



## EMPOWERMENT OF TRIBAL CHILDREN OF ATTAPADY, KERALA

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### ABSTRACT

*This is a study of the need of addressing the Educational constraints and empowers the Tribal children of Attapady, Kerala. This research aims to find out the various educational availability of Tribal children, to analyse the educational problems, to find out need of Counseling and guidance, to assess the method of conducting programmes for Tribal children and thus empower the children belongs to scheduled tribe. The researcher used Descriptive design. The researcher used the PURPOSIVE methods of sampling for collecting the data. The sample size is hundred. Twenty respondents each from five Tribal hostels have been selected, which ranges from fifth to twelfth classes. The tool used for collecting data was Structured Interview schedule. The study clearly indicates that the Tribal children find inadequate facility in the family for their studies. The majority agree that Counseling helps them to study well. The study shows that after counseling they develop their self-esteem and self-confidence and they gain so much and express the willingness to study well and achieve the goal in life. Through the intervention of the social workers, the tribal children are empowered.*

### Introduction

Tribal population of Kerala constitute 1.4% of the total population of the State. There are 36 tribal communities live in Kerala that include Paniya, Kurichiya, MalaiArayan, MulluKuruma, Marati, Irla, Muduga, Kurumba etc. The district of Wayanad has the largest concentration of tribal population in Kerala. There are areas where it is practically nil. Attempts by official and non-official agencies to tackle the educational problems are being made. Establishment of schools, award of scholarships, reservation of seats, relaxation of age limits for admission, etc are some of the measures that have been attempted. The problem of text-books in tribal dialect, the availability of teachers, the scattered nature of villages and the distance to school have also to be considered. The scholar studies need of empowerment among the tribal children of Attapady, Palakkad district of Kerala.

### Importance of the study

The low literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes is a serious threat to Indian education. It is significant even to Kerala, the state with highest literacy rate. The intensity of the problem is reflected by the SSLC (Secondary School Leaving Certificate) examination results of March 2010 where the Palakkadu District had scored the less pass percentage of 83.04. The increase in the number of failures and drop outs in the schools of Attapady is discussed as major cause for the fall by educators and proponents of the State. The Observation has impacted this scholar to undertake a study on the Empowerment among the Tribal Children of Attapady, Kerala. The need of understanding the problems with regard to education and the importance of education and thus empowerment is focussed here and thus more guidance, counselling and orientation are given to the tribal children of Attapady.

### Objectives of the study

- The general objective of the study is to identify the educational problems in the education of the tribal children of Kerala.

### The specific objectives of the study are:

- To find out the various educational problems faced by the tribal children
- To find out whether the inadequacies of incentives act as constraints in the education of the tribal pupils.

- To identify the academic constraints in the education of the tribal pupils.
- To offer suggestions to minimize the educational constraints of tribal pupils.
- To empower the tribal children of Attapady

### Basic Assumption

The tribal children of Attapady face a number of problems and through continual guidance, motivation and counselling those can be solved and thus empowerment is possible.

### Methods & Materials

**Field of Study:** The field of study is Tribal block panjayath of Attapady, Palakkad district of Kerala. The researcher adopted descriptive design in this study.

**Method of Sampling:** The researcher used the PURPOSIVE methods of sampling for collecting the data. The sample size is hundred. Ten respondents each from ten tribal hostels have been selected.

**Tools of Data collection:** The Researcher used Interview schedule. An Interview schedule is a structured pattern of questions with various answers. The researcher has used different types of standardized scale in the questions and the answers.

**Preparation of Tool:** Tool has been prepared on the basis of the Objectives. The research tool includes the following sub-headings to assess the training need of the staff very clearly: Personal Details, Assessment Regarding educational problems, Usefulness of the Counselling previously attended.

### Review of Literature

**Tribals of Kerala:** Tribals in Kerala are the indigenous population found in the southern Indian state of Kerala. Most of the tribal people of Kerala live in the forests and mountains of Western Ghats, bordering Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. According to the 2001 census of India, the Scheduled Tribe population in Kerala is 3,64,189 (male- 180,169 and females-184,020). Wayanad has the highest number of tribals (1,36,062). Idukki (50973) and Palakkad (39665) districts are the next two that make the lion portion of the tribal people groups in the state. The Paniya (Paniyar) are the largest of the 35 major tribes.

Tribals of Attapady: There are three different tribal communities in Attapady: Irular, Mudugar and Kurumbas who constitute less than five percent of the total population lies in the interior of the northern area of Attapady. They were the first group of Adivasis to settle in the place. Mudugar are believed to have immigrated from the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. They had lived in the north-eastern part of Attapady under the leadership of Kovai (Coimbatore) Moopen.

Irular is a Dravidian tribe spread over the three state of Tamil Nadu. The term Irular is derived from the word Irul meaning darkness. Irular are proud to practice their customs and manners. Children of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes

- Tribal communities live in hilly areas of with low population density. 37% of the tribal population is in Wayanad district. The largest tribal community is the Paniyan (21% of all tribals). One-fourth of all tribals live below poverty line.
- ST literacy rate is 57%
- SC students constitute 10.7% and ST students 1.2% of the total enrolment in schools. Their share in enrolment is commensurate with their share in the school-going age group population (10.4% for SCs and 1.2% for STs.)
- The rate of enrolment among children of SC and ST Communities is decreasing. In Kerala less than one percent of schools run by Tribal Welfare department while the tribal population is 1.14%.
- The share of SC and ST in enrolment in unaided schools recognised by the state government in 2007-08 was just 3.3% and 0.4%, respectively. As against this, the share of these groups in the enrolment in government schools is much higher at 13.5% and 2.7%, respectively. In the aided schools, the shares of SC and ST in enrolment were 10.5% and 1.1% respectively.

### Results & Discussion

From the research major problems of the tribal students analysed are as follows: Hostel facilities presently available for tribal pupils are quite inadequate. Tribal pupils have not even the bare minimum facilities for study at home. The poor financial conditions of tribal parents have adverse effect on the education of tribal students. Their Poor socio-economic conditions result in irregular attendance, less concentration in studies, failure in the examinations, inhibition in interacting with other students and development of disinterest towards learning. Early marriage of tribal children, especially girls, was found to be a factor adversely affecting the education of the tribal pupils. Drug addiction of tribal parents was found to be adversely affecting the educational interest of tribal children. Most of the tribal parents do not motivate their children to go to school. Financial backwardness acts as a strong constraint in the education of the tribal children. The difficulties mainly hail from poor standard of the tribal pupils, their lack of interest towards learning, their irregular attendance and lack of parental support in their learning. There are inadequacies in the available school & hostel facilities. Improvement in school & hostel facilities will result in the improvement of learning by tribal pupils.

**Table.1**  
**The problems that affect the studies of Tribal students**

No	Problems that affect their studies	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Distractions/Disturbed thoughts	55	55
2.	Lack of interest/ laziness	94	94
3.	Sleep	62	62
4.	Lack of memory, unable to remember	86	86
5.	Mobile phone, internet, Games	35	35
6.	Bad company/friendship	35	35
7.	Use of substance e.g. Hans	10	10
8.	Family situation/broken family	22	22
9.	Tension/fear	15	15
10.	Love affair/teen age issues	65	65

This table explains the various problems connected with studies. 94 percent of the respondents expressed that lack of interest in studies as one of the major problems of the tribal students. 86 percent feel that they do not have memory or they forget fast what they learn. And 65 percent find teen age issue especially love-affair too affect their study in the school.

**Table 2**  
**Need of counselling**

Need of Counselling	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	98	98
Agree	2	2
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Total	100	100

For a Tribal student, Counselling is an unavoidable aspect to achieve his goal. 98 per cent of the respondent strongly agree and say that the counselling is a must for the tribal students for their better motivation and better performance in studies.

**Table 3**  
**Motivation helps them to have a clear goal in life**

Motivation helps to have a clear goal	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	70	70
Agree	28	28
Neither agree nor disagree	2	2
Disagree	1	2
Total	60	100

Almost all the respondents agree and 70 strongly agree that motivation helps to have clear goal in life among the tribal boys. Because of Motivation, many tribal people of Attapady have got government jobs and other professionals. So the boys agree that proper and regular motivation has to be given to them.

**Table 4**  
Necessary Training programme to be conducted

No	Programmes	Respondents	Percentage
1	Study skills	98	98
2	Personality development	78	78
3	Team work	65	65
4	Skill development	72	72
5	Health aspects	55	55
6	Counselling	91	91
7	Motivation sessions	85	85
	Any other	-	-

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Table 4 shows that majority had expressed that they need counselling classes, sessions on study skills and motivation. They also said that the scholar's personal intervention has helped them to study well and get good marks.

**Table 5**  
Willingness to attend Motivation classes

More motivation classes	Respondents	Percentage
To a very great extent	90	90
To a great extent	8	8
To some extent	2	2
Not at all	0	0
Total	100	100

This table reveals that all the respondents are willing to attend the motivation class. No one is unwilling to co-operate with the counsellor to tackle the educational problems. Thus tribal students are ready for any motivation class or seminar at Attapady, Kerala.

### Findings

1. Hostel facilities presently available for tribal pupils are quite inadequate.
2. The dropout rate of tribal students is high when compared to general population. In the districts of Wayanad, Malappuram, Palakkad and Ernakulam the tribal dropout rate is very conspicuous.
3. The poor financial conditions of tribal parents have adverse effect on the education of tribal students.
4. Their Poor socio-economic conditions result in irregular attendance, less concentration in studies, failure in the examinations, inhibition in interacting with other students and development of disinterest towards learning.
5. Early marriage of tribal children, especially girls, was found to be a factor adversely affecting the education of the tribal pupils.
6. Drug addiction of tribal parents was found to be adversely

affecting the educational interest of tribal children.

7. Many tribal students have to travel long distances sometimes through mid forests to reach the school
8. The tribal students are in need of proper motivation. They have various problems with regard to education. They all want them to be tackled or solved.
9. They mostly are ready to undergo counselling and so be empowered.
10. Tribal students are aware that they can also achieve greater things in life through proper training with regard to education, health, personality development programme. All these aim will empower them.

### Suggestions

- Appointing professional social workers as counsellor in all schools and hostels and continual guidance be assured
- Motivation and counselling should be provided to all the tribal students in Attapady
- Teachers who are working in Attapady need to be given special training to work with Tribal pupils with commitment
- Awareness programme to be conducted for Parents, Teachers, and Students
- Improvement in school & hostel facilities will result in the improvement of learning by tribal pupils.
- The improvement in school facilities will be conspicuous in the areas of securing more marks in examinations, stimulation of interest towards education, participation in co-curricular activities etc

**Role of A Social Worker:** To empower the tribal children of Attapady, the Social worker suggests the following things to be done regularly.

- Regular motivation sessions with the Tribal students
- Counseling to the needy children
- Life orientation programme be done
- Leadership and personality development training programme be conducted
- Summer Camps focusing on over all development of the tribal children

### Conclusion

Each child including tribal-child has the right to free and compulsory education. Indian Constitutions guarantees basic rights which are to be protected and promoted. Although the tribal department (ITDP) and Government of Kerala do a number of projects and programmes for the integral development of Tribal children of Attapady, they face a number of problems with regard to education. They need to be addressed and tackled and thus the dreams of tribal children be fulfilled.

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