



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 8.4
IJAR 2022; 8(11): 210-216
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 04-08-2022
Accepted: 07-09-2022

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Cultural impeccability of Himachali tribes and their floras in Chamba District: A case study

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Abstract

The principle of cultural impeccability calls for the preservation of the knowledge base, the development of indigenous people's capacities, and the fair sharing of profits resulting from the commercial use of indigenous knowledge. Tribes living in Himachal Pradesh have their own language, dance, culture, festivals, and fairs. The tribes of Chamba district are spread throughout the state, and are cordial and identified by their cultures and traditions. The Himalayan region is famous for growing medicinal plants for centuries. The study area is Banet and Priyungal village located in Bhattiyat tehsil of Chamba district in Himachal Pradesh, India. Most of the scheduled tribes living in this area are Gaddis, Gurjars, Pangwala and Bhots and Bodhs. Primary data will be collected by conducting field survey from the tribes living there through questionnaire. There are many such plants and their parts, which are used by the local tribes in the cultural, traditional, festivals and fairs activities, but the outside world does not know about that plant. This study is to find about the flora's used by the tribes in Himachal Pradesh by looking at its cultural (folklores, folk songs, folk talks, games, temples, creators, literatures, artistic, music, paintings), traditional, social, economic, and medical uses - aspects that have been a part of their daily lives since Vadic Period. Tourism has an impact on the lifestyle of the tribes living there, where changes can be seen in their cultural, traditional activities. In today's modern era, there is a need to identify and preserve that valuable plant, this study is a step in that direction.

Keywords: Cultural impeccability, Indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditions, scheduled tribes, Tourism

Introduction

Himachal Pradesh is also a very attractive place for tourists from the point of view of tourism. Apart from the country, people also come from abroad. It has an impact on the lifestyle of the tribes living there, where changes can be seen in their cultural, traditional activities. The bond between humans' beings and plants is very strong. From the birth of human till death, we are associated with plants in some form or the other and use it throughout our life. Different types of rites are performed from birth to death. Some rites are performed before birth, some at birth and some after. Throughout our lives, we use plants and their components in a variety of ways.

The use of spiritual knowledge relating to "Cultural Impeccability of Tribals of Himachal Pradesh since Vedic Period with reference to their Flora's" for human welfare demands data on socio-economic aspects, aesthetics, ethics, impact on or environment or conservation of biodiversity. Cultural Impeccability demands preservation of the knowledge base, capacity building among the indigenous people and fair sharing of benefits accruing from commercial use of the indigenous knowledge. Modern scientific approach to the study of ethnobotany demands precision in information, statistical support to data and quantitative analysis of field observations. Himalayan forests offer enormous prospects for the discovery of new drugs for use in modern medicine. The most effective method of finding plants that contain bioactive substances is to concentrate on those that are utilised as remedies by indigenous peoples. There is an urgent need for more ethnobotanists and ethnopharmacologists to document as much information as possible before the plants are lost through destruction of the forest and acculturation of the indigenous peoples.

About half all-renowned medication is derived from natural product and their semi-synthetic derivatives. There are several approaches obtainable for the choice of plants for drug discovery.

There are many approaches available for the selection of plants for drug discovery. Ethno botany has been once more become a recognized tool within the explore for new prescription drugs. This regeneration has been sparked in part by initiatives taken by governmental and private organizations. Numerous of these studies are multidisciplinary collaborations with experts in chemistry, anthropology, botany, medicine, and pharmacology. Almost everywhere in the world, both natural and man-made factors pose a threat to the environment and its resources. Some of the main natural forces behind the eradication of native flora include floods, soil erosion, landslides, earthquakes, natural competition between species, species biology, pollination especially in the absence of a suitable pollinator, natural regeneration, disease. Population growth, Cultural Impeccability, use of wood for furniture, fuel, grazing and fodder, forest fires, exploitation of economically important plant species, development activities and agriculture are the main man-made factors.

Review of Literature

(Sharma & Uniyal, 2009) ^[5] The objective of the study is to specify the “Aeginetia Indical- A new record to the flora of Himachal Pradesh”. The study was conducted in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. Earlier studies made no reference to this species. Agnetae indicial, a holophrastic plant species, is commonly found in wet, moist and marshy areas. The author has represented the species in the description by photographs, diagrams so that it can be easily recognized.

(Lal, Rawat, & Pandey, 2012) ^[3] The research paper is an effort to understand the “*Taverniera cuneifolium* (Roth) Arnott (Fabaceae) a new distributional record to the flora of Himachal Pradesh, India”. In this research, researcher has identified a new species *Taverniera cuneifolium* by survey in Sirmour district of Himachal Pradesh (India). This species is well known in the north-western parts of India and many other countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Oman and Somalia. But was completely unknown in Himachal Pradesh. The identification and related information of this species is described by the author, species Shrub in nature, 60–100 cm tall, striped, pubescent and twigs as its distinctive features. All seasons of the year are suitable for the bloom and fruit of this species.

(Rani, Rana, & Rana, 2013) ^[4] This paper demonstrates the “Ethnomedicinal plants of Chamba district, Himachal Pradesh, India”. The research, conducted during 2010 to 2012, was carried out for ethnobotanical evaluation of native plants of Chamba district. The researcher found 50 species present there through field studies and questionnaire surveys. This is used by the people living there to cure 26 diseases. Locals highly value “cordifolia” for its potential health benefits as well as its cultural importance. The many species of plants used by the Vedas are of great importance and can be found in India's traditional system of medicine, Ayurveda and Unani. In this study, the researcher suggested that the administration along with the local community should take steps to save the domestic species.

(Kumar, 2016) ^[2] This study focused on “Major tribes of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh”. All the tribes living in Himachal Pradesh have their own language, dance, culture, festivals and fairs. The tribes of Chamba district are spread throughout the state, and the tribal population living in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh is cordial and

identified by their cultures and traditions. The study finds that Gaddi and Gujjar Tribe are two of the main tribes in this area. Ravi Valley is the common name for Chamba valley. In this paper, the author has made an effort to understand about the three Valleys of Chamba district and the tribes living there. Gurjar tribe is more in number in Chamba valley, Gaddi in Bharmour valley and Pangwala tribe is more in Pangi valley. The Tribal Development Department has run several programs from time to time for the development and welfare of the Scheduled Tribes living there.

(Arora, Sharma, & Gupta, 2018) ^[1] This paper demonstrates the Overview of “Ethnomedicinal studies of some tree species of Chamba district (Himachal Pradesh) India”. This study has been done among Gaddi and Gurjar tribes in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh and the study included 121 ethno-medicinal uses of 26 tree species from 20 families. In this Research paper researcher found that *Taxus baccata* was discovered to be the most adaptable species in the area. It was used for 13 diseases affecting 8 different bodily systems.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the floras available in Chamba district.
- To know about the major tribes, culture and local fair of the tribes of Chamba District.
- To analyse the transfer of knowledge from person to person through folklores, folk songs, folk talks, games, herbarium, temples, creators, literatures, artistic, music, paintings and sculpture are the means to preserve that.
- To understand the Sources Floras used in Culture since Vedic periods.

Major Tribes of Himachal Pradesh

- **Gaddis Tribes:** The Gaddi tribe is the most powerful of the several hill tribes in Himachal Pradesh. The Gaddis are the most numerous tribes when compared to the other tribes. Gadi is the language of the Gaddis. While the Gaddis' financial situation is better than that of their counterparts in other states (Socio-Economic Caste Census, 2011), since the majority of them live semi-nomadic pastoral lives and practise transhumance, their standard of living has not increased over time. A Gaddi spends the majority of their time raising sheep and goats, which is their primary occupation. This tribe's main source of income comes from the upkeep of sizable flocks of sheep and goats as well as from the provision of fodder for their cattle.
- **Pangwals Tribes:** The Pangwals are a mountain people that make their home in the colder parts of Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district. The communities' economies rely mostly on agriculture, animal husbandry, and handmade goods.
- **Gujjar Tribe:** The Gujjar people of Himachal Pradesh are a multireligious group with some members practising Hinduism and others practising Islam. The bulk of this group maintains a nomadic existence, and their transhumanist culture extends to many aspects of daily life. Some of them, though, have found permanent residence away from one another, but they have retained the traditional nuclear family unit within their homes. Similar to the Gaddis, this tribe's main economic activity is cow herding.

- **Lahaula Tribe:** Lahaulas are the common name for people of the Lahaula Tribe. Several unique tribal communities may be found in Himachal Pradesh's Lahaul and Spiti areas. The economy of Lahaula relies heavily on agriculture, trade, horticulture, animal husbandry, and a wide range of handicrafts.
- **Kinners or Kinnauras Tribe:** The Kinners, also known as the Kinnauras, are an indigenous ethnic group from the southwestern part of the Indian state of Kinnaur. The majority of Kinnauras' GDP comes from commerce, horticulture, and agriculture. Members of this tribe also participate in silversmithing, blacksmithing, and woodcarving in addition to the more traditional livestock farming and weaving.
- **Bodh Tribe:** The Bodh people, also known as the Khas Bodhi, are an indigenous people group in the Himachal Pradesh region of India. There are also a few scattered populations in the Miyar Valley, the higher Pangi regions of Himachal Pradesh, and the Paddar Valley of Jammu and Kashmir. The best place to look for them is in Lahaul and Spiti. Although Buddhism makes up the bulk of their religious practises, some atavistic and Shaivite rites are also performed.
- **Swangla Tribes:** In Himachal, these contemporary scheduled tribes reside in the city and the Chandra Bhaga River Valley nearby. They generally converse in Manchhad dialects. They were believed to reside in the northernmost Himalayan ranges.
- **Khampa Tribes:** The Khampa people are Tibetan immigrants who have established themselves in Himachal Pradesh. They settled in the Himachal Pradesh districts of Kullu, Chamba, Kinnaur, and Lahaul. Each of these original communities in Himachal Pradesh today goes by a name that reflects the ways in which it has evolved across time and space. People in the Kullu valley call them "Bauddh," while those in the Spiti division call them "Piti Khampa." Regardless of the titles by which they are known in different regions, their distinctive appearance sets them apart.

Table 1: Floras used in Culture/Tradition/ by Tribes since Vedic periods:

SL No.	Scientific Name Family Local Name	Photo	Floras used in Culture/Tradition/ by Tribes since Vedic periods
1	Bauhinia Variegata Fabaceae Orchid tree, Kachnar		The flowers and buds of Kachnar are especially beneficial for arthritis, joint pain. Those who know about this tree believe that its buds are usually made as a vegetable. Along with this, raita is also made from its flowers, which is delicious to eat. And Kachnar leaves are also used for fodder and fuel.
2	Terminalia Chebula Terminalia Harad		Terminalia Chebula (Harad) fruit, bark and gum are used medicinally and is also used for dyeing leather. There are 3 types of Terminalia Chebula – big, Yellow and small, all three Terminalia Chebula are the fruits of the same tree, which vary according to the stage difference.
3	Lettuce Asteraceae Kahu		Lettuce (Kahu) plant is used for making sticks, as fodder and fuel, and oil is extracted from its seeds and it is used as a salad.
4	Rhododendron Ericaceae Buransh		Flowers are used to make sauces and beverages, and its wood is used for fuel.
5	Cassia fistula Fabaceae Amaltas		It is used for house building, burning wood, coal, for making colours, and in the manufacture of various types of medicines from the roots, leaves and pods.
6	Vateria indica Dipterocarpaceae dhupa		It is used for making soaps, candles and its products are used for lighting lamps in place of ghee.

7	Adina cordifolia Rubiaceae Haldia		It is used in packing boxes, frames, furniture, plows, toys, gun handles, brushes, carbigframes, knives and mirror frames.
8	Betula utilis Betulaceae Bhojpatra		Bhujpatri or Bhurjar is found at an altitude of more than 3000 m, whose bark was once used for writing instead of paper
9	Sapindus mukorossi Sapindaceae Ritha		Ritha tree is used for washing woolen and silk clothes and its leaves are used for fodder.
10	Pyrus pashia Rosaceae Kainth		It is used for making sticks, combs and hookah tubes. It's delicious fruit is used to eat.

The floras that may be found in the Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh are listed in the table that can be found above. In addition to the scientific name and family name, the common name of the plant is also given. This table also includes a discussion of the plants that are utilised in a variety of cultural practises as well as in the ordinary activities of the tribes that live there (Table 1).

Sources of Floras used in their Culture

- **Phulaich Festival:** This festival is celebrated on the 16th day of the Hindu month of Bhadrapada (August and September), the season for the flowering of wildflowers in the upper hilly areas. Locally, the Phulaich festival is also called Ookay and Festival or Ukyam Festival. During Phulaich festival, 3-4 persons bring flowers to the village from a high hill and offer them to the deity. Then dance takes place in the temple premises.
- **Shebo Fair:** Shebo fair is celebrated in Chango village of Kinnaur in which archery takes place. The bow and arrow are made from a special kind of wood. The name of that wood is also Tira wood. This comes from the Sahu tree.
- **Thoda Khel:** The history of Thoda Khel is said to be related to Mahabharata. It is allegorical game of Mahabharata but it is played with brotherhood. In this game, arrows are shot at the opponent's legs in turn. Arrows and bows are used which are made from Sahu tree.
- **Suhi Fair:** There is a Suhi fair celebrated by the local people of Chamba. This fair remembers the goddess who sacrificed herself to provide water to her subjects. Perhaps this is the only fair in the world which is

famous as 'Women's Fair'. It is celebrated from 1st Chaitra to 14th Chaitra. For these fourteen days, the women of Dhadog Mohalla would come to the Sapri locality, picking flowers of a particular plant from the temple of Bhagwati Chamunda, situated at the top of Chamba city. From 15 Chaitra, the gathering of Ghuryeis would start in the temple of Mata Suhi.

- **Chamba Rumal:** Chamba Rumal this is not a simple handkerchief but a very beautiful handkerchief made from world famous and embroidered handicrafts. Various types of paintings exist on this handkerchief in the form of small paintings and murals, such as pictures of animals, birds and plants. The tradition of showing the plant on the handkerchief will give an opportunity to know many types of plants which are becoming extinct and can be saved from extinction.
- **Budhi Diwali:** In some districts of Himachal Pradesh like Shimla and other districts, Budhi Diwali is celebrated. Although the main Diwali is also celebrated here with pomp. There is also a custom of burning Baliraj in these areas. Especially in the midnight of Amavasya, a grand procession is taken out by the people of Kaurava dynasty by taking torches and circumambulation the whole village and later the tradition of Baliraj Dahan is played by setting fire to the collected grass, thatch and maize sticks.

Research Methodology

Study Area & Methodology

The study area is Banet and Priyungal village located in Bhattiyat tehsil of Chamba district in Himachal Pradesh, India. Most of the scheduled tribes living in this area are Gaddis, Gurjars, Pangwala and Bhots and Bodhs.

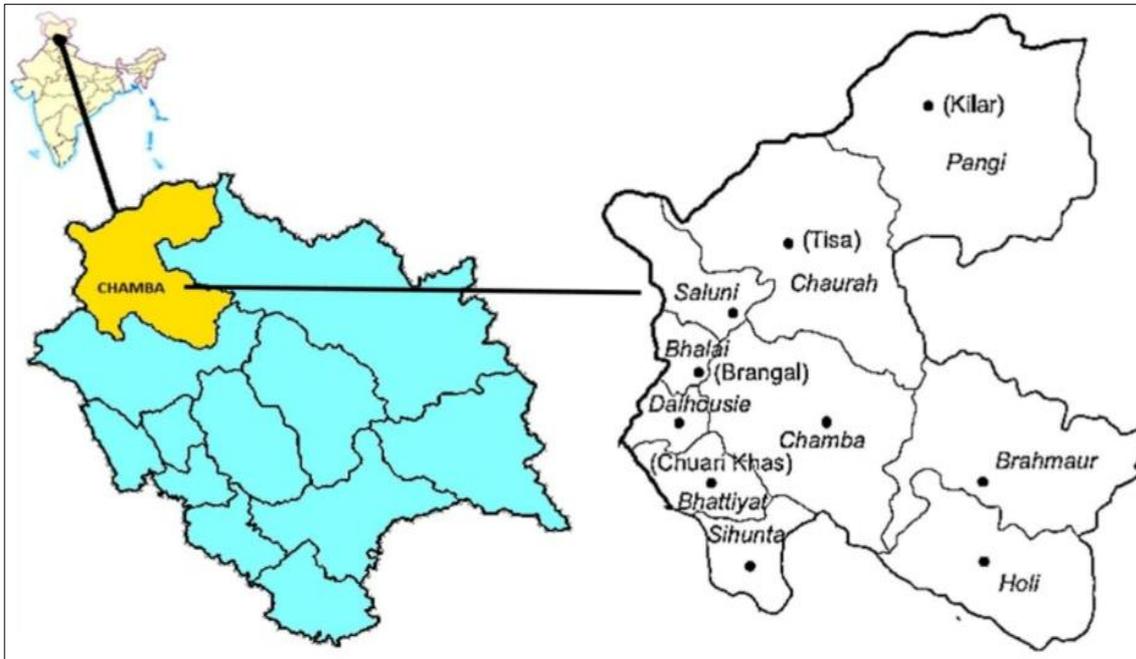


Fig 1: Study Area

- **Chamba:** With an approximate size of 6522 km² and being surrounded on all sides by towering hill ranges, Chamba is bordered on the north-west by Jammu and Kashmir, the north-east and east by the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir and the Lahaul and Barabangal area of Himachal Pradesh. With an elevation range of 2,000 to 21,000 feet, the region is entirely mountainous.
- **Bhattiyat:** Bhattiyat is a Tehsil in Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district. It is one of the districts of Chamba's 10 Tehsils. In Bhattiyat Tehsil, there are 133 villages and 2 towns. The Bhattiyat Tehsil has a total area of 249 km², of which 244.17 km² is rural and 4.71 km² is urban.
- **Banet:** Banet is a Village in Bhattiyat Tehsil in Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh State, India. It is located 33 Km towards South from District headquarters Chamba. 21 Km from Bhattiyat. The total geographical area of village is 168.03 hectares/1.6803 km².
- **Priyungal:** Priyungal village is located in Bhattiyat tehsil of Chamba district in Himachal Pradesh, India. It is situated 66km away from district headquarter Chuari

Khas. Banet is the gram panchayat of Priyungal village. The total geographical area of village is 374.71 hectares/3.7471 km².

This research paper is based on secondary data. Secondary data will be collected through literature review and various sources like websites, my books and newspapers, magazines, research papers, reports which are available on the government website. The data of the tribes has been taken from the Tribal Development Department, Government of Himachal Pradesh.

The study population consists of tribals from Banet and Priyungal villages located in Bhattiyat tehsil of Chamba district in Himachal Pradesh, India. According to the Census 2011 the population of Himachal Pradesh is 68,64,602 of which 3,92,126 (5.71%) belongs to Scheduled Tribes. The following communities have been listed in the State Scheduled Tribes list. Bhot/Bodh, Gaddi, Gujjar, Jad/Lamba/ Khampa, Kanaura/Kinnara, Lahaula, Pangwala, Swangla, Beta/Beda, Demba/Gara/Zoba.

Table 2: Total Population and Schedule Tribes

Area	Total Population	All Schedule Tribes	Percentage (%)
Himachal Pradesh	68,64,602	3,92,126	5.71
Chamba	5,19,080	1,35,500	26.10
Bhattiyat	42,967	10,592	24.65
Banet	426	188	44.13
Priyungal	180	75	41.67

Source: HP Govt. Census 2011 Retrieved (<https://www.censusindia2011.com/himachal-pradesh-population.html>)

According to the 2011 census Chamba district has a total population of 519,080 in which male population is 261,320 and female population is 257,760 and 1,35,500 (26.10%) belongs to Scheduled Tribes. Bhattiyat Tehsil of Chamba district has total population of 42,967. Out of which 21,550 are males while 21,417 are females and 10,592 (24.65%) belongs to Scheduled Tribes. In 2011 there were total 8,897

families residing in Bhattiyat Tehsil. The total population of Banet is 426 out of which 214 are males and 212 are females and 188 (44.13 %) belongs to Scheduled Tribes. Priyungal has a total population of 180 peoples, out of which male population is 85 while female population is 95 and 75 (41.67 %) belongs to Scheduled Tribes (Table 2).

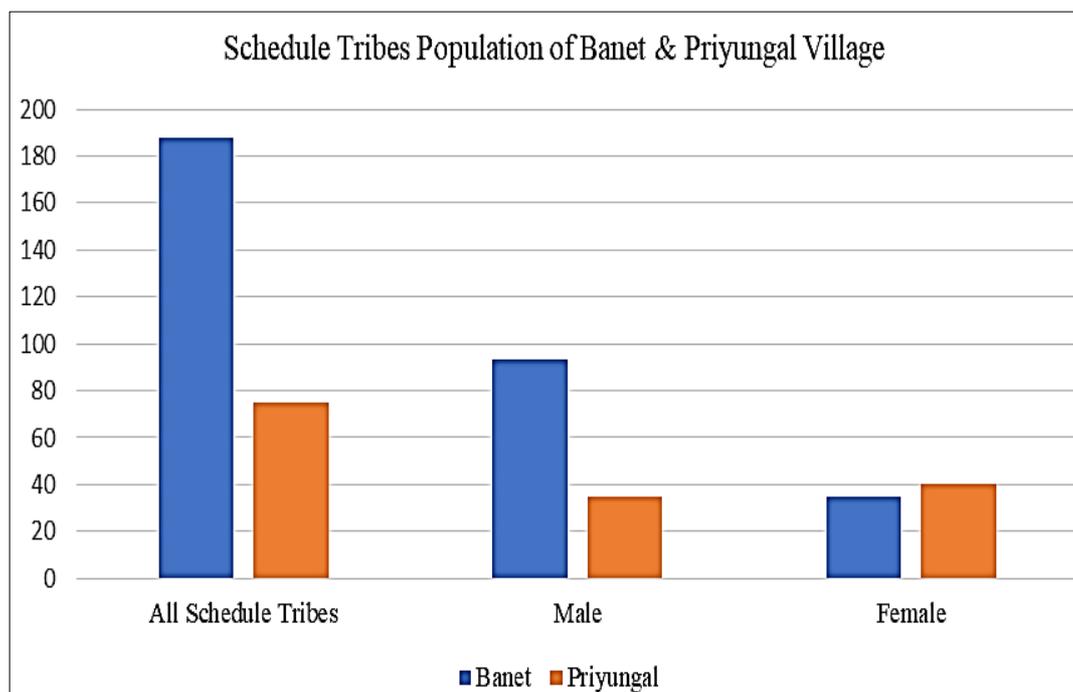
Table 3: Schedule Tribes

Schedule Tribes	Himachal Pradesh	Chamba	Bhattiyat	Banet	Priyungal
Male	1,96,118	67,900	5,216	93	35
Female	1,96,008	67,600	5,376	35	40
Total	3,92,126	1,35,500	10,592	188	75

Source: HP Govt. Census 2011 Retrieved (<https://www.censusindia2011.com/himachal-pradesh-population.html>)

According to the 2011 census Himachal Pradesh has a total Schedule Tribes population of 3, 92,126 in which male population is 1, 96,118 and female population is 1, 96,008.

Chamba district has a total Schedule Tribes population of 1, 35,500 in which male population is 67,900 and female population is 67,600.

**Fig 2:** Schedule Tribes Population of Banet & Priyungal Village

According to the 2011 census Bhattiyat Tehsil of Chamba district has total Schedule Tribes population of 10,592. Out of which 5,216 are males while 5,376 are females. The total Schedule Tribes population of Banet is 188 out of which 93

are males and 35 are females. Priyungal has a total tribe's population of 75 peoples, out of which male population is 35 while female population is 40 (Table 3 and figure 2).

Table 4: Major Tribes of Chamba District

All Schedule Tribes	Male	Female	Total
Gaddi	52,448	52,616	1,05,064
Pangwala	8,579	8,484	17063
Gujjar	5,084	4,700	9784
Lahaula	172	175	347
Kanaura, Kinnara	146	165	311
Bhot, Bodh	114	117	231
Swangla	33	31	64
Jad, Lamba, Khampa	24	18	42
Domba, Gara,Zoba	5	2	7
Others	1295	1292	2587
Total	67,900	67,600	135500

Table 5: Male & Female Schedule Tribes of HP & Chamba District

All Schedule Tribes	Male	Female	Total
Himachal Pradesh	1,96,118	1,96,008	3,92,126
Chamba District	67,900	67,600	135500

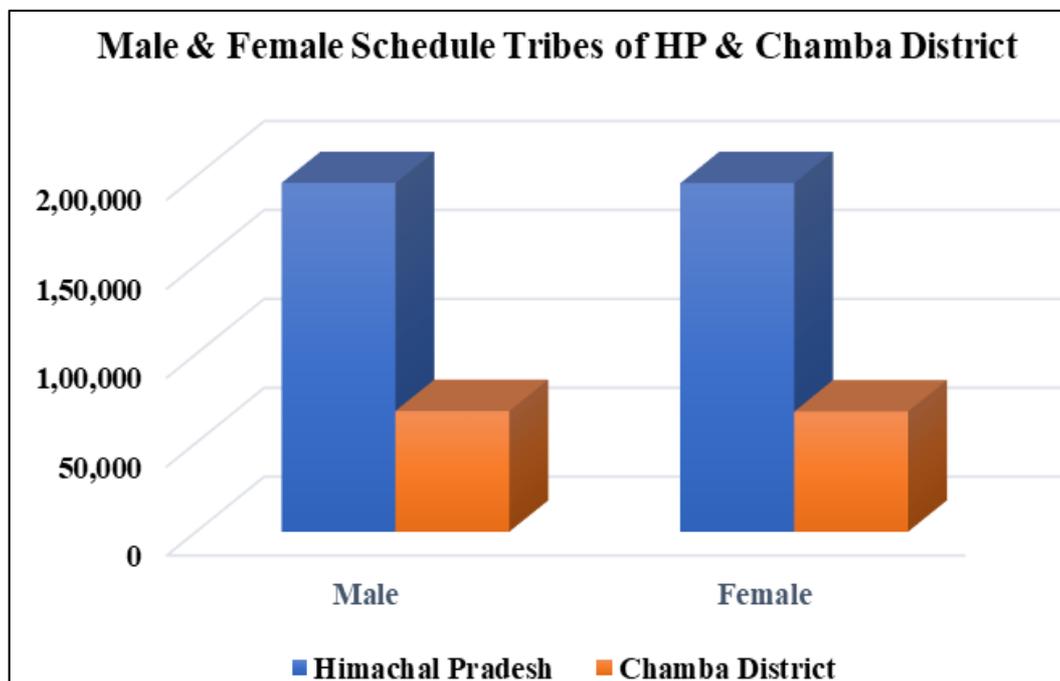


Fig 3: Male & Female Schedule Tribes of HP & Chamba District

Chamba district has the largest number of Gaddi tribes, followed by Pangwala tribe and Gurjar tribe. According to the 2011 census the population of Himachal Pradesh is 6,86,4,602 out of which 3, 92, 126 (5.71%) belong to the Scheduled Tribes. About 34% of the tribes living in Himachal Pradesh (3, 92,126) live in Chamba district (1, 35,500) (Table 4, 5 & Figure 3).

Conclusion

According to the Census 2011, Chamba district has a population of 5, 19,080, out of which 1, 35,500 belong to the Scheduled Tribes (ST) constituting 26.1% of Chamba's total population. Bhattiyat Tehsil of Chamba district has total population of 42,967 out of which 24.65 % belongs to Scheduled Tribes. Banet and Priyungal have 44.13 % and 41.67 % Scheduled Tribes population respectively. All the tribes living in Himachal Pradesh have their own language, dance, culture, festivals and fairs. The tribes of Chamba district are spread throughout the state, and the tribal population living in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh is cordial and identified by their cultures and traditions. This research will give an opportunity to learn and understand about such flora from which the world is untouched. The Himalayan region is famous for growing medicinal plants for centuries. There are many such plants and their parts, which are used by the local tribes there, but the outside world does not know about that plant. In today's modern era, there is a need to identify and preserve that valuable plant. And this research project is a step in that direction.

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