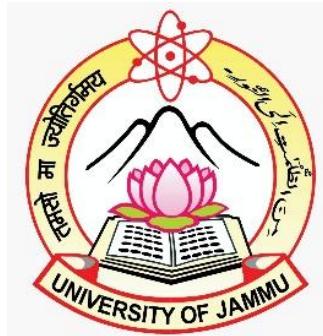


# **From Mountains to Memories Rediscovering Erstwhile Doda**



## **MAJOR PROJECT REPORT**

**SEMESTER- I**

**FOUR-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME (DESIGN YOUR DEGREE)**  
**SUBMITTED TO UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU, JAMMU**

**SUBMITTED BY THE TEAM: THE VOYAGERS**

<b>TEAM</b>	<b>ROLL NO</b>
DHWANI GUPTA	DYD-24-09
FATIMA SAYED	DYD-24-10
MEHAK SHAN	DYD-24-22
NITIN RATHORE	DYD-24-26
RUDRAKSH SHARMA	DYD-24-29
SOMIL NARANG	DYD-24-36

**UNDER THE MENTORSHIP OF**

<b>DR. SANDEEP SINGH</b> DEPARTMENT OF LIFELONG LEARNING	<b>DR. SHALLU SEHGAL</b> DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
---	---

**SUBMITTED ON-**

## **CERTIFICATE**

The work embodied in this report entitled "**From Mountains to Memories Rediscovering Erstwhile Doda**" has been done by Team THE VOYAGERS including group members- Dhwani Gupta, Fatima Sayed, Mehak Shan, Nitin Rathore, Rudraksh Sharma, Somil Narang as a Major Project for Semester I of Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (Design Your Degree). This work was carried out under the guidance of Mentors Dr. Shallu Sehgal and Sandeep Singh for the partial fulfilment of the award of the Design Your Degree, Four Year Undergraduate Programme, University of Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir. This project report has not been submitted anywhere else.

### **Signatures of Students**

Dhwani Gupta

Mehak Shan

Fatima Sayed

Nitin Rathore

Rudraksh Sharma

Somil Narang

### **Signature of Mentors**

**Dr. Sandeep Singh**

(Mentor)

**Dr. Shallu Sehgal**

(Mentor)

**Prof. Alka Sharma**

**Director**

**SIIDEC, University of Jammu**

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## ABSTRACT

The erstwhile Doda region, located in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, represents a significant chapter in the socio-cultural and geographical narrative of Northern India. Once a unified district, it was later reorganized into three distinct districts: Doda, Kishtwar, and Ramban. This administrative restructuring was aimed at improving governance and fostering regional development. Known for its breathtaking natural beauty, the region is home to the mighty Chenab River, dense forests, snow-capped mountains, and lush green valleys. These elements not only enhance its aesthetic appeal but also contribute to its ecological and economic significance.

Historically, the region has witnessed various cultural influences, ranging from Mughal traditions to Dogra rule, which have shaped its identity. The area is a melting pot of diverse communities, including Dogras, Gujjars, Bakarwals, and Kashmiri-speaking populations. These groups have coexisted harmoniously, enriching the region's cultural fabric through their unique traditions, music, dance, and festivals. Despite its rich cultural heritage, the region has faced challenges related to isolation, limited infrastructure, and socio-economic disparities due to its rugged Himalayan terrain.

Economically, the region remains predominantly agrarian, with agriculture and livestock being the primary sources of livelihood. Additionally, its vast hydropower potential, driven by the Chenab River, remains a key focus for economic growth. Tourism, too, offers immense opportunities, with places like Bhaderwah, Kishtwar National Park, and the Padri meadow attracting visitors. The creation of separate districts has opened doors for targeted development in healthcare, education, and infrastructure, aiming to address long-standing regional disparities.

This study explores the historical, cultural, and economic aspects of the erstwhile Doda region, highlighting its evolution, challenges, and future potential. The region stands as a testament to the resilience of its people and their ability to adapt to modernity while preserving their heritage. It emphasizes the importance of sustainable development strategies to unlock the true potential of this Himalayan gem, ensuring that progress reaches even its remotest corners while maintaining its ecological and cultural balance.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Erstwhile Doda, a region known for its diverse topography and cultural richness, holds a significant place in the history and geography of Jammu and Kashmir. While its natural beauty and resources offer immense potential for tourism and development, the area's remote location and challenging terrain have posed considerable difficulties in governance, infrastructure development, and public service delivery.

The division of Doda into three districts was motivated by the need to bring administration closer to the people, ensure more focused development efforts, and improve access to essential services in a region historically plagued by difficult accessibility. The new administrative units were expected to cater to the region's unique needs, with Doda remaining as an important administrative, economic, and cultural hub in the Jammu division.



#### 1.1 Geography and Natural Features

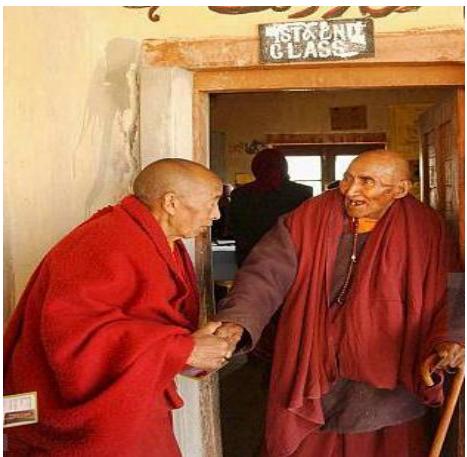
Erstwhile Doda, stretching across the Chenab Valley, is renowned for its rugged terrain and breathtaking landscapes. The valley is situated amidst the Himalayas, and its steep hills and deep gorges give it a distinct geographic identity. The Chenab River, one of the major rivers of northern India, flows through this valley, contributing not only to the region's agriculture but also to its hydropower potential. The difficult topography has historically hindered the development of infrastructure such as roads, but the region's natural beauty has made it a hidden gem, with potential for eco-tourism and adventure tourism. The terrain supports a rich biodiversity, with forests home to various species of flora and fauna.

The region's climate is typical of high-altitude areas, with cool winters and moderate summers, making it ideal for certain crops and agricultural activities. However, the remote areas of the erstwhile district faced challenges in connecting to the larger network of Jammu and Kashmir, leading to issues in transportation, education, healthcare, and overall development.



## 1.2 Cultural Diversity

The cultural fabric of the erstwhile Doda district is as diverse as its geography. The region has a rich history of ethnic and religious coexistence, with a blend of Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist communities. The district's population is known for its harmonious relationships despite the presence of various communities and their distinct traditions. The rich cultural diversity is reflected in the district's festivals, folk music, dance forms, and other traditional practices, each of which represents the values and customs of the people. The people of Doda celebrate various festivals such as Diwali, Eid, Lohri, and Buddhist festivals, showcasing the region's pluralistic identity.



Erstwhile Doda is also known for its local handicrafts and traditional arts, which are a testament to the skills of the people. From woolen goods and woodwork to metal crafts and stone carvings, these crafts reflect the region's cultural heritage and have provided an economic livelihood for many. The local Buddhist monasteries, ancient Hindu temples, and Muslim mosques are also important religious and cultural landmarks that further enhance the region's historical significance.



### **1.3 Economic Structure and Development**

The economic structure of the erstwhile Doda region was primarily based on agriculture, with farming being the principal occupation of its people. The fertile lands along the Chenab River supported the cultivation of crops such as rice, wheat, and maize, as well as a variety of fruits, including apples, peaches, and walnuts. Cattle rearing was also an important economic activity, with livestock being raised for milk, meat, and wool. The district was known for producing high-quality woolen goods and other traditional handicrafts.



In addition to these agricultural activities, the region is blessed with a significant hydropower potential. The Chenab River and its tributaries provide opportunities for the generation of hydroelectric power, which could potentially be harnessed to fuel the development of the region and the larger state. Several hydropower projects have been established, bringing both economic opportunities and challenges related to environmental sustainability.

However, the region's development has long been hampered by poor infrastructure and remoteness, with inadequate roads, limited access to electricity, and inadequate healthcare and educational facilities. The tough terrain, combined with security concerns in certain areas, has also played a role in delaying infrastructural progress. After the reorganization into separate districts, focused efforts have been made to address these issues, such as improving road networks, expanding healthcare services, and introducing better communication facilities.



## 1.4 Tourism Potential

Erstwhile Doda's natural beauty, with its snow-capped mountains, lush meadows, and scenic lakes, offers immense potential for eco-tourism and adventure tourism. Bhaderwah, often referred to as the "Mini Kashmir," is one of the most popular tourist spots in the region, offering a unique combination of natural beauty, historical significance, and cultural heritage. The region's hiking trails, particularly in areas like Jai, Padri, and Bani, are popular with trekkers and nature enthusiasts.

Kishtwar, located in the picturesque Chenab Valley of Jammu and Kashmir, is a growing tourist destination known for its breathtaking landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and religious significance. Surrounded by snow-capped mountains and the serene Chenab River, it offers a range of attractions including Kishtwar National Park, trekking routes like Sinthan Top, and angling opportunities in its rivers. The district is also home to religious sites like the Chandi Mata Temple and Sufi shrines, making it a place of spiritual importance. Kishtwar's vibrant culture, seen in its local handicrafts, festivals, and unique Kishtwari cuisine, adds to its charm. With growing infrastructure and eco-tourism initiatives, Kishtwar is becoming an ideal spot for those seeking adventure, nature, and cultural experiences.

While tourism holds significant potential for economic growth in the region, it has been largely underdeveloped due to insufficient infrastructure and the lack of facilities to accommodate large numbers of visitors. However, with the recent administrative focus on improving infrastructure and connectivity, tourism is poised to become a major driver of economic activity in the post-reorganization era. There are plans to enhance the region's tourism infrastructure, including roads, hotels, and recreational facilities.



## **1.5 Religious Tourism**

Religious tourism in erstwhile Doda is a significant aspect of the region's cultural and spiritual heritage. The area, known for its breathtaking natural beauty and historical significance, is home to a number of revered religious sites, temples, shrines, and pilgrimage routes, attracting devotees and tourists alike. The religious diversity of the region, along with its rich cultural traditions, makes it an important destination for those seeking spiritual solace.

### **Prominent Religious Sites in Erstwhile Doda:**

#### **1. MACHAIL MATA TEMPLE**

Machail Mata is one of the most revered deities in the Paddar region of Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly among the Hindu community. The Machail Mata Temple is located at a high altitude in the Paddar Machail area of Kishtwar, in the Kishtwar of Jammu and Kashmir. It is dedicated to Chandi Mata, a manifestation of Goddess Durga, and holds immense religious significance for the locals and pilgrims alike.

Machail Mata is a symbol of faith, strength, and devotion for many in the region. The Machail Mata Temple, with its scenic location and rich religious significance, remains a cornerstone of spiritual life for the people of Kishtwar and surrounding areas. The annual Machail Mata Yatra draws thousands of pilgrims each year, making it a key religious event and an important part of the cultural fabric of the region. The temple and its yatra continue to be a source of inspiration, hope, and spiritual fulfillment for devotees from all walks of life.



## **2. SARTHAL DEVI TEMPLE**

The Sarthal Devi Temple is a significant religious site located in the Sarthal Valley of Kishtwar, in the Jammu and Kashmir region of India. Dedicated to Mata Sarthal Devi, the temple is a prominent pilgrimage destination, especially for the Hindu community in the region. It is situated in the picturesque Sarthal area, which is known for its lush greenery, serene atmosphere, and stunning natural beauty. The temple holds a special place in the hearts of locals and devotees from nearby regions, who visit it to seek blessings and spiritual solace.

The Sarthal Devi Temple is an important religious and cultural landmark in Kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir. It is a revered site for devotees who visit to seek the blessings of Mata Sarthal Devi. Surrounded by the natural beauty of the Sarthal Valley, the temple provides a peaceful and spiritual retreat for pilgrims. The combination of religious significance, natural beauty, and local traditions makes it a central point of worship and social life in the region. As the temple continues to attract pilgrims, there is a growing need for sustainable development to ensure that the spiritual and cultural heritage of the area is preserved for future generations.



### **3. VASUKI NAG TEMPLE**

The Vasuki Nag Temple is a significant religious site located in Bhaderwah, a town in the Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir, India. The temple is dedicated to Vasuki Nag, the serpent king in Hindu mythology, and is a prominent site for worship, especially among the locals of Bhaderwah and surrounding regions. It is one of the most revered temples in the area, attracting pilgrims from all over the region, particularly during special religious occasions and festivals.

The Vasuki Nag Temple in Bhaderwah is a revered spiritual site for devotees who worship Vasuki Nag, the serpent king. With its rich religious significance, stunning location, and cultural importance, the temple is an integral part of the religious landscape of Jammu and Kashmir. It not only serves as a place of worship but also as a cultural symbol for the local community. With continued development and preservation, the Vasuki Nag Temple will remain a significant pilgrimage site for generations to come.



#### **4. BIMAL NAG TEMPLE**

The Bimal Nag Temple is a historically significant and sacred temple located in the Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir. This temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, one of the principal deities in Hinduism, who represents destruction, transformation, and regeneration. It attracts a significant number of devotees, particularly during auspicious occasions like Shivratri.

The temple also plays a significant role in the local culture, with festivals and religious gatherings bringing people together to celebrate their faith. It's a must-visit destination for those exploring the spiritual and natural beauty of Jammu and Kashmir.



## **5. Mela Patt or Patt-re-Kudd**

Bhaderwah usually called Mini Kashmir has its own enriched culture. It is known for the natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. In ancient times, it was known as Bhadrakshi. A land of gods and goddesses.

### **History**

Mela Patt is a sacred famous festival of this place. After Kailash Kund Yatra, Mela Patt is celebrated in Bhaderwah with great enthusiasm at Khakhal, Bhaderwah in front of Durga Mata Temple. In this sacred fair, which is celebrated for three days, people irrespective of caste and creed participate in huge numbers all over from Chenab Valley of the State and from other states. Even foreign tourists are also attracted to this mela. Mela Patt is an annual fair which is celebrated in the memory of memorable meeting of King Akbar with Raja Naag Pal, the then ruler of Bhaderwah. According to history, Raja Naag Pal first initiated this festival in 16th Century. As per Holy Vasuki Puran, Raja Naag Pal was the ruler of Bhaderwah and Akbar was the King of India. Akbar used to call the kings to his durbar in Delhi as a matter of routines. Once on the call of Akbar, Raja Naag Pal also went to Delhi to attend the Royal Darbar. In the Durbar, many kings of other states of India were also present along with their darbaris. When durbar started all the kings after bowing to Akbar took their seats. Raja Naag Pal was as a matter of custom, expected to bow before the king Akbar which he did not. Because for him, Lord Vasuki Naag Ji was his only master so Raja Naag Pal entered the Darbar without bowing and took his seat. On seeing this King Akbar asked Raja Naag Pal the reason for not bowing before him. Raja Naag Pal replied that he only bows to Lord Shri Vasuki Naag Ji. On hearing this Akbar ordered his courtiers that next day Raja Naag Pal should enter the Royal Darbar Hall through a small window. But instead of main entrance. This would make Raja Naag Pal to bow automatically but next day Raja entered through window instead of bowing his head, his legs appeared from the window. This enraged King Akbar and he asked Raja Naag Pal to prove his spirituality before any action is taken against him.

The historic festival is organized seven days after the conclusion of the ancient Kailash Yatra.

### **How it is celebrated**

On the evening of “Patharchoth” or “Vinayak Choth” the “Jahari” (the conical metallic pot) is carried by a representative belonging to Raj-purohit family in Bhaderwah. The calmness of the dark starry night is broken with slogans, “Jai Bolo Nagae Basik Ki Jai, Phir Bolo Sanchae Durbar ki Jai,” The procession passes through the Main Bazars of the town. It concludes at the Vasuki Dhera Temple. Next morning after routine worship in the Temple, the Jahari moves to the house of Rajgurus' in Mohalla Khakhal. The team of selected person of the locality called “Dashan” prepare the traditional “Patt Jhanki.” The patt, a heavy load of conical shape with Jahari on the top decently decorated with marigold flowers garlands and ‘Haraii’ adorned with hundreds of cloth – pieces of gorgeous colours are now ready for exhibition. With the break of dawn on Nag Panchami i.e. Rishi Panchmi a devoted person carries this “Patt” on his head in a procession led by the ‘Chela' (Mystic Man) of the deity and the musicians proceed to “Ganesh Math” for paying homage to God. “Ganpati” then the procession reaches the compound of the

Vasuki Dhera Temple. The Traditional dance is performed before the Naga Deity and this procession later, concludes at the house of Rajgurus in Khakhral. The devotee throng there to have Darshan of “Patt” and pay their homage to Nag Raj Basuki and Raja Nagpal.



## 6. Manimahesh yatra or Kailash Kund yatra

Kailash in Bhaderwah is called "Kablas". It is a big lake situated at a height of 14241 ft. from sea level. It is beautiful, Pure having ice cold clear fresh water lake, surrounded by mountains and glaciers. There are many such kunds, some are large like Kailash, Rishi dals and Kal dals (Dal means Lake), some are small kunds among the surrounding hillocks and rocks.

Kailash yatra in Bhaderwah starts every year from Gatha (Previously named Ghoshta) to Kailash Kund. Every year this yatra starts in the month of Bhadu on Dewadshi Thethi in krishan pakh according to Bikrami Samvat (i.e. in late days of August).

This Yatra Starts form one of the oldest temple of Shri Vasuki Nag Ji (at village Gatha). It starts in morning with beating of Drums, blowing of flutes amidst the shouting of religious slogans by the people like **“JAI BOLO NAGE BASKE KI JAI... JAI BOLO NAGE BASKE KI JAI... JO BOLE GA JAI KARA HOYE GA SATKARA BOL SACHE DARBAR KI JAI.”**

At about 2 kms away from Gatha, yatries wait for a short period for the mace of NAGAR TEMPLE (Which is durbar of the Maharaja Vasuki Nag ji). Then yatra proceed further towards Village SUNGLI having spring of cold water called Kali Nag and believed to be the base of Mountain. After a short rest and some tea at Sungli Yatries Start climbing mountain towards Kailash (known as KABLAS by locals).

There is a green valley over the peak of this hill top, having some Gujjar Huts. Some yatries pitch their tents in this valley. Some proceed ahead along with the holy "mace" (**Known as Chadi or Nishani**).

The pilgrims have to trek for 13 kms to reach Manimahesh. Between Hadsar and Manimahesh is an important halting place known as Dhanchho where pilgrims usually spend a night. There is a beautiful waterfall.

About one and half kilometers short of Manimahesh lake fall two religiously important water bodies called Gauri Kund and Shiva Krotri whereas per popular belief Gauri and Shiva bathe respectively. The women pilgrims do take holy dip in Gauri Kund and the men pilgrims in Shiva Krotri before proceeding to Manimahesh lake.



## **7. Gupt Ganga, Bhaderwah**

On the east of the town at a distance of 0.5 kms from the river Neru, there is an old Shiv Temple purely made of stone slabs with the name ‘Gupt Ganga’. It has a tomb like construction and long stone slabs have been used in it. Here Ganga abruptly falls on the Lingam and then disappears

- Gupt Ganga is one of the famous historical pilgrim places in Bhaderwah., The whole sight is so attractive that visitors desire to go on seeing it again and again. The inside water then flows to a “Bawali” (Pond) where Sadhus, devotees and visitors take bath. The water of the Bawali is cold in summer and warm in winter.
- It is called ‘Gupt Ganga’ because the stream of water comes into the temple in a hidden mysterious way, and the water of this stream is considered as sacred as the water of the Ganga.
- Inside the temple, there is a footprint of Bhimsen on a rock. There is a long cave said to have been used by the Pandavas to reach Kashmir from Bhaderwah during the period of their Agyat-Vaas.
- There is a tunnel adjoining to the temple and there is no definite record of its depth. It is generally said that Pandavas during their exile took shelter in Bhadarkashi, one day they disappeared suddenly and it is said that they disappeared through this tunnel to some unknown place because that was the day when their Agyatvas (living in hidden position) started. This tunnel has been closed now. In the North West of this Shiv temple there is a splendid building on a rock. It is in the shape of a room, but there are three doors on each wall of the building. That is why this building is called “Barahdari”.
- There is a cremation Ghat near the temple on the bank of Neeru and people after death perform the rituals as they do on Ganga Ghat. So Gupt Ganga is considered as sacred as Ganga Mata.



## 8. Sheetla Mata Mandir, Doda

Sheetla Mata Temple, dedicated to the Hindu goddess of epidemic diseases, Sheetla, is located on a small hill of Doda area. The temple enshrines an old statue of Goddess Sheetla and devotees visit here in large numbers to offer their prayers.

A big function is organised here on the 8th day of Navratra, a Hindu festival celebrating the triumph of good over evil. During this time people make sacrifices of lambs whose meat is distributed as ‘prashad’ or sacred food.

Devotees undertake an 8-kilometer trek to reach the temple, where they participate in traditional rituals and dances, such as the 'Dekhu' dance. Community meals (langar) are also organized by local volunteers during this time.

The temple is believed to be over a thousand years old, with legends suggesting its origins date back to the era of Mughal emperor Babar.

“As such their’s is no significant data or history is available. All of the information is given by locals”

## **9. Ziyarat of Hazrat-ud-Din Wali**

The Ziyarat of Hazrat Zain-ud-Din Wali in Kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir, is one of the most revered and spiritually significant shrines in the region. Hazrat Zain-ud-Din Wali (RA) was a famous Sufi saint from the Rishi Order, known for spreading the message of Islam, spirituality, and universal brotherhood in the region during the 15th century.

The shrine is surrounded by the stunning landscapes of Kishtwar, including lush greenery, mountains, and rivers, making it a serene and picturesque destination for both spiritual seekers and nature lovers.



## **10. Ziyarat of Hazrat Shah Asrar-ud-Din Baghdadi**

The Ziyarat of Hazrat Shah Asrar-ud-Din Baghdadi, commonly known as Bare Shah Sahab, is a revered Sufi shrine located in Kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir. Hazrat Shah Asrar-ud-Din Baghdadi was a prominent Sufi saint and spiritual leader who played a significant role in spreading the message of Islam, peace, and Sufism in the region.



## **1.5 Administrative Reorganization and Governance**

The reorganization of Doda into three distinct districts in 2007 marked a major turning point in the region's governance. The split was intended to address the unique challenges faced by the district, including its difficult geographical landscape, poor infrastructure, and diverse population. By creating smaller, more manageable administrative units, the government aimed to bring governance closer to the people, ensuring a more effective distribution of resources and services.

The creation of the districts of Doda, Kishtwar, and Ramban has allowed for more localized governance, enabling the government to focus on specific developmental priorities for each area. This reorganization has also helped in better managing the region's natural resources, such as its forests, rivers, and agricultural lands. Moreover, it has improved access to education, healthcare, and government services for the people of the region, which were often hampered by the vastness of the erstwhile Doda district.

## **CHAPTER 2`**

### **OBJECTIVES**

#### **2.1 Project Description**

This Project is an initiative aimed at preserving, documenting, and promoting the historical, cultural, and socio-economic heritage of the Doda district in Jammu and Kashmir. Formerly known as a single administrative district, Erstwhile Doda encompassed the present-day districts of Doda, Kishtwar, and Ramban. This project seeks to chronicle the transformation of the region over time, focusing on its history, natural beauty, socio-economic development, and challenges, including the impact of terrorism.

The project aims to highlight the region's vibrant cultural diversity, including its languages, traditions, and festivals, while ensuring the preservation of its tangible and intangible heritage. It also seeks to address critical issues such as the economic disruptions caused by conflict, the migration of families in search of safer livelihoods, and the long-term effects of terrorism on education and community well-being.

By combining historical research, digital archiving, and community engagement, This Project envisions creating a comprehensive record of the region's past and present. The initiative also aspires to unlock the area's economic potential through sustainable tourism, infrastructure development, and the revival of traditional livelihoods. Through this, the project aims to bridge the gap between the region's challenges and its future opportunities, fostering a resilient and inclusive path forward.

#### **2.2 Objective of the study**

##### **Following are the objectives of study**

- ❖ To know about the cultural, historical and linguistic heritage of Erstwhile Doda.
- ❖ To understand region's transformation and significant historical milestones.
- ❖ To analyze and address the socio-economic impact of terrorism on livelihoods and development.
- ❖ To promote sustainable tourism and traditional livelihood to boost the local economy.
- ❖ Exploring the changes over time in the region through secondary data and oral accounts from migrants.
- ❖ Analyzing the challenges faced by the region and its people.

## 2.3 Problem Statement

The Erstwhile Doda region, comprising the present-day districts of Doda, Kishtwar, and Ramban, faces significant challenges in preserving its rich cultural heritage, addressing socio-economic disparities, and overcoming the long-term effects of conflict. The rise of terrorism over the past decades has disrupted the region's economic activities, displaced communities, and hindered access to education, leading to a decline in local development and migration to urban areas.

Moreover, the lack of documentation of the region's historical and cultural identity has resulted in diminishing awareness and appreciation of its unique legacy. Environmental degradation, underdeveloped infrastructure, and untapped tourism potential further compound the challenges. To ensure a sustainable and inclusive future, there is an urgent need to address these issues through comprehensive documentation, socio-economic revival, and community-led development initiatives.

## 2.4 Project Outcomes

**Preservation of Regional Identity:** Documentation and promotion of the cultural, historical, and geographical uniqueness of the erstwhile Doda region, including Doda, Kishtwar, and Ramban districts.

- **Tourism Development:** Identification and promotion of untapped tourism potential, such as Bhaderwah Padri Pass, Guldanda, and pilgrim routes like the Machail Yatra, Mindal, Sarthal.
- **Economic Growth:** Encouragement of sustainable development initiatives in agriculture, horticulture, and hydropower to boost the region's economy.
- **Cultural Integration:** Strengthening communal harmony and cultural exchanges among the diverse communities in the region.
- **Infrastructure Enhancement:** Recommendations for improving connectivity and public amenities to support economic activities and tourism.
- **Environmental Conservation:** Initiatives for preserving the region's natural resources, including its forests, biodiversity, and hydropower potential.
- **Educational and Research Focus:** Establishment of research hubs for studying the region's heritage, ecology, and development challenges.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

To ensure a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the cultural, economic, and environmental aspects of erstwhile Doda, we adopted a mixed-method approach, incorporating both secondary and primary data collection techniques. Since we could not visit the region we relied mostly on the secondary sources and made a beneficial use of them, provided the limited primary data we had with us.

- **Secondary Data Collection**

Secondary data sources provided a foundational understanding of the region's historical, cultural, and environmental context. These sources were systematically reviewed and analyzed to ensure relevance and reliability.

#### **a) Historical Records**

- **Sources:** Journals and research papers available online were utilized.
- **Approach:** We conducted structured searches using keywords such as "Doda history," "Bhaderwah culture," and "regional economic developments." Databases like ResearchGate and Google Scholar were prioritized for peer-reviewed content.
- **Purpose:** These records helped establish a chronological understanding of the region's development and highlighted significant historical events and trends.

#### **b) Government Reports**

- **Sources:** Official documents, such as census data, regional development reports, and policies impacting Doda and Bhaderwah, were collected from government websites and local administrative offices.
- **Approach:** We ensured the authenticity of data by cross-referencing information from multiple government publications.
- **Purpose:** These reports provided quantitative insights into demographic trends, economic policies, and regional initiatives.

#### **c) Media Articles**

- **Sources:** News articles, blogs, and documentaries related to the region were examined.
- **Approach:** We selected sources from reputable media outlets and independent researchers, focusing on current and historical narratives.
- **Purpose:** These articles offered contemporary perspectives regarding the socio-economic conditions of the region.

- **Primary Data Collection**

Primary data collection involved capturing firsthand accounts from individuals who had direct connections to Doda and Bhaderwah. This approach enriched the study with personal experiences and localized knowledge.

- a) **Identifying Participants**

- **Target Group:** Individuals who migrated from Doda and Bhaderwah to other regions of Jammu were identified through local networks, personal connections and social media platforms.
  - **Criteria:** Participants were selected based on their willingness to share insights about the cultural, economic, and environmental aspects of the region.

- b) **Conducting Interviews**

- **Approach:** We conducted semi-structured interviews and discussions to allow flexibility in exploring the topics while maintaining a consistent framework.
  - **Ethics:** Questionnaires were provided to participants with the help of Google Forms, explaining the purpose of the study and guaranteeing confidentiality.
  - **Validation:** Insights were cross verified with secondary data to ensure consistency and accuracy.

By combining secondary data sources with primary oral histories, we ensured a holistic understanding of the region's socio-cultural and environmental dynamics. The integration of diverse methodologies enabled us to compute data effectively, ensuring validity and reliability in our findings. This approach not only enriched our research with quantitative and qualitative insights but also emphasized the lived experiences of the region's people, providing a well-rounded perspective.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of the Erstwhile Doda region, encompassing the present-day districts of Doda, Kishtwar, and Ramban, has been explored through various dimensions such as cultural heritage, socio-economic challenges, conflict impact, and environmental concerns. A review of relevant literature highlights the key themes and research gaps addressed by this project.

### 1. Cultural Heritage and Preservation:

Previous studies have emphasized the region's rich cultural diversity, including its languages, traditions, and festivals. However, limited documentation exists on the intangible cultural assets, such as folklore and oral histories, making them vulnerable to extinction. Research suggests the need for digital preservation efforts and the promotion of traditional crafts to revive local economies.

### 2. Impact of Conflict:

Extensive literature has documented the socio-economic disruptions caused by decades of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. Studies reveal the devastating effects on education, displacement of communities, and the decline of local industries. However, there is a gap in focused research on the specific impact on the Erstwhile Doda region, which suffered heavily from migration and economic stagnation.

### 3. Tourism Potential:

Various reports highlight the natural beauty of the region, including destinations like Bhaderwah Valley, Kishtwar National Park, and Ramban's scenic landscapes. Despite its potential, tourism remains underdeveloped due to a lack of infrastructure and promotion. Literature advocates for sustainable tourism as a means to boost regional development.

### 4. Education and Human Development:

Studies show that prolonged conflict has adversely affected education in the region, with disrupted schooling and limited access to higher education. Research points to the importance of rebuilding educational infrastructure and introducing skill development programs to empower the youth.

### 5. Environmental Challenges:

The region's biodiversity is well-documented, with a focus on its forests, rivers, and unique wildlife. However, studies also highlight issues such as deforestation, climate change, and unplanned development, which threaten its ecological balance. There is a growing call for sustainable environmental management practices.

### 6. Migration and Resettlement:

Research on migration patterns identifies terrorism and lack of economic opportunities as primary drivers of displacement. Few studies provide comprehensive solutions for resettlement and reintegration of displaced communities, creating a critical gap in the literature.

**Research Gaps:**

- Limited documentation of Erstwhile Doda's intangible cultural heritage.
- Lack of region-specific studies on the socio-economic impact of conflict and terrorism.
- Minimal focus on sustainable tourism development tailored to the region's unique assets.
- Inadequate attention to environmental challenges and their link to local livelihoods.
- Few actionable insights on the reintegration of displaced communities.

**Conclusion:**

The literature review underscores the need for a comprehensive initiative like Project Erstwhile Doda to address these gaps. By documenting the region's heritage, fostering sustainable development, and addressing socio-economic challenges, this project aims to fill the void in existing research and provide a framework for inclusive regional growth.

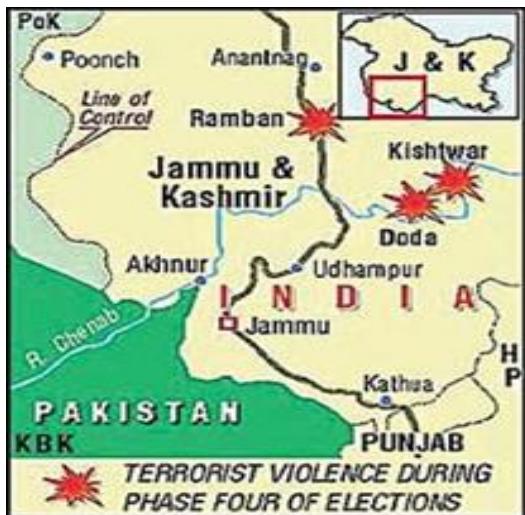
**References:**

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## CHAPTER 4

### CASE STUDIES

#### 4.1 Terrorism in Erstwhile Doda and Population Migration



#### Introduction

Erstwhile Doda, comprising the present-day districts of **Doda**, **Kishtwar**, and **Ramban**, experienced one of the most challenging periods during the 1990s and early 2000s due to the rise of terrorism. The region's mountainous terrain and proximity to the Kashmir Valley made it vulnerable to insurgent activities. The ensuing violence disrupted the socio-economic fabric, causing widespread migration and altering the region's demographic and cultural landscape.

#### The Rise of Terrorism

##### 1. Geopolitical Context:

- In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the militancy that gripped the Kashmir Valley spilled over into the Jammu region, particularly into Doda.
- The region's rugged terrain became a haven for militant groups, providing them with hideouts and mobility.

##### 2. Militant Activities:

- Groups like Hizbul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Taiba targeted the area, exploiting its religious diversity and remoteness.
- **Incidents of Violence:** High-profile massacres, such as the killings in Bhaderwah and Kishtwar, aimed to create communal tension.
- Kidnappings, extortion, and attacks on civilians, security personnel, and political leaders became common.

### **3. Impact on Governance:**

- The administration struggled to maintain law and order.
- Limited infrastructure and poor connectivity further hampered counter-insurgency operations.

## **Impact on the Population**

### **1. Widespread Fear:**

- The violent environment instilled fear among residents, particularly among the Hindu minority, who were frequently targeted.

### **2. Forced Migration:**

- **Hindu Exodus:** A significant number of Hindus, particularly from remote villages, migrated to safer areas, including Jammu city and other parts of India.
- **Economic Strain:** Migrants faced hardships in rebuilding their lives, often living in camps or rented accommodations in urban centers.

### **3. Demographic Changes:**

- The migration created a void in the social and cultural fabric of many villages.
- Abandoned homes and properties became symbols of the disruption caused by terrorism.

## **Socio-Economic Implications**

### **1. Economic Stagnation:**

- Agriculture and small businesses suffered as families fled their ancestral lands.
- Tourism, once a potential growth sector due to the region's natural beauty, declined drastically.

### **2. Breakdown of Social Harmony:**

- Terrorist groups sought to exploit communal divides, affecting centuries of coexistence between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs.

### **3. Education and Health:**

- Schools in remote areas were shut down, and healthcare facilities became inaccessible due to fear and lack of infrastructure.

## Government Response

### 1. Security Measures:

- Deployment of additional security forces, establishment of Army camps, and creation of Village Defense Committees (VDCs) helped in counter-insurgency efforts.
- Coordinated operations by the Indian Army, CRPF, and J&K Police gradually reduced the influence of militant groups.

### 2. Rehabilitation Efforts:

- The government provided financial assistance and reserved educational and job opportunities for displaced families.
- Development schemes like road construction and power projects were initiated to improve connectivity and employment.

## Stories of Migration

- **Survivor Accounts:** Many families recall the trauma of fleeing their homes under the cover of darkness, leaving behind livelihoods and ancestral properties.
- **Rebuilding Lives:** Displaced people, especially from regions like Bhaderwah and Kishtwar, settled in Jammu, Delhi, and other cities, often starting anew with limited resources.

## Revival and Current Scenario

- While the insurgency has largely been brought under control in the region, its scars remain.
- Several displaced families have not returned due to lingering insecurity, lack of basic amenities in their native villages, or the challenges of resettling.



## **Conclusion**

The terrorism that plagued erstwhile Doda during the 1990s left a profound impact on its people, leading to significant migration and socio-economic disruption. While the situation has improved with sustained government efforts and the resilience of the local population, the memories of displacement and loss continue to shape the narrative of the region. Addressing the long-term consequences of this period remains crucial for healing and holistic development.

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(By Nitin Rathore)

## **THE PHASE OF TERRORISM WHICH I WITNESSED MYSELF**

### **Witnessing the Tragedy: The Killings of the Parihar Brothers and RSS Leader in Kishtwar**

Nestled in the breathtaking beauty of the Chenab Valley, Kishtwar is a town often associated with tranquility. However, in recent years, this peace was shattered by a series of brutal killings that left the community reeling. The murders of the Parihar brothers and a senior RSS leader marked one of the darkest chapters in Kishtwar's history. For me, these tragedies were not just events on the news, they were personal. Their sons were my friends, and I witnessed the devastating impact these incidents had on their families and the town.

#### **The Assassination of the Parihar Brothers**

On November 1, 2018, Anil Parihar, a senior BJP leader, and his younger brother, Ajeet Parihar, were ambushed and murdered near their home. Returning from work, they were targeted by militants in a premeditated attack, gunned down at point-blank range in the narrow lanes of Kishtwar.

Anil Parihar was widely known for his dedication to public service and his role in strengthening the region's political and social fabric. His brother Ajeet, a quieter figure, was equally committed to supporting his family and community. The brothers were respected and beloved by many in Kishtwar.

When the news of their deaths broke, it felt as if the entire town was plunged into collective grief. For me, the shock was deeply personal. Their sons were my friends, and I had spent countless moments with them, sharing laughter and life. Seeing them endure such unimaginable loss was heartbreakingly. The grief in their household was palpable, an unbearable silence hung in the air as the family grappled with their tragic reality.



### **The Killing of RSS leader Chandrakant Sharma**

Just months later, in April 2019, another act of violence struck Kishtwar. Chandrakant Sharma, a senior RSS leader known for his efforts to promote community harmony, was assassinated inside a hospital. Despite being under police protection, he was targeted in a brazen attack, and his Personal Security Officer (PSO) was also killed.

Chandrakant Sharma's assassination compounded the fear and uncertainty already gripping the town. He was a figure of unity, someone who worked tirelessly to bridge divides in a sensitive region. His death was a blow not just to his family but also to the hope he represented for many.

When the news of their deaths broke, it felt as if the entire town was plunged into collective grief. For me, the shock was deeply personal. His sons were my friends, and I had spent countless moments with them, sharing laughter and life. Seeing them endure such unimaginable loss was heartbreakingly. The grief in their household was palpable an unbearable silence hung in the air as the family grappled with their tragic reality.



### **A Personal Perspective**

Having been close to both families, these events were more than just stories of violence to me they were personal tragedies that left an indelible mark on my life. I saw firsthand the pain, strength, and resilience of the families affected, especially my friends, who had to navigate life without their fathers. Despite their immense loss, they stood strong, determined to honor their fathers' legacies and contribute positively to society.

The killings also exposed the fragility of peace in Kishtwar. The streets, once lively and welcoming, became quiet and tense. A sense of insecurity settled over the town, a stark reminder of how violence can disrupt the lives of entire communities.

## **Reflections and Hope**

The murders of the Parihar brothers and Chandrakant Sharma were not just attacks on individuals but on the fabric of a peaceful society. These events remind us of the urgent need to address the root causes of violence and extremism. For me, they are also a call to action to work toward a future where such senseless loss becomes a distant memory.

Kishtwar's people are resilient, and the families of the victims have shown extraordinary courage in the face of adversity. As someone who witnessed their pain and strength, I carry their stories with me, hoping to honor their memory by advocating for peace, unity, and a brighter future for our community.

**(By Nitin Rathore)**

## 4.2 Road Accidents in Erstwhile Doda (Jammu & Kashmir)

### Abstract

This case study focuses on road accidents in erstwhile Doda, a region in Jammu & Kashmir known for its challenging terrain and hazardous road conditions. The study examines the causes behind the high frequency of accidents, explores preventive measures, and suggests practical solutions to enhance road safety. The findings aim to contribute to the understanding of road safety issues in mountainous regions and propose actionable strategies for mitigation, making it suitable for academic and practical reference.

### Introduction

Road accidents are a major concern in erstwhile Doda, a region characterized by rugged mountainous terrain, narrow roads, and unpredictable weather. These factors, combined with infrastructural and human challenges, have led to a high incidence of road accidents over the years. This study delves into the primary reasons for accidents, identifies precautionary measures, and provides actionable recommendations for improving road safety. The findings are particularly relevant for policymakers, transport authorities, and researchers studying road safety in hilly areas.



Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/>

### Objectives

1. To analyze the primary causes of road accidents in erstwhile Doda.
2. To identify precautionary measures that can reduce the risk of accidents.
3. To propose long-term solutions for enhancing road safety in the region.

### Reasons for Accidents in Erstwhile Doda

#### 1. Geographical Challenges

- Terrain: The mountainous and rugged terrain poses significant challenges to drivers.
- Narrow Roads: Most roads are narrow, with sharp bends, making navigation difficult.

- Landslides: Frequent landslides during the monsoon season obstruct roads and lead to accidents.

## **2. Weather Conditions**

- Snowfall and Fog: Reduced visibility during winters increases the likelihood of collisions.
- Rain: Slippery roads during rains cause vehicles to skid, leading to accidents.

## **3. Poor Road Infrastructure**

- Lack of Maintenance: Many roads remain poorly maintained, with potholes and uneven surfaces.
- Absence of Safety Barriers: Steep cliffs often lack guardrails, increasing the risk of vehicles falling into gorges.

## **4. Human Factors**

- Overspeeding: Drivers often exceed speed limits, especially on downhill slopes.
- Overloading: Overcrowded buses and trucks reduce vehicle stability and control.
- Lack of Driving Skills: Inexperienced drivers or those untrained in navigating hilly terrain contribute to accidents.
- Negligence: Use of mobile phones while driving and driving under the influence of alcohol are common.

## **5. Vehicle Conditions**

- Poorly Maintained Vehicles: Faulty brakes, worn-out tires, and inadequate lighting systems are frequent issues.
- Old Vehicles: Many vehicles in the region are outdated, with poor safety standards.

## **6. Inadequate Emergency Services**

- Delayed Response: Lack of timely medical assistance leads to higher fatalities.
- Remote Locations: Difficulty in reaching accident sites due to the remoteness of the region.

## **Suggestions which I think can be used for Long-Term Improvement**

### **1. Policy Interventions:**

- Formulate stringent traffic rules tailored for hilly areas.
- Impose heavy fines for violations like overspeeding and overloading.

**2. Technological Integration:**

- Install surveillance cameras and speed monitoring systems.
- Use GPS-based systems to track vehicles and provide route safety alerts.

**3. Community Involvement:**

- Engage local communities in road safety initiatives.
- Form volunteer groups to assist in emergencies.

**4. Public Transport Enhancement:**

- Invest in safer and more reliable public transport systems.
- Reduce dependency on private and outdated vehicles.

**5. Periodic Research and Audits:**

- Conduct regular road safety audits to identify high-risk areas.
- Undertake studies to assess the impact of implemented measures.

## **Conclusion**

Road accidents in erstwhile Doda are a complex issue arising from a combination of geographical, infrastructural, and human factors. A multi-pronged approach involving improved infrastructure, stricter regulations, and community participation is essential to mitigate the problem. This case study highlights the urgent need for collaboration among stakeholders to reduce accidents and improve transportation safety. By implementing the suggested measures, the region can significantly lower accident rates and ensure safer mobility for all.

## A MASSIVE ROAD ACCIDENT WHICH I WITNESSED MY SELF

On November 16, 2023, a devastating bus accident in Doda shook the lives of many, claiming 39 innocent souls in a tragic and unforgettable event. I was on another bus traveling along the same perilous route, and what I witnessed that day has left an indelible mark on my heart and mind. The accident occurred on a narrow, winding road carved into the steep hills of the region a route infamous for its sharp turns and lack of proper safety measures. The bus was overcrowded and the driver lost control and plunged into a deep gorge, leaving chaos and despair in its wake.

From my bus, I could hear the sound of the crash and see the horrifying aftermath. People screamed for help, while others rushed to the scene, desperate to save those who might still be alive. The gorge below was a heart-wrenching sight twisted metal, scattered belongings, and the unmistakable sorrow of lives lost too soon. As an onlooker, I felt powerless, overwhelmed by grief and helplessness. My thoughts kept racing to the victims and their families, imagining the pain they must endure from such an unimaginable loss.

This tragedy has profoundly affected me, serving as a stark reminder of the fragility of life. It has highlighted the pressing need for better safety measures on such hazardous roads. Poor infrastructure, inadequate driver training, and lax enforcement of traffic rules are common culprits in accidents like this. The government and local authorities must prioritize road maintenance, install proper barriers along dangerous stretches, and ensure that vehicles are regularly inspected for safety compliance. Drivers navigating these risky routes must receive adequate training and adhere to strict speed regulations to prevent such tragedies.

As someone who witnessed this heartbreaking event, I feel a responsibility to raise awareness about the importance of road safety. This incident should serve as a wake-up call for all of us to demand change and work toward preventing similar occurrences in the future. While the pain and loss of that day can never be erased, we can honor the memory of the victims by taking meaningful steps to ensure that such accidents become a rarity. May the souls of those who perished in this tragedy rest in peace, and may their memory inspire us to create safer roads and more secure journeys for everyone.



These are some pictures of that bus which fell into the deep gorge.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/>

(By Nitin Rathore)

## **4.3 Migration and Its Impacts in Doda District, Jammu and Kashmir**

### **Introduction**

Migration has been a significant socio-economic phenomenon in the Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir, driven by limited local economic opportunities and a search for better livelihoods. The case study examines the multi-dimensional impact of migration on the district's economy and social structure, using insights from specific households and community experiences.



### **Background of Doda District**

Doda is in the eastern region of Jammu and Kashmir, marked by hilly land and industrial underdevelopment. The local economy relies on agriculture and small-scale trade, yet both sectors have little to provide for employment opportunities. Consequently, the population of the region often moves out of the region into urban cities or other states in search of jobs.

### **Objectives of the Case Study**

Examine the economic advantages and disadvantages of migration for households in Doda.

To understand the social changes migration induces within the community.

To provide insights for policymakers to address migration's impacts effectively.

## **Methodology**

This case study is based on qualitative and quantitative data collected from:

Household Surveys: Data from 30 migrant and non-migrant households.

Interviews: Semi-structured interviews with migrants and their families.

## **Secondary Data: Reports and studies on migration in Jammu and Kashmir.**

### **Findings**

#### **Economic Impacts of Migration**

##### **Remittances and Household Income**

Increased Household Income: There was a 40-60% increase in the income households of migrants due to remittances.

Investments: These money remittances were used to invest in land purchases, houses, and more access for education and healthcare.

#### **Labor Market Dynamics**

Agricultural Sector: Out-migration has vacated agricultural labour markets which has given a 25% increase in the daily earnings of the remaining agricultural labourers in the region.

Diversified Source of Income: Families either incur less investment in agriculture, investing in small enterprises.



## **Social Effects of Migration**

### **Skill Acquisition**

The migrants, especially those in the construction and manufacturing sectors, develop technical skills that enhance their employment prospects upon return. Returned migrants have brought in new farming methods and entrepreneurial activities to the district.

### **Community Development**

Migrant families have enhanced local infrastructure through better homes and community resources such as water systems and schools.

## **Effects of Migration:**

### **Economic Inequalities**

Migrant families are more likely to accumulate wealth more rapidly, and thus there would be economic differences between migrant and non-migrant households. The non-migrant families, particularly those who rely on agriculture, tend to grow their economies more slowly.

### **Remittances Dependency**

Households with excessive reliance on remittances are prone to economic shocks from job loss or health crises for the migrants.

### **Social Integration Problems**

Migrants have cultural and linguistic barriers in cities, which will limit their social mobility. In Doda, the population lacks working people, and mostly older family heads have to raise children and increase their workload burden.

## **Case Study**

**Household A:** In Bhaderwah tehsil, five members of a family benefited from the migration of one member to Mumbai for construction work. In five years, remittances funded the purchase of agricultural machinery and enabled their son to pursue higher education in Srinagar. Yet, the family also reported that the long periods of separation took an emotional toll.  
**Household B:** In contrast, a non-migrant family in the same village struggled with low agricultural yields and rising labour costs. The economic gap between the two households has contributed to social tensions in the community.

## **Policy Recommendations**

**Skill Development Programs:** Provide training for potential migrants to enhance job prospects and ensure better working conditions.

**Support for Non-Migrant Families:** Introduce subsidies and programs to uplift non-migrant households, reducing economic disparities.

**Community Investment Programs:** Encourage people to collectively invest in infrastructure and businesses that develop in a specific area.

**Enhancing Social Security:** This may include extended benefits like health insurance and legal aid for migrant workers.



## Conclusion

Migration has both positive and negative implications for Doda's economy and social fabric. While remittances and skill acquisition bring economic growth and community development, challenges such as inequality, dependency, and social integration issues must be addressed. Targeted policies can help maximize migration's benefits while mitigating its downsides, ensuring sustainable development for both migrants and their home communities.

(By Somil Narang)

## **4.4 TOURISM IN THE BHADERWAH VALLEY**

### **POTENTIAL AND CHALLENGES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Bhaderwah is a small valley-town which is predominantly hilly and has a temperate environment. Bhaderwah provides visitors with a variety of picturesque landscapes, meadows, little lovely valleys, bright local fairs, an important festival atmosphere, and a distinctive mosaic culture. The region, also known as Chhota-Kashmir / Mini- Kashmir, is known for its enthralling natural beauty. Bhaderwah is one of many undiscovered locations in Jammu that are still unknown to visitors. The current study is an analysis to identify several barriers to the promotion of tourism in Bhaderwah. The study further focused on the potentiality of tourism and suggests various strategies for the promotion of tourism in the Bhaderwah. It is one of the uncharted areas in Jammu region that is still unknown to visitors.



#### **OBJECTIVES**

- To study the various tourist destinations available in the Bhaderwah
- To study the various constraints in the way of tourism promotion in the Bhaderwah
- To suggest the various policies for the promotion of tourism in the Bhaderwah.
- To publicize the area as a famous tourist destination.

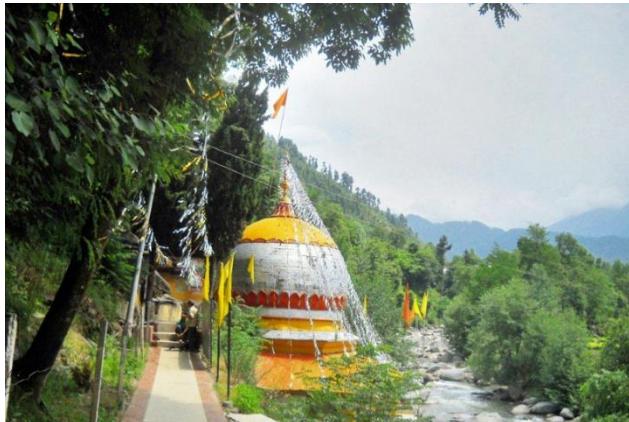
#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Numerous books, journals, PhD theses, magazines, and the internet were consulted for secondary data. Primary and secondary data were used to create the proposed investigation using questionnaires and interviews of the people who belong to the region.

## TOURISM POTENTIAL IN BHADERWAH

### Pilgrimage Tourism:

In Bhaderwah there are many pilgrimage places which attracts devotees all over the state throughout the year. Some important pilgrimage places are *Gupt Ganga temple*, *Chinote Temple*, *Laxminarayan* and *Durga Devi Temple*, and a couple of *Dargah Sharief* and many more. The **Kailash Yatra** begins with *Chari* from *Gatha* in Bhaderwah, travels to *Vasu ki Nag* and *Ramtund* for a night, and then proceeds to *Kailash*. The Yatra concludes on the Kailash Kund in August.



## **Eco-Tourism**

There are numerous magnificent natural spots in Bhaderwah Valley; some of them are- Chinta Valley; Jai Valley; Padri Meadow; Chatargalla Pass (Gulli Danda & Thanthera); Lake View Resort, Gatha; Bhaderwah Fort; Nalthi Village.



## **Adventure Tourism**

### **Paragliding:**

Seoj Meadow (11000 ft) is for beginner and intermediate fliers.

- Padri and Bal Padri (10,000 feet)
- For cross-country and advance flyers: Gurdanda, Sonbain (7000, 8000 ft), Khanitop, and Thuba.
- Chinta and Jai valleys (6000 feet) For basic and advanced training, all these sites offer a favourable environment and ambience for paragliding and are simply accessible and convenient for making the logistical arrangements. Except during the rainy season, paragliding is a year-round possibility and the steep tourist destination's main draw.



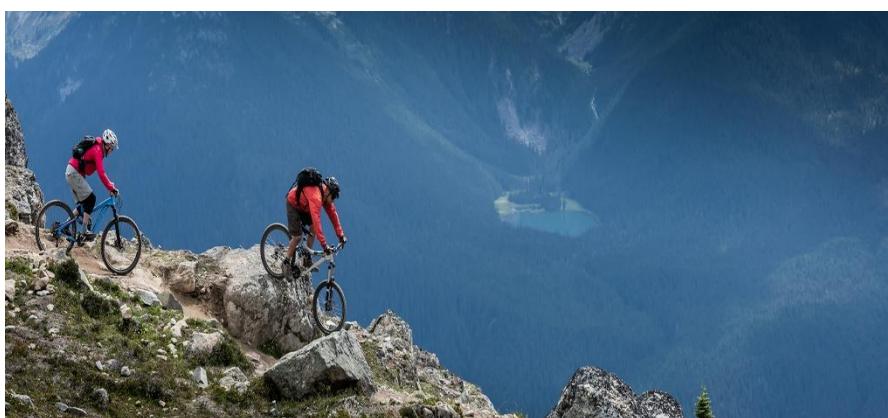
### **Snow skiing:**

Bhaderwah is blessed with places like the Sonbain glacier on Ashapati mountain, which is adjacent to the settlement of "Thanalla" hamlet and is located at an elevation of 7000–8000 ft. where snow never melts. The dangerous Bhaderwah Chamba road connects the high-altitude meadows of Padri and Padri Gali, which are located 30 kilometres from the main town. From November to June, Padri's slopes are completely covered in snow, making them ideal for both novice and expert snow skiers. These are comparable to the Gulmarg-Kashmir competition slopes and are very accessible. 'Chinta', a different tourist destination, is suitable for doing snow skiing training sessions. Being a mountainous valley, it has a lot to offer those looking for adventure.



### **Mountain biking:**

Chances are plentiful in the high-altitude meadows surrounding Bhaderwah, which are known as perfect paragliding places, snow skiing slopes, mountaineering and trekking trips, as well as cross-country vehicle and motorcycle rallies.



## **Cultural Tourism**

### **Mela Patt:**

One of the hilly regions is Bhadarwah, which is steeped in custom and tradition and has a long history of hospitality, fairs, and festivals. In this region's cultural past, fairs have a special place. The three months of August, September, and October are when the principal crops ripen and people rejoice and celebrate all the fairs that Bhadarwah holds; "Mela Patt" is the one that is most fervently observed. Tradition holds that this event was established by Raja Nagpal of Bhadarwah with the help of Lord Nag Vasuki sometime in the 16th century.



### **FINDINGS:**

Despite Bhaderwah's significant tourism potential, tourists are often ignorant of the area. Despite the fact that the State Government and Tourism Department are making efforts to promote tourism in the area, more significant actions need to be made. Consider how Kashmir has helped to spread its culture over the globe. The Bhaderwah requires the same efforts. The following three areas—or 3As—need to be managed and developed for the tourist attraction to succeed: Accessibility, Accommodation, and Attractions at the place.

- **Accessibility:** According to the research, there aren't many high-quality transit options for getting from Jammu to Bhaderwah or from Bhaderwah to the area's different tourist attractions. Accessibility to the location is essential to its success. Even if a destination is stunning, alluring, and equipped with every amenity, it is useless if tourists cannot get there. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Jammu and Kashmir State Government and all private tourism organizations to offer reliable transit options in Bhaderwah.
- **Accommodations:** According to the research results, Bhaderwah lacks high-quality lodging options. There aren't many hotels in the area that offer top-notch tourist services.
- **Attraction:** The research's findings show that Bhaderwah has a number of lovely tourist destinations, but visitors find it difficult to get to them. They are on hills, and the roads are not

adequately constructed. Additionally, the primary tourist destinations in Bhaderwah lack basic amenities like food, medical care, communication, etc., which is a significant barrier to the city's efforts to promote tourism.

- **Governmental initiatives:** Despite the best efforts of the state government, which established the Bhaderwah Development Authority (BDA) for the development of tourism in the region, there are a great number of locations that the BDA has identified for the promotion of tourism in the area. The many initiatives to create tourism routes in the area are now in progress. The most well-known and naturally stunning locations include Kalash, Seoj, Kansar Domuhanda, etc. For the promotion of tourism in the region, the government has taken action and launched a festival. However, additional significant initiatives are needed if the state administration hopes to make Bhaderwah a popular tourism destination in both India and J&K.

## SUGGESTIONS:

- A central location should have a constantly staffed information desk where visitors can learn about the many tourist attractions in Bhaderwah.
- Accommodations for tourists should be made during the busiest time of year, when there is a lot of demand owing to the Kailash and Machail Yatras.
- Tourists should be provided with safety and security measures at the region's most popular tourist destinations.
- Promotion of Bhaderwah should be done through print and electronic media so that everyone is aware of the many tourist attractions in Bhaderwah.
- The government should work to build highways connecting Bhaderwah to Bani (Kathua) and Chamba (Himachal Pradesh), which can serve as a gateway for tourists to visit Bhaderwah. As of now, travellers take the Jammu or Srinagar routes to visit Bhaderwah.

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(By Fatima Sayed)

## **4.5 Effect of Migration from Doda District on Education**

### **Introduction**

Doda district in Jammu and Kashmir has experienced significant migration, particularly after the 1990s. This migration has been primarily driven by communal tensions, armed conflict, and limited economic opportunities in the region. The displacement resulting from these factors has had a profound impact on the education of children, both in terms of accessibility and quality. Families that migrate often face socio-economic instability, making it difficult to ensure consistent schooling for their children.



### **Educational Challenges Faced by Migrant Families**

#### **1. Interrupted Educational Continuity**

Frequent relocations that come with migration disturb the academic calendar for children. Children of migrants find it challenging to adapt to new schools, curricula, and peer groups, which negatively impacts academic performance. These problems are aggravated by language barriers and unfamiliarity with local educational systems in the receiving areas.



## **2. Socio-Economic Barriers**

Many migrant families cannot afford school fees, uniforms, and learning materials due to economic instability. Sometimes, children have to work to supplement family income, preventing them from attending school regularly. Additionally, discrimination and lack of social integration in receiving communities hinder educational advancement.

## **3. Impact on Left-Behind Children**

Children left behind by migrating parents often experience neglect in their education. The absence of parental supervision increases dropout rates and reduces academic focus. Many of these children take on household responsibilities, further limiting their educational opportunities.

### **Positive Interventions and Opportunities**

#### **1. Local Educational Initiatives in Doda**

Institutions like Haji Public School in Breswana village have been pivotal in providing quality education to children in remote areas. Founded in 2009, the school relies on volunteer teachers from around the world to maintain high standards. Such efforts attract families from other parts of the district, demonstrating how grassroots initiatives can counteract the negative impact of migration on education.

#### **2. Policy Support for Migrant Children**

Government programs like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Right to Education Act help address these issues by improving educational access for displaced families. Special provisions for children affected by conflict, including scholarships and free textbooks, aid in retaining students in schools.

#### **3. Community-Based Support Systems**

Community-based initiatives, such as night schools and tutorials, cater to children who cannot attend mainstream schools. NGOs in the region create awareness about education and provide support structures required by migrant families.



### **Outcomes and Recommendations**

Much progress has been made, but the landscape in Doda remains complex, with children affected by migration. The following recommendations can address these challenges:

- Improve financing and infrastructural support to schools in rural and conflict zones.
- Flexible Education Policies: Provide mobile schools or seasonal learning centers for children of migrating families.
- Economic Support for Families: Offer financial assistance or livelihood programs to reduce economic pressures on migrant households.
- Awareness Campaigns: Emphasize the importance of education within communities and enhance involvement in schooling.

### **Conclusion**

Children are adversely affected by migration from Doda district, both when they migrate and when they are left behind. It hampers the schooling of migrants and creates economic and social challenges for left-behind children. Initiatives like Haji Public School demonstrate that proper support and government initiatives can mitigate these issues. Strengthening educational infrastructure, providing economic aid, and adopting innovative teaching methods can help ensure better educational outcomes for children affected by migration.

### **Sources**

1. "The Impact of Armed Conflict on Education in Doda District," Journal of Conflict Studies, 2018.
2. Official website of Haji Public School ([hajipublicschool.org](http://hajipublicschool.org)).

3. "Migration and Education: Challenges and Solutions," National Education Policy Review, 2021.
4. Government of India, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Right to Education Act official documents.
5. NGO Reports on Educational Initiatives in Jammu and Kashmir, 2020.

(By Rudraksh Sharma)

## **4.6 The cultural dimensions of the historical of Doda**

### **Introduction**

In the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, the charming district of Doda is well-known for its varied customs and rich cultural legacy. Doda, which is tucked away in the Himalayas, is known for its breathtaking scenery, lively locals, and a distinctive fusion of cultural elements that represent the history and population of the area.



### **Origin of the Name**

“Doda” The district of Doda derived its name from its main town, also known as Doda. Historical records, particularly (Misli Haqaqit) maintained by the State Revenue Department, the district Doda,

Deeda a migrant from Multan (Pakistan) to settle permanently in his territory and set up a utensil factory there.

### **Historical Background**

The region's historical significance dates back to 1822 AD, when Doda was subjugated by Maharaja Gulab Singh, a significant character in the history of Jammu and Kashmir. He gained the support and allegiance of the local populace by winning their hearts rather than employing force. Doda's history underwent a sea change as a result of this peaceful conquest, which paved the way for its growth and incorporation into the greater princely state. The Jaral Ramas, Rajput's, Katoch Rajas, Bhaus, Shan's, Manhases, Chibs, Thakkars, Wanis, and Gakkars were among the prominent governing clans. The sociopolitical environment of the area was significantly shaped by these dynasties.

The Doda Fort was one of Doda's most famous historical sites. **Historian Thakur Kahan Singh Balowria** asserts that the Doda Fort's advantageous position made it especially significant.



## **Festivals and Celebrations**

Like Karva chouth in other parts of the country, Kanchoth and Gauri –Tritya a local festival of Women is celebrated with enthusiasm and religious fervour in erstwhile hilly Doda every year during the Shukla Paksha of Magh month in January and February. Beside the annual Yatras the other festivals & fairs which are celebrated in this region are Mela Pat, Sobar Dhar Mela, Kud dance, Pahari folk songs and music. BISOU or BAISAKHI, Jantron Dhar Mela & Khanthi Dhar mela on 17th July annually. Jatlaaz-a symbol of Nag culture, is a rotational night time celebration and is observed in all the villages across erstwhile Doda district on different days on a particular date. from village Manthla of Bhadarwah and after being celebrated in different villages on different dates After night long celebrations, where locals along with half a dozen priests known as Chelaaz gathered around the sacred fire place (Zagru) and performed traditional Dekho dance till dawn. At 4 am, the priests along with some selected locals trekked to hill top Nag Temple at Manthla and after taking the blessings of serpent god came back to Chinta, where hundreds of devotees were waiting for them to take blessings. The priests wearing ancient ornaments depicting traditional Nag culture crossed the fire place barefooted among the Nag chants and religious hymns.





### **Traditional Arts and Crafts**

Doda's craft like handmade Woolen Blankets, Shawls, Gaba are famous artistic work of this mountainous region. Beside this, the Bina work of wheat & Paddy grass is also famous & rare kind of craft. The centuries old Bakarwals Silver Jewellery made by Local Jewellers are also famous among outsiders and Tourists. The Music & folk lore of Bhaderwah is famous and resembles with that of Cahmba. The dance form performed on various fairs & festivals are Dikku & Ghurai.

### **Cuisine**

The culinary traditions of Doda are as diverse as its culture. The local cuisine is characterized by the use of fresh, locally sourced ingredients, with dishes that are rich in flavor and aroma. Popular dishes include **Rajma** (kidney beans), **Luchi Bade** is a famous traditional snack of the Doda region in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly enjoyed during special occasions and festivals, Anardana ki chutney, Rogan Josh, Ambal , Gucchi pulao.





### **Language and Literature**

Dogri, Bhaderwah, Urdu, and Hindi are the main languages used in Doda, and they all contribute to the literary legacy of the area. These languages' folktales, poetry, and songs frequently portray the local way of life, customs, and scenic splendor. Elders have a particularly strong oral storytelling tradition, passing down tales that capture the community's history and ideals.

### **References**

- <https://doda.nic.in>
- <https://ulbjammu.jk.gov.in>
- <https://www.dailyexcelsior.com>

(By Mehak Shan)

## **4.7 Migration from Doda in Search of Jobs**

### **Introduction**

Doda, a district in the Jammu region of Jammu and Kashmir, has witnessed significant migration over the years which is primarily driven by lack of employment opportunities. Doda is known for its scenic beauty, Doda remains economically constrained due to limited industrialization, poor infrastructure, political instability and dependence on agriculture. Consequently, a considerable portion of the population migrates to urban centres in search of better livelihoods and secured jobs. This case study examines the patterns, causes, and consequences of migration from Doda, focusing on job-seeking as the primary motive.

### **Objectives**

To analyse the root causes of job-related migration of Doda.

To understand the impact of migration on the economic and social lives of migrants.

To propose strategies to reduce forced migration by enhancing local job opportunities.

### **Methodology**

This case study is based on secondary data from government reports, academic studies, and news articles. The survey focused on migration patterns, employment status, living conditions, and remittances.

### **Findings**

#### **1. Causes of Job-Related Migration**

- a) Limited Local Opportunities: Doda's economy is predominantly impacted from agriculture, with very few avenues for formal or high-income employment. The absence of large industries or service-sector jobs often compels residents to migrate to bigger cities like Jammu for work.
- b) Education and Skill Mismatch: Doda has very limited access to higher education and vocational training means that locals lack the skills required for modern job present in markets, prompting them to seek jobs with very less pay and have no security.
- c) Seasonal Unemployment: Agriculture, being seasonal, fails to provide year-round employment. Many residents migrate during off-seasons to sustain their livelihoods.
- d) Pull of Urban Areas: Cities like Jammu and Srinagar offer diverse employment opportunities in construction, retail, transportation, and small businesses, attracting migrants in large numbers.

## **2. Migration Destinations and Employment Sectors**

- a) Primary Destinations: Jammu city is the most common destination for Doda migrants, followed by Srinagar a metropolitan area like Delhi.
- b) Jobs Taken Up by Migrants: Migrants often engage in low-paying, informal jobs such as labourers in construction, shop assistants, drivers, and domestic workers. A smaller proportion secures employment in government or private organizations.

## **3. Socio-Economic Impacts**

- a) On Migrants: Even though migrants experience financial improvements but most of the time they face challenges like job insecurity, lack of benefits, and exploitation in informal sectors.
- b) On Families Left Behind: Remittances from migrants provide financial stability but can lead to emotional and social gaps within families.
- c) On Doda's Workforce: The migration of working-age individuals leads to a labour shortage in agriculture and small local industries, further stalling economic growth in Doda.

## **4. Challenges Faced by Migrants**

- a) Job Insecurity: Migrants usually work as temporary workers or in informal jobs without legal protections, this leads to wage theft making them vulnerable.
- b) Exploitation and Discrimination: Many faces poor working conditions and social discrimination in urban areas making their lives more depressing.
- c) Living Conditions: Affordable housing is a significant issue, forcing many migrants to live in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions.

## **Conclusion**

Migration from Doda in search of jobs is a consequence of economic stagnation and limited local opportunities. While migration has improved the financial status of many families, it also exposes migrants to numerous vulnerabilities, including job insecurity and social isolation. Additionally, the outflow of labour from Doda hampers the region's economic development. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach to create local jobs and improve infrastructure.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Develop Local Industries:**

Promote small-scale industries and agro-based enterprises in Doda to provide sustainable employment opportunities.

### **2. Vocational Training:**

Training the youth skill through which they can land a job with good wages.

### **4. Improve Connectivity:**

Better road and communication infrastructure can attract investments and create job opportunities.

### **5. Promote Self-Employment:**

Encourage entrepreneurship by providing financial assistance and training to potential entrepreneurs in Doda.

## **Conclusion**

This case study highlights the urgent need for a balanced development strategy to curb job-related migration and enhance the quality of life for residents of Doda.

## **References**

- <https://censusindia.gov.in/>
- <https://www.jk.gov.in/>

(By Dhwani Gupta)

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **INTERVIEWS**

#### **5.1 INTERVIEW 1**

This report summarizes the key points discussed during the interview regarding the region of Bhaderwah, its cultural and educational development, and the aspirations of its residents.

##### **1. Personal Connection to Bhaderwah and Comparison with Jammu**

**Interviewer:** What differences do you notice between Bhaderwah and Jammu?

**Interviewee:**

Bhaderwah offers a unique charm with its scenic beauty and serene environment compared to the bustling city life in Jammu. There are developmental steps being taken in Bhaderwah, particularly in education and infrastructure. The community remains optimistic about future growth and exposure for the region.

##### **2. Educational Development in Bhaderwah**

**Interviewer:** How is the education system in Bhaderwah evolving?

**Interviewee:**

Schools in Bhaderwah are increasingly emphasizing exposure and extracurricular activities for students. Teachers and the government are making significant efforts to enhance the quality of education. These initiatives are expected to lead to notable improvements in the education sector in the near future.

##### **3. Government Initiatives for Development**

**Interviewer:** What role do government efforts play in the betterment of Bhaderwah?

**Interviewee:**

Government steps are seen as pivotal in driving progress in education and infrastructure. There is hope and confidence that these initiatives will yield substantial benefits in the coming years.

##### **4. Aspirations and Future Plans for Children**

**Interviewer:** What are the future aspirations for children in Bhaderwah?

**Interviewee:**

Parents aspire to provide their children with quality education and diverse career opportunities. The focus is shifting beyond traditional fields like medicine and engineering to include various other streams and degrees. The vision is to establish institutions in Bhaderwah that offer a range of educational programs, reducing the need for students to relocate for higher studies.

## **5. Scenic Beauty and Lifestyle in Bhaderwah**

**Interviewer:** How do you feel when you visit your hometown, Bhaderwah?

**Interviewee:** Bhaderwah is cherished for its natural beauty and is often referred to as “paradise” due to its picturesque landscapes. The region attracts numerous tourists from across India, with popular spots like Jai Valley and Nalthi adding to its charm. Residents value family time, often spending weekends exploring the area and enjoying its serene environment.

### **Conclusion**

The interview highlights the dual focus on preserving the natural beauty of Bhaderwah while fostering educational and infrastructural growth. The aspirations of the resident reflect a desire for balanced progress, where children have access to quality education and broader career opportunities, without losing the cultural and scenic essence of the region. The government's initiatives are pivotal in achieving these goals, and the optimism among the people suggests a bright future for Bhaderwah.

By: Fatima, Dhwani and Mehak

## **5.2 INTERVIEW 2**

The report summarizes the key points discussed during the interview regarding the migration done by a person from Bhaderwah to Jammu with his family. The interview was mainly based on the questions which included their reasons of migration, its effects on their lives both economically and socially, and how do they think that migration has affected them, positively or negatively.

### **1 TIME OF MIGRATION:**

**Interviewer:** when did you migrated?

**Interviewee:** They first migrated in the year 1979 to Amritsar then fully migrated to Jammu in 1984.

### **2. ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF MIGRATION**

**Interviewer:** what were the reasons behind migration?

**Interviewee:** The main reason behind migration was expanding the family business which they were successful to do, due to the demand of simple fruits category in Jammu's market sector. On the whole migrating to Jammu was economically beneficial to them.

### **3. SOCIAL IMPACTS OF MIGRATION**

**Interviewer:** How are your inter-community relations?

**Interviewee:** At first it was hard but with time we were able to get along with people from the other community.

### **CHALLENGES FACED;**

- Language
- Cultural differences
- Community differences
- Feeling of alienation

### **OVERCAME CHALLENGES BY:**

- Using common language
- Adapting and following traditions
- Communicating with the people

#### **4. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**

**Interviewer:** What were the cultural difference that u faced?

**Interviewee:** Cultural differences like language gap were a problem at first as they spoke Kashmiri. Local festivals were also something that we missed as they are also integral part of our culture.

#### **5. WAS MIGRATION SUCCESSFUL**

**Interviewer:** Do you think that migration from Bhaderwah to Jammu was a success?

**Interviewee:** Yes, it was a successful decision as it has given our living lifestyle more stability than we had in Bhaderwah itself.

#### **6. MOVING BACK**

**Interviewer:** Have you consider moving back to your native place?

**Interviewee:** No, we don't think we will be moving back as we have totally adapted to the environment here and are happily settled here in Jammu.

### **CONCLUSION**

The interviewee's story highlights the emotional and practical challenges of migration, as well as the resilience required to overcome them. Their journey from Bhaderwah to Jammu reflects the broader themes of adaptation, hope, and the pursuit of a better life.

BY FATIMA, DHWANI AND MEHAK

### **5.3 INTERVIEW 3**

This report holds the key points which were discussed during the interview regarding the region DODA, its cultural aspect, educational aspects, and future development of the region.

#### **1. MIGRATION**

**Interviewer:** When did you migrated from DODA?

**Interviewee:** Just after 10<sup>th</sup> they settled in Jammu from their point of view it was not a migration but a settlement.

#### **2. REASON BEHIND MIGRATION**

**Interviewer:** What was the reason for your migration from your hometown to Jammu?

**Interviewee:** The reason behind was that. Firstly, for better education as they settled just after 10<sup>th</sup> as for better education purpose. Secondly for better job opportunities

#### **3. RESULT AFTER MIGRATION**

**Interviewer:** Was the migration successful?

**Interviewee:** Yes, it was successful as they did their higher education there after that they got job.

#### **4. EMOTIONAL CONNECTION**

**Interviewer:** How was your connection with your hometown after Migration?

**Interviewee:** It was not easy for them to settle to other city they lost many connections, as they got separated from their relatives also it was harder from them to adopt the new living style in other city.

#### **5. PROBLEMS FACED**

**Interviewer:** What was the problem you faced during this phase?

**Interviewer:** they faced many problems during this phase. Firstly, Language barriers, cultural differences, it was difficult for them to adopt the new environment.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the above interview, it highlights the emotional aspects after their migration from place to another, how it was difficult for them to adapt the environment, reason for their migration, was it successful for them, it also reflects their journey from their hometown DODA to JAMMU.

BY FATIMA, DHWANI and MEHAK

# **CHAPTER 6**

## **QUESTIONAIRRE ANALYSIS**

### **1. Introduction**

Migration is a global phenomenon with profound economic, social, and cultural impacts. This survey aimed to capture individual migration experiences, focusing on factors like income changes, business investment intentions, and quality of life after migrating from their native place.

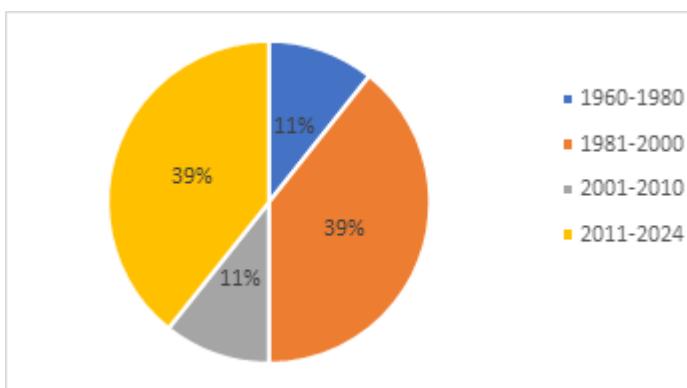
### **2. Methodology**

- **Data Collection:** Survey responses were collected via Google Forms.
- **Participants:** A total of 30 responses were recorded.

### **3. Findings**

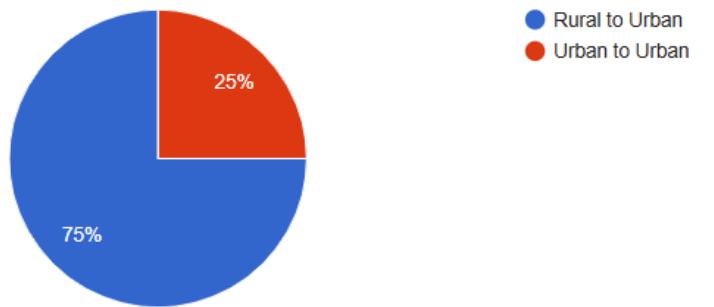
#### **3.1 When did migration took place**

- Majority of respondents (39% each) have migrated in the years 1981-2000 and 2011-2024 reported migrating from Rural to Urban areas.
- Graph: Pie chart showing distribution of year of migration.



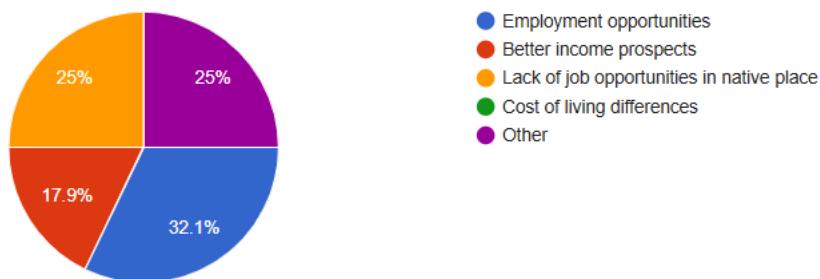
### 3.2 Type of Migration

- Majority of respondents (75%) reported migrating from Rural to Urban areas.
- Graph: Pie chart showing distribution of migration types.



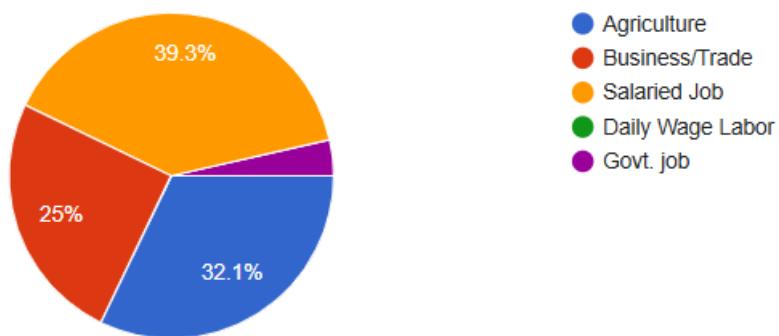
### 3.3 Main Reasons for Migrating

- Majority of respondents (32.1%) faced the problem of employment opportunities.
- Graph: Pie chart showing different problems which were highlighted as the main reasons for migration.



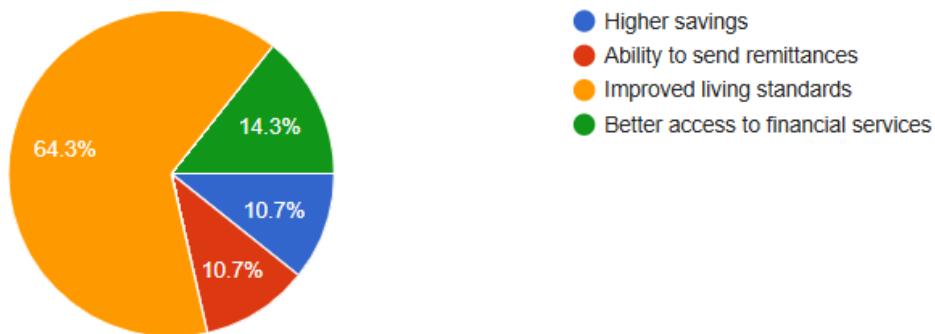
### 3.4 Primary Source of Income Before Migrating

- 39.3% of respondents relied on agriculture for their primary source of income.
- Graph: Pie chart representing primary sources of income.



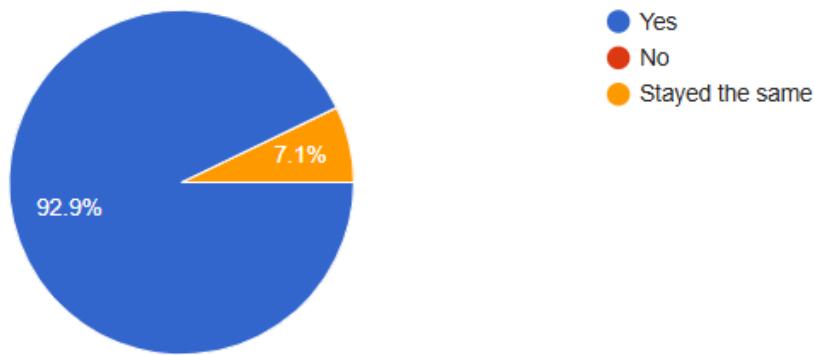
### 3.5 Financial Benefits After Migration

- Majority of respondents i.e 64.3% of respondents experienced an improved living standard.
- Graph: Pie chart representing financial benefits after migration.



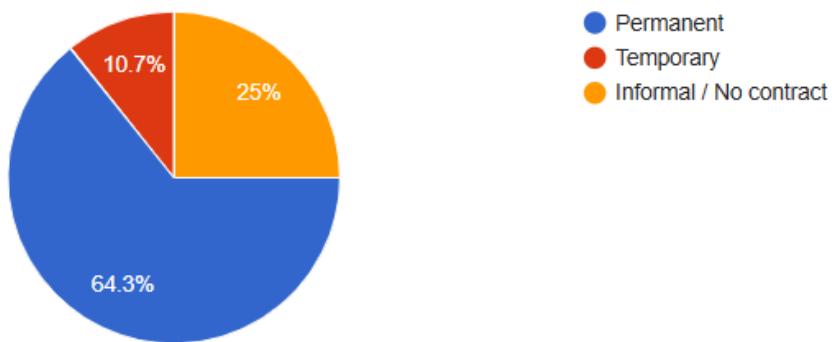
### 3.6 Income Changes Post-Migration

- An overwhelmingly 92.9% of respondents experienced an increase in income.
- Graph: Pie chart representing income change proportions.



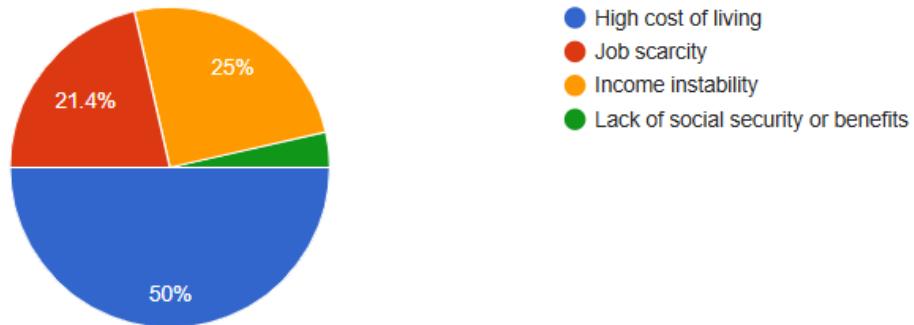
### 3.7 Job contract of employees

- 64.3% respondents have a permanent job contract. While others have temporary or no contract.
- Graph: Pie chart representing job contract of employees.



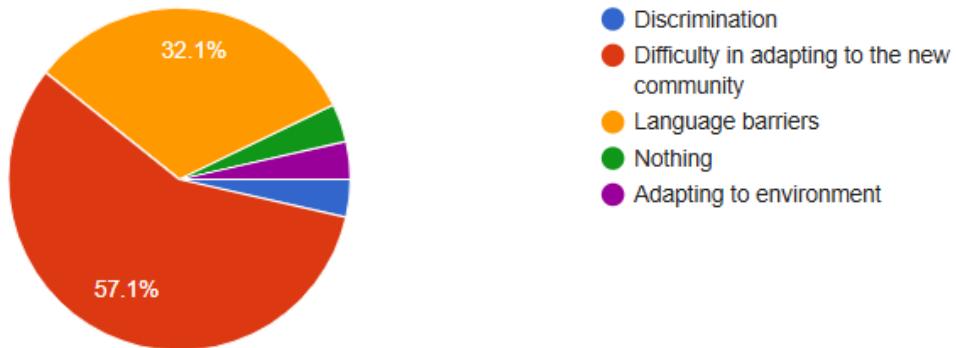
### 3.8 Challenges Faced After Migration

- 50% respondents experienced a high cost of living in the location. While others have experienced job scarcity and income stability and others.
- Graph: Pie chart representing challenges faced after migration.



### 3.9 Social challenges faced after migration

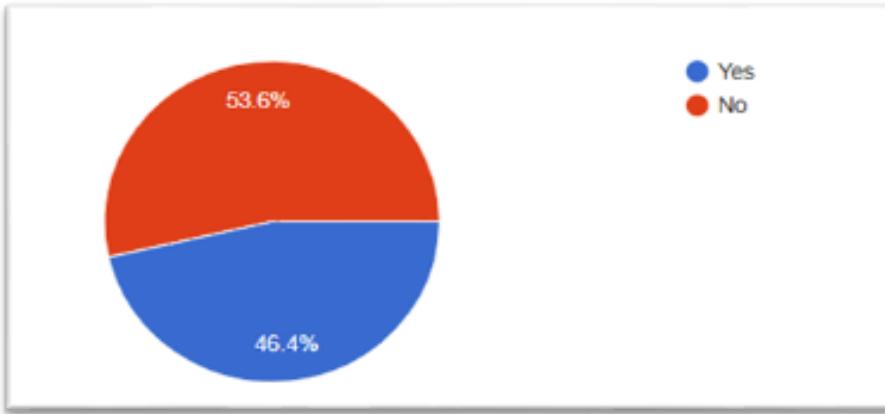
- Majority of respondents 57.1% faced difficulty in adapting to the new community.



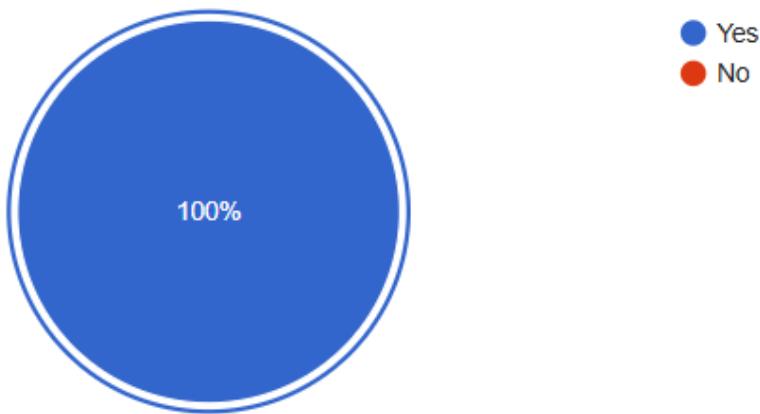
Graph: Pie chart representing social challenges faced after migration

### 3.10 Business Investment Intentions

- 46.4% are planning to invest or start a business in their current location.
- Graph: Pie chart of business investment intentions.



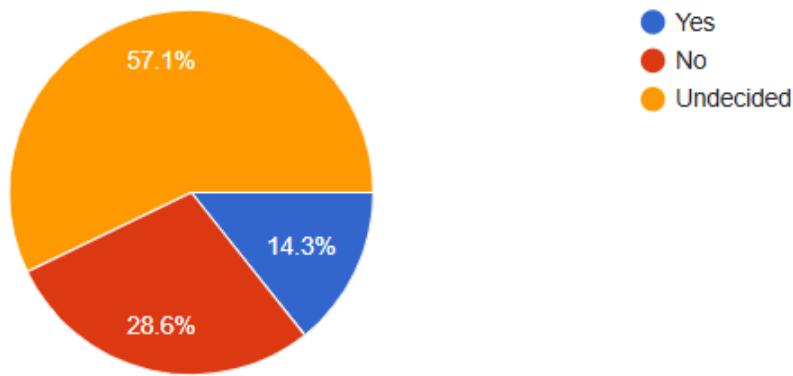
### 3.11 Perception of Quality of Life



- 100% of respondents believe their quality-of-life improved post-migration.
- Graph: Pie chart of quality-of-life perception trends.

### **3.12 Intention to return to their native place**

- Majority of respondents 57.1% does not have a clear idea whether they want to return their native place or not.
- Graph: Pie chart representing people's intention of returning to their native place.



The data highlights the respondents honest review about their lifestyle after migrating from their native place. The data provides insights about how their economic, social, personal, professional challenges faced by them while settling to the new location. With this we can conclude that many of the migrants don't regret their decision on migration but there are always some exceptions.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Project Erstwhile Doda is a comprehensive initiative aimed at preserving the rich cultural, historical, and socio-economic identity of the erstwhile Doda region, which now comprises the districts of Doda, Kishtwar, and Ramban. Known for its stunning natural beauty, diverse cultural heritage, and strategic geographical importance, the region has endured decades of socio-political conflict, terrorism, and economic challenges. This project addresses about the region's heritage while tackling the long-standing issues of migration, economic stagnation, and environmental degradation. The rise of terrorism in the 1990s caused a significant outflow of people from the region, particularly the Hindu minority, who fled in search of safety and stability. This exodus left a profound impact on the social and cultural fabric of the area, with entire communities abandoning their ancestral homes. Even beyond the period of insurgency, migration from Erstwhile Doda has continued, driven by the lack of local employment opportunities, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to quality education. Many individuals and families have relocated to urban centers such as Jammu, Delhi, and other parts of India in search of jobs, better livelihoods, and improved living conditions. Today, migration remains a significant challenge for the region, contributing to the depopulation of rural areas and the decline of local economies. The outflow of skilled and educated youth exacerbates the "brain drain," leaving the region with a reduced capacity for self-driven development. Despite efforts by the government to improve connectivity, initiate development projects, and rehabilitate displaced communities, many migrants are reluctant to return due to persistent challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited economic opportunities, and security concerns. Project Erstwhile Doda seeks to address these issues by fostering a multi-dimensional approach. It emphasizes the preservation of cultural heritage, the promotion of sustainable tourism, and the development of educational and economic infrastructure to create local job opportunities and curb migration. The project also aims to provide a framework for the reintegration of displaced communities and support for families that have been affected by displacement and socio-economic instability.

In conclusion, Project Erstwhile Doda is more than just a preservation initiative; it is a blueprint for addressing the region's socio-economic challenges, revitalizing its heritage, and creating opportunities for its people. By tackling migration drivers, promoting inclusivity, and fostering sustainable practices, this project has the potential to transform Erstwhile Doda into a region of growth and resilience. It highlights the importance of collective efforts in ensuring that the legacy of this historically significant area is preserved while paving the way for a brighter future for its communities.