From Brahma ji to Chokhani's

We have often heard of terms like" Agrawal's" "Maheshwari's" "Gotra's" etc which make little sense to people of the current generation. Some of the interested ones are handicapped by lack of authentic and credible information. Some other's lose interest because of the communication gap between the so called "knowledge holders" and the "candidates".

The end result? More often than not, the current generation pushes the subject on the bottom end of their priority list. An attempt is, therefore, made here to chart the chain from evolution of mankind to the present day Mr/s Chokhani.

The starting point is obviously the creation of mankind.

Level 1:

According to Hindu belief, millions years ago, Lord Brahma, who is considered as the creator of this universe, first created Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva.

It is believed that he made the two of them in order to maintain equilibrium in the world that he had set out to create.
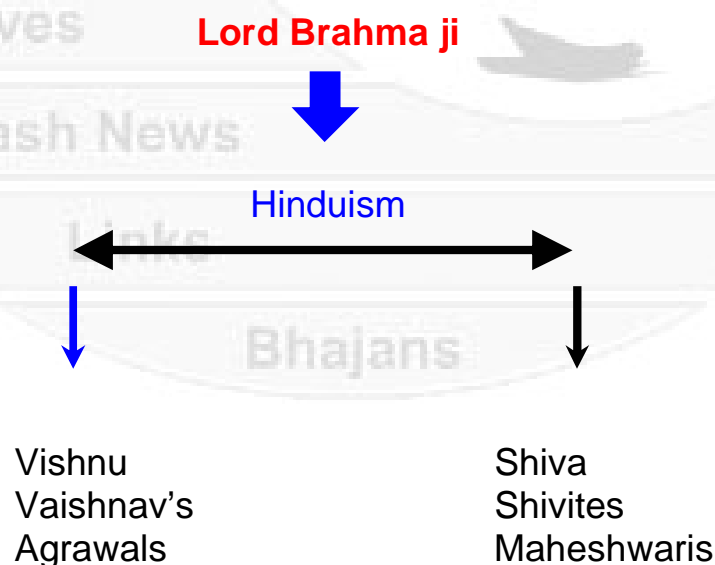
Vishnu was given the task of a "Palaan haar", which in simple English means "one who takes care". Shiva was to take up the task of "Sanghar karta". I.e. the "destroyer". The logic was simple. Vishnu was to create, and with the help of Lord Indra, look after those who are living. And with the assistance of Lord Yama, Shiva was to extinguish the excess whenever the need arose and look after them thereafter.

The worshippers (or followers) of Vishnu are called Vaishnav's. Similarly the followers of Shiva are called Shaiva's or Shivites. Another general method by which they are differentiated is that all Vaishnav's are called Agrawals and all Shivites are Maheshwaris. (From the word Mahesh, which is another name of Shiva)

It is pertinent to note here that Lord Brahma created not only the Hindus, but the entire mankind. People who follow Lord Vishnu or Shiva or their other incarnations- are categorized as Hindus. Somewhere down the line, some people chose living individuals as their idols and started worshiping them as gods. These people later came to be known as Jains, Sikhs, Christians, Muslims etc.

Hindu's include Marwari's, who worship the "God" created by Lord Brahma. Others like the Jain's, Sikh's, etc worship a human being as their god.

The chart so far would look somewhat like this:

Lord Brahma ji

Hinduism

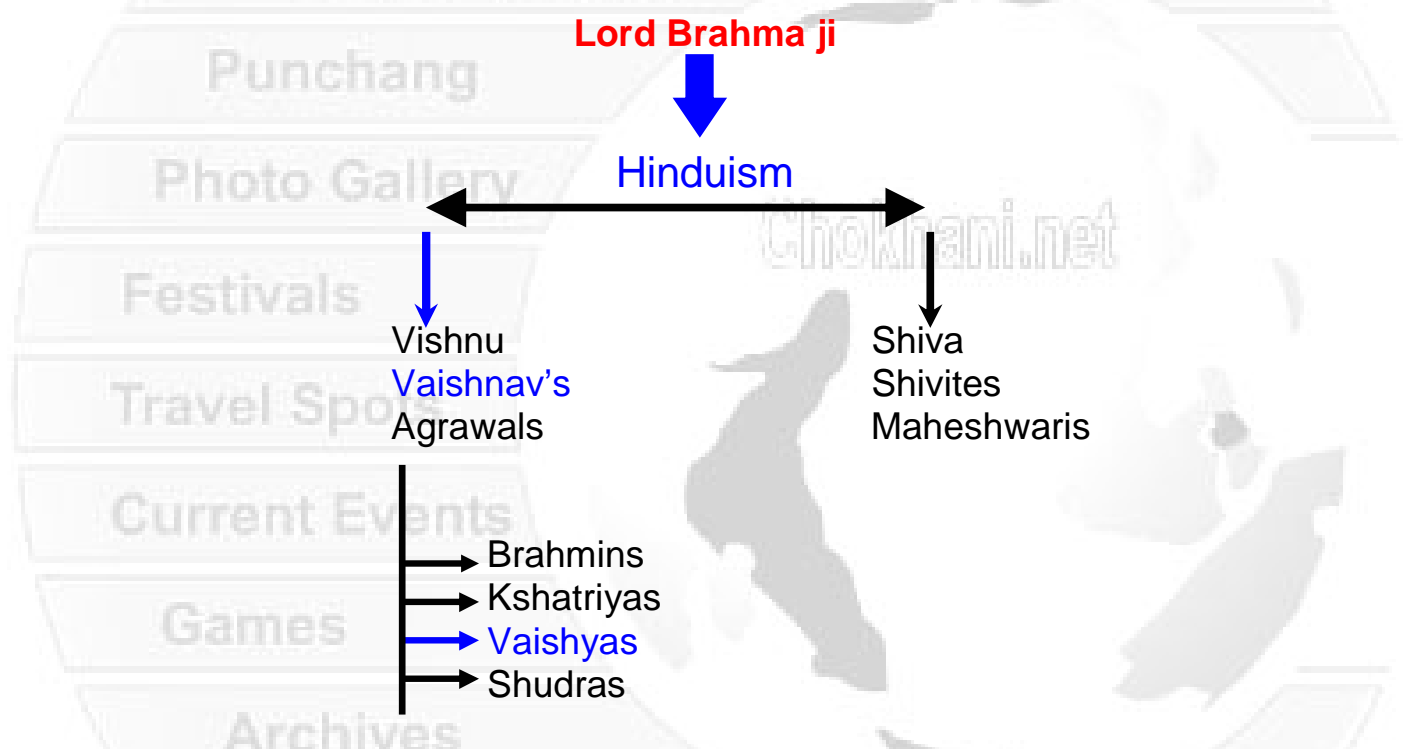| Vishnu	Shiva
Vaishnav's	Shivites
Agrawals	Maheshwaris

Level 2:

We Chokhani's are vaishnavs, and therefore, we will presently restrict the description of the chain to this branch only

Within this branch of vaishnavs, are four main divisions. These divisions were made essentially on the occupations of the respective divisions. These are, in order of their seniority, as follows

1. Brahmins: consisting of pujaris, teachers etc.
2. Kshatriya: consisting of warriors
3. Vaishya: consisting of traders and businessmen
4... Shudra: consisting of servants, sweepers etc

This leads us to the following situation:

Lord Brahma ji

Hinduism

Vishnu	Shiva
Vaishnav's	Shivites
Agrawals	Maheshwaris

- Brahmins
- Kshatriyas
- Vaishyas
- Shudras

Among the Vaishnavs, we Chokhani's are Vaishyas.

In the early ages, movement of people from one division to another was freely permissible. This was simply because the divisions were formed solely on the basis of the occupation of the person concerned. Hence, a Brahmin could become a Kshatriya or a Vaishya could become a Brahmin, whenever they changed their occupation.

Level 3:

It is said that many years ago, (the time frame is not very clear) there used to live an emperor by the name of Agrasen. Maharaja Agrasen was a natural Kshatriya (by profession). Since warriors were Kshatriyas, he could not have been anyone other than a Kshatriya.

At this time, differences between the divisions of Brahmins, Kshatriya's, Vaishyas, particularly among those who "converted" from one to another (due to change in occupation) started gathering momentum. Prominent among these was the Vaishyas who proved to be better administrators in many fields. This field of administrative work was hitherto the domain of the Brahmins, who started treating the Vaishya administrators in a different way.

To sort out these simmering differences, Maharaja Agrasen, carved out a territory from his existing empire and located all the Vaishya's there. This new territory was named Agroha. Later, Maharaja Agrasen renounced his earlier empire and took over as Maharaja of Agroha in order to serve the Vaishya cause more effectively. It is also said that at this point Maharaja Agrasen "converted" himself in a Vaishya.

Maharaja Agrasen was also familiar with the scientific truth about the effects of liaisons with same lineage. He knew the fact those liaisons like marriages which result in an offspring are not advisable as the resultant child is likely to be defective either mentally or physically or both. He also understood the theory that Children born out of liaisons between different lineages will be a better race than their predecessors. A present day similarity can be found in hybrid varieties of foodgrains which are better than the originals.

With the dual purpose of settling the Vaishyas and to develop a progressive race of humans, he divided the entire population of the territory of Agroha into 18 groups. Each group was given a group leader. This person was the highest intellectual among that group. The leader was given also the task to monitor the liaisons taking place among the members and to ensure that no such liaisons take place within one group. The groups were named after their respective leaders. These group names came to be known as "Gotra". Therefore there are 18 gotras.

There are some beliefs that initially there were only four groups (or gotra's). These were later expanded to 8 but there is no dispute that at present there are a total of 18.

The list of the 18 reads as follows:

Person's Name	Gotra	Prevalent Name	Equivalent Hindi Name
Gargeya	Garg	Garg	Garg
Gomila	Gomil	Goyal	Goyal
Gautam	Gaen	Gautam	Goyan
Maitrya	Mittal	Mittal	Mittal
Jaimina	Jintal	Jindal	Jindal
Shaingal	Sinhal	Singal	Singhal
Vatsya	Baansal	Bansal	Bansal
Ooru	Airan	Airan	Airan
Kaushik	Kansal	Kansal	Kansal
Kashyap	Kaphal	Kashyap	Bhandal
Tandya	Tingal	Tittal	Tingal
Bahndeya	Mangal	Mangal	Mangal
Vashisth	Bindal	Bindal	Bindal
Dhaimya	Dharap	Dheran	Dharan
Mudrat	Mudast	Madhupal	Madhuphal
Taiteriya	Tayal	Tayal	Tayal
Nasand	Nangal	Nagod	Nagan
Kutsa	Kuchalas	Kuchhal	Kuchhal

It is very important to note that such concepts (or gotra's) are also prevalent the other divisions of Brahmins/Kshatriya's/Shudra's and also in the other branch of Maheshwaris. Further, since the gotras' are basically names of human beings, it is possible, and is also prevalent that Gotras' of similar names are available in other divisions and branches.

Further down the line, different "varieties" of Hindus viz: Maharashtrians, Gujaratis etc. have also introduced their own variations of these concepts.
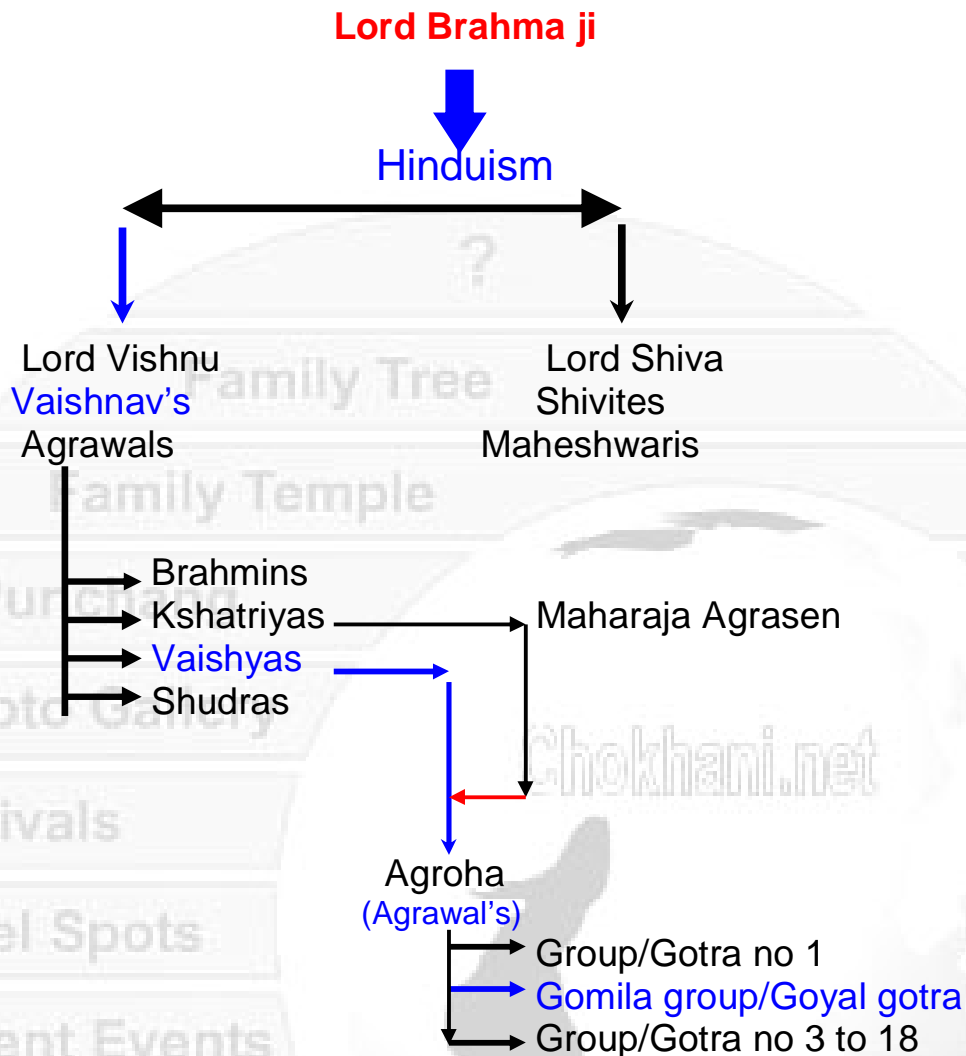
This brings the chart one step further.

Lord Brahma ji

Hinduism

Lord Vishnu
Vaishnav's
Agrawals

Lord Shiva
Shivites
Maheshwaris

→ Brahmins
→ Kshatriyas ———→ Maharaja Agrasen
→ Vaishyas
→ Shudras

Agroha
(Agrawal's)

→ Group/Gotra no 1
→ Gomila group/Goyal gotra
→ Group/Gotra no 3 to 18

Level 4 :

It also needs to be clarified that "Agrawals" are not necessary direct descendants of Maharaja Agrasen. Agrawals' are actually all those who are descendants of anyone from the original place called Agroha. This place called Agroha is presently in the state of Haryana, which is very close to the even present day Rajasthan. This could easily explain why we are all called Rajasthanis'.

Out of the 18 groups made by Maharaja Agrasen one group, was named after a person called Gomila. The gotra of this group (derived from the name of its leader) was Goyal. Shri Chokharaj ji belonged to this group. Since in those days there was no concept of "surname", people used to write the gotra alongwith their names, so as to make the identity more explicit. Accordingly it is obvious that "full" name of Shri Chokhraj ji was Shri Chokhraj Goyal.

We, present day Chokhani's (and Chokhany's and Chowkhani's) are direct descendants of this Chokhraj ji. And have "derived" our surname from him.

Therefore, the complete chart would look like this:

Lord Brahma ji

Hinduism

Lord Vishnu
Vaishnav's
Agrawals

Lord Shiva
Shivites
Maheshwaris

Brahmins
Kshatriyas → Maharaja Agrasen
Vaishyas
Shudras

Agroha
(Agrawal's)

Group/Gotra no 1
Gomila group/Goyal gotra
Group/Gotra no 3 to 18

Other individuals

Shri Chokhraj Goyal

Chokhani