

## A STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF GUJJAR CHILDREN OF SOUTH KASHMIR

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**Abstract:** *Gujjars are semi-nomadic tribes of Jammu and Kashmir who have been given Scheduled Tribe (ST) status due to their migratory and backward nature. The Gujjars are primarily nomads who move from plains to the higher altitudes with their cattles as part of their annual season journeys with their livestock. The literacy rate among the Gujjars community is low in comparison to other twelve scheduled tribe communities in the state. The present paper stresses on the status of education among the semi-nomadic Gujjar children in South Kashmir. The study aims to find out the reasons behind educational backwardness among Gujjar tribes. It also seeks to find out the measures taken by the Jammu and Kashmir government to provide education to Gujjar tribes.*

**Key Words:** *Gujjars, education, semi-nomads, backwardness, Jammu and Kashmir.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

It is well known fact that the State of Jammu and Kashmir is a combine of several ethnic groups like Kashmiri, Dogras, Gujjars and Bakarwals, Dards, Baltis, Gaddis, Ladakhis, etc. Gujjars inhabit in the mountainous and kandi area of the state. Gujjars are mostly pastoral, they are said to have migrated from Rajasthan and embraced Islam. They migrate along with their sheep, goats and cattle from the plains to the higher region in search of green pastures in summer. Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir are semi-nomads. The tribe is popularly known as Gujjars in Indian subcontinent. Gujjars form an important ethnic and linguistic group in Jammu and Kashmir and constitute 20 percent of total population of the State Scattered in all most all districts of the State. J&K Gujjars who are mainly Muslims carry with itself the age old traditions and customs of prehistoric time. Jammu and Kashmir state have 22 districts, 10 in Kashmir region and 10 in Jammu region and remaining two in Ladakh region. The state of Jammu and Kashmir consists of three regions: Jammu, Kashmir valley and Ladakh. Jammu and Kashmir has population of 1.25 crores in census 2011, which is an increase from figure of 1.01 crores in 2001 census. The total population of Jammu and Kashmir, as per Census 2011, is 12,548,925 including male population 66,40,662 and female population 59,00,640 respectively. Among which Kashmir division constitutes 6907622, Jammu divisions constitutes 5350811 & Ladakh division constitutes the population of 290492. In 2001, total population was 10,143,700 in which males were 5,360,926 while females were 4,782,774. The population of Jammu and Kashmir forms 1.04 percent of India in 2011. In 2001, the figure was 0.99 percent. The major languages spoken in Jammu and Kashmir are Kashmiri, Urdu, Dogri, Pahari, Balti, Ladakhi, Gojri, Shina

and Pashto. On the other hand, Urdu written in the Persian script is the official language of the state. Hindi or English languages are also used by many speakers as a Second language.

Jammu and Kashmir is the only state in India with a Muslim-majority population. According to the Census 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. Jammu And Kashmir State had no Scheduled Tribes (STs) before 1989. In the Constitution (Jammu & Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1989 further four communities, namely Gujjar, Bakarwal, Gaddi and Sippi were notified as the Scheduled Tribes vide Order (Amendment) Act, 1991. These tribes living in Jammu and Kashmir which were approved ST status are Balti, Beda, Bot (Boto), Brokpa (Drokpa, Dard, Shin), Changpa, Garra, Mon, Purigpa, Gujjar, Bakarwal, Gaddi and Sippis. Of these, eight communities are located in Ladakh including Balti, Beda, Bodh or Bot, Brokpa, Champa (or Changpa), Garra and Mon. Out of twelve Scheduled Tribes of J&K, Gujjar tribe is the most populous tribe with a population of 763,806, thus forming 69.1 percent of the total ST population. Balti, Purigpa and Gaddi together form 10.2 per cent of the total ST population. Five tribes Sippi, Changpa, Mon, Garra and Beda along constitute the residual proportion (1.9 per cent). Beda is the smallest group with a population of 128 among all these tribes. Gujjars the semi-nomadic tribes which form the third largest community in Jammu and Kashmir and constitute 11.9 percent of the total population in the state, according to the Census of India 2011. In Jammu and Kashmir, Gujjars 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 Anantnag, Baramulla, Kupwara, Pulwama, Kulgam and Shopian) and Ladakh (comprising Kargil). The word Gujjar in the literature of India is maintained to have occurred in the 7th century A.D. The word "Gujjar" is believed to be the derivation of 'Gurujar' which is Sanskrit word meaning a valiant out to crush the enemies further believe that these

word derived from Gauchar: Gau means cow and Char means Graze . Gujjars were primarily a nomadic community who have now settled down 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. Besides, there are semi-settled or sedentary transhumant Gujjars who combine the cultivation of land with pastoralism. They move to the lower and middle mountain pasture areas in the summer with their herds where they engage in cultivation and come back to the plains in the winters. Despite tremendous effort of central Government of India and State Government, have not much change their thinking and living style. Only a fraction of Gujjars have come up with modernization and have acquired the modern and scientific approach of life and are going on an equal pace with the race of modern agriculture.

The literacy rate of Jammu and Kashmir as per the census of 2011 is 68.74 %. The overall literacy rate of the scheduled tribe of the Jammu and Kashmir is 37.5% this is much lower than the national average of 47% aggregated for all scheduled tribes. The Male and female literacy rates (48.2% and 25.25%) are much below if compared to those records by all scheduled tribes at the national level (59.2 % and 34.8%). Similar trends are discovered in these tribes in respect of female literacy also.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sharma D. (1988) study on "Education and socialization among the tribes" he find out that the socialization process among the Gujjars is mostly unconscious and is sorted in the primarily institutions of the society like family, Kafila' community and the Kinship. The proportion of Gujjar children go to school is very low. The girls are not sent to school. Changes have started taking place in the life style of Gujjars but these changes are very few and only in small percentage of people.

Ananda G. (1995) researched on "Wastage in primary education among tribal children" and found that absenteeism rate decreased in classes 2nd to fifth and it was highest in class Ist. The mean stagnation of class Ist was more than all other classes. The average dropout was higher in lower classes and lower in higher classes.

Mukhopadhyay, Rabindranath and Gosh , Sudeshna, (2002), studied " Quality of Indian tribal literacy" and found that all India level' literacy rate was much lower for the tribal population women literacy is much rampant compared to male illiteracy both for tribal and general community.

Baba, A.R's (1992), research on "Educational achievement and social awareness of Gujjar and Bakkarwal boy of Srinagar district – A comparison between hostellers and non-hostellers" found that the boys studying in the hostels had a higher percentage of marks than the non –hostellers. The awareness towards health and hygiene was very much more prominent among the hostel group as compared to non-hostel groups.

Dubey (2009), studied on scheduled tribes and concluded that scheduled tribes are facing the problem of poverty and malnutrition and there is need to pay attention to them.

Suri, K. (2014), in her study on "The seasonal educational

schools for nomadic population in Jammu and Kashmir" found that the seasonal school are in a bad condition and lack proper infrastructure, stationary is not provided at the right time, the mid-day meal facility was also not available to the seasonal school children and there was corruption at the ZEO level. She found that poverty is one of the key factors for the educational backwardness of tribal children (Gujjar and Bakkarwal in Jammu and Kashmir).

Dr Javid Rahi, (2011), systematically revealed the origin of Gujjar tribe, their tribal identity, and history of Gujjar community. Political empowerment of Gujjars in J&K is also analysed by the author.

Aparna Mitra (2008), studied on the status of women among scheduled tribes in India and concluded that tribal women are less educated comparatively and gender equality among tribal group is a complex phenomenon.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study entitled "Educational Status of Tribal Gujjar children in South Kashmir" was conducted in four Districts of South Kashmir.

Sampling Technique: Multistage sampling technique was used to select the villages for the present study.

Sample Size: The sample size for the present study was 300 respondents from 300 household (Deras). The sample comprised of 300 people who were household heads. 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: A well structured interview Schedule was prepared comprised of background information of the respondents, question regarding their education of children, their socio-economic condition, life style etc. The Questions were regarding general information like name, age, and educational status, type of family, income of the family etc. Educational status of Gujjar community and other social issues which ultimately impact education among Gujjar boys and girls.

Primary data was collected from the selected areas and the secondary data was collected from books, journals, websites, research papers, and few resource persons. The research tools were administrated as per the convenience of the Gujjar community members which included time available with them. As the researcher hails from South Kashmir himself, it was not difficult to talk with community members and collect the data. Later, the data was analysed using qualitative analysis.

### 2. Profile of the area:

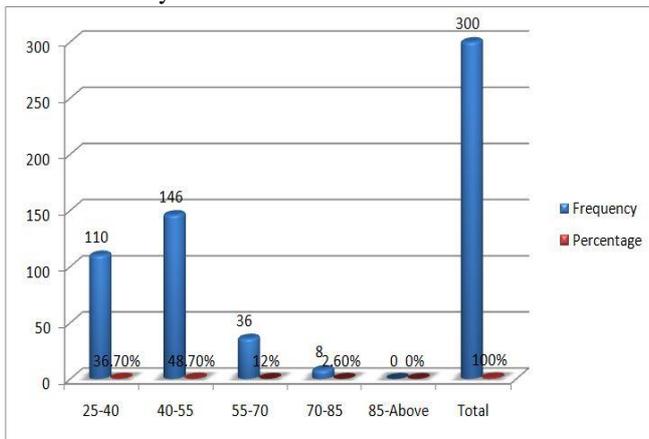
The Universe of the study South Kashmir is Muslim dominated area. The South Kashmir consists of four districts Anantanag, Pulwama, Shopian and Kulgam. The total population of South Kashmir is 2041318 with males 1051706 and females 989612. The total area of South Kashmir is 5323.9 sq.km.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Table No. 1.1: Age of Gujjar respondent:

| S.No | Age Group of Respondents | Frequency  | Percentage  |
|------|--------------------------|------------|-------------|
| 1    | 25-40                    | 110        | 36.7%       |
| 2    | 40-55                    | 146        | 48.7%       |
| 3    | 55-70                    | 36         | 12%         |
| 4    | 70-85                    | 8          | 2.6%        |
| 5    | 85-Above                 | 00         | 00%         |
|      | <b>Total</b>             | <b>300</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: Primary data



It is an important determinant of demographic profile of households. Household heads that have younger age are to be married at an early age. The table.1.1: shows the respondents of different age groups who were interviewed while data collection. A total no of 300 respondents were interviewed among which the highest number of respondents is between the age group of 40-55 with 48% and the lowest number of respondents falls in the age group of 70-85 with 2.6%. The respondents are male head member of their respective families. It has been also reveals that after the marriage the Gujjars manage their own families and make their separation from their primitive unit. There are various justifications of these results. The first point is that Gujjars has a tradition of early marriage. Second after marriage they make the separation from the joint family, even from the parents. Third, they have a high fertility rate and also have more children. The age differences of their children are very low.

Table No.1. 2: Occupation of Gujjar respondents.

| S.No | Occupation       | Frequency  | Percentage  |
|------|------------------|------------|-------------|
| 1    | Pastoral         | 89         | 29.7%       |
| 2    | Farmer           | 25         | 8.3%        |
| 3    | Domestic Servant | 130        | 43.3%       |
| 4    | Govt. Employ     | 18         | 6%          |
| 5    | Other            | 38         | 12.7%       |
|      | <b>Total</b>     | <b>300</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: Primary data.

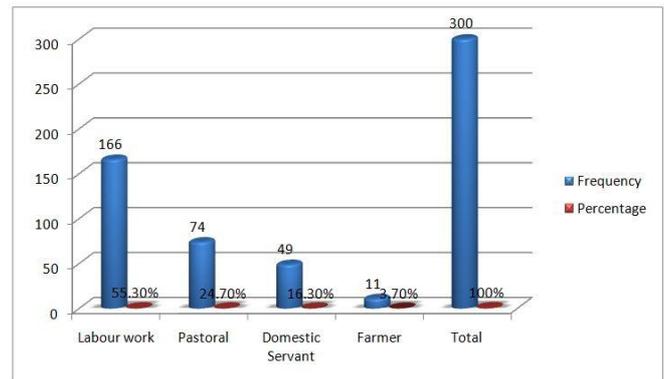
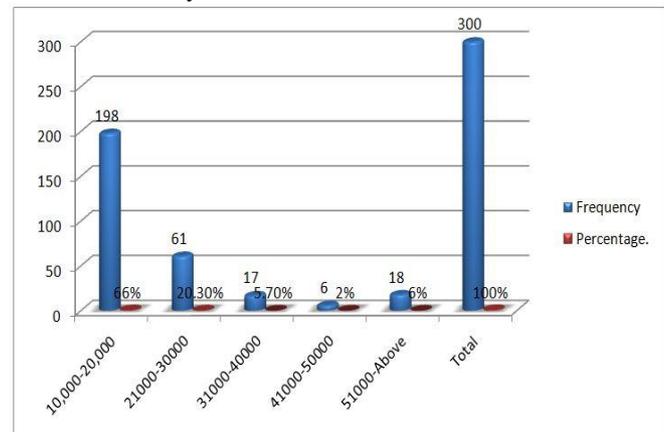


Table No: 1.2. Shows the occupation of respondents which is also classified into Pastoral, farmer, Domestic labour, Government employ and other different occupations. The table reveals that 29.7% of respondents have the occupation as pastoral activities, 8.3% of respondents occupation is farming, majority of respondents with 43.3% of respondents have occupation as domestic labour, 6% of respondents are in government service and 12.7% of respondents have other occupations.

Table No.1. 3: Income status of Gujjar respondents.

| S.No | Total Annual Income | Frequency  | Percentage. |
|------|---------------------|------------|-------------|
| 1    | 10,000-20,000       | 198        | 66%         |
| 2    | 21000-30000         | 61         | 20.3%       |
| 3    | 31000-40000         | 17         | 5.7%        |
| 4    | 41000-50000         | 06         | 02%         |
| 5    | 51000-Above         | 18         | 06%         |
|      | <b>Total</b>        | <b>300</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: Primary data.



The above table shows majority of respondents with 66% have annual income of 10000-20000 per year followed by 20.3% of respondents having 21000-30000 yearly, 5.7% of respondents have annual income of 31000-40000 and 02% of respondents have 41000-50000 and 6% of respondents have annual income 51000-Above. The income has been improved due to impact of new jobs and high wage rates. They earn money to meet both their ends. The Gujjars with good economic condition, start doing small business in the nearby towns and villages while as other poor Gujjars start doing manual labour work to get more and more money.

Table No. 1. 4: Educational Status of Gujjar children:

| S No | Educational Status  | Frequency | Percentage |
|------|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1    | Illiterate          | 118       | 39.3%      |
| 2    | Primary             | 87        | 29.7%      |
| 3    | Secondary           | 49        | 15.7%      |
| 4    | Higher Secondary    | 28        | 9.3%       |
| 5    | Graduation          | 06        | 02%        |
| 6    | Above Graduate      | 09        | 03%        |
| 7    | Professional course | 03        | 01%        |
|      | Total               | 300       | 100%       |

Source: Primary data.

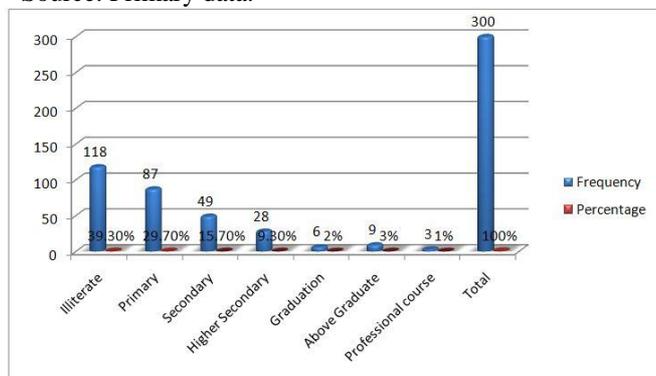


Table No.1.4. shows the educational of respondents children, the table shows that 39.3% of respondents children are illiterate, 29.7% of respondents children are in primary standard, 15.7% of respondents children are in secondary standard, 9.3% of respondents children are in higher secondary standard, 2% of respondents children are Graduate, 3% of respondents children have qualification as above graduate and 01% of respondents children have the educational standard as professional course.

Table No.1.5: Parental Preference of Education for their children

| S. No | Parents allowing for School | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1     | Yes                         | 262       | 87.3%      |
| 2     | No                          | 38        | 12.7%      |
|       | Total                       | 300       | 100%       |

Source: Primary data

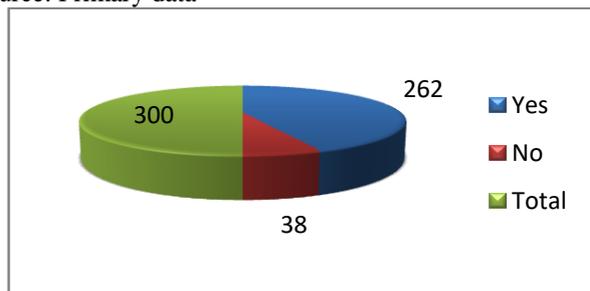


Table No.5 shows that the Gujjar parents have lack of interest in the field of education. The researcher found out that out of 300 respondents, only 87.3% of respondents are prefer to educate their children and 12.7% of respondents do not have favour their children for schooling.

Table. No.1.8: Distribution on the knowledge about Educational Schemes.

| S. No | Educational Schemes awareness | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1     | Yes                           | 221       | 73.7%      |
| 2     | No                            | 79        | 26.3%      |
|       | Total                         | 300       | 100%       |

Source: Primary data

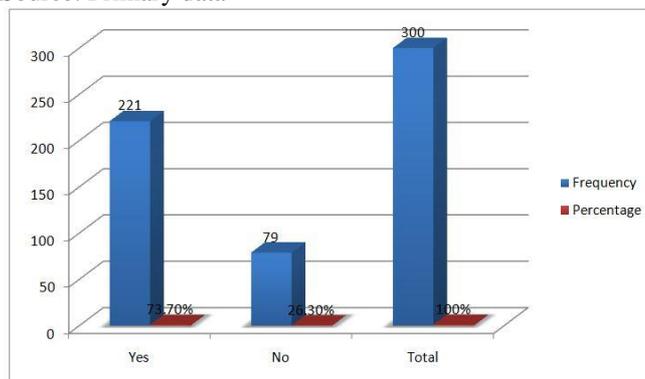


Table No.8 shows that only 73.7 percent respondents are aware about the schemes started by the government for their development, and 26.3 percent don't have any information regarding these schemes. The government has various provisions under centrally sponsored schemes like SSA for these tribal people. The Residential schools have also been opened for tribal tribes.

## V. CONCLUSION

The present study throws light over the fact that even in the 21st century; the condition Gujjar community is not too good. Their source of income largely depends on labour work and Livestock. They have not proper agricultural land. The literacy rate among the Gujjar is low as compared to other inhabitants of the state. Even though government has made various efforts to improve their conditions. The education level is low among Gujjar children's due to lack of money and transhumance practices which become biggest hurdle for their schooling. Frequent seasonal migration is also hurdles in the education of the Gujjar children. Those students who go to the school are mostly boys and very less number of girls. It has been seen that education backwardness among the Gujjars which is one of the key factors for their poverty, ignorance and overall backwardness they utilize less efforts for educating their children. Besides state and central Government has implemented beneficial schemes regarding education of schedule tribes they have not gained more benefit from the schemes. The role of Gujjar children has increased after government has started free education and mid day meals in the schools.

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