



DISPARITIES IN EDUCATIONAL ACCESS OF TRIBALS: ANALYSING SCHOOL AVAILABILITY IN TRIBAL ZONES OF DISTRICT GANDERBAL, JAMMU AND KASHMIR

ZAHOOR AHMAD BHAT*, MAHMOOD AHMAD KHAN

MAZEDAN INT. J. OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

e-ISSN: 2582-9564

Article id-MIJSSH0303001

Vol-3, Issue-3

Received: 28 Feb 2022

Revised: 14 Mar 2022

Accepted: 16 Mar 2022

Citation: Bhat, Z. A., & Khan, M. A. (2022). Disparities in Educational Access of Tribals: Analysing School Availability in Tribal Zones of District Ganderbal, Jammu and Kashmir. *Mazedan International Journal of Social Science and Humanities*, 3(3), 1-5.

Abstract

Disparities in educational access especially in tribal areas has been one of the grave issues in addressing tribal education. The study aimed to analyse educational access and disparities in school availability in tribal educational zones and stages of school education. The study adopted descriptive survey to understand the demographics and availability of schools; applied self-designed Information blank to collect data from educational zones and analysed the data, using tabulation as well as percentage statistics. The study concluded that access to secondary education is limited in district Ganderbal, as the district possess low number of educational institutions (middle, high and higher secondary). Moreover, disparity has been found in educational institutions with respect to tribal dominated educational zones i.e., Hariganwan and Kangan. The tribal dominated educational zones lack access to schooling and possess low number of schools compared to other two educational zones i.e., Ganderbal and Tullamulla having dominant non tribal populations. This study has implications for policy planner to understand the dynamics of school access in tribal areas and increase schooling accessibility by establishing more upper primary and secondary schools especially in remote tribal zones, keeping in mind their topographical, seasonal movement, cultural underpinnings.

Keywords: Bakarwal, Disparity, Education Access, Gujjar, School Availability, Tribal Areas.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a basic (UN, 1948) fundamental (UN, 1948) human right (Jakarta Declaration, 2005) of every citizen and any distinction and discrimination of any form viz., linguistic, religious, political, race, birth, socio-economic status, sex, stereotyping, etc. shall not prevents children from receiving education (UNESCO, 1960; ICESCR, 1966). India also took significant measures to make education birth right of every child. The noteworthy among them were Article 45 (DSPS), Article 21-A and RTE Act – 2009. The recent education policy (NEP, 2020) plans to adopt inclusive, equitable, integrated and flexible approach towards education, thus reconfigured its educational system. “All children have a right to go to school and have equal access to education at all stage” (UNESCO, 2016) but many countries failed to protect such rights and are struggling to fulfil basic component i.e., equal access of right to education (Human Rights Watch, 2016). School unavailability deprive children of their right to education and penalise them for the rest of their lives. In 2014, UNESCO, Institute of Statistics in its report stated that the number of illiterates and out-of-school children is highest in India. In India, 60 Lakh (2.9 %) of children (aged 6-13) are OOSC and 26 lack (44.5 %) of them were never enrolled and in J&K, 45468 (2.04 %) were OOSC and never enrolled constitute 29 thousand (64.22 %) and 13 thousand (30.75 %) dropouts. National level figures of OOSC were highest among tribals 4.20 % and Muslims 4.43 %. In India 19.70 %, and in J&K 16.16

% tribal children aged 6-13 were OOS and 18.53 % and 5.03 % of them were never enrolled in any school (NSSO Survey, 2014). 3.22 crore children (aged 6-17 years) were out of school (NSSO, 2017-18) and majority of them were tribal children. India has made tremendous progress in enhancing accessibility to basic education since independence, but the meaningful access is hampered by numerous factors and school supply is one among them (CREATE, 2009). Access of children of disadvantaged communities and minorities especially tribals to education is low and unsatisfactory and are socially excluded groups. Lagging access to school is systemic and multifaced. Khan (1987) stated that J&K state instead of establishing new schools are running schools on rental basis in private buildings. Chandra (1990) in his study was concerned about the educational provisions available for tribals of Nilgiris. The tribals of Nilgiris were among the least educated and the main problem was school inaccessibility. Khan (1991) stated that the significant increase in population of Jammu and Kashmir has led to increase in enrolment, however, the rate of establishing new school is still meagre and to attend school, children have to cover longer distances. Malik, Bhat & Ganai (2006) found that only 60.65 % Gujjar and Bakarwal children aged 6-15 years were admitted in schools and rest of tribal children could not join schools due to lack of access to school and other reasons. Malik, Bhat & Ganai (2007) stated found only 14 mobile schools for a tribal

population of Kupwara and 54162 Gujjar and Bakarwal children aged below 15 years and only 47.27 % possess school within 1 Km ranges and other 35.46 % had to cover upto two kilometres and 17.27 % had to walk more than three kilometres to reach nearby school. Bhat (2008) was concerned about the pathetic picture of Gujjar & Bakarwal tribe at primary education stage, which opens the gates for further education. Basumatary (2012) found poverty, elevated school distance, poor transport mainly responsible for school dropout. A significant tribal hamlet of Hasanur village of Thalavady, Satyamagalam (Tamil Nadu) lack schooling facilities and tribal children attend school after walking the distance of 12-15 Kms (Thangmani, 2015). Pajankar (2016) observed that children of tribal habituation have to walk long distance through rocky pathways and muddy slopes to reach school. Mehendale (n.d.) stated about the historical deprivation of tribals and their inaccessibility to resources and education as well. The government has failed to provide them functional schools where they could enrol. CBPS (2017) stated that tribal children of Maharashtra are deprived access to free and affordable schooling. Empirical studies and report have clearly shown children who even in today’s world, still remain out of school belong to “hardest to reach” areas and most “vulnerable” social groups. The areas with high concentration of tribal children and other marginalised communities are “pockets of exclusion form schools” (MHRD, 2013). Infrastructural facilities in most of the areas habituated by tribals are poor (Rajeshwar & Ramachandram, 2019). The nature of the geospatial setting is not kept into consideration and hence have to walk long distance to attend school. Lone & Khan (2017:2018) stated that the students with least exposure to the outer world as well as least provision of facilities are tribal students.

With this backdrop, the researchers intended to study school availability in district Ganderbal (J&K), which have the largest proportion (20.53 %) of tribal population in Kashmir division. District is linguistically and culturally diverse (Bhat & Khan, 2020) and majority of its populace resides in rural areas. The district attracts tribal Gujjar/Bakarwals of other district in summer as it is bestowed with hilly lush green alpine pastures and meadows. The district has four educational zones (Ganderbal, Tullamulla, Kangan and Hariganwan) and two of its educational zones (Kangan and Hariganwan) are heavily dominated by tribal Gujjar and Bakarwal communities and constitute around 85 % tribal population and 87 % percent of households. The literacy figure of Gujjar/Bakarwal tribals are pathetically low (43.6 %), below overall literacy rates (58 %) of the district (Bhat & Khan, 2021).

2. OBJECTIVES

The study aimed to analyse educational access and disparities in school availability in tribal educational zones. With these aims in mind, the objectives formulated were to enumerate total number of educational institutions (government only) and make a comparison with respect to zones and stage of education with special emphasis on tribal educational zones.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey to understand the demographics and availability of schools and applied self-designed Information blank to collect data. The researchers visited chief and all zonal educational offices of the district and seek information via information blank regarding educational institutions of the district Ganderbal. The data regarding educational institutions was limited to government schools managed by school education department of Jammu and Kashmir, excluding schools managed by central government, ministry of tribal affairs, and wakf boards. The data was analysed using tabulation and percentage statistics.

4. RESULTS

Table 1 Total number of educational institutions in district Ganderbal for the year 2018-19

Total Educational Institutions	Elementary (I-VIII)	Secondary (IX-XII)
578	521	57

Note: Government only

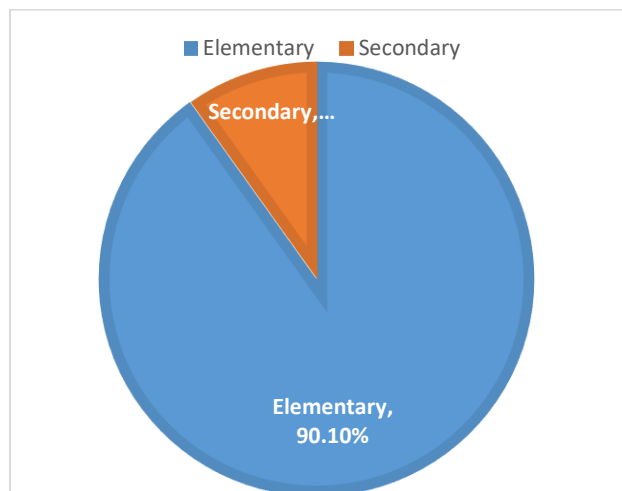


Figure 1 Percentage of elementary and secondary schools in district Ganderbal

Table 2 Stage wise total number of educational institutions in district Ganderbal for the year 2018-19

Primary (I-V)	Middle (VI-VIII)	High (IX-X)	Higher Secondary (XI-XII)
356	165	40	17

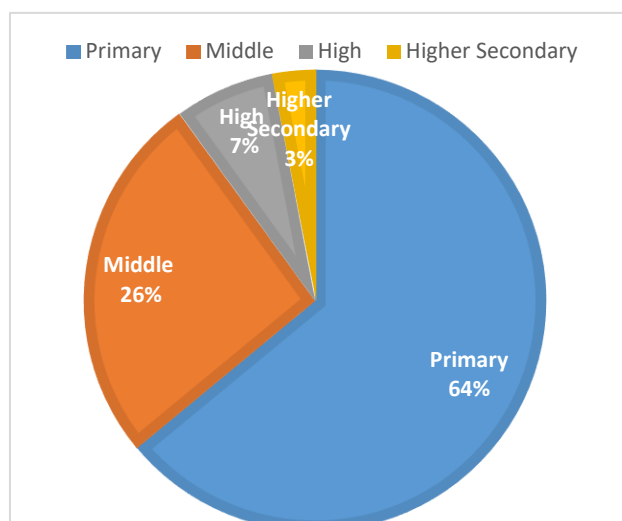


Figure 2 Stage wise percentage of educational institutions in district Ganderbal

In 2018-19, there were 578 educational institutions in district Ganderbal, managed by government that offer education to children from class I-XII. Of all 578 government schools of district Ganderbal, 521 or 90.1 % offer elementary education (I-VIII) and only 57 or 9.86 % offer secondary education (IX-XIII).

Among schools offering elementary education, 356 or 61.59 % were primary schools offering education from class I to class V, 165 or 28.54 % are middle schools offering education from class VI to class VIII, 40 or 6.92 % were high schools offering education from class IX to class X and 17 or 2.94 % were higher secondary schools offering education from class XI-XII.

Table 3 zone wise number and percentage of educational institutions in district Ganderbal

Educational zones	Total number of schools	Percentage
Zone Ganderbal	139	24.04 %
Zone Tullamulla	142	24.56 %
Zone Kangan	166	34.46 %
Zone Hariganwan	131	23.11 %

Of all 578 educational institutions, 139 or 24.04 % were in zone Ganderbal, 142 or 24.56 % in zone Tullamulla, 166 or 34.46 % in zone Kangan and 131 or 23.11 % in zone Hariganwan.

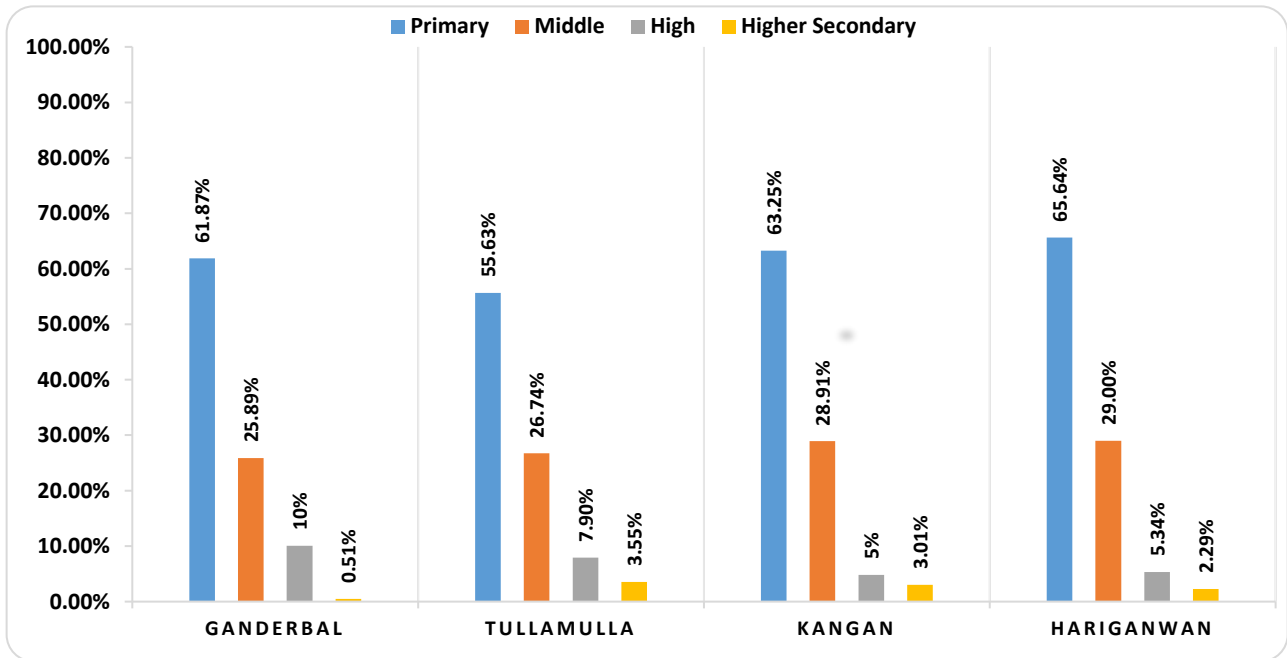


Figure 3 Zone wise percentage of different types of educational institutions

Of all 139 schools of zone Ganderbal, 86 or 61.87 % were primary, 36 or 25.89 % were middle, 14 or 10.07 % were high and 3 or 0.51 % were higher secondary schools. Of all 142 schools of zone Tullamulla, 79 or 55.63 % were primary, 46 or 26.74 % were middle, 11 or 7.90 % were high and 6 or 3.55 % were higher secondary schools. Of all 166 schools of zone Kangan, 105 or 63.25 % were primary, 48 or 28.91 % were middle, 8 or 4.81 % were high and 5 or 3.01 % were higher secondary schools. Of all 131 schools of zone Hariganwan, 86 or 65.64 % were primary, 38 or 29.00 % were middle, 7 or 5.34 % were high and 3 or 2.29 % were higher secondary schools.

Table 4 Zone wise number of primary schools in district Ganderbal

Total Primary Schools	Zone Ganderbal	Zone Tullamulla	Zone Kangan	Zone Hariganwan
356	86 (24.15 %)	79 (22.19 %)	105 (29.49 %)	86 (24.15 %)

Of all 356 primary schools, of district Ganderbal, zone Ganderbal, Tullamulla, Kangan and Hariganwan has 86 or 24.15 %, 79 or 22.19 %, 105 or 29.49 %, 86 or 24.15 % primary schools respectively.

Table 5 Zone wise number of middle schools in district Ganderbal.

Total Primary School	Ganderbal	Tullamulla	Kangan	Hariganwan
165	36 (21.81 %)	46 (27.87 %)	48 (29.09 %)	35 (21.21 %)

Of all 165 middle schools of district Ganderbal, zone Ganderbal, Tullamulla, Kangan and Hariganwan have 36 or 21.81 %, 46 or 27.87 %, 48 or 29.09 %, 35 or 21.21 % middle schools respectively.

Table 6 Zone wise number of high schools in district Ganderbal

Total Primary School	Ganderbal	Tullamulla	Kangan	Hariganwan
40	14 (35 %)	11 (27.5 %)	8 (20 %)	7 (17.5 %)

Of all 40 high schools of district Ganderbal, zone Ganderbal, Tullamulla, Kangan and Hariganwan have 14 or 35 %, 11 or 27.5 %, 8 or 20 %, 7 or 17.5 % high schools respectively.

Table 7 Zone wise number of higher secondary schools in district Ganderbal

Total Primary School	Ganderbal	Tullamulla	Kangan	Hariganwan
17	3 (17.64 %)	6 (35.29 %)	5 (29.4 %)	3 (17.64 %)

Of all 17 higher secondary schools of district Ganderbal, zone Ganderbal, Tullamulla, Kangan and Hariganwan

have 3 or 17.64 %, 6 or 35.29 %, 5 or 29.4 %, 3 or 17.64 % higher secondary schools respectively.

5. DISCUSSION

There were 578 government educational institutions in district Ganderbal (2018-19) of which 90.10 % were elementary and just 10.86 % were secondary schools. The share middle is low (26 %) and high (7 %) and higher secondary schools is lowest (3 %). There exists a zonal disparity (inter and intra) in number of schools, educational zones with dominant Gujjar and Bakarwal populations and habitations has lowest number and share in schools. Of all 578 schools, zone Hariganwan, which is dominated by tribal Gujjar and Bakarwal community has only 131 i.e., lowest number of educational institutions among four educational zones reflecting disparity and unequal allocation/availability of schools to tribal dominated areas. Moreover, the number of elementary, middle, high and higher secondary educational institutions were lowest in zone Hariganwan, reflecting educational and school unavailability in tribal Gujjar and Bakarwal dominated zones. There were just 10 secondary (7 high, 3 higher secondary) schools against 121 elementary schools and just 35 Middle against 86 primary schools in zone Hariganwan. Furthermore, tribal Gujjar and Bakarwal dominated zone Kangan has highest number of educational institutions offering elementary education (Primary 105, Upper Primary 48) however, has the second lowest number of educational institutions offering secondary education (High schools 8 & Higher secondaries 5) in comparison to non-tribal/non-Gujjar & Bakarwal or majority community dominated educational zones of Ganderbal and Tullamulla.

Many empirical reports and studies conducted by numerous researchers concur with our results. CSF (2020) witnessed a decline of 2 % in government school in India. Kumar (2008) also found tribal pockets face the same fate (lack of schools) as did we find in our study. There are significant scarcities and disparities/inequalities in basic school accessibility especially among disadvantaged, rural and tribal children within/between states of India (Alcott & Rose, 2017; Asadullah & Yalonetzky, 2012; Agarwal, 2014). The tribal district of Maharashtra also has low number of government schools and the problem of educational/school unavailability is due to school rationalisation process, and increase in quantum of private schools (CBPS, 2017). Pajankar (2016) in his study on Madhya Pradesh tribals groups also found lack of schools and educational inaccessibility in tribal villages in contrast to main villages. 11.54 % tribal households of India still lack school within 1 Km range as envisaged by SSA, which puts barriers in achieving goals of various schemes and Universalisation of Education Brahmanandam & Babu (2016). The acute school shortage in tribal zones was found despite the provision of special norms in establishing novel primary schools in such areas (Sujatha, n. d.). Sharma (2014) also found educational access and equity were the dominant educational issues faced by tribal Bakarwals, Gaddis and Gujjars of J&K. Similarly, the condition of remote tribal hamlets of Jharkhand are no different and they also face acute dearth of schools in tribal areas, which clearly determined state governments failure to support education of tribals. (Kumar, 2008).

Sujatha (2016) studied tribals of 9 India states and also found shortage of educational institutions in 2022 tribal dwellings. The reasons attributed were shut down of school with meagre enrolment which has further escalated educational access. Greater Kashmir (02 June 2016:09 July 2018) stated school merging has also forced many schools (91 in 2016 and 18 in 2018) to shut, thus creating more shortage and disparities. Another study also found twenty five percent of tribal areas did not have school within a prescribed radius of one kilometre (Debi & E (n. d.).

6. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the number of educational institutions offering post primary education i.e., Grade VI onward in district Ganderbal was low. Upper primary schooling availability in the district were limited as the ratio of primary to upper primary schools in the district was 356:164. Many children especially from remote tribal areas discontinue education after primary stage due to lack of upper primary schools in their vicinities. Similarly, availability of secondary schools and accessibility to secondary education in the district was limited, affecting the target of USE (Universal Secondary Education) and SDG 4 (Universal Primary and Secondary Education). Children of tribal Gujjar and Bakarwal communities habituated on low density hilly terrains, sloped and pastures especially female loss the opportunity of education post primary stage and end up in dropping out after leaving nearby school in the village. The tribal dominated educational zones i.e., Hariganwan and Kangan comprises 87.14 % of tribal population and 87.93 % of tribal households (Gujjar and Bakarwal). The study concluded that there exists a zonal disparity in number of educational institutions of district Ganderbal and dominantly Gujjar and Bakarwal habituated Hariganwan zone possess lowest number of educational institutions (86 primary, 35 middle, 7 high and 3 higher secondary) among all four zones. The school availability/accessibility (Elementary & Secondary) in the tribal dominated educational zone i.e., Hariganwan was low compared to other three zones. The school unavailability/inaccessibility further widens at secondary stage in the district and was more severe in tribal zones of Kangan and Hariganwan.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The results enlighten policy makers and administrators about the zonal disparities in school allocation, availability and accessibility in general and the problem of unavailability of adequate educational institutions in tribal educational zones in particular. Policy planners, experts and decision makers must cater the educational needs of tribal Gujjar and Bakarwal communities and establish a greater number of schools offering post primary education and allocate/establish schools keeping into consideration their population density, geospatial conditions, nature of habitations, remoteness and frequent mobility. It is recommended to establish a greater number of middle, high and higher secondary schools in district Ganderbal in general and tribal dominated Gujjar and Bakarwal educational zones of Hariganwan and Kangan.

REFERENCES

- 2406 schools merged under rationalization process across Kashmir: govt (2016, June 02). *Greater Kashmir*. Retrieved from: <https://www.greaterkashmir.com/kashmir/2406-schools-merged-under-rationalization-process-across-kashmir-govt>
- Alcott, B., & Rose, P. (2017). Learning in India's primary schools: How do disparities widen across the grades? *International Journal of Educational Development*, 56, 42-51. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2011.11.008>
- Basumatary, R. (2012). School dropout across Indian states and UTs: An economic study. *International research journal of social sciences*, 1(4), 28-35.
- Bhat, M. S. (2008). Haunting problems of education among Gujjars and Bakarwals. *INSIGHT Journal of Applied Research in Education*, 14(1), 103-108.
- [Bhat, Z. A., & Khan, M. A. \(2020\). Exploring the indigenous language of Gujjar and Bakerwal Communities. *KALA: The Journal of Indian Arts History Congress* 26\(2\), 107-115](#)
- Brahmanandam, T. & Bosu Babu, T. (2016). Educational status among the scheduled tribes: Issues and challenges. *The NEHU Journal*, XIV (2), 69-85. <https://nehu.ac.in/public/downloads/Journals/NEHU-Journal-July-Dec-2016-A5.pdf>
- Central Square Foundation (2020). *School education in India data, trends, and policies*. Retrieved From: https://educationforallinindia.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/School_education_in_India_Data_Trends_Policies_Central_Square_Foundation.pdf
- Centre for Budget and Policy Studies -CBPS (2017). Reviewing the status of education in tribal areas in Maharashtra: A comprehensive report. Bangalore. https://cbps.in/wp-content/uploads/CBPS_TribalReport_UNICEF_FIN_AL-.pdf
- Chandra, R. (1990). *Instructional communication and modernity in the tribal world: A study among the tribes of Nilgiris*. New Delhi: Inter-India Publications
- Debi, S., & E, M. (n. d.). *Development of education of scheduled tribes in Orissa: The role of PESA Act*. Monograph Series No. 52, Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research, Karnataka India. http://cmdr.ac.in/editor_v51/assets/mono-52.pdf
- Human Rights Watch (2016). *The education deficit failures to protect and fulfill the right to education in global development agendas*. USA. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/accessible_document/educationdeficit0616_accessible.pdf
- Khan, M. M. A. (1991). Universalisation of elementary education in Jammu and Kashmir - A Utopian Dream. *Educational Ladder*, 6, 14-18
- Khan, M. A. (1987). Elementary education in Jammu & Kashmir: A review. *The Educational Review*, 93 (10), 167-170
- Kumar, D. A. (2008). Universal primary education among tribals in Jharkhand: A situational analysis of Jharkhand. *Journal of Development and Management Studies*, 6(4), 3111-3123
- Lone, M. M., & Khan, P. D. M. A. (2017). Mental health of tribal and non-tribal students of Kashmir. *Human Behaviour-Journal of Applied Psychology*, 12(1), 60-72
- Lone, M. M., & Khan, P. D. M. A. (2018). A comparative study of social intelligence of tribal and non-tribal students of Kashmir. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 6(1), 1522-1531
- Malik, P. G. M., Bhat, M. S., & Ganai, D. M. Y. (2007). Education of Gujjar and Bakarwals in district Kupwara. *INSIGHT Journal of Applied Research in Education*, 13(1), 14-26
- Mehendale, A. (n. d.). Isolated communities and ignored claims: Tribal children's right to education in India. 1-7. From: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/2162.pdf/>
- MHRD (2013). Interventional strategies for Special Training. Retrieved from: https://www.education.gov.in/en/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/OoSC.pdf
- Pajanka, V. D. (2016). A case study on accessibility of school in tribal areas and its implications on educational inclusiveness. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(19), 10-13.
- Panda, A. & Ojha, L. (2021). Wastage' is a challenge of tribal education - A review-based study. *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 7(1), 34-38. DOI: 10.36713/epra2013
- Rajeshwar, G., & Ramachandram, P. V. (2019). scope of education among tribal children in Telangana. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(3), DOI: 10.25215/0703.036
- Sharma, V. (2014). Education and women empowerment among Gujjars, Bakerwals and Gaddis in Jammu region of Jammu and Kashmir. *International Journal of Research*, 1(4), 452-467.
- Sujatha, K. (2016). Assessment of available facilities for primary and upper primary education in predominantly tribal areas in nine states. NRRPS/002/2016, NIEPA, New Delhi. Retrieved from: http://niepa.ac.in/new/download/Research/National_Report_of_Tribal_Areas_of_Nine_States_June10,_2016.pdf
- Sujatha, K. (n. d.). *Education among scheduled tribes. India Education Report*, CED code- B.N21.G1, Retrieved from: http://www.doccentre.net/docsweb/Education/Scanned_material/analysis_Tribals.pdf
- Thangmani, D. M. (2015). Education for tribal children: An engine for human development. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 3(2), 60-68.