

Research Scholar Information Sheet
Institute of Kashmir Studies, University of Kashmir



Name of Scholar: Amir Shamim Shiekh

Name of Supervisor: Dr. Farrukh Faheem

Year of Joining: 2020

Year of Registration: 2023 (*Date of BoRS 20-06-2023*)

Title of PhD: Understanding Barriers to Education: A Study of Out of School Children in Kashmir

Short Summary (300-400 words):

The research delves into the barriers that prevent children in Kashmir from accessing education, with a focus on the most marginalized communities. The study aims to identify these groups, explore the socio-economic and cultural dynamics contributing to their exclusion, and analyze the processes that perpetuate these barriers. Another key aspect of the research is understanding the intersectionality of gender and class, and how these factors intensify educational inequalities. Additionally, the study examines the compounded effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on these already vulnerable populations.

To capture these dynamics, the research employs a comprehensive mixed-methods approach. This includes quantitative surveys to map the scope of exclusion, and qualitative methods such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (e.g., Drawing with Children, Dream Mapping), Focus Group Discussions, and in-depth interviews to capture the lived experiences of these communities. An ethnographic approach was also adopted as it was felt to be needed during pilot study which provides deeper insights into the socio-cultural context by allowing immersion in the communities being studied.

A critical finding from the preliminary analysis reveals the complex and unique migration patterns of certain communities in the region, which significantly hinder consistent access to education. The nature of this migration is twofold: seasonal migration to higher altitudes, where families move and settle in various locations, often beyond the reach of mobile schools; and inter-state migration to regions like Punjab, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh. Throughout these migrations, children play a crucial role in supporting their families, further disrupting their educational continuity. The pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, further isolating these communities from educational opportunities.

Current Status: I have successfully collected the data and I am currently in the process of analyzing it. Additionally, I am preparing for fieldwork at our second research location.