

Disturbed situations in Jammu and Kashmir and its impact on the Education of the Gujjar and Bakarwal tribes

Dr. Mohd. Tufail
Assistant Professor
Department of Geography
Govt. Post Graduate College Rajouri, J&K
Affiliated to University of Jammu

Abstract

Education, for transhumants remain a distant dream. From the angle of official education to them, they are complete failure in terms of enrolment, classroom performance, attendance, achievement and share to the higher education and gender balance they are at the bottom. Reaching them for the formal education now has become a major challenge and thousands of nomadic childrens remain outside the formal education and this will remain a distant dream until more effective ways are not found to bridge the gap between the government policies for education of them and what type of education nomadic children need and want to know.

Gujjar and Bakarwal communities move to middle and higher reaches of the Himalayan Mountains in Jammu and Kashmir with their livestock in summer and came back to the winter areas on the coming of winter months. If we look at the literacy rate among them, they are at the bottom in the state and are considered as educationally backward communities in the state. The disturbed situations which are almost crossing quarter of the century has impacted the education of them from every angle. In the 1970s Late Sheikh Abdullah led government initiated the process of the opening of mobile primary schools on the pattern of schools which are working in the nomadic tribal areas of several African Nations. So, formally efforts are being made to educate them. Despite the efforts of the Government, the mobile schooling system have failed completely due to lack of interest or militancy as the other reason. Most of the Gujjars and Bakarwals remain excluded from the formal education system.

Key Words: Gujjar and Bakarwals, Disturbed Situations, Education, Impact

Introduction

The Jammu and Kashmir Government with the goal of the upliftment of the community had set a Gujjar and Bakarwal Advisory board and with the recommendation of the board has set up many Gujjar and Bakarwal hostels in every district and mobile schools. In these mobile schools, teachers are drawn from the community itself which know their mother tongue but this idea could not converted into dream and soon after the start of insurgency most of these schools are either closed down or converted into stationary schools.

Until recently there had been relatively little consistent research in Jammu and Kashmir relating more specifically to the Gujjar and Bakarwal Community with the ongoing disturbed situations and its impact on the education sector. This Chapter addresses with the impact of the disturbed situations on the education of the community as a whole and explores how the conflict has influenced the education of them. Using household survey data collected during the field work, analysis reveals that there is a wide gap in the literacy rate among the sedentary and transhumant families. Furthermore, gaps between vulnerable groups such as womens and the rest of the population worsen during the militancy period. In addition to this, a general comparison is made between the General Population and the Gujjar and Bakarwal Population as far as the Education is concerned. Jammu and Kashmir has 1163 mobile seasonal schools operating across where children from nomadic population study. The centers are established at the location where the nomadic population stays during the summer season¹.

Gujjar and Bakarwal communities represent more than 10 percent of the population in Jammu and Kashmir. Their level of participation in formal education is known to be low, because of the poverty or due to their nomadic life style results in a great challenge to the policy makers. The literacy rate of Gujjar and Bakarwals is quite low. There are a number of educational provisions for migratory Gujjar-Bakarwal populations in the form of stationary and permanent government schools at different places all over the state. But at the summer locations where the good numbers of nomadic children are available who move there with their parents, the educational facilities are again very less. For the education of the children of

¹ <http://www.kashmirlife.net/jk-1163-seasonal-mobile-schools-functional-45341/>

the nomadic populations of Gujjar and Bakarwals, 'Seasonal Educational Schools' have been set up where the teachers do not accompany the nomadic children but continue to remain at the temporary camps of the nomads and provide education to those children who are at the higher reaches with their families and cattle for better pastures². First, civil wars are likely to destroy a state's system of education through the loss of infrastructure and personnel. Second, a less deleterious cause may be the drawing away of funds for increased military expenditures to fight the civil war³.

Armed conflict change the supply of education (e.g. through occupied school buildings or migration of teachers) and the demand for education (lower returns to education). Thus, an armed conflict can reduce the education (e.g. years of schooling) of individuals. The supply of education is reduced because school buildings get destroyed or occupied by armed forces and militants. Another reason is that teachers migrate to safer regions. The demand for education can decrease because of the increased risk of going to school. This is especially true for girls because parents want to protect them from the risk of being exposed to violence.⁴

Some observation has been done by keeping in mind the field work where it was noted that militancy has a direct and indirect impact on the education.

Literacy among Gujjars and Bakarwals

As far as the literacy level among Gujjars and Bakarwals is concerned, their literacy rate is at bottom as compare to the others communities in the Census of India, 2011. Percentage of Literates among Bakarwals is 25.3 where as among Gujjars it was 36.9 percent. In comparision to the Gujjars and Bakarwals, the percentage of literates among other communities was 56.4 percent in 2011. On the one hand female literates are 17.7 percent

²Suri Kavita, 2014, Teaching the nomads in the wild: An analysis of seasonal educational schools for nomadic populations in Jammu and Kashmir, Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies, Volume 2, Issue 3, March 2014 ISSN: 2321-8819.

³Lai, Brian, 2014, The Effect of Civil War on Education, 1980—97, Journal of Peace Research, vol. 44, no. 3, 2007, pp. 277-292

⁴Shemyakina Olga (2011) "The effect of armed conflict on accumulation of schooling: Results from Tajikistan", Journal of Development Economics, Vol. 95 No.2, pp. 186-200.

among Bakarwals in comparison to 47.5 percent among the womens of other communities. So, it is concluded from the 2011 data that Gujjars and Bakarwals not educated as compare to the General population.

Percentage of Literates among the Gujjar and Bakarwal Population 2011

	Total Literate	Male Literate	Female Literate
Bakarwals	25.3	32.1	17.7
Gujjars	36.9	44.5	28.5
Both	35.7	43.3	27.4
Others	56.4	64.2	47.5

Source: Census of India, 2011

Level of education among the Gujjar and Bakarwal

If we have a look at the level of education among the Gujjar and Bakarwals, their share in the higher education is almost negligible. Only 1.2 percent Bakarwals and 2.7 percent Gujjars are educated up to graduation or above. Only 0.7 percent females among Bakarwals are educated up to graduation according to the Census of India, 2011.

Level of Education among the Gujjars and Bakarwals, 2011

	Below Primary			Middle			Upto Metric			Higher Sec.			Diploma			Grad. & above		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
Bakarwals	30.6	26.7	38.6	20.2	22.6	15.5	8.3	9.7	5.4	3.8	4.5	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	1.5	0.7
Gujjars	24.9	21.9	30.1	25.1	27.6	21.0	10.4	11.8	8.2	5.1	5.5	4.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	2.2	2.7	1.4
Both	25.4	22.3	30.7	24.8	27.2	20.6	10.3	11.6	8.0	5.0	5.4	4.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	2.1	2.6	1.3

Source: Census of India, 2011

Number of Mobile Schools in Jammu Province

Those districts which are highly concentrated by the Gujjars and Bakarwals have more number of mobile schools for the education of them. Rajouri district has 25 mobile schools, followed by 13 in Udhampur, 11 in Jammu, 9 in Kistwar. The total number of Mobile Schools in Jammu Province is 76 in 2016 in the below table.

Total Number of Mobile Schools of Gujjars and Bakarwals in Jammu Province, 2016

S.No.	District	Number of Mobile Schools
1	Jammu	11
2	Samba	7
3	Kathua	4

4	Udhampur	13
5	Reasi	4
6	Doda	0
7	Ramban	3
8	Kishtwar	9
9	Rajouri	25
10	Poonch	0
Total		76

Source: Directorate of School Education Jammu, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Feb.2016

Enrolment in Mobile Schools

As the universalisation of primary education has become a central agenda in the education policies of every country, nations around the world are preparing educational policies to reach out to the disadvantageous groups especially the nomads and dalits in our country. Generally the mobile schools have a low enrolment of the students due to many factors like food, water, electricity and distance from the dwelling places. Provision of food and water are the main issues need to be addressed.

Total Number of Enrolment in Mobile Schools of Gujjars and Bakarwals in Jammu Province, 2016

S.No.	District	Enrolment
1	Jammu	313
2	Samba	119
3	Kathua	52
4	Udhampur	358
5	Reasi	97
6	Doda	0
7	Ramban	91
8	Kishtwar	157
9	Rajouri	749
10	Poonch	0
Total		1936

Source: Directorate of School Education Jammu, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Feb.2016

In fact Jammu and Kashmir has a mid day meal policy to provide food during the lunch time in schools. But scarcity of drinking water is the major problem with non availability of toilet facilities, these issues need to be addressed for the proper functioning of the mobile schools. The total enrolled students in the mobile schools of Gujjars and Bakarwals are 1936 with

highest number in Rajouri district 749 students in 25 mobile schools, while Udhampur has 358 students in 13 schools.

Stationary Schools

Stationary schools are those schools which are converted during the militancy period from mobile school status and are stationary in nature at present. These schools are working in the winter pasture areas of the Gujjars and Bakarwals because most of the community members are sedentarise now and have left the transhumance practice, most of their mobile schools are converted into stationary status. Jammu Region has 165 stationary schools which are mobile schools few decades back. Rajouri district has 41 stationary schools followed by 36 in Poonch, 26 in Reasi, 17 in Kathua, 16 in Udhampur. From the below data it is quite clear that most of the mobile schools are converted into stationary schools.

Total Number of Stationary Schools of Gujjars and Bakarwals in Jammu Province, 2016

S.No.	District	Number of Stationary Schools
1	Jammu	0
2	Samba	3
3	Kathua	17
4	Udhampur	16
5	Reasi	26
6	Doda	14
7	Ramban	7
8	Kishtwar	5
9	Rajouri	41
10	Poonch	36
Total		165

Source: Directorate of School Education Jammu, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Feb.2016

Enrolment in Stationary Schools

The total enrolment in the Stationary schools is 6576 in the year 2016. The highest enrolment of the students is in Poonch with 1543 students, Rajouri 1451 students and Reasi 1310.

Total Number of Enrolment in Stationary Schools of Gujjars and Bakarwals in Jammu Province, 2016

S.No.	District	Enrolment
1	Jammu	0
2	Samba	54
3	Kathua	452
4	Udhampur	361
5	Reasi	1310
6	Doda	1131
7	Ramban	274
8	Kishtwar	0
9	Rajouri	1451
10	Poonch	1543
Total		6576

Source: Directorate of School Education Jammu, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Feb.2016

Number of Seasonal Centres and Enrolment of Students

Recently Government of Jammu and Kashmir has set up seasonal centres of Gujjars and Bakarwals for providing better educational facilities. These seasonal centres are working in the summer pastures for six months and winter areas for the remaining period. The total number of seasonal centres in the Jammu region is 702 with 16387 enrolled students. The total staff engaged in these centres is 823 in the year 2016 according to the Directorate of School of Education, Jammu.

Total Number of Seasonal Centres of Gujjars and Bakarwals in Jammu Province, 2016

S.No.	District	Number of Seasonal Centres
1	Jammu	6
2	Samba	2
3	Kathua	0
4	Udhampur	1
5	Reasi	104
6	Doda	145
7	Ramban	30
8	Kishtwar	94
9	Rajouri	100
10	Poonch	220
Total		702

Source: Directorate of School Education Jammu, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Feb.2016

Total Number of Enrolment in Seasonal Centres of Gujjars and Bakarwals in Jammu Province, 2016

S.No.	District	Enrolment
1	Jammu	145
2	Samba	46
3	Kathua	0
4	Udhampur	37
5	Reasi	2214
6	Doda	2161
7	Ramban	489
8	Kishtwar	2547
9	Rajouri	2282
10	Poonch	6466
Total		16387

Source: Directorate of School Education Jammu, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Feb.2016

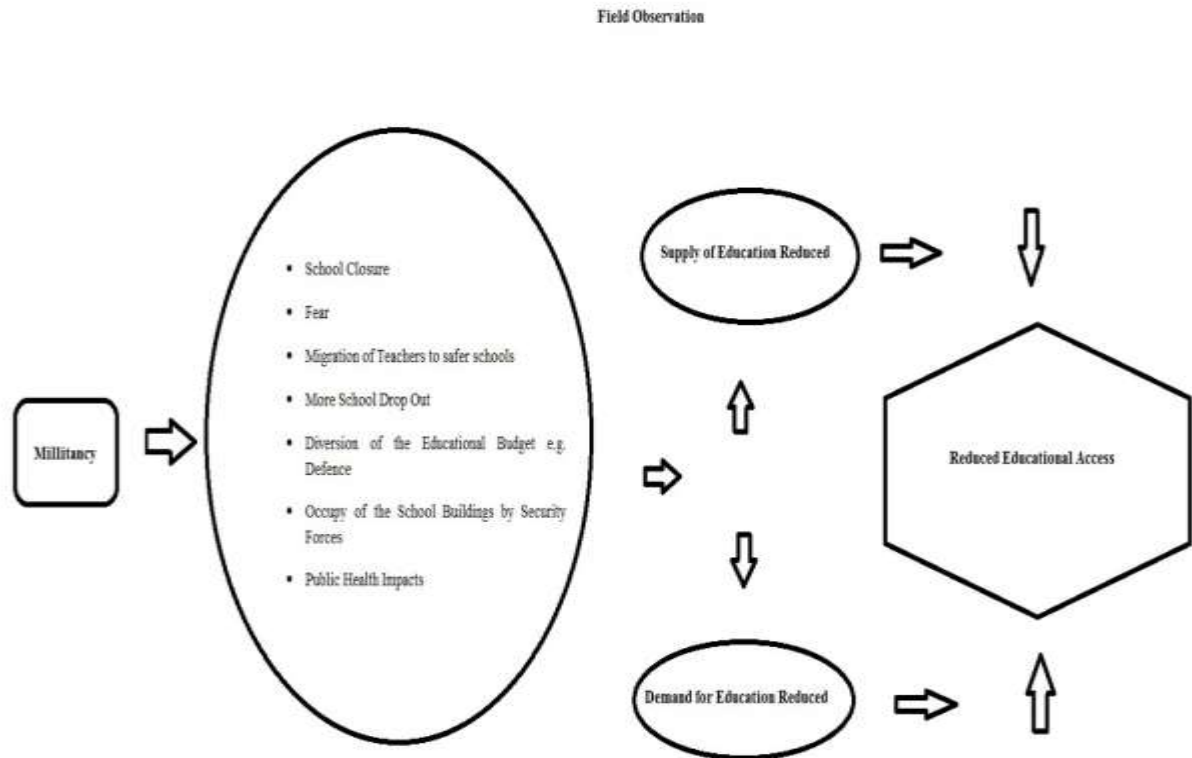
Total Number of Staff Engaged in Seasonal Centres of Gujjars and Bakarwals in Jammu Province, 2016

S.No.	District	Staff
1	Jammu	7
2	Samba	2
3	Kathua	0
4	Udhampur	1
5	Reasi	104
6	Doda	159
7	Ramban	30
8	Kishtwar	94
9	Rajouri	100
10	Poonch	326
Total		823

Source: Directorate of School Education Jammu, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Feb.2016

Impact of Conflict on Education

Channels Through Which Disturbed Situations Impacts on Education of Gujjars and Bakarwals:



One interesting thing I have noticed as far as the level of education is concerned the percentage of Literates is decreasing with the increase in level of education categories. According to the below table 3.10 and fig 3.1, there is a wide gap in the literacy among the sedentary and transhumant population. Sedentary population is surveyed which was transhumant before the start of militancy in Jammu and Kashmir and transhumant population is surveyed which is involved in transhumance practice at present. It was done by keeping in mind to find out the impact of militancy on education whether this impact was positive or negative. From below table it is clear that militancy has a positive impact on the education of Gujjars and Bakarwals, those families which were transhumant before the militancy but in later were forced to settle due to the disturbed situation have a better educational status in comparison to those community members which are still involved in the seasonal migration. For example Saranoo has 79.5 percent Literates among the sedentary population and 20.5 percent are from the transhumant groups. Out of the total surveyed population, 75.0 percent

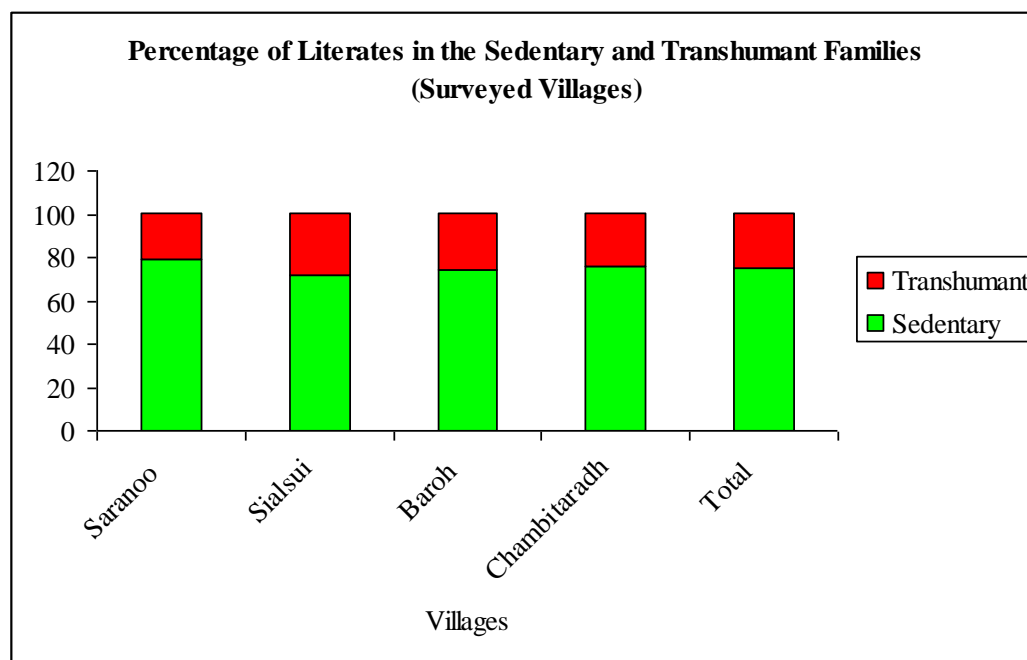
literate are from the sedentary groups and 25.0 are from transhumant population and which is a clear indication that transhumance is still a big hurdle to the education of community. The families which are settled are more educated than those families which are still practicing transhumance.

Percentage of Literates in the Sedentary and Transhumant Families (Surveyed Villages)

Villages	Percentage of Literates	
	Sedentary	Transhumant
Saranoo	79.5	20.5
Sialsui	71.5	28.5
Baroh	74.0	26.0
Chambitaradh	76.0	24.0
Total	75.0	25.0

Field Work: 2014

Note: Sedentary Population, which was transhumant before the start of Militancy.



Source: Field Work 2014

Note: Sedentary Population, which was transhumant before the start of Militancy

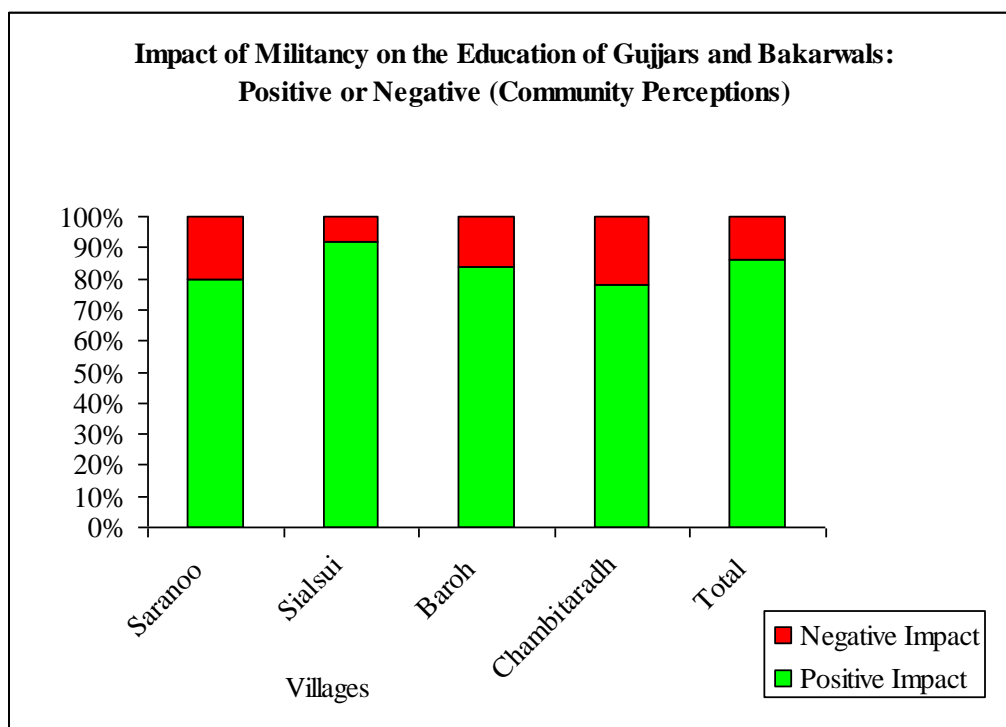
From the below table 3.11, it is quite clear from the community perceptions that there is positive impact of militancy on the education system of the Gujjars and Bakarwals. Transhumance is a big barrier that hinders nomadic childrens from the Gujjar and Bakarwal community from enrolling and completing the education. It has been seen there is high drop

out rate among the childrens of nomads. During the survey, it was suggested by the community members that we need education but that was relevant to the nomadic way of life but not of that kind which force the community members to make a choice between it and their nomadic way of life which is revolving around the animals.

**Impact of Militancy on the Education of Gujjars and Bakarwals:
Positive or Negative (Community Perceptions)**

Villages	Perception of the Community	
	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Saranoo	80.0	20.0
Sialsui	92.0	8.0
Baroh	84.0	16.0
Chambitaradh	78.0	22.0
Total	86.0	14.0

Source: Field Work 2014



Factors Effecting Education of the community

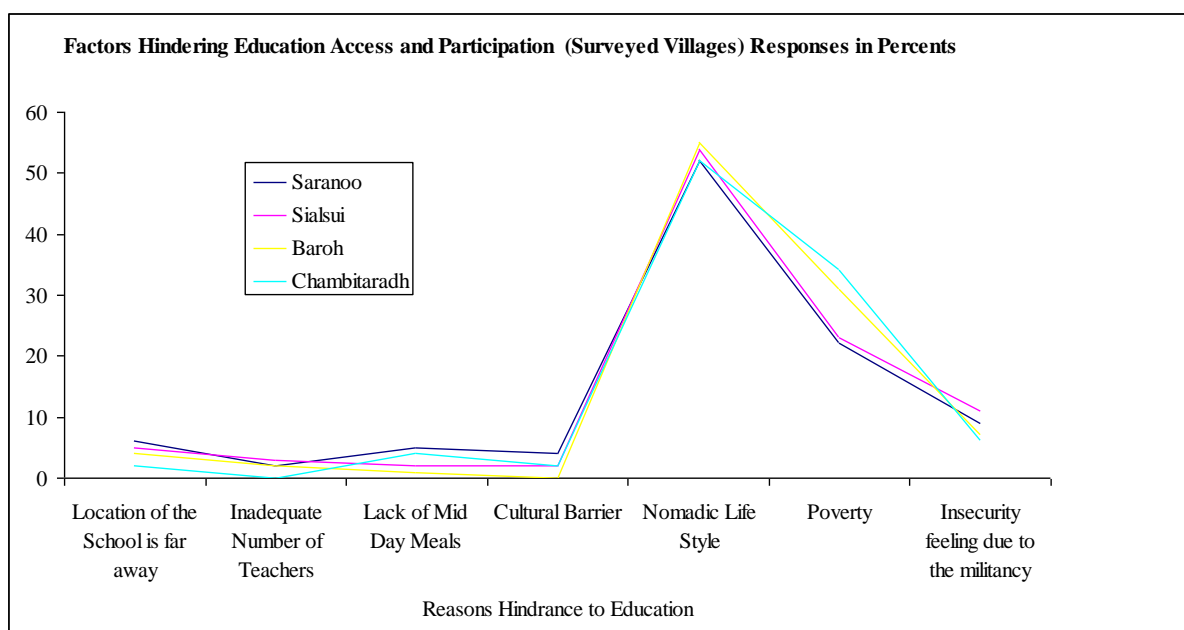
During the field work, it was questioned what were the reason that restricts the Gujjars and Bakarwals childrens to take the formal education (table 3.12 and figure 3.3). The responses

were different, but majority of them told that nomadic lifestyle and poverty are the main reasons of illiteracy among them. Since, livesocks required a huge labour throughout the day and night and childrens are diverted towards the look out of their cattles during the school hours and this is one of the reason that majority of the childrens are out from the school in transhumant families. The other reason is the never ending cycles of poverty among them. Some of the respondents have the view that disturbed situation force them to stop their childrens to school due the fear of harassment.

Factors Hindering Education Access and Participation (Surveyed Villages) Responses in Percents

Reasons Hindrance to Education	Villages			
	Saranoo	Sialsui	Baroh	Chambitaradh
Location of the School is far away	6.0	5.0	4.0	2.0
Inadequate Number of Teachers	2.0	3.0	2.0	0.0
Lack of Mid Day Meals	5.0	2.0	1.0	4.0
Cultural Barrier	4.0	2.0	0.0	2.0
Nomadic Life Style	52.0	54.0	55.0	52.0
Poverty	22.0	23.0	31.0	34.0
Insecurity feeling due to the militancy	9.0	11.0	7.0	6.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Work 2014



Source: Field Work 2014

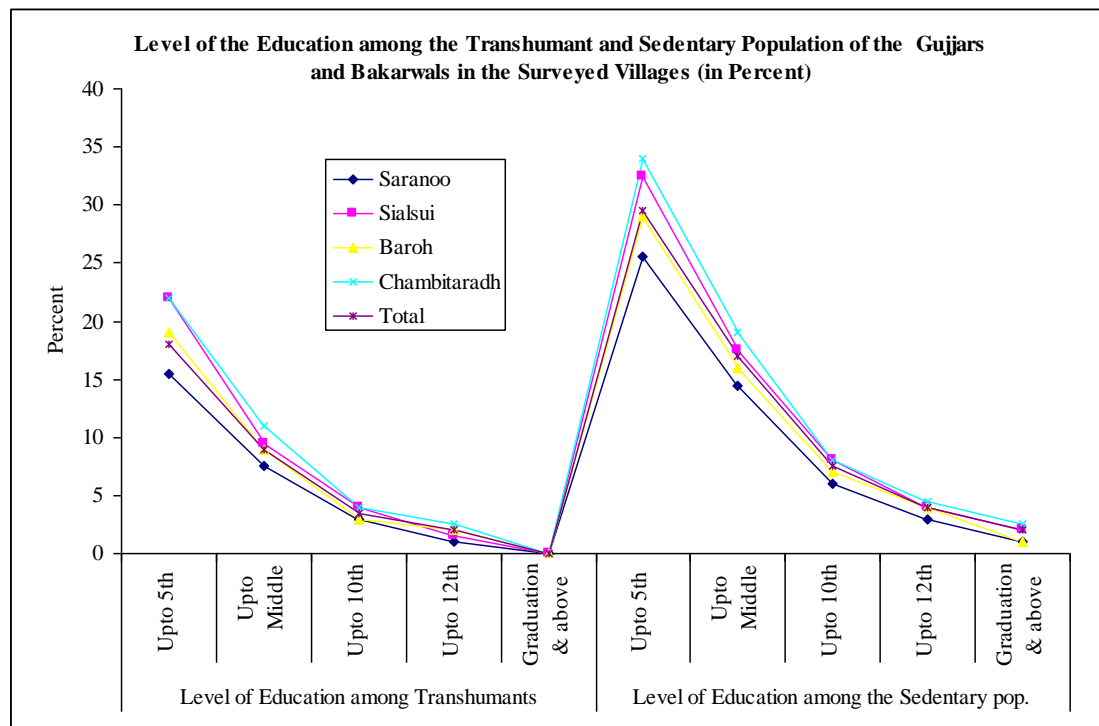
Education: Transhumance vs Sedentary Gujjars and Bakarwals

If we have a look on the level of education among the transhumant and sedentary population in Jammu and Kashmir. The share in the education is more among the settled population than the nomadic. Because nomadism is big hurdle in the way of education. As the transhumant families keep moving all around the year from one pasture to another so, it is difficult to them to enrol their childrens in the schools. Few years back there was a provision of mobile schools which move with the families. In summer, these schools work in the summer pastures for six months and for six months in the winter areas. But these schools are mostly closed down or converted into stationary schools. This is one of the main reason that education level is very low among the transhumant Gujjars and Bakarwals. From the field, it was noticed that 18 percent of the childrens are up to primary level among the transhumant families where as the same figures are 29.5 percent among the settled Gujjars and Bakarwals. 9.0 percent of the families are educated up to middle level in the transhumant families where as 17 percent among the settled communities. Interestingly, there is no graduate among the Gujjars and Bakarwals which are involved in the seasonal migration where as 2 percent are graduate in the settled Gujjars and Bakarwals.

Level of the Education among the Transhumant and Sedentary Population of the Gujjars and Bakarwals in the Surveyed Villages (in Percent)

Villages	Level of Education among Transhumants					Level of Education among the Sedentary pop.				
	Upto 5 th	Upto Middle	Upto 10 th	Upto 12 th	Graduation & above	Upto 5 th	Upto Middle	Upto 10 th	Upto 12 th	Graduation & above
Saranoo	15.5	7.5	3.0	1.0	0.0	25.5	14.5	6.0	3.0	1.0
Sialsui	22.0	9.5	4.0	1.5	0.0	32.5	17.5	8.0	4.0	2.0
Baroh	19.0	9.0	3.0	2.0	0.0	29.0	16.0	7.0	4.0	1.0
Chambitaradh	22.0	11.0	4.0	2.5	0.0	34.0	19.0	8.0	4.5	2.5
Total	18.0	9.0	3.5	2.0	0.0	29.5	17.0	7.5	4.0	2.0

Source: Field Work 2014

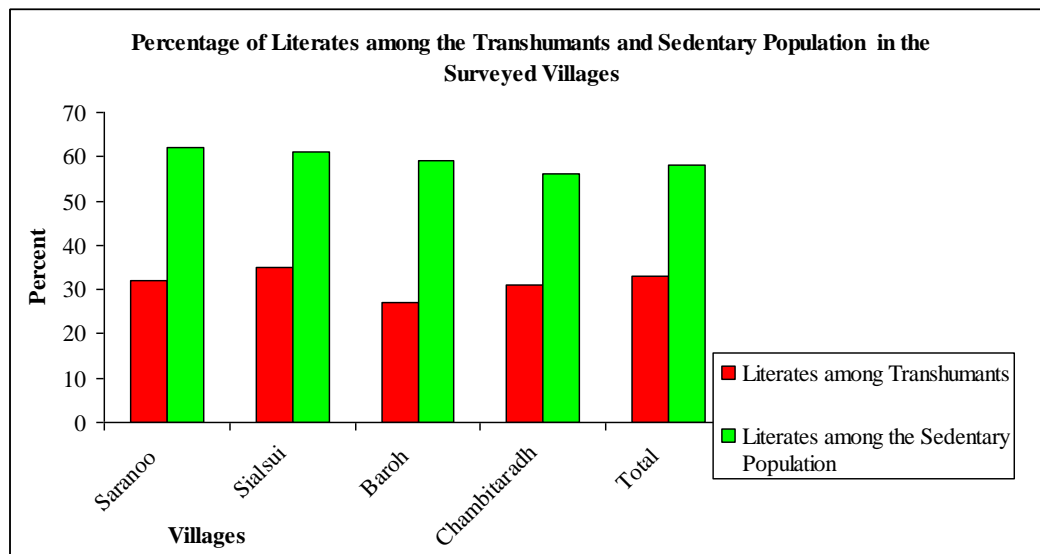


Source: Field Work 2014

On the other hand, 33.0 percent population is literate among the transhumant families while 58.0 percent are literates among the sedentary population. One interesting thing was noticed during field work that more than 50 percent population is literate among the sedentary population in all the four villages which were surveyed. The Gujjar and Bakarwal population which is settled have more facilities of education in terms of Government and Private schools where as for the transhumants families most of the mobile schools are either shut down during militancy or converted into stationary schools.

Percentage of Literates among the Transhumants and Sedentary Population in the Surveyed Villages

Villages	Literates among Transhumants	Literates among the Sedentary Population
Saranoo	32.0	62.0
Sialsui	35.0	61.0
Baroh	27.0	59.0
Chambitaradh	31.0	56.0
Total	33.0	58.0



Source: Field Work 2014

School Drop Outs

It is a common problem among the transhumant Gujjar and Bakarwals, the school drop out ratio is more among them as compare to the non-transhumant communities. During the seasonal migration it is difficult to take the formal education. As most of the mobile schools in the upper reaches are either closed down or converted into stationary schools which are working in the winter pastures only. Gujjar and Bakarwal children attend these schools from November when they came back to winter areas upto march only. Then again they start their annual cycle of migration. This is one of the main reasons of more drop outs among the childrens of transhumant families as compare to the sedentary families. 31.2 percent childrens have discontinued their studies in saranoo village where as in Sialsui 29.7 percent childrens were dropped.

Percentage of School Drop Outs among the Gujjars and Bakarwals

Villages	Number of Drop Outs	Percentage
Saranoo	43	31.2
Sialsui	41	29.7
Baroh	26	18.8
Chambitaradh	28	20.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>138</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: Field Work 2014

**Reasons of Dropout: Perception of the School Teachers in
Gujjar & Bakarwal Areas**

Reasons	Percent
Lack of Interest in Study	100
Economic Problem	85
Health Problem	5
Distance from Home to School	70
Militancy Related Problems	65
Lack of the Awareness of Parents	58
Language Problem	15
Lack of the Food	5
Due to seasonal migration	95
Lack of Proper Guidance	26
Early Marriage	37
Increased Household Responsibilities	77
<i>Source: Field Work 2014</i>	

As far as the reasons of school drop outs are concerned (table 3.16), 95 percent of the families have a say that transhumance is the main cause of it. Another 85 percent thinks that due to mass poverty they are not able to educate their wards. 65 percent compares it to the militancy as a main reason of drop outs. Generally girls are married at a very young age in the Gujjars and Bakarwals. So could be one of the main reasons of school drop outs among female students.

Reasons of the School Drop Outs

- (i) Mass Poverty: Gujjars and Bakarwals have lowest economic status in the state with no source of income. Parents are not able to send their children to school.
- (ii) Attitude of the Parents: Tribal parents are mostly illiterate. They always show a very different attitude towards the education of their children. Most of the parents in the Gujjars and Bakarwals community are interested in giving the responsibility of household activities to their childrens. The parents of these childrens are untouched with the outside world and basically they are not aware about the importance of the education. As education does not yield immediate economic returns so they force their childrens towards other works which supplements the family income.
- (iii) Distance from home to school: It is one of the main reasons of school drop outs. Gujjar and Bakarwal population is wide scattered over a larger area. Most of the

Government schools are located in the plains away from the tribal villages. Students have to cover many kilometres to reach out their schools. This is one of the reason childrens and particularly parents are not interested in sending out their children especially girls to schools. If primary school is available in their locality but for middle and high school classes they have to cover many kilometres which effects their education.

- (iv) Militancy: Militancy is an important factor of the school dropouts especially for the female students. Parents are not interested to send out their childrens especially girls to schools in the ongoing disturbed situations in the state.
- (v) Early marriage: In the transhumant families, early marriage is a general trend which effects the education of them.
- (vi) Increased Household Responsibilities: Parents force their children to dis-continue their education for the look after of the livestock.
- (vii) Absenteeism of the Teachers: In remote tribal areas, teacher absenteeism is a regular phenomenon which effects the quality education of them.
- (viii) Lack of Proper Monitoring: as there is a poor coordination between the tribal ministry and school education ministry which results in lack of education of the Gujjars and Bakarwals.

Conclusion

Education is the key to the development of the Gujjars and Bakarwal Community. Gujjar and Bakarwals have a very low level of education. If Government will take some measures for the improvement of education of tribals, it will lead to the development of them which will brings them to the main stream economic development.

Bibliography

Casimir, M.J. (1991) and A.Rao (1985) Vertical control in the western Himalayas: some notes on pastoral ecology of the nomadic Bakarwals of the Jammu and Kashmir, Mountain Research and Development.

Warickoo.K. (2000) Himalayan and Central Asian Studies Vol. 4 No. 1, Jan. - March 2000.

Negi, R.S.(2002) The Gujjars of the Siwaliks: Seasonal mobility to sedentarisation: In K.Warikoo (ed.) Gujjar of the Jammu and Kashmir.

Sarah K. Goodall,(2004), Rural to Urban Migration and Urbanization in Leh, Ladakh: A case Study of three Nomadic Pastoral Communities, Mountain Research and Development, vol. 24, No.3, (August,2004),pp. 220-227.

Choudhary, Gulam Mohammad, (2005) The ethno-cultural and pastoral identity of the Gujjars and Bakarwals: A case study of the Jammu and Kashmir, unpublished M.Phil. A dissertation submitted in the center for the study of social systems, school of social sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Shemyakina Olga (2011) "The effect of armed conflict on accumulation of schooling: Results from Tajikistan", Journal of Development Economics, Vol. 95 No.2, pp. 186-200.

Suri Kavita, 2014, Teaching the nomads in the wild: An analysis of seasonal educational schools for nomadic populations in Jammu and Kashmir, Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies, Volume 2, Issue 3, March 2014 ISSN: 2321-8819.

Lai, Brian, 2014, The Effect of Civil War on Education, 1980—97, Journal of Peace Research, vol. 44, no. 3, 2007, pp. 277–292

Alexandru Nedela (2009) affects of the transhumance on the southern slopes of the Fagaras Mountains.