

Transforming Tribal Identity: A case study of Kinnaura tribe in Himachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

A "tribe" is a congregation of people inhabited in a specific region for generations. Tribes are social structures composed of various groups such as villages or lineages that typically share a unified territory, language, culture, political system, customary laws and traditional forms of education. Tribe's living in forest areas and other remote places have their own culture, customs, practices and religion. These tribal societies have been unaffected by the sources of change. Kinnaura tribal communities are identified as indigenous groups. The Kinnaura tribal communities are most marginalized and vulnerable community enduring profound socio-economic hardships and systemic exclusion. No significant transformation has been taken place in socio-economic and political sphere among the Kinnaura tribal communities. The research paper will be helpful to understand the nature of the changes that have occurred the factors influencing these changes and ultimately the pace and direction of these transformations. The Kinnaura tribal community of Himachal Pradesh is known for its rich cultural heritage and indigenous practices is experiencing cultural transformation due to increased interactions with non-tribal societies and the impact of globalization. Their unique social, cultural, and economic characteristics distinguish them from other segments of society. Purposive sampling is used to collect the desired information in the present study. The primary data is gathered by using interview, case study, focus group discussion and observation method, which seek both qualitative and quantitative information. The study will highlight the delicate balance between preserving cultural identity and embracing modernity.

Keywords: Tribal Identity, Rituals, Transformation, Migration, Modernity, Globalization

Introduction

The term 'tribe' is not clearly defined in the Indian constitution. The tribal people have a distinct identity in terms of culture, language, religious beliefs, customs and socio-political administrative machinery (Somasekhar, 2008). The term 'tribe' here means a group of people that have lived at a particular place from time immemorial. Anthropologically the tribe is a system of social organisation which includes several local groups- village, districts on lineage and normally includes a common territory, a common name, political system, simple economy, religion and belief, primitive law and own education system (Panday, 2015).

There are many tribal communities in our country who have maintained their primitive culture so far. Due to staying away from the mainstream of the society they remained socially and economically backward compared to the rest of the population. They have maintained their social customs and rituals, which separates them from the rest of the country. In spite of poverty and backwardness they have maintained their pride and their life is colourful. Their problems vary from tribe to tribe and region to region. Similarly the pace of development among different tribes is not the same in different areas. However the roots of tribal development lie in the Indian constitution itself. Article 46 which is known as the Directive Principles of state policy states that the state shall work to promote the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections and in particular the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Article 244 empowers the President of India to declare areas as a Scheduled or tribal areas under the Fifth schedule and the Sixth schedule separately. Article 339 (2) provides that the executive powers of the union extend to giving directions to the state with respect to the formulation and execution of schemes for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in the state. Article 275 provides financial assistance to the states for implementing schemes for the development of the scheduled tribes and extends the scope of the administration of Scheduled Areas (Das, 1993). The process of tribal

empowerment in India was initiated in 1993 through the landmark 73rd Constitutional Amendment. The reason for this amendment was the need to adapt to the largely ineffective Panchayati Raj system and the tribal system of local self-governance in the country. Thus the provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas Act) 1996 (PESA) were enacted into law and states with Fifth schedule areas were required to enact conforming legislation within a year. The distinctive feature of these legal instruments is recognition of the traditional structure of self-governance in tribal areas and transforming them into units of local-governance, especially through the Gram Sabha. State legislation on Panchayats should be consistent with customary laws, social and religious practices and traditional management practices of community resources and dispute resolution. As far as tribal self-governance is concerned, many state laws, especially in Jharkhand are not in accordance with the central PESA Act. A study conducted in the states of Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan revealed that most people are not aware of the powers and functions of the Gram Sabha and its place in the new Panchayat elections in the Fifth schedule areas where traditional system of self-governance prevails. It is also necessary to have proper coordination between officials and non-officials in the internal structure of the new Panchayat system. The Gram Sabha has control over the forest and other resources in the area. It organizes its own welfare and development programmes and generates funds for various schemes. Scheduled tribes are those, which are notified as such by the President of India under Article-342 of the constitution. The first notification was issued in 1950. The President considers characteristics like the tribes primitive traits, distinctive culture, shyness with the public at large, geographical isolation and social and economic backwardness before notifying them as a Scheduled Tribes. The constitution through several Articles has provided for the socio-economic development and empowerment of Scheduled Tribes (Ravi, 2015). Through many articles, the constitution has provided for socio-economic development and empowerment of Scheduled Tribes. The second administrative reforms commission also effectively implemented PESA 1996. The Ministry of rural development is the nodal agency for overseeing the implementation of the rural development programme. The Ministry of tribal affairs, formed in 1999, has not yet been entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of PESA (Rao, 2018).

There are four major tribes in Himachal Pradesh i. e. Gujjars, Gaddis, Pangwal and Kinnaura tribe. The present study is confined to Kinnaura tribe who resides in Kinnaura district of Himachal Pradesh.

Identity of Kinnaura Tribe

Identity revolves around two important theories: liberal theory and communitarian theory. Liberal theory gives importance to self for identity while communitarian theory believes that community is the source of a person's identity. Communitarian's gives importance to community life, traditions and culture and say that it is necessary to keep in mind the life, traditions and culture of the community while making state policies. Along with his identity, a person is also particularly influenced by the culture, traditions, music, language, lifestyle etc. on the community. The tribal community is also based on the culture, traditions, lifestyle etc. of their community. Culture is one of the most important factors which play a vital role in maintaining the identity of any member of water, forest and land. It is not just a matter of culture, but water, forest and land are the most important part of their life cycle. Land, forest and water are not only the source of their identity but also the social and economic source of their livelihood (Sahoo, 2024). In legends and mythology, Kinners are considered to be a special race between humans and gods. Many writers on Indian art, mythology, culture and history have described them as wonderful creatures, half-human and half-bird. These people are called Kimpurusha, which means 'what kind of' (Kim) human (narapurusha). They are described in the epics as a heavenly musician and a divine singer. And there is ample evidence of this that the races of Kinners and Kirats were exists. It is also an established fact that both these races lived contemporaneously in the region of the high Himalayan Mountains. Over time, due to changes and upheavals from the surrounding region, were gradually pushed to the higher hills and almost became extinct from there, i.e. they got assimilation with the invaders. beyond recognition. This invasion took place in two phases, one by the Vedic Aryans moving upwards from the plains and the other by the Khashas (Gazetteer, 1971).

In recent times modernity has sympathetically awakened tribal consciousness. The increasingly available facilities are encouraging educated and aware tribal groups to find their identity among the majority in Indian society. In this study an attempt has been made to highlight the aspects of changing socio-cultural landscape in tribal societies and the perceptions about such changes among populations. Indian tribal communities have largely remained away from mainstream Indian identity politics. Tribal ethnic identity in modern India remained continuously backward until the

20th century. Tribes and tribal societies in contemporary India are witnessing a paradigm shift due to their increasing presence in the development sector and the associated to widespread changes in their socio-cultural and lifestyle (Acharya and Kshatriya, 2014).

Objectives

- To analyse the social, economic, political, and cultural factors deriving the transformation of tribal identity in Kinnaur district and to identify the challenges faced by the tribal community in preserving their distinct identity.
- To evaluate the effects of modernization, globalization and environmental changes on the tribal identity of the Kinnaur community.

Methodology

Purposive sampling is used to collect the desired information in the present study. The study is undertaken in Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh, which is one of the tribal districts of the state and is universe of the study. The study area includes- Kalpa, Pooh and Nichar blocks. Three panchayats were selected from each block randomly. From each panchayat, 10 respondents have been selected. In total 90 respondents have been chosen. In order to ensure the participation of females, there have been 50 percent female respondents. Equal participation of Scheduled Castes people are also ensured from each panchayat. The primary data is gathered by using interview, case study, focus group discussion and observation method, which seek both qualitative and quantitative information. Both open ended and close ended questionnaire is used for data collection. Secondary data is collected from books, research paper; gazetteer and through sources.

Demographic Profile of Kinnaura Tribe:

Entire population of Kinnaur districts lives in rural areas. Demographic profile of district Kinnaur is presented in table 1. According to the 2011 Census, Kinnaur had a population of 84,121 of which there were 46,249 male and 37,872 female, while according to the 2001 Census, Kinnaur had a population of 78,334 of which there were 42,173 males were and remaining 36,161 were females.

Table 1 Population and Literacy Rate of District Kinnaur

Population	2001 Census	2011 Census
Male	42,173	46,249
Female	36,161	37,872
Sex Ratio	857 (No. of females per 1000 males)	819 (No. of females per 1000 males)
Literacy Rate	2001 Census	2011 Census
Average Literacy	75.20	80.00
Male Literacy	84.30	87.27
Female Literacy	64.40	70.96

Source: Census of India

According to the 2011 Census, the average literacy rate of Kinnaur was 80.00 as compared to 75.20 of 2001 Census. While analyzing the status, gender wise, male and female literacy were 87.27 percent and 70.96 percent respectively. For the 2001 census, same figures stood at 84.30 percent and 64.40 percent. Thus, the male and female literacy rate has improved in the last decade. As far as the Sex Ratio is concerned, it stood at 819 per 1000 males in the year 2011 as compared to 857 figure of 2001 Census. Total geographical area of the district is 6401 sq. kms. The forest area in the district is 5,75,42,211 Hect. The geographical details of the district are presented in table 2. There are three Development Blocks in the district- Pooh, Kalpa and Nichar, five tehsils namely Sangla, Pooh, Nichar, Moorang and Kalpa and one sub-tehsil, Hangrang at Yangthang. There are 73 Panchayats and 241 inhabited and 419 uninhabited villages in district Kinnaur. There are three panchayat samitis and one assembly area in Kinnaur district which is shown in table 2.

Table 2 Geographical Details and Administrative Setup of District Kinnaur

Geographical Area	6401 Sq. Kms.
Forest Cover	26,606.89 Hectare
Forest Area	5,75,422.11 Hectare
Administrative Setup	
Development Blocks	3 - Pooh, Kalpa, Nichar
No. of Tehsils	5 - Sangla, Pooh, Nichar, Moorang, Kalpa.
No. of Sub-tehsil	1 - Hangrang at Yangthang
Panchayats	73
Panchayat Simitis	3
Revenue Villages	660 (241 Inhabited and 419 Uninhabited)
Assembly Area	1

Source: District Statistical Office, Kinnaur

Transforming Tribal Identity: Kinnaura tribe

The tribal communities in Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh have self-identification as belonging to tribal people. The social, culture and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the communities. The tribal communities retain their own social, cultural and political institutions irrespective of their legal status. But in the present scenario transformations have been taken place which is derived from the (field survey).¹

Cultural-Political Factors deriving the Transformation of Tribal Identity in Kinnaur:

Birth

During the field survey it was found that the Kinnaura tribal communities do not traditionally follow ‘Pandit’ at the time of child birth, as there are no ‘Pandits’ in their culture and no one makes a ‘Birth Tibda’. They invite the deity (*Shu/ Dev*) if they fulfil their wish (*Mannat*) which is known as ‘*Shukudh* ceremony’ in their local dialect and on this occasion, a dance called Kongkare is performed by the Kardars of the deity while circling around the deity. However, with the passage time and increased interaction with non-tribal communities, the Kinnaura tribal people have begun adopting practices from outside their traditions. Now in the present times people are making their children’s ‘Birth Tipda’. They now perform rituals marking births and have started following customs influenced by non-tribal communities (field survey).²

Marriage

The marriage³ customs of the Kinnaura tribe are unique. From the field survey it was found that traditionally, they do not perform the ‘Saat Fera’ and don’t seek the assistance of a priest for rituals. They worship their deities during the wedding ceremony. However, in recent times due to increased interaction with non-tribal communities, they have started incorporating practices such as the haldi ritual, which was not a part of their original traditions. In earlier times, the community would come together to assist each other during weddings, fostering a sense of mutual support and brotherhood. Unfortunately, this spirit of togetherness is gradually diminishing as more people opt for hotel-based

¹ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

² Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

³ Marriage also called matrimony is culturally and often legally recognised union between peoples. For more details <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marriage>

wedding ceremonies influenced by non-tribal customs. From the field study it is concluded the Kinnaura identity is transforming with the influence of non-tribal communities (field survey).⁴

Death

From the field survey it was found that tribal communities call a Lama⁵ if a person dies, who performs prayers for the peace of the departed soul. This practice is known as 'Fova Fonning' in their local dialect. This practice is still going on till date and serves as one of the customs that distinguish tribal communities from non-tribal communities. From the above statement it is concluded that death rituals are not affected by the influence of non-tribal communities (field survey).⁶

Dress

Attire is a significant aspect of any culture. From the field survey it was found that the unique dress of the Kinnaura tribal communities distinguishes it from other communities. Women traditionally wear outfits such as Dhoru, Choli, Gachi, Topru Chadar, and Hat with green velvet (Thepang) and jewelry while men adorn themselves in traditional attire like Chhubha, Topru Chamu Sutan, and Hat with green velvet (Thepang) and coats. However, in today's era, with increased interaction with non-tribal communities, they have started adopting modern clothing styles. They have gradually moved away from their traditional attire. Now tribal communities are opting for outfits like coats, pants, ties, jeans, and casual wear. Women too have transitioned to wearing sarees, kurtas, pajamas, and jeans reflecting a major shift in their dressing preferences. A question was asked from the respondents that whether they wear the traditional dress till now. 89.15 percent of the respondents said that they wear the traditional dresses occasionally specially while entering the temple, fairs and festivals etc. While 10.85 percent of the respondents, especially elderly women of the village wear the traditional dress regularly. Even during wedding ceremonies and other cultural events traditional attire is seldom worn. From the above statement researcher concluded that the changes have also been observed in dressing styles (field survey).⁷

Language

The official language of the Kinnaura tribal society is Hindi. During the field survey it was found that most of the respondents speak in their local dialect. One of the respondent said that me with my friend always speak in Kinnauri dialect in case of any secrecy which we do not want to share with the non-tribal friends. For them it seems to be code word. This shows the unique identity of Kinnauri dialect which do not match with any other dialect. But with the passage of time new generations are not taking interest in the Kinnauri dialect due the contact with the outer world. Their approach will be limited to learn the English language and speak in English. From the above statement researcher observed that the new generation have no interest in their local dialect and is now on the verge of extinction (field survey).⁸

Effect of Reservation Policies for Women

Respondents opined that in ancient times women did not have representation in politics and their roles were largely confined to the household and domestic duties. However, today due to reservations women are actively participating in politics. In Kalpa Block of Kinnaur district out of 24 panchayats there are 13 having female Pradhan. The women are increasingly involved in politics. But it was also pointed out that they are still lagging behind in decision-making processes. In many cases, they rely on male counterparts for assistance in decision-making. From the above study

⁴ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

⁵ Lama, in Tibetan Buddhism, is a spiritual leader. For more details <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lama>

⁶ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

⁷ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

⁸ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

researcher concluded that the women are getting empowered gradually which is good indications for tribal society (field survey).⁹

Women Empowerment through Modernity

The study reveals that in ancient times tribal women did not have a prominent place in society. However, now in Kinnaur women have made significant progress in various fields. In the study area, women are now deriving vehicles, spraying and pruning in orchards tasks and plucking apples etc. that were traditionally done by men. In the past, most of the women were not sent to school and were far behind in terms of education. However, in present time women are excelling even more than men in education. Due to government schemes like MGNREGA¹⁰, women are playing a crucial role in the development of their villages and have become self-reliant. From the above statement researcher found that huge transformation has been taken place from ancient time to till date (field survey).¹¹

Empowerment through Education and Equality

In the field survey it was found that in the past, education was limited only to the wealthy or the privileged classes. However, today due to the right to equality people from all walks of life have progressed in the field of education. Today, people from tribal communities such as *Kinaura tribe Koli* and *Kinnaura tribe Lohars*, hold high positions. In addition, they are involved in various activities such as agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, handloom work, and many other fields. The researcher concluded that due to the Right to Education¹² all the communities have progressed in the field of education. In this way the transformation has been taken place in the field of education (field survey).¹³

Socio-Economic Factors Deriving the Transformation of Tribal Identity in Kinnaur:

Transformation in Housing Pattern

During the field survey it was found that 76.15 % of the respondents have RCC (Reinforced Cement Concrete) building and remaining 23.85 % of the respondents are still living in traditional Kath-Kunni¹⁴ style houses. Most of the respondents told that in ancient times houses were primarily constructed using wood, stone, and clay following the traditional Kath-Kuni style. These houses had a distinct characteristics; they maintained a comfortable temperature, staying neither too hot in summer nor too cold in winter. Moreover, they were earthquake-resistant and functioned as insulation. However, with the increased interaction with non-tribal communities, people have transitioned to using RCC (Reinforced Cement Concrete) for building houses. These modern constructions are less eco-friendly as compared to traditional designs. From the above statement researcher concluded that housing pattern has been changed from Kath-Kunni style to RCC building. This shift signifies that tribal communities are gradually losing their unique identity and moving towards urbanization (field survey).¹⁵

Change in Food consumption pattern

⁹ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

¹⁰ Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is to enhance the livelihood security of rural households across the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment. For more details: http://nrega.nic.in/MGNREGA_new/Nrega_home.aspx

¹¹ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

¹² under 86th constitutional Amendment (2002) inserted Article 21A in Indian constitution states the free and compulsory education should be provided to all children from 6 to 14 years. Follow <http://www.education.gov.in/rte>

¹³ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

¹⁴ Homes that have interlocked with wooden beams made of deodars and stone supported structure. For more details: <https://indianexpress.com/article/et-al-express-insight/the-kath-kuni-revivalist-an-architect-on-a-mission-to-restore-himachals-traditional-architecture/>

¹⁵ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

During the field survey it was found that in earlier times, people used to prepare traditional food items such as Taakoo and Kawani ka Dhu, Fafra or Ogla ka chilta and Dhu and Kanak ka Chilta. Rice consumption was minimal and Barley (*Jau*) was the staple grain. In addition, people used to make butter in a pot made of mud (*Gauraw in local dialect*), oil was extracted from traditional tools i.e. *Kaani and musal*. Traditional oil extraction involves collective efforts where neighbours help one another. Unfortunately, with the advent of machines, this sense of community and mutual support has diminished. They relied on whatever resources were locally available. But with the development of infrastructure facilities particularly the opening of NH-5 (old name NH-22) and opening of fair price shop; they connected with the outside world. Now the items like rice, flour, onions and other items are easily.

Earlier, instead of onion people used other local substitutes like Shocho (wild natural green leaves) and garlic. Wealthy individuals travel to Rampur to procure essential items. Today, traditional oils like *chuli oil* (locally made oil) have gained recognition as heritage products. However, researcher concluded that the transformation in lifestyles has led to decline in traditional practices and community bonds (field survey).¹⁶

Limited use of Natural Herbs

During field survey it was found that in ancient time people used Chharma¹⁷ (*surch* in local dialect) in their food instead of tomatoes, which worked as medicine. For stomach pain; black cumin seeds (*Kala Jeera*) and Pathish (*Medicinal herbs*) were used, for fever; Banaksa (*Medicinal herbs*) was used, for Najla; Kooth (*Medicinal herbs*) was used and for injuries or cuts; Khasbal (*Medicinal herbs*) was used. However, nowadays due to the use of medicines, the effect of natural herbs has diminished significantly. Further a question was asked from the respondent that whether they are using medicinal herbs till now. In this regard 21.5 percent respondents replied that still they are using the medicinal herbs but 78.5 percent of the respondents denied and they told that they have no more belief in the medicinal herbs. From the above statement researcher concluded those in contact with the outer world the Kinnaura tribal societies have no faith in the medicinal herbs without prescription of doctor. This shows the transformation has been taken place in great extent (field survey).¹⁸

Declining Local Interest in Pine Nut Harvesting in Kinnaur

The study reveals that Kinnaur is world famous for its pine nuts which are the famous cash crop high cost in international market. Pine nuts are usually found in the study area except Chitkul and Sangla. However, these nuts are not found in Lower Kinnaur i.e. in Nichar Block. The trees of pine nuts grow very large and climbing into it is very difficult. The respondents said that in the past few years ago people collect the pine cone very curiosity even a single pine cone could not be missed because they were very costly. But it is very difficult task for young generations. In the present scenario the young generations are not showing their interest in traditional work. Now the respondents collect the pine apple with the help of Nepali Labour. Researcher concluded that in contact with the outer world the people have changed their habit. Now they do not want to do such a hard job and not want to take the risk. But if the Neapali labour will not come to the Kinnaur district it will be difficult for them to survive (field survey).¹⁹

Evolution of Occupational Patterns in Kinnaur

During field survey it was found that in ancient times, under the monarchy, a feudal system prevailed where poor people worked in the fields of rich people to earn their living. In Kinnaur three tribal communities were prevalent and they still exist today. Among them, the Kinnaura Tribe Koli, and the Kinnaura Tribe Lohar were indigenous communities. Both the Kinner tribe Koli and Lohar were self-sufficient, engaged in various tasks and were known for their versatile talents. The Kinnara Tribe Khoshia was primarily focused on agriculture and some were engaged in high post. However, with the changes in occupational patterns today due to the freedom of choice in occupations,

¹⁶ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

¹⁷ A species of flowering plant in the family Elaeagnaceae, native to cold-temperate regions of Eurasia. For more details: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippophae_rhamnoides

¹⁸ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

¹⁹ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

individuals from any caste can adopt any profession. Traditionally, the Kinner tribe Koli had weaving businesses. But today due to high market demands and prices, people from all tribes are adopting these professions. From the above statement researcher concluded that due to the contact with the outer world the Kinnaura tribal communities has changed the occupation and the people of all castes are adopting professions according to their convenience (field survey).²⁰

Tribal Adoption of Christianity: A Shift in Beliefs

The field survey reveals that the Kinnaura tribal communities belonged to both Hindu and Buddhist. But in the study area the 4.5 percent of the respondents have started adopting Christianity²¹. They believe that they are still considered Hindu according to official documents. According to them they have not converted but they follow Christianity for personal peace and well-being. They refer to themselves as Christians. They do not receive any respect at the temples of Hindu deities in their village. Most of these people belonged to lower castes and never visit temples nor partake in offerings. Thus researcher concluded that the Kinnaura tribal communities after coming into contact with the outside world are increasingly adopting Christianity (field survey).²²

Untouchability Practices in the Kinnaura Tribal Society

Since ancient times, untouchability²³ has been a curse for every society and the tribal communities are no exception. During the field survey it was found that the Kinnaura Tribal Society is part of the Abrahamian community and untouchability has taken root here as well. A question was asked from the Kinnaura tribe Khoshia respondents about untouchability, most of the respondents said that they did not have any issues but due to religious beliefs, they had to follow such practices. Researcher concluded that that if all the deity's temple goes under the control of government then untouchability can be eradicated (field survey).²⁴

Transition from Natural Manure to Chemical Fertilizers

During the field survey all respondents replied that in ancient times, people used cow or goat dung in fields and gardens and lived a natural life and used to spray with *lassi* and cow urine (*Gau Mutra*) on plants and trees, which ensured good quality produce and kept plants disease-free. However, as tribal communities came into contact with the outer-world, they started replacing dung with urea, cane, various types of fertilizers and many types of sprays are used. From the above statement researcher concluded that the most of the people are using chemical fertilizers and chemical sprays in place of natural manure in their agricultural/ Horticultural land which are beneficial for the production of crops but harmful for health (field survey).²⁵

The Effects of Modernization, Globalization and Environmental Changes on the Tribal Identity of the Kinnaura Tribal Communities:

Impact of Globalization on Community Life and Traditional Practices

Kinnaura tribal communities have unique cultural identity. During the field survey it was found that in the past, due to limited online communication resources there was little exchange of ideas. People had a strong sense of brotherhood. They lived together and helped each other in their work which is called as 'Kawal' in their local dialect. However, with the effect of globalization the whole world has come together under one roof. Events happening abroad are now accessible to everyone and we can get this information sitting at home. Today, every member of the household has a

²⁰ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

²¹ An Abrahamian monotheistic religion. For more details:<http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity>

²² Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

²³ Untouchability is a form of social institution that legitimises and enforces practices that are discriminatory, humiliating and exploitative against people belonging to certain social groups. For more detail: <http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Untouchability>

²⁴ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

²⁵ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

mobile phone. People have no longer engaged in physical exercise and they spend all their time on their phones. The sense of brotherhood has nearly vanished and people no longer lend a hand to each other. Now, work on farms is often done through hired labour and the 'Kawal' has come to an end. In this way researcher concluded that Kinnaura tribal culture and traditional practices has been affected by the globalization (field survey).²⁶

Use of New Technology in Agriculture and Horticulture

The research survey reveals that in the past people used traditional tools for farming such as spade (*Goling* in their local dialect) digging and wooden plough (Tal, kaul, phalingoxen) were used to plough the field with help of oxen and other hand tools like farua, Bilcha and Zithrang (sickles) etc. However, today these manual methods have been replaced by machines in most of the farming activities. In old times for the packing and grading of apples were once done by hand. Now majority of people are using machines for the packing and grading of Apples. It was also found that 80 percent of the respondents were using machines for packing and grading of Apples, while 20 percent of the respondents were still doing these tasks manually. Despite the widespread use of machines 75percent of the respondents continue to use traditional tools for farming, especially in narrow fields where transporting and operating large machines can be difficult. Moreover, 95 percent of the respondents are using the power spray machine for spray in apple orchard, as it speeds up the work. They have purchased the power spray machine in subsidy. Only 5 percent of the respondents were using the mechanical spray machine because they have small horticulture land.

From the above statement researcher concluded that this shift in agricultural practices highlights the impact of modern technology in improving efficiency and work quality. Although, some traditional methods are still preferred in specific situations particularly for smaller farms (field survey).²⁷

Impact of Hydro Power Projects on Weather and Environment

Kinnaur is famous for its cold climate and good weather conditions. During the field survey people say that in the old days, rainfall and snowfall occurred in time and crops were abundant. However, with time changes in the weather have led to numerous problems. The root cause of these issues is the hydro power projects which have led to the widening of roads and the cutting of trees for their proper functioning. As a result, some areas are still experiencing landslides and the weather has also changed. Although the projects have brought benefits such as employment opportunities in villages and better transportation facilities but frequent disasters continue to occur. From the above statement researcher concluded that most of the transitions have been taken place due to the Hydropower projects and changed the lives of the Kinnaura tribal people. But it has negatively impacted on natural environment (field survey).²⁸

The Challenges Faced by the Tribal Community in Preserving their Identity:

Migration of Tribal Communities for Education and Livelihood

Due to the difficult geographical conditions, the hilly tribal communities are migrating towards the non-tribal areas. During the field survey it was found that in ancient times, people would travel to temperate areas during the winter in search of work and return to their homes in the summer. However, this system has now come to an end. Nowadays, most of the people are migrating from villages to cities for their children's education. This is because the villages lack the amenities that cities provide. However, some members of the family still manage household chores. From the above statement researcher concluded that the migrations can be stopped if all the facilities will be available in their hometown (field survey).²⁹

Inheritance of Ancestral Property

The field survey reveals that the property rights have been in practice since ancient times and still prevalent today. In ancient times, the Kinnaura tribe believed in certain customs and norms that the women cannot inherit the ancestral

²⁶ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

²⁷ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

²⁸ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

²⁹ Data collected in their own dialect and Hindi than translated into English.

property. According to this tradition, property could only be bequeathed to women by their parents through a will. Otherwise, women did not automatically receive property in their name. According to Dr. Seema Kashyap and Nawang Chhodan (2023), Most of tribal communities in India follow a patriarchal social structure. Similar to other tribal societies, these communities adhere to traditional inheritance practices where women are excluded from inheriting land. They remain governed by old patriarchal laws that restrict property inheritance to men, and the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 does not apply to them. Customary laws, such as *Wajib-ul-Arz* at the village level and *Riwaj-i-Am* at the district level, which date back to 1926, are still in force. As a result, even in the modern era, women living in the remote and challenging terrains of the Himalayan state often face hardships instead of gaining assets after the death of their parents or husbands. In response, women from various parts of Kinnaur have come together to form the *Mahila Kalyan Parishad*, under the leadership of Ms. Rattan Manjari from Ribba village, to advocate for equal rights to ancestral property (Kashyap and Chhodan, 2023, p. 163-168). From the above statement researcher concluded that in case if they had no son in their family the property will be transferred to their Biradari. Their real daughter has no right to inherit until they will bequeath the property in their name which is challenging to them for their survival (field survey).³⁰

Changing Dynamics: Education and Integration of Tribal Societies

The field survey reveals that in ancient times girls were not sent outside the home for education. However, today people are sending their children to cities for education which allows them to connect with the outside world. In the past, people preferred not to marry their children to non-tribal individuals. But today, due to the influence of non-tribal communities, the tribal society has become exposed to the outside world. As a result, there is now a mixing between tribals and non-tribals. (Field Survey)

Issues and Challenges Faced by Kinnaura Tribal Society

- Kinnaura tribal community is transforming its unique identities such as culture, rites and rituals etc with the influence of non-tribal communities.
- According to Rattan Manjari's statement in The Times of India, "*If the centre can abolish the triple talaq, why cannot this custom making women's condition like hell be abolished? I am a soldier's daughter and want to take this battle to its logical end because it is matter of women's self-esteem.*" (The Times of India, 2022). The statement shows that Kinnaura tribal women are facing the problem of inheritance of ancestral property.
- Caste system is still in vogue in the temples and Buddhist Monasteries.

Conclusion

This study has examined the changes in rituals, attire, housing, food, social structures, spiritual beliefs, birth and marriage ceremonies have adopted non-tribal elements, while death practices remain traditional. Clothing has shifted to modern styles, traditional housing is being replaced by urban RCC (Reinforcement Cement Concrete) constructions, and agricultural practices now favour chemical fertilizers and mechanization. Dietary habits and medicinal practices have transitioned towards commercial foods and modern medicine. Women have gained empowerment through education and government schemes, while occupational roles have diversified. Migration and globalization challenge agrarian roots and social cohesion. Despite advancements, untouchability persists, and environmental concerns emerge due to developmental projects.

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