



Unveiling The Status And Challenges Of Tribal Education: A Tulail Valley Perspective

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Abstract

Tribal education plays a vital role in the advancement and empowerment of indigenous communities. However, it encounters numerous obstacles, including poor infrastructure, limited access, inadequate quality, lack of relevance, and inequity. These challenges are further compounded by the geographical, cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity within tribal populations. One particular area that urgently requires attention in terms of tribal education is the Tulail Valley, a sub-valley of Gurez in the Jammu and Kashmir union territory, nestled in the Himalayas. This valley is inhabited by the Dard tribe, who speak Shina, a branch of the Dardic languages. This community possesses a rich and unique cultural heritage, but unfortunately, they also face poverty, isolation, and marginalization. This research paper aims to investigate the state of institutional infrastructure and the complex challenges confronted by tribal students, with a specific emphasis on the status of elementary education in the Tulail Valley. By conducting a thorough analysis of the educational landscape, this study employs a natural inquiry design, utilizing information blanks, field notes, surveys and interviews as the primary methods for data collection. The aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand. The study's findings shed light on the poor institutional infrastructural, lack of professional teachers, accommodation and many other unfolded challenges that hinder the accessibility and quality of education in the Tulail Valley. Furthermore, it explores potential strategies and interventions to address these challenges and promote inclusive and sustainable tribal education in the Tulail Valley.

Keywords: Tribal Education, Tulail Valley, Institutional Infrastructure, Quality of Education.

Introduction

Most of us would be familiar with the verdant forests of Gurez Valley's gurgling waterfalls flowing over jagged rocks, the towering cedars (Deodars) talking to sky, pyramid shaped Habba Khatun mountain and the deep blue waters of Kishanganga river. It is because, Gurez has now become a world-famous tourist destination. But in this paper, I am not going to discuss Gurez, rather the investigator felt the need to write and explore the educational scenario of Tulail valley, that has not got its share of attention yet on part of the government in different walks of life. Tulail is a tehsil of District Bandipora Jammu and Kashmir. It is the part

of education zone Gurez. Its location is to a large extent tough. The tehsil headquarter of Tulail is located at Badugaam, distant 30 kms from Dawar Gurez. Till 1996, this area was deprived of all the basic facilities, especially of road connectivity. Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in collaboration with Indian army started constructing roads in 1996. But still no significant progress has been made in terms of health, electricity, drinking water and above all educational infrastructure which are considered basic necessities of life. Maximum population of Tulail belong to Dard race, speaking Shina language, but they have equal hold on Kashmiri language too. Their ancestors have migrated from Gilgit, Chitral and Chilas and settled here. It seems that they reside here from prehistoric times. Some percentage of population is also inhabited by Kashmiris, whose exact number and percentage could not be known. Arthur Neve in his book, "Thirty Years in Kashmir" (1915) gives the account and the reason of the settlement of Kashmiris in Tulail valley in this way. The Tulail district is situated along the eastern tributary. The residents of this area have a closer affiliation with the Kashmiris, a connection that seems to have originated during the Dogra conquest in the early 19th century. During this conquest, marauding groups of Dogras burned down many villages, causing the inhabitants to flee to the nearby valleys on the Kashmir side. However, a reverse migration occurred later on, with peasants from the Lar district of Kashmir moving to Tulail to escape oppressive taxation and forced labor. Throughout several decades of the last century, the Sikh and Dogra armies were expanding their control over the mountainous regions of Ladakh, Baltistan, and Gilgit. Due to the lack of suitable roads for transportation and logistical support, each expedition required the forcible recruitment of thousands of Kashmiri Potters by driving most of the men out of the villages at the mouth of the valleys leading to the passes. As a result of such oppression, some individuals sought refuge in the secluded valleys of Tulail, where they intermarried. Consequently, the people of Tulail are now bilingual, speaking both Kashmiri and Dardic languages to a significant extent.

Formal education has been started in Tulail in 1942 by opening a primary school in Gujraan. The first teacher served to the institution was hailing to Astore of Gilgit.

Conceptual Background of the Study

Tribal education plays a vital role in the development and empowerment of indigenous communities in India. However, the mainstream educational system and policies have not fully understood or addressed the status and challenges of tribal education. The tribal communities face multiple barriers to access and complete primary education, such as poverty, malnutrition, discrimination, language, culture, curriculum, pedagogy, teacher quality, infrastructure, and governance. The government policies and programmes for tribal education have been largely ineffective, inconsistent, and inadequate, failing to address the specific needs and aspirations of the tribal communities. **Brahmanandam and Babu (2015)** According to the 2011 Census of India, the literacy rate among scheduled tribes (STs) was 59%, significantly lower than the national average of 74%. Tribal education faces various issues such as low enrollment, high dropout rates, poor quality, lack of access, and cultural alienation. Several barriers hindering tribal students' access and completion of school education which include poverty, geographical isolation, cultural alienation, language barriers, discrimination, inadequate teaching and learning standards, as well as insufficient infrastructure and facilities. **Ottaplackal and Anbu (2022)**. In the context of Jammu and Kashmir. It has been a matter of concern and interest for the

education department, researchers, policymakers, and activists. These communities are deprived of fundamental rights and opportunities, and they often face discrimination and oppression from the dominant groups. **Chandra and Rafique (2020)**. In Jammu and Kashmir, twelve tribal communities are officially recognized as scheduled tribes. Eight of these communities were granted this status in 1989, namely Balti, Beda, Bot, Brokpas, (Drokpa, Dard and Shin) Changpa, Garra, Mon, and Purigpas. The remaining four communities, Bakarwals, Gujjars, Gaddis, and Sippis, were notified as scheduled tribes in 1991. The official enumeration of all twelve scheduled tribes took place for the first time during the 2001 census, which recorded a population of 1,105,979. As per the 2011 census, the total population of scheduled tribes in the state was 1,493,299, accounting for 11.90% of the state's total population and approximately 1.5% of the country's total tribal population. The literacy rate among scheduled tribes in J&K was recorded at 50%, lower than the national average of 59%. Most of these tribes are concentrated in the Ladakh region of the union territory, while the Gujjar and Bakarwal tribes are predominantly found in the Kashmir valley.

Several efforts have been made by both the government and non-governmental organizations to enhance the educational status of the tribal communities in Jammu and Kashmir. Notable initiatives include. The tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), which provides funds for the development of tribal areas and communities, including education of the Tribal Research and Cultural Foundation (TRCF) conducts research and documentation on tribal culture, history, and traditions, as well as organizing awareness campaigns and workshops on education. The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) offers residential schooling for girls from disadvantaged groups, including various tribes. Additionally, the Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) provide quality education to tribal children in a residential setting. However, it is important to note that the Tulail Valley, the area under investigation, lacks these facilities. Existing literature review of the related studies from Jammu and Kashmir reveals that maximum research work has been done on Gujjar and Bakarwal communities. It seems that Dard community has been given stepmother treatment in the arena of research. After reviewing many journals, studies and articles, neither large nor small scale research could be found on the Dard community of Tulail and Gurez Valleys. Therefore, the researcher found a wide gap of research opportunity and there could not be a better opportunity that it to contribute for the pious cause of research. While there may be other challenges and deficiencies in the area of investigation, but this study primarily focuses on assessing the educational infrastructure and the resulting obstacles faced by tribal students in accessing education in the Tulail Valley.

Objectives of the Study

After taking an overview of the related literature, the following objectives have been formulated for the study.

1. To survey the total number of institutions and find out the enrolment of the students there.
2. To conduct a thorough analysis of the current state of tribal education in the Tulail Valley, evaluating existing institutional infrastructural factors that influence educational outcomes.
3. Identify and elucidate the Challenges hindering access to education within the Tulail Valley in respect of Pupil-Teacher Ratio, Student Classroom Ratio, institution classroom ratio and status of teacher qualification.

By traversing these goals, this study aims to provide significant perspectives to the discussion on tribal education, presenting a detailed comprehension of the difficulties encountered in the Tulail Valley and, consequently, illuminating wider concerns pertaining to tribal education in comparable settings worldwide.

Methodology

The present study is based on primary data, collected in 2021, that has been collected through a comprehensive survey method using natural and emergent inquiry designs. All the institutions existing in the four clusters of Tulail Valley have been surveyed personally by the investigator during data collection. Tools used for data collection were questionnaires, information blanks, field notes and un structured interviews. The collected data has been analysed by thematic analysis. Some themes, serving to the objectives of the study have been created in order to present the data in the desired way.

Data Analysis

Valley of Tulail is divided in to four educational clusters names Burnai, Jarniyal, Badugam and Gujraan. Brief description of these clusters is tabled below.

Educational Clusters and Enrolment of Tulail Valley

Table1.01

S. No	Name of the Cluster	No. of Instts.	Enrolment		Total
			Boys	Girls	
01	Burnai	19	221	189	410
02	Jarniyal	23	325	322	647
03	Badugaam	23	366	343	709
04	Gujraan	14	419	374	793
Total		79	1331	1228	2559

The above table reveals that Tulail Valley has total 79 institutions where 2559 students have been found enrolled. Since valley of Tulail is spread over the distance of about 60 km including Kilshay Valley. Therefore, villages have been distributed to the clusters according to their geographic location by education department. Most of the settlements in Tulail Valley, except Kilshay Valley (a sub valley situated in Burnai Cluster on its north) are located across the Chak-Nalla from Burnai to Gujraan. On a general look of the above data, one comes to know that the educational institutions have not been provided according to the population of the clusters. Burnai, the first cluster, where enrolment of students is least among the four clusters has more institutions than the cluster, where enrolment is most among the four that is Gujraan

STUDENT ENROLMENT OF Tulail**Table1.02**

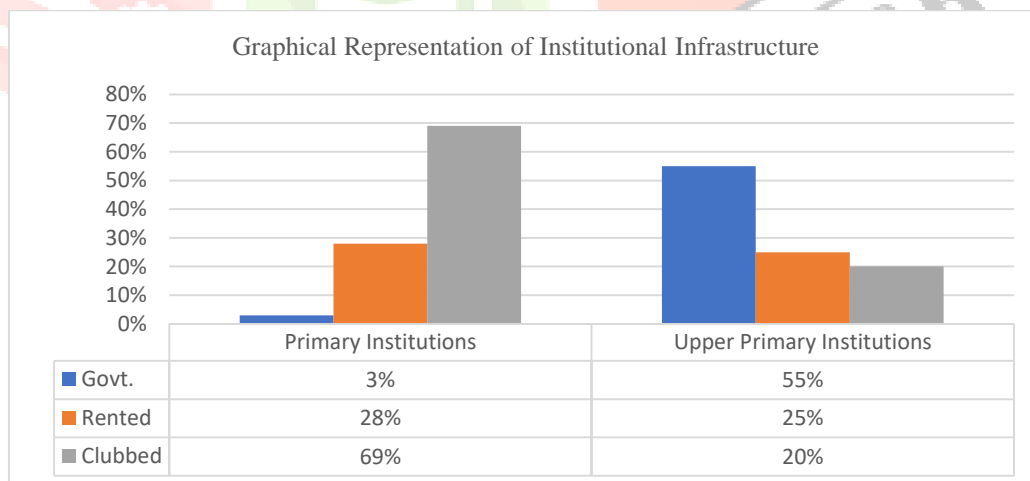
S. No	Enrolment at different levels	No. of Instts.	Boys	Girls	Total	Gender wise Percentage		Enrl Diff. %age
						Boys	Girls	
01	Primary	39	472	385	857	55	45	10
02	Upper Primary	40	859	843	1702	51	49	02
Total		79	1331	1228	2559	52	48	04

Enrl Diff.: Enrolment Difference Percentage

The above table reveals that 2559 students are enrolled in 79 educational institutions in four clusters of Tulail Valley. The enrolment of boys is 10% and 2% excess than Girls at primary and upper primary stages respectively. It shows enrolment disparity in respect of girl students. The data further reveals that enrolment of girls is 10% less at primary level.

INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF Tulail Valley**Table1.03**

S. No	Level of Instt.	No. of Instts	Physical Existence		Student Enrolment	Clubbed Instt.	Student Enrolment	Total Enrolment
			Govt	Rented				
1	Primary	39	01	11	278	27	583	861
2	Upper Primary	40	22	10	1320	08	378	1698
Total		79	23	21	1598	35	961	2559



The above table reveals a grim picture of the educational infrastructure of the Tulail Valley. The lofty claims of the department of education, Jammu and Kashmir seem to be falling cold here. It is seeming that the condition of any tribal community, belonging to any region of India, in terms of educational infrastructure will not be deteriorated and miserable than the area under investigation. It is a sad tragedy that out of 39 primary institutions, only 01 (2.56%) has its own building. Besides the 11 (28.21%) institutions have been found residing in one roomed wooden rented hut. A few among them were having 02 rooms. In these 12

institutions, 01 government and 11 rented, 278 (32.29%) children were being found accommodated. Rest 583 (67.71%) children at primary were without schools. These children have been shifted to nearby upper primary institutions. Whether we call it compulsion or helplessness, both the words are falling short to compensate this ignoring view of education department and government.

STUDENT CLASSROOM RATIO OF *Tulail Valley*

Table 1.04

S. No	Level of Institutions	Institutions Sanctioned	Instts with Buildings	Enrolment	classrooms available	Clubbed Institutions	Enrolment	Total enrolment	Student Classroom Ratio (SCR)	Average Institution CR Ratio
1	Primary	39	12	278	18	27	583	861	15.44:1	≤1/2
2	Upper Primary	40	32	1320	73	08	378	1698	31.25:1	≤2
Total		79	44	1598	91	35	961	2559	28	1

The above table reveals that at primary level, out of 39 institutions, only 12 were having school buildings, and 11 of them were rented buildings. These 12 institutions were having 18 class rooms, where 278 children were to be accommodated. The student classroom ratio of these students is 15.44:1. Similarly at upper primary level out of 40 institutions, 32 were having buildings, that have 73 classrooms, where 2281 school children including 583 children of clubbed primary institutions have been accommodated. The student classroom ratio (SCR) at upper primary level has been found as 31.25:1.

Apparently, this ratio between children and classrooms is not looking much especially at primary level, but when the ratio of average classrooms for each institution is calculated at both levels, a frightening picture emerges. The above table reveals that at primary level, we have 39 institutions on paper, but the number of classrooms available is just 12. Means each institution, has less than half a classroom. At upper primary level, we have 40 institutions, that have 73 classrooms. The above data reveals that, averagely each upper primary institution shares less than two classrooms.

AVAILABLE TEACHING STAFF AND PUPIL TEACHER RATIO

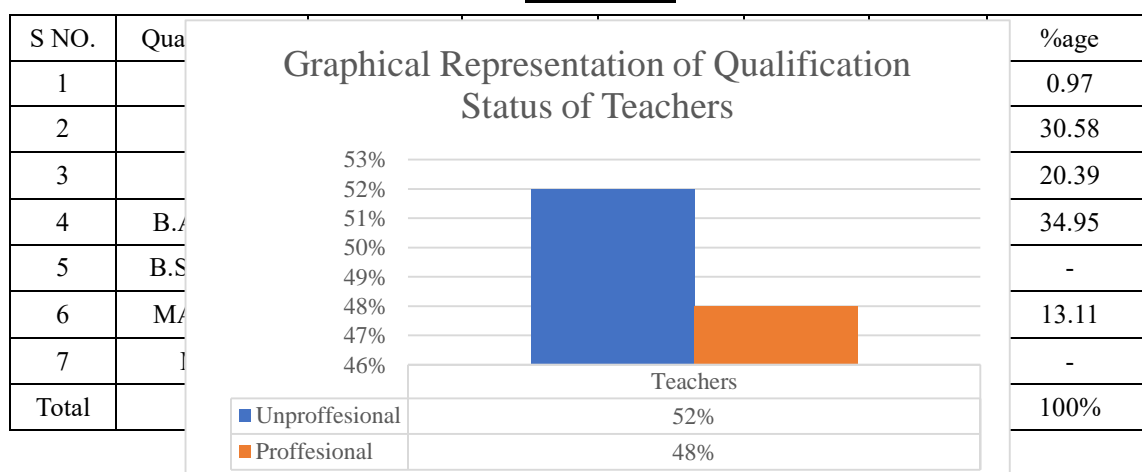
Table: 1.05

S. No	Level of Institution	No. of Instts.	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total	No. of Students	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	Average Tr Institution Ratio
1	Primary Institutions	39	60	06	66	861	13.05:1	≤2
2	U. Primary	40	130	10	140	1698	12.13:1	≤4
Total		79	190	16	206	2559	1:12.42	≤3

The above table displays that at primary level, 861 children were enrolled, for whom 66 teachers were available. The pupil teacher ratio at primary level has been found as 13.05:1. Similarly at upper primary level, 140 teachers were found on job for 1698 school children. The pupil-teacher ratio at upper primary level has been recorded as 12.13:1. Apparently, the pupil-teacher ratio seems satisfactory, but as we move forward to another step, horrific reality gets surface. At primary level each institution has averagely less than 02 teachers, similarly at upper primary level, each institution shares averagely less than 04 teachers. As per RTE act 2009, PTR at primary level has been framed as 30:1 and for upper primary level it has been set as 35:1. But researchers have started to raise questions over PTR, because it is wrongly understood. Rather it should be replaced with teacher classroom ratio (TCR). If we try to understand PTR from the layman's view point, then we are committing mistake, rather it needs creative intellect to understand it. For example, if we have 35 children in an upper primary institution, distributed from KG-8th class, as per RTE act, do we need only one teacher there? When 46 listed subjects are taught there every day. Is it possible for a single teacher. Whether there are 05 children in class or 25. A teacher has to devote equal time and energy to derive high quality results. But as per the data displayed above, a teacher at primary level has to attend sixteen classes averagely in a day. At the upper primary level, a teacher has to teach an average of thirteen subjects a day, which is impossible for a normal human being.

QUALIFICATION STATUS OF TEACHERS OF TULAIL VALLEY

Table: 1.06



According to the National Council for Teacher Education's (NCTE) Regulations 2001, minimum qualification for recruitment of teachers in schools has been determined as graduate with Bachelor of Education (B Ed.) or its equivalent. As per these regulations, 52% teachers have been found untrained and unprofessional working

in Tulail Valley. Though 35% teachers were BA, B Ed., 13% teachers were MA, B Ed. But the study reveals dearth of science and math knowing teachers in all the four clusters. Whatever the percentage of science and math knowing teachers was available there, has been found working in high schools. Besides the percentage of female teachers working there has been found very low (7.77%), which indicates that girl education has been ignored to a large extent in past.

Findings of the Study

1. The study reveals that 69% primary institutions were without school buildings where 68% children were enrolled.
2. Similarly at upper primary level 20% institutions have been without school buildings where 22% children were enrolled.
3. In the valley of Tulail, each primary institution shares averagely less than a half classroom and each upper primary institution shares less than two rooms.
4. The study finds that 52% teachers have been found untrained and unprofessional. Their qualification was not according to the norms and standard of National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE).
5. The study further reveals that the teacher institution ratio at primary level is less than two teachers for each institution. Similarly, the proportion for upper primary institution is less than four teachers.

Discussion

Since achieving independence, the government has introduced a range of initiatives, educational programs, and efforts to foster the progress of tribal education. Positive outcomes have been observed wherever these educational programs have been implemented. However, the distribution of these programs is not evenly spread. The Evaluation report by the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes recognizes the advancements made in tribal education and emphasizes the necessity of maintaining a consistent momentum. The Commission emphasizes the significance of addressing regional disparities and suggests customized interventions to meet the diverse requirements of tribal communities. It is crucial to have continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to further enhance the progress. In recent decades, several notable endeavours have been undertaken, including the establishment of Ekalavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS). These high-quality residential schools cater to talented tribal students from class VI to XIII, providing them with exposure to modern curriculum, technology, sports, and culture. Another initiative is the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), which offers residential education to girls from disadvantaged groups such as SC, ST, OBC, minority, and below poverty line (BPL) backgrounds. These schools empower the girls through education, life skills, and vocational training. Additionally, Vocational Training Centres (VTC) have been set up to provide skill development and employability training to tribal youth, particularly school dropouts. These centres connect them with various sectors like agriculture, horticulture, handicrafts, tourism, and more. Furthermore, Ashram Schools have been established in remote and inaccessible areas to cater specifically to tribal children. These residential schools offer free education, boarding and lodging facilities, textbooks, uniforms, and other necessary provisions. Moreover, the government allocates funds under the tribal sub plan to support the development of tribal communities, including education, research on

tribal communities, documentation of their culture, traditions, and history, as well as organizing awareness campaigns and workshops in tribal areas. However, it is worth noting that no evidence of any of the above-mentioned educational programs has been found in Tulail. The Tribal Affairs Department of Jammu and Kashmir has a primary responsibility of overseeing and monitoring the development of tribal communities. It is crucial to adopt a comprehensive and inclusive approach in order to enhance the educational infrastructure in Tulail valley, which has been identified as inadequate. This will enable the recognition of the diverse talents and potential of the Dard tribal students. Upon gathering feedback from parents regarding the educational infrastructure, it is evident that they express frustration with the government's perceived lack of concern for their children's future. Therefore, it is imperative for the authorities to establish committees for annual monitoring and evaluation, as well as develop a system for receiving feedback from the concerned tribal groups and addressing their grievances.

Conclusion

This research paper provides valuable insights into the critical issues surrounding tribal education, specifically focusing on the Tulail Valley. Through an examination of various factors such as educational infrastructure, teaching quality, pupil-teacher ratio, and accommodation challenges, a complex and multifaceted landscape has been revealed, demanding immediate attention and strategic interventions. The findings emphasize the urgent need for targeted efforts to address the disparities in educational resources and opportunities faced by tribal community of Tulail. The state of tribal education in the Tulail Valley reflects broader challenges that resonate with indigenous populations worldwide. The lack of adequate educational infrastructure, poor teaching quality, and accommodation issues are not isolated concerns in Tulail but rather interconnected facets of a systematic problems have been found there. Therefore, efforts to improve educational outcomes in this tribal valley must adopt a holistic approach that encompass infrastructural development, teacher training, and solutions to accommodation constraints. Additionally, it is crucial for policymakers, educational authorities, and community stakeholders to collaborate closely in designing and implementing initiatives tailored to the unique needs of educational sector. By acknowledging and confronting these challenges directly, there is a potential to not only enhance educational outcomes but also promote empowerment, inclusivity and sustainable development within the Tulail Valley.

To progress, it is advisable for forthcoming research and interventions to consider the cultural subtleties and viewpoints of the community, engaging local stakeholders in decision-making. This approach aims to foster a comprehensive and fair educational setting that fosters the intellectual capabilities of the tribal population in the Tulail Valley and other comparable regions worldwide. Ultimately, this study serves as a rallying cry, urging collaborative endeavours to surmount the challenges encountered in form of poor educational infrastructure by these tribal school children there, thus paving the path for a more optimistic and promising future for the historically disadvantaged and marginalized Dard tribal community.

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Figure 1 Investigator while data collection at habitation Refugee II, Kilshay Tulail



Figure 2 Govt, Upper Primary School Gratnala Tulail

