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### DEMOGRAPHY, HABITAT AND ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE TRIBES OF UTTARANCHAL

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#### ABSTRACT

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

Like other states and union territories in the country, Uttarakhand, a newly formed state also have scheduled Tribe population but in a very scanty and scattered form out of total 5926147 population of Uttarakhand, the scheduled Tribes constitute only 3.54% with 209838 population of the state. The Bhotias, the Buxas, the Tharus, the Rajis and the Khasas (Jaunsaries) are the scheduled Tribe communities dwelling in Uttarakhand since the time immemorial.

A brief demographic sketch of the scheduled tribes of Uttaranchal can be given as follows: Every district of Uttaranchal has more or less tribal population. But the concentration of the major part of the ST population resides in rural areas. Maximum tribal population dwell in Nainital (including U.S. Nagar district), which is preceded respectively by Dehradun, Pithoragarh, Chamoli, Almora, Uttarakashi, Pauri and Tehri. It is also noteworthy that the Dehradun with maximum tribal population has the lowest percent of tribal literacy, Tehri with minimum tribal population has maximum tribal literacy : i.e. 63.27%.

#### MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF TRIBALS IN INDIA

The tribals have been described in Hindi as Advasi (original/old settlers), Vanvasi (forest dwellers) or Girijan (mountain dwellers). These terms are widely used for tribals, but the first Adivasi has become controversial, because it means the first settlers. The description

of tribals as Vanvasi is most appropriate as majority of them (63%) still live within one to five km from a forest (Sarvekshna, 1994). The tribals are very heterogeneous. They are at different levels of development, ranging from the most primitive as hunters to well settled cultivators. Most tribe groups India are rural, illiterate and 53% live below poverty line.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Rizbi (1993)** reported that tribal population of India could be differentiated from non-tribal groups by their relatively primitive economy. Many tribal groups are still largely dependent on forests. Due to strict forest laws and the creation of conservation areas and wild life parks, hunting, tapping and the use of forest products are in the decline among the tribes. The process of industrialization and economic development has resulted in uprooting vast tribal population without any alternative schemes of rehabilitation.

**Shah (1992)** stated that tribals in India present a variety of ecological, socioeconomic and techno-cultural settings. Each tribal area presents a more or less unique system in terms of resource use patterns, technological pattern levels and levels of living. Reddy (1992) stated that the tribals living in the forests are ecologically and economically inseparable. They have co-existed since time immemorial and will continue to co-exist in a mutually reinforcing relationship.

**Singh(1997)** has noted the distribution pattern of tribes in India and reported that tribals constitute an overwhelming majority in Mizoram (94.74%), Lakshdeep (93.15%), Nagaland(87.70%) and Meghalaya (85.53%). On the other hand, the states of M.P. Maharashtra, Orissa, Bihar, Gujrat, Rajasthan, A.P., and West Bengal account for 83% of the total tribal population, even though the non-tribals constitute the majority populations in these states.

## 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 population 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	T	18313	3.23	995	47.62	62.41	32.51
	R	15140	2.89	982	44.66	59.96	29.07

<b>Champawat)</b>	U	3173	7.53	1056	68.94	79.87	57.57
<b>Chamoli (including Karn Prayag)</b>	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
<b>Dehradun</b>	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
<b>Pauri</b>	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
<b>Tehri</b>	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
<b>Uttarakashi</b>	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
<b>Uttarakhand</b>	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).

### SUMMARY

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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