

# **MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF COVID & CONFLICT: EMPOWERING & SECURING FUTURES OF BELONGING TO PASTORAL COMMUNITIES CHILDREN IN JAMMU & KASHMIR**

by Afreen G Faridi  
PhD Candidate, Centre for the Study of Law and Governance  
JNU  
Asst Prof, JK Lakshmi Pat University, Jaipur

## **Summary**

The issue of marginalisation of tribal children is exacerbated due to an absence of developmental discourse that is based on social-constructionist (Stammers 1993, 1999) and eco-materialist (Foster 2000) perspectives on rights and power. While the Indian government has promoted policy tools that enable tribal groups to represent their interests and become collaborators in the policymaking process, the tribal response to state policy of marketisation and globalisation is nebulous (Agrawal 2005).

The proposed research seeks to unravel the impact of conflict & the Covid pandemic on the nature of child work and education within pastoral tribes of Kashmir living in border areas and within a conflict zone in the era of global pandemic. The research shall serve as steerage for future labour policy aiming at empowerment of tribal children on the margins in the Indian sub-continent.

## **Abstract**

Social exclusion discourse has been criticised as inadequate for viewing marginality. In this regard, the notion of differential or 'adverse inclusion' into the state, market or civil society becomes more appropriate to locate marginality or chronic poverty (du Toit 2004). The notion of adverse inclusion becomes useful to analyse how localised livelihood strategies are actuated and deterred by economic, social and political relations both spatially and temporally through unequal power regimes (Hickey & du Toit 2013). The analysis incorporates a gendered form of analysis while deriving from feminist structuralism (Kabeer 1994). The framework is also relevant for discerning changing social relations that drive development within a temporal frame, following trajectories of work duration across 'the developmental cycle' within a wider class analysis to posit the temporal process of 'impoverishment' (Murray 1987).

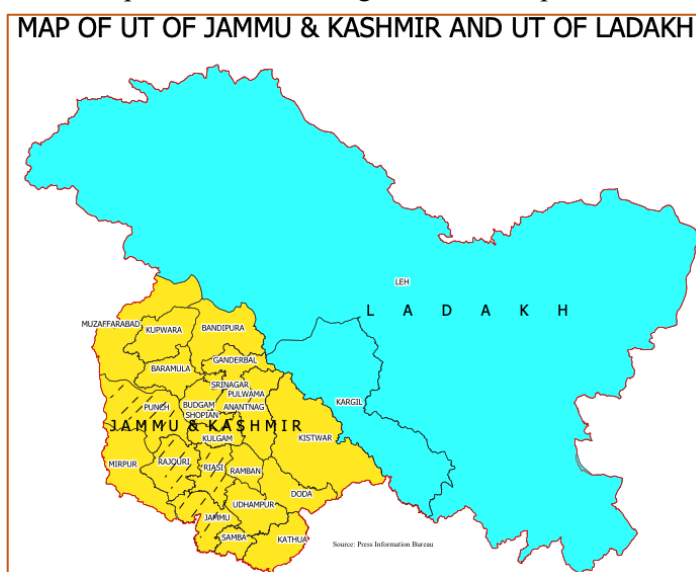
Scholars have emphasised the significance of 'political ecology' in understanding various forms of struggles involved in controlling natural resources (Jayal 2001), and also in gaining insights into the responses of local actors to the challenges and opportunities posed by global discourses of conservation, environmentalism, sustainability and development (Gupta 2018). Watts (2000) argues that political ecology understands the complex relationship of nature with society through a careful study of 'forms of access and control over resources and their implications for environmental health and sustainable livelihoods'. As a part of political ecology, this research shall analyse the statist notions of environmental conservation and idea of 'sustainable' in work practices amongst children and policies by employing 'eco-materialism' (Foster 2000) along with neo-institutional economics for a comparative advantage over neo-classicism which fails to locate the social within its analytical toolbox.

The researcher shall employ an Institutional Analysis and Development framework (Ostrom in Abitbol and Flechas 2008) to unravel the dialectic between locals and state institutions in the border areas of Jammu & Kashmir (Ostrom 2005). The framework would be bolstered with the use of the Conflict Theory (Allan 2011) refined by Lewis Coser to analyse the interplay between class and power affecting work in the border districts. Furthermore, the concept of the political economy of work (Spencer 2009) would aid in the task of analysing the communitarian work practices of the tribe against notions of work in the Indian legislation. An application of such a multi-disciplinary approach would aid in situating research for an understanding which is sensitive to the changing nature of social, political and economic order in regions inhabited by the tribes.

The ethnographic survey entailed in this project would be located in the analysis of work practices of the Bakkarwal tribe. Primary data collection would involve the use of time-use surveys of tribal work practices in border areas. The data shall be juxtaposed against previous survey on child labour undertaken by the researcher in 2016; before the pandemic & federal shift in J&K. On Such surveys would help in factoring in temporal and spatial variance in activities for an accurate understanding of specificities of embedded realities affecting tribal livelihoods. The researcher also proposes to use of structured interviews and observation method in existing research to analyse the functioning and efficacy of government, as well as, non-government institutions that seek to preserve and protect tribal customs and work practices. These methods have proven efficient for engaging with public officials and members of civil society.

Secondary research would include a critical analysis of constitutional protections afforded to tribes, children, laws on management of forests and property ownership. The research would analyse laws affecting federal structures & property relations & policies determining ‘domicile’, ‘permanent residency’, & Ministry of Home Affairs notices on spatial mobility during the Covid-19 pandemic to determine their impact on the transhumance mode of existence.

The use of multi-regional and sectoral data provided by the Indian Government and other extra-state agencies on labour practises amongst tribes would be essential for locating the local against the national. Using this, one would be able to use comparative methods for a comprehensive understanding of work practices in border areas. The research project would also include a section on research ethics that would guide the researcher in engaging with tribes and the handling of personal information related to them and their families.



### EXTENT OF THE FIELD

Owing to the transhumance nature of livelihood amongst the tribes and exploratory nature of research in locating the ‘landedness’ amongst the members of the pastoral community, the specific spatial and temporal expanse of data collection shall be determined within the field. However, an estimation of the scope of the field shall be presented based on past literature. The research shall integrate into policy recommendations the changing nature of work as a result of the global pandemic of Covid-19.

Figure 1: Map of UT of J&K

The proposed ethnography shall be undertaken in J&K using the Census 2011 district level data to identify high concentration districts and specific geographical belts the members of the Bakkarwals might inhabit. Taking the aid of snowball sampling technique, the researcher shall add to the expanding scope of spatiality during the fieldwork.

The researcher shall locate the nomadic pastoralists at their winter abode of Poonch, Rajouri- the two border districts, Reasi, and Jammu. In order to juxtapose against rural dwellers & to locate ‘landedness’ within the two tribes, the researcher shall also survey urban areas of Jammu & the Valley of Kashmir (Figure 1). Besides, ethnography, archival studies shall be undertaken at Jammu & Srinagar in J&K; and at New Delhi where state and national archives are located. These regions also host administrative headquarters, libraries & academic institutions which shall be accessed for data collection.

## TIMELINE OF THE PROJECT

| PERIOD | MONTHS     | TASKS AND OUTCOME  |
|--------|------------|--|
| I      | 2          | The first phase of research shall focus on the undertaking Literature Review, narrowing of field and determination of sample size, & analysis of state's policies and legislations affecting lives of pastoral children.   |
| 2      | 1.5        | The second phase shall focus on the gathering of archival data & resource materials across three regions of Jammu, Kashmir and New Delhi.<br>The researcher shall also engage with government officials, NGOs & other non-tribal persons of interest working against child labour and for tribal welfare during the visits to these three urban centres.                                     |
| 3      | 2 months   | This shall be a period of ethnographic survey targeting 300 households (based on preliminary calculations on sample size).   |
| 4      | 1 month    | The period shall be used to collate and analyse the data gathered.   |
| 5      | 1.5 months | - The final outcomes of the research project shall be laid during this period:<br>a. Submit the research undertaken as a working paper slated for future publication on the nature of child work in the Bakkarwal Community.<br>b. Organise of Seminar present the findings of the Research Project.<br>c. Finalise a roadmap to draft and present a White Paper emerging from the research. |
| 6      | 1 MONTH    | (9 <sup>TH</sup> MONTH- SUBMISSION OF WORK)  |

## PROPOSED BUDGET

| S.No         | Budget Expenditure Head                     | Amount INR  | Rationale/Justification  |
|--------------|---|-------------|--|
| 1            | Overheads                                   | 20,000      | The overheads will include boarding, lodging & ancillary costs for accommodation.  |
| 2            | Field work – Transport and Equipment        | 30,000      | The field work will consist of visiting four districts of J&K requiring all day access to a capable SUV for 2 months to visit deras of pastoral and landed tribes. The amount will cover the rent of a basic 4x4 required to cover difficult road conditions and the fuel and maintenance costs. |
| 3            | Stationery, Study Material & Archival costs | 10,000      | Amount will also be used for acquiring copies of data from national and state archives and libraries. Often the copying charges are many times more than market rates.   |
| 4            | Contingency                                 | 5,000       | A contingency amount shall be set aside for medical insurance, logistical risks to transport & instruments for data entry owing to treacherous terrains and climate in the locale of data collection. The researcher will acquire health insurance for the duration of the research project.     |
| 5            | Honorarium                                  | 30,000      | The amount shall be used for personal spending as a remittance for the project.  |
| 6            | Field Guide                                 | 5,000       | An amount will be provided for field guide in the mountains  |
| <b>Total</b> |   | INR 100,000 |  |

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. (2011). *Census*. Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India.
2. Abitbol, P., & Flechas, D. (2008). Deliberative Action Arenas on Public Policy Making in Conflict Zones: A Case Study with Women's Groups in Colombia. *Human Development and Capability Association Annual Conference*. New Delhi.
3. Agrawal, A. (2005). *Environmentality: Technologies of Government and the Making of Subjects*. Durham: Duke University Press.
4. Ahmad, M. (2020). Trouble Mounts for J&K's Nomads During Annual Migration to Greener Pastures. Retrieved 7 July 2020, from <https://thewire.in/agriculture/jammu-nomads-bakarwal-annual-migration-animal-rearing>
5. Allan, K. (2011). *The Social Lens* (1st ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
6. Bhatnagar, G. (2020). 'Kathua Case a Part of Continuing Oppression of Pastoral Communities'. Retrieved 7 July 2020, from <https://thewire.in/women/kathua-gangrape-murder-bakarwals-pastoral-community>
7. du Toit, A. (2004). Forgotten by the Highway: Globalisation, adverse incorporation and chronic poverty in a commercial farming district of South Africa. *CRPC Working paper 49*. Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.

8. Foster, J. B. (2000). *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature*. Monthly Review Press.
9. Ganai, N. (2020). Amid Coronavirus Lockdown, Govt Comes Up With Domicile Law For Jammu And Kashmir. Retrieved 7 July 2020, from <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/india-news-amid-coronavirus-lockdown-govt-comes-up-with-domicile-law-for-jammu-and-kashmir/349830>
10. Gupta, S. (2018). *Contesting Conservation Shahtoosh Trade and Forest Management in Jammu and Kashmir, India*. Springer International Publishing.
11. Hassan, F. (2020). In Jammu and Kashmir, inconsistent lockdown rules have disrupted seasonal livestock migration. Retrieved 7 July 2020, from <https://scroll.in/article/960770/in-jammu-and-kashmir-inconsistent-lockdown-rules-have-disrupted-seasonal-livestock-migration>
12. Hickey, S., & du Toit, A. (2013). Adverse Incorporation, Social Exclusion, and Chronic Poverty. In A. Shepherd, & J. Brunt, *Chronic Poverty: Rethinking International Development Series* (pp. 134-159). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
13. Jayal, N. G. (2001). Balancing Political and Ecological Values. *Environmental Politics*, 10(1), 65-88.
14. Kabeer, N. (1994). *Reversed Realities: Gendered Hierarchies in Development Thought*. London: Vero.
15. Murray, C. (1987). Class, gender and household: the developmental cycle in Southern Africa. *Development and Change*, 18(2), 235-250.
16. Nathan, D., & Xaxa, V. (2012). *Social Exclusion and Adverse Inclusion: Development and Deprivation of Adivasis in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
17. Ostrom, E. (2005). *Understanding Institutional Diversity* (1st ed.). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
18. Spencer, David. (2009). *The Political Economy of Work*. New York: Routledge.
19. Stammers, N. (1993). Human Rights and Power. *Political Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.1993.tb01638.x>
20. Stammers, N. (1999). Social Movements and the Social Construction of Human Rights. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 21(4), 980–1008. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.1999.0054>
21. Watts, M. (2000). Political ecology. In T. Barners, & E. Scheppard, *A companion to economic geography* (pp. 257–275). Oxford: Blackwell.