CHAPTER-V

NON-MATERIAL ASPECT OF CULTURE AND LANGUAGE
5.0. Introduction

Ritual is apparently an all inclusive element of human social presence: pretty much as one cannot imagine a society without language or exchange, one would be just as unable to envision a society without rituals. Rituals is an inevitable segment of society, extending out from the largest scale social and political procedures to the most intrinsic assortment of ritual practices, between and within the societies, reflects the full diverse qualities of the human experiences. It was neither coincidence nor primitivist eroticization that set custom at the focal point of the development of anthropological thoughts: it was rather ritual’s rich potential experience as an object of socio-cultural analysis.

Ritual and custom are social behaviors specific to given cultures. Each is used to reinforce social bonds and structure. The definitions are somewhat overlapping; both are learned behaviors that may be restricted as to who can and cannot perform them. In anthropology, rituals are actions with intentional symbolic meaning undertaken for a specific cultural purpose, such as a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood, and may reinforce broader community social bonds, as in a wedding. Customs may be less formal (though no less rigid) unwritten laws, such as table manners or following group conventions to dress appropriately for one's age. Both may include religious or secular reinforcement, and performing each correctly often indicates membership or status in a self-defining cultural group.

Ritual is an event that marks a person's transition from one status to another, including birth, coming-of-age, marriage, death as well as initiation into groups not tied to a formal stage of life such as a fraternity. According to Oxford Dictionaries, ritual refers to a religious or solemn ceremony consisting of a series of action performed according to a prescribed order. There are many rituals that people take
part in, even in modern society, and each has their own meanings and symbolisms. Some rituals are used in weddings, funerals, healing, and even in childbirth. Such ritual might be conducted in public (e.g. wedding rituals), or in private (such as ritual involved in childbirth) (Rook, 1984). Someone who is given the authority and respect by respect by others commonly conducts such rituals.

As per Rook (1984) “Rituals tend to be culturally associated and are ceremonies that are resistant to change and are passed down from generation to generation.”

Erdogu (2009), states “For the most part, rituals act as a symbolic medium for creating and maintaining social ties and dependencies to the community.”

Ritual is ostensibly an all inclusive element of human social presence: pretty much as one can't imagine a society without language or exchange, one would be just as unable to envision a general public without custom. Rituals are truth be told an inescapable segment of society, reaching out from the biggest scale social and political procedures to the most close parts of our self-experience. Yet inside of this all inclusiveness, the characteristic assortment of custom practices, both between and inside of societies, additionally mirrors the full differing qualities of the human experience. It was then neither immaculate happenstance nor primitivist eroticization that set custom at the focal point of the advancement of anthropological thought: it was rather custom's rich potential bits of knowledge as an object of socio-social investigation.

Customs and rituals is an important component of tribal life. The customs and rituals influenced the Gujjars life deeply. They are very adherent toward their established customs and traditions. The concept of customs implies not only statistical
occurrence of given behaviour but also a prescriptive dimension. Religion is one of the dominant factors which influence the social life of Gujjars life deeply. For Gujjar community the disobedience to the custom means a sin against their social faith. From birth of a child to a death ceremony certain custom prevail in the community which shows the religious importance. This community is Muslim by faith and one can easily see the influence of Islamic customs and rituals over their life. Some of the important Islamic customs among them are those related to child birth, circumcision of male child, wedding ceremony and funeral rites.

5.1. Objective

The chapter aims to contemplate deeply the folk traditions of people related to them. Different folk tradition ceremonies like child birth, marriages, entombment rituals and the convictions connected with every custom and rituals reflecting the profoundly established social foundation of the group are analysed.

5.2. Theme

For a social or ethnic group, life cycle rituals form a coherent, interconnected set of activities. There are certain norms, do’s and do not’s, like a typical food, specific colours, special months, blessings and specific people considered necessary to each rite. Actions necessary for inauspicious occasions such as funerals, are forbidden for auspicious ones such as wedding. Astrology is consulted for match making. Wedding dress should not be of red colour preferably it can black. The month of Muharram and Ribi-ul-awal are not considered auspicious for any ritual among Gujjars. Instead Shawal is considered favorable for carrying on any ritual. Last funeral ride to the deceased is given by males only. Each society thus develops its typical ritual style depending upon the deeply held beliefs and traditions which are
passed down to generations. Each social group has its own way of celebrating certain ceremonies and rituals. In these occasions the bonds between the acquaintances strengthen, they make positive connections and also learn from each other about the diverse ways in which people tend to approach significant life events. These occasions are the times of intense emotions and significant for those directly involved.

5.3. Non Material Culture

Society - a dynamic phenomenon that changes its form according to geographical and cultural conditions prevailing in a particular community. While as the former is more inclined towards the ecological characteristics but the latter is categorized by two main aspects. Material culture- reflected in science and technology and non-material culture - revealed in traditions customs, folk ways, norms and valuations of a society. In a non-materialistic culture, people are often guided more by religion and spiritual consideration. Though the role and status are based on the ascribed system but in some societies it is always the same culture that predominates. Non-material culture consisting of folk beliefs and customs forms an important part of all societies is it primitive or civilized. Though superficially folk ways may not seem important, yet, their very persistency makes them essential from the sociological point of view.

Each society has its own way of celebrating ceremonies and performing rituals viz a viz. birth, puberty, marriage and death [mourning], by following their tradition [in traditional ways] inherited from their ancestors. These ways of celebration actually differentiates one society from another. In order to understand the cultural bases of a community, it is necessary to understand their belief, customs and rituals. All cultures
address common life-cycle events: birth, the passage from childhood to adulthood, marriage, and death.

Thus we can say that customs are formed spontaneously because of society and are a part of social inheritance. Customs play an important role in personality building. Customs influence the individual behavior as well as social behavior. Customs occupy an important place in the society as most of them are based on religious beliefs.

The customs from child birth to death (human life cycle) among the Gujjars have been discussed below:

5.3.1. Birth rituals

The time of child birth is one such custom which has retained its characteristics unchanged over the centuries. The birth of a child is considered to be an occasion of great celebration. Traditionally boys have always been preferred over girls. Mothers with male babies were given twice more ration (food) compared to those having given birth to girls. Even the midwife or the physician delivering babies (male) was paid twice more in terms of ration and wages. But now the times have changed, modern people do not hold such notions anymore. However traditional families in rural areas still consider having male babies more superior than their counterparts.

The birth rituals traditionally start with the pregnancy itself. Gujjars do not talk about the pregnancy of their women and prefer to keep it a secret except for the women of the family and her husband. The pregnant lady usually stays at home and wears loosely stitched clothes. In Gojri pregnant lady is known as [bimar]. The
utterance \(\text{voṭi biman he}\) is used for the lady. Great care is taken and nutritious diet is served to her till the birth of the baby.

The tradition of going to parents’ home for the delivery of the baby is still followed rigorously by the Gujjars though in certain cases the baby is delivered at her husband’s place. The process of birth is usually facilitated by midwives (in absence of doctors) whom they call [daji]. The birth takes place at home and only in case of emergency hospitals are preferred. The newly born baby is known as [dzatik]. If it is a baby boy they say [isna ṣədra dzəm gəjo] and if a baby girl is born they say [isna ṣədrı dzəm gəji].

At the time of birth of child (boy/girl), the [bāg deno] [way of calling of Moslems for Namaz (Prayer)- (God is great (4 times) I testify that there is no one worth worshiping than Allah(2 times) I testify that Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) is the messenger of Allah (2 times) Come to pray(2 times) Come to success (2 times) God is great(2 times) I testify that there is no one worth worshiping than Allah (1 time)] is uttered loudly in the right ear of the baby by a known person or a relative and takbir or Muslim creed from the left ear.

After two/three hours of birth, the baby is given goat milk. This custom is considered to be auspicious as they believe that it will keep the baby healthy. The lactating mother known as [lous] is given nutritious diet for forty days called [ʃira]. This is a mixture of some wild herbs [javein] like [gəgal tof], [kuṭ], [chooro] blended along with coconut [kʰupar], black cumin [dzira] and sugar [misri]. The newly become grandmothers bring gifts like some cash, dresses (lirago set), fruits [mewa], cakes, sweets etc., what they call as [mədʒmo].
1. [sətmoh ko paṇi kəla]—The Purification Bath

After delivery the woman is considered to be unclean. The first bath after the child birth is a major event. This is done after the seventh day of delivery. The pouring of water on the seventh day is known as [sətmoh ko paṇi kəla]. The water to be poured is boiled along with some wild herbs [lous gass]. Then a spade known as [dedz] (an iron instrument with wooden handle, used to dig the land) is immersed into this boiling water, as they believe that by doing so the water is purified. The utterance [paṇi pəkko hogo] is used for this. The child is also bathed along with her mother [magəj nəl bətfə navi paṇi kəla]. The second bath for purification which is taken on the fortieth day after delivery is known as [tfəli din paṇi kəla]. These baths on seventh and fortieth day are taken to protect the new mother and baby from the diseases and other harms and were originally purification rights in the ancient times. For these forty days [lous] is kept aloof, she is not allowed to cook and serve in the kitchen [bādo kəneri] as she is unclean. She is served in separate utensils.

2. [zar kəsən]—The Head Shaving Ceremony

The head shaving ceremony of the baby is known as [zar kəsən]. The hair on the head of the new born [dzətik] is shaved after the fortieth day of his or her birth [tfəli doh pat zar kəsən] as they believe that shaving the hair of the head provides the child with strength and opens up the pores of the skin. It is also beneficial for the eye sight, the hearing and the sense of smell. This head shaving ceremony [zar kəsən] is celebrated simply and no feast is organized. No payment of money [sədkəh] is given as most of them cannot afford it. They simply call the barber [najə] to their place or sometimes they themselves shave off the hair of the new born [dzətik] what they call as [zar ape kəd de]. The knife used for shaving is called as [pak].
3. *[na kərã]—The Naming ceremony*

Name is a primary means of social interaction, it brings about merits and it is the rope of fortune. From name man attains fame. The child is given its name by the Peer (saint). He usually suggests some names depending on the month in which the child is born or the names derived from their Holy book, ‘The Quran’.

With changing times, parents or grand-parents name the child without consulting the Peer. The name giving ceremony is known as *[na kərã]*. The child is given its name after the seventh day of his or her birth.

According to the anthropologists the name of individuals in a society reflects a particular linguistic background and features of the socio-cultural and religious ethos. A definite set of surnames is associated with different sects of the community. Same is the case with people belonging to Gujjar community.

It was observed that the names of the people belonging to Gujjar community are all Muslims without any exception. The names are typically of Kashmiri style with surname at the end of the name and it can be easily marked out that the surnames in the end are related to their profession. For example, Fambda are considered to be the high class people. The Gujjars have been given the title ‘Khan’ by the people but they deny having any such surname in them. According to them ‘Khan’ surname belongs to the Pakhtoon tribe, who also live in the same vicinity. The names from column 1 to 5 are old patterned male names while as column 6 to 11 represents modern male names. Like other Muslims, Gujjars also prefer to name the male child as recommended in the Holy Quran. They choose names that indicate service to God, name of Prophets or other male names which have a good meaning. They avoid choosing names which are prohibited in Islam.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.no</th>
<th>Names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Raj Mohd.Fambda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Abdul Rashid Fambda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Abdul majeeed Fambda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mohd.Sharief Khatana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Abdul Majid Avaan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Manzoor Ahmad Khatana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sharafat Ali Ktanaha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mohd.Sulaiman Bajran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Asif Ahmad Bajran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Feroz Ahmad Avaan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Irshad Ahmad Khatana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: Male names in Fakir Gujri

While choosing a name for a girl, Gujjars like other Muslims have several possibilities. They prefer choose the names recommended in the Holy Quran. They may also use other meaningful female names which are popular but not prohibited. The names in the column numbering from 1 to 6 belong comparatively to younger generation. Females belonging to Gujjar community usually attach [Bano] and [Jan] at the end of their names instead of surnames.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.no</th>
<th>Names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nasreena Bano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rukhsana Bano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Arifa Bano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Asmat Jan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nargis Jan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rabia jan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Rafiqa Bano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kounsar Bano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Zubaida Bano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Misra Bano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Zulaikha Bano</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2: Names of Females in Fakir Gujri

4. *nal kəra*—The Circumcision Ceremony

Another ritual performed by the Gujjars is the circumcision ceremony known as [*kʰandra*] or [*nal kərã*]. At the age of three to four the child is circumcised before he attains maturity. This is the day of great rejoicing. On this day feast is organized and friends and relatives are invited by paying a personal visit. The utterance [*humna nikelo dzatik vifano he, tom davət pe a*] (meaning you are invited on the circumcision ceremony of our son) is used.

5.3.2. Marriage Rituals

Marriage is a social union or legal contract between people that creates kinship. One social benefit of marriage is that it provides a mechanism for regulating the sexual division of labour that exists to in all societies. For reasons that are both
biological and cultural, men in all societies perform some tasks, while women perform others. To maximize the chance of survival, it is important for a society to arrange the exchange of goods and services of men and women. Marriage usually brings about the domestic relationships that facilitate the exchange of these goods and services.

Marriage functions to create a set of family relationships that can provide for the material, educational, and emotional needs of children for a relatively long period of time. It is an institution in which inter-personal relationships, usually intimate and sexual, are acknowledged in a variety of ways, depending on the culture or subculture in which it is found. Marriage tradition and customs vary greatly between culture, ethnic groups, religions, countries and social classes. Most wedding ceremonies involve an exchange of wedding vows by the couple exchanging gifts (offering ring, symbolize item, flowers, money) and a public proclamation of marriage by an authority figure or leader.

Special wedding garments are often worn, and ceremony is sometimes followed by a wedding reception. Music, poetry, prayers or readings from scripture or literature are also commonly incorporated into the ceremony.

5.3.2.1. Marriage among Gujjars

Muslim Gujjars count descent patrilineal, and marriage is patrilocal with consanguine wedding sort. Marriage is usually arranged by parents. Love marriages are considered derogatory. They follow the custom of early marriages, where girls are married at an age of 14-15 years and boys at 17-18 years. It is observed that the practice of monogamy (according to which one male marries one female throughout the life) is widely practiced. Dominant majority follows this practice strictly. Though
Islam, the soul religion, believed and practiced among Gujjars has permitted marriage of a Muslim male with more than one female, if he can do justice between them and can afford them fairly on financial grounds. The practice of polygamy has become lesser. The main reason for the situation presented by the Gujjars is hard economic condition and little agricultural land available to them. Therefore, the monogamous marriage represents the general pattern, while as polygamy represents the exceptional pattern of marriage. The main reason for the polygamous type of marriage is the need of children in the family which the first wife cannot fulfill in present and in future as well. Other reasons could be the mutual conflict and lack of compatibility among the two.

It is also found that generally Gujjars practice endogamy, i.e. they marry within their own family, clan, class, caste and community. They also marry among Bakarwals (who belong to the same ethnic stock) and Pahari.

Gujjar marriages are characterized with the feature of patri-locality. It means that the bride after her marriage goes to the residence of the bride groom and settles their permanently after performing certain rituals, ceremonies and practices. This goes in consonance with the inheritance rights of the male child (which is double then the share of the female child). It is in exceptional cases that the boy goes and settles in the house of his wife after marriage. It is observed that certain hypergamous and hypogamous marriages also take place. Thus a boy of lower caste marries the girl of upper caste and vice versa.

Preferential cousin marriage is practiced by the Gujjar tribe where both cross\(^1\) and parallel\(^2\) cousin marriages take place.

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\(^1\) Cross cousins are one’s mother’s brother’s children and one’s father’s sister’s children.

\(^2\) Parallel cousins are children of one’s mother’s sister and father’s brother.
Levirate\(^3\) and Sororate\(^4\) marriages are also practiced in the community.

The marriage process in the community starts with contact of families of the boy and the girl. The criterion for a good girl includes her originality in descent, good in nature, and chastity-modesty in the character. On the other hand, the desirable traits for a boy include the image/status of his family, earning hand and a good character. Both the sides put forth these features through their relatives or family friends. In previous times there was a trend of fixing the marriage before child birth. With the changing time this trend is no more practiced.

The rituals performed in the said community are cited as follows:-

1. \([bʰaɖɔ sutʃo kərʊn]\): \([bʰaɖɔ sutʃo kərʊn]\) means fixing up the marriage. The utterance \([rɪʃto hʊmne usko lɪjo]\) is used by the groom’s family meaning that they have fixed the marriage. This custom is performed by the families of the boy and girl who are going to get engaged. In this custom the in-laws of the girl deposit an amount of eleven hundred rupees or more (according to the economic condition/status) in the bank. It is a symbolic exchange of their son and daughter. Majority of the Gujjars perform the custom of \([nɪkkaɭ]\) on this day only. \([boɭi koɖa]\) takes place two or three years down the line i.e. when a girl leaves her home to live with her husband.

2. \([mɑŋɗo kərʊn]\): It is an engagement ceremony, but this is not obligatory among Gujjars and they usually skip it. But with the changing trends some Gujjars, especially those in contact with Kashmiri speaking people, perform this ritual. On the day of \([mɑŋɡo kərʊn]\) (engagement) the guests from the groom’s home come to the bride’s home along with gifts and sweets. They are given a special treatment, and before their

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\(^3\) Levirate is the custom where by a widow is expected to marry the brother of her dead husband.

\(^4\) Sororate is the practice of a widower’s marrying the sister of his deceased wife.
arrival, the bride is decorated by her friends and relatives to sit among the guests. There are traditional Gojri songs which are sung on this occasion by the females.

3. \[\text{\textit{viəh ma sədan tfalija}}\]: \[\text{\textit{viəh}}\] in Gojri means ‘marriage’ and \[\text{\textit{sədan tfalija}}\] means ‘to invite’. Thus the utterance \[\text{\textit{viəh ma sədan tfalija}}\] means ‘to invite for marriage’. It defines an invitation ceremony. In olden days, the trend of sending invitation cards was not a part of their culture. In those days the invitation was given by paying a personal visit to the houses of relatives, neighbors and friends. Even nowadays, this tradition has not completely vanished. Even these days, for inviting close relatives and some close neighbor’s, personal visits are needed. Invitation cards in this case can be offensive. In Gujjar community almost everyone is invited in this way only, as majority of them reside at the same place with only few exceptions.

4. \[\text{\textit{ləkdʒi kəran tfalijo}}\]: \[\text{\textit{ləkdʒi}}\] in Gojri means wood and \[\text{\textit{kəran tfalijo}}\] means to collect. Thus the utterance \[\text{\textit{ləkdʒi kəran tfalijo}}\] means collecting the firewood from the jungle which is to be used in the marriage ceremony. In this ritual friends and relatives take part. They form a group known as \[\text{\textit{lajtri}}\] in Gojri. They collectively go to the forest to collect firewood \[\text{\textit{dzəjan kəran}}\] to cook food for marriage ceremony.

5. \[\text{\textit{mədi rat}}\]: Literally means ‘the night of henna’. \[\text{\textit{mədi- Heena; rat- night}}\]. Henna is a powder made from the dried leaves of the plant \textit{Lawsonia inermis}. This powder after mixing with water is applied on hands and hair for color. \[\text{\textit{mədi rat}}\] is typically associated with this henna. Customarily, both the bride and the groom use henna on the \[\text{\textit{mədi rat}}\]. Henna is applied to the hands and feet of the bride, and on the little finger of the right hand of the groom. Usually bride’s close friend applies henna on her hands and feet. Importantly, this ceremony of application of henna has to occur in the night that is why the named as \[\text{\textit{mədi ra t}}\]. On this day few girls from the
bridegrooms place visit brides home with baskets of henna [mêdi], dry fruits etc. These girls [mezman] also apply henna to the bride.

6. [ab seron]: [a:b] means water and [seron] means to pour. Thus [ab seron] is the ceremony when the bride takes bath on the day of wedding. When the bride comes out after the bath, she offers prayers and recites the Quran. Then all the ladies gather around her and sing Gojri folk songs.

7. [nikkah]: It is the actual marriage ceremony, which is headed by a Maulana who recites [k̪ʰutba-nikkah]. [nikkah] is a religious ceremony by which the two marriage partner’s union becomes complete as per the Islamic laws. At the time of [nikkah] few hadith {(sayings of Prophet Muhammad) (PBUH)} are also recited. It involves getting the consent of both bride and groom for being each other’s life partner. The consent is taken by a very close relative (usually uncle) called [vəkil] (lawyer) in presence of two other persons called [shahid] (witnesses) who too are close relatives of the bride or groom. While giving the consent, the bride or groom has to say [kəbol he] (yes) three times to prove his/her will for the marriage. After taking the consent of groom, these three persons visit the bride’s house. There, in presence of Maulana and the brides close relatives, an amount which is to be paid to the bride as security, on behalf of groom is called [mahar]. In earlier times mostly cattle was given in [mahar] but now cash is preferred over it which is deposited in bride’s bank account. They believe that this money fixed for her in the bank will be useful to her in her tough times. Then the consent of bride is taken by her close relatives in the same way as that of the groom. Afterwards the Maulana confirms the satisfaction from both partners for [nikkah] and gives it an orthographic shape on a paper called [nikkah nama]. It is to be prepared for both sides, so that it remains as an authentic report for [nikkah]. After the completion
of this ceremony, all the people related to the \[nikkah\] including the Maulana are served with \[kəhva\] and Wazwan.

8. \[sir munna\]: This is the hair trimming ceremony of the bride groom. The bridegroom doesn’t get his hair trimmed for few days before marriage ceremony and then on the day of wedding, the bridegroom sits at a place where he is being shaved and his hair is being cut by the barber. The ladies gather round that place to keep their singing continuous throughout. Moreover, as a mark of celebration, they throw almonds and candies over his head.

9. \[vᵃh\]: \[vᵃh\] in Gojri means marriage. On this day, a grand feast (Wazwan) is organized. This is followed by the arrival of the bridegroom \[məradʒ\] along with the people who accompany the bridegroom to bride’s house, who are called as \[salar\], to take the bride \[boṭi\] to his own home. \[salar\] along with the bridegroom \[məradʒ\] are served with a grand feast called as \[maradʒ sal\]. This ceremony usually takes place during night. No tents etc. are used for the function but the top of the \[kotha\] is decorated where the groom is served.

10. \[boṭi kuḍa roksət lijo\]: \[boṭi\] in Gojri means bride. On the day of wedding ceremony when the bride has to leave with the groom, before that all her relatives, neighbors and friends come to see off her. This is called as \[ruksət lijo\]. The bride travels to her in-laws place in a traditional \[doli\] which is carried by her relatives. If her in-laws place is far off still there is a tradition of taking the bride in a \[doli\] half way and then by car. When the bride reaches her in-laws house, her brother accompanies her. On this occasion gift is presented to him by his sister’s in-laws. \[səheli/dod məadʒ\] (mid- wife) goes along with the bride and stays with her for seven days.
11. [burko tʃakã/μu kʰolan]: In Gojri burko means veil which covers the face and tʃakã means to uncover. When the bride reaches the groom’s house, usually her sasu (mother-in-law) or [nand] (sister-in-law) takes off the bride’s veil and uncovers her face. This custom is known as [burko tʃakã] or [μu kʰolan]. All other women present there keep on singing the traditional songs which are meant for that occasion. This is followed by the mother-in-law presenting the bride with some gift which is usually in the form of gold ornament or cash. The bride in turn also presents some gift to her mother–in–law which is called [sasu hafí kãtʰ]. There is a tradition of keeping a small child in brides lap called [bɑtʃto ʃodí ʃoli mai ɾəkʰa]. [bɑtʃto] means child, ʃodí ʃoli means your lap, [me ɾəkʰa] means to keep. The bride’s mother-in-law makes the child to sit in her lap. Doing this is considered a good omen. The bride is blessed with the wishes of conceiving soon.

12. [sat moh]: In Gojri [sat moh] means seventh day. The period of seven days after the marriage ceremony is celebrated on the traditional lines in Gujjar community. During these seven days the bride is treated like an esteemed person at her in-laws place. No one from the bride’s home comes to see her in these seven days. On the seventh day [sæt moh] one person from her family comes to take her along. She stays at her parents place for 3-4 days after which her [kərwale ka bai] (brother-in-law) comes to take her back to her husband’s place.

13. [pur sal]: It is celebrated during the first seven days of marriage usually on the third or the fourth day. On this day the bride and bridegroom are invited by the bride’s family. All the family members and relatives of t bride present gifts to the bridegroom. Bride is supposed to wear new set of clothes, shoes, purse etc. while going back to groom’s home which is offered to her by her family.
5.3.2.2. Practice of Exchange

Today, expenditure on a marriage is shared equally, even though traditionally it was the groom’s family that incurred a larger share of the expenses. In most cases, both the bride price and the dowry value are negotiated carefully and have a direct bearing on their scale, which is usually coordinated with the scale of the marriage festivities and the resulting prestige derived from the display. The scale of exchange and ceremonies vary with the social rank of the families involved and the social distance between the households. In most cases, any household which aspires for propriety and prestige will demand, and expect to give, the bride price and dowry.

Kinship also has an impact on the scale of exchange in a marriage among the Gujjars. Kinship ties seem to affect the bride price and dowry exchange in proportion. The bride price may be greatly reduced when marrying one’s close kin, while the scale of exchange is greatly enhanced in marriages between unrelated or distinctly related families. Kinship would also have a similar impact on the scope and method of negotiations of exchange. Thus, it may be inferred that the scale of exchange will be proportional to the social distance between the households, and, conversely expectations and the magnitude of exchange will be least when dealing with the household of a close kin.

Dowry has become prominent among the Gujjars as well. Today they may demand goods along with cash and mal (sheep, goat and horses) in marriage. According to some of them, dowry is not yet common in their society and there is no undue pressure on the girls or boy’s kin to give lavish gifts and money in order to procure a good match. They also believe that the dignity and respect commanded by a [kunba] is given more importance than their economic status when looking for a match.
5.3.2.3. Divorce and Remarriage

There is a provision for divorce among the Gujjars, keeping in view the Islamic law, even though divorce or [tolak] is disapproved in their society. However, divorce may take place in extreme circumstances and is known to be sought more by women than men. Divorce is perceived as a stigma by a majority of women in most of the societies. Therefore in most of the cases, the ill-treated women have no choice but to bear the cruelty of their husbands. They would even hesitate to approach a Sardar, or chief, to interfere because they are scared that their husbands will divorce them once they hear about the complaint. According to them, divorce is not a real option; the stigma attached to divorced women is so grave that it is almost impossible for a divorcee to find her a worthy groom for the second time. The fact that women are frequently ill-treated in their second marriage, does not encourage suffering women to seek the option of divorce. Divorced women, on the other hand complain of being branded as tainted and undesirable. This could be an exaggeration here, as the unequal male-female ratio puts women in more privileged position vis-a-vis men, the proportion of males among the Gujjar’s being higher. Hence, it is unlikely that divorced women will stay single for long.

Widow Remarriage is permissible in Gujjar society, and is in accordance with Islamic law. However, an attempt is made to retain the widow within the family by practicing levirate marriage under which a brother of the deceased will marry the widow. No elaborate ceremonies mark such a wedding, which is performed with the simple rite of placing a sheet [tʃadar] over the widow’s head by her new husband who also gives her bangles, as a gift. Levirate marriages, as in most societies, are practiced with the rationale of retaining the property of a lost kin as well as his children within
the kin gro. In Gujjar community women can remarry after their period of Iddah\(^5\) is over.

### 5.3.3. Death rituals

Funeral customs vary widely between cultures and between the religious affiliations within those cultures. A funeral is a ceremony marking a person’s death. Funerary customs are based on the beliefs and tradition of a culture in remembrance of the dead. This takes the form of the actual funeral service, prayers and rituals undertaken in their honor. The Muslim Gujjars bury the dead body in the graveyard.

Burial rituals take place as soon as possible and include.

1. Bathing the deceased
2. Enshrouding dead body in a white cotton or linen cloth.
3. Funeral prayer.
4. Burial of the dead body in a grave.
5. Positioning the deceased so that the head is faced towards Mecca.

#### 1. [paṇi tu kəɖjo]—Bathing the deceased

In Gojri the dead body or corpse is known as [maet]. The corpse is bathed; the purpose is to physically cleanse the corpse. The bathing of the corpse is known as [paṇi tu kəɖjo]. The exact manner: the method, style and accessories used for bathing the corpse may vary from locale and temporal position. However the deceased is bathed, it is an essential ritual of the Sunnah of the last prophet in Islam, Muhammad (PBUH), and therefore a part of the Islamic Sharia. Ideally, this occurs as soon as possible, within hours of the actual death.

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\(^5\) Iddah is the period, three months after a divorce and four months and ten days after the death of spouse, is calculated on the number of menses that a women has. Iddah is intended to sure that the male parent of any off spring produced after the cessation of nikah would be known.
The orthodox practice is that the body is washed while a cloth is put on top of it so that his/her aura (keeping specific organs of the body hidden according to Sharia) is kept hidden. The water is then poured over the body with the cloth on the body. The awra should be covered at all times.

The "washers" are commonly the same gender as the deceased and immediate family members.

2. [@fan]—Enshrouding the deceased

The corpse [@et] is typically wrapped in a simple plain cloth [@fan]. This is done to respect the dignity and privacy of the deceased. The shroud [@fan] is mostly white in color. However, the shroud should be simple and modest. For men using only three pieces of cloth and for females five pieces of cloth [@fan]. The deceased may be kept in this state for several hours, allowing well-wishers to pass on their respects and condolences. After shrouding, the corpse is placed in a coffin known as [@dzo] in Gojri.

3. [@nazo]—The Funeral prayer

The Funeral Prayer is known as [@naz]. The Muslims of the community gather to offer their collective prayers for the forgiveness of the dead. Women do not attend funerals, and the friends and relations of the deceased walk behind the bier reciting Quranic verses ‘laillaha illalah’. Muslims allow no delay for carrying their dead to the place of interment, and necessarily attend the funeral on foot. The funeral service [@nazo] is recited in a mosque or in some open space close to the graveyard.

The [@nazo] prayer is as follows:
• Like Eid prayer, the [džinazo] prayer incorporates an additional (four) Takbirs, the Arabic name for the phrase *Allahu Akbar*, *but* there is no Ruku' (*bowing*) and Sajda (*prostrating*).

• Supplication for the deceased and mankind is recited.

4. *[dəfɨn]—The Burial*

The deceased is then taken for burial *[dəfɨn]*. The exact manner, customs and style of the grave, the burial and so forth may vary by regional custom.

The grave for the deceased is dug by the family member or friend/neighbor. This is known as *[kəbar kəudna]*. The grave should be aligned perpendicular to the Qibla (i.e. Mecca). The body is placed in the grave without a casket, lying on its right side, and facing the Qibla. Thus Grave markers *[patar]* are simple, because outwardly lavish displays are discouraged in Islam. Many times graves may even be unmarked, or marked only with a simple wreath. However, it is becoming more common for family members to erect grave stone (mostly marble).

Three fist-sized spheres of hand-packed soil (prepared beforehand by the gravediggers) are used as props, one under the head, one under the chin and one under the shoulder. The lowering of the corpse *[maet]* and positioning of the soil is done by the next of kin. In the case of a departed husband, the male brother or brother-in-law usually performs this task. In the case of a departed wife, the husband undertakes this (if physically able). If the husband is elderly, then the eldest male son (or son-in-law) is responsible for lowering, alignment and propping the departed.

When the body is lowered into the grave each person present there takes up a cod and recites Quranic verse in Arabic meaning “We created you from it, and return you into it, and from it we will raise you a second time”. More prayers are then said,
asking for forgiveness of the deceased, and reminding the dead of their profession of faith.

The corpse is then fully buried by the gravediggers, who may stamp or pat down the grave to shape. Commonly the eldest male will supervise. After the burial, the Muslims who have gathered to pay their respects to the dead collectively pray for the forgiveness of the dead. This collective prayer is the last formal collective prayer for the dead.

5. [tazijät]— The Mourning Period

The loved ones and relatives observe a 4-day mourning period. Islamic mourning is observed with increased devotion, receiving visitors and condolences, and avoiding decorative clothing and jewelry. The mourners who visit the bereaved family are referred to as [mezman aja tazijät ko]. For a period of three days the food and the tea for the bereaved family is arranged by the relatives or neighbors. The utterance [tre din kar roti nai p kani] is used meaning food is not to be cooked for three days. On the fourth day [tʃouth] the bereaved family prepares tea. In the evening food is served to the priests who recite Quranic verses and send fateh to the deceased. [kʰatmi sharief] (a fixed devotional prayer which consists of reciting Quran) is performed by priests. This is known as [kʰatam paḍava]. On the first Thursday evening after Magrib prayers Quranic verses and [fateh] to the deceased is recited again. The bereaved family is again visited on the fortieth day known as [ɪfalimoh]. On this day the close relatives and neighbors are invited for food. The food is cooked by the traditional cook know as [vaza]. Priests are invited to recite the Quranic verses. The bereaved family is again visited on the first Shab-i-baraat and Eid.
Widows observe an extended mourning period *iddah* (period of waiting), 4 months and 10 days long, in accordance with the Quran. During that time, the widow is not to remarry, interact with *na-mahram* (with whom she can marry). This rule is to confirm that the woman is not pregnant with the deceased's child prior to remarrying. However in case of emergencies such as visiting a doctor because of a health emergency, the widow can interact with [*na-mahram*].

Women are prohibited to enter the graveyard. They can recite Quranic verses (*fateh*) from home only. It is believed that reciting Quranic verses gives relief to the deceased.

Gujjars do not decorate the grave with flowers; candles etc. as they believe that only the faith and good deeds of the deceased will protect him in the grave. The clothes of the deceased are usually buried or given to the poor.

**5.3.4. Rituals and Beliefs**

After two/three hours of birth, the baby is given goat milk. This custom is considered to be auspicious as they believe that it will keep the baby healthy. The hair on the head of the new born [*dzatik*] is shaved after the fortieth day of his or her birth [*tfali doh pat æær kasən*] as they believe that shaving the hair of the head provides the child with strength and opens up the pores of the skin. It is also beneficial for the eye sight, the hearing and the sense of smell.

After delivery the woman is considered to be unclean, she is given the purification bath on the seventh day with the specially prepared water including some wild herbs and a spade. There is a belief that while adding these wild herbs and immersing the spade into the boiling water purifies it.
At the time of marriage when the bride is unveiled by her mother-in-law, there is a tradition of keeping a small child in brides lap called [bətʃə tʃɔdɪ tʃɔli me raka]. The bride’s mother-in-law makes the child to sit in her lap. Doing this is considered a good omen. It is believed that the bride would conceive soon.

Gujjars have a belief that only the faith and good deeds of the deceased will protect him in the grave. It is also believed that reciting Quranic verses gives relief to the deceased.