



# Devlang As Cultural Discourse: Investigating Ritualistic Dimensions And Symbolic Politics Of Sathi And Pansai

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## Abstract-

Folk festivals and Fairs are a component of folk tradition, which is essentially the customs that represent the distinct culture of a certain Indigenous groups that sets them apart from other culture or traditions. It is among the tools that allow us to distinguish the way of life of a specific community. The study is taken on folk festival of *Rawain* Valley of Uttarkashi District with special reference to folk festival *Devlang of Gair Banal*. Geographically, the *Rawain pargana* (District) was a part of erstwhile Tehri principality, which was a populated and geographically wide area during the reign of Tehri monarch (1815-1949 A.D). The *Rawain* Valley consists of 18 Pattis (Revenue blocks), *Banal Patti* is one of the 18 Pattis of *Rawain* Valley, where *Devlang* festival is celebrated. The study intended to introduce the unique traditions & rituals involved in *Devlang* and various dimensions like Folk Deity of *Banal Patti*, the two conflicting *Thoks (Sathi and Pansai)*, who demonstrate their power to establish supremacy over one another, Role of *Khund* (Militia and one of the important parts of folk deity regency) and Ritualistic role of *Nattan* (a group of *dalit* community). This paper tends to outreach different realms of *Devlang* fair and its importance in Maintaining age old culture and traditions in *Rawain* Valley. Both primary and secondary sources are used, Primary data is collected by structured interviews with village veterans, priests, and *Nattan* community and for the secondary source's books, Articles and journals were used.

**Keywords:** *Devlang*, folk deity, *Khund*, *Sathi and Pansai*, Supremacy of power, *Nattan*.

## Introduction-

Fair and Festival have long held a special place in society as cultural events. The first festivals in recorded human history were associated with bountiful harvests or commemorating significant events in localities or communities. Festivals and fairs are an expressive way to celebrate glorious heritage culture and tradition. People living in rural areas are free-spirited, festive, and overwhelmed by the wide dimensions of folk life, folk festival, fairs, and folk songs.

Uttarakhand is a Himalayan state where Himalayan culture and traditions are prominent, and numerous fairs and festivals are held to showcase its rich cultural heritage. Most significant fairs and festivals are celebrated in accordance with seasons, geographical regions, societal contexts, and available resources in the vicinity.

The *Rawain* Valley, situated in the frontiers of Uttarkashi district in Uttarakhand state, has served as a hub of cultural diversity for centuries. The region is renowned for its cultural richness and notable fairs and festivals which are being celebrated in every corner of *Rawain* Valley. The *Rawain* region is renowned for its preserved culture and traditions, with fairs and festivals serving as a medium to exhibit the rich cultural heritage of *Rawain* Valley.

*Rawain* at the source of the Yamuna River, every month, a Festival, Fairs, and cultural ceremonies are held. Among these festival *Devlang* is a major folk festival celebrated in the northwestern *Rawain* region of the border district Uttarkashi, which falls under the Garhwal region of *Devbhoomi* Uttarakhand. It is organised one month after the main Diwali of India in the premises of *Rajaraghunath*<sup>1</sup>. Regarding this *Bagwal*, (Diwali) the local people believe that due to geographical conditions, there is a lot of farming work in the month of *Katik* (October) and hence this *Bagwal* cannot be celebrated with joy and enthusiasm, so their ancestors celebrated the month of *Mangsheer* (December) a month later. (Bijlwan, 2024)

*Devlang* is typically a three-day festival. The sequence commences at *Bagwal*, traverses through *Devlang*, and concludes on the third day with *Balraj*. The day of *Mangsheer* Amavasya is designated for *Devlang*, in accordance with ancient tradition. This fair also got recognition from Uttarakhand government as State fair of Uttarakhand in 2016 and it is selected as state fair because of its ritualistic nature which are age old and still performed without any significant changes. (Interview- Gairola dec 2024).

While Diwali is celebrated in the month of Kartik in the entire country, in the hills, especially in Dehradun, Uttarkashi and Tehri districts, there is a tradition of celebrating this Diwali on the new moon day of *Mangsheer*, but the question arises why? If we talk about Uttarkashi district alone, then this Diwali in the district has been known and celebrated as *Bagwal* in the Ganga valley and *Devlang* in the Yamuna valley. On asking the reason from the local people, there is no proper history of celebrating the festival of Diwali a month later in these areas, but according to the elders, the crops ripen and are ready in the month of *Kartik*. At that time, there is not enough time to celebrate any festival. Hence, *Mangsheer* (November) was considered suitable as per convenience.

Some people say that after defeating the king of Lanka, Ravan, Ramchandra Ji returned to Ayodhya on the new moon day of Kartik month and Deepawali was celebrated there in this joy, but this news reached the mountains late after a month, so the joy was expressed in the form of *Bagwal* after a month. According to Rahul Sankrityan, once a man had made a false complaint to the king of Tehri about Veer Madho Singh Bhandari (Commander-in-Chief of Mahipati Shah of Parmara Dynasty) on which Bhandari was ordered to appear in the court immediately. The people of the state did not celebrate Deepawali as their beloved leader was invited to the royal court on the festival and on Bhandari's return a month later, then Diwali was celebrated.

But if we consider the above facts, they are not seen authentic because these are Mythical and lame historical perspective which are intentionally connected to this festival. Ignoring these perspectives the *Sathi* and *Pansai thok*<sup>2</sup> rivalry can be seen appropriate for this Festival. As Dr. Prahlad Singh Rawat, the first PhD holder of Yamuna Valley stated that *Devlang* is just a festival symbolizing the display of power of '*Sathi*' and '*Pansai*' *Thok* of *Banal patti* (Rawat, 2021).

<sup>1</sup> *Rajaraghunath* is a folk deity of *Banal patti* and hailed as *Mulakpati* (King of subjects), whose rule existed in 65-70 villages of *Banal*, *Thakral* and *Godar khatar patti* of *Rawain* Valley but main temples of deity are in *Gair gaon* and *pujali*

<sup>2</sup> *Thok* means a family of family tree members or *Mundit*. The head or eldest member of *thok* is called *Thokdar*. From administrative point of view, *Thokdar* means the head of village. *Thokdar* position was dynasty base system but the Kingdom or its administrators could change *Thokdar* and could appoint new *Thokdar* or could add new *Thokdar*. *Thokdar* had a couple of synonymic names as *Salan* in *Salan*, *Thokdar* was also called as '*Kamin*.' North Garhwal- in North Garhwal, *Thokdar* was called as '*Sayana*.' The *Thokdars* used to report to *Pargana* in charge of the Kingdom

During the field visit I informed by people that earlier there was a tradition of Goat sacrifice on the roof of Temple, which was slain by *Khund* and if the head of goat falls to left side, then *Devlang* is celebrated in *Pujeli* and if it falls in right side then *Devlang* is celebrated in *Gair*. This episode put many questions which are related to these *thoks* internal rivalry which can be seen in *Devlang*. Along its *Raja Raghunath* has two temples in *sathi* and *pansai* territory, which validate rivalry of these *thoks*. But with time people started to celebrate this fair as collaboration between *Sathi* and *Pansai thok* and harmony between different strata of people, people denotes this festival as collaboration between *Sathi* and *Pansai* and it shows unity by *Devlang* but we cannot ignore the medieval and Early modern society of *Rawain*, which acted like war state, everywhere there is conflict and these conflicts are between *pattis* of *Rawain* and a tradition of *Dhada* (Animal rustling) prevalent in the valley. There are numerous incidents which show this area being a part of *Thokdari*, Historically banal *pattis* had conflict with *Geeth patti* of *Rawain* in which role of *khund* (warrior) was most important but with coming of democracy and modern rules and regulation, wisdom of people increased due to socialization with other part of country, people don't want to denote this festival as festival of conflict, they now showcase this festival as festival of unity and tranquillity. but these *Sathi* and *Pansai thok* are prevalent across *Rawain*, *Jaunpur* and *Jaunsar* and festivals like *Maun* (Fishing festival In *Jaunpur* and *rawain*), *Hindoda* (Ball game at village *Dewara*), *Sarbadiyar mela* (*Kathua mela*), and *Bissu* (Archery festival across *Jaunsar* and *Rawain*) along these festival *Mahasu* territory is divided between *Sathi* and *Pansai* and *Chalda* travels and stays 12 years per territory (Ohri,2018).

All these festivals have one thing common is Concept of power and to stablish hegemony over one another, both groups try to dominate one another which is unique tradition and the role of Folk deity in managing these two conflicting groups. These groups raise many questions like Why *Sathi* and *Pansai* name is given? Why their conflict and for what they are conflicting for?

This research paper tries to discuss concept of power in *Devlang* festival and Different com-ponents which are part of *Devlang* festival.

### Role of Folk Deity: -

When an innocent human being brought up in the lap of nature and he sees a wonderful or miraculous sight or power, then he being overwhelmed by the supernatural power, he gives it the status of divinity and influenced by the sense of possible loss or gain, his miraculous, he bows down before its miraculous power, capable of doing good or bad. Wishing his safety, he starts praising or worshipping it. It is this feeling that develops it and provides stability. With this he attains someone to worship in the form of Folk deity. (Rawat,2023)



Figure 2;; Palanquin of Raja Raghunath

Figure 1;Mask image of Raja Raghunath

The valley of *Rawain* is believer in their folk deity and every bit of the valley is surrounded by its folk deities, it is enough to understand the faith and belief of the people towards the folk deities that a person living in the remote valleys of the Himalayas, in case of any kind of physical or mental illness, knocks at the door of his deity before visiting the hospital. Not only this, when a poor and indigent person is tortured by some strongman, instead of going through the hassles of any lawyer or court, he directly appears in the court of the deity and pleads for justice. *Pokhu Devta* of *Naitwad*

is famous in this entire region as the god of justice. People also have full faith in the decisions taken by the gods i.e. justice.

Raja Raghunath is folk deity of *Banal*, *Thakral*, *Rama sirya*, *Kamal sirya*, and *patti* of *Godal Khattal* (Naudiyal,2021). It includes 70 villages where *Raja Raghunath* rule exists. According to Willam sax and Peter Sutherland folk deities in western Himalaya rule as Divine kings with its own agency. Raja Raghunath also rules their territory through agency and most of folk deities in *Rawain* acts like Divine kings, some of

them are *Mahasu*, *Raja karan*, and *Someshwar*. All of them has definite territory with varied nature of power.

The isolated valley in the region known as *Rawain* in the western Himalaya, are ruled by local gods (Lok devata) who control the weather, provide justice, and regularly travel in procession through their territory to demonstrate their sovereignty, and to ward off incursions by rival gods. (Sax,2024)

*Raja Raghunath* through his oracle introduce his agency and people by saying *Dui Wazir*, *Dui Gad*<sup>3</sup>, *Dui Than*, *Char Khund* aur *1500 Banali* (Interview- Gairola; Rawat,2023). The folk deity is centre of the whole agency in which balance of power between *Sathi* and *Pansai* is intentionally kept. Two wazir from *Koti* (*Sathi*) and *Bakhreti* (*Pansai*), *Dui gad* demarcate boundary between *Pansai* by *kotla gad* and *Sathi* by *Banal gad*, *Char khund*, two from *Sathi* and Two from *Pansai* and *Dui than* at *Pujeli* (*Pansai* dominated area) and *Gair* (*Sathi* dominated area). These equal division of agency somewhere gives clear hint of Conflict of power and to establish hegemony over one another and Balancing power is in Folk deity, who is controlling both the *thoks*.

In *Devlang* festival folk deity is important for blessing and to protect Ceader tree (*Devlang*), and to establish harmony between the *thoks*, *Raja Raghunath* hailed as *Mulakpati* and Here *mulakpati* denote to people's king. Locals believe that *Raja Raghunath* Came from Kashmir to Kullu and then to Banal. But with time people started to associate this folk deity to *Mahasu* (Uniyal 2011; Interview Gairola dec2024). Which clearly shows the process of Sanskritization and Folk songs of *Banal patti* also connect it with *Mahasu*. *Raja Raghunath* maintain agency in which different roles are appointed to specific person. It can be understood through the diagram-

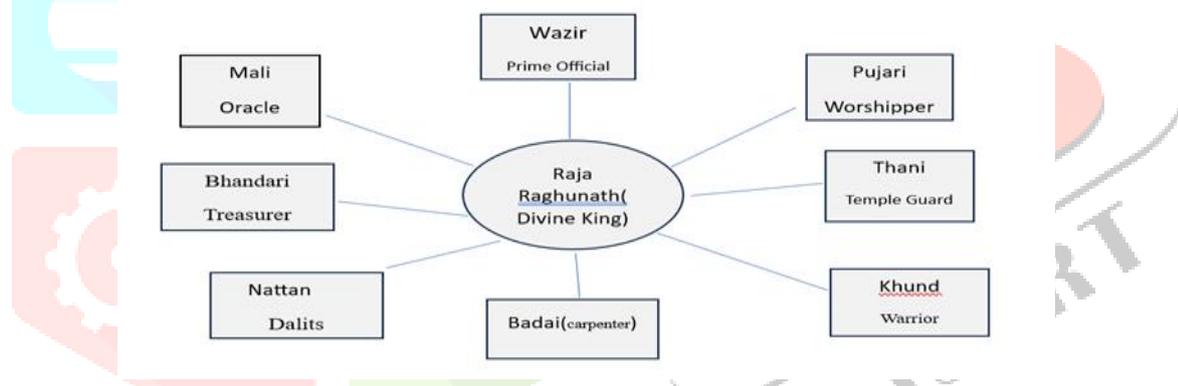


Figure 3; Raja Raghunath agency

*Khund*, *Mali*, *Wazir*, *pujari*, and *Nattan* are the main participant in *Devlang* Festival without them rituals of *devlang* cannot be performed. Folk deity controls the whole ritualistic part of *Devlang* and without his permission nothing can be done. Locals believe that *raja Raghunath* protect the ceader tree topmost part which is important for a *devlang*.

<sup>3</sup> *Dui Gad* means Two rivers, which are demarcation of boundary between *Sathi* and *Pansai*, here two rivers are *Banal Gad* and *Kotla gad*.

## Conflict of Power between Sathi and Pansai:

*Sathi* and *Pansai* are *Thoks* divided in *Banal patti*, Whole of Raja Raghunath territory bifurcated in *Sathi* and *Pansai thok*. Divine agency of folk deity also divided into equal proportion between the *thoks*, these

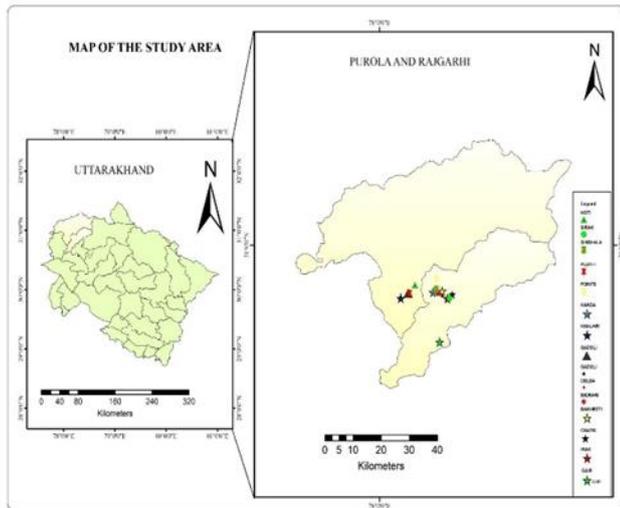


Figure 4; Territories of Sathi and Pansai

*thoks* are not cast based groups but territory is main basis of dividing them. As *kotla gad* is boundary of *Pansai* and *Banal Gad* is boundary of *Sathi*. The region is also coloured with unique practices like *Sathi* and *Pansai* which is famous in *Rawain*, *Jaunpur* and *Jaunsar*. The practice of *Sathi* and *Pansai* is associated with folk ritual of the region which is the showcase of internal conflict, hegemony and to establish supremacy of power over the other group. The practice also involves specific fair and festival in the region which include *Devalang*, *Maun of Kamalgad*, *Maun of river Anglad*, *Hindoda mela (Dewara)* of *Singtoor patti* of *Rawain*, *Kathwa mela (Sarbadiyar patti of rawain)* and famous *Bissu Festival* of *Jaunsar*. All these fairs involve practice of *Sathi* and *Pansai*.

All the villages of *Banal Patti* are divided into two groups namely *Sathi* and *Pansai*. *Sathi* group includes 18 villages namely *Koti*, *Idak*, *Sidak*, *Thanki*, *Bhaani*, *Chhatri*, *Visatgaon*, *Ghandala*, *Gair*, *Biyawali*, *Gol*, *Arun*, *Gadoli*, *Purola* to *Bhadrali*, *Khadkyasem* etc. are included, while 37 villages are included under *Pansai Thok*. These include *Bakhareti*, *Kud*, *Jaishtwadi*, *Chitti*, *Seena*, *Bigradi*, *Karnali*, *Kotla*, *Delda*, *Sisala*, *Shri*, *Nathedagaon*, *Kuni*, *Ghund*, *Dhonsali*, *Jakhli*, *Pujeli*, *Guladi*, *Sunali*, *Sukdala*, *Nauri*, *Purola*, *Math* and *Nald* etc. (Interview Gairola 2024; Rawat 2023; Uniyal 2011; Bijlwan 2024).

The traditions of naming *Sathi* and *Pansai* thoks are not exclusive in *Banal patti*, as earlier told different fairs are associated with this tradition. The western Garhwal region is coloured with this practice and Different scholars gave different opinions about *sathi* and *pansai*. As Willam Sax and Lokesh Ohri works on *Mahasu*, *Someshwar* and *Raja Karan*, gave a little description of *Sathi* and *Pansai* as they connect these with Epic tradition of Mahabharata, where they mentioned *Sathi* as *Kurava* and *pansai* as *Pandava*. According to P.C. Kashyap Yamuna bank which is habitant of *Sathi* and *pansai*, two major group of *khasa<sup>4</sup>khund*. P.C. Kashyap also termed *khasa* aur *khos* to *thoda* player, which associate *Jaunsari* community to *khasa* but He also associate it with epic tradition of Mahabharata. Here two major group in *Toda* (archery drill) are *Sathi* and *Pansai* (Kashyap,2000)

Majumdar also mentioned *khasa* aur *khos* in their work Himalayan polyandry and his first research paper on the *Khasas* appeared in 1940 in the journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal (Letters) under the title 'Some Aspects of the Cultural Life of the Khasas of the CiS Himalayan Region (Majumdar,1960). S.K Gupta also mentioned about *Sathi* and *pansai* where he said Devotee are divided into *Sathi* (the 60 *kaurvas*) and *Pasis* (the five *Pandavas*) and they try to uproot the cedar tree and tilt it towards each other, as trial of strength. Studying these studies, we find that there is something which is enigma about *Sathi* and *Pansai* (Gupta;2002). People associate these with *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* but this field is obscure, and relevant study about this topic should be done without which we cannot make any comment on this.

As of *Rawain* valley, in *devlang* there is many incidents in which it was shown that a tradition of *Dhada* was present, *Pansai thok* which headquarter is at *Pujeli* made a *dhada* for idols of *devta* in *gair banal* which is a *Sathi* territory. (Interview-Gairola dec 2024). This practice of *dhada* (rustling) had been prevalent in

<sup>4</sup> The Khas tribes, primarily found in the northern and western regions of Uttarakhand, are one of the oldest and most significant communities in the state. They are often referred to as the "Khas" or "Khasas," a term used historically to describe various groups in the region. They are successor of Kol and kirats.

*Rawain valley* and as *Peter zoller* stated that *Dhada* was mainly made for grazing animal, abduction of women, stealing of Water sources and raiding Enemy temples (Zoller,1970; Chandra,2019)

During my field visit I was informed by locals that there was tradition of *dhada* in which stealing of deity, animals and abduction of women was very common. This tradition had been common in *Sathi* and *Pansai* territory.

This also show how society was then, both the *thok* fought for folk deity and other issues. Which can be shown in *Devlang*, both still tries to establish hegemony over one another and contest of supremacy of power underwent. The ritualistic role of *Sathi* and *Pansai* in *Devlang* festival is very important because they are heroes of this festival, they usually come to lift the *devlang* and after lifting the cedar tree, it can set to fire. It is interesting to know that if there is no presence of one of the groups, the other group must wait for another one. *Devlang* is set to fire only when both the groups are present in premises of temple. People of *sathi* and *pansai* tease each other for coming late for *Devlang*, so that *devlang* will have to wait for another group.

## Role of Khund-



Figure 5; sacrificial goat (Khund used to slain)

Local opinion holds that the term *khund* derives from *khun* (blood). In everyday conversation, it applies only to the warrior clans and carries a "brave" connotation. The term for warrior is *khund*, which local persons normally derive from the Perso-Arabic word *khun*, or "blood." A *khund* is a warrior and a fighter, someone who is willing to spill blood – either his own, or that of his enemies – in defence of his divine king and territory (Sax,2024). As a song from *Bangan* has it,

***A khund has his teeth in his stomach***

***A khund steals sheep***

***a khund fights***

***and a khund abducts women*** (Zoller 1996)

The *khund* are clearly distinguished from the Rajput, also known as Khas Rajput. Traditionally the groups did not intermarry, although this restriction appears to be breaking down in recent years. The *Khas Rawats* eat only male rams, while *khund* eat female goats, as well as male and female sheep (Chandra, 2019). the martial style of the *khund* is closely associated with pastoralism, which was the main economic activity in traditional times, and remains very important for the contemporary economy. Much of the feuding between the various territories centred on pastoral disputes.

In *Banal Patti*, *Raja Raghunath* has four *khunds*, two from *Sathi* and two from *Pansai*, these *khunds* are protector of *Raja Raghunath* territory and one of the main officials of his agency. In *Banal Pattis* these *khunds* had as long history of invading enemy territory, as *Banal Patti* had a long conflict with *Nagangaon* of *Thakral Patti* and *Gith Patti*. One of these incidents is mentioned by Radhey Shayam Bijlawan, i.e. incident of *Atla* of *Banal* and *Kirta Bhandari* of *Gith*. (Bijlawan,2002)

Also, there was intra-patti conflict for folk deity between *Sathi* and *Pansai* and conflict for Fair for which *Khund* use to slain goat on the roof of temple, by which it was decided where to celebrate *Devlang*.

As in modern context *Khunds* do not have earlier type of role, now they become symbolic in their duty and for *devlang* all the four *khunds* show their presence holding *Aula* in their hand.

## Ritual performed in *Devlang* and Importance of Dalits community:

The day when *Devlang* is to be celebrated, is a day of vigor and joy for all the *Banal Patti* and people from different Patis visit *Gair gaon* to see this historic festival. On the *devlang* day, according to tradition, the Nattan family of village *Gair* observes a fast and goes to the forest to bring a deodar tree in the form of *Devlang*. According to the rule the whole green *deodar* tree is brought for *Devlang*, which is welcomed with drums and music in the temple square (Interview- Bharti-Dec,2024)

As soon as we reach the temple of *Devlang*, the people present there start dancing with joy. This is in a way the first stage of *Devlang*. The *deodar* tree brought for *Devlang* is brought to the temple with great effort and care because there is a belief that if for any reason the top of the tree brought for *Devlang* i.e. *Shikhar*. If it breaks, such a tree is not stood as *Devlang*.



Figure 6; Nattan bringing *Devlang* tree

The responsibility of bringing trees for *Devlang* was given to Nattan and responsibility of tying woods around the *Devlang* is given to *Biyali's Machran's* family (*Dalits*). Therefore, these people also go to the forest with full rules and regulations and bring dry wooden planks to be tied on *Devlang*, which is called in local language as *Silli*. This *silli* is tied in circular circles all over the *Devlang* and each circle is named after the local deities, but it is difficult to know which circle is named after which deity. Before the start of *Devlang*, both the family members of the person who brings and fills the *Devlang* are given *Mangal Tilak* and *Pithai* by the entire group. These people accept this happily by considering it as the blessing of the local deity. On the night of *Devlang*, on one side where the *Devlang* is placed, a few people were busy decorating the place and on the other side, the whole *Mulk* (people) was excited with the preparations to go to *Devlang*. Groups of men and women singing songs in various villages of the region, the sweet sound waves of songs and music, the footsteps of men and women engaged in *tandi*, the tune of folk instruments that invigorate and the aroma of delicious food prepared to welcome the guests who come to the house on the occasion of *Devlang* suddenly fill the hearts of the people gives a feeling of supernatural happiness.

The two *thoks Sathi* and *pansai* bring *aula* in their hand and proceed towards temple, they are the main characters who are going to lift *Devlang*, after reaching the destination they revolve around the temple premises with *aula* beating with each other, and finally they start lifting *Devlang* tree with the help of Scissor like instrument locally known as *Kaichi*. *Sathi thok* from the temple and *Pansai thok* from opposite push out *Devlang*. After Sometimes *Devlang* can stand only after several attempts. When finally, *devlang* is lift, it set to fire and this way *Devlang* end in *gair*. *Devlang* may be performed in *Gair Banal* but its final sacrifice is performed at *Madkeshwar* situated in the middle of a dense deodar forest. Where God Brahmins perform *Havan* and *Puja* with milk and ghee in village *Gaul*. There is a popular belief that Years ago, torch (*Aula*) was lit from here to light *Devlang*.



Figure 6; A view of *Devlang*

*Devlang* as a festival is incomplete without the *Nattan* of *gair (Dalits)*, *Machran* of *Biyali* and *Bajgi*, without their collaboration *devlang* cannot be performed. *Nattan* lives at *Gair gaon* where there is an oral tradition that earlier they use to reside above the folk deity temple, Folk deity had seen this as derogatory, so *Raja Raghunath* took a tiger attire and attacked a girl of *Nattan*, after knowing that tiger was *Raja Raghunath*, *Nattan* visited folk deity and asked his problem. From that point *Nattan* use to live periphery of the village. This oral tradition gives information that *Nattan* use to live above the *Gair gaon* before the arrival of Folk deity, which show they are the original people of village and today they being important

driver of *devlang*, Earlier only *Nattan* use to cut *Devlang* tree and without them nobody can cut the *devlang* tree, There is a popular belief that if anyone goes with *nattan* to cut tree, the tree top (*sikhara*) will not be remain intact. Which is must for a *devlang* tree. *Nattan* select tree to cut and they pull tree from the dense forest to premises of temple. But now *Mashran (Dalits)* also accompanied *Nattan* for cutting tree.

These community play an important role in fairs and festival and without them every fair and festival could not be celebrated, these *Dalits* classes (*Nattan*) discharge their lifestyle through folk methods, which reflects that society here is dependent on feeling of compliment and assimilation of each other. But due to the present consumerism, materialism and the disintegrating traditional social structure, these folk traditions are losing their existence. Villages are becoming deserted due to migration, education, and unemployment. *Auji, Nattan, Mashran* and *Baajgi* communities, the carriers of these traditions, are constantly changing their business. In the longing for urbanization and modern facilities, these priceless intangible and tangible cultural heritage of human society is facing threat of extinction. Modern society is continuously abandoning these traditions as a symbol of insignificance and backwardness.

## Review of Literature-

While going through literature, there is clearly a dearth of literature in this topic and significant work must be done.

**Tourism and Heritage Resources in Garhwal Himalaya (2003) by Sk Gupta**, in his work he mentioned *Devlang* festival and talk about its rituals and customs.

**Dinesh rawat's rawain ke devalaya aivam devgatheyen(2019)**, in his work he gave a vivid introduction of *Rawain* region which include its history, geography and cultural in a detailed way. He also gave information of various festival and folk deity of *Rawain* region, among them he highlighted *Devlang* festival as festival of light and tranquility in the region, But *Devlang* as fair of Supremacy of power and conflict were sideline.

**Dr. Jagdish prasad Naudiya's, Uttrakhand ki sanskritik dharohar (2021)** The work provides detailed information on the region from historical to politicocultural and economic aspects and it mainly deals with folk literature and cultural aspect of the *Rawain* valley. The folk literature which is stored in folksong, folklore, folkdance of the region.

**“In the valley of Kauravas: A divine kingdom in the Western Himalayas” (2024) By Willam Sax**, in his text Sax demonstrated *Rawain* as the isolated valleys in the region known as *Rawain*, near the headwaters of the *Tons* River in the *Western Himalaya*, are ruled by local gods (*devtaa*) who control the weather, provide justice, and regularly travel in procession through their territories to demonstrate their sovereignty, and to ward off incursions by rival gods. These *devtaa* are regarded as divine kings for whom local persons act as priests, ministers, patrons, soldiers, and servants. Each of them has one or more oracles, who often enter trance and speak with the *devtaa*'s voice, appointing and dismissing officers, confiscating property, levying fines, and ratifying the decisions of councils of elders. The gods hear civil and sometimes criminal cases and then, through their oracles, enforce their judgments, usually by compelling disputants to reach a compromise.

## Objectives –

1. To study the unique traditions and rituals involved in *Devlang* festival of *Gair Banal*.
2. To study different dimension (folk deity, *Khund*, *Sathi* and *Pansai* and *Nattan*) of *Devlang* fair and to highlight their role in *Devlang* festival.
3. To study symbolic politics between *Sathi* and *Pansai* group in *Devlang* Festival

## Research Methodology-

The present study employs a Qualitative research design and primary and secondary data were used to explore various rituals, customs and politics present between *sathi* and *pansai* in *Devlang* fair. The field work was conducted at *Gair banal* of *Uttarkashi* district, known for its preserved culture and marvellous architecture.

Primary data was collected through Structured interviews with open ended and close ended questions were asked, which involved priest, local villagers, Tradition bearers and Nattan (Dalits) and with consent of these participants Audio-visual recording was done for later analysis.

Secondary data was collected through Books, magazines, research papers and PhD thesis.

### Finding and Discussion-

Through this research paper, we get to know about *devlang* festival unique features and different dimensions which are still intact with minor fabrication. *Devlang* as a festival hold cultural, ritualistic, and political dimensions which cannot be seen as a layman view, for that we have to analysis ritualistic and concept of power that are inert in *Devlang*. This festival also shows how society and polity of the region was earlier, how folk deity rules through their agency? How *khunds* were prominent in this region and cultural values it holds since ages but with time many of dimensions have been fade out and whole new narrative set up in *banal patti* about the *devlang* and *sathi* and *pansai thoks*, people demonstrate this festival as festival of brotherhood, festival of light and festival of victory over truth but as per my observation still there is enigma about *sathi* and *pansai thok* which can be seen through various facts like 2 temples, 2 *wazir* and 4 *khunds* which are divided equally to prevent any dispute and as per my observation when *sathi* and *pansai thoks* lift the tree of *Devlang*, the sound of beating sticks gave a sense of showing aggression towards each other. which show there has been tradition of conflict and *Rawain* valley is well known for their tradition of conflict like *dhada* (Rustling), which was also prevalent in *Banal patti*. As of *Rawain* valley, in *devlang* there is many incidents in which it was shown that a tradition of *Dhada* was present, *Pansai thok* which headquarter is at *pujeli* made a *dhada* for idols of devta in *gair banal* which is a *Sathi* territory. This practice of *dhada* (rustling) had been prevalent in *Rawain* valley and as Peter zoller stated that *Dhada* was mainly made for grazing animal, abduction of women, stealing of Water sources and raiding Enemy temples The symbolic politics of *Sathi* and *Pansai* is widespread in *Rawain*, *Jaunpur* and *Jaunsar*, which has one thing common is they fight for Supremacy of power and to stablish hegemony over one another. This unique practice always has been a matter of Curiosity for Scholars and Different scholars has interpreted *Sathi* and *Pansai* as, William sax and Lokesh Ohri works on *Mahasu*, *Someshwar* and *Raja Karan*, gave a little description of *Sathi* and *Pansai* as they connect these with Epic tradition of Mahabharata, where they mentioned *Sathi* as Kurava and *pansai* as Pandava. According to P.C. Kashyap Yamuna bank which is habitant of *Sathi* and *pansai*, two major group of *khasa khund*. Pc kashyap also termed *khasa* aur *khos* to *thoda* player, which associate *Jaunsari* community to *khasa* but He also associate it with epic tradition of Mahabharata. Here two major group in Toda (archery drill) are *Sathi* and *Pansai*. S.K Gupta also mentioned about *Sathi* and *Pansai* where he said Devotee are divided into *sathi* (the 60 kaurvas) and *pasis* (the five Pandavas) and they try to uproot the ceader tree and tilt it towards each other, as trial of strength. Dr Prahlad Singh Rawat, the first PhD holder of Yamuna Valley stated that *Devlang* is just a festival symbolizing the display of power of '*Sathi*' and '*Pansai*' Thok of *Banal patti*. We find that there is something which is enigma about *sathi* and *pansai*. People associate these with Kauravas and Pandavas but this field is obscure, and relevant study about this topic should be done without which we cannot make any comment on this.

### Conclusion-

*Devlang* is festival of different components which make it unique and this festival celebrated as buddhi Diwali but it is more than that as it holds age old tradition and socio-political structure of society. Ultimately, *Devlang* stands as a living testimony to the cultural richness of *Rawain* Valley. It offers valuable insights into how folk festivals are used to negotiate power, assert identity, and construct communal memory in Himalayan societies. It also emphasizes the need for further scholarly exploration into understudied aspects like the origins of the *Sathi*-*Pansai* divide and the deeper meanings behind folk ritual systems, helping to preserve and interpret these traditions for future generations.

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