

# Community Organization of Gaddis in Meerut: A Sociological Study



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## Abstract

Social system in India is characterized by the ubiquity of caste. The caste were arranged in the hierarchy of purity and pollution, each following a certain traditional occupation and customs. Each caste is geographically fragmented into small territorial units, and within each unit, development of caste consciousness strengthens and give birth to caste organizations (Samaj).

Caste association is no longer a birth status group in which membership is automatically ascribed by birth. In the present study any organization established by the members of a specific caste for its welfare and to overcome disabilities etc. will be known as caste organization.

Western U.P. Gaddies are considered as backward class and are given reservation by the U.P. Government, Gaddies are either highly qualified or illiterate, very rich or poor. Gaddi is a citizen of a distinctive community with a long history and with distinct custom and tradition. The ideal Gaddi is a man with adequate land, sufficient cattle, a good house, numerous children, male and female, a man generous in his gifts to all his friends, and with enough sur and food to give frequent feast. The study focused on the origin of organization, its structure, functions, and problems.

**Keywords:** Community, Organization, Functions, Caste Association/ Organization, Structure, Gaddi.

## Introduction

Social system in India is characterized by the ubiquity of caste. The caste were arranged in the hierarchy of purity and pollution, each following a certain traditional occupation and customs. Each caste is geographically fragmented into small territorial units, and within each unit, development of caste consciousness strengthens and give birth to caste organizations (Samaj). The impetus to form a Samaj comes out of the same motives that impel people to strive for the rise of their caste and to enhance social status and prestige of a caste as whole in the traditional hierarchy of the society.

Though during the period of independence caste appeared to have been losing some attributes in democratic polity but in the present time caste once again appears to started playing an important role in the democratic processes as well. Caste/community organization are observable in the resent times to consolidate their position in order to participate and to gain rewards of development and other processes. To maintain the caste system, the caste organizations have always played an important role and forced the member to follow the general norms and cultural patterns of the community.

## Objective of the study

The study focus upon an organization of a community which has some unique attributes and has converted from Hindu to Islam in masse of Western U.P. Following questions are specifically proposed in the context of a community in the present study.

1. What are the conditions under which a community organization has got initiated, aims to know that why and how the leading persons of Gaddi community come together to form a Gaddi community or organization.
2. Who are the leading persons who played an important role in establishing and running the community organization, their social background, their age, education, occupation, economic status, activity and position in the community organization over a period of time?
3. What are the aims of the community organization and what are main problem which this community faced was and how the members of this

4. community tried to solve those community problems. How far they succeed in achieving their aims.
5. What are the structural body of the community organization, whether formal or informal structure.
6. How the organizing committee makes there politics, general norms and force the community to follow. How they find out problems of beradari and how the solution reaches the masses. What is the level of participation of masses in both problem raising and problem solving at the level of the community organization?

#### **Area of Study**

Our study focusses on a community organization of Gaddi. Gaddi was Hindu but now it is Muslim community, identifiable by its culture and other traits. In Meerut at present the Gaddi reside in and around the city of Meerut in a large number. Thus the area of study becomes Meerut city and nearby villages in which the Guddi community is presently available.

#### **Methodology**

To study the community organization of Guddi in Meerut district, web approach was used to identify the members and office bearers of the community organization. Interview and observation methods were used to collect data. Case studies of five office bearers of the community organization were undertaken as these members activity participate in all the three phases of the community organization of Gaddi in Meerut district.

#### **Review of Literature**

Indian society has a tendency for every caste to form its own community comprising all members of the caste speaking the same language. In the old regimes, the caste panchayat or council was usually restricted to the confines of the village or the town. In the large majority of cases the caste consciousness is limited by the bounds of the villages and its organization does not extend beyond the village. Front times have been such organizations living beyond these boundaries.

G.S. Ghurye(1968:298-99) has discussed about caste associations and now forms of caste consciousness among and Brahmins of Madras. The functions of the organization was—

1. To further the general interest of the caste and particularly to guard its social status in the hierarchy form actual or potential attacks of other castes.
2. To start funds to provide scholarship for the need and deserving student of the caste, usually at the secondary and college stage of education and sometime even to help them to proceed further country for higher academic qualifications.
3. To help poor people of the caste.
4. To try to regulate certain customs of the casts by resolutions passed at the annual meeting of the members of the caste.

The emergence of such caste associations has been noted by most of the sociologist of caste and class in India.

Six major function of community/caste organizations are mainly discussed by the sociologists who have written on caste organizations these functions are as follows--

1. Fostering of co-operation and caste consciousness among the members of caste.
2. Efforts to establish schools, technical institutions and scholarship for deserving students of the community.
3. Cast-courts which punish people infringing the castes rules.
4. To promote welfare and reformative activities.
5. To organize meetings to discuss the problems of the community.
6. To resist and fight instances of caste discriminations and overcome caste disabilities.

#### **Findings**

Five questions were posed in the beginning of the study—

1. What are the conditions under which a community has got initiated?
2. Who are the leading person who played an important role in establishing the community organization?
3. What are the aims of the community organization?
4. What are the structural elements of the community organization?
5. How does this organization functions?

These question have been specifically studied in the context of or with specific reference of community organization of Gaddi. Gaddi at present is a Muslim community. It has its distinct culture, way of life, dress patterns etc. and thus is identified as a Muslim community. It was earlier a Hindu caste and spread over various part of north India. The Muslim Gaddi now resides in and the cantonment areas of western Uttar Pradesh spread over various part of north India.

For the purpose of the present study, the conditions which gave rise to their organization in the resent time has been traced through knowing the recent history of the community through its elderly people living in and around Meerut city in the year 2016 and 2017 in different durations of time. Detailed interviews has been conducted with a few leading persons who were a part of and played leading role in the establishment of the organization in 1980 in the recent past. They are played part in the conflict situation of the organization, when it got bifurcated in year 1985. Again in the third phase in the recent time in 1996 again the organization becoming one and all the members of the community organization are again playing a leading role in uniting the organization.

On the aspect of the first question, what are the condition under which a community has got initiated? We find that the caste/ community organization of Gaddi got initiated in 1980. By this time the marriage custom in particular were becoming so expensive, largely because of the feast to be provided at the time of marriage, that the poor people of the community coming under the large debts. This also had started compelling marriage of a number of children together. Eventhen the number of guest of

the community to be invited was so large that it was resulting into poverty, indebtedness to money and abuse of child marriage. Largely these conditions were felt by some of the leading persons of the community and they initiated the present community organization to overcome these difficulties.

On aspect of the second question, who are the persons, playing leading role in organizing the community? We find that 25% of the Guddi community have been playing leading role in organizing the community and they are the active members of the community i.e. formative and bifurcation phase and at present also i.e. consolidation phase they are playing a leading role for organizing the community. All of them are owner of an agricultural land, besides this one is professionally an advocate, one is an owner of a cold storage and one has its own dairy farm. All the leading member are married and belongs to 30 to 50 year age group. All of them are actively working for the advancement of education and co-operation of Guddi community.

On the aspect of third question what are the aim of the community organization? We find that there are various features of the Gaddi community and the members of this community could be expelled by the biradari leaders for infringing caste rules. The main aim of community organization was to overcome the evil practices and features of Guddi community for their welfare. The main aim was to expel the rule of marriage of giving feast to the whole biradari. In the bifurcation phase i.e. the conflict arise between the Gaddi community and two parties i.e. sarbat and Rice (chawal) were formed. The aim of sarbat party was to offer sarbat to the sarbat party in the marriage ceremony and to avoid all other wastage at marriage. The aim of rice (Chawal) party was to offer chawal to the chawal party of Guddi community in the marriage ceremony. Due to this bifurcation several problem emerges and conflict situation arise between two parties. To solve this problem again the common meeting was organized by some leading persons and main aim of the phase was to faster and encourage friendly and brotherly feeling and to develop unity among the member of Gaddi community. Several bad practices like 'Lal Khat', 'Ta-am', 'Zahaz', 'Salam', 'Chala', 'Ramsala', and 'Iddat' were checked and new decisions were taken for the welfare of the community.

On the aspect of fourth question, what are the structural elements of the organization, we found that- Governing body of the organization has formal structure. Each member of the governing body has its own position and functions and there is a specific law in that governing body. Its structure is well defined, what would be the right and duties of each office bearer is also specified. The membership of Gaddi biradari is a matter of sentiments rather than a conscious act of choice. No matter whether one pays membership or not, he continuous to participate in the meetings. Leadership in the organization is not hereditary but it depends on one's interest and ability to articulate the purpose of the Sabha.

The fifth question, how does this organization function? On the basis of the evidence from case studies and observation we find as follows- They organize a number of meetings to communicate and to establish a friendly and brotherly feeling among Gaddi community. Their way of arranging meeting is by distributing pamphlets, announcing the dates and the place of meeting in the area of Gaddi community. To make available educational facilities by opening night school for working children. The function of the community is governed by a set of rules, hierarchy of officials with defined responsibility and duties. The problem of biradari is considered in these meetings and the solution is also taken in that meeting. The total Gaddi biradari at all India level participates in the meeting of Gaddi community. Thus there appears to be as mass participation from all areas of the community.

In the literature it was found that it is a feature of Indian society to form its own caste community/association. It is no longer a birth status group in which membership is automatically ascribed at birth, membership in a caste organization has to be acquired although the base of recruitment may be restricted to a single caste or a group. (Beteille, 1969: 182). In the present study 'Gaddi organization' is a caste/community in which membership is automatically ascribed by birth and it is also restricted to a single caste i.e. 'Gaddi'. Caste organization is formed with specific aim, as in the present study this organization is also formed with a specific aim to overcome disabilities and bad practices of the community.

#### **Conclusion**

Caste organization has their own structure and their own caste elders to settle disputes. As in the Gaddi organization it also has a well framed structure of governing body at all three phases and there are caste elders known as 'Patrons' to settle disputes. Through all not elder but educated combine so this function is also fulfilled by the organization with the addition that not only elders but all the educated and leading persons of the community have settle the disputes and regulated some practices.

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