



GUJJARS AND BAKARWALS OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR VIS-À-VIS EDUCATIONAL STATUS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Tribal population in India add more to its diversity and dignity. Around 700 total Scheduled Tribes in the country (Ministry of Tribal Affairs Government of India, 2013) that constitute 8.6% of the total population of the nation (Kumar, Pathak, & Ruikar, 2020). Out of total 12 Scheduled Tribes in Jammu and Kashmir Gujjars and Bakarwals in majority both together are more than 85%. Education to the tribes a great challenge and difficult task for the government because of their lifestyles. So, in the present paper the researcher intended to get acquainted with Educational Status of Gujjars and Bakarwals in contrast with other tribes of Union Territory and Scheduled Tribes at the national level and the challenges that they are facing in their education. The present paper is review of the past literature from different online sources. The past results Educational Status of Gujjars and Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir is low as compared to the other tribes of Jammu and Kashmir and STs of India but recorded an enhancement in their literacy rate over the decades. The educational status of Gujjars was found better than the Bakarwals tribes of Jammu and Kashmir. It has been also revealed that the remoteness, life on hilly terrains, parental attitude, low economic status, domestic work, long distance to school, teachers refusing to work in hard settings, girl's early marriages, etc. are some major challenges and obstacles to the education of Scheduled Tribes Gujjars and Bakarwals.

Keywords: nomads, tribes, scheduled tribe's education, Gujjars and Bakarwals, literacy.



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Introduction

India well a diversified nation having people of different religions, caste, languages, cultures, traditions and lifestyles, etc. and tribal population is also one such part of it diversity and can be found in every state and union territory (UT). Education is a fundamental and vital

means for the development of an individual and a society that led to development of Nation well (Paray, 2020). For the development of a nation economically, politically, or socially Education plays a central role (Shakeel, 2020). Education works a key element for the advancement of a nation (Soko, 2018). The development of a nation can be reflected by its education system so, keeping in view the fact every country trying to make its education system the best. India is also one among the nations who have best education system. Number of programs and policies are initiated to bring the education at every individual's doorstep so that each and every child can get benefit. But despite of the efforts there are lot of children who remained outside of the school.

Table 1: Comparison of Literacy Gap Between Total Population and St Population of India

Year	1961	2001	2011
Whole Population	28.3%	64.8%	72.9%
ST Population	8.5%	47.1%	58.9%
Gap	19.8%	18.7%	14%

Note: The Table 1 demonstrates the literacy gap between the total population of India vs ST population as per census respective censuses. The source of statistical information for the above table was (Ministry of Tribal Affairs Government of India, 2013).

There seemed a reduction in the literacy gap between the total population and ST population of India from the decades as about 6% reduction in the literacy gap between ST population and national population of India from 1961 to 2011.

Education to children of nomads and tribes ever existed as a great barrier and a difficult task for the government because of their lifestyle as most the tribal population migrates from one region to the other with their livestock and their earning completely depends on their animal rearing and agricultural practices. The northern most part of India i.e. the Jammu and Kashmir union territory (earlier was a state) is the land-dwelling of different religions, different language speakers, having different cultures and traditions, and different communities and tribes. The scheduled tribes are also among such diversity. Total there are 12 Scheduled Tribes in the UT but most in numbers are Gujjars and Bakarwals both together made 85% of the total population of ST in Jammu and Kashmir (Ministry of Tribal Affairs Government of India). The Jammu and Kashmir was ranked 30th at the index of Literacy rate of State and Union territories (Gul & Khan, 2014). Bakarwals with only 25.3% literacy from the Jammu and

Kashmir was in list of those Scheduled Tribes (ST) who had less than 30% literacy rate in 2011 (Ministry of Tribal Affairs Government of India).

From the last few decades, it seemed a progression in the educational status of backward tribal population but still not reached up to the desired level because of number of obstructions that push back these tribes from receiving education despite of the efforts from the government. In the present paper an attempt has been made to know about the educational status of scheduled tribes Gujjars and Bakarwals of the Jammu and Kashmir and also the causes and challenges of their backwardness in the education field.

Gujjars and Bakarwals

There are around 700 Scheduled Tribes residing in every state and UT of the country. Total became 12 in Jammu and Kashmir after adding 4 more (Gaddi, Sippi, Gujjar, and Bakarwal) in 2001 to the pre-existed 8 (Balti, Beda, Bot, Brokpa, Changpa, Garra, Mon, Purigpa) as per “*The Constitution of (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1989*”. Gujjars and Bakarwals are the same ethnic group having same language, culture and lifestyle but their bifurcation only on the basis of their animal rearing and agriculture practices. Gujjars mainly have their own land and have permanent residence and they do agriculture practices and rear buffaloes for the milk, curd, and ghee. The word Bakarwal is derived from Urdu, Hindi, and Punjabi words ‘Bakri’ (i.e. the Goat) and ‘Wal’ meaning one who is the owner (Sofi, 2013). Bakarwals rear Goats and Sheep and rarely have own land most of them don’t have and their livelihood totally depend on their animal. In 2001 there were 157 villages in Jammu and Kashmir had 100% tribal population, the number reduced in 2011 i.e. were only 89 that were 100% resided tribal population.

Objectives

- To know the educational status among Scheduled Tribes Gujjars and Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir.
- To get acquainted with the challenges in the way of education for the Gujjars and Bakarwals in Jammu and Kashmir.

Methodology

The present paper is a review of the existed information and statistical evidence collected from the different online sources and census reports etc. the paper is completely based on the analysis of secondary information. The collected sources were scrutinized on the basis of their main objective i.e., about the educational status among scheduled tribes.

Literature Review

Educational provision to the people who live in isolated, remote, and backward areas always remains a challenge for the educational authorities. Indian population is also comprised of such communities and tribes who are living in the backward, remote, and far-flung areas where education through the normal schools can be problematic enough. But the education is the fundamental right of every individual as per the constitution of India: Article 21 (A). So, there always remains a priority by the government to bring every child to the school irrespective of religion, caste, culture, beliefs, etc. Likewise, in the northernmost part of India, Union Territory Jammu and Kashmir (which earlier was a State) different tribes live in different parts of the UT among these the Scheduled Tribes Gujjars and Bakarwals are the major ones. Although major changes had been noticed but still the educational status of Gujjars and Bakarwals is low as compared to the other population of the union territory, and the nation, in support of this statement the researcher collected different previous studies are done, census records, news articles, and other such sources. All the sources will be secondary for the present paper.

To know about the myths and realities about the educational status of the scheduled tribes especially the Gujjars and Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir researchers amalgamated the information from the different sources like past studies done by the other searchers, census reports, news articles, research papers, etc.

The educational achievement among Gujjars and Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir was found with an average of 53.59%. As compared to the Kashmir division the school achievement among Gujjars and Bakarwals was good in the Jammu region. Male in contrast to females was having high educational achievements. Gujjars students as compared to Bakarwals with high educational achievement while talking in the context of the educational status of Gujjars & Bakarwals (Rafaqi, 2015). A study conducted by (Jan , 2014) in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir with objective to identify the educational status of Gujjars and Bakarwals which found low. 124 households were surveyed from 5 villages of 3 tehsils. The average literacy rate was resulted below 30%. Males were more literate than females. There were listed a few major the obstacles in the way to their education like a low density of population in remote areas caused long distances to school, teachers denying working in hard circumstances, parental negative attitude, and children doing housework. Another study was conducted by (Suri & Raina, 2016) revealed educational status of Bakarwals in Rajouri district

of Jammu and Kashmir. The sample of the study was 50 (both male and female) above the age of 15 year age. 90% responded that their children enrolled at primary school level, 8% responded that their children enrolled in matric class only and 2% responded yes that their child at senior secondary level, and no one responded for graduation. While talking about the girls' education only 20% responded yes that they want their girls to study. Another investigation by (Andrabi, 2018) revealed literacy rate among STs of Jammu and Kashmir too low in contrast to STs of whole India. In a research article (Rahi, 2016) acknowledged that Scheduled Tribes' literacy rate at the national level is 59% while that in Jammu & Kashmir only 50% of STs are literate and while talking about the literacy rate among females of Gujjar-Bakarwals only 17.8% were able to read and write, and also stated some issues and challenges for the low education level among the particular tribes such as migratory life, residence to the hilly and border areas, child labor work at home due to the low economic condition of parents, early marriage of children, especially the girl child. Few major challenges to the Education of girls listed by (Gul & Khan, 2014) as lack of financial resources, illiterate guardians, the marriage of girls in childhood is still in some districts of Jammu and Kashmir, parents' negative attitude toward the co-education where both the boys and girls sit together in a single classroom, lack of hostel facilities to the Scheduled tribes and Scheduled castes girls who are living far from the schools. In an article by (Mondal, Your Article Library) reported that there occurs a difference in the literacy rate of deprived populations. As per the 1991 census, the literacy rate of India was 52.31% while that ST had only 29.60% literacy rate, so it was about a 23% difference was between the general population of the country and the STs Literacy rate. The dropout ratio among ST students is higher than that of SC students. Some issues there like inadequate facilities at schools, students face problems to reach at school due to the long distance. Teachers were not ready to work in isolated areas, medium of instruction like children not familiar with the languages other than their mother-tongue, culture and societal norms cause to acquire knowledge like the early marriage of the child, their traditional norms and values are also among such barriers. few major challenges were listed among Scheduled Tribes elementary education in Poonch district of Jammu Kashmir as remoteness and inaccessible places difficult lifestyle there doesn't exist the education awareness among the people, lack of appropriate infrastructure in the educational institutions, untrained teachers, and absenteeism among teachers, enrollment is less among the girls of remote areas (Suri, 2014). The Bakarwals and Gujjars Scheduled Tribes in Jammu and Kashmir were at bottom in the index of the literacy

rate with 22.2% in 2001 and 24.3% in 2011 preceded by Gujjars with a literacy rate of 31.7% in 2001 and 34.4% in 2011. In contrast with Bakarwals, Gujjars were higher than the Bakarwals tribes. There seemed an increase in the frequency of the rate in both the cases in the Gujjars and Bakarwals but was very minor throughout the period a decade (Rahi, 2019).

Figure 1: Literacy rate of Gujjars and Bakarwals Tribes of Jammu and Kashmir in Percentage in 2001 and 2011.

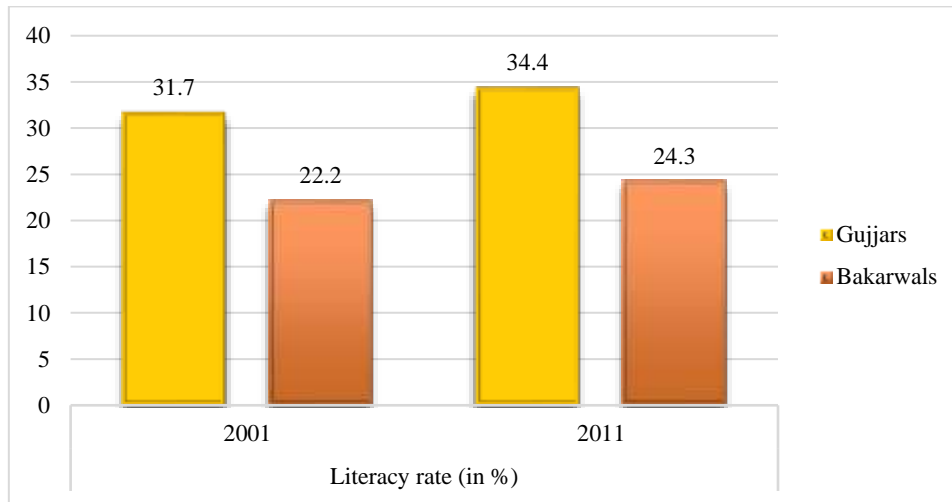


Table 2: Literacy Rate of India and Jammu & Kashmir according to the census 2001 and 2011.

Population	Literacy rate (in %)	
	2001	2011
Total Population of India	64.8	74.04
ST population of India	47.1	58.9
Total population of J&K	55.52	67.16
ST population of J&K	37.5	50.6

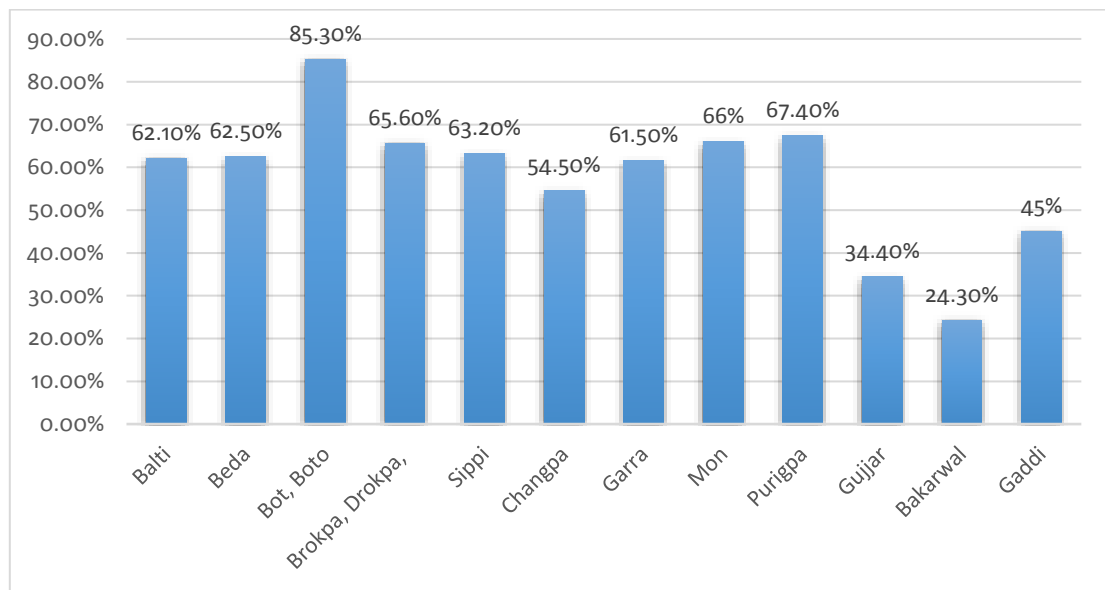
Note: Table 2 shows the Literacy rate of the total population and ST population of India and Jammu & Kashmir in 2001 and 2011. The sources are data are Census 2001 and 2011.

The literacy rate of Scheduled tribes is low as compared to the literacy rate of the total population of India whereas the literacy rate of the Scheduled tribes of Jammu and Kashmir is also too low in contrast with the literacy rate of the total population of India. The total population of Jammu and Kashmir's literacy rate is low as compared to the total population of India but higher as compared to the literacy rate of Scheduled tribes of the Union territory. Also, the Scheduled tribe's literacy rate in Jammu and Kashmir was recorded as low as

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compared to the literacy rate of the nation. There noted as per the census data that the increase in the percentage of literacy was higher in 2011 as compared to the census in 2001. While making an overall comparison the literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes of Jammu and Kashmir is low as compared to the other population either at the State/UT level or the Nation as well as shown in Table 2.

FIGURE 2: Graph Represents Literacy Rate among different 12 STs of Jammu and Kashmir



Note: Figure 1 shows literacy among the 12 Scheduled Tribes of Jammu and Kashmir, the information collected from the census 2011 and also adapted from “Tribal Education in Jammu and Kashmir a case study of Gujjars and Bakerwals” by Rahi J. (2019).

Among of 12 Scheduled Tribes in Jammu and Kashmir, the Bakarwals with the smallest rate of literacy (24.3%) at the last of the index, and Gujjars are stands one step ahead with the literacy rate of 34.4%. Thus both the Gujjars and Bakarwals have a low literacy rate as compared to the other Scheduled tribes and the general population of the Jammu & Kashmir UT as shown in Figure 2.

Summary

An attempt was for a large collection of studies but there was found scarcity and insufficiency of literature in the related area of the present paper. As per the objectives of the present paper, we can categorize in different three sections per the first objective to know about the educational status of Gujjars and Bakarwals the studies (Rahi, 2019; Suri & Raina, 2016; Sofi; 2014; Andrabi, 2013) stated the educational status of the Scheduled tribes Gujjars and

Bakarwals is too low as compared to the other population of Jammu and Kashmir and at national level as well. It was found that the literacy rate Gujjars and Bakarwals was low among all the twelve Scheduled Tribes and other population of the Union Territory and Scheduled Tribes of the nation as well, as per the second objective and the last objective was to know the challenges in the way to the education of Gujjars and Bakarwals, the studies like (Sofi, 2014) found distance to school because of low population density, teachers refusing to work in hard settings, parent's negative attitude, and children doing domestic works while (Rahi, 2016) listed obstacles in the way of education of Gujjars and Bakarwals as migratory life, residence to the hilly and border areas, child labor work at home due to the low economic condition of parents, early marriage of children especially the girl child while (Gul & Khan, 2014) listed as lack of financial resources, illiterate guardian, marriage of girls at childhood, parents negative attitude towards the co-education, lack of hostel facilities to the Scheduled tribes girls whose residence far away from the schools, another study investigated by (Suri, 2014) revealed that remoteness and inaccessible places difficult and tough lifestyle there doesn't exist the education awareness among the people, lack of appropriate infrastructure in the educational institutions, untrained teachers and absenteeism among teachers, enrollment is less among the girls of remote areas.

Conclusion

The review of the literature in the form of secondary data collected from different sources like databases, journal articles, news articles census reports, and studies conducted by different researchers all represents, demonstrates, and shows that the literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes is too low at any level. There is a huge difference in the literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes (ST) in Jammu and Kashmir and the general population of the nation as well as the Union Territory and the literacy rate of ST in Jammu and Kashmir is low as compared to the literacy rate of ST at the national level and the literacy rate of ST is also too low as compared to the total population of the UT Jammu & Kashmir. The literacy rate among the Scheduled Tribes Bakarwals and Gujjars is also low as compared to the other Scheduled Tribes of Jammu & Kashmir UT but there seemed decadal increase in the literacy rate among the ST both at the National level and in UT Jammu & Kashmir. The Literacy rate of Bakarwals is less than the literacy rate of Gujjars. Some studies also discussed the obstacles, barriers, and challenges in the way to the education of Scheduled Tribes of Jammu & Kashmir Vis; remoteness, school at distance, denying of teachers in isolated and remote areas, parents' unawareness about the

education, and domestic work for livelihood, early child marriage and one of the most challenges is the migratory lifestyle of Gujjars and Bakarwals in search of greenery for their animals

Suggestions

- Steps to be taken for the Sedentarization of these people by the government.
- Counseling sessions for the students, teachers, and parents to be aware of the education values and intangible prices.
- Awareness camps about the schemes and policies for the education and welfare of tribal and backward peoples
- From time-to-time supervision of the remote area's schools for the tribal people
- Training sessions for the teachers at the block or village level to be organized
- Number of seats to be increased in residential institutions or hostels
- Meeting to be fixed with the parents of the students regarding the education of their children
- Awareness programs to be organized about the role of technology in the professional development of people in remote areas to be organized like agriculture and animal rearing.

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