

Raji Tribe - UPSC Notes

Why in News?

In *Khetar Kanyal*, a village dominated by the Raji tribe in **Pithoragarh district** of **Uttarakhand**, the *absence of any female candidate for the post of village pradhan* (head) has highlighted deeper socio-political and gender representation issues within this marginalized community.

About Raji Tribe

- **Location:** Primarily found in the **Kumaon region** of **Uttarakhand**, especially in the **Pithoragarh district**; also present in parts of **western Nepal**.
- **Other Names:** Also known as *Banrawats*, *Ben Manus*, and *cave dwellers* due to their traditional lifestyle.
- **Classification:** Listed as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)** by the Government of India.
- **Population:** One of the **smallest tribal communities** in India.
- **Language:** Speak a Tibeto-Burman language called **Bat-Kha**.

Traditional Lifestyle

- **Past Livelihoods:**
 - Forest gatherers
 - Honey collection from wild beehives
 - Fishing and small-game hunting
- **Present Livelihoods:**
 - Transitioning to **agriculture**: rice, maize, and barley are staple crops.
 - Skilled in **handicrafts**, particularly **weaving and bamboo basketry**.

Religion and Beliefs

- Practice a blend of **Hinduism** and **nature worship**.
- Rituals often revolve around forests, animals, and natural forces.

Social Structure

- **Clan-based society:** Each clan has distinct customs and traditions.
- **Elders** play a central role in **conflict resolution** and **decision-making**.
- Local self-governance through **Panchayats** ensures community cohesion.

Housing and Architecture

- Homes are built from **locally available materials:** wood, mud, and stone.
- Elevated construction to withstand **harsh terrain, wildlife, and flooding**.
- Settlements are usually in **forest or hilly areas**, consistent with their traditional lifestyle.

Conservation and Challenges

- As a **PVTG**, the Raji tribe faces challenges such as:
 - **Loss of traditional livelihood** due to forest conservation laws
 - **Low literacy and poor health indicators**
 - **Limited political participation**, especially among women
 - **Cultural erosion** due to modern influences

UPSC Relevance

- **Static GK:** Tribal groups of India
- **Current Affairs:** Gender and tribal rights
- **Governance & Social Justice:** Issues related to PVTGs, Tribal Panchayati Raj
- **GS Paper I & II:** Society, vulnerable sections, government policies

Raji Tribe - Quick Facts

Feature
State
District

Details
Uttarakhand
Pithoragarh

Feature	Details
Other Names	Banrawats, Ben Manus, Cave Dwellers
Language	Bat-Kha (Tibeto-Burman family)
Tribal Category	Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)
Primary Livelihoods	Gathering, agriculture, handicrafts
Religion	Hinduism + Nature Worship

FAQs on Raji Tribe

Q1. In which Indian state is the Raji tribe mainly found?

Ans: Uttarakhand

Q2. What is another common name for the Raji tribe?

Ans: Banrawats

Q3. Which district of Uttarakhand is primarily inhabited by the Raji tribe?

Ans: Pithoragarh

Q4. What language is spoken by the Raji tribe?

Ans: Bat-Kha (Tibeto-Burman language)

Q5. What is the status of the Raji tribe as per Government classification?

Ans: Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)

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