

A Study of Caste and Tribal System in Kumaon and Garhwal Regions in Uttarakhand

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ABSTRACT

The Jaunsari, Tharu, Raji, Buksa, and Bhotiya tribes are the five primary groups that makeup Uttarakhand's tribe population. The Jaunsari tribe is the largest tribal group in the state in terms of numbers. The ethnic groups living in the state of Uttarakhand are represented by the tribes. In all of Uttarakhand's districts, the proportion of tribal people is roughly moderate. The majority of tribal people in the state of Uttarakhand live in rural areas. According to available data, approximately 94.50% of all tribal members live in rural areas, with the remaining portion residing in urban areas. It is stated that about five tribes call Uttarakhand officially home. The Indian Constitution has designated a schedule for these tribes from Uttarakhand. According to historical accounts, the earliest people to settle in this part of North India were the tribes of Uttarakhand. Their primary populations used to be restricted to isolated, steep, and wooded regions. The ancient customs of the tribes in Uttarakhand have not changed. They stand for the unique way of life and characteristics of a prehistoric society. Their ethnicity is determined by their sociocultural practices and traditional customs. Up to five tribes that are officially located in Uttarakhand are listed as scheduled in the Indian Constitution, which was drafted more than 40 years ago, in 1967.

Keywords: Tribals, Scheduled Tribals, Ancient Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Scheduled Castes

1. INTRODUCTION

India is world-famous for its cultural unity. Because different castes, tribes, and scheduled tribes reside here in different states. Mainly these castes are based on the varna system mentioned in the history of Indian culture. 'According to Dr. Shastri, the caste system that is spread in the Hindu society today is at the root of this caste system. There is no doubt about it. How the original four varnas evolved into these innumerable castes and sub-castes is also an interesting story. It is believed that the place of these varnas in the varna system has been confirmed by a mantra.

The meaning of the mantra in the Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda is as follows:

“The brahmin's chest was the face of the arm and he was made a royal, Uru that which Vaishya Padmyon Shudron d born”.

That is, that great man had a Brahmin face and became a king i.e. Kshatriya Bahu. The thighs of this great man became Vaishyas and Shudras were born from his feet. It is known from ancient texts like Vedas and Upanishads that the basis of the caste system was the order of human qualities. In a mantra of the twenty-second chapter of the Yajurveda, a prayer has been made for the Brahmins of the nation to be supreme and

the Kshatriyas to be skilled, archers and strong. According to the above mantra, the work of Brahmins is to study the Vedas in society. To awaken spiritual sublime feelings and inspire him on the right path, Making necessary rules for society and solving important problems had to be found, etc. Similarly, the work of Kshatriyas was decided to protect the society and to keep the development of physical strength intact. To keep the society rich in wealth, agriculture, and trade, Vaishyas and those who helped everyone in their work with their services were kept in the category of Shudras. It is also revealed from the ancient texts that although the work of a Shudra was to serve the society, the Shudra was not considered inferior as is the practice in the present era. Even marriage, social behavior, eating habits, etc. were prevalent among the four varnas and Shudras were looked upon with respect. As the society expanded, it was natural for their needs to increase. Therefore, man started adopting many professions for his living, due to which the division of Indian society became based on birth rather than work and since then there have been changes in varna and caste. There were only four varnas but the castes with their sub-castes flourished and became innumerable. In this way, caste was based on karma and hence the basis of castes was born. The core of Indian culture was not only based on the caste system and caste system but also the prevalence of different powers, religions, and the arrival of foreign powers, etc. continued parallel to it. As a result, many social classes and groups of society were formed living in different states of India. Talking about the state of Uttarakhand, the origin of its history was also the same. Before the formation of the Uttarakhand state, detailed mention of religion, caste system, and castes and tribes in the two main parts of Uttarakhand, Kumaon, and Garhwal, is found in the Himalayan Gazetteer written by Atkinson. According to him, "In 1881, the population of the entire Kumaon was 4,93,641. Religion-wise there were 4,79,948 Hindus, 11,261 Muslims, 12,664 Christians, 487 Baudras, and 103 Jains. The total population of Kumaon and Garhwal was 8,39,270, out of which 8,23,124 were Hindus, 13,3,38 were Muslims and 2,798 were Christians. But very few Muslims and Christians can be called Hindus. These can be further divided into categories. (1) Khasias, Brahmins, Rajputs, and their followers Doms who have settled here since ancient times (2) Hindus of all classes who have settled here from the plains; (3) Tibetan immigrants settled in the Bhotiya area and (4) mixed class. It is more convenient for us to follow the general division of castes with Brahmin, Rajput, Bania, and others. In the year 1872, there were 1,08,283 Brahmins in Kumaon who had many sub-divisions.

1.1. Many sub-castes of Brahmins are found in Kumaon.

In the list of Kurmachali Brahmins received from Pandit Parshuram Joshi, details of 150 sub-castes of Brahmins have been given. According to Pandit Ramdutt Pant's "Jyotirvid", Brahmins in the entire Kumaon is divided into more than three hundred sub-castes. Pandit Gangadatt Upreti has given the number of sub-castes of Brahmins in his list as 254. Brahmins of Kumaon can be divided into mainly 4 categories.

1. Ancient Brahmins

Under this category come those Brahmins who are famous based on their respective village names and occupations. These were the pundits and priests of special Rajputs, like the Brahmins of Chahaj village are called Chahaji or Chaudasi. Because of his work in astrology, he came to be known as Joshi. Similarly, Sun village is called Sanyal, Dug village is called Dugal, Guran village is called Gurani, and Kapola village is called Kapoli. Brahmins came during the time of Katyuri and Chand rulers. After the sixth century, during the time of Katyuri and Chand rulers, some Brahmins came to North India from the south and north-east. During the reign of Katyuri and Chand rulers, these ministers, priests, physicians, astrologers, bishops, etc. held important and social positions in the government. Some scholars believe that to prove their superiority and maintain their supremacy over other Brahmins, the elite Brahmins

establish their relationship with the Brahmins of South India or North-East. This type of Brahmin comes in the "Dewan class". These are called 'Tuldhyotik' or "Thul Brahmins" in Kumaoni. They are considered to be high-class Brahmins. This type of Brahmins includes Cheenakhan Galli, Jhijad, Danya, Masmoli and Joshi of Pokhri, Pandey of Palyu, Patiya, Simaltia etc., Askot. Brahmins like Awasthi and Pant etc. come here.

2. Brahmins with profession

Some of these elite Brahmins started doing professional or other work due to a lack of good conduct and lack of money or any other social reasons. Therefore, they were considered to be of lower class compared to the elite. Over time, their descendants came to be known as "Maan Dyotik" or "Nan Baman". After an increase in wealth, education, respect, and social prestige in a few generations, they again join the elite and high Brahmins.

3. Katuva Brahmin

This is the lowest sub-caste of Brahmins. They are called Katuva Brahmins. The elite Brahmins do not maintain any bread-and-daughter relationship with them. These Brahmins plow like Rajputs and Dhanti is prevalent among them. "Atkinson has written that the outsiders include Pant, Pandey, Joshi, Tiwari, Upadhyaya, and Patha are included. Pant people trace their origin to Maharashtra (Konkan region). He belongs to the Bhardwaj, Parashar, Vashishtha Gotra, and Madhyandini branch. After he arrived in Kumaon, in the tenth generation his descendants were divided into four branches namely Sharma, Shrinath, Nathu, and Bhauda. Sharm became Vaiha, Srinath became the spiritual guru of Raja Nathu, a teacher of Purana-shastra, and a Bhauda soldier. It is said about the Pade people that they came from Kot-Kangra and the plains. His gotras are Gautam, Bhardwaj, Vatsa-Bhargava, Kashyap, and Parashar. These people marry Joshi, Lohani, Pant, Pathak, Tiwari, Kanyal and others. Joshis, however, are hardly considered Brahmins in the plains... They are astrologers and horoscope makers by profession. Their gotras are Gargeya Bhardwaj, Upamanyu, Kashyap and Angira. The Tiwari Tiwari, or Tripathi, and the Tyadi of Garhwal claim themselves to be descendants of the Gujarati Brahmin Shri Chand. Upadhyay - belongs to Bhardwaj Gotra and claims himself to be a descendant of Shri Ballabh of Kannauj from whom the Lohana series originates. Reader: In these, the Kashyap series says that his ancestors came to Gangoli from Sanaranpali in Awadh. Dugal came from Kannauj during the time of Katyuris. He has relations with Bisht, Lohani, Patni, Tripathi, etc. They marry into Mathpal or Madhwal, Harbola, Brahmpuriya, Panyud, Paliala, Pujari, Kashmiri, and Dugal Brahmins. Bhatt- People are from Bhardwaj, Upamanyu, Vishwamitra, and Kashyap gotra. He says that earlier he was called Bhattacharya - he came to Kumaon during the time of Abhaychand and started being called by the names of the villages in which he settled like Bharuya, Kafuli, Ghankota, Dalakoti, Mathpal, etc. Priests The priests of most of the temples are Khasia people. The Pandas of Jageshwar call these priests Badwa or Badora. They say that he was a Bhatt of Banaras and came during the time of King Udyan Chand. Khasia Brahmins- According to various lists, there are 250 clans of Khasia Brahmins. The word Rajput is also used for Kshatriya. In Kumaon, the derogatory word Khasia is popular for them.

4. KSHATRIYAS IN KUMAON CAN BE DIVIDED INTO FOUR SUB-CLASSES

1. **Suryavanshi Rajputs**, descendants of Katyur dynasty, Pal or Rajwar of Askot, Rajayar of Chaukot and Jaspur and Manral of Salt Udaipur, Bisht of Sabli, Bangari of Bangarsyun, Ganda, Kalakoti, Kadokoti, Rakwal, Padyar, Karki Burm etc. sub-castes of Rajputs are Suryavanshi. It is said.

2. **Chandravanshi Rajputs**, descendants of Chand rulers, are said to be sub-castes of Chandravanshi Rajputs like Sore, Kota, Hayani Rau, Uchhoor, Boraru, Kaklason, Rautela of Mahyuri and Dhaniyakot, Mar and Fadtyal of Kali Kumaon, etc.

3. **Khas Rajput** Apart from the Rajputs of these two dynasties, the old Thatwans and feudal lords here are called Khas Rajput.

"Pt. Rudradatt Pant Ji has divided the Khas Rajputs into two categories 1) Ancient Khas Rajput and 2) Later Khas Rajput. The Rajputs who came from outside in the later times are called Later Khas Rajput and the old Thatwan are called Ancient Khas Rajput. Kali Kumaon People of the castes like Syaniya, Banraut of Askot, Dano of Danpur, Takuli, Koranga, Kapkoti, Aithani, Bafila, Gadiya, etc. are the descendants of Khas Rajputs. "According to Atkinson, the total number of Rajputs in Kumaon in 1881 was 2, 16, Was 247. Here too, like Garhwal, 90 percent of Rajputs are Khasias and are different from the immigrants who came from the plains. Katyuri, Rajbar, Sain, Manral, etc. belong to the Katyuri family. Suryavanshi are the descendants of Katyuris among the Katyuri plains immigrants. Rajbars (Rajbar or Rajbar) The Rajbars of Chaukot are mainly soldiers. Among the immigrants of Rautela plains, the descendants of Chand are Chandravanshi who are scattered in the entire district under the name Rautela. Vishta describes himself as a descendant of a group that came from Chittor and belongs to the Kashyap, Bhardwaj, and Upamanyu gotras. People of Upamanyu Gotra say that they came from Ujjain and settled in Garhwal and then in Kumaon. Their sub-branches are Baura, Son, Rakwal, Ganda, Visariya, Khadku, Kathi Khandi, Ulsi Milaula, Chilwal, Dahilo, Bhisada, Chamyal, Vani, Dhaniya and Bagdayal. Adhikari – This is a branch of Bhardwaj Gotra. These people worship Kali of Purnagiri as their family deity. Bora: Their customs and traditions are similar to those of Khasia Rajputs. Mahra (Mahara or Mara) claim their origin as Chittor. He belongs to Bhardwaj and Kashyap Gotra and belongs to the Bishton branch. Negi says that they came from Dharanagari and some call themselves Chauhans of Mewar. Pandya, Panwar, Takuli, Kaida, and Bhandari all call themselves Chauhan.

4. **Other Rajputs** "According to Atkinson, about two hundred and eighty branches of the Rajputs are mentioned in my list, but a large number of them are Khasias whose caste is named after the villages inhabited by them.

The number of Vaishyas has been underestimated in proportion to the Vaishya castes. They are mostly included in the business class. Among these, mainly the name of the Sah caste comes. Sah caste also has many sub-castes like Thuldhariya, Gangola, Jagati (Jakati) Chaudhary, Salim Gadhiya, Kumayye Sah, Tola, Kholmiteria etc. Apart from this, some Vaishya class who came and settled in Kumaon from outside are also said to be under this caste group. Like Agarwal, Tamoli, Khatri, Kayastha, etc.

Especially the Vaishyas settled in Kumaon are mostly settled in places like Almora, Nainital, Ranikhet, Bageshwar, Bhawali etc. Sah is derived from moneylender or moneylender. The Sah people were appointed custodians of Thulghar i.e. storehouse, hence they came to be called Thulghariya. Thulaghariya Sah is considered the most prestigious among Sahi. When the Sah people settled there due to their business reaching an advanced stage in Gangolihat, they came to be known by the surname Gangola. Similarly, those Sahs who settled somewhere else from Kumaon i.e. Champawat-Kunu like in Almora, etc., then they were called Kumsye Sahs. During the time of some kings, those who used to do the work of weighing were called Tola. Those who collect Zakat or tax are called 'Zakati'. In the lineage of some kings, those who worked inside the palace or fort of the king came to be called 'Kholbhiteria'. The market officer was called 'Chaudhary' and the inspector was called 'Chakudayat'. Agrawal describes himself as the son of Agroha (King Agrasen). Those who sell paan are called Tamoli or Tamboli Vaishya. Which are mostly in

Terai Bhanwar. Khatris consider themselves Kshatriyas and relate to Khas-Rajputs here. They do not give their daughters but bring the daughters of Khas-Rajputs to themselves. Kayasthas consider themselves to be the children of Chitragupta. According to Atkinson, these Kayasthas merged into Khas-Rajputs. The gathering of Kayasthas divided into 12 gotras of the country still exists here. But compared to other classes, their profession is considered to be job and politics, etc. rather than business. Shudra - Those who were called Shudra in ancient times. Presently they are being called craftsmen or 'Harijan'. The artisan class also has many sub-castes like Shilpivarg, Chamar, Teli, Sool, Dhuna, Sais, Bakhriya, Badi, Dholi, Das, Haliya etc. The artisan class mainly includes Koli, Tamta, Od, Bade, Lohar, Tiruva, Dhadi, etc. Kolis, the cloth weavers, used to run 'Katuba' from house to house. Modernization of machines caused their business to change. Presently they do farming or rearing animals. The builders or masons who select the houses and remove stones from the mines and mines are called bards. Tamta is a derivative of Tamrakat which is a famous caste for making copper utensils. At present, due to changes in education level, these people have now occupied higher positions also. Those who work with iron are called Lohakar or Lohar. Those who made arrows came to be known as Tiruva. In the second category, those who extract oil from sesame, mustard, mustard, etc., or who operate a crusher are called mistakes. Wadia is also included in these. They make baskets and mats of rental, rudia, gunpowder, etc. 'Agri works in a copper mine. Chimriyas make wooden contracts, poles, fans, etc. Like the guard of the country, the village watchman or head's messenger is called Pahari. Those who pluck and peel bamboo are also included in gunpowder and are called bamboo breakers. The third class includes Shudra Chamaar, Mochi, Bakhariya, Ghuna and Hankiya. Those who clean leather and make shoes are called cobblers. Potters who make earthen pots are called Hanakiya. In the fourth class, the village-to-village dance singer or the village singer, musician, and the 'Baadi' of the juggler class do the work of demanding arbitrary things from the villagers. They also do the work of catching fish and birds. The class related to making women dance by playing 'Hudka' is called 'Hudkiya'. Those who play drums are called Dholi. These also include 'Bajaniyas' who play drums and 'Bajdaars' who carry the load of musical instruments. Tailors are also called 'Auji' or 'Ajjuk'. Some drummers tell stories by playing the drums and making the goddess dance. Those who ask are Doom Jogis who are called Nanakshahi Joshi in Pali Pachhaun. The one who strikes Pahari is known as the executioner. They are going to do the work of hanging, caning, etc. The Bagudi who plow the land are said to kill the animals of the forest. In this way, these castes were classified and named according to their occupation. At present, except for Tamta Aagri, etc., everyone has started using the word Arya in place of sub-castes. Other sub-classes are still prevalent in the name of professions like goldsmiths, this is not a caste but a profession. There are four types. The people of Almora write themselves as Verma. Work in making jewelry. There are many such sub-castes like Kodhyali, Bhandari, Thatila, Roda, Jagi, Tabelaia, Parouliya, Sutara, Chakuwa, Balal, Sarna, Mer, Patara, Kadiyal, Matyani, Racholi, Dagi etc. Jogi i.e. Sadhu etc. are also popular classes among them. There are Gusai, Aradhya, Pir, Aughad, Bairagi, Nath etc. Tribes - Apart from this, the Christian community following Christianity and people of the Muslim community following Islam also reside here. 'The human community that is uncivilized and uncultured in modern terms, representing the primitive civilization and culture of human life and living in forests, mountains, and plateaus, is called a tribal community. From the modern point of view, the term 'tribe' is legally used for these human communities which are extremely backward. The organization of their family groups has a definite name. They live in a specific area. They have their specific language or dialect and follow their specific social rules and prohibitions. The main tribes living in Kumaon are Char-Raji, Bhotiya, Tharu, and Boxa. Raji and Bhotia are settled in the northern frontier of Pithoragarh district and Tharu and Boxa

are settled in the southern frontier of Nainital district. In Kumaon, these four tribes have been constitutionally declared as "Scheduled Tribes" in 1967. Raji or Banrit people live in the forest of Dharchula near Askot. In the local dialect, they are called Banraut. They are considered to be the descendants of Raj Kirats. They live in small family groups. It is popular that the descendants of the Rajwars are called Rajwars. The king says that at present they have started living in places named Churani, Gangau, Aultari, Kantoli, Khirdwari, and Bhot. These castes living in the region are called Bhotiya and this tribe living in the northern frontier is also called Ran or Shoka. Based on the name of the village and local characteristics, they are divided into many sub-castes, for example, Johari living in Jiwar, Toliya etc. living in Tola village. Similarly, names like Byasi, Chaudansi, Nabiyal, Sirkhal, Tolchha, Gunjyal, Jangpangi, Martolia, Dhupwal, Pangti, Dharmasaktu, Brijwal, Pachwal, etc. are also included. Bryans, Chaundas, Gunji village, Pangu, Himkhola, Sosa, Sipu, Tidang, Dantu, etc. are the main villages and settlements of these sub-castes. Apart from Pithoragarh, they also live in their settlements in the northern parts of Chamoli, and Uttarkashi districts. Their settlement has also been seen in Bageshwar. The area of Tharu Tharus is called 'Thadwat'. Kichha and Khatima tehsils of the Nainital district are included under the Thadwat area. Based on racial characteristics, Dr. Majmudar has considered Tharus to be of Mongol race. Tharu are divided into two classes, upper class and lower class. The higher group is divided into five Kurias namely Batha, Barayaut, Biratiya, Dahaut, and Mahatum. Similarly, the seven Kuris in the lower class are Rawat, Dangra, Khuka, Rajiya, Sansa, Buxa and Jugiya. Some Tharus also live in the Terai of Nepal. In the south, their spread extends up to Majhola. Their numbers are highest compared to other tribes. Boxa - This tribe living in the western part of Nainital district is called Boxa or Buxa. The area where this caste has settled is known as Boxad or Buksad. This area extends to Ramnagar tehsil, Baheri tehsil, Kichha and Kashipur tehsil. Some Boksa also live in the Terai of Garhwal and Dehradun. Like the Tharus, the Boxa also call themselves descendants of the Pawar dynasty Rajputs of Gharanagar. Boxa tribe is divided into two classes Chauhan, Tomar, and Gaur, etc. in the first class, and Paulgadiya Goat of Paulgarh Khed, Parijiya Got of Parijiya Khed, etc. in the second class. Apart from these, names of other tribes living in Uttarakhand also appear. Some of them are Khadwal of Har Ki Doon, Jaunsari, Jaad of Khai, etc. "A tribe named Khadwal lives in the valleys of the Tons River on the western slope of the Bandar Puch mountain range bordering Himachal Pradesh in Uttarkashi district. This caste considers itself the descendants of the Khas Rajputs of the Mahabharata period and worships Duryodhana in the name of Samsu. There is no importance of other Hindu Gods. They do not consider Brahmins as their main food. Their main occupation is sheep and goat rearing. The people of Jaunsari district consider Pandavas as their ancestors. There are three types of castes: Khas (Rajput or Brahmin). Their main occupation is agriculture. They are made of stone. The main occupation is agriculture, in which both men and women cooperate equally. Jaunsari people strongly believe in fate, witchcraft, ghosts, Jantar Mantar, exorcism, etc. Mahasu is their main deity. There are figures of snakes on the doors of their temples, flags hanging from spears and bows. Dance and song events are organized every day. No festival is complete without songs and dance instruments. The residents of the source of Jadganga near the Tibetan border in Uttarkashi are called Jad. Jads also live in Bagauri and Jhala near Harsil. Their main occupation has been rearing sheep and goats. Some agriculture is also done. Along with these, they also trade in wool, woolen clothes, and herbs. Both Jad and Khampa here follow Buddhism. There are many similarities in the customs of both. Their main festival is Lasar, in which Lord Buddha is worshipped. At all festivals, there is the consumption of meat and liquor songs and dances, etc. Apart from Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas, a brief description

or account of the main Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is given as follows according to page 25 of 'Uttaranchal Year Book-2005.

5. SCHEDULED CASTES

Koli in almost all the districts of Uttaranchal

Tamta - mostly in the Kumaon division

Shirki/Sharki only in Kumaon division

Muji / Baajgi In almost all the hilly districts of Uttaranchal

Bachi In almost all the hilly districts of Uttaranchal, Mostly in Garhwal division

Oadd - in almost all the hill districts of Uttaranchal

Dalya/Pori/Pahari in almost all the hilly districts of Uttaranchal.

Kolta in Jaunsar Babar area of Dehradun district.

Blacksmith - All over Uttaranchal

Koli/Teli in almost all the hill districts of Uttaranchal (apart from the above, there are separate Scheduled Castes in the plain districts of Uttaranchal which are already well known, hence their list is not being given here)

6. MAJOR SCHEDULED TRIBES

Bhotia - in Pithoragarh district (about 97 percent)

Jaunsari - In Chakrata and Vikas Nagar tehsil of Dehradun district (about 98 percent)

Residents of Boxa Terai Bhawar (about 61 percent in Champawat district and 32 percent in Dehradun district)

Vanraji - About 66 percent of the villages of Chipalthada, Ganagaon, Mauka Tirwa, Kimkhola, Chaurani, Jamtari, and Kuna Kanyal, etc. of Dharchula and Didihat development block of Pithoragarh district and approximately 20 percent in Nainital district.

Tharu in Kichha, Khatima, Nanakmatta, and Sitarganj development blocks of Udham Singh Nagar (about 99 percent).

Thus, it becomes clear that Uttarakhand has been inhabited by castes and tribes from the beginning of its history till the present. The most important thing is that together with all these, a very beautiful history of civilization and culture of Uttarakhand has been created, which has been successful in creating a special identity for itself not only in India but in the world.

7. CONCLUSION

Tribals and scheduled tribes make up a sizable portion of the population in Uttarakhand. These are Rajis, Tharus Jaunsaries, Bhotias, and Buxas. Although they are dispersed throughout all of Uttaranchal's districts, Udham Singh Nagar, Nainital, and Dehradun have the largest populations (94%). In 1997, Srivastava et al. Divergent opinions exist regarding their history and place of origin. According to one account of their history, they immigrated from Rajasthan during the persecution and settled in the Tarai regions. There is also the opinion that Buxas are of Mongolia lineage and have no connection to the inhabitants of Rajasthan or the Upas. Their nose is drooping, their face is wide across the cheeks, and they have a dwarf aspect. Their eyes are tiny, with thin, horizontal, and linear eyelid apertures. Women's features are more shaped than men's, although they are nonetheless similar in length. Men and women have wheatish to dark wheatish complexions. The Buxas are primarily Hindu in their religious beliefs.

The state of Uttarakhand is rich in traditional and cultural characteristics. In addition, it is strategically significant. Forced migration, commonly referred to as poverty-induced migration, is the main cause of suffering for tribal people.

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