

**GIVING VOICE TO VOICELESS: A STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL
ASPIRATION AMONG GIRLS BELONGS TO GADDI TRIBE**

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ABSTRACT

Aspiration is aim or goal an individual set for himself/herself and strive to achieve it through continues hard work. Aspiration is minimum criteria for humans for being alive and everyone of us aspire everyday in one or the other walk of life. Present study is an attempt to study Educational Aspiration of Gaddi girls of backward areas of Doda district. Moreover, efforts were made through present research work to investigate various factors threatening their aspiration. Here the target population is marginalized on three parameters: Firstly they are girls and we all know that gender equality in India is still distant dream; secondly they belongs to Gaddi tribe of schedule tribe and tertiary they belonged to the backward areas of Doda district. The population of the present study comprised of higher secondary school students. The sample of the study was extracted from the population by using purposive sampling technique.

Keywords:- *Aspiration, Gaddi, Girls, Schedule Tribe etc.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a one of the prominent factors in promoting and sustaining social advancement, economic growth and technological development of any nation. The growth of society is not possible without education. It is with this reason that almost all the eminent educationists have unanimously agreed that education is the pillar on which the entire fabric of nation resides. Education in its broadest sense is any act or experience that has formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual and in its technical sense education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, values, skills from one generation to another through institution.

Aspiration means a strong desire to achieve something high or great. Aspirations, however, usually cannot be the achievement of something high or great. These also address both present and future perspectives. According to Sirin *et al.*, (2004), “Aspirations have been defined as the educational and vocational dreams that students have for the future.” According to Hurlock (1973), “Aspiration means a longing for what one has achieved with advancement on it’s as its end”.

In Jammu and Kashmir there are numerous communities of tribal which are scattered in all three region (Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh) of the state. In constitutionally special state of Jammu and Kashmir they live in high altitude areas as per the data majority of them are found in Ladakh region. Most common tribes found in J&K are Gujjar, Bakarwal, Gaddi, Sippi, Balti, Beda, Boto, Changpa, Garra, Mon, Purigpa, Brokpa, Drokpa, Dard and Schin. The Gaddis are a tribe living mainly in the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. They are a Scheduled Tribe, and many make their living by sheep raising and farming. Women of the tribe take part in agriculture and animal husbandry, and contribute to the family income. William Crooke describes them as a “community of cow-herders” in his Tribes and Castes of North-Western India (1896). The travel with flocks to the higher reach in summer and lower reach in winter season but over a period of time they have settled down and practice agriculture. Gaddi economy mainly revolves around agriculture and pastoralism. Majority of them has own land which is jointly held within the family. Gaddis believe in joint extended family system where father mother with their married and unmarried children commonly share the same roof. The eldest male member as head of the family commands great respect. Women observe avoidance in the presence of elder male members of husband’s household but share joking relationship with younger ones. Gaddi family and kinship is basically patterned on patriarchal system, succession from father to son and the inheritance follows the matrilineal line of descent. The Gaddis marry within their community and the marriages are arranged by the elder family members. As far as education of the community is concerned, the literacy rate of Schedule tribe in general and Gaddi tribe in particular in J&K is very low as compare to national literacy rate of Schedule tribes.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Gaddi tribe in particular is one of the most socially and educationally deprived sections of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. There is patriarchal dominance in the community even now and many geographical, social and educational factors are collectively responsible for their educational backwardness. Moreover, the trend of early marriage in the community is one of the

leading cause behind low literacy rate among females as in many cases girls are barred from education after secondary stage. Ahmed (2017) studied educational career aspiration among Teli secondary school students of Jammu division and concluded that level of educational and career aspiration of said community was very low, especially among females. He also explored various factors responsible for such trend and factors Illiteracy of parents, conservative outlook of the community, religious conservatism, trend of early engagements etc. were prominent one. In the light of above argument a study was planned to investigate educational aspiration of higher secondary school girls belongs to Gaddi tribe of Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study Nature and Level of Educational Aspiration of Gaddi higher secondary school girls of Doda district
- To study Level of awareness about educational and career perspectives among Gaddi higher secondary school girls of Doda district
- To Study various factors threatening educational aspiration of Gaddi higher secondary school girls of Doda district
- To suggest remedies to improve educational aspiration of Gaddi higher secondary school girls of Doda district

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Methodology: The present study is mainly intended to investigate aspiration of Gaddi higher secondary school girls of Doda district. To fulfill this objective, it was needed to visit the field and observe the real situation. Hence, Exploratory Research Design was adopted to conduct the study.

Population of the Study: The population of the present study consists of higher secondary school girls (11th, and 12th) belonged to Gaddi Tribe of Doda district.

Sample of the Study: Sample of present study consists of 50 higher secondary school girls (11th, and 12th) belonged to Gaddi Tribe of Doda district. Only Gaddi girls studying in four government higher secondary schools across four tehsils (Doda, Bhaderwah, Thathri and Gandoh) were taken up in the present study. Purposive sampling technique is used to draw sample from the population.

Tool and Techniques for the Study: For the present study the investigator used Semi structured questionnaire for collection of data. The tool was validated by the process of peer review, expert

review and pilot testing. In addition to questionnaire, informal focus group discussion was also carried out with the sample girls for the in-depth responses.

OBJECTIVE WISE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Table I – Nature and level of educational aspiration of Gaddi Girls

Themes	Frequency	Percentage
Nature of Educational Aspiration		
• Technical and Vocational Courses	---	---
• General courses	48	96
• Professional Courses	02	04
Level of Educational Aspiration		
• 10+2/Diploma	22	44
• Graduation	23	46
• Post Graduation	05	10
• M.Phil/Ph.D.	---	---

Objective - 1: To study Nature and Level of Educational Aspiration of Gaddi higher secondary school girls of Doda district

Table 1 is reflecting nature and level of educational aspiration Gaddi girls of Doda district. With regard to nature of educational aspiration it was found that majority of Gaddi secondary school girls (96%) aspire for general courses like simple 10+2, general graduation (B.A, B.Sc., B.Com.), general post-graduation (M.A, M.Sc., M.Com.) and just meager number i.e. 04% aspirants wish to study professional courses. In addition to this the students were also asked about their inclination towards vocational courses but no respondents expressed her willingness to join vocational courses. As far as level of educational aspiration of respondents is concerned, it was found that 44% respondent want to study up to 12th standard only, whereas 46% respondent want to continue their study up to graduation level and just 10% respondent wish to continue their study up to post graduation level.

Table 2 - Awareness among Gaddi secondary school girls about scholarship schemes

S.No	Themes	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Awareness about Scholarship schemes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes• No	02 48	04 96
2.	Scholarship Aailed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes• No	46 04	92 08

Objective - 2: To study Level of awareness among Gaddi higher secondary school girls of Doda district

Table-2 is showing level of awareness among respondents about various financial (Scholarship) schemes for the students' belonged Schedule tribe category. It was evident from the above table that majority of the respondents (96%) do not know about various scholarship schemes meant for the ST students and just 04% of them are familiar with these schemes. They were further asked whether they have availed scholarship or not and they gave much contradicted responses that 92% of them have availed scholarship and just few (08%) never availed benefit of these financial assistance. Furthermore, majority of respondents revealed that they availed scholarship for more than five times so far. Through informal focus group discussion, they were probed about their contradictory responses. In this regard, one of the respondent quoted:

Hume scholarship schemes ke bare main kuch khass pata nai hai. Huma teachers har saal bolta ha ki tum form bhara tuma paisa mila gay. Hume har saal paise milte hain par kyu milte hai, koun deta hai huma uska kuch bhi pata nai hai.

Translation: We do not know much about scholarship schemes, our teachers ask us to fill form every year for getting money. We just know that we got money every year but we know nothing about why we are getting money and who is giving money.

Table 3 is showing awareness level of the respondents about various state level and national level competitive examinations for seeking admissions in different courses. And it was found that only few students are aware about these examinations which are confined to the state of Jammu and Kashmir only. Their information system was as weak as they don't know much about various competitive examinations. Surprisingly, the researchers inquired (Observation and Focus group Discussion) the reasons behind their poor information system and concluded three major reasons behind their poor information system.

1. School library is not even equipped with essential books then how could we expect from school to provide the students facilities like newspapers, internet and magazines?
2. They belongs to the educationally backward blocks where literacy level is very low and their parents are either illiterate or semi-literate who themselves don't know about these examinations then how could we expect them to guide their wards?
3. In addition to the above mentioned reasons, third reason lies with the responsibility of the teacher. The responsibility of teacher doesn't end with teaching only but they have to make their students aware about latest trends in educational field and guide their students accordingly but most of the teachers don't guide their students about various latest job oriented educational courses which also contribute in poor information system of the students.

Table 3 - Awareness about national and local competitive exams for seeking admission in different courses after higher secondary level

Themes	Yes	No
	F (%)	F (%)
Exams for getting admission in different courses		
• NEET	---	50 (100)
• JEE	---	50 (100)
• JK CET	05 (10)	45 (90)
• JUET	02 (04)	48 (96)
• CUCET	---	50 (100)

Table 4 - Factors threatening educational aspiration of Gaddi higher secondary school girls

Themes	Responses	
	Frequency	Percentage
Push factors among Adolescents		
• Educational	36	72
• Social	39	78
• Financial	27	54
• Geographical	43	86
• Domestic	42	84

Objective - 3: To Study various factors threatening educational aspiration of Gaddi higher secondary school girls of Doda district

Table 4 is showing various factors which cause obstacles in the way of aspirants to aspire higher and to achieve whatever is aspired. For this purpose the respondents were asked about such factors and then the researchers categorized these factors into five broader categories (as shown in the above table). There are many sub factors which are subsumed under broader categories which are as under:

- **Educational Factors:** Under this category the respondents revealed many issues which become hindrance in their way such as lack of guidance in the home due to illiteracy of the parents, lack of guidance on the part of teachers etc. Moreover they also claimed that examination anxiety is also serve threatening force which obstruct them to achieve higher and higher.
- **Social Factors:** As far as social factors are concerned, the respondents claimed that orthodox thinking of the community about the education of girls and trend of early marriage (most suitable age in the gaddi tribe is 18 years for the girls and 21 years for boys) are most dominant threatening factors. Respondents further revealed that the community members still thinks that women are only house managers and there is no need to invest on their education. Moreover, if someone rebel and goes for higher education then it will be very difficult to get suitable match within the community for them as the gaddi tribe believe in within tribe marriages and people belongs to this tribe has to strictly adhere this norm.
- **Financial Factors:** With regard to financial factors, the respondent claimed that they belongs to poor family as their main source of livelihood depends on agricultural activities or animal rearing which doesn't permit them to aspire higher (especially professional courses) as higher education is very costly. In addition to this they also revealed that they don't have enough financial resources to buy books and avail private tuitions. Although there are many scholarship and loan schemes run by the government for the tribal students and girls students but it is already established that the respondents don't know much about various financial schemes.
- **Geographical Factors:** These students belonged to the hilly areas and the students have to come down for the school by walking more than 5 kilometers daily (10 km up and down) as there is not road connectivity to the schools either or it is in very poor shape. There is threat on their security as well as there are streams in the way which may wash them away in

monsoons (quoted incidents: Saringal and Batote) and respondents are girls so we all know that there is rise in the crime against women in the country.

- **Domestic Factors:** Said tribe still believes that women are meant for the house care. After school hours these girls had to take part in agricultural activities, household chores and taking care of domestic animals to strength family income. If the students are spending most of their time in domestic work then how could they fully devote themselves in their studies?

Objective - 4: To suggest remedies to improve educational aspiration of Gaddi higher secondary school girls of Doda district

- Parents of target population are either illiterate or semi-literate. So, the responsibility of guiding these young buds shifted on the teachers and the educated community members.
- Teachers should acquaint these students about various new job oriented vocational courses as we are living in era of skill driven society. Moreover, they should also make them aware about process and eligibility of various scholarship and loan schemes meant for Schedule tribe and girls students.
- The findings of the study revealed that these students are less informed about various competitive examinations for seeking admission in professional and general higher educational institutions. So, the school administration should organize various types of events such as lectures, seminars, workshops etc. to make them more informative and to drive them towards contributors of national development.
- Government and NGO's should organize various events for the community members of gaddi tribe about the importance of education of girls and hazards of early marriages.
- To curb various geographical factors, it is strictly recommended on the part government to either provide good road connectivity or to initiate scheme like Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (to cover 12 years of school education) to ensure hostel facility to these marginalized girls. Furthermore, these prospective schools should be well equipped with human and material resource support for better outcomes.

CONCLUSION:

It was evident from the findings of the present study that the aspiration level and awareness level about various higher educational courses among higher secondary girls belongs to Gaddi tribe. Educational, financial, social, domestic and geographical factors are predominately responsible

for such trend. Hence, various stakeholders should work collaboratively and follow the above suggestions to curb these factors and for achieving high ended results.

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