

# Improvement In Status Of Tribal Women With Special Reference To The Socio-Economic Conditions: A Study In Jammu And Kashmir

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## **Abstract**

*Tribals are groups that are selected for special security and each group has its own history, heritage and lifestyle. People who have been alienated by mainstream Hindu population. These communities have distinct social setup than mainstream Hindu society. In all, 8.6% of the population of India are ST, but in Jammu and Kashmir, ST is 11.9% of the population. Indian women are said to be less discriminated against than women in general. Tribal women experience greater equality and have a higher sex ratio than conventional societies. Child marriage and dowry traditions are not present in several tribals. Women are granted more equality in many tribes. A girl is never required to marry and there is more independence in matters of divorce and polyandry is found to be occurring in many tribes. Participation rates are strong as both men and women work. Dowry is becoming widespread among the indigenous tribes. In Jammu and Kashmir, tribal people are best positioned in some ways, but worse in others. Dowry and female literacy indicate that there is a mythical status linked to tribal women. Female literacy in J&K is abysmally poor. 37.54% of females cannot read and write compared to 11% of tribal women. Scheduled Tribe women work a lot more in rural areas but they do not work as frequently in urban areas. Educational achievement among tribal women is very poor from the very beginning. Tribal women who do not have an education are popular in all cultures. The paper addresses women in J&K in selected education, labor force attendance, family spending, age of marriage, and head of household position. This analysis depends on both primary and secondary results.*

**Keywords:** Tribals, Equality, Sex ratio, Divorce, Dowry, Labor force, Marriage etc.

## **1. Introduction**

Tribals are initial settlers of India before establishment of Aryans. They were compelled to flee to remote areas. According to government data, as of 2011, 8.6% of India's population were members of a tribal group. One notable characteristic of India's tribal population is that most tribal people live in scattered, remote locations rather than on the plains. Census data on tribal populations did not differentiate between distinct religious groups and instead reported "tribal" populations as homogeneous groups, rather than as groups based on distinct ethnic groups. This tribe is segregated from the mainstream Hindu community and its lifestyle is very distinct. They are primitive. Though the distinction between tribes and civilizations has been maintained, tribal people are characterized by the absence of hierarchical social and cultural practices and by the absence of taboos in food and social practices (Arpita Mitra, 2010). Those that were absorbed into Hinduism and those that were subjected to compulsory conversion by the Hindus. Those that are poorly incorporated and partly integrated. It discovered a deep resonance among Christian missionary review committee. Tribes were categorized on the basis of their racial heritage in 1941.

Women's role in Indian culture is poor as it has been isolated from society and ignored in many other domains. In India women have low rank because they lack power of financial and social wealth (Bhasin- 2007). Scheduled tribes in India experience fewer prejudice than Hindus. Tribal women possess better independence and high sex ratios. Sati is banned in Scheduled Tribe regions, there are no victims of sati in Scheduled Tribe areas. It is thought that certain tribal communities such as in India are promoting early marriage as a way of status and are prohibiting widow remarriage and divorce as well as holding women in subordinate roles in relation to inheritance and land (Roy Burman 1988). K. Males also observe that females have increasingly lost the right to participate in pre-marital intercourse, pregnancy, and reproduction. Marriage constraints for Naga women are lax since the bride price is the most significant element in deciding a family's prosperity. The dowry is also popular among Naga women from middle and upper class families (Kishwar). Even as metrics indicate that Kerala is at the top of the list in literacy, education, and medical treatment, it struggles to successfully meet the needs of the tribal community. Kerala women are far better than every other territory. The sex ratio is higher in tribal communities, but tribal groups do not discriminate against females and thus do not carry out sex determination assessments. Girls have a special inheritance rule that states they cannot inherit property, but boys do. Girls are not generally permitted to marry outside their tribe while they have an option to marry inside their tribe. If a girl has no brother, so she is entitled to share in the family land, which is typically her father's inheritance. This may lead to a polygamous marriage. In Bhutia tribes women can't inherit property unless they are married. Santhal tribal women are not

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permitted to marry outside their group, which is deemed an effort to gain property and contribute to significant tension between tribal and non-tribal's. Even people who wish to be land widows are killed by families. Similar to Native American witch hunts, Santhal people were sometimes proclaimed witches by neighboring villagers and then held prisoner by witch hunters. Soma Chaudhuri reveals how women make up half of the plantation staff in the Dooars area of Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal. Witches, a tea plantation, and how people are murdered and raped.

So called state development tribal's have been forced to move into other places in search of livelihood. Multipurpose dams, mining and industrialization have led to eviction of thousands of tribal families (Vidhya Das, Achyut Das). Tribal women play an important role in the management of house. With so called state development; women have to cover long distance to collect fodder fuel and water resources. This ultimately leads to migration of tribal women. Women in Jharkhand have been migrating to nearby cities where they are exploited by agents in various ways (Vinita Singh and Kali Nath jha). In poverty ridden tribal areas of Orissa the push factor has caused migration of tribal girl in cities where they are exploited by agents in the cities and many girls are forced in to prostitution. Besides tribal women workers working in tea plantation and other plantations plants are also victims of sexual exploitation. They are not only paid less wages but also contract terms forced them into sexual relations with managers, supervisors (Jayabrata Sarkar). In some of tribes girls are made into prostitution with the consent of parents. One such tribe is Bedia family. A woman born in Bedia family is made to work in prostitution. This they do to provide for economic needs of the family. (Anuj Agarwal 2008). But available research on women of tribes considers that with passage of time the values of dominant culture has been imbibed by tribes and thus evil practices like dowry, child marriage and opposition to widow remarriage has been seen even among tribal's. This thing maybe true to major extent and in relation to some tribes. Educational attainment of tribal women is very poor from the very beginning. Majority of tribal women are illiterate which makes them susceptible to exploitation. The prime reason is that these tribes have been isolated by institution of state and hence tribal's themselves cannot be held responsible for their poor educational achievement.

Majority of tribal schools are without infrastructural facilities (Sujata 1994). Besides the fact majority of tribal children especially girl children are important earners of family and due to migration from place to place keeps absenteeism high and high dropout ratio. (Ranvi- M 2000) observed in her study that due to language barriers tribal children are unable to establish contact with teacher which makes them to drop the school at some point or the other. The main cause low educational attainment of scheduled tribe women is dual system of educational admistration; ministry of tribal affairs at national level and state education department at state level which cause lack of coordination among these two departments. Schools schedules are decided by state education department which hardly takes into consideration specific condition and circumstances of tribal children.

On health matter due to their extreme poverty tribal women have very poor health and health infrastructure is very lacking in the tribal belts. Nutritional anemia is acute problem among tribals in India and in tribal belts and anemia adversely affects the psychological and social lives of tribal women.

The assimilation of tribal's within folds of Hinduism and Christianity has different kinds of impact. Although Christian missionaries have done lot of work to ameliorate the condition of these tribes especially in the field of education but in religious sphere the role of women is secondary women is never appointed as priest but she was given freedom to worship both in Hindu society and Christian society. Religious freedom of women of that tribe who have embraced Christianity and Hinduism is found to be secondary to men as women. Furthermore educational attainment of tribal women has found to be very lees from the very beginning. One of common feature among all tribal women that is found is lack of education. Besides another important disturbing trend that has emerged in recent years is migration of tribal women to cities as an economic compulsion.

## **2. Objectives of Study**

1. To study sex ratio among tribes in Jammu and Kashmir.
2. To study the illiteracy levels of tribal women in Jammu and Kashmir.
3. To study tribal women's job participation.
4. To study on child marriage, dowry, and religious freedom of tribals.

## **3. Research Methodology**

A research is focused on primary and secondary results. The purposive sampling methodology has been implemented. Three districts from the Gujjar and Bhutto populations have been chosen. A selection of 60 households from each of the districts was selected using a purposeful sampling method. This sample contained some of the inhabitants of that specific district. Secondary data was obtained from the Indian National Census (INCC) Office.

### **3.1 Research Questions**

1. As the government of the State has developed adequate number of Social, Economic, Political and educational schemes in support of the status of the tribal women in Kashmir, the same can be extended for other citizens as well.
2. Does the government bring in equality for the infrastructural needs of everyone, to provide education to everyone, to properly finance for the schemes and welfare of all in Kashmir?
3. It seems that in the Kashmir division, there are women who are working at a satisfactory rate to fulfil the demand of the state.
4. What differences are there between the urban women of Kashmir and the tribal women in their lives with regard to their needs?

### 3.2 Discussion of study:

#### A. Family head and expenditure decision of sample families of Gujjar families

S.NO		% of families
	Households headed by female	1.77
	Household headed by male	98.33
<b>Total</b>		100
	Decision regarding spending of money to be taken solely by male head	80
	Decision taken regarding spending by female only	5
	Decision taken by both male and female regarding spending of money	15
<b>Total</b>		100

Source: field survey

The majority of families chosen in the Gujjar tribe of Ganderbal, Kupwara and Bandipora districts are male 98.33% and only 1.77% are female. As for females, widows and unmarried women. Besides it is the judgment on the distribution of money among various pieces of spending which is determined by males in majority of cases. In certain situations, the decision to invest money is made through shared agreement between both males and females

#### B. Child Marriage and Dowry

Dowry is a true tradition in certain parts of the world. However, in India, the Kanyadan tradition is dominated by the family. There is also a customary form of bride price. Some respondents said it may be in the form of both cash and merchandise. An equal portion is paid to the parents of a child. Compensation is given to cover deprivation suffered by parents of children, but in the district of Rajouri and Bandipora, the tradition of dowry is becoming the standard and growing dependent on socio-economic status. I hereby attest that by my side, I will deposit the specified monetary amount in the account of the bridegroom for the security of the financial responsibilities assigned to me by my side.

The Gujjar believe in several men in a woman's family to ensure stability for the family. The test results show that there is continuity in cases of divorce, for some of the respondents, between 5 and 6 percent, there was love marriage between partners. Unions of monogamous marriages are found in communities in regions of Jammu and Kashmir, especially the Valley, and in Pakistan. A individual will be married to one person and get a divorce and get married to another person to have the same dispute. The conflict can be settled by a settlement between the representatives of the tribe. Non-tribe members are not allowed to marry into the tribe. Therefore, interracial partnerships between non-tribal members and tribal members are lawful.

Tribes in tehsil Padder of district Kishtwar and in Ladakh are Buddhist. The Buddhist women of Padder are very active and many of them run shops in Kishtwar district. Women who are qualified to lead households would have a greater effect. Parents arrange Buddhist weddings. But girls have the option to marry the boy if he holds to some set of rules.

#### C. Marriage system

Table showing marriage age for Gujjar tribe of Jammu and Kashmir

Table 1

S.NO.	Gujjar tribes			Bhutia tribes	
	AGE MARRIAGE	OF	% PEOPLE	OF	% of families
1	12-17		20		15
2	18-23		50		55
3	24-29		28		25
4	30-35		02		05
5	36-41		0		0
6	42-47		0		0

Source: field survey

There are some instances of marriages in the Gujjar tribe around the ages of 18 and 25. The family of the groom retains the groom-to-be for a few years before the marriage and until it is decided by the family and the elders.

Nowadays the child marriage among the Gujjar and Bakerwal is pretty normal in which 55% of the marriages take place at an age more than 18 years and a third of the people are married at an age more than 18 years. Since Gujjar and Bakerwal in Jammu and Kashmir district in north-east India have a lower percentage of child marriage, it can be believed they have a similar culture.

**D. Sex ratio among tribes in Jammu and Kashmir**

Age group	All STs (India)	All STs (J&K)	Gaddi	Bot	Balti	Brokpa	Gujjar	Purigpa	Bakerwal
All ages	978	910	948	941	936	916	908	903	868
0 – 6 yrs.	973	979	989	965	994	938	985	1019	928

When seeking to determine how a girl is handled in ethnic cultures, sex ratios of girls will be an outstanding predictor. Many separate research conducted in states of India have shown that there is a greater incidence of birth control in the tribal community than non-tribal population. In Jammu and Kashmir, the sex ratio of the tribal community is found to be higher in all districts excluding Srinagar and Baramulla, contrary to the expectation. People here are relatively better off, and so is social status, than their counterparts in other sections of the state. In Leh, for instance, the sex ratio is 1,016, whereas that of the Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) state is sat at 997 District Leh is preceded by district Ponch having population density of 975.8 people per square km, and an average population growth rate of 3.7 percent per year. In which district Srinagar has sex ratio of 779.5, however proportion of ST population in Srinagar is only 0.72 percent; but the same cannot be said for the rest of the district. Baramulla has sex ratio of 863(per 1000 man), where ST population is only 3.71 percent. In all districts except Srinagar and Baramulla the sex ratio of tribal population is marginally better than non-tribal population. One issue that has been troublesome is the low sex ratio in the society, particularly with the people having a need for a serious attention. These tribal's (Fungu) is from the Lango district and still practice the old traditional rituals which doesn't care about the girls in marriage. As we know, taking part in the traditional rituals are expensive and parents care about your comparatively less money. If you marry and don't have a bride price happy otherwise if you have a sacrifice of a child, and now the government has made it easy. Also the existence of activities alluded to as the "Gharjamai methodology" in which a male family member is brought in the home of a female and he "wears the pants in the family". He also receives part ownership in the land of his girlfriend's kin.

**E. Female literacy of tribal's and non-tribal's in Jammu and Kashmir:**

The educational achievement of Indian women is very poor among Indian tribes. Remote tribal regions are suffering from missing the right infrastructural infrastructure. Poverty and ignorance of commodity price has still held markets tribal's in a state of poverty and a poor level of basic literacy. In Jammu and Kashmir, the tribal people do not have large rate of female literacy. Many parents find it daunting to send their girls to kindergarten. Like the mother-in-law would say, we use our daughters as mental and financial instruments, raising them to be successful herders. As it is already mentioned to you that it was agreed for the state to bear the entire cost of education of girls, but parents are still not willing to bear any expenses for girls education The reason I think dropout percentage is high in these tribes is because of the reason. It is true that girls will quit high school or not attend high school at all, but girls leave Morocco's high schools at some stage, somewhere in their academic career. Teachers have trouble teaching in some schools because of their lack of understanding of the native language of the children in the classroom. Moreover, even though the girl enrolls in the college, the family atmosphere at home is not conducive to learning, so they are engaged in rearing cattle and doing chores at home on a daily basis. Educating children regarding gender equality is a distant hope for the Gujjar society, a tribal society, on which women are still vulnerable, in the rural areas of Punjab province.

The literacy rate among female tribal in Jammu and Kashmir is very poor compared to the literacy rate among the non-tribal in J&K state. Though the total ST population % is highest in Kulgam, the proportion of ST citizens who reside in Kulgam district is extremely limited. After Kashmir, one of the lowest literacy rates is seen in Anantnag which is has a significant proportion of scheduled tribe community. The district in which Kulgam is situated follows a district, Ramban (where the social circumstances of the tribe are more to be desired), where the literacy rate is extremely weak. Despite the region's high illiteracy rates, it is observed that the highest literacy among citizens in the heights was found in Leh at 56.56 percent, led by Kathua district at 47.35 percent, and most followed by District Kargil at 46.65 percent.

**F. Labour Force**

**Table 3.** shows Labour force data of tribals

	Urban									Rural								
	Male			Female			Person			Male			Female			Person		
	LFPR	WPR	(PU)	LFPR	WPR	(PU)	LFPR	WPR	(PU)	LFPR	WPR	PU	LFPR	WPR	PU	LFPR	WPR	PU
All India	534	510	24	212	203	09	378	362	17	569	559	10	362	359	3	468	461	07
J&K	645	649	16	36	0	439	429	10	557	557	0	710	710	0	652	628	0	24

The labor force participation rate for males in urban areas of Jammu and Kashmir is higher at 12 compared to 8 nationally, but the gap is not important. The job engagement rate is higher in rural and urban regions, than in suburbanites. The unemployed was disproportionately higher in rural areas but lower in urban areas than the typical unemployed people. For

women employed in the labor sector, their rate of presence is very poor in metropolitan regions but it is far higher in urban areas. Thus it is claimed that female in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir play an important role as an additional in the whole of the man but at the same time unemployed woman is seen more in urban areas than in rural areas in Jammu and Kashmir in comparison with the national average. This table provides information about those who are involved in the labour market, the population of those who are below the age of working and the proportion of those who are not in the labor force in both rural and metropolitan regions. In the NSS report, jobs and the unemployment condition among social classes. were studied in India.

#### 4. Findings of study:

Major findings of study are:

1. As can be seen from the table, the sex ratio is higher in all districts excluding the districts Srinagar and Baramulla with ST population but in these two districts, the ST population stands at quite less percentage. It is possible that the sex ratio in tribal is less than what it should be. As it can be seen from the table, male to female birth ratio is higher in Districts with plurality of tribal's than in non-tribal Districts.
2. The literacy rate for women in the state is very poor in all districts of Jammu and Kashmir. It is as little as 11.26% in the district of Kulgam in Valley, state of Jammu and Kashmir.
3. Large scale coordinated female work involvement is prevalent in rural areas among scheduled tribes. While there is many work being done by females in urban areas Jammu and Kashmir as a State.
4. The tradition of child marriage was found to be widespread among the tribal groups of the Kishtwar and Rajouri districts. Although such a practice is less among Bhutto tribes in Punjab, the distribution of this practice is far more widespread in Ladakh.
5. Whereas dowry, in traditional parlance, is used in reference to the tradition of wedding price, the custom of bride price is used in the custom of dowry, which characterizes Gujjar tribals. The dowry tradition is found among the tribes of the Rajouri district.

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