

**EDUCATION FOR TRIBAL CHILDREN: AN ENGINE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT****Dr. Mrs. Thangamani***Associate Prof. of Economics, NDA, Khadakwasla, Pune – 23, Maharashtra***Abstract**

*The literacy level of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is very low compared to the general literacy rate. Recognizing that education provides opportunities for a permanent change in the socio-economic status of these people, Government has identified top priority to education in the recent years. The present paper made an attempt to analyze the problems in the field of Tribal children education and suggest measures for the development of education among the Tribals in Sathyamangalam Taluk of Tamil nadu state in India. The study reveals that People of the remote area are superstitious and addicted to blind beliefs. Hence, appropriate policies to be framed and implemented by the government to enhance their education level.*

Literacy and human development are keys to any quantitative social change and those two factors influence demographic behavior. 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).

According to provisional totals of the latest census, literates constitute 74 per cent of total population aged seven and above. It was encouraging to note that out of total 217,700,941 literates added during the decade, females at 110,069,001 outnumbered males at 107,631,940. A significant milestone reached in 2011 census was the decline of illiterates by 31,196,847. Ten states and union territories, including Kerala, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Tripura, Goa, Daman and Diu, Pondicherry, Chandigarh, National Capital Territory of Delhi and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, have attained literacy rate of above 85 per cent.

The gap of 21.59 per cent age points recorded between male and female literacy rates in 2001 census reduced to 16.68 percentage points in 2011. The Planning Commission had set up a target of reducing this gap to 10 percentage points by 2011-12. Kerala has the highest literacy rate at 93.91 per cent followed by Lakshadweep at 92.28 per cent. Bihar is at the bottom of the ladder with literacy rate of 63.82 followed by Arunachal Pradesh at 66.95.

The literacy rate for the total population in India has increased from 52.21percent to 64.84 percent during the period from 1991 to 2001; the literacy rate among the Scheduled Tribes has increased from 29.60 percent to 47.10 percent. Among ST males

literacy increased from 40.65 percent to 59.17 percent and among ST female literacy increased from 18.19 percent to 34.76 percent during the same period. The ST female literacy is lower by approximately 21 percentage point as compared to the overall female literacy of the general population.

The present study is conducted in the Thalavady block of Sathyamangalam taluk in Tamil Nadu in India. Tamil Nadu is one of the major states of southern India; According to the census of 2001, the scheduled Tribe population in Tamil Nadu is 651,321, constituting 1.0 percent of the total population. As like other states and union territories, Tamil Nadu Tribals are also facing the problems of hunger, malnutrition, poverty, poor literacy, poor health facility and deprivation from basic amenities. The extreme economic and educational backwardness of the 36 Scheduled Tribal communities are living in this state, among them 6 Tribal Communities have been identified as Primitive Tribes (i.e.,) Toda, Kota, Kurumbas, Irulur, Paniyan and Kattunayakan, these communities are considered as very poor than the other tribal communities in the country therefore they have drawn the attention of the state and Central Governments and the NGOs. The efforts of various commissions and legislative measures have proved futile. A number of developmental activities intended for protecting the tribal's from exploitation and meant for helping them to further their socio-economic development have not yielded fruitful results as expected. This may be due to many reasons; The Anthropologists have studied the socio-cultural system and taboos of the tribal's and have produced volumes of literature. There are a few studies made particularly in Tamil Nadu by the government agencies that have evaluated the impact of education on tribal population, but very few studies have been focused on the tribal educational development of this block. The focus of the study was to find out the provisions for primary and secondary education in the tribal areas as well as their utilization by these tribal population. At the same time the study attempted to discover the attitudes of tribal parents, opinion leaders, and teachers of tribal children. It was envisaged that such a focus will enable the planners at the district level to make more meaningful and direct interventions for ensuring quality education in tribal areas.

Sathyamangalam was formerly part of Coimbatore District, but became part of Erode District in 1979. According to the 2011 census, Sathyamangalam Taluk had a population of 331,993 with 166,964 males and 165,029 females. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes accounted for 10.38% and .74% of the population respectively. The city is also named as the reserve forest under the wild life protection Act 1973.

The selected village hasanur comes under talavadi taluk in Erode District of Tamil Nadu state. The total population of this village is 3690 based on 2011 census. The total area was 524.3494 square kilometres (202.452 sq mi). The sub villages are Keelmavallam, Meelmavallam, Osatty, Pududoddi, Arepalayam, Gethesal, Centre Doddi, Kottadai, Pudukkadu, Bungalwododdi, Devarnatham, Hongalvadi and Kuliyadi. The researcher has



### Hypotheses to be Tested

In accordance with the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses have been framed to test their validity.

- High rate of literacy enables the individuals to exhibit better knowledge about the Government facilities and rights.
- Ecological relationship dominates the socio economic conditions of the tribal people

### Sources of Data

The study used both the primary as well as secondary source data in its findings. The secondary data were collected from published and unpublished documents of Government Departments and private agencies and the Primary data was collected from the selected households of tribal area of hasanur village. It was collected directly from the respondents through interview method by using specific information questions

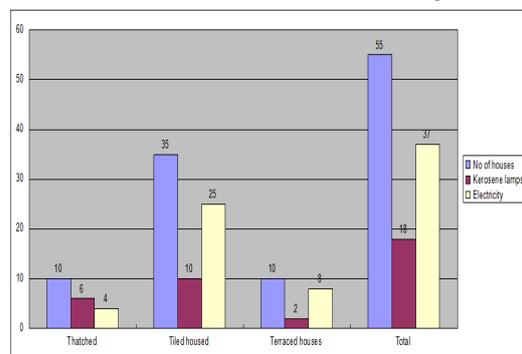
### Limitations of the Study

#### Primary Study

1. The primary data were collected through survey method by administering a household interview schedule to the head of the household. The respondents have generally provided information from their memory. Absence of maintenance of accounts by the households in rural areas (especially in tribal households) was conspicuous.
2. Some of the respondents were initially reluctant to give correct information regarding their land and income from collection of minor forest produce with the apprehension that they may be penalized for the violation of Forest Laws. However, special efforts were made to collect the statistics appropriately for the study.

The socio economic conditions are explained with the help of the following fact and figures

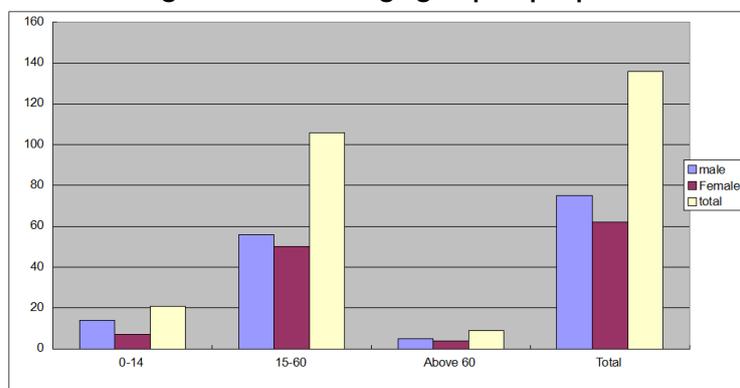
**Figure 1: Type of houses**



**Source:** Field survey.

The above figure indicates the housing conditions of the tribal hamlets. Among the 55 houses 10 houses are thatched, 35 are tiled houses and the remaining houses are terraced houses. Among the total houses about 37 percent of the houses have got electricity facility. Some of them are holding more than one house. The tiled houses were built by the IRDP Scheme in which some of them were totally damaged and few houses were repaired by MYRADA (Mysore resettlement and Development Agency) a non-governmental organization. Also Terraced roofs are partly damaged. Since these people live in thick forest, they should be given proper housing facilities which enable them to be away from acute problems which crop up from their surroundings.

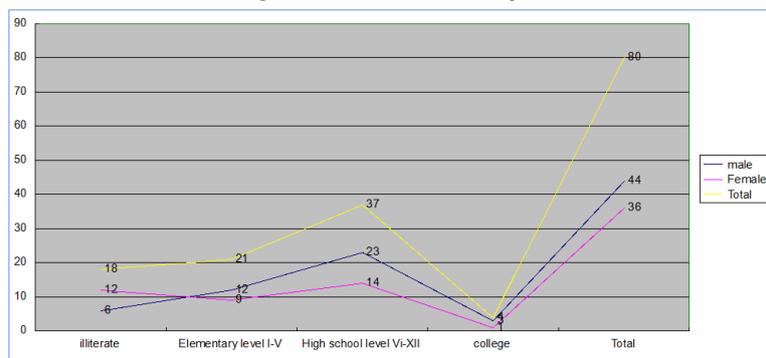
**Figure 2: Sex and age group of people**



**Source: Field survey**

The above figure reveals the age group and sex of the tribal hamlets of Hasanur village, the percentage of male population is higher than the women population. Besides, it is also expressed that working population size is more in male population than the women’s population It is well known that the productive age group population is very high in both sexes in this village than the non-productive population.

**Figure 3: Educational particulars**



**Source: Field survey**

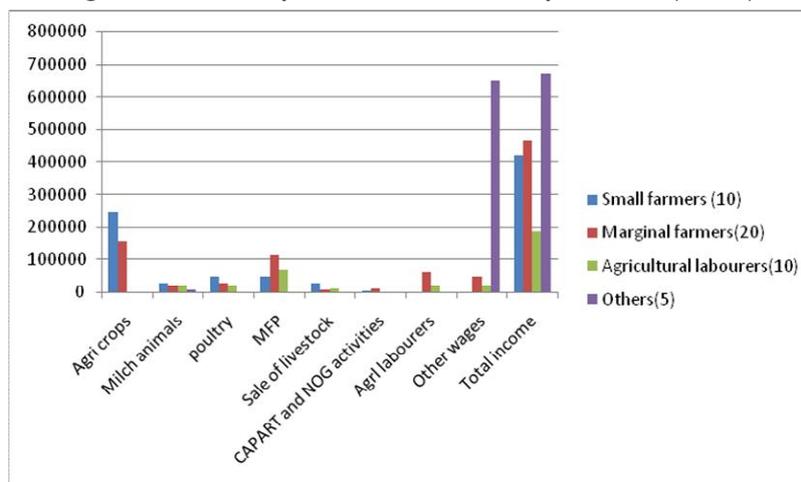
Since education is one of the important factors in achieving rapid rural development, it helps in creating a social order founded on the values of freedom, social justice and opportunities. As per the census records, a person is considered literate if he can both read and write with understanding in any language.

The above diagram explains the literacy level of selected tribal people of hasanur village. It is important to note that Compared with the male population women' are more illiterate. It has been observed that tribal community in the study area, have studied only up to secondary school, after that they have been advised to look after the domestic work rather sending them to higher studies.

Generally they cultivate crops like Ragi, Maize, Jowar, Gingelly, Mulberry, Flower, Pulses, and vegetables. These products are mainly depending upon natural manure because they make use of modern technologies such as pesticides and fertilizers.

Income particulars of the respondents in (RS)

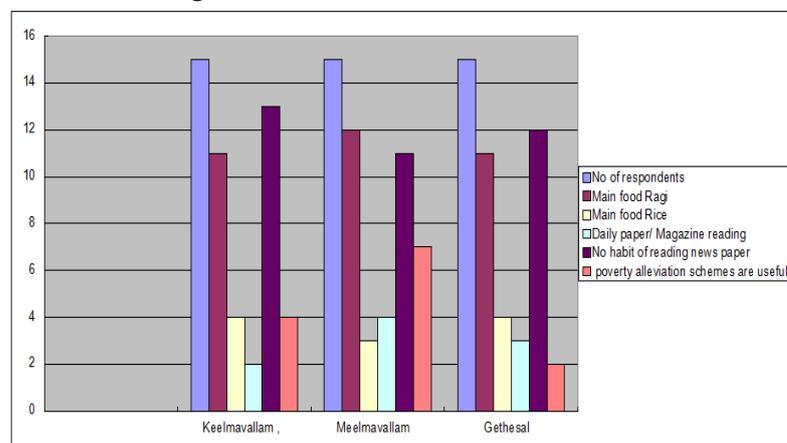
**Figure 4 :Income particulars of the respondents ( in Rs)**



Source: Field survey

The above figure reveals that the main sources of income of the tribal people are Agricultural crops, Milch animal, Poultry, Minor forest products, Sale of livestock, CAPART and NOG activities, Agricultural labour etc. The tribal group is divided into Agricultural labourers, Marginal farmers, Small farmers, big farmers and other categories. It is important to note that among the various sources of income; only MFP has contributed maximum income to the tribals than the other sources of occupation. The tribal people mainly depend upon collecting the minor forest for their main income. It is important to note that large farmers are not able to earn more income from other sources due to their land holding capacity, but marginal and agricultural labourers tend to pick up any kind of job available to them, in fact even they travel faraway places for agricultural jobs.

Figure 5: General information



Source: Field survey

Majority of the tribal community in the study area have never read regional news papers at all and there are no library facilities inside the tribal area. It signifies that tribal people are illiterate and ignorant about outside activities. When asked about their opinion regarding the poverty alleviation schemes they said that these scheme does not provide any sort of facilities to them; and only 15.56 percent of the people said that there are some benefits by the scheme. The above objectives have been proved with the help of field survey statistics, Educational development is a stepping-stone to economic and social development, and the most effective instrument for empowering the tribal; but it is not very much successful in tribal areas due to lack of transport facilities and infrastructural facilities.

The selected villages have education facility up to primary and middle school, this has created a positive impact on the increase in enrollment of tribal children in school especially the girls had the opportunity to access it. But after the primary and middle education the children in these villages have to travel 12 km to 15 km to pursue higher studies, either Thalavady or Bejality. Therefore their parents don't permit them to pursue higher studies. There are only 4 teachers in Geddesal school and it is a residential school. At Meelamavallam School, the existing infrastructural facilities are very poor. There are no toilet facilities in the school, only one teacher handles the classes of 1<sup>st</sup> to v standard. Educational opportunities and enrollment

Most of the tribal hamlets do not have schooling facility. The state should strive to provide them school to every panchayat. The syllabus incorporated in the curriculum is not relevant to the integrated development of tribes. It do not have well formulated distinct one required for the balanced growth of tribes. The curriculum offered to them is designed for mainstream society and it has been followed without any change. All the teaching members in this school are non tribals, so they lack cultural, environmental and value

orientations of tribes and tribal students. The national curriculum framework for school education is less achieved especially in tribal areas. Teaching and learning process are more concerned towards examination and vocation training has less importance. In the initial period these children went to the school for the purpose of means but the attitude has changed over a period of These are not well managed and there is shortage of teachers in most of the schools at all time. Now the children as well as the parents are more concerned towards education of their community. Since the no of teachers in the schools are very limited therefore they have occupied by writing assignment and writing works. The headmaster himself is the hostel warden and he stays within the school, moreover these teachers are non tribals obviously they have to come by nearby district. The medium of instruction in the school is a serious issue for the tribals. They cannot understand the actual meaning of the subject and there is need to change and frame the curriculum in the concerned dialect.

These people are leading primitive lifestyles which do not allow room for diversity of any sort, but only allow them to fulfill their basic needs for survival.

It is understood that they spend more on social and religious functions than others, which proves that these people are bounded by old customs and traditions, that they hardly spend money on health, hygiene and educational facilities.

### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that the following factors are responsible for poor educational development in these tribal areas.

### **Suitable Teachers**

Lack of suitable teachers is one of the major reasons for the slow growth of education in tribal areas. Most of the teachers employed for imparting education to the tribal children show little appreciation of tribal way of life and value system. They approach tribal people with a sense of superiority and treat them as 'savage and uncivilized' and hence fail to establish proper rapport with their students. The Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission's report says that a teacher in the tribal areas must have a thorough knowledge of tribal life and culture. He/she must speak tribal language. Only they can be in a position to act as a friend, philosopher and guide to the tribal people. Actually the gap between teachers and taught can be best reduced by appointing teachers from the tribal community itself or a separate cadre of teachers for tribal areas, with some inducements, should be created to serve the educational needs of the tribal society.

### **Lack of facilities**

Following observations are made. One of the major problems in tribal education is that of language. Most of the tribal languages and dialects are in the most rudimentary

stage and there is hardly any written literature. Most of the states impart education to tribal and non-tribal children alike through the medium of the regional language, which makes the education Uninteresting and also hurts tribal sentiments.

#### **Nature of Habitat**

Most of the tribal villages are scattered. This entails long travels to attend schools. Unless the school situated very close to their villages and its site approved by the local people the result shall not be encouraging. School building also plays an important role in the growth of education among the tribal folk. Due to mismanagement, bungling and sometimes financial constraints, the building is seldom suitable to run an educational institution.

#### **Number of Teachers**

Most of the primary schools run in the tribal areas are “Single teacher-managed whose presence in the school is more an exception than a rule”. The enthusiasm of tribal people in the education of their children also depends considerably on the timing of school hours in different seasons. It should not clash with their important socio-economic activities. To many observers of the situation, the problem of education in tribal areas is the problem of wastage. It is not that wastage and stagnation are peculiar to the tribal communities alone but the extent of wastage is much larger in their case. The problem of absenteeism is a serious one in tribal areas. One sees a large number of students on the rolls but the actual attendance is really low, and the number of students passing out at the final examinations is even lower. The real problem is to create such economic conditions as could be conducive to the students developing sufficient interest in their studies.

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