



## EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF VAN GUJJARS IN UTTARAKHAND

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### Abstract

*Education is a forceful instrument to change the values and attitude of people and to create in them the urge of necessary motivation to achieve social class ascendancy and social mobility. Education transmits the culture from one generation to another. An integration of the old must take place with the new ones. The communities live in the present, on the past and for the future. This means that activities and experiences in the present have to be built on the past and the present will guide the activities of the future as education is the continuous reorganization and integration of the activities and experiences. "Education is a liberating force and in our age it is also a democratizing force cutting across the barriers of caste and class, something out of inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances..." (Indira Gandhi). Education as a means of advancement of capacity, well-being and opportunity is uncontested and more so among communities on the periphery of obligations"*

*One such community is of Van-Gujjars which is involved in animal husbandry and lives in forests of Uttarakhand, Himachal and Jammu&Kashmir. It is one of the most backward communities in our country and due to absence of education the Van-Gujjars are suffering from backwardness, social and economic disabilities. Van-Gujjars who generally live an isolated life are not treated well, nor cooperated with in time of need, which leads them to the back foot and restricts their admittance to the Government schemes. The community is in the grip of age-old culture, which affects it in many ways. Many of the traditional social evils are still prevalent among them. The youth and awakened people from the community wish to get out of it and some of them have even initiated the process.*

*Indian Government has put lot of efforts for their upliftment. In the last few decades the condition of life has changed in many ways for the pastoral Van Gujjar who have their winter camps in the interior of the forests of the Shiwalik foot hills of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand in northern India. The paper attempts to study the educational status of the families of Van-Gujjar students especially in Haridwar district of Uttarakhand.*

**Key words:-** Van- Gujjars, Educational status

### Introduction

Van Gujjar is a tribal-nomadic community which has been provided the status of Other Backward Classes in Uttarakhand state. organized societies."

In the last few decades the condition of life has changed in many ways for the pastoral Van Gujjar who have their winter camps in the interior of the forests of the Shiwalik foot hills of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand in northern India. While the Van-Gujjar in most of northern India are a very large and ethnically as well as religiously diversified population, the pastoral Van- Gujjar in this particular area are all Muslims and constitute a rather homogenous, specialized community based on the production of buffalo milk from pastoralism in state forest. Although most other pastoral communities in the Himalayan region have a village base where they practice agriculture for part of the year, this is not the case with Van Gujjars. They live a scattered life in temporarily erected huts, made from



forest materials, in both their winter and summer pastures in the interior of the forests. During the last decade the Van-Gujjars have tried to access education for their children. During summer they migrate to the forests of Uttarakhand or to the Shimla hills in Himachal Pradesh. Few of the Van-gujjars have settled in Pathari place of Haridwar district.

**Need for the study:**-Education is an endless process needed for the development of a nation. It is education only which enables them to secure for themselves an equitable and rightful place in the national system. Up liftment of the human depends on the rise of its educational status. Therefore the researcher is intended to take opportunity for the present study on educational status of Van-Gujjars students belonging to Haridwar district of Uttarakhand state who are studying in secondary classes(9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>) of Government schools.

**Review of related literature:**-Education commission 1966 on Nomadic and semi nomadic groups states that “it may be stated that there are several nomadic and semi-nomadic groups in the country whose needs have been hitherto neglected almost completely. It will not be easy to provide educational facilities for such groups. To the extent possible, such groups have to be assisted in developing more settled ways of life. This calls for a degree of fundamental reorganization in their economy and their way of life. While such process of change would be carried out over several years, efforts have to be made to provide marketing, credit, health, and educational facilities in a mobile form wherever there are sizeable nomadic groups. Several facilities are required for communities which migrate from their homes, for several months in a year”.

S. M. Dubey, (1972) carried a study on education, social change and political consciousness among tribes of north east India and concluded that tribes are illiterate and backward, and there is a need of creating political awareness among them. Anita Sharma (2009), explored the community life of Bakerwals, their religion, their power and reciprocity, knowledge, tradition, language, art, craft, music and dance in a detailed way, also a gave brief summary about the valley of Kashmir is given. Aparna Mitra, (2008) studied on the status of women among scheduled tribes in India and concluded that tribal women are less educated comparatively and gender equality among tribal group is a complex phenomenon. D.K.Behera, et.al (1999) made a study entitled “contemporary societies, tribal societies” studies on various social concepts about the tribes and concluded that tribes are socially and educationally backward.

**Objective of the study:-** To study the educational status of the families of Van-Gujjar students.

#### **Delimitations of the study**

- The study is confined to Van-gujjars of Haridwar district of Uttarakhand State only.
- The sample of the study encompasses of only 50 Van-gujjar students studying in secondary(9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>) classes of government schools.



**Methodology of research:-** Selection of appropriate research method helps the investigator to fulfill the objectives of the study. The present study is based on survey, in which normative survey method was followed for carrying out this study. In normative survey method we are concerned with the conditions that exist, practice that prevails, points of views or influences that are being felt and trends that are developing.

**Sample:-**Sample of the present study constitutes 50 Van-gujjar students studying in secondary classes (9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>) of Government schools.

**Tools:-** The investigator has developed her own questionnaire for studying the educational status the Van-gujjar students of secondary classes.

**Statistical technique used:-** The investigator used percentage method to analyze the data collected from the Van-gujjar students.

### **Analysis of Data**

**Table 1:Distribution of the students on the basis of their family's educational status:-**

S.No	Education	No of students	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	32	64%
2.	Till 5 <sup>th</sup> Standard	7	14%
3.	5 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> Standard	5	10%
4.	10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Standard	4	8%
5.	Graduate	2	4%

Table 1 indicates that 64% of students mentioned that their parents are illiterate, parents of 14% students are class 5<sup>th</sup> Passed. The parents of 10% of the students have educational qualification between 5<sup>th</sup> passed to 10<sup>th</sup> passed, whereas the educational qualification of the parents of 8% Van Gujjar students lie between classes 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> passed. Parents of only 4% students are graduates. The Figure 3.1 shows the graphical representation of the educational qualifications of the parents of Gujjar students.

### **Conclusion**

On analyzing the data we found that the Van-Gujjars are educationally very poor as only 4% of the parents are Graduate. The parents of the majority of the Van-gujjar students are illiterate. The poor socio-economic status, unawareness, migration as well as un-accessibility of educational opportunities leads the Van-Gujjars to lead a pathetic life. Education which is free of cost upto elementary level in India must be accessible to all, including Gujjars too. They should be made aware that talinh elementary education is their fundamental right. It is the responsibility of the Indian Government as well as the whole society to empower Van-Gujjars through education, so that they would lead a better life.

### **Suggestions**

- The educational status of the Van-gujjars can be raised by providing them access to various educational opportunities



- Van-Gujjars should be made aware that education is their fundamental right.
- They should be provided with new empowerment schemes so as that they would rely on other income generation sources in addition to the traditional occupation.
- Provision of mobile schools by government would help Van Gujjars to get educated.
- Van Gujjars should be exposed to professional skills so as to establish their own units.
- Accessibility and awareness of government jobs to educated Van-Gujjars.
- Immediate step to be taken by Uttarakhand state government to provide permanent land settlements so as to stop the migration of Van-Gujjars.

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