



RAJI TRIBE OF UTTARAKHAND

ISSUES AND WAY FORWARD

An action-oriented survey on the status of the Raji Tribe was carried out to understand their social, economic and political vulnerabilities by ARPAN, with the support of Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS). This folder highlights some of the key findings related to their fundamental needs along with recommendations for their empowerment so that they can live a secure and dignified life.

HOUSING AND TOILETS

Around 40 per cent of houses are kaccha (huts), 30 per cent are pukka (linter roofs and stone walls) and 30 per cent are semi-pukka (tin/grass or polythene sheets for rooftops and stone or wooden walls).

Around 30 per cent of houses were sanctioned some 10 to 12 years back; they are now in very poor condition (leaking roofs). Almost half of the families do not have access to toilets.

ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

Only 70 per cent of the Raji people have Antyodaya cards, around 40 per cent have job cards, and 57 per cent of the families have received some or other benefit from government schemes like goat/cow shed, chicks, work under MNREGS. Around 5 per cent of the village is still not electrified. Around 45 per cent of Raji people do not have appropriate documents like Aadhar cards, land records, birth and death certificates etc. due to which they are not able to access government programmes.



POLITICAL STATUS

Until now, around seven people from the Raji community have been elected under the Panchayat elections (ward member and one Pradhan between 2014-2019). As an exception, one person has also been elected as MLA. Their participation in Gram Sabha meetings and other socio-political platforms is considerably low.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above-mentioned findings from the ARPAN survey, some of the important recommendations for the empowerment of the Raji Tribe are as follows:

- Considering their PVTG status, the Raji people require additional and special efforts from the government agencies at the block, district and state levels.
- There should be policies across the State to strengthen social infrastructure and social security to improve the overall condition of the PVTGs.
- Value addition in agricultural production should be considered for skill enhancement training and infrastructure-related facilities like irrigation and soil treatment should be provided to the Raji villages.
- Rural employment schemes need to be linked with the existing skills and special needs of Raji villages.
- Special provisions need to be provided by the government for their health care and health insurance.
- Aanganwadi centres, Primary, and Higher education for Raji children need special attention. The Block resource centre should monitor the progress of Raji children.
- To ensure land titles, livelihood and food security for the Raji tribe, the provisions made under 'The Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of forest rights) Act, 2006' should be implemented.
- Government departments and agencies should collaborate to prioritize the issues of the Raji community.

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Alcoholism in the community is increasing resulting in a weakened immune system.

The frequency of visits by medical staff to the village is a matter of serious concern. For their health problems, the Raji community mainly depends on the quacks or untrained doctors in their neighbourhood.

ECONOMIC STATUS

The Raji Tribe is a resource-poor and asset-less community. The main source of their livelihood is agriculture labour and daily wage work on construction sites, animal husbandry and fuel and fodder collection from the forest. Most of their work is seasonal.



Their daily earning varies between Rs. 250 to Rs. 1,000 depending upon the availability of work. Almost all families have very small land holdings (around 0.05 acres), which provide them food for barely 2 to 4 months. Climate variation, un-irrigated land and destruction of crops by wild animals are the main reasons affecting their agriculture. Their purchasing capacity is very poor; hence, they rely on the market only for sugar, tea, cooking oil, salt and medical care.

LAND HOLDING

The community falls under the category of landless. Their land holding ranges between 0.05 acres to 0.75 acres. Only 20 per cent have government patta (land-deed). Under the Forest Right Act, 2006, until now, only 83 families have received land deeds (only in five villages in District Pithoragarh); they are yet to receive their land titles. Community forest claim status is Nil. The forest land where deeds have been passed is not being transferred to Revenue land. The process of filing IFC and CFR has not been initiated until now (Khardwari & Chakarpur). The claims have been rejected by SDLC/DLC due to a lack of sufficient documents.



'Van Raut' or the 'Raji' Tribe is listed as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) since 1975. There exist only 249 families of the Raji Tribe in only 11 villages of Uttarakhand (See Table 1 below).

Table 1: Village-wise distribution of the Raji Tribe in Uttarakhand (ARPAN Survey, 2022)

Sl	District	Block	Gram Sabha	Village	Raji Population	Raji Households
1.	Pithoragarh	Dharchula	Toli	Chifaltara	45	16
2.			Kimkhola	Kimkhola	194	40
3.				Bhaktirwa	47	13
4.			DutiBagad	Ganagaon	91	19
5.		Kanalichhina	Dangti	Kulekh	46	11
6.			Jamtari	Kantoli	142	33
7.			Aultadi	Aultadi	39	11
8.		Didihat	Khetar	Kutachaurani	159	32
9.			Kanyal	Madanpuri	93	22
10.	Champawat	Champawat	Poth	Khirdwari	154	36
11.	Udham Singh Nagar	Khatima	Chakarpur	Chakarpur	65	16
Total					1075	249



EDUCATION

The dropout rate from secondary school is around 75 per cent. Only 90 per cent of the Raji children can attain education up to primary level. The main reasons behind dropout are inaccessibility to the schools, their remoteness, and sending children for high school education becomes expensive. In villages like Ganagaon, Chakarpur, and Madanpuri, the Aaganwadi centres are far-off. In villages like Kantoli, the condition of primary schools needs urgent attention.

Table 2: Reach of villages from basic amenities

Institutions	Maximum Distance	Minimum Distance
PHC	On Foot 11 + Road 38 km (Khirdwari)	500 mts (Kulekh)
Aanganwadi Kendra	On Foot 6 km (Kuta)	500 mts (Kulekh)
Primary School	On Foot 5 km + Road 43 km (Chifaltara)	In the village (Madanpuri)

HEALTH

It is a major issue for the Raji community especially for ailments related to stomach, malnutrition and accidents resulting in fractures or major injuries. Reproductive health issues affect the overall health of women. Early childbearing, frequent pregnancies, lack of proper nutrition and care, and drudgery are major causes of the deteriorating health of women.