

Problems and Challenges faced by the School Teachers in the Rural Areas of Jammu and Kashmir: A Critical Study

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Abstract

The quality of education is directly proportional to the quality of teachers especially in rural areas because two-thirds population of the country resides in rural areas. In Jammu and Kashmir alone nearly 72.62 per cent population resides in rural areas. So, it is very important to analyze the rural educational system because education is only a way to bring positive changes in society and teacher plays a vital role in achieving the concern goal. Therefore, in the present paper, the investigators have focused on the existing status of school teachers in rural areas and tried to analyze the existing problems and challenges faced by them. Secondary sources of data were used by employing the percentages and depicted through a line graph. It had been found that school teachers in rural areas were facing the problems of ICT training, inclusive education training, improper deployment of female and highly qualified teachers, and involvement of teachers in non-teaching/training activities. More than 88 per cent of teachers did not know the use of computers, more than 99 per cent cannot deal in inclusive classrooms, and 13.49 per cent were involved in non-teaching activities like election duties, back to villages programme duties, census work, and other administrative work within the education department.

Keywords: *Teachers, Rural area, Jammu and Kashmir, Education.*

Introduction

Education is the foundation stone of nation's intellectual power which shapes the power profile of a nation in the world. The progress of a country particularly in a democratic country like India depends upon the quality of its teachers (Sharma, 2003; Mohammad, 2025). Teacher leads communities and nations towards better and higher quality of life (Verma, 2006; Yaseen et al., 2023). They have a prominent place in the society from ancient to the modern era but with the changes of the society, they need to change their teaching methodologies, strategies and skills, because educational fields continually undergoing changes in curricula which is informed by social, economic, and psychological needs, and technological innovations. Teacher education is necessary to not just equip teachers with the skills indispensable to their profession, but also enhance their performance by being upgraded on the changes that are being made in education (Aggarwal, 2010; Mohammad et al., 2024). They have learned their teaching methodologies, strategies and skills and improved them through training, practice, and evaluation (Sarita, & Tomar, 2004) because teachers must be adaptive; they should be able to develop their teaching techniques with the ever- changing world, adapt to the internet changes brought about by technology, and incorporate them into their teaching (Cox, 2019; Al-Rahmi et al.,

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2023). But with the teachers in India, it has been found that initiatives have had limited success in engaging with teachers' local needs and supporting sustained change in teachers' practices (Clarke, 2003; Dyer et al., 2004; Mukhopadhyay, 2009; Mohammad et al., 2025a). This reconfiguration of the teacher's role significantly challenges established practices of Indian teacher education and urges new approaches to develop and support reflective practitioners in schools (Saigal, 2012; Hujran et al., 2023). The challenges are further creating a major gap between the rural and urban areas educational system. The major factors are teacher absenteeism and accountability in administrative, ethical, teaching, and reporting areas (Nedungadi et al., 2017a; Clotfelter et al. 2007; Duflo & Hanna 2005; Mohammad et al., 2025b), gender, marital status, age, tenure at schools, social and political involvement (Chaudhury et al., 2006) are serious issues in government schools in rural areas of India. There is a need to improve the technological teaching skills, solutions for teacher absenteeism, adequate infrastructure facilities, awareness, and incentives for students. It has been demonstrated that head teachers can increase teacher attendance locally at a lesser cost than with automated techniques, although there is a chance of cooperation with this approach (Chen et al. 2001; Mohammad et al., 2025c). Several low-cost channels for monitoring rural classrooms, such as personalized apps and social media, combined with sporadic scheduled and unannounced field visits, can help ensure accuracy in reporting and accountability, empower teachers, and raise the standard of education in general (Nedungadi et al., 2017b). In the present paper, the focus has been given on the problems and challenges faced by school teachers in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir by critically analyzing the current profile of the teachers, their educational qualifications, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) knowledge, inclusive education experts, and professional degree holders.

Review of Related Literature

Rural education in India have mostly ignored the context of implementation and remained negligent of the external influencing factors, like social, economic, political, and socio-psychological, that marks the disadvantages of rural India and subsequently hamper rural educational practices (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2021; Mohammad et al., 2025d). The conditions of Indian rural schools are still improving. They need quality education, adequate study materials, experts to guide in learning, and proper guidance towards pursuing job oriented courses (Dinesha, & Aggarwal, 2011). These conditions can be fulfilled only with the help of efficient, trained, and quality expert teachers. Unfortunately, in India, there is dearth of such teachers. Their technological skills, training, and ethics are not up to mark, there is a need for both substantive and methodological focus on gender-specific responsibilities and requirements, in order to take out maximum from male and female teachers to produce high degree of effectiveness in their profession (Islahi, & Nasreen, 2013). In Telangana state, 43 per cent school teachers do not use computers, and more than 80 per cent of schools teachers are very poor performer in using ICT tools for teaching and learning (Vanam, 2022; Mohammad et al., 2025e). In spite of that, they are facing the obstacles of irregular salaries, added workload and poor working conditions to name a few (Kundu, 2019). Less satisfied with advancement, compensation, supervision human-relation, and working conditions (Mahmood et al. 2011). Especially female teachers, aged - 50-60 years, urban, private school, headmaster & assistant headmaster, and higher-paid teachers were found to suffer from high levels of stress (Dawn et al., 2016). Due to these reasons, teachers' work in India is impacted by the ongoing restructuring of school education that incorporates simultaneous attempts at reform and regulation (Chandran, 2021). They are expected to engage critically with the curriculum, syllabus and textbooks, and develop skills in facilitating learner-centered classroom interactions (NCF, 2005; NCFTE, 2009). The school management should conduct interventional programmes for teachers, keeping in mind the cultural variations, to increase their resources, and should recruit positive and happy teachers who can impart learning adequately and innovatively (Clarence et al., 2021) because teacher communities are considered as one of the pillars of societal growth and success (Lavy & Naama-ghanayim, 2020). They are the life director, torch bearer, and shape holder of the life of individuals. Therefore, the essential focus should be on the enhancement of the relevance and quality of pre- and in-service teacher education in India (Dyer et al., 2004).

Area of the Study

Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory is located on the north of India with 42241 Sq. Km. area, 12541302 population, 67.16 per cent literacy rate (male 76.75% and female 56.43%), and sex ratio of 889 female per 1000 male. It is a Muslim majority Union Territory in India with approximately 68.31 per cent Muslims, 28.44 per cent Hindus, 1.87 per cent Sikhs, 0.28 per cent Jains, 0.02 per cent Buddhists, and 0.17 per cent others. Around 72.62 per cent of the total population, live in rural areas and only 27.38 per cent population live in urban area (Census of India, 2011). For the present study, the

investigators have tried to identify and analyze the problems faced by school teachers in the rural districts of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory.

Justification of the Study

The quality of education is directly proportional to the quality of teachers (Government of Jammu and Kashmir). School Education Department of Jammu and Kashmir is emphasis to enhance access and quality of education towards the universalization at all levels as envisaged by National Education Policy 2020 (State Council of Educational Research & Training, J&K UT, 2022-23). It has constituted a committee to implement the vision of NEP-2020 by training existing faculty. Various digital initiatives such as JK Education Hub, Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA), e-Vidyadaan, Digital studio, online trainings, workshops, and webinars for quality teachers has been undertaken by Directorate of School Education (Directorate of School Education, Jammu, 2020). But still 47 per cent education zones in Jammu and Kashmir are backward/rural zones (School Education Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir) and the teachers of rural areas are tended to be less well educated, slightly less experienced, younger, and less likely to belong to a minority group (Sumbria, 2022). They were mitigating the challenges of transportation, quality of life, and administrative constraints (Ho, & Tsai, 2023). Because of the tough terrain, hilly area, and backwardness, teachers are not willing to perform their duties in rural areas especially with the female teachers. Therefore, most of the female teachers are attached in urban areas and due to it 22 per cent schools at primary level and 6 per cent schools at upper primary level in urban areas have surplus teachers (Department of School & Literacy, Government of India, 2023-24). So there is a need of proper rationalization of teachers irrespective of any excuses because rural area schools have less qualified and experienced teachers (Hamid, 2023). There is need of pedagogic reforms among the rural school teachers (Dar, 2021). May be due to these reasons, Jammu and Kashmir is still one of the backward Union Territory among all the other States and Union Territories of India. To keep in mind, the backwardness of Jammu and Kashmir, the investigators in this article have analysed critically the status of rural district teachers, their educational qualifications, computer knowledge, and pedagogic knowledge, inclusive education training, and various problems and challenges are faced by them.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the current profile of school teacher in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory
2. To identify the problems and challenges faced by school teacher in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir

Research Questions of the Study

1. What is the status of current profile of school teachers in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir?
2. What are the problems and challenges faced by school teachers in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir?

Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to critically analyze the current profile of school teachers in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir, regardless of their educational qualifications, ICT knowledge, pedagogic knowledge, inclusive education training, and the challenges they face. The investigators have used interpretive research. For the present study, the researchers have used secondary sources of data; Unified Digital Information on School Education (UDISE) 2021-22, State Council of Educational Research & Training, J&K UT 2022-23, School Education Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir 2022-23, Directorate of School Education 2022-23, Directorate of Economic & Statistics 2019-20, and Census of India, 2011. There are 20 districts in Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory, with 18 of them having more than 70 per cent rural population. Therefore, the investigators selected all the districts that have more than 70 per cent rural population as a sample to analyze critically with the help of interpretive research. The data gathered has been presented in bar graphs after being calculated into percentages.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The analysis and interpretation of data has been analyzed critically by converting into percentages regarding the current status of school teachers in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory, their educational qualifications, computer knowledge, pedagogic knowledge, inclusive education training, involvement of teachers in non-training/teaching activities, and challenges faced by them.

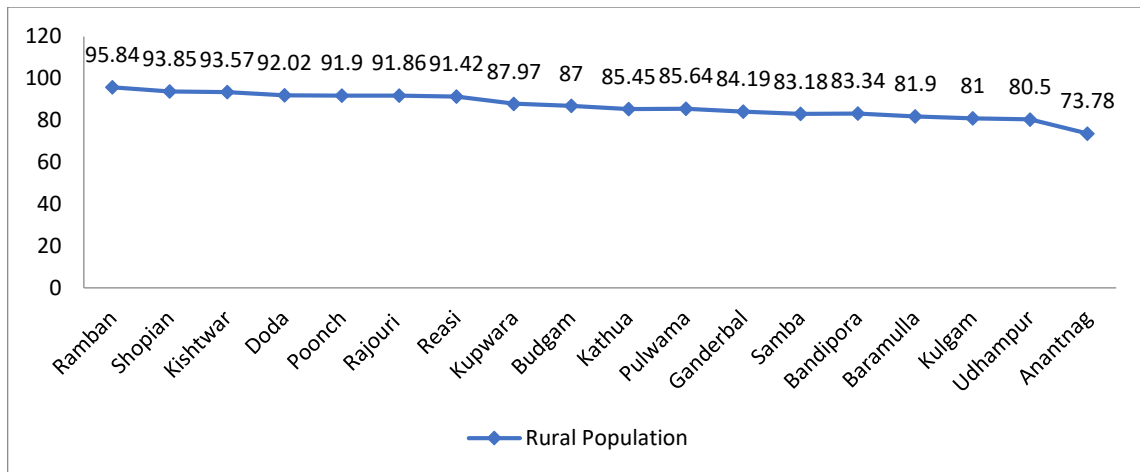


Fig. 1

Percentages of Rural Population in Rural Districts of Jammu and Kashmir

Source: Directorate of Economic & Statistics, J&K, 2019-20

The above evidence shows that out of eighteen districts, seven districts have more than 90 per cent rural populations are Ramban, Shopian, Kishtwar, Doda, Poonch, Rajouri, and Reasi, ten districts have more than 80 per cent rural populations are Kupwara, Budgam, Kathua, Pulwama, Ganderbal, Samba, Bandipora, Baramulla, Kulgam, and Udhampur, and only Anantnag district has less than 80 per cent rural population. This data indicates that more than two-thirds of Jammu and Kashmir's total population resides in rural areas. However, rural area schools and teachers are facing problems such as transportation, communication, infrastructure, awareness, and technological advances. These issues could be the main cause of the underdevelopment in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

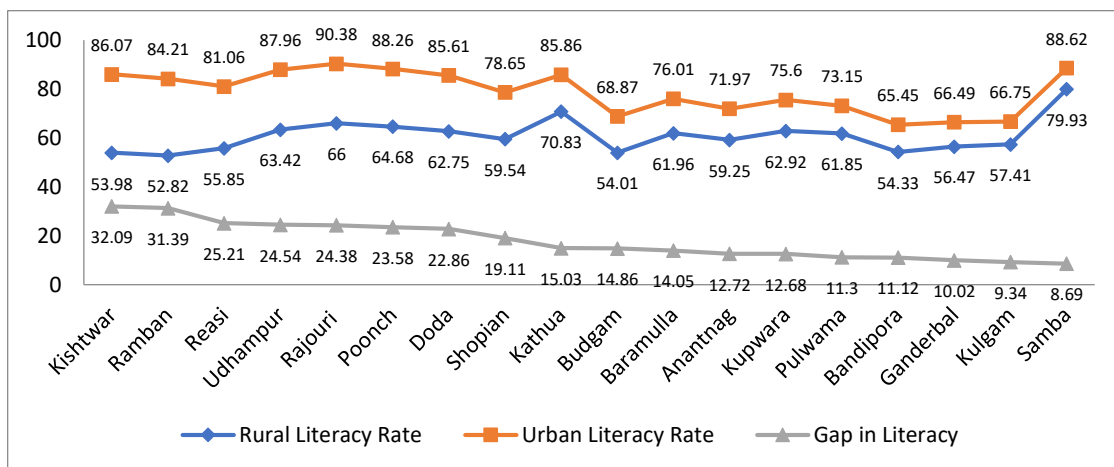


Fig. 2

Percentages of Total Literacy Rate, Rural Literacy Rate and Urban Literacy Rate in the Rural Districts of Jammu and Kashmir

Source: Census of India, 2011

In Jammu and Kashmir, seven districts have more than 20 percent literacy gaps between rural and urban population are Kishtwar, Ramban, Reasi, Udhampur, Rajouri, Poonch, and Doda. Moreover, Shopian, Kathua, Budgam, Baramulla, Anantnag, Kupwara, Pulwama, Bandipora, and Ganderbal districts have between 10 to 20 per cent literacy gaps and only Kulgam and Samba districts have less than 10 per cent literacy gaps. Districts with higher literacy gaps are hilly area districts with tough terrain, harsh winters, heavy snowfall, and scattered population. It is quite difficult for the government to maintain the quality resources (materialistic and non-materialistic) because of improper road connectivity, lack of communication facilities, and political ignorance. Therefore, these districts have larger literacy gaps as compare to the plain rural districts.

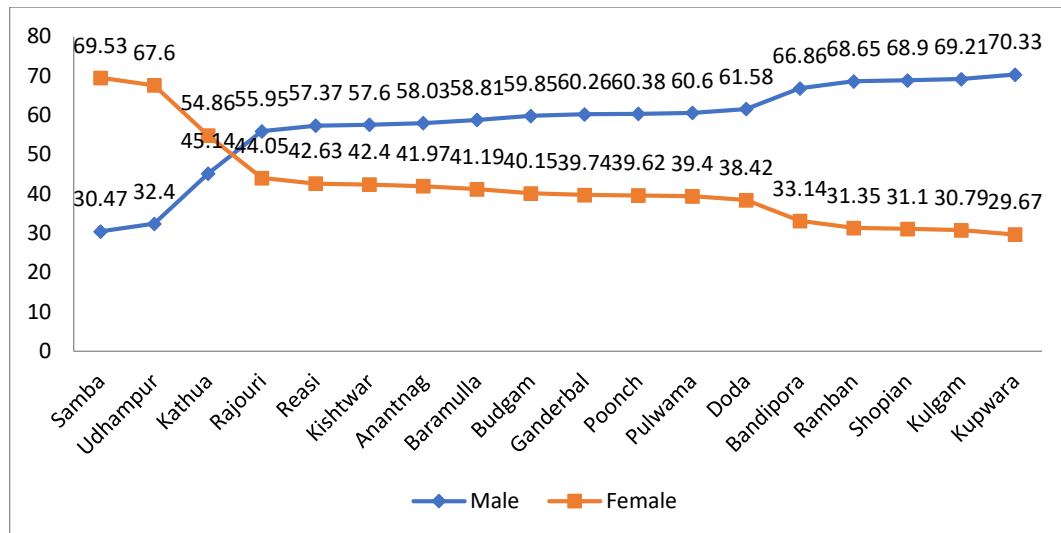


Fig. 3

Percentages of Gender wise School Teachers in Rural Districts of Jammu and Kashmir

Source: UDISE+, 2021-22

The evidence shows that Samba, Udhampur, and Kathua districts have majority of female teachers whereas Rajouri, Reasi, Kishtwar, Anantnag, Baramulla, and Budgam districts have between 40 to 50 per cent female teachers, Ganderbal, Poonch, Pulwama, Doda, Bandipura, Ramban, Shopian, and Kulgam districts have between 30 to 40 per cent female teachers and Kupwara district has less than 30 per cent female teachers. Whereas Jammu and Kashmir has 48.07 per cent and India has 51.30 per cent female teachers (UDISE+, 2021-22). This means that gender disparity existed among the teachers in the rural areas and majority of the female teachers are assigned in urban and plain rural districts of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory. Most of the female teachers are attached in urban areas and due to this 22 per cent schools at primary level and 6 per cent schools at upper primary level in urban areas are running with surplus teachers (Department of School & Literacy, Government of India, 2023-24).

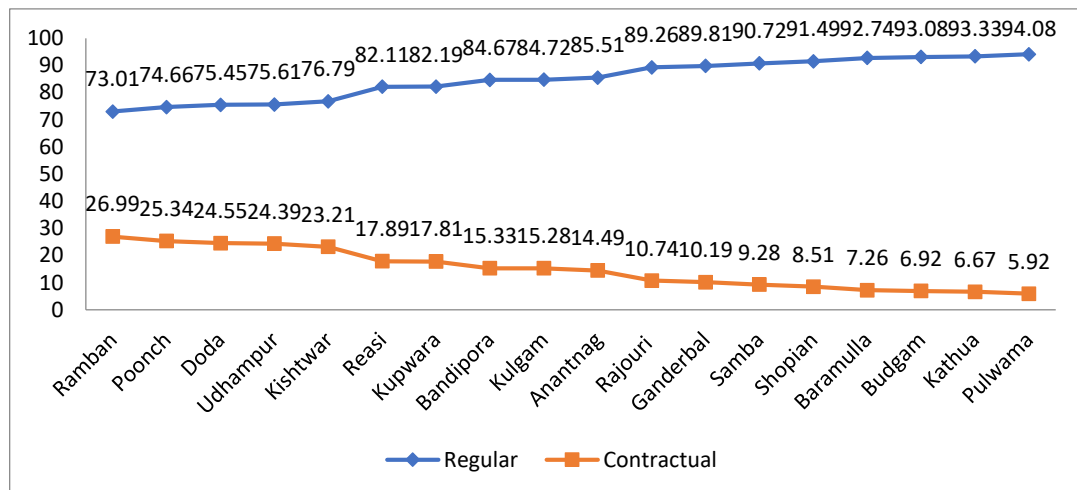


Fig. 4

Percentages of Regular and Contractual School Teachers in Rural Districts of Jammu and Kashmir

Source: UDISE+, 2021-22

Based on the evidence, it has been found that Ramban, Poonch, Doda, Udhampur, and Kishtwar districts have more than 20 per cent contractual teachers, whereas Reasi, Kupwara, Bandipora, Kulgam, Anantnag, Rajouri, and Ganderbal have between 20 to 10 per cent, and Samba, Shopian, Baramulla, Budgam, Kathua, and Kupwara districts have less than 10 per cent contractual teachers. This shows that 27.78 per cent rural districts have more than 20 per cent contractual teachers, 38.89

per cent have more than 10 per cent, and 33.33 per cent districts have less than 10 per cent. This also shows that rural districts located in the hilly areas of Jammu division have higher percentages of contractual teachers as compare to the other rural districts of Union Territory. These districts have also lower literacy rate in comparison to the other districts, so the higher number of contractual teachers may also be one of the major reasons for this issue.

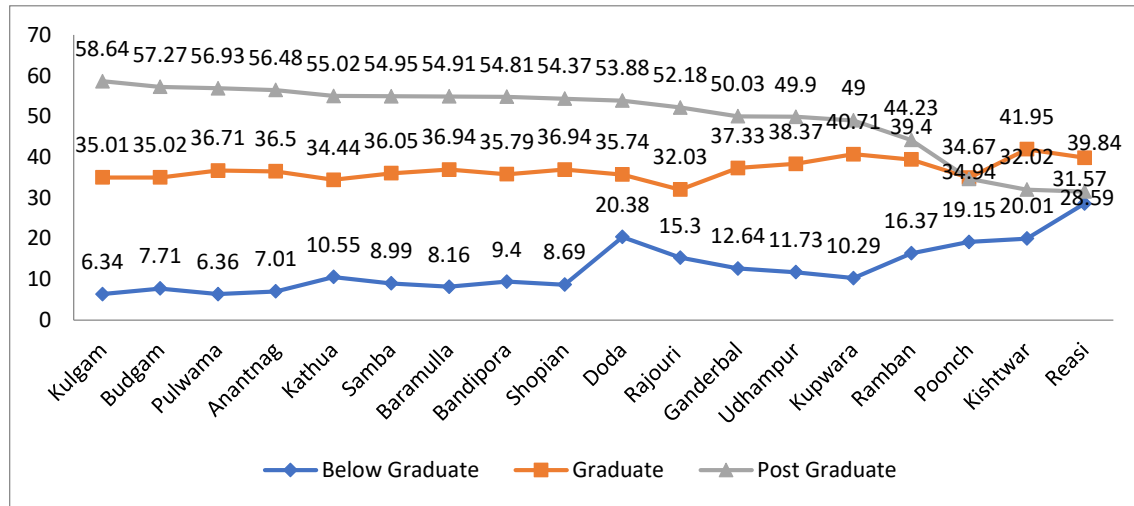


Fig. 5

Percentages of Educational Qualifications of Teachers in Rural Districts of Jammu and Kashmir

Source: UDISE+, 2021-22, SCERT-JKUT, 2021-22

In Jammu and Kashmir, Reasi, Doda, and Kishtwar districts have more than 20 per cent undergraduate teachers, whereas Poonch, Ramban, and Rajouri districts have more than 15 per cent, Ganderbal, Kathua, and Kupwara districts have more than 10 per cent and other districts have less than 10 per cent undergraduate teachers. The rural districts located in hilly areas of Jammu division have higher percentages of undergraduate teachers as compare to the other rural districts of the Union Territory. However, graduate teachers have not too much variation, Kupwara district has the highest percentages (40.71%) and Rajouri district has the lowest (32.03%) percentages of graduate teachers. As for post-graduate teachers, out of 18 districts, 12 districts have more than 50 per cent are Kulgam (58.34%), Budgam (57.25%), Pulwama (56.93%), Anantnag (56.48%), Kathua (55.02%), Samba (54.95%), Baramulla (54.91%), Bandipora (54.81%), Shopian (54.37%), Doda (53.88%), Rajouri (52.18%), and Ganderbal (50.03) and the other districts have less than 50 per cent post-graduate teachers. The lowest percentages of post graduate teachers are in the Reasi district (31.57%) and highest are in Kulgam (58.64%). This means that the government has not given much focus on the higher qualifications of the teachers in Reasi, Kishtwar, Poonch, and Ramban districts of Jammu and Kashmir. This may be due to the reasons of their far distance from Union Territory headquarter, backwardness of the districts, unawareness of the people, harsh winters, heavy snowfall, and ignorance of political leaders and administrators.

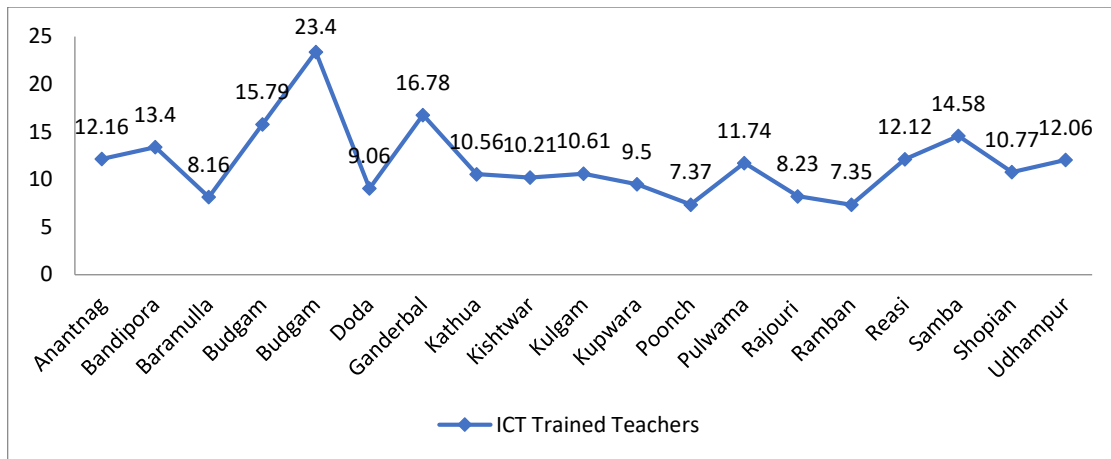


Fig. 6

Percentages of ICT Trained Teachers in Rural Districts of Jammu and Kashmir

Source: UDISE+, 2021-22

In the contemporary educational system, ICT plays a vital role in teaching-learning process, students' assessment and evaluation. Therefore, ICT knowledge is very essential for every teacher but in Jammu and Kashmir only 12.64 per cent teachers are computer knowing teachers. They have the basic knowledge of ICT. Budgam district has the highest percentages (23.4%) of computer knowing and Ramban district has the lowest percentages (7.35%) of teachers. This percentage of teachers is not sufficient for the proper functioning of ICT based teaching-learning transactions. This shows that government should be more focused on the ICT training of teachers instead of installing ICT labs in every school until the teachers are enable to function technological equipments properly, computer labs installation is useless.

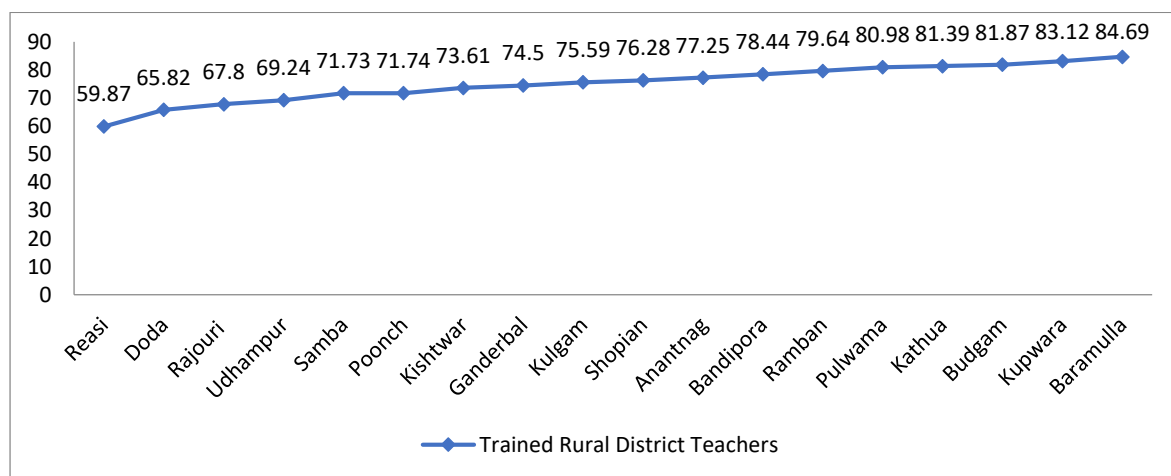


Fig. 7

Percentages of Trained School Teachers in Rural Districts of Jammu and Kashmir

Source: UDISE+, 2021-22

Ensuring effective and quality teaching requires a well-trained teaching staff. Currently, in Jammu and Kashmir, only 74.67% of teachers are trained, with six rural districts demonstrating a lower percentage of trained teachers. These districts include Reasi (59.87%), Doda (65.82%), Rajouri (67.8%), Udhampur (69.24%), Samba (71.73%), and Poonch (71.74%). Unfortunately, 25.33% of teachers are still untrained. This is due the reason that the Government of Jammu and Kashmir have not made Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) as an eligibility criterion for teacher recruitment. National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) and National Education Policy-2020 also emphasize the need for trained teachers. Therefore, it is imperative for the Government of Jammu and Kashmir to consider making B. Ed. compulsory for teacher recruitment to enhance the quality of education in the Union

Territory. Besides, the government should train the untrained teachers to make quality in education especially in rural areas.

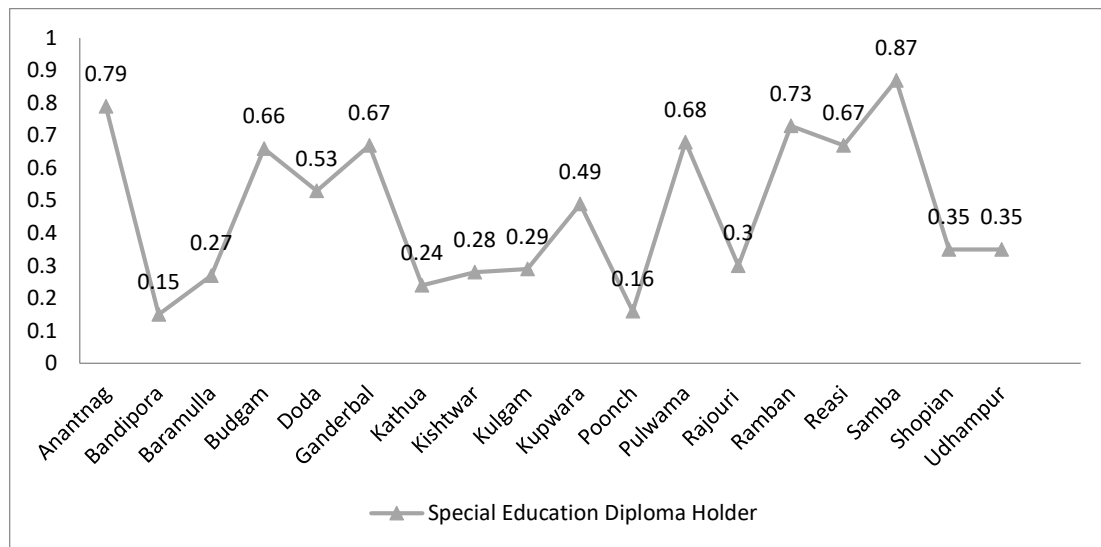


Fig. 8

Percentages of Inclusive Education Trained Teachers in Rural Districts of Jammu and Kashmir

Source: UDISE+, 2021-22

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has a concerning shortage of special education teachers. A mere 0.59 per cent of teachers in the region are trained, with the lowest percentages found in rural districts, where only 0.47 per cent of educators possess this specialized expertise. The most significant concentration of special education trained teachers has found in Samba district, where 0.87 per cent of teachers possess this valuable skill set. The districts of Anantnag, Pulwama, Ramban, Ganderbal, Budgam, and Doda also have a relatively higher percentage of such teachers, ranging between 0.53 per cent and 0.79 per cent. It is imperative that the government of Jammu and Kashmir should focus its efforts on recruiting and training more special education teachers or providing mainstream teachers with specialized training in this area. Every school should have at least one special education trained teacher to ensure that children with disabilities receive the necessary support to succeed in their education. The Indian Constitution recognizes the Right to Education as a fundamental right for every citizen of the country, including children with disabilities, and has taken significant steps to integrate disabled children into mainstream education. However, for these individuals to learn effectively, they need teachers who are trained to deal with disabilities.

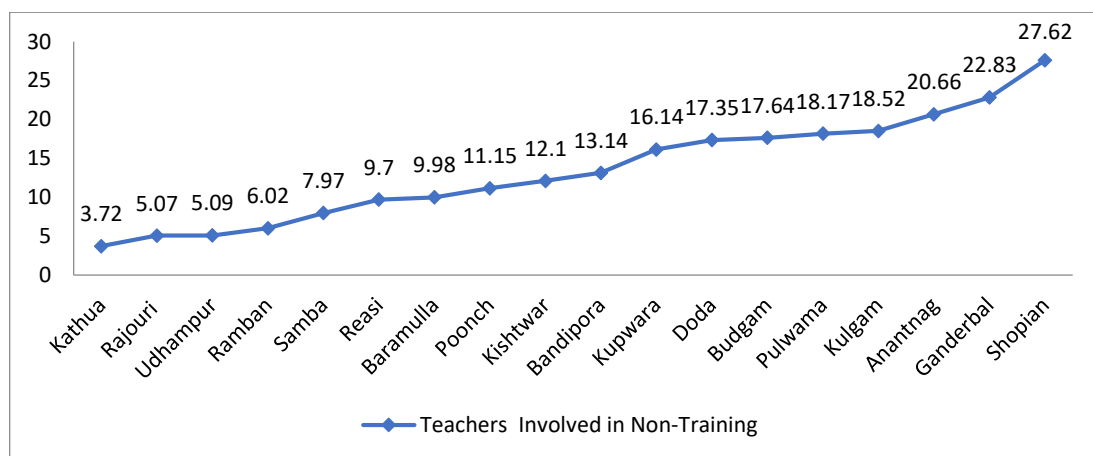


Fig. 9

Percentages of the Involvement of Rural School Teachers in Non-Training Activities in Jammu and Kashmir

Source: UDISE+, 2021-22

In Jammu and Kashmir, one of the major issues with teachers is their involvement in non-training activities. Approximately 11.78 per cent of the teachers in the region are assigned in non-teaching duties, such as elections, census, back to village programmes, and other miscellaneous tasks within the education department. This issue is more prevalent in rural districts, where ten out of 18 districts have a higher percentage of teachers involved in non-training activities. The districts with the highest percentages are Shopian (27.62%), Ganderbal (22.83%), Anantnag (20.66%), Kulgam (18.52%), Pulwama (18.17%), Budgam (17.64%), Doda (17.35%), Kupwara (16.14%), Bandipora (13.14%), and Kishtwar (12.01%). The remaining districts have a lower percentage of teachers involved in non-training activities as compared to the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory. This shows that thousand of teachers are have involved in not-training activities by the government which result the scarcity of teachers in the classroom, consumption of valuable time for both students and teachers, and disrupts the core academic functions.

Discussion of the Results

The teachers has to see themselves not only as a prime sources of knowledge but as organizer of learning and learning experiences, transmitter of culture, builder of character and personality of children, convener of moral and ethical values, a guide and counselor, inspirer for social change and architect of future of the nation (Mangla, 2018). Teacher is a major source of inspiration (Johnson, 2017), motivation (Williams & Williams, 2011), and a role model to transform the life of students (Eacute & Esteve, 2000). But teachers teaching in rural areas in Jammu and Kashmir often face the problems of required technical support, relevant atmosphere (Geelaing, 2023; Mishra, 2015), burdened with additional tasks, including the administration of election surveys and various other surveys and dearth of teachers (Shah, 2023).

The evidence supports that school teachers in rural areas are facing the problems of ICT training, inclusive education training, improper deployment of teachers in rural areas especially female and highly qualified teachers, and involvement of teachers in non-teaching activities. Due to these reasons, the educational system of rural areas are affecting adversely. In one hand, educational institutions are facing the problems of sufficient teachers and on other hand around 13.49 per cent teachers have involved in non-teaching activities. Therefore, the government should not involve them into additional administrative work. Creation of subject specific teaching positions is a long pending issue (Shah, 2018a). Besides, there is a need to reframe the recruitment norms, in which B. Ed. must be basic eligibility criteria to bring quality education. Around 22.22 per cent teachers in Jammu and Kashmir rural areas are still untrained and 12.65 per cent are undergraduate teachers are recruited due to such faulty recruitment criterion. Prathap (2023) mentioned that Jammu and Kashmir is the most distressed union territory when it comes to rural school education. As per Census of India, 2011, it has sixth lowest literacy rate among all the states and union territories of India (Census of India, 2011). Shah (2018b) mentioned in his study that Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India have also noticed in the 8th Teacher Education Appraisal Board (TEAB) meeting held on 28 March 2014 at New Delhi and the minutes of which were notified vide number No.F.43-3/2014-EE.9 dated 29 April 2014 which reads as:

“Minimum qualification (10+2) is still an issue in the matter of restructuring of teacher educator cadre, the state government was advised to follow the norms of NCTE, even though JK does not come under the purview of NCTE, or devise its own norms on similar lines.”

So, the government should change such recruitment criterion as soon as possible by introducing B. Ed. as a basic eligibility. Along with this, the government along with SCERT-JKUT, and Directorate of School Education should focus on the recruitment of ICT experts and special education teachers because ICT plays a crucial role in the classroom. At least 2-3 ICT experts and one special education teachers should be recruited in each school at every levels of education. The government should focus on the proper rationalization of teachers in the rural districts because 22 per cent schools at primary level and 6 per cent schools at upper primary level in urban are running with surplus teachers (Department of School & Literacy, Government of India, 2023-24). So, the transfer policy must be strictly implemented without any biases to overcome such issues. Proper focus, should also be given to the functioning of ICT labs, libraries, non-teaching staff, and other resources because the crying needs for educational aids, resources, and faculty enhancement programs were completely neglected in Jammu and Kashmir (Nagial, 2022).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the evidences, it has been found that school teachers in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir are facing the problems of ICT training, inclusive education training, improper deployment of teachers in rural areas especially female and highly qualified teachers, and involvement of teachers in non-teaching/training activities. A total of 11.78 per cent computer knowing, 0.47 per cent special education trained and 13.49 per cent teachers were involved in non training activities like elections, census, and other miscellaneous tasks within the education department. Along with there is a major problem of improper deployment of teachers in rural areas especially female teacher do not want to perform their duties in rural areas because of the lack of road connectivity, residential facilities, and involvement in personal household activities whereas the same problems with the highly qualified teachers also. As a result, there was a shortage of subject matter experts, ICT experts and special education experts in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir. The prime duty of a teacher is to teach in the classroom but the government of Jammu and Kashmir also involved the teachers in not-teaching activities like involvement of teachers in election duties, census duties, block duties, clerical works which result the scarcity of teachers in the classroom. The department has taken several initiatives to ensure equal access to quality education in all areas but rural areas need special attention as the students' population is mostly dependent on government schools due to very less representation of private schools in remote areas. Therefore, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir should given special focus in rural areas by proper deployment of teachers along with the provisions of residential facilities and strict action should be taken against who will not perform duties in rural areas, more focused should be on computer literacy, and special education training to the mainstream teachers. The government should not involve the teachers in not teaching activities because teachers' prime duty is teaching.

Acknowledgments

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