"Cultural Resilience and Identity Formation: Shilpkar(Dalit) Perspectives in the Face of Upper Caste Hegemony in Uttarakhand"

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Abstract-

The study of history involves, above all, the study of civilizations and cultures - especially those that arose in human societies. But there is an important question: which human cultures were studied? Were these cultures all encompassing, representing all aspects of human society? Moreover, if these cultures are not universal or representative of all social classes, what are the elements that prevent their broad acceptance? It is important to note that Dalit (Shilpkar) cultures are not homogeneous. If they were, the upper strata of society would accept them in part or in whole. On the contrary, these cultures were categorically rejected as uncivilized or uncivilized, and regulations were put in place to ensure that they would never be assimilated. This research paper aims to examine those very elements and facts.

Keywords:

Shilpkar (Dalits), the elite, Bith (upper castes), culture, dominance.

Introduction-

In the historical social hierarchy of Uttarakhand, the society is divided into two main categories, Bith and Dom. The Bith group is further subdivided into the Thul-jaat (Asal) group. Conversely, the Dom, now called Shilpkar, are considered inferior castes and are considered untouchables. In Uttarakhand, the predominant culture is considered to be that of the Bithu (upper castes). The idea of a culture coming from the lower levels of society is completely ignored. Heritage, art, sculpture, and tradition are all seen through the lens of the dominant elite. Similarly, the traditions, arts and music of the lower castes are not taken into account, as is their social position. Moreover, the dichotomy of good and evil is also reflected in cultural practices. As a result, culture from lower castes is considered unclean. The Shilpkar (Dalit) culture cannot be reduced to a single name or caste sign; it is instead a collective identity journey.

The Kol are the oldest of the three cultural groups followed by the Kirat and Khas within the Central Himalayan context, with the Kol being the most ancient group. Historians, anthropologists, sociologists, linguists have acknowledged that the Kol were ancestors of Shilpkar (Dalits), modern scholars have tried to incorporate these Shilpkar into Brahmanical culture and framework but when we study their culture, Shilpkar culture is often neglected and Brahminical system totally denies their culture and treats them as untouchables outside society religion caste.

This research paper will attempt to bring a new perspective beyond the prevailing ideology of Brahminism and analyze the unique differences in Shilpkar culture.

Research methodology –

The investigation uses a qualitative and interpretative approach, relying mainly on secondary data. The aim is to examine the development, characteristics and differences between Dalit and elitist cultures in Uttarakhand through analysis of historical and cultural texts, with a focus on how these cultures are represented, ignored or glorified in literary and historical narratives.

"Steering Through the Currents of Fairness: Dalit Democracy and the Dominance of Elite Power Dynamics"

In the Brahminical system, fundamental rights are discussed only for the upper castes, while the existence of Shilpkar's is completely denied. The Shilpkar culture is a shared culture that, despite being oppressed, advocates coexistence. Atkinson mentions two types of slaves—domestic slaves and agricultural slaves; domestic slaves belonged to the Khas class, while agricultural slaves were from the Shilpkar class. Slaves depended on their masters for their daily needs. In reality, agricultural slaves were temporary, meaning Shilpkar's were called upon only during farming periods. The purchase of women for Shilpkar's and Vaishya livelihoods was common; parents themselves sold their children. (Atkinson-493) This clearly shows the extent of untouchability. The classification of slaves proves that Shilpkar's were not allowed entry into the homes of upper castes, and in many cases, were even prohibited from entering villages. Their work was limited to being plowmen (field tillers), and even that depended on the goodwill of their masters. The buying and selling of men and women was a violation of their fundamental rights and humanity. In contrast, the Shilpkar culture sought a democratic share of their labor or some capital, but they hardly ever received wages for their work. For making sacks and bags, hemp fibers were used, known as kuthle in the hills. Buddhist texts use the term kathmitika for these. Buddhist monks were forbidden from wearing wool or fur from animals; instead, they wore robes made from hemp fibers. Such clothing is referred to in Buddhist literature as bhangisi, bhangik, or bhangiya, and sometimes as Nepalak. According to Ganpat Shastri (Part 1, p.192), Nepali folklore states that during Shankaracharya's time, worship of Pashupatinath was conducted by Buddhist priests. Shankaracharya killed many followers of Buddhism, forcing the rest to abandon Buddhism, convert to Hinduism, and adopt animal sacrifice. Agricultural lands under the control of Buddhist monasteries in Kumaon-Garhwal were confiscated. The Katyuris, considered Shudras, began to be called Rajputs, and indigenous tribes were labeled Dom. (Okley, Holy Himalaya, pp. 96-97) Middle Himalayan literature contains many accounts of the violation of Shilpkar's' rights and the prohibition of their religious and spiritual freedoms, completely refuting the notion that previous systems were a golden age.

"Understanding Patriarchy: Perspectives on Shilpkar (Dalit) and Bith Societies"

Patriarchal systems exist among both Shilpkar's and upper castes. Exploitation was present in both cultures, but in terms of prohibitions and religious control, the Shilpkar community can be considered more democratic, though not entirely. The problems faced by Shilpkar women are greater than those faced by upper-caste women. First and foremost, they have to struggle for their existence and identity. Additionally, Shilpkar women face exploitation in three ways: first, due to their caste; second, due to their economic condition; and third, due to their gender. In the first case, they face untouchability; in the second, they struggle with poverty; and in the third, they are considered inferior because they are women. Beyond these three conditions, there are many layers of their exploitation. Being women, they are subject to numerous religious and social prohibitions. Due to their economic situation, they suffer from malnutrition and other health problems, and are deprived of all material comforts and conveniences. As Dalits, they have historically endured both physical and mental exploitation. In the early medieval period, women began to be seen as property, gradually becoming objects of consumption. Dalit women have endured this exploitation more than other women because, besides their own families, they were also regarded as the property of upper-caste men. They have endured lifelong harassment (verbal abuse), physical violence, sexual exploitation, agricultural servitude, forced labor, and poverty. Yet, in the mid-Himalayan regions, a clear difference can be seen in the patriarchal structures of Shilpkar's versus upper castes. Among the upper castes, especially Brahmins, there is a distinct division of labor between men and women, with upper-caste women appearing distant from direct spiritual activities and existing subordinately to men. They are not direct participants in spiritual work but remain subordinate in all such activities. In contrast, Shilpkar women have been action-oriented; although they struggled with their fate, they did not lament it. Despite facing all kinds of exploitation, they were more active and pragmatic than fatalistic. Shilpkar women are equal partners with men in the production process, whether in agriculture, animal husbandry, or other crafts, and compared to other groups, they can easily engage in traditional work. This is because there are no spiritual or religious restrictions on them performing these tasks. In contrast, women of other castes are prohibited from performing their traditional and caste-specific duties—such as rituals (yajnas) or warfare—except in exceptional emergency situations.

A Comparative Study of Spiritual Differences: Shilpkar and Bith (Upper Caste) Practices:

The Brahmanical system promotes spiritual progress for upper castes while denying it to Shilpkars, who are prohibited from entering temples or performing yajnas (sacrificial ceremonies), whereas Shilpkar culture replaces those rituals with open-ended practices that welcome all social groups and includes everyone in Jagar. The spirituality of the Shilpkars differs sharply from the Brahmanical perspective: Whereas the Brahmanical system views moksha (liberation) as the ultimate spiritual achievement, which will be experienced after death, Shilpkar spirituality focuses more on eliminating suffering and is characterized by an exchange between humans and deities in

which devotees offer a share of their happiness (the object sought) as a gift once they have received it. This covenant can encompass anything from simple gifts to elaborate ceremonies.

Shilpkar advocates a universal cultural education, which includes acceptance of all religions, sects, and the mainstreaming of women. The educational institutes set up by Munshi Hariprasad Tamt in Almora and Khushiram in Nainital are a prime example of this vision. Brahmin culture, on the other hand, limits education to a select few. Trail points out that there is virtually no public education institution, such as a school, and that private schooling is restricted to the upper strata of society. Educators are typically Brahmins who teach their students only reading, writing and arithmetic. The descendents of the elite Brahmins are taught in Sanskrit. As regards the Shilpkar, upper castes often claim that the Shilpkar have historically been related to them and that they have established relations based on kinship. They have consistently provided financial support, grain, etc. during occasions such as weddings, festivals, religious ceremonies (Dev puja) and other major events.

"The Connecting Realms: An In-Depth Exploration of Savarn's Spiritual Insights and Shilpkar's Material Expertise."

Numerous scholars have studied the ancient culture of Uttarakhand and have claimed that the original inhabitants of the region were the Kol and the Kirat, who absorbed the Khas cultural practices. Then Shankaracharya came and replaced it with a Brahmin culture. Contemporary culture is a fusion of all these traditions. In this respect, the observation of the former President Dr K.R. Narayanan deserves attention: 'Conflict does not arise between civilizations, but between uncivilized elements.` The Khas saw the culture of the Kol-Kirat as inferior to their own, and the Brahmins viewed the culture of the Khas as inferior to theirs. This reflects, in essence, a cultural imposition process. The Khas replaced the Kol-Kirat's nature worship and animism with the worship of feudal deities, and the Brahmins then replaced that worship of feudal deities with the worship of the spiritual. The Brahmins maintained this system but altered it by framing it within the boundaries of caste, purity, and impurity. Those early worshippers of nature, production, and animism were declared socially and spiritually outcast. In the Shilpkar culture, the concept of deity worship appears distinct from the Vedic gods. Whereas in Brahminical literature, attaining or merging with Brahman (God) is the ultimate spiritual goal, achieved through certain rituals that must be performed by trained or expert Brahmins, who also require adherence to rules of purity, the Shilpkar form of deity worship is connected to nature and material culture. Their gods are associated more with practical knowledge than spiritual knowledge and are concerned with protecting the culture of production. This production culture focuses on the present rather than the afterlife, ghosts, or the future. The gods are expected to safeguard their production and material culture, which benefits not only the individual and their family but also other social groups—in other words, the concept of collective benefit. In Shilpkar deity worship, the idea of collectivity is not one-sided but involves pleasing the gods together with all social groups. A portion of the production or other goods is also offered to the gods as a gift. Ghantakarna or Ghandyal is among the deities worshipped by lower castes. In descriptions of Badrinath, Ghantakarna is mentioned as

a servant of Badrinath and is considered a follower of Shiva. This deity is believed to cure skin diseases and is worshipped along with a water vessel. Bhairava is also regarded as a god of the lower castes. Generally, their temples were built to protect against evil spirits and calamities. To ward off wrath, the king had eight Bhairava temples constructed in Almora. According to Atkinson (pages 545-546), Gangnath is a popular deity among Shilpkar's. When someone is harassed by a bad or powerful person, they seek help from Gangnath, who punishes the wrongdoer. Goril, also known as Goria, Gwal, and Gol, is a widely worshipped deity among the lower castes in Kumaon. Goril is especially revered for justice, healing illness, and fulfilling desires. Similarly, Kshetrapal or Bhumiya is the guardian deity of fields, farms, and boundaries. Aedi is a forest deity. Chaumu is the protector deity of cattle, as is Badhan. Atkinson (pages 546-557) notes that Gadeli (river goddess) is invoked when a child falls ill and worshipped after the harvest to give thanks. Similarly, Masani is told, “If you do not find water at the time of death, we will offer you water.” Trail writes in his report that drought, soil fertility, livestock epidemics, and other agricultural losses are attributed to the wrath of some deity, and various rituals are performed to appease them. (Atkinson, page 562) Even today in Kumaon, when a person falls ill, it is believed that they have been afflicted by “chal” — the shadow of ghosts or spirits. To remove this “chal,” chants and magical rites are performed, known as “jagar.” (Source: Sanskriti Sangam, p. 40)

"Understanding Power Structures: The Vocabulary of Authority versus the Vocabulary of Subjugation in Social Communication."

In the Brahminical system, a special language (Sanskrit) held great importance, known as the language of the gods, which was the language of the dominant classes. The right to speak this language and pronounce some of its special words was reserved only for a particular class. In contrast, the language of craftsmen was the vernacular, which anyone could use anywhere. Opposite to the language of the gods, during the British rule, a new language emerged among the elite classes, which was different from the previously prevalent elite language and was the new administrative language. The younger generation of the elite, especially Brahmins, immediately adopted it in place of Sanskrit because the old Brahmins could not embrace it, and slow changes began to appear in the prevailing orthodox traditions and systems. There were no restrictions for craftsmen in adopting this language, so they also began to learn it, which became unacceptable to the upper castes. Here, Traill's statement becomes debatable, where he describes craftsmen as having immoral character and a nature different from the upper castes. (Traill, Sketch of Kumaon, A.R.I., Volume 16, page 218.) The modern Dalit thinker and writer Mohan Mukt refers to a poem by Gumani Pant, which in the context of British rule says—

मखमल और कमख्र गजागज छींट गजी से सस्ती है

टके सेर के मेवे खाके डुमड़ी में भी मस्ती है,

कहे गुमानी अंग्रेजों की दुनियां में परबस्ती है !

पुल दरियाव जगै-जगै पर किले कोटघर बंगले हैं

चूड़े और चमार धनंदर बांभन-बनिये कंगले हैं !

The resentment of arrogance is evident in these lines, reflecting the opportunities and the awakening among Dalits during British rule. The mobility of Dalits and the slightest hint of wealth are intolerable to them. Kanchani—the woman who sells her body, the low-caste Dalit woman who makes a living by dancing—is portrayed with an anti-Dalit and anti-woman image. The hateful term "Doom," which was used as an insult against lower castes, is clearly visible in her poetry.

It was not only the universalization of the English language that was opposed; there was also resistance to the universalization of Hindu society. When the Arya Samaj, based on their interpretation of the Vedas, entered Uttarakhand, and Lala Lajpat Rai addressed the Dalit castes there as Shilpkar's and began advocating for Shilpkar's right to wear the sacred thread (Janeu), several such incidents occurred that the upper caste society fiercely opposed. Considering all these facts, as Sumit Sarkar wrote, this was called the concept of Kali Yuga. It was described as a reversal of the traditional caste and gender hierarchy, with disobedient women and Shudras dominating high caste men. Kali Yuga became a language expressing the frustration, pain, and resentment of less successful educated individuals from the higher castes. (Sumit Sarkar, p. 206) Although Shilpkar were connected to food production processes (as agricultural laborers), due to their limited ownership of agricultural land, their share in the produced food was almost negligible. What little share of food they received from their labor was considered alms. If they took even the smallest portion of food they produced for their family's sustenance, it was labeled theft. For this reason, the British began classifying them as a criminal tribe. During Trail's time (1815-1835), in Kumaon and Garhwal, the British administration relied on local intermediaries or "Munshis" for communication between local languages (such as Kumaoni, Garhwali, and Hindi) and English. These Munshis or local scholars acted as translators, helped in document writing, revenue record-keeping, and translating between local languages (like Sanskrit, Kumaoni, or Hindi) and English. Trail, in his book "Statistical Sketch of Kumaon," mentions working with local people but clearly did not have extensive knowledge of the Shilpkar communities; his prejudice against Shilpkar's was based solely on local intermediaries and elite perspectives. He worked without resistance even in forced labor conditions for his local wholesalers (landlords) and Brahmins—work considered menial and done without complaint—so the British Raj could not have created such intermediaries. In Kali Yuga, women came to be associated with greed for wealth and possessions. Here, Gumani does not focus on all women but specifically targets low-class Shilpkar women as symbols of immorality, even questioning their right to eat delicious sweets—things previously reserved only for the upper classes. He laments the economic changes happening to Shilpkar's under British rule. There was widespread opposition to the universalization of the elite class's distinct language—that is, the adoption of this language by Shilpkar's. Some reformers, through the Arya Samaj's initial Hindu reform movement in Uttarakhand, faced open opposition from the upper castes. The Kumaon Council president, Pandit Taradatt Gairola, was reportedly deceitfully called inside a house by upper castes and severely beaten by Shilpkar's. They rubbed sandalwood paste into his

shoes, broke his sacred thread, and forced him into porter's labor, among other abuses. (Satyaketu Haridutt, Part 4, p. 265) Regarding the cultural assimilation of Shilpkars, Rajput-Brahmins said Shilpkars should neither abandon their hereditary customs nor wear the sacred thread. Hargovind Pant and Harikrishna Pandey asked Shilpkar leader Khushi Ram to stop wearing the sacred thread to maintain peace. (Shakti, September 1925) Clearly, Shilpkar culture resists linguistic dominance; instead, it advocates for the universalization and democratic nature of language, where there is no notion of a language as an oppressor. It openly opposes the traditional theory of inequality and promotes coexistence of languages rather than dominance. This is why the devotional songs (Jagars), seasonal songs (Ritugits), and even songs of separation and complaint used by Shilpkar's for their physical and spiritual welfare are not exclusive to one class but belong to all classes and express collective welfare and the voice of all people.

It was not only the universalization of the English language that was opposed; the universalization of Hindu society was opposed as well. When the Arya Samaj, based on its interpretations of the Vedas, entered Uttarakhand, and Lala Lajpat Rai addressed the local Dalit castes as 'Shilpkars' and began advocating for their right to wear the sacred thread (Janeu), many incidents occurred that met fierce resistance from the upper castes. Considering all these facts, as Sumit Sarkar wrote, this was called the concept of Kali Yuga. It was described as an overturning of the traditional caste and gender order, with disobedient women and Shudra dominance over high-caste men. Kali Yuga became a language expressing the frustration, pain, and resentment of less successful, educated individuals in the upper castes. (Sumit Sarkar - p.206) Though the Shilpkars were linked to food production processes (as agricultural laborers), their share in the produced food was negligible because they did not own much agricultural land themselves. Even the minimal share they earned through their labor was treated as alms. If they took even the smallest portion of the food produced by their own family's labor, it was equated with theft. For this reason, the British began classifying them as a criminal tribe. During the period of British rule (1815–1835), the administration in Kumaon and Garhwal relied on local intermediaries or "Munshis" to communicate between local languages (like Kumaoni, Garhwali, and Hindi) and English. These Munshis or local scholars acted as translators. They worked locally as Munshis or Pandits, assisting with document writing, maintaining revenue records, and translating from local languages (such as Sanskrit, Kumaoni, or Hindi) into English. Trail mentioned working with local people in his book Statistical Sketch of Kumaon, though clearly he did not have much knowledge about the Shilpkar communities. His bias against Shilpkars was based solely on local prejudices and upper-caste perspectives. He worked without protest even under forced labor conditions for local landlords (zamindars) and Brahmins, performing tasks considered menial without complaint, so such exploitative practices could not have originated with Trail during British rule. In Kali Yuga, women began to be associated with greed for wealth and goods. Here, the writer does not focus on all women but targets the lower-class Shilpkar women as symbols of immorality, even questioning their enjoyment of sweet delicacies—how could they eat such things that until then were only rights of the upper classes? He laments the economic changes happening to the Shilpkars under British rule. There was widespread opposition from the elite classes to the universalization of their

distinct language—that is, to the acceptance of Shilpkars. The initial reform movement for Hindu religious reform led by Arya Samaj in Uttarakhand was openly opposed by the upper castes. The president of the Kumaon Council, Pandit Taradatt Gairola, wrote that the Shilpkars deceived him by inviting him inside a house where they severely beat him, rubbed his sandalwood with their shoes, tore off his sacred thread, and subjected him to forced labor as a porter, among other abuses. (Satyaketu Haridatt, Part 4, p. 265) Regarding the Sanskritization of the Shilpkars, Rajput-Brahmins said that Shilpkars should not give up their traditional ways or wear the sacred thread. Hargovind Pant and Harikrishna Pandey told Shilpkar leader Khushi Ram to stop wearing the Janeu for the sake of peace. (Shakti, September 1925) Clearly, Shilpkar culture opposes linguistic dominance; rather, it Navigating the Tides of Equity: A Comparative Study of Dalit Democracy and Elite Power Structures"interprets language universalization and democratic forms as ones in which the concept of an oppressor language does not exist. It openly opposes the old principles of inequality. It advocates for the coexistence of languages, not dominance. This is why the devotional songs (devgeet/jagar), seasonal songs (ritugeet), and even songs of separation and complaint used by Shilpkars for their physical and spiritual well-being belong not to a single class but to all classes, expressing collective welfare and the feelings of all.

Overcoming Obstacles: A Comparative Study of Economic Inequality in the Lives of Bith (Savarna) and Shilpkar (Dalit) Communities

The level of economic disparity in the Shilpkar culture is more apparent among the upper castes. This is due to the geographical conditions of the Central Himalayan regions as well as caste, which is a significant factor. Besides their traditional craft work, Shilpkar's also performed other tasks such as blacksmithing, carpentry, masonry, entertainment (dancers and singers), drumming outside temples, village watchmen, and more. Additionally, they worked as tenant farmers for their upper-caste patrons, performing labor-intensive tasks like plowing fields, breaking stones, and fetching wood. These jobs were part of a forced labor system.

It is worth noting that during the medieval Katyuri and Chand feudal systems, Shilpkar's were essentially agricultural serfs. After the arrival of Shankaracharya in Uttarakhand and the establishment of Brahminical order, Shilpkar's were relegated to an economically disadvantaged, socially and religiously marginalized, and untouchable status. It is also important to consider that due to their economic backwardness, these groups were morally stigmatized and socially criminalized. For a powerful landowner, known locally as a "Thokdar," having multiple wives—both legal and illegal—was a symbol of status and prestige. However, it was unimaginable for a woman or an Shilpkar to even consider ownership of property or equality with their patrons. While Brahmins could lawfully receive precious gems, jewelry, and land as gifts or offerings, Shilpkar's had to beg for even a minimal share of the produce from the fields they worked on as tenant farmers. In fact, Shilpkar's were often disparagingly labeled as a "begging caste." The last Katyuri king would have wheat milled from his granary but would charge more than what was given. Every village was forced to provide labor in rotation, but there were no fixed rules—whatever the ruler

desired became law. Handsome young boys and girls from the populace were forcibly taken as servants or slaves.

Regarding King Brahmadev, there was a saying that he had iron shackles fastened around the shoulders of those who carried his palanquin to prevent them from throwing him into a deep pit if they ever mistook him for a tyrant. To further increase economic disparity, a tax called “Mijhari” was imposed exclusively on Shilpkar’s. In Brahminical literature, people involved in agricultural and craft production were classified as Shudras and considered fit only for manual labor, deemed unsuitable for intellectual work. This perception of Shilpkar’s, rooted entirely in prejudice, has persisted over time. Shilpkar’s were involved in various crafts such as ironwork, carpentry, agriculture, and leatherwork. It is generally assumed that these crafts involved only manual labor and lacked intellectual or creative input. However, it was these very Shilpkar’s who were the early engineers and scientists of Uttarakhand. They were the first to discover iron and its smelting process, inventing various tools that revolutionized agriculture and the military. They also pioneered early seed development techniques. Shilpkar’s were the first to understand soil properties and the benefits of fertilizers.

Investigating the Sacred: Food Practices and Ideas of Purity Among Bith (Savarna) and Dalit (Shilpkar) Groups

Within the Brahminical framework, there exist particular dietary limitations. Nevertheless, in the elevated Himalayan regions, even those of higher caste partake in meat consumption. In the mid-Himalayan territories, the consumption of meat is not entirely forbidden; instead, the restrictions pertain to specific animal types. This prohibition represents an imposition on pre-existing cultural practices and can be interpreted as a form of cultural imperialism. Ultimately, this differentiation is not centered on the food itself but rather on the individuals who partake in it. Deepa Tok asserts that the upper castes provided the same food to others that they themselves consumed, yet the food ingested by Dalits was deemed unclean and impure, despite the fact that upper castes consumed the same items (Rege et al., 63-68). It is crucial to recognize that the distinctiveness of Dalit cuisine is not determined by the options available to them, but rather by what was left for them. All so-called "pure" foods were appropriated by upper-caste communities, relegating Dalits to the remnants of meat, flour, and grains. The upper castes adhere to a specific dietary code that dictates which foods may be shared among castes and which are prohibited. Dining with Shilpkar’s was entirely forbidden. A post by Koranne-Khandekar elucidates their perspective on the correlation between social standing and dietary habits—indicating that the higher one's societal status, the less varied one's diet becomes. This phenomenon is also observable in the mid-Himalayan region. Here, in addition to dietary restrictions, one can observe variations in the cooking methods as well. For Shilpkar women, cooking is a routine, everyday task, while in the kitchens of upper-caste women, the divine is the primary focus. Rigid purity regulations must be adhered to, such as cooking exclusively in unstitched garments or refraining from kitchen

activities during menstruation. Indeed, in numerous Brahmin households, women were even prohibited from entering the kitchen.

Conclusion:

In summary, the thoughtful comparison made between the spiritual practices of Brahmanical and Shilpkar traditions acts as a powerful reflection of the significant divide apparent in their respective spiritual methodologies. This highlights the essential necessity to acknowledge and appreciate the various spiritual traditions that are present, not only for the sake of cultural education but also for promoting social cohesion.

The complex and varied cultural development observed in Uttarakhand vividly demonstrates the subtle interaction between assimilation and dominance among the area's indigenous populations and later groups. This historical account weaves a rich narrative of beliefs that prioritize collective welfare and practical knowledge over spiritual elitism, thus underscoring the importance of valuing and honoring the diverse cultural practices that have influenced the region throughout its history.Moreover, a deep dive into the historical relationship between language and power unveils a strong undercurrent of resistance to linguistic and social control within Shilpkar communities like the Shilpkars. This resistance underscores the pressing necessity for inclusive and open communication channels that can lay the foundational stones for a fairer and more egalitarian society, while also prompting a critical examination of entrenched hierarchical structures that shape societal norms. Delving further, an exploration of the complex dynamics at play in the realms of food, culture, and social hierarchy within the Dwij and Dalit communities unveils the discriminatory undertones embedded in food practices. This, in turn, illuminates the intrinsic link between one's social standing and dietary habits, underscoring the enduring influence of caste on food customs prevalent in the mid-Himalayan region. Furthermore, a careful examination of the patriarchal systems entrenched within Shilpkar (Dalit) and Savarna cultures brings into sharp focus the stark disparities that women within these communities grapple with. This stark revelation sheds light on the intricate and often oppressive dynamics at play within patriarchal structures that shape these communities, necessitating a deeper introspection and a call to action for gender equality and empowerment. Overall, the persistent economic disparities faced by Dwij (Savarna) and Shilpkar (Dalit) Shilpkar’s in the Central Himalayan regions can be directly traced back to the enduring grip of the caste system and the deep-rooted historical feudal structures. These structural barriers perpetuate the marginalized status of these Shilpkar’s despite their substantial contributions in various fields, thereby underscoring the pressing need to confront and rectify these ongoing injustices in order to forge a more just and equitable society for all.

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