

## EDUCATIONALLY BACKWARD TRIBES OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR -A CASE STUDY OF DISTRICT SHOPIAN

**Dr. Syed Zahoor Ahmad Geelani \***

### ABSTRACT

*Education has been and continues to be one of the major concerns of the modern as well as the traditional societies. It is a powerful instrument that decides the destiny of the mankind. It is a major force behind the development that mankind has achieved so far and will achieve in the future. It is essential that every new generation must be given the training in the ways of the group so that the same tradition will continue. Every society has its own ways and means of fulfilling this need. 'Education' has come to be recognized as one of the core ways of fulfilling this need. It is increasingly being recognized that education is one of the pre-requisites of social change and development. All the countries of the world have placed high premium on education.*

*The race of achieving greater and challenging objectives in the present era became an important issue for every independent country, but some countries including our own country, face some different challenges as some of the minority communities especially Muslims who live under poverty and deprivation are not able to contribute in the economy and development of the country. Literacy which is a first step to education is lowest of the Muslim minority and the educational scenario of minorities living in tribal and far flung areas of the country is extremely miserable, the inter-state variation in their literacy rates is also very high. Also, their literacy rate in some districts of J and K state is abysmally low. In this paper the researcher has discussed the areas of intervention and challenges and appropriate measures are suggested to improve and promote the education of minorities in India.*

**Keywords:** Literacy, school education, minorities, miserable, tribal.

### Introduction:

Education has been and continues to be one of the major concerns of the modern as well as the traditional societies. It is a powerful instrument that decides the destiny of the mankind. It is a major force behind the development that mankind has achieved so far and will achieve in the future. It is essential that every new generation must be given the training in the ways of the group so that the same tradition will continue. Every society has its own ways and means of fulfilling this need. 'Education' has come to be recognized as one of the core ways of fulfilling this need. It is increasingly being recognized that education is one of the pre-requisites of social change and development. All the countries of the world have placed high premium on education.

The Valley of Kashmir is a unique part of our Country located at a very high altitude as compared to the other parts of the Country. It is surrounded by exceptionally high mountains on all sides which are nearly un-reachable but we must appreciate the human courage that man invaded these high mountains despite of harsh geographical and climatic conditions. Kashmir is not only geographically unique but its history is also different like its culture and civilization. The people of Kashmir are famous in the world due

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\* Associate Professor, Education (College of Teacher Education, Srinagar) Maulana Azad National Urdu University Hyderabad.

to some unique characteristics. Kashmir is called the “Paradise on earth”. There is famous proverb about Kashmir:

Agar Firdous Baroye Zamin Ast

Hami astu Hami astu Hami Ast.

**Meaning:** If paradise is anywhere on the earth, it is here, it is here and it is here.

District shopian which has been established in 2007 by separating it from District Pulwama is located on the base of Peer Panchal range of Mountains. According to the 2011 census, District Shopian has 13 Urban Wards and 229 Villages. District has been divided into two main Divisions-Shopian division and Keller Division. Keller block has 29 Panchayat Halqas and Block Shopian has 47 Panchayat Halqas. Geographically District Shopian has 612.86 sq.km area, out of which 304 sq kms are under forests. The District head quarter is located in the middle of the town nearly 55 kms away from the summer capital of the state, Srinagar. According to census 2011, the total population of the district is 266215 individuals, out of which 249855 are living in villages and 16360 are living in the town. Shopian is called the Apple Bowl because apple are grown here at large scale and the whole agricultural process is confined to horticulture that too only apple cultivation. As the whole district is located on the pir panchal hills, the district has been declared as the hill district. The famous Mughal road which connects the valley with district Rajouri passes through this district.

The Gujjars living on the Himalayan mountain range had spread throughout the northern India other than Jammu and Kashmir, they live in Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Gujrat and Rajisthan States. Except the Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir state, the Gujjars of all Northern States are Hindus. The Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir state are mostly muslims and they are living throughout the Pir-panchal range on about 300 Kms area from Banihal to Muzzafarabad. Though the Gujjars live in almost all districts of Jammu division but the Gujjar population of Rajouri and Poonch districts is about 40% of their total population. The Gujjar had also spread to some villages of Jammu and Kuthwa district. Gol-Gulabgad Reasi and Ramnagar villages of Udampur district have also good number of Gujjars. They also live on the mountains of Kishtwar district. On the other hand, the Gujjars of the Kashmir Valley have spread throughout the mountain ranges of Valley. The whole Himalayan mountain range from Qazigund to Ganderbal has got the tribal population Yusmarg, Gulmarg, Khilanmarag, Tangmarg Bandipora, Kupwara, Karna, Uri, Sonamarg, Lar, Wanghat, Kangan, Kokernag, Pahalgam and most parts of district shopian has got dense Muslim Gujjar Population. The Gujjars of Kashmir Valley are living mostly on difficult and far flung mountain peaks where there are no basic amenities of life. Other than animal rearing, these people also do some farming. As the land here remains covered with snow in most of the months of year and the soil being less fertile. The farming is not so fruitful; these people live in small houses made of wood and mud called kothas. These people have their own separate pastures where they feed their animals.

**Need and Importance of the Study:**

The tribal people of our country are passing through different developmental stages and some tribes are living miserable life even today because these tribes are not able to get benefited from the welfare

schemes run by the government due to their indifferent approach and disinterest. Yet there is a group of certain tribes which are developed like the people living in plains of India and they play their full role in strengthening the economy of our country. A large number of researchers have done their research to find out the reasons of educational backwardness of different tribes till date and most of the researches pertain to disinterest in education, education achievement, professional attitude, intelligence, behavior and other allied educational problems. Now the need is to explore the economical, social and educational backwardness of those tribes who live in the far flung and difficult mountain peaks and how to solve their problems and devise the steps by which their hardships can be removed. As our country is a democratic country and it is expected from a democracy that all the sections of people get equal opportunities of development and every citizen should have equal rights and no any tribe can be neglected, may it be social equity, economy or education.

#### **Review of Related Literature:**

Many studies have been done on Educational backwardness of minorities in India by the individual scholars, religious organizations, NGO's as well as by some governmental agencies; the findings of some important studies are mentioned here:

Since 1947 Muslims have been continuously found educationally backward, being a part of this big secular country Jammu and Kashmir State also falls into the backwardness which is found among the Muslims of India and have been continuously getting treatment which has been given to the Muslims in India. In the State a clear discrimination has been continuously found in Muslim populated districts. There are so many development schemes which directly go to Jammu while as the Valley based Muslim districts remain always waiting for the promises made by the legislatures. (Wasim Ali, 27 Feb, 2013)

Economic poverty, Lack of proper education, Illiteracy among parents, Larger families, Lack of girls school, Poor facilities in Muslim schools, Linking education with employment, Negative attitude towards girls education, Effect of Medium of Instruction in Schools, Lack of vocational education, Improper Muslim Leadership: social and political, Lack of education among Muslims in Muslim managed institutions are the main reasons for the backwardness of Muslim in the field of education. (Dr. Mujibul Hasan Siddiqui, Dec. 2012.)

The tribal population of District Kupwara of J and K State which is mainly comprised of Gujers and Backerwals are mainly illiterate and only 65% of their child population is enrolled in schools, the mobile schools which have been established there are stationed at one place and are mobile only by name, there is lack of basic educational facilities in the schools and the teachers posted in these schools are less qualified, less experienced and untrained. (Dr. Mohmmad Syed Bhat, 2008)

After a thorough study it has been found that there are only 53 schools and 24 craft centers in district pulwama of J and K state where 1850 students and 405 children are enrolled respectively. There are more than 37% children who are out of schools due poverty and indifferent attitude of parents towards education. Most of the parents think that sending children to increases their unemployment. (Gulshan Banoo, 2006)

#### **Facilities Available for Tribal minority students in Shopian:**

The researcher visited all the areas of District Shopian where the tribal people are residing and detailed information about the educational facilities was collected which is tabulated as under:

**Table-1: Distance of Schools in Hilly areas of District Shopian**

Distance	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Total
Within 01 KM	55 (59.78%)	0	55
Between 01-02 KMS	32 (34.78)	02 (13.33%)	32
More than 02 KMS	05 (05.44%)	13 (86.67%)	18
Total	92	15	107

There are a total of 92 primary schools in the hilly areas of District Shopian and only 59.78% primary are located within one Km as required by the national norms of Distance, 41.22% schools imparting primary education are located more two KMs away from the enrolled students.

**Table-1.1: Type of Connectivity to Schools in District Shopian**

Road	Primary Schools	Secondary schools
Pacca Roads	41(44.57%)	14 (93.33%)
Kacha Roads	51(55.43%)	01 (06.67%)
Total	92	15

The information tabulated above gives a clear indication that most of the schools located in the areas under study are not connected with proper roads and the students face dangers of wild animals and have to travel through difficult paths to reach their schools. 55.43% Primary Schools and 06.67% Schools are without any proper connectivity.

**Table-1.2: Status of School Buildings in Hilly areas of District Shopian**

S. No.	School	Govt. Building	Rented House	Tent	Total
1	Senior Secondary	04 (100%)	0	0	04
2	Secondary	10 (90.91%)	01 (9.09)	0	11
3	Elementary	23 (74.19%)	08 (25.81%)	0	31
4	Primary	21 (34.43%)	40 (65.57%)	0	61
5	Behak Centres	0	0	38	38
Total		58	49	38	145

When we look into the status of school buildings in the hilly areas of the Shopian we find that 9.09% secondary, 25.81% Elementary, 65.57% Primary and 100% Mobile Schools are having insufficient accommodation and are housed either in temporary huts or tents which hinders the normal teaching learning in the areas under study.

#### **Educational Problems Tribal Students of District Shopian**

Questionnaire of educational problems “**Shah Educational Problem Questionnaire (EPQS-SL)**” prepared by Prof. Beena Shah and S.K Lakhara from the National Psychological Corporation Kachari Ghat Agra was used to collect information from the students. The questionnaire contains 147 items on four dimensions viz. causes related to teacher and teaching, causes related to social and educational atmosphere, organizational and administrative causes and cultural and historical causes. The responses of the subjects are tabulated as under:

**Table 2.0: Educational Problems of minorities living in tribal Areas**

S. No	Variables	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Student face linguistic problems in the class room learning (Item No. 1-4)	67.58%	71.38%	69.48%
2	There is not the curriculum suitable for students in these Schools.(item No. 5&6)	51.23%	57.41%	54.32%
3	Students have difficulties in completing their home work ( item No. 7-15)	60.23%	61.19%	60.71%
4	Students face problems in respect of Teachers (item No. 16-29)	35.23%	42.28%	38.90%
5	Students have problems with time table of The schools ( item No. 30 -31)	21.23%	28.27%	23.23%
6	The Students face psychological stress due to examination (item No. 32-38)	59.37%	64.54%	61.95%
7	Students face problems with methodology and motivation ( item No.39-47)	38.98%	47.18%	43.08%
8	Students have problems with their class mates of other communities ( item No. 48-60)	63.24%	73.89%	68.56%

9	Students need extra tuition (additional classes) (item No. 61-63)	51.39%	48.62%	50.00%
10	There is lack of teachers in these schools (item No. 64-65)	58.97%	61.58%	60.27%

The above information collected from the students reveal that the students of tribal minorities living in the hilly areas of district Shopian face severe type of educational problems as students face multiple many problems in their education like medium of instruction is not suitable them, mother tongue is not used in the class room even in the primary classes, 69.48% students have identified this problem out of which 71.38 are girls and 67.58% are boys. The curriculum is also not fit the students of these communities as 54.32% students have identifies this problem (57.41% girls and 51.32% boys). The students face difficulties in completing their home work 60.71% students have this kind of difficulty as they have no any person at home to help them in this regard. The students have problems of interaction with their teachers. There are some problems of these students with school time table and the overall School timings.

Among the other educational problems, which the students of these minorities are facing are the psychological stress due to examination, 61.95% students (64.54% girls and 59.37% boys) have answered in positive in response to queries of such kind in the questionnaire. 43.08% students (47.18% Girls and 38.98% boys) face problems of methodology adopted by the teachers in these schools. The students of these tribes face problems of behavior and interaction with the students of other communities who are enrolled along with these minority students in concerned schools, 68.56% students (73.89% girls and 63.24% boys) have identified such problems. 50% students (48.62% girls and 51.39 boys) have clearly mentioned that they need extra tuition and additional classes in their studies. There is lack of teachers in these schools as 60.27% students have consented that there are less teachers in their schools.

**Table 2.1: Problems of social and educational environment in the areas of Study:**

S. No	Variables	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Economic backwardness is hurdle in education ( item No. 66-78)	59.30%	57.09%	58.19%
2	Interest of parents towards education of their children (item No. 79-87)	43.08%	38.89%	40.98%
3	Educational attitude among students ( item No 88-90)	47.51%	32.08%	39.40%
4	Effect of home environment on the educational achievement of students ( item No. 91-93)	27.82%	33.78%	30.80%
5	Home environment is responsible for their remaining absent in schools ( item	68.32%	60.68%	64.50%

	No. 94-98)			
6	Distance to schools is a hurdle (item No. 99-102)	59.23%	51.03%	55.13%
7	Lack of hostel facilities in schools (Item No.103-104)	26.03%	22.01%	24.02%
8	Lack of educational environment at home (item No. 105-107)	57.01%	68.81%	62.91%
9	Lack of Tuition at Home ( item No. 108-109)	60.93%	65.75%	63.34%

The information of the table reveals that the economic backwardness of the parents of tribal minorities is a hurdle in the educational achievement of the students as 58.19% students have accepted it as a hurdle in the educational achievement. There is lack of interest on the part of parents of these students towards their education which revealed by 63.34% students. Lack of educational environment at home and poverty are reasons of their less interest in education, this has been revealed by 30.80% students.

64.50% students have confirmed that their involvement in the home business and engagement in house hold domestic jobs is main reason of their being in schools most of the time. 55.13% students and 24.01% students are the opinion that the lack proper transport facilities and lack hostel in schools are the reasons of lack of interest of their not attending the schools. 62.91% students have revealed that lack facilities at home for education is also one of the reasons for their educational backwardness.

**Table 2.2: Administrative problems in the schools:**

S. No	Variables	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Lack of Library and Reading room in the school (item No. 110-117)	68.79%	69.46%	69.12%
2	Facility of MDM in schools (item No. 118-121)	88.08%	83.68%	85.88%
3	Availability of Scholarship to the students (item No. 122-129)	59.32%	48.66%	53.99%
4	Lack sports facilities in the schools (item No. 130-134)	49.55%	56.25%	52.09%
5	Lack of cultural activities and other co curricular activities(item No.135-139)	61.67%	58.23%	59.95%

The tabulated information reveals that there is lack of library and reading room facilities in the concerned schools as 69.12% students have identified such issues in the schools. 53.99% students have revealed that there is insufficient MDM and the same is provided in some months of the academic year, 85.88% students have opinioned about this problem of MDM. 53.99% students have revealed that the scholarship provided to them is not utilized for educational purposes as they are living in abject poverty. 52.09% students are of the opinion that neither there are sports facilities nor are any type sports competition held in the schools. 59.95% students have revealed that there is lack of co-curricular activities and cultural programmes in their schools.

**Table 2.3: Historical and Cultural aspects of the students**

S No	Variables	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Parents of the students want their children to work with them (item No. 140-144)	52.67%	51.28%	51.98%
2	By educating children parents feel isolated (item No. 145)	47.30%	41.25%	44.26%
3	Parents feel that their children have go away from home for education (Item No. 146-147)	38.29%	29.83%	34.06%

The above tabulated information reveals that 51.98% students are of the opinion that their parents want them to work with them in their traditional work. 44.28% students feel that by going to schools their parents feel isolated from them and 34.06% students feel that their parents are afraid that by educating their children they will be forced to send them to hostels away from their homes.

**Conclusion and Findings:**

After the interpretation and analysis of the data the researcher 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% tribal populations are living below 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 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.



**Suggestions for stakeholders:**

As revealed by the results of the research it is found that the educational backwardness of minorities (tribal people) has become a hurdle in the overall development of the state and concrete steps are needed to taken up for removing the educational backwardness of the tribes and following measures are to taken by the concerned agencies in this regard:

1. Appropriate arrangement of Education should be done for them especially the value system and their regional needs should be taken care of in their curriculum.
2. The educational facilities should be provided to the tribal people as required by the climatic conditions prevailing in those areas.
3. Use of mother tongue at primary level should be encouraged and either the teacher of their own community should be appointed or else teachers should be given trained to teach in the tribal language.
4. The National and State level welfare schemes should be advertised properly so that these people can be benefited.
5. The amount of scholarships given to tribal students should be enhanced so that their individual and educational need can be fulfilled.
6. The basic infrastructural arrangements of ICT should be provided to these areas.
7. The mobile Schools made fully functional with sufficient infrastructure

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