



Seasonal Migration and Its Effect on Gujjar Bakerwal Children's Education:

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ABSTRACT:

Gujjar Bakerwal nomads do not stay in one place. They move from region to region based on the season and local conditions. During summer, they migrate to mountain areas and return to plains in winter. This movement affects many parts of their lives, especially the education of their children. This paper examines how seasonal migration impacts the schooling of Gujjar Bakerwal children.

Keywords: migration, seasonal nomads, education, Gujjars, Bakerwals

Introduction:

Nomads are people who do not settle permanently. They move from one place to another to find work and resources. There are three main types of nomads in the world.

1. **Hunter-Gatherers:** These are the earliest nomads. They gather wild plants and hunt animals, moving regularly to find food. Examples include:
 - **Tlingit:** Once common in North America, many died of disease. About 15,000 live near Alaska and British Columbia today.
 - **Khoisan:** Found in southern Africa, they face modern threats but try to preserve their ways.
 - **Nukak-Maku:** Deep in Colombia's Amazon rainforest, fewer than 1,000 remain. They move often and stay in one place only a few days.
 - **Bushmen:** In southern Africa, they are mostly hunter-gatherers and have a strong bond with nature.
2. **Pastoral Nomads:** These nomads focus on raising animals. They move with their herds, seeking fresh pastures. They include:
 - **Iranian Nomads:** Tribes like Bakhtiari, Qashqai, and Shaksavans. About 1 million people, or 1.5% of Iran's population, are nomads in Iran.
 - **Bedouin:** Around 21 million Bedouins mainly live in the Middle East. Many have switched to settled life, but they keep their language and culture.
 - **Kochis (Kuchis):** In Afghanistan, over 1.5 million of the 2.4 million remain nomads. They raise goats and sheep, selling meat, wool, and milk.
 - **Sarakatsani:** Greek nomads since the 4th century AD. They depend on their herds for food and their way of life.
 - **Mongols:** In China, about 3-6 million Mongols are nomadic. They herd sheep, yaks, camels, and horses. They live in yurt tents.
 - **Pokot:** In Kenya and Uganda, around 700,000 Pokots move with their animals. They are known for their stories and riddles.
3. **Peripatetic Nomads:** These are traders and tinkers who move from place to place. They sell goods and offer services. Modern farming and industry have made many of these nomads settle down. Only a few still move regularly.
 - **Gujjar and Bakarwal Nomads in Jammu and Kashmir** are communities that move from place to place with their livestock. They usually practice transhumance, which means their migration follows the seasons. They travel between high and low areas to find grazing land. Their main livelihood depends on their animals and natural pastures. They have kept a distinct way of life, including their own clothing, food, and social traditions. Both groups are recognized as Scheduled Tribes in Jammu and Kashmir, which gives them certain rights and protections.
 - **Bakarwals mainly herd sheep and goats.** In the summer, they migrate to the Kashmir Valley's highlands. During winter, they return to lower areas in Jammu. Gujjars tend to herd cattle and buffaloes. Some Gujjars are nomads, while others live more settled or semi-settled lives. The Gujjar community has many different languages and customs, making them diverse culturally.

- **Other tribes in Jammu and Kashmir:** include the Changpa, Bot, Batti, Purigpa, Brokpa, and Drokpa. The Changpa are a small Buddhist tribe from Ladakh. They are semi-nomadic herders who raise yaks and goats. The name Changpa means "Northerners" in Tibetan. They mainly live on the high-altitude Changtang plateau in Tibet and Ladakh.
- **The Bot or Boto** are the largest Buddhist tribe in Jammu and Kashmir. Most of them live in Ladakh. They are related to Tibetan people and mostly speak Tibetan. Their name comes from the old name for Tibet.
- **Batti and Purigpa** are tribes from Ladakh. Batti are a small group, while the Purigpa mainly live in Kargil. Both tribes are related to Tibetan and Dardic peoples. They were once followers of Buddhism but many converted to Islam later.
- **Brokpa and Drokpa are important tribes.** Many are from the Proto-Rigvedic groups. Most Brokpa are Muslims, but some follow Buddhism or Hinduism. Over the last decade, the number of Buddhist Brokpa and Drokpa has increased.

Objectives:

This study aims to examine how seasonal migration affects the education of bakerwal children.

Methodology:

The research uses both primary and secondary data. Secondary data includes magazines, articles, official reports, and previously published studies. Primary data is gathered through questionnaires distributed via convenience sampling. Several educational issues faced by nomad children due to migration are identified.

Most migrating families have around four children who move together to higher altitudes, disrupting their learning. Migration occurs from June to October. The main goal of migration is to graze livestock, a tradition passed down through generations. Children often cannot attend school regularly in new locations due to long distances. Many children drop out during middle school. Seasonal learning centers do exist to fill education gaps, but many are not operational everywhere. This limits educational access for the children.

Teachers do visit these centres, but the number of teachers is too small to meet all student needs. They lack the specialization to teach all subjects well. Children also lack basic knowledge in many subjects and are often unable to learn this at seasonal centers. The environment for studying is poor, as children live in sheds or old mud houses. These are usually large joint families with no private space for study. This leads to constant interruptions in their learning.

An interesting finding is that many nomads are not actually poor, although they live modestly. They are often financially stable. The real issue is that going to school is not a priority or easy to pursue. It's not a matter of money but of motivation and opportunity.

Conclusion:

To sum up, we can say that there is a dire need for institutional reforms making nomad community aware of the importance of education and to go along the changes which take place from time to time to prevent exploitation and backwardness. It is far better than providing little incentives. Once they come to know about the importance of education they will automatically fix their minds towards education scarifying other activities. Setting seasonal centres to the migrated areas and mid day meal in them should be second best initiative. In fact hard efforts are required to break the vicious circle in nomads otherwise they will continue to lag behind.

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