



**NMML
OCCASIONAL PAPER**

HISTORY AND SOCIETY

**New Series
64**

**Making Kumaun Modern: Beliefs and
practices circa 1815–1930**

Vasudha Pande

Fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.



**Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
2014**

NMML Occasional Paper



© Vasudha Pande, 2014

All rights reserved. No portion of the contents may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the author. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed herein are those of the author and do not reflect the opinion of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library Society, in whole or part thereof.

Published by

Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
Teen Murti House
New Delhi-110011

e-mail : ddnehrumemorial@gmail.com

ISBN : 978-93-83650-56-9

Price Rs. 100/-; US \$ 10

Page setting & Printed by : A.D. Print Studio, 1749 B/6, Govind Puri
Extn. Kalkaji, New Delhi - 110019. E-mail : studio.adprint@gmail.com

NMML Occasional Paper



Making Kumaun* Modern: Beliefs and practices circa. 1815–1930**

Vasudha Pande

The Decline of Communitarian Practices: Reorienting Ritual

The emergence of an intelligentsia well versed in English literary traditions led to a host of interrelated changes in belief systems and rituals. They initiated the reorienting of cultural practices premised upon a new normative order. Their world-view was premised upon textbooks prescribed by the English curriculum and classic Brahmanical texts. It clearly involved a reformulation of the Khasa religious system. The modern intelligentsia sought to construct a Kumauni identity which drew its inspiration from the Vedas, and which accepted a Varna hierarchy. The making of this modern religious identity, required the submergence, denial and suppression of cultural practices of the Khasas. For example, shamanic practices, pervasive in the ritual life of people were now considered part of ‘low’ culture and stigmatised by the new elites.¹ This paper will detail the manner in which such reorientation of

* Kumaun refers to the Kumaun Division of present day Uttarakhand. It includes the districts of Almora, Bageshwar, Champawat, Nainital, Pithoragarh and Uddham Singh Nagar. (This was the Kumaon district of Kumaon Division from 1815–1930.)

** Lecture delivered at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, 25 March 2014.

¹ Gellner Ernest, *Nations and Nationalism*, first published 1983, 2nd edition Blackwell 2006, Cornell University Press, pp. 72–73. P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, (first ed. 1978, second ed. 1994, third ed. 2009 Ashgate, Surrey. Introduction to third edition, pp. 1–20, “the interaction can scarcely be discussed without recourse to the concepts of high and low, viewed as models or ideal types to which actual cultural practices only approximate or as opposite ends of a system rather than 2 sides of a firm frontier”. (p. 15)

cultural practices as “high” and “low” was constructed.

What were these practices and what changes were effected? The religious practices of the people consisted of a mosaic of beliefs that figured in its cultural life spanning a period of two millennia. Mother goddess worship, so manifest in the cult of Nanda Devi was probably of pre-historic origin (Sax, 1991).² The mother goddess later became the consort of Shiva, and also included worship of Naga,³ (documented in folklore and Nautiyal, 1969: 36). The triptych of the tree, altar and stone which emerged during Kumaun’s early history is worshipped even today and can be dated to the Kuninda period.⁴ Traces of Bon/Pon religion are manifest in a combination of shamanic practices with the narration of historical events integral to the performance of religious rites (like the *jagar*). The worship of mountain peaks, and the veneration of these sites is also a Bon relic (Tucci, 1980; Bell, 1931; Hoffmann, 1961; Das, 1970).⁵ Mashan, an important folk god can also be linked to the Bon tradition.⁶ The Pashupata Lakulisa tradition which acquired prominence during the Gupta period was

² S.S. Pangtey, “Shakti ka Pratham Chitra: Nanda”, *Uttarakhand*, Volume 5, 1991, pp. 54–60 argues that the Nanda Devi Jatra also has strong traces of Bon/Paun/Pun—a twelve-year cycle, the anti-clockwise circumambulation, the direction of the swastika and the large number of references to Pun.

³ Nautiyal K.P., *The Archaeology of Kumaun*, Varanasi 1969, pp. 224–225 notes, “about its (Naga worship) antiquity in Kumaun, nothing definite can be said, but it may be assumed that it must have had a long antiquity here also. In 1877, Rivett Carnac noticed a few cup markings along with figures of snakes carved on the rocks in and around the region of Almora Naga worship is very common even today throughout Garhwal and in other parts of the Kumaun region”.

⁴ M.P. Joshi, *Uttaranchal Kumaun Garhwal*, Almora 1992, pp. 19–36 and S.P. Dabral, *Kulinda Janapada*, Dogadda V. S. 2049, pp. 266–276.

⁵ G. Tucci, *The Religions of Tibet*, translated by G. Samuel, Allied Publishers Delhi, 1980. ‘The Bon Religion’, pp. 213–238. C.A. Bell., *The Religion of Tibet*, Oxford 1931, H. Hoffmann, *The Religion of Tibet*, London 1961; Sarat Chand Das, *The Religious History of Tibet*, Manjusri, 1970.

⁶ Mashan is referred to by E.T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, first published 1882, reprint Delhi 1981, Volume II part II, pp. 699–934, particular reference page 820, also noted by K.P. Nautiyal *The Archaeology of Kumaun*, Varanasi 1969, p. 221 and E.S. Oakley, *Holy Himalaya*, first published 1905

also incorporated into the shamanic practices followed in this region.⁷

The practices of the heterodox schools probably prepared the ground for the emergence of the popularity of the Siddhas who play an important role in historical legends.⁸ The Khasa records indicate that they were followers of Vajrayana, and evidence of Cinachara practices can be found in the folklore of the region.⁹ Subsequently, the Natha Siddhas appear to have influenced religious practices and the Nathas are eulogised in folklore.¹⁰

British administrators and other functionaries who travelled in the Kumaun region remarked upon these ritual practices. E.T. Atkinson in his comprehensive work *Religion in the North Western Provinces* noted, “in the Himalayan region we find a

reprint Nainital 1990, p. 220, V.S. Pathak, “History of Saiva Cults in North Indian from Inscriptions 700–1200” in G.C. Pande (ed.) *Saiva Cults*, Allahabad 1980 and K.C. Pande, *An Outline of the History of Saiva Philosophy*, Moti Lal Banarasi Dass 1954, reprint 1986.

⁷ R. Tiwari notes that four statues of Lakulisa have been recovered from Almora, and can be dated to the 8 and 9 centuries. *Sarvekshan Report 1980–81*, Lucknow 1983, pp. 67–68; K.P. Nautiyal, n 46, pp. 141–144 also refers to the fact that the region of Kumaun abounds in Lakulisa sculptures.

⁸ References to the Siddhas abound in folklore. Most famous Siddha who is worshipped even today is Narsingh. K.P. Nautiyal, n 46, refers to Narsingh as the Siddha who ousted the Katyuris from Joshimath, p. 50. Rahul Sankrityayan, “The Origin of Vajrayana and its Eighty-four Mystics”, *Selected Essays of Rahul Sankrityayan*, PPH, New Delhi 1984, pp. 114–130.

⁹ S. Adhikary, *The Khasa Kingdom*, Jaipur, 1988, p. 34 Appendices p. xiv, “The Copper Plate Inscription of Aditya Malla, of 1316, refers to Hevajra, Aghenand Bharati”, *The Tantric Tradition*, New York 1970, pp. 58–84, refers to the significance of Cinachara and through the work of G. Tucci it is possible to identify Cina as western Tibet. *Preliminary Report on Two Scientific Explorations in Nepal*, First Edition Rome : Is. M.E.O., 1956, pp. 90–109.

¹⁰ Prayag Joshi “Lok Gathayen Aur Guru Gorakhnath Ki Parampara”, in *Kumaun Garhwal Ki Lok Gathayen*, Bareilly 1990, pp. 23–27; E.T. Atkinson n 48, Volume II, part II, pp. 808–809, 815–816, 817–820; B.D. Pande *Kumaun ka Itihas*, 1990, pp. 630–632.

curious blending of pre-Brahmanical, Brahmanical and Buddhistic practices which it will take some time and attention to separate and ascribe to their original sources".¹¹ Christian missionary E.S. Oakley noted that "the worship of the greater gods of Hinduism, though universally spread by Brahmanic influence, is more or less a foreign imposition upon a vast undergrowth of aboriginal cults, animistic worship, and propitiation of spirits and demons, prevailing among the masses of the population".¹² Local beliefs based upon the idea of "possession" continued to be an important aspect of popular faith. The anthropologist G. Berreman found that village religious life was,

primarily concerned with the maintenance of proper relations with supernatural beings who have power over the members of the family and the village ... Their form, origin, and affinities are of less significance to villagers than are their effects and the means to placate them. Some of these beings are gods or goddesses which affect the entire village, or which affect only particular households. Others are ancestral spirits. Other categories of powerful supernatural are ghosts of dead relatives or of known types of individuals.¹³

These ceremonies required specialised services like singing of ballads (Rachhas) and drumming by the Das-Dholi-Damai-groups. Prior to this the Das, who were the Gurus of the Katyuris had an independent ranking at par with other ascetic sects. In the 1891 Census of Almora the Das are counted separately, are about 199 in number and confined to Goriphat, Johar with three settlements in Giwar Palla. In earlier Census Surveys the Dholi were relegated to the Dom category because of their playing the drum made of animal hide. Atkinson notes that the 4th class of Doms, "comprises the vagrant tribes of musicians, dancers, jugglers, acrobats & c., and includes the Badi, Hurkiya, Darzi,

¹¹ E.T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Gazetteer* first published 1882, reprint Delhi 1981, Volume II, part II, p. 701.

¹² E.S. Oakley, *Holy Himalaya*, First published 1905, reprint 1990, p. 201.

¹³ G. Berreman, *Hindus of the Himalayas*, 1963, p. 87.

Dholi, Dumjogi and Bhand”.¹⁴ The Dholis are enumerated in Edye’s survey in Group IV of the Depressed Classes though in Turner’s Survey of 1931 the Dholi had moved up and were no. 19 in a list of 51 sub-castes among the Shilpakars, a new self- ascribed term for Dalit groups.

The Das, accompanied by the Dholi-Damai were the professional bards whose occupation was to recite the ballads of folk heroes, kings, warriors and gods. The recitation of these songs was a religious event and was considered sacred. The recitation was often a night-long affair, sometimes stretching to 22 days for the Baisis and involved the process of incarnation of the spirit of the person whose ballad was being sung in a medium. Andrew Alter found that in Garhwal “drummers of the dominant musician caste group (referred to as Bajgi, Das or Auji) are particularly known for their performance of the two outdoor drums, the *dhol* and the *damaun*. Through their performances on these drums, drummers maintain a crucial role in ritual activity at processions, festivals, weddings, and other critical events”.¹⁵

In the early medieval period the Dasas were the Gurus of the heroes of the ballads,¹⁶ and may have been Naths,¹⁷ but gradually with increasing stratification and the emergence of a pro-Brahman state they lost their privileged status. However, even the later

¹⁴ E.T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, first published 1882, reprint Delhi 1981, Volume III, part II, p. 449.

¹⁵ Andrew Alter, “Dhol Sagar: Aspects of Drum Knowledge amongst, Musicians in Garhwal, North India”, *European Bulletin for Himalayan Research*, XXIV, Spring 2003, pp. 63–76, Alter’s informant was Jog Das of Budha Kedar village.

¹⁶ (i) Madan Chand Bhatt, *Himalaya Ka Itihas* part I from Collection No. 14 District Archives Nainital, pp. 67–83, refers to the *Guru Paduka*, an unpublished manuscript and also cites local legends about Guru Kashmiri Khek Das, Dharam Das, Kalu Das, Rai Das and Vina Das; (ii) Madan Chand Bhatt, Saim aur Chipulakot, *Uttarakhand* 8, 1994, pp. 29–42, transcript of jagar sung by Kalu Das in 1966.

¹⁷ G.W. Briggs, after the initiation ceremony to the Nath order “the candidate may now add to his name the sect word Das”, p. 29, *Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis*, first published 1938, reprint Delhi, 1973.

medieval state recognised and patronised the Rachha singing groups and a tax was levied on the peasantry for the maintenance of these groups (Joshi, 1996: 29–30). The growing Brahman presence at the Chand court (shifted from Champawat to Almora in 1563 CE) probably entailed a certain loss of status for the group who were replaced by the vritti Brahmans who performed the Shastric rituals for their upper caste clients.

Yet Brahmanical practices were not prevalent among all sections of Kumaun society even during the colonial period and it was probably during this period that the Das-Dholi-Damai also started performing at the life crisis ceremonies of some of the upper castes. In such situations, they were required to

abstain from engaging in polluting activities as much as possible, at least on the days they were to engage in drum playing and singing for the Bith. They had to associate with certain polluting things such as their skin-covered drums, but this was necessary and rectified in the Bith (Khasa) view by keeping them at a respectable distance from temples or homes. No such avoidance was, however, observed in the case of marriage processions or certain others of festive nature, all of which were headed by the Dholi.¹⁸

However, most members of the Thuljaat, who premised their ritual superiority on immigrant status abjured local beliefs and did not use the Rachha singing or spirit invocatory services of the Das-Dholi-Damai. They preferred “to worship their god and goddess in accordance with orthodox prescriptions through a Bhalbaman priest and avoided propitiatory ritual generally”.¹⁹

During British rule, the intelligentsia and the Brahman groups did not acknowledge the religious role of the Das-Dholi-Damai, but their complete marginalisation was not possible till shamanic religious beliefs persisted in peasant society. They continued to

¹⁸ R.D. Sanwal, *Social Stratification in Kumaun*, Delhi 1976, p. 77.

¹⁹ T. Kapur, *Religion and Ritual in Rural India: A Case Study of Kumaon*, Delhi 1988, p. 77.

provide religious services to a large number of Bith groups and were not required *only* by the Thuljaat, a small minority, who worshipped their gods and goddesses in accordance with orthodox prescriptions and usually refrained from performing rituals to pacify local gods and demons. Even this group was not completely free from a belief in village gods and other deities who could only be pacified by acts of invocation and possession, performative acts which required music and song. For this reason, R.D. Sanwal noticed in 1960,

the Khalait category (of the Doms) however did include a group whose occupational exclusiveness extended to the social field and was expressed in endogamy. The status exclusiveness of the Das-Dholi-Damai group was as much a consequence of the conditions imposed on this occupational group by the Bith as was the lack of it in the case of the remaining Khalait Dom ... they provided the Drum music at the life crisis ceremonies of the Bith they were attached to ... it was, perhaps, the requirement to keep as clean and pure as they possibly could within the limits imposed by their occupation, which inhibited the Das-Dholi-Damai group from intermarrying with the other Doms”.²⁰

Sanwal adds that, “the dhol (a small single membranophone) and the damoo (large single membrane kettle drum) played by the Dholi–Damai are not even touched by the Bith because of the bovine skins which cover the drums”.²¹ We can therefore deduce that as Brahmanical practices became more pervasive the contextual proximity to Dholi and Damai also polluted the Das.

Over the twentieth century, other artisanal groups who were numerically preponderant and belonged to the skilled labour category were able to assert their social superiority over the Das, Dholi and Damai. The relegation of this group to the lowest stratum within the Khalait category was also due to the fact that they were seen as similar to the Hurki, Badi, Mirasi group of vagrant

²⁰ R.D. Sanwal *Social Stratification in Rural Kumaon*, OUP, 1976 p. 77.

²¹ R.D. Sanwal *Social Stratification in Rural Kumaon*, OUP, 1976, p. 84, n. 33.

musicians and entertainers. The lower status of this group was also a function of its inability to survive in a society and state system, which did not require them for public ritual. R.D. Sanwal (1976) and M.P. Joshi (1992–93, 301–333), suggest that the Das-Dholi-Damai were probably better off as professional performers at public events, under the patronage of the Katyuri and Chand kings. The importance of the Dholi, in ritual practices, obviated their status as part of the Dom category, yet the growing stratification within Kumaun society was responsible for the transformation of the Dholi from important religious functionaries to a low status even amongst the Doms.

The modern intelligentsia of Kumaun also played an important role in marginalising the Das-Dholi-Damai through its offensive upon folk performances which were considered coarse and vulgar. It promoted the use of Sanskrit and devalued the local tradition. In the 1930s, a monthly magazine titled *Achal* (in Kumauni) published by Jeevan Chandra Joshi stated that educated members of Kumaun society should consider it their duty to compose ‘sat-sahitya’²² (‘sat’ here has to be translated as ‘moral’; Swami Satyadeva had popularized the idea of *shudha-sahitya*).²³

Even a scholar administrator like T.D. Gairola, who helped E.S. Oakley (Christian missionary) to collect Kumauni folklore, failed to recognise the particularities of Kumaun legends.²⁴ As pointed out by Gaborieau in an “Introduction” to the 1977 Edition,

Gairola tells very little about the ethnographic context of these songs, although he proposes a historical construction based on the texts of the legends. He explains that bards called hurkiya, attached to royal families, had the function of encouraging warriors on the battlefield and entertaining

²² J.C. Joshi (ed.), “Editors Opinion”, *Achal*, November 1938, p. 37.

²³ Shudha Sahitya Samiti was established in Almora by Swami Satyadeva with the express purpose of countering obscene literature by Shastri Krishnanada, *Shudha Sahitya Samiti*, Almora.

²⁴ E.S. Oakley and T.D. Gairola, *Himalayan Folklore*, Allahabad 1934.

guests at the court. But he tells nothing about the performances of the bards in his own day.²⁵

Gaborieau tells us how he witnessed certain performances by Gopi Das and others and realised the variety of stories and their functions completely absent in Gairola's narrative.

Gairola's silence about practitioners of folk traditions speaks volumes. He also appears to have made major mutations in rendering the folktales. Particularly surprising are the interpellations about the practice of Sati, which are not necessarily found in subsequent collections.²⁶ For him folklore was best used for filling in the gaps for history writing of the positivist variety. He glossed over references to polyandry, and folk stories collected by him translated into English have a completely different flavour from the subsequent collections of Shailesh Matiyani,²⁷ Trilochan Pande,²⁸ Krishna Nand Joshi,²⁹ Prayag Joshi³⁰ and Urva Dutt Upadhyaya.³¹

Folk songs and dances, which were a regular part of fairs were also censored by the intelligentsia. In 1929, the Danpur Sudhar

²⁵ E.S. Oakley and T.D. Gairola, *Himalyan Folklore: Kumaon and West Nepal*, reprinted with a new introduction by Marc Gaborieau, Kathmandu 1977, p. xiii.

²⁶ For example, the story of Asa Rawat ends with, "he then reclined on the lap of Saru and expired. Saru wept bitterly and prepared a funeral pyre. She put on a white sari, and, applying vermilion to her forehead, mounted the funeral pyre and became Sati", pp. 155–156. Oakley and Gairola, *Himalyan Folklore*, Allahabad 1934, reprinted with a new introduction by Marc Gaborieau, Kathmandu 1977.

²⁷ S. Matiyani, *Bela hui Aber*, Delhi 1962; *Kumaun ki Lok Gathayen*, Parts 1, 2, 3. Delhi 1958; *Baramandal ki Lok Kathaye*, 1958; *Doti Pradesh ki Lok Kathaye*, Delhi 1960; *Almora ki Lok Kathaye*, 1960; *Champawat ki Lok Kathaye*, 1960; *Tarai Pradesh ki Lok Kathaye*, 1960; *Nainital ki Lok Kathayen*, 1960.

²⁸ Trilochan Pande, *Kumaun ka Lok Sahitya*, Agra 1979.

²⁹ K.N. Joshi, *Kumaun ka Lok Sahitya*, Bareilly 1982.

³⁰ Prayag Joshi, *Kumauni Lok Gathayae*, Bareilly, 3 Volumes, 1991, 1993 and 1994.

³¹ U.D. Upadhyaya, *Kumaun Ki Lok Gathayen*, Bareilly 1979.

Sabha and its sub-committee, the Kapkot Sudhar Sabha, were busy mobilising support against the singing of “obscene” songs at various public events.³² Mohan Upreti³³ (*Pahar* 3–4, 126–131) writes in his memoirs that even in the 1950s when he was involved in the promotion of folk literature and music he found the upper castes contemptuous of folk artists and folk traditions. Mohan Upreti’s scathing critique of Kumaun elites of the 1950s inevitably draws attention to the life of Kumaun’s most celebrated creative writer, Shailesh Matiyani (1931–2001: originally Rajesh Matiyani ‘Shailesh’, later known as Shailesh Matiyani). During the 1950s and 1960s he published collections of folk songs and tales of the different regions of Kumaun. Around 1955, an article in *Dharmayug* on Kumauni folklore by Matiyani raised a storm in Almora. Jeevan writes that members of the Shah community were incensed and made him (Jeevan) write a letter to the editor of *Dharmayug* who published an apology in the magazine.³⁴ From the outset, Matiyani was a controversial writer, because of his delineation of “low” aspects of Kumaun’s cultural life. Matiyani’s depiction of Kumauni society was not the sanitised version appreciated and exhibited by the upper castes. According to Batrohi, people were critical of him for two reasons: his depiction of Kumauni culture was neither aesthetic nor stylised; others suggest that he disliked the upper castes because of the failure of his personal romance with a young Brahman girl.³⁵ This episode probably formed the backdrop for a major conflagration in 1963 when Matiyani was confronted by the upper castes regarding his friendship with a young girl of Almora and literally hounded out of the town.³⁶

Though public performances at fairs and festivals could be censored and brought into conformity, belief in village gods and

³² *Shakti*, 7 December, 1929.

³³ p. 130. One of the main reasons for the break up of the Lok Kalakar Sangha and United Artists was the narrow-mindedness and political selfishness of the dominant groups who refused to cooperate with the folk artists.

³⁴ Jeevan, “Hamara bhi Dostana tha”, *Pahar* 13, 2001, pp. 126–128.

³⁵ Batrohi, “Lekhakar ban Sakne ka Akankshi”, *Pahar* 13, 2001, pp. 202–207.

³⁶ Rajendra, “Yadav Do kathin paton ke beech”, *Pahar* 13, 2001, pp. 164–171.

shamanic practices for pacifying local deities/demons/*bhuts* could not be wished away. Atkinson describes the importance of the *Ghantuwa* or astrologer who diagnoses the problem and specifies the power/spirit who has to be appeased. If the *Ghantuwa* suggests, then a *Jagariya* and his assistant are called and they play a drum and tambourine whilst the relatives of the afflicted dance till one of them is possessed; the one possessed is the *Dungariya*, who then explains the nature of the transgression.³⁷

Jagars were of two kinds—community ones and those for individual purposes. E.S. Oakley cited G.D. Upreti and noted that concerted dancing around a fire or *dhuni* was an essential aspect of worship at the local temple. This temple did not have an idol placed in it, but on all ordinary festival days offerings were placed there for the gods and demons. Village gods were placated at festivals when dancing by the *dungaria* was carried on from 11 to 22 days. “These rites usually took place during the moonlit halves of the months of Asoj (October), Mangsu (December), and Chait (March). On these occasions, the villagers contributed for the purpose of these rites, which were to secure the welfare of the entire community”.³⁸ These ceremonies entailed the recitation of ballads and stories of heroes and were often enacted, and certain individuals were “possessed” by particular heroes or gods during the performance. Ancestral spirits and other malevolent gods and ghosts also required pacification in a similar manner and were invoked either at home or at particular shrines. The priests who officiated at these shrines were esteemed for their oracular powers and were often “*Khassiyas*, that is, ordinary villagers or ascetics of some sect. The Doms appoint persons from among their own classes to act as priests”.³⁹ These beliefs, sometimes, required exorcism rites which were often resorted to in cases of individual illness.

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century shamanic

³⁷ E.T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, first published 1882, reprint Delhi 1981, Volume II, part II, p. 824.

³⁸ E.S. Oakley, *Holy Himalaya*, first published 1905, reprint 1990, p. 208.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

practices were relegated to the “low” tradition. Atkinson concluded that,

With the exception of the educated classes, perhaps the great mass of people of these hills are worshippers of unorthodox forms whose wrath is deprecated by offerings of male kids and young buffaloes ... the ruder ritual has borrowed much from the Buddhist and Saiva tantras, but is simpler than that in use in the temples.⁴⁰

E.S. Oakley, a Christian missionary was more critical. He cited Risley saying that Hinduism is Animism modified by philosophy and added that the religion of the Kumaun peasantry is a religion of fear and may be considered simply as demonolatry (Monier Williams).

The local intelligentsia responded. G.D. Upreti, who wrote extensively on Kumaon folklore, proverbs, martial castes and languages, was apologetic about this aspect of hill culture and noted, “Such beliefs and practices are generally confined to the women of all classes and the more illiterate males. Mainly through the entreaties of their women-folk, and in order to humour them, the better educated and more enlightened men are held to observe them”.⁴¹ Rai Pati Ram Bahadur, writing in 1916, elaborated greatly on the Vedic traditions of the region and regarded popular religion as inherited from the “aboriginal inhabitants”.⁴² B.D. Pande in *Kumaun Ka Itihas* (1937) referred to local beliefs/stories in detail but completely ignored the rituals associated with these stories.⁴³ The understanding was that these beliefs belong to a hoary past and are mere historical accretions. Kumaun society, in its present incarnation, through a process of evolution, has moved on from such “primitive” beliefs.

⁴⁰ E.T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, first published 1882, reprint Delhi 1981, Volume II, part II, p. 839–840.

⁴¹ G.D. Upreti, cited in E.S. Oakley, *Holy Himalaya*, first published 1905, reprint 1990, p. 211.

⁴² Rai Pati Ram Bahadur, *Garhwal: Ancient and Modern*, reprint 1992, p. 120.

⁴³ B.D. Pande, *Kumaun Ka Itihas*, reprint 1992, pp. 659–673.

Almost all anthropologists conducting research on this region remark upon the jagar ritual as performance and belief, they particularly comment on the role of drummers and musicians in the exorcism/oracle/possession ceremony (G. Berreman, 1962, 80–120; R.D. Sanwal (1976, 77–79); T. Kapur 1988, 82–122) and A. Fanger, (1990, 173–189). Berreman says that in the 1950s and 1960s the striking feature of the traditional religious organisation in Sirkanda was

the strategic importance of the shaman. In the sphere of religion he is the cultural policy maker. He is the key man in virtually every situation of traditional religious worship. He determines which supernatural being is to be worshipped and placated, be it household, village, regional or even Hindu god, or be it ancestor ghost, spirit or witch. He often determines which puja will be performed, which sacrifice will be offered, which pilgrimages will be undertaken, which new god will be worshipped.⁴⁴

Krishnan and Joshi in an article in 1984 clearly stated that the jagar is a tantric practice and appreciated its therapeutic attributes, but he too admitted that educated young men do not understand the significance of this tradition.⁴⁵ Though jagars continued, these practices were reported for villages not so well connected or for lower castes. Marc Gaborieau, who did fieldwork in Kali Kumaun and western Nepal pointed to the shared traditions in this aspect of Garhwal, Kumaon and western Nepal. Franck Bernede of the Centre Nationale De La Recherche Scientifique Paris recorded a jagar performed in Almora region in 1987 and 1994. He noted that the jagariya, “play for the possession rituals intended for the *lower castes*, (emphasis mine) take on the intercessions needed between the local populations and their divinities”.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ G. Berreman, *Hindus of the Himalayas*, California 1963, p. 90.

⁴⁵ Krishnanand Joshi, Dev Amantran Jagar, *Shri Nanda Devi Smarika Centenary Year 1983–84*, Nainital, pp. 57–62.

⁴⁶ Frank Bernede, *Bards of the Himalayas Nepal/India*, Le Chante Du Monde CNR 2741060, Paris 1997, p. 26–27.

Though jagars continued through the twentieth century, by the 1970s, it was evident that the tradition of village jagars was declining (Fanger 1990:173–189). The tendency for outside jagars to decline was because they required community effort and involved a great deal of expense. The erosion of the village community furthered a growing disinterest in the Jagar. In certain pockets, the village jagars were brought under the control and direction of the Brahmans, whereas the individual exorcisms continue to be practiced by traditional groups (Kapur 1988: 46–56 and 82–122). According to Kapur, the Brahmans of Devagiri who undertook village exorcisms did not belong to the Thuljaat category and were probably Khasa Brahmans whose religious belief systems were still deeply impregnated by shamanic practices. Private jagars, were held as family rituals and usually invoked village and lineage gods for pacification or for thanksgiving. A large number of shamans were from low caste groups that provided the context for the practice of group and individual exorcisms.

The importance of the jagar in the contemporary life of Kumaun is still evident to observers, yet the ritual functionaries required for the jagar are now dwindling in numbers.⁴⁷ The designated performers for public occasions, Das-Dholi-Damai have become professional tailors, with only a few ghantuwas, jagariyas and dungariyas who continue the tradition of performance primarily in a part-time capacity.⁴⁸ The religious traditions of Kumaun have thus adapted to the exigencies of modernity.

⁴⁷ A.C. Fanger, “The Jagar: Spirit Possession Séance among the Rajputs and Silpakars of Kumaon”, in Joshi, Brown and Fanger (eds) *Himalaya: Past and Present*, Volume I, Almora 1990, p. 177, “The jagariya today is a part time practitioner”.

⁴⁸ The exception was Jhusia Damai (1910–2005) one of the most celebrated folk artists of the region. Girda G. Tewari, “Jhusia Damai ka Lok”, *Pahar* 16–17, pp. 384–389. A film on Jhusia Damai also made by Sudhir Gupta.

The Construction of High Culture: Dichotomies of Upper Caste and Khasa

Ascetic orders like the Jangamas (Virasaivas), Kanphatas (Naths) and Gosains (Dasnamis) were an integral part of the religious life of Kumaun in the mediaeval period. A brief history of the various ascetic traditions in Kumaun is as follows. The Pashupata Lakulisha sect can be traced to the post-Gupta period. Historical evidence put together by S.P. Dabral tells us that the Pashupata Lakulisha ascetics traversed Kumaun on their way from Kantipur in Nepal to Kedar; Baleshwar and Jageshwar were important points on that route.⁴⁹ The Katyuri connection to the Pashupatas is borne out by the construction of a temple to Lakulisha at Jageshwar. The construction of the temple has been dated to the ninth century by K.P. Nautiyal.⁵⁰ The Pashupatas controlled Kedar till the twelfth century, subsequently, the Jangama sect took over.⁵¹ According to N.K. Nautiyal cited by M.C. Chaubey, “During the early mediaeval period and later it (Pashupata Lakulisha) got itself absorbed with the Kanphata class of Sadhus in Kumaon”.⁵²

Around the beginning of the second millennium, there was a revival of Bon in western Tibet and it is possible that Bon shamanic and monastic traditions influenced religious practices in this region. It is around this period that we find evidence for the Siddhas (visit of the Siddhas is mentioned in the history of Chamba).⁵³ The famous Siddha for Kumaun is Nar Singh who according to tradition ousted the Katyuris from Joshimath

⁴⁹ S.P. Dabral, *Katyuri Rajavansha utthan evam Samapan*, Dogadda 2051 V.S., p. 83.

⁵⁰ K.P. Nautiyal, *The Archaeology of Kumaon* Varanasi, p. 90.

⁵¹ S.P. Dabral, *Uttaranchal Himachal ka Prachin Itihas Chauthi se Athvi Shati Tak*, Dogadda 2052 V.S., p. 657.

⁵² N.K. Nautiyal, *Journal of the Oriental Institute of Baroda* 23, 1974–75, pp. 54–58 cited in M.C. Choubey, *Lakulisa in Indian Art and Culture*, Delhi 1997, p. 133.

⁵³ Romila Thapar, The Chamba Vamsavali, *The Past Before Us: Historical Traditions of North India*, Ranikhet, 2013, p. 636.

(approximately 1000 CE).⁵⁴ The linkage of the Naths with the Siddhas and its prevalence is well recognized and can also be deduced from place names and temples. Nath beliefs were in consonance with a society based upon a lineage system. The Kanphata or split-ear tradition of the Naths appears to have been particularly popular in Kumaun.

Most histories of the region refer to Shankaracharya and claim that he visited this region and negotiated the transition from Bauddha Dharmi to Brahman Dharmi, around the ninth century.⁵⁵ Historical evidence shows that the Dasnami Gosain (also known as Saniasis) tradition found root in Kumaun in the fifteenth century.⁵⁶ The Gosains claimed descent from Shankaracharya and were Shaivas organised into an ascetic order (Ghurye, 1963). They were able to establish themselves firmly within the north Indian and trans-Himalayan circuit of trade.⁵⁷ Their organizational skills and martial abilities helped them in dominating the hill kingdoms (which were unable to maintain separate armies) and the dominant (often royal) lineages functioned as their partners in the Himalayan trade. The Gosains advocated and supported a polity based upon the caste system and undermined the less caste-conscious,

⁵⁴ S.P. Dabral, *Katyuri Rajavansha utthan evam Samapan*, Dogadda, 2051 V.S., p. 57.

⁵⁵ S.P. Dabral, *Katyuri Rajavansha utthan evam Samapan*, Dogadda, 2051 V.S., pp. 156–163; H.K. Raturi, *Garhwal ka Itihas*, first published Bombay 1928, third edition, Tehri 1988, pp. 128–131.

⁵⁶ The first reference to Gosain can be dated to an inscription on the temple of the Kula Devi at Tamadhaun in Chaukot, cited in E.T. Atkinson, Volume II. part II, p. 536. A reference to Gosain is also found in S. Adhikary, *Pashchim Nepal Ko Atihasik Anveshan*, Kathmandu Vikram Samvat 2043, p. 66, copper plate of Kirti Malla Sake 1402, refers to Pitu Gosain and Pitu Gosain is also referred to as a king in the *Katyuri Pali Pachaun Vanshavali*, B.D. Pande, *Kumaun ka Itihasa*, Almora 1990, pp. 219–221. S.P. Dabral, *Uttarakhand Ke Abhilekh*, Dogadda Vikram Samvat 2047, p. 211 the Copper plate of Kirati Chand of 1505 refers to Bhiku Gosain.

⁵⁷ Bernard S. Cohn, “The Role of the Gosains in the Economy of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Upper India”, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, I, no. 4 (1964). pp. 175–82 and John Clarke, Hindu Trading Pilgrims, Alex McKay (ed.), *Pilgrimage in Tibet*, Curzon, 1998, pp. 52–70.

sometimes overtly anti-caste, Nath tradition. Economic developments during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries also promoted stratification and helped the Gosains. The *Trivarnik Dharma Nirnayanam* attributed to the King Rudra Chandra Deva (1565–1597 CE) was probably composed and implemented during this period.⁵⁸ In this phase, Kumaun society, divided primarily into peasants and artisans, developed norms about caste behaviour and the Gosains were favoured whereas heterodox non-conformist, non-martial Nath/Kanphata *Jogis* lost patronage. The Gosains in Kumaun also practiced agriculture. The Khaukiya-Gosain relationship described by R.D. Sanwal and A.C. Fanger points towards their interest in establishing caste hierarchies to enable them to control Doms/Dalits for providing labour services.

The story of Parkhu Pant who defeated the Nath king of Sira and established the Vedic religion in Gangoli region is legendary. Parkhu became a local hero whose story began with the caveat that though a Brahman he was nevertheless a brave warrior. (Upadhyaya 1979: 137–146). The Gosains also instituted Dattatreya worship at Dwara and Jageshwar (Atkinson 1882, Volume II, part II: 805). The importance of Dattatreya,⁵⁹ the Avadhut par excellence, in this context, can be attributed to his success in a contest with Gorakhnath. His ability to vanquish Gorakhnath was propagated by the Saniasis in their attempt to establish the hegemony of Vedic gods.⁶⁰ In the *Manaskhand* (Sanskrit text composed in approximately the eighteenth century) Dattatreya is also celebrated as the Avadhuta who initiated the Kailash Manasarovar pilgrimage (Pande, 1989: 29).

⁵⁸ Deva Rudra Chand, *Trivarnik Dharma Nirnayanam*, Sanskrit MSS, Government Collection of Asiatic Society, Har Prasad Sastri, Calcutta, 26 pages. It describes the duties and rituals to be performed by each caste and delineates the functions of *grahasthas*/householders.

⁵⁹ Rai Ram Bahadur Pati, *Garhwal Ancient and Modern*, Vintage reprint 1992, p. 102–103. “Sanyasin-This class of yogis principally owe their origin to Swami Sankaracharya and Dattatreya.”

⁶⁰ G.W. Briggs, *Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis*, first published 1938, reprint Delhi 1973, pp. 74–75.

It is probable that the Gosains promoted the legend of Shankaracharya in this part of the Himalayas. As yet there is no historical evidence to prove Shankaracharya's visit to the region (Sankritiyayan 1953: 105). Even the dominance of Gosains can not be located prior to 1420 (Atkinson, 1882, Volume II, part I: 297–350). According to H.K. Raturi the Dasnami control over Jyotirmath can be dated from 1497 CE.⁶¹ According to Mohan Lal Babulkar the first copper plate inscription for the Raghunath Temple at Devaprayag that refers to Shankaranand Bharti is dated 1495 CE.⁶² Probably, the control of Jumla and Muktinath (western Nepal) also passed into the hands of the Dasnamis by 1540 CE, because the Kalyala king Bhanushahi's copper plate inscription begins with an invocation to Badrinath and Muktinath.⁶³ In the eighteenth century, the Gosains endorsed the struggle between the Thuljaat and the Khasa and fostered a distinction based upon the hierarchy of different belief systems. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Shankara myth was used by the Brahmans for the elaboration of genealogies that dated back to the tenth century, to establish their superior caste status. By proving that Som Chand of the Vamsavalis was a fictitious character M.P. Joshi has interrogated the genealogies and cast doubts on their authenticity.⁶⁴

Though the Gosains took over trade and important strategic establishments, yet even in the eighteenth century the Bhairava temples (Nath) continued to receive grants.⁶⁵ At the beginning of British rule Gumani attests to the importance of the ascetic orders in Kumaon; he has a couplet for each sect in his poetry.⁶⁶ In the

⁶¹ H.K. Raturi, *Garhwal ka Itihas*, reprint 1988, Tihri, p. 28; S. P. Dabral, *Garhwal ka Naveen Itihas*, Dogadda, 2044 V.S., p. 266, suggests 1443 CE.

⁶² Mohan Lal Babulkar, "Devaprayagiyon ka Jatiya Itihas", *Anvar Purvasi 1990*, Almora, pp. 45–52.

⁶³ S. Adhikari, *Paschim Nepal ko Anveshan*, Kathmandu, 2043 V.S. p. 34; Bhanushahi Shake 1462 ko Kagazpatra.

⁶⁴ M.P. Joshi, "Kumaun Vamsavalis, Myth and Reality", *Himalaya Past and Present*, Volume I, Almora 1990, pp. 201–244.

⁶⁵ "Grant in 1783 to Bhairava Temple in Almora (Nath) by Raja Mohan Singh, E.T. Atkinson", *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, 1981, Volume II, part II, p. 604.

⁶⁶ Gumani, *Gumani Collection*, pp. 33–35.

nineteenth century, E.T. Atkinson found that “the Kanphata Jogis conduct the worship in all the Bhairava temples that are not ministered to by Khasiyas ... They are very numerous in these hills and possess several large establishments. They are the great priests of the lower Shakti forms of Bhairava and even of the village gods”.⁶⁷ In the early years of the twentieth century, G.W. Briggs also found the Kanphatas in the various shrines of Bhairon.⁶⁸ He even found women priests officiating over certain temples in Kumaun. The Kanphatas were in charge of the Bhairava temples and according to B.D. Pande they followed left-hand practices. We thus find that the Nath tradition continued to play an important role in Kumaun’s cultural life.

Though large sections of the peasantry remained loyal to the Jogis (Naths), but because of royal patronage, by the nineteenth century the Gosains clearly outnumbered the Jogis. Resumption of some of the *Goonth*/Temple lands on which the ascetic orders had survived probably undermined the entire tradition.⁶⁹ The 1872 Census recorded 1,726 Jogis and 3,860 Gosains in the Kumaun Division.⁷⁰ In 1891, the Almora Census recorded Nath and Das as

⁶⁷ E.T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, reprint 1981, n. 48, Volume II, part II, p. 783; For Kumaon district the figures for Gosains are 3860 in 1872 and 2940 in 1881, Vol. III, Part II, p. 430.

⁶⁸ G.W. Briggs, *Gorkhanath and Kanphata Yogis*, Calcutta 1938, p. 139. “Besides this, Gorakhnathis serve as pujaris or officiants, at various temples, especially to those of Bhairon and Sakti, and at some temples of Siva. In Benares they serve as priests of Kal Bhairon, and in the Himalayas, e.g. Almora, they are in possession of many temples of Bhairon, where they conduct worship. Some of these places of worship, as already stated, are in possession of women of the sect. All of the temples of Bhairon except those where Khasiyas serve, these Yogis often act as priests for the village gods. In the Himalayas they serve as priests of the lower Sakti worship and of the village gods.”

⁶⁹ J.O’B. Beckett, *Report on the Revision of Settlement in the Kumaon District carried out by J.O’B. Beckett 1863–1873*, Part II, Allahabad 1874, pp. 14D–15D.

⁷⁰ E.T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, 1882, reprint 1981, III, II: pp. 430–431.

separate groups alongwith Saniasis and Dasnamis.⁷¹ E.H.H. Edey, *Census of India 1921* compilation indicates that the Dasnamis and Saniasis were dominant in Katyur Bichla and Malla, Chaukot Malla and Talla, Tyunara, Phaldakot, Borarao Walla, Talla Palla and Malla Sult, Patti Bel in Gangoli, Rithagarh and Lakhanpur.

By 1931, Naths were included in the category of Doms.⁷² How had this happened? In the late nineteenth century, Atkinson noted that,

They follow the Tantrika ritual, which is distinguished by its licentiousness, both ling and yoni are worshipped by them and they declare that it is unnecessary to restrain the passions to arrive at release from metempsychosis.... They eat flesh and drink wine and indulge in the orgies of the left handed sect.⁷³

But,

The more respectable and intelligent, whatever their practice in secret may be, never profess in public any attachment to the grosser ceremonial of the left-hand Saktas, and it is only fair to say that they generally reprobate it as opposed to the spirit of the more orthodox writings.⁷⁴

Clearly Nath practices were not acceptable to those advocating Vedic upper caste patriarchal conformist traditions. One of the reasons for the denial of Nath practices could be linked to the fact

⁷¹ *District Census Statistics North West Provinces and Oudh Almora District*, Allahabad 1897; Almora District 1891—Dasa-199; Nath-610; Saniasi/ Dasnami-779 (compiled).

⁷² A.C. Turner, “Caste in the Kumaun Division and Tehri Garhwal State” *Census of 1931*, Allahabad, p. 557, “(38) Nath or Jogi—Beggars, found in Garhwal and Tehri Garhwal. They call themselves followers of Guru Gorakhnath, pierce their ears and wear heavy glass or wooden ear-rings. Many of them have taken to cultivation as well for a living”.

⁷³ E.T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, 1882, reprint 1981, II, II: pp. 865–866.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 865.

that notions of the ideal family prototype had changed and the Nath practice of women ascetics controlling temples and going on pilgrimages independently may have not found favour with the modern intelligentsia.⁷⁵

The shift is evident in E.S. Oakley's 1905 book on the religion and traditions of Kumaon and Garhwal, which does not refer to the Nath, with the exception of Ganganath of Doti who is recorded as a favourite of the Doms.⁷⁶ In the last decades of the twentieth century, analysis of folk traditions noted the large number of references to the Nath but did not provide any details about their practices.⁷⁷ Though place names identified Kumaun as Nath country, the focus and control of temples and institutions had shifted to the Brahmans and their belief systems. Mohan Lal Babulkar laments the fact that Nath is now restricted to temples though their presence is evident in the folk traditions of Uttarakhand.⁷⁸

The construction of a non-Khasa, upper caste Kumauni identity sought legitimacy from the Gosains with the help of the local Brahmans who were responsible for the elaboration of a pan-Indian mythology. The compilation of the *Manaskhand*, a Sanskrit treatise during the late Chand period, was part of this strategy. The

⁷⁵ G.W. Briggs, *Gorkhanath and Kanphata Yogis*, Calcutta 1938, reprint 1973, p. 34, "Some women receive initiation. These are either married women or those who enter the sect after the death of their husbands. In Almora, in 1924, there was one Saraswati (Nathni), a widow whose husband had been a landlord. After his death she was initiated into the Satnath sub-sect at Almora. She had been on pilgrimages as far as Hing Laj. She was a pujari at a temple of Bhairon in her own house. On her arm was a brand mark received at Koteswar. Her coconut begging bowl was from Bhuj in Kacch. In her rosary of thirty two beads she wore a taviz, or amulet; black stones from Badrinath; and large, white stones from Hing Laj, set in silver".

⁷⁶ Also B.D. Pande, *Kumaun ka Itihas*, reprint 1990, p. 661.

⁷⁷ Prayag Joshi, "Lok Gathaye aur Gorakhnath ki Parampara", in *Kumaun Garhwal ki Lok Gathaye: Ek Sanskritik Adhyayan*, Bareilly 1990, pp. 23–27.

⁷⁸ Mohan Lal Babulkar, "Himalaya-Kedarkhand mein Nath", in *Purvasi 14*, 1993 pp. 87–91 and Mohan Lal Babulkar, *Garhwali Lok Sahitya ka Vivechanatamak Adhyayan*, Prayag 1964.

Manaskhand claimed a high pedigree by professing to be a part of the *Skanda Purana* (Pande 1989:17). This composition followed the form of the earlier Puranas and was written in the form of a dialogue between Vyasa and Suta, though in certain sections it appears to be a dialogue between Vyasa and Dattatreya. It provides information about natural resources and documents with great care the confluence of various streams that run north to south in this region. It describes the country from Nanda mountain to Kakagiri in western Nepal that includes the Kailash Manasarovar region. The pilgrim route, according to this text, was Kurmanchal Marg from Lohaghat to Jageshwar, Patal Bhubneshwar, across the Ramganga river to Pavan Parvat to Dhvaj Mountain, across Jauljibi to Chaudans Byans to the origin of the Kali river, from there to Puloman Mountain Tarak and Gauri Parvat to Manasarovar. After bathing in Manasarovar on the return journey the pilgrim was to go to Rakshas Tal, Kailash, origin of Saryu, Khojarnath towards Baidyanath in Nepal and from there to Jwala Devi in western Nepal. This constituted the major pilgrimage circuit. The geography of the *Manaskhand* therefore included Kumaun, western Nepal and western Tibet.

The construction of a new sacred geography helped appropriate the mountains and rivers of the Himalaya for the greater gods of Hinduism. These were attempts to transform local traditions. The *Manaskhand* appears to have had a limited impact, but by the early twentieth century it helped promote an upper caste vision of Kumaun.⁷⁹ E.T. Atkinson, Kumaun's colonial ethnographer granted it a pride of place in his historical account, "the work itself is very popular and is deeply interesting as showing the form in which the actual living belief of the people is exhibited", yet even he was unable to identify many of the details. He confessed that though

notes are given explaining all the allusions and identifying most of the places mentioned. The writers have transferred many of the names of rivers celebrated elsewhere to comparatively unimportant streams in the vicinity of

⁷⁹ B.D. Pande, *Kumaun ka Itihasa*, Almora 1990, p. 162–178.

celebrated Tirthas and these have in many cases been forgotten or have existed merely as literary fictions known only to the educated few: hence one of the main difficulties in identifying the names given here.⁸⁰

It is interesting to find that the term Kurmanchal for Kumaun can also be traced to the *Manaskhand*. The Champawat region was referred to as Kamadesh in the Purushottam Singh Inscription of 1255 and 1275 CE.⁸¹ By the fifteenth century, the Bhabhar-Tarai region was referred to as Kamaun or Kumaun. Later on the region was closely identified with a well-known mutt of the Nathpanthis, Kama Goonth. G.W. Briggs in his book has a picture of the Mahant of Kama dated 1924.⁸² The *Ain-i-Akbari* referred to Sarkar Kumaun,⁸³ but by the period of the *Manaskhand* the Kranteshwar mountain was sacred because of the birth of the Kurma Avatar (Tortoise Incarnation) here, and therefore the designated name was Kurmanchal for the region.⁸⁴ Even today, this region is referred to as Kumu but upper caste groups preferred to think of Kumaun as Kurmanchal, a name with clear-cut Sanskrit origins.

Defining the Hindu: Positing the Sacred

We find that though local beliefs are mentioned in the writings of the modern intelligentsia, they primarily expound a religious belief system, that endorses “the worship of the greater gods of modern Hinduism”.⁸⁵ The Kumaun intelligentsia advocated

⁸⁰ E.T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, 1882 II, I, p. 298.

⁸¹ S.P. Dabral, *Uttarakhand ke Abhilekh evam Mudra*, Dogadda, pp. 94–97, 4th line of inscription refers to Kamadesh and describes it as a region known for its beauty and its prosperity. R.N. Pandey, *Making of Modern Nepal*, Delhi 1997, p. 155 refers to Vajracharya who has translated Lakshmana years 51 and 74 to 1312 and 1332 of the Vikrama era and hence calculated inscriptions as dated 1255 and 1275, respectively.

⁸² G.W. Briggs, *Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Jogis*, reprint 1973, plate IV and Kama village is also listed in the *Census of Almora District*, 1951, p. 234.

⁸³ S.P. Dabral, *Kumaun ka Itihas, 1000–1790*, Dogadda, p. 13.

⁸⁴ G.D. Pande (ed.), *Manaskhand*, Varanasi 1989, p. 279.

⁸⁵ E.S. Oakley, *Holy Himalaya*, First published 1905, reprint 1990, p. 162.

reforms, which were in consonance with a Brahmanical world-view and attempted to impose these beliefs on other groups. In its confrontation with Christianity, the intelligentsia was even more categorical about its religious beliefs; Vedic and Brahmanical Hinduism were clearly articulated and adhered to. During the 1860s and 1870s, north India was affected by Christian efforts at reform and conversion. We find a large number of references to debates between Christian preachers and Muslim and Hindu theologians. These debates were conducted in public platforms and were engaged in with integrity and commitment by the participants. There are references to individuals who even accepted a change of faith as a consequence of being defeated in this war of words. The ideological atmosphere was therefore reasonably charged, and it was the new/modern intelligentsia that infused the exchange with intellectual and emotional intensity.

The advent of the London Missionary Society in Almora in 1850 was an important historical event, because it brought English education to the Kumaun hills. Yet the London Missionary Society had not come all the way to Almora only to provide natives with English education but rather with the avowed purpose of bringing, “the glorious gospel of the blessed god to the heathen”.⁸⁶ Evangelical work therefore went hand-in-hand with the establishment of the mission school, and the first instance of a Kumauni conversion to Christianity was in 1861.⁸⁷ Conversion required persuasion and the missionaries realised the need to make Christian literature available to the locals in Hindi, if not in Kumauni. Reverend Budden was busy translating Christian tracts. The *Choupai Sheet* was published in 1854. The *Dharmadhari Pariksha Patra* was followed by the translation of Muir’s *Matapariksha* from Sanskrit in 1856 and in 1865 he specially wrote a tale for Christian women entitled *Phulmani and Karuna*.

The Methodist Episcopal American Mission opened a school in Dwarahat in 1871, a dispensary in Lohaghat in 1873, a leprosy

⁸⁶ Fundamental principles of the London Missionary Society, Indian Council of World Missionary Archives henceforth *I.C.W. M.A.*

⁸⁷ Report by Budden, *I.C.W.M.A.*

centre in Pithoragarh in 1885.⁸⁸ After the school in Dwarahat, a number of mission schools were established in Katyur, Bageshwar, Berinag, Lohaghat, Johar, Darchula and Chaudans (Pande 1990). In Nainital, the mission opened a number of schools and also established a church. During the 1870s and 1880s, the missionaries were able to extend the area of work and, were able to establish their credibility. James Kennedy visited Ranikhet in 1869, and has written about his work in his well-known book, *Life and Works in Benaras and Kumaun (1882)*.

By 1871, the missionaries had made some inroads into Kumauni society, attested to by the conversion of Tara Dutt Pant, a former pupil, who was baptised at Varanasi. Though of a good family, Tara Dutt was not much of an asset to the Church, because he failed to attract fellow Brahmans, this was despite the fact that he was entrusted with the responsibility of teaching scripture at the school.⁸⁹ Budden decided to continue his effort to generate discussion on religious matters and supported the establishment of the Debating Club, which had a committee called Sat-Sabha for the discussion of religious matters. Besides this, from 1872, Budden started organising Saturday meetings for the purpose of conversation on missionary topics, the scriptures, their interpretation and other personal subjects. The new intelligentsia that emerged from the mission school, not only attended these meetings, but also helped Budden in organising a night school for local artisans.

Budden's strategy was to try and draw converts to Christianity from the new intelligentsia. He was opposed to the practice of baptising all and sundry. He preferred self-conscious and educated people who would be consistent in their faith. In his reports to the mission in London, he was critical of those missionaries who were not discreet about baptising people. He noted,

the youth baptised in 1861, has since relapsed into immorality and apostasy, and our former catechist has been found to be

⁸⁸ Rahul Sankrityayan, *Kumaun*, Varanasi, V.S 2015, pp. 178–180.

⁸⁹ Report of 1871, *I.C.W.M.A.*

unworthy of confidence. It was I believe that under his influence Mr. Hewitt baptized two other adults who have since given much trouble, though I am happy to say that they have not openly departed from the truth.⁹⁰

Budden found this experience heart rending and was extremely disturbed by the fact that “many of the native Christians do not follow the doctrines of the scriptures”. He felt an overwhelming need for the translation of the Gospel and in 1875, at the Conference of Urdu and Hindi Christian literature he proposed the publication of a Hindi magazine to be printed in Devanagari accompanied with a translation in English. This proposal was accepted and Budden was appointed co-editor and the magazine entitled *Aryan* started publication from Mirzarpur in 1876. This magazine proposed to discuss social, political, scientific and general matters “but its main object was to meet the case of those young men, who are now so numerous everywhere, who are cut adrift from their old moorings without compass, and to show to them in all possible ways, that the only secure refuge for sinful man either in time or eternity, is the cross of Christ” (Winter 1873).

Despite the conversion of one Gaur Brahman in 1874, Budden did not find his task easy. In discussion, he encountered many questions about the conduct of native Christians by the “surrounding heathens, who asked what is the difference between themselves and the professed Christians”,⁹¹ Budden himself encountered some difficulty in answering these questions and noted that “there are amongst the native Christians, a good many who are Christians in mere name, but their conduct and behavior are not at all consistent with the plain doctrines of the scriptures, the number of rice Christians”, created problems.

In this context, the visit of Ram Chandra Basu, a native preacher appeared particularly opportune. His lectures began in 1877 and were repeated in the two subsequent years; Budden reported “on each occasion they have been productive of efforts

⁹⁰ Report of 1871, *I.C.W.M.A.*

⁹¹ London Missionary Society, Almora, *I.C.W.M.A.*



highly conducive to our great object. It was seen to be precisely the agency needed to meet the exigencies of our work, to bring to light the progress already made and to give it an increased impetus”.

Budden’s groundwork coupled with R. Basu’s lectures yielded good results. In 1879, Almora witnessed three baptisms, all three equally significant. One was the conversion of a young girl studying at the bazaar school who refused to get married to a heathen and the other two were brothers from a respectable Rajput family. They were residents of the boarding school and the missionaries despite their earnest avowals refused to baptise them till their uncle Nain Singh C.I.E. had been informed. He tried to dissuade them from committing themselves but to no avail, and on 28 June 1879 they were baptised. One of them, Uttam Singh Rawat would prove to be a great asset to the missionaries.

The “native” community in Almora in the meanwhile was articulating its response to the missionaries as promoters of knowledge, both sacred and profane. The advantages of English education were becoming more and more apparent to them as the colonial economy began impinging more explicitly upon their existence. Budden found that he was inundated with requests from local inhabitants who wanted to learn English. The number of school students had also increased and by 1888–89, Kumaun had one college, three high schools, 17 middle schools and 204 village schools, where a total of 10,927 students were enrolled.⁹² To the local people, English education provided an opportunity for employment. As E.S. Oakley noted, “a further result of English education in India has led to an idea that the aim of school and college life is to get Government service only that and nothing more”.⁹³ Budden’s expectation that his students would be drawn towards Christian Enlightenment, were not fulfilled. Inhabitants of Kumaun had a rather mercenary attitude to English education,

⁹² *Administration Report of the North Western Provinces*, Allahabad, 1888–89.

⁹³ E.S. Oakley, *Holy Himalaya*, first published 1905, reprint 1990, p. 47.

and their response to the diffusion of Christian ideas was also not over enthusiastic.

The establishment of the Sanskrit Pathshala by the members of the Debating Club of Almora was clearly an attempt to retain control and access to traditional learning. The importance of Sanskrit was well recognised and L.D. Joshi himself a product of the mission school and later a Munsif exhorted all fellow Kumaunis, “to teach Sanskrit to your children, because he feared a class in Kumaun who ridicule everything Oriental, who think that all that is associated with progress has come from the west, and that Indians are mere fools or idiots”.⁹⁴ This mode was not lost on Budden who reported in his *Annual Report for 1878* that

another fact of some importance should be mentioned ... a movement amongst the party of the orthodox Hindus to counteract the effect of the mission and other teaching upon the prevailing opinions and practices of the rising generation. This was shown in the establishment of the Sanskrit school, although all rivalry and opposition to the Mission School are emphatically disavowed, there is good reason to believe that its avowed object is to avert further innovation.

Budden had assessed the situation correctly; the Sanskrit Pathshala was a joint initiative of the modern and traditional intelligentsia. A keen awareness of historical tradition was being inculcated in the new intelligentsia simultaneously with the historico-critical outlook, and this new identity forged for itself a code that was introspective, without being subservient. The success of the conversions and the inability of the Hindus as a community to take action against them was disconcerting and we find that when Reverend Ram Chand Basu visited Almora in 1879, two Kumauni Pandits stood up and countered his lectures; one of the Pandits spoke in defense of Hindusim, whereas the other argued against the basic tenets of Christianity (as perceived by Reverend Basu). We do not have any details about the Pandit who defended Hinduism, and it appears that he did not make a significant impact

⁹⁴ L.D. Joshi, *Diaries*, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

on the people assembled in the lecture hall. L.D. Joshi does not even mention the Brahman who defended Hinduism. The Pandit who argued against Christianity, however “produced a considerable impression at the time and it was subsequently published in the native vernacular periodical and afterwards in a pamphlet form in Almora”. L.D. Joshi observed,

Pandit Badari Dutt Joshi a learned pleader of our town, stood up and being ill, read out a written address in Hindi attacking the Christian religion. The paper was written in excellent Hindi, and was entitled ‘Christianity Destroyed’. The language was forcible and vigorous and the arguments well thought out and convincing and the learned Pandit claimed that he had by his arguments destroyed the stronghold of Christianity. Mr. Basu could not have been expected to reply to the learned Pandit’s arguments then and there at the spur of the moment so he asked Reverend Budden to reply to them afterwards, and Budden took up the challenge and his reply was called ‘Christianity Indestructible’.

The detail with which this event has been conjured up in the *Diaries* of L.D. Joshi, tells us about the impact it had upon an impressionable lad of 14 years. The *Diaries* reveal a man who regards the advent of English education as a remarkable sign of progress but who is very agitated that, “no effort has been made by Hindus to impart religious education to their children and Hindus know more about other religions than their own”. B.D. Joshi (who spoke up against Ram Chandra Basu) belonged to the Shalakhola branch of the Joshis and was well known for his brilliance. He wrote regularly for the *Kavi Vachan Sudha* published from Varanasi. This paper edited by the famous Hindi poet Babu Harish Chandra was a fairly radical Hindi magazine during this period. Joshi was also well known for his lectures on polygamy and other related topics. He would later be granted the honorary title of Rai Bahadur and would also be made a District Judge.

Despite the nature of the attack, the missionaries were not displeased because the cultivated attitude of indifference adopted by many Hindus had been shattered and the missionaries were

now presented with the opportunity long deserved of considering at length the objections raised against the Gospel. The Pandit's lecture was published along with a commentary in Budden's journal *The Aryan*, in dialogue form and later as a book in Hindi and English.⁹⁵ The outburst was momentary and B.D. Joshi himself was rather disconcerted by the reaction of many contemporaries who did not approve of such out-spokenness and Budden who wanted to capitalise the situation soon realised that though "the discussion had attracted some attention in Almora, it is hardly likely to lead to any further untoward results".⁹⁶

The next 10 years appear to have passed by in amiable accord. The Mission School attendance continued to rise with many students coming from outlying areas staying in the boarding school. In March 1886 the *Almora Akhbar* noted that "the Director of Public Instruction has clearly shown in his report that the Almora Mission School did much better than the Agra St. John's College ... Mr. White has recommended an increase in the grant to the Almora Mission School and it may be hoped that the local government will accede to his recommendation."⁹⁷ The school had done well.

By early 1889, the tone of the *Almora Akhbar* changed when it reported a missionary attempt at converting Raghubar Dutt Joshi, a young Brahman lad who was a resident of the boarding house. The details were as follows,

his relatives coming to know of the matter, removed him from the boarding house to his maternal uncle's home. Miss Budden and Reverend Mr. Bullock went to the house and claimed to take him back to the boarding house, but he did not agree. Miss Budden then charged the relatives with having poisoned him and sent the Civil Surgeon to examine him... the charge was unfounded. Mr. Bullock then

⁹⁵ Pandit B.D. Joshi, *Christianity Indestructible or Pandit Badri Datt Joshi's Lecture "Christianity Destroyed"*, Mirzapore, 1880.

⁹⁶ L.M.S. Almora, *I.C.W.M.A.*

⁹⁷ *Almora Akhbar*, cited in *Native Newspaper Reports*, March 1886.



complained to the District Magistrate that the boy was under wrongful confinement. Mr. Giles saw the boy at his own home ... his answers satisfied him.⁹⁸

The newspaper added that the Hindu community of Almora showed remarkable unity,

that the proceedings of the missionaries annoyed the whole native community of Almora, and the students of the college tore up their Bibles and threw the leaves in public thoroughfares. On Monday when a boy refused to read the Bible, the Reverend Mr. Bullock ordered him to go out, on this the whole class left the school. Next day, the Reverend Mr. Bullock told Babu Jugal Kishore B.A., a Professor in the college, that his services had been dispensed with by the college committee. As soon as Pandit Hari Ram Pande B.A. the Headmaster heard of his dismissal, he tendered his resignation.

The repercussions of this event were wide-ranging in communitarian and institutional terms. The Hindu community responded by starting a private school, established by some public-spirited men to provide education for the boys who did not want to attend the missionary institution. The significance of this event can be traced from the Ramsay School Records that provide us with the names of 822 registered students for the year 1889. It appears that in the initial flush of anger about 93 students left the school, but over the year 139 students were withdrawn from the school. Of these 139, 116 were Brahmans, 23 were non-Brahmans and one was a Muslim.⁹⁹ The Hindu School was established on 8 February 1889 and was later taken over by the District Board and thereafter was referred to as the Government Zila School. In the first year itself it had enrolled 262 students¹⁰⁰ and went on to become a high school in 1910. It was eventually upgraded to an Intermediate College in 1921.

⁹⁸ *Almora Akhbar*, cited in *Native Newspaper Reports*, 17 February 1889.

⁹⁹ Compiled from School Registers Ramsay School Almora.

¹⁰⁰ *Almora Akhbar* cited in *Native Newspaper Reports*, 9 July 1891.

For the missionaries, the only mitigating factor in the whole scenario was that not all the Hindus deserted them. From the author of the *Diaries* (L.D. Joshi of Selakhola) we know that, “the Danya and Chinakhan Joshis sided with the missionaries, the other Brahmans, the Joshis of Galli, the Pants of Tyunara, the Pandes of Champanaula and Pandekhola were arranged against them”. The perception of the author is clearly that the Danya and Chinakhan Joshis were those sections of the Brahmans who, though of lower social status, had received British patronage. The other lineages of Brahmans who had not been nominated to good government jobs resented the Danya and Chinakhan Joshis and denied them equal status.

The missionaries were not completely abandoned but it is apparent that they had lost the battle. By 1892 things were settling down and the hostile feeling of “parties” was passing away, but the missionary zeal had lost its cutting edge. E.S. Oakley reported in 1892 that he had prepared for the scripture class as carefully as for the pulpit but, “if the question be asked what is the result, how many have been baptised? I can only say none”.¹⁰¹ The *Annual Report of I.C.W.M.A.* 1893 reflected a change in attitude, the failure of the missionaries was attributed to the fact that “the Kumaunese is a very peculiar specimen of humanity, he is ignorant, almost beyond endurance and he carries this ignorance to such a pitch that it almost drives one to despair ...” in addition “he is superstitious, lazy, self contented, very dirty and full of odd notions, far from converting ... he is sold to idolatory”.

After this the missionary strategy changed, the accent being placed on conversion in the countryside. Bazaar preaching continued in Almora but the focus was clearly elsewhere, and by 1901 the *Annual Report of I.C.W.M.A.* remarked that “the village preachers, teachers and zenana working have continued their labours in the out stations of Hawalbagh, Bageshwar, Someshwar, Katyur, Kapkot and surrounding places as well as Bhotia country”. This was a qualitative change, evident in the importance now

¹⁰¹ London Missionary Society Almora 1892 *I.C.W.M.A.*

acquired by Tara Dutt Pant, and in the very obvious emphasis on medical work rather than on education.¹⁰²

The impact of Christianity on the region was limited and is evident from the figures given below. In 1881, in Garhwal and Kumaun, the number of Christians was 1,286 out of a total population of 11,90,130, which works out to a mere 0.1 per cent of the total population. In 1891, the number of Christians had increased to 2,302 and by 1901 the number had gone up to 3,588.¹⁰³ Even in 1931, the Christians numbered 5,376 in the district of Almora, with a total population of 5,83,302; this works out to 0.9 per cent of the entire population, which means that even in Almora in 1931, the total population of Christians was less than 1 per cent of the total population.¹⁰⁴

Reverend Oakley who arrived in Almora at the turn of the century realised how stupendous the task of conversion was and made a special effort to study the religious beliefs of the local people in an attempt to be more persuasive. The earlier strategy of wooing the upper castes had changed and Oakley invested a great deal of time and effort in trying to understand the religious practices of the common people of Kumaun and Garhwal, and found that

popular religion in the Himalayas may be conveniently divided into two main types—the worship of the greater gods of modern Hinduism, and that of the local deities. In this respect there is a general likeness to the whole of North India, with the exception that the local godlings are perhaps more in evidence here than in other parts of the country.¹⁰⁵

The Christian missionaries now hoped to convert not the educated sections who had well articulated religious beliefs and

¹⁰² I.C.W.M.A., 6086 and 6098 refer to the need for medical work in Bhot and Johar respectively *I.C.W.M.A.*

¹⁰³ Compiled from the Census of 1881 and 1891.

¹⁰⁴ Rahul Sankrityayan, *Kumaun*. Varanasi, V.S 2015, p. 149.

¹⁰⁵ E.S. Oakley, *Holy Himalaya*, first published 1905, reprint 1990, p. 162.

articulated a “high” culture, but rather peasant groups who were less argumentative and not so firmly rooted in the scriptural tradition.

It would appear, however, that more significant in this regard was the change of strategy from conversion of upper caste educated elites to a focus on the men and women of depressed groups who found the caste system oppressive. Budden noted that the depressed classes were more receptive to missionary teaching and reported that

when I go to preach the word of God, I often get little companies of hearers from 8-20 or so. I have visited in all about 13 villages. I have noticed that the people of Dumtola (Doms) listened more attentively than the villagers... their first thought is that if they become Christian they will be able to escape from their position... if only we had any land where such people could be established.¹⁰⁶

Missionary activity did attain a certain measure of success in converting some sections of the depressed classes. The figures for 1931 (Census 1931) show that there were 643 Christians in Kharahi, 616 in Darun, 372 in Mahar, 271 in Almora, 262 in Khasparja, and 128, 48 and 85 in Malla, Bichla, Talla Katyur, respectively. It was the success of missionary activity in Kharahi, primarily an artisanal village that affected the Hindu community, led them to organise a counter movement of Shudhi under the auspices of the Arya Samaj in 1913 to prevent conversion of the lower castes.

In this context, it is important to locate the epistemological change in matters of religious belief that occurred as a consequence of western learning and exposure to Christian theology. The backbone of British religious understanding in the nineteenth century was positivism. It believed that even faith could be proved empirically and argued that all the miracles attributed to Jesus Christ, were documented and historical. The Christian religion

¹⁰⁶ 6867 London Missionary Society Almora, *I.C.W.M.A.*

according to this perspective was not only based upon historical events, elaborated in the scriptures and a clearly identified sacred geography. The missionaries demanded similar empirical proof from Hinduism, which appeared to be more myth than fact. This was the terrain on which the debate on religion was carried out, and which appears to have been accepted by most protagonists. Dayanand Saraswati's response to this was that the Vedas are the infallible, historical and rational texts of the Hindus. It was this response to Christianity, which fostered the growing importance in the Hindu mind of Ram Janma Bhumi and Krishna Janma Bhumi which were attempts to identify Hindu Bethlehems.

The historicising thrust of Christianity was accepted by B.D. Joshi (1880) whose response was to argue that Christ was born when, "this India of ours had attained to the very summit of civilization". He suggested that if Christ had such a momentous impact on the world then it would have registered on the memory of the Aryan race whose history goes further back than the Christian era. He noted, "Oh! It is a wonderful thing! That in such a great country as India in which 2,000,00,000 people live and which is not very far from Palestine, how could the people of this country not hear of even the name of Jesus" (Joshi: 28–29). He went on to say that Christ was rejected by the Jews and, "if these prophecies had been true and were not mere inventions would these people have so knowingly treated them with such disrespect". The missionary responded to B.D. Joshi by arguing that "it is more or less a matter of history and there are some persons, perhaps the Pandit is among them who had not a great partiality for true, authentic history but prefer words of imagination and legends, even though they may be a matter of blind tradition" (Ibid: 49). Joshi, however, chose to contextualise Christian universalism and noted that though he was willing to accept Jesus as an incarnation of God, he could not accept him as the only one. The most significant statement of Joshi appears to be that

God has given to us, as He has to all, a small portion of His favour i.e. discrimination. By means of its light, and the help of the Lord of the world, if we put forth even a little effort and continue searching, thousands of ways will come into

view, by which it will be plain to us that we can very easily get out of this tangled maze (Ibid: 9).

Like most of these debates elsewhere, the missionaries emphasised the importance of Christianity as the religion of the British Empire and premised the superiority of Christian religion upon the achievements of the British Empire and nation. The significance of Christianity as the *Rajadharma* or the king's religion lay in its ability to infuse Indian society with its values that appear to have been accepted by the modern intelligentsia. B.D. Joshi, who swore by his Brahmanical lock of hair and his sacred thread that he would not accept Christianity, nevertheless appears to have advocated social reform in consonance with nineteenth-century Victorian Britain. His denouncement of polygamy and promotion of family values is not that different from the value system advocated by the Christian missionaries.

The nineteenth-century therefore witnessed the development and articulation of a "Hindu" world-view that was the outcome of economic and political changes during the colonial period. By the 1880s and 1890s, associations and organizations, professedly Hindu, were mushrooming all over north India. The two organisations that made their presence felt in this region were the Arya Samaj and the Sanatan Dharma Sabha. Both believed in the caste system, though the Arya Samaj had a more innovative attitude to caste and was willing to grant the "sacred thread" to those groups who had been considered "outside" the pale of Hindu society earlier.

Instituting the Modern: Religion and the Reconstitution of the Social Order

The debate about Christianity in Kumaun during the 1880s and the consequent reaction against proselytisation in the 1890s indicated the changes in the mindset of the intelligentsia which was responding to the new social order of the colonial period. In the 1890s, the Gaurakshni Sabhas were organised all over north India, and in Almora too the sale of Dayanand's picture with the

cow was extremely popular.¹⁰⁷ The Kumaun intelligentsia's agitation regarding cow protection is evident in the *Almora Akhbar* comment that though people derive great benefits from kine, surprisingly no community other than the Hindus recognises this and that government officers unaware of this choose to harass cow protection societies. Commenting upon the Poona riots, it noted that "no improvement in the relations between Hindus and Muslims at Poona, or in the country appears to be possible until cow killing has been entirely stopped and when the authorities show no favour to one community against another".¹⁰⁸ The Kumauni intelligentsia also favoured Hindi over Urdu and clearly supported the use of the Devanagari script.¹⁰⁹ This was probably prompted by the fact that during the mediaeval period neither Persian nor Urdu had become the court language of this region. These issues probably facilitated the articulation of a religious consciousness infused with Arya Samaj ideals.

Swami Dayanand toured Garhwal in 1854–55 and attended the Mahakumbh at Haridwar in 1876.¹¹⁰ The impact of his teachings led to the establishment of the Satya Dharma Pracharani Sabha in 1874, which merged into the Arya Samaj in 1875. In the 1880s and 1890s, Ratanpati Pande, Tara Dutt Pant, Gauri Dutt Joshi and Ranjit Singh along with Rai Bahadur Kishan Singh Rawat Milamwal went and met Swami Dayanand. Maha Dev Sharma and Shiva Dutt Sati corresponded with Dayanand and discussed Arya Samaj literature (Joshi, 1992).

In the early period, Nainital and Kashipur were important centres for the propagation of Arya Samaj ideas, but gradually Haldwani also became an important centre and a large number of

¹⁰⁷ J.D. Joshi, *Aditi: A Memorial Volume of the Arya Samaj*, Almora, 1992, p. 5.

¹⁰⁸ *Almora Akhbar* of 16 October 1893, cited in *Native Newspaper Reports*, 28 October 1893; *Almora Akhbar* of 29 October 1894 and cited in *Native Newspaper Reports*, 31 October 1894.

¹⁰⁹ *Native Newspaper Reports*, 15 May and 6 November 1900.

¹¹⁰ S. Pathak, "Uttarakhand Me Samajik Andolanalo Ki Rooprekha", *Pahar* 2, p. 99.

the preachers of the Arya Samaj were able to find an entry point into Kumaun from Haldwani. Swami Satyadeva reached Almora and organised the Shudha Sahitya Samiti which was dedicated to the development of a library for Almora that would provide “clean healthy” literature for the residents of Almora.

The Social Club which was established in the early years of the twentieth century by G.B. Pant, H.G. Pant, Lala Khandelwal, Ratan Singh Rawat, Debi Lal Shah, Hari Singh Bisht etc. was Arya Samaji in vision. The Young Men’s Association was set up in 1907 with a memorandum of association, in which out of 10 rules seven were adapted from the Arya Samaj its members were M.P. Nayak, B.D. Agarwal, C.L. Shah, B.H. Swarup and S.K. Devi. By 1912, C.L. Shah and D.P. Singh had initiated the process for building an Arya Samaj temple at Almora. With the support of Swami Satya Dev and others, the temple was established and completed by 1917.

Gradually the Arya Samaj members promoted social change. The evangelical aspect of Arya Samaj was extremely important during this period, and Arya Samaj practices appear to be influenced by Christian methods of propaganda. Lala Ram Prasad, who later became Swami Ramanand, visited various fairs to disseminate Arya Samaj ideas. Aware of the fact that Christian missionaries had now decided to focus evangelical activity on the Dalit groups, the Arya Samajis realised the importance of work amongst Dalit groups. Khimanand Khulbe was one of the dedicated workers of the Samaj who was the first Kumauni Brahman who not only visited the Dalit¹¹¹ families of Almora, but also drank tea with them as early as 1913.¹¹² From 1914, he taught

¹¹¹ The term Dom, because of its pejorative connotation was replaced by Depressed Classes (used by the colonial state), Untouchables (first used in 1909) and Harijans people of god (used by Gandhian nationalists). The term Dalit was articulated as a self-ascribed term by Jyotirao Phule and later popularised by the Dalit Panther movement of the 1970s; it refers to Dalit as oppressed /crushed by an upper caste consciousness. The term Dalit, a self-ascriptive term, has therefore been preferred in this essay.

¹¹² Obituary of K.N. Khulbe, *Samata*, 10 May 1961.

at the Tamata Night School in the Tamata mohalla. He was the Headmaster of the Almora Middle School and established a school for the Dalits of Rajpur mohalla in Almora.

It appears that the growing success of the Christian strategy of converting lower castes had a role to play in the entry of the Arya Samaj into Ramgarh (Nainital) for *Shudhi* in August 1913. The *Almora Akhbar* of 18 August 1913 reported that the lower castes of Ayar Patta were willing to convert to Christianity if they were not accepted into the Hindu fold. Ram Prasad, the preacher at Haldwani, decided to take advantage of this opportunity to invite Lala Lajpat Rai to initiate Dalit groups into the Vedic religion. Lajpat Rai addressed the meeting at Sunakia village attended by a large number of Dalit families. (A number of those who attended the meeting walked up to 100–150 km to attend the occasion.) The meeting emphasised the importance of education for Dalits, because neither social reformers nor the upper castes could help the Dalits unless they decided to educate themselves.

In a memorial presented to Lala Lajpat Rai by the residents of Sunakia village, the Dalits thanked him for showing them the path of education and enlightenment. They requested him to take interest in providing education to them so that they could get rid off their centuries-old ignorance and help them follow the righteous path. Lala Lajpat Rai, accompanied by some residents of Almora, C.L. Shah, K.L. Shah and H.K. Tamata, was offered food cooked by the Dalits to break caste injunctions against commensality. A resolution was passed at the meeting to set up a Shilpakar Sudharani Sabha. The Shilpakars at this meeting vowed that they would not eat meat and drink alcohol. It was decided to establish schools for the Shilpakars, and Khushi Ram was elected Secretary of the Shilpakar Sudharani Sabha.

The Arya Samaj appears to have upstaged the Christian missionaries who were scheduled to reach Sunakia for conversion on 11 August 1913. The missionaries were furious when they realised that their potential converts had been made into Aryas, and thereby Hindus. They told the Dalits that if they continued

with their subservience to the Hindus then they would never be able to pull out of their Sisyphean situation and would continue to carry stones from Baldhauti and would remain as beasts of burden of the upper castes.¹¹³ A contributor to the *Almora Akhbar* who referred to himself as 'Shaitan ka Shatru' or 'Enemy of the Devil' commented on the situation. He said, that the Christians are not Das, that is slave (referring to the surname of the Christian missionary who was to have baptised the Dalits), but they are the kings. As soon as the Christians decided to work with them and touch them, the Arya Samajis¹¹⁴ deemed them worthy of Shuddhi.

The historic importance of the purification rituals at Sunakia may be located in Shudhi, a ritual process whereby the Arya Samaj cleansed the Dalits and granted them the right to the sacred thread. This meant that the Arya Samaj movement in Kumaun was overwhelmingly about Dalits. Since the 1870s, the movement had been restricted largely to trading groups in Nainital and Almora. The representatives of the Arya Samaj who visited Sunakia with Lala Lajpat Rai belonged to local trading families. After Sunakia they were restricted and their work was mainly confined to the establishment of the Arya temples and orphanages. They probably found it easier to leave the work of evangelising to the Swamis within the Arya Samaj, and the post-1913 history of the Arya Samaj is identified primarily with Dalit groups.

The significance of Sunakia episode was not lost on the Dalits who were all praise for Hari Krishna Tamata.¹¹⁵ He also started a number of night schools in Almora and established a library for Dalits in Tamtyura. The nomination of Hari Krishna Tamata to the Municipal Board in 1914 was primarily because of his pioneering work in providing education for Dalits.¹¹⁶ The appointment of H.K. Tamata gave the Dalits a political visibility in local society, which contributed to the growing popularity of

¹¹³ *Almora Akhbar*, 18 August 1913.

¹¹⁴ *Almora Akhbar*, 22 September 1913.

¹¹⁵ *Almora Akhbar*, 25 August 1913.

¹¹⁶ Private Papers of the Tamata Family Tamata Collection, courtesy M.C. Tamata.

the Arya Samaj and the Shuddhi movement. The number of Dalit students at the special schools organised by the Arya Samaj increased, and according to a report, Khushi Ram, the Secretary had established four schools at Sunakia (18 students), Khara (30 students), Chhakhata (218 students) and Darhal (13 students) by December 1913. This probably gave it confidence in articulating its resentment towards hostile groups.¹¹⁷

The antagonism between the upper castes who did not support Shuddhi and the Arya Samaj activists manifested itself in the events that surrounded the performance of Shuddhi at Kharahi in 1916.¹¹⁸ The performance of Shuddhi and the grant of the sacred thread to the Dalits of Kharahi incensed the upper caste groups who ransacked the village of Kharahi. In retaliation, the Dalits complained to the government. An inquiry was instituted and 22 accused were challaned by the Patwari and summoned by the Deputy Collector. Hari Dutt Pande was nominated to investigate the charges. The accused were finally charge-sheeted in June 1916, and a portion of the ransacked loot was recovered from their possession. By July 1916, a case was registered in the Sessions court, which named 39 accused. Eventually 19 of the accused were punished for their role in the Kharahi episode.¹¹⁹ The indictment of the upper caste for their role in intimidating the Dalits had important repercussions on the social system. H.K. Tamata's grandson told me about the Kharahi episode when I went to Almora in 1996. He had been told about Kharahi as part of the Tamata legend, and though he was not clear about the date, he remembered the details of the episode.¹²⁰ The importance of the testimony was that the Tamatas were able to identify the copper vessels which had been looted by the upper castes since the vessels which had been made by them.¹²¹ M.C. Tamata suggested that some of those

¹¹⁷ *Almora Akhbar*, 15 December 1913.

¹¹⁸ *Almora Akhbar*, 17 April 1916.

¹¹⁹ *Almora Akhbar*, 15 May, 22 May, 3 July and 10 July 1916.

¹²⁰ Conversation with M.C. Tamata.

¹²¹ M.C. Tamata emphasised the fact that every copper vessel made by the local artisans was distinct and bore the imprint of the individual artisan who had created it.

indicted were proved guilty of possessing their own copper vessels! The subversion involved in this episode probably helped imprint it on Dalit memory.

An in-depth probe of Kharahi can help us identify the historical coordinates of change caused by Shuddhi and its impact on caste attitudes. The Kharahi patti was distinct from other agricultural divisions. It was known for its mines of copper and soap-stone and its luxuriant pine forests. During the eighteenth century, when the Gorkhas required more copper, its importance increased, and it was part of Bam Shah's jagir. However, during the nineteenth century, its importance declined, because of the import of British copper sheets, which were cheaper than local copper. By 1840, the Kharahi mines yielded only Re. 1 per annum.¹²² It is evident that Kharahi was in a state of decline. The caste composition of Kharahi patti in 1890 shows an interesting break-up of population. Out of a total population of 2,041, Brahmans were 528, Rajput Chandrabanshis 223, Rajput Khasas 336, and Dalits 782. The Dalits therefore constituted about 38 per cent of the population.¹²³ This was a sizable number and probably gave them the self-confidence and aggression necessary for Shuddhi. In the hamlet of Chhana Kharahi where this particular episode occurred, the Dalits outnumbered the Rajput Negis—the Negis were 47, the Dalits were 88, in the Lagga village of Chhana there were 40 Dalits, which brings the total Dalit population to 128. The Negi Rajputs, who during the Gorkha period had lived off the mining, smelting and metal-making capabilities of the Dalits now found it difficult to maintain their domination. This was precisely why they must have greatly resented the Shuddhis. They themselves were in decline, and could not allow their subalterns this show of status mobility. The bitterness caused by the Shuddhis can

¹²² Captain Henry Drummond, "Report on the Copper Mines of Kumaon", *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, 1838, Volume 3, p. 934 and J.O'B. Beckett, *Report on the Revision of Settlement in the Kumaon District carried out by J.O'B. Beckett*, 1863–1873, Allahabad 1874, Appendix, p. 39D and 40D

¹²³ *Census of India*, District Census Statistics North West Provinces and Oudh, Government Press, Allahabad 1897, Almora Collectorate hand written official notings and numbers.

therefore be placed in the historical context of the erosion of the power of the earlier elites, the Thakurs.

Editorials on Kharahi in the *Almora Akhbar* noted that it is important for Kumauni society to pause and reflect upon the events in Kharahi. They are significant because they indicate major transformations and alert us to the possibilities of major conflagrations.¹²⁴ The editor of the *Almora Akhbar* contested the Pauranic basis for the origin of castes from the various parts of the body of Brahma, but said that most people are afraid to raise the question because they may be regarded as atheists. His formulation about the emergence of caste located it in social exigencies rather than in divine intervention. The story of divine origin of the caste system was questioned and a historical explanation provided, but the editor S. Sanwal clearly did not support the idea of Shuddhi.¹²⁵ The Kharahi episode vitiated the relationship between the upper caste and the Dalits, questioned the patron–client structure of the earlier period and attempted to establish a more contractual non-coercive relationship.

Meanwhile, the Arya Samaj Shilpakar Sabha, was gradually finding its voice. It sent a letter to the newly established Kumaun Parishad (regional organisation).¹²⁶ The letter was a charter of demands, which asked for a radical reorientation of Kumauni society. The tone of the letter was aggressive and stated that the Kumaun Parishad should chastise those who behave rudely with the Dalits, and suggested that it promulgate an order to this effect. The letter expressed great dissatisfaction with the inhuman behaviour of a large number of Hindus who did not allow Dalits to use water from their reservoirs. It noted that the Dalits are invited to the houses of the upper castes and then roughed up and the ritual mark on their forehead is wiped out with shoes, their sacred thread is broken, and their land is snatched away from them. It complained that the preachers of the Arya Samaj were not allowed to carry on their work peacefully. It resented the fact that

¹²⁴ *Almora Akhbar*, 10 July, 17 July and 31 July 1916.

¹²⁵ *Almora Akhbar*, 31 July 1916.

¹²⁶ *Shakti*, 4 February 1919.

in spite of the sacred thread, the Dalits were not granted commensurate status. On the contrary, they were told that the sacred thread did not confer any ritual superiority. It demanded that the Dalits should be allowed to extend their holdings to the populated part of the village and questioned the allocation of the Dalits to the margins of the village. We thus find that Arya Samaj's Shuddhi movement not only provided a critique of the earlier social order, but also provided the basis for its reformulation. The Kumaun Parishad did not respond to this charter and was duly castigated by the Dalit leadership.¹²⁷

The period from 1917 to 1920 was an important one for the Almora Arya Samaj. The Arya Samaj now branched out into other areas. The Arya Stri Samaj was established by V. Devi and started off with a membership of 25. The orphanage was also started (Joshi 1992). The Arya Samaj organised the Valmiki sweepers, established a school for them and renamed their locality (its name was changed from Badokela to Rajapur).¹²⁸ The residents of Rajapur observed a fast on Rakshabandhan day and also performed a Yajna. They resolved not to consume meat and liquor.¹²⁹ At the local fair of Nandadevi, the Dalits of Rajapur did not sing the traditional songs (obscene) nor perform the Hurkyani dance.¹³⁰ Yet it was Shuddhi, which appears to have been the most significant item on the Arya Samaj's agenda. The resistance to Shuddhi from 1913 to 1919, led to the organisation of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha, which was a very vocal critic of the Arya Samaj. Yet the conversion of five Dalits to Christianity in 1919 brought the Arya Samaji and the Sanatani together. One of the five who had been converted was brought before the Sabha, his head was shaved, the mandatory tuft was kept, and he was made to perform *Prayaschitta*. Members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha and the Arya Samaj attended the ceremony.¹³¹

¹²⁷ *Shakti*, 11 February 1919, Khushi Ram, the Secretary of the Shilpakar Sudharani Sabha noted that even the Swarajyavadis did not respond to the charter of demands and said that it is a life and death issue for the Dalits and should be recognised as such.

¹²⁸ *Shakti*, 5 August 1919.

¹²⁹ *Shakti*, 19 August 1919.

¹³⁰ *Shakti*, 16 September 1919.

¹³¹ *Shakti*, 5 August 1919.

The emphasis on Shuddhi continued, and the post-war years saw a remarkable increase in the number of Shuddhis. This can probably be linked to economic changes, particularly the increase in wages. The Dalits constituted a major portion of skilled wage labour, and a growing market and demand for their services may have resulted in status mobility. At the seventh Annual Conference of the Shilpakarni Sabha, the Secretary reported that in 1918–19, individuals had been purified and entered the Arya Samaj.¹³² One hundred Shilpakars attended the 1919 (Bhowali) session of the Nainital Shilpakar Sudharani Sabha.¹³³ The process of Shuddhi and conversion appears to have been greater in the urban centres of Kumaun-Nainital, Haldwani, Jaspur, Kashipur and Almora. The converts in this phase were displaced urban artisans and mining groups.

Meetings were now held in other urban centres like Bhowali, Mukteshwar and Ramgarh.¹³⁴ From there the preachers fanned out to Chaubainsi and Dhyaniarau.¹³⁵ They continued to meet with resistance. In Inan Patti, the Rajputs were very angry and a large group of Rajputs confronted the Dalits who were returning home after the Shuddhi. Stones were rained upon them and their cooking vessels were broken, the Dalits ran away to Bhowali and Ranikhet, some of them were grievously injured.¹³⁶ In Sungarkhal, the Shuddhi was resisted by the Saunagari, a mining community which had been granted the sacred thread by the Dharmadhikari, during the Gorkha regime.¹³⁷ Yet in spite of these obstacles, the Arya Samaj continued with its work. In Ramgarh, 150 were initiated, 162 in Bhumka, 17 in Belna, 96 in Brahmadhar, 300 in Chaubainsi, 105 in Mahangir and another 300 again in Ramgarh.¹³⁸ Meetings were also held in Harauli, Debidhura, Shirmodia, Khurpatal and Bhumiadhar. Large number of delegates attended the Eleventh

¹³² *Shakti*, 26 August 1919.

¹³³ *Shakti*, 4 November 1919.

¹³⁴ *Shakti*, 13 April and 14 September 1920.

¹³⁵ *Shakti*, 5 October and 12 October 1920.

¹³⁶ *Shakti*, 5 April 1921.

¹³⁷ *Shakti*, 13 April 1921.

¹³⁸ *Shakti*, 14 September 1922.

Annual Conference at Dhari near Mukteshwar; 500 people represented 40 villages.¹³⁹

Gradually the scope of Shuddhi was extended to other non-Dalit groups. Its preachers were invited to redeem those who originally belonged to upper castes but had been out-casted. In 1924, Bachiram Arya granted Shuddhi to a Muslim family of Bhimtal. This family which was not originally Dalit but Rawat, had some years ago been out-casted by the Hindus because the family had dined with members of other castes.¹⁴⁰

The Dalits who had performed Shuddhi declared themselves Aryas and at its Eighth Annual Meeting of 28 and 29 August 1920, the Sabha passed a resolution that for the next census, the Dalits would register themselves as Shilpakars and not Doms. Shuddhi, however, did not automatically translate into higher caste status, because social reform cannot be a unilateral measure, and Dalits were not accepted as equals by other caste groups. One such episode occurred in Nainital when Gusain Ram Arya was accused of feeding a Brahman without informing him that he was an Arya. His case went up before the Honorary Magistrate who held that this amounted to deception that caused a loss of purity of the Brahman.¹⁴¹ He was therefore fined Rs. 30. Similarly, at the annual event in Tarikhet (where an Ashram had been opened by a nationalist group) a large number of people objected to the presence of Khushi Ram and his sacred thread-wearing Shilpakars.¹⁴² Swami Satyadev pleaded on behalf of the Shilpakars and said they were wearing the sacred thread and assured the assembly not to be concerned about loss of caste. His appeal had little effect, and a large number of people left the gathering.

This episode had long-term repercussions and matters came to a head at a public meeting organised in Sult where Khushi Ram, the Dalit leader had to ask Har Govind Pant and Hari Ram Pande

¹³⁹ *Shakti*, 18 September 1923.

¹⁴⁰ *Shakti*, 17 June 1924.

¹⁴¹ *Shakti*, 4 November 1919.

¹⁴² *Shakti*, 16 June 1925.



to come and mediate between his constituency and hostile upper-caste groups. Khushi Ram was advised to stop the practice of Shuddhi. He said he would consult his people and then decide. D.S. Kumwar who reported this to the *Shakti* of 16 June 1925, remarked that the problem was not with Dalits wearing the sacred thread, but rather with their appropriation of Bith (upper castes) status. The Dalits expected that with the sacred thread they would be entitled to enter temples, sweetmeat shops, and the use of water bodies reserved for the upper castes. Thus self-ascription of higher status by the Dalits created problems, because it led to the transgression of caste norms.

Khushi Ram's answer to those who advised him to stop Shuddhi was announced a month later when the Tamatas of Almora decided to go for a swim in the Badrishwar tank.¹⁴³ Most of the water springs in Almora were the exclusive property of the Brahmans and in 1844, Pilgrim noted,

the great majority of the covered stone Naolas are private property, belonging chiefly to Joses and other principal brahmans of the place. In confirmation of the ancient distribution of the springs, these and others were, in Mr. Traill's time, made over exclusively to the Hindoo community; others were set apart for Mussulmans and outcasts; others were declared to be common, but even there, the well must not be defiled by the bheesty's mussuck or Dolochee, and Hindoos are stationed to dispense the element, and pour it into the several receptacles brought. Even the plain sipahees adopt this custom, and the principal Naola in the lines has a guard over it for this purpose. Thus, only a few distant springs, which are blessed with spouts, are open and free to all, and chiefly through the agency of Mr. G. Lushington the commissioner; to these has recently been added, I am happy to say, an aqueduct which brings water from the Simtola hill to the eastern termination of the town.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ *Shakti*, 28 July 1925.

¹⁴⁴ Pilgrim, *Wandering in the Himmala*, first published 1844, reprint Nainital 1990, p. 121.

In this historical context, the use of the Badrishwar tank by the Dalits, created a furore and the Secretary of the Municipal Board served a notice on the Dalits, saying that the tank was reserved for the Bith (upper castes). The Dalits were not cowed down, and Hari Tamata raised the issue at a Municipal Board Meeting and made the Chairman announce that the tank was a public one and was not exclusively reserved for the upper castes.

The Badrishwar episode marked a turning point in the history of Dalit mobilisation. A major conference of the Dalits was held in Deoli Danda on 23–24 September 1925, addressed by Hari Tamata, Khushi Ram Arya and Bachi Ram Arya. The Dalits wanted to hold the conference at Nandadevi in Almora but were not granted the permission to do so. Thousands of Dalits attended the conference and participated in a massive procession.¹⁴⁵ A large number of proposals were also passed by the conference—primary education was to be made compulsory with no fees charged from Dalits, reservation of seats for Dalits in the Municipal Board and the District Board, the recruitment of Dalits to the army, allotment of land to Dalits, a prohibition on caste discrimination and the establishment of a Shilpakar Bank (Dalit Bank).¹⁴⁶ This gave the Dalits a political visibility, and a large number of reports and letters to *Shakti* refer to the organisation of the Dalits. In February 1926, the Dalits again organised a major conference at Bageshwar, and expressed their solidarity on a public platform; the meeting was addressed by various Dalit leaders like Hari Tamata, Khushi Ram, Hari Ram and Bachi Ram Arya¹⁴⁷ Mobilisation for the Arya Samaj continued through 1926 and 1927.

By 1929, the Dayanand Shilpa Vidyalaya Samiti had been established in the Kumaun Division and was working for the economic and social development of Dalit men and women.¹⁴⁸ The Raja of Kalakankar was the patron of the Samiti and provided

¹⁴⁵ *Shakti*, 16 October 1925.

¹⁴⁶ M.A. Ansari, “Kumaun Mein Shilpakar Andolan”, *Pahar* 3–4, pp. 214–217.

¹⁴⁷ *Shakti*, 2 February 1926.

¹⁴⁸ *Shakti*, 3 March 1929.

economic support. Support was also mobilised in Gangoli, Katyur, Danpur, Someshwar and Chaugarkha. The success of the Arya Samaj in Kota during this period led to the initiation of 100 Dalits. The Arya Samaj movement had matured during the two decades of its existence. The physical and symbolic act of Shuddhi itself was no longer regarded as the means for higher caste status. Bachi Ram appealed to his disciples to break out of mental slavery, and exhorted them to recognise the virtues of education, work with the Brahmans on an equal footing and yet be critical of them. The very success of the Arya Samaj, however, would lead to other developments beyond its control.

The following statistics provide us with an idea about the number of Dalits who had been initiated into the Arya Samaj.¹⁴⁹

Census of 1931

| | | |
|----------|---------------------|--|
| Nainital | Total no. of Dalits | 21,011 |
| Nainital | Total no. of Aryas | 15,722 Aryas as per cent of total Dalit pop.—74.8 per cent |
| Almora | Total no. of Dalits | 1,18,710 |
| Almora | Total no. of Aryas | 3,160 Aryas as per cent of total Dalit pop.—2.51 per cent |

Total population,

| | |
|----------|----------|
| Nainital | 2,77,286 |
| Almora | 5,83,302 |

| | Dalit to total pop. | Aryas to total pop. | Non Aryas to total pop. |
|----------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Nainital | 13.2% | 5.67% | 0.7% |
| Almora | 20.89% | 0.54% | 20.35% |

The success of the Arya Samaj in Nainital district was much more than its achievement in Almora. This can be explained in terms of the fact that Nainital district included the mining areas

¹⁴⁹ A.C. Turner, "Caste in Kumaun and Tehri Garhwal", *Census of India 1931*, chapter Twelve, p. 554.

of Ramgarh, the developing urban centres of Bhowali and Mukteshwar, the freshly colonised areas of the Bhabar, Kota, Chhakhata, Chaubainsi, Haldwani and Kathgodam. Nainital also included a portion of the Tarai, where the artisan had been extremely important till the 1890s in the towns of Jaspur and Kashipur. These towns produced cotton fabrics, till the advent of European piece goods displaced their market. In Almora, though the Dalits constituted a larger proportion of the total population, nevertheless they were not concentrated in the urban areas, but were part of village networks, and therefore less mobile. In Almora, therefore, the popularity of the Arya Samaj was limited to Almora town and to the Kharahi Patti, which accounts for the small percentage of Aryas to Dalit population and total population.

The activities of the Arya Samaj brought about some internal changes within the Dalit community. The Arya Samaj encouraged the emergence of a priestly class from among the Dalits themselves, who charged Re. 1 to Rs. 2 per head for each investiture. Turner noted that “nowadays in some parts of Kumaun Shilpakars are emulating the marriage and funeral ceremonies of the orthodox Hindus, but no Brahman officiates, his place is taken either by son-in-law or a sister’s son. They are ignorant of the orthodox rites and Mantras and the whole affair is but an imperfect imitation”.¹⁵⁰ Gradually, a Dalit priestly class took over this role. This may have occurred because earlier Dalit communities were restricted to their locality and the system of cross-cousin marriages prevented the emergence of a regional Dalit community. The function of the Arya Samaj was to provide the vertically divided Dalit community with a wider consciousness of its reach and capability. The hierarchy amongst the Dalits was not questioned, but the sense of community was generated. This was noticed by R.D. Sanwal who during his field work in the late 1950s found that “the Tamatas are taking over formal priestly functions in regard to the Shilpakars ... the emergence of a formal political leadership as well as a priesthood both belonging to the highest

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. pp. 553–571.

stratum is extremely important for the present day social stratification of the Dom".¹⁵¹

The Arya Samaj strategy gave the Dalits a political and social visibility, which they lacked earlier and from 1924, Dalit leaders came under public scrutiny. A report in September 1924, noted that the Dalits are now awakening to their own potential, and remarked upon the great dissatisfaction of the community with the present state of affairs. It added that some leaders were trying to take advantage of this and that they wanted to keep the Shilpakar Sudharni Sabha under their control.¹⁵² They were encouraging a herd mentality and were not interested in promoting the democratisation of the Sabha and the election of the leadership. Khushi Ram Arya and Bachi Ram Arya came in for major criticism because of their autocratic manner.¹⁵³ Khushi Ram was also criticised for his appropriation of the role of the Brahman for the Arya Dalits¹⁵⁴ because he had prevented the solemnisation of a marriage where he had not been invited as the ritual Purohit (priest).¹⁵⁵

By 1925, this refrain was picked up by some Dalits who were critical of the leadership and of the Arya Samaj strategy. These critics noted that the leaders of the Arya movement were taking advantage of the illiteracy of the people and granted Shuddhi without attempting to influence the mindset of the people. They noted that anyone who asks for Shuddhi is granted it and there are no other expectations from them; they continue to live a life which is no different from the pre-Shuddhi phase.¹⁵⁶ The Dalit identity had to now go beyond the parameters of social reform. It had to become part of the political process and align itself with the emerging political currents. Even though nationalists like B.D. Pande and Mohan Joshi welcomed the organisation of the

¹⁵¹ R.D. Sanwal, *Social Stratification in Rural Kumaon*, OUP, 1976, p. 176.

¹⁵² *Shakti*, 17 August 1924.

¹⁵³ *Shakti*, 2 September 1924.

¹⁵⁴ *Shakti*, 6 January 1925.

¹⁵⁵ *Shakti*, 21 December 1924.

¹⁵⁶ *Shakti*, 6 January 1925.

Dalits, they expressed concern about their aggression and growing dependence on the colonial state.¹⁵⁷ 1928 was an important year because it was marked by the advent of the Simon Commission to India to inquire into the question of dominion status for India. The depressed classes presented a petition to the Simon Commission which demanded education, separate representation, entry into government and military services, access to public wells, right to acquire property and the confiscation of Manu's books. A large number of these resolutions reiterated the demands of the Dalits passed at the Shilpakar Sammelan of 1925.

The Shilpakar Sudharni Sabha under the leadership of Khushi Ram favoured the nationalist agenda and sought the cooperation of the local Kumaun people, whereas Hari Tamata advocated a clear cut pro-government position and emerged as a staunch supporter of the government. A satirical report on Hari Tamata said that he was the Guru of the Dalits who denied faith in Ram, Krishna, Nanak, Dayanand and Gandhi. He believed that the saviour of the Dalits was His Highness George V, and was encouraged by government officials who wanted Dalits to support the government.¹⁵⁸ By 1931, the rift was clear. Bachi Ram Arya castigated the loyalist faction of the Dalits and condemned them outright. He declared that a section of the Dalit Arya leadership in contrast to the Adi-Hindu leadership was in favour of joining the national movement for the construction of a better future.¹⁵⁹

The process of Shuddhi by the Arya Samaj enabled Dalit groups to claim higher caste status within the community but this was not acceptable to upper caste Hindu groups. Some Dalit groups were not in favour of adopting the Arya Samaj strategy and wanted to be accepted as Hindus without joining the Arya Samaj. The Saun Agaris of Kumaun had acquired clean caste status from the Dharmadhikari of Chhakhata (Pande 1937: 616) and it was probably this which encouraged the Karki Boras of Kumaun to seek upper caste Hindu support for their movement to acquire a

¹⁵⁷ *Shakti*, 13 October, 30 October 1925 and 23 February 1926.

¹⁵⁸ *Shakti*, 17 August 1929.

¹⁵⁹ *Shakti*, 28 March 1931.



clean caste status. Their movement does not fall within the ambit of the Arya Samaj nor can it be classified as part of the Sanatan Dharma movement.

The Anomalous Situation of the Boras, outside the Domain of the Modern

Who were the Boras, and what was the specificity of their situation? According to E.T. Atkinson, the Boras stated that their ancestor Danukumer lived at Kotalgarh in Kali Kumaun, joined Kirati Chand in his invasion of Katyuri territory, and then migrated to the western region. They were cultivators and were also willing to serve as soldiers: “Around Almora they manufacture the hemp bags known as Kuthela and make mill-stones and other utensils. But those Boras who pursue these handicrafts are despised by their land holding fellow tribesman, and are sometimes indeed not allowed to eat with the latter”.¹⁶⁰ It appears that during the nineteenth century there was an increasing differentiation between the Bora cultivators and the Bora artisans, which manifested in the refusal of the agriculturist Boras to share food with them.

The demarcation between the cultivator groups and the artisans was also evident in the dress which the artisans groups were permitted to wear. M.V. Grundy found the Boras of Berinag:

The most backward class of people in this part of the country ... who were known as Karkis later on. Their dress consisted of a very narrow loincloth ... very few of them had shirts and instead of a coat they used boriyas (gunny) neatly fastened and folded across their breast. They wore round white caps, the shape of a coconut cut in half and due to constant use, and also grease and dirt, their caps had become waterproof, and were used by the people as cups for drinking water when travelling.

He found that, “these Boras were very industrious and hard working people, and they always had the best crops compared

¹⁶⁰ E.T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, 1882, reprint 1981 III, II, p. 434.

with the other people. *Boriyas* or gunny bags and ropes were made from the outer fibre of hemp by the Bora women and girls during the winter months on looms".¹⁶¹ Though Atkinson had classified the Boras as Khasiya Rajputs, by 1921 the artisanal sections amongst them were classified as a Dalit group and E.H.H. Edye placed them in Group I of the Depressed Classes¹⁶² and the Census of 1931 identified them as the sack makers of Almora.¹⁶³

In 1923, Churamani Chandola started espousing the cause of the Karki Boras in the local newspaper *Shakti*. He noted that the Boras of Kamsyar were very simple, industrious and well-behaved. Their lifestyle and behaviour do not justify their classification with the Dalit groups. They render great service to the pilgrims going to Kailash Mansarovar, but are not accorded an appropriate status by the people of Kumaun.¹⁶⁴ In December 1923, he again asked the readers of *Shakti* to support the 4,000 Karkis in their movement for recognition as caste Hindus.¹⁶⁵ There was no response to the suggestion, and though Arya Samaj Shuddhi continued through the 1920s, the cause of the Boras was not espoused by anyone else. It is surprising to find that the Arya Samaj Shilpakars too did not express any interest in the predicament of the Karki Boras, and did not attempt to induct them into the Arya fold. Even at the large conferences of the Shilpakars, the Boras appear to have been unrepresented.

In 1928, D.D. Pant of Lucknow addressed the problem of the Boras. He said that the Boras should declare that on 1 January 1929 they would wear the sacred thread of six strands, and would ask Brahmans to preside over their religious ceremonies.¹⁶⁶ After acquiring Hindu status, the Boras should devote themselves to acquiring education, and live a life in consonance with the

¹⁶¹ M.V. Grundy, *Berinag Old and New*, unpublished manuscript, p. 11.

¹⁶² E.H.H. Edye, "The Depressed Classes of the Kumaun Hills Table III", *Census of India* 1921, XVI.

¹⁶³ A.C. Turner, "Caste in Kumaun and Tehri Garhwal", *Census of India*, 1931.

¹⁶⁴ *Shakti*, 6 November 1923.

¹⁶⁵ *Shakti*, 18 December 1923.

¹⁶⁶ *Shakti*, 22 December 1928.

Dharmashastras, and thus become Brahmans. He argued that Brahman status was not ascribed, but acquired through education. He suggested that the Boras could ask activists like B.D. Pande and G.B. Pant to open schools for them. He exhorted them to help themselves and not supplicate the upper castes. If the Boras expected the upper caste to mobilise on their behalf, then they would be disappointed. Though D.D. Pant did not even attempt to make an intervention on behalf of the Boras, his espousal of their cause created a furore among upper caste groups.

The Sanatan Dharma Sabha mobilised opposition to this proposal of Bora Shuddhi. About 7,000–8,000 people in Ganai Gangoli expressed their opposition to the idea. (An organisation was formed, Thakur Jasodh Singh was elected Sarpanch and Chairman, and Thakur Guman Singh was elected Vice-Chairman.) A long array of speeches harangued the congregation and the meeting arrived at a consensus that the Boras were Dalits and that no Brahmans should perform the purificatory rituals for them. Those who chose to do so would be ex-communicated.¹⁶⁷

The event was reported in *Shakti* and its editor lamented the fact that even today such obscurantist practices were endorsed and that resolutions of this kind could be passed at public meetings. He noted that in a period of change when people were shedding caste identities and when a large number of upper castes had given up the sacred thread, other castes were being denied the right to acquire them. The only fault of the Boras appeared to be their poverty. He congratulated Nitya Nand Pande who raised his voice against the resolution and said that it was not correct to deny this privilege to the Boras. Nitya Nand reminded the crowd at the Gangoli meeting that the issue was one of drinking water and did not involve marriage ties. He appealed to the humanism of the people and said that they should treat the Boras as human beings.¹⁶⁸

The Boras, however, did not accept the decision of the Ganai Gangoli Sanatan Dharma Sabha. They wrote a letter to D.D. Pant

¹⁶⁷ *Shakti*, 12 January 1929.

¹⁶⁸ *Shakti*, 19 January 1929.

asking him to intervene and get the Brahmans to accept them. Pant in his flamboyant style suggested that they should wear the sacred thread and declare themselves Brahmans at the next Census. This advice was preposterous and the Boras probably realised the futility of such a unilateral decision.¹⁶⁹ Dharmanand Joshi of Gangoli now took up the cause of the Boras. He noted that the Boras of western Nepal were not relegated to the caste from whom water could not be accepted. It was therefore possible to accept the Boras as a caste group from whose hands water could be taken.¹⁷⁰

The peculiar predicament of the Boras caught the attention of another reader of *Shakti* who said that for the last few years the Boras have requested the upper castes to accept them as Hindus, but to no avail. Remarking upon the persistence of the Boras, he requested B.D. Pande and H.G. Pant to visit them and work out a solution to their problem.¹⁷¹ Pande and Pant who were Congress functionaries at this time, held important public positions. B.D. Pande represented Almora at the U.P. Legislative Council and Pant was Chairman of the District Board. They both belonged to the upper strata of Kumaun Brahman society and were well known for their social activism. They probably realised that they would be exceeding their brief if they involved themselves in this issue, because they did not exercise any sacred authority, and they did not respond or intervene.

The anomalous situation of the Boras provides an interesting case for the study of the decline of “sacred” authority, which had earlier been exercised by the king and the Brahman nobility during the late Chand period and by the Dharmadhikari during the Gorkha period. British rule “destroyed the formal prescriptions and sanction which maintained the differential distribution of political, economic and intellectual resources and symbols amongst the various status categories...”¹⁷² The problem with the British refusal

¹⁶⁹ *Shakti*, 26 January 1929.

¹⁷⁰ *Shakti*, 16 February 1929.

¹⁷¹ *Shakti*, 16 March 1929.

¹⁷² R.D. Sanwal, *Social Stratification in Rural Kumaon*, OUP, 1976, p. 135.



to continue state management of status affairs created a void which was fulfilled by a constituent descent group of a caste rather than by the caste itself and was generally effective within a small region rather than within the entire area over which the members of the caste were dispersed. The situation of the Boras can be placed within this problematic. Since there was no mechanism for the status enhancement of the Boras within the colonial state system (except for the Arya Samaj). The Boras who had been relegated to a lower status by the cotton wearing upper castes found that though they were no longer regarded with contempt for their use of hemp but they could not translate this ritual into upward mobility.

Eventually the Boras appealed to the Askot Rajbar. The zamindars of Askot were the only ruling “kings” of the region.¹⁷³ They exercised “sacred” authority and adjudicated all cases related to caste issues. Eventually it was the Rajbar of Askot who granted the Boras entry into the caste from which water could be accepted, a right denied them by the peculiarities of colonial Kumaun.

The Hegemony of the Eternal (Sanatan) and the Closure of Tradition

The Arya Samaj and the Sanatan Dharma Sabha from the 1880s to the early 1930s represent the two binaries of Hinduism in the Kumaun region. They have also been viewed from the perspective of reform and revival. It is difficult to categorise either the Sanatan or the Arya Samaji as exclusively one or the other. Both appear to be a response to the contemporary situation that elaborates different strategies towards the caste system, yet both appear to be based upon the Vedantic religion. In the Arya Samaj doctrine, the Vedas have been ascribed the role of the infallible eternal scriptures. Similarly, *Hindu Religion and Ethics*, published by the Hindu College of Varanasi in 1903, regarded the Sanatan Dharma

¹⁷³ E.T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, 1882, reprint 1981, Volume III, Part II, p. 15, “The tenure of land in Askot is unique in Kumaun, it being the only parganah where the form of right in land known as zamindari exists in these hills.”

as Vedic Dharma (Joshi, 1903, reprint 1994:1). The compilers of the book believed science philosophy and religion were based upon the Vedas. The difference between the Arya Samajis and Sanatan Dharmis therefore is not necessarily theological but about activism and social intervention.

In Kumaun, the Sanatanis were not necessarily hidebound by orthodoxy but were circumspect about innovation. The members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha belonged to the upper castes though they were not all Sanskritists or priests. The composition of the Sanatan Sabha also changed over a period of time. A reporter of *Almora Akhbar* remarked upon the attire of the members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha in 1914. He noticed their foreign clothes (Ram Dutt Jyotirvid was dressed in a Kashmiri coat, whereas K. Joshi was in a striped suit). All the items at the meeting were British excluding the lamp and the harmonium.¹⁷⁴ In a critique of the Sanatanis, the editor of *Almora Akhbar* castigated them for their profligate lifestyle, and remarked upon their “feudal” habits. Their fondness for British goods and English education did not find favour with the younger and more radical nationalist generation. This generation said that though they did not choose to wear their caste mark on their forehead, they led a moral and virtuous life. Clearly, the Sanatan group was not identified with the new morality, but with the earlier elites.¹⁷⁵ The Sanatanis were known for their support of British rule; they performed a Yajna in 1916, for the victory of Britain in the war. They supported the war effort and proclaimed their allegiance to the Raj and sent a telegram professing their loyalty to the Viceroy. They were able to mobilise 300 gold coins for the war effort.¹⁷⁶ Thus, the Sanatan in this region appear to be conservative rather than orthodox.

In Almora, a clearly articulated Arya Samaj or Sanatan position is not evident during the events of 1889 and 1890, when Christian evangelists encountered Hindu believers. The Sanatan Dharma Sabha was established in Haldwani in 1903, yet its activities were

¹⁷⁴ *Almora Akhbar*, 19 February 1914.

¹⁷⁵ *Almora Akhbar*, 3 June 1916.

¹⁷⁶ *Almora Akhbar*, 3 July 1916.

not reported, and it was probably a dormant organisation. The emergence of Sanatan organisations is linked to the beginnings of Arya Samaj proselytisation. In Kumaun, the Sanatan Dharma Sabha appears to have first crystallised around the issue of the Hindu taboo against travel across the seas. In 1910, the Sanatan group decided on the ex-communication of Bhola Nath Pande who had just returned from Japan. He had gone to Japan to study sericulture. Not only Bhola Nath Pande, but all his kinsmen were ex-communicated. He performed all the expiatory rituals like going to Haridwar and even announced his expiation through leaflets distributed in Almora, but to no avail. He died a few years later, a broken and unhappy man.¹⁷⁷ His death in 1913, when the Shuddhi process began, heralded the advent of a popular incarnation of the Arya Samaj and the formation of a more active Sanatan Dharma Sabha. Hari Ram Pande who led the group against Bhola Nath was shamefaced and had to disown his son Ashvini Kumar when he decided to go abroad for further studies.¹⁷⁸ In 1924, Gauri Dutt Pande (brother of Bhola Nath) was sarcastic when he noted that the Sanatan Dharma Sabha was not able to establish its writ anymore. A large number of Kumaunis go to Burma, but no one is required to perform shuddhi.¹⁷⁹

In 1913, in response to the Shuddhi, a meeting of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha was held in Almora in the mohalla of Galli. H.R. Tripathi, M.D. Joshi, L.D. Jyotishi, L.D. Joshi, L.N. Joshi, J.D. Joshi and K.D. Shastri attended the meeting.¹⁸⁰ A variety of views about the Sunakia episode were expressed. K.D. Shastri supported the ex-communication of those who would join the purificatory rites. H.R. Tripathi suggested that those who had gone for the Shuddhi should be asked to perform Prayaschitta and those who did not do so should be boycotted. The question then raised was whether it was better for the lower castes to become Christians or Arya Samajis. Shastri felt that the Arya Samaj groups could be

¹⁷⁷ *Almora Akhbar*, 5 December 1913.

¹⁷⁸ Jayanti Pant, Pandit Hari Ram Pande, Dharmanand Pande (eds) *B.D. Pande Smarika*, Almora 1984. pp. 261–270.

¹⁷⁹ *Shakti*, 24 June 1924, debate continued till 29 September.

¹⁸⁰ *Almora Akhbar*, 8 September 1913.

easily classified as a separate group or jati and that would resolve the problem. Others felt that since there was no question of commensality and marriage exchange with those groups, it was not really worthwhile to get too agitated about Shuddhi. The meeting ended on a humorous note about the large number of feasts to Brahmans that would be required for the expiation ceremonies, and all appeared to look forward to this development.

Another meeting of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha was held soon after.¹⁸¹ Ten to eleven members attended the meeting. R.D. Tripathi wanted the arrest of the supporters of Shuddhi, but could not answer under which act they could be booked. Bhavani Singh Tailor was extremely aggressive and hit the floor with his stick and suggested that the Shudhiwallahs be beaten up. Whereupon H.R. Tripathi declared that he was a Brahman and could not participate in any such martial activity. The meeting ended on an inconclusive note with some mention of Dayanand who was staunchly defended by M. Gurrani for his support of Sanskrit learning. The Sanatan Dharma Sabha's attempts to mobilise around the issue of cow protection also were not too successful. Though a large number of people signed the resolution against cow slaughter very few turned up for the meeting.¹⁸²

In June 1916, the Sanatan Dharma Sabha Almora held its Fourth Annual Conference.¹⁸³ The patron of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha was the Maharaja of Alwar who chaired the ceremonies on the first day. On the second day K.K. Tripathi chaired the meeting and the Chairman of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha Almora, M.R. Joshi, read out a resolution in English in support of the government. Kanhaiya Lal delivered a lecture on Sanatan Dharma. On the third day, I.D. Tripathi chaired the conference, and Vidyaratna delivered a lecture on Sanatan Dharma. The support provided to the Sanatan Dharma Sabha by the Rajputs of Almora was noted and they were thanked for their cooperation.

¹⁸¹ *Almora Akhbar*, 22 September 1913.

¹⁸² *Almora Akhbar*, 17 November and 24 November 1919.

¹⁸³ *Almora Akhbar*, 19 June 1916.

The links of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha of Almora and Haldwani with the Sanatan Dharma Mahamandal of north India was evident and it appears that they received guidance and support from the Mahamandal. Nanda Kishore was sent as a representative of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha Almora to attend the U.P. Sanatan Mandal session at Meerut. The resignation of M.M. Malaviya from the Sanatan Dharma movement was a major blow to the organisation and revealed the shallowness of its commitment to Shastric tradition. Malaviya vented his wrath against an organisation that published a tract claiming it as an ancient piece of work, when it was actually a recent piece of scholarship. He requested the Maharajah of Darbhanga and others to prevent further incidents of this kind. During this period, political alignments were also becoming clear and the Sanatan Dharma Sabha was identified with the loyalist camp of Rajas, Maharajahs and the feudal aristocracy who had a vested interest in defending British rule. In Almora too, Maharajah Fateh Singh Deva Varma Bahadur Chandra, the king of Pubaya became the Chairman of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha in 1916.¹⁸⁴

The Sanatan Dharma Sabha till this period did not have a clearly defined agenda. The Almora Sanatan Sabha opened a school for the children of goldsmiths¹⁸⁵ whereas the Sanatan Dharma Sabha of Haldwani stated its opposition to Patel's Bill that sought to legalise inter-caste marriage between Hindus. Sanatan Dharma Sabhas were organised in Munshyari in 1917.¹⁸⁶ Resistance to Shuddhi and Arya Samaj continued but this was offset by the perception of a greater threat from Christianity; reference has already been made to the episode when the Sanatana Dharma supported the Arya Samaj when it brought back into the Hindu fold a young convert to Christianity.¹⁸⁷ This was probably part of a growing emphasis on the importance of Hindu unity, a refrain that gathered momentum in the 1920s.

¹⁸⁴ *Almora Akhbar*, 15 September 1916.

¹⁸⁵ *Shakti*, 27 April 1920.

¹⁸⁶ *Almora Akhbar*, 23 April 1917.

¹⁸⁷ *Shakti*, 25 March 1919.

The success of the movement in 1921 against *begar* and forest laws transformed the political situation; it facilitated the generation of a national consciousness. In 1923, the *Shakti* said that as a Congress newspaper it would no longer publish reports about religious organisations and categorically stated that it would not report the activities of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha and the Arya Samaj. It claimed that though it was not opposed to the idea of a Hindu organisation, it did not support the denigration of other caste groups, and exhorted the Hindu party to introspect before it decided on any course of action.¹⁸⁸ Its ire appears to have been particularly directed at the Sanatan Dharma Sabha which neither supported the *begar* nor the forest movement.

By the 1920s, the Sanatanis were clearly exposed as a loyalist group and earned the censure of a section of Kumauni society. Unfortunately they found themselves further isolated because even the orthodox group did not support their conservative politics. For example, the Brahmans of Mala village known for their scholarship and knowledge of the scriptures came out openly in favour of a less rigid caste system. They granted a letter of authority to the barbers who claimed that they were not ritually impure and could be regarded as a caste from whose hands water could be taken.¹⁸⁹ Similarly, the astrologers who cast the Kumaun calendar favoured the use of the plough by Brahmans and did not condone the new orthodoxy.¹⁹⁰

The censorship of *Shakti* could block news about the Sanatan Dharma Sabha, but even the nationalists (Swarajists) could not ignore the growing unease of the upper caste with the increasing aggressiveness of the depressed classes. In 1924, the *Shakti* carried lead articles about the need for Hindu unity, which was obstructed by caste loyalties. The formation of a Hindu organisation in Haldwani¹⁹¹ prompted Satya Deva Parivrajak to appeal to the Kurmanchalis to organise a Hindu *sangathan*.¹⁹² The *Shakti*

¹⁸⁸ *Shakti*, 6 November 1923.

¹⁸⁹ *Shakti*, 1 April, 15 April and 29 April 1924.

¹⁹⁰ *Shakti*, 23 March 1929.

¹⁹¹ *Shakti*, 21 April 1924.

¹⁹² *Shakti*, 7 April 1925.

editorials of April and May 1925 echoed popular sentiment in demanding an organization of the Hindu community of Kumaun.¹⁹³ These editorials which elaborated the difficulties in establishing a Hindu organisation attracted a lot of public attention.

In these articles B.D. Pande argued that is not possible to have a united Hindu community because of the caste divisions in Kumaun. He noted that the caste hierarchy included within it diverse groups like the Bhotiyas and the Hurkiyas. Every jati or sub-group considered itself superior to the other group and this vertical division prevented the emergence of a Hindu community. He also emphasised the role of the colonial state, which encouraged caste divisions and was interested in preventing unity amongst the people. His critique of various groups like the eastern Bhotias and his reference to the customary practices of the Khasas earned him the ire of the various communities he had castigated,¹⁹⁴ but the attention he received indicates that this was an important issue. The construction of a Hindu community out of disaggregated segments of which it was constituted was imperative for the dissemination of a regional and national consciousness.

The formation of the Kumaun Parishad in 1916 and the need to mobilise more people for it helped focus on the unity provided by Sanatan Dharma. The Census records of 1881 had documented the population of Kumaun as consisting of 4,79,948 Hindus, 11,261 Muslims, 2,646 Christians, 87 Buddhists and 103 Jains. Kumaun was clearly a predominantly Hindu society.¹⁹⁵ A large section of the Kumaun population considered itself Hindu and could be mobilised under the aegis of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha. The best strategy for the modern intelligentsia was to take over control of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha. The Sanatan Dharma Sabha attempted to organise itself during 1925, and the Eighth Conference of the Hindu Mahasabha was held in April which

¹⁹³ *Shakti*, 21, 28 April, 5 and 12 May 1925.

¹⁹⁴ Indra Singh Nayal published a rebuttal defending the Khasa Rajputs in an article published in *Shakti*, 30 June 1925.

¹⁹⁵ E.T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, 1882, reprint 1981, Volume III part II, p. 420.

attempted to mobilise and unite Hindus through the call to defend the Ganga, Geeta, Gomata and Gayatri.¹⁹⁶ The problem, however, was that rigid Sanatanis refused to accept changes in the caste system, arguing that it would hasten its demise¹⁹⁷ without realising that caste divisions would have to be re-negotiated for the construction of a Sanatani community.

During the late 1920s, the Sanatan Dharma Sabha was therefore overtaken by new elements; they were against rigid Sanatani positions and professed loyalism to the Raj. This new group articulated a critique of Sanatan Dharma that did not allow for an interaction between castes which prevented people from getting together, dining together and prevented travel across the seas.¹⁹⁸ The loyalist position of the Sanatan group was also attacked and Sanatanis were referred to as contractors of religion who hoped to get titles, jagirs and appointments as honorary magistrates for themselves.¹⁹⁹ In contrast, the “true Sanatani” were people like Vinoba Bhave and M.K. Gandhi, who did not accept caste rigidities but who nevertheless believed in the caste system.²⁰⁰ It is during this period that the Congress activists made symbolic gestures to repudiate caste injunctions. H.G. Pant, a Brahman, used the plough at a fair in Bageshwar²⁰¹ and G.B. Pant along with his colleagues drank water from the common well with the Dalits of Almora.

The Sanatanis had come a long way from the events of 1910 when they had boycotted B.N. Pande for travelling to Japan. His brother, the famous poet of Kumaun, Gauri Dutt Pande noted that it was the very same Sanatani Dharma Sabha that 18 years ago had boycotted his brother for travelling overseas, now passed a resolution for the inter-dining of Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.²⁰² By 1931, these changes had been accepted and

¹⁹⁶ *Shakti*, 21 April 1925.

¹⁹⁷ *Shakti*, 21 April 1925.

¹⁹⁸ *Shakti*, 10 August 1929

¹⁹⁹ *Shakti*, 3 August 1929.

²⁰⁰ *Shakti*, 3 August and 10 August 1929.

²⁰¹ *Shakti*, 2 February 1929.

²⁰² *Shakti*, 10 August 1929.



Sahbhojyata was accepted by a large section of the Kumaun Sanatanis.²⁰³ The *Shakti* now wanted to promote inter-dining with Dalit groups as well and noted that a Sahbhoj organised at Lahore included the Dalits.²⁰⁴ It noted that food taboos would soon be obliterated but the feeling of caste would remain. Caste would now not determine social interaction in the public sphere, but would continue to be important for the negotiation of marriages and for private worship. New entrants who espoused the use of the plough by Brahmans, and advocated commensality amongst all Hindu groups transformed the Sanatan position.

The Arya Samaj on the other hand appears to have toned down its critique of the caste system and Puranic practices. In any case, the Arya Samaj had never commanded a large following in the region amongst the upper castes. A large number of upper castes had supported the Arya Samaj on the issue of Shuddhi, establishment of schools and orphanages, but very few had actually chosen to be initiated. As early as 1914, the *Almora Akhbar* had suggested that the Arya Samaj and the Sanatan Dharma Sabha should get together like their leaders Lala Lajpat Rai and Madan Mohan Malaviya.²⁰⁵ The alliance between the Arya Samaj and the Sanatan Dharma Sabha under the leadership of Madan Mohan Malaviya from 1923 onwards represented a growth in Hindu consciousness in the rest of north India. The revival of the Hindu Mahasabha in 1923 was an important development that also had an impact on Kumaun. The Sanatan critique of Shuddhi was by now muted, but not abandoned.

The radicalisation of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha, however, did not necessarily overwhelm or transform it. Religious conservatism of the Sanatan group chose an important point of entry when the Boras decided to go in for Shuddhi. The Boras were a small community of weavers of hemp clothes who had been relegated to Dalit status. In western Nepal, the Boras were not considered untouchable, but were a caste from whom water could be accepted.

²⁰³ *Shakti*, 31 January 1931.

²⁰⁴ *Shakti*, 31 January 1931.

²⁰⁵ *Almora Akhbar*, 2 March 1914.

For a long time, the Boras requested the people to support them in their efforts to improve their status and they also received a favourable response from a large number of individuals. The Sanatan group, however, decided to mobilise support against the ritual purification of the Boras. This time they were extremely successful. This was probably the response of upper caste to the growing militancy of the Dalits. The Sanatan Dharma Sabha was able to mobilise about 6,000 to 7,000 people in the Gangoli Ganai area, against this Shuddhi.²⁰⁶ This was a major achievement. Prompted by this response, the Sanatan Dharma Sabha was able to take a more aggressive posture and at the Bageshwar fair they unfurled their flag over the Saryu as a Hindu organisation.²⁰⁷

The resurgence of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha by 1929, can be explained by the developments that had occurred between 1924 and 1929, which had transformed it from an ineffective organisation to a popular broad-based one. In 1925, *Shakti* featured editorials like, “What kind of Hindu Organisation for Kumaun?”²⁰⁸ “Will Hindus of Kumaun Get Organised?”²⁰⁹ By 1927, the tone had changed, the need for unity and organisation was now imperative and the editorial carried a “Warning to the People of Kumaun”.²¹⁰

The Hindu Sangathan (organisation) forged by repeated appeals and threats brought the community into an overt confrontation with Muslims. There were few Muslims in Kumaun and their presence was limited to the urban centres of Almora, Haldwani and Nainital.²¹¹ By 1930, the Muslims of Bageshwar organised themselves and opposed the blatant abuse of Hindu unity by the local trading community.²¹² It is therefore significant that

²⁰⁶ *Shakti*, 12 January 1929.

²⁰⁷ *Shakti*, 26 January 1929.

²⁰⁸ *Shakti*, 21 April 1925

²⁰⁹ *Shakti*, 28 April, 5 May, 12 May 1925.

²¹⁰ *Shakti*, 22 January 1927.

²¹¹ In 1881, the population of Kumaun was 4,32,576 and the number of Muslims was 11,261.

²¹² *Shakti*, 11 January 1930.

in June 1931, there was the possibility of a Hindu–Muslim conflagration at Almora, which was diffused by the citizens.²¹³ By 1932, the Kurmanchal Samaj Sammelan articulated a regional identity, which was primarily Hindu and appeared unaware of other religious dispensations. This probably alienated the Muslim minorities further, and the possibility of a Hindu–Muslim confrontation at Haldwani is documented in the police records, which refers to the Muslim opposition to processionists before the mosque.²¹⁴

Conclusion

The modern intelligentsia chose to emphasise historical continuity with the religious belief system propagated by the Dasnam Gosains, a peculiar mix of Vedic philosophy with Puranic gods and lore. This is clearly visible in the writings of the Arya Samajis, the Sanatanis, the Hindus and the nationalists. The interpolations made by T.D. Gairola in *Himalyan Folklore* and the emphasis placed by the intelligentsia on the *Manaskhand*²¹⁵ as the religious cum historical text of Kumaun identity and history alongwith the relegation of Khasa history to an ancient and inaccessible past was an attempt to create a “high” cultural tradition for the region. Great antiquity was claimed for the *Manaskhand*, which describes in detail the pilgrimage to Kailash Mansarovar, thereby establishing Kumaun as one of the sacred centres of early Brahmanical Hinduism. The text (dated to the 18th century, Dabral says 17th century) celebrates the sacred geography of Kumaun in a manner that shifts the focus from local to pan-Indian context based on Puranic lore. Stories are used to establish the sacred nature of various sites in the region and to integrate it with an all India corpus. The pride of place given to the *Manaskhand* by the upper caste intelligentsia endorsed only

²¹³ *Shakti*, 9 May, 23 May and 24 June 1931.

²¹⁴ Village Crime Note Book, Haldwani Police Record Room, Thana Haldwani refers to tension in October 1933 and to communal tensions in March 1939 when the Sanatan Dharma Sabha organised its annual conference.

²¹⁵ G.D. Pande ed., *Manaskhand*, Varanasi 1989.

those aspects of Kumaun culture that were in consonance with the emerging all India Brahmanical context.

The written testimony of the intelligentsia does not emphasise either Nath practices, or the shamanic jagars and belief in local gods and other ritual practices followed by the peasantry.²¹⁶ The debates on religion in modern Kumaun are remarkable for their almost complete silence about a plethora of religious practices. The refusal of the Kumaun intelligentsia to discuss and understand religious belief systems which were deeply ingrained in the cultural matrix of modern Kumaun and which were followed by a large number of Kumaunis was part of its initiative to establish upper caste normative traditions for modern Kumaun.

As a result of the debates of this period alongside the growing influence of nationalist ideology, popular culture was marginalised and relegated to an “un-evolved” sub-stratum. The term Hindu now included a spectrum of believers (from different segments) and it was possible to think of a community with a specific regional and cultural identity, Kumauni/Kurmanchali. The organisation of the Kurmanchal Samaj Sammelan in 1932 was symptomatic of this development. The Sammelan aroused the Hindus of Kurmanchal with the call “It is morning, rise o Hindus” and invited representatives from all over Kumaun to express their views about a number of resolutions that were then put to vote. In this manner, the construction of a modern religious community in Kumaun was rendered possible. However, this identity was neither final nor uncontested in its appropriation of the term Kumauni Hindu and its other manifestations will be discussed in another essay.

²¹⁶ An important context for reference to jagar is by B.D. Joshi in his Presidential Address to the Kurmanchal Samaj Sammelan of 1932, wherein he argued that in Kumaun untouchability is not practised because all castes participate equally in the performance of jagar and B.D. Pande’s “introduction” to his book where he refers to the many traditions of Kumaun, one of them is the tradition of jagars, but says it is not of much value, so why write about it.

Bibliography

- Adhikary, S.M., *Paschim Nepal Ko Atihasik Anveshan*, Tribhuvan Vishwavidyalaya, Kathmandu, V.S. 2043.
- *The Khasa Kingdom*, Nirala, Jaipur, 1988.
- Almora Akhbar*, Almora, 1913.
- Alter, Andrew, “Dhol Sagar: Aspects of Drum Knowledge amongst Musicians in Garhwal North India”, *European Bulletin for Himalayan Research*, XXIV, Spring 2003, pp. 63–76.
- Atkinson, E.T., *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, first published Government Press, 1882, reprint Cosmo, Delhi 1981, Volume II, part I and II, Volume III, part I and II .
- Babulkar, Mohan Lal, “Devaprayagiyan ka Jatiya Itihas”, *Anvar Purvasi 1990*, Lakshmi Bhandar, Almora, pp. 45–52.
- , “Himalaya-Kedarkhand mein Nath”, *Purvasi 14*, 1993, pp. 87–91.
- , *Garhwali Lok Sahitya ka Vivechanatamak Adhyayan*, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Prayag, 1964.
- Batrohi, “Lekhak ban Sakne ka Akankshi”, *Pahar 13*, Nainital, 2001, pp. 202–207.
- Batten, J.H. (ed.), *Official Reports on the Province of Kumaon*, Secundra Orphan Press, Agra, 1851.
- Beckett J.O’ B., *Report on the Revision of Settlement in the Kumaon District carried out by J.O’B. Beckett*, 1863–1873, Government Press, Allahabad, 1874.
- Bell, C. A., *The Religion of Tibet*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1931.
- Bernede, Frank, *Bards of the Himalayas Nepal/India*, Le Chante Du Monde CNR 2741060, Paris, 1997.
- Berremen, G.D., *Hindus of the Himalayas*, University of California, California, 1963
- Berremen G.D., “The U.P. Himalaya; Culture, Cultures and Regionalism”, in Modie and Lall (eds), *The Himalaya, Aspects of Change*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1981.

- Bharati, Agheanand, *The Tantric Tradition*, Anchor, New York, 1970, Random House London, 1993.
- Bhatt, Madan Chand, *Himalaya Ka Itihas*, part I from Collection No 14, District Archives Nainital.
- , “Saim aur Chipulakot”, *Uttarakhand* 8, 1994, pp. 29–42.
- Blunt, Edward, *The Caste System of Northern India*, first published 1931, reprint Isha Books, Delhi, 2010.
- Briggs, G.W., *Gorakhanath and the Kanaphata Yogis*, first published 1938, Motilal Benarasi Dass, reprint Delhi 1973.
- Burn, R., *Census of India 1901*, Volume XVI Part I, Government Press, Allahabad, 1911.
- Census of India*, District Census Statistics North West Provinces and Oudh, Government Press, Allahabad, 1897. Almora Collectorate hand written official notings and numbers.
- Chaudhari, G., *Kurmanchali Itihas Mein Dwarahat Ke Chaudhuri*, Almora, 1949.
- Choubey, M.C. *Lakulisa in Indian Art and Culture*, Sharada Publishing House, Delhi, 1997.
- Dabral, S.P., *Uttarakhand Ke Abhilekh*, Veergatha Prakashan, Dogadda, V.S. 2047.
- , *Uttaranchal-Himanchal Ka Prachin Itihas Chauthi se Athvi Shati Tak*, Veergatha Prakashan, Dogadda, V.S. 2052.
- , *Katyuri Rajavansha utthan evam Samapan*, Veergatha Prakashan, Dogadda, V.S. 2051.
- , *Garhwal ka Naveen Itihas*, Veergatha Prakashan Dogadda, V.S. 2044.
- Das, Sarat Chand, *The Religious History of Tibet*, Manjusri Publications, 1970.
- Deva, Rudra Chand, *Traivarnik Dharma Nirnayanam*, manuscript attributed to the sixteenth century, in the Government Collection of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta.
- District Census Statistics North West Provinces and Oudh Almora District*, Government Press, Allahabad, 1897.

- Drummond, Captain Henry, "Report on the Copper Mines of Kumaon", *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, 1838, Volume 3.
- Dutt, Bhavani, "Svargiya Bhagirath Pande", in D. Pande (ed.) *B.D. Pande Smarika*, Shakti Press, Almora, 1984, pp. 279–281.
- Eyde, E.H.H., "The Depressed Classes of the Kumaun Hills", in *Census of India*, 1921 Volume 16, part I, Appendix C, Government Press, Allahabad, 1923.
- Fanger, A.C., *Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives on Kumaun Society and Culture*, Ph.D dissertation, Syracuse University, 1980.
- , The Jagar: Spirit Possession Séance among the Rajputs and Silpakars of Kumaon, in (eds) Brown, Fanger and Joshi, *Himalaya: Past and Present*, Volume I, Almora, 1990.
- , Marriage Exchange among the Jimadars of the Central Himalayas, in (eds) Brown Fanger and Joshi, *Himalaya Past and Present*, Volume 3, Almora Book Depot, Almora 1993, pp. 275–300.
- Fisher, Captain, "Notes and Statement Regarding the Prevailing Castes in Kumaun", *Census of North Western Provinces*, Government Press, Allahabad, 1867.
- Fraser, J.B., *Journal of a Tour through the Himalaya Mountains*, Rodwell and Martin, London, first printed 1820, reprint 1982.
- Furer-Haimendorf, C.von, "Unity and Diversity in the Chetri caste of Nepal", in (ed.) C. von Furer-Haimendorf, *Caste and Kin in Nepal, India and Ceylon*, Asia Publishing House, Delhi, 1966, pp. 11–68.
- Galey, J.C., "Hindu Kingship in its Ritual Realm", in *Himalaya, Past and Present*, Volume 2, Almora Book Depot, Almora, 1992, pp. 173–237.
- Garhwali*, 1918, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
- Ghildyal, U.C., *Garhwal Ke Sanskrit Abhilekh*, Garhwal Vishwavidyalaya, Srinagar, 1981.
- Ghurye, G.S., *Indian Sadhus*, Popular Book Depot, Pune, 1953.
- Goudge, J. E., *Final Report of the Assessment of the Almora District*, Government Press, Allahabad, 1903, pp. 1–26.
- Grundy, M.V., *Berenag, Old and New: A Brief History of Berenag and*

the Surrounding Country in the Kumaon Hills of Pithoragarh District. From the year 1868 to 1960 (manuscript) 35 pages + *Ghosts* (manuscript) 8 pages.

Gumani, *Gumani Collection*, not dated.

Heber, R., *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India*, Carey, Philadelphia, 1828.

Hodgson, B.H., "Origin and Classification of the Military Tribes of Nepal", in *Essays on the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet*, first published Trubner and Company, London 1874, reprint Bharat-Bharati 1971, Varanasi, pp. 37–44.

Hoffmann, H., *The Religion of Tibet*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1961.

Jeevan, "Hamara bhi Dostana tha", *Pahar*, 13, Nainital, 2001, pp. 126–128.

Joshi, Pandit B.D., *Christianity Indestructible or Pandit Badri Datt Joshi's Lecture "Christianity Destroyed"*, Orphan School Press, Mirzapore, 1880.

Joshi, J.C. (ed.), "Editors Opinion", *Achal*, November 1938, Nainital.

Joshi, J.D., *Aditi: A Memorial Volume of the Arya Samaj*, Almora, 1992.

Joshi, Krishnanand, "Dev Amantran Jagar", *Shri Nanda Devi Smarika Centenary Year 1983–84*, Nainital, pp. 57–62.

Joshi, K.N., *Kumaun ka Lok Sahitya*, Prakash Book Depot, Bareilly, 1982.

Joshi, L.D., *Diaries 1867–1912*, Archives of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

——, *Khasa Family Law*, Government Press, Allahabad, 1929.

Joshi, M.C., "Introduction", *Hindu Religion and Ethics*, Aryan International, Delhi, first printed 1903, reprint 1994.

Joshi, M.P., "Economic Resource Management in the Kumaun of the Chandras", in (ed.) Joshi, Fanger and Brown, *Himalaya Past and Present*, Volume II, Almora Book Depot, Almora, 1992.

——, "Kumaun Vanshavalis, Myth and Reality", in *Himalaya: Past and Present*, Volume I, Almora Book Depot, Almora, 1990, pp. 201–244.

- , “The Silpakars of Central Himalaya: A Diachronic Study”, in *Himalaya Past and Present*, Volume III, Almora Book Depot, Almora, 1994, pp. 301–333.
- Joshi, P. (ed.) *Sira Desh Ko Davthar*, Ajit Offset, Kanpur, 1996.
- , *Kumaun Garhwal Ki Lok Gathayen*, Prakash Book Depot, Bareilly, 1990.
- Kala, G.R., *Memoirs of the Raj*, Mukul Prakashan, Delhi, 1974.
- Kapur, Tribhuvan, *Religion and Ritual in Rural India: A Case Study in Kumaon*, Asia Publishing House, Delhi, 1988.
- Kumaun Kumud*, 12 March 1938 and 24 March 1938.
- Lall, Panna, *Kumaun Local Custom*, Government Press, Allahabad, 1920.
- A Manual of the Titles of North Western Provinces*, Government Press, Allahabad, 1889.
- Matiyani, Shailesh, *Kumaun ki Lok Gathayen*, Part 1, 2, 3. Atma Ram and Sons, Delhi, 1958.
- , *Baramandal ki Lok Kathaye*, Atma Ram and Sons, Delhi, 1958.
- , *Doti Pradesh ki Lok Kathaye*, Atma Ram and Sons, Delhi, 1960.
- , *Almora ki Lok Kathaye*, Atma Ram and Sons, Delhi, 1960.
- , *Champawat ki Lok Kathaye*, Atma Ram and Sons, Delhi, 1960.
- , *Tarai Pradesh ki Lok Kathaye*, Atma Ram and Sons, Delhi, 1960.
- , *Nainital ki Lok Kathayen*, Atma Ram and Sons, Delhi, 1960.
- Mishra, Nityanand, *Kalyan chandrodaya Kavya Evam Uske Praneta Shivanand Pande*, Almora, not dated.
- , (ed.), *Kalyanchandrodaya Kavya*, Almora, 1992 (composed by Shivanand Pande)
- Mountaineer, *A Summer Ramble in the Himalayas*, Hurst and Blackett, London 1860, reprint Vintage, Delhi, 1993.
- Native Newspaper Reports North Western Provinces*, 1869–1901.
- Native Newspaper Reports United Provinces*, 1901–1906.
- Nautiyal, K.P., B. Khanduri and R. Bhatt, “Uttarakhand Ka Puratattva”, *Pahar* 3 and 4, pp. 1–14.

- , *Archaeology of Kumaun*, Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1969.
- Nayal, I.S., *Swatranta Sangram Mein Kumaun Ka Yogadan*, Delhi, 1973.
- Negi, V.S., “Perspective on the Rohila invasion of Kumaun”, in *Himalaya Past and Present*, Volume II, Almora Book Depot, Almora, 1992, pp. 291–301.
- Oakley, E.S., *Holy Himalaya*, first published 1905, reprint Gyanodaya Prakashan, Nainital, 1990.
- Pande, B.D., *Kumaun Ka Itihas*, first published 1938, Shakti, reprint Almora Book Depot, Almora, 1990.
- , “Kumaun Ki Nayak Jati Ka Sudhar”, in (ed.) Dharmanand Pande, *B.D. Pande Smarika*, Almora, 1984.
- Pande, G.D., *Manaskhand*, Nityanand Smarak Samiti, Varanasi, 1989.
- Pande, Krishna, *Indian Antiquary*, 1910, pp. 78–82.
- Pande, K.C., *An Outline of the History of Saiva Philosophy*, Moti Lal Banarasi Dass, 1954, reprint 1986.
- Pande, M., *Sankshipta Kurmanchal Rajya Varnan Aur Simaltiya Pande Vanshavali*, Almora, 1925.
- Pandey, R.N., *The Making Of Modern Nepal*, Nirala, Delhi, 1997.
- Pande, Shivanand, *Kalyanchandrodaya Kavya*, manuscript courtesy Dr. G.D. Pande.
- Pande, Trilochan, *Kumaun ka Lok Sahitya*, Almora Book Depot, Agra, 1979.
- Pande, Vasudha, “Law, Women and Family in Kumaun”, *India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 3/4, “Second Nature: Women and the Family” (Winter 1996), pp. 106–120.
- Pandey, T., *Kumauni Bhasha aur uska Sahitya*, Lucknow, 1977.
- Pant, Jayanti, Pandit Hari Ram Pande and Dharmanand Pande (eds) *B.D. Pande Smarika*, Shakti Prakashan, Almora, 1984, pp. 261–270.
- Pathak, S., “Uttarakhand Me Samajik Andolanalo Ki Rooprekha”, *Pahar* 2, Nainital, pp. 97–111.
- Pathak, V.S., “History of Saiva Cults in North India from Inscriptions 700–1200”, in (ed.) G.C. Pande *Saiva Cults*, Abhinash Prakashan,

- Allahabad, 1980.
- Pangtey, S.S., “Shakti ka Pratham Chitra: Nanda”, *Uttarakahand*, Volume 5, 1991, pp. 54–60.
- Plowden, W.C., *Census of the North Western Provinces, Volume I*, 1872, Government Press, Allahabad, 1873.
- Pokharia, D., *Kumauni Bhasha, Sahitya evam Sanskriti*, Almora Book Depot, Almora, 1994.
- Ram, Rai Bahadur Pati, *Garhwal Ancient and Modern*, first printed Army Press 1916, reprint Vintage, Delhi, 1992.
- Raturi, H.A., *Garhwal Ka Itihas*, first printed, Bombay, 1928, reprint Bhagirathi Prakashan, Tehri, 1988.
- Regmi, M.C., *Thatched Huts & Stucco Palaces*, Vikas, Delhi, 1978.
- Regmi Research Collection*, Nepal Research Centre, Kathmandu, Volume I to Volume XXXVIII.
- Rizvi, S.A.A., *Almora Gazetteer*, Government Press, Lucknow, 1981.
- Samata*, 21 February 1962.
- Samata* Rajat Jayanti Special Issue, June 1984.
- Sankrityayan, R., *Kumaun*, Gyanamandal, Varanasi, V.S. 2015.
- , “Kinnar Desh Par Atihasik Drishti”, *Pahar* 7, 1994, pp. 92–93.
- , “The Origin of Vajrayan and its Eighty Four Mystics”, in *Selected Essays of Rahula Sankrityayan*, Peoples Publishing House, New Delhi, 1984, pp. 114–130.
- Sanwal, R.D., *Social Stratification in Rural Kumaun*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1976.
- Sax, W.S., *Mountain Goddess*, Oxford University Press, USA, 1991.
- Shah, N.L., *Kumaun ka Shah Vansha*, Lucknow, 1938.
- Shakti*, Almora.
- Sharma, P.R., “Caste, Social Mobility and Sanskritisation: A Study of Nepal’s Old Legal Code”, *Kailash*, Volume V, 1977.
- Smith, M., “Himalayas in Kumaun and Garhwal”, *Calcutta Review*, Volume XVIII, 1852, pp. 72–115.

- Stowell, V.A., *A Manual of the Land Tenure of the Kumaun Division*, Government Press, first printed 1907, Allahabad, 1966.
- , *Kumaon Rulings for Civil Courts with a Commentary*, Government Press, Allahabad, 1916.
- Tamata, H.P., *Dalit Sumananjali*, File at the Almora Collectorate 1995–96, enlisting achievements of Hari Tamata so that the Lower Mall Road could be renamed the Hari Prasad Tamata Marg.
- Tewari, Girida G., “Jhusia Damai ka Lok”, *Pahar* 16–17, pp. 384–389.
- Tiwary, D.D., *Historical and Political Notes on Kumaon*, Almora, 1923.
- , *Kurmanchal Sah Samaj*, Almora 1939, in the Ganga Prasad Shah Collection, District Archives, Nainital.
- Tewari, Rakesh, *Sarvekshan Report 1980–81*, Uttar Pradesh Rajkiya Puratattva Sangathan, Lucknow, 1983.
- Thapar, Romila, The Chamba Vamsavali, *The Past Before Us: Historical Traditions of North India*, Permanent Black, Ranikhet, 2013.
- Tolia, R.S., *British Kumaun Garhwal*, Almora Book Depot, 1994 and 1996.
- Traill, G.W., “Statistical Sketch of Kumaun”, in (ed.) J. Batten, *Official Report of the Province of Kumaun*, Agra, 1851.
- Trivedi M.D., Kumaun Ki Adalati Bhasha, *Achal*, March 1938, pp. 12–15.
- Tucci, G., *Preliminary Report on Two Scientific Expeditions in Nepal*, Is. M.E.O. Rome, 1956.
- Turner, A.C., “Caste in the Kumaun Division and the Tehri-Garhwal State”, *Census of India, 1931 Report*, United Provinces, Government Press, Allahabad, 1933.
- , *Census of United Provinces 1931*, Volume XVIII, Imperial Table XIV, Government Press, Allahabad, 1933.
- U.P. Legislative Council Proceedings*, Volume XX, 1924, Government Press, Allahabad, 1925.
- Upadhyaya, U.D., *Kumaun Ki Lok Gathayen*, Prakash Book Depot, Bareilly, 1979.



Upreti, Mohan, “Lok Kala: Sinhavalokan aur Sanmbhavnayein”, *Pahar* 3–4, 1989.

Vernacular Newspaper Reports, National Archives, Delhi, 1870–1905.

Whalley, P., *British Kumaon the Law of the Extra Regulation Tracts: Subordinate to the Government N.W.P.*, first published Government Press, Allahabad, 1870, reprint Vishwavidyaya Prakashan, Varanasi, 1991.

Yadav, Rajendra, “Do kathin paton ke beech”, *Pahar* 13, 2001, pp. 164–171.