in the forests. They join the main tracks which are utilized at the time
of spring and autumn migrations. They approach the intervening pastures.

Firstly, these tracks pass over a region consisting of many parallel hill ridges of low altitudes and then follow the stream beds, winding along it sometimes on a level with the bed and at others on the mountain path over the low ridges. In the last quarter of April, when the Gujara Bakerwals are passing over these tracks the day temperatures are rising and precipitation is very low. Although the ridges, spurs and slopes are covered with many kinds of bushes and grasses, yet the country around seems to be destitute of plants in this season, as the vegetation starts drying up in this season and are of little use to their animals.

Secondly, the routes enter a zone of narrow fertile valleys of the middle mountains through the valleys of Manawar Tawi (Rajouri) Ans, (Budhil), Ram Nagar nalla and many others. These valleys are located at an average height of 1220 metres above sea level to the north of outer-hills. The sources of all these streams are in the middle mountain ranges of Rattan Pir Shah, Golgulab Garh, Ledha Dhar, Dudu Basant Garh and Sarthal ranges. These middle mountain valleys are separated by ridges of varying altitudes, which are more or less parallel to each other; sometimes narrow, sometimes wide with the main lines of drainage cutting across,
that is, through the ridges. The paths in these valleys are along the streams sometimes over masses of large stones through the cultivated fields. While the Gujara Bakarwals passing through these valleys in the last quarter of April the temperatures are on the increase and the sun shines brightly. Their tracks traverse through well cultivated valleys and over several streams meandering through the fields. In this zone, the routes also pass through the local sedentary population of these valleys. This population puts resistance to the Gujara Bakarwals in this season as the fields are not vacant. Continuing up the valleys of these rivers, the tracks pass between low spurs of the hills. The ground and the slopes of the valleys are cut into terraces up to great heights and made into rice fields, which at this time are flooded with water led from the stream in preparation for the sowing, which will be done a week or two later.

Near the end of the streams the valleys are closely bounded by spurs of hills from where the tracks ascend to middle mountain ranges. Between the narrow fertile valleys and the Pir Panjal mountain the routes scale the Rattan Pir Shah, Golgulab Garh, Ladha Bhar, Dudu Basant Garh and Sarthal ranges above 2440 metres from sea level. F. Drew remarks that "These middle mountain ranges are

ridges of varying, irregular, directions, that branch again and again like the twigs of trees, the chief ridges are at the same time the important water sheds."

As the routes ascend these slopes, the vegetation becomes pleasant, covered with forests, grasses and herbage of all kinds with plants and flowers. The grassy grounds are numerous and serve as the grazing grounds for the local graziers, as well as to the marching Gujar Bakarwals. The tracks on these middle mountains are over the country which is intersected in every direction by ranges of hills and the villages are built in valleys or scattered in small patches over the slopes.

On leaving the middle mountain ranges the tracks lead towards the main Pir Panjal mountain Passes. All the tracks descend the northern sides of these middle mountains, taking downward course over hard stony paths through the green forests.

After descending these slopes the tracks lay along the bottom of the narrow valleys of small streams and torrents from the Pir Panjal range over which the wooden bridges are thrown. These streams are clear, rapid mountain torrents, which have their sources in the Pir Panjal range. These streams are of cold and clear water. They are dashing over large rounded stones of the stream bed in their progress through narrow gorges. Along these
streams the tracks are sometimes over the blocks of ice and sometimes over the stones. In order to ford them the Gujara Bakarwals are forced to jump from stone to stone, "a feat by no means agreeable or easy, on account of their slipperiness and the depth at which they lie". Snow storms, hail and rainfall are frequent in these areas. The wind and the cold is very piercing. The unmelted pieces of ice attribute to the extreme rarity and dryness of the air.

As the tracks proceed further, "the hill sides are too steep for the paths easily to be made along them, so the traveller must keep close to the river which has to be crossed in many cases about thirty times, as it nears alternatively the right and left bounding cliffs. A series of little wooden bridges are prepared, which are good enough for foot passengers and for an unladen horse, but ought not to be ridden over. The tracks continue to wind down to the valleys, which are still closely hemmed in by vast overhanging mountains and are so low that the presence of daylight in some places almost unknown. Towards the end of these valleys the mountains are closely hemmed together and towering aloft towards the sky. These valleys are shut in closely by the spurs of hills. At

1. Ibid., P. 158.
some places the tracks pass through such narrow gorges where there is darkness even in the day. The waterfalls are numerous.¹

In this way the tracks approach the foot of the Pir Panjal range. Passes after traversing through the narrow gorges of swift flowing chilled water torrents and steep lofty slopes on both the sides. From the bottom of these valleys the routes rise by a steep ascent on the north to the Pir Panjal range Passes until the region of the perpetual snow. The ascent is dreadfully steep through the rocky heights. "The paths are perilous and difficult. In many parts the soil is very loose and crumbling as to afford no safe footing; and large masses falling from above, block up the usual road and force the traveller to find out a new one as he best can."² The tops of this mountain range are dotted with many sara (tarns), snow clad peaks and mountain Passes. The routes pass through the grassy grounds and skirting along the sara (tarns), of Nanan Sar, Konsar Nag and many others. The Gujara Bakarwals offer offerings to the Sara or to the Pir of every mountain Pass in the form of sweetmeats. This is a present as a thank-offering for the sake of safety of their animals and family through the dangerous mountain Passes.

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
The major Pir Panjal mountain passes through which the Gujara Bakarwals oscillation channels Pass are shown in Table 2.2. These passes lie 3335 to 3660 metres above mean sea level.

### Table 2.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Mountain Pass</th>
<th>Height above mean sea level</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Halan Pass</td>
<td>3,189 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Banihal Pass</td>
<td>3,224 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Didam Gali</td>
<td>3,809 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Phutian Pansial Gali</td>
<td>3,123 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Budhil Pir Pass</td>
<td>4,261 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Rupri Pass</td>
<td>4,099 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Darhal Pass</td>
<td>3,946 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Khabi-Ki-Gali</td>
<td>3,979 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Pir Panjal Pass</td>
<td>3,491 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Naba Pir Pass or Tangtala Pass</td>
<td>4,259 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Chhoti Gali</td>
<td>4,296 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Nurpur Gali</td>
<td>4,093 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Toshmaidan Pass or China Marg</td>
<td>4,091 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Jamian Wali Gali</td>
<td>4,089 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Chor Panjal Pass</td>
<td>3,964 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Naji-Pir Pass</td>
<td>2,607 metres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The zone near the passes is covered with snow and devoid of vegetation and is difficult to cross in the daytime. Here the melting of snow, strong wind, and slippery ground pose many problems and sometimes cost heavy loss of man and animals.
From the Pir Panjal Passes the tracks descend and are over the steep northern side of the Pir Panjal. The tracks first take the traveller through deep ravines and skirt for some distance along the wall-like rocks and descend gradually upto some distance; but again the routes are completely hemmed in on every side by high snowy peaks. Further northwards the descent is again irregular and over rough and slippery ground. After traversing along the slopes the tracks further descend into the valleys of the torrents and streams, which are having their course towards the valley of Kashmir. Here the paths are narrow and the mountain streams are crossed by wooden bridges.

Later on, the tracks enter a zone of charming woodland and grassy grounds known as Pir Panjal marga. These marga where the ground is covered with wild flowers, green grasses and with many trees and shrubs provide rich pasturage to their animals. Some sections linger on to utilize the spring pastures in the Pir Panjal ranges and others make a detour to pass on wards.

As the tracks proceed further northwards the hills on each side of the tracks get lower and lower till they reach the southern boundaries of the Kashmir valley. In these parts on the outskirts of the vale of Kashmir, the Gujara Bakarwals face the organized bands of robbers. They plunder the Kafilas by hurling stones at them down the precipice and take away their stray animals.
After crossing the Pir Panjal watershed, the routes enter the world of Kashmir peasants and are over the plains of valley of Kashmir. From here the Gujara Bakarwal Kafilas separate into smaller sections and follow a number of alternative routes through the valley of Kashmir. There the tracks pass over Karwasa (low hills) and then winding over another Karwasa along the streams, with villages and rice fields amid which grow the plane and poplar tree, with many others bearing rich fruits. Here the routes are over the level ground and through the villages. Some of the routes are on the metallled roads also.

After passing over the plain of Kashmir valley the routes enter the side valleys of Brin, Lidder, Sindh, Brin, Madhumati and their tributaries. The sources of all these streams are in the higher mountains encircling the valley of Kashmir from east, north and west and have cut deep valleys in the mountains. These valleys are narrow towards the Greater Himalayan ranges and before joining the river Jhelum in the plains of valley of Kashmir. These valleys gradually become wide. As the tracks proceed further along the beds of these streams, the valley becomes narrow and narrow surrounded by steep slopes. The slopes of these valleys are forested with many kinds of plants and patches of grasses. However, some sections remain and spread over the pastures on the slopes of the side valleys. The others push on to the pasture on the northern slopes of the Great Himalayan ranges.
As the tracks proceed further northwards along the narrow streams up to the foot of the mountain 2745 metres, they are subdivided into many smaller tracks following the beds of the tributary streams. From the bottom of these valleys the routes again ascend further northwards to the lush green slopes of the Great Himalayan ranges, which enclose the Kashmir valley on the east, north-east and north-west.

After an arduous ascent the tracks cross these ranges through mountain Passes at an elevation between 2940 to 4291 metres above sea level shown in Table 2.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Mountain Pass</th>
<th>Height above mean sea level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Waril Gali</td>
<td>4,291 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Viji Gali</td>
<td>4,246 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kuljan Gali</td>
<td>4,246 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Gosai Gali</td>
<td>3,501 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Nao Gali</td>
<td>3,334 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Sonapind Gali</td>
<td>3,047 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Puta Kham Gali</td>
<td>2,972 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Pharkhiam-ki-Gali</td>
<td>2,940 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Rangwar Gali</td>
<td>3,738 metres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and Table 2.4. The crossing of these Passes is very
difficult even in summers, when the melting of snow and
natural snow bridges pose problems of all kinds.

Table 2.4
EAST KASHMIR RANGE MOUNTAIN PASSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Mountain Pass</th>
<th>Height above mean sea level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Zojila</td>
<td>3,526 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Guloal Gali</td>
<td>4,405 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Sar Gali</td>
<td>4,131 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Zeji Marg</td>
<td>4,036 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Pritwal Marg</td>
<td>3,992 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Shilsar</td>
<td>4,141 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Darinyansar</td>
<td>4,327 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Sinthan</td>
<td>3,571 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Singbapur Gali</td>
<td>3,571 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Kun Gali</td>
<td>3,973 metres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After crossing the passes the tracks spread over
the summer pastures on the northern slopes of the Greater
Himalayas. The major pasture grounds are Matsil, Gurez,
Tilal, Matayan, Wardwan and Ringdu. These pasture grounds
are on the northern slopes of the Greater Himalayan ranges
and are covered with snow during the winter season. But
they provide sufficient pasturage during summers. Even
during summer season they are dotted with snow.
The Gujara Bakarwals graze their animals during summer on these slopes and then again return to their winter resorts through their appointed oscillation channels. They repeat this migration cycle every year through these channels. On the eastern side of the valley the routes are traversed by a number of passes, the notable among them are shown in Table 2.4.

2.4 CONCLUSION

A brief account of the habitat, climate, pastures, social group and the ecology of the migration channels have been presented through the above account with a view to present a picture of the various aspects as well as the constituents of the transhumance economy of the Gujara Bakarwals of the Jammu and Kashmir. The above discussion on terrain, climate, grass lands and migration channels are the guiding factors of the movements of these transhumance for the needs of their animals. This has been the focus of our analyses in the foregoing chapters.