



## Some Observations on Education in a Vanishing Tribe Raji

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Education is an integral part of our society. The word education is derived from the Latin verb *Educane* which means *to bring up child* and was itself formed from the verb '*Educare*' which means 'to lead'. Education is transitional in the sense that it should prepare the child to move with autonomy and self understanding into the adult years.

Mead (1931) considers "Primitive education is a process by which preliterate people induct children into the cultural tradition of the tribe." Boas (1928) devotes an entire chapter of this text to the relationship between anthropology and education. He discusses such factors as environment, sex, and ethnic differences and their influence on the cultural transmission process. Brameld (1957) brings the cultural approach of anthropology to bear on the field of education. He thus unites ideas of anthropological theory with those of psychology, sociology, history and philosophy of education. In linking anthropology and education, Bryson (1939) touches upon a number of areas- from incidental instruction to education as a complex organization of cultural behaviors.

Since the last five decades various plans and programmes, not to mention the countless academic exercises, have been at work to raise and improve the educational levels among the tribal people. Unfortunately the picture is grim as the results are far from satisfactory. It is truism that the education has an important role in social development. Thus it is assumed that the formal education would enable the tribal people to meet the present and future confrontations especially in the market and consumer cultural milieu while eventually integrating them in the national mainstream. But this could not be resulted given the unequal social conditioning.

Education among the tribal communities right from 1880 was launched to civilize the "wild tribes"-a colonial perception of the people. For the colonial government appointed the Indian Education Commission emphasizing the need to educate the tribal people. The issue of the tribal education is one of the most unresolved items in India despite all the efforts, measures and provisions since fifty years. However, this is not to deny a few changes in tribal Literacy rates. In addition not only there is a wide disparity between the tribal people and non tribal people but also among various states and among different tribal communities.

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This trend clearly signals that a uniform educational policy for all the communities cannot be formulated.

More often the assumption with regard to tribal education is to develop them enlarge their world ethos and also to enable them to face the changing social conditions. This way it is assumed that the formal education of the tribal people would eventually lead them to participate in the national stream. In other words the objectives of education are to reduce the gap between the tribal and non tribal people. (Pathy, 1996)

### **The Area**

Pithoragarh and Champawat districts are situated in the north west of Uttarakhand and forms the north eastern part of the Kumaun division. It lies between lat 29.4° N 30.3° N and long. 80° E to 81°E . On its north and east lies international border of Tibet and Nepal respectively, while on its south west touches the district Almora. It is bounded in the south by district Nainital and district Chamoli, is on its west. The total geographical area of the district is 8,856 square kms.

The Rajis inhabit nine villages of the districts Pithoragarh and Champawat namely Jamtadi, Altadi, Kuta & Chaurani, Madanpuri in tehsil Didihaat, Kimkhola, Bhaktirwa, Gangaon and Chipalthara in tehsil Dharchula, and Khirdwari in Champawat. The physical location and approaches to the field centres are either by kuchha road or pucca road. Rajis have been reported from other places also like Udham Singh Nagar and Central Himalayas but the present study was confined to Pithoragarh and Champawat districts.

### **Selection of the Field Centres**

The selection of the field centres were made on the basis of a twofold consideration. Firstly, the village to be selected must have a representative character with regard to the culture of the region for study and secondly, the village must have a suitable size and setting. I have divided the field centres into two areas interior area and the outer area. It is the interior area which possesses more of the typical culture of the area. Whereas the condition of the outer area, which is comparatively open to the outsiders may not give a good insight into the people understanding of the way of life of the people. My primary attention, therefore, was focussed on the interior area to know the traditional pattern of the culture and secondly attention was on the outer area to know the changes occurred in the lifestyle of the tribals.

The interior area includes Gangaon, Bhaktirwa of Dharchula Tehsil, Kuta & Chaurani, Madanpuri and Altadi of Didihaat tehsil whereas outer area includes Kimkhola and Chipalthara of Dharchula tehsil and Jamtadi of Didihaat tehsil respectively. In the interior areas, local differences are so great and they vary so much from tehsil to tehsil in context of some of the cultural traits that it was not advisable to depend on single centre for my study. However, frequent visits to the areas were made which includes Kimkhola, Chipalthara of the outer areas and Altadi, Kuta and Chaurani, Madanpuri and Gangaon of the interior area. Other remaining villages were visited and they served the purpose equally but the easy rapport we could establish in these villages and rich data made us finally select them. (Pandey, Keya 2007)

### **The village site**

Village settlements are to be found in comparatively open parts of a slope half way up the hill, with greater or lesser number of terraced plots for cultivation on one or more side, above and below, though most of the fields are often situated near away from human habitation. The topography of the Raji region is such that all the huts in a village are never situated at the same level. The difference in elevation between the clusters of houses may vary greatly. The village Gangaon & Kuta Chaurani is on the peak of the hills may represent an extreme case of ruggedness. The huts in the villages are not aligned. They are scattered in a small area of uneven terraced lands. The densest village is kimkhola and due to the limited

space to one hut they have generally untidy and clumsy appearance. Rajis prefer to live aloof from the outsiders and reside in dense forest with the help of which one cannot negotiate their villages. Small cultivable lands are all around their huts.

### **Tribe under study**

There were five scheduled tribes in the state of U.P. namely- Bhoksa, Bhotia, Jaunsari, Raji and Tharu. Raji is one of the five scheduled tribes who were declared for the first time in June 1967 vide scheduled caste and scheduled tribe list modification 1967 along with Tharu, Bhoksa, Jaunsari, Bhotia in U.P. in which Raji was declared the primitive tribal group (PTG) by Govt. of India in 1975. Before 1967 there was no recognised scheduled tribe in this state. Presently the tribe under study falls under the state jurisdiction of Uttarakhand.

### **Historical background of Rajis**

The Raji tribals dispersed over the Pithoragarh and Nepal are not of equal status. The Rajis of Nepal and the Rajis of India intermarry but the Rajis of India consider themselves to be of higher racial group. Raji is a little known tribal community which was brought into light for the first time in 1823 by the then Commissioner of Kumaun C.W. Trail. It is said that Rajis or Banrawats are descendents of the prehistoric kiratas, who were comparatively early settlers of the region then the Nagas and the Khasas.

Atkinson stated that these early tribes entered India by the same route as the Aryans and the Kiratas who were the first to arrive than the others. In course of time Kiratas were gradually uprooted from the region by the dominating impact of other ethnic groups but their few descendents remained in Kumaun and Nepal. In Kumaun they were called Rajis but they are not aware of their prehistoric Kirat origin.

The legend current among them is that they were descendents of the royal family of Askot. Until recently they lived a life typical of neolithic age, as cave dwellers and food gatherers subsisting on hunting, fishing and jungle produce. Still they cannot be considered as aboriginals as they had not inhabited the region from the beginning. Regarding the origin of Raji tribe there are many reasons which are told by Raji informants. However, according to W. Crooke- *"The Rajis have been identified with Raja Kiratas, who in early Sanskrit literature are joined with Sakas and Savaras as Dasyu and are placed by the Varaha Sarnhita between Amarwana and China or between Jageswar and Tibet and a title will mean either" the princely Kiratas or the "Kiratas of Ragya"*. Crooke further stated that the Rajis represent themselves as descendents of one of the aboriginal princes of Kumaun who with his family fled to the jungles to escape the destruction threatened by an usurper under the pretention of royal origin, the Rawats or Rajis abstain from offering to any individual whatever his rank, the usual eastern salutation. Further on the basis of fresh inquiry based on the notes of Bhawani Singh, teacher of Devaliakote School in the Almora district, Crooke mentioned that they are known by the two names Raji and Rawat. These names are used by the people themselves as well as by outsiders. They say that they are descended from the Raja of Kutpur by whom they were expelled for some fault. Since then they have been wandering about in the hills and forests, living on jungle produce. At the time of their expulsion, the Raja of Kutpur was NilKamal, but they cannot say how many years ago he lived. This Kutpur family, they say, reigned for 38 generations from Vikramaditya to Biramdeo. All the members of the tribe considered themselves equal and intermarry.

Rajis are locally known as Banawats and Rajwar and this name is used by the members of the community themselves as well as by outsiders. During the field inquiry few elderly Raji informants told about their origin that they were descendents of the king of Askot and give the following account of their origin. It is said that the king of Askot had two sons. The elder son was fond of hunting and fled into the forest. He never returned from there and practically he ruled in the forest. He being in the forest used to live on forest fruits,

roots and jungle games. The younger brother therefore, the ruler of Askot kingdom, it is alleged that the Rajis are the descendents of elder brother who called themselves *Banrawats* or *Rajis* or *Rajwars*, where as the descendents of younger brother are called *Pals*. In support of their origin from elder brother, they maintain a status of supremacy and do not offer salutation to anybody. Thus from the tradition of their origin the Rajis claimed to have a royal descent.

### Racial stock of Rajis

Mr. Traill stated that there is a total dissimilitude of language between the Rajis and Kumaunis, and that the Doms may have been descended from the Rajis - "*the former being, for the most part, extremely black, with crisp, curly hair, inclining to wool.*" This until the present inquires is the only account that has been given on any authority regarding the Rajis, yet Prof. Ritter found in it confirmation of the opinion that a Negro race may have been among the aboriginal inhabitants of the Himalayan and Kuen- Jima. There is no foundation for the statement that the Doms have curly hair inclining to wool. Out of hundreds they have come under notice, not a single one can be said to have any Negroid characteristic, though many are of an extremely dark complexion, like the other similar servile castes in the plains. (Trail, 1954) Dr. Pritchard conjectured that the Rajis would be found to resemble the other numerous aboriginal tribes found along the Himalayan border. All possessing the physical character of the Bhotiyas in general and very unlike the Doms. (Trail, 1954).

Dr. Latham too expresses his conviction that the Rajis are the equivalents to the "Chepang of Nepal" (Atkinson, 1981). Captain Strachey noticed "*nothing very remarkable about them, except an expression of alarm and stupidity in their faces, and they are perhaps darker and otherwise more like lowland Hindustanis than the average kumaun paharis*". Atkinson stated the "*in countenance race and appearance, presently they exhibit mixed physical traits of Aryans, Dravidians and Mongoloids. It appears that the intermingling of different ethnic elements for ages has caused the disappearance of their original racial features*". (Anonymous, 1981).

### Distribution of Rajis

Rajis are reported from different parts of Uttarakhand but in Pithoragarh district they have been reported from the nine villages *i.e.* Kimkhola, Ganagaon, Bhaktirwa, Chipalthara, Altadi, Jarntadi, Kuta Chaurani, Madanpuri which falls under Dharchula and Didihaat tehsil. These villages are scattered and dotted in a vast area of about 200 kms. Their habitations are generally at the altitude ranging from 2000' to 5000' above sea level. Their settlements are in accordance with hilly nature and are away from the main habitation because they prefer to live aloof from other communities.

According to the census of 1991 the population of Raji was 494 but the present situation of their population is different from the former. The present data has been collected from door to door survey in July 1997. A classified enumeration of population is not only intrinsically valuable in providing data for statistical estimations of density of population, sex rates, fertility rates and other indices, it is also essential to an understanding of social structure since the organization and functions of kingroups, associations and other social groups will be found to be related to their numerical strength and to be modified with change in that strength.

**Table 1 Showing population according to Tehsilwise, blockwise and villagewise**

SN	Name of Tehsil	of	Name of Block	Name of village	No. of households	Total Pop.
1.	Dharchula		Dharchula	Kimkhola	25	112
				Bhaktirwa	03	17

			Ganagaon	17	67
			Chipalthara	09	22
2.	Didihaat	Didihaat	Madanpuri	06	26
			Kuta & Chaurani	17	71
		Kanalichhina	Jamtadi	05	18
			Altadi	10	48
3.	Champwat (District)	Chapawat	Khirdwari	10	44
<b>Total</b>				<b>102</b>	<b>425</b>

From the above table it is evident that three villages viz. Kimkhola, Ganagaon and Kuta Chaurani have a sizeable Raji population whereas Altadi village has average size of population and the remaining four villages viz. Bhaktirwa Chipalthara, Madanpuri and Jamtadi have a very small population. The population trend shows the sizeable increase in their population during past years. The main reason of their population variation is on account of their cross country relationship as Rajis are also reported to be in good number in Nepal. The villagewise distribution of Rajis according to age and sex is furnished in following table 2-

**Table -2 showing distribution of Rajis according to their age and sex.**

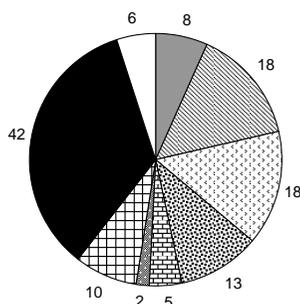
SN	Village	1-10		10-20		20-30		30-40		40-50		50-60		60 above		&Total	Total	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F			
1.	Kimkhola	27	21	12	09	07	08	07	06	04	03	03	03	00	02	60	52	112
2	Bhaktirwa	04	02	02	02	01	01	01	00	02	01	00	01	00	00	10	07	17
3	Ganagaon	10	06	07	10	07	04	03	03	04	04	02	01	03	03	36	31	67
4	Chipalthara	02	02	03	01	03	03	01	02	03	01	00	00	00	01	12	10	22
5	Chaurani	12	13	16	00	07	06	02	04	01	00	00	00	00	00	38	33	71
6	Jamtadi	01	04	01	02	02	02	00	02	02	01	00	00	01	00	07	11	18
7	Altadi	09	05	06	00	01	03	06	05	01	01	03	02	04	03	29	19	48
8	Madanpuri	07	05	03	05	01	00	00	00	02	03	00	00	00	00	13	13	26
9	Khidwari	08	05	05	06	06	06	03	02	01	01	01	00	00	00	24	20	44
Total		80	63	55	45	35	33	13	14	20	15	08	07	08	09	229	196	425
%age		18.8	14.8	12.9	10.5	8.23	7.76	5.41	5.64	4.7	3.52	1.88	1.64	1.8	2.11	53.8	46.1	100

From the table 2 it is evident that the village kimkhola has the maximum Raji population i.e. 112 whereas village like Bhaktirwa, Ganagaon, Chipalthara, Chaurani, Jamtadi, Altadi, Madanpuri and Khirdwari have 17, 67, 22, 26, 71, 18, 48 and 44 population respectively. Accordingly the percentage of males and females comes to 53.8% and 46.1% Amongst the 0-10 years age group there are 143 children out of which 80 (18.8%) are females. Amongst the age group of 10-20 years there are 100 children out of which 55(12.9%) are

males and 45 (10.5%) are females. Amongst the age group of 20-30 years there are 68 persons out of which 35(8.23%) are males and 33(7.76%) are females. Amongst 30-40 years of age group there are 47 persons out of which 23(5.41%) are males and 24(5.64%) are females. In the same way amongst 40-50 years of age group there are 35 persons out of which 20(4.71%) are males and 15(3.52%) are females. In the age group of 50-60 years there are 15 persons out of which 8 (1.88%) are males and 7(1.64%) are females. Amongst 60 and above age group there are only 17 persons out of which 8(1.88%) are males and 9(2.11%) are females. The largest number of the persons are in the age group of 0-10 years and the least number of the persons are in the age group of 50-60 years and 60 and above category of age groups. Very few people remain alive after fifty years of age. As compared to females, males have a large population among Rajis i.e. 196 females and 229 males thus we can say that the population of Rajis is decreasing as they are suffering from malnutrition.

**Table-3 showing occupation of Rajis**

S.N.	Occupation	No. of Household
1.	Chiran	08
2.	Agriculture labour	18
3.	Agriculture	18
4.	Selling of wooden implements	13
5.	Grass cutting	05
6.	Service	02
7.	Chiran and agriculture	10
8.	Chiran Grass cutting and Agriculture labour	42
9.	Rock and Mud loading and net weaving	06
<b>Total</b>		<b>102</b>



■ Chiran	■ Agriculture labour
□ Agriculture	■ Selling of wooden implements
■ Grass cutting	■ Service
■ Chiran and agriculture	■ Chiran Grass cutting and Agriculture labour
□ Rock and Mud loading and net weaving	

The above table 3 presents the distribution of Raji folks according to their occupation. Out of 102 households of Rajis 08 households practice Chiran' which is also known as wood cutting in English language. Again there are 08 households which are under the leading agriculture labourers. They have no lands of their own. They work as labour on the lands of other people. Those households which practice only agriculture are 08 in number. They are fully dependent on it. They get sufficient food to eat and sufficient food to sell for their livelihood. As I have written earlier that they are well versed in their wooden craft which is day by day deteriorating but today also there were 13 households which are still making wooden implements and selling them to fulfil their necessity 05 households were reported which were involved in grass cutting and 02 households were reported in which one member of the family is a Govt. servant respectively.

There are some household which supplement their occupation with some other work. They are 58 in number in which 10 households practice chiran and agriculture 42 households practice Chiran along with grass cutting and agriculture labour and 06 are involved in rock and mud loading and net weaving. Last category was seen in the village Bhaktirwa which falls under the tehsil Dharchula. Raji folks are hunters, food gatherers and agriculturalists.

The traditional occupation of Rajis was hunting and food gathering. They were leading a wild life depending upon the forest produce and partly to secure food grains from local villages by bartering their handmade wooden articles of domestic use. Now they are almost leading settled life and depending upon labour and partly upon agriculture with the contact of local people.

**Table 4 showing monthly income of the Raji households**

S.No	Income/Mth.	No. of households	Percentage
1.	0-500	12	11.7%
2.	500-1000	46	45.0%
3.	1000-1500	22	21.5%
4.	1500-2000	17	16.6%
5.	2000-2500	05	4.90%
<b>Total</b>		<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>

The above table shows that the income of 102 households was calculated. 12 were reported in the income group of 0-500. In the income group of 500-1000, 46 (45.0%) households were found. In the monthly income group of Rs. 1000-1500, 22 (21.5%) households were reported. Similarly in the income group of Rs. 1500-2000, only 17 (16.6%) households were reported, 5 households (4.90%) were reported in the income group of Rs. 2000-2500. Maximum number of households i.e. 46 (45%) were reported in the income group of Rs. 500-1000 and the least number of households were reported in the income group of Rs. 2000-2500 and the number of households are 5 (4.90%) respectively.

#### **Education Among Rajis**

In Raji society five years old child considered as little bit dependent child. The child starts taking milk with glass from the age of four years. Mother teaches her the habits of taking food, toilet training, respect to elders etc. The basic training is given by the mother of the child. Elder people of the family teach the child about cleanliness. Among Rajis 6 to 7 years old child do his work on his own. Elder girls of the family take care of their siblings.

Elder member of the family teaches a child about respective behaviour towards elders of the family and society. Most of the Raji people are below poverty line and this is the main cause that their children does not show any sign of cleanliness.

Informal education is the education which is given by the members of the family of a child. In which mother is the main teacher who teaches her child about language, behaviour, cleanliness, dress, toilet training, basic knowledge etc. She guides the child about right or wrong activities. Family is the unit which makes the foundation of a child future and the future of a child totally depends on his/her basic education which is imparted by his family. A Raji child is not able to enjoy his childhood cause of poverty. Raji parents are not educated so they are not aware towards their child future but all children get total training to become a social animal through the process of socialization.

#### Formal Education.

From the given table 5 it is invent that out of total population of Rajis only 104 (24.4%) are literate and 311 (75.5%) are illiterates. It shows that above 75% of the population are illiterate. Out of 104 literate no Raji was found educated above primary level except three from kimkhola . In fact Rajis do not want to send their children outside the village. If we calculate the literacy level in the above written nine villages we find that 63 males i.e. 14.8% of the total population are literate and 41 females i.e. 9.64% of the total population are literate. As compared to females the literacy level of the males is greater. In the same way 161 males are illiterate i.e. 37.8% of the total population and 160 females are illiterate i.e. 37.6% of the total population.

**Table-5 showing distribution of Rajis according to their literacy and sex.**

SN	Village	Literates			Illiterates			Total
		M	F	Total	M	F	Total	
1.	Kimbhola	24	15	39	36	37	73	112
2	Bhaktirwa	02	01	03	08	06	04	17
3	Ganagaon	12	09	21	24	22	46	67
4	Chipalthara	06	02	08	06	08	14	22
5	Chaurani	03	00	03	35	33	67	71
6	Jamtadi	01	04	05	06	07	13	18
7	Altadi	06	04	10	22	16	38	48
8	Madanpuri	00	00	00	13	13	26	26
9	Khirdwari	09	06	15	11	18	29	44
Total		63	41	104	161	160	321	425
%age		14.8	9.64	24.4	37.8	37.6	75.5	100

The following are the causes which led them towards illiteracy.

- a) There is no facility of schools or any other educational institutions in the village itself.
- b) The schools which are outside the village are quite far form their places that they avoid their wards going there especially the girls because of the forest route.

- c) The marriages of boys and girls takes places at a very early age so they enter into household activities which makes them devoid of education as they have to start with some work for their livelihood.
- d) If some person starts teaching them in their village, then also they will not take advantage of the facility because they are shy and are not open to the outsiders.
- e) They lack trained teachers as it was reported that some institutions were opened which are now closed due to the lack of trained teachers. It was evident from the fact that some persons who claim themselves to be literate don't know even how to write their names properly.

Formal education means the theoretical aspect of the education which is imparted into the children of a society in a preorganized pattern. This education is given to boys and girls in the institution, individually or collectively. These institutions vary in their nature as well as functions. For the education Rajis have schools in or near their villages. The data was collected from nine different villages of Rajis falling under Pithoragarh & Champawat region. The villages have primary schools and junior high school but only Kimkhola was reported as one of the village which has a high school and inter college but it was about 8 kms from the village. These institutions are mostly financed by the governments. This is interesting to note that in all these schools co-education prevails. According to the respondents the schools which were opened inside the village of Dharchula Tehsil were closed because the salaries of teachers were not given on time and it was not sufficient for them. The result was that they were closed and the case related to their salaries is still going in the court. It was also informed that these schools were opened by Hira Lai Vora who is a well known ex political leader. These schools are four in number. The nearest school from kimkhola is '*Ashram Padhiti Ucchatar Madhyamik Vidyalaya*' in Balwakot. This school, as the name implies has a hostel facility and the students are provided breakfast, lunch and dinner, and it includes both the boarding students and the day scholars. This school is upto 10th class. The total number of the students enrolled were 125 (including Bhotias, kumaunis and Rajis) Only seven students belong to the Raji tribe. It was reported that one student Mr. Kaman Singh, had passed his Xth class and now a days he is working as a peon in a leprosy centre at Pithoragarh. The other student, Inder Singh had passed VIIIth class and he too is working as a peon in the C.D.O. office. Gagan Singh was reported to be one and the only student after Kaman & Inder Singh who was in class IXth when the field data was collected. Other remaining students were in primary section. One more school only meant for girls was running in Gothi. This school also have boarding facility and it was known as Gothi Balika Vidyalaya Ashram Type School. But no student of Raji tribe was reported from here. The school of Balwakot about is the nearest one but still children are not permitted and allowed to joint the school, by their parents because firstly, the schools are far away from their places and secondly, hill tracks do not allow parents to send their wards alone. The school has a very small staff and they are - K. S. Kathayat, Shamim Ahmad Khan, I.D. Joshi, Asha Naviyal, Shri Shyamlal, B.K. Saraswati and Bindu Gwal. They are placed here through the placement scheme of the U.P. government. This was reported to me that since they are not the residents of Balwakot, most of the time they prefer to live with their family at their native places. They also lack trained teachers especially for the nursery classes as well as for the craft classes. Mr. K.S. Kathyat told me that they are running short of staff members and the school has not enough classes and rooms to make the students adjust. Only a big hall was there which was divided into different sections during the day time and at night they keep their trunks on their desks and after joining them, sleep on it.

The credit for initiating the process of education among the Rajis goes to a voluntary organization called '*Raji Vikas Samitee*'. This organization opened a kind of elementary educational institution called '*Bal Sanskar Kendra*' in the villages of Didihaat Tehsil between

1965-1970 (Joshi 1996). Initially cultural apprehensions inhibited the parents in sending their children to the schools. It was the first experience when the members of a N.G.O. started pursuing and convincing the parents and equally for the parents to come out of the culture shock and send their children to school. The N.G.O. was also ceased to work as they were financially weak and it resulted in closing-reopening-closing the schools in some of the villages until 1978 (Joshi 1996). In 1983, renewed efforts of another voluntary organization '*Seemant Anusuchit Jati - Janjati Sewa Sansthan*' in collaboration with U.P. Directorate of Social welfare, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh saw reopening of villages inhabited by Rajis and by 1986 there were about eight schools to serve their existing 8 villages. To motivate the parents and children, incentives like Rs. 30/- to parents mid day meals, school uniform, reading material and scholarships to children were provided (Joshi, 1996). One teacher and one attendant were attached to each school which was run in a single room building. The supervision of the functioning of the school was jointly done by the N.G.O., Department of Primary Education and *Zila Samaj Kalyan Vibhag*. For that time schools worked very well and almost all the school going children were enrolled in the school. In 1988, the NGO handed over the charge of the schools entirely to the department of social welfare and in 1989 incentives and facilities provided were withdrawn resulting in drop in attendance. This situation was aggravated by the non payment of the salaries to the teachers and the entire educational process among the Rajis was gradually getting paralyzed. (Samal, Topal & Pant 2000)

The total percentage of literates in Raji society is 24.4% and 75.5% are illiterates. Based on the total percentage of literates 14.8% males and 9.64% females were reported. If we calculate percentage of illiterates we decipher that 37.8% of males and on 37.6% of females are illiterates. But very few were found who have passed the level of primary.

But today also the level of education among these people remained confined so far to lower levels though the entire process of education started about 25 years back. This was all because of socio-cultural, ecological and economic conditions of the Raji tribe. The other point which was reported from the village was that the higher education does not exist in the nearby area and the tribe does not have a resource base that would support expenses of their children for higher education staying away from their native village. Though the effort in educating the Rajis are successful, the education has not so far been able to give expected direction to better or alternative livelihood as reflected in their occupational pattern. They are still substantially dependent on forest, wage labour, crude farming system and other unorganized section. Unlike, other neighbouring tribes, Rajis are not being able to take advantage of constitutional privileges. For example Article 16 of Indian Constitution provides for equality of opportunity in matters of public employment for all citizens irrespective of religion, race, caste, sex, residence etc. However equality of opportunity amongst unequals may in effect mean discrimination. Therefore clause (4) makes an exception and provides for reservation of appointments or posts in favour of backward classes of citizens. Specific provision has also been made under article 335 in respect of services and posts for ST's. Each and every village comprises one primary school but the desired results were not obtained.

#### **Vocational Education.**

Vocational education was also imparted on Rajis which was specially related to their wooden art and some other training programmes were imposed on them but they were not as successful as they ought to be. Employment generation programme started in the year 1982-83 which includes tailoring, collection of minor forest produces and sericulture, some co-operatives and training in wood craft were also implemented but the desired results were not obtained in the fields of tailoring, sericulture and cooperatives. But to some extent the training programmes in wood craft got popularity among the tribals. The raw materials for the wooden craft were provided to them and the new implements were launched by the

Govt. to save their wooden art from the extinction. Among these centres the 'Training and Production Centre, Jauljibi' got popularity and the maximum population of tribals were reported from this centre for getting new implements, subsidies and training. But later on in the late 1996 this centre was closed due to some irregularities in the centre. Now the Rajis are not availing this beneficiary nor the other training centre one.

#### **The attitude of parents and students towards education:-**

Most children seem to be aware of the fact that their future is marked by following the tracks of their parents, where the son grows up to be a man working in their fields earning for his survival and the girl grows up to be married. Not only this, there is a lack of awareness regarding the importance of education but also a lack of proper educational environment which urgently needs to be stressed upon.

Their parents too have different views regarding the education of their children. They don't have any clear idea about the future of their children. They say that Govt. has not gives proper help for the education. Secondly, there is no school situated inside their villages so that their wards can go and study. The schools which are quite far from their villages require full concentration on the children, as the forest hilly tracks are not safe to move alone. There are very few parents preferring to send their wards to schools. These parents mostly belong to those villages who are on lower slopes and not so far from the schools. Some parents are not well off to send their wards to schools but they want their wards to be literate. Life in Rajis is so hard, and the need of hands to cope with the voluminous work both in and outside the household so great, that even children of five or six years of age have to be actively engaged. In an agricultural cum pastoral family, both small boys and girls go to graze cattle, and goats specially in summer and rainy season, when the elders have more to do in the field. Some of the older children have to give hand in the seasons agricultural operations as well. Girls of all families and classes too are taught to become helpful in the household. Under these circumstances parents have to think twice before sending their wards to the school.

Besides, there were other reasons which contributed to the small roll and low attendance of the students in the schools. Some remarked that after education children are becoming 'useless'. They believe that after coming out of the school, the boy could do no more than what other boys of his age were doing. Obviously, the economic condition of the family has been one of the most important factors in determining the schools of children but an equally important point governing children's, education is the number of working member available in the family.

#### **Girl students**

Very few girls were found among the students in the schools. This was natural, as the people disfavoured girls education. There were many reasons for this, but the one that was most cited was that the literacy training imparted to students in schools had nothing to do with a girls or woman's traditional duty in the family and society of Rajis.

A married woman or a mistress of the house had to do all kinds of household jobs. The training and practice for these had to be given to a girl from an early age in her parental house, by her mother and other elder women. She becomes a working member of the family and a very essential helping hand, busy with all sorts of daily routine in her parental house. She could not be easily spared from the household for her education. Also it would not be advisable to let her ignore the traditional duty in order to get literacy and other knowledge which would never be of any practical use in life. Many villages argued that as they did not even educate their sons the question of educating their daughters could not arise. And in Rajis there are still more reasons for the parents to overlook the education, of their daughters, who become 'others' property and are generally married off at an early age. After a girl's

marriage, all matters concerning her future are determined by her parents -in-law, who prefers to let her be better conversant with household jobs than have school education.

#### **Factors responsible for illiteracy**

There are many factors which are responsible for the growth of illiteracy in the society and they are as following.

- a) Most of the Raji tribals are below poverty line which ceases their hands to spend money on the education of their wards.
- b) Parents are illiterate and they don't understand the importance of education therefore they don't like their children to go to schools.
- c) They are not aware of the educational programmes of the government and their benefits.
- d) They (parents) think that educating their wards is a sheer wastage of money and time both as they have to work in fields in the future.
- e) They don't have schools in their villages. For that they have to come down on the motor road which is not safe for small children after covering a long distance of forests.

#### **Governmental schemes and developmental programmes.**

The government has made various schemes to upgrade the standard of education in the Raji villages but not succeeded and achieved the desired target. Educational programmes were started in the year 1982-83. The emphasis was given on the pre primary and primary education. Besides, incentives to guardians and incentives to motivators were planned again in the year 1988-89 it was planned to open eight primary schools in different Raji locality. The same planing was done in the year 1989-90 but some amount was kept for the year 1990-91 and eight schools were opened in different Raji locality. It was reported that 156 students were enrolled in eight different schools. In 1983, renewed efforts of voluntary organization 'Seemant Anusuchit Janjati Seva Sansthan' in collaboration with U.P. Directorate of social welfare, Govt of Uttar Pradesh sawreopening of schools in villages inhabited by Rajis and by 1986 there were about 8 schools to serve then existing 8 villages. To motivate the parents and children, incentives like Rs. 30/- to parents mid day meals, school uniform, reading material and scholarships to children were provided (Joshi 1996). One teacher and one attendant were attached to each schools which was run in a small building.

The supervision of the functioning of the schools was jointly done by the NGQ. Department of Primary education and Zila Samaj Kalyan Vibhag. The schools worked very well and almost all the children of school going age in the villages enrolled in the schools. In 1988, the NGO handed over the schools entirely to department of social welfare and in 1989 incentives and facilities provided were withdrawn resulting in drop in attendances. The situation was aggravated by non payment of salaries to the teachers and the entire educational process among the Rajis was gradually paralysed.

The outcome and efforts in educating this nomadic people was commendable. This achievement was significant for a tribe which was completely nomadic about 3-4 decades back and which has less than 4.0 percent of its population literate about three decades back. But the level of education among these people remained confined so far to lower levels though the entire process of education started about 30 years back.

The major restraints in promoting the education were socio-cultural, economical, ecological, content of education, structural imbalance, supporting services, quality of personnel and administration of educational system etc. It is worth mentioning that these factors were said as constraints in tribal education by the National Committee on Development of Backward Areas in 1981 (Planning Commission, 1981) and are still seen to

some extent. For a nomadic people like Raji, who lived an isolated life for generation, it was natural to suspect the motives of the voluntary organization who initiated the process of education among them. During this preliminary stage of education, the tribe was in total turmoil as they were facing the situation of basic conceptual change in relation to property right, ownership of natural resources i.e. threat to their livelihood based on forest and were also facing the threat to their tradition and value system under the process of acculturation. It was natural that their traditional habits and values deterred the parents to send their wards to schools. It was all due to lack of awareness, non understanding of education and illiterate background of parents or guardians. During this initial phase of education i.e. in early seventies, the school going children were the first generation learners. Their parents or elders neither had any education nor did they appreciate the value of education (Joshi 1996.)

The educational system among the Rajis was an extension of the general educational system highly laden with urban orientation. Though in theory it is argued that learning in the elementary classes should be organized in the form of exploration by the child leading to its higher levels from what he had already picked up from his home, community and environment, in practice this has never followed (Planning Commission, 1981.) The contents of education among the Rajis never took into cognizance, the socio-cultural and environmental backdrop and were rather incompatible from the point of view of language, model curricula, text books etc. Education in the practised form is more or less a kind of mechanism to promote economic advantage and security attaching least or no significance to its qualitative value. The negative contributions of the present education among the Rajis have been reflected in the form that the little knowledge is dangerous. It has led to growth of unemployment and dissatisfaction among the little educated Raji youths resulting in non adherence and disregard to culture and tradition, loss of confidence in self and authority.

Like in other tribal areas of India, among Rajis provision like no fees from the students, free reading materials, scholarships to meritorious students, incentives to parents in the form of cash etc., were made available to the Rajis initially. They were withdrawn later in 1989 resulting in drop of attendance. Also there were delays in the grants and payments to the teachers, which had led them to resorts to agitations. Non payments of salaries to the teachers is still prevailing, leading to partial or complete closure of many primary schools. For example, schools in three settlements are closed while in other three settlements they are partially closed. In addition the schools are run in a single room building which accommodate classes from one to fifth. Only one teacher has to teach the entire five classes. The school also lacked minimum infrastructural provisions. The single teacher in the school, generally recruited from outside, was neither educated enough nor trained to teach the students. (Samal, Topal & Pant, 2000)

Table -3 shows that out of total population of Rajis only 104 (24.4%) are literate and 311 (75.5%) are illiterates. Out of 104 literate no Raji was found educated above primary level except three people of kimkhola village (Dharchula tehsil of Pithoragarh). This achievement was enormous for a tribe which was complete 'nomad' about 3-4 decades back and which had less than 4.0% of its population, about three decades back. The level of education among these people remained confined so far to lower levels though the entire process of education started about 30 years back. This was largely because of socio cultural, ecological and economic specificities associated with the Rajis and their habitat. Secondly, there is no facility for higher education in the tribe or nearby area. Thirdly, the tribe does not have a resource base that would support expenses of their children for higher education staying away from their native village. Thus, though the efforts in educating this nomadic people has been successful, the education has not so far been able to give expected direction to better or alternative livelihood as reflected in their occupational pattern, they are still dependent on the

forest labour and forest produce. Unlike other neighbouring tribe Rajis are not being able to take advantage of constitutional privileges.

The problem of educational development among this nomadic tribe has been very complex. The educational system among the Rajis was an extension of the general educational system highly laden with urban orientation. Though in theory it is argued that learning in the elementary classes should be organized in the form of exploration by the child leading to its higher levels from what he had already picked up from his home, community and environment, in practice this is never followed. (Planning Commission 1981) The contents of the education among the Rajis never took into cognizance the socio-cultural and environmental backdrop and were rather incompatible from the point of language, model curricula, text books etc. The content has also no relevance to the immediate environment and towards enhancing their productive sectors which are primarily the forest and the agriculture. Further the language of the textbooks was in Hindi, which is different from the vernacular language of the Rajis based on Tibeto-Burman family. A large number of children could not proceed beyond primary school. Lack of opportunity for higher education and its application in promoting the quality of life particularly from point of view of economy has made both the parents and children indifferent to even primary education. Non effective administration and organizational failure were the major factors in the defoliation of educating among the Rajis.

Before three to four decades Rajis were totally nomadic, pursuing a life of hunter gatherers taking shelter in caves or temporary huts. Their occupation and material culture are also changing. From hunter gathering stage they have now adopted agriculture but today also they are fully dependent on forest labour, wage labour, and some are still practising nomadism. Few decades back, they used to avoid going to other communities. They were of shy nature, used to hide away in forests from people of the Kumaun and the only relationship it had with the other people was through barter of wooden utensils and implements. The Rajis were famous for the unique practice of invisible trading and were known as the traders of the night. During nights they disguised themselves under barks and skins of animals and go to nearby settlements of other communities carrying wooden implements and utensils, bamboo baskets and other forest produces. They use to keep these materials at the gate of the house or at doorsteps and disappear. These articles were collected and replaced by foodgrains, salt, sugar and other essential material by the household, which were collected by the Rajis in the next night again. Also like the primitives of Africa the Rajis usually kept the forest produces as well as wooden utensils at a distance in the forest or behind the bushes. The local traders or people, acquainted with this practice, would visit the place and replace these products with articles of these peoples need i.e. cloth, foodgrains etc. which the Rajis collected afterwards. This trade of this nomadic people was completely based on mutual belief and trust. With the introduction of forest rules by the government they were forced to leave their traditional pattern of living and adopt a new one i.e. agriculture and allied sectors. With the advent of the agricultural schemes of the government tribal were allotted land for agricultural activities which resulted in their lifestyle and the community is gradually adapting to sedentary agriculture.

Rajis are good artisans and prepare variety of articles of daily and domestic use. Rajis are specially skilled in carpentry and woodwork and earn their livelihood through this occupation as such they mostly prepare agricultural articles of domestic use such as plough, wooden dish, etc. They also work as agricultural labours and as wage labourers during the construction of roads and water channels. With the low levels of training skill and technology that remained largely traditional the tribe lacks employment/occupational opportunities. A majority of the family do not possess any right on the land they cultivate. Reviewing the policies and programmes undertaken during various plans, it is concluded

that efforts so far made for social and economic development of the tribe did not bring about appreciable changes in their livelihood. The plan programs largely failed to take into account the actual needs of this tribal people that are at lowest socio-economic level of development. The major bottlenecks in the program implementation were lack of political will among the decision makers, leakage at the level of functionary, lack of inter departmental coordination and lack of trained and committed personnel. It was felt that to ensure a balanced economic development of the tribe, a different approach would be necessary in the forthcoming initiatives.

The strategy for the development of this tribe needs to be holistic so as to narrow the gap between the levels of development of the tribe and other in the region as well as to improve the quality of community building upon the inner strength of tribal people and improving their organizational capabilities.

The basic components of the strategy may include : a realization and special consideration of the peculiarities of the ecology and environment of the tribe in development policy formulations and planning process, an appreciation of the values of the tribe in the maintenance of ecological balance, apart from its economic values, preference to development programmes rely more on indigenous/ local rather than external resources, emphasis on the area specific development programmes compatible with ecological and social specificities and need for hastening the process of technological transfer. The development process needs lands of different peoples for the holistic approach. The very recently introduced Swarana Jayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojna (SGSY) will be, probably, a very successful package in the development of this tribe as it blends all the aspects described above. (Samal, Topal & Pant, 2000).

### **Conclusion**

The problem of education among this nomadic tribe has been very complex. As said earlier in the chapter that the educational system among the Rajis was an extension of the general educational system highly laden with urban orientation, and for this reason it was very difficult for the tribals to accept in full, the developmental programmes in this regard. The contents of the education among the Rajis never took into cognizance the socio-cultural and environmental backdrop and were rather incompatible from the point of language, model curricula, text books etc. The substance has also no relevance to the direct environment and towards developing their productive sectors which are primarily the forest and the agriculture. Further the language of the textbooks was in Hindi, which is different from the vernacular language of the Rajis based on Tibeto-Burman family. And for this reason large number of children could not proceed beyond primary school. Another cause is the lack of opportunity for higher education and its application in changing their quality of life more particularly from the standpoint of economy has made both the parents and children unsympathetic towards primary education. The government, local NGO's, social scientists and powerful political people have to come forward for their development in every respect in connection to the tribe. And for this we need effective administration and organizational success which are the major factors in educating the Rajis.

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