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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Socio-Cultural and Historical Review of Khas Patti of Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India.

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Abstract

The proposed research papers describe the socio-cultural and historical facts of a such terrain in India which never remained under the British royalty. But amongst diverse movement against the atrocity of local administration, the local residents have got attention of the country from centuries through their socio-cultural, religious and communal harmony. There have been described such activities and contribution of the local people of 'Khas Patti' of Uttarakhand.

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Introduction:-

A big terrain in Devprayag Tehsil of Tehri district covered the 4085 square meter area and situated in 30.146° N and 78.598° E is known as 'Khas Patti'. In the ancient time most of the population lived here, belonged to 'Khas' caste, therefore this place named the 'Khas Patti'. Possibly due to occasional revolutions against the atrocity and injustice of Tehri royalty, it was known as 'Khas Patti'. Atkinson(1885), Rahul (1953) and Dabral (1975) etc. also introduced this place as 'Khas Patti'.

In the beginning of Thirteen century that Ajaypal, the emperor of Pal dynasty got victory on 52 independent 'Garh' (area) in the Garhwal region and established the 'Garhwal State', which was spread in present seven districts of Garhwal region. The capital of this state firstly was established in Devalgarh in 1508 century and later on it was shifted in Srinagar in 1512. It was governed by king Ajaypal from 1500 to 1548 century and after that his ancestor ruled here up to two centuries. In this period Emperor Akbar honored the king Sahjpal by the degree of 'Shah' and then Pal dynasty add 'Shah' after their name.

The Garhwal king Pradhayuman Shah was killed by Nepal commanders Amar Singh Thapa, Hansidal Chautariya and other in 1803. After that Gorkha dynasty ruled here from 1804 to 1815c., who treat the people of this region with cruelty and in this period prince Sudarshan Shah spend the parish life at Kankhal Haridwar. In 1815 Sudarshan Shah got back his kingdom with the help of British army, but according the agreement of the help he had to give left terrain of river Alakhnanda to Britishers, which was named 'British Garhwal' and right terrain of Alakhnanda was called 'Tehri Garhwal'. The capital of Tehri sate was established at the confluence of Bhilangna and Bhagirathi River, which include the 17 Parganas and 46 Patties. During the land settlement in 1821 Mr. Backet decreases the Parganas by 17 to 11 and increases the patties by 46 to 86 (Baket Report, 1866). According it there were 07 Patties in Kritinagar, 09 Patties in Narendranagar and 03 Patties in Chandrabadni Pargana. There were 300 villages in Chandrabadni Pargana which abound with 26658 populations and 19996-6 1/4 acre agriculture land (Dabral,1975, p.131). This Pargana was divided in three parts viz. *Valla Bangar*, *Palla Bangar* and *Bichla Bangar*. Presently these three part is collectively called 'Khas Patti'.

At present '*Khas Patti*' include the Jakhnidhar, Lmnidhar, Paurikhal, Hindolakhal, Devalkandi, Chandrabadni, Jurana, Naikhri, Pujar gaon, Jhald, Ransolidhar, Aamni, Tyuna, Tylni, Tyargaon, Kund-Bharpoor etc. region. '*Khas Patti*' is abounding in social and cultural heritage from ancient time and also famous for revolutionary movements.

During the Tehri royalty, only the people of '*Khas Patti*' opposed the discriminatory law and decisions of the king and his ministers, which not only compel the royalty to bend down but also it paves the way for the society in the right direction. The king Sudarshan Shah issued the tender of forest cutting to British contractor Fradik Wilson and Scout in April, 1858 at the both bank of Bhagirathi river amounting only 6000 rupees per annum for five years to increase the revenue of the state (Tehri state record register no. 01,-56/10B).

Again in 1860 Wilson took the contract of forest cutting for four years from king Bhawani Shah at the rate of 4000 rupees per annum at the both bank of Bhagirathi from Devprayag to Taknur and in Tons from Chanchad to Satkhan-Badgaun (Tehri state record register no. 01,-76/F12). Like this Wilson got more contracts occasionally and took this building wood in plain area through the river for making railway slippers and other purposes and earned too much money. It caused the problem for local residents because after the ban by Wilson they had no woods for their requirements.

This practice continued during king Kritishah (1886-1913 AD). Beside it, to increase the more revenue, Tehri king Kritishah followed the forest policy of British officers of Kumaun region. Following this policy the king got total authority over the all unmeasured land, barren land, rivers, pools, rills, snowy region, rocks, forest and unmeasured lands and forest were divided into three parts A, B and C, in which local people were completely prohibited from main forest A and B, local people was right only on C forest, but later on it was necessary to take permission from king for fuel, fodder and building materials. Therefore, it was very difficult for local people to get these things of their daily requirements. The state officer started to admonish local people that caused to anger among the society (Dabral, 1999, p.40). During the king Kirtishah, the people of '*Khas Patti*' firstly opposed the forest policy and punished the government forest conservator. Therefore the villagers of Juran, Liwana, Karans, Kaflana, Kentholi and Devalkandi etc, situated near the forest leaping across the royal edict started to use the forest as they used before. These villagers were supported by all residents of '*Khas Patti*'. For suppressing revolution and rebellion across the royal edict, the king sent army in leadership of his conservator Sadanand Gairola. But angry and united population of '*Khas Patti*' enclosed the Gairola and his army at Naikhari. When Sadanand Gairola was trying to punish the people for royal edict, at this time the revolutionars Indra Singh Bisht from Jurana Village, Bhup Singh from Duni-Bhitwali, Roop Singh and Bheem Singh Mahra from Panchur, Jai Singh and Jagat Singh Kantura from Liwana, Sankar Singh Mahra from Gurai, Badri Singh from Jagdhar (Paurikhal), Badar Singh Negi and Rajeet Singh from Devalkandi, caught conservator Sadanand and burn his forehead with hot iron rod (Bhatt, 2015, p.32). These revolutionars were called '*Van Dandak*'.

Gairola run away from the spot and reached the royal court, looking him at the moment the king was also scared, but he worked patiently. The king tried to identify the '*Dandak*' by his deductive but due to unity of the people he could not do it. At last the king used his diplomacy and made a government witness and excused his all crime while others were punished (Raturi, 1920, p.90). Possibly it was the first revolution in India to protect the forest and get right over it. The famous '*Chepko movement*' held at Chamoli, Uttarakhand in April, 1973 and '*Khejdali movement*' held at Jodhpur, Rajasthan in September- 1973 related with forest policy started after this movement.

The people of '*Khas Patti*' occasionally revealed the unity by doing many movements against the royal discrimination and their rights. One such movement was done by the people in 1948 against the king Manvendra Shah. An independent panchayat '*Janta ki Adalat*' was formed by the people against the punitive behave and royalty on 10th of January 1948 at Kritinagar. The people of *Khas Patti* played an important role in it. 26 year old Nagendra Dutt Saklani and Trapan Singh Negi were sent by the communist party to participate in this movement (Dabral, 1975, p.112). Next day sub divisional officer (SDO) and police superintendent were sent here to suppress the movement but they were scared of too much and run towards the forest, which were captured by Nagendra Saklani and Molu singh, but SDO shoot both of them and run again towards the forest. The news of revolutionars death spread all over the public, angry people caught them again and punished in Tehri. On 12th of January, Chandra Singh Garhwali, Trapaan Singh, Devidutt Tiwari and Triloknath Panwar led a huge mob for the funeral ceremony with the dead body of both revolutionars on '*Pinas*' (a kind of barge), which passes through Devprayag, Hindolakhal, Jammikhal, Naikhari, Anjanisain and at last funeral ceremony was executed at royal Ghat of Tehri state (Rahul, 1953, p.345-347). People of '*Khas Patti*' play a vital role in this movement.

Scaring about the anger of public, the king Manvendra Shah and his father king Narendra Shah left the capital Tehri and went Narendranagar. On 16th January 1948 the Tehri state was handed over to Joint state government by in Uttar Pradesh (Dabral,1975,p.115-120).

'*Khas Patti*' is also famous for its revolutionary thoughts together with its socio-cultural and religious organization, fair and festivals. The symbols of cultural heritage are celebrated here from ancient time. From March to April so many fair are organized here at Naikhari, Malda, Bargor, Raurdhar, Hindolakhil, Paurikhal, Khandogi, Punanu, Jannikhal and Anjanisain etc. places in which nearby people actively participate in the programs.

In the past, near about eight decade fighting among the villager of diversion line, due to confiscation of women was main part of the fair organized in month of April, dated 16-17th (4 *gati Baishak*) at the '*Odda*' (border line between two territory) of these villages. According to Sri Sohan Lal (79) and Gopal Singh Panwar (57), resident of Jurana and Jhald Village respectively "at the time of fair if the women of any village knowingly or unknowingly cross the border of his territory, she was confiscated by the villager of other side. That resulted the fighting between the villagers and women was handed over the victorious villagers" (Personal Communication). Although, villagers of the both side have good relation in the other days. At present there is only a small stone temple in '*Odda*' (30.3211⁰ N, 78.6071⁰ E) (Fig.1), and fair is organized at Naikhari place, where is not any tradition of women confiscation. The other fairs start after this fair.

In this region here at Goddess Shidpeeth Chandrabadni (30.3043⁰ N, Long 78.6195⁰ E) (Fig.2) is situated since 7-8 century AD. The magnitude of this temple is described in Kedarkhand Puran (141/5-36), where a big fair is celebrated during Navratra every year. In this fair beside the local people, so many pilgrimages from other countries take blessing at the temple. On the other hand these fairs are appropriate medium for demonstration of native folk culture and best means to sell the local products.

This region have also 11 villages of Muslim viz. Curenlda, Ggogas, Andrathi, Mingwali, Muckrobi, Pailgaon, Moli, Nirali, Bonsta etc. (Fig.3), who are living here since 12th century. Being Muslim villages in Hindu dominated '*Khas Patti*' is great example of communal morality. Muslim of this region takes part actively as Hindus in all kind of socio-cultural and religious activities. Both communities take part in marriage ceremony to each-other and help accordingly. These Muslims also worship to Hindu God and Goddesses, which is also verified by the statistical report of Uttar Pradesh in 1931 and the report, count the Muslim population 1500 describing their work as agriculture and making bangles. Beside it, Muslim also worship other God and Goddesses such as Narsingh, Nag, Chandrabadni and Bagwati etc. (Censes report U.P.,1931, p.590). At present Muslim of this region mostly take oath of Chandrabadni Goddess. Presently 80% of the Muslim male population is working in Gulf countries while women and children spend their life smoothly with the help of native Hindu families.

Fig. 1: '*Odda*': border line place between two territories.



Fig. 2: Shidpeeth Chandrabadni Temple.



Fig. 3: A view of Muslim Villages in *Khas Patti*.



Conclusion:-

It is clear by the above description that the Tehri district is among those nominal places which never remain under the British royalty. But Tehri royalty and its officer did not develop the region but only tried to discriminate and suppress the local people. In such conditions '*Khas Patti*' region took initiative to oppose Tehri royalty and their tyranny. This region has always remained famous for their revolutionary thought and on the other hand it gives the message to the country and world for socio-cultural and religious unity. It is a symbol of communal affection to be the Muslim villages and their relationship with Hindus in this Hindu dominated region. In this way the fair and festivals organized here are the Carrier of folk culture. Although at present these fair and festivals are changing towards modernization, yet the reflection of local folk culture is seen today as well.

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