

A Study on Tribal Women In Kashmir

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Abstract- Jammu and Kashmir is homeland to a number of tribal communities with diverse eco-cultural, socioeconomic and geographical backgrounds. The women in the tribal community constitute half of the tribal population. In Jammu and Kashmir, tribal women are better placed in certain respects and worst in some other respects. Tribal women play important role in the management of their house. The present paper explores the population status, educational status and marital status of tribal women in Kashmir. There is an essential need to make serious efforts by government, non-government organizations and other local bodies to augment the pace of development in tribal communities of Kashmir.

Keywords- Kashmir, Tribal women, Status

I. INTRODUCTION

The tribal people are those who live in the lap of the nature, and depend on natural resources for their livelihood⁽¹⁾. India is a home to a large variety of indigenous people. The Scheduled Tribe population represents one of the most economically impoverished and marginalized groups in India. The tribes of India constitute 8.6 per cent of the total population of the country⁽²⁾. India is one of the countries having a large concentration of tribal population. In this respect, it ranks second in the world and comes next only to Africa. There are 537 different tribal communities spread all over India⁽³⁾. The nature of society in Jammu and Kashmir is heterogeneous in terms of its ethnic composition as well as religious orientation. The heterogeneity of the state is multilayered and can be seen at racial, linguistic, cultural and religious levels. Gujjar, Bakerwal and Gaddis are main tribal communities recognized as such by the government. Gujjar and Bakerwal form the third largest ethnic groups in terms of their population in the state. As per census 2011 they form 10.9% of population of state⁽⁴⁾. Jammu and Kashmir has 12 scheduled tribes- Balti, Beda, Boti, Boto, Brokpa, Drokpa, Dard, and shin. Changpa, Garra, mon, Purigpa, Gujjar, Bakerwal, Gaddi and Sippi spread over three regions Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. Out of 12 scheduled tribes Gujjar is the most populous tribe having a population of 7,63,806. Thus forming 69.1 percent of total scheduled tribe population. Bot is second major tribe having a population of 96,698 followed by Bakerwal 60,724 and Brokpa 51,957. Gujjar along with the

three tribes constitute 88 percent of the total tribal population⁽⁴⁾.

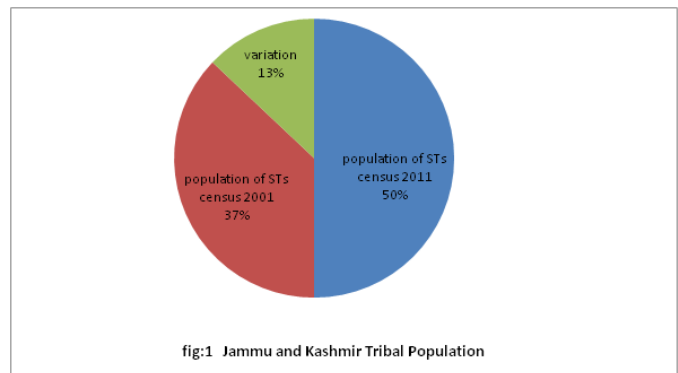


fig:1 Jammu and Kashmir Tribal Population

Source: census 2011

II. TRIBAL WOMEN

The women in the tribal community constitute half of the tribal population. Tribal women in India are said to face less discrimination than women of mainstream Hindu population. Tribal women enjoy greater freedom and sex ratio among tribal is found to be higher than mainstream population in many states. In Jammu and Kashmir tribal women is better placed in certain respects and worst in some other respects as in many districts the practice of dowry is not visible but the high status of women appears myth when child marriage and female literacy is taken into account. 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⁽⁵⁾. The status of women in a society is a significant reflection of the level of social justice in that society. Women's status is often described in terms of their level of income, employment, education, health and fertility as well as their roles within the family, the community and society. The role of women in tribal communities is substantial and crucial. Although they constitute about half the total population but in tribal society women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. Even after industrialization and the resultant commercialization swamped the tribal economy, women continued to play a significant role. Collection of minor forest produce is done mostly by women and children. Many also work as laborers in industries,

households and construction, contributing to their family income. However, tribal women face problems and challenges in getting a sustainable livelihood and a decent life due to environmental degradation and the interference of outsiders. Undoubtedly, the programs, oriented towards the empowerment of tribal women, they have also improved their socio-economic conditions and status. However, there are wide variations across regions and tribes in terms of work participation, sex ratio, economic productivity and social life ⁽⁶⁾.

III. OBJECTIVES

1. To study the tribal women in all Districts of Kashmir.
2. To find out the different categories of tribal women in Kashmir.
3. To assess the marital status of tribal women in Kashmir.

IV. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The position that the women hold in a society gives an indication of the level of the justice in that particular society. It is often found that women are more vulnerable section of the society relative to the male counterpart and they often happen to be last receiver of nation. The severe is the case about the tribal women as they are more isolated in term of education, employment and health facilities from the mainland. So, it may be that they are more deprived when compare with male-counterpart as well as the women from other communities. The health status of tribal women is very poor in comparison to women of other caste and religion. Tribal women lack nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation which have a direct bearing on their reproductive health causing maternal mortality and higher fertility rate. The common health related problems of tribal women are sickle cell anemia, malaria, tuberculosis, malnutrition and sexually transmitted diseases etc. Tribal women are not free from atrocities. Apart from social prejudices, tribal women suffer from lack of education, health services and independent economic activities. Tribal women are discriminated more in cases relating to ownership, possession, cultivation and possession of lands. A large number of offences against woman have occurred in the schedule areas showing extremely vulnerable position of tribal women.

V. MATERIAL AND METHOD

For this study, data from secondary sources is used. The main sources of data are; the Census reports (2001 and 2011), Data of Registrar General of India, Websites, Research Articles and Books. Content analysis is used using qualitative as well as quantitative analysis. The data is presented in

suitable figures and tables computing frequencies and percentages.

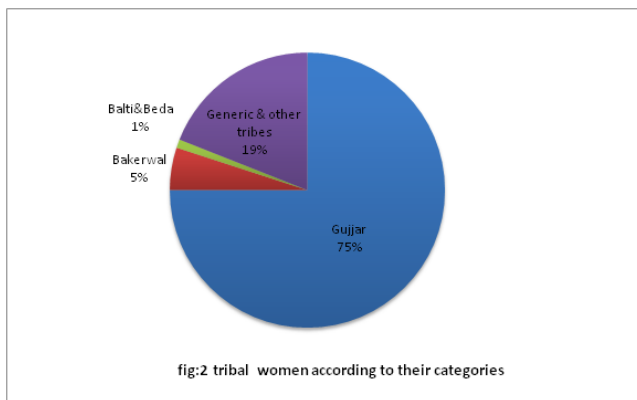
VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table:1 Female Tribal Women Population in All Districts of Kashmir

DISTRICT	TOTAL FEMALE TRIBAL POPULATION	Percentage of Tribal Population (%)
Anantnag	55016	25.00
Bandipore	35976	17.00
Baramulla	17468	8.00
Budgam	11529	6.00
Ganderbal	28516	13.00
Kulgam	12637	6.00
Kupwara	33439	15.00
Pulwama	10770	5.00
Shopian	10509	4.00
Srinagar	3914	1.00
TOTAL	219774	100.00

Source, census 2011

Table 1 reveals that majority of tribal women population i.e., 25 percent (f=55016) is in Anantnag district of Kashmir, followed by 17 percent (f=35976) in district Bandipore, 15 percent (f=17468) in district Kupwara, 13 percent (f=33439) in district Ganderbal, 8 percent (f=28516) in district Baramulla, 6 percent (f=12637) in Kulgam, 5 percent (f=10770) in Pulwama, 4 percent (f=10509) in Shopian and only 1 percent (f=3914) of tribal women population is in Srinagar district of Kashmir. Thus, majority of tribal women population lives in Anantnag district of Kashmir. However, Indian scenario shows that more than 70 per cent of the tribal population is concentrated in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Gujarat. The essential characteristics of these communities are primitive traits, geographical isolation, distinctive culture, shyness of contact with communities at large and backwardness. In India there are no tribals in Haryana, Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi and Pondicherry. Tribal population is very low at Goa i.e; only 566 persons (0.04% of total population)



Source, census 2011

The figure 2 depicts that 75 percent (f=164646) tribal women in Kashmir belongs to the Gujjar Tribe, followed by Generic and other tribes 19 percent (f=42957); while a small percentage 5 percent (f=11045) tribal women belong to the Bakerwal tribe whileas, only percent (f=1125) belongs to the Balti and Beda. He other tribal groups in India include Gonds, Santhals, Khasis, Angamis, Bhils, Bhutias,Bodos,Bishnois and Great Andamanese. The four major tribal groups in India are: Bodos of Assam; Khasis of Meghalaya; Bhils of Rajasthan; and Bisnois of Rajasthan

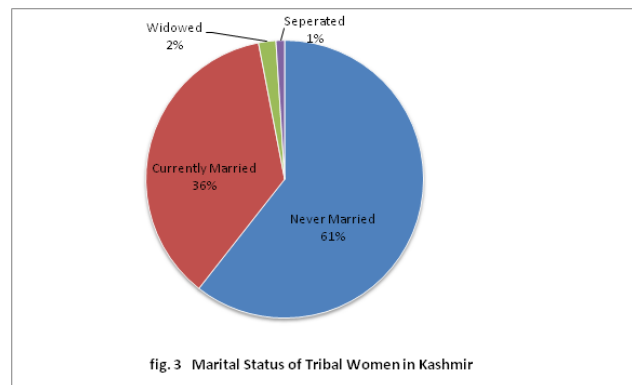
Table-2: Educational Status of Female Tribal Women Population

District	Literate female population	Percentage of literate tribal female population	Illiterate female population	Percentage of literate tribal female population
Anantnag	10468	5.00	44548	20.00
Bandipore	11506	6.00	16589	8.00
Baramulla	879	1.00	24470	11.00
Budgam	2834	2.00	8695	3.00
Ganderbal	7211	3.00	21305	9.00
Kulgam	8117	3.00	25322	12.00
Kupwara	2057	1.00	10580	5.00
Pulwama	1770	1.00	9000	4.00
Shopian	2292	1.00	8217	3.00
Srinagar	1136	1.00	2778	1.00
TOTAL	48270	24	171504	76

Source, census 2011

Education is the key which opens the door of life, develops humanity and promotes national and self development. Education can be an effective tool for women empowerment. It enables the tribal women to acquire knowledge for improving and empowering their tasks in all fields. It is quite clear from table 2 that educational level among the tribal women of Kashmir is not impressive. The data shows that majority 76 percent (f=48270) female population is illiterate while only 24 percent (f=171504) tribal women is literate that is very low as compared to those recorded by all tribal women at the national level. The analysis

has brought this fact to the fore that the educational status of tribal women is very low as compared to general women of Kashmir. Therefore, there is an immediate need to study the causes for such a low performance in educational sector by tribal women so that a sociological framework of suggestions will be provided for the solution of those problems through micro-macro level programme intervention in the long- term and short term policy planning in Kashmir.



Source, census 2011

Marital status is essential to assess the social life, as it determines the status and respect got due to their husband’s families. In India majority of the tribal women are unmarried or single and those who are married have best and cordial relations with their husbands. According to the fig. 3, as per 2011 census, majority 60 percent (f=131724)of tribal women in Kashmir are never married followed by 36(f=81018) of tribal women who are currently married and very low percent of tribal women are widowed 3 percent (f=6532)seperated and divorced 1 percent (f=500).It is clear from the above analysis that maximum of the tribal women in Kashmir are never married.

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It has been concluded that majority of tribal women population live in Anantnag district of Kashmir followed by district Bandipore and district Kupwara and a small percent of tribal women population is in other districts of Kashmir. Majority of tribal women in Kashmir belongs to the Gujjar Tribe, followed by Generic and other tribes ; while a small percentage of tribal women belong to the Bakerwal tribe. Educational level among the tribal women of Kashmir is not impressive. The data shows that majority of female population is illiterate; while less percentage of tribal women are literate which is very low as compared to those recorded by all tribal women at the national level. Most of tribal women in Kashmir are never married, followed by currently married and very low percent of tribal women are widowed , separated and divorced. The practices of divorce and separation are not

common among tribes of Kashmir. Education is a key indicator of socioeconomic development. It also increases the knowledge and vision of a person. Equally, it is considered as an essential element in bringing change in social, political, economic fields in a society. There is immense need to understand the context, and background of education system in Kashmir to address the question of providing equal access of education to tribes.

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