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Socio-Economic Characteristics among Ethnic Population of North Kashmir Himalayas

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Abstract

The valley of Kashmir being predominantly a mountainous one is inhabited by two major contrasting communities- one occupying the valley floor (Kashmiris) and the other mountain valleys (Gujjars). These Gujjars are classified into two groups of nomadic Gujjars and sedentary Gujjars. However, nomadic Gujjars are associated with transhumance and their main source of living is animal rearing and unskilled labour. The development of agriculture is very limited due to the limited availability of arable land, rugged terrain, immature soils and short summer season. Being the inhabitants of remote mountainous areas, these Gujjars lack basic facilities and amenities which are available to the Kashmiri people residing in the low lying areas. Therefore, this study is undertaken with the objective to analyse the socio-economic characteristics of ethnic population in different altitude zones of North Kashmir Himalayas.

Introduction

North Kashmir Himalayas, being a mountainous area, with undulating topography is inhabited by both Gujar and Kashmiri community with very low socio-economic development (Rather & Sameer). North Kashmir Himalayas is a part of Great Kashmir Himalayas which lies between $34^0$16′– 34^0 40′ North Latitude and $73^0$45′-75^0 35′ East Longitude (Fig 1.1). The mountainous range has an average altitude of 2324 masl and extends over an area of 5110.60Km^2. North Kashmir Himalayas take a blend towards the south west near Zojila to Kazinag. This range acts as a water divide between Jhelum in Kashmir valley and Kishanganga of Gurez valley (Raza et al., 1978). It comprises of four districts of Jammu and Kashmir State viz. Ganderbal, Bandipora, Kupwara and Baramullah. About 21 percent of the total population of Jammu & Kashmir state is found in North Kashmir Himalayas. The total population of North Kashmir Himalayas is 2.56 lac persons (Census, 2011) with about 53.55 percent male population and 46.45 percent are female population. The concentration of Gujjar population is found in all districts of J & K state. About 12.07 percent gujjar population out of total population is found in Jammu and Kashmir State. The Total Gujjar population of North Kashmir Himalayas is 244501 persons in which 52.80 percent are males and 47.20 percent are females (Census, 2011).

The Gujjars are having symbiotic interaction with the surrounding environs and in turn they derive their basic livelihood from them (Khatana 1992, 2007). Environment has played a great role in their type of housing, food, clothing and living style (Hussain, 2002). An attempt has been made to investigate the health implications of poor housing conditions in Srinagar city by Singh and Baba (2015). Various housing indicators were identified and correlation was established between housing conditions and diseases. The study

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revealed that there is a positive relationship between the socio-economic conditions of households and frequent occurrence of air borne diseases.

The major concentration of ethnic community in Jammu and Kashmir is Gujjar and Bakarwals (Zutshi, 2001). Ruhi (2014) worked on socio-economic conditions of Gujjars. The findings were that Gujjars live mostly in kachha houses. They have low level of standard of life as they cannot afford to have basic facilities of life which are now very much important for people to maintain their minimum standard of life. They have a very low source of income and cannot afford to have good house, good food, good education and better health facilities.

Gujjars in the state of J&K have been classified differently on their activity and type of housing. Some population of this ethnic group are semi-nomads and are involved in cultivation. They are now known as Baskeens (those who have settled on land). The other section practice seasonal migration (Transhumance) with their livestock. They are further sub-divided into two main groups of Baniharas or Doodhi Gujars and the Bakerwal Gujars. (Rahi, 2012).

Nomadic Gujjars constitute a sizable chunk in the J&K state population whereas in Himachal Pradesh they are a very small part of state's population. Koundal (2012) used stratified random sampling technique for analyzing the socio-economic status of Gujjars. It was found that there are income inequalities in the Gujjar households and therefore the health conditions of Gujjars vary from one household to another.

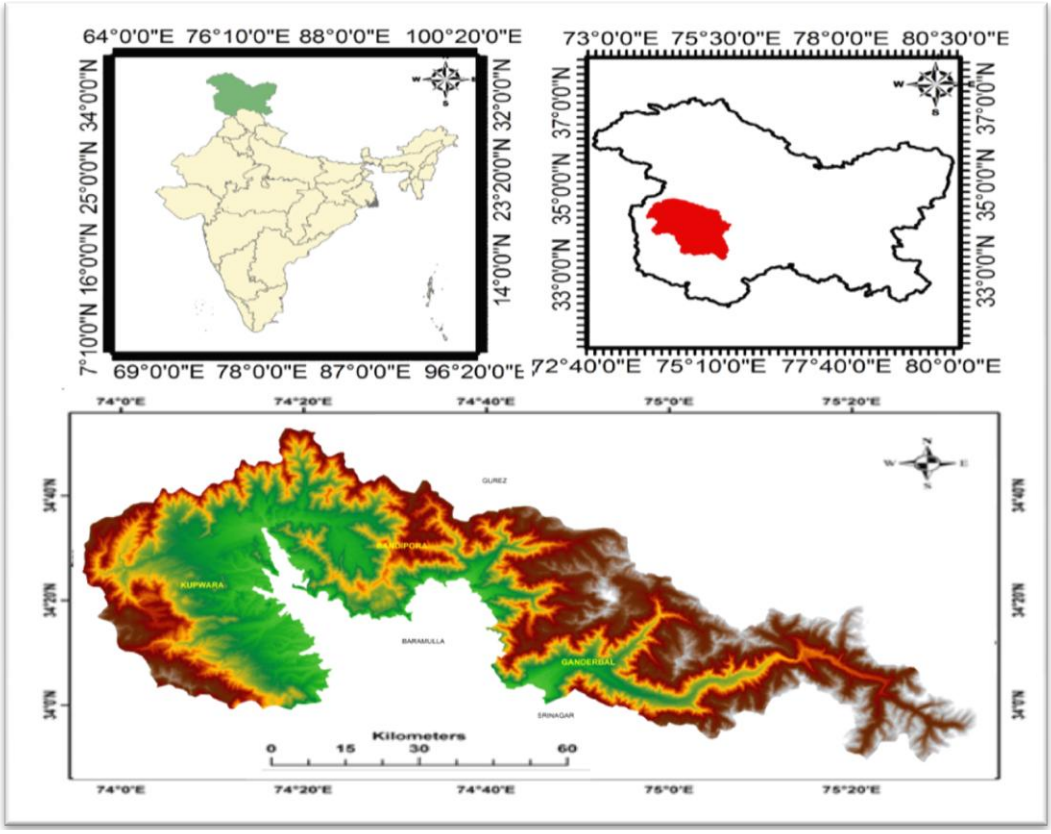

Fig 1.1 Study Area

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2. Data Base and Methodology

2.1 Socio-economic data

This study relied more on primary sources of data and partly on secondary data. Primary data has been generated through sample survey with the help of structured questionnaires/ schedules, interviews, observations etc.

The data pertaining to various socio-economic and demographic variables of north Kashmir Himalayas have been collected from various departments. The data on population and its various attributes was obtained from Census Department; data regarding gujjar settlements was collected at district level offices.

2.2 Delineation of study area

The study area was delineated from Survey of India Toposheets (1971) of 1:50,000 scale. First mosaic of toposheets and geo-referencing were done in Erdas imagine and then a subset was prepared. It was then transferred to ArcGIS 10.3 then the contours were taken as the criterion for delineation. The base contour was taken as 1,600th m AMSL. Subsequently, the data regarding gujjar population of the study area was processed in ArcGIS 10.3 for the preparation of various thematic maps (Fig 1.2 & 1.3).

2.3 Identification and Zonation

The gujjar villages were identified on the basis of census data 2011 provided by census department Jammu and Kashmir and on ground truthing. The area under study was fairly large characterized by large altitudinal variations; it was divided into five altitudinal zones with 200 metre interval with the help of ArcGIS10.3. The altitudinal zonation was done as the North Kashmir Himalayas has heterogeneous terrain and there is variation in physical and social aspects. Variation in socio-economic profile with altitude was evident in pilot survey, there is variation in road network and accessibility with altitude, also there is variation in basic amenities with altitude. So altitudinal zonation becomes necessary for analyzing the residential environment and quality of life.

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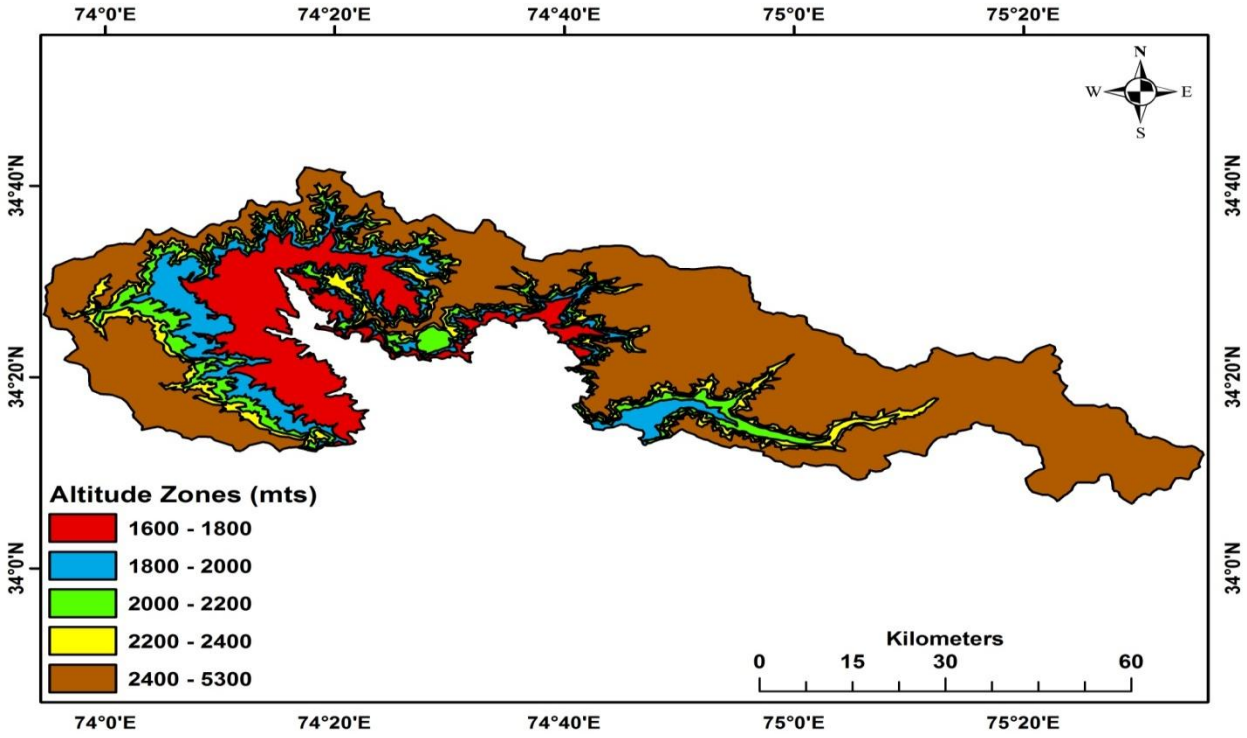

Fig 1.2 Altitude zones of North Kashmir Himalayas

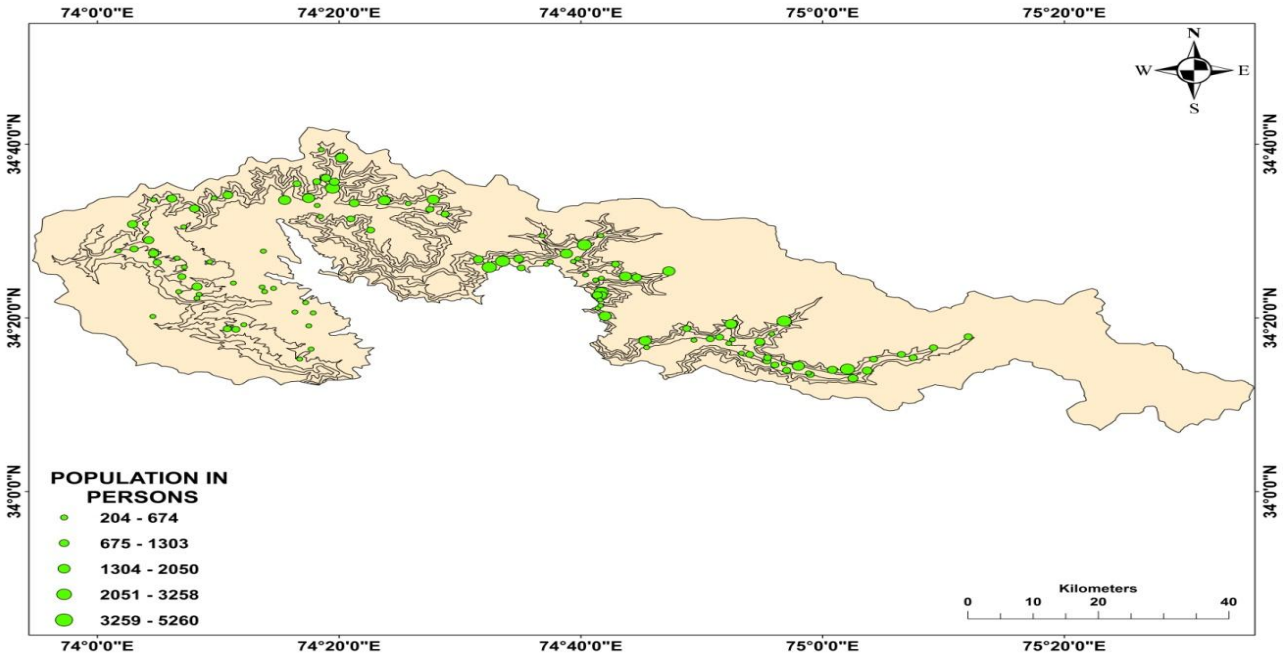

Fig 1.3 Population Distribution in North Kashmir Himalayas

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2.4 Framing and designing of Questionnaire/Schedule

A structured questionnaire/schedule was framed after consulting the literature that was available in libraries and on internet. Questionnaire / Schedule were consisting of various parts like demographic set up, economic conditions, expenditure pattern and household asset among gujjars of north Kashmir Himalayas.

2.5 Sample Survey / Field Survey

Stratified random sample survey was used for data collection and the questionnaire/schedule was the main tool. A sample size of 8 percent of the households and 20 percent of the total gujjar villages were selected for the sample survey. Household survey of 557 sample households was carried out to study the residential environment and quality of life in north Kashmir Himalayas (Fig 1.4). Pilot survey / personal observation and personal interview were the techniques of data collection.

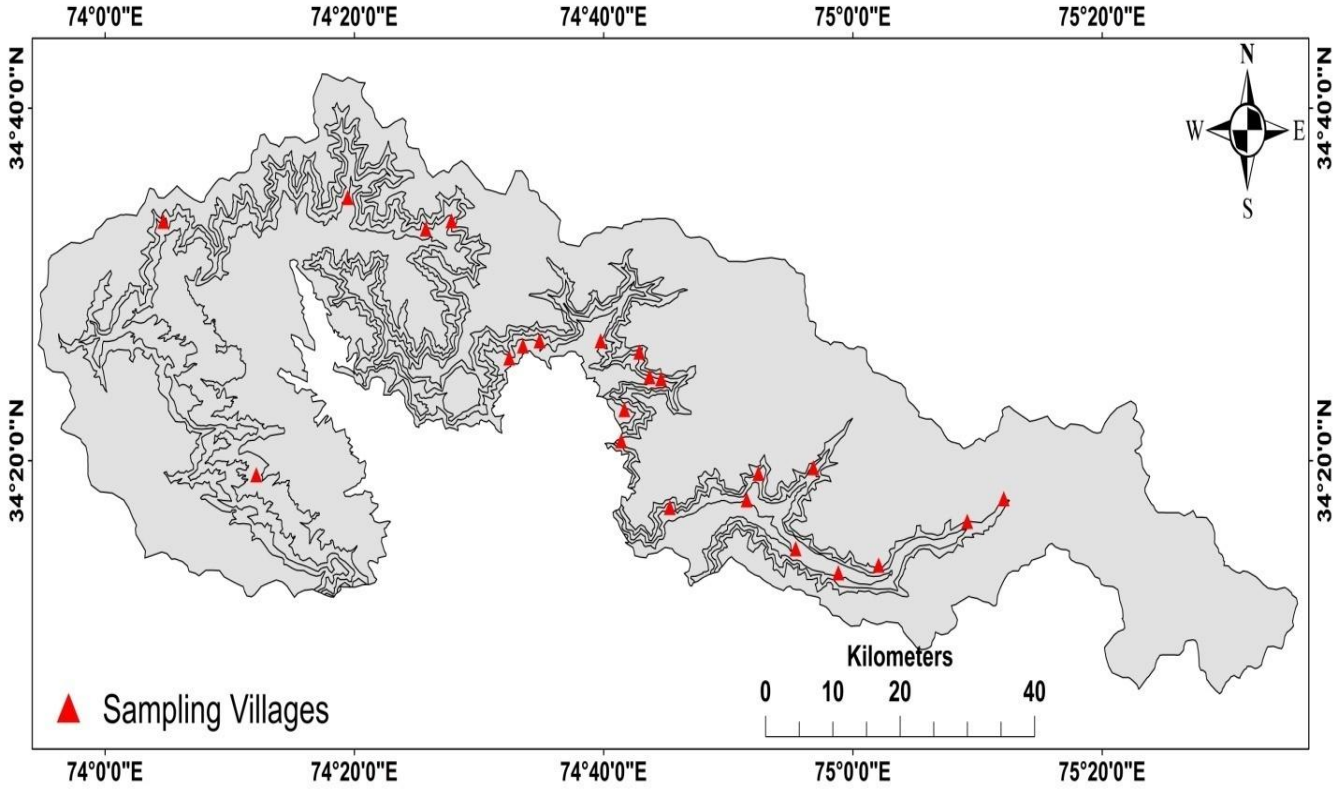

Fig 1.4 Sample villages of North Kashmir Himalayas

3.0 Results & Discussions

3.1 Gender Composition

The composition of population according to sex is known as sex composition. The sex composition of population helps in understanding the demographic processes of fertility, mortality and migration. The

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knowledge of sex ratio is essential for understanding the employment and consumption patterns and social needs of a community. In India, sex ratio is expressed as the number of females per thousand males. In some countries this ratio is expressed as males per thousand females, while in countries like Russia and Ukraine, it is expressed in terms of percentage of males or female population. From the table 1.1 and fig 1.5, zone D has highest sex ratio (911) followed by zone A (872) and zone E (865) while as zone B has lowest females per thousand males (755). The average sex ratio of north Kashmir Himalayas was found to be 844 females per thousand males which is quite low than the state average (883) and national average (940). The average household size was found to be 5.4 persons with highest household size in zone A (6.8)

Table 1.1 Demographic Profile

Altitude Zone in (mts)	Sample Village	Sample Households	Avg. H.H size	Demographic Profile			
				Sample Population (Persons)	Males	Females	Sex Ratio
Zone A (1600-1800)	Gund Saderkoot, Aloosa, Ahmi Sharief, Chitibandi	125	6.8	852	455 (53.4)	397 (46.6)	872
Zone B (1800-2000)	Muqam, Malangam, Kalrooch, Manigam, Shiltra, Kuligam, Sumlar, Akhal, Hayan	184	5.3	981	559 (57.0)	422 (43.0)	755
Zone C (2000-2200)	Chunt Waliwar, Khurhama, Chuntmullah, Wangat, Chatargul	159	4.9	786	432 (55.0)	354 (45.0)	819
Zone D (2200-2400)	Farkhan, Erin Dardpora, Kolan	33	4.6	151	79 (52.3)	72 (47.7)	911
Zone E (2400-5300)	Gagangeer, Ganiwan	56	5.2	289	155 (53.6)	134 (46.4)	865
		557	5.4	3059	1680 (54.3)	1379 (45.7)	844

Source: - Sample Survey, 2016

Note: - Figures in parenthesis represent percentage to total

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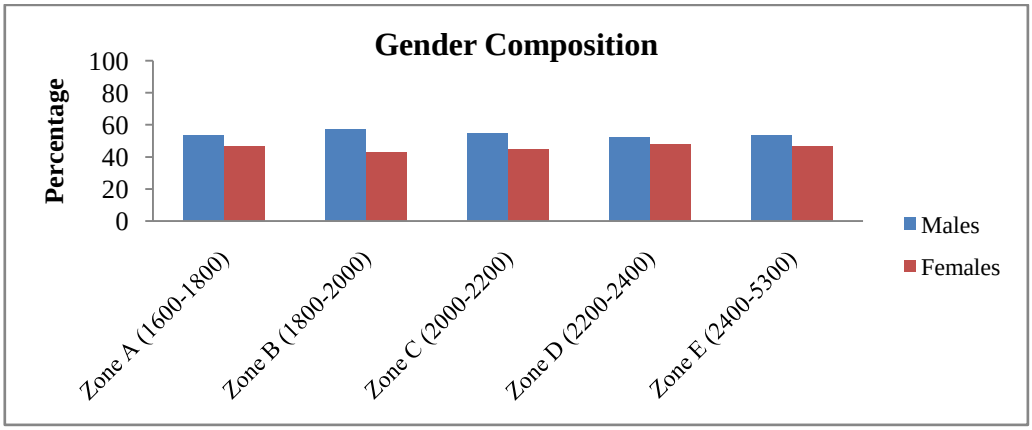

Source: - Based on data obtained through Sample survey- 2016

Fig 1.5 Gender Composition

3.2 Age Structure

Age structure is an important characteristic of a population which determines the workforce and dependency ratio. There are three basic determinants of age composition of population. These include natality, mortality and mobility. These determinants of age structure are interdependent and any change in one of them may influence the other two and it is through these variables that the socio-economic conditions influence the age structure. Apart from fertility, mortality and migration; the age structure of population is also influenced by wars, catastrophe, natural calamities and population. Form the table 1.2 67.48 percent have 15-59 years age. The highest percentage of persons of 0-14 years was found in zone D (26.49 percent). The highest percentage of persons of 15-59 years was found in zone C (68.32 percent). The highest percentage of persons above 60 years (8.46 percent) was found in zone B (fig 1.6).

Table 1.2 Age Structure

Altitude Zone in (mts)	Sample Village	Sample Population	Percentage of Age Structure (years)		
			0-14	15-59	>60
Zone A (1600-1800)	Gund Saderkoot, Aloosa, Ahmi Sharief, Chitibandi	852	217 (25.47)	568 (66.67)	67 (7.86)
Zone B (1800-2000)	Muqam, Malangam, Kalrooch, Manigam, Shiltra, Kuligam, Sumlar, Akhal, Hayan	981	230 (23.45)	668 (68.09)	83 (8.46)
Zone C (2000-2200)	Chunt Waliwar, Khurhama, Chuntmullah, Wangat, Chatargul	786	198 (25.19)	537 (68.32)	51 (6.49)
Zone D (2200-2400)	Farkhan, Erin Dardpora, Kolan	151	40 (26.49)	102 (67.55)	9 (5.96)

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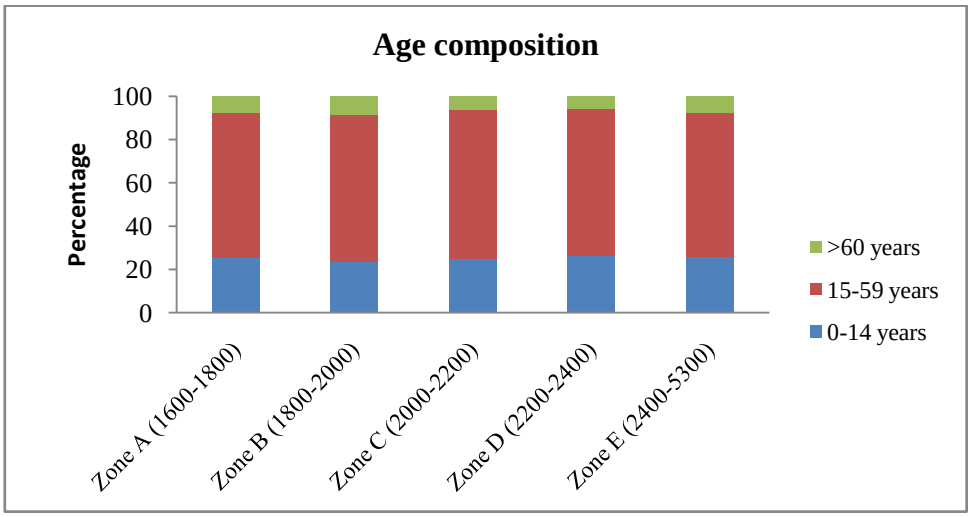
Zone E (2400-5300)	Gagangeer, Ganiwan	289	74 (25.61)	193 (66.78)	22 (7.61)
		3059	759 (25.24)	2068 (67.48)	232 (7.28)

Source: - Sample Survey, 2016

Note: - Figures in parenthesis represent percentage to total



Source: - Based on data obtained through Sample survey- 2016

Fig 1.6 Age Composition

3.3 Levels of Education

Literacy rate is the number of literate persons for each hundred people and is expressed in percentages. Literacy is essential for eradicating poverty and mental isolation, for cultivating peaceful and friendly international relations and for permitting the free play of demographic processes. Literacy influences other such attributes of population as fertility, mortality, mobility, occupations etc. About 83 percent of population has primary and middle level of education as revealed from table 1.3 and fig 1.7. The altitude zone C has highest percentage of secondary education (16.3 percent). While as zone D has lowest percentage of secondary education (8.5 percent). Regarding the higher education, zone A has highest percentage (6.3 percent) and zone D has lowest percentage (1.7 percent). The average total literacy of all altitudinal zones was 41.5percent which is much below than state average (68.74 percent) and national average (74.04 percent). The correlation between education and income level (below Rs. 6000/-) was found positive (0.78). A lot of variation was found between male literacy and female literacy. The male literacy was 46.08 percent while female literacy was found as 36.07 percent. The highest female literacy was found in zone A (39.24 percent) while as the lowest female literacy was found in zone D (29.17 percent). The reason of low level of female literacy is male dominance, low standard of life, gender inequality and lack of awareness.

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To study whether the education level is even or not, we make a null hypothesis that the number of literates having higher education is evenly or unevenly distributed. Under this assumption each part should have equal number of literates. In order to test the assumption made above we work out the value of x2 as 28.3. The degree of freedom (n-1) in this case is 5-1=4. For 4 d.f tabulated value of chi-square at 1% level of significance is 13.28. Our computed value 28.3 is more than the tabulated value and hence, it is statistically significant. Thus the hypothesis that higher education level literates are equally distributed is rejected and we may conclude that the distribution of literates (having higher education) is not even.

Table 1.3 Levels of Education

Altitude Zone in (mts)	**Sample Village**	Total literacy	Male literacy	Female literacy	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher
Zone A (1600-1800)	Gund Saderkoot, Aloosa, Ahmi Sharief, Chitibandi	368 (43.2)	213 (46.61)	155 (39.24)	137 (37.2)	155 (42.1)	53 (14.4)	23 (6.3)
Zone B (1800-2000)	Muqam, Malangam, Kalrooch, Manigam, Shiltra, Kuligam, Sumlar, Akhal, Hayan	390 (39.8)	238 (42.58)	152 (36.02)	159 (40.8)	170 (43.6)	47 (12.1)	14 (3.6)
Zone C (2000-2200)	Chunt Waliwar, Khurhama, Chuntmullah, Wangat, Chatargul	344 (43.8)	210 (48.61)	134 (37.85)	133 (38.7)	135 (39.2)	56 (16.3)	20 (5.8)
Zone D (2200-2400)	Farkhan, Erin Dardpora, Kolan	59 (39.1)	38 (48.10)	21 (29.17)	31 (52.5)	22 (37.3)	5 (8.5)	1 (1.7)
Zone E (2400-5300)	Gagangeer, Ganiwan	120 (41.5)	69 (44.52)	51 (38.06)	47 (39.2)	53 (44.2)	15 (12.5)	5 (4.2)
Total		1281 (41.5)	768 (46.08)	513 (36.07)	507 (41.7)	535 (41.8)	176 (12.7)	63 (4.3)

Source: - Sample Survey, 2016

Note: - Figures in parenthesis represent percentage to total

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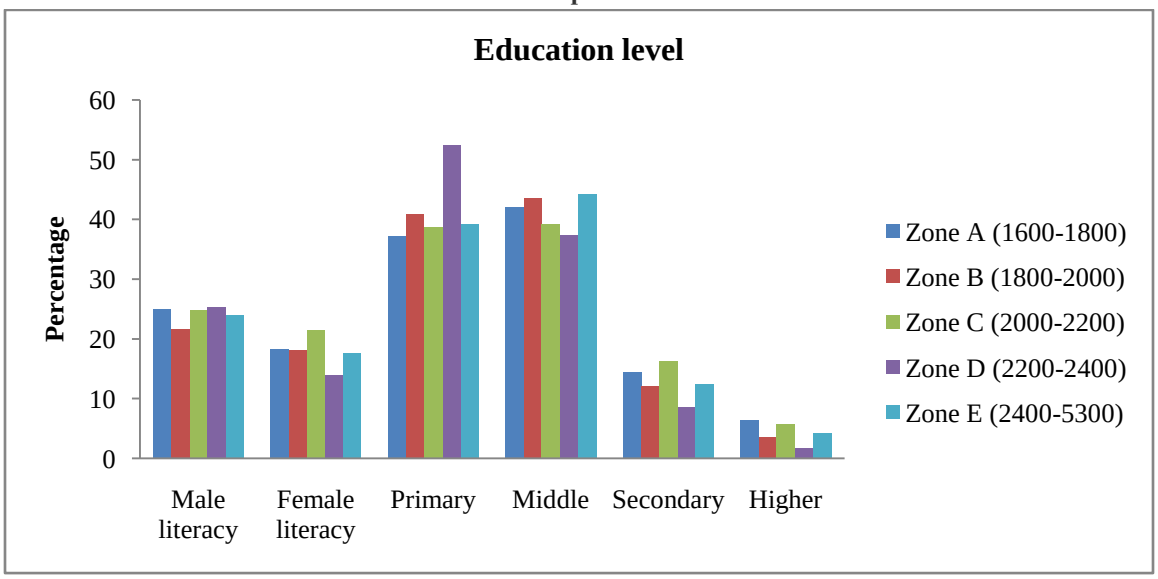

Source: - Based on data obtained through Sample survey- 2016

Fig 1.7 Educational Level

3.4 Levels of Income

Household income is an important parameter to ascertain the level of living and state well being of population. Magnitude and its distribution of absolute monthly income is also useful device in making provision for housing. It also helps in determining the urban poverty. Not only this, the main objective of the income distribution has been to examine income inequalities among households of different altitude zones. About 66.5 percent households have income of Rs. 6000 per month (Table 1.4 and fig 1.8). Zone C has the lowest percentage of Rs 6000 income per month (64.2 percent) and the highest percentage of income of Rs. 6000 was found in zone D (72.7 percent). The highest income of Rs above 10000 was found in altitude zone A (20.8 percent) and lowest percentage is found in zone D (12.1 percent). To study whether the income was distributed evenly or unevenly, chi-square was applied.

The x^2 values for all income groups come to be 106.17, 36.95 and 19.46. Since the computed value is found higher than the tabulated value, hence it is statistically significant. Thus the hypothesis that the distribution of income is equally distributed in each part is rejected and we may conclude that the distribution of income levels is not even.

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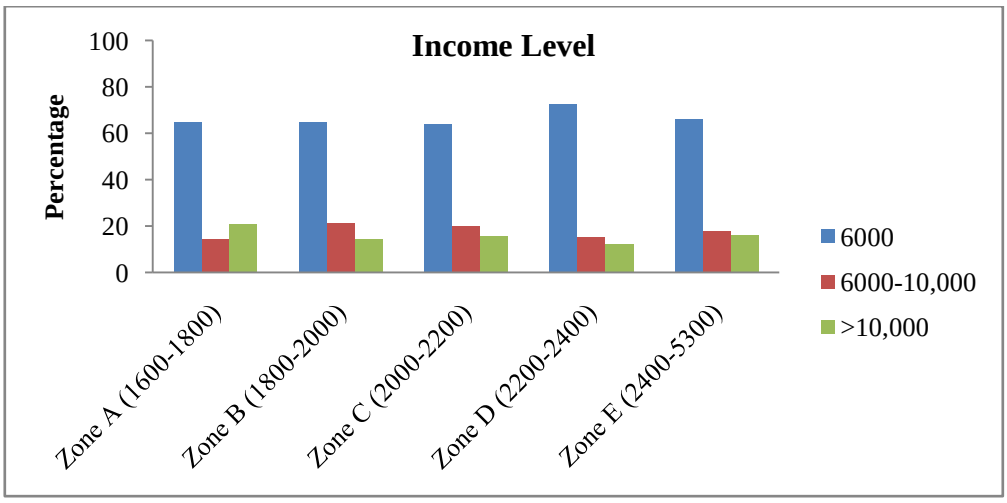
Table 1.4 Levels of Income

Altitude Zone in (mts)	Sample Village	Sample households	Income (Rs) /m		
			6000	6000-10,000	>10,000
Zone A (1600-1800)	Gund Saderkoot, Aloosa, Ahmi Sharief, Chitibandi	125	81 (64.8)	18 (14.4)	26 (20.8)
Zone B (1800-2000)	Muqam, Malangam, Kalrooch, Manigam, Shiltra, Kuligam, Sumlar, Akhal, Hayan	184	122 (64.7)	41 (21.2)	21 (14.1)
Zone C (2000-2200)	Chunt Waliwar, Khurhama, Chuntmullah, Wangat, Chatargul	159	111 (64.2)	27 (20.1)	21 (15.7)
Zone D (2200-2400)	Farkhan, Erin Dardpora, Kolan	33	21 (72.7)	7 (15.2)	5 (12.1)
Zone E (2400-5300)	Gagangeer, Ganiwan	56	37 (66.1)	10 (17.9)	9 (16.1)
		557	372 (66.5)	103 (17.7)	82 (15.8)

Source: - Sample Survey, 2016
Note: - Figures in parenthesis represent percentage to total



Source: - Based on data obtained through Sample survey- 2016
Fig 1.8 Income Levels

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3.5 Levels of Occupation

Occupational structure means the division of working population in different occupations and professions. In each society, people engage themselves in different productive economic activities. The occupation of an individual refers to his trade, profession and type of work. The occupational structure of a society is closely influenced by a number of geo-climate, socio-economic, political factors and human aspirations. The nature and variety of physical resource base like arable land, forest water and minerals also determine the occupational structure of the region. From the table 1.5 and fig 1.9 it was evident that the average total work force was found to be 38.3 percent. About 73 percent of population was involved in primary activities (Labour and Agriculture). In zone D about 59.2 percent are involved in agriculture. The lowest percentage under Govt.Employee was found in zone D (9.2 percent). About 15.1 percent population are involved in category of others (includes private sector, manufacturing, handicrafts, masons and carpenters).

In order to test the assumption made above the value of chi-square comes out be 102 for labours, 140 for agricultural workers and 49.7 for govt. employees. The degree of freedom is 4. For 4, d.f tabulated value of chi-square at 1% level of significance is 13.28. Our computed value is much more than the tabulated value, hence it is statistically significant. Thus the hypothesis that distribution of occupational classes is not even.

Table 1.5 Levels of Occupation

Altitude Zone in (mts)	**Sample Village**	Total Population	Total Work force	Labour	Agriculture and Allied occupation	Govt. Employee	Others
Zone A (1600-1800)	Gund Saderkoot, Aloosa, Ahmi Sharief, Chitibandi	852	321 (37.7)	85 (26.5)	150 (46.7)	35 (10.9)	51 (15.9)
Zone B (1800-2000)	Muqam, Malangam, Kalrooch, Manigam, Shiltra, Kuligam, Sumlar, Akhal, Hayan	981	398 (40.6)	93 (23.5)	180 (45.1)	49 (12.3)	76 (19.1)
Zone C (2000-2200)	Chunt Waliwar, Khurhama, Chuntmullah, Wangat, Chatargul	786	303 (38.5)	81 (26.7)	131 (43.2)	43 (14.2)	48 (15.8)
Zone D (2200-2400)	Farkhan, Erin Dardpora, Kolan	151	55 (36.4)	10 (22.1)	31 (59.2)	6 (9.2)	7 (9.5)
Zone E (2400-5300)	Gagangeer, Ganiwan	289	111 (38.4)	21 (18.9)	59 (53.2)	14 (12.6)	17 (15.3)
		3059	1188 (38.3)	291 (23.5)	553 (49.5)	147 (11.8)	197 (15.1)

Source: - Sample Survey, 2016

Note: - Figures in parenthesis represent percentage to total

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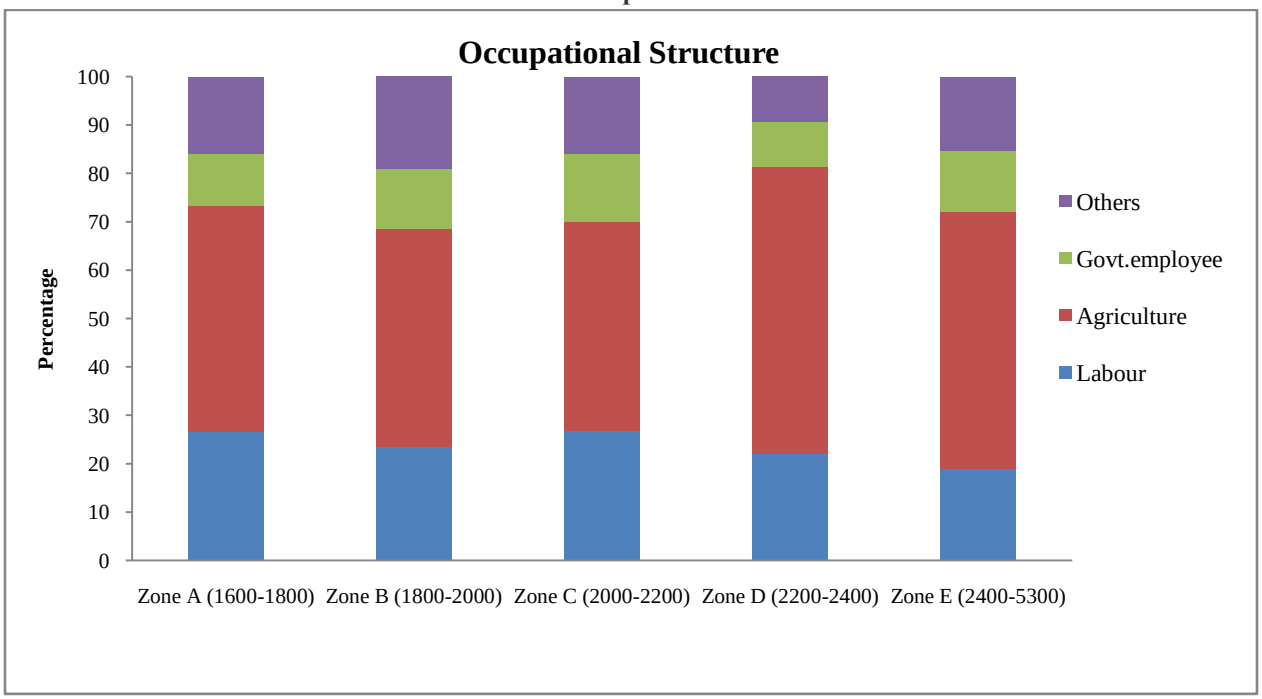

Source: - Based on data obtained through Sample survey- 2016

Fig 1.9 Occupational Structure

3.6 Expenditure pattern and Household Assets

From the table 1.6 and fig 1.10 it was evident that 42.2 percent households are expending more than Rs. 500/m on their childs for food. About 53.6 percent households in zone E spends more than Rs. 500/m on food. About 18.6 percent households are spending more than Rs.500/m on their education. Only 12.9 percent households are spending more than Rs.500/m on health.

From the table 1.6.1 about 12.5 percent households have the availability of television. About 91.4 percent households do not have vehicles. Zone C has highest percentage of four wheelers (11.3 percent) followed by zone A (1.6 percent).

Table 1.6 Expenditure pattern on Childs

Altitude Zone in (mts)	Sample Village	Sample households	Food		Education		Health	
			< 500	> 500	< 500	> 500	< 500	> 500
Zone A (1600-1800)	Gund Saderkoot, Aloosa, Ahmi Sharief, Chitibandi	125	67 (53.6)	58 (46.4)	80 (64.0)	45 (36.0)	87 (69.6)	38 (30.4)
Zone B (1800-2000)	Muqam, Malangam, Kalrooch, Manigam, Shiltra, Kuligam, Sumlar, Akhal,	184	98 (53.3)	86 (46.7)	135 (73.4)	49 (26.6)	165 (89.7)	19 (10.3)

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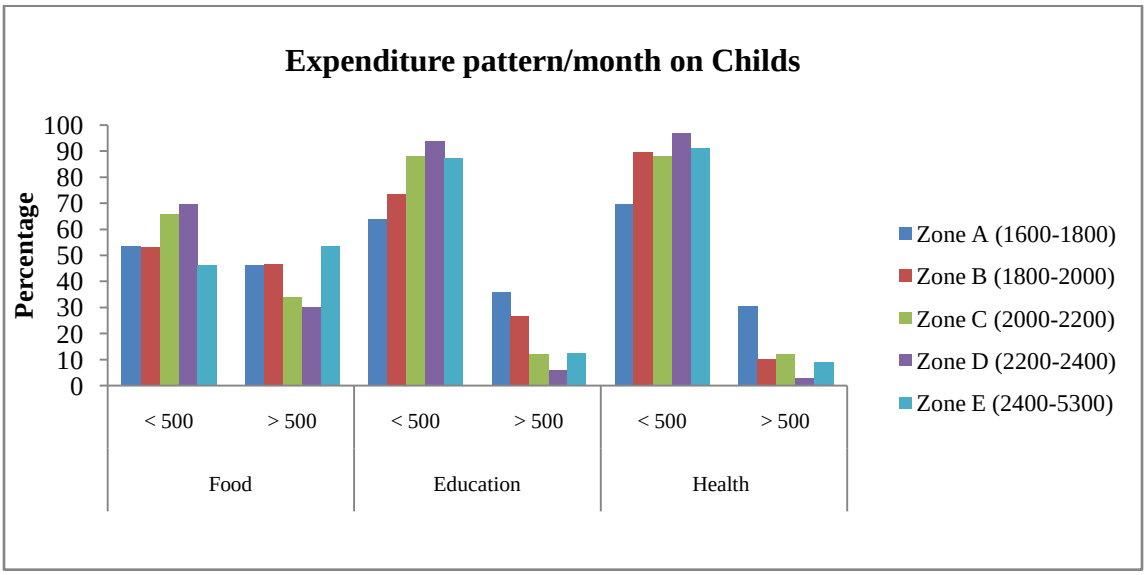
	Hayan							
Zone C (2000-2200)	Chunt Waliwar, Khurhama, Chuntmullah, Wangat, Chatargul	159	105 (66.0)	54 (34.0)	140 (88.1)	19 (11.9)	140 (88.1)	19 (11.9)
Zone D (2200-2400)	Farkhan, Erin Dardpora, Kolan	33	23 (69.7)	10 (30.3)	31 (93.9)	2 (6.1)	32 (97.0)	1 (3.0)
Zone E (2400-5300)	Gagangeer, Ganiwan	56	26 (46.4)	30 (53.6)	49 (87.5)	7 (12.5)	51 (91.1)	5 (8.9)
		557	319 (57.8)	238 (42.2)	435 (81.4)	122 (18.6)	475 (87.1)	82 (12.9)

Source: - Sample Survey, 2016
Note: - Figures in parenthesis represent percentage to total



Source: - Based on data obtained through Sample survey- 2016
Fig 1.10 Expenditure Pattern/month on Childs

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Table 1.6.1 Household Assets

Altitude Zone in (mts)	Sample Village	Sample households	Electronic Appliances		Vehicles present		Type of vehicle		No. of cell phones	
			TV	Radio	Yes	No	Two wheelers	Four wheelers	1	2
Zone A (1600-1800)	Gund Saderkoot, Aloosa, Ahmi Sharief, Chitibandi	125	26 (20.8)	51 (40.8)	12 (9.6)	113 (90.4)	10 (8.0)	2 (1.6)	97 (77.6)	26 (20.8)
Zone B (1800-2000)	Muqam, Malangam, Kalrooch, Manigam, Shiltra, Kuligam, Sumlar, Akhal, Hayan	184	21 (11.4)	68 (37.0)	8 (4.3)	176 (95.7)	6 (3.3)	2 (1.1)	162 (88.0)	21 (11.4)
Zone C (2000-2200)	Chunt Waliwar, Khurhama, Chuntmullah, Wangat, Chatargul	159	19 (11.9)	87 (54.7)	25 (15.7)	134 (84.3)	7 (4.4)	18 (11.3)	134 (84.3)	19 (11.9)
Zone D (2200-2400)	Farkhan, Erin Dardpora, Kolan	33	2 (6.1)	12 (36.4)	2 (6.1)	31 (93.9)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	31 (93.9)	2 (6.1)
Zone E (2400-5300)	Gagangeer, Ganiwan	56	7 (12.5)	24 (42.9)	4 (7.1)	52 (92.9)	4 (7.1)	0 (0.0)	47 (83.9)	9 (16.1)
		557	75 (12.5)	242 (42.3)	51 (8.6)	506 (91.4)	29 (5.8)	22 (2.8)	471 (85.6)	77 (13.3)

Source: - Sample Survey, 2016

Note: - Figures in parenthesis represent percentage to total

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Conclusion

The study argues that altitude plays an important role in the provision of various facilities and amenities necessary for maintaining a higher standard of life. Therefore, the study area is divided in different altitude zones which are subsequently prioritized on the basis of the evaluated parameters of QoL. Infact QoL deteriorates as we move from lower to higher altitudes. Mountainous areas with higher altitudes characterized by rugged terrain and limited accessibility not only offer challenges for the government to provide basic facilities but also leaves its inhabitants with limited opportunities for making a living. The Gujjar population which contributes about 12.07 percent of total population is characterized by low level of social and economic development. The socio-demographic status of the Gujjars is very low as compared to the state and national average. Average sex ratio of Gujjars was found to be 844 females per thousand males which is quite low than the state average (883) and national average (940). The literacy rate was found to be 41.5 percent which is again much below than the state average (68.74%) and national average (74.04%). The economic development of the Gujjars is very low. Infact a majority of them depend on traditional economic practices for making a living. This is evident from the fact that only 38.3 percent of the total population is engaged in economic activities among which 73 percent are involved in primary activities. The bulk workforce is predominantly unskilled which results in low earning. Moreover, only 11.8 percent of the total workforce is engaged in Govt. sector. Thus 66.5 percent of the households manage their living with an income of upto INR 6000/month.

Suggestions

1. Educational institutions must be established in these remote areas to provide basic education to the Gujjars. This will help not only to raise their standard of living but will also help to elevate the status of women as the sex ratio is found to be very low among Gujjars.
2. Gujjars are generally poor as the employment opportunities are limited in remote areas where they live. Adequate employment opportunities need to be provided so that they could meet their basic necessities of life. They could conveniently be trained and employed for the collection of medicinal plants, forest protection, water resources management and dairy development in higher altitudes.

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