Between aspirations and socio-economic realities: Livelihood strategies of Gaddi community in Himachal Pradesh, India

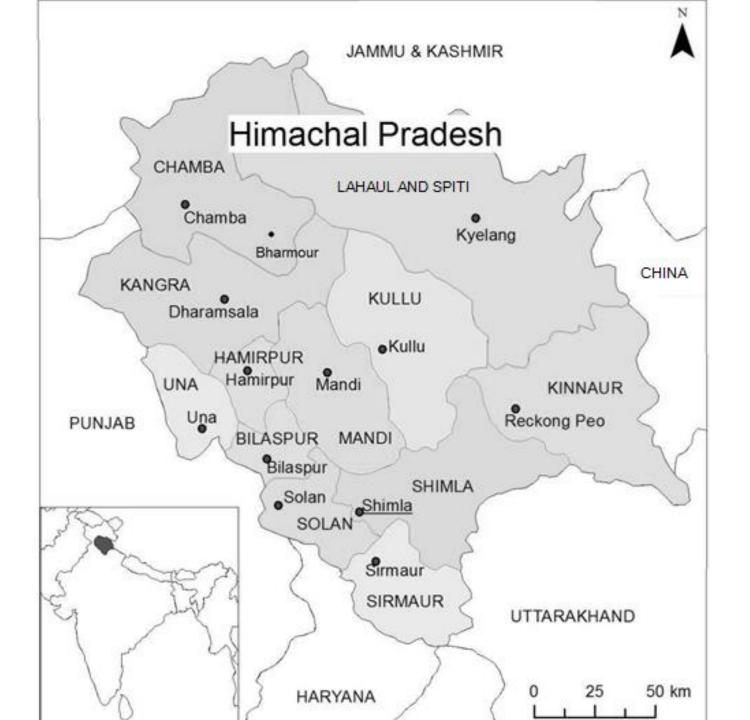
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Indigenous peoples' rights for selfdetermined livelihoods

- UN Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous peoples (2007)
- The right to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions (based on needs and aspirations)
- The sustainable livelihoods approach
 - cause-effect relations in a livelihood system
 - its economic and non-economic components
 - perceptions from *outside* and from *within*

Gaddi community

- The throne (in hindi: gaddi) of God Shiva
- Animism and hinduism
- Gaddi is a general social category evolved through pastoralism
- Today they are officially identified as an indigenous tribe (Scheduled tribe, ST)







Vulnerability context of Gaddis

- Mountains -> ecological & geological hazards
- Transhumant pastoralism and subsistence agriculture (agro-pastoralists)
- Several decades of conflicts over the land use with the state, and sedentary communities
- Who has the right to use the land and its resources? And who has the power over the land?

Vulnerability context of Gaddis

- Over-grazing and exclusion
- Development schemes:
 - -> subsidies and employment aid
 - -> various employment schemes (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

Guarantee Act)

- What type of livelihood strategies do the Gaddis have?
- How did the livelihood strategies evolve?
- What is the relationship between their aspirations and socio-economic realities?

Livelihood strategy

 Livelihood activities and livelihoodrelated decisions that people undertake in order to achieve their desired livelihood goals (IDS 2014)

Research material and methods

- Semi-structured interviews (30) and participant observation
- In Bharmour and Dharamsala
- One month in spring (March-April)
- Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

What type of livelihood strategies do Gaddis have and why?

- Cash crop cultivation (apple), subsistence agriculture, animal husbandry, wage employment and tourism in Bharmour
- Seasonal wage employment (in construction, in fields), less subsistence agriculture, and tourism in Dharamsala
- Diverse livelihoods -> non-farm sector

Perceptions within – employment

- The biggest concerns related to work
 - low levels of salary
 - ecological and economical risks
- Positive attributes of work
 - the amount of leisure time
 - material and financial gains
 - customer service

Perceptions within: sense of place

- Attachment to home village
 - material
 - **social** and **religious** reasons:
 - "Gaddi can be said to live like Shiva, or as my informants sometimes phrased it, Shiva lives just like a Gaddi" (Wagner 2013:41).
 - environmental attributes: climate and the aestetics of the mountains

Livelihood diversification

- The crisis of pastoralism
- The state and global economy
- The changing local culture and aspirations
- Diversity of livelihoods -> risk reduction and wealth accumulation, social dependency and reciprocity
- Attachment to place less out-migration aspirations



Kiitos! Thank you! Danyavaad!

