



# Socio-Psychological Adjustment Amongst the Tribal People Believing in Local Deities

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**Abstract-** Paranormal beliefs since time immemorial have proved a greater resource in eliminating allostatic load and promoting psychosocial adjustment among the people across world. The people of India in general and district Kinnaur of Himachal Pradesh in particular still believe in paranormal elements and agents. They believe in God, deity, Devta, possession of evil and spirit, black-magic, shamanistic practices, existences of inhuman phenomenon, Kali, Solah Savni, animist ghosts such as Banshira, Dafrento, Khunkch and bhoot-pret etc. The study has been conducted on sample comprise on N= 120 Scheduled Caste and Non-scheduled Caste men and women of Kinnaur. Bells Adjustment inventory was used in the present study. The results based on 2 x 2 x 2 ANNOVA revealed that women (10.56) significantly  $F(1, 112) = 11.58, p < .01$  reported better health adjustment as compared to their men counterparts (9.86). The Non-scheduled caste (17.75) significantly  $F(1, 112) = 16.57$  reported better social adjustment as compared to their scheduled caste counterparts (16.18). Finally, the Scheduled Caste people (18) significantly  $F(1, 112) = 10.86, p < .01$  reported better emotional as compared to their non-scheduled caste counterpart (14). In nutshell, the women were found better in health adjustment whereas the non-scheduled caste in social adjustment and scheduled caste in emotional adjustment respectively. The people acclaimed such deities beliefs in health, social and emotional adjustment.

**Keywords-** *Paranormal Belief, Socio-psychological Adjustment, Local Deities, Mali*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the time immemorial most people had believed in the paranormal phenomenon such as existence of spirits, a human soul, thought to be an invisible that inhabits people while they are alive. Lindeman and Svedholm (2012) considered paranormal beliefs as common denominator that considered all beliefs to paranormal belief, supernatural, superstitious, magical and religious beliefs. Religious beliefs, like paranormal beliefs, involve accepting and attaching great value to things that can neither be seen nor verified (Vail, 2010). In India, rarely do we find a community without any folk and tradition beliefs. Believe in supernatural powers, paranormal phenomenon prevalent here. According to Thakur and Zinta (2018), the human beings since beginning have noticed many supernatural elements (God, Allaha) and their agents (god, goddess, local devta and deities).

Himachal Pradesh has plenty of folk and beliefs and legends associated to paranormal beliefs, in which local deity play prominent role in the customary practices and behavior of the masses. Pahari people in hilly areas also have their immutable believes in (Mali, Moulvis, Padri, and Granthis). The phenomenon of possession is widespread in rural areas wherein the Mali/Gur/Chela speaks and communicates the message of the deities to the people. Similarly, the culture root of people of tribal area Kinnaur can be found very ancient and mysterious. Tobacyk and Milford(1983)

found in their study that many wondrous and anomalous support belief in supernatural powers of forces and as such, play an important role in the development of mystical ideologies. The customary tradition and culture rituals are formulated on the basis of paranormal belief in Kinnaur. People have profound faith on supernatural powers such as deity powers, mali possession, spirit possession, black-magic, shamanistic practices, existences of inhuman phenomenon, good and bad spirits, kali, Solah savni, animist ghosts such as Banshira, Dafrento, Khunkch and bhoot-pret etc. Local deities and mali play a significant role settlement of people glitches and complications. People's faith towards their deities and supernatural phenomenon leads to ritual healing system. Some evidence was collected by Pirta and Ranta (2007), Vidya Sagar Negi (2010), Sunderkala Negi (2010) and R. L. Zinta (2010) and Deepika Negi (2017) in their studies on the tribal people of Kinnaur who are the strong devotee of local devta and paranormal phenomenon. The myths, ritual and trusty behaviours of people, functions as a conceptual apparatus in the life of the community member of Kinnaur.

Further, a culture has the main place in the socio-psychological adjustment in the people of Kinnaur. M. V. Grigoriyeva (2005) social and psychological adjustment are the element of the activities, the function of which is mastering relatively stable environmental conditions, solving repetitive typical problems through the use of the adopted ways of social behaviour, action. Rice (2003), in his study he explored that there is positive relationship between



social and paranormal beliefs. Every person desires to get something in life, everyone has their own wishes and dreams. He wants to in his life and keep trying to achieve his goals of life. Unwavering faith in deities is the focal point of culture here in Kinnaur. Every day, some kind of ritual is being done here, also the effect of supernatural powers of their deities has been seen in their daily lifestyle, behaviour and social adjustment. Herewith, local deity plays very vital role in socio-psychological adjustment by knowing the wellbeing of people and reconciles the psycho social conflicts of people etc. (Zinta and Negi, 2013). Beside deity other paranormal beliefs such as bhoot, prît, chudel, banshish, dyne, jogin etc. are directly prevalent in the mind of people. Such belief system has made the local people as religiously very strong as well as vulnerable. On the one side, the deity beliefs system has been directly related to the cooperation, and wellness and wellbeing of the society. It seems to promote the quality of life of the people by experiencing bumper crops i.e. granary and greenery and also foresee them behind their achievement and performance.

All human communities face problem of cooperation and coordination (Cronk & Leech, 2013). Religious belief promotes pro-social behavior (Norenzayan, 2013). Mainly, the upper caste people have strongly granted the help of their local deity in order to maintain supremacy. They have even misused their local devta in order to rule over the people. They considered themselves superior in term of socio-economic status, psychological status as they have abundant household properties and land holding. Many of the people in hilly areas have hundred bighas of land wherein they abundantly get their agricultural and horticultural products. Keeping in view their high income and socio-economic status they try to use and dominate lower caste people. Intention behind this is to keep ready them to work in their field and to make them land labourer through the life. Further they become the Thekedar or their deities by saying that the gramin devta do not allowed the lower caste people to touch their palanquin as well as temple premises. Therefore, the upper caste people directly are involved in expanding the untouchability and socio-psychological distresses. The deity beliefs and mind-set therefore, are directly related to the socio-psychological discrimination (Zinta, 2010). Additionally, mind-set *are a powerful leverage point for socio-psychological adjustment. According to Gupta (1992), shaping of mind, in an ecological frame, has to be considered as a function of our experience of the external world represented by the brain processes, not of the brain processes themselves, like in Kinnaur people experience deities and other paranormal phenomenon in their lifestyle. People's faith in these divine powers determines their mind-set.*

According to development psychology human understanding of other minds, that other people act goal-directed and intentionally based on their wishes

and beliefs. It begins to develop from birth and some social related habits and bases for later developing skills are innate (Farroni 2005; Blakemore, 2008; Saxe, Carey, & Kanwisher, 2004; Wellman, Cross, & Watson, 2001). The civilization of Kinnaur cannot be imagined without the deities. It is clear to see the influence of deities in the lives of the Kinnauri people. Here every person, whether it is a child or an elder, does not act against the deity and follows the rules of the deity. The influence of the deities in everyday life evokes faith in the people towards divine and supernatural powers. As a result, each person's behaviour and social adjustment is determined. Further, adaptive specialization to the environments that are initially tightly wired into a particular system and accomplish specific purpose may eventually be incorporated into other systems, and may ultimately give rise to consciousness and flexibility. Man likes freedom by nature, but uncontrolled freelance is fatal to both the individual and society, so rules and controls are essential for maintaining the existence of a civilized society. Therefore, the present study intends to explore the Socio-Psychological Adjustment of Tribal People Believing in Paranormal Phenomenon among Scheduled and Non-scheduled Caste Men and Women of upper and lower Kinnaur.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Major headings should be typeset in boldface with the words uppercase.**

### **2.1 Study Area and sample.**

The present study was conducted in district Kinnaur, a tribal area of Himachal Pradesh which is situated amidst the dreaded and giant mountain ranges, which has its own geographical position. The study has been conducted on the sample of on sample comprise on N= 120 subjects (60 Upper Kinnaur, 60 Lower Kinnaur) further subdivide on the basis of caste with N= 30 in Scheduled Caste and N= 30 Non-scheduled Caste group. Finally, the subjects were again grouped on the basis of gender that comprises of N= 15 men and another N= 15 in woman category. In this manner, there were eight groups with N=15 in each that comprises of aforesaid. Thus purposive sampling was used.

### **2.2 Measure**

In the present Bells adjustment inventory was used. It was developed by R.K Ojha in 2006, which is an Indian adaptation of the Bell's Adjustment Inventory. There are 140 items in relation to four domain of adjustment i.e. Home, Health, Social and Emotional with 35 items in each. The responses based on two-point scaling i.e. Yes, or No. For every yes participant will get one mark and zero on No response. High score on the inventory signify poor adjustment and low score batter adjustment in different specific areas and also in respect of adjustment taken as a whole. The scale is



easy to administer and the students have already used the measure on the Himachali people.

### 3. PROCEDURE

The main objective of the study was to study the socio-psychological adjustment amongst the Scheduled and Non-scheduled caste Men and Women of Upper and Lower Kinnaur. The study has been conducted on a sample of  $n=120$  subjects as shown in the above classification. There were eight groups with  $N = 8$  subject in each. These subjects were given Bells adjustment inventory to fill. The raw score was tabulated. A  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  ANOVA was used keeping in view the factorial design so as to explore the impact of locality i.e. local culture, gender and caste. The results are as follows:-

### 5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Hence the objective of the study is to assess the Paranormal Belief and impact of Paranormal belief on Socio-psychological Adjustment. in this Study ANOVA has been used and the results are as follow:

**TABLE 1.1:** A  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  ANOVA Performed on Home Adjustment among SC and ST Men and Women of Upper Kinnaur and Lower Kinnaur

Source	ss	df	ms	F	p
Total	15198.000	120	15198.000		
R	13.333	1	13.333	.518	n.s
C	1.633	1	1.633	.063	n.s
G	.300	1	.300	.012	n.s
R x C	7.500	1	7.500	.291	n.s
R x G	.300	1	.300	.012	n.s
C x G	19.200	1	19.200	.745	n.s
R x C x G	30.000	1	30.000	1.165	n.s
Error	2884.533	112	25.755		
Corrected	2956.800	119			

Notations: R= Region; C= Caste; G= Gender

Main effect of region in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-I was found  $F(1, 112) = .518, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. As well as main effect of caste in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-I was found  $F(1, 112) = .063, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. Further, main effect of gender in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-I was found  $F(1, 112) = .012, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. Then two-way interaction between region x caste in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-I was found  $F(1, 112) = .291, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. Moreover, two-way Interaction between region x

gender in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-I was found  $F(1, 112) = .012, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. And two-way interaction between caste x gender in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-I was found  $F(1, 112) = .745, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. Three-way interaction between in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-I was found  $F(1, 112) = 1.165, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant.

**Table1.2:** A  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  ANOVA Performed on Health Adjustment SC and ST Men and Women of Upper Kinnaur and Lower Kinnaur

Source	ss	df	ms	F	p
Total	40750.000	120	40750.000		
R	5.633	1	5.633	.118	n.s
C	73.633	1	73.633	1.538	n.s
G	554.700	1	554.700	11.586	<.01
R x C	128.133	1	128.133	2.676	n.s
RxG	1.200	1	1.200	.025	n.s
CxG	.133	1	.133	.003	n.s
RxCxG	80.033	1	80.033	1.672	n.s
Error	5362.400	112	47.879		
Corrected	6205.867	119			

Notations: R= Region; C= Caste; G= Gender

Main effect of region in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-II was found  $F(1, 112) = .118, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. Then main effect of caste in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-II was found  $F(1, 112) = 1.538, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. Further, main effect of gender in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-II was found  $F(1, 112) = 11.586, p < .01$  as statistically significant. The average score of women was found as 10.56 and men as 9.86. Then two-way interaction between region x caste in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-II was found  $F(1, 112) = 2.676, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. Then two-way interaction between region x gender in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-II was found  $F(1, 112) = .025, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. Two-way interaction between caste x gender in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-II was found  $F(1, 112) = .003, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. Further three-way interaction between region x caste x gender in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-II was found  $F(1, 112) = .1672, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant.



**Table 1.3:** A 2 x 2 x 2 ANOVA Performed on Social Adjustment among SC and ST Men and Women of Upper Kinnaur and Lower Kinnaur

Source	Ss	Df	Ms	F	P
Total	39159.000	120			
R	95.408	1	95.408	2.154	n.s
C	735.075	1	735.075	16.575	<.01
G	1.408	1	1.408	.032	n.s
RxC	9.075	1	9.075	.205	n.s
RxG	696.008	1	696.008	16.713	<.01
CxG	2.408	1	2.408	.054	n.s
RxCxG	21.675	1	21.675	.489	n.s
Error	4960.933	112	44.294		
Corrected Total	6521.992	119			

Notations: R= Region; C= Caste; G= Gender

Main effect of region in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-III was found  $F(1,112) = 2.154, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. Then main effect of caste in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-III was found  $F(1,112) = 16.575, p < .01$  as statistically significant. Further, main effect of gender in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-III was found  $F(1,112) = .032, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. As well as two-way interaction between region x caste in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-III found  $F(1,112) = .205, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. And two-way interaction between region x gender in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-III was found  $F(1,112) = 16.713, p < .01$  as statistically significant. Further, two-way interaction between caste x gender in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-III was found  $F(1,112) = .054, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. Three-way interaction between region x caste x gender in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-III was found  $F(1,112) = .489, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant.

**Table 1.4:** A 2x2x2 ANOVA Performed on emotional Adjustment among SC and ST Men and Women of Upper Kinnaur and Lower Kinnaur

Source	ss	df	ms	F	p
Total	29977.000	120			
R	99.008	1	99.008	2.551	n.s
C	421.875	1	421.875	10.869	<.01
G	4.408	1	4.408	.114	n.s
RxC	11.408	1	11.408	.294	n.s
RxG	78.408	1	78.408	2.020	n.s

CxG	3.675	1	3.675	.095	n.s
RxCxG	99.008	1	99.008	2.551	n.s
Error	4347.200	112	38.814		
Corrected Total	5064.992	119			

Notations: R= Region; C= Caste; G= Gender

The main effect of region in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-IV was found  $F(1,112) = 2.551, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. Then main effect of caste in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-IV was found  $F(1,112) = 10.869, p < .01$  as statistically significant. Further, the main effect of gender in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-IV was found  $F(1,112) = .114, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. Two-way interaction between region x caste in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-IV was found  $F(1,112) = .294, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. As well as two-way interaction between region x gender in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-IV was found  $F(1,112) = 2.020, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. Then two-way interaction between caste x gender in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-IV was found  $F(1,112) = .095, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant. Three-way interaction between region x caste x gender in the measure of Bell's Adjustment Part-IV was found  $F(1,112) = 2.551, p > .05$  as statistically non-significant.

In nutshell it can be stated that their paranormal beliefs since time immemorial have proved a greater resource in eliminating allostatic load and promoting psychosocial adjustment among the people across world. The people of Kinnaur of Himachal Pradesh still believe in paranormal elements and agents. They believe in God, deity, Devta, possession of evil and spirit, black-magic, shamanistic practices, existences of inhuman phenomenon, Kali, Solah Savni, animist ghosts such as Banshira, Dafrento, Khunkch and bhoot-pret etc. The study has been conducted on sample comprise on N= 120 Scheduled Caste and Non-scheduled Caste men and women of Kinnaur. Bell's Adjustment inventory was used in the present study. The results based on 2 x 2 x 2 ANOVA revealed that women (10.56) significantly  $F(1, 112) = 11.58, p < .01$  reported better health adjustment as compared to their men counterparts (9.86). The Non-scheduled caste (17.75) significantly  $F(1, 112) = 16.57$  reported better social adjustment as compared to their scheduled caste counterparts (16.18). Finally, the Scheduled Caste people (18) significantly  $F(1, 112) = 10.86, p < .01$  reported better emotional as compared to their non-scheduled caste counterpart (14). In nutshell, the women were found better in health adjustment whereas the non-scheduled caste in social adjustment and scheduled caste in emotional adjustment respectively. The people acclaimed such deities beliefs in health, social and emotional adjustment.



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