



## THE NEED FOR INCLUSIVENESS OF EDUCATION IN MOTHER TONGUE FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF TRIBAL'S IN KERALA- A STUDY ON ATTAPPADY

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### **Abstract**

Development is to be understood in terms of the people and each activity is to be analyzed to see how much people participate in it and benefit from it. When we think about human development, children are a section which should not be neglected. It should not be forgotten that the very destiny of our nation is dependent on this growing generation. Children need extra care since they are our supreme assets and the human resource for the days to come. It should be remembered that if they are not treated properly, their futures would end up in danger. Health and education is a major factor in the phase of growth of a child and if the children are denied the opportunity to enjoy the output of education the condition will be worse than what we can imagine. But the most worst situations is that though there are many reasons to boast of the achievements by Kerala, it should be noted that the development of the state is uneven. Attappady, being one of the largest tribal settlements in the state is one such pocket which suggests that something is wrong in Kerala too. The abundance of fund, flow of money, literacy, richness etc are in gifted amount in this area. But there is neglect from all sections of the society. There are forty eight tribal communities throughout Kerala, of which thirty five are scheduled tribals and the remaining are unrecognized tribal communities. In the past, the tribes remained isolated from the mainstream of national life perhaps due to their innate desire for self-sufficiency. They retained their traditions and values even though they were found inconsistent with modern life. They used the available natural resources sparingly and with utmost care. They practised shifting cultivation and subsisted by the collection of forest produce. The tribals remained beyond governmental control for long due to their inaccessible and perilous location. Most of the tribal communities are at various stages of transition. They have discarded their traditional way of life of hunting and gathering to a great extent and have more or less settled down as cultivators. The impact of deforestation on land use changes varies from region to region and also within a region. Under the Constitution of India certain tribes have been specified as the Scheduled Tribes. It is to be noted that only those tribes which have been included in the list of Scheduled Tribes are given special treatment or facilities envisaged under the Constitution. The Constitution neither defines nor lays down any criteria for specifying the Scheduled Tribes.

**Key Words: Tribals, Deprivation, Marginalization, Mainstream Culture .**

As per the Lokur Committee report the basic traits of Scheduled Tribe Communities are

1. Indication of primitive traits
2. Distinctive culture
3. Shyness to contact with other
4. Geographical isolation
5. Backwardness

The tribal people of India got a diverse socio-cultural life and economic development and live in scattered isolated areas, inaccessible settlements in interior forest and remote hilly areas of the country. These areas lack proper communication systems and transportation facilities like road and transport. They also deprived of the basic amenities like medical facilities, electricity and educational facilities. In the education sector the literacy rate among tribes is very low and the majority children continue to be outside the school system. The Government introduced special educational support to the tribes. Special norms and flexible approaches introduced. But the number of the out of school children is large.

In Kerala, one of the major states of India the condition of tribal education is the same. Here also the number of enrollment among tribes is very low and the dropout rate is very high. There are number of reasons behind this, like lack of parental support and interest, inability to understand the medium of instruction due to mother to inhibition, lack of schools nearby, teacher absenteeism attitude towards girls etc.

### **Nature and scope of the study**

Kerala is one of the 28 States of the Indian Union, which is the largest Democratic Republic in the world. This is the southernmost state which is on the shores of the Arabian Sea. It has an area of 38,863 sq. kms (1.18% of Indian land mass) with 30 million people, and it is divided into 14 districts. The language of Kerala is Malayalam, which had originated from Sanskrit and Tamil. Malayalam, another name of the state, which is also the name of the language, is probably derived from mala (hill) and alam (dale) corresponding to the undulating physical feature of Kerala, the land of hills and valleys.

"Malabar" is a partially arabicized form of the same word. The northern area of Kerala is still known as Malabar. The 14 Districts of Kerala are grouped in to three regions on the basis of certain cultural, historical and geographical similarities. Malabar Region (North Kerala), Kochi Region (Central Kerala) and Travancore (South Kerala) are the regions.

### Major problem faced by the tribals

1. Fast increasing tendency to use tribal people as 'cat's -paws in criminal activities like illicit distillation, cultivation of narcotic plants, stealing of forest wealth etc.
2. Dependency-inducing developmental programmes relying on distribution of benefits rate than building up of capabilities.
3. Implementation of ad hoc and stereotyped developmental programmes in the absence of proper planning.
4. Weak delivery system of public services.
5. Very weak monitoring system.
6. High level of exploitation of women by out-side

Change in curriculum would remain incomplete unless patterns of teacher-student interaction also change in the direction of coercion-free involvement of the ST students. The knowledge of social reality that teachers bring to the classroom, and their perception of the role of education are among the key determinants of teacher's behavior. To a great extent, the norms of teacher-student interaction are shaped by the training that teachers receive prior to employment. Knowledge of social reality' and role of education under prevailing social conditions do form a part of present training curricula, but like much else in teacher training, these segments receive a ritualistic observance. Teachers cannot be oriented towards new types of classroom interactions without being exposed to specific issues of social reality and functioning of school.

So for the Universalization of primary education the Government of India introduced new innovative approaches and strategies. The Government opened single teacher schools in remote tribal areas. The importance and need of these alternative schools and alternative strategies in meeting the educational needs of tribal children. It also analyses the viability and desirability of the school approach and the benefits of the schools to the younger generation. It also studies the major problems and challenges faced by the system. It also throws light to the new methodological and pedagogical approach. It is very essential to improve the pedagogic reform, community participation and the attempts to improve the quality of teachers by adapting new techniques of training, and new methods like using local teachers, adapting curriculum and providing locally relevant teaching learning materials.

### Tribes in Kerala

"The tribal zone in India is generally divided into three zones according to their distribution namely the north-eastern zone, the central zone and the southern zone. The north-eastern zone consists of the Himalayan region and the hill and the mountain ranges of North- Eastern India. The southern zone consists of that part of the Peninsular India which falls south of the River Krishna. The central zone occupies the central belt of the older hills and the plateaus along the dividing line between Peninsular India and the Indo Gangetic Plains" (Thakur and Thakur, 1994:99). The State of Kerala belongs to the central tribal belt of India.

The tribes of Kerala mainly settled in four districts viz, Wayanad, Idukki, Palakkad and Kasargode. 35.82% of the tribal people are settled in Wayanad district. As per the *Constitutional Amendment by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes orders (Amendment) Act, 2002 (Act 10 of 2003) Part – VIII – Kerala*, 35 tribes considered as Scheduled Tribes.

### Education Profile of the tribals

At present the education sector as a whole in the state is characterised by the existence of a dual system: one segment comprising high quality institutions catering to the affluent 5 per cent of the population and the second consisting of low quality institutions meant for the masses. The state has never made any attempt at equitable distribution of quality higher education, the access to which is virtually barred to children of marginalized groups like SC/ST.

A review of literacy rates among ST population in comparison with that of the general population indicates a growing gap between literacy rates of these communities (Kerala Development Report, 2008). Our examination of recent trends in educational attainment of tribes: their recent trends in enrollment drop-out for the children are empty by absence of relevant statistical data.

The percentage of Scheduled tribe students in total enrollment also went up only marginally from 1.15 per cent in 2001-02 to 1.23 per cent in 2003-04. But the absolute number of Scheduled Tribe students enrolled went up from 58859 in 2001-01 to

60339 in 2003-04. Also the vast majority of these students are in government schools and government-aided schools. In 2004, 42.08 percent of the SC/ST students were enrolled in government schools, 56.39 percent in government-aided schools and a 1.53 percent in private unaided schools. The proportions of Scheduled Tribe students in Lower Primary and Upper Primary schools during 2008-09 are relatively higher than their population percentage. In High School section the percentage of Scheduled Tribe students is a little less than their population percentage.

### Dropout Rate

Among the Indian states Kerala has achieved the distinction of the state having the lowest dropout rate among school students. In the year 2006-07 dropout ratio among school students in Kerala was 0.81 per cent. The drop-out ratio in Lower Primary Section, Upper Primary Section and High School Section were 0.59 Per cent, 0.52 per cent and 1.38 per cent respectively. Among the Districts, Wayanad has the highest drop out ratio in the Lower Primary section (1.89 %), Upper Primary Section (1.92 %) and High School Section (2.56 %). Drop-out ratio among Scheduled Tribe students is 4.18 per cent.

### Reasons for Drop-out among tribal students

1. **Low socio-economic status:** - Tribals enjoy low socio-economic status. Miller (1988) has identified four major classes of variables such as cognitive variables, physical variables and motivational variables where disadvantaged learners show poor performance as compared with the advantaged groups.
2. **Tribal concepts of pleasure:-** Tribals are giving more importance for their pleasure such as dance, music and other types of entertainments prevalent in the society.
3. **Existence of ethnic stereotypes:** - Stereo typing is a natural and inevitable. It helps us to organize life. But such typing turns in to prejudice or stereotypes when based on little facts and it is used as a mechanism to establish the myth of racial or cultural superiority.
4. **Tribal concept of learning:-** In most of the tribal cultures learning is an active pleasurable event mostly carried on among peers. But the existing system of education does not take in to account their learning style.
5. **Linguistic problems:-** Tribal languages, except a very few, belong to Austro-Asiatic language family and are different from dominant non tribal languages of India which belong either to the Indo European or the Dravidian family. In most of the time tribals face acute problems in language.
6. **Problem of learning English:** - Tribals need for English is great, they face problems in learning than their non-tribal counterparts. For tribals their typical use of regional languages interferes with English. For them English are 5th or 6th languages.
7. **Problems in learning to read:-** Tribals have long oral tradition. Their culture is oral. Their history, myths and traditions are orally handed down from generation to generation. Most of the language does not have scripts of their own; their oral tradition still continues to exist.
8. **Psychological problems:** - Financial problems of the tribals always make the tribals in a very depressed condition. They have lots of wants and but the means to satisfying them is very less. It leads to many psychological issues
9. **Academic and administrative problems:** - Even though the number of programmes for the upliftment of tribal education is many, the percentage of people receiving these benefits is very less. Administrative authorities are always showing very neutral attitude towards the education of the tribals.
  1. Extreme level of poverty, deprivation and vulnerability
  2. High levels of exclusion, developmental, social and economic
  3. Extremely low level of empowerment-political, social and economic
  4. Low level of access to entitlement
  5. Practically zero participation in development matters with no autonomy in any form of decision-making
  6. Poor human development with low level of literacy and access to health care
  7. Rapid alienation of assets like land
  8. Alarming depletion of social capital especially traditional forms of organization and leadership.

The major problems faced by the schools were nothing other than high number for tribal out of school children. Out of school children means those children who were never enrolled in school and those drop out student. The major factors behind this were two types' factors. 1) The internal factors or Intrinsic factors: This factors lies in the structure of education system itself. 2) The External factors: Those factors which were outside the education system Internal External Mother tongue Incentives Gender Geographical migratory inhibition bias isolation pattern of parents Content & pedagogy Teacher absenteeism and negative attitude of teachers

### Strategies and Approaches to Solve the Problems

The schools mainly started to rectify the major internal factor which primarily impediments the education



### **Approaches to solve Mother Tongue Inhibition.**

Normally the tribal child is unfamiliar with the language of instruction in primary school. They knew only their tribal dialect. The language of instruction in Kerala or the state language is Malayalam and some schools use English as their medium of instruction. The instruction and communication in state language will lead to a kind of alienation among kids in class room activity.

In Single school the language of instruction and communication is local tribal dialect. This will create interest in classroom teaching and activities. This language makes the process of education and learning easier and natural. So that the child can acquire knowledge very easily. This will reduce the rate of drop outs. Later stage these schools used trilingual approach of education. In the initial stage they get their own tribal language then Malayalam the state language and English.

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This also helps for the peer to peer learning observation capacity. They became more and more sociable. This method replaces the textbook oriented, teacher directed, and syllabus centered monograde approaches. The concentration is on learning. The importance of this method is to increases the student activity level, self learning group dynamics, interaction, interrelation, co-operation, socialization, sociality and sociability with coalasing. The four classes were considered as step learning ladder. This ladder covers the whole curriculum from class I to class IV. In the area of Mathematics, Environmental Studies and Languages. Activities were planned according to the learner's level.

### **Content of Curriculum**

Content of the State syllabus the terminologies, the topic and messages are really alien to the tribal kids. So there need a total deconstruction of the content. So that the contexts and the matter rebuilt on the basis of local and familiar theoretical space. Introduced ten important themes which got local specificity, cultural meaning, and ecological validity. KIRTADS developed dictionaries and developing primer in the tribal language. Apart from these KIRTADS gave biannual training to the teachers using developed text books, work books picture books on the basis of theme. Also developed local friendly teaching learning materials to help the students to learn easily.

### **The major activities are**

1. Developed a language lab for the them
2. Created a reading corner (*Vayana moola*)
3. Created a laboratory corner. (*ShaasthraMoola*)
4. Collected the tribal songs, stories, fables and created cultural encyclopedia.
5. Supplementary Teaching Learning Material Kit(TLM) developed on the basis of theme.
6. Developed picture work books, teachers hand books, chart and models.



### **Increase in Incentives**

To increase the number of tribal students in these schools the Government started to give incentives. These schools provide milk, midday meal, egg and fruits for the students. Govt. also provided two pairs of uniform, free text books, bags, Umbrella and other study materials. This incentive helped to raise the number of enrollment and retention. It motivated the kids to study and to learn things.

### **Community awareness programmes.**

The Directorate of KIRTADS conducted community awareness programmes in the field. Gave empowerment and motivational training to the parents. These programmes help them to create a positive attitude towards education, particularly the need and importance of education, girls education etc.

Training on material use, thematic presentation of the subject, TLM creation, techniques to control Multigradee multilevel situations were also given.

In the training programme the teachers got attitudinal training also. They were sensitized to the importance of tribal education and the problems of tribal students in education.

### **Creation of effective TLM Kit**

This training helps the teachers to create interesting and innovative teaching learning materials on the basis of the themes. Majority of these materials were prepared on the basis of socio-cultural background of the community. Teachers have flexibility in the creation of materials by supplementing their own ideas with their own social customs, language and peculiarities.

### **Development of Context Specific reading and writing materials**

The teachers got thorough training in the preparation of context specific reading and writing materials. This material helps them to create interest in the study among tribal students.

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Education is the only means to the individuals and society can improve endowment. It helps them to built capacity and confidence. The education system in India is currently designed for the dominant groups so that for the education of tribes we need to develop a supplementary, alternative support mechanism. This will help the tribal children to enter in to formal system of education.

1. Use community dialect or language as the medium of instruction.
2. Introduce a multigrade, multilevel student oriented curriculum
3. Create dictionaries, primers, text books and encyclopedias in tribal language
4. Develop a context specific thematic approach.
5. Create a context specific teaching learning material
6. Introduce Incentives to the tribal students and for teachers too
7. Empower and consentize the parents
8. Develop a positive attitude among teachers regarding tribal life and culture.
9. Improve community participation

### **Conclusion**

It is well understood that the socio-economic problems faced by the tribal communities is very high. They are deprived from the all sects of development, lack of education, stagnation in all aspects of their growth, malnutrition and related health problems are some of the most important issues facing the country. Socially marginalised groups, women and children in particular, in many states are the worst victims of this problem. It is shocking to note that Kerala – a state with the remarkable

achievements in human, and social (health) indicators – has excluded the tribal groups from its so-called achievements. It shows that development in human and social (health) sectors are as not inclusive as claimed by the state. For instance, more than 60 tribal infant/children died due to the combined impacts of loss of indigenous food items, poor public distribution system, unavailability of alternate nutritious food and the loss of employment opportunities, which led to widespread starvation along with high malnutrition and related health problems in the past 24 months in Attappady, the only tribal block in the state of Kerala. For attaining all these goals education is a primary role in it. Engineering, medical and higher education institutions with special provisions for tribal students should be opened in the area. Investment in the transportation sector should be enhanced to improve the accessibility and connectivity of tribal groups. The quality and quantity of health services provided by both public and private sector in Attappady should be upgraded.

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