

# **Retention of Tribal Students at Upper Primary Stage with special focus on Gender and Educational Zones**

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## **Abstract**

The study attempts to know the extent of enrolment, and retention rate of tribal students at upper primary stage and provide a comparative picture of tribal with respect to gender and educational zones of Ganderbal district. Descriptive survey has been used in present study. Using Information Blank, the primary information about student enrolment was gathered from the Chief and Zonal Educational offices of district Ganderbal. Percentage statistics was used to analyse the data. Statistical results were visualised through tables and bar graphs. The study revealed that tribals constitute 31.37% and 27.74% of aggregate Grade VI and Grade VIII enrolment respectively. The aggregate retention rate of district Ganderbal at Upper Primary stage of education was low (88.62%) while as that of tribal children also low (78.83%). The gaps/disparity between aggregate and tribal GRR were found. Gender disparity in GRR were observed in GRR of district Ganderbal. At upper primary stage, girls had low GRR (76.08%) than boys (81.48%), and tribal girls have lowest compared to boys (aggregate & tribal). Zonal disparity in GRR was observed in district Ganderbal. Zone Hariganwan had lowest GRR (Tribal and Overall) compared to zone, Kangan, Ganderbal and Tullamulla at upper primary stage.

## **Introduction**

A long-held belief that universal literacy and fundamental education are the cornerstones of social change and economic progress has been thoroughly investigated and supported by empirical studies. Education has also been praised by conventional wisdom as the foundation of civilisational advancement. The status of education as a fundamental human right has not been contested. However, in many nations across the world, the objective of basic education and universal literacy has not been realised and India is not an exception. The literacy has jumped to 77.7% in 2022 compared to 73% in 2011, females (70.3%) significantly below male literary rates (84.7%) reports National Survey of India. When compared to other countries, India has the highest concentration of people who are illiterate and children who are not in school (Rana, 2022). Even before

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the era of independence, policymakers were worried about making elementary education available to everyone. Soon after India gained its independence, the need for Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) was widely acknowledged. In this regard, a directive in the form of Article 45 was included in the constitution of India, stating all children up to the age of 14 must get free and obligatory elementary education within ten years of the constitution's implementation. According to the constitutional mandate, all children between the ages of 6 and 11 must have access to a primary education lasting five years, and all students between the ages of 11 and 14 must have access to a three-year upper primary education. A countrywide national integrated programme SSA 2001 also set targets of completing 8 years of schooling, narrowing down disparities (gender and social category) as well as universal retention by the year 2010. Throughout the decades after its independence from British colonial rule, government repeatedly established specified goals and deadlines for achieving UEE, but these were yet to be accomplished even after decades of independence. The government has focused more on primary education than upper primary school to achieve UEE. India has made considerable strides in expanding children's access to education, which has boosted primary stage enrolment rates. As a result of increased enrolment at the primary level of education, there has been an increase in the amount of pressure exerted to raise enrolment at the upper primary level of education. The concept of universalizing upper primary education in India is typically considered in terms of ensuring that all children between the ages of 11 and 14 are enrolled in school and continue their education. Upper primary enrolment is a better predictor of primary school graduation rates than age and their continuation till grade VIII determines success of upper primary stage.

There are three obstacles to attaining UEE. The first involves enrolling children in school, the second requires ensuring that they remain in the educational system, and the third involves their gaining valuable knowledge throughout their stay. The struggle to retain students enrolled in school until Grade VIII has been going on for a long time. Educational endeavours can be judged in part by the percentage of registered students who successfully complete their courses of study rather than dropping out. The low number of students who complete upper primary schooling in India is a major problem for the country's education system. The challenge becomes more complicated since dropout rates, albeit decreasing, remain high. The dropout rate at upper primary stage for the year 2018-19 was 5.1% at national level with significant gender, category and regional disparities (U-DISE, 2018-19). A total of 3.22 crore children between the ages of 6-17 were out of school (OoSc) in 2017-18, according to data collected by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) during its 75th round of household surveys. A large percentage of children, especially those from minority groups, low-income families, and

weaker elements of society, continue to remain OoSC. This article attempts to assess the tribal enrolment and retention rates of government run schools at district level, to know the extent of tribal retention, gender, social category and zonal disparities.

### Objectives

- To know the extent of retention and retention rate of tribal students at upper primary Stage in district Ganderbal.
- To compare the retention and retention rate of tribal students on the basis of gender and educational zones of district Ganderbal.

### Methodology and Procedure

Descriptive survey has been used in present study. Using Information Blank, the primary information about student enrolment was gathered from the Chief and Zonal Educational offices of district Ganderbal. The study was delimited to Ganderbal district which comprises of four educational zones: Zone Ganderbal, Tullamulla, Kangan, and Hariganwan. Percentage statistics was used to analyse the data. Statistical results were visualised through tables and bar graphs. The enrolment of government upper primary schools run by public education department were taken into consideration because tribal areas lack provisions of private education, possess low number of private schools that too at long distances and education in tribal areas is main responsibility of the government. To calculate retention rate, Grade VIII enrolment (2018-19) was divided by Grade VI enrolment (2016-17) and multiplied by 100.

### Analysis and Interpretation

**Table 1. showing enrolment of students (tribal and all students) of district Ganderbal in Grade VI (2016-17) and Grade VIII (2018-19).**

District Ganderbal						
Grade/Year	Tribal			All students		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
<b>Grade VI 2016-17</b>	363	368	<b>731</b>	1090	1240	<b>2330</b>
<b>Grade VIII 2018-19</b>	293	280	<b>573</b>	977	1088	<b>2065</b>

Note: *Enrolment of government schools only.*

The overall Grade VI enrolment in the year 2016-17 of the district Ganderbal was 2330 (Male 46.78 %, Female 53.21%) and the same for tribal students were 731 (Male 49.65 %, Female 50.34 %). The overall Grade VIII enrolment in the year 2018-19 of the

district Ganderbal was 2065 (Male 47.31 %, Female 52.68 %) and the same for Tribal students were 573 (Male 51.13 %, Female 48.86 %).

**Table 2. Showing zone wise enrolment shares of tribal students to the total enrolment of the educational zones.**

Grade /Year	Category	Educational Zones											
		Ganderbal			Tullamulla			Kangan			Hariganwan		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Grade VI 2016-17	ALL	225	312	537	217	200	417	311	414	725	337	314	651
	Tribal	14	12	26	14	15	32	131	184	315	201	157	358
Share		6.22 %	3.84 %	4.84 %	6.45 %	7.5 %	7.67 %	42.1 %	44.4 %	43.44 %	59.6 %	50 %	54.99 %
Grade VIII 2018-19	ALL	219	291	510	197	175	372	262	346	608	299	276	575
	Tribal	13	10	23	14	13	27	101	135	236	165	122	287
Share		5.93 %	3.43 %	4.5 %	7.10 %	7.42 %	7.25 %	38.5 %	39.0 %	38.81 %	55.1 %	44.2 %	49.91 %

The share of tribal enrolment to total Grade VI (2016-17) enrolment of educational zones was highest in Hariganwan zone 54.99 % (Male 60.26%, Female 62.26%), followed by Kangan zone 43.44 % (Male 42.12 %, Female 44.44 %), Tullamulla zone 7.67 % (Male 6.45 %, Female 7.5 %), and Ganderbal zone 4.84 % (Male 6.22 %, Female 60.73 %). The share of tribal enrolment to total Grade VIII (2018-19) enrolment of educational zones was highest in Hariganwan zone 49.91 % (Male 55.18%, Female 44.20%), followed by Kangan zone 38.81 % (Male 38.54 %, Female 39.01 %), Tullamulla zone 7.25 % (Male 7.10 %, Female 7.42 %), and Ganderbal zone 4.5 % (Male 6.22 %, Female 3.84 %).

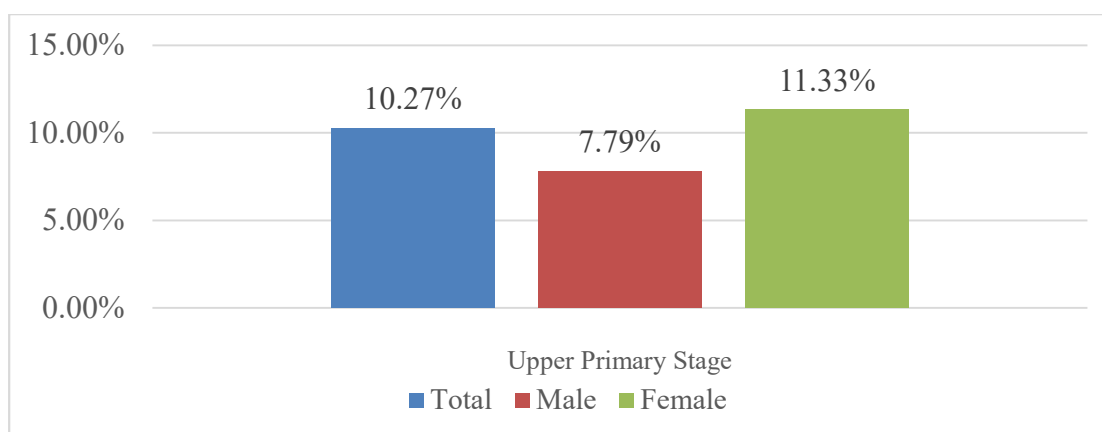
**Table 3. showing retention & retention rate of overall and tribal students of district Ganderbal.**

District Ganderbal						
Stage	All students			Tribal		
	M	M	M	M	F	T
Upper Primary (VI-VIII)	977 (89.63)	977 (89.63)	977 (89.63)	293 (81.84)	280 (76.08)	573 (78.38)

Note: The above stated retention is gross retention rate as repeaters are not taken into account.

The GRR of all students of district Ganderbal at upper primary stage for the year 2018-19 was 88.62% (Male 89.63%, Female 87.41%), indicating that 2065 (Male 977, Female 1088) students reached Grade VIII compared to their Grade VI enrolment of 2330 (Male 1090, Female 1240) two years back i.e., 2016-17. However, in case of tribal students, GRR at upper primary stage was 78.38% (Male 81.84%, Female 76.08%), indicating that as many as 573 (Male 293, Female 280) retained till Grade VIII compared their enrolment four two back (2016-17) of 731 (Male 363, Female 368).

The data highlights a significant gap of 10.27% between overall and tribal students at upper primary stage. Looking at male and female GRR rates, the male GRR of overall and Tribal students are higher than female GRR and a gap of 7.79% male and 11.33% exist between male & female GRR.



**Figure 1. showing gaps in GRR at upper primary stage (All & Tribal) of district Ganderbal.**

**Table 4. showing zone wise retention rate of all students to total enrolment in each zone.**

Stage	Educational Zones											
	Ganderbal			Tullamulla			Kangan			Hariganwan		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Upper Primary (VI-VIII)	96.90	93.26	<b>94.97</b>	90.78	87.5	<b>89.20</b>	84.24	83.57	<b>83.86</b>	88.72	87.89	<b>88.32</b>

Of 2065 (Male 977, Female 1088) overall GRR of district Ganderbal at upper primary stage (2018-19), zone Ganderbal has 94.97 % (Male 96.90 %, Female 93.26 %), zone Tullamulla has 89.20 % (Male 90.78, Female 87.5 %) zone Kangan has 83.86 % (Male 84.24 %, Female 83.57 %) and zone Hariganwan has 88.32 % (Male 88.72 %, Female 87.89 %). Zone Kangan, followed by zone Hariganwan has the lowest overall

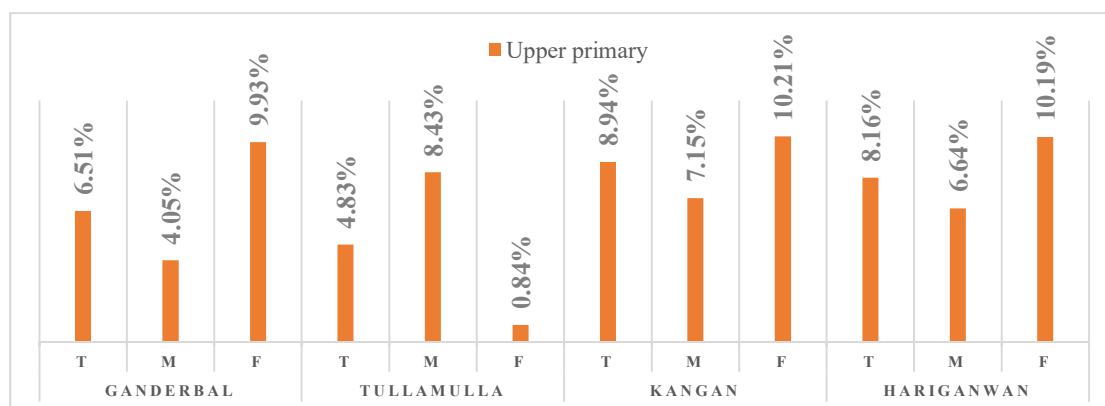
GRR rates. In all the four zones, the GRR of male students is higher than female students at upper primary stage.

**Table 5. showing stage wise retention rate of Tribal students to their total enrolment in each zone.**

Stage	Educational Zones											
	Ganderbal			Tullamulla			Kangan			Hariganwan		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Upper Primary	92.85	83.33	88.46	82.35	86.66	84.37	77.09	73.36	74.92	82.08	77.70	80.16

Of 573 (Male 293, Female 280) GRR of tribal students of district Ganderbal at upper primary stage (2018-19), zone Ganderbal has 88.46 % (Male 92.85 %, Female 83.33 %), zone Tullamulla has 84.37 % (Male 82.35 %, Female 86.66 %) zone Kangan has 74.92 % (Male 77.09 %, Female 73.36 %) and zone Hariganwan has 80.16 % (Male 82.08 %, Female 77.70 %). Zone Kangan, followed by zone Hariganwan has the lowest overall GRR rates among all the four zones. The GRR of male students was higher in zone Ganderbal, Kangan and Hariganwan than female students at upper primary stage and lowest in zone Tullamulla. While as female GRR of tribal students was lowest Hariganwan, followed by Kangan zone and male GRR of tribal students is also lowest in Kangan, followed by Hariganwan zone at upper primary stage.

At upper primary stage, aggregate gap was found highest in Kangan (8.94%), followed by Hariganwan (8.16%), Ganderbal (6.51%), Tullamulla (4.83%) and the male gap at the same stage is highest in Tullamulla (8.43%), followed by Kangan (7.15%) Hariganwan (6.64 %), and Ganderbal (4.05%). The female gap was highest in Kangan (10.21%), followed by Hariganwan (10.19%). Ganderbal (9.93%), Tullamulla (0.84%) and Female gaps are generally higher compared to male at primary stage except in Hariganwan zone.



**Figure 2. showing gaps in GRR between all and tribal students of district Ganderbal**

## Discussion

Tribals constitute significant portion of aggregate enrolments at Grade VI and VIII and majority of enrolment were from tribal dominated educational zones- Hariganwan and Kangan. The aggregate and tribal gross retention rate (GRR) of district Ganderbal at upper primary stage of education was low. The tribal GRR at was far behind from overall GRR of the district Ganderbal and that is true in case of tribal male and female GRR as well. The GRR of female students (Tribal and overall) at upper primary stage was very low compared to male students. Furthermore, the zonal analysis depicted low GRR at upper primary stage in four educational zones of district, but was low in tribal dominated educational zones i.e., Hariganwan and Kangan compared to zone Ganderbal & Tullamulla zone. The tribal GRR was significantly below overall GRR in all four educational zones. At upper primary stage, the female GRR of tribal as well overall students was low in zone Ganderbal, Kangan and Hariganwan and more in zone Tullamulla zone compared to male GRR. Among all four educational zones, it was lowest in zone Hariganwan, followed by Kangan zone in case of tribal students and Kangan zone, followed by Hariganwan zone in case of overall students.

Empirical studies also confirm significant enrolment and low retention rates of tribals. The results are in line Bhat & Khan, 2022a; Mary (2002), Mukherjee (2005), Sedwal & Kamat (2008) and Project Approval Board, (2016). Tribal Gujjar and Bakerwal students constitute significant proportion of all enrolment and found declining trends in tribal enrolment over several years (Bhat & Khan, 2022a; Bhat, 2007; Bhat, 2022) Unsatisfactory school access and poor retention rates were observed by Bandyopadhyay (2012) in her study, as the dropout percentage of tribal students in sampled areas were 48%. Bhat & Khan (2021) stated that the upper primary dropout rates of tribals in Jammu and Kashmir increased from 8.13 % (Boys 6.79 % & Girls 9.47 %) in 2014-15 to 12.77 (Boys 10.26 % & girls 15.28 %) in 2018-19 and in district Ganderbal, it was 15.2%. Tribals habitation of district Kupwara had low number of mobile schools for tribal areas and 69.09 % students were not interested to attend these school as they were situated at long distances and on hilly slopes (Malik, Bhat & Ganai, 2007). Tribal habitation possesses lower number of middle schools compared non-tribal areas and tribal have to walk long distances to reach school (Bhat & Khan, 2022b). Poor quality education and poor school environment coupled with dearth of teaching personnel forces twenty percent of student to leave school in mid-way Sedwal & Kamat (2008). Children of tribal communities speak languages that contradict with languages that are used for transactional purposes in mainstream school education system, which force may tribal students to dropout from school due to language barrier (Basu & Chatterjee, 2014; Bhat & Khan, 2021). The reasons attributed to low tribal retention rates are of varied nature

including nomadism, pastoralism, preference for boys' education, tribal traditions, child labour, sibling care, teacher absenteeism, dearth of teachers from tribal community, school closure, low academic achievement, hereditary occupation, seasonal mobility, pony riding, domestic chores, collection of forest resource, early engagement, poor attendance, large family and sibship size, poverty, and parental illiteracy (Khatana, 1976; Handu, 1977; Lidhoo, 1987; Malik & Bhat, 2006; Bhat, 2007; Bhat, 2008; Farooq, 2013; Tufail, 2014; Bashir, 2019; Dar, 2019; Maningba, Jeyaseelan & Stephen, 2020; Bhat, 2022)

### **Conclusion**

The study revealed that tribals constitute 31.37% and 27.74% of aggregate Grade VI and Grade VIII enrolment respectively. The aggregate retention rate of district Ganderbal at Upper Primary stage of education was low (88.62%) and below 100. Similarly, the GRR of tribal children to their total retention at Upper primary stage was also low (78.83%) which is below 100 and low compared to aggregate retention rate of district. The gaps/disparity between aggregate and tribal GRR were found. Gender disparity in GRR were observed in GRR of district Ganderbal. At upper primary stage, girls had low GRR (76.08 %) than boys (81.48 %), and tribal girls have lowest compared to boys (aggregate & tribal). Zonal disparity in GRR was observed in district Ganderbal. Zone Hariganwan had lowest GRR (Tribal and Overall) compared to zone, Kangan, Ganderbal and Tullamulla at upper primary stage.

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