

Socio Economic Conditions of Tribals of Jammu and Kashmir - A case study of Gujjars and Bakerwals in Pulwama District

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Abstract

The Gujjar and Bakerwals have been granted Sc and ST status in Jammu and Kashmir because of their nomadic and archaic character. On a seasonal and annual basis, the said tribes move from lower to higher altitudes with their cattle. The Gujjar and Bakerwal communities have relatively low literacy rates. For Gujjar-Bakerwal communities that migrate, there are several educational options available to them in the form of permanent and stationary government schools located around the state. However, there are also very few educational facilities in the summer months in places where a sizable population of nomadic children live with their parents. For the purpose of educating the kids about the wandering populations of For the purpose of teaching the offspring of the itinerant communities of Gujjars and Bakerwals, 'Seasonal Educational There are now schools where the teachers stay at the temporary camps of the nomads rather than traveling with the children to accompany them. The children's receive education at the higher reaches without facing any problem; even their families and animals remain part of this process. As per the census record for 2001, As comparison to national average of 47.1 percent, the literacy rate of schedule tribes in jammu and Kashmir is 3.7 percent. The government of India has taken a number of steps to improve the education of indigenous communities, and much more work has to be done. This essay aims to investigate the current state of education for the Gujjar and Bakerwal tribes, two significant ethnic groups in Jammu and Kashmir.

Keywords: Gujjars and Bakerwals, Educational Status, Seasonal Educational, Jammu and Kashmir.

INTRODUCTION

The Government of India started the process of preparing the National Human Development Report for individual states. The first of its kind was prepared in 2001 and was followed by various state human development reports. As of the iniquitous and hierachal Indian society, the magnitude of discriminated and excluded groups (OBS, Sc's, and St's), whose proportion is almost half of the population of India, The NHDR and SHDR highlight the dimensions of socially marginalized groups from the perspective of development, especially the SC's and ST's. The analysis of the human development situation of such a large section of the population is, however, dealt with by employing limited indicators and without resorting to composite indexes, either for human poverty or human development. The various indicators practiced in human development disaggregation vary from state to state from the perspective of various social groups. NHDR uses different indicators at all India levels. Including literacy level, electricity, safe drinking water, excess to toilet facilities, and consumption expenditure. In this regard, the report observed that "there is a considerable difference in the level of attainment of people on various aspects of well-being, depending on the social group or segment of population (SC, ST, and others) that the person belongs to." The report further observed that "the attainment levels for the SCs and the STs are lower than the others on the available indicators" (NHDR, 2001). Despite the group focus assigned to SCs and STs in the development policy of the central and state governments, group disparity in human poverty and human development is not generally dealt with by SHDR, either by exercising a set of human development indicators (like literacy rate, life expectancy, enrolment ratio, and some measures of excess resources). And the human poverty like electricity, public health services, mortality rate, dropout rate, illiteracy, and electricity. or may through index of human poverty and human index. There has been no attempt to conceptualize caste and ethnicity-based exclusion and discrimination, the contemporary societal processes and institutions of discrimination, forms of economic, social, and political exclusion and discrimination, and their consequences. Similarly, the indicators of exclusion and discrimination or the different variables of SHDR are least development.

Past development discourses incorporate the function of education from multiple perspectives. Educational backwardness has been identified as an indicator of underdevelopment. The majority of the nations that are underdeveloped have varying low levels of literacy when embarking on the stages of development. Later on, education acquired a great significance as a formal economic analysis tool.

The United Nations Development Programme encouraged attempts made by individual researchers, which came in the form of the introduction of HDI. The Human Development Index was the first report of a human development report that used an important component (adult literacy) as one of its three components. The important dimensions of human development are education, leading a long and healthy life captured by life expectancy, knowledge captured by literacy, and standard of living captured by per capita income.

It is clear that education is the most essential component and important factor influencing both economic progress and human development. Education is influenced directly or indirectly by all the other indicators of human development. Education plays a notable role in expanding the opportunities and choices for people, enhancing capabilities and skills, generating new ideas, and fetching information. Education enhances the ability to increase the horizon of vision, improves decision-making capabilities, and drives the nation towards much stronger and empowered people. It creates human capital and improves labor productivity in cases of both genders. Education enhances women's outcomes, decreases mortality rates, and also leads to personal development. It creates awareness and drives people for greater participation in social life. Education plays an active role in reducing inequality, unemployment, improving health conditions, and reducing poverty by enhancing economic growth and development. In this chapter, we will study educational attainments like literacy, educational status, gender parity index, dropout rate, and accessibility to educational institutions among the Gujjars and Bakerwals in the study area.

Gujjars and Bakerwals of Jammu and Kashmir from the perspective of educational status:

The population of Jammu and Kashmir was recorded as 12541302, with 6640662 males and 5900640 females (2007 census). The population of the Schedule tribe was 1493309, which became 11.91% of the total population of Jammu and Kashmir. Earlier, the Gujarati population in the state was estimated to be 9.8 lakh, whereas the Bengali population was 1.1 lakh. The center for policy studies analysis of the 2011 census record shows that the Gujar and Bakerwal population increased by 33% as compared to the previous decade, which is quite faster than the average growth of 23.6% of the state. They move about with their herds on a seasonal basis. Their seasonal mobility has a significant impact on their schooling.

Table No.1: Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Population :

District	Scheduled Caste			Scheduled Tribes			Sch.caste as pop.% age of total dist.pop.	Sch.tribe as pop.% age of total dist.pop.
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female		
Anantnag	1826	1811	15	116006	60990	55016	0.17	10.75
Kulgam	21	11	10	26525	13888	12637	0.005	6.25
Pulwama	402	397	5	22607	11837	10770	0.07	4.03
Shopian	43	43	-	21820	11311	10509	0.02	8.2
Srinagar	1068	995	73	8935	5021	3914	0.09	0.72
Ganderbal	117	105	12	61070	32554	28516	0.04	20.53
Budgam	368	343	25	23912	12383	11529	0.05	3.17
Baramulla	1476	1451	25	37705	20237	17468	0.15	3.74
Bandipura	392	375	17	75374	39398	35976	0.1	19.22
Kupwara	1048	1046	2	70352	36913	33439	0.12	8.08
Leh	488	444	44	95857	47543	48314	0.33	71.81
Kargil	18	12	6	122336	62652	59684	0.01	86.89
Jammu	377991	197610	180381	69193	36323	32870	24.71	4.52
Samba	91835	47920	43915	17573	9188	8385	28.8	5.51
Udhampur	138569	72093	66476	56309	29142	27167	24.97	10.15
Reasi	37757	19657	18100	88365	46330	42035	12	28.08
Kathua	141224	75644	66580	53307	27693	25614	22.91	8.65
Doda	53408	27209	26199	39216	20377	18839	13.03	9.57
Kishtwar	14307	7322	6985	38149	198899	18260	6.2	16.54
Ramban	13920	7168	6752	39772	20940	18832	4.91	14.02
Rajouri	48157	25170	22987	232815	121374	111441	7.5	36.24
Poonch	556	406	150	176101	90274	85827	0.12	36.93
J&K State	924991	486232	438759	14,93,309	776267	717042	7.38	11.91

Source: Census of India, 2011

According to the census of India 2011, the Gujjars and Bakerwals of jammu and Kashmir constitute 8.1% of the total population of the state the said tribes are inhabiting in all the three regions of jammu and Kashmir and ladakh. Kashmir region (comprising district of anantnag, budgam, pulwama, kupwara, baramulla, and Srinagar). Jammu region (comprising of rajouri poonch, udhampur, kauthua and jammu), and ladakh (comprising of leh and kargil).

Table No.2: Literacy rate among Gujjars and Bakerwals and the general population in jammu and Kashmir (%):

Districts	Total Lit.Pop.	Gujjars	Bakerwals	General Pop.
Anantnag	463197	15.5	14.6	73.01
Pulwama	281518	17.4	20.1	66.21
Srinagar	641267	16.3	15.6	78.83
Budgam	226167	21.7	18.3	74.23
Baramulla	447075	19.7	19.3	62.48
Kupwara	232557	16.9	20.4	65.32
Leh	68278	88.2	100.0	68.21
Kargil	60803	50.7	17.4	63.98
Jammu	1070574	39.0	23.5	79.7
Udhampur	343429	21.3	19.3	61.21
Kathua	307370	19.3	18.8	74.11
Doda	274425	16.8	15.6	54.82
Rajouri	234228	32.9	20.5	72.45
Poonch	156398	34.6	30.8	69.08
Total	4807286	31.65	22.51	71.23

Source: Census OF India,2011

Note: Lit= Literacy, Pop.= Population

The above-cited table highlights the distribution of literacy among Gujjars and Bakerwals district-wise. The table shows that there is high literacy among the Bakerwals in the districts of Jammu, Rajouri, and Pouch, which is 23.5, 20.5, and 30.8, respectively. While in the case of Gujjars of Jammu, there are 39.00%, Rajouri 32.94%, and Pouch 34.60% of the literate population of Jammu division.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

During the research, both primary and secondary data will be collected. The secondary data included the national human development report, state human development report, economic surveys, digest of statistics, NFHS, NSSO survey, village education committee, village sanitation committee, developmental participation committees, and other unpublished data from various government and non-government agencies. Primary data will be collected from the field survey by using a well-structured questionnaire.

Study Area:

The sampling technique that will be used is purposive sampling, followed by stratified random sampling. The Pulwama district will be the ideal one for studying social groups like Gujjars and Bakerwals.

Sample Size:

The study will encompass 100 households of Gujaratis, and Bakerwals will be chosen randomly. The said sample will be selected from a minimum of three villages, which represent small, medium, and large villages in Pulwama district.

Objectives:

1. To examine the educational status of Gujarati and Bakerwals in district Pulwama.
2. To examine the reasons for educational backwardness among Gujjars and Bakerwals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The collected data provides a good assessment of the occupational status and sources of income among Gujaratis and Bakerwals. Majority of Gujjars and Bakerwals belong to the villages of tral, sangerwani, and achgoz of district Pulwama. The data, which was taken from 100 households, will be chosen randomly.

Socio profile of Gujjars and Bakerwals:

Table No.3: Age of the family members.

Age Groups	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
UPTO 20	321	50.5	50.5
21-40	214	33.6	84.1
41-60	83	13.1	97.2
61-80	16	2.5	99.7
81 ABOVE	2	.3	100.0
Total	636	100.0	-

Source: Field Survey,2024

Table 3 shows that age up to 20 years had 321 respondents (50.5%), age between 21 and 40 years had 214 respondents (33.6%), age between 41 and 60 years had 83 respondents (13.1%), age between 61 and 80 years had 16 respondents (2.5%), and age above 81 years had 2 respondents. (3%).

Table No. 4: Sex of the Respondents:

Sex	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Male	348	54.7	54.7
Female	288	45.3	100.0
Total	636	100.0	

Source: Field Survey,2024

Figure No.1

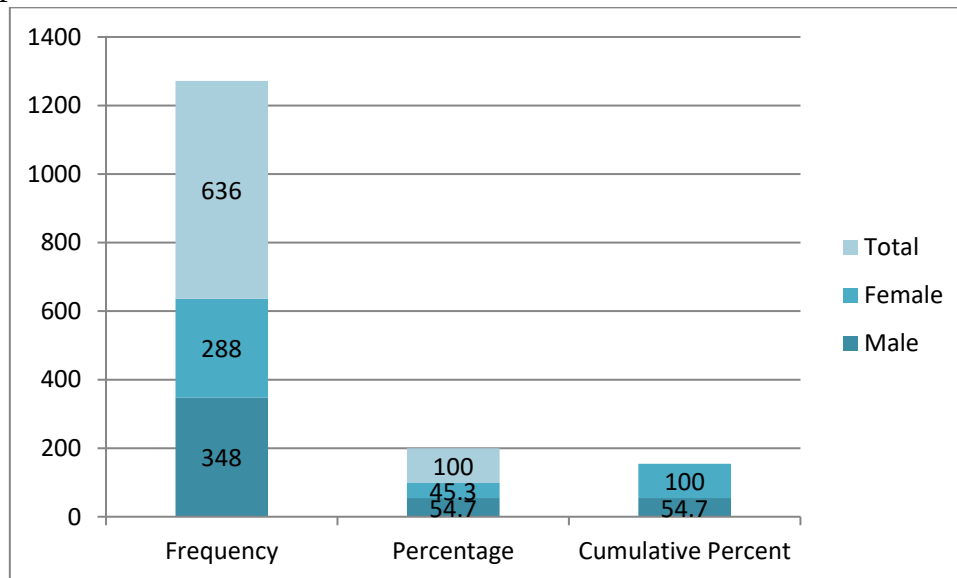


Table 4 represents that out of 636 respondents, 348 (54.7%) were male and 288 (45.3%) were female, which highlights that females are lagging behind education as compared to males.

Table No. 5: Educational Status of Household Members:

Educational status	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Illiterate	338	53.1	53.1
Primary	186	29.2	82.4
High	87	13.7	96.1
Higher	25	3.9	100.0
Total	636	100.0	-

Source: Field Survey,2024

The 100 respondents were divided into four educational categories i.e illiterate, primary, high, and higher. The highest percentage of respondents in the sample who were illiterate was 53.1 percent out of 636 respondents; 29.2 percent of the respondents had primary qualifications; 87 percent had high qualifications; and 25 percent had higher qualifications.

Table No. 6: Research area's of educational facilities accessibility and availability:

Indicators	Within Village	Within 1km	Beyond 1km
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Distance of Nearest Primary Schools	85.89	18.49	2.58
Distance of Nearest Middle Schools	41.47	14.89	39.39
Distance of Nearest High Schools	40.45	26.72	45.91

Source: Field Survey, 2024

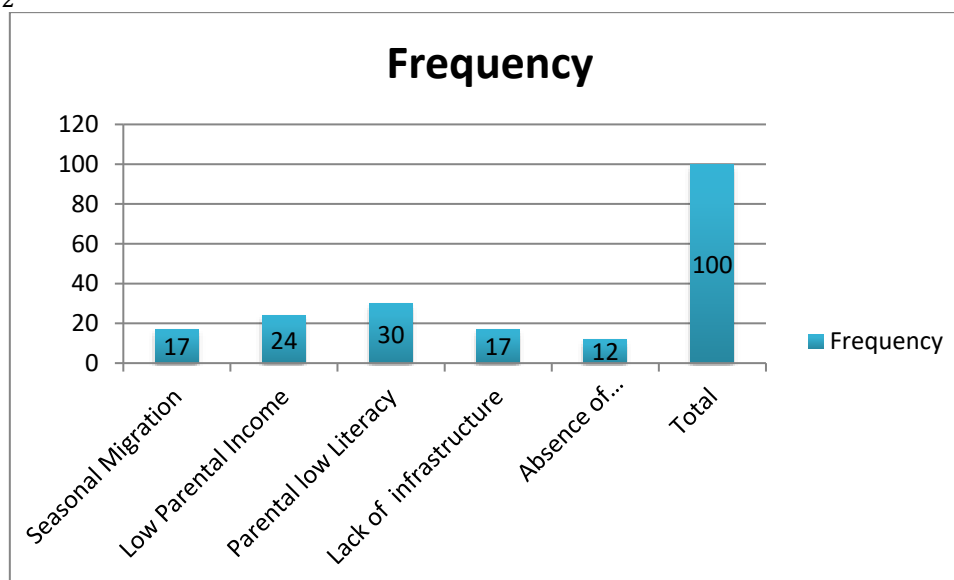
It is found that primary schools are located within 85.89 percent of the villages and wards; 18.49 percent are located within 1 km of the village, while 2.58 percent are located outside the 1 km boundary of the village. While analyzing middle schools, about 41.47 percent are located in a village. Within 1 km 14.89 percent of middle schools are located, and beyond 1 km 39.39 percent are located. About 40.45 percent of high schools are located within the village, and beyond the range of 1 km, 45.91 percent of high schools are located. It is clearly seen that at the primary level the accessibility of institutions is quite satisfactory, while in the middle and high school levels it faces certain drawbacks in the district pulwama.

Table No.7: Reasons Behind Educational Backwardness:

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Seasonal Migration	17	17.00
Low Parental Income	24	24.00
Parental low Literacy	30	30.00
Lack of infrastructure	17	17.00
Absence of Modernisation	12	12.00
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Figure No. 2



The backwardness of education among Gujjars and Bakerwals has many reasons behind it. One of the reason is absence of modernization that was found in 12 percent respondents of 100 households. The response of the 30 (30 percent respondents were their low literacy. 24 respondents showed financial problems as their main cause not to send their kids to schools as the basic necessities of life are hard to fulfill.

SUGGESTIONS

- It is necessary to provide vocational education in tribal schools.
- The government ought to conduct routine inspections of these institutions.
- It is imperative that the government provide facilities for open schooling to the people, particularly the nomadic tribes.
- These tribal people had no means of communication or internet access, so they were unable to engage with urban areas or contemporary communities. in order for them to comprehend the importance of globalization and education.

CONCLUSION

As compared to other social groups Gujar and Bakerwals have low literacy rates. One of the main concerns is not just education but also accessibility. There are several difficulties in offering education to Gujjars and Bakerwals like unprivileged households in the said areas, a low population densities that force people to travel great distances to get to school, a sedantary type of life style and livestock economy, shortage of teachers to work in harsh conditions found in their areas (Gujjar-Bakerwals). Which resulted in the shortage of teachers and financial burdens upon the parents to pay for schooling costs like stationary books and uniforms. a nomadic way of life and a dependence on the livestock industry, which prevent kids from attending school since they must spend a lot of time away from their homes. It is necessary to approach educational issues pertaining to Gujjars and nomadic tribes from a comprehensive perspective. The literacy rate of Gujjars and Bakerwals may increase if the right measures are taken was carried out.

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