

FOLK RELIGION IN THE CENTRAL HIMALAYAS (KUMAON AND GARHWAL)

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ABSTRACT

A Folk tradition provides the insight into the local beliefs and practices of the people. This local tradition does not rely on the written sources and instead carried through oral means and majorly revolves around the lives of the common people. The area of the study of this paper is the hilly region of Kumaon and Garhwal in the state of Uttarakhand. The paper discusses the local beliefs and practices of the Uttarakhand region. It explores the thin boundary between the local and pan-Indian and the relation in which one co-exists in the other. This paper takes a journey from the brief history of religion practiced in the region to the different cults venerated in the region. Analyzing these local cults and practices, the paper finally depicts the processes through which the folk is assimilated into the fold of mainstream Brahmanical culture.

KEYWORDS: Religion, Folk, Brahmanical, Local Traditions, Pan-Indian Traditions, Kumaon, Garhwal