

Educational system in the tribal areas of Kashmir valley: A case study of zone Khanshab of District Budgam

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Abstract

The study was taken to decipher the special features of the educational system in the tribal areas of Khanshab. The main tribes of the areas are sedentarized and nomadic Gujjar and Bakkarwal. The study used a non-experimental, cross-sectional research design with the main tools of data collection being observation schedule and self-constructed questionnaire to decipher the opinion of all the stakeholders associated with schooling in the study area. The study revealed that under the flagship Programme of Sarva Shiksha Abiyan (SSA) government has been partially able to uplift the educational infrastructure. Through SSA Government has been able to enhance the enrollment in the schools but quality dimensions of education are still below standard. Physical structures in the form of buildings, bathrooms have been erected but quality education is still a dream in the schools. Teachers mentioned an unmanageable pupil teacher ratio, and a weak parental and community support. Study revealed a complete absence of female teachers in the schools. Study showed that the teacher student communication has been improved in the last few years by recruiting local tribal and non-tribal teachers. But the qualification of teachers remains a concern as many teachers with low qualification have been recruited.

Keywords: tribes, education, school, local teachers

1. Introduction

Defining 'tribe' has conceptual as well as empirical problems for academicians (Virginius, 1999) [31]. Schedule Tribes in India are generally considered to be Adivasi, literally meaning 'indigenous people' or 'original inhabitants', though the term Schedule Tribes (STs) is not coterminous with Adivasi. ST is an administrative term used for the purposes of 'administering' certain specific constitutional privileges, and for the protection and benefits of specific sections of peoples considered historically disadvantaged and 'backward' (Bijoy 2003) [3]. Many credit the introduction of the term tribe to colonial administrators. It was part of the universal trend to dichotomize the indigenous peoples and colonizers, the savage and the civilized, the tribals and non-tribal (Singh, 1993) [24, 27]. Many Anthropologists have claimed that tribes are no different from rest of the Indian population and are part of the larger social system of India, and argue that tribes are backward Hindus and considered tribes as indistinct from caste (Ghurye, 1959, 1963) [11, 12]. But there are others who vehemently criticize the view of conceptually including tribes in caste tribe. That is, how social scientists including historians and anthropologists, have viewed social change among the tribes [Bose 1941; Sinha 1962, 1987; Kosambi 1975] [25, 13]. The Constitution of India though made several provisions for safeguarding the interests of tribes, but it is nowhere defined in the Constitution. This creates a scope for debate over a proper definition of tribe. It only declares that the Scheduled Tribes are "the tribes or the tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities" which the President of the country may specify by public notification (Article 342). Among the vast crowd of scholars

the definition of Majumdar (1958) [20] stands apart. According to him, "a tribe is a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name, members of which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and have developed a well-assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations.

The 12 Scheduled Tribes in J&K have a population of 14, 93,299 which account for 11.9 per cent of the total population of the State (Census 2011). Gujjar and Bakkarwal the prominent schedule tribe community in J&K are found in all the three regions of the state of Jammu and Kashmir including Jammu (comprising districts of Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur, Poonch, and Rajouri Districts), Kashmir Valley (comprising the districts of Srinagar, Baramulla, Kupwara, Pulwama, Budgam and Anantnag etc.) and Ladakh (comprising Leh and Kargil). Gujjar and Bakkarwal are mostly nomadic tribes of Jammu and Kashmir but since past many years, a majority of the Gujjar population has become sedentarized (Zutshi 2001; Bhardwaj 1994; Kango & Dhar 1981) [32, 9, 15]. They move to the lower and middle mountain areas and Pir Panjal pastures in the summer with their flock of buffalos where they engage in cultivation and come back to the plains in the winters (Khatana 1992; Rao & Casimir 1982) [16, 29]. Tribes of Jammu and Kashmir lie far below in many parameters of education and literacy than the tribals at national level. Poverty and lack of basic infrastructural facilities seem to be major obstacles in attainment of education (Andrabi, 2013) [2]. Government has made many efforts, like mobile schools, to meet the unique challenges of tribal education in J&K (Suri, 2014) [23, 28]. Adivasi People in India have undergone considerable changes

during the last decades because of many policy programmes by federal government of India (Mishra, & Joshi, 2015) [18]. But still the ideals of social welfare in terms Socio-economic changes proposed in the Constitution of India for the scheduled tribes have not materialized (Vidyarthi, 1972) [30]. There have been many quantitative improvements in the status of tribal education in post-independence era but there are lot are discriminations within the educational institutions based on existing criteria's of social differentiation in India. There is a partial neglect on many quality dimensions of tribal education in India. Most of the educational research so far, has dealt in terms of numbers and frequencies for understanding the status of education among the marginalized groups, which could be a trap as it prepares the ground for spurious reforms (Kumar, 1983) [14]. But there is a deep and latent contradiction in fundamental forces and official goals that transcend the goals of the immediate community and its needs, resulting into students experiencing discontinuities between their traditional way of life and the ways of the dominant culture imparted through schools and text-books (Wetzlaugk, 1984). The approach that has been adopted for educating tribal children presently is significantly alien to them, not able to engage them meaningfully in the school related activities, which are divorced from their home culture (Rathnaiah 1977; Sujatha 1987; Mukharjii 2009) [21, 22].

2. Objectives of the study

1. To know the gross enrollment ratio of ST students in

4. Interpretation and analysis of data

Table 1: Showing enrollment of boys and girls

Girls	624
Boys	865
Total enrolment	1489

There is no such norm over boys Vs girls' enrollment ratio set by government for schools in tribal areas. But since the equality in educational opportunities for all classes of people and equity for disadvantaged sections of society has become a watch word these days and has also become an indicator of developmental index of a country, priority to girls education is a vital concern of the state policy making, therefore it became imperative to study boys Vs girls ratio in Tribal schools, to see if any efforts were taken to improve the enrollment of girls in schools.

- a. The overall ratio of boys Vs girls enrollment in schools in the present year, is found to be 60:40. That is there is an average of six boys to four girls in each class. Thus showing that the number of girls enrolled in schools in

schools.

2. To understand the extent of Gender dissonance in enrolment in tribal schools of khanshaib.
3. To decipher the opinion of stakeholders about infrastructure and facilities available in tribal schools.

3. Methodology

A non-experimental cross sectional mixed method research methodology was employed. Self-constructed Questionnaire was used as the tool for getting the opinion of Teachers and other stakeholders. Purposive sampling technique was used to gather data from respondents. All teachers and administrators of schools enrolling ST students falling in the zone khanshaib were considered as respondents.

Five Panchayat Halqas Kaichwari, Gurwaith, Mujhpathri, Rayarich and Rayar Beeru were taken as research areas in the community development block of khanshaib of district Budgam of J&K state. The information about above panchayat halqs was gained from the office of block development officer khanshaib. These five panchayat halqs further include a cluster of two or more villages. Some of the tribal people migrate to Jammu region during winter season along with their flocks but, most of them have established permanent settlements and practice cultivation of maize and other cereals. The tribal population of the area mainly includes Gujjar and Bakkarwal.

comparison to boys has is less.

- b. Majority of the respondents think that conservative attitude among community is major reason responsible for low girl enrollment compared to boys.
- c. It was seen that under the SSA scheme satisfactory facilities have been provided to ensure healthy enrollment of girls.
- d. Some of the respondents' particularly senior administrators who have worked in the neighboring non-tribal areas feel that the dissonance in enrollment of boys and girls is not a special feature of the concerned tribal area but, report that the same trend of dissonance in enrollment is seen in the neighboring non-tribal rural areas.

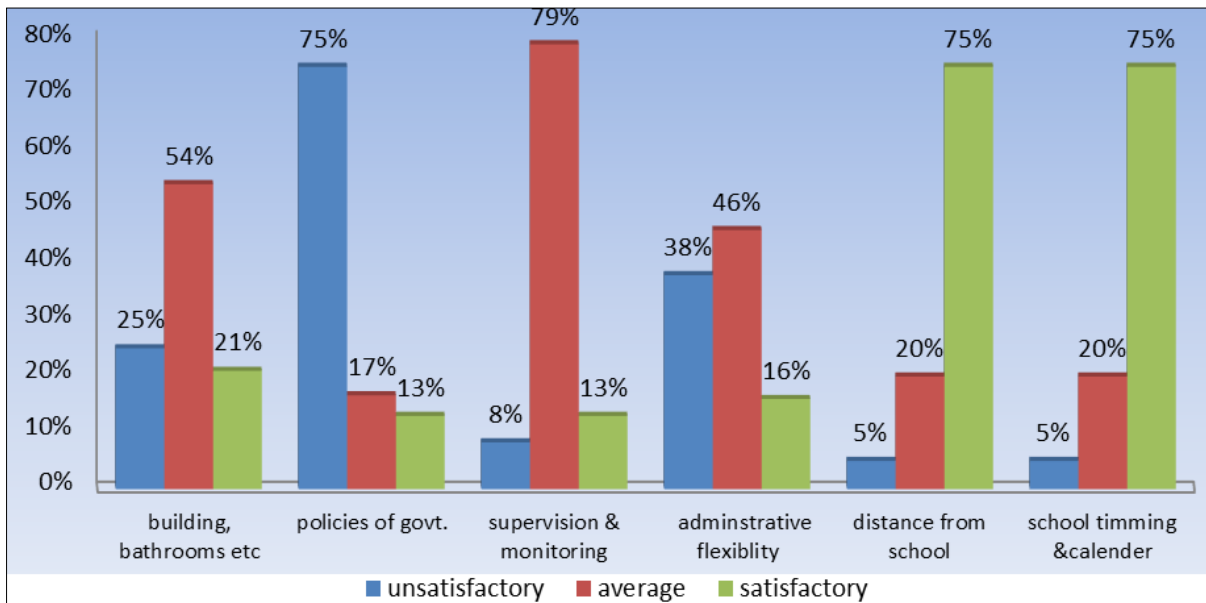


Fig 1: Showing perception of respondents about various aspects related to infrastructure.

All schools which were surveyed:

- 90% of the middle schools have buildings with more than five rooms and more than one pakka house buildings. Each building having more than 2 rooms.
- The only two high schools present in the area where ST boys and girls are enrolled have more than 10 rooms. They have large buildings with sufficient number of rooms to accommodate the students.
- The classrooms were airy with suitable light and size. Classrooms were comparatively better fulfilling the criteria of a standard classroom.
- 50% of the schools had no bathrooms. Only 25% schools surveyed have separate bathrooms for girls.
- Only 25% schools surveyed had genuine playgrounds. 75% had no playground facilities.
- 20% schools were located at dangerous places like near a river bank or at abnormal height.
- Only 25% of the respondents think that the physical structures like bathrooms, buildings are unsatisfactory rest of the 75% either it is average or satisfactory.
- 75% of the respondents believe that schools to home distance are satisfactory. They think that schools have been established within a walkable distance. Clusters of primary, middle schools and high schools been established, making access to education easy for ST candidates.
- Some teachers said that although schools have been established within walkable distance student teacher ratio is still unmanageable. There is deficiency of teachers in these schools. In most of these schools number of posts are lying vacant. There is least concern being paid to fill these vacancies.
- 75% of the stakeholders believe that school timing and

annual calendar is satisfactory and local culture does not cause interference with it.

- Teachers and administrators believe that students are satisfied with the timings and students have readily adapted to it.
- Mobile schools have also been adopted in higher hilly areas.
- Overall most of the teachers are quite satisfied with the annual cycle of schools.
- Only 16% of the respondents believe that administrative flexibility is satisfactory
- 36% believe that it is unsatisfactory
- 46% believe it is average
- c) The recruitment and transfer policy of teachers is faulty
- Political interferences are more prevalent.
- Only 8% of the respondents believe that an unsatisfactory supervision and monitoring exists.
- 79% believe it is average and 13% believe that it is satisfactory. There is less scope in the supervision for improvement of the operational dimension of education.
- Most of the supervision and monitoring process includes surprise visits by the administrators. Teachers think that keeping in view the fact that most of the teachers working are untrained less attention is being done to remedy this weakness.

Amid of all this Government has taken so many steps to ensure that the peculiar problems of educating tribal children are rectified. Like Mobile schools have been established in tents in high hilly areas. There is one mobile school that works in the Grazing lands of Dodhpatri. This school moves with the migration of the Bakerwals to rajori and poonch districts in winters.

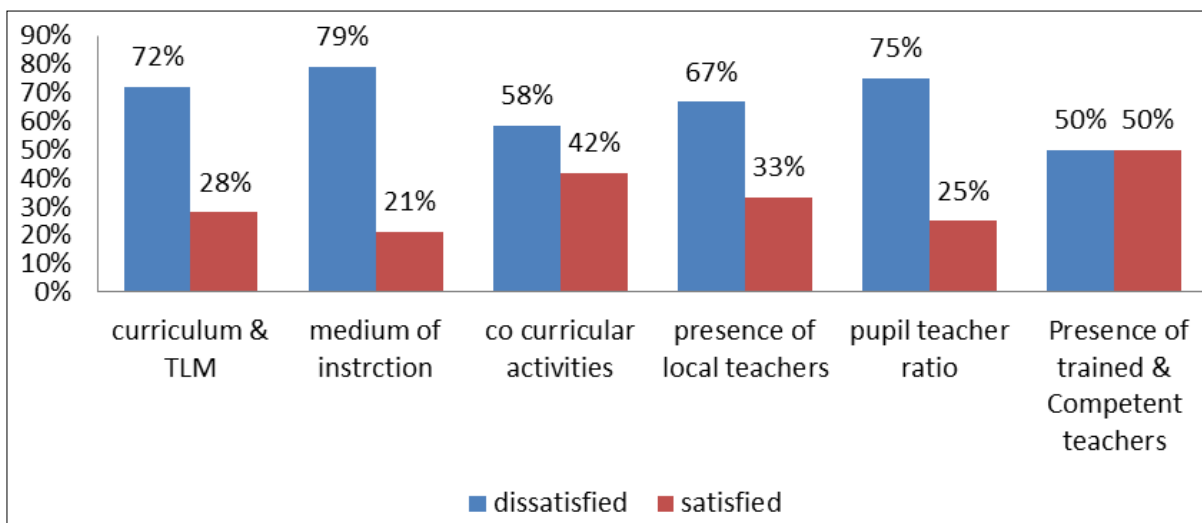


Fig 2: showing satisfaction and dissatisfaction of teachers towards various quality dimensions of education.

As per the norm under SSA, teacher to pupil ratio in a class should be 1:40 but, as far as tribal schools are concerned this ratio is well above the number that a teacher can handle.

1. It has been widely seen in most of the cases of appointment of teachers, teacher's qualification and training has been compromised and by preference has been given to low qualified local teachers over qualified teachers from surrounding non-tribal areas and towns.
2. 50% of the respondents are satisfied with competence, qualification, and training of teachers working in the tribal areas.
3. 50% are unsatisfied with competence, qualification and training of teachers.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

It was concluded that the government has partially failed to address the peculiarities of tribal culture in designing educational policies for them. The education provided in the tribal schools is, at best, sub-standard. The research revealed an absolute dearth of female teachers in the schools operating in the tribal areas. Although in most of the schools, government has been able to successfully meet some of the standards of educational development in terms of adequate infrastructural facilities in the form of adequate classrooms, drinking water, and toilets with few exceptions. The availability of physical structures like, buildings and adequate bathrooms has been successfully ensured through SSA, still work needs to be done in terms of providing proper playground facilities and opportunities for co-curricular activities. Satisfactory numbers of local teachers, who are quite familiar with the local culture, have been recruited in schools running in tribal areas. Absolute deficit of female teachers in tribal schools seems to be serious concern which should invite the concern of state administration. Teacher qualification and training still seems to be below average. Untrained teachers have been appointed because of their familiarity with local culture and local residence. Mobile schools have established in tents where ever necessary but their number seems to be little less. There was a significant difference between the enrollment of boys and girls in tribal

schools. More boys than girls are enrolled in the schools. Government should take appropriate steps to improve girl enrollment in the schools. Community mobilization should be organized in these areas. Girls should be encouraged to pursue education by providing scholarships and other necessary requirements. Parents in particular and community at large should be educated about the Importance of girl education. The most serious problem to which teachers and administrators showed a lot concern during the fieldwork is the parental attitude, teacher community relations and poverty and apathy of the parents. It was seen that most of the teachers and administrators are not satisfied with the prevailing curriculum and feel that curriculum should be changed. The study shows a vital need of rigorous training of teachers in teaching methodology and overall pedagogy and administrators in terms of leadership in organization planning and management.

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