

# Walk a Mile with DR. Mohd Ramzan and Mohd Bashir Kassana; a Case Study of Two Personalities of the Scheduled Tribe (Gujjar) of Nagrota and Poonch region of Jammu and Kashmir

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## Abstract

The present study deals with two independent case studies of two personalities of Gujjar community of Jammu division, Dr. Mohd Ramzan and Mr. Mohd Bashir. The study talks about their life story from struggle days to success and how they brought pride to the Gujjar community. Dr. Mohd Ramzan, who is the first Doctorate of Gujjar community of Jammu and Kashmir (Jammu). The other personality, Mohd Bashir, who is an orphan since the age of seven years worked hard not only for himself but for his younger siblings and today is an Accounts officer. The study reveals social impact of society around them and the external factors responsible for their success in life. It is basically the analysis of social constraints, human interaction and sources available which contributed in shaping their personalities and helped them grow as a person, ultimately inspiring so many individuals and I being one of them.

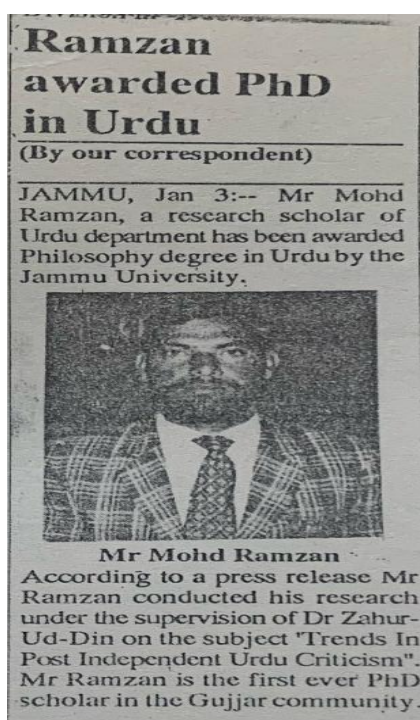
**Keywords:** Gujjar Community, Personalities, Hard work, Struggle, Education, Experience, Needs, Identity, Self-belief, Efforts.

## Introduction

Dr. Mohd Ramzan is born on 15 December, 1959 in village Jagti, Nagrota of Jammu district. He is said to be known as the first doctorate among Gujjar community of Jammu. The study depicts the struggle of him with limited resources and lack of financial and social security, finds his way to become the first doctorate of Gujjar community. When asked about his early days of struggle he said, "I was not afraid to fail but was more afraid to lose myself in the process. I always wanted to gain knowledge because it interested me more than anything, even than employment and I'm lucky enough to say that I have achieved more and today I'm contending with it."

The path he chose for himself was indeed new, full of risks but turned out to be successful and inspiring. His determination to acquire knowledge complimented his struggles and his circumstances were more like challenges for him. He believes that education is something which is responsible for the choices he made latterly in his life. He is still a determined and focused person who beautifully answered when asked about his hardships he said, "My hardships and circumstances only enhanced my ability and capacity to do something for myself and ultimately shaped my personality." He said, my failures are my lessons learnt and counts as an experience, I have had to find my own light and own way to make things work so, self-belief is what has made me a stronger person. He says, achievement comes as a reward to only those who dare to struggle and prove themselves at every step of life.

Mohd Ramzan says that his childhood was not as easy as others and his achievement is something worth fighting for. He says, he still spends time with books and tries to learn every day, now reading is his constant habit and a hobby too. His story of life tells us that if given opportunity and a platform anyone can achieve and accomplish anything. He says that education is the greatest battle he fought in his life with pen being his only sword. His idea of life is simple living and he likes to keep a



Balance between his personal and professional life. He is an intellectual, down to earth and spiritually grown person. On being asked about education and its impact he said, "Education is not about degrees or qualifications, it is more about having your own style of thinking or developing your own perspective to think and analyze your surroundings". He further said, my parents are the only role model I have had and to be like them is the only thing I have ever imagined and I'm still working on it.

#### Methodology

The research techniques used to conduct this study are observation, interview, survey and questionnaire. Both primary and secondary sources are taken into consideration.

#### Aim of the study

The aim of this research is to throw light on the struggle of two independent personalities of S.T community (Gujjar). The study deals with the early life and the achievements of Dr. Mohd Ramzan and Mohd Bashir. The purpose is to find their impact on society and their contribution.

#### Early life and childhood

He was seven years old when he had first encounter with education. From the beginning only he was sure that this was the thing he wanted for himself. On being asked he said, "when I joined school I got this feeling that this is where I belong and this is what I wanted to do in future (teaching)". He was disciplined child and school decorum only trained his mind and he liked it. So, discipline is what he learned on the first few years of his studies. He was a regular student to school with so much enthusiasm and hardly missed any day going to school. The first language or subject he learned was Urdu and it became his favorite subject for life, even for PhD he chose Urdu.

Up to 5<sup>th</sup> standard he learnt Urdu and finally English, mathematics and other subjects were introduced to him. He says, his world is all about reading and writing because it is the only thing that became the matter of appreciation for him. As he belonged to S.T community (gujjar) so he had to work extra hard to make sure that his parents let him study and his performance really encouraged him as well as his parents who further agreed to send him to school. After seeing him doing well in studies, his parents became the true support system and played an important role in his life.

His parents made studies a matter of competition at home among his siblings and the one who performed well was rewarded with money which fetched his interest and from there it was no way turning back. His school was about 4kms away from his residence so he had to walk till school and then return home. His parents encouraged him and pushed him every day. He says, he can't forget his mother's role in his life as she was the motivating factor and they both share first name that is, Ramzan in common. He further says that my mother was also an educated lady but differently, she was a student of Arabic literature and her intellect inspired me and motivated me so much that education became the only aim of my life. He also shared one incident in which he mentioned that for two years like in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> standard he attended co-education school which impacted his mindset and he learned to show respect and give space to his opposite gender. The impact of co-education influenced him so much that he stood for his younger sister's education at home and helped her to seek admission in school.

He then talked about his incident of passing matric (10<sup>th</sup>) examination where his elder brother failed; still his parents celebrated his victory, ignored the failure of his brother and organized the feast for neighbors and village people. His parents were so proud because he was the first matriculate of his house. His family took his success with so much pride that the celebrations continued for days. The primary school got over and a new chapter begun in his life as soon as he took admission in Ranbir higher secondary school, Jammu. It is still one of the reputed government schools of Jammu. He also mentioned that it was very difficult for S.T student to study in that school but he managed taking admissions with help of one of the faculty of Ranbir School who shared same place of residence with Mohd Ramzan. He is still very thankful to him as this was one of the greatest favors someone has ever done for him.

Dr. Ramzan said his real struggle started from there only, he was introduced to the new world and soon he made one friend whose presence influenced him so much that his friend made him study commerce subjects for like good six months and he failed one of his subjects, economics. On seeing this his parents stopped him from going to school and punished him by making him do all the household activities for instance, milking cow, cutting grass, rearing animals and alike, he was forced to do it all by himself. His parents knew his right potential but they wanted him to realize it by himself so his father (Nazir

Ahmed) made him walk 16kms every day just to carry and drop milk and milk products to nearby army camps.

He says, army really inspired me a lot and helped put me back on my lost track by motivating me and soon I realized that I was not doing justice to myself. It was hard for him to convince his father so, one of the Army officers even took the initiative to talk to his father about his studies and somehow his father agreed to send him to school. He further resumed his studies and joined Ranbir School again, from where he completed his 12<sup>th</sup>. He says, I was lucky enough that while studying only I got recruited as field instructor which was a part time job for me and started making little money for myself. On seeing his hard work and interest for education, Mohd Shafi Uri, education minister that time talked to him and encouraged him for higher studies. He then took admissions in Maulana Azad Memorial College, Jammu and became the first graduate in his family and also in the whole village jagti, Nagrota. The location of his college was opposite Jammu University and watching students going to University fascinated him so much and from there he further pursued masters in Urdu. He also shared that though the structure of new campus of university encouraged him but his classes were held in old campus which was situated in canal road and he had to go for evening classes there. Latterly, he got shifted to new campus and it was a dream come true. In the new campus, classes held in the morning and he managed his spare time by studying in the library. On being asked about his interest for PhD he said, he never thought about it until one incident changed his reality of existence, one day he went to attend his cousin uncle's wedding, his relative passed taunts at him in front of everyone and said, "Your cousin brother is soon to be a doctor in real life, what are you going to become after so many years of education?" He then realized that even he wanted to get recognized therefore, his journey to become doctorate commenced.

His love for literature was never ending so first, he took topic which was a short story by "Krishan chander", titled "Ann data ka tankee di jayaza" and completed his M.Phil. Then he pursued PhD and chose topic called "Trends in Post-independence Urdu Criticism" and submitted his thesis. On being asked why he chose above mentioned topic he said, one incident really influenced his mindset when he was young kid, he witnessed "The war of 1965" and clearly remember how aircraft of Pakistan was shot by Indian air force which had a great impact on him.

During his PhD research work, he visited many places and universities like Aligarh Muslim University, khuda baksh library patna, J.N.U, Delhi University, Allahabad University, Benaras University, Gorakhpur University which together influenced him and he developed love for learning new cultures and met different personalities throughout his PhD journey. He says, PhD taught him the art of acceptance and respecting diverse nature of people, their culture. He further developed interest in learning different religious texts and studied it thoroughly. He

knows many languages like Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Sanskrit, and Hindi. On being asked about his experience with life he said, "life is a story that is prewritten by god and rewritten by us so be true to yourself". He says, today when I see myself coming this far and being able to tell my story, really means world to me and all my hardships, 18hrs study per day paid well for me.

He says, "Keep working hard and push yourself because one day all your efforts will become your accomplishment." After he became doctorate, he himself organized feast and celebrated it with his loved ones including university professors from different departments and he remembers this incident more than any festival he ever celebrated. His love for education made him do another master's degree later that too in political science and he got retired as lecturer of political science.

He says, "I owe my success to my parents without whom I would have not become what I'm today". He got married when he was 33years old to an educated women as he believes that education is the beautiful ornament of a women and a real strength, it can afford every ornament of the world. Currently his wife is working as principal of government higher secondary school, Nagrota. Dr. Ramzan has also performed hajj that is visit to mecca twice and now working on him to grow spiritually.

**Dr. Mohd Ramzan**



**Parents:** Nazir Ahmed and Ramzan Bibi.

**Spouse:** Sultana Koser.

**Children:** Bismah Chowdhary and Ali Hassan.

**Qualifications:** B.A, M.A Urdu, M.Phil., PhD, B.Ed., M.A political science.

#### **Introduction**

Mohd Bashir kassana is born on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1965, in marha village of poonch district. He belongs to gujjar community and currently working as Accounts Officer in finance department of Jammu and Kashmir. When asked about life he said, "My life is struggle, it still is but now it is about to live with dignity and truth". He became orphan at a very young age of seven years with two siblings left to take care of. His optimistic personality, independent thoughts and hard work has contributed to make him what he is today- a successful and an admired person. They say, "Actions speak louder than words" and it is well proved by him. He further says, "To be an orphan was pre destined and I'm a constant fool if I would deny that but to die just an orphan is what I'm responsible for." He lacked every single resource, be it financial, social or any but today he has achieved more than he ever thought. He believes that it is you who should speak for yourself because no one else would do, also was responsible

for three lives. He said, "Being seven years old orphan but at the same time a mother and a father to my younger siblings has taught me the real meaning of life." He might have lost his childhood but he made sure to give his younger siblings a secure environment and a beautiful childhood. He says, destiny took a lot from me when I was young but today when I see myself, I can say that I have more than I deserve. He is well recognized personality of Marha village, poonch because of his loving, sincere and helping personality.

#### **Earlylife and childhood**

He started earning at a very young age of seven years, soon after his parents death; his relatives threw him and his siblings from his own house and deprived him of his parental things. He said he was too young to realize about the intentions of his relatives. When he asked for help from his paternal relatives they straight away said no, instead they occupied his share of property which was left by his father for him and his siblings. He was just seven years old when his whole world changed not just he became an orphan but also homeless. He moved to poonch barefooted with nothing in his hand but the responsibility of his siblings, seeing him and his siblings; someone showed him mercy and helped him to stay at dhaba for a month or so. He said, it was tough for me to understand the change that was going on,

I hardly got the time to mourn my parent's death. All I was thinking of feeding my younger siblings and myself so I started looking for any kind of work. He started working as a coolie at a minimum wage of eight annas per day, also in his free hours he worked as a labourer. He then met a clerk who was working at D.C office; poonch, who helped him in seeking admission in Bal Ashram in poonch. He said, he never got the chance of enjoying or living like a child; means his childhood was full of struggle and responsibilities but he made sure that his siblings could have it all. No one from the parental family came to help us and that time only I realized that how important it is for me to build my career as I never wanted to live forever in that Ashram, he said. He started his education career when he was eight years old at "city primary school poonch" and studied there up to eight standards. Then he moved to Yateem trust (orphanage) Srinagar, where he passed his 12<sup>th</sup> from "M.P higher secondary school".

He said the only role model he has is "Late Abdul Khalid Talk zainagiri", who still has the impact on him. For his higher education; he joined Amar singh college, Srinagar and completed his graduation degree. He says, I did not have anything constant in my life except my interest for education; I was a fast learner and a bright student so studying was my thing. He said he worked day and night to fund his and his sibling's education; life was hard for his brother and sister in that ashram so he made them stay at a rented room. The rent was the main thing for him so he took any and every kind of work to meet his expenses, be it working as labourer or coolie. He said, he was very much interested in further studying so after graduation, he moved to University of Kashmir

for his masters in sociology but got employed in middle so he left it and joined in the fund organization, as he was not economically sound; so he preferred job opportunity over master's degree. He says, sometimes it's not about making a choice; it is about deciding your future; so there I made it. On being asked about his decision of quitting education he said, his mother wanted him to study and that was her last words to him but seeing his state of being with two more responsibilities he had to quit as he could not afford it.

He said, he don't regret his decision because today when he looks back and compare his life; it is far better than he would have ever imagined. He said, I am more than happy to see my younger brother got settled with a government job; sister after her education got married and has a happy family, is what I wanted for my family and myself. As he was not satisfied with the kind of job he had, so he qualified the service selection board exam and got recruited as Accounts assistant and that's when he stepped forward to have a stable life. Then he served in poonch for three years. From there he moved to serve in the housing and urban development department; after that he got a promotion and became Accountant; served in treasury (poonch). Mohd Bashir has also served in Forest protection force, Jammu; then he got a promotion and became Assistant accounts officer in Home Department (Civil Secretariat).

He says I have made it this far because of self-belief and constant efforts of trying; I am not scared of failures because it is temporary and it is more like a self-evaluation. He further got promoted as Accounts Officer and worked in Electric planning and design department. Currently, he is in the finance department as Accounts Officer. Mohd Bashir has now only one mission to accomplish that is to open his orphanage so that he can help so many orphans like him and he is working on it. He is building his orphanage and soon it will be functional. On this he said, I have seen people appreciating the good deeds of others but no one wants to do it personally; I always wanted to contribute in the society and my orphanage is my contribution. He got married when he was 32 years old with a working lady named Zeidha; she was a government employee and he says that his wife has a great impact on his this decision. He says, no matter how hard the life was I always had this fighting spirit with confidence of overcoming everything and that's the habit I have developed. He says, while in a process of shaping yourself; always remember why you started and where you want to see yourself. The struggle of him is still being appreciated by his village people because it was really tough for seven years old boy to come this far and being able to inspire so many people to make their own identity. He says, "never let your circumstances decide your fate; instead believe in the power of your hard work and carve your own name".

**Mohd Bashir****Parents:** Shah Mohd and Akam Bi.**Spouse:** Zeidha.**Qualifications:** B.A, SSB exam qualified.**Designation:** Accounts Officer.**Conclusion**

Dr. Mohd Ramzan being the first doctorate of Gujjar community has so much impact on the youth of Nagrota and continues to motivate so many. His ideas and thoughts are inspiring and the respect he has earned is remarkable.

Mohd Bashir, an Accounts officer is a wonderful person and people around him look upto him to be like him. His optimistic vision, fighting spirit and forever smiling face is inspiring in its own way. He has helped so many in pursuing educations and is still affording it.

The Struggle of Both personalities needs to be recognized and writing about them is a matter of pride.

**Review of literature**

The present study is a case study of two individuals of Gujjar community of Jammu and Kashmir. The research paper is an analysis of early life and their current state of being. The information obtained about them required research methods like interview, observation, survey and the important evidence to state the study is drawn from the newspaper, "Kashmir times". It is conducted to investigate about two individuals of S.T community

and their achievements. The sources for the literature review included newspaper article, books like "trends in post-independence", "case study research in practice" etc.

The review focused on two fundamentals areas; first, if given opportunity anyone can achieve whatever he/she wishes for and second, determination is the key with a blend of hard work. The above case studies are descriptive design that explains the struggle, hard work and self-belief of these two individuals. It further explains their level of integration with their social arrangement. It is an insight on how Mohd Ramzan became the first ever PhD of Gujjar community and Mohd Bashir; an orphan became the Accounts officer and an influential personality of S.T community.

**Acknowledgement**

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Regards,

Bismah Chowdhary.

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