CASE STUDIES

Case-1:

Inayat Ali is a 40 years old man who belongs to Khatana clan of Gujjar community and is a resident of Jagti village, Jammu. He is Graduate and is married to Rasoolan Bibi who is 33 years old and belongs to Mehsi clan.

Inayat Ali is a Government employee and he is a Patwari by his profession. There are total six members in his family- himself, wife, three daughters and one son. His wife is 12th passed and she is a housewife.

Inayat Ali is an educated person and he informed that his ancestors sedentarized long back. He is leading a progressive life and sending his wards to school. He also said that his children are getting scholarship for the education under the provision of ST status.

The wife of Inayat Ali is related to him before marriage as his wife is the daughter of mother’s brother. According to him, in his case, the criteria of mate selection were family background and the relation as the two families already knew each other very well.

He was of the opinion that his language and culture are the most important factors with which he identifies himself. He has strong affinity for his community and his family observes all the traditions that are there in his community. He is a learned man and very much aware of the rights, provisions and the privileges that are granted to his community.

He, himself, has been benefited from the reservation policy under the ST status. He got his job and then promotion because of the reservation.
Case-2:

Sohail Choudhary is a young man of 30 years who belongs to Chechi Clan of Gujar community and is married to Asiya Bibi who belongs to Kasana clan.

Both Sohail and Asiya are well educated, modern and into Government Jobs. Sohail Choudhary is an Engineer by profession and Asiya is a Teacher by profession. They got married with each other two years back and has a son who is one year old. According to Sohail, the criteria of mate selection in his case were education, family background and occupation. He said that he wanted to get married to a girl who is educated and into a job.

Sohail Choudhary has been benefited through reservation policy. He got his engineering seat and job because of the reservation. Asiya Bibi also got benefited and got the job under the reservation policy. As both are well educated, they are very much acquaint with the rights and privileges that has been granted to the Gujar community. Sohail Choudhary told that he and his wife actively participated in the last elections of the State and said that his wife is free to cast vote as per her own choice to her desired candidate.

Though Sohail Choudhary is quite educated and modernized, still he adheres to many of the traditions and customs that are a part and parcel of his community. He informed that he speaks his own language Gojri but can speak Dogri as well with the same fluency. He is aware that many NGOs are working for the welfare of the community and are providing a platform where Gujjars can raise their voice and put forth their demands.

Case-3:

Gafoor Ahmed is a Master by his profession. He belongs to Lodha clan and he is 53 years old. He is a very respectable man of his place and is a resident of Jandyal Village, Jammu. He has two sons and one daughter-in-law. His wife Rashida Begum belongs to Taas clan. Both were unrelated before marriage.
He opined that his culture, language and religion are the main factors that give a unique identity to Gujjar community. He said that though he is a Government employee, his family still follows the traditional occupation of cattle rearing but for their own household consumption.

As a teacher he imparts knowledge to his students. He is of the view that education is one of the important instruments that brought a sea change in his community outlook and occupation. Because of education, Gujjar community has realized the importance of sedentarization and shuns the nomadic life to a great extent.

According to him, he got benefited because of the reservation policy. He is aware of the fact that Gujjar community has been accorded the ST status and many facilities, concessions and privileges have been provided for the welfare and upliftment of the community.

In his view, the traditions and customs of his community are very much dear to him though some of the customs have been left far behind with the passage of time.

**Case-4:**

Aashiq Ali is a man of 45 years old. He lives with his wife, one son and two daughters. His one daughter is married. Aashiq Ali is 12th passed and works in PHE Department. His widow mother also lives with him. He and his wife were related to each other before marriage as his wife is his father’s sister’s daughter (FZD). His wife is 8th passed only.

Aashiq Ali got the job under the ST status. Though not very educated but he actively participates in politics and very keenly follows all the political development related to his community.

He strongly supports that his language and culture is very distinct and is one of the factors that shapes their identity and make it unique in itself. His family still rears cattle but that is purely for the family consumption.
His children got the scholarship for their studies and one of his sons is residing in Gujar hostel for studies. Aashiq Ali is aware of the rights & provisions that the constitution of India has granted to his community.

He was of the view that though Government has given many facilities but still there is long way to go and many more milestones are yet to achieve in order to bring his community into the main stream and make them aware of the modern lifestyle.

Case-5:

Dr. Javed Rahi is a prolific writer and researcher and he is a prominent name in tribal circles of the State. Dr. Rahi is 40 years old and did his Ph.D. from University of Jammu. He has been awarded the Best Book award in 1999 in Gojri language by J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.

Dr. Rahi belongs to the Khatana clan and he is married. His wife belongs to Blasser clan and she is a Government Teacher. Dr. Rahi has two children— one daughter and one son. They both are studying in a reputed school.

Dr. Rahi is the Chief Editor of the Gojri wing of the State Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. He is a renowned researcher and poet of Gojri and Urdu languages. He has authored one dozen books in Gojri and Urdu on history, culture and folklore of Gujjars. Dr. Rahi has headed various prestigious research projects including Encyclopedia of Himalayan Gujjars, Folklore Dictionary of Gujjar Tribe, Hindi-Gojri Dictionary Project.

Dr. Rahi said that he has been a member of the jury of Bhasha Samman in Gojri of National Academy of letters ‘Sahitya Akademi’, New Delhi and has attended a number of National conferences on tribals. His write-ups are regularly published in reputed newspapers.

He informed that he got scholarship up to Ph.D programme. He also said that he got Government service under ST category. Dr. Rahi is also the Secretary of Tribal Research and Cultural Foundation— an organization which was setup as a Non-Government Organization with the objective to promote socio-economic and cultural
aspects of Gujjars. He said that the main motive of this NGO is to preserve priceless manuscripts, miniature paintings and other artifacts; to promote the Gojri language; to promote social welfare schemes among Tribals.

He also informed that he is putting in all his concerted efforts for the projection of his community in one way or the other. Through this NGO, he is approaching the Union/State Governments from time to time to reserve adequate Assembly and Parliament seats for the STs (Gujjars) in J&K State Assembly as it is their Constitutional right.

**Case-6:**

Sajjad Ahmed Chechi is a prominent person of the Gujjar community. He is 57 years old and is a businessman. His wife belongs to Khatana clan. He has two daughters and two sons. His daughters and sons did their respective professional courses. According to Mr. Chechi, his wards did not get the scholarships as he is economically well off. But he informed that all his wards got their respective professional seats under ST status.

Mr. Chechi is also the General Secretary of Gurjar Desh Charitable Trust (GDCT), Jammu. He informed that in J&K, the population of Gujjars is sizeable but owing to several ups and downs of history lining their way right since their first appearance in the State they have unfortunately continued to live on the fringes of the society- neglected, suppressed, marginalized.

He said that the most deplorable side of the picture is that the Gujjars are politically under-represented. They have been targeted systematically by the successive political establishments to weaken their cohesion and bonding and this has ultimately reduced pitch of their powerful voice. With all these complex set of issues in the backdrop, Gurjar Desh Charitable Trust (GDCT) was born not as yet another organization but as a movement directed towards resurrection of this hapless community from the throes of discrimination.

He also informed that Gurjar Desh Charitable Trust (GDCT) has no doubt succeeded in setting in motion this grand process of cascading upward mobility in the
Gujjar community, there are several barriers to be overcome and many a bottleneck waiting to be squeezed through. Even today majority of Gujjars is living sub-human existence in the nomadic and semi-nomadic pattern of life. Government jobs are hard to lay hands on, and education is still a distant goal for some extremely poor families, healthcare facilities just nominally existent in far-distant locations and so on.

Mr. Chechi held the view that only awakened Gujjar sections of society will perhaps help reverse the sorry state of affairs. This doesn’t mean Gujjars have to get divorced from their heritage and culture in order to get stronger on all these issues of concern. Instead, they have to revisit their rich and colorful culture, revive their waning glory and embrace modernization without allowing a disconnection between the tradition and modernity. In the nutshell, this is the movement GDCT is spearheading with the honest belief that the most genuine concerns of the community will be honestly addressed without anyone trying to piggyback them for mundane gains thus reducing them into soulless numbers.

**Case-7:**

Mr. Masud Chowdhary (Retired IPS officer) is the Chairman of Gurjar Desh Charitable Trust, (GDCT). Mr. Chowdhary said that ethnic communities like Gujjars have everything special about them—their culture, their history, their norms and mores, their value systems, their customs and traditions. Something that continues to baulk them with and irreversible stubbornness even after 63 years of independence is their never ending neglect and deprivation. This community has watched with envy the meteoric rise their other social counterparts have made in the same space of time.

Mr. Chowdhary also held the view that Gujjar community has its distinct existence, its peculiar dress code, its arts and artifacts and its belief systems. Unless cautiously protected and conserved, this cultural identity is forever in danger of melting away. Someone has to take lead and do what is needed to be done. Here at GDCT this awakening dawn simultaneously with its setting up and the second important initiative that they took after a pioneering lead in education was in protecting Gujjar culture and Traditions from any kind of onslaught. This has led us to the setting up of Centre for
Culture and Heritage, Jammu---- a Centre for Research and Development, Centre of Learning and Development, a Museum for showcasing rich cultural heritage, a Centre for rich reciprocity of books and Publications.

He informed that what they honestly believe is that the Journey for them has just begun. This is not the last signpost that they have conquered but mile-zero from where a journey of thousand miles has to be undertaken. According to Mr. Chowdhary, they have already taken noteworthy initiative in Secondary Education and from there they have to move forward and set up a Tribal University in the State of J&K.

He concluded his note with an Urdu couplet:

"Chiraghon ko aankhon mein mehfooz rakhna
Bahut Door takk raat hi raat hogi"

(Keep burning lamps protected under the lids of your eyes.... For a long distance all you will see is the all encompassing night and its impenetrable darkness).