

Analysis of Habitat and Ethnography of the Tribes of Uttaraanchal District

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ABSTRACT:

India, one of the biggest democratic countries of the world, has its commitment to the creation of a society free from poverty, ignorance and diseases so that equality freedom and justice can be made accessible to all the utilizers of the country in general and the rural, poor and tribals in particular. In this context, there has been efforts made by the central and state government for expanding educational medical and health services through their various agencies since long. The development of a given community also depends to a large extent on the educational standard, health, hygiene and nutritional conditions of its population. Viewing to this reality the socio-economic and nutritional status of the target population can be observed. The important aspects of human life are 'Health, Hygiene and Nutrition' which altogether ascertain psycho-physical, social, economic and cultural status of an individual. Basically, all the three elements, i.e. health, hygiene and nutrition are interrelated and positively correlated with each other. Health status of an individual depends to a large extent, on the hygiene conditions and nutritional pattern. Health is essentially a basic requirement to lead a socio-economic life. And it is essential to have any appropriate feeling for a healthy life. In fact there is ample evidence that the higher level of nutrition, improvement in environmental sanitation and adoption of better health care and hygienic practices have made possible improvement in the health status of the population. Healthy/Nutritional status of the people determines the average expectation of life, production, productivity, earning capacity, employment and over all socio-economic status of the person. Thus, we may say that 'Nutritional Status' of the people is one of the important indicators of human resource development.

INTRODUCTION

In India, poverty line is defined in nutritional terms. The estimation of poverty is based on the consumption expenditure level below which a house hold of 5.5 person on an average cannot meet the recommended intake of 2400 kcal for adults in rural areas and 2100 kcal in Urban areas. Using a non-monetary criteria know as index of deprivation, Keddy (2002), estimated that among social groups considering the poverty line, highest percentage of people living below poverty line are scheduled tribes (50.3%), followed by scheduled caste (48.3%).

The tribals in India are the most underdeveloped ethnic group. Emperical studies on the health of tribals have reported high prevalence of disease and malnutrition. (Singh and Jabbi 1996 and Singh 1997). They have lower literacy rate (23.6%) than the general population (52.2%). The tribal women, like women in other social groups have lower literacy rate (14.5%) than men (32.50%).

In Uttaraanchal, there is sizeable population of tribals and the scheduled tribes. Here are Buxas, Bhotias, Tharus Jaunsaries and Rajis. These tribals are spread over all the districts of Uttaraanchal, but their major concentrations (94% population) are in district Udham Singh Nagar, Nainital and Dehradun. (Srivastava et al. 1997). There are different views about their origin and history. One view about their history is that they migrated from Rajasthan during prosecution of Mughals and settled in

Tarai areas. There is another view that Buxas come from Monogoloid stock and have nothing in common with people of UP or Rajasthan. In appearance they are dwarf in stature, their face is very broad across the cheeks and their nose is depressed. Their eyes are small, the openings of eyelids being narrow linear and horizontal. The features of women are similar to horizontal those of men but they are more shapely. The complexion of both men and women is wheatish to dark wheatish. The religious belief of Buxas are basically Hindu.

The Bhotias, the Buxas, the Tharus, the Rajis and the Khasis (Jaunsaris) are scheduled tribe communities dwelling in Uttarakhand. Bhotiyas are the aboriginal tribes of the Indo-Tibetal borderland. The Raji, a little known tribe of Kumaun Himalayan in Uttaranchal is an aboriginal tribe who is said to be the habitants of Ascot and its adjacent forest areas on the Kali river. These people are leading their life in a very miserable and adverse life conditions. The Tharus are dwellers in swamps, are great rice cultivators and are proof against Malaria. They ever dread visiting the plains where they say they suffer severely from fever. The Tharu population is scattered over Nainital Tarai to Gorakhpur in east, but the major part of their population is concentrated in Khatima and Sitarganj tehsil of Uttaranchal.

Generally the territorial group of people living in Jaunsur-Bawar area in Uttaranchal is known as Jaunsaris. The Jaunsaris is thus a composite term which consists of the people of different sub groups. Some of them enjoy high social status while some other have comparatively a lower position among the Jaunsaris. Khasas are below medium in height with a long head shape. They have long and narrow (thin) nasal structure with a convex upper bone. They have fair complexion with light brownish colour. But the Khasas are of dark complexion and look like the doms.

NEED & IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

If we make an objective review of the literature available, we come to conclusion that the ethnic groups of Uttarakhand have attracted the attention of Pilgrims, traveler administrators, traders, ethnographers, anthropologist and sociologists. We have no doubt detailed information about the people of Uttarakhand and also about their socio-culture and economic life, but the overall evaluation of the research findings of the studies on the tribals of Uttaranchal depicts that not of these scholars has tried to touch the vital issues like education health, hygiene, socio economic status, nutritional status of the tribals. With a view of bridging this gap of knowledge, this study had been taken with some objectives.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

S.N. Rathore (1992) has made an evaluation of literacy in tribal India. He includes that only 16.35% (1981 census) tribals in the country are reported to be literate. The difference between the literacy level of the general population and the tribal population is 19.88% wide differences are observed in the literacy level from tribe to tribe. There are tribes who have achieved a very high level of literacy to the extent of 100% level. The gulf between the literacy levels of the tribal population and the general population is also considerably high.

R. Chandra (1992) has presented an appraisal of the situation of education in Nilgiri tribes of Tamil Nadu. The conclusions are drawn on the basis of fieldwork. It is observed that among the six tribal groups of Nilgiris, viz, the Toda, Kota, Irula, Kurumba, Kattu Naicken and the Paniya; Toda have the maximum literacy

Doshi (1995) has conducted a case study of the tribals of Rajasthan within the framework of food in culture. This leads him to discuss various aspects of tribal food habits food preparation food preference, hot and cold food and ceremonial food. Doshi attempted to develop a theory of tribal

stratification on the basis of food habits as indicators. The class view of diet, disease and health is also illustrated by him. He also brings into focus the need for and adequate national food policy.

Agarwal (1990) with a view to estimate the determinants of malnutrition with a comparative analysis for different geographical areas, has conducted a study on 'Malnutrition in Rural Haryana'. The study was carried out in ten purposefully selected villages from three derived ecological zones so as to reflect the varied physical socio-economic and cultural conditions of the Haryana state. The study concludes that malnutrition in children in Haryana was related to several inter-related factors, i.e., environment, sanitation, income, demography, dietary pattern, socio-cultural aspects prevailing in the study area.

Swain (1998) presented an overview of the studies and the articles on 'health and nutrition in Tribal area'. The review of literature confirms that not only is there a lack of information but also that there is some misinformation such as the view that tribals are ill-fed but well-nourished.

Patel (1995) describes about the awareness of tribal health and medical care in Madhya Pradesh. Patel concludes that due to low literacy level the general awareness of the tribals was low about modern health care. On the contrary, the tribals, in general had strong faith in super natural power which largely had been attributed to create health hazards. Lastly, Patel suggests for some preventive and constructive measures for better health status of the tribals.

Goyal et al (1998) conducted a study on the health and social aspects of tribal adolescent girls in tribal development blocks of Betul district in Madhya Pradesh. The analysis of first hand information reveals that there is poor trend in the health and nutrition status of the tribal adolescent girls. It is also obvious from the discussion that the girls are aware of their social discrimination, importance of education, need for sex education.

Patel (1993) has conducted a detailed study on the Koraku tribe of chhotanagpur, Madhya Pradesh and presented briefly the food habits, food pattern and nutritional status of the Koraku tribe. Patel states that Korakus are both vegetarian and non-vegetarian and used to alcoholic drinks. Liquor prepared by Mahuwa is used by men, women and children. Due to this drinking habit, the health status of an average Koraku person is very weak.

RESULT & DISCUSSION:

If we take into account the tribe wise population and the status of the tribals in Uttaranchal, we come to conclusion that there is great variation in regard to population size as well as of the socio-economic and cultural status of the tribals. In general census, we find the following tribe wise population figures in Uttaranchal (Bisht).

Tribes	Bhotiya	Buxa	Tharus	Rajis	Jaunsaries	Total
Population	31014	28685	68197	567	8137.5	209838
Percent	14.78	13.67	37.5	0.27	38.78	100.00

It is obvious that Jaunsari with 38.78% of the total tribal population in Uttaranchal is the largest tribal group. The Tharu is the second largest tribal group of Uttarakhand. It constitutes 32.50% of the total tribal population of Uttarakhand. The total population of Tharus is spread over 141 villages of Sitarganj and Khatima development blocks newly formed Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttaranchal. The Tharus are also found in Lakhimpur Kheri, Gonda, Behraich, and Gorakhpur districts of U.P., but 60% of the total Tharu population is concentrated only in Sitarganj and Khatima blocks.

14.78% of the total tribal population of Uttaranchal is formed by the Bhotiyas. According to available information total population of Bhotiya stands 31014 which is spread over 291 villages of Pithoragarh, Uttarakashi, Chamoli, and Almora districts of Uttaranchal.

Buxas are spread over all the hill districts of Uttaranchal except Tehri. Though there is a very heavy concentration of their population in the rural area of U.S. Nagar, Nainital and Dehradun. The highest concentration of their population is found in U.S. Nagar/Nainital (61.89%) followed by Dehradun (32%), Chamoli (3.59%), Garhwal (1.64%), Pithoragarh (0.66%) and Uttarakashi (0.09%) (Srivastava et al., 1997). In the U.S. Nagar (earlier a part of Nainital district) highest concentration of Buxas is found in the Bajpur Block followed by Kashipur block. In Dehradun, Buxas are known as Mehre, the biggest concentration is found in Dehradun tehsil. Though uphill share of 86.82% of total population of Buxas is in Uttaranchal, remaining 13.18% of Buxas, live in the adjoining district Bijnore of Uttar Pradesh.

PHYSICAL FEATURES OF TRIBAL HABITAT IN UTTARANCHAL:

The total population is found in almost all parts of Uttaranchal. At present the distribution of tribal populate on in Uttaranchal is as below mentioned table :

District-wise Scheduled- Tribe Population in Uttarakhand

District	Total- (T) Rural- (R) Urban- (U)	Population	% of Scheduled Tribe Population to total population	Sex ratio (Females per 1000 Males)	Literacy Percentage		
					Persons	Male	Female
Almora (including Bageshwar)	T	2739	0.33	949	46.57	61.39	31.55
	R	2044	0.26	1018	44.55	60.76	27.87
	U	695	1.30	773	60.36	65.91	55.24
Nainital (including U.S. Nagar)	T	90020	5.84	9.44	19.04	31.59	6.12
	R	88061	8.49	947	18.71	31.15	5.95
	U	1959	0.39	814	48.61	64.96	25.07
Pithoragarh (including Champawat)	T	18313	3.23	995	47.62	62.41	32.51
	R	15140	2.89	982	44.66	59.96	29.07
	U	3173	7.53	1056	68.94	79.87	57.57
Chamoli (including Karn Prayag)	T	10073	2.26	1062	45.88	63.11	29.43
	R	7939	1.92	1113	40.03	58.11	23.56
	U	2334	5.76	907	60.79	74.81	45.70
Dehradun	T	84046	8.20	889	18.64	29.36	6.08
	R	81005	15.88	898	18.13	28.78	5.72

	U	3071	0.60	684	61.31	67.43	48.45
Pauri	T	1502	0.22	744	26.16	40.22	6.55
	R	1358	0.28	784	19.35	32.55	2.35
	U	144	0.18	440	80.99	87.64	62.50
Tehri	T	615	0.11	1312	51.35	63.27	42.11
	R	548	0.10	1491	52.46	59.09	35.29
	U	67	0.20	456	100.00	100.00	100.00
Uttarakashi	T	2300	0.96	909	40.84	57.53	20.01
	R	2240	1.01	908	40.28	57.04	21.58
	U	60	0.35	935	59.61	71.88	40.00
Uttarakhand	T	209838	3.54	930	23.56	35.64	10.43
	R	198335	4.27	935	22.03	34.06	9.03
	U	11503	0.89	843	62.27	73.79	48.28

If we take into account the tribe were population and the status of the tribes in Uttaranchal we come to the conclusion that there is a great variation in regard population size as well as of socio-economic and cultural status of the tribals. If we take into consideration the availability tribe were population as the base line data and calculate the population growth's per rate we observe in general census, we find the following tribe were population figures in Uttanachal (Bisht : 1996).

CONCLUSION:

In Uttaranchal, there is sizeable population of tribals and the scheduled tribes. Here are Buxas, Bhotias, Tharus Jaunsaries and Rajis. These tribals are spread over all the districts of Uttaranchal, but their major concentrations (94% population) are in district Udham Singh Nagar, Nainital and Dehradun. (Srivastava et al. 1997). There are different views about their origin and history. One view about their history is that they migrated from Rajasthan during prosecution of Mughals and settled in Tarai areas. There is another view that Buxas come from Monogoloid stock and have nothing in common with people of UP or Rajasthan. In appearance they are dwarf in stature, their face is very broad across the cheeks and their nose is depressed. Their eyes are small, the openings of eyelids being narrow linear and horizontal. The features of women are similar to horizontal those of men but they are more shapely. The complexion of both men and women is wheatish to dark wheatish. The religious belief of Buxas are basically Hindu.

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