The tribal belt of Himachal Pradesh is situated in its north and north-east and is spread over the Districts of Kinnaur, Lahaul-Spiti, Pangi Sub-division and Bharmour Sub-division of Chamba District. A brief geographical description of the tribal belt is given below.

(a) **Kinnaur District:** Kinnaur District consists of a series of mountainous and precipitous ravines descending rapidly to the bed of Sutlej. The two chains of lofty summits, which branch off in south-western directions from the elevated ridge of the left bank of the Indus, fall within the District and are known as Parasala and Purgeol. Parasala is, according to the estimate of Alexander Gerard, about 6300 metres high while the height

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of Purgoil, at two points, is about 6189 and 6747 metres.  
The Kailash peak is the highest in the District.  
the principal river of the District which originates in  
the Himalayas, enters the Kinnaur District from the  
Tibetan territory. The main tributaries of the river in  
the District are Lee or Spiti, Baspa, Tidong, Wanger and  
Darbung.

(b) Lahaul-Spiti District. The main Himalayan  
mountain range, constituting the north-western tip of  
Lahaul-Spiti District boundary, extends through Baralacha  
region, encompassing the upper reaches of the rivers  
Tzarah, Paraichu and Lingti, terminates at the place  
where the river Spiti leaves the District boundaries.  
The mid-Himalayan range separates the District from Kulu  
and Bara-Shangal and merges itself with the Sri Kandh  
range, which touches the main Himalayan range at the river

3. Ibid.  
4. Ibid.
Spiti. The western part of the District is bounded by the great Pir Panjal range. The mid and the main Himalayan ranges are joined by the Kunzum range, which separates the District into two natural divisions of Lahaul and Spiti; communication between the two is open only during the summer months, through the passes of Kunzum and Baralacha. The Lahaul sub-division has five natural parts, viz. Chandra Valley, Bhaga Valley, combined Chandra-Bhaga Valley, plain of Lingti and the great mass of glaciers and high peaks encircled by the Chandra and Bhaga rivers. Similarly, Spiti is subdivided into two parts situated on the either side of the main Himalayan range. The District has three important rivers, viz. the Chandra, the Bhaga and the Spiti. The first two, which are exclusively in the Lahaul sub-division form the headwaters of the Chenab, locally known as Chandra-Bhaga river. The Spiti, which is the main river of the Spiti sub-division, empties its waters in the Sutlej river. The important rivers, having altogether a different drainage system, are Yunar, Tsarab and Paraichu which flow into Ladakh territory and finally become a part of the great Indus river. 5

Chamba District

(c) **Bharmour Sub-division:** The area to the south-east of the Tundah Spur comprises of that part of the valley of the Ravi - from below Bara-Bhangal with its tributaries, the Budhil and the Tundah, as far down as the Chirchind Nullah, near Chhatrari - which is called the Bharmour Sub-division; it is the oldest portion of the District and includes the ancient capital. It is also called 'Gadderan' or the abode of the Gaddis.

(d) **Pangi Sub-division:** Thilot Nullah on the eastern side and Sansari Nullah on the western side separate Pangi Sub-division from the Lahaul-Spiti District. On these two boundaries, as also largely on the other sides, the valley is surrounded by high mountain ranges. The lowest of the five passes by which this sub-division is connected by direct traffic with the rest of the Chamba District is about 4298 metres high while the highest is 4932 metres above the sea level. The important passes are Sach, Darati, Chaini,

6. [Sub-Plan for Tribal Belt (1974-79), op.cit., p.3.](#)
Kalicho and Chobia. These passes remain closed for traffic practically for half the year. The Chandra-Shage, flowing into the valley from Lahaul-Spiti, runs through its whole length and divides it into several parts along with its tributaries of Sural, Hundan, Seichu and Meyar nullah. The Pangi valley thus stands sub-divided into Sural, Hundan, Seichu and Meyar sub-valleys. Following re-organisation of the Sub-division, Meyar valley was transferred to Lahaul-Spiti District.

Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste Communities: The major Scheduled Tribes, inhabiting the Kinnaur District are known as 'Kinsaura'. Among the Scheduled Castes are 'Koli' (or 'Kolta' or 'Chamang') and 'Lohar' (or 'Kathala', 'Bandhala', 'Damang'). 'Bhot' (or 'Bodh') and 'Swemple' are the major Scheduled Tribes inhabiting the Lahaul-Spiti District. 'Kori' (or 'Koli') and 'Samhali' are the major Scheduled Castes in the District of Lahaul-Spiti.

'Pangwalas' and 'Gaddis' are the chief tribes of Pangi and Shimshur Sub-divisions respectively. 'Hali', 'Sipi' and 'Chamar' are among the main Scheduled Castes inhabiting the Pangi and Shimshur Sub-divisions.8

7. Sub-Plan for Tribal Belt (1974-79), op. cit, p.2

Fig. No. 5.

SCHEDULED TRIBES IN HIMACHAL PRADESH
(1971 CENSUS)
The following tribes have been declared as Scheduled Tribes in Himachal Pradesh.

**TABLE No. 3.1**

Scheduled Tribes of Himachal Pradesh

1. Gaddi
2. Gujjar
3. Jad, Lamba, Khampa and Bhot (or Bodh)
4. Lahaul
5. Pangwala
6. Kannaura or Kimara
7. Swangla

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**Area and Population**

As per the last census, the tribal belt covers 43.03 per cent of the total geographical area and 3.30 per cent of the total population of the Pradesh. Of the total population of 1.14 lakhs, 73.89 per cent are Scheduled Tribes - their percentage is as high as 91.6 in Pangi Sub-division. The following table indicates the percentage of Scheduled Tribe population in the various Districts of the Pradesh.

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10. Sub-Plan for Tribal Belt, op.cit, p.3.
### Table No. 3.2

**Percentage of Scheduled Tribes, District-wise**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bilaspur</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Chamba</td>
<td>27.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Hamirpur</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Kangra</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Kinnair</td>
<td>68.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Kulu</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Lahaul-Spiti</td>
<td>78.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Mandi</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Simla</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Sirmour</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Solan</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Una</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Himachal Pradesh** 4.09 per cent

From Table No.3.2, it is clear that concentration of Scheduled Tribes is maximum in three Districts only, i.e. Lahaul-Spiti, Kinnair and Chamba. The area and

population in these three District have been indicated in Table No.3.3 below.

**TABLE NO. 3.3**

Area and Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Area in sq. km.</th>
<th>Scheduled Castes</th>
<th>Scheduled Tribes</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinnaur</td>
<td>6,553</td>
<td>9,669</td>
<td>34,090</td>
<td>6,076</td>
<td>49,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahaul-Spiti</td>
<td>13,930</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>21,563</td>
<td>5,346</td>
<td>27,263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamba</td>
<td>6,280</td>
<td>38,156</td>
<td>67,852</td>
<td>1,45,195</td>
<td>2,51,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26,763</td>
<td>48,179</td>
<td>1,23,505</td>
<td>1,56,617</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it is clear that among the three Districts, the tribal population is highest in Chamba District. The table given below indicates the population of Scheduled Tribes in the Sub-divisions of these three Districts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Sub-division</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Scheduled Tribes Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kinnaur</td>
<td>Kalpa</td>
<td>19,217</td>
<td>12,168</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pooh</td>
<td>16,413</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nichar</td>
<td>14,205</td>
<td>8,922</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Lahaul-Spiti</td>
<td>Lahaul</td>
<td>20,372</td>
<td>15,583</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spiti</td>
<td>7,196</td>
<td>5,980</td>
<td>83.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Chamba</td>
<td>Pangi</td>
<td>9,794</td>
<td>8,978</td>
<td>91.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dharmour</td>
<td>27,067</td>
<td>19,809</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chamba and</td>
<td>1,50,195</td>
<td>23,316</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Churah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dalhousie</td>
<td>66,147</td>
<td>15,745</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Revised Tribal Sub-Plan, op. cit., p. 25. An area of 1914.3 sq. km. consisting of 4,030 persons (3,812 Scheduled Tribes) were transferred to Lahaul-Spiti District from Pangi Sub-division as a result of the re-organisation.
From Table No.3.2, it appears that district-wise tribal concentration is maximum in Chamba, Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti Districts. From Table No.3.3 it is also evident that among the three Districts, numerically the tribal population is maximum in Chamba (67,853) followed by Kinnaur (34,090) and Lahaul-Spiti (21,363). From Table No.3.4, it is evident that the percentage of tribal population is maximum in Pangi Sub-division (91.6) followed by Spiti (83.1) Pooh (79.2) Lahaul (73.5) Bharmour (73.2), Kalpa (63.3), and Nichar (62.8).

The present study, however, is concerned only with the Bharmour and Pangi Sub-divisions of the Chamba District. Chamba District comprises the erstwhile princely State of the same name which became a part of Himachal Pradesh on April 15, 1948. With the re-organisation of Punjab, some areas of Pathankot Tehsil of Gurdaspur District of Punjab were integrated with this District.

The District has a total area of 6280 sq. km. and the total population, according to 1971 census, is 2,51,203. The entire District is mountainous with altitudes ranging from 609.60 metres to 4400.80 metres above the sea level. Therefore, the climate varies from sub tropical to semi-arctic. The high altitude regions of the District remain snow-bound for a fairly long period during the year.

Out of the four sub-divisions, the Pangi and Bharmour sub-divisions are the tribal areas of the District. These
two Sub-divisions are one of the most backward Sub-divisions in Chamba District as well as in Himachal Pradesh.

**BHARMOUR SUB-DIVISION**

The Bharmour Sub-division has a great historical importance. It was here that the erstwhile Chamba State was founded; this tract is also regarded as the homeland of the Scheduled Tribe known as Gaddis. Once called Brahampura—the original capital of Chamba State—Bharmour proper today is no bigger than a large village. But it still retains, in ancient temples, the monuments of its old glory. The population in this Sub-division is concentrated in the three sub valleys—Tundah, Kugti and Holi-Chanhauta. These are inhabited by about 58, 12 and 30 percent respectively of the population of the entire Sub-division. With regard to economic development and accessibility, of the three sub valleys, Tundah sub valley may be considered as comparatively more advanced and the Kugti as most backward.

The headquarters of the Sub-division is located at Bharmour in the lap of Bharmani forests and is approachable from Chamba town through a 67 km long fair weather road which remains closed to traffic for the entire length of

Map of Sub-Division, Bharmour

References:
Sub-Division Boundary: —— —— —— ——
Kanungo Circle Boundary: —— x —— x —— x
Patwar Circle Boundary: ————
rainy and winter seasons. Otherwise, the means of transport and communications are extremely scarce and difficult. Certain habitats are still not accessible even through beasts of burden. For such places, human labour is the only means of transport.

The Gaddis, who inhabit Bharmour Sub-division of Chamba District, are a classic example of how people - fleeing from the Indo-Gangetic plains to an entirely different, rugged and mountainous tract - adopted themselves remarkably well to the new conditions and at the same time retained their essentially original socio-cultural traits for all these centuries. Traditions connect their origin to those Hindus who sought refuge in the Dhauladhar mountain range from war and religious persecution in the plains during the Mughal period.16

The Gaddis are the semi-nomadic people who inhabit the Dhauladhar range in the north of the Himalayan Beas Basin. They attract notice by their striking dress and handsome bearing. The mountainous habitat has strongly influenced their economy. Their life, work and religious beliefs bear the imprint of the environment in which they live and work. They are handsome, tall, robust and energetic people. Their complexion is fair, and 'Gaddans' - the Gaddi women - are well known for their good looks.17

16. Revised Tribal Sub-Plan, op.cit, p.23.
Migration: During migration, besides grazing their flocks of sheep and goats, Gaddis engage themselves in cutting wood, pounding rice, working as agricultural and manual labourers, domestic service, etc. Thus, their meagre income from land, sheep and goats and cottage industries at home are augmented to a certain extent. The constant touch with the outside world, during migration, year after year, also results in their adopting better ways of life prevalent in the places of their migration. 18

Food: The food of Gaddis consists of goat's and sheep's milk, maize, buck wheat, hill millets, phullan and pulses. The bread is dipped in milk and eaten. Occasionally, mutton and liquor are consumed especially on festive occasions. Gaddis' favourite drink is 'lugri' a mild alcoholic drink made from fermented rice or barley flavoured with roots of shrubs. At high altitudes, where it is difficult to procure provisions, the Gaddi lives on for days together on milk of sheep and goat. Gaddis also eat some edible plants like 'lungru' and 'phaphru'. Parched barley made into flour is consumed on their journeys from place to place. Instead of sugar, they use mostly honey which they get from the forest hives. They prefer the crude salt of Mandi District. 19


19. S.L. Kayastha, op.cit, p.72.
Social Norms: Gaddis are known for their simplicity and honesty. Brunhes remarks that "Instinct to pillage is inherent in the character of the nomads, but it is truly remarkable that Gaddis are free from pilfering, poaching, theft and any other crime. Even some of their deeds are maintained by oral words only. Neither, is their attitude to settled people hostile". This may be due to the fact that on either side of their habitat they are hemmed by the valleys of Kangra and Chamba and year after year they have to maintain contact with the valley people during their seasonal migration. It is true that Gaddi may have little appreciation for the intellectual and artistic elements of the agriculturists of the valleys and plains but it cannot be said that morally he is low. In fact the scales may tip in his favour. Crime is unknown amongst them and they are not of litigious mind. Murder and rape are rare. Gaddis are secluded-like by nature and by their old customs and quaint manners.

Social Stratification: Gaddis are divided into a number of classes, Brahmins, Khatris, Rajputs, Thakurs and Rathis and Sudras, of menials, Reharas, Kolis, Sipis and Halis. The first two classes wear sacred-thread. Gaddi

society is organised on the rajput hypergamous system. They are much stricter in the observance of Hindu customs and social practices, than most other inhabitants of the high ranges of Himalayas. The custom and social practices vary amongst different classes of Gaddis. Such variation is not unnatural. As Forde remarks "The character and scale of the social and political organisation among people who mainly rely on livestock for their support, varies as widely as among agricultural people."

Gaddi dialect belongs to what is known as western Pahari language of the northern group of the Sanskrit Aryan Family. There is no script for their dialect but Devnagri script can easily be adopted. However, the dialect is being preserved through spoken language, songs and folk tales.

Cultural heritage: A study of folk songs reveals a rich emotional life. Open air living, healthy diet and hardy habits combine to produce a race of healthy and cheerful people who enjoy life with a gusto. In meadows and mountain pastures, opportunities are not lacking for young people to meet and sing their romantic episodes. They sing in soft low tones as they spin. Gaddis' delight in festive

gatherings and are fond of singing and dancing. The latter is a style peculiar to them. Dancing is vigorous and even boisterous. At village fairs, dancing is essential part of procedure and is often accompanied with drinking.24

**Economic Aspect:** As the social environments have far reaching effect on the economic condition of the people and their capacity to develop themselves economically and socially the economic and historical background of the Gaddis afford an interesting study. The cheerful, pleasant and friendly Gaddis seen with their flocks of the sheep and goats in the foot-hills and the plains every winter, were once the valiant soldiers of the rulers of Bharmour. The strong ties between them and their rulers and their friendly temperament won for them new friends after independence. The Himachal authorities declared the Bharmour Gaddis, a Scheduled Tribe. Their brethren in Kangra, which was part of Punjab till November, 1966 were not given this status. However, over 1000 years of life in the midst of unfriendly natural surroundings and poverty as a result of un.rewarding yields from small terraced fields in a highly rugged terrain where soil erosion continues to pose a constant threat have

transferred the swordsmen into tribals who can be best
described as semi-agriculturists and semi-herdsmen.\(^\text{25}\)

**Economic Pursuits:** Fifty five per cent of the Gaddis
depend on farming. The area under cultivation, though not
necessarily under the plough, is 2361 hectares which means
an average of 0.16 hectare per head. In the absence of
irrigation, the farming is limited to only a few months
in a year which makes their farm income extremely meagre.
This fact has been sufficiently substantiated in the light
of the findings of an evaluation study of this area conducted
by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics of the Govern­
ment of Himachal Pradesh. At that time, the per hectare-
yield of various crops like wheat, barley, maize and ragi
was as low as 6, 9, 10 and 4 quintals respectively.\(^\text{26}\) Accor­
ding to horticulturists, however, the area is highly suitable
for apple and other fruit cultivation. However, as land
is already scarce, shifting to horticulture would only result
in acute food problem. Moreover, the long period between
planting and bearing and absence of roads are other impedi­
ments for the horticulture to become popular. In spite of
that it seems that horticulture alone can enhance the per
capita income of the inhabitants of these areas.

\(^{25}\) Revised Tribal Sub-Plan, op.cit, p.26.

\(^{26}\) Ibid.
Gaddi farming is characterised by small fields, primitive implements and small yields. The introduction of potato has increased the value of cultivated land. The fields around the Gaddi house which produced at best only wheat and barley, now produce very lucrative harvest of potatoes.\(^{27}\)

The average annual rainfall recorded at Bharmour is about 145 cm.\(^{28}\) The major precipitation occurs during summer months from June to September. However, the agroclimatic conditions vary widely as the elevation at which the cultivation is carried on, ranging from moderately high hill slopes about 1524 metres above sea level to well over 3048 metres. Some parts are beyond the range of monsoon current and consequently possess special climatic features. As a result of this, both the sowing and harvesting periods also vary considerably with the elevation of the cultivated lands and rabi crops are usually sown from the beginning of September to the end of October and harvesting is done during May to August. On the other hand, kharif crops are sown from the middle of April to the end of July and reaped from August to November. In Kugti valley, the land is scrapped with a 'kudali' and the sowing of rabi crops is undertaken when the kharif crops are still standing. On the high hills, cultivation is carried on in alternate years.

\(^{27}\) S.L. Kayastha, op.cit, p.67.

\(^{28}\) Revised Tribal Sub-Plan, op.cit, p.26.
Indebtedness: During the village survey of Shamour conducted by the Census Department, only four cases of indebtedness in the village were reported.29

The indebtedness survey among Scheduled Tribes in Himachal Pradesh conducted by the State's Economic and Statistics Department revealed that 28.9 and 32.1 per cent of the households in Bharmour/Pangi and other areas of Chamba District were under debt.30 The break-up of the household value of cash loan worked out to be Rs.701.76 and Rs.558.34 respectively. The area wise break up of these households were 18 (11.3) and 15(18.5) per cent respectively.31

Pangi Sub-Division

The majority of the population inhabiting Pangi Sub-division belongs to Pangwala tribe. A few of them are Bhots as well. The entire area is highly mountainous with altitudes ranging between 2133 metres and 6400 metres above the sea level. The area is one of the most difficult and remote and remains cut off from the rest of the world for about five to six months due to heavy snow fall during winter. The region is accessible through Sach Pass in

31. Ibid.
REFERENCES:

SUB-DIVISIONAL BOUNDARY

PATWAR CIRCLE BOUNDARY
Chamba District, Rohtang Pass in Lahaul-Spiti District and Kishtwar hinterland in Jammu and Kashmir. The access to the area is still difficult even after more than two decades of planned economic development mainly due to snow-bound hills. The headquarter of the Pangi Sub-division is located at Kilar.

Pangi Sub-division of Chamba District is situated between two lofty mountain ranges of Pangi and Zaskar and is accessible through high mountain-passes which are covered with snow for most part of the year. It is bounded by Jammu and Kashmir in north and north-west, by Lahaul Sub-division in the east, Churah Tehsil in the west, and by Bharmour Sub-division in the south. Based on the cultural affinity of the people residing in Chamba-Lahaul area beyond Thirtot Nullah and comprising 118 villages - of which only 30 villages are inhabited - have recently been transferred to Lahaul-Spiti District. As a result, a population of 4030 (males 2193, females 1837) have been transferred to Lahaul-Spiti District. There are now 9794 persons (males 4996 and females 9798) who inhabit Pangi Sub-division. Thus the sex-ratio is 960 females per thousand males. The area is entirely rural and a large number of villages are uninhabited and the Pangwalas mostly reside along the river Chandra-Bhaga and certain other important nullahs, like Saichu, Hundan and Sural. The area of the Sub-division
is 1653.7 sq. km. and the density of population is 6 persons per sq. km.

The climate of the valley is temperate in summer and semi-arctic in winter. As the lowest altitude in the valley is 1524 metres above the sea level, summer is extremely mild and pleasant and owing to scanty rainfall, the humidity is low throughout the year. The winter season in the valley is very severe and the snow falls heavily which paralyses the movement of the people during the season. The heavy snowfall, however, enriches the soil and provides a regular flow of water in the streams and springs.

Migration: Generally, the people in the valley are non-migratory except in Sural Mullah and Hundan Mullah sub-valleys where people migrate to adjoining areas of Chamba and Churah Tehsils during the winter on account of better accessibility. The majority of this migratory population works as labourers and domestic servants during the period of migration. The non-migratory population engages itself in spinning and weaving during the winter months.

Food: Due to heavy snowfall there is an acute shortage of cereals in this region and hence the people do not clean wheat and grind it with the chaff. The bread seems to be prepared by grass which cannot satisfy their hunger and the poor tribals have to eat bread five times
a day. In winter, the entire Sub-division is like an isolated island where the human being and animals both stay alike in the houses and sheds continuously for six months. The Pangwalas get only one crop a year and a slight drought creates famine conditions. On such contingencies they fall back on the stores of black corn (kodra) or grass known as 'Phapra'.

The staple food of the people is barley, elo (rye), wheat, buck wheat, siul and cheena. Part of straw often ground with the grain and eaten even in normal years. In times of scarcity, certain grasses and roots, such as Kangesh, 'Chukri', etc. are also eaten, compounded with the flour. On account of extreme poverty, meat is eaten only in winter and that too on special occasions. Walnut oil and ghee are the traditional fats used as cooking media. Generally, the people take their meals thrice a day. The morning meal is known as 'Kalau' the afternoon meal is 'Rihne' and the night meal 'Behal'. Drinking is traditionally and widely prevalent among both sexes. Considering the tribal habits and the climatic conditions, the people in this area are legally free to ferment drinks for their own use. The only taboo against drinking is the poverty of the people.


since foodgrains are mostly used for the preparation of local brew called 'Ailo'.

Social Stratification: Of the two main tribes, viz. Pangwalas and Bhots, who inhabit the valley, Pangwalas constitute the major local population. The Pangwalas are the aboriginals of the Pangi region of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh. 'Pangwalas' means the people of Pangi and it includes the following castes which can be divided into two major classes, i.e. (A) High Castes: (a) Brahmans (b) Rajputs (c) Thakurs (d) Rathis and (B) Low Castes: (a) Hallis (b) Lohars (c) Meghs (d) Dakis.

There are also a few Tibetans in the Sub-division who are called 'Bhots' but outsiders recognize them as 'Pangwalas' only as they inhabit the Pangi Sub-division. There is no restriction on food and marriages among the high castes but they do not eat or intermarry with the lower castes and not even with the Bhots.

Cultural Heritage: In order to remain lively, the hill people celebrate their fairs and festivals in their own gorgeous manner and Pangwalas are no exception to this. They forget every thing on these festive occasions and

34. Revised Tribal Sub-Plan, op.cit, p.30.
35. S.S. Shashi, op.cit, p.121.
36. Ibid.
Indulge freely in merry-making and rejoicing. The chief festival observed in Pangi is Bishnu or the Bisoa observed on first of Baisakh when Sani (small wheat cakes, cooked in ghee), incense, vermilion, flowers, rice, ghee and gur are offered to Devi and at night relatives and friends are feasted and drinking of locally brewed Lugri is freely indulged in. Other festivals are: (i) Urrain, observed on first Magh in honour of ancestors amidst gala feasting, and (ii) Khoul mela held on full moon of Magh. A big feast is held at night and people make small torches called chink which they throw at the walnut trees with the belief that the thrower will have a son. The Pangwalas also observe Shivratri and hold Sil Mela on the new moon of Magh. On these festivals, excepting Shivratri, drunkenness is quite common. Sacrifice consist of sheep or goat; the animal's head is taken by the slayer and the rest is divided between the priests and the worshippers. Sacrifices are made in order to appease the gods.

Economic Aspect: The people of Pangi Sub-division are economically very backward in view of the fact that the area remains cut off from the rest of the world for a major portion of the year. The severe climatic conditions are

not conducive to the setting up of either traditional or modern industries there. Agriculture is the mainstay, rather the only occupation available with the people and they depend directly on land for their livelihood. Out of a total population of 9794, 5460 or 55.7 per cent are workers (according to 1971 census) who are engaged mostly in agricultural pursuits.

Prior to re-organisation of Pangi Sub-division, the net area sown was 2,091 hectares in 1973-74. Of this, 969 hectares were irrigated, which forms 46.3 per cent of the area sown. There is a large scope for harnessing the natural resources, available in plenty, for bringing more area under assured irrigation. The valley is deficit in foodgrains, and in order to fully meet the foodgrain requirements of the people, transport subsidy is being given by the Government, since it is a very costly affair to transport foodgrains to these far-flung areas across the Sach Pass. There are practically no roads available and the people have to carry goods for their day-to-day needs on their backs or carry them on sheep and goats. Vegetation in the region varies with the altitude. Coniferous and deodar forests are abundant, but in the absence of communication

38. Refer T.S. Negi, Scheduled Tribes of Himachal Pradesh, A Profile (Simla, 1976).
facilities its exploitation is very much restricted.

**Economic Pursuits:** In order to ameliorate the economy of the area, road construction programme has been accorded a high priority. Once the area becomes accessible the trade can flourish. Kuth is available in some parts of the valley. It is a medicinal herb which is in great demand and is a source of foreign exchange. At present, Kuth is being exported from Lahaul-Spiti District but much headway has to be made to propagate its cultivation on scientific lines. There is scope for cultivation of Chilgoza trees in some parts of the valley. The subsidiary occupation of the people of Pangi valley is weaving and spinning and during winter season when the people are confined indoors, because of heavy snow fall, they keep themselves engaged in this activity and prepare woolen cloth for use during the remaining part of the year.

The crops grown in valley are mainly barley and wheat, elo, massar and potato. People still practise the conservative methods of farming and economic poverty stands in the way of adopting improved methods and use of chemical fertilisers, etc. As compared to Chamba District, average yield of crops per hectare is very low in Pangi valley.

39. *Revised Tribal Sub-Plan, op cit, p.31.*
A study conducted by the State's Directorate of Economics and Statistics revealed that the people living in the Miar sub-valley are comparatively, more affluent as compared to people in other parts of the valley. According to the study, 15 out of 40 households covered for the purpose were found to be under debt. The amount of debt varied between Rs. 60 and 1200. The largest single purpose for which loans were taken was the purchase of food stuffs followed by business and house construction.\textsuperscript{40}

The Socio-economic study of Pangi Sub-division conducted by the Economics and Statistics Department of Himachal Pradesh revealed that out of 200 sample households 61 were under debt to the tune of Rs. 21,757.50. Thus on an average the amount of loan per indebted family works out to Rs. 356.68. It was further revealed that 72.58 per cent household took loans for meeting the household requirements, 3.23 per cent for educational purposes, 9.68 per cent for ceremonies, 6.45 per cent for medical care and 8.06 per cent for other purposes.\textsuperscript{41}

Regarding the source of finance, 2 household got loans from co-operative societies, 19 from money-lenders, 13 from friends and relatives and 35 from various shop-keepers.

\textsuperscript{40} Revised Tribal Sub-Plan, \textit{op.cit}, p.31.
\textsuperscript{41} Pangi Valley, An Evaluation and A Socio Economic Study (Simla, 1986), p.85.
Sixteen households had taken loans from more than one source. The rate of interest in the sample village varied from 7 to 15 per cent which is very high.

During indebtedness survey among Scheduled Tribes in Himachal Pradesh, the Economics and Statistics Department of the Pradesh found that 28.9 and 32.1 per cent of the households in Sharmour/Pangi Sub-divisions and other areas of Chamba District were under debt. The break-up of the household value of cash loan outstanding as on June 30, 1976 worked out to be Rs.701.76 and Rs.558.34 respectively. The area-wise break up of these households was 18 (11.3 per cent) and 15 (18.5 per cent) respectively.

43. Ibid.
45. Ibid.