

The Socio-Economic Status among Gujjar and Bakarwal Tribe: An Analytical Study

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ABSTRACT

The majority of Gujjars and Bakarwals dwell in the state, performing in greater numbers than other community subgroups. Actually, the districts of Rajouri, Paunch, Khistawar, Doda, Kupwara, and Baramulla is home to the largest populations of Muslim tribal communities. According to the 2011 Census, Gujjar and Bakarwal are the third-largest ethnic group in Jammu and Kashmir, making up more than 11.9% of the state's total population. The only community in the state that has preserved its culture and history over the years and calls the state's lush forested regions home are these tribes. However, they are also backward, but they live in Jammu and Kashmir's forested regions, where the materials are more advanced economically. In this analytical study, the researcher has tried to pen the socio-economic and educational status of Schedule Tribes of Jammu and Kashmir especially Gujjar and Bakrwals tribes through secondary data sources.

Keywords: Bakarwal, Culture, Education, Gujjar, Socio-Economic Status, Tribes

INTRODUCTION

A tribe is a group of individuals who have a similar history, culture, language, or religion. Each tribe is distinct from the others and frequently has its own customs, many of which are different. In anthropology, a tribe is a hypothetical form of human social organization made up of several smaller groups (referred to as bands), with temporary or permanent political integration, and characterized by customs of shared ancestry, language, culture, and ideology. The word "tribus" was used to describe a division inside the state in ancient Rome, where the phrase first appeared. Later, it was used to characterize the cultures that European explorers met. By the middle of the 19th century, the term, along with band, chiefdom, and state, were widely used by anthropologists and other academics to designate specific stages in unilineal cultural history. According to ILO Convention 107 (1957), the tribals or aboriginals have been defined as the tribals or semi-tribal groups of the independent countries deprived socially or economically and having their customary laws/conventions (Majumdar,1958). Oxford Dictionary defines, "tribe is a group of people in the primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding themselves as having a common ancestor". For Verrier Elwin, the word 'tribe' has been derived from the Latin root, the middle English term "Tribuz" meaning the three divisions into which the early Romans were grouped, came to evolve into the modern English tribe (Singh, 1959). Different Anthropologists, Sociologists, economists and administrators defined the term tribe in their particular way. Bardhan defined the tribes as a "course of socio-cultural entity at a definite historical stage of development. It is a single, endogamous community, with a cultural and psychological makeup going back into a distinct historical past. Mujumdar defines the tribe as "a collection of families or common groups bearing a common name, the members of which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession/occupation and have developed a well-assured system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations". In this analytical study, we aim to provide a detailed description of each in this analytical investigation, we want to provide a thorough description of each.

- *Gujjar*

The Gujjars also go by the names Goojar, Gujar, and Gurjara. The history of this tribe is highly intriguing; it is believed that during the Hunas' invasion, the Gurjara tribes travelled into Himachal Pradesh and northern India. The Gujjar tribe is thought to have descended from the Khazar tribes. Gujjar is a term that has Khazar roots. Gujjar populations can be found primarily in Delhi, western Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Himachal

Pradesh, and Haryana in India. In the states of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and northwest Uttar Pradesh, there are semi-nomadic Gujjar people. Gujarat derives its name from the word 'Gurjar'. Gujjar's cultural heritage is extensive. They speak GOJRI, a branch of the Indo-Aryan language, and have unique rituals, eating and living habits, as well as specialities in their craft and workmanship (Farhat,2012).

- *Bakarwal*

The nomadic Bakarwal (also known as Bakkarwal, Bakharwal, Bakrawala, and Bakerwal) and Gujjars have been listed as Scheduled Tribes since 1991 in the Indian Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The Gujjar Bakerwal are the largest Muslim tribe in all of India and the third-largest ethnic group in the Indian part of Jammu & Kashmir. The Gujjars and Bakarwals both claim common ancestry. Numerous names have been given to the Gujjars, including Ajjadh, Dohdhi Gujjars, Banhara Gujjars, and Van-Gujjars. The Gujjar term for those who raise sheep and goats is "Bakarwal." The history, culture, language, sub-caste, and racial identity of Gujjars and Bakarwals are the same. They assert that anthropological and genetic research on Bakarwals and Gujjars has reached the conclusion that they are not, in any way, distinct identities. The Indian government accorded the Gujjar-Bakarwals tribal designation in Jammu and Kashmir in 1991 following a thorough investigation. According to the study, Bakarwal is another term for Gujjar, and as a result, they were recorded in revenue records under a different tribal category in accordance with the Indian Constitution. The Gujjars and Bakarwals share a same ancestry, and they are both open to intertribal unions.

The available literature on tribal's socio-economic education status in Jammu and Kashmir reiterates that their status is not satisfactory as compared to other sections of the society Suri (2014), shows in her study that the socio-economic and educational status of Gujjar and Bakarwal is not satisfactory as compared to other sections of society. She further states that educational backwardness amongst Gujjars and Bakarwals is one of the key factors for their poverty, ignorance and overall backwardness. N. K. Ambasht, (1970) mention in his study that the main cause of illiteracy among Gujjar and Bakarwal social distance between the teacher and the pupil in the tribal areas. S. M. Dubey, (1972) conducted a study on education, social change and political consciousness among tribal community of northeast India and concluded that tribes are backward, illiterate and there is a need of creating political consciousness among them. R. P. Khatana, (1976) studied marriages and kinship among Gujjar and Bakerwals in Jammu and Kashmir and concluded that these scheduled tribes' marriages within the community and the clan strictly and also studied some aspects of

transhumance in mountainous traits during the year 1976. K. S. Chalam, (1993) studied educational policy for human resource development, and concluded that there is a need for educational reforms for the development of scheduled tribes. P.C. Mehta (2000) presents an overall review of the tribal development measures adopted in the 20th century. He further states that their socio-economic and educational status is not satisfactory; they are lagging in every aspect of social life.

- *Education*

Educationists are viewed as standouts amongst the most essential and potential instruments for the advancement of a country. Contemporary society can't perform its attempt at economic development, technological improvement and social movement without completely exploiting the capacities of its nationals. Educationists thus make every effort to develop fully the intellectual potential of the students and make efforts to see that their potentialities are fully acknowledged and channelized for the benefit of the individual in general and that of society in particular (Sameena, 2015). Education is a basic human right and an important factor in the development of children, communities, and countries. Opening classroom doors to all children, especially girls, will help break the intergenerational chains of poverty because education is intrinsically linked to all development goals, such as supporting gender empowerment, improving child health and maternal health, reducing hunger, fighting the spread of HIV and diseases of poverty, spurring economic growth, and building peace. Educational level among the Gujjars and Bakarwals is too low as compared to other inhabitants of the state. These tribal communities are already lagging behind the rest of the tribes and population of the trouble region. Some of the challenges in the provision of educational services to transhumanist areas are similar to those faced by other rural and marginalized households in the region, although often more severe. These include nomadism, militancy, lack of teachers willing to work in the conflict situations found in these areas, poor infrastructure as well as poorly motivated teachers, a household economy dependent on livestock, with children pending long periods away from their homes and schools and transhumant mobility (Suri,2010)

Table 1 shows the percentage of Gujjars and Bakarwals and the general population in Jammu & Kashmir who are literate.

S.No	Districts	Total population	lit. Gujjars	Bakarwals
1	Poonch	156,398	34.6	30.8
2	Rajouri	234,228	32.9	20.5
3	Jammu	1,070,574	39.0	23.5
4	Kathua	307,370	19.3	18.8
5	Kupwara	232,557	16.9	20.4
6	Baramulla	447,075	19.7	19.3
7	Srinagar	641,267	16.3	15.6
8	Badgam	226,167	21.7	18.3
9	Pulwama	281,518	17.4	20.1
10	Anantnag	463,197	15.5	14.6
11	Leh	68,278	88.2	100.0
12	Kargil	60,803	50.7	17.4
13	Doda	274,425	16.8	15.6
14	Udhampur	343,429	21.3	19.3
	Total	48,07,286	31.65	22.51

Source:2001Census

District-wise distribution of literacy among Gujjar and Bakarwals in the above table shows that high literacy is found among the Bakarwals population in the districts of Poonch, Rajouri and Jammu which has 30.8, 20.5 and 23.5 percent education respectively. Whereas among the Gujjars Jammu has 39.00, Poonch 34.60 and Rajouri 32.94 percent literate population. These are the most literate districts as far as literacy among the Gujjars is concerned. Among the general population, all the districts have more number educated people than the Gujjars and Bakarwals. Gujjar and Bakarwals are highly marginalized and illiterate in comparison to General Population of the state. Gujjars and Bakarwals are a tribe which has the lowest enrolment in school education in Jammu and Kashmir. In many Gujjar and Bakarwal areas, there is no school available at all, and in other areas, enrolment is only 20 to 30 percent. Education is the Myth to decentralization or the permanent settlement of the nomads, their education problem is due to the transhumance practice and these problems will disappear shortly when they will be settled permanently (Tufail,2014). It is evident from the table given above that the educational level among the Gujjars and Bakarwals is not satisfactory. The analysis shows that the majority of the population is illiterate, in total 31.65 percent of the

population is literate in the Gujjars community, and 22.51 per cent were literate among the Bakarwals. If we compare it to the General population, the general population has a 55.52 percent of the literacy rate. In all the district's General population has the highest literacy rate in comparison to the Gujjars and Bakarwals, because Gujjars and Bakarwals do not have a fixed place and they keep moving all around the year so they get fewer opportunities for educating their children as compared to the settled general population (Tufail, 2014). The level of literacy among the Gujjar is low, particularly for young Girls. The Gujjar in the prosperous conditions of Punjab and Haryana and Delhi have entry to government advancement plans for better well-being, power, watering system, drinking water and bank credits. A few segments of the Gujjar are receptive to family welfare and family arranging projects. Be that as it may, the nomadic Gujjar of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir don't have fundamental offices. The Jammu and Kashmir government opened mobile schools in 1970 and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan under which education is being provided to the children of nomadic ST communities by setting up educational facilities in the form of "Seasonal schooling camps" in the upper reaches of the Pir Panjal range of mountains. The main purpose of these schemes was to fulfil the educational needs of the nomadic population (Suri, 2014). Despite good constitutional provisions, policies and programmes their educational level is still low when compared to other sections of society because they are not fully aware from the policies and programmes initiated by the Government.

- *Economy*

The Gujjars and Bakarwals have been a roaming tribe of J&K state, their economy is generally focused around cultivation. They herd animals like sheep, goats and buffaloes. However, few of them get to be inactive and own cultivable grounds yet have a couple of buffaloes and other animals (VIRENDER-2014) Bulk of the Gujjars and Bakarwals rear cattle for a variety of purposes but when people breed and rear cattle for commercial purposes and makes it the source of livelihood, they may be said to be living under pastoral economy. The pastoralists usually do not lead a settled life and become wanderers and nomads only under the pressure of changing weather. The pastoral tribes who inhabit mountainous regions migrate to the plains along with their cattle during severe winters but go back to their permanent abode at the advent of summer (Ruhi, 2014). The Gujjars deal in milk production, residing mostly in the subtropical zone (Jammu region). As per the estimates of the Integrated Sample Survey (ISS) of major livestock products, the production of milk in Jammu and Kashmir state for the year 2007-08 was estimated at 1515.29 thousand metric tonnes. Presently the per capita availability of milk is about 341 grams per day (Anonymous, 2009).

In the Jammu region, the major milk producer is Gujjars (Singh,2012). A major proportion of the Gujjars and Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir depend on animal husbandry for their livelihood in lower, middle and higher mountain regions. Animals like sheep, cows, and goats are kept for commercial purposes. The Jammu and Kashmir economy is heavily dependent on animal husbandry. One of the prominent economic sectors of the state, Jammu and Kashmir animal husbandry has contributed immensely to the financial improvement of the state. The distribution of livestock across the district wise in Jammu and Kashmir is shown in table below:

Table 2 shows the district-level concentration of Gujjar and Bakarwal livestock (sheep and goats) in Jammu and Kashmir (in percent). Jammu & Kashmir's 1992, 2003, and 2007 livestock census.

Districts	1992	2003	2007
Punch	15.1	16.2	15.9
Rajouri	20.6	18.3	19.6
Jammu	7.4	7.4	6.7
Kathua	13.1	14.2	12.3
Anantnag	8.6	7.4	6.3
Srinagar	1.4	1.7	2.9
Kupwara	1.3	1.9	2.1
Baramulla	6.3	5.5	5.1
Budgam	1.6	1.6	1.5
Pulwama	3.8	4.1	4.3
kargil	1.2	2.1	3.1
Leh	3.2	4.1	4.3
Doda	7.3	6.8	7.1
Udhampur	9.1	8.7	8.8
Total	36,87,937	39,76,328	32,08,734

Source: Livestock Census of Jammu and Kashmir, 1992, 2003and2007

Barring a few exceptions, the share of each district in livestock has shown a significant change during the years 1992, 2003 and 2007, though variation in the concentration of livestock across various districts is visible (Tufail,2014). Both central and state governments launched various income-generating programmes for the rural and Tribal people. These income-generation programmes are meant to enhance the income of the

beneficiaries. The programmes are planned keeping consonance with the existing income level of the beneficiaries. The programmes are designed in such a manner that they provide a constant source of income to the beneficiaries (Ruhi, 2014).

- *Culture*

Prior to discussing the Gujjar and Bakarwal cultures, it will be appropriate to grasp what culture is. Culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morality, laws, custom, and any other capabilities and habits as acquired by man as a member of society," according to E.B. Taylor. The majority of Gujjars and Bakarwals adhere to folk culture in terms of their cultures. Gujjar and Bakarwal culture can be clearly seen in dancing, religious rites, and customs, among other things. The bulk of the tribal people in the state of Jammu & Kashmir are Muslims. They are the tribes that faithfully adhere to ancestral practices and traditions. They adhere to the practice of child weddings, in which guys marry at the age of 17 or 18 and girls marry at 14 or 15 years old (*Farhat,2012*).

- *Festivals*

The Tribal Group frequently has celebrations. All of the important national holidays, including as Eid, Holi, Lohdi (Sagraand), and others, are celebrated by them. In addition to these, the tribes have firmly established their religious practises and traditions. They fervently and joyfully celebrate all of the holidays. They go well with distinctive music, food, customs, and society. People with varied levels of belief can assemble in these settings. Nearly all of the regional holidays and festivals are observed by the Gujjars and Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir, but they also add their own unique charm and perfection. (*Gupta,2012*).

- *Customs and Rituals*

The customs and rituals of Gujjars and Bakarwals are an important component as well. Custom naturally develops. Davis claims that it alludes to traditions that have been handed down over many generations. Simply because they have been in the past, these procedures are being followed. Most Gujjars and Bakarwals adhered strictly to the community's customs and traditions. From birthing to funeral customs, the culture as a whole adheres to a set of traditions. It is obvious that Islamic rituals and practices have a huge influence on how they live because this community is predominately Muslim. Some important Islamic customs include the circumcision of male infants, marriage ceremonies, and funeral rites. In times of sympathy, they deliver food and meals to the homes of the resentful. They also supply other small things to aid the household (*Khatana, 1976*).

- *Marriage Ceremonies*

One of the basic social institutions is marriage. Human society established it as a means of policing and regulating men's sexual behaviour. It has a close relationship to the institution of the family. In actuality, marriage and family are mutually beneficial. Marriage, according to Gillin & Gillin, "is a socially sanctioned way of establishing a family of procreation." Marriages among Gujjars and Bakarwals are fixed in adulthood by negotiation and by the elder members of the family. The inheritance of the property is from father to son, who equally share it (Khatana, 1976).

- *Folk Games*

Despite leading busy lives, the people of Gujjar and Bakarwal schedule downtime for entertainment and leisure in their own unique ways. They participate in a variety of activities, such as Stone Lifting (Bughdar), Arm Holding (Beeni Panjo), Chitto (often played by girls), Panjgeet (an indoor game with five tiny pieces of stone), and others.

- *Language:*

The beautiful Gujari language, also known as Gojri, is spoken by the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities. The Rajasthan language family is home to this tongue. Other languages including Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, and Pahari languages like Kangri and Dogri have also become second nature to them. With the exception of Tehsil Mendhar, where the Bakarwals have a slightly distinct pronunciation, the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities speak the same language. Another noteworthy point is that Gojri dialect is still quite active since Gujjar and Bakarwals frequently communicate with one another and even with members of other communities like the Pahari. When speakers of a language value and treat it with respect, the language as a whole survives and develops (Rahi, 2011).

CONCLUSION

In order to draw a conclusion, it is stated that the socioeconomic and educational level of Gujjar and Bakarwal in the state of Jammu and Kashmir is not sufficient. While there are undoubtedly some families with successful educational records, the majority of tribal members continue to struggle owing to their illiteracy and poverty. The census report makes clear that the indigenous people are generally poor, illiterate, and backward. According to the 2001 census, the literacy rates for the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities respectively were 31.65 and 22.51 percent. If we compare it to the overall population, we find that their literacy rate is 55.52 percent. In lower, middle, and upper mountain regions, the Gujjars and Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir rely mostly on their agricultural productivity and cattle for their subsistence. These include professors who lack motivation, inadequate infrastructure, and nomadism. As a result, the

indigenous community lacks awareness. The involvement of tribal families, community leaders, and the media merits special consideration in this attempt to create educational awareness and attitude changes among the general population towards tribal. Government and civil society activities have made little progress in the area of tribal development, but greater advancement is needed.

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