

## A STUDY ON EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF TRIBAL CHILDREN IN THE NILGRIS DISTRICT

**DR. V. RAJAM\*; MS. MALARVIZHI. V\*\***

\*Professor,

Avina shilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women,  
Coimbatore-43, Tamilnadu, India.

\*\*Assistant Professor,

Avina shilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women,  
Coimbatore-43, Tamilnadu, India.

---

### ABSTRACT

Literacy and human development are keys to any quantitative social change and those two factors influence demographic behaviour. The reservation policy has opened the gates of education to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes low privileged groups' caste men as well as women. With this background an attempt was made with the objectives; to study the parental objective in educating the respondents, to find out the reasons for taking education and financial aid for children and to assess the difficulties faced by them. The study was based on the primary data that was collected with the help of well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule, administered to 600 respondents in the Nilgris in two blocks. A purposive random sampling method was adopted in data collection. From the findings of the study, that the given opportunities were not utilized fully; sometimes they were opposed by their own caste people, which resulted in conflicts, problems and tensions. The study suggested that, Massive community programme could be taken with a view to change the aspiration levels of the disadvantaged children and a crèche attached to the school may lighten the domestic burden of school girls. To conclude, as education of women brings out change of the standard of living and their entire family system.

**KEYWORDS:** conflicts, domestic, education, Human development, and scheduled Tribes.

---

### INTRODUCTION

Literacy and human development are keys to any quantitative social change and those two factors influence demographic behaviour. The educational system in India is the second largest in the world with 10.4 lakhs schools, about 17,000 colleges and about 329 universities including institutions demanded to be university (Tilak, 2006: 33-34). The number of students in educational institutions in India out numbers the total population of united Germany, England and Canada together. Also enrolment in all educational institutions have increased eight times from 2.4 crores in 1950-01 to 21 crores in 2002-03, as per official statistics (Ibid :33). Of late, schemes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Mid- Day Meal have proved to be highly beneficial for providing access to children to elementary schools and retain them up to class VIII (Joshi 2009: 30-31).

Yet the pressure to build an appropriate educational structure for the burgeoning population is deeply felt in India. One thing that is constant independently of the level of development and stage of demographic transition is that household educational expenditure per child decline with family size. The impact is more pronounced in case of the girl child, as there is less retention of girls after the age of 11 for several socio- cultural reasons. With nearly 273 million total illiterate in, most of whom are women and people from disadvantaged sections, India tops the rank of the largest number of illiterates in the world. According UNICEF (2009) report, in India, the net attendance ratio in primary schools is 72 percent in 2005-06. In the middle, secondary and higher secondary standard such a ratio is only 52 percent.

The government of India in its 11<sup>th</sup> Plan Document (2008:4) has acknowledged that 51 percent of students at the elementary level (classes 1-8) had dropped out during 2004-05. Such a rate is much higher for the Scheduled Tribe (66 percent) and Scheduled Caste (57 percent) students. Despite the expansion of the system in recent years, therefore, the progress achieved so far has not been satisfactory, both in terms of quantity and quality. According to the 'EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010' (UNESCO), India's rank on EDI was 105 among 128 countries. And it continues to figure, along with a bunch of African and one or two Asian countries, such as Pakistan and Bangladesh, in the group of countries with a low EDI. In 2001 also India was ranked 105 among 127 countries (Tilak 2010).

The reservation policy has opened the gates of education to Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) low privileged groups' caste men as well as women. But quite a few low privileged caste girls/women are not aware of their rights and welfare and do not take advantage of the reservation and policies of protective discrimination. Therefore to achieve a sustainable balance development, which is the key area concern in hilly regions, the study has attempted to study the educational status of Tribal children in Nilgiris district.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To study the formal level of education and achievement among the Tribal group.
- To study the parental objective in educating the respondents.
- To find out the reasons for taking education.
- To find out the knowledge about the reservation of seats for Scheduled Caste and financial aid for children.
- To assess the difficulties faced by them.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Singh and Ohri (1993) opined in their study that the educational status of tribals should be improved. The study suggested that as a result of modernization, education and social change among tribals have improved better. Further improvement can be made on the basis of data related to education available from various sources, identifying tribal groups for initiating innovative educational programmes at the micro-level, conducting state-wise and district-wise

surveys of causes of non-enrolment of girl child in tribal communities in order to achieve the goal of universalisation of elementary education, studying the problems of drop-outs, wastage and stagnation among tribal girls in school and examining their occupational mobility. The role of mass media also needs to be assessed in the educational development of tribals.

Jayaswal, et.al, (2003) examined the role of parental support on academic achievement of tribal school students. The study selected a sample of 10 schools of Ranchi town having classes I, VI and XI randomly making a total of 300 children. The parents of 30 high achievers and 30 low achievers were selected as the parental sample. The tools used in the study were personal data questionnaire, academic achievement test, and parental support scale. The study found that the parents of high achievers exerted significantly more support in their children's studies than the parents of low achievers students. The parents of high achievers had greater work commitment concern with the quality of performance and inclination to learn lessons from others, more interest in children's educational success and were liberal. On the other hand the parents of low achievers were not strongly ambitious of children's upward mobility and were more fatalistic, lacking a role model and having low self-confidence and initiative for guiding their children.

Vijayalakshmi (2003) conducted a study to identify the problems of tribal students in secondary schools. The sample consisted of 240 students from VIII, IX and X classes who were selected from Andhra Pradesh Tribal Welfare Residential Schools, Ashram Schools and Zilla Parishad High Schools at random. The findings of the study revealed that the tribal students had more problems with regard to their parents and family followed by personal, infrastructural and facilities, academic and teachers related. The individual problems faced by students were low social status of the parent, illiteracy of parents, cultural backwardness of the family, low educational levels of the siblings and nomadic life of parents. The other problems faced by them were lack of academic help from the teachers, non-availability of teachers, insect bites in the school premises, inconvenient school timings and absence of teachers in the school.

Vinoba Gautam (2003) focused his study on education of tribal children in India and the issue of medium of instruction through a joint programme "Janshala" for the universalisation of primary education among educationally underserved communities. The programme was being implemented in nine Indian states. Records collected in schools in the Janshala Programme areas indicated continuing high "dropout" rates among tribal children. A major reason for this was that in most states the medium of instruction was regional language. Most tribal children do not understand the textbooks, which were generally in the regional language. The appointment of non-tribal teachers in tribal children's schools was another problem, the teachers could not know the language the children speak and children could not understand the teacher's language. The issue of language was being debated in the context of tribal education. While some researchers argued for a uniform policy with respect to language use in schools, others perceived it as a constraint in the process of schooling. This paper examined the current policy framework of the participating states with regard to the medium of instruction in government schools in tribal areas and meeting the needs of sound education of tribal children in terms of the posting of teachers, development of textbooks and curricula, training of teachers, etc. The responses of the stakeholders have been gathered through a survey carried out recently in fifteen Janshala blocks of five states. The paper also presented a statistical analysis of the responses of parents, children

and teachers on the issue of using the mother tongue as medium of instruction in schools and other language issues.

## METHODOLOGY

India is one of the largest concentrations of tribal population in the world. According to the census of 2001, the tribal population in India is 67.76 million constituting 8.08 percent of total population. There are about 449 Tribes and sub – Tribes in different parts of India. Most of the Tribes live in well defined but isolated hilly areas, which are often inaccessible and relatively underdeveloped and poorly integrated with the rest of the nation. Hence, tribal communities in Nilgris district also followed distinctive culture.

The present study was conducted in The Nilgris in two blocks viz., girl children in five groups of tribes namely Todas, Kotas, Kurumbas, Paniyas and Kattunayakans sample of six hundred respondents from each group of tribals from two blocks viz., Udagamandalam and Kothagiri. The locale of the study was confined to two blocks limits on the grounds of easy collection of data and time constraint. The total sample consisted of 600 respondents were selected by adopting purposive random sampling technique. The present study is based on primary data, by administering an interview schedule to the selected respondents to collect the information required. The interview schedule was first pre-tested to check for clarity and specificity and the necessary modification were made on the basis of the experience gained during pre-testing. The field investigation and data collection for the study were carried out during the period from November 2010- January 2011. Data collection were tabulated and analyzed for the purpose of giving precise and concise information. Central Government and state Government offices, Universities, hospitals, colleges, schools and other offices where women were employed extended their cooperation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

For the first time in the year 1899, the British Government, on the basis of the report of the educational authorities, established on the higher altitude of The Nilgris hill, a few special schools for indigo communities like Badagas, Kotas and Todas, Considered by them as the backward classes.

**TABLE- 1**

**BLOCKS AND POPULATION OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN THE NILGIRIS DISTRICT**

<b>Blocks</b>	<b>Population</b>
Pandalur	32.08
Kothagiri	24.10
Gudalur	14.33

Kundah	13.16
Udhagamandalam	9.27
Coonoor	6.96

Source: Tribal education Status Documentation, (2010- 11)

The above table shows that, Pandalur block has higher percent of the tribes (32 %) next to Kothagiri (24 %) and least percent of the tribes belong to Coonoor block.

**TABLE- 2**

**STATUS OF FORMAL EDUCATION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF TRIBES**

Name of the tribes	Non literates		Literates		10 <sup>th</sup> failed		10 <sup>th</sup> passed		Graduate		Post graduate	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
<b>Todas</b>	580	467	316	285	48	41	29	32	4	12	0	3
<b>Kotas</b>	450	628	512	395	75	54	46	45	25	18	9	6
<b>Kurumbas (Alu)</b>	1919	2832	1491	645	109	112	92	75	2	-	-	-
<b>Kurumbas (Jenu)</b>	233	196	62	79	15	12	6	4	-	-	-	-
<b>Kurumbas (Betta)</b>	469	511	55	49	19	14	7	6	-	-	-	-
<b>Kurumbas (Mullu)</b>	305	486	290	165	85	45	41	35	7	4	3	-
<b>Kurumbas (Urali)</b>	241	261	39	35	16	7	9	6	-	-	-	-
<b>Irula</b>	2399	3320	2010	985	220	240	125	140	9	6	-	-
<b>Paniyas Urban</b>	428	345	163	214	260	172	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Paniyas Rural</b>	1559	1565	47	12	11	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Paniyas Total</b>	1987	1910	210	226	271	173	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: a) Tribal Education status Documentation (2010), b) Tribal Research centre (TRC), Hill Area Development Programme (HADP), Udhagamandalam, TamilNadu, and PP.58-66.

The selected respondents in the study do not belong to drop out for they have reached up to the secondary school level, passed the examination and managed to get jobs. The parental objectives in educating their children are seen in table-3.

**TABLE- 3**

**PARENTAL OBJECTIVES IN EDUCATING THEIR CHILDREN**

<b>Parents objectives</b>	<b>Block I</b>	<b>Block II</b>
	<b>Udhagamandalam</b>	<b>Kothagiri</b>
<b>To get knowledge</b>	66 (22.0)	51 (17.00)
<b>To get a while collar job</b>	41 (13.66)	110 (36.66)
<b>To get a non-traditional job</b>	17 (5.66)	8 (2.66)
<b>To raise income earning capacity</b>	69 (22.33)	23 (7.66)
<b>For personal Development</b>	67 (22.33)	88 (29.34)
<b>To get a better husband</b>	25 (8.34)	9 (3.00)
<b>1+5 above or any other combination with 18 above</b>	7 (2.33)	10 (3.33)
<b>4+5 above</b>	7 (2.33)	-
<b>No reply</b>	1	1

<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b> <b>(99.99)</b>	<b>300</b> <b>(99.98)</b>
--------------	------------------------------	------------------------------

Source: Field Survey

The three main reasons for educating their children were i) to get knowledge, ii) to raise income earning capacity and iii) for personal development. The other reasons pointed out by them were, to get white collar job and to get better husband. This means that the parents of respondents who were illiterate had tried to overcome their handicaps by educating their daughters.

In table-4, the respondents' perception of taking education is presented. The respondents taught education because they wanted employment, higher status in society and attain economic security and also to improve the standard of family and to achieve self satisfaction.

**TABLE- 4**  
**RESPONDENTS REASONS FOR TAKING EDUCATION**

Reasons	Block I (Udhagamandalam)	Block II (Kothagiri)
<b>For employment</b>	89 (29.67)	93 (31.00)
<b>For economic security</b>	45 (15.00)	30 (10.00)
<b>For getting higher status in society</b>	52 (17.33)	54 (18.00)
<b>Education is a goal of life</b>	49 (16.33)	47 (15.66)
<b>For improving standard of family</b>	28 (9.33)	43 (14.33)
<b>Education is an asset to marriage</b>	6 (2.00)	11 (3.67)
<b>For self satisfaction</b>	26	21

	(8.67)	(7.00)
<b>Other combinations 1+2+3</b>	2 (0.66)	-
<b>Not taken higher education</b>	3 (1.00)	1 (0.33)
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b> <b>(99.89)</b>	<b>300</b> <b>(99.99)</b>

Source: Field Survey (Figures in parent thesis show percentage to total)

In table-5, the present study establishes the fact that even though a very large number of respondents were aware of the reservation of seats for them a sizeable number of them were not aware of the facilities regarding (a) educational facilities (b) concessions and (c) reservation in government offices offered to them.

**TABLE- 5**

**KNOWLEDGE REGARDING RESERVATION OF SEATS FOR SCHEDULED CASTE/SCHEDULED TRIBES**

<b>Aware of Reservations</b>	<b>BlockI (Udhagamandalam)</b>	<b>BlockII (Kothagiri)</b>
<b>Free concession</b>	28 (9.33)	28 (9.33)
<b>Free uniform</b>	2 (0.66)	1 (0.33)
<b>Free Books</b>	-	1 (0.33)
<b>Government of India Scholarship</b>	-	3 (1.00)
<b>Educational facilities</b>	149 (49.66)	93 (31.00)
<b>Fee concession + Educational facilities</b>	1 (0.33)	13 (4.33)
<b>Reservation in government offices</b>	18 (6.00)	5 (1.66)
<b>Not taken</b>	50 (16.66)	51 (17.00)
<b>No reply</b>	52 (17.33)	105 (35.00)

<b>Total</b>	<b>300 (99.997)</b>	<b>300 (99.98)</b>
--------------	---------------------	--------------------

Sources: Field Survey (figures in parenthesis show percentage to total)

Besides scholarships and freeships, educating girls require considerable finance for their maintenance. In the case of the selected respondents, the financial burden for higher education is borne by (a) their parents (b) relatives and (c) scholarships and were aided by parents when required. Lack of achievement drive among the respondents was due to the reasons that they are assured some job by virtue of being Scheduled Tribes. In fact from the responses, the study found that a large group from among these respondents felt that it was their birth right to get such aid from the government. Table-6, explains the financial aid for education.

**TABLE- 6**

**FINANCIAL AID FOR EDUCATION**

<b>Financed Aid</b>	<b>Block I (Udhagamandalam)</b>	<b>Block II (Kothagiri)</b>
<b>Parents</b>	181 (60.33)	250 (83.33)
<b>Help from relatives</b>	30 (10.00)	12 (4.00)
<b>Part time role</b>	4 (1.33)	1 (0.33)
<b>Scholarship and parents</b>	81 (27.00)	37 (12.33)
<b>Other means</b>	-	-
<b>Parents and Husband</b>	-	-
<b>Self</b>	1 (0.33)	-
<b>Parents and relatives</b>	3 (1.00)	-

<b>No reply</b>	-	-
<b>Total</b>	300 (99.98)	300 (99.99)

Source: Field Survey (Figures in parenthesis show percentage to total)

### DIFFICULTIES FOR PURSUING EDUCATION

The difficulties for pursuing education as ranked by the respondents have been tabulated and presented in table-7.

**TABLE- 7**

#### RESPONDENTS DIFFICULTIES

<b>Types of difficulties</b>	<b>BlockI (Udhagamandalam)</b>	<b>BlockII (Kothagiri)</b>
<b>Could not afford to buy all the books</b>	117 (39.00)	76 (25.33)
<b>Instruction through English were difficult to follow</b>	51 (17.00)	27 (9.00)
<b>Non – receipt of scholarship</b>	27 (9.00)	9 (3.00)
<b>Not getting proper food</b>	8 (2.66)	6 (2.00)
<b>Economizing on their needs because of inadequate scholarship</b>	10 (3.33)	8 (2.66)
<b>Negligence towards studies due to worries and mental disturbance due to lack of finance</b>	25 (8.34)	12 (4.00)
<b>No difficulties</b>	40 (13.33)	153 (51.00)

<b>None of these</b>	10 (3.33)	5 (1.66)
<b>No reply</b>	12 (4.00)	4 (1.33)
<b>Total</b>	300 (99.98)	300 (99.99)

Source: Field Survey (Figures in Parenthesis show Percentage to total)

Majority of the respondents stated that their performance suffered due to negligence towards studies due to worries and mental disturbance due to lack of finances.

### REASONS FOR FINDING STUDIES DIFFICULT

Table-8 presents the reasons for finding studies difficult.

**TABLE- 8**

### REASONS FOR FINDING STUDIES DIFFICULT

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Block I (Udhagamandalam)</b>	<b>Block II (Kothagiri)</b>
<b>English medium</b>	70 (23.33)	37 (12.33)
<b>No guidance</b>	163 (54.33)	103 (34.33)
<b>Heavy syllabus</b>	38 (12.66)	25 (8.34)
<b>No difficulties</b>	14 (4.66)	130 (43.44)
<b>No interest</b>	1 (0.33)	1 (0.33)

<b>2 and 3 above</b>	1 (0.33)	1 (0.33)
<b>All 1+2+3</b>	12 (4.00)	1 (0.33)
<b>No reply</b>	1 (0.33)	1 (0.33)
<b>Total</b>	300 (99.97)	300 (99.99)

Source: Field Survey, Figures in Parenthesis show percent to total

Their chief reason seems to be lack of guidance. A few could not cope up with the syllabus as it was too heavy and they could not give enough attention.

### **CORRECTIVE MEASURES FOR DROPOUT SYNDROME**

1. Incentive in the form of free books, food and clothing would be useful but should not be freely available. Some work in turn should be extracted from them in the nature of vocational training with available natural resources.
2. Massive community programme could be taken with a view to change the aspiration levels of the disadvantaged children.
3. A mobile school room would be ideal and
4. A crèche attached to the school may lighten the domestic burden of school girls.

### **CONCLUSION**

After independence, the new constitution of free India made untouchability-un lawful, thus providing complete security to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes section of Indian society. But in reality, insecurity persists in many subtle ways. As a result, the given opportunities were not utilized fully; sometimes they were opposed by their own caste people, which resulted in conflicts, problems and tensions. To conclude, as education of a women brings out change of the entire family Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes girls education should be taken up on a war footing if the unnatural protective discrimination has to come to an end within short period of time.

## **REFERENCE**

### **BOOKS**

- Chimis Suma (1981), “A long way to go, ICSSR Allied Publisher Pvt Ltd, New Delhi.
- Rao, Usha (1981), “Deprived Castes in India”, Chugh Publication, Allahabad.

### **JOURNALS**

- Jayaswal, M., Sinha, S.K., Kumari, K. and Arora, A. (2003), Parental Support and Academic Achievement in Tribal School Students of Jharkhand, Journal of All India Association for Educational Research, September, Vol. 15, No.3, Pp: 9-16.
- Joshi, Ira (2009), “Quality Education for all –The New National Agenda” Kurushetra, 57(9), pp.29-31.
- Singh and Ohri (1993), “Status of Tribal Women in India” Social Change, December, Vol.23, No.4, Pp: 21-26.
- UshaSree, S., (1980): Social Disadvantage, Academic Adjustment and Socialistic Achievement, Social Change, Vol. 10. No.1& 2.

### **REPORTS**

- Biswajit Ghosh, (2011), “Population change and its consequences: India’s concerns in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”, Man and Development Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, Vol.XXXIII, No .1, March, pp.1-18.
- Government of India (2008) “Eleventh Five Year Plan 2007-2012”, Vol.1 and 2, Planning Commission, New Delhi.
- Jakka parthasarathy (2003), “ Irula women and Empowerment in Nilgris District, Tamil Nadu, A study on Alternatives for Tribal Development, Tribal Women Empowerment Documentation”, Tribal Research Centre (TRC), Under the Hill Area Development Programme (HADP), Udthagamandalam, Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu.
- Jakka parthasarathy (2008), “The Badagas of the Nilgris District”, Tribal Research Centre, Under the Hill Area Development Programme (HADP), Udthagamandalam, Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu.
- Jakkar Parthasarathy (2007), “Education and Development among the Tribes – A Study of Formal Education and Tribal Girl Child Dropouts in the Nilgris District, Tamil Nadu”, Tribal Education Status Documentation, Tribal Research Centre (TRC) Under the Hill Area Development Programme (HADP), Udthagamandalam, Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu.

- Tilak J.B.G. (2006), “Education – A Saga of Spectacular Achievement and Conspicuous Failures in India: Social Development Report (Council for Social Development)”, Oxford University, New Delhi.
- UNICEF (2009), “The State of the Worlds Children”, New York.
- Vinoba Gautam (2003), “Education of tribal children in India and the issue of Medium of Instruction: A Janshala experience Coordinator”, UN/Government Janshala Programme, New Delhi.
- World Bank (1992-2008), “World Development Report”, Oxford University Press, New York.