
“Educational Status of Tribals of Jammu and Kashmir: A Case Study of Gujjars and Bakarwalls in District Pulwama”

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Abstract:

Gujjar and Bakarwals are two nomadic tribes of Jammu and Kashmir who have been given ScheduledTribe (ST) status due to their migratory and backward nature. The gujjars are primarily nomads who move fromplains to the higher altitudes with their cattles as part of their annual season journeys with their livestock. The literacy rate of Gujjar and Bakkarwals is quite low. There are a number of educational provisions for migratory Gujjar-Bakkarwal populations in the form of stationary and permanent government schools at different places all over the state. But at the summer locations where the good numbers of nomadic children are available who move there with their parents, the educational facilities are again very less. For the education of the children of the nomadic populations of Gujjar and Bakkarwals, ‘Seasonal Educational Schools’ have been set up where the teachers do not accompany the nomadic children but continue to remain at the temporary camps of

the nomads and provide education to those children who are at the higher reaches with their families and cattle for better pastures. In Jammu & Kashmir the overall literacy rate of the Scheduled tribes as per the census 2001 is 3.7percent which is much lower than the national average of 47.1percent aggregated for all S.Ts. Though various efforts have been made by the government for the development of education among tribal communities but much more still needs to do. In this paper an attempt has been made to explore the existing educational status of two prominent tribal communities of Jammu and Kashmir- Gujjars and Bakarwals.

Key words: Educational status, Gujjar and Bakarwala, Jammu & Kashmir.

INTRODUCTION

Jammu and Kashmir is one of the border states of India having a population of 1,25,41302

including male population of 66,40662 and female population of 59,00640. The 12 Scheduled Tribes in J&K have a population of 14,93,299 which account for 11.9 per cent of the total population of the State (Census 2011). As per Census 2001, out of twelve Scheduled Tribes, Gujjar and Bakarwal tribes form 69.1 percent of the total ST population. These twin tribes also form the third largest community in Jammu and Kashmir.

Jammu and Kashmir is the only state in India with a Muslim- majority population. As per the Census of 2011, Islam is practised by about 68.3 percent of the state population while 28.4 percent follow Hinduism and small minorities follow Sikhism (1.9 percent), Buddhism (0.9%) and Christianity (0.3 %). Jammu and Kashmir is inhabited by a number of tribal communities who have settled down in all parts of this Himalayan state. All the three regions of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh are inhabited by various tribes which make up the authentic and characteristic ethnic culture of this state and its tribal culture. The Scheduled Tribes (STs) constitute 11.9 % of the total population of the state. The state of Jammu and Kashmir has twelve tribes including Gujjars, Bakarwals, Balti, Beda, Bot (Boto) ,Brokpa (Drokpa), Changpa, Garra, Mon, Purigpa, Gaddi and Sippis. Gujjars are the most populous tribe in

the state having a population of 7, 63,806 thus 69% of the total scheduled tribes population of J&K. Bot is the second major tribe having a population of 96,698; followed by Bakarwals which are 60,724 in number. Jammu and Kashmir state had no Scheduled Tribes (STs) before 1989. It was only in 1989 that eight communities vide the Constitution (Jammu & Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1989 and four communities, namely Gujjar, Bakarwal, Gaddi and Sippi were notified as the Scheduled Tribes vide the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Act, 1991. These twelve hill tribes living in Jammu and Kashmir which were granted ST status are Balti, Beda, Bot (Boto), Brokpa

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has proud distinction of being a multicultural, multi-linguistic state and its wide range diversity of ethnic groups is just like a beautiful garden with a multi-hued flowers. Since the Gujjars and Bakerwals are one 11 of the important component of the state composite culture so not only Gujjars but entire civil society of the state must make endeavour to preserve their tradition of folk-lore, art and cultural heritage. (Sharma 2008) The Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir are not the same as other ethnic groups; they vary in different means such as, in their environment, traditions, customs and other

customary features. In any case, it does not mean there is no interaction with other groups. They collaborate with different gatherings at a larger scale. The Gujjars who are settled in Kashmir are not originally from Kashmir. It is believed that Gujjar and Bakerwals were essentially Rajputs who have moved from Kathiawad locale of Gujarat (via Rajasthan) and Hazara area of North West Frontier Province (NWFP) to Jammu and Kashmir. Another perception believes after Gujjar's adoption of the Muslim faith divided them into two professionally different sects of Gujjars and Bakerwals. They remained in oblivion till seventh century when Gujjars became high class officials in Poonch. One out of such officials is Rahullah Khan who established Sango dynasty of Gujjars in eighteenth century. In Jammu and Kashmir, saturation of Muslim Gujjars is mostly in the districts of Poonch, Rajouri, Jammu, Kellar, Srinagar, Tangdar, Karna, Gurez, Shopian Duksum, Pahalgam and Uri.

Gujjars and Bakkarwals are found in all the three regions of the state of Jammu and Kashmir including Jammu (comprising districts of Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur, Poonch, and Rajouri Districts), Kashmir Valley (comprising the districts of Srinagar, Baramulla, Kupwara, Pulwama, Budgam and Anantnag etc.) and

Ladakh (comprising Leh and Kargil). The Gujjar tribe has the highest concentration in Poonch and Rajouri districts followed by Anantnag, Udhampur and Doda districts. In Poonch, the population of STs is 1, 76,101 while in Rajouri it is 2, 32, 815 which is 36.9 % and 36.2 % of the total population of the two border districts respectively (Census 2011).

Gujjars and Bakkarwals are mostly nomadic tribes of Jammu and Kashmir but since past many years, a majority of the Gujjar population has become sedentarized (Zutshi 2001). Gujjars which were primarily a nomadic community, have now settled to a large extent and have become sedentarized or settled in permanent villages in the plains bordering the foot hills and have taken to cultivation of land as their primary occupation (Bhardwaj 1994). Besides, there are semi-settled or sedentary transhumant Gujjars who combine the cultivation of land with nomadism (Kango&Dhar 1981). They move to the lower and middle mountain areas and PirPanjal pastures in the summer with their flock of buffalos where they engage in cultivation and come back to the plains in the winters (Khatana 1992).

Education is a major instrument for change and social development which plays an important

role in empowering the child economically and socially and assists the marginalized population out of poverty. Education also provides the children with the means to participate fully in their communities (UNESCO, 2000). Accelerated progress in education is critical for the economic development of any nation and the achievement of the wider Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in areas such as poverty reduction, nutrition, child survival and maternal health (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985; Lucas, 1988; Barro, 1991; Mankiw, Romer and Weil, 1992). According to the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), education is a fundamental human right and a key factor in reducing poverty and child labour as well as promoting sustainable development.

Nomads of Jammu and Kashmir:

Nomadic pastoralists are found in the arid zones of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh,

Rajasthan, Gujarat etc. Jammu and Kashmir is one of the border states of India, has a total population of 1,25,41302 including male population of 66,40662 and female population of 59,00640. The Scheduled Tribes account for 11.9 per cent of the total population of the State as per Census 2011. In Jammu and Kashmir, there are 12 Scheduled Tribes which were enumerated officially for the first time during the 2001 census recording a population of 1,105,979. The Census 2011 shows the entire ST population of the state at 14, 93, 299 in comparison to 11,0,5979 of Census 2001. Out of twelve Scheduled Tribes, Gujjar is the most populous tribe having a population of 763,806, thus forming 69.1 percent of the total ST population. Bot is the second major tribe having a population of 96, 698, followed by Bakkarwal (60,724) and Brokpa (51,957). Gujjar along with the three tribes constitute 88 per cent of the total tribal population (Census 2001)

NAME	POPULATION OF ST CENSUS 2011	POPULATION OF ST CENSUS 2001	VARIATION
JAMMU & KASHMIR	14,93,299	11,05,979	3,87,320
Shopian	21820	80856	35150
Anantnag	116006	80856	35150

Pulwama	22607	10552	12055
Kulgam	26525	20287	6238
Baramulla	37705	28886	8819
Bandipora	75374	54996	20378
Srinagar	8935	3485	5450
Ganderbal	61070	41959	19111
Badgam	23912	14547	9365
Kupwara	70352	51753	18599
Leh	95857	96174	-317
Kargil	122336	105337	16959
Poonch	176101	149018	27083
Rajouri	232815	160049	72766
Kuthua	53307	33969	19338
Doda	39216	28400	10816
Ramban	39772	29353	10419
Kishtiwar	38149	27917	10232
Udhampur	56309	42875	13434
Reasi	88365	60753	27612
Jammu	69193	42089	27104
Samba	17573	11740	5833

Source: Census 2011



The Gujjars and Bakkarwal tribes are the two nomadic tribes which form the third largest community in Jammu and Kashmir and constitute 8.1 percent of the total population in the state, according to the census of India 2001. In Jammu and Kashmir in India, Gujjars and Bakkarwals are found in all the three regions of the state including Jammu (comprising districts of Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur, Poonch, Rajouri etc), the Kashmir Valley (comprising the districts of Srinagar, Baramulla, Kupwara, Pulwama, Budgam and Anantnag) and Ladakh (comprising Kargil).

Education for Nomads

The education of pastoralist communities has assumed much importance in the past few years keeping in view the fact that in the changing world orders and globalization, the acquisition of basic functional literacy and numeracy is a felt need among the nomads who need to comprehend those things which affect their occupational roles like useful direction tax, understand instructions on health and animals treatment and schemes relating to animal

husbandry etc. They also need to read and understand various polices introduced by the respective state and central governments for their betterment and avail the same. In recent years, problems such as overgrazing of limited resources, punitive local taxes etc. have thrown up more and more challenges to pastoralists which they have sought to meet by various adaptation strategies (Choksi& Dyer, 1996) including education, Small little things like writing, reading, written communications with veterinary, agriculture and livestock officers on how to improve their herds etc., small simple calculations and keeping record relating to the numbering their herds, cost and returns from investment on improved herding and grazing, distance covered on seasonal movements etc. is very important. Besides, education can also help them in the improvement in their socio-economic status if they learn to know about better marketing of their products such as meat, milk, and butter by application of modern technology and use modern savings and bank credit facilities which can enable them integrate better with the rest of the population.

DISTRICTS	TOTAL LITERACY RATE	BAKARWALS	GUJJARS	GENERAL POPULATION

Anantnag	463197	14.6	15.5	73.01
Pulwama	281518	20.1	17.4	66.21
Baramulla	447075	19.3	19.7	62.48
Srinagar	641276	15.6	16.3	78.83
Badgam	226167	18.3	21.7	74.23
Kupwara	232557	20.4	16.9	65.32
Kargil	60803	17.4	50.7	63.98
Leh	68278	10	21.79	22.79
Poonch	156398	30.8	34.6	69.08
Rajouri	234228	20.5	32.9	72.45
Kuthua	307370	18.8	19.3	74.11
Doda	274425	15.6	16.8	54.82
Udhampur	343429	19.3	21.3	61.21
Jammu	1070574	23.5	39	79.07
Total	4807286	18.4	25.5	71.23

Source: Census of India 2001

In Jammu & Kashmir the overall literacy rate of the S.Ts as per the census 2001 is 3.7% which is much lower than the national average of 47.1percent aggregated for all S.Ts. Male and female literacy rates 48.2% and 25.5% are much below if compared to those recorded by

all S.Ts at the national level (59.2% and 34.8 %). Among all the S.T literates in the state 34.9% are either without any educational level or have attained education below primary level. The primary level literates constitute 26.2% followed by literates up to middle level

(22.1%). The persons educated up to the secondary/ higher secondary level constitute 14.7% whereas 2% only are graduates and above. Non- technical and technical diploma holders form negligible percentage (0.1percent).

Though the above given data clearly shows the educational backwardness among S.Ts of the state in general but at the individual level Gujjars&Bakarwals have the lowest literacy rates (as per census 2001) of 31.7% and 22.5% respectively, which is lower than any other tribe of the state. Therefore, there is an immediate need to study the causes for such a low performance in educational sector by these two tribal groups so that a sociological framework of suggestions will be provided for the solution of those problems through micro-macro level programme intervention in the long- term and short term policy planning in the state.

Research methodology:

The research is based on both primary as well as secondary sources. The researcher travelled to hilly areas of district pulwama and interviewed many Gujjar Bakkarwals nomadic tribes for the study. A detailed questionnaire was used for primary sources who were contacted in the field for the present research

paper. Besides, the secondary sources including various government documents, reports, books, research papers in journals, J&K economic surveys, magazines and periodicals have been consulted thoroughly for the present study.

Sample Size: The sample size for the present study was 60 respondents from 60 household(Deras) in bagandar sagarwanie block keller of district pulwama. Both men and women were included in the samples. The sample comprised of people who were above years. The young children were not included in the study as they were very young, in most of the cases below 7 or 8 years and hence could not elicit proper and adequate response. Tools for Data Collection: The research tools of Questionnaire, interviews and case study were used for data collection. First of all, a well-structured questionnaire was prepared for the data collection after doing a field survey first (before the commencement of the study) which comprised of background information of the respondents, question regarding their education of children, their socio-economic condition, life style etc. The questionnaire used for data collection was divided into different sections to collect the required information. Questions were regarding general information like name, age, and educational status, type of family,

income of the family, route for nomadism etc., educational status of Gujjar community and other social issues which ultimately impact education among Gujjar boys and girls.

Objectives:

1. To study the educational status of Gujjars and bakawals of in pulwama district.
2. To analyze the reasons behind the educational backwardness among gujjars and bakarwals.

Results and discussion:

The data which was collected and analysed, gave the researcher a fairly good assessment

Table No. 1: Socio- Profile of Gujjars and bakarwals.

Age of respondents (in years)	Frequency	Percentage
20-30	12	20
30-40	20	33.3
40-50	18	30
Above 50	10	16.6
Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data, Computed

about the educational status or levels among the gujjars and bakarwals children of the community.

The number of people, both men and women belonging to Gujjar and bakarwal community hailing from the village (bagander sangarwanie) The data which was taken from 60 households, had mostly male as the interviewees. The number of females was comparatively less as they were not very forthright in giving interviews. Out of 60 respondents, 24 interviews were done with the females and 36 with male tribals. The researcher took 60 houses (kothas) from village (bagander sangarwanie) of district pulwama

Table 1 shows that age between 20 -30 years were 12 respondents (20%), age between 30-40 years

were 20 respondents (33.3%), age between 40-50 years were 18 respondents (30%) and age above 50 years were 10 respondents (10%).

Table 2 Sex of the respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	36	60
Female	24	40
Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data, Computed

Table 2 represents out of 60 respondents 36 (60%) were male and 24 (40%) were female

means that education is lagging behind in females as compared to males.

Table 3: Educational status of respondents

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterates	17	28.33
Primary	13	21.66
Middle	11	18.33
Secondary	9	15
Hr. secondary	7	11.66
Graduate	3	5
Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data, Computed

Education-wise, the respondents surveyed and have been divided into six educational categories, viz., Illiterate, primary, Middle, secondary, Hr. secondary, and Graduate. Table 3 Indicates that highest percentage of respondents in the sample were illiterate i.e.

28.33 per cent out of 60 respondents. 21.66 per cent of the respondents having qualification primary, 18.33 per cent of sample respondents having qualification middle, 15 percent having qualification secondary and 5 percent were graduates.

Table 4: Reason behind educational backwardness.

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Financial problem	16	26.6
Lack of infrastructure	8	13.33
Unawareness	17	28.33
Traditional occupation	19	31.66
Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data, Computed

Table 4 shows there are many reasons behind the backwardness of education in Gujjar and Bukarwal tribes. Out of 60 respondents 19 (31.66%) respondents the reason behind educational backwardness in their community is due to traditional occupation which is rearing goats, sheep, oxen, bulls etc. so they engage their

children also in this occupation. 17 (28.33%) respondents reason was unawareness about education as they were unknown about education and its status in the community and also benefits. The response of the 16 (26.6%) respondents were their financial problems as they were not able to send their children

schools due to low income and they hardly fulfill their basic needs. The response of the 8(13.3s%) respondents shows that there is lack of infrastructure which includes schools, libraries, internet facilities, roads etc. as they have to travel a long distance to go to school. There is lack of road connectivity to the urban rural areas and they are not able to send their small children to far away schools.

Suggestions:

- Government should take broad steps for the upliftment of education of Gujjars and Bakarwals which includes seminars, workshops, symposiums, competitions etc. so that they will be aware of education and its benefits and its status in the society.
- Keeping in view the educational backwardness, low rate of enrolment of Bakarwals and Gujjars particularly the girl children in schools and the difficulties faced by first generation learners in non-Gojri medium of instruction, there is a need to link the child's home language with the school language /medium of instruction. There is need for adoption of mother tongue education up to primary level using bilingual / bi-dialectical approach in the schools to achieve the goal of universalisation of primary education among this community.

- The state as well as center government must take boost steps to promote and strengthen the education system of these tribals. They should increase the number of mobile schools and also must provide all the facilities during winter season when there is heavy snowfall and it becomes difficult for them to go out from their homes for education.
- Due to lack of internet and communication facilities these tribals did not get interact with the urban or modern villages so that they will be able to understand the value of education and globalizations

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