

## **Tribal Education In India: A Review Of Literature**

### **Running Title: Tribal Education In India**

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#### **Abstract**

Education includes every process, except genetics, that helps to mold a person's mind, character, or physical capacity. It is a lifelong process, for we must learn new ways of thought and action with every major change in our lives (Malinowski, 1947). The main objective of this study is to acquire an understanding of tribal education through a review of related literature. Therefore, the secondary source of data has been utilized for the present study. India is home to a large, variety of indigenous people. The tribal population represents one of the most economically impoverished and marginalized groups in India. They are mainly residing in hilly and mountainous regions. With a population of more than 10 crores, India has the single largest tribal population in the whole world. Education is one of the chief means of transformation towards development in general and human resource development in particular in the present modern world. Education acts as an impetus not only for the economic development of tribes but also for the all-round development of the tribal communities which aids them in meeting the new challenges of life. However, there is a need to formulate more measures and programs that are necessary to bring about enhancement in tribal education in general. Besides improvements in teaching-learning methods, skills, infrastructure, facilities, amenities and the overall conditions of the educational institutions need to be focused upon. Moreover, there is a need for awareness among the tribal population about the importance of education and various schemes related to tribal education.

**Keywords:** Tribal Education, India, Kashmir, Schedule Tribe

#### **Introduction**

Education is a modern word, that is derived from the Latin word 'educare', which means to nourish, to cause to grow. Education also prevails in illiterate societies, where it is imparted orally and by mass behavior. A member of primitive society learns to earn his livelihood, to do good works, to obey spiritual beings and also superstitions, etc from the elders of the society and is bound by its laws and regulations. These are the education for them. We, the modern people, do mean "education as reading and writing". And by modern education, a person can able to increase his knowledge, expand his vision and avail the fruits of development. Hence, modern education can play the role of catalyst in bringing changes in the spheres of social, political and economic fields (Prasad & Rao, 2014: 1).

Tribals constitute a substantial portion of India's population. In many respects, they lag behind their non-tribal counterparts. To ameliorate their condition, much attention has been given to their education. The government of India and constituent state governments have launched a good number of schemes to promote education among tribal children. In addition, separate schools have been established under Integrated Tribal Development Agency projects, in order to promote literacy among tribals. Despite these efforts, the growth of education and the rate of literacy among tribals were found to be low (Ibid).

#### **Review of literature**

The review of literature is not mere reading for reading's sake; it is focused and directed toward a specific purpose. A researcher has to select the kinds of literature to be reviewed and determine the purposes for which he has to study them. Accordingly, to achieve the aims and objectives of the study, an extensive review has been done of the relevant pieces of literature. The issue of educational backwardness among tribal people is multidimensional; consequently, it has been

the focus of attention for many authors, scholars, academicians, organizations and governments. Following is a brief survey of the notable works done on various aspects of tribal education and development.

**Sujatha (1994)** investigated based on the review that despite constitutional guarantees and persistent efforts, tribal communities continue to lag behind the general population in education. The reasons for this can be categorized as external, internal, socio-economic, and psychological. The external constraints are related to problems and difficulties at levels of policy, planning, implementation, and administration. Internal constraints refer to problems associated with the school system, content, curriculum, medium of instruction, pedagogy, academic supervision, monitoring, and teacher-related problems. The third set of problems relates to the social, economic, and cultural background of tribals and the psychological problems of first-generation learners.

**Mahapatra (2010)** observed in his study that schools shouldn't try to get lower-class families to provide their children with linguistic and cultural knowledge and skills that are completely unfamiliar to them. Rather the education system should focus on how it can help the children to bridge the gap between their own skills and those that large society demands within the context of schooling. Educational planners, policymakers and administrators should glance at the curriculum and pedagogy as the cultural issue that can bring a scheduled tribe children closer to the classroom and can bridge the gap between Scheduled Tribes and the general population in the society.

**Devan (2014)** opined in his study that the existing curricula should be related to the socio-economic and culture of the tribals. The study suggested by providing better communication facilities, sanitary programs, teaching materials and methods the government can hope to bring about an attitudinal change in the tribal population towards education.

**Kumari (2014)** mentioned that both boys and girls faced some kind of barriers while pursuing education at the primary level. The main grounds for dropout among tribal children at the primary level are the location of schools, language and curriculum, lack of proper facilities, parents' negligence, and socio-economic and cultural practices.

**Padhi (2014)** analyzed the lack of motivation, awareness, economic conditions of parents, lack of trained teachers, reading materials, poor infrastructure, and facilities. Moreover, there is seasonal absenteeism or non-attendance by the tribal students and there is a lack of a well-planned education system for scheduled tribes which are the causes behind the low level of education among scheduled tribe children.

**Sharma (2014)** in his article 'Education and Women Empowerment among Gujjars, Bakerwals and Gaddis in Jammu Region of Jammu and Kashmir' highlighted that the growth of women's education is very slow and this in turn leads to women's illiteracy, backwardness, and exploitation. A large number of tribal women have missed education at different stages and to empower them there is a great need to provide opportunities so as to enable them to assume leadership qualities for economic self-reliance and even social transformation.

**Sofi (2014)** conducted the study with the objective of carrying out an empirical sociological investigation of the existing status of education among the Gujjar and Bakarwal tribals. The study took 124 households from five villages belonging to three different tehsils of district Anantnag with the help of stratified sampling. The analysis of data shows that the literacy rate among the Gujjars and Bakarwals is too low as compared to other sections of the society. Some of the challenges for educational service provision to transhumance areas are similar to those faced by other rural and marginalized households in the region, although often more severe. These include- Low population densities resulting in long distances to schools; lack of teachers willing to live in the hard conditions found in these areas, resulting in teacher shortages as well as poorly motivated teachers; lack of parental resources to pay for schooling costs such as uniform, books, stationary, etc.; migratory lifestyle and dependence on livestock economy, which compels children to spend long periods away from their residential places and thus keeps them away from school.

**Abass, Ahmed and Ahmed (2015)** revealed Gujjar and Bakarwal are the third largest ethnic group in Jammu and Kashmir constituting more than 11.9% of the total population of the erstwhile state. Scheduled tribe is the only community in the UT that maintains its culture and heritage throughout the ages. The present study has focused on the socio-economic and educational life of tribal in general and Gujjar and Bakarwal in particular. The study is purely based on secondary sources i.e. population census of India in 2001 and 2011, various Journals, Articles, Books and Reports etc. It is evident from the study that the socio-economic and educational status of Gujjar and Bakarwal in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir is not satisfactory. No doubt a few families have good achievements in education but the majority of tribal still suffer due to their illiteracy and poverty. There is widespread poverty, illiteracy and backwardness among the tribal people. Most of the Gujjars and Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir depend on their agricultural productivity and cattle for their livelihood in lower, middle and higher mountain regions. Some of the challenges in the provision of educational services to transhumant areas are similar to those faced by other rural and marginalized households in the region, although often more severe. These include nomadism, poor infrastructure as well and poorly

motivated teachers. Authors revealed that efforts are required to generate educational awareness and attitudinal changes among the masses regarding tribal, and the role of tribal families, community leaders and media deserves special attention.

**Kumar (2015)** found that Jammu and Kashmir have a sizeable population of SC/ST population, 7.3% of SC and 11.90% of ST population reside in J&K but the economic condition of these people is deplorable and thus educational standard is low, have failed to take benefits of government policies and programs as these people are unaware of government policies and programs due to their illiteracy. Literacy of SC is 60.55% and 40.29% among ST whereas overall literacy is 67.16%. Female literacy is extremely low among the ST population with only District Leh having female literacy of more than 50%. It was also found there are wide disparities from District to District in literacy. The disparity is found among all three categories of people in this study. Therefore, overall literacy of Jammu and Kashmir is very low among the ST population followed by SC and it is highest in the non-SC/ST population. Thus tribal people in Jammu and Kashmir have not been able to take advantage of protective discrimination and various government policies aimed at the educational advancement of these people.

**Geelani (2016)** has conducted an empirical study on tribes living in the district Shopian of Kashmir division. He has explored the economic, social and educational backwardness of those tribes who live in the far-flung and difficult mountain peaks. After the interpretation and analysis of the data gathered from the study area, the author concluded that:

1. The literacy rate of District Shopian is only 62.49% which is 04.67% less than the state literacy rate (67.16%) and 11.55% less than the national literacy rate (74.04%)
2. 83.26% of tribal populations are living below the poverty line.
3. 90% of parents of school-going children are illiterate.
4. No any Non-Govt. educational Institution is present in all the areas where tribal people are living in District Shopian.
5. There is a lack of learning facilities in schools.
6. All the tribal children of District Shopian are facing extreme educational problems.
7. The geographical and climatic conditions of the areas under study are harsh and are forcing authorities to reduce the daily school timings and the yearly academic calendars.

**Dar (2017)** highlighted the challenges faced by Gujjar, a tribal community of Jammu and Kashmir in accessing educational facilities. Most of the basic facilities provided in government schools do not reach economically disadvantaged students and concerning facilities available in schools, there is a complete absence of first-aid and other medical facilities in schools. Like medical facilities, drinking water and toilet facilities are also not present in schools under study; the ones that are present are not functional. Besides, separate toilets for boys and girls even nonfunctional ones were not seen in any school under study. On the other hand, the facilities are available for games but teachers hardly teach any games to the students. It was highlighted that the schools neither had any provision for physical education teachers nor specified hours for physical activity such as playing games. The games were played by the children during their lunch break. It was also highlighted that only part of the actual amount of scholarship is given to each child. Regarding the mid-day meal it was highlighted that the mid-day meal is served only for a few days in a month which extends to a maximum of ten days. There are reports that the students were asked to pay the cost of uniforms. However books are provided free of cost in schools, but the untimely distribution of books was reported by many participants in the present study.

**Ramachandran and Deepan (2017)** conducted a study to find out the educational status of scheduled tribes in India. The findings of the study revealed that there is widespread poverty, illiteracy, and backwardness among the tribal people followed by poor infrastructure as well as poorly motivated teachers. Moreover, there is a lack of awareness among the tribal community which led to dropouts and directly impacted their overall educational status.

**Singh and Singh (2018)** highlighted India is home to a tribal population of about 85 million with more than 700 groups each with constitutional obligations but also as a crucial input for the holistic development of tribal with their distinct cultures, social practices, religions, dialects and occupations and are scattered in all states and union territories in India. The schedule tribes are one of the principal categories of the backward classes or historically disadvantaged bottom groups of society. However, despite several campaigns to promote formal education ever since independence, the literacy rate among schedule tribes has remained low and the female literacy rate has been still lower compared to the national female literacy rate. The authors highlighted various reasons that have hindered the participation of STs in education. Merely launching the programs and schemes is not a panacea for the evil of illiteracy among tribal masses. The benefits of these schemes have percolated to them scantily. Low level of awareness about these schemes among the tribal masses, the peculiar nature of their dwellings, and the apathy of administrative officials in the implementation of these schemes and programs are bottlenecks in the ST's Education. Local media and ST Intelligencia can work jointly to create awareness among the STs. The administrative machinery should be sensitized toward the peculiarities of tribal habitat

**Wani and Islam (2018)** have examined the educational backwardness and status of tribals in district Pulwama of Jammu and Kashmir. The study was based on both primary as well as secondary sources and the data was collected from the respondents in bagandar sagarwanie block Keller of district Pulwama. Both men and women were included in the study. The analysis of data shows that various barriers hinder the educational development of Gujjar and Bakarwall tribes; their traditional occupation is rearing goats, sheep, oxen bulls, etc. so they engage their children in this occupation, unawareness of education as they were unaware of education and its status in the community and also benefits, financial problems as they were not able to send their children schools due to low income and they hardly fulfill their basic needs, there is lack of road connectivity to the rural-urban areas and they are not able to send their small children to faraway schools. Most importantly there is a lack of infrastructure which includes schools, libraries, internet facilities, and so forth which affects the education of tribals.

**Sahoo (2019)** in his article found that the policies adopted for the development of education among the tribal communities are not adequate to fight against the disadvantages typical to the tribal population. The study analyzed that population and distance norms that the government had initiated have proved to be futile for the tribal areas because of their sparse population and isolated residential patterns. Moreover, both the tribal welfare department and the educational department failed to understand the complex realities of tribal life and the expectations of the tribal from the system while formulating the policies and programs for tribal education. Besides the quality of schools, suitable teachers, relevance of content and curriculum, and level of teaching and instructing are also responsible for educational backwardness among scheduled tribes.

**Bhat and Khan (2021)** probed school progression, enrolment, disparity, and dropout patterns and trends of tribal school-going children of Jammu and Kashmir over time. The authors applied the time series approach and used U-DISE data from the Ministry of Education, Government of India. On human development indicators (HDI), their position is appalling and very much below compared to other communities of the state, which has devastating effects on their education in general and minimal school participation, transition, survival and significant school dropout in particular. Stage and gender-wise variation have been observed among tribal enrolment, GER, GPI & and dropout rates. Moreover, the present research highlighted a declining trend in enrolment patterns of tribal children in school education at primary and upper primary stages with an improvement in enrolment trends at secondary and senior secondary stages. Tribal GER rate at the initial stages (primary & upper primary) showed increasing trends, while in terminal stages (secondary & senior secondary) showed a sharp decline. Although, tribal GPI has increased over a period of time but is yet to be achieved, which shows wider gender disparity. The trend in dropout rates of tribal children at primary stages has steeply increased and with each passing stage, it becomes more severe. Furthermore, gender, district-wise variations, and gaps in these parameters have been found among tribal as well as non-tribal children. Authors suggested tribe-specific micro-level research studies and surveys to get an understanding of their cultural and social setup, occupational patterns, lifestyle, socioeconomic status, attitude towards education of children, and other forces that impede the educational enrolment, retention and dropout of tribal children.

**Gulzar (2021)** has explored the various inclusive measures for the Tribals of Jammu and Kashmir. Although, both the central government and Jammu and Kashmir government have launched various socio-economic programs for the rural and Tribal people. These programs were meant to advance the income and social aspects of the beneficiaries. The purpose of these inclusive measures is to generate employment opportunities among Tribals and provide them with an alternative to primitive cultivating techniques. However, the statistics from the census 2011 and other studies have presented a gloomy picture of the Gujjar Tribals of Jammu and Kashmir. The Gujjar Tribals are living a wretched life and are socially and economically backward as compared to the general population of J&K. Thus, there exists a need to dawn such a mechanism and comprehensive strategy that will alter the socio-economic conditions of Gujjar Tribals in a constructive approach.

A review of the literature on tribal education provided valuable insights into the challenges, initiatives, and outcomes related to education among tribal or indigenous communities. While the specifics may vary depending on the country, region and context, some common themes and findings emerged from reviews. Here is an overview of key themes and points that emerged from the review of literature;

- ❖ **Cultural and Linguistic Diversity:** Many tribal communities have their own unique languages, cultures, and traditions. This diversity can pose challenges for mainstream education systems that often prioritize the dominant culture and language.
- ❖ **Socio-economic Disparities:** Poverty and limited access to basic amenities are common among tribal communities. Economic challenges can affect children's access to education due to factors like the cost of schooling and the need for child labor to support their families.

- ❖ **Geographical Isolation:** Tribal communities often inhabit remote and inaccessible regions, making it difficult to establish schools and provide quality education. Lack of infrastructure, including roads and transportation, can exacerbate the isolation.
- ❖ **Teacher Shortages and Quality:** Schools in tribal areas may face a shortage of qualified teachers. Even when teachers are available, they may lack cultural sensitivity and understanding, affecting the quality of education.
- ❖ **Gender Disparities:** Gender bias can limit educational opportunities for tribal girls, who may be expected to take on household responsibilities or marry early.
- ❖ **Health and Nutrition:** Poor health and malnutrition can hinder cognitive development and school attendance among tribal children. Access to healthcare services may be limited.

## Conclusion

From the preceding assessment, it is significant to conclude that tribal people are excluded from effective participation in the field of education than the other members of general society. They experience various barriers when accessing educational services starting with a lack of understanding of the importance of education. Most of the studies conducted in various parts showed a significant association between socio-cultural setup, economy and geographical location. Therefore, the progress of education among the tribals has been very slow. Most of the studies have highlighted these factors and a closer analysis of the literature reveals that difficulties and disparities in educational progress among the tribal people stem from three sets of structural barriers namely, the ecological, the socio-economic and infrastructural or internal elements of the school system. Further, the educational development among tribal people and the various reasons that have hindered educational progress among them evidently emphasize that socio-economic development and education should not be separated from each other, but rather viewed as interdependent processes.

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