
A Comparative Study of Mingling of Indian and Western Cultures in Kasar Devi Village Almora

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ABSTRACT

Just because of globalization the world has become a global village. India is rich in cultural values and hospitality. Thousands of foreigners has embraced Indian values and they have mingled with Indian culture. This paper presents a comprehensive overview on the facts how Indian and western cultures are mingling in a very small village Kasar Devi, Almora. Present study shows how Indian villagers are able to sustain their traditional values among foreigners. This study specially examines how people of different races, religions, languages and countries live and learn together. A hundred of respondents were taken in this study and interview method was applied for the purpose. In present study it was found that both the Indians and foreigners are living friendly adopting their cultural values mutually.

Keywords: *Mingling of Cultures, Indian Culture, Western Culture*

INTRODUCTION

Uttarakhand is a scenic, beautiful and welcoming state of India. Thousands of tourists from various parts of the world come every year to see the beauty of mountains, rivers, lakes, valleys and bugyals in Uttarakhand. The state is divided into two divisions namely Garhwal and Kumaun with a total of 13 districts. Kumaun is one of the two zones and administrative divisions of Uttarakhand. It is a mountainous state of northern India. Nanda Devi is the highest, 7,816 meters above sea level, mountain in Uttarakhand and the second-highest mountain in India. Important cities of Kumaun are Haldwani, Nainital, Almora, Pithoragarh, Ranikhet and Pantnagar. People of different races and religions live here together. The towns of Uttarakhand are peaceful and people of Uttarakhand are educated, friendly and they have a great feeling of hospitality.

Almora is the cultural heart of Kumaun region of Uttarakhand state of India. Almora is at 29.62°N 79.67°E. It has an average elevation of 1,861 meters above sea level. It is a very famous town of Kumaun region.

Near Almora city there is a village named Kasar Devi. It is known for the Kasar Devi temple. The temple structure dates to the 2nd century CE. The temple hosts the annual "Kasar Devi Fair" on Kartik Poornima in November-December months every year. A number of western seekers, writers, saints and Buddhists such as Allen Ginsberg, Peter Orlovsky, Gary Snyder, Anandamayi Ma, Bob Dylan, George Harrison, Cat Stevens, Robert Thurman, and D. H. Lawrence visited this place and lived here for a long time. Many psychologists, painters, poets and scientists also visited this place and they loved it.

Kasar Devi village lay in a gap in the Van Allen belt, a radiation zone of high-energy particles trapped by the earth's magnetic field. Anyone could apparently harness one's meditative powers to the optimum. Here is the point of energy made by the universe.

Anyone can spend a number of years of one's life peacefully and with concentration at that hill top village, Kasar Devi. That is why hundreds of tourists from various parts of the world come there in search of peace, spiritual satisfaction and meditation every year. Many of immigrants had been living there for a number of years. Even some of male immigrants married with Indian girls while some of female immigrants married with Indian boys. And so their new generation is also living there.

When the researcher asked the reasons of their arrival to Kasar Devi, those foreigners answered that they had arrived there because of tranquility, peace, and healthy climate in that area. Some of those foreigners told that they got fresh and nutritious vegetables and fruits there while some of those immigrants told that they arrived there for Ayurvedic treatment and to live in such a healthy atmosphere. Few immigrants answered that they were poor and they were getting few amount of their pension from their own countries as its convertibility is higher in India.

During this study it was found by the researcher that when the pictures of those foreigners were being taken after interview, some of them told the researcher not to do so saying about their privacy issues and few of them did not agree to tell anything about themselves. In this way the researcher came to know that most of the immigrants had been living there illegally. Surprisingly, it seemed, government authorities were not taking any strict action against those illegal immigrants.

In interviews, villagers of Kasar Devi told that their sources of income had been increased due to the rapid immigration of these foreigners into their area. They had built new houses and different vehicles to give the foreigners on rent. The number of taxis in the area had been increased. Moreover many Indian come there not only to visit that place but to see those foreigners also. They told that in few cases, because of intimacy with those foreigners, their few boys and girls were indulged in severe habits of vulgarity and drugs addiction.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand the effect of Indian culture on western foreigners.
2. To understand the effect of western culture on Indian villagers.
3. To determine whether the foreigners and Indian villagers are facing any problem in living together.
4. To establish the facts how these immigrants from different countries are staying for a long time in this particular area.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. How did Indians and foreigners mingle with each other?
2. How did foreigners and Indian react to challenges they faced in different cultures.

3. What were the changes after mingling of cultures in the Indian society in Kasar Devi, Almora?
4. How can adoptability and tolerance regarding different cultural differences benefit Indian society?

METHODOLOGY

- (i) **Population** - The population of the study were the immigrants and Indian villagers living in Kasar Devi village, Almora, India.
- (ii) **Sample** - For the sample, the immigrants and Indian villagers living in Kasar Devi Village, Almora were selected through stratified random sampling. Total 100 residents among 50 immigrants and 50 Indian villagers were selected as a sample.

Table showing respondents of the study

Country of Origin*	No. of Immigrants	Country of Origin	No. of Villagers
England	9	Indian	50
Russia	7		
U.S.A.	6		
Germany	5		
Hungary	5		
New Zealand	4		
Australia	4		
Austria	3		
France	2		
Canada	2		
Denmark	1		
Bulgaria	1		
Italy	1		
	Total 50		Total 50

Country of Origin*--- As respondents told to the researcher

- (iii) **Tools Used** - To test the level of tolerance, prejudice, adoptability, changes in living and mingling of cultures and the effect of all these on their social and financial status descriptive survey method, personal observation and interview method had been employed.

CONCLUSION:

The cosmopolitan community of Kasar Devi village, Almora is unique in itself and this uniqueness attracts many foreigners from various part of world. Various cultural groups can be seen in a single place over here. Surprisingly the villagers are representing the image of bilinguals. The socio-economic standard of these villagers is enhanced. Few aspects of western cultures are also found out in the study that some boys and girls of this village are indulged in the habits of drugs addiction and vulgarity that does not match to the Indian culture. It evolved just due to intimacy between villagers and immigrants. In positive aspects, the life style and capability of adaptability and tolerance has been improved in many ways. A beautiful image of mingling of Indian and western cultures can be seen here in every place and every time.

Major Findings of the Study

1. Indians and foreigners are mingling with each other very efficiently. While many foreigners from different countries of the world are coming here in search of peace and they are living here in Indian houses on rent, Indians are getting a bigger amount so for their livelihood.
2. Both the foreigners and Indians live so friendly that no problem can be seen over here. If in any case any problem arises, they solve it mutually.
3. Major changes can be seen in Indians in Kasar Devi, Almora. While Kasar Devi village is very small and far distant from main Almora city, many Indian villagers are able to speak different foreign languages such as English, French and Russian etc. Many villagers can be seen in western dresses. It is amazing that in such type of village area very modern commodities such as Bisleri water bottles, Gold Flake and other costly cigarettes, printer cartridges and branded wines are available in village shops. A high standard resort and many fine restaurants are also available there.
4. The local residents of Kasar Devi, Almora are very tolerant and they have a great quality of adoptability. They are not only presenting Indian culture, traditions and values to the foreigners but they are learning a lot day by day from them. As hundreds of visitors from rest of the world are coming to this particular area and the number is increasing day by day. The income per head of this area is increased and living standard of the local residents of Kasar Devi village is also going high day by day.
5. The immigrants from different countries of the world learn the values of Indian culture and heritage. Even some of the them are so influenced with Indian culture and traditions that they have embraced Indian culture and traditions, married with Indians and they do not want to return to their home countries which turns Kasar Devi village into a global village with international identification.

Recommendations for Governments:

1. Kasar Devi, Almora is rich in natural beauty so Indian government should do efforts to attract the international tourists and to enhance the basic amenities of international level.
2. The state government should promote tourism in this particular area and more facilities should be provided to all these visitors over here.
3. More security should be provided to the all residents living here.
4. The state government should provide financial assistance to the villagers of Kasar Devi, Almora so that they may become very efficient to settle their businesses.
5. Many immigrants from different countries of the world are living here for a long time and surprisingly some foreigners' new generation is also living here for a long time. So government authorities should be strict regarding illegal immigration and regular checking system of immigrants should be there whether the immigrants are living legally or not. And after the expiry of their visas they must be deported to their home countries.
6. Uttarakhand government should develop this area as well.
7. Electricity supply and water supply should be enhanced in this particular area.

Suggestions for Future Research

1. Further research may be done in a large group of immigrants and villagers in Kasar Devi village, Almora.
2. Further research may be done establishing the geographical facts of Kasar Devi village, Almora.
3. Further research may be done about socio-economic status Kasar Devi village in comparison of other villages of Almora.
4. Further research may be done establishing the facts how and why some immigrants are staying illegally for a long time in Kasar Devi village, Almora.

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