

Educational Status of Tribals of Jammu and Kashmir: A Case Study of Women (Gujjars) in District Budgam

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Abstract

The education of Scheduled Tribes has become a vital component for the planned development of human resources in India. However, it has been observed that the literacy rates and education levels among Scheduled Tribes residing in Jammu and Kashmir are considerably lower than the national average. For instance, the Gujjars, who lead a nomadic lifestyle in District Budgam, migrate with their livestock to higher altitudes during seasonal journeys. This study utilizes both primary and secondary sources of data to understand the educational challenges faced by these communities.

Unfortunately, census data from 2011 reveals that only 25.5% of Scheduled Tribe women in Jammu & Kashmir were literate compared to 34.8% nationally. This disparity can be attributed to several factors such as unawareness, conservative societal norms, traditional lifestyles, poverty, and lack of basic infrastructural facilities that pose significant obstacles to achieving educational attainment. Moreover, the conservative nature of society and stereotypes still prevalent in these sections further exacerbate the issue.

To address this problem effectively, it is imperative that government bodies alongside not-for-profit organizations make concerted efforts to expedite progress towards improving education amongst Scheduled Tribes residing in Jammu and Kashmir. This paper aims to examine some fundamental issues faced by women belonging to the Gujjar community on a daily basis in District Budgam within the Union territory of Jammu & Kashmir; how can these deprived sections be brought up-to-speed with progress?

In conclusion, it is high time that measures are taken to bridge this gap and ensure equal opportunities for all individuals irrespective of their social background or cultural practices. The government must work towards providing better access to quality education along with adequate infrastructure facilities for students belonging to Scheduled Tribes residing in Jammu and Kashmir so that they can break free from age-old traditions and contribute towards building a better future for themselves and their communities as well as for our country as a whole.

Keywords: Scheduled Tribe, Educational Status, Women, Jammu and Kashmir and Budgam

Introduction

India is a land of immense cultural and geographical diversity, with a population of over 1.3 billion people who come from various religions, cultures, ideologies, and socio-economic backgrounds living

together as one nation. This diverse population is divided into different sections based on these parameters, including the scheduled tribe population. The latest census report from 2011 indicates that this group comprises nearly 10.45 crore individuals or approximately 8.6% of the total population and 11.3% of the rural population in India.

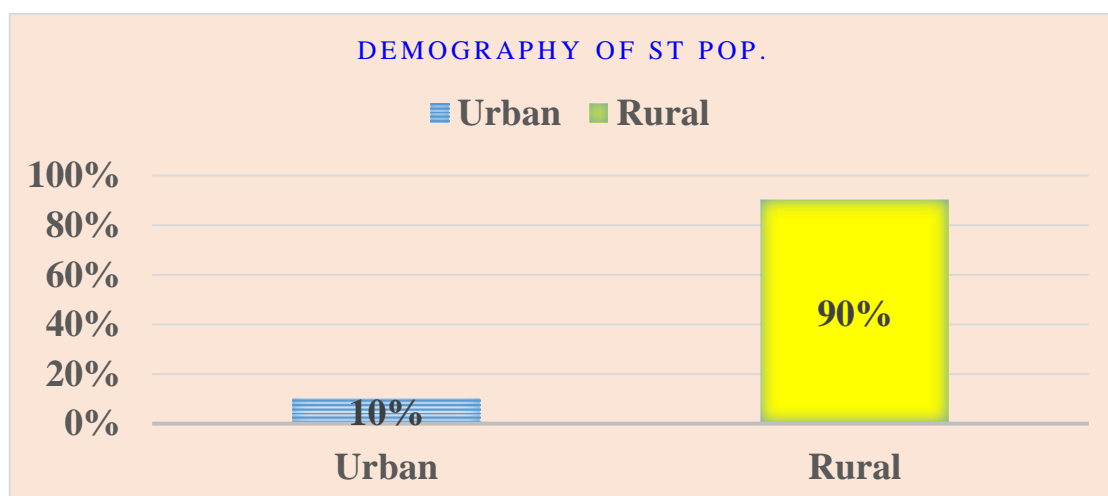
Scheduled Tribes (STs) are a unique tribal community with distinct identities within India's borders. Therefore, it becomes essential to focus on their education for planned human resource development in the country. Research studies have shown that literacy and basic education play a crucial role in enhancing economic productivity and social mobility while enabling individuals to eradicate social inequalities caused by class, gender, caste system discrimination (race), disability issues among others.

To ensure equal rights for everyone regardless of their background or ethnicity - fundamental rights principles are enshrined at both national levels through acts such as Article 26 of Universal Declaration Human Rights which states “that education is a fundamental right for all humans beings irrespective of any biases” towards them because they belong to certain groups like Scheduled Tribes populations.

The Indian Constitution provides preventive measures against inequality/discrimination faced by STs via constitutional provisions like Article 15(4) “which ensures positive developmental steps towards socially backward classes – making sure no one gets left behind when it comes down promoting educational interests among marginalized communities like SC/ST groups”. Moreover, initiatives taken by governments across India provide access & retention programs specifically targeting this group since most STs live in rural areas where resources may be limited compared with urban counterparts representing only around ten percent thereof.

Education can help generate awareness about legal/social/political/economic rights empowering tribal communities with secure employment opportunities leading up better health conditions resulting eventually improving overall prosperity levels throughout society while also driving much-needed social change forward alongside other efforts aimed at reducing poverty rates nationwide too!

To sum up, India's scheduled tribes represent an essential part of its diverse cultural heritage; therefore, focusing on their education is vital for planned human resource development in the country. By ensuring equal rights and access to quality education opportunities, we can empower these communities while promoting social equality and reducing poverty rates nationwide.



The data is saying that a lot of population from scheduled Tribes, in India live in the central and northeastern parts of the country. In fact, more than half of the population from scheduled Tribes lives in central India specifically. The union territory of Jammu and Kashmir, on the other hand, almost 1.2% of schedule Tribes, of the total population. So basically, there are a lot of people living in certain areas of India and not as many people living in others.

There is no doubt that education is the backbone of progress and development. In the era when the county is striving for achieving higher rates as GER in education, the scheduled tribe community is lagging behind. There are many reasons and one of the lynchpin among them is the geography of the community. They reside in far flung areas with extreme environmental and political disturbance, affecting their overall education. The umbrella schemes like SSA and Right to education (2009) have enhanced the GER and boosted the education system but yet it has not realised fully its goals in scheduled tribe communities. The reasons may be social conservative approaches, migration and awareness. When the literacy rate in the country as per census 2011 stands at 74%, the scheduled tribe literacy rate is 59% and in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir against 64% it stands at 50.06% far below the national and union territory average. It has been observed that there is a sea of difference in the literacy rates of different groups among scheduled tribes as Gujjar, Bakerwal , Gadi and Sippi have lowest literacy rate far behind other groups among scheduled Tribes. Furthermore Bakerwals have been found at the lowest among the all groups.

Table 1: Literacy Rate

S No	State	Persons		Males		Females	
		All	ST	All	ST	All	ST
1	India	74.04	59	82.14	68.5	65.46	49.4
2	J & k	67.2	50.6	76.8	60.6	56.4	39.7

Scheduled Tribe In Jammu & Kashmir

The constitution of Jammu and Kashmir has identified twelve groups of people as Scheduled Tribes, which account for only 1.2% of the tribal population across India. These tribes are primarily located in rural areas, particularly in districts such as Kargil, Leh, Poonch, and Rajauri. The largest tribe is Gujjar, followed closely by Bot, Bakarwal, and Brokpa. The remaining five tribes - Sippi, Changpa, Mon, Garra and Beda - represent only 1.9% of the total Scheduled Tribe population.

In terms of education levels in Jammu & Kashmir state overall literacy rate is at 68%, but there is a significant gender gap with male literacy rates being almost 80% compared to just over half for women (58%). For those belonging to Scheduled Castes (SCs), who are classified as disadvantaged due to their social status according to government classifications; their literacy rate hovers around 59%. However, for those belonging to Scheduled Tribes (STs), this figure drops even further down to just half having basic reading skills.

Overall these statistics provide insight into the various tribal communities that exist within Jammu & Kashmir state along with their geographic concentration and population size based on census data from 2011. Additionally, they reveal educational attainment rates among different communities living there today highlighting the need for targeted interventions aimed at improving literacy levels amongst marginalized groups such as STs.

	General		Scheduled Caste		Scheduled Tribe	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
India	80.9%	64.6%	75.17	56.5%	68.51	49.36
JK	76.8%	56.4%			48.2%	25.5%

Source: Census (2011)

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has a population that includes almost 11.9% Scheduled Tribes, a community that is often marginalized due to their strict conservative beliefs, relative isolation, and primitive mode of sustenance. In this paper, we will focus on the educational status of women from the Gujjar tribe in District Budgam block Sukhnag. The Gujjars are an integral part of the state's composite culture, and it is crucial for society as a whole to preserve their traditions in folk-lore, art, and cultural heritage.

The Gujjars in Jammu and Kashmir are unique compared to other ethnic groups because of differences in environment, traditions, customs, and customary features. However, they do interact with different groups at a larger scale. It is believed that the Gujjars and Bakerwals were Rajputs who moved from the Kathiawad region of Gujarat (via Rajasthan) and Hazara area of North West Frontier Province (NWFP) to Jammu & Kashmir or after adopting Muslim faith divided into two professionally different sects i.e., Gujjars & Bakerwals.

Although most Gujjars in Jammu and Kashmir are nomadic tribes, they have become increasingly sedentarized over the past few years. Taking advantage of permanent villages in the plains bordering foothills, many Gujjars have settled to a large extent taken up cultivation as their primary occupation. Additionally, some semi-settled or sedentary transhuman Guajar still engage in nomadism while cultivating land, moving between lower/middle mountain areas and Pir Panjal pastures during summer with flocks of buffaloes before returning to the plains during winter.

Education plays an essential role in empowering children economically and socially while assisting marginalized populations out of poverty. It also provides them with means for full participation within their communities. Accelerated progress education is critical for economic development any nation, and wider Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) e.g. poverty reduction, nutrition child survival, and maternal health According to UNICEF, every child has a fundamental right education which reduces poverty/child labor promotes sustainable development.

Education amongst pastoralist communities has become increasingly important due to unprecedented global changes requiring acquisition basic functional literacy, numeracy skills for comprehension occupational roles-useful direction tax, instructions on healthcare animals treatment schemes relating animal husbandry etc. They need to read and understand various policies introduced by respective UT central governments for betterment avail same. In recent years, pastorals faced challenges e.g. overgrazing limited resources, punitive local taxes etc. and adapted strategies through education. Smaller things like writing reading, written communications veterinary agriculture livestock officers on improving herds small calculations keeping records relating to numbering herds, cost returns from investment on improved herding grazing, distance covered seasonal movements are crucial.

Besides education can help them improve socio-economic status if they learn about better marketing products meat, milk, butter by application modern technology use modern savings bank credit facilities enabling them integrate better with rest population. The government must ensure that all children

belonging to marginalized communities have access to education so that they can break free from poverty cycles and lead fulfilling lives as contributing members of society.

Objectives:

1. To study the educational status of Schedule Tribe women in Budgam District.
2. To analyze the reasons behind the educational backwardness among Schedule Tribe Women In District Budgam.

Research methodology:

The text is talking about research that was done on a group of people called the Gujjar tribes who live in hilly areas of Sukhnag Block, district Budgam. The researcher used both primary and secondary sources to gather information for their study. Primary sources are people who were interviewed directly by the researcher, and they used a detailed interview schedule to make sure they asked all the right questions. Secondary sources are things like government documents, reports, books, and other research papers that have already been published. The researcher looked at all these different types of secondary sources to help them with their study as well. Overall, this research paper is based on a combination of information gathered from both primary and secondary sources about the Gujjar tribes living in Sukhnag Block.

Sample Size: The sample size for the present study was 80 respondents from 80 household (Deras) in Sukhnag block Khanshab of district Budgam. Only women were included in the samples. The sample was randomly selected as the majority of the females were reluctant to record their statements. In fact few of them narrated their plights but never allowed to record on their behalf.

Tools for Data Collection: Interview schedule and unstructured interviews were used as research tools for data collection. The investigator prepared a well-structured interview schedule after doing a field survey to collect background information on the respondents, their children's education, socio-economic conditions, lifestyle, etc. The interview schedule was divided into different sections to gather all the required information. Some of the questions asked were general information like name, age, educational status, type of family, income of the family and other social issues that impact education among Gujjar girls. The study focused on gathering data about education in Gujjar community specifically for girls. The researcher wanted to understand how a sum of common factors affect girl's education in this community. Overall, the data was collected after taking proper permission from all the respondents and was recorded afterwards by using tools to gain insight into various aspects of life within a specific community related to education.

Results and discussion: The data which was collected and analysed, gave the researcher a fairly good assessment about the educational status or levels among the Gujjar children of the community. The data which was taken from 80 households, (Zoogu Kharian) had only women as the interviewees. Majority of these women were hesitant, were not very forthright in giving interviews. Out of 80 respondents, 34 interviews were done with the married and 46 with unmarried women.

Table No. 2: Age- Profile of Women (Gujjar ST)

Age of respondents (in years)	20-30	30-40	40-50	Above 50	Total
Frequency	25	22	15	18	80
Percentage	31.25	27.50	18.75	22.5	100

Source: Primary Data, Computed

This data is discussing a table, specifically Table No:2. The table shows the percentage of people in different age groups. For example, 31.25% of the people (or 25 individuals) belong to the age group of 20-30 years old. Similarly, 27.50% (22 individuals) are in the age group of 30-40 years old, and so on. In summary, this data is simply providing information about how many people fall into each age category based on percentages and numbers within a specific table.

Table No:03: Marital Status of the respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	34	42.50
Unmarried	46	57.50
Total	80	100

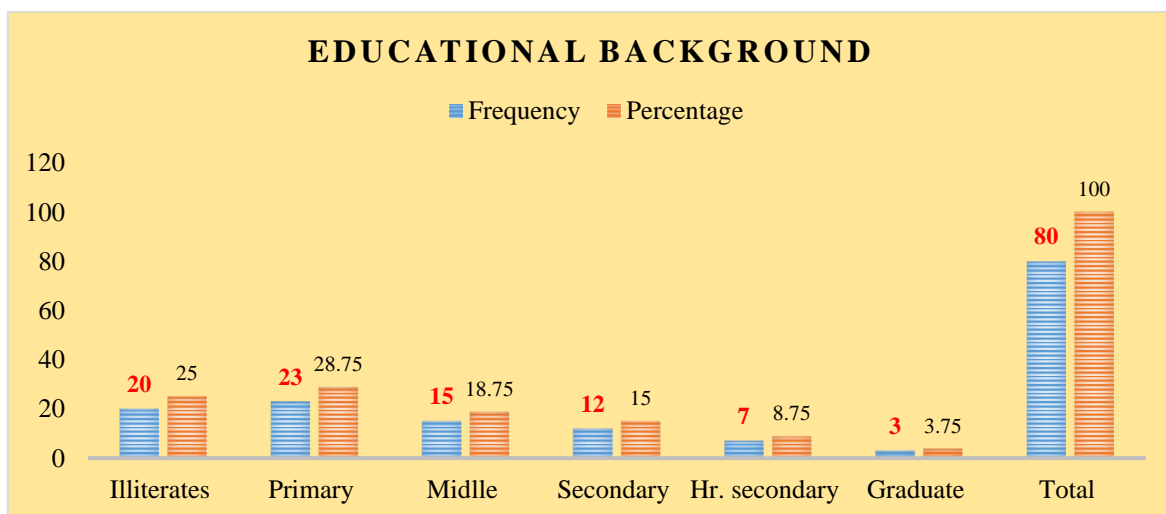
Source: Primary Data, Computed

Looking at Table No:03, we can see that there are two categories of people - those who are married and those who are unmarried. Out of the total number of people in the table, 42.50% or 34 individuals belong to the married category, while 57.50% or 46 individuals belong to the unmarried status. This means that more than half of the people in this group are not currently married.

Table No: 04: Educational status of respondents

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterates	20	25
Primary	23	28.75
Midlle	15	18.75
Secondary	12	15
Hr. secondary	7	8.75
Graduate	3	3.75
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data, Computed

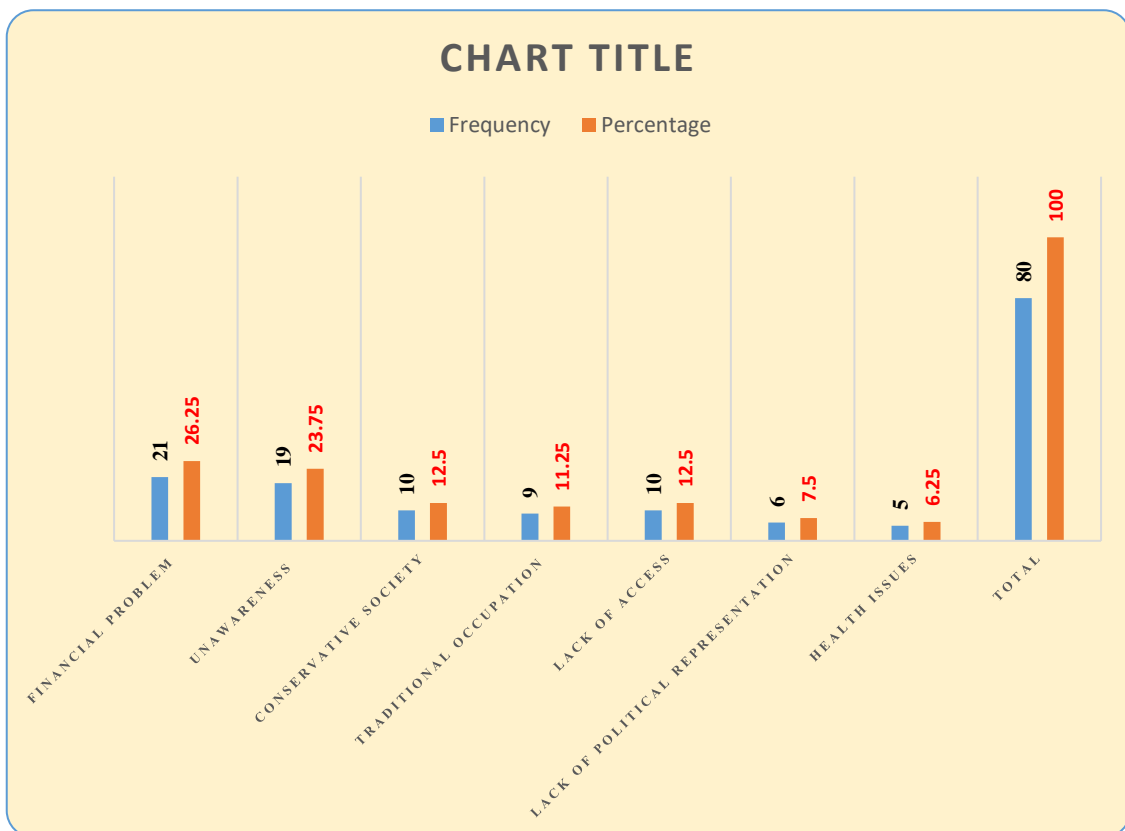


Education-wise, the respondents surveyed and have been divided into six educational categories viz, Illiterates, Primary, Middle, Secondary, Hr secondary and Graduate. A perusal of the table No4 reveals that (28.75%) highest number of sample belongs to primary level, 25% next illiterates, 18.75% with Middle, 15% with Secondary, 8.75% with Hr secondary ans lowest being from graduates with 3.75%.

Table No:05: Reason behind educational backwardness.

S No	Reason	Frequency	Percentage
1	Financial problem	21	26.25
2	Unawareness	19	23.75
3	Conservative Society	10	12.5
4	Traditional occupation	9	11.25
5	Lack of access	10	12.5
6	Lack of political representation	06	7.5
7	Health issues	05	6.25
	Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data, Computed



An examination of Table No:05 indicates numerous factors contributing to the inadequate educational status of ST women. Among 80 respondents, 26.25% attributed the poor education status to a lack of financial opportunities and poverty in the area. Another 23.75% believed that ignorance towards education and its associated benefits was responsible for this issue. Additionally, 12.5% identified conservative societal attitudes as a hindrance to educational progress, while others cited limited access to

education beyond middle school as problematic (also at 12.5%). The conservative society holds beliefs such as girls being prohibited from co-education or required to support their families after puberty instead of pursuing education which is a valid concern in these sections.

11.25% noted traditional practices like agriculture, animal husbandry, cow dung rearing and domestic work for females negatively impacting girl child education attainment. 7.5 % explained how political under-representation resulted in educational shortcomings; they strongly believe that this factor has affected providing necessary infrastructure and support values influencing levels of education within these families.

6.25% opined that weak health and early marriage significantly hindered female educational achievement on a large scale due to insufficient hospitals in these regions coupled with insecurity felt by most girls attending co-educational schools when nature calls arise; malnutrition issues also plague many young women who resort to unsanitary methods for self-care purposes therein exacerbating their already weakened state further still..

Suggestions:

- The schemes should reach these deprived groups especially as per the article 330, 332, 243D and 243T.
- There should be political reservation for Gujjars and bakerwla.
- The schemes and programmes should be taken as per the specific timeline and targets in time bound manner.
- Special task force for monitoring of different scheme and projects to avoid gaps and leniency.
- Review and evaluation of the different schemes and programmes.
- Engagement of locals in the developmental projects.
- More avenues of educational access and basic infrastructure.
- Bringing in accountability and transparency as promised by the current Govt.

Conclusion

The text is discussing the situation of the Gujjar tribe in district Budgam. The author has analyzed data and found that despite several government schemes launched for their upliftment, the Gujjar tribe is still lagging behind in various aspects such as education, health status, socio-economic conditions, and jobs. This is due to the fact that they belong to a minority Muslim population and have not utilized these schemes as desired. Additionally, there are further gaps among tribes with most benefits being availed by modern tribes belonging to Leh, Samba, Jammu, Doda belonging to particular sections of tribes.

The Gujjars and Bakerwals residing in district Budgam are at the bottom when it comes to education level and job opportunities but they have a high population rate which puts them on top when it comes to poverty and unemployment rates. They also live in conservative societies following superstitious beliefs. However, after Jammu and Kashmir reorganization act post Aug 2019 was enacted; it is expected that they may get justice at par with other sections of society.

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