

The Gujjar tribe is scattered across the mountains and foothills of Pakistan and north India. Life there is beset with difficulties including poverty, illiteracy, lack of medical facilities, and disempowerment. Traditionally, the Gujjar are nomadic herdsman, looking after sheep, goats, and water buffalo, though over the centuries some have taken up a sedentary, agricultural lifestyle. Others have given up migrating to pursue a better life in town with salaried employment and access to education and healthcare.

The Gujjar lifestyle has been disturbed by 15 years of militancy in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. The mountain heights are no longer considered safe, and this has caused many Gujjars to give up migrating altogether. Other areas have been overgrazed, so that the migration routes no longer support the animal herds.

As the Gujjars move from a traditional lifestyle to a modern one, their culture is experiencing rapid change. Family relationships are struggling to adjust to a new social environment, and traditional clothes are being replaced by modern ones.



Historically, Gujjars have been folk Muslims. But through the efforts of Islamic teachers, many Gujjars are becoming increasingly orthodox. Most still visit Muslim shrines in times of need, and traditional cures and amulets are dispensed by holy men called "pirs." In the spiritual worldview of Gujjars, these holy men are close to God, whom they consider to be distant and inaccessible without the assistance of a pir.

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The past 15 years have been turbulent times for the Gujjar people, and an assortment of external pressures has led to an increased receptivity among the younger generations. Many young Gujjars have begun to question the worldview, religious beliefs and practices of their elders. They are looking for real spiritual answers.

► Pray

- Pray that the Lord will send additional workers to the Gujjar.
- At present there is no Gujjar Bible, but a translation is in process. Pray that Gujjars of all dialects will be able to understand it. Pray also for audio/oral Bibles in the Gujjar language, as most are illiterate.
- Pray for the fellowship and spiritual growth of the few Gujjar believers as they organize themselves into fellowships.