

Exploring the Educational Marginality: A Study of Socio Educational Status of Pahari Ethnicity a Marginal Ethnic Group in Jammu and Kashmir.

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Abstract

The Pahari Ethnicity of Jammu and Kashmir is mostly, residing in the hilly terrain regions of the Jammu and Kashmir and some other parts of the country too. The majority its population in the Rajouri and Poonch Districts of Jammu division and Baramulla and Kupwara in Kashmir division, and the areas that are now under the Control of Pakistan (POJK). Similar to other state backward communities like SCs, STs and OBCs, Pahari Ethnicity of Jammu and Kashmir also faces socio- economic and educational Marginalization and laying at the bottom of the developmental ladder. They have also been advocating for their right to be identified. They are unable to compete with the higher strata of the Society due to the lack of adequate facilities in education and healthcare, and their socio educational status is not up to the mark because of their geographical isolation, lack of awareness and border conflicts as well. Furthermore, their children are unable to get the proper benefit from any state or central govt policies, as they are living in the remote mountainous areas where there lacks access to roads and other essential facilities. As a result, they are unable to get the proper education from the institutions which is a basic requirement to access the benefits from any governmental or non-governmental organizations.

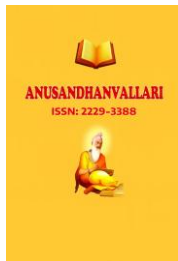
Keywords: Pahari Ethnicity, Socio-educational, backwardness, Education, Mountainous, marginality.

Introduction

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is located in the northern part of the Indian sub-continent in the vicinity of the Korakarm and western mountain ranges. The total area of Jammu and Kashmir is about 222236 Square Kilometer, lying between 32.17” and 36.58” north altitude and east to west

73.26” and 80.30” longitude.¹ The state is bounded by China in the north and east, Afghanistan in the north-west and Pakistan in the west. In the south, it is linked with the rest of

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the country.² After crossing the Pir-panchal, one enters into the beautiful valley of Kashmir which is surrounded by high mountains. The state of Jammu and Kashmir is a land of many cultures, religions and ethnic groups, distinct in their looks, dresses, food habits, customs, speech and traditions. There have been constant impulses of immigration from the north, west, south, and east directions.³ The alien races, ethnic groups and various religions have influenced the cultural ethos and mode of life of the people of the state, despite already the presence of heterogeneity in the state. The state is truly a symbol of composite culture, where we see that the people of the all religions live with a sense of harmony. The people of the three regions not only live differently but also speak different languages, worship different Gods and have different ethical and moral codes. The people of the state speak mainly Kashmiri, Dogri, Ladakhi, Urdu, Hindi, Pahari, Gojree languages.⁴ The Jammu division is mainly inhabited by the Hindus, Kashmir valley by Muslims and the Ladakh region by the Buddhists.⁵

Education- Meaning

Etymologically, the word Education has been derived from Latin word; “*educare*” which means “to bring out” or “to nourish”. The term education can be understood in two sense; broader aspects and specific nature. In the broader meaning education is life long process, where an individual accumulate all the knowledge, skills, experience and thinking strategies, analytical power and so forth through the life he has passed. It does not constrain to the classroom knowledge and experiences that one had experienced. All the formal, informal and incidental experience that has created any sort of knowledge is called as education.

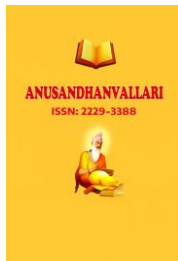
Meaning of Marginalized

Marginalization is a universal tendency related to social stratification. In marginalization opportunities and benefits are denied to the individuals those living on the “margin” while encouraging the opportunities for those who are in the „Centre” of the society (Ramesh, 2013).

The lower literacy level of education and the continued discrimination of marginalized in educational institutions pose a major problem.

Marginalization may be of –

- Gender-related
- Culture-related



- Location-related
- Poverty-related or

□ Special groups include disabled, gifted children and children living with HIV and Aids, etc. Many communities across the world show prejudice based on caste and class resulting in the exclusion of marginalized people. It may directly affect the attainment of effective endowments in the spheres of education, occupation, and livelihood.

Education and marginality

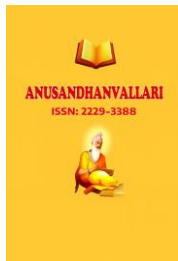
In the realm of research, the intersection between education and marginality is a multifaceted and crucial area of study. Marginality refers to the social, economic, or political position of being relegated to the fringes or peripheries of society. This concept intertwines with education in various ways, offering insights into the disparities, challenges, and opportunities experienced by marginalized groups within educational systems.

At its core, education is often regarded as a tool for empowerment and social mobility. However, marginalized communities frequently encounter barriers that impede their access to quality education. Factors like socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, disability, and geographic location significantly influence the educational opportunities available to individuals. These disparities manifest in unequal resource allocation, limited access to educational facilities, discriminatory practices, and biased curricula.

scholars like hooks (1994) and Freire (1970) have extensively studied the relationship between education and power structures. Their work emphasizes how educational systems often perpetuate marginality by reinforcing dominant narratives, ideologies, and cultural norms, consequently alienating marginalized communities.

Research within this domain aims to uncover the complexities of these disparities, exploring how marginalized groups navigate and experience educational systems. It delves into the impact of systemic inequalities on educational outcomes, shedding light on the perpetuation of marginality through generations. Moreover, it examines the role of education in either reinforcing or challenging existing power structures.

Additionally, understanding the intersection of education and marginality involves exploring the broader socio-cultural context. This includes investigating the influence of cultural norms, stereotypes, and institutional biases on the educational experiences of marginalized individuals. For instance, examining the representation of diverse voices in educational materials and the curriculum can provide insights into the reinforcement or breakdown of



marginalization within educational settings.

Research in this field often seeks to propose interventions and policy recommendations aimed at mitigating these disparities. By advocating for inclusive educational policies, equitable resource distribution, culturally responsive teaching practices, and comprehensive support systems, researchers aim to address the root causes of marginalization in education.

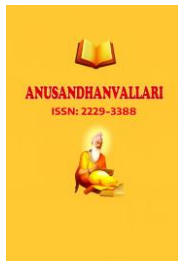
Moreover, there is a growing emphasis on amplifying the voices of marginalized communities within the research itself. Participatory research methodologies, where these communities actively contribute to and shape the research process, are gaining prominence. This approach ensures that the perspectives, experiences, and needs of marginalized groups are central to the research agenda, fostering more authentic and impactful outcomes.

Education for the Pahari Ethnicity of Jammu and Kashmir in Indian subcontinent .

Education is a major instrument for change and social development. It plays an important role in empowering the human beings economically and socially. In recent world scenario, education has been given prime attention by every nation. **In 2009** the Right of Children for Free and Compulsory Education Act was enacted in India to ensure the same. But this intention is not yet implemented properly even 13 years after the Right to Education Act. Education is the right of every citizen under Right to education Act 2009. Education should be provided to every community without any discrimination.

As far as Pahari Ethnicity is concerned it is not much high in the educational ladder. Their language has not found room in the classroom education. Their socio-economic position is not as par with the mainland community, like Kashmiris and Dogra's which is also responsible for their unhealthy education and vice versa. **Sharma (2020)**. In her article titled "Struggle for Identity and Rights: A Case Study of Pahari People In J&K State" she found that Pahari Ethnicity lack educational facility. They cannot compete with the other communities because the other community like Kashmiris and Dogra's having strong educational access and they are living in the plain of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, on the other side Pahari's are mostly the inhabitant of the hilly and border areas of J&K. **Khan, (2021)**. Book Review on "The Pahari's Ethnography of a genuine tribe of Jammu and Kashmir" the author found in it that Pahari is a tribe of Jammu and Kashmir which has it distinct cultural and lingual ethos. **Haq, (2021)**. Done a study on the theme "Origin of Pahari Ethnicity, their demographic characteristic, educational, literacy and linguistic composition: a case study of Rajouri district (J&K). with the objective of to check educational level Rajouri district along with focus on history, demography, and linguistic makeup of the Pahari tribe as well as potential solutions to the issues in the Rajouri areas. Author found that the educational status of Pahari Ethnicity is not up to the mark as compared to other communities like Kashmiris, Dogra's etc. study also found that at elementary stage education level is good but at higher education educational level found in opposite

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direction. Their overall educational level in J&K is low.

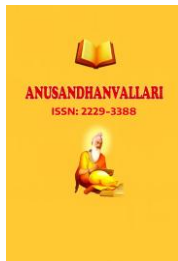
The Pahari speaking people are undoubtedly socio economically and educationally backward like other ethnic groups like Shina, Gujjars, Bakerwals, Balti etc. and therefore, deserve immediate safeguard and protection. Pahari people of Jammu and Kashmir mainly found in the Pir Panjal range and north-western Kashmir valley. Their educational aspect did not get much attention and they remain under dormant phase since 1947 when they destined towards an agony end. Most of the Pahari speaking people got divided at the time of partition and 70 % of the Pahari Ethnicity migrated to Pakistan at the time of partition due to which their representation in Indian side of Kashmir got adversely impacted, and so the education also effected. Both state govt and central govt failed to enhance the educational status of Pahari Ethnicity of J&K due to ground level negligence and policy implementation and border conflict and Kashmir crisis. All this can be justified because we did not find much literacy among Pahari's, they don't have any strong leader at central or state level. The border areas of Jammu and Kashmir state along with valley are badly affected on account of political turmoil across the border. The state is declared as disturbed area such a horrific situation doesn't exist in any other state of India; therefore, the already vulnerable marginalized groups of the state are more prone to the victimization from the state machinery as well as by the extremist forces operating in the state so there is an immediate need of the comprehensive measure to enable the security for these marginalized communities, particularly Pahari Ethnicity.

Marginalised communities are addressed under the National Education Policy of India (NEP) 2020.

In this regard, NEP 2020 has established special education zones where all the marginalised groups are placed. This reflects NEP 2020's current focus on marginalised communities in India. SC, ST, OBC, minorities, the poor and even children with special abilities in one basket and calls them socio-economically disadvantaged groups. The policy also aims to reduce disparities in access to education, particularly for disadvantaged and marginalized communities. It also emphasizes the need to promote gender equity in education. The policy aims to improve the quality of education in India by emphasizing the need for well-trained teachers, updated curriculum and pedagogy, and the use of technology in the classroom but have these documented provisions benefited the Pahari Ethnic Group or not, we have to deliberate and examine this and need to formulate implement and execute it .

Programme for the Development of Border Areas in Jammu & Kashmir India.

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District of Rajouri, Poonch, Baramulla and Kupwara is also falling under Border area development Programme (BADP). which has also special focus on education and health. but till now there has not been proper implementation of such schemes in these districts, following bullet point are the focus of BADP in educational sector.

- (I) Construction of houses for Government teachers and other government officials engaged in education sector.
- (ii) Construction of Primary/ Middle/ Secondary/ Higher secondary school buildings and their up-gradation/addition such as construction of additional classrooms, computer rooms and laboratories.
- (iii) Construction of hostels/ dormitories in Secondary/ Higher Secondary school

After looking and examining these policies in context of Paharis Ethnicity, its found that there is no such significant and better result because these are not properly implemented In J&K

Statement of the Problem

The educational environment of the Pahari Ethnicity in Jammu and Kashmir is examined in the paper "Exploring the Educational Marginality: A Study of Socio-Educational Status of Pahari Ethnicity in Jammu and Kashmir." The current situation of the issue sheds light on the inequalities, difficulties, and obstacles the Pahari people have in obtaining high-quality education by highlighting their marginalized educational position. It highlighted into things like socioeconomic status, cultural dynamics, remote location, institutional constraints, and governmental policies that lead to their marginalization in school. In order to overcome these discrepancies and advance inclusive education in the area, this research aims to provide a thorough understanding of the educational dilemma facing the Pahari Ethnicity. The current paper delves into the educational metamorphosis of the Pahari Ethnicity of Jammu and Kashmir, the problem of education pertaining to the Pahari Ethnicity is a question of concern in the present ongoing situation in Jammu and Kashmir region of Indian state. Pahari Ethnicity is socially and educationally backward community of Jammu and Kashmir which need special attention for the current academician and policy makers.

Methodology

The current study is descriptive in nature, This is an exploratory study based on both quantitative and qualitative approaches Method of Content analysis has been used in order to descript the present scenario of educational challenges and status of the Pahari Ethnicity, study is based

on primarily on secondary sources; secondary sources including Papers published in various journal, Books and book review has been used. Govt reports , magazines and article has been used in the present study.

Research Gap

Prior to beginning my study, I reviewed the literature to determine whether any thorough research had been done on the educational side of the Pahari Ethnicity. I also discovered that there had been very little research done on the Pahari Ethnicity population in Jammu and

Kashmir. For this reason, I wish to examine the socioeconomic circumstances and educational standing of the Pahari group in this article. My motivation for researching the educational state

of the Pahari Ethnicity stemmed from its understudied educational dimension. I read a number of books and research papers about the tribes of Jammu and Kashmir as well as those of India as a whole. especially in regard to their level of education. I discovered during the thorough research process that there is a tonne of literature about Indian tribes in general and Jammu and Kashmiri tribes in particular. But the Pahari Ethnicity is also a Jammu and Kashmiri tribe. However, there is a scarcity of material about the J&K Pahari tribe in general and the Pahari tribe's educational

aspects in particular. The Pahari people, who are primarily found in Pakistan and India, have seen their way of life, particularly the ecology of education, progressively erode. After thinking about all of these issues, I see a strong need to investigate the Pahari people of Jammu and Kashmir's educational standing.

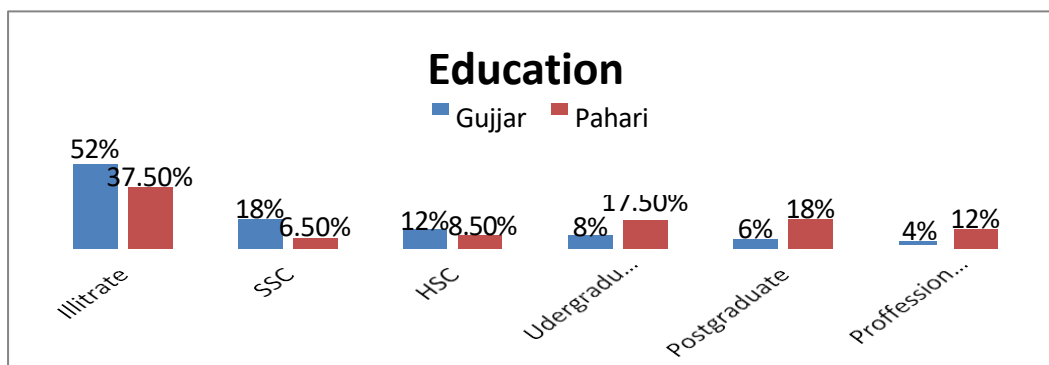
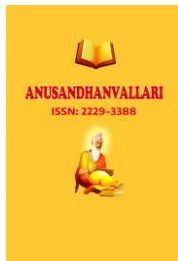


Fig.1. Educational Status of Gujjars and Paharis



The figure 1 above shows that 52 percent of the Gujjars are still illiterate and rest literates got employment opportunity at the early stage of their education, so they do not prefer higher education. Whereas, the Paharis are very much found in abundance in higher education. The researcher found that 18 percent of the Paharis are studying in various higher educational institutions and 12 percent are pursuing the professional/technical education. The researcher further found that 18 percent of the Gujjars are studying at HSC level, 12 percent at SSC, 8 percent at under graduation, 6 percent at post graduation level and small proportion of 4 percent are pursuing professional/ technical education. Whereas, in case of Paharis 37.5 percent were found illiterates, 6.5 percent in HSC and 17.5 are studying at undergraduate level. (Bhat)

Hurdles and challenges in the way of Education of Pahari Ethnicity in Jammu & Kashmir

The Pahari Ethnicity in Jammu and Kashmir faces multifaceted challenges in accessing education, stemming from various socio-economic, geographical, and political factors. These hurdles significantly hinder their educational progress and perpetuate disparities in learning opportunities. In delving into these challenges, it's crucial to highlight the intricate landscape of issues affecting the educational landscape of the Pahari Ethnicity in the region.

The low socio-educational status of the Pahari Ethnicity in Jammu and Kashmir can be attributed to a confluence of historical, socio-economic, and geographical factors that have persisted over time. Understanding these factors helps illuminate the reasons behind their educational challenges:

Historical Context:

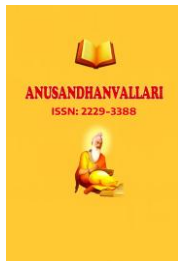
Marginalization and Neglect:

1. **Historical Disadvantages:** The Pahari Ethnicity has historically faced marginalization, with limited access to resources and opportunities for education compared to dominant communities in the region like Kashmiri, Dogra .
2. **Lack of Development Initiatives:** Neglect by governing bodies in providing adequate educational infrastructure and opportunities to the Pahari Ethnicity has perpetuated disparities.

Socio-Economic Challenges:

Limited Access to Quality Education:

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1. *Inadequate Infrastructure:* Remote Pahari villages often lack proper educational infrastructure like schools, libraries, and technology.
2. *Shortage of Teachers:* Many Pahari-dominated areas suffer from a shortage of qualified teachers, leading to compromised quality of education.
3. *Financial Constraints:* Economic disparities restrict access to educational resources such as books, uniforms, and transportation, making education unaffordable for many Pahari families.

Geographical Barriers:

1. *Remote Terrain:* The hilly and mountainous terrain in Pahari-inhabited regions poses significant logistical challenges. These areas often lack proper road connectivity, making it difficult for students to reach schools.
2. *Seasonal Accessibility:* Harsh weather conditions, especially during winters, create barriers to regular school attendance, causing interruptions in the education of Pahari children.

Sociocultural Factors:

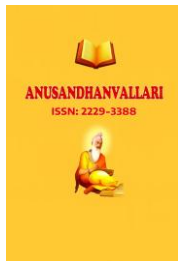
1. *Language Barriers:* The Pahari Ethnicity predominantly speaks languages distinct from the official language used in schools. This language gap hampers effective learning and understanding for Pahari students.
2. *Cultural Norms:* Traditional societal norms sometimes prioritize household chores or agricultural work over education, particularly for girls, perpetuating gender disparities in education.

Political Instability:

1. *Border Conflict and Unrest In the Pahari Region :* The region's prolonged political instability and conflict. The Pahari people mainly residing in the borderland between India and Pakistan this had disrupted the education system, causing school closures and fear among students and teachers. This volatile environment hampers the consistency and quality of education.
2. *Limited Governmental Support:* Inadequate government attention and policies directed towards improving educational facilities in Pahari regions contribute to the perpetuation of educational disparities.

Mainstreaming the Marginalized

Mainstreaming is the process of incorporating individuals with special and specific needs and Available online at <https://psvmkendra.com>



into the main educational stream to enjoy regular school classes and thus to incorporate them into the prevailing social activities and thoughts. Various initiatives and efforts have been made to realize the concept of education for all however, the rate of wastage and stagnation in the

Indian education system is still in a critical range. Multiple causes are there including social, economic, ethnic and also faulty educational systems which hindering the children from lower social strata from accessing and sustaining the education. For the mainstreaming of the marginalized children the following suggestions would be beneficial;

□ The effective implementation of the Right to Education Act should be monitored by the government to ensure not simply enrolment of students, but on the retention of every student in school.

□ The government should take initiatives to check the dropout rate by monitoring children at risk of dropping out, and develop appropriate social mapping strategies has to develop by relevant authorities among marginalized and minority communities to ensure the retention.

□ Any kind of discrimination should be stopped from all the educational systems including from the part of the policymakers, officials, teachers, and fellow students. The government should strictly monitor such practices in the educational institutions from primary level to higher education. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights can do much in this regard by making appropriate guidelines to address discrimination and other abuses of children and set out appropriate disciplinary measures. Penalty for such malpractices also should be strengthening.

□ Better incentives to the families to send their children to school regularly till they complete their high school education.

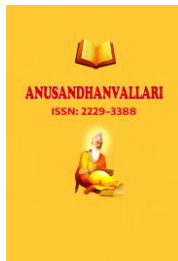
□ More teachers should be recruited from various marginalized groups to motivate more students to come to higher education fields

Better hostel facilities for the students who need it to complete their course More educational institutes in rural and remote areas

□ Proper attention for the tribal education by giving due respect to their cultural uniqueness and ethnicity

□ Designing and implementation of instructional materials and curricula in tribal language with facilities to switch to regional language

□ Human Resource Development Ministry can develop manuals for teachers and instructors to foster social inclusion and equity. Encouragement of children from marginalized groups in
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different school activities and responsibilities would positively influence their development. The collaboration of children of different social strata also should be ensured. The government can

give instruction regarding this.

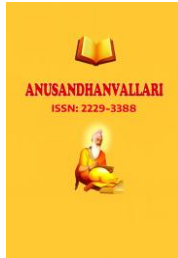
Along with proper service conditions, training and qualifications of teachers are a matter of concern. Quality of education is affected because of teaching-learning materials. Many of the teachers and students hardly get textbooks and materials of good quality causing learning difficulties for the poor children, as they have practically no access to any material other than textbooks. While improving quality, it is necessary to provide essential physical and academic facilities in the school.(Mustafa 2019)

Solutions and Interventions:

1. *Improving Infrastructure:* Investment in building schools, libraries, and providing necessary facilities is crucial for enhancing the learning environment.
2. *Teacher Training Programs:* Implementing training programs for teachers to improve their skills and ensure quality education delivery in Pahari-dominated areas.
3. *Mobile Education Units for the Paharis:* Utilizing mobile classrooms or technology-based learning methods to reach remote Pahari villages where establishing permanent infrastructure might be challenging.
4. *Community Engagement:* Involving local communities in educational initiatives can foster a sense of ownership and ensure better participation in education.
5. *Policy Reforms:* Implementing policies that address linguistic diversity, cultural sensitivity, and inclusivity in the educational curriculum to bridge the language and cultural gaps.

Conclusion:

The educational challenges faced by the Pahari Ethnicity in Jammu and Kashmir are complex and deeply rooted in socio-economic, geographical, and political issues. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that involves improving infrastructure, providing teacher training, engaging the community, and implementing inclusive policies. A concerted effort from both the government and non-governmental organizations is essential to ensure that every child within the Pahari Ethnicity has access to quality education, irrespective of their socio-economic background or geographical location.



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