



Nomadic Way of Life Induces Educational Backwardness in Women of Bakarwal Communities of Rajouri District Of J&K.

Naila Kousar^{1*}, Aswathy V.K.²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Lovely Professional University, India.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences and Languages Lovely Professional University, India.

Citation: Naila Kousar, *et al* (2025), Nomadic Way of Life Induces Educational Backwardness in Women of Bakarwal Communities of Rajouri District Of J&K, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 31(2) 126-131

Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v31i2.10318

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

We cannot imagine progress without education in today's time. Because education is the basic need of a human being. It's a process that help us to know about oneself, our neighbourhood, community, society, country and a world as a whole. Only education makes it possible. India is a vast country with diversity in its culture, language, region, religion, ethnic and so on. Tribal group is one of them. This group is far behind from mainstream of Indian society in every sphere of life. In education, they are lacking behind from the total population. This paper try to describe the reason of educational backwardness in nomadic tribal community i.e Bakarwal of J&K.

Keywords: Education, Nomad, Bakarwal

Introduction

We cannot imagine progress without education in today's time. Because education is the basic need of a human being. It's a process that help us to know about oneself, our neighbourhood, community, society, country and a world as a whole. Only education makes it possible. India is a vast country with diversity in its culture, language, region, religion, ethnic and so on. Tribal group is one of them. This group is far behind from mainstream of Indian society in every sphere of life. In education, they are lacking behind from the total population. Without education we cannot think about ourself. In the time of internet, when everything is online. Education plays very important role in every sphere of life. Education from elementary level to technical higher education can able to bring the world to a single platform where competency and individual penitently give the worth of living. The Vision 2020 of India and the competitive challenges in globalization race of the world meet the platform of development (Upmanyu, 2016). But after 77 years of independence India couldn't achieve the literacy target that was our goal. Still some communities of our country are far behind in literacy rate in comparison of total population. In such groups, tribal group of our country is very low in literacy rate. The total population of tribal group of our country is 8.6%. This group is carrying age old traditions, living in the miserable condition in the far-flung areas and totally depend on nature.

Table-1: Comparative table of Literacy rate of national population with tribal population.

Year	1961	2001	2011
National population	28.3	64.8	74.04
Scheduled tribes	8.5	47.1	59
Gap	19.8	18.7	15.04

Sources:- Census 1961, 2001 and 201

Table-1 shows the literacy rate of total population and tribal population of India. The literacy rate of STs is reduced almost 5% from 1961 to 2011. Educating the tribal children is very difficult task because of their unique culture. They are living in far flung areas with their old tradition of life. Still some tribes even move from one place to another in search of food for their live stocks. They move seasonally, in summer they move to the hilly areas and in winter they come back to the foot hills of Himalayas.

Table-2 Comparative Table of Literacy Rate of Total Population, tribal population and Gujjar and Bakerwals of J&K

Year	2001	2011
Total population	55.52	67.16
Tribal population	37.5	50.6
Gujjar	31.7	34.4
Bakerwals	22.2	24.3

Sources Census 2001 and 2011

Table 2 shows the comparative literacy rate of total population of Jammu and Kashmir and tribal population with Gujjar and Bakerwals of Jammu and Kashmir. The literacy rate of tribals is low at national level but its too much low at state level. The literacy rate of Gujjar is better than the literacy rate of Bakerwals.

The term “Bakarwal” is derived from the combination of two terms “Bakri” meaning goat/sheep and “wal” meaning “one who takes care of”. The name “Bakarwal” signifies “high altitude goat and sheep herders”. Bakarwals are primarily pastoral nomads rearing goat and sheep in high altitudes of Greater-Himalayas in summers and in winters they move towards plains in the foot hills of Shiwaliks. This nomadic tribe is found in the Pirpanjal range of mountains located between the UT of Jammu and Kashmir and state of Himachal Pardesh. In Jammu and Kashmir there are 12 scheduled tribes groups. Gujjar and Bakarwals is the main tribal group of the jammu and Kashmir. It comprise almost 85% of the tribal population of the UT. This tribal group is scattered in all-over the jammu and Kashmir. But majority of it is concentrated in Rajouri-Poonch twin border districts of jammu and Kashmir..

In Rajouri there are only two local scheduled tribes out of 12 tribes in J&K. As per 2011 Census the total population of Gujjar and Bakarwals is of 36% of the total population. In this district about 12% population is comprised of Bakarwals. The bakarwals is the off shoots of Gujjars, its nomadic tribe, landless and houseless. Their livkelihood is mostly dependent on sheep and goats for which they have to rear these animals. In search of green pastures for their herds and flocks, they travel from one place to another with their baggage and language, flock of sheep and goats, fleet of horses and dogs (Florentina and Grazia 2014). In the months of April-May, the Bakarwals tribe migrate to upper reaches of Peer Panjal even to reach the Gurez and Sonamarg Valleys, where they live a toughest life far away from the main cities, without the basic facilities of health and education etc. The government of Jammu and Kashmir has launched many schemes for the improvement of education of Tribal people. In J&K there are 1163 mobiles schools, which provide education to this group in the high altitudes to tribal people who migrate there in summer season. There are Gujjar hostels in every district of J&K. Still there is no improvement in literacy rate.

Education is an important parameter for any inclusive growth in an economy and its an important avenue of upgrading the economic and social condition of the scheduled tribes. Literacy and educational attainment are powerful indicators of social and economic development among the backward groups (Punnaiah, 2018). But the literacy rate is very low in tribal group. In tribal group the rate of literacy of women is very low as compared to total women population of the country.

After independence government make a lot of efforts but couldn't achieve the desirable result. It effects the directly on the development of the country. In constitution, there is given a lot of stress on the education of weaker sections. There are so many articles in this regard. From Article 14 to Article 22(2) of the 73rd and 74th amendments, are related to the weaker section of the society. In 2002, the right to education became a fundamental right in India, when the 86th amendments to the constitution was passed. This Amendment added Article 21A to the constitution, which states that state must provide free and compulsory education to the children between the age group of 6 to 14. The constitutional provision of India helped the tribal people to move towards development.

Table 3: Comparative Table of Literacy Rate of National Tribal male and Female

Year	Total	Male	Female
1961	8.53	13.83	3.16
1971	11.30	17.63	4.85
1981	16.35	24.52	8.05
1991	29.60	40.65	18.19
2001	47.10	59.70	34.76
2011	58.96	68.53	49.35

Sources Census 1961 to 2011

Table 3 shows the literacy rate of tribal population's male and female. It shows improvement but not at satisfactory level. The percentage of literacy of tribes in India only 8.54% in 1961 which was increased to 58.96% in 2011. But female literacy rate among tribes is only 49.35 as compared to male literacy of 68.53 (Kumari, 2018). Government started a lot of schemes for promoting education of underprivileged sections of society. Major government schemes for promoting elementary education are Sarva Sihiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamaik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Mid-Day Meal scheme. SSA has been operational since 2000-2001

and provides for universal access, retention and quality in elementary education with special emphasis on girl's education, at elementary level. At the secondary level, the scheme launched in March 2009 called RMSA has been introduced. The objective of the scheme was to enhance access to secondary education and to improve its quality by the year 2017. Still there is no improvement in education of underprivileged section of Indian society. In today's time still some sections of society are lagging behind from the mainstream of society.

Statement of the problem:

The backwardness in Bakarwal tribe of Rajouri district of J&K is because of education. The literacy rate in this group is very low. There is a need of government interference and NGOs to take in this regard.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The main objective of this study is to highlight the educational constraints in the way education of the nomadic Bakarwal tribal women of Rajouri district of J&K and suggest some suggestions to overcome these problems.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. For collection of primary data, the researcher interviewed from nomadic as well as settled households of Rajouri district of Union Territory of J&K. And secondary data has been collected from census 2011, internet, journals, books and reports

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education is the single most important means by which individual and society can build capacity levels, overcome barriers, and expand opportunities for their well-being. In the context of education of STs children, finding a balance between preserving tribal cultural identity, and mainstreaming them seems crucial (Upmanyu, 2016). Education and literacy rate are the powerful indicators of social and economic development among the backward groups. The male-female gap in literacy and educational attainment among the scheduled tribes is significant. Scheduled tribes are geographically, socially isolated and economically marginalised communities. This has led to drop outs and directly impacted their overall educational status (Punnaiah, 2018). India is the second populous country in the world with 6.77 crores of tribal population. Most of the tribal people are poor, illiterate and inhabited in inaccessible forest and hilly areas. They lag behind in all spheres of life in comparison with other section of the population. The government of India has launched a number of schemes for the promotion of education and welfare among the tribes. In spite of these efforts the rate of literacy has not been improved (Sarita and Tanushree). A study revealed that the Gujjar and Bakarwal live a separate life at dhoks totally isolated from the rest of the area. These dhoks are far away from the inhabited areas. These people have to cover a distance of 30-40 kilometres to reach in these dhoks. These places are green pastures and meadows where they graze their animals.

There is unavailability of educational facilities for children. Mobile schools appear to exist only on papers. Children get engaged in rearing of cattle in absence of educational facilities (Florentina and Grazia, 2014). A study revealed that out of 1000 nomad households of nomadic Gujjar and Bakarwal tribe of J&K surveyed in districts of Rajouri, Poonch, Baramulla and Kupwara, a total of 89% Gujjar and Bakarwal women between the age group of 10-65 were illiterate (Sharma, 2014). One of the studies revealed that among 12 scheduled tribes in Jammu and Kashmir, the Bakarwals with the smallest rate of literacy with 24.3% and Gujjars stand one step ahead with the literacy rate of 34.4%. Both the Gujjar and Bakarwals have a low literacy rate as compared to the other scheduled tribes and general population of Jammu and Kashmir UT (Raziq and Popat, 2021). A research conducted by Jan in 2014, in the district of Anantnag, Jammu and Kashmir. In this research the researcher found that the educational status of Gujjar and Bakarwals is very low. The survey conducted in 3 tehsils' 5 villages' 124 households. The average literacy was found below 30%. Males were more literate than females. Main obstacles were listed in the way to their education are low density of population in remote areas caused long distance to school, teachers denying to work in hard circumstances, parental negative attitude and household burden (Jan, 2014). A research was conducted in Rajouri districts of J&K (UT) on Bakarwal tribe.

In this study, the sample was 50 both male and female above the age group of 15. 90% responded that their children enrolled at primary school level, 8% responded that their children enrolled in matric class only and 2% responded that their children enrolled till secondary level but no one responded for graduation. While talking about girls only 20% responded that they want their girls to study (Suri and Raina, 2016). Another socio-economic study was conducted by (Abass, Ahmed and Israr Ahmed, 2015) on Gujjar and Bakarwal tribe of J&K. In this study the authors take secondary sources of data and concluded that according to the Census data of 2001, the literacy rate among Gujjars was 31.65% and Bakarwals was 22.51%.

Table No. 1 Respondents Age

S. No	Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
1	15-20	3	10
2	20-25	12	40
3	25-30	9	30
4	30-35	6	20
	Total	30	100

While conducting our research work in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir (UT) about the status of education in settled and nomadic Bakarwal tribe of J&K, first of all we tried to know the age group of our respondents. After collecting and analysing the data, we concluded that 5 respondents fell under the age group of 15-20, 15 respondents fell under age group of 20-30, 10 respondents fell under the age group of 25-30, 5 respondents fell under the age group of 30-35.

Table No. 2 Respondents Category

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Nomadic Bakarwal	20	66.66
2	Settled Bakarwal	10	33.34
	Total	30	100

Table no 2 shows that the respondents were 20 nomads who migrate seasonally in search of food and fodder for their cattle in the upper reaches of the peer panjal and even beyond the lolab valleys in Kashmir while 10 respondents were settled.

Table No 3 Respondents Educational Status

Educational Level	Settled Bakarwal women	Percentage	Nomadic Bakarwal women	Percentage
Never Enrolled	Nil	Nil	12	60
1 st -5 th	Nil	Nil	6	30
5 th -10 th	02	20	2	10
10 th -12 th	04	40	Nil	Nil
Graduation	01	10	Nil	Nil
Post Graduation	02	20	Nil	Nil
PhD/M.Phil	01	10	Nil	Nil
Total	10	100	20	100

Table no 3 shows the trend of literacy between settled and nomadic women of Bakarwal tribe of Rajouri districts of J&K, UT. Women who are settled their educational status is much better than the women who are nomadic. 20% women who are settled fell in the category of 5th -10th educational status. 40% women who are settled and educated fell in the category of 10th -12th educational status. 10% women who are settled and fell in the category Graduation. 20% women who are settled and fell in the educational status of Post Graduation and 10% women are settled and fell in the top of educational status of PhD. Whereas the educational status of nomadic women who migrate seasonally their percentage of education is very low 60% nomadic women never enrolled in the school, 30% enrolled in primary level then drop out and 10% women who are nomad and reached to the educational status of 5th -10th.

OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF EDUCATION

Nomadic Way of Life: Since the Bakarwal community is a nomadic tribe. This group of people is landless and houseless. They migrated seasonally, in summer they move upward to hilly areas of J&K, where they live without any basic facilities. In summer zone of Rajouri district, classes started in March-April, at this time this nomadic group started migrated to upper reach of valleys, it takes almost 2 months to reach and settled there with their live stocks, baggage and luggage. And when exams of winter zone start in November, before exam, in October they again started migration towards foot hills of Peer-Panjal. In between this their education suffer.

Living in Far-flung Areas: As this group move upward during migration, they live there in far-flung areas where they have to travel 30-40 kilometre from inhabited areas. In such areas to reach school in primary classes is very difficult task.

Negative Attitude of Parents: Parents attitude towards education is negative. They prefer girls get engaged in household work at a very early age. Because they are illiterate and don't know the value of education.

Early Marriage: Early marriage is another obstacle in the way of girls education. Mostly girls of this communities get married in early age of 15-18 years.

Gender Bias: Mostly boys are educated than girls. Parents prefer to send boys to school and spent on their education. Girls prefer to look after of siblings at home and take all the responsibilities of home. Because of gender bias they are deprived by education.

Poverty: Being a poor parent and financially weak they couldn't provide education to girls because of large family to handle.

Lack of Awareness About Government Schemes: Being illiterate and living far away from society, parents of this community are not aware about different kinds of government schemes.

Outcomes of Education is a Long Process: Education is a long and time-consuming process. Its outcomes appear after almost 10-15 years. So parents prefer domestic work than wasting time in educating their kids which is not confirmed that after 15 years we get something or not.

Lack of Female Staff: Parents of these communities are traditional and unaware about the world. They are not ready to send their daughters to school where is male staff and no female. Females are not ready to serve in such a hard area.

Shortage of Girls Schools: Parents are not ready to send their daughters where boys are also studying.

Lack of Security: Density of the hilly areas is very low. Houses are far away from each other and schools are also at a very long distance. There is also a security issue of wild animals so parents are not ready to send their daughters to schools.

Mobile Schools Only up to 5th Standards: Government launches different schemes for this group, the scheme of mobile/seasonal schools is one of them. But these schools provide only education till 5th standard.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The study shows that the settled women of Bakarwal tribe are very well in educational status while the condition of nomadic women of Bakarwal tribe is in a very miserable condition. Education is one of the basic needs of today's era. 21st century is a century of digitalization. Everything is digital, at each and every step we need knowledge not only bookish but of computer. But in this time, our geographical division and variation among culture, language, traditions and carrying age-old tradition with, some of our country's people still lagging behind from the mainstream. Specially, the women of our scheduled group are lagging behind everywhere. Despite of various schemes for the upliftment of scheduled group, the result is not satisfactory. Major obstacles that come in the education of women are geography, culture, tradition, parents' negative attitude, teacher-pupil ratio, lack of awareness of girl child education, problems of security and safety. The main reason of Bakarwal women's educational backwardness is nomadic way of life, lack of awareness of education and educational schemes, long distance between school and home, shortage of girls' schools, early marriage, household burden on girls. Undoubtedly, the policies of the government at various levels are working and effective too but its result is not satisfied. The literacy rate among the girls who are nomads and houseless, landless is critically low. This group is educationally deprived. There is a need of the involvement of government schemes, NGOs, other non-profit organisations to design such policies and awareness camps about these policies to reach out such groups of society. Education is a time-consuming process its result comes out minimum after 10-15 years, these people couldn't wait for such a long period of time. They get compelled by time to drop out kids. And all this led to wastage and stagnations. The design of government policies and NGOs efforts according to the need of the women of nomadic Bakarwal tribe. A team of community volunteers from their own community may be trained to motivate parents and elders to send their girls to school. A strong connection between home and school is a pre-requisite for spreading girls' education and instil zeal to study.

References

1. Arya, Ms Sarita, and Chauhan, Ms Tanushree: A Critical Study of Tribal Education: with Special Reference to Women's
2. Basin, Dr Veen: Status of Tribal Women
3. Chowdhury, Arnab, and Roul Kumar, Dr Sushanta, and Mete Kumar, Dr Jayanta (2021): Empowerment of Tribal Women with Respect to Their Socio-Economic Status in India. Journal of legal, ethical and regulatory issues.
4. Gautam, Dr Neera (2013): Education of Scheduled Tribe in India: Schemes and Programme. www.iiste.org
5. Gulzar, Danish and Shameem, Bazila and Bhat, Ahmed, Dr Javeed and Kaur, Dr Rajvinder (2023): Role of Policy Measures and Non-State Actors for Tribal Upliftment in Jammu and Kashmir: A Socio-Economic Perspective: Journal of Pharmaceutical Negative Results: volume 14
6. Kumari, Suman (2018): Challenging Issue of Tribal Women Education in India.: International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Arts and Humanities (IJIRAH), www.dypublication.com
7. Mohanty, Seemita, and Thamminanina, Apparao, and Kanungo, Pallavi (2019): Delivering Quality Education to Girls from Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGS) in India: Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews, <https://doi.org/10.18510/hssr.2019.7143>
8. Nanda, Prof. Renu and Sharma (2018): A Study of educational status of Tribal Gujjars of Vijaypur Block in Samba District of Jammu and Kashmir, International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences (IJRESS), <http://euroasiapub.org>
9. Naresh, Gummad (2014): Work Participation of Tribal Women in India : A Development Perspective. IOSR Journals of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) www.iosrjournals.org

10. Punnaiah, Dr. A. (2018): Issues and Challenges of Tribal Education: A Study of Telangana State.: International Journal and Research Journal (IERJ), E-ISSN No: 2454-9916|Volume:4|issue:1|Jan 2018.
11. R. Dr. Florentina, and Grazia, Ms. (2014): A Community Fact Finding of Jammu and Kashmir, India.: Scholedge International Journal of Multidisciplinary & Allied Studies. www.scholedge.org
12. Raziq, Mohd & Popat, S. Shilpa (2021): Gujjars and Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir Vis-à-vis educational Status: A Literature Review: Scholarly Research Journal for Humanity Science & English Language, www.srjis.com
13. Reddy, Prasad, Dr. B. R. (2021).: A Brief Review on Tribal Education in India.: Quest Journals, Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science. www.questjournals.org
14. S. C. Jai Prabhakar (2018); Tribal Education in India : Challenges Issues to Conquest.: Addaiyan Journals of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, <https://aipublisher.org/projects/ajahss/>
15. Sahu, Kumar Niraj and Prajapati, Mithlesh and Upadhyay Gouri (2020): An Impact of Digitalization in Rural Areas. International Research Journal of Engineering and Technology (IRJET) www.irjet.net
16. Sindhi, Ms. Swaeha(2012): Prospects and Challenges in Empowerment of Tribal Women: IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science 9JHSS), www.iosrjournals.org
17. Upmanyu, M. C. (2016): The Tribal Education in India, Status, Challenges and Issues.: International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning. www.noveltyjournals.com