

Ecology, Economy and Society: Their Interaction Amongst the Gaddis of Himachal Pradesh

Veena Bhasin

Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, Delhi 110 007, India

KEYWORDS Himalayas. Transhumant. Interdependence

ABSTRACT The present study reports the economic and social interdependence in a transhumant population group Gaddis of Himachal Pradesh. This transhumant way of life nurtured by ecological factors has given social relationships which are institutionalized between people who know one another personally. Each Gaddi stands at the centre of a network of social relationship. Some of these relationships are established by birth, some by marriage and some by deliberate pledge. All these relationships provide economic advantages and protection for the participants. Gaddis have evolved two institutions, namely, co-operation between families and Barton (obligatory assistance) to deal with the need for interdependence and to overcome the scarcity of paid labour. In the present paper it is reported that ecology of the area has produced a unique blend of self-sufficiency and mutual interdependence. The socio-cultural system of Gaddis, provides an institutionalized means of formalizing a friendship between status equals or of bringing close together persons of high and low castes.