

## Jaunsari : A Study of Tribal Society

Dr. Babit Kumar Bihan

### Abstract-

Jaunsari a tribal group of Uttarakhand, inhabit the Jaunsar-bawar area of district Dehradun. Ancient time, polyandry system exist in this society. Polyandry consists of two words i.e. Poly and Androus; Poly- means many and Androus- means man. So, polyandry refers to a form of sexual union, in which a woman is married to two or more husbands at the same time and family means is a group of people living together. Therefore, R.Parkin say that," families may be polygynous or polyandrous, that is, consist of man or woman with more than one spouse and corresponding sets of children, though often each co-spense may form a separate household with his, or more often, her children. This polyandrous family exists in the Jaunsari's. It represents the geographical region inhabited by the jaunsaris, which traces its origin from the Pandavas of Mahabharata and Rajputs of Rajasthan. So, the objective of the present study –to know the Jaunsari society with the perspective of social and cultural. The data has been collected by observation, interview schedule and using secondary sources: personal and public documents etc. after analysis of the data, his findings show that, the present time, Jaunsari people is distinct from other people. The presence of polygamy and polyandry in the local traditions with richer practising polygamy, while their choose to share a wife i.e polyandry though the husband should be brothers. Rhanti and Dhanti are the main terminology but now change. Mahasu Devta fair at hanol. Education and media is the main factor for Social and Cultural change among the Jaunsari Society."

**1. Introduction - Man** is a social animal both by need, nature and necessity without society. He requires society both for his life and for the sake of good life. **Maclver (1974)** society is a system of usages and procedures of authority and mutual aid, of many grouping and divisions of controls of human behaviour and of liberties. This ever changing complex system, which we call society, is a web of social relationship." And Tribal society means –A society with the social organization of a tribe. The term tribe is derived from the Latin word 'Tribus'. Earlier Romans used this term to designate the divisions in the society. Later use suggests that it meant poor people. The present popular meaning of a 'Tribe' in India is a category of people, included in the list of the scheduled tribes.

Uttarakhand is the replace name of Uttaranchal. There are five schedule tribes in Uttarakhand as listed in Indian constitution. As follows- *Jaunsar Bawar, Tharu, Boxa, Bhotia and Raji/Banarot*. The Jaunsar-Bawar is famous for its different culture and living style. The Jaunsarie are associated with the ancient Khasas. **According to Majumdar**, among the Jaunsari a less rigid form of caste system and polyandry system existence in this society. Many eminent persons have done study on this tribe like as- R.N. Saksena, D.N. Majumdar, G.S. Bhatt etc. but till today there are some important issues which have not touched for study. So, in this reference, **this study focuses on the social and cultural life of Jaunsari society.**

### 2. Objective of the study-

**The present study focuses on the following specific questions.**

1. *What is the social background of Jaunsari Tribe?*
2. *To know the social and cultural life of Jaunsari ?*

The First issue is social background; it includes education qualification, type of family, religion, marital status and occupation of the Jaunsari tribes.

The Second issue takes into account, *To know the* social and cultural life of jaunsari such as history, marriage, religious, economy and residence etc ?

**3. Tribe :** *According to oxford Dictionary defines* tribe was a "group of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding themselves as having a common ancestor."

*According to D.N. Majumdar (1962)*, a tribe is a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name, members of which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and have developed a well assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations.

Therefore, Tribal have an important place in Indian society. Indian has the largest concentration of tribal population in Asia. Tribal people are considered to be the original inhabitants of this sub continent having a very simple way of life. But In the present time, *A Ranjan Basu (1985)* the present popular meaning of a 'Tribe' in India implies those communities or groups, which have been included in the list of scheduled tribes in the Indian constitution.

**4. Social change-** *MacIver says*, "Social change is change in social relationship." *According to Kingsley Davis*, "By social change is meant only such alterations as occur in social organisation that is the structure and function of society". Thus, social change is alteration in the social structure and social relationship in a society. So, change is natural for every society.

**5. Area of study and methodology :** **The area of present study- is Jaunsari people in** kalsi block of district Dehradun. Jaunsari a tribal group of Uttarakhand in the Jaunsar –Bawar area of district Dehradun. Jaunsar –Bawar constitutes the hilly part of the district. It lies between north latitude 30°31" and 31°3' 30" and East longitude 77°45' and 78°7'20" with an area of 343.5 square miles. I have selected Kalsi- Block of Jaunsar-Bawar region, Dehradun. Now the questions arise, **WHY?** Because considering the scientific method the Kalsi- block is very near to city area. So change will touch then first. Jaunsar-Bawar is bounded on the north an east by tehri: on the west by the hill states of Bashar, Raviengarh, Thorach jubal and Sirmor and on the south by the Doon valley. It is separated from the Sirmor state by the Ton up to its confluence with the Yamuna River near Kalsi.

**Methodology** – The objective of this research and their aspects have been studied in the Kalsi block among the Jaunsari tribe. Observation, interview schedule and by the using secondary sources: Personal and Public documents.

**6. After the classification and analysis of data**, he finds that with reference to objective to know the Social background, social and cultural life of Jaunsari family. I found that -

**6.1 History of Jaunsarie-** The Jaunsarie are associated with the ancient Khasas. The Mahabharate give a detailed account of the various gifts presented to Yudhistara by the kings of India and neighbouring states at the coronation ceremony. The Khasas and the Tangans with other are said to have brought in tribute heaps of gold measured in dronas (Jars) raised from underneath the earth by ants and therefore, they were called after these creatures, the Khasas are not mentioned in the great list of the armies which assembled on the battle field of Kurukshetra but they appear in the army of duryodhan and armed with Swords and Lances fought with stones against satyaki. Fighting with stones was well known in these hills. The Falk fare mentions such warfare and one finds relics of by gone days in stone heaps at the hill tops.

Duryodhan is worshipped by Jaunsarie even today as God Somesu whereas in other parts of Garhwal, Pandavs are worshipped in the popular tradition of Pandavvila or Pandwarta. Duryodhan is not supposed to be a good character worthy to be worshipped by Garhwalis. This current practice of worshipping Duryodhan as Somesu God, confirm the link of Khasas with Duryodhan as we gather from Mahabharata. This also helps us in associating jaunsaries with Khasas, we have survivors of inter tribal fights with stones at Chaur and silangi in Garhwal (Atkinson) the Khasas find mention in Paranic literature at the present day their descendents and the tribes who claim descent from them, occupy a much under area (Grierson, 1916) on the basis of physical features people of Jaunsar-Babar have been identified as of the Khasa stock. (Mazumdar, 1944)

It represents the geographical region inhabited by the jaunsaris, which traces its origin from the Pandavas of Mahabharata and Rajputs of Rajasthan. Describes the Khasas of Jaunsar-Bawar "Their physical features, fair complexion, tall stature, aquiline nose and well defined features of the face easily distinguish them from their neighbours, the Garhwalis" (Saksena, 1955) Such statements are based on stereotypes rather than observation. The khasas have often been referred to as a tribal people. This term has not been defined in such a way as to include satisfactory the diverse groups it excludes. Whatever their origin, the Jaunsares have been declared a Scheduled tribe in 1967 by the Government. They are supposed to be descendants of ancient khasas so much discussed in ancient Indian literature. Polyandry consists of two words i.e poly and androus: Poly means many and androus means man. So polyandry refers to form of sexual union, in which a woman is married to two or more husbands at the same time and family means is a group of people living together.

**According to R. Parkin** says that, "Families may be Polygynous or polyandrous -that is consist of a man or woman with more than one sponse and corresponding sets of children, though often each co-sponse may form a separate household with his or, more often, her children. This polyandrous family exists in the Jaunsari. But educations is the indicator and factor for social change among the Jaunsari polyandry families because education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skill and values from one generation to another. **Emile Durkheim** says that, the major function of education is the transmission of society norms and values (Bottomore, T.B.1962).

**6.2 Social life of Jaunsari-** In Indian, many tribes co-habit with their different cultural aspects. Their way of life style is different from one-another. Uttarakhand becomes the 27<sup>th</sup> state of the republic of India in November, 2000. Their are five schedule tribe in Uttarakhand. Jaunsar -Bawar, Tribal society means a society with the social organisation of tribe and Jaunsari tribal society means a society with the social organisation of a Jaunsar-Bawar tribe. It means Jaunsari, a tribal group of Uttarakhand, inhabit the Jaunsar-Bawar area of district Dehradun. They have district cultural and socio- religious traditions. Janusari commanly practice what is known as fraternal polyandry, though monogamy and polygamy are not altogether non-existent and at present time a lot have been changed. Change is natural for every society.

**6.3 Religious life-** The religious life is governed by a number of religious and ritual features. Animal sacrifice is a part of the most of the religious ceremonies. Most of the gods worshipped by these communities are of Hindu origin, though several have been metamorphosed beyond recognition. The principal deity, however, is Mahasu. Mahasu Devta is the only deity they worship and believe. Fraternal polyandry, inter-caste marriages are in practiced among them. Dhoti, Shirt and Jacket is the prominent dress of the males. Female generally wears knee length Kurta and Ghaghara. During such festivities a large quantity of home-brewed liquor and meat is consumed. They dance to the spellbinding rhythm of the martial drums. Men and women dance separately in groups.

Region is of great importance in the tribe. Religion is also important factor for change in Jaunsari

society. In Jaunsar, Mahasu and Samesu are the two major local gods. The famous Magh festival is celebrated during the serenity of winter. The Besoo fair is held during spring when hundreds of men and women decked in grey clothes dance and welcome the coming of spring. Other festivals are the Jagra, Man, Lonai, Panchon, Diwali etc. Men and women dance separately in groups.

**6.4 Marriage life-** The marriage customs of the Khasas and other members of these communities are most interesting. The marriage system is governed by a number of rules. These include bride price, marriage with no necessity for a Sanskrit marriage ceremony, Polyandry in some areas, levirate divorce by mutual consent remarriage of widows and divorcees, toleration of inter-caste marriage within the high or low caste groups. Marriage is universally Prohibited only in own and mother's clan and village exogamy is not every where the rule. The much talked and prevalent Polyandry in Jaunsar is now on decrease. Since then, many of the educated people from the area have got government jobs and now they have adopted Sanskritized lifestyle. Jaunsari people are like in mainly rural area; Mates selection decision for life Partner by the both (family decision and self-decision); In the demand of dowry, No exist in this area but some Particulars are traditions; Polyandry system in new generation is not found now a day; family change is not like but he prefers mostly joint family; education is increase in this area. Marriage is preferably to Boidedi and women empowerment in full for family decision. Cooperation among villagers is immense during marriage and whole village take responsibility of it. There are separate groups for cooking different cuisines, groups for taking care of guests, groups for serving food, water and salad etc. Each member of take full responsibility of the work assigned to him. All the kitchen utensils are provided by village panchayat free of cost. On marriage day different group of village girls are also formed to prepare chapati for feast night (Rasuware) i.e. Rasoiye as a whole. Dance and music are also an integral part of any Jaunsari marriage celebration.

Now, a days you can observe some new trends in these marriages. DJs and modern music systems are gradually replacing our traditional instrument and music. When I asked , where the groom is she did not say anything but laughed.

Someone it may not fit in the contemporary scenario yet it has many positive sides, it gives a glimpse of the rich culture tradition evolved and preserved by our ancestors. There is no such thing as a perfect culture or society because different people have different values at different times. Age old well established norms and traditions of the Jaunsaris are now gradually changing and Sanskritisation is taking place. The tribal system is facing challenge in the light of modernization, media, development and evolution of new values and lifestyle, gradually. (*Gazetteer of the Himalayan district of the north-western provinces, Part II, p. 360-66*)

**6.5 Economy-** Economy is based on agriculture with primary dependence on millets, wheat, and barley. Animal husbandry and artifacts also provide livelihood to some of the people. Recently, those who are in government jobs do also send money orders from outside to support their families. Therefore, money order economy is in the process of evolution. Agriculture is the Primary Source (more than 90%) of their livelihood. Animal grazing and rearing of cattle and sheep accompanied by trans-humane are secondary occupations. Female constitute the main labour force. They generally follow three main types of farming – on upland slopes on valleys and intermittent cultivation. The main crops are raised are rice, wheat, maize, Mandau and barley. Most fields depend on rainfall for water. Sheep and goats provide them milk and meat.

**6.6 Residence-** The jaunsari Residence/Home enjoys the reputation of sinking all his fortune in the construction of his house and in the ornaments. The houses are substantial structures, consisting of two to three storeys. Multi stores structured wooden houses of Jaunsarie people is a attraction and fine example of craftsmanship. Ground floor may be built of wooden or stones but the upper storeys

are made of deodar wooden only with sloping roofs at the top. Differently decorated main entrance door of wooden is another specificity of their homes. They generally place sheep and horse heads carved out of wooden at the centre top and both sides of their main entrance door. (*Gazetteer of the Himalayan district of the north-western provinces, Part II, p. 360-66*) **but now some impact of technology on house.**

**7. Result- In sum,** socio-economic background of Jaunsari people are mainly belongs to up to 30 years, upper class, graduate & post-graduate, joint family, agriculture work, male and Hindu religion in this area.

The facts shows that, the majority of the reference of second objective are, The Jaunsarie are associated with the ancient Khasas. Mahasu. Mahasu Devta is the only deity they worship and believe. Economy is based on agriculture with primary dependence on millets, wheat, and barley. Recently, those who are in government jobs do also send money orders from outside to support their families. Multi stores structured wooden houses of Jaunsarie people is a attraction and fine example of craftsmanship. Polyandrous system is famous in ancient time is decaling now a days among the janusari, mainly, changes seen in rural to urban, Mates selection self with family decision selection, Polyandry system dislike, prefer to joint family, increase in education, Boidedi marriage prefer, increase of family decision, region behind for change is education, media and urbanization. Therefore, the facts, I concluded, polyandrous system according to R.N. Saxena & Y.S. Parmer is not found, now a day in new generation of Jaunsari tribe. This is a new facts and best topic to write something about. This change has come due to education, urbanization, means of commutation and media. This place is considered best for research work in sociology because its deals with a progressive change in polyandrous family among the Jaunsari tribes.

**Assistant Professor (Sociology), Govt. Degree College,  
Lakholi (Rudraprayag), Uttarakhand**

#### References-

- Ambashta, N.K. 1970. *A Critical Study of Tribal Educations*. Delhi: S. Chand & Co. Bottomore, T.B. 1962. *Sociology: A Guide to problems and literature*. Bombay: George Allen of University.
- Gardon, M. 1998. *A Dictionary of Sociology*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Haralmbos, M. 1998. *Sociology: Themes and Perspective*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Hobhouse, L.T. 1924. *Social Development*. London: George Allen and Unwin
- Maciver, R.M. and Page, C.H. 1974. *Society: An introduction analysis*. London: The MacMillian Press Ltd.
- Majumdar, D.N. 1962. *Himalayan Polyandry: Structure, Functioning and Culture Change, A field study of Jaunsar-Bawar*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House
- Mendlbom, D.G. 1972. *Society in India*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Pathak, Bindeshwar, 1998. *Continuity and change in Indian society*. Jaipur and New Delhi: concept Publishing Company
- Parmar, Y.S. 1975: *Polyandary in the Himalayas*, Delhi: Vikas Publishing House
- Saksena, R.N. 1962. *Social Economy of a Polyandrous people*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House
- Sharma, S.L. 1986. *Development Socio-Cultural Dimensions*. Delhi: Rawat Publication.
- Singhi, N.K. 1979. *Education and social change*. Jaipur: Rawat publication
- .....