CHAPTER 1
JĀṬ ORIGINS: NOTIONS OF COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Medieval India was a period of transition during which several marginalized social groups restructured their foundations and modes of existences, and accrued considerable economic and social advantages offered by the contemporary changes. The Jats were one of such people who significantly moved from the periphery into the mainstream and brought about substantial changes in their social and economic position. The study of the Jāṭs is primarily based on the Perso-Arabic sources that contain useful references to contemporary communities, particularly those who resided in nodal areas of imperial territories or resisted the imperial masters. The asymmetrical information provided by these sources do not adequately compensate the need for reliable historical evidence on the Jāṭs, and therefore, a fair amount of speculation continue to dwell at certain points, particularly where precise information is completely missing. However, it is increasingly being realized that the unrecorded episodes of Jāṭ history can be retrieved by a judicious utilization of their oral traditions.

This chapter has two objectives. The first is to trace the origins and historical roots of the Jāṭs to provide a meaningful basis to support the theoretical framework of mobility and change. The second is to delineate the process that contributed to the notions of community and formation of their identity.
Map 2: Upper Jamunā–Gangā Doāb c. CE 1595

SECTION A
ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL ROOTS

Etymological Roots of ‘Jāṭ’:

The nomenclature of the ‘Jāṭ’ is complicated by the fact that more than two scores of the variants of this term have been reported from a wide range of sources from diverse regions. The 6th century Pāli inscription in nail-headed character spells this race as ‘Jit’.

Etymologically the term seems to have originated from the epithet of their supposedly first King, Jit Salindra, mentioned in this inscription. In the opinion of Tod, in Panjāb and Rājasthān, the people of this race retained their original name ‘Jit’. According to the Encyclopaedia of Islam, the term ‘Djat’ (‘Jaṭt’) is employed by the Persian translator of Chachnāma, the author of the Tārīkh i-Sind and Shah Wali Allah al-Dihalwi in his Persian letters. The term ‘Jaṭṭ’ is also referred by Delhi Sultanate chroniclers Alberuni, Gardezi, Baihaqi, Isami. For the Arabicized form, the term ‘Zat’ or ‘Zutt’ was employed because in Arabic the letter ‘J’ is changed into ‘Z.’ The Arab geographer, Ibn Hauqal also describes the Jāṭs as ‘Zat.’ It has been reported that a ‘Djat’ (Zutt) physician, who was apparently well-versed in witch-craft also, is said to have been called in to treat Hazrat Muhammad’s wife Āisha, when she fell seriously ill.

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1 Tod, Annals, ii, pp. 914-17.
2 Raza, op cit., p. 54.
3 Tod, Annals, i, p. 85; ii, pp. 138, 180, 299.
7 Baihaqi, Tārīkh i-Baihaqi, (ed.) Q. Ghani and A.A. Fayyaz, Tehran, 1946, p. 434.
9 Ibn Hauqal, Kitab Masalik Wa al-Mamalik, (tr.) Elliot and Dowson, History of India as told by its own Historians, Delhi, 2001, vol. i, p. 40.
10 Encycl. Islam, p. 488.
argued\textsuperscript{11} that the name ‘Djät’ (Zutt) is basically an Indo-\-Āryan form which has a post Sanskritic Indian origin and wide distribution over the Indo-Pak subcontinent, particularly Panjāb, Sind, Rājasthān and western Uttar Pradesh.

It may be noted that the regional variation is amply clear by the differences in pronunciation in two distant but analogous regions, namely the present day Panjāb, Pakistan and Afghanistan where they are pronounced as ‘Jātt’ or ‘Juṭṭ’, and north India where they are called ‘Jāt’ with long vowel and a long phonetic ‘a’.\textsuperscript{12} In the Sindi dialect, the Jāṭs are pronounced and written as ‘Dyat’ which means ‘a camel driver or breeder of camels’.\textsuperscript{13} An interesting fact of phonetic significance, reported by some scholars\textsuperscript{14} is that in Pakistan, the camelmen and graziers among the Baloch are shown as a Jāṭ clan within the tribe of the same name, but their name is pronounced with a soft ‘t’ as opposed to the hard ‘t’, used for the cultivator. In the poetic legends of Panjāb, they were expressed as ‘Jaṭṭā’.\textsuperscript{15}

The author of \textit{Mujmalu-t Tawarikh} tells us that by the Arabs the Hindus are called ‘Jāṭs.’\textsuperscript{16} Ibbetson\textsuperscript{17} also suggests that on the Lower Indus the word ‘Jāṭ’ is applied generically to a congeries of tribes, Jāṭs proper, Rājpūts, lower castes, and mongrels, who have no points in common save their Mahomedan religion, their agricultural occupation,

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Cited Raza, op. cit., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{14} Richard F Burton, \textit{Sind and the Races that inhabit the valley of the Indus with notices of the Topography and History of Province}, New Delhi, 1992, p. 411.

\textsuperscript{16} ‘Pagri Sambhal, O Jattā’ [Take care of your turban (hold your prestige), O Jattā]—The popular Panjiibi song of the colonial times. Cited by Pawar, op. cit., p. 339.

\textsuperscript{17} Translated from original Sanskrit text into Arabic as \textit{Mujmalu-t Tawarikh}, (Eng. tr.) ED i, op. cit., p. 104.
and their subordinate position. The author of *Dabistan-i Mazahib*\(^{18}\) (c. 1655) mentions that in the dialect of Penjab 'Jāṭ' means a villager or a rustic.' The Deccani chronicler Ferishta\(^{19}\) describes them as 'Juts' with short vowel 'u' and emphasis on 't.' The first historical reference to these people as Jāts with long vowel 'a' and hard 't' is found in *Ā'in-i-Akbarī.*\(^{20}\) Since then, in the Gangetic Doāb, these peasant classes are known as Jāts.

**Origins of the Jāts:**

Down from the colonial period, a fair amount of scholarship and speculation has been attempted over the problem of Jāt origin. But the rigidity of opinions and the inability to accommodate scientific interpretations and the results of new findings have resulted in historically incompatible notions about their origin and antiquities. However, for our purpose the origin of the Jāts raises two main questions — the question of their foreign origin and their ethnological connections with the Rājpūts. Here, an attempt would be made to put their origin into a process of historical investigation, test the validity of existing opinions and situate the Jāt origin and evolution in correct historical framework.

James Tod\(^{21}\) and Alexander Cunningham\(^{22}\) were the pioneer scholars who formulated the argument that the Jāts belonged to the Indo-Scythian stock. Cunningham

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18 Zulfiqar Mubed, *Dabistān-i Mazāhib,* (tr.) David Shea and Anthony Troyer as *Hinduism. During the Mughal India of the 17th century,* Patna, 1993, p. 252.
"identifies the Jāts with the Xanthii of Strabo and the Jātii of Pliny and Ptolemy, and fixes their parent country on the banks of the Oxus river between Bactria, Hyrkania and Khorasmia." He holds that the Jāts "probably entered Panjāb from their homeland on the Oxus soon after the Meds or Mands, who were also Indo-Scythians, and who moved into the Panjāb about 100 BCE. The Jāts possibly first occupied the Indus valley as far as Sind, whither the Meds followed them about the beginning of the present era. But before the earliest Mahomedan invasion the Jāts had spread into the Panjāb proper, where they were firmly established in the beginning of the 11th century. By the time of Babur, the Jāts of the Salt-range tract had been subdued by the Gakkhars, Awans and Janjuas, while as early as the 7th century the Jāts and Meds of Sind were ruled over by a Brahmana dynasty." James Tod considers the Jāts as one of the great Rājpūt tribes, and extends his identification with the Getae to both races. But here Cunningham differs, holding the Rājpūts to belong to the original Āryan stock, and the Jāts to belong to a later wave of immigrants from the North-West, probably of Scythian race. The theory of the Scythian origin of the Jāts was based on a premise that the Scythians were foreign invaders and racially distinct from the Āryans. Therefore, the identification of the Jāts with the Scythians led to a natural belief that the Jāts are also non-Āryans, non-Indians and invaders. This theory found another distinguished adherent—Vincent Smith—who argued that when the invaders such as Indo-Scythian, Huns etc settled down in India, their military leaders and royal houses were absorbed as Rājpūts, their cultivating communities were accepted as Jāts while their cattle-breeders were adopted as Gujars.

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24 Ibbetson, op. cit., p. 97.
25 Ibid.
26 Vincent Smith, Early History of India, 1924, p. 411.
From the beginning of the 20th century, the theory of Scythian origin of the Jāts received a major challenge from the new discoveries and developments in the fields of Philalogy, History and Anthropology. Grierson, Trump and Beames, taking cue from the language and physical types, argued that the Jāts are the pure descendants of the Indo-Āryan. According to Grierson Lahnda is the language of Western Panjāb which is also known by several other names such as Western Punjabi, Jaṭṭi (language of the Jaṭṭ tribe), Uchi and Hindki. Taking 74° Long E as the line roughly dividing Lahnda-speaking areas from Panjābi-speaking areas, and taking cue from the traces of Sindi in Multān area, Grierson suggests northward migration of the Jāts from Sind into southern Panjāb. Trump and Beames argued that ‘both in consideration of their physical type and language, which has been authoritatively pronounced as a pure dialect of Hindi without the slightest trace of Scythian, the Jāts are the pure descendants of the Āryans. Though these scholars outright rejected the Scythian origin of the Jāts, they shared the notions that Scythians were foreign invaders and hence could not have been the progenitors of the Jāts. But the main drawback among these authorities was that they were primarily philologists and philology cannot be trusted in ethnological questions. The voice of the philologists was silenced by the advancement in ethnology, when Cuno remarked—‘Language is neither the proof of a race nor is a race coextensive with language which is stable whereas race is persistent.’ The debate between philology and ethnology complicated the problem of the Jāt origin mainly because both of them failed to recognize

27 Pawar, op. cit., p. 176.
29 Ibid., Also cited Habib (1976), op. cit., pp. 93-95.
31 Ibid.
the significance of anthropology which could claim to possess important clue to the origin of races as well as correct and corroborate the conclusions of the two sciences. The Scythian theory of Jāts origin received another setback from Herbert Risley, an anthropologist who conducted physical measurements of the people of India with his anthrometrical apparatus and identified the Jāts, Rājpūts and others as the true representatives of the Indo-Āryans. Similarly some other anthropologists also argued that the Scythians invaders with brachycephalic and mesocephalic heads, straight eyes, platyrhine noses, short stature and high cheek bones could never have been the progenitors of the delicocephalic, leptorhine, tall-statured, broad-shouldered and fair-complexioned Jāts, Rājpūts and Khatris who share with the Indo-Āryans the same physical features. However, these anthropologists too shared the perception of their predecessors that the Scythians were racially different from the Āryans.

The Scythian theory received a heavy drubbing at the hands of the anthropologists yet it cannot be denied that it possessed an ‘inherent truth’ which was not completely visualized by its antagonists. On the other hand, HS Pawar interpreted the Scythian theory in reverse form by arguing that the Scythians were the progenitors of the Jāts, not as foreign invaders but as pure Indo-Āryans. To him the confusion of this theory has largely been at the level of the identification of the Scythians who originally belonged to the Āryan stock but due to false notions incorrectly perceived as non-Āryans. The main argument that supports Pawar’s hypothesis is that the Scythians were actually Āryans

33 Ibid., pp. 58-59; Elliot, op. cit., p.134; Haddon, Races of Man, New York, 1925, p. 112.
34 Pawar, op. cit. p. 178.
35 Ibid.
who on account of their acclimatization to new ecological areas developed certain brachycephalic features.

Cunningham\(^{36}\) has tried to identify the Jāts with the Xanthii of Strabo and the Jātti of Pliny and Ptolemy and on this basis has tried to locate their homeland on the banks of the Oxus river between Bactria, Hyrkania and Khorasmia. According to Pliny, the original home of the Jāttis or Jāts happened to be Zotale or Yothale, irrigated by Margus river. "Their course from the Oxus to the Indus may, perhaps, be dimly traced in the Xuthi of Dionysius of Samos and the Zuthi of Ptolemy, who occupied the Karmanian desert on the frontier of Drangiana. They may have been best known in early times by the general name of their horde as Abars instead of by their tribal name as Jāts. According to this view, the main body of the Jātti would have occupied the district of Abiria and the towns of Pardabathra and Bardaxema in Sind, while the Panjāb was principally colonised by their brethren the Meds." In this context Pritchard observed. "The supposition that the Jāts or Jāts of the Indus are descendants of the Yuetschi does not appear altogether preposterous, but it is supported by no proof except the very trifling one of a slight resemblance of names. The physical characters of the Jāts are very different from those attributed to the Yuetschi and the kindred tribes by the writers cited by Klaproth and Abel Remusat, who say they are of sanguine complexions with blue eyes." Some of the scholar have tried to identify the Jāts with the Kṣatriya tribe of the Jatharas; but in opposition to this Growse\(^{37}\) argues that their home is always placed in a south-east quarter, while it is certain that the Jāts came from the West. Another theory identifies them with the Jartika, who with the Bahika and Takka are

\(^{36}\) Cunningham, op. cit., p. 55.

suggested to have been the original inhabitants of the Panjâb. During the time of Justin, the Jâts were known as Aratta, i.e. Arashtra, or "people without a king", and are represented by the Adraistae of Arrian, who places them on the banks of the Ravi.38 According to Nesfield's theory,39 the word Jât is nothing more than the modern Hindi pronunciation of Yadu or Jadu, the tribe in which Krishna was born, which is now represented by the modern Jadon Râjpûts.

It has been argued that the Jâts contributed to some extent in the formation of Gypsies. These linkages of the Jâts with Gypsies have been traced on grounds of language as well as the movements of the Jâts. There are some indications about six westerly movements of the races of the North-western Frontier, who are often collectively called as Jâts.40 There are some blurred references to a transplanting of Kerks, Sindis, Kolis, Meds, and other West Indian tribes before the Christian era. It is also evident that the Indian musicians (Luris) were brought to Persia by Bahram Gor in c. 450 CE, from where they dispersed. It is also known that a body of Kerks, Sangars and Jâts were deported from the Persian Gulf to Asia Minor. In the wake of the invasion of India by Mahmud Ghazni in 1025, a body of the Jâts were deported westward. Similarly, the Jâts were again deported westwards following the conquest of the Seljuks in the 12th century and those of Osmanli Turks in the 14th century. A westward movement of the Jâts was again reported after Timur carried out ravages in India.

**Origin Myths:**

Myth is generally regarded as a 'sacred' narrative, from which legends and fairy tales are not always clearly distinguishable. In a common tradition of analysis, myth is above all explanatory, i.e. how something came to be as it is? It is believed that the

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38 Cunningham, *Bhilasa Topes*, p. 89; Cited Pawar, op. cit., p. 179.
meaning of a myth lies below the narrative surface, being detectable by a close analysis of the individual incidents and items in the narrative, by their regrouping, and by their study in the context of the transformations they undergo in all versions of the myth. They then reveal an endless struggle to overcome 'contradictions'. If study of myth is linked with psychological, literary, and classical and sociological studies, it may no longer remain a 'sacred' narrative but tends to become a whole value-bestowing area of belief.

The origin of ancient communities, as determined by modern historical investigation, tends to diverge from the picture framed by mythology. The mutually contradicting positions and the polarization of the results produced by history and mythology respectively add to the confusion and distract us from arriving at a generally acceptable conclusion. The main difficulty is not in the difference of the nature of the two disciplines but rather from the failure to recognize the inherent ability of mythology to contribute to the process of unveiling the remote past.

The value of a tradition like myth is not determined by the mode of its expression because a simple society may be prone to mythical narrative instead of historical narrative. Here, when a tradition is expressed in the form of a sacred narrative, its significance cannot be reduced merely by dismissing it as a non-historical narrative. In mythological traditions too, both the purpose of action as well as the agency of action are as human as in the case of historical traditions, despite differences in their relative importance. Since the efficacy of the historical traditions is restricted to the immediate

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past. the events occurring in the more remote periods often take the form of a myth. Myth is in a sense a prototype history since it is a selection of ideas composed in narrative form for the purpose of preserving and giving significance to an important aspect of the past. Hence, the analysis and interpretation of myths can reveal the more emphatic assumptions of a society as well as some ‘grand events’ of the past, such as the creation of the world, the origin of man and gods, the justification of kinship etc. Myths can also be seen as charters of validation in which the aim was to provide a sanction for current situations. Owing to their social underpinnings, myths become very important for the study of social history.

The origin of the Jāts is interwoven with a good deal of historical and mythological material. About a dozen theories on the mythical origin of the Jāts were expounded by the end of the 19th century. Here, an attempt would be made to analyse these theories in order to extract corroborative evidence which can enlighten some dark areas of the Jāt origin and enable us to situate the Jāt community in a correct historical perspective.

The first attempt at tracing the Jāt origin comes from a Jāt Sanskrit scholar and Rājā of Beswa, Aligarh, Pandit Giribar Prasad. He employed a Śāstri named Angad Sharmā to find the origin of the Jāts in the light of orthodox literature. Angad Sharmā, relying mainly on the similarity of sound, lighted upon the Jatharas as the hypothetical ancestors of the Jāts; and propounded the Jathara theory in 1869 in his book

43 Ibid., p. 294
44 Ibid.
45 Fontana Dict. op. cit., 556.
Jāthopattī. It is a catena of all the ancient texts mentioning the tribe of Jatharas, whose origin is related as follows in the *Padma Purāṇa*:

When the son of Bhrigu [i.e., Parshuram] exterminated the warrior-class, their daughters, seeing the world empty of the Kṣatriya and being desirous of getting sons, laid hold of the Brahmans and carefully cherishing the seed sown in their womb [Jathara] brought forth Kṣatriya sons called Jatharas.

Angad Sharmā based himself on *Padama Purāṇa, Brahmand Purāṇa, Vāyu Purāṇa, Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and *Bhagvata Purāṇa* from where he collected the accounts of the birth of the new Kṣatriya race and the Jāthra mountain. The Parsurāma myth occurs in the *Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Padama Purāṇa* and *Agni Purāṇa*. Angad Sharmā, impressed by the similarity of sounds of Jāthra (womb), Jathara (mountain) and Jāt, developed a link between the three. Growse remarks: "There is no great intrinsic improbability in the hypothesis that the word Jathara has been shortened into Jāt, but if one race is really descended from the other, it is exceedingly strange that the fact should never have been so stated before. This difficulty might be met by replying that the Jāts have always been, with very few exceptions, an illiterate class, who were not likely to trouble themselves about recording their mythological pedigrees; while the story of their parentage would not be of sufficient interest to induce outsiders to investigate it. But a more unanswerable objection is found in a passage, which the Shastri himself quotes from the *Brhat Samhitā* (xiv. 8). This places the home of the Jatharas in the south-eastern quarter, whereas it is certain that the Jāts have come from the west..."

The second attempt at shedding light over the mystery of Jāt origin also comes from a Jāt pleader of Meerut, Chaudhary Lahiri Singh at the request of the census.

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47 Pawar, op. cit., p. 3.
officials of 1883. In his booklet, *The Ethnology of the Jāts*, he propounded another Jathara theory of Jāt origin. He derives the word Jāt from *Jathara*, but he differs from Angad Sharmā by making the *Jatharas* a foreign people deriving their name from the mountain *Jathara*, mentioned in the *Mahabharata*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and *Bhāgvat Purāṇa*. The first two mention the country of the *Jatharas* along with Kalinga, Kashi and Aparkashi.49

However, the Jāts cannot be held to be the same people as the ancient Jatharas, because the doubtful testimony of the similarity of sounds breaks down in the face of the significant absence of any tradition whatsoever, connecting the two peoples. One might close his eyes against the irrationality of the case, if the Jatharas had been altogether an extinct people. But they still survive in Southern India, without claiming any connection with Jāts. These Jatharas belong to a subsection of the Deccani Maratha Brahmans called *Karhadas*.50

Another mythological theory of Jāt origin is that from the Jāta (matted locks) of Lord Shiva, propounded by Gorakh Sinha in his early medieval work *Deva-Saṁhitā*.

On the occasion when Himachal or Daksha Raja, father–in–law of Mahadeva was performing a great sacrifice, he invited all the gods to be present except his son–in–law Mahadev (Siva). The latter’s wife, Parvati was however very eager to go; so she asked Mahadev to let her attend. even though she had not been invited. Mahadev was unwilling to allow her, but finally consented. Daksha treated Parvati with great want of respect at the sacrifice, so she came home and told Mahadev about her plight. When Mahadev heard all this he was filled with wrath and untying his matted hair (Jāta) dashed it on the ground. whence two powerful beings arose from it. He sent them to destroy Daksha’s sacrifice and they went and destroyed it and from these were descended the race of the Jāts, and they take their name from the matted locks (Jatā) of Mahādeva.51

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49 Qunungo, op. cit., p. 9.
50 Ibid.
51 Pawar, op. cit. p. 33.
However, the theory of matted locks finds support from a 6th century Pāli inscription of Jit kings a part of which reads, "...Again what does it resemble, where the hissing-angered serpents dwell? What may this Jit'ha be compared to, from whose root the roaring flood descends? Such is the Jit'ha; by it may thou be preserved..."52 This theory cast spell on the minds of the Jāt folk and soon became popular with them. Almost every Jāt village in north India is sanctified with a Shiva temple.53 The Jāts feel nearer to Siva than to other incarnations, he being their chief deity whom they worship regularly and pray to.54 The theory of matted locks has been quoted and criticised by a number of scholars.55 According to YP Shastri the theory was propounded to win back the Jāts, who had en masse embraced Buddhism, to neo–Hinduism as preached by Śankarācharya.56

There is general agreement among the observers that with respect to social and religious images, the Jāts do not differ much from other Hindu communities of Āryan origin.57 But to firmly establish this contention, it is now increasingly becoming necessary to identify the Jāts with some ancient Āryan tribe, mentioned in Sanskrit literature. Unfortunately, authentic data required for this investigation is lost forever and therefore, the scholars are left with no choice but to adopt convenient tools, such as the similarity of sound, to pursue their objectives.58 The Mahabharata contains descriptions

52 Tod, Annals, pp. 914-915.
53 Ibid., p. 34.
56 Shastri, op. cit. p. 40.
57 Qanungo, op. cit., p. 5.
58 Ibid.
of people and tribes of the Panjab and Sind which has been claimed as the actual homeland of the Jats. Here, we find references to Jartrakas along with Madrakas—both called Bahikas or outlanders. James Campbell and Grierson\(^{59}\) regard this to be the earliest reference to the Jats in Sanskrit literature.\(^{60}\) This contention provides basis for another theory, based on the similarity of sound— the Jarta or Jartrika theory of Jat origin, whose chief exponent is CV Vaidya. He claims that the Jats are the Jartrakas or Jartas, residing in early times in the vicinity of Sakala and who are mentioned in the Karna Parva of the Mahabharata. The acrimonious reply of Karna to Shalya, King of Madrakas contains a graphic account though distorted picture of the habits and character of these people—

The Madras are always false to their friends... without affection, always wicked, untruthful and cruel. That wicked people eat fried barley and fish and in their house father, son, mother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, uncle, daughter, son-in-law, brother, grandsons, with friends and guests, menial and maidservant, male and female together, drink wine with cow's flesh, and sometimes cry, sometimes laugh and delight in indecent talk and songs...... Their women overcome with wine, dance naked.... They are of fair complexion and tall stature, wearing blankets, eating large quantities of food, shameless and lax in the observance of the laws of purity. The Bahikas, who have been expelled from the region of the Himalayas, the Ganges, the Jumuna, the Saraswati and Kurukshetra should be avoided. The Bahikas are not created by Prajapati, the creator of the orthodox Aryans, they are the offspring of Pishach couple, named Bahi and Heek who dwelt on the bank of the Bipasa (the Beas). There is a town named Sakala and a river named Apaga where a section of the Bahikas, known as the Jatrikas, dwell. Their character is very reprehensible. These people eat contentedly a large quantity of meat and boiled barley, or barley-bread, cow's flesh with garlic and fried barley. Their women drink wine, laugh and dance in public, sing indecent songs in a loud shrill voice like that of a camel or an ass; they become very unrestrained and boisterous specially on festive occasions when they dance and shout, calling one another, 'Thou ill-fated one; husband-slayer etc.' A Bahika who had to sojourn for a time in the Kuru-jangal country sang the following song about the women of his country: 'Though a Bahika, I am at present an exile in the Kuru-jangal country; that tall and fair-complexioned wife of mine, dressed in

\(^{59}\) Ibid., fn; Campbell holds them to be foreigners who entered India along with the Kush horde (about BCE 150–100) whose greatest representative was Kanishka [Bom. Gaz. vol. ix, pt. i, p. 459]. Grierson considers them as degraded Aryans and not infidels ab initio. Baraha Mihir mentions two peoples, viz, Jattasuras in the northeast, and Jataadhavas in the south India near the Kaveri, whose names may sound like that of the Jats in the scholarly ear of Grierson.

\(^{60}\) Ibid.
her fine blanket certainly remembers me when she retires to rest. Oh! when shall I go back to my country crossing again the Satadru (the Sutlej) and the Iravati and see the beautiful females of fair complexion, wearing stout bangles, dressed in blanket and skins, eye-sides coloured with the dye of Manshila, forehead, cheek and chin painted with collyrium [tattooing]? When shall we eat under the pleasant shade of the Shami, Peelu and Karir, loaves and balls of fried barley powder with waterless churned curd [kunjik], and gathering strength. take away the clothes of the wayfarers and beat them? Among the Madrakas and Shakalas, young and old both drink heavily and sing aloud, 'Vainly are they born who do not eat the flesh of boars, cocks, kine, asses, camels and sheep'.

On closer observation, this identification of the Jâts with the Jarrikas proves most illusory. The above-mentioned argument that the Bahikas were not created by Prajāpati demonstrates the belief of the dwellers of the Vedic Āryandom that the outer nationalities originated from an altogether different ethnic stock. These people were likely to be the ancestors of the speakers of what Grierson calls the modern Paisāca languages—the Kashmiris, the Dards, and the Kāfirs of the Hindukush. The broad or medium headed outlandish Āryans were least likely to be the ancestors of the longheaded Jâts. The use of fine blankets and skins by Bahika women shows that they possibly immigrated from some colder regions. The Jâts observe some, though not all the ten customary rituals of the Hindus. Among the Jâts the Upanayana ceremony does not take place at the scheduled time but at the time of marriage. The Bahikas did not observe gotra exogamy but the Jâts do observe that as they do not marry within the same gotra. The Jâts adopted the Hindu law of succession, and in no case is the sister's son regarded as the lawful heir in preference to their own sons—a custom prevalent among the Bahikas. No doubt the

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61 Ibid., pp. 5–7.
62 Ibid.
64 Hoshiarpur Distt. Gaz. (1883), p. 56. The Brahmans who have taken to agriculture rarely perform the investiture ceremony separately at the prescribed time. Boys are given janeo at the time of marriage, in case of early marriage. Cited Qanungo, op. cit., p. 7.
65 Ibid.
orthodox Hindus of Sind still contemptuously call the Jāts Baheka or aliens; but it is least likely that the name of one insignificant tribe Jartrika, not known for morality, character, power or purity of conduct, should be adopted by millions of people, living in an area, stretching from Afghanistan to Malwa. Moreover, no Jāt tribe claims any linkage with Sakala; on the reverse, all of them believe their ancestors to have been immigrants from the interior of India. In this way, this supposed identification based on similarity of sound alone cannot be accepted as valid.

Another theory, ascribed to NN Vasu and VN Vasu, attempts to trace the origin of the Jāts from the Rājpūt–Gujjar union. This theory is based on a story, “A Rājpūt king, fascinated by the health and beauty of a Gujjar damsel, married her. The issues of their union came to be known as the Jāts.”

The theory has been criticized on various grounds. In the patrilineal society of the Rājpūts, the offsprings of Rājpūt–Gujjar union are likely to be called Rājpūts and not Jāts or Gujjars. The theory is also exposed by historical evidence. The Rājpūts appeared in the 8th century CE and the word ‘Rājpūt’ in its ethnic sense was not used until 10th century CE. Similarly the word ‘Gujjar’ did not appear before 7th century CE, whereas historical evidence speak of the existence of the Jāt ruling dynasty over Kota–Bundi as early as 400 CE. During this period about 12,000 talented Jāts are said to have been invited by

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67 Qanungo, op. cit. p. 8.
68 Ibid.
70 Pawar, op. cit., p. 67.
72 Tod, Annals, i, op. cit., 621–24.
Bahram Gour to participate in the Iranian National celebrations.\footnote{73}{David McRitchie, *Accounts of the Gypsies of India*, Delhi, 1976, pp. 4-5. Cited Pawar, op. cit., n. 6, p. 70.} Even earlier, AS Basum Ansari\footnote{74}{Westphal, op. cit., p. 102.} finds the Jāts moving up the shores of the Persian Gulf in the second and third centuries CE. According to KR Qanungo the Jāts were the earlier occupants of lands from where they were ousted by the Rājpūts; from Malwa, Jaisalmer, Bikaner and Delhi, the Jāts were displaced by the Paramaras, Bhattis, Rathors and Tanwars respectively.\footnote{75}{KR Qanungo, *Historical Essays*, Agra, 1960, p. 44.} In view of the pre-existence of the Jāts over the Rājpūts and Gujjars for about four centuries, it is not feasible to accept the two as the ancestors of the Jāt people.

An etymological attempt to trace the Jāt origin has been made by Pandit Sagar Dutta Gaur, a lawyer of Rohtak, who claims that the word ‘Jāt’ is derived from the word ‘ajaat’ (casteless).\footnote{76}{Pawar, op. cit.. p. 68.} The rational basis for the Ajaat theory is drawn from the contention that the surnames or the subcastes (*gotras* or *gots*) of the Jāts are found among all other communities in northern and north-western India. This fact is applicable to almost all communities of India and there are common surnames or subcastes particularly among the Brahmans, Rājpūts, Baniyas, Gujars, Khatris etc. The most commonly found surnames among the non-Jāt communities include Muhar, Bhargava, Mudgil, Sandil, Nagar etc.\footnote{77}{Ibid.} What seems more plausible is that in the event of migration of communities, confusion might have arisen in caste name when a whole or a part of a tribe, following its own occupation settled down in new areas and gets mixed up occupation-wise with its original population, but bearing their erstwhile ethnic nomenclature and known by the same in the
new social set-up. The problem is also complicated by the lack of uniformity over the definition and differences between ‘caste’, ‘subcaste’, ‘gotra’ and ‘pravar’ as well as the multiplication of caste-names over the ages. Hence, attempts to derive final conclusions on the origins of communities from the proliferation of castes may not stand the test of validity.

The theory of Yādava origin of the Jāts gained currency among a number of Indian and non-Indian scholars. At the beginning of the 11th century, Al-Beruni, in his *Tahqiq-i-Hind*, recorded his observation—

A messenger of this kind is, according to the belief of the Hindus, Vasudeva, who was sent the last time in human shape, being called Vasudeva. It was a time when the giants were numerous on earth and the earth was full of their oppression; it tottered, being hardly able to bear the whole number of them, and it trembled from the vehemence of their treading. Then there was born a child in the city of Mathura to Vasudeva by the sister of Kamsa, at that time ruler of the town. They were a Jāț family, cattle-owners, low Śūdra people.

This theory enjoys wide support and a sixth-century inscription also refers to the marriage of Jit prince with Yadu princess. The Yadus though somewhat above the Jāț status of ‘low Śūdra’ of the 11th century, were well-nigh approaching it, being little esteemed by the more orthodox Āryan tribes with monarchical constitution. In the opinion of Qanungo, there is no greater improbability in deriving Jāț or Jut—as the tribal name is pronounced in various forms in the different provinces—from the Indian Yadu or Yadav than from the Chinese Yuti or Ye-ta-li-to. If phonetical difficulty discourages the identification of the Jāțs with the Yādavas, the alternative is suggested in

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78 Ibid., pp. 68-69.
79 Alberuni’s India, pp. 400-401.
82 Qanungo, op. cit., p. 10.
identifying the Jāts with the Jātās or SuJātās, a branch of the great Haihaya Yādavas.\textsuperscript{83} The SuJātās are not commonly specified for their great number.\textsuperscript{84} It has been argued that since the Haihayas were a southern people who lived in the Narmada region, Haihayas might not be the ancestors of the Jāts who are spatially spread in Sind and Punjab. These misgivings can be removed by the fact that the existence of the Jāts has been reported in the Narmada valley, Bhopal etc; and that the Haihayas are also mentioned among the western peoples in the Brhat Samhitā.\textsuperscript{85} The tribe of Yadu gradually moved towards the Northwest, and the Jāt clans of Bal, Bhular, Chahal, and Kahlon spread out to Malwa, Dhar and the Deccan as their original homeland.\textsuperscript{86}

It is also suggested that the ancient Yādavas were not a homogeneous tribe but rather a confederacy of tribes, including Andakas, Bhojas, Kukkurās, Dasharnas etc. The numerical growth of the ancient tribes has been both on account of multiplication as well as affiliation of one tribe into another. This explains the conflicting traditions about the origins of the different Jāt gotras, and that even the Babbars of Dera Ghazi Khan claim to be the Jāts. These were apparently an out-landish people affiliated to the Yadu clan. This kind of groupings are further proved by a passage in Bhagwat Purāṇa which refers to King Sagara who first exterminated the Haihayas and then attacked the allies of Haihayas, namely Saka, Yavana and Barbaras.\textsuperscript{87} The Harivamsa describes a hereditary conflict

\textsuperscript{83} Wilson, op. cit., pp. 417–418. Of the hundred sons of Kartavirya, the five principal were Sura, Surasena, Vrishana, Madhu and Jayadhwaja. From the last sprang up the five great divisions of the Haihaya tribe, the Talajanghas, Vitihotras, Avantyas, Tundikeras, and Jātās also called SuJātās from the prolific number. [Wilson seems to entertain a doubt whether the Haihayas are not the Huna and Saka tribes engrafted upon the great genealogical tree of the Aryans by the clever Puranic ethnologists. The Jāts were known by the name of Sus, Abars, and many other names.] Quoted by Qanungo, op. cit., p. 10.

\textsuperscript{84} Wilson, op. cit., p. 418, fn. 20, Cited Qanungo, op. cit., p. 10.

\textsuperscript{85} Brhat Samhitā, ch. xiv, p. 291. Cited Qanungo, op. cit., p. 11.

\textsuperscript{86} Rose, Glossary, ii, p. 220.

\textsuperscript{87} JM Sanyal (tr.), Bhagwat Purāṇa, Calcutta, ix, ch. viii. Cited Qanungo, op. cit., p. 11.
between the descendants of Puru and Yadu—which was also a struggle between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, between the pure Indo-Āryans and the outlandish peoples headed by the Yādavas. Similar kind of tribal polarisation can still be witnessed in Delhi–Rohtak region which drags even the aliens into one or the other factions, i.e. Dahiya and Ahulanas.88

The Yadus suffered extermination at the hands of Pashurama and those few who escaped his wrath sought shelter in the mountains and among the lower castes. In absence of rituals they grew there as Śūdras till they were reclaimed and restored as Kṣatriyas by Rishi Kaśyapa. This was the first creation of the class of neo-Kṣatriyas. The Kassab [Kaśyap] Gotri Jāts with pretensions to Rājpūts blood may thus owe their kinship with the ancient Yādavas.89

Thus it is obvious that serious attempts have been made from time to time to dig into mythological past in order to cater to a long-standing urge for a dignified, ritually sanctioned and socially acceptable origin of the Jāt community. These attempts reveal an extreme polarity of perception, ranging from crude logic to higher rationalism. We have seen that except the theory of Yādava origin of the Jāts, which is supported by inscriptive evidence of 6th century, none of the above-mentioned hypotheses are strong enough to be put to the test of historical investigation. However, attempt will be made to integrate the subject matter of these theories into a picture that is likely to emerge after a comparative analysis of all kind of arguments over the Jāt origins.

88 Rose, Glossary, p. 220.
89 Qanungo, op. cit., p. 12.
Historical Roots of the Jāts:

The earliest historical evidence of the Jāts is a 6th century inscription (S. 597/541 CE), in Nail-headed characters, that refers to Raja Jit Salindra as ruler of Salpoora (Punjab), Malwa and parts of Rājasthān. It may be noted that this inscription which appears in the Appendix of James Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rājasthān*, is yet to receive validity by the historians as a historical document of the Jāts. The remarkable thing about this classic inscription is that it provides us a good amount of information on chronology, dynastic history, ethnological clues and religious matters and helps us to extricate Jāt antiquities from the realms of speculation. It reads:

May the Jit'ha be thy protector! What does this Jit’h resemble? which is the vessel of conveyance across the waters of life, which is partly white, partly red? Again what does it resemble, where the hissing-angered serpents dwell? What may this Jit’ha be compared to, from whose root the roaring flood descends? Such is the Jit’h; by it may thou be preserved.

The fame of RAJA JIT I now shall tell, by whose valour the lands of Salpoora are preserved. The fortunes of Raja Jit are as flames of fire devouring his foe. The mighty warrior JIT SALINDRA is beautiful in person, and from the strength of his arm esteemed the first amongst the tribes of the mighty; make resplendent, as does the moon the earth, the dominions of SALPOORI. The whole world praises the JIT prince, who enlarges the renown of his race, sitting in the midst of haughty warriors, like the lotos in the waters, the moon of the sons of men. The foreheads of the princes of the earth worship the toe of his foot. Beams of light irradiate his countenance, issuing from the gems of his arms of strength. Radiant is his array; his risces abundant; his mind generous and profound as the ocean. Such is he of SĀRYA race, a tribe renowned amongst the tribes of the mighty, whose princes were ever foes to treachery, to whom the earth surrendered her fruits, and who added the lands of their foes to their own. By sacrifice, the mind of this lord of men has been purified; fair are his territories, and fair is the FORTRESS OF TAK’HYA. The string of whose bow is dreaded, whose wrath is the reaper of the field of combat; but to his dependants he as the pearl on the neck; who makes no account of the battle, though streams of blood run through the field. As does the silver lotos bend its head before the fierce rays of the sun, does his foe stoop to him, while the cowards abandon the field.

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* Tod, *Annals*, pp. 914-917; Discovered in 1820, this inscription is on stone built into a wall of a temple of Mahadev, at Kanaswa, near the Chambal river, south of Kotah, Rājasthān.*
From this lord of men (Narpati) SALINDRA sprung DEVANGLI, whose deeds are known even at this remote period.

From him was born SUMBOOKA, and from him Degali, who married two wives of YCEU race, and by one a son named VIRA NARENDRA, pure as a flower from the fountain.

Amidst groves of amba, on whose clustering blossoms hang myriads of bees, that the wearied traveller might repose, was this edifice erected. May it, and the fame of his founder, continue while ocean rolls, or while the moon, the sun, and hills endure. Samvat 597.—On the extremity of MALWA, this minster (MINDRA) was erected, on the banks of the river Taveli, by SALICHANDRA, son of VIRACHANDRA.

Whoever will commit this writing to memory, his sins will be obliterated. Carved by the sculptor SEVANARYA, son of DWARSIVA, and composed by BUTENA, chief of the bards.

It is significant that this inscription clearly mentions the name ‘Jit’ which is a variant of ‘Jāt.’ From the location of the inscription, i.e. Kota, Rājasthān, and the places mentioned there in, we can ascertain that their capital was Salpoora, ‘the city of Sal,’ which was probably situated ‘at the base of the Sewalik mountains’ in Punjab,93 and their rule and settlements extended in the south to Kota and Malwa, and in the north to North-West Punjab. Elsewhere it has also been argued that the Jāts trace their origin from the far North-West and claimed ancient Garh Gajni (Rawalpindi, Pakistan) as their original homeland.94 Persian chronicler Ferishta also corroborates this information when he says that the Juts were ‘residing in the Koh-i-

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91 Ibid., pp. 914-15.
92 “In Punjab they still retain their ancient name of Jit.... The greater portion of the husbandmen in Rajsthan are Jits, and there are numerous tribes beyond the Indus, now proselytes to the Muhammadan religion, who derive their origin from this class.” Tod, op. cit., pp 88-91; “This tribe commonly bears the name of Jit in Rajputana.... The Jit and the Gujar are the original cultivator of the soil in Ajmer-Merwara, and considerably outnumber every other tribe.” MA Shering, Hindu Tribes and Castes, Delhi, 1974, p 73.
93 Tod, Annals, p. 916; Salpoora has also been identified with Salpur/Sorpur, near Multan; Raza, , op. cit., p 57.
Jud (Salt Range) in North-West Punjab. Therefore, in the 4th century, we find a Jit kingdom established in the Panjáb; but how much earlier this people colonised those regions we are ignorant. It can be speculated that at least two centuries elapsed between the Jit colonisation of Punjab and the Jit kingdom of Panjáb. During this period, Jits seem to have extended their power in Indus region, settled down on both banks of Indus and occupied Multán. By the turn of the 5th century, the Jit kindom flourished not only in Panjáb but also extended to Malwa and parts of Rājasthān.

Among the more acceptable formulations regarding the Jāts is the 7th century account of Hiuen Tsang. Describing an unnamed pastoral population in Sin-Tu (Sind), the Chinese scholar writes—

"...By the side of the river Sind, along the flat marshy lowlands for some thousand li, there are several hundreds of thousands (a very great many) of families settled. They are of an unfeeling and hasty temper, and are given to bloodshed only. They give themselves exclusively to tending cattle, and from this derive their livelihood. They have no masters, and, whether men or women, have neither rich nor poor; they shave their heads and wear the Kashya robes of Bhikshus, whom they resemble outwardly, whilst they engage themselves in the ordinary affairs of lay life. They hold to their narrow (little) views and attack the Great Vehicle.

The old reports state that formerly these people were extremely hasty (impatient), and only practised violence and cruelty. At this time there was an Arhat, who, pitying their perversity, and desiring to convert them, mounted in the air and came amongst them. He exhibited his miraculous powers and displayed his wonderful capabilities. Thus he led the people to believe and accept the doctrine, and gradually he taught them in words; all of them joyfully accepted his teaching and respectfully prayed him to direct them in their religious life. The Arhat perceiving that the hearts of the people had become submissive, delivered to them the three "Refuges" and restrained their cruel tendencies; they entirely gave up "taking life," they shaved their heads, and assumed the soiled robes of a Bhikshu, and obediently walked according to the doctrine of religion. Since then, generations have passed by and the changed times have weakened their virtue.

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95 Ferishta, op. cit., p. 49; Cited by Raza, op. cit. p. 4.
97 Raza, op. cit. 4.
98 Tod, Annals, ii, pp. 914-17.
but as for the rest, they retain their old customs. But though they wear the robes of religion, they live without any moral rules, and their sons and grandsons continue to live as worldly people, without any regard to their religious profession.

It may be noted that Hiuen Tsang did not mention the name of this pastoral population of Sind. Here, circumstantial evidence may provide important clues in identification of this pastoralist population. However, the Chachnāma describes a people in Sind with similar kind of characteristics whom he clearly refers as Jāṭts. On this basis, the cattle-herders of Sind may also be regarded as pastoral people, mentioned by Hiuen Tsang, as the Jāṭts of Sind.

In this way we can see that by the beginning of the 7th century, the process of expansion and colonization carried the Jāṭs into Sind where they settled along the flat marshy lowlands by the side of the river Sind. Ibn Hauqal also informs us that “between Mansura and Makran..., the inhabitants of the country are the Indian races called Zats (Jāṭs).” At the close of the 7th century, the Jāṭ settlements are also evident in Daybal where they confronted and killed the Arab commander, Budayi b. Tahfa al-Badjali, during his attack on the sea port of Daybul, prior to the invasion of Muhammad b. al-Kasim.
In the 8th century we come across *Chachnāma*, a superb chronicle by an unknown author which gives an account of the Arab invasion of Sind (712 CE) along with other important matters pertaining to the Jāts:

Muhammad Kasim then sent for Wazir Siyakar and Mokah Basayeh, and asked them as to how the Jāts of the Luhanah tribe had been treated by Chach and Dahar, and how matters now stood in regard to them. Wazir Siyakar replied in the presence of Mokah Basayeh: “In the reign of Rai Chach the Luhanahs, that is, the Lakhas and the Sammahs were not allowed to use soft clothes of silk or velvet. On the contrary they used to wear a rough black blanket, and put on a rough coarse scarf on their shoulders, and they went about with bare head and feet. If any one of them wore some soft stuff, he was fined, and when they went out of their houses, they used to take a dog with them, in order that they might easily be distinguished from the other tribes. None of their elders or chiefs was allowed to ride a horse. If any guides were required anywhere by any prince, they served as such. In fact it was their business to show the way as guides up to the limits of another tribe. If any headmen or Rana was obliged to ride a horse, he rode it without any saddle or reins, and with only a blanket on its back. If an accident occurred to any traveller, the Jāt tribes were called to help, and it was the duty of their headmen to see that such help was given readily. If any one of them committed theft, his children and the other members of his family were thrown into flames and burnt. They guided caravans on their way both during day time and at night. Among them there is no distinction of high and low; they are all of the wild nature of brutes. They have always been refractory and disobedient to the rulers; and are in the habit of committing highway robberies. In the robberies committed some time ago on the high roads of Debai, they were probably concerned as accomplices. It was also a duty of theirs to supply firewood for the royal kitchen, to collect provisions for the personal use of the king, and to keep watch over his person as his body guards.” Hearing this account of the Luhanah Jāts, Muhammad Kasim is said to have remarked: “what a villainous set of people these are. They are quite like the wild men, living in some villages of Fars and Mount Payeh, and they should now be treated as such.” Muhammad Kasim, therefore, thought it proper to deal with them exactly in the same way, and following the rule made applicable by the commander of the faithful, Umar, son of Khattab, (may the great God be pleased with him) to the people of Syria, he ordered that if any stranger or a traveller should arrive within their limits, they were bound to entertain him with food as a guest for a day and night, and if fell sick, for three days.\(^{103}\)

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\(^{103}\) *Chachnamah*, pp. 169-171.
Significantly, the author of *Chachnāma* gives direct reference to the Jāts whom he calls ‘Jāṭts’. This text is the chief source of our information about the settlements, spatial spread, occupations, social organization and socio-economic position of the Jāṭts in the 8th century. The Jāṭ settlements now extended to Siwistan (Sehwan) and Bodhiya in the north, and in the south to the port of Debal. Their population was mainly concentrated in the central part of Sind, in the territories of Brahmanabad, Lohana, Lakha and Samma. They inhabited both the banks of the river Indus and according to the site of their location, they were divided into ‘western Jāṭs’ (Jāṭtan-i-gharhi) and ‘eastern Jāṭs’ (Jāṭtan-i-Sharqi). They were also called Jāṭtan-i-dashti, i.e. the Jāṭts living in the steppes or wastes. The references to Jāṭ tribes, chiefs, elders, headmen and Rana suggest that they were probably at the level of chiefdomship and the differences in power had not yet sharpened. There was ‘no distinction of high and low among them’ and their social structure was apparently egalitarian or semi-egalitarian. The main occupation of the Jāṭts was cattle-herding but they also engaged in other kinds of occupation such as soldiers, royal bodyguards, guides, spies.

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106 Ibid., pp. 36, 124, 137, 169-71, 173.
107 Ibid., p. 173.
108 Ibid., p. 170.
109 Ibid., pp. 36-37.
110 Ibid., pp. 36, 170, 171
111 Ibid., p. 170.
112 Ibid., p. 137; Also cited by Habib, op. cit. p. 94.
113 *Chachnāma*, op. cit., pp. 170, 173.
114 Ibid., pp. 170, 173.
115 Ibid., pp. 36, 170.
116 Ibid., p. 170.
117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
119 Ibid.
120 Habib, op. cit. p. 95.
121 *Chachnāma*, pp. 37, 124, 137.
122 Ibid., p. 170.
caravan guides, travellers' assistants, boatmen and royal firewood suppliers. There are instances of punitive tributes from the Jāts by the Arab rulers but the only tribute the Jāts were able to pay was in the form of fuelwood or by providing meals to travellers and strangers within their limits. Under the rule of Chacha and his successors, the Jāts were subjected to harsh social restrictions such as prohibition on carrying swords, horse-riding and wearing soft clothes of silk or velvet. On the contrary, they were forced to wear rough black blanket and rough coarse cotton-scarfs, to walk bare-headed and bare-footed and to take dogs with them as a mark of identification and humiliation. However, these harsh impositions on the Jāts are reminiscent of the constraints imposed by Manu on the Chandalas—"But the dwellings of Kandalas and Svapakas shall be outside the village, they must be made Apapatras, and their wealth (shall be) dogs and donkeys." However, the practise of social constraints on the Jāts was not discontinued by the Arab conquerors of Sind and the social position of the Jāts seems to have remained unchanged despite the change in the regime.

A question may be raised as to why such kind of social disabilities and mark of identification and humiliation were imposed exclusively on the Jāts such as 'to take a dog with them' in order that they might easily be distinguished from the other tribes. It

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125 Ibid., pp. 37, 170
124 Ibid., p. 37.
126 Ibid., p. 170.
127 Ibid., p. 171.
128 Ibid., p. 124.
129 Ibid., pp. 37, 170.
130 Ibid., p. 171.
131 Ibid., pp. 37, 170.
132 Ibid., p. 37.
134 Chachnama, p. 170.
135 Ibid., p. 37.
is evident that the Chach and his successors were Brahman rulers. On the other hand the pastoral communities of Sind, reported by Hiuen Tsang, were inclined to Buddhism when “they gave up taking life, shaved their heads, and assumed the soiled robes of a Bhikshu, and obediently walked according to the doctrine of religion.”

We may surmise that under a Brahman dynasty of Chach and his successors, the religious allegiance of the Jāṭs to Buddhism may have caused estranged relationship between the rulers and the Jāṭs and therefore, religious intolerance may be one of the reasons for the social degradation of the Jāṭs. But we fail to understand why Arab rulers allowed status quo by continuing the policy of social restrictions against the Jāṭs. It is equally plausible that as matter of State policy, the Arabs declined to intervene in the social and religious matters in newly conquered foreign territories.

In the 9th century, the main references to the Jāṭs come from Futuhu-L Buldan, one of the earliest Arab chronicles written by Al Biladuri (d. CE 892-93). This work contains an account of the first conquest of the Arabs in West Asia, Egypt, India etc and throws precious light on the position of the Jāṭs of Sind—

He marched to Kikan against the Jāṭs whom he defeated and subjugated. He built a city there, which he called Al Baiza, “the white”. and he posted a military force there.... Then he made war upon the Meds, and killed three thousand of them. There he constructed a band, which is called “Sakru-l Med”, Band of the Meds. He encamped on the river at Alrur. There he summoned the Jāṭs, who came to his presence, when he sealed their hands, took from them the jizya (capitation tax). and he ordered that every man of them should bring a dog with him when he came to wait upon him—hence the price of a dog rose to fifty dirhams. He again attacked the Meds, having with him the chief men of the Jāṭs. He dug a canal

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135 Beal, op. cit., p. 273.
136 Habib, op. cit., pp. 94-95.
from the sea to their tank, so their water became salt; and he sent out several marauding expeditions against them.\textsuperscript{137}

The evidence provided by Biladuri further testifies the presence of the Jāts in Sind during the 9th century. The main settlements of the Jāts are found at Kikan and Alrur\textsuperscript{138} in the region of Multān in Upper Sind. This evidence highlights the constant movements of the Jāts into Upper Sind from the Central Sind\textsuperscript{139} in previous century. This is the first account of the imposition of Jiziya on the Jāts by Amran, the Arab governor of Sind in CE 836. The payment of Jiziya by the Jāts somewhat altered their social status as now they were regarded as protected subjects (Zimmis). However, the governor’s order that ‘every man of them should bring a dog with him’\textsuperscript{140} shows that the prevailing social prohibitions\textsuperscript{141} against the Jāts were not lifted. It can be anticipated that the employment of ‘the chief men of the Jāts’\textsuperscript{142} by the Arab governor in the expeditions against the Meds might have reduced the restrictions on sword-wielding and horse-riding.\textsuperscript{143} It is also a matter of speculation that the Jāt manpower was utilized in digging a canal from the sea to the tank of the Meds to make their water salty.\textsuperscript{144} But it cannot be denied that the greater role was assigned to the Jāts in the prevailing uncertain situations which must have helped the Jāts to become more and more acceptable in the eyes of the rulers and the ruled.

The earliest evidence of the Jāt connections with Punjab was the 6th century Pāli

\textsuperscript{137} Al Biladuri, \textit{Futuhu-L Buldan} in ED i, op. cit., p. 128.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., p. 128.
\textsuperscript{139} Habib, op. cit., p. 94.
\textsuperscript{140} Al Biladuri, op. cit., p. 128.
\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Chachnama}, op. cit. p. 170.
\textsuperscript{142} Al Biladuri, op. cit., p. 128.
\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Chachnama}, op. cit., pp. 37, 170.
\textsuperscript{144} Al Biladuri, op. cit., p. 128.
inscription, followed by Biladhuri who attests the northward movements of the Jats. But there is a remarkable shift in the Jat history in the 11th century when a Ghaznavid chronicle, Zain al-Akhbar, authored by Gardizi, provides the unexpectedly enlarged existence of the Jat power in Punjab. Here, we find a fresh and rather forceful emergence of "the Jats of Multan and Bhatiya [by] the banks of the Sihun [Indus]." when they entered into a ferocious naval encounter with Mahmud Ghazni with their 4,000 or 8,000 boats. He informs us that this encounter was in the year 1027 when Sultan Mahmud set out for Multan to punish the Jats who had harassed his army during his return march from Somnath in 1026. Both sides made massive preparations for this battle but the Jats were defeated by Sultan Mahmud. Gardizi's reference to the Jats is historically significant as apart from their expansion into Punjab, it also reflects the phenomenal increase in the military power of the Jats, particularly their naval strength and strategically warfare in CE 1027. It is evident that a people tied to a pastoral economy and social disabilities were able to develop into a well-organised militia within a span of three centuries. It can be argued that the Jats had a long history of warrior traditions and their fighting abilities were well utilized and recognized even during the times of Chach, Muhammad Qasim and successive Arab governors hence what we witness in CE 1027 is basically only an advancement over an existing occupation and passion.

145 Tod, Annals, pp. 914-15.
146 Al Biladuri, op. cit., p. 128.
147 Gardizi, op. cit., pp. 87-89. Cited by Habib, op. cit., p. 95; Also see Isami, op. cit., vol. i, p. 125; Ferishta, op. cit., pp. 49-50.
149 Ibid., pp. 121-22.
150 Beal, op. cit., p. 273.
151 Chachnama, op. cit., p. 170.
The growing Jāt existence in Punjab is further testified by another 11th century Ghaznavid scholar Baihaqi who described in his work Tārīkh i-Baihaqi that these "seditious Hindus" had supported Sultan Masud's officers against the rebel Yanaltigin.\(^\text{152}\)

Another 11th century chronicler-traveller, Alberuni (c. 1030), also yield precious information on the Jāts—"Then there was born a child in the city of Mathura to Vasudeva by the sister of Kamsa, at that time ruler of the town. They were a Jāt family, cattle-owners, low Śūdra people."\(^\text{153}\)

Alberuni’s observation of the Jāts was historically remarkable as it happens to be the first reference to the Jāts as ‘Śūdras’ This piece of evidence throws abundant light on the social phenomenon that despite the Jāts having gained economic and military strength by the 11th century, they were yet regarded as the ‘Śūdra’, and ‘low’ people. This also shows that their ritual status was not consistent with their newly acquired economic and military advancement. Alberuni’s observation about the intermarriage of the Jāts with Yadus\(^\text{154}\) corroborates the similar kind of evidence supplied by the 6th century Pāli inscription\(^\text{155}\) and provides basis for considering the Jāts as one of the thirty-six royal races of India.\(^\text{156}\)

In the 12th century an inscription\(^\text{157}\) in the Nail-headed characters strengthens some of the arguments presented before. It states:

\(^{152}\) Al-Baihaqi, op. cit., pp. 523-34. Cited Habib, op. cit., p. 94.
\(^{153}\) Alberuni’s, p. 401.
\(^{154}\) Ibid.
\(^{155}\) Tod, Annals, ii, pp. 914-15.
\(^{156}\) Ibid., p. 917; M.A Sherring, op. cit., p. 73.
\(^{157}\) Tod, Annals, pp. 917-18. The inscription was discovered at Ram Chundrapoora, six miles east of Boondee, in digging a well. It was thence conveyed, and deposited by Tod in the Museum of the Royal Asiatic Society.
"To my foe, salutation! This foe of the race of JIT, CATHIDA, how shall I describe, who is resplendent by the favour of the round bosom of ROODRANI, and whose ancestor, the warrior TUKHYA, formed the garland on the neck of Mahadeva. Better than this foe on the earth's surface, there is none; therefore to him I offer salutation. The sparkling gems on the coronets of kings irradiate the nail of his foot.

Of the race of BOTENA RAJA T'HOT was born; his fame expanded through the universe.

Pure in mind, strong in arm, and beloved by mankind, such was CHANDRASEN. How shall he be described, who broke the strength of his foe, on whom when his sword swims in fight, he appears like a magician. With his subjects he interchanged the merchandise of liberality, of which he reaped the fruits. from him whose history is fair, was born KRITIKA, the deeds of whose arm were buds of renown, forming a necklace of praise in the eyes of mankind. His queen was dear to him as his own existence—how can she be described? As the flame is inseparable from the fire, so was she from her lord—she was the light issuing from the sun—her name GOON-NEWASA, and her actions correspond with her name. By her he had two sons, like gems set in bracelets. born to please mankind. Teh eldest was named SOOKUNDA, the younger DERUKA. Their fortunes consumed their foes: but their dependents enjoyed happiness. As the flowers of Calpvricsa are beloved by the gods, so are these brothers by their subjects, granting their requests, and increasing the glory of the race, whence they sprung.

DERUKA had a son, KUHLA, and his was DHUNIKA, whose deeds ascended high—who could fathom the intentions of mankind—whose mind was deep as the ocean—whose ever-hungry fauchion expelled from their mountains and forest the MEENA tribes, leaving them no refuge in the three worlds, levelling their retreats to the ground. His quiver was filled with crescent-formed arrows—his sword the climber (vela), of which pearls are the fruit. With his younger brother Dewaka he reverences gods and Brahmins—and with his own wealth perfumed a sacrifice to the sun.

For the much-beloved's (his wife) pleasure this was undertaken. Now the river of ease, life and death, is crossed over, for this abode will devour the body of the foe, into which the west wind wafts the fragrant perfume from the sandal covered bosom of Lakshmi; while from innumerable lotos the gale from the east comes laden with arôme, the hum of the bees as they hang clustering on the flowers of the padhul is pleasing to the ear.

So long as Soomeru stands on its base of golden stands, so long may this dwelling endure. So long as the wind blows on the koonjeris, supporters of the globe, while the firmament endures or while Lakshmi causes the palm to be extended, so long may this praise and this edifice be stable.

KUHILA formed this abode of virtue, and east thereof a temple to Iswara. By ACHIL, son of the mighty prince YASOOVERMA, has its renown been composed in various forms of speech."  

158 Ibid.
This 12th century inscription, found at Boondi, throws light on the glory of the Jit rulers and refers the Jit race as the opponent of the Parmara rulers of Rājasthān.\textsuperscript{159} Besides, the references to King Yasovarman and Meena tribes further confirms the poetical hold of the Jits in Rājasthān and Central India.\textsuperscript{160}

Till then the Jāts are nowhere mentioned in connection with north India and most of the evidence speaks of their presence in Sind, Panjāb and Rājasthān. But in the mid-12th century, we find that the Jāts began to appear in the Upper Gangetic Doāb.\textsuperscript{161} The Jāt existence in this Doāb is attested by the historical narratives\textsuperscript{162} written by the \textit{khāp} and Sarva-\textit{khāp} panchayats of the Jāts of Meerut division. These narratives are based on the records and minutes of \textit{khāp} and Sarva-\textit{khāp} panchayats, royal firmans of the Mughal emperors issued to various Jāt \textit{khāps}, private papers of office-bearers of \textit{khāp} panchayats, and the gotra Šākhas, containing both Jāt traditions and some historical data.

The value of this evidence is unmistakable as it provides important clues to the process of migration and expansion of the Jāts into the Gangetic valley. A historical trend of an eastward migration of the Jāts from the south-east Panjāb to the Gangetic Doāb is clearly visible from the 12th century onwards which continued unabated till the early 16th century.\textsuperscript{163} The great shift in the position of the Jāts from Panjāb to U.P Doāb was facilitated by massive breakdown of law and order in wake of foreign invasions and political instability of the Delhi Sultanate. These conditions emboldened the gotra-based groups of the Jāts of Panjāb to cross the Jamunā river and embark upon an aggressive

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{161} Pradhan, op. cit., p. 75.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., p. 76
campaign of territorial expansion, conquest and land acquisition by pushing the previous communities. The evidence in form of narratives of the *khāp*-panchayats corroborates the oral traditions of the Jāts that they migrated into the upper Gangetic Doāb from south-east Panjab. 

In the 12th century, the Jāt presence in the Doāb is further attested by the record of a *Sarva-khāp* panchayat meeting (10th *Ashadh*, S. 1256/CE 1191) at village Tikri of Chaugama *khāp* (Meerut) which was attended by 60,000 people of various *khāps*. The importance of this record is that for the first time we find direct reference to the Jāts as cultivators. Their main concentration was on the eastern bank of the Jamunā in the Muzaffarnagar region. The Panchayat resolution’s reference that ‘more attention is required for promotion of agriculture’ shows the collective concern over agriculture and the degrees of their dependence on it. Military concern also weighed heavily in their minds as the resolution emphasised production of good quality weapons, better training of their soldiers, better management of army provisions and recruitment of healthy youth in the *khāp* army. The Panchayats were also supposed to look after the helpless and homeless within their jurisdiction.

At the close of 12th century, the Jāts are again noticed through a record of the meeting of *Sarva-khāp* panchayat (S. 1254/1197 CE) held at Baraut, a village of Desh *khāp* and attended by the representatives of twelve *khāps*. The Jāt settlements seemed to

164 Ibid.
165 Ibid.
166 Ibid.
167 Ibid.
168 Ibid.
169 Ibid.
170 Ibid.
171 Ibid.
have spread into Meerut region.\textsuperscript{172} They decided to wage an armed struggle against the imposition of \textit{Jiziya} and restrictions over panchayats by Qutubuddin Aibak.\textsuperscript{173} This resistance by the \textit{Jatis} was an advancement over quiet acceptance of previous imposition of \textit{Jiziya}\textsuperscript{174} and harsh restrictions on the \textit{Jatis}.\textsuperscript{175} The panchayats mustered an army of 90,000 soldiers and fierce fighting took place between the two armies at Meerut\textsuperscript{176} in which 5,000 \textit{Jatis} and 4,000 men of other castes were killed.\textsuperscript{177} As a result, the restrictions over the panchayats were lifted but the fate of \textit{Jiziya} is not known.\textsuperscript{178}

In the 13th century, a \textit{Sarva-khāp} panchayat (S. 1258/CE 1201) expressed concern over the defeat of Rathor Chauhans at the hands of Muhammad Ghori and resolved to defend the \textit{Sarva-khāp} territories from ravages by raising a \textit{khāp} army of 60,000 to 100,000 men.\textsuperscript{179} The 13th century witnessed increasing trends of \textit{khāp}-based protests against State injustice, particularly against compulsion for government service, harmful taxes and administrative high-handedness (1248 CE);\textsuperscript{180} imposition of \textit{Jiziya} and tax on ritual bathing (1255 CE).\textsuperscript{181} In 1297 CE, a \textit{Sarva-khāp} panchayat resolution decided to revolt against Alauddin Khilji unless he revokes the order for 50% land revenue, \textit{Jiziya} and prohibitions against wielding of arms, accumulation of wealth and recruitment of soldiers.\textsuperscript{182} In this century, a perceptible increase in the \textit{Jat} power and resources is visible

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{172} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{173} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{174} Biladuri, op. cit., p. 128.
\item \textsuperscript{175} \textit{Chachnama}, op. cit., pp. 37, 170
\item \textsuperscript{176} Pradhan, op. cit., p. 219.
\item \textsuperscript{177} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{178} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{179} Ibid., p. 218.
\item \textsuperscript{180} Ibid. p. 220.
\item \textsuperscript{181} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{182} Ibid., pp. 220-21.
\end{itemize}
as their settlements spread widely into Upper Gangetic Doāb and their linkages with the sister khāps of this region grow stronger.\textsuperscript{183} The weight of the increasing Jāt power is also felt by the Delhi government when the khāp-panchayat proposals were either accepted or sincerely acknowledged.\textsuperscript{184}

In the 14th century, a historical decision was taken by Sarva-khāp panchayat (1326 CE) to revolt against the unpopular policies of Muhammad Tuglaq, particularly the increased revenue in Doāb and other hikes in taxation which ruined the farmers and others.\textsuperscript{185} The Panchayat decision reveals the primacy of agriculture in the lives of the Jāts who were ready to shed their lives to protect the interests of the peasantry in the Gangetic Doāb.\textsuperscript{186} Another evidence of the growth of militarism and strategical warfare among the Jāts is the record of Sarva-khāp panchayat (1398 CE) which decided to adopt a scorched earth policy and launch a guerrilla attack on the forces of Taimur during the course of its movement from Delhi to Haridwar.\textsuperscript{187} However, a 20,000 strong panchayat sena encountered Taimur and lost about 6,000 men.\textsuperscript{188}

In the 15th century, the Jāt panchayat (1403 CE) responded to the severe famine and subsequent lawlessness and passed a resolution to protect their crops, life, property and religious beliefs.\textsuperscript{189} It proposed to organize an army of 30,000 men from all the castes of their khāp, particularly the Jāts, Rājpūts, Gujars and Ahirs.\textsuperscript{190} This demonstrates the ability of the dominating Jāts to integrate other communities into an effective defence

\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., p. 218.
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., pp. 219-221.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid., p. 221.
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid., p. 222
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid.
mechanism. During the reign of Saiyyad Lodi, a Sarva-khāp panchayat (1490 CE) refused to obey the imposition of Jiziya and increased taxation, declared its intention for civil disobedience, and raised a 50,000 strong all-caste army to revolt against the government.\footnote{Ibid., p. 223} However, in light of the determination of the Jāṭ leadership, the Lodi rulers relented.\footnote{Ibid.}

The 16th century further witness the growth of Jāṭ power when their panchayats extended military support to Ibrahim Lodi (1517 CE)\footnote{Pradhan, op. cit., p. 223.} against his brother, and to Maharana Sangrama Singh (1527 A.D)\footnote{Ibid.} against Babur. The Soram panchayat of 1574 was remarkable for its assertion for self-determination and greater autonomy in matters of assessment and collection of revenue.\footnote{Ibid., p. 224.} Towards the end of the 16th century, our major source on the position of the Jāṭs is Āʾīn-i-Akbarī (c.1595) which provides a detailed list of Zamīndār castes in each pargana. These lists attest the spatial spread of the Jāṭs in Multān, Lahore, Delhi and Agra provinces.

In the 17th century, the author of Dabistān-i-Maẓāhib (c. 1655) describes the Jāṭs of Panjāb as “an inferior caste of Baisas (Visas)”.\footnote{Dabistān, p. 270.} He also mentions that “Jāṭ in the dialect of the Penjab, means a villager or a rustic.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 152.} Both these observation reflect the changes in the socio-economic position of the Jāṭs. To call the Jāṭs as ‘villager’ or a ‘rustic’ suggests strong agrarian roots which the Jāṭs seemed to express through his
behaviour. The conferment of 'Vaiśya' status on the Jāts is also an advancement over the previous social degradations\textsuperscript{198} and designation as 'Śūdras'\textsuperscript{199}.

In 1661, a Jāt panchayat opposed the religious policy of Aurangzeb and send a letter of protest to the Delhi Durbar against the imposition of Jiziya and restrictions on the activities of the panchayats.\textsuperscript{200}

Though our period of study is up to 16th century, it is pertinent to note that during the 18th century, the strength of the Jāts reached its zenith when the great Maratha leader, Sadashiv Rao Bhao requested military support from the eighteen khāps of the Jāts, Gujars and others against Ahmad Shah Abdali.\textsuperscript{201} The Sarva-khāp panchayat of 1760 decided to send an army of 20,000 soldiers to help Bhao but almost all of these perished along with the Marathas.\textsuperscript{202}

\textbf{SECTION B}

\textbf{NOTIONS OF COMMUNITY IDENTITY}

The purpose of this section is to situate the question of Jāt identity in a correct historical perspective. The present day Jāts are regarded as a separate community with a distinct identity— territorial, cultural and political. But the question arises, have these notions of community and identity always been there? If we scratch the antiquities of the Jāts, we find that at one time these notions are not present, at other times they are

\textsuperscript{198} Chachnama, pp. 37, 170.
\textsuperscript{199} Alberuni, 401.
\textsuperscript{200} Pradhan, op. cit., pp. 224-25.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid., p. 98.
\textsuperscript{202} Pradhan, op. cit., p. 225.
inchoate and yet some other times they are explicit. Why this is so? We can always attempt a retrospective projection of the historical sense to explore as to how and when the notions of community and identity were germinated in the minds of the millions, at what stages they became coherent and when they crystallized into definite form.

The formation of an identity presupposes the formation of a community. Identity is like a superstructure that needs a base to grow, flower and attain fulfilment. Hence the process of identity formation is preceded by creation of the sense of community. It is important to ascertain the self-consciousness of the community, as to how its members perceive themselves in the existing social network, how did they visualize and judge themselves vis-a-vis other communities and enter into social relationships with a strong sense of social identity. It seems that such a study also requires some kind of communication with the community consciousness which actually harbours the notions of identity. The process of identity-formation can be historically traced by the study of conscious attempts by the members of the community. When we try to study the communities in a varna framework, our opinions are likely to be overshadowed by the cultural labels placed on the communities by the Dharamśāstras rather than directly ascertaining the actual economic strength and social status of the community in a given society. Hence the social dynamics of the Indian caste system lies not as much in the study of Śāstric gradation of Jāti communities but more so in discovering the reinvented identities by the recalcitrant communities.

It is a matter of great historical interest to find out exactly when and why a particular group chooses to invent or re-invent identity and tries to perpetuate it for its
progeny. It is important to analyse the socio-economic constraints, the threat perception, and the logical necessity for building a self-image which can separate that group from 'others'. The theme of identity helps us to understand not merely a positive action of organising itself on part of a people but also suggests a negative angle, i.e. a divisive attempt to separate 'us' from 'others'. This division demonstrates a strong desire of a people to reject the existing structure in order to derive great advantages from the new identity. These advantages may sound imaginary to others but the concerned group perceives fulfilment and a promising future from the materialization of the new identity. It seems plausible that over emphasis on the process of self-identification or aspired status may eclipse the other side of the social reality, i.e. that is the actual status and positions of the said group in a society. But on the other hand we cannot afford to neglect the collective urge of a people which may be supported by conscious affirmative action such as sanskritization. The study of the undying zeal for new identities by social groups is as important as its set of beliefs, cults and modes of worship. In other words, identity-formation is a kind of historical projection of accumulated desires, efforts, struggles and ambitions of millions of men and women over the generations who tried to attain it. It is important to investigate as to why a particular kind of identity serves as a centripetal force for a large number of men and women who decide to make a common cause for the realization of the proposed identity. The identity can serve as a historical clue to study the psychology of communities as to how the germination of a brilliant idea for the upliftment of a group of people is endlessly pursued by the successive generations and ultimately leads to the transformation of its people and the emergence of new identity.
For a discussion on the formation of Jāt identity and community one needs to comprehend the significance of ‘shift’ in Jāt history. Here, the ‘shift’ implies a process of change which manifest itself in not one but many forms. For the purpose of Jāts, three distinct but inter-linked shifts need to be considered— the territorial shift, the occupational shift and the technological shift. In this part, the problem of Jāt identity will be examined within this framework.

In the 7th century, Hiuen Tsang noticed a large pastoral population living ‘along the flat marshy lowlands’ in Sind whom he described as ‘of an unfeeling and hasty temper’ but did not mention their name. At this stage, on account of their low level of existence these people (identified as Jāts) were not important enough to be named and were rather recognized by their external behaviour and way of life.

The first attempt to fix a mark of identification on the Jāts is found in the 8th century when during the reign of Hindu Chach as well as under Muhammad Qasim, it was strictly ordered that ‘when the Jāts went out of their houses, they must take dogs with them, in order that they might easily be distinguished from the other tribes.’ Other restrictions on the Jāts included that they should not carry swords, ride horses and wear soft and silken clothes. This unprecedented development was a significant change as it provides insight into the prevailing conditions that invited the imposition of an inferior identity or a mark of humiliation over a selective people by the State. It may be noted that Chach, the Brahmana ruler of Sindh was a successor of a Śūdra ruler who respected the

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204 Chachnama, p. 170.
The Jāts of Sindh were also inclined to Buddhist faith and this might have been one of the factors that determined the policy of a Brahman State towards people belonging to heterodox faith. However, the continuity of social restrictions and imposition of identity marks on the Jāts by the Arab rulers of Sind also confirm the policy of non-interference in the past traditions and social usage in foreign countries. This phenomenon is reminiscent of the ancient Indian tendency to exclude the Śūdras from participating in the communal life. The discriminatory provisions imposed on the Jāts also remind us of the rules governing the relations between the masters and their herdsmen and agricultural labourers, characteristic of agrarian and pastoral economy of pre-Mauryan period. It is a matter of investigation as to why this kind of identity or a mark of humiliation was exclusively placed on the Jāts and Luhanas. Chachnāma informs us the Jāts were supposed to ‘supply firewood to the ruler of Brahmanabad; that they must serve him in the capacity of guides and spies; that, if they distinguished themselves for these qualities, they would be considered trustworthy and honest; that they must live in harmony and co-operate with King Agham’s son Sarhand; and that, if an enemy invaded the country, they should consider it their duty to stand by him and fight for him. The imposition of compulsory service and extortions from the Jāts is also reminiscent of the economic disabilities imposed on the Śūdras. These tendencies also shows that there are conscious attempts to widen the gap between the higher Varnas and

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205 Beal, op. cit., p. 272.
206 Ibid., pp. 273-74.
207 RS Sharma, Śūdras in Ancient India, Delhi, 1980, p. 62.
208 Ibid., p. 112.
209 Chachnama, p. 37.
210 Sharma, op. cit., p. 112.
the lower Jāts but they were certainly not treated as untouchables. The Jāts seemed to have a record of defiance, insurgency and banditry and perhaps these restrictions are mainly intended to prevent their mobility and ability to revolt. The expectations of trustworthiness and honesty from the Jāts by Chach as well as the appeal to them to live in harmony and co-operation clearly suggests that the rulers did not trust the Jāts and hence there was the need of some stringent measures to deal with their hostile nature. The socio-economic disabilities imposed on the Jāts also explain the roots of their religious affiliations to Buddhism which had opened its doors to all those who were scorned in the Brahmanical society. Hence, it can be postulated that the social degradation of the Jāts was more pronounced on account of their engagement to menial occupation (herdsmen) and allegiance to the heterodox sect. This phenomenon is also reflected later in Alberuni’s observation that ‘the Jātts were cattle-herders, low Śūdra people.’ In this way, the first notions of community and identity formation of the Jāts were not articulated by the Jāts themselves but by the ‘others’ who were governed by cultural relativism, socio-economic incompatibility and threat perception.

The available evidence shows that significant territorial shift in the North-West from roughly 10th century onwards contributed to the changes in the socio-economic and political life of various communities, the Jāts in particular. In the 8th and 9th century the main area of Jāt concentration was central and upper Sind but in the early 11th century

211 Chachnamah, pp. 169-171.
212 Beal, op. cit., p. 273.
213 Alberuni, p. 401.
214 Chachnamah, pp. 37, 170; Biladuri, op. cit. p. 128.
the Jāts emerged in greater strength in Panjāb when they entered into a fierce naval encounter with the forces of Mahmud Ghazni in 1027 CE. This sudden demographic change in the situation provides conclusive evidence of a northward migration of the Jāts from Sind into southern Panjāb by the end of the 10th century. The focus of the Jāts had now shifted from the ‘flat marshy lowlands’ of Sind to the banks of Indus in Panjāb. This process seems to be in complete agreement with the linguistic evidence, which suggests an incursion of a Sindhi type language in Multān. This would be a natural consequence of the migration of the Sindhi Jāts into southern Panjāb. According to Grierson, one of the names of Lahnda is Jātki, the language of the Jāts who were quite numerous in the central part of the lahnda tract.

This mobility was not new to the Jāts whose previous occupation was pastoralism that requires groups to be mobile for all or part of the year. The geographical movement from Sind to southern Panjāb transformed the socio-economic patterns of the Jāts. The pastoralism possibly first gave way to pastro-agriculture before moving into full-fledged agriculture. The subsistence economy of pastoral life was replaced by the fruits of agricultural surplus. In this way, the territorial shift triggered an occupational shift among the Jāts who settled down in the villages of Mulātn and Bhatiya and adopted agricultural way of life.

216 Habib, op. cit., p. 95.
217 Beal, op. cit., p. 273.
218 Habib, op. cit., p. 95
219 Grierson, op. cit., p. 136. Also cited Habib, op. cit. p. 95.
221 Habib, op. cit., p. 95.
At the pastoral level, the Jāts were socially organized into bands or tribes which do not stress the accumulation of material goods, do not interact with the strangers and have limited social roles. It was these isolated and self-sufficient pastoral communities of the Jāts that Hiuen Tsang noticed in the 7th century. But after moving into Panjāb, the Jāts evolved out of their tribal way of life and adopted village-based plough agriculture which now allowed larger population, wealth and greater potential for war mobilization. This transformation explains the large-scale mobilization of manpower and resources by the Jāts against Mahmud Ghazni.

It has been argued that the question of identity has to be situated within those politico-economic developments that altered the 'settled' character of many peoples and cultures. The political condition in Central Asia have, from the early periods, been in a state of flux where the push and pull factors resulted in endless movements and migrations of communities and cultures. The North-Western parts of India were directly in touch with the fluid political situation of Central Asia and were therefore directly affected by the happenings. The Jāts of Sind and Punjab were one of the communities whose destiny was directly linked with the happenings of Central Asia. The Hun and Mongol invasions from the North West had direct bearings on the Jāts of Sind and Punjab. The series of Mongol invasions during 13th and 14th centuries pushed the Jāts and other communities northwards. The political pressures forced them into southern Punjab from where they moved into south-east Punjab and further spread into Gangetic

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222 Ratnagar, op. cit. pp. xi-xii.
223 Beal, op. cit. p. 273.
224 Isami, op. cit. p. 48; Ferishta, op. cit. p. 50.
225 Mushirul Hasan, Islam, Communities and the Nation—Muslim Identities in South Asia and Beyond, New Delhi, 1998, p. 9.
Doab. The constant movements and migrations of the Jāts over the centuries were fraught with difficulties. During the course of their movements they came across new environment, new regions, new people, new cultures, new enmities and new constraints which greatly transformed their occupations, preferences and psychology. The people whose life has been far from settled and who were exposed to hitherto unknown dangers were rather forced to accommodate with the fast changing realities of the time. The itinerant character of the Jāts gave them a totally different outlook which may have been dissimilar to the settled communities. The Jāts during the course of their unsettled existence and constant warfare required a rallying point which can help them to survive and sustain themselves. It is only a strong sense of unity, cohesiveness and brotherhood that could enable them to outlive the dangers and challenges of life.

They badly needed a continuous supply of warriors and resources in order to fight their enemies. The spirit of war and sacrifice demands not just materialistic gains in terms of booty or territory but rather a higher ideal such as honour of tribe, the past glory, removal of threat etc. These needs couldn’t have been met without a social organization which thrives upon production and protection. With the absence of kingship and having a strong republican tradition of egalitarian way of life, the Jāts were in a position of great advantage to organise the resources and manpower. The strong pastoral background of the Jāts also helped them to absorb the shocks of push and pull factors and sustain themselves in an uncertain and unsettled way of life. It is largely on account of their exposure to nomadic way of life that they were able to accommodate the political and economic constraints of the time. Hence the debate of identity of the Jāts also needs to be
situated within their pastoral background, egalitarian way of life, co-existence with political upheavals, incessant warfare and forced migrations. The process of accommodation to the new modes of life also set into motion a subtle process of social grouping or social cohesion among those who were now inclined to hold the plough. The practical needs of agriculture demanded organisation of manpower for day to day agricultural activities. The shift to agriculture changed the focus from cattle to land and crop. The protection of crops as well as expansion of cultivation necessitated war which again demanded further mobilization of manpower and resources. Hence the previously scattered groups of Jāts coalesced into close working communities. The shift to agriculture was accompanied by many phenomenon such as agrarian surplus, accumulation of wealth, landed property, trade and crafts. The new complexeties required some kind of settlement in form of rules for property, property disputes, marriage and descent. For a long period, the Jāts were in a period of transition and their identity was inchoate as the Jāt tribes were transforming into caste and being absorbed onto varna-Jāti system. The process of social transformation of the tribes did not altogether abandon the tribal structure but accommodated the clan system along with its rules of exogamy. Gradually, the Jāts evolved into a caste with well defined rules of exogamy and endogamy, a fixed occupation, i.e agriculture with code of social behaviour and relationships with other communities. *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib* refers to the Jāts of Panjāb as 'villagers or rustic' belonging to the caste of Vaiśyas. Thus the Jāts not only developed a sense of community of peasants within themselves but also perceived by others as cultivators.

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226 *Dabistān*, pp. 252, 270.
The above transformation of the Jāts from tribe into community was inherently connected to the question of identity. As noted earlier, the Jāts of Sindh were subjected to harsh socio-economic disabilities and as a consequence they had an inferior social status and weak identity. But now having moved into Panjāb, the Jāts adopted agriculture which brought about perceptible changes in their identity. The point of significance is the fact that the Jāts of Panjāb were no longer subjected to Chachnāma-type of discriminatory prohibitions. The plough agriculture brought ritual status, the agrarian surplus brought material prosperity and large population brought better war mobilization. Their newly found economic strength and the newly assigned role as a cultivator and warrior helped their integration into the society. The food stability and the agrarian surplus now supported an increasing population with a large network of clan-based groups, linked together with rules of marriage and descent. The dynamism of the Jāt cultivators gave them self-respect and a strong self-consciousness which they began to assert in a number of ways. As reported earlier, in Panjāb, the connection of the Jāts with peasant agriculture was so linked that ‘Jāt’ began to mean an agriculturist. Their proximity to land was an important factor in building a basis for the new identity. Thus the most significant aspect in terms of identity-formation of the Jāts was the merger of the cultivation with the cultivating caste (Jāts). Ibbetson observed that the word ‘Jāt’ became a generic term for even a non-Jāt agriculturist to claim Jāt status. It shows that the name ‘Jāt’ gradually became a model of Sankritization where one can enhance his caste status by adopting the occupation of the Jāts.

227 Habīb, op. cit. p. 97.
The process of Jāt expansion within Panjāb continued unabated and it seems that by the end of 11th century, the Jāts had spread out from southern Panjāb and settled in south-east Panjāb. During the course of their movements, the Jāts developed strong associations with existing popular cults and also developed their own religious traditions. The process of formation of Jāt identity derived sustenance from their cultural traditions which centred around local cults, saints, pirs, tombs and shrines.229 Their pluralist religious traditions such as swāngs, kīśās, khāthās and sākkhas.230 Some of their popular stories included stories of Allah Īdal, Gāga Pīr, Bhūrā Bādal, Hādi Rānī, Amar Singh Rāthore, Vīr Javnāharmal, Bhāu kī sākkhas etc.231 The religious traditions of the Jāts contributed to great extent in providing a structure to the Jāt identity.

From the 12th century onwards we see another phase of territorial shift of the Jāts from Panjāb to present day Uttar Pradesh. An eastward migration of the Jāts from the south-east Panjāb to the Gangetic Doāb is clearly visible from the 12th century onwards which continued unabated till the early 16th century.232 The great shift in the position of the Jāts from Panjāb to Gangetic Doāb was facilitated by massive breakdown of law and order in wake of foreign invasions and political instability of the Delhi Sultanate. During this period, the Mongol invasions caused great political upheavels in the North-West and triggered a chain of push and pull factors that displaced several communities. The Jāts were one of these dispossessed communities that found its way first into south-eastern Panjāb and then into the Gangetic valley. These conditions emboldened the goitra-based

229 Datta, op. cit., p. 23.
230 Ibid.
231 Ibid.
232 Pradhan, op. cit., p. 76.
groups of the Jāts of Panjab to cross the Jamunā river and embark upon an aggressive campaign of territorial expansion, conquest and land acquisition in U.P. by pushing the previous communities.\textsuperscript{233} The narratives of the khāp-panchayats corroborates the oral traditions of the Jāts that they migrated into the upper Gangetic Doāb from south-east Panjab.\textsuperscript{234} A narrative of Šākha of khāp Bāliyān demonstrates the trend of this evidence.

“In the mid-12th century a Jāt group of Kaśyap gotra migrated from their ancestral village, Mehlana (Gurgaon, Panjab), crossed Jamunā river and settled in the territory that now corresponds to Bhanera Jāt and Sisauli villages in Muzaffarnagar (Uttar Pradesh). These two villages were established by this shakha. Village Sisauli was established at the end of the 12th century and it developed into a centre of the gotra. The villages that now falls under the Bāliyān khāp were either established or conquered by the Kaśyap Jāts who had spread into the neighbouring areas from Sisauli.”\textsuperscript{235} The process of territorial expansion, conquests and land acquisition by the Bāliyān khāp continued till the early 16th century. This phenomenon was a result of the breakdown of the law and order in wake of foreign invasions and rapid dynastic changes before the foundation of the Mughal Empire. After the formation of the Mughal rule, the law and order situation was brought under control.

The second shift of the Jāts from Panjab to Uttar Pradesh brought even greater transformation in the status and identity among the Jāts. The Jāts soon spread themselves into the entire Upper Gangā-Jamunā Doāb and mobilized their resources through their khāp network. It may be noted that before their migration from Panjab, the political

\textsuperscript{233} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{234} Crooke, op. cit. p. 25.
\textsuperscript{235} Pradhan, op. cit. p. 76.
institution of the Jāts was based on their membership of the gotra. But now, in the Doāb, the villages that they conquered or controlled were organised into gotra panchayat and the territories under its control were called khāp. The panchayats of these villages were called khāp panchayat. This khāp possessed its own civil army for the purpose of security and further expansion which continued till the foundation of the Mughal rule in the 16th century. The situation of 16th century Doāb after the completion of the Jāt migration is reflected in Aʿīn-i-Akbari which provides a comprehensive list of Jāt Zamīndārs.

The second phase of the Jāt migration was a high watermark in terms of the Jāt identity. The new shift transformed the previous Jāt cultivator into a Jāt Zamīndār. It was a result of an incredibly massive mobilization of manpower and resources during this period that the Jāts were able to reach the highest level of landed aristocracy. The range of the Jāt expansion in Upper Gangetic Doāb was to great extent on account of the formation of a khāp mechanism which integrated almost all the rural sections under their domination.

It has been argued that the second phase of the Jāt expansion and their conversion into an essentially peasant population were not only simultaneous, but also linked processes. This high success of this phase of expansion can also be attributed to some special conditions which the Jāts exploited very well for the extension of cultivation during the twelfth-sixteenth centuries. One important dimension of change that further contributed to the above phenomenon was the technological shift to the Persian wheel.

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236 Habib, op. cit. 97.
237 Ibid.
The Persian wheel was a wooden device with a chain of buckets and gearing mechanism to lift water from depths. Irfan Habib argues in favour of sudden appearance of the Persian wheel in the early 16th century.\textsuperscript{238} The Persian wheel was a marked improvement over the existing water-lifting technologies, particularly \textit{araghatta} which had certain limitations in working over wells or making use of animal power.\textsuperscript{239} The Persian wheel removed these limitations as it was capable of lifting water from depths and harnessing animal power. Broadly, the Persian wheel revolutionized the agrarian conditions of Punjab as the farmers were inclined to utilize this method to improve their cultivation. The Jāts who seem to have to have been in a transitional phase could not have remained aloof to the advantages brought about by the new technology. The Jāts took full advantage of the Persian wheel and it appears that the Persian wheel was instrumental in the Jāts' conversion to agriculture and their expanding settlements.\textsuperscript{240} This trend can be corroborated by Babur who saw the use of the Persian wheel in Lahore, Dipalpur and Sirhind.\textsuperscript{241} The regions described by Babur were important centres of Jāt settlements during the 16th century. It is not without significance that the \textit{A'īn-i-Akbarī} has reported the presence of Jāt Zamīndārs in these areas. The Jāts took full advantage of the Persian wheel and it appears that it was instrumental in part of the Jāts conversion to agriculture and their expanding settlements.\textsuperscript{242} With the adoption of the Persian wheel, and the expansion of their village settlements in Punjab, the Jāts came to be recognized as

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\footnote{238} Ibid., 98.  \\
\footnote{239} Ibid., p. 97.  \\
\footnote{241} Zahiru'd-din Muhammad Babur, \textit{Babur-Nama (Memoirs of Babur)}, (tr.) Annette Susannah Beveridge, vol. ii, Delhi, 2003, p. 486.  \\


Fig. 1: The Persian Wheel (Geared Water-Lifting Device) c. 16th century.

substantial farmers. The degrees of their association with cultivation are clearly demonstrated by the fact that in Punjab, the term Jāt became synonymous with agriculture. From our point of view, this trend was significant in the formation of the Jāt identity. The gradual shifting of the Jāts to agriculture resulted in the crystallization of their myriad communities, previously engaged in various kinds of occupation, into a clearly discernable class of cultivators. It is noteworthy that Dabistan-i-Mazhab described the Jāts as “villagers and rustics.” 243 With the expansion of their population and their transformation to agriculture, a process that took about three to four centuries, the Jāts began to show more cohesion in their socio-economic and cultural demeanour, and by the 16th century, emerged as a distinct peasant community.