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Political Awareness among Tribes: a Comparison between two Villages of Jammu and Kashmir and Uttrakhand

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Abstract: ***Tribes of India are socially and educationally backward. They are alienated from main-stream of nation development since the British rule. This is due to the fact that they have less political awareness. For the success of democracy in a large democratic country like India, it is very important to have a good level of political awareness among its voters. The present research paper is an attempt to know the political awareness among the two Scheduled Tribe villages, one from Jammu and Kashmir and other from Uttrakhand. Village 'Hadal' was selected from Jammu and Kashmir and 'BirpurLacchi' from Uttrakhand. Both are Tribal village having 100% Tribal population. Hadal is inhabited by 'Gaddi' Scheduled Tribe and BirpurLacchi by 'Buksa' Scheduled Tribe. A total of 80 respondents were interviewed forty from village Hadal of Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir and forty from village 'BirpurLacchi' of district Nainital of Uttrakhand, selected on basis of cluster random sampling. From the empirical observation during survey it was found that women in BirpurLacchi hold more freedom in domestic affairs then women in Hadal. In Hadal 30% respondents were able to identify their MLA, none of women was able to answer the name of their MLA. On the other hand in BirpurLachhi 50% respondents were able to answer the name their MLA including two women. Both the villages had good awareness about party ruling at center i.e. 62.5% at Hadal and 60% at BirpurLachhi. In Hadal 80% were able to know there Gram Pradhan i.e. Halqa Sarpanvh and in BirpurLachhi only 76 %. In Hadal 12.5% respondents were able to answer the minimum required age for voting in India where as in BirpurLachhi it was 20%. In Hadal only 25% respondents were able to understand language other than Gaddi dialect where as in BirpurLachhi 60% were able to know other language than Buksa dialect. 80% respondents in Hadal and 85% respondents in BirpurLachhi informed that they are not satisfied by performance of Gram Sabha. In BirpurLachhi there were more interaction of bureaucrats posted in village and Panchayats but in Hadal it was less due to no road connectivity. From both the village none had applied for RTI (Right to information) and only 5% respondent in Hadal and 7.5 in BirpurLachhi had knowledge about it. Finally after a comparative analysis, the recommendations were made to increase the political awareness among these Tribes.***
Keywords: Political Awareness, Scheduled Tribe, Gaddi, Buksa

I. INTRODUCTION

For the success of democracy in a country like India, it is very important for every voter to make proper use of their votes. A voter can make proper use of his voting rights if one is politically aware. Tribal people live their life quite away from rest of non-tribal society. In India Scheduled Tribes constitutes about 8.6% of its population, hence it becomes very important for a country like India to make her Tribal people to develop themselves.[1]

Political awareness refers to the knowledge about political phenomenon, political institution, and is an important concept in understanding political system. It is basic for efficiency of a political system.[2] When an individual is inducted to political socialization, he/she requires three types of basic orientation i.e. knowledge, value and attitude. Thus primary stage political socialization is the awareness level, which would help them to get into political culture. The following five activities form part of political participation: (1) Voting at polling time (2) Supporting possible pressure group by being member of them (3) Communicating directly with legislators (4) Participating in political party activity and thus acquiring claim over legislators (5) Engaging in habitual dissemination of political opinions through word of mouth/communication to other citizens.[3]

A. Scheduled Tribes

The term 'Scheduled Tribe' first appeared in the constitution of India. Article 366(25) defined scheduled tribes as "such tribes or tribal community or parts of or a group within such tribes or tribal community as are deemed under Article 342 to be scheduled tribe for the purpose of the constitution''. Article 342 prescribes procedure to be followed in the matter of specification of Scheduled

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Tribes.[4] As per the census of India 2011, there is about 104281034 Schedule tribe populations in India, which constitute about 8.62 % of India's total population. Out of which 5.2 crore are male and 5.1 are female.

B. Scheduled Tribes of Jammu and Kashmir

In Jammu & Kashmir there are twelve Scheduled Tribes: Balti, Beda, Boto, Changpa, Garra, Mon, Purigpa, (Brokpa, Drokpa, Dard, Shin), Gujjar, Bakarwal, Gaddi and Sippi. First eight Tribes got scheduled Tribe status in 1989. Rest four namely Gujjar, Bakarwal, Gaddi and Sippi got it in 1991 vide constitution (Scheduled Tribe) Act (Amendment) 1991.[5] According to the census of 2011, there are about 1493299 Scheduled Tribe Population in Jammu and Kashmir, which is about 11.91 % of total population of the State and about 1.43% of total Scheduled Tribe population of India. Out of the total Population of Scheduled Tribe in Jammu and Kashmir, Gujjar holds the largest share followed by Bakerwal and Gaddis. The total population of Gaddi Scheduled tribe in Jammu and Kashmir is 46489 Majority of the Tribal people belongs to nomadic and semi-nomadic community. They take no more interest in election or other process of government.

C. Scheduled Tribe of Uttrakhand

There are five Scheduled Tribes in Uttrakhand namely Tharu, Buksa, Jounsari, Bhutia and Raji. The population of Scheduled Tribe in Uttrakhand is 291903, which is about 2.3% of total population of the State. Tharus is the largest Tribe among these five having a population of 91342.[6] The Raji is smallest having a population of 690. Among these five Tribes Buksa and Raji are registered as vulnerable tribe.

1) *Gaddi:* The 'Gaddi' is a Sanskrit word which means 'Seat'. During the region of Mughal king Aurengzeb, some Hindu nomadic people fled from his region to avoid his cruel policy against Hindu and got settled in a hilly place known as Brahmaur in Dhouladhar region of Himachal Pradesh. They established a kingdom i.e. Gaddi (seat of king). All the people falling under its sovereignty were know by the name 'Gaddi'. As this Tribe is a semi-nomadic they used to graze their folks in hill area during summer and in plans during winter.[7] Gaddi settlements are found scattered in the mountainous regions of Jammu and Himachal Pradesh. Though a major concentration of the Gaddis is in the Brahmaur area of Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh and is generally referred to as Gaddis of Himachal. According to the census of 2011 there are 178130 Gaddi Schedule Tribe people in Himachal Pradesh. In Jammu and Kashmir they are found in Doda, Udhumpur, Ramban, and Kathua districts of Jammu Division. According to the census of India 2011 in Jammu and Kashmir the population of Gaddi Scheduled Tribe is 46489. This tribe was notified as Scheduled tribes vide the constitution (Scheduled Tribe) Order (Amendment) Act, 1991 in Jammu and Kashmir.[8]
2) *Buksa:* In tradition of the states, they acquired the name on account of the fact of their appearance which is unkempt, and their neighbors gave the name boksa which means a mountain goat in the local Pahari dialect. The etymology of the term 'Buksa' leads to a number of stories as to prove the exactness of the appellation used for this tribal community. As for example some Buksas of Bijnor area are of the opinion that their ancestors had long beard quite resembling the Bok (a he-goat) found in the adjoining hill provinces of their settlement and thus called Boksas, boxas and Buksa. Some aged 'Buksa' of Udham. Singh. Nagar district are of the opinion that 'Buksa' is a corrupted term of SarvaBakshi mean *Bhakosanawala* means 'omnivorous'. It is said that at the earlier stage of their settlement in Tarai, they used to devour everything as to keep their body and soul together and thus called Bhaksi which gradually converted into Buksa.[9]

II. AREA OF STUDY

A. Jammu and Kashmir

It is located between 320.15' and 370.05' North latitude and 720.35' East and 830.20' East longitude. It is about 640 km in length from north to south and 480 km from east to west. Its total area is 2,22,236 Sq. km including 78,114 Sq. km illegally occupied by Pakistan and 37555 Sq. km by China.[10] The Jammu and Kashmir state is the northern most state of the union of India. Tibet is in its east. Afghanistan and China are in its North. Punjab and Himachal Pradesh are in its south. Pakistan is in its west. This state is 6th largest state of India in terms of its area and 17th in terms of its population. The height of state varies from 1000 ft. to 28500 ft. about sea level.

B. Uttrakhand

It is located between $30^{o}.33^{'}$ N and $78^{o}.06^{'}$ E. On 9 November 2000, Uttrakhand became the 27^{th} state of Republic of India by bifurcation of erstwhile state of Utter Pradesh. It is the 18^{th} biggest state of in India. It borders Tibet to the North, Nepal to the East,

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the plains of Uttar Pradesh to the west and Himachal Pradesh to the North-West.[11]Its total area is 53.483 sq. km having a population of 10,086292 persons. It has unicameral state assembly having 71 seats. It has 3 seats in RajyaSabha and five seats in LokSabha.

S.No.	State	Population	R. S. Seats	L. S. Seats	Literacy	Sex Ratio
1	Jammu & Kashmir	12541302	4	6	67.16	889
2	Uttrakhand	10,086292	3	5	78.82	963

Source: Census of India, 2011

C. BirpurLacchi

It is a village located in Ramnagar Tehsil of District Nainital, Uttrakhand. According to Census of India its population is 348. Out of which 166 are male and 182 are female. It holds a literacy rate of 50. It is about 20 Km away from Ramnagar and 86 Km from Nainital district.

1) *Hadal:* Village Hadal is located about 47 Km from district Doda and 11 km from tehsil Bhaderwah of Jammu and Kashmir. It is located on a hill location, having no road connectivity. According to census of India 2011 the population of village Hadal is 393 out which 177 are males and 186 are females. It holds literacy rate of 51.79.

Table 1 : Showing data from study area.

S.No.	Village	Population			House Hold	Sex Ratio	Literacy
		Total	Tribe	% Tribe			
1	Hadal	363	363	100	62	1050	51.69
2	BirpurLacchi	348	281	80	67	1090	50

Source: Census of India, 2011.

D. Objectives

1) To know about political awareness among Buksa Scheduled Tribe of Uttrakhand
2) To know about political awareness among Gaddi Scheduled Tribe of Jammu and Kashmir.
3) To compare the political awareness level between these two Tribes.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is mainly based on primary data collected by interview scheduled. Two villages were selected for study by sampling method. Sampling was done at three stages. First, District Doda from Jammu and Kashmir and Nanital District from Uttrakhand were selected by Simple Random sampling method i.e. lottery method. At the village level again sampling method was applied. In Nainital District, there are two villages i.e. BirpurTarra and BirpurLachhi having 100% Buksa population. BirpurLachhi was selected by lotery method. In Doda, there are ten villages having 100% Gaddi Scheduled Tribe population i.e. Bharei, Hadal, Buttla, Kansar, Manthla, Dhamunda, Nashkri, Banjla, Dhalla and Batei. 'Hadal' was selected from these villages by simple random sampling i.e. lottery method. Now the sample for interview schedule were selected by cluster random sampling. The whole village was divided into four cluster and samples were taken selecting two household from each cluster of village by simple random sampling. Moreover the samples were balanced by 50% male and 50% female respondents. By this process forty samples were taken from village of Jammu and Kashmir and forty from village of Uttrakhand. So the total samples in the whole study becomes eighty.

IV. DISCUSSION & FINDINGS

Till now various strategies have been made for upliftment of tribes. Indian constitution provides legal equality for men and women but in reality social and economic equality is yet to be achieved. Tribes in India still continue to be discriminated and their current status still causes concern.. Since independence, a great variety of researches have been undertaken on various issues related to tribes. In order to find out the path towards developing them such kind of studies may be considered essential. The present study is conducted to know whether the tribes of our society are aware of their political rights, political representatives, bureaucrats etc. The respondents were asked several questions in order to gauge their political awareness among them weather they are aware on their voting rights, their general knowledge on the name of their constituency representatives member of their own constituency. Education has a direct effect on the political awareness of the respondents. Educated people are more aware as compared to illiterate people.[12]

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Table 1: showing distribution of respondents by education

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Education	Illiterate	25	62.5
	Pre-primary	5	12.5
	Primary	5	12.5
	High School	3	7.5
	Higher Secondary	2	5
	College	0	0
Total		40	100

Source: Field survey from village Hadal , March 2017.

The above table 1 reveals that in Hadal illiterate people holds the top position i.e. 62.5 followed by pre-primary a primary each 12.5. There is none of student having college education. Even only 7.5 % were having high school education followed by 5 % by higher secondary level.

Table 2: Showing distribution of respondents by education

Variable	Education	Frequency	Percentage
Education	Illiterate	20	50
	Pre-primary	4	12.5
	Primary	8	20
	High School	4	12.5
	Higher Secondary	3	7.5
	College	1	2.5
Total		40	100

Source: Field survey from BirpurLachhi (Uttarakhand), May 2017

The above table 2 reveals that in village Birpur Tara majority of the respondents are illiterate people holds the top position i.e. 50 % followed by primary i.e. 20 %. Both pre-primary and High School hold 12.5 %. There is only one student having joined college i.e. 2.5 %. Even only 12.5 % were having High School education followed by 5 % by higher secondary level.

From the empirical observation during survey it was found that women in BirpurLacchi hold more freedom in domestic affairs then women in Hadal. In Hadal 30% respondents were able to identify their MLA none of women was able to answer the name of their MLA. On the other hand in BirpurLachhi 50% respondents were able to answer the name their MLA including two women. In Hadal 30% respondents had the awareness about the ruling govt. in the state where as in BirpurLachhi 50% respondents had the awareness about the ruling party in state.

Both the villages had good awareness about party ruling at center i.e. 62.5% at Hadal and 60% at BirpurLachhi. In Hadal 80% were able to know there Gram Pradhan i.e. HalqaSarpanvh and in BirpurLachhi only 76 %. In BirpurLachhi 10% respondents were able to answer the name of president of India where as in Hadal only 7.5%. In Hadal 12.5% respondents were able to answer the minimum required age for voting in India where as in BirpurLachhi it was 20%. In Hadal only 25% respondents were able to understand language other than Gaddi dialect where as in BirpurLachhi 60% were able to know other language than Buksa dialect. In Hadal 20% people answered right about the party from which their MP belongs where as in BirpulLachhi it was 40%. In Hadal there 20% respondent had Television in their homes where as in BirpurLachhi it was 50%. In Hadal there were more radio users i.e. 40% where as in BirpurLachhi there are 10%. Hadal has no road connectivity. Road is 5 Km away from village and BirpurLachhi has road connectivity to all its Villagers. In Hadal MLA visited only once in last four years but in BirpurLachhi MLA visited three times in four year. 80% respondents in Hadal and 85% respondents in BirpurLachhi informed that they are not satisfied by performance of Gram Sabha.

In BirpurLachhi there were more interaction of Bureaucrats posted in village and Panchayats but in Hadal it was less due to no road connectivity. From both the village none had applied for RTI (Right to information) and only 5% respondent in Hadal and 7.5 in BirpurLachhi had knowledge about it.

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V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

From the above findings it is clear that BirpurLachhi is more aware as compared to Hadal. This is due to various factors such as Hadal is located on a high elevation as compared to the BirpurLachhi, Hadal is not much connected with the non-tribal society as well as with road, as BirpurLachhi. Hadal has less sources of awareness as compared to BirpurLachhi. Hadal is a disturbed village with the Terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir where as BirpurLachhi is free from such disturbance. BirpurLachhi is more connected with non-tribal society by their understanding of languages other than *Buksa* dialect but Hadal is facing this problem as majority of respondent don not know languages other than *Gaddi* dialect. On the other hand BirpurLachhi has low literacy rate i.e. 50 as compared to Hadal which holds 51.79. It is too notable that Hadal has very less interaction with the representatives as well as posted bureaucrats where as BirpurLachhi has more which is perhaps too responsible for its high awareness.

A. It is suggested that,

Since as the condition of India is at present, it is not easy to implement the documented plan of a tribal village but still some of the suggestions were provided as below for increasing Political awareness among these Tribal villages.

1) Make road connectivity available to Hadal village as provided for BirpurLachhi.
2) Install bio-metric for attendance of the government servants posted in Hadal.
3) Arrange a hostel facility with teacher for BirpurLachhi and Hadal, so that the students can study together at night.
4) More houses should be constructed at both villages under schemes such as PradhanMantriAwas Yojna etc.
5) Arrange more awareness programs in these tribal villages by Gram Sabha and the NGO working in these tribal villages to make them more aware about govt. and its various schemes.
6) Provide self employment opportunities to both villages such as micro handloom industries in Hadal an, dairy farming etc. in BirpurLachhi by govt. agencies such as SC/ST Development corporations etc.

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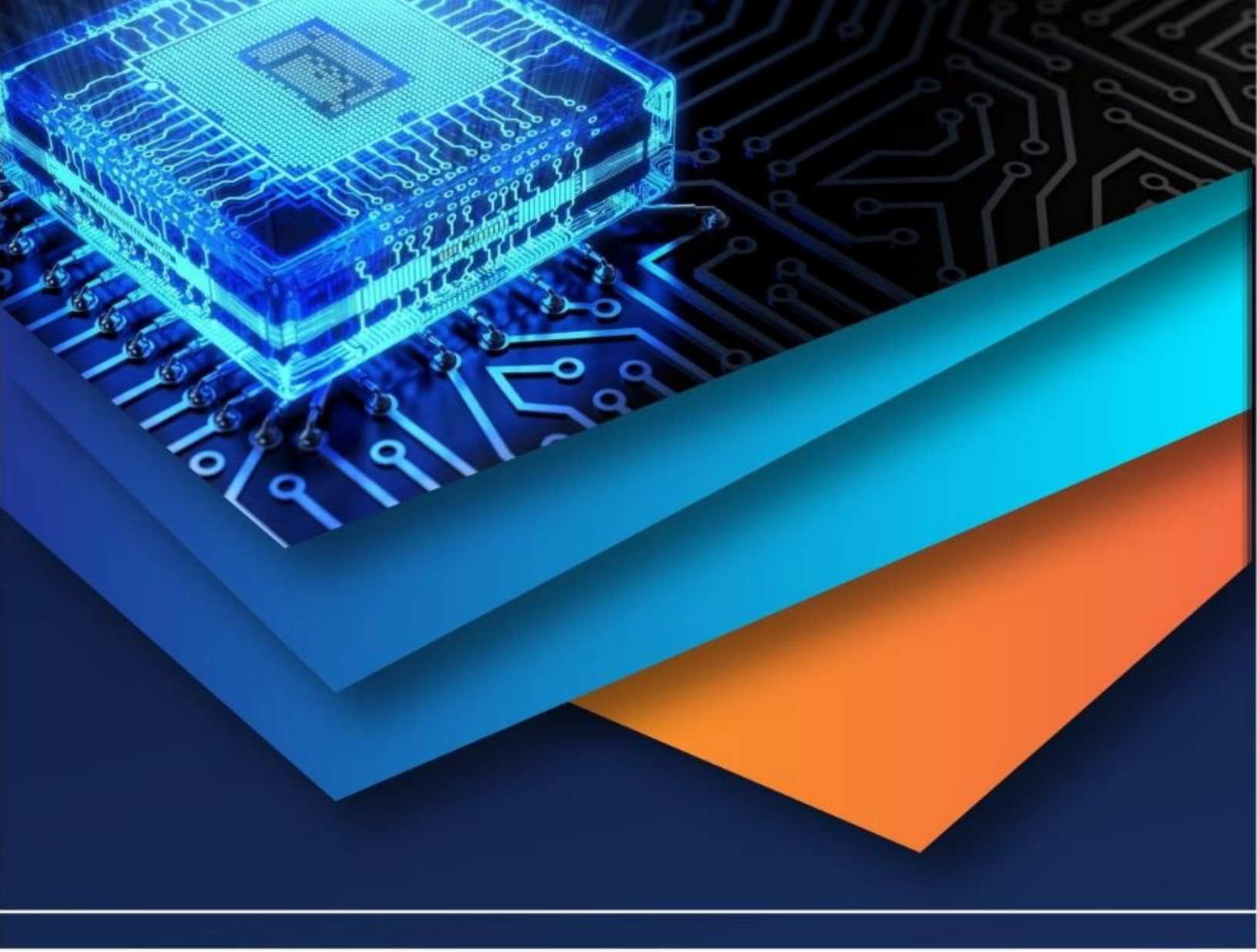

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