

# Asian Resonance

## The Perception of the Girls towards the Culture of Almora: A Study

### Abstract

Almora district is gifted with quite extraordinary natural loveliness and affluent Cultural heritage. This delightful place was the prosperous capital by the Chand Dynusty. The region was previously under the sovereignty of the Katyuri King. It is notable that in 1560 the capital of Chand Dynusty was switched to Almora by Kalyanchand. Almora is a primary center for trade and other activities- social, cultural, political and is a district place of Uttarakhand State in India. The region of Kumaun hills is rich in folklore and the folktoles Aju-Bafaul, Narsingh and Ghana and the mythical toles of Haru-sem Golu, Kalsem are Anchari are Prominent. Many of these in the form of lallads are sung in diverse melodies and Nyoli, Bhagnaula, chapel and jhorro belong to this group. This folk song of this region make a poetic description of the glory of the Himaliyen Region.

The Study has revealed that there are various cultural activities witch take place regularly in the society and the same is being preserved the people of Almora. But it seems that the post modern generation has been including themselves in the stream of modernity and science and Technology.

**Keywords:** Girls perception, culture, tradition

### Introduction

History of Almora can be traced back to ancient times of Mahabharata. However, the earliest historical account of the place is provided by a Chinese pilgrim of seventh century. The pilgrim wrote in great detail about a kingdom called 'Brahmaputra'. A kingdom was first established in this area by the Katyuri dynasty. The Katyuri dynasty reigned from Dwarahat in katurya Valley. During those times, there was a small settlement in this area not much of any political significance. King Baichaldeo of the Katyuri dynasty, who reined in the region where present day Almora is located, donated major part of this land to a Gujarati Brahmin by name Sri Chand Tiwari.

Almora district is gifted with quite extraordinary natural loveliness and affluent cultural heritage. This delightful place was the prosperous capital of the Chand Dynasty. The region was previously under the sovereignty of the Katyuri king Baichaldeo who bestowed this place to a Gujarati Brahmin Sri Chand Tiwari. It is notable that in 1560 the capital of Chand Dynasty was switched to Almora by Kalyan Chand. The beautiful town is set on a 6 kms long horse saddle shaped ridge. It affords breathtaking views of the snowy summits of Himalayas.

In 1744 during the raid by Ali Muhammad Khan Rohilla, Almora was taken over from Chand dynasty. However, unable to bear the hardships of living in the hills, the Rohillas chiefs, placed by Ali Mohammad Khan Rohilla, returned Almora for a heavy bribe of three lakh rupees. Ali Mohammad, dissatisfied with the conduct of his commanders, attacked Almora again in 1745. However, this time the Rohillas were defeated. They never came back again. In 1790, Almora was conquered by the Gurkhas who ruled it for the next 24 years until it was taken over by the British in 1815. Today, Almora is a primary center for trade and other activities – social, cultural, political- and is a district place of Uttarakhand State in India. Unlike Shimla, Ranikhet, Nainital and Mussoorie, Almora has no such history of being developed by the British as hill stations.

The region of Kumaun hills is rich in folk lore and the folk tales of Aju-Bafaul, Narsingh and Ghana, Purukh Pant and the tales of Chivalry of Gangnath, and the mythical tales of Haru-Sem, Golu, Bin-bhat, Ganwara, Kalsem, Churmali, Pari and Anchari are prominent. Many of these tales in the form of lallads are sung in diverse melodies and Nyoli, Bhagnaula, Chapeli, Jhorra, Chanchari, Barrey, Shakun Geet and Banara belong to this group. The folk songs of this region make a poetic description of the



**H.R. Kaushal**

Asstt. Professor  
Dept. of Commerce &  
Mgt. Studies  
Kumaun University  
S.S.J. Campus  
Almora, U.K.

# Asian Resonance

glory of the Himalayan Region, the inherent charm of Nandadevi, Panchhchuli, Trishul and Chiplakot and the beauty of various aspects of nature including the luxuriant vegetation and the dense forest of Deodar, Banj (Oak) and Shiling Kafal, Burans (Rhododendrone) etc. The folk songs also frequently allude to the fields, forests, rivers, streams, rivulets, fauna and the snow clad peaks.

Almora besides being a hill station has also been a place frequented by famous personalities. Rabindranath Tagore spent some time here and wrote some of his sweet verses; Swami Vivekananda on his Himalayan sojourn stopped here and gave some famous discourses. Almora is the birthplace of freedom fighter and Bharat Ratna Govind Ballabh Pant. Even Jawaharlal Nehru was in Almora Jail for some time. Almora is also the birthplace of Nobel Laureate Sir Ronald Ross, the famous scientist, who pioneered the vaccine against Malaria. A very popular American actress, Uma Thurman spent some part of her childhood at Crank's Ridge. Praseon Joshi, Mohan Upreti and a few popular artists have their roots in Almora.

Almora is the second largest town of Kumaon and is a transit point en-route to popular tourist destinations Jageshwar, Binsar, Kaushani and Sitlakheth. It is also home to many famous temples including Binar Mahadev, Kasar Devi, Nanda Devi Temple and Banari Devi. The town because of what all it has in store for the tourists is a bustling vacation spot all around the year. This makes it more populated with the tourists than the actual populace of the town. Almora is also an important agricultural base and hence serves as a trade centre in more than one way. The people here are used to the crowd that the town is full of and is quite helpful. The people here are very religiously oriented and believe in the old style of living which was much simpler and honest.

But the basic intention behind conducting the said research is to point out the postmodern girl students' awareness and affinity towards their own culture. In fact, it has been found that the postmodern generation has been indulging themselves in the stream of modernity and science and technology but unfortunately they are moving away from their own circle which is culturally, traditionally and conventionally quite rich and prosperous. Therefore, deliberately we have selected our target group as the girls who are studying in professional courses. In order to find out certain significant conclusions there are certain statements of investigations which have been prepared by the group. Those statements are:

## 1. Statements of Investigations:

- Does the culture of Almora have very rich and influential cultural background?
- Do there difference between the terms called 'Tradition' and 'Culture'?
- Does this place called Almora have any historical importance?
- What are those cultural activities which take place regularly in Almora?
- What is the perception of the girls of Almora towards the culture?

## Aims and Objectives:

- To study the cultural activities of Almora.
- To understand the difference between culture and tradition.
- To study the historical heritage of Almora.
- To study the interest of the postmodern girls who are studying in professional courses.
- To study the perception of the same girls towards the culture and their knowledge about the same.

## Research Methodology:

It is an analytical research and based on the analysis of the questionnaire which is prepared to point out the perception of the girls towards the culture of Almora. The questionnaire was prepared containing twenty five questions based on the cultural activities of Almora and given to the target group as a part of field work. The sequential method of sampling was used in which the particular group of girls had been taken as the target group. It means the qualitative and quantitative method of research has been implemented certain texts containing the cultural details, journals, magazines, newspapers, have been used as a Primary Data and Secondary Data for the same.

## Difference Between Tradition and Culture:

It is quite important understand the difference between the terms called tradition and culture. Some people may think that these two terms are one and the same and there is no difference between them. It can be defined that 'Tradition' is the passing of beliefs or behaviors from one generation to the next generation, whereas 'Culture' reflects the characteristics that describe a society at a particular time; and the culture is mostly associated with the art forms.

Wikipedia defines tradition as "Tradition is a belief or behavior passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origins in the past". The word "tradition" has been derived from the Latin word 'tradere' or 'traderer', meaning to transmit or to hand-over. As in tradition we are talking about passing of belief or behavior to the next generation; it is clear from this statement that this is to retain these beliefs and behaviors in some or the other form. It reminds of the past as the tradition is related to the things in past and thus the current generation gets the chance to re-connect with the beliefs of the past. Traditions do not remain same forever, they may change or the better term to use in this context is that they evolve.

Wikipedia defines culture as "The arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively". The word culture has been derived from Latin word 'cultura', meaning cultivation. In 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century, the word culture was used in Europe to refer a process of cultivation or improvement. Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the term evolved and started being used for referring betterment or refinement of the society and, then to fulfillment of national ideals or aspirations. In 20<sup>th</sup> century, it finally emerged as an

# Asian Resonance

important concept in anthropology describing the human related phenomena that cannot be considered genetically inherited. It is an attribute referring to members of groups. Culture is always transmitted by the society not by an individual.

## 2. Data Analysis:

Twenty students of the girls' hostel were handed over the questionnaire containing the questions about traditional and cultural customs, festivals, attire and fairs. There were twenty five questions in the questionnaire carrying one mark for each question. The following details have been found

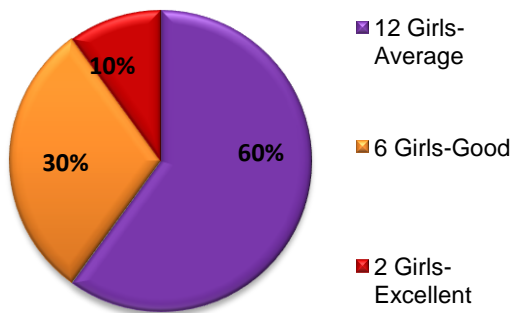
**Table No. 1**

Sr.No	Marks Obtained	Number of Students	Grade
01	0-10	Nil	Nil
02	10-20	Nil	Nil
03	20-30	Nil	Nil
04	30-40	Nil	Nil
05	40-50	Nil	Nil
06	50-60	12	C
07	60-70	06	B
08	70-80	02	A
09	80-90	Nil	Nil
10	90-100	Nil	Nil

**A= Excellent, B=Good & C=Average**

After analyzing the questionnaire it realizes that there are twelve girl students who scored between 50% to 60% marks. Moreover, there are six girl students who scored between 60% to 70%. Besides, there are only two girl students who scored between 70% to 80%.

**Marks Obtained in % Form**



The girl students are classified into grade. Those girl students who have scored more between 70% to 80% have been given the 'A' grade and those girl students who have scored between 60% to 70% have been given the 'B' grade whereas the girls who have scored between 50% to 60% have been given the 'C' grade. In grading structure the 'A' grade means 'Excellent', 'B' mean 'Good' and 'C' means 'Average.' The following table shows the facts:

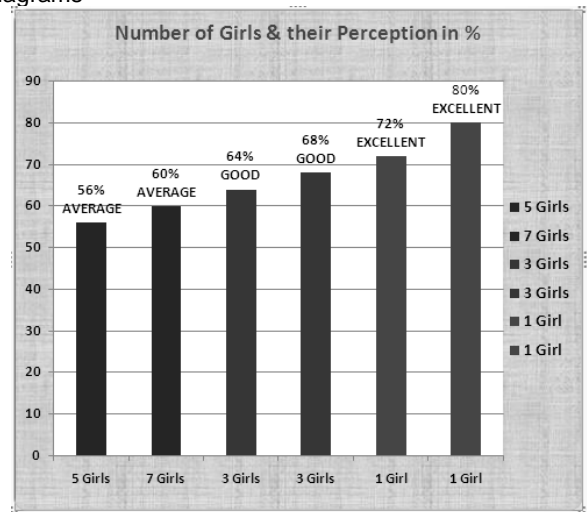
**Table No. 2**

Sr.No	Number of Students	Marks Obt. In %
01	05	56%
02	07	60%
03	03	64%
04	03	68%
05	01	72%
06	01	80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>59.8%</b>

With the help of above given specification it can be expressed that there are five girl students who have got 56%, seven girl students have got 60%. On the basis of their score it can be said that these girl students have the average knowledge of the culture of Almora (Uttarakhand).

There are three girl students who have scored 64% and another three girl students have scored 68%. On the basis of their score it can be said that these girl students have the good knowledge of the culture of Almora (Uttarakhand) including fairs, traditional culture activities and festivals.

There is only one girl student who has scored 72% and another one who has scored 80%. On the basis of their score it can be said that these girl students have the excellent knowledge of the culture of Almora (Uttarakhand) including fairs, traditional culture activities and festivals. The same analysis can be pointed out in brief with the help of following bar diagrams



Overall talking about the said survey, it can be stated that the total girls have scored 298 marks out of 500 marks. If the average of the entire score is calculated then it is 59.8%. This result shows that the girls who have gone through this process of solving the questionnaire having quite average knowledge about the culture of Almora and they need to develop their perception and attitude towards the same in order to preserve and practice the cultural heritage of Almora.

### Target Group and Questionnaire:

The target group for the said proposal is the girl students who are staying at Hostel in Almora. In

# Asian Resonance

fact, I have decided to take such a target group of girls who are taking the professional education. In my target group there were the girls from different branches and streams like Education, Law, etc. I have selected around twenty girl students and handed over the questionnaire to them. They were asked about the details of the culture of Almora. I have framed certain questions like:

1. What is Jagar?
2. When and why the Hudhaki Boll is sung?
3. What is Harela ?
4. How many types of the seeds are sown in Harela?
5. When the Harela is repeated?
6. Which auspicious song is sung in Kumauni Marriage Ceremony?
7. Which blessing is given by the elders to the children in Festival?
8. Which folk songs were sung at night to entertain the people by the public singers in ancient times in Uttarakhand?
10. Which is the major festival of Animals in which they are worshiped?
11. Which song is sung by the children on the occasion of Phool Sankranti?
12. What is the traditional attire/dress of men and women of Uttarakhand?
13. Where the Maanz Kumayya is spoken?
14. Which are the traditional musical instruments of Uttarakhand? Chauliya Dance of Uttarakhand is based upon
15. What are the portraits made by the fingers on papers, doors and thresholds?
16. When exactly the Decare/Decaal is made?
17. When the Door Dubad is worn?
18. Where exactly the Bagwal Mela is organized?
19. Where exactly the Devidhura Mela is organized?
20. In which month Khaturuwa Festival is celebrated?
21. Which festival is celebrated on the arrival of 'Vasant'?
22. What is called the design which is made on the religious and auspicious occasion?
23. In which state Nandadevi Festival is celebrated?
24. What is called the symbols which are made from main door of the home to pooja graha on the occasion of Mahalaxami Pooja?
25. What is called the dance is made by the girls and boys when the night is with full stars?

### Findings / Conclusions:

Eventually, I can point out certain conclusions or findings of the Research paper which have been drawn after the systematic analysis of the data. All the findings can be explained here in nutshell. Those are:

1. Almora has a very rich historic background.
2. Almora has a quite significant and influential cultural.
3. The terms called tradition and cultural are different from each other and contain different meanings.
4. The cultural heritage has been preserved nicely by the people.

5. The perception of the select target group towards the culture is quite average and need to indulge themselves in cultural activities.
6. There are 12 girls who scored between 50% to 60% as far as their perception towards the culture of Almora is concerned.
7. There are 6 girls who scored between 60% to 70% as far as their perception towards the culture of Almora is concerned.
8. There are 2 girls who scored between 70% to 80% as far as their perception towards the culture of Almora is concerned.
9. The average of their overall perception towards culture is 59.8%.

### References

1. Dabral, Shivprasad, History of Uttarakhand (History of Kumaun), Veergatha Publication, Duggadda- Gadwal, 1990.
2. Pathak, Shekhar, Pahad: Ek Parikrama, Talladanda Publication, Tallital-Nainital, 1994.
3. Pandey, Badridatta, History of Kumaun, Shyam Publication, Almora, 1990.
4. Navani, Lokesh, Uttarakhand Year Book, Binsar Publication Company, Dehradun, 2001.
5. Navani, Lokesh, Uttarakhand Year Book, Binsar Publication Company, Dehradun, 2011.
6. Karaula, Uday, Uttarakhand Ek Adhayan, Pratiyogita Sahitya Series, Aagra, 2010.
7. Tripathi, Kesarinandan, Uttarakhand Ka Samagra Adhyayan, Baudhik Prakashan, Allahabad, 2011.