

**EDUCATION STATUS OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO KERALA STATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Tribes have unique traditions, distinct culture and peculiar approach towards their life and religion. Both Central as well as State Governments has been introducing various schemes for the promotion of tribal education. Even after introducing various promotional schemes for the development of tribal education, result was not satisfactory. There are various factors like economic, family background, occupation of the parents, unawareness about various schemes for the promotion of education, problem of effective communication, parents love and affection, administrative factors, attitude of the teachers, psychological, political and locational factors are determined for the promotion of education among female schedule tribes in Kerala state. The Government should maintained proper accountability and auditing system to know the effectiveness of various schemes implement by the administration for the promotion of education among tribes particularly female. If any failure reported about the implementation from administration side, the Government should take serious action against administrative officers and others involved in that. There should be a cordial relationship between tribes, teachers, tribal welfare officers and non tribes are essential to improve the education level among the tribes in India particularly Kerala state.*

**Keywords:** Education, Tribal, Women, Government Schemes, Kerala State

**Introduction**

Andre Beteille rightly points out that “the tribes are relatively isolated as to the castes”.For protecting the interest of Indian tribes various Articles had been framed in the constitution. Article 15(4) and 29 safe guarding education of the tribes, Articles 16(4) guarantying

employment protection to the tribes, the Article 19 give to safeguard the economic interest and for protection from social injustice from non tribes, Article 46 safeguarding the tribes from all forms of exploitation, as per Article 330,332 and 164 reservation of seats for Schedule Tribes in Lok Sabha and Assemblies, Articles 46 gives provisions for promoting the educational and economic interests of the Scheduled Tribes, the Article 75 gives grants from Central Government to the states for welfare of Scheduled Tribes and raising the level of administration of Scheduled Areas. More over the sources of funds available for tribal development programmes are made available from State Plan, Special Central Assistance, Sectoral Programmes of Central Ministries/Departments and Institutional Finance.

Even various protective measures and schemes have been implementing by the government of India for safeguard the interest of tribes in the country; why they are not free from various obstacles? Due to the harmful involvement of non tribes in the forest area tribes are getting affected from the wild animals. There is no copy right on tribe's culture and traditional knowledge so their knowledge have been exploiting by others. Most of the tribes in India are casting their votes with interest of others and their right had been bought for money, alcohol and unrealistic promises. They are suffers from chronic infections and diseases and also are not free from poverty. Tribes are lacking the formal education so there is little chance to express their thought and vision for the development of the nation. Similarly the racist issues were also reporting in various parts of the country.

### **Review of Earlier Studies**

According to Sengupta and Guha (2002) mother's literacy status and educational attainment have significantly positive effects on the child's human capital attainment. But in India the schedule tribe's women are having the lowest literacy rates (Maharatna 2005). Annual report (2001) of MHRD, GOI reported that in India, average national level female literacy rate 34.76% and in the state of Kerala was 58.11%. in India the highest literacy rates among ST women is Mizoram (86.95%) and lowest rate had in the state of Bihar (15.54%). According to Aparna Mitra, (2008) the tribal literacy rate among women is significantly higher in Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Nagaland but state like Rajasthan, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh having tribal literacy rates are much lower.

According to Pradhan (2011) “the non-tribal teachers in many cases treat themselves 'civilized' and tribes as 'uncivilized' and 'savage’” so there is little social interaction between students and teachers, and teachers and parents are possible. Tribal students are often ridiculed, humiliated and reprimanded for speaking in their own language, and are punished for failing to talk in their standard language or continuously lapsing back in the mother tongue (Nambissan 1994). The ego and selfish motive of tribal teachers have been discouraging the tribes to send their children to the educational institutions (Panda 1988). Hasnain (2004) found “most of the primary schools in the tribal areas are single teacher-managed whose presence in the school is more of exception than a rule”. Further, parents are not wish to spend money for their daughters’ schooling because there is a limited labor market opportunities (Sathar and Lloyd 1994). Similarly tribal parents are usually feel that sending their children to school is unproductive so the girl at home will be available for work that will bring additional income for household (Rajyalakshmi 2010). Even today in most parts of the country, the tribal women remains steeped in superstitions and ignorance with main presiding over their destiny (Rani, Rajani and Neeraja 2011).

The review of earlier studies have shown that many studies have been conducted on different aspects of Schedule Tribes in India, but an elaborate study specifically on the “educational status of Schedule Tribes” in India particularly in the state of Kerala have not been done by any researcher. Therefore an earnest attempt is made by the researcher in that direction.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To analyse the educational status among Schedule Tribes women in India and particularly in the state of Kerala.
2. To examine various factors determined for the promotion of education among Schedule Tribes in India particularly in the state of Kerala.

### **Methodology of the Study**

The data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary data was collected from official records, research papers and articles published in the leading journals and text books. The Primary data was collected by way of discussion with tribal students in Kerala state. A sample of 120 tribal girl students were selected on stratified random sampling procedure from four district of Wayanad, Idukki, Palakkad and Kasargod ( in Kerala state tribes

are mainly settled in the above mentioned four districts). From each district researcher took 30 samples, out of that 50% are college students and balance are school students. For analysing the data we used statistical technique like average and percentage analysis.

**Education status of Tribes women’s in India**

Education plays a crucial role for the sustainable growth of nation in general and particularly society. The percentage of literacy among female schedule tribes in the year 1961 was 3.16 percent had increased to 54.40 percent by 2011. The respective year’s female literacy among non-tribe was 15.35 percent and 64 percent. The average annual percentage of literacy among female schedule tribes was 20.57 percent and non-tribes had 37.34 percent. So there is a difference in percentage of literacy among schedule tribes and other social groups in India. Similarly there is a difference in percentage of literacy on gender wise among schedule tribes and other social groups in India. Table 1 shows the details about the percentage of literacy among schedule tribes and other social group in India.

**Table 1: Percentage of Literacy among ST and other social groups in India**

Years	Schedule Tribes		Other Social Groups	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1961	13.83	3.16	40.40	15.35
1971	17.63	4.85	45.96	21.97
1981	24.52	8.04	56.38	29.76
1991	40.65	18.19	64.13	39.29
2001	59.17	34.76	75.26	53.67
2011	71.70	54.40	81.10	64.00
Average		20.57		37.34

Source: Registrar General of India

More number of illiteracy among Indian schedule tribes are female residing in rural area and male residing in urban area were found lowest proportion of illiteracy. Majority of the Indian tribes residing in rural areas are not getting educated after their primary level of education. Table 2 shows that level of general education among schedule tribes in India on gender wise as well as on location.

**Table2: Level of general education among Schedule Tribe in India**

Illiteracy	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Diploma	Graduate & Above

Rural							
Male	35.8	26.4	18.3	11.1	5.7	.6	2.2
Female	58.3	21.7	10.3	5.7	2.7	.3	.9
Urban							
Male	12.7	17.6	19.3	18.2	14.3	2.6	15.3
Female	31.3	16.7	15.3	14.7	11.1	1	9.8

Sources: National Statistical Survey 2009-10

Indian girls belonging to schedule tribe's category are getting more drops out from lowest stage itself when comparing to other social group. The highest drops out of schedule tribes girls in II standard with rate of 14 percent and other social groups in XI standard with rate of 15.7percent. The lowest drops out rate were found in schedule tribe's girls with rate of 1.7 percent but other social groups 2.8 percent in XII standard. Similarly average drops out rate of tribal girls were higher than other social groups. The detailed data had been tabulated and presented in table no 3.

**Table 3: Percentage of Indian Girl's students who discontinued studies at different levels**

Std.	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	Average
ST	-	14	6.6	6.1	5.8	11.6	6.5	8.5	11	5	10.9	1.7	7.79
Others	-	7.8	3.1	4.5	5.6	7.5	5	4	10.8	5.3	15.7	2.8	6.55

Source: Statistics of School Education 2010-11, MHRD GOI

#### **Education status of Tribes women's in Kerala**

In Kerala States overall literacy rate among the Tribes had 57.2 percent as per 1991 Census same had increased to 64.4 percent as per 2001 Census. By 2011 the literacy rate had further increased to 71.1 percent, this show that credential improvement in literacy rate among tribal female in Kerala during the recent periods. The literacy rate of male tribes in Kerala state is giving better position than female literacy rate. The detailed data had been tabulated and presented in table no 4.

**Table 4:Kerala States overall literacy rate among the Tribes**

Years	Schedule Tribes	
	Male	Female
1991	63.4	51
2001	73.8	58.1
2011	75.8	71.1
Average	71.00	60.07

Source: GOI Census Reports

As per Census 1991 state that among female tribes in Kerala MalaiArayan has highest percentage of literacy (82.34%) and Kurubas tribes have the lowest literacy rate (15.26%). Kammara, Malayaran, Kondareddis, Ulladan, Malaivedan, Kanikkar, Kochuvelan, Kurichan, Kuruman, Urally and Marati, are the other Tribes having good female literacy rate. The census report 2001 shows that first position is maintained by the MalaiArayan with 94.5 percent followed by Kanikaran, Kurichiyan and Kurumans. Kurumba, Muthuvan, Paniyan and Irular have shown lower female literacy among tribes in Kerala.

### **Problems associated with the promotion of Education of Tribal Women's in Kerala**

Researcher intended to analysis various factors which affect the promotion of education facilities of the tribal women's in Kerala and the same has explained below.

#### **Economic factor**

For promoting the education among tribe's Government of India as well as respective state governments providing various types scholarship, mid-day meals, coaching schemes, supply of text books, stationery and other equipment's. Pre-examination training centres are established in some places to help them to appear for competitive examinations. Even the governments offering various schemes for the promotion of education among tribes but a large section of tribes are not utilizing the schemes. The main reason for that is due to poverty and moreover the financial assistance are not providing in a right time for pursuing education to the tribes. So parents are sending their daughters for works.

Schedule Tribe girls in Kerala strongly believe that economic factor is important element for their underperformance in education. There is a difference opinion among students on basis of their level of education and also on the basis of location. In the district of Wayanad 80% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level mentioned that economic factor is the important elements to determine the level of education and 76% of school student had same opinion. Idukki district 78% of Schedule Tribe girls pursuing college education and 71% of school level Schedule Tribe girls point out that their education level was unsatisfactory due to their family economic situation. Similarly in the district of Palakkad 82% of Schedule Tribe girls in college level and 73% of school going girls stated that their quality of education is mainly based on their family economic background. In the district of Kasarkod 76% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level mentioned that economic factor is the prime motive for the success of their

education and 70% of school students had same opinion. An average 79 % of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level had mentioned economic factor is important element for the success of education and 72.5% school going Schedule Tribe had same opinion.

### **Family background**

The family background is the another factor which determine education of girl child in the tribal family, if father have the habit to consume alcoholics products they are interest to send their daughters to work for meeting the house hold expenditure. The earlier year's marriage, lack of proper guidance and negative attitude of the society tribal girls are not pursuing their higher studies. Caste and religion are another important social factor which determined level of education among female tribes in Kerala state.

In the district of Wayanad 92% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level mentioned that family background is playing vital role to determine the level of education and 84% of school student had same opinion. Idukki district 93% of Schedule Tribe girls pursuing college education and 87% of school level Schedule Tribe girls opinioned that their education level was unsatisfactory due to their family. Similarly in the district of Palakkad 91% of Schedule Tribe girls in college level and 89% of school going girls stated that their quality of education is mainly based on their family background. In the district of Kasarkod 92% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level mentioned that family background is the prime motive for the success of their education and 83% of school students had same opinion. An average 92 percent of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level had mentioned family background is important element for the success of education among them and 85.75% school going Schedule Tribe had same opinion.

### **Occupation of the Parents**

From the analysis we could understand that in the district of Wayanad 69% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level mentioned that occupation of the parents is important to determine the level of education and 62% of school student had same opinion. Idukki district 73% of Schedule Tribe girls pursuing college education and 67% of school level Schedule Tribe girls opinioned that their education level was unsatisfactory due to their parents working for daily wages. Similarly in the district of Palakkad 71% of Schedule Tribe girls in college level and 64% of school going girls stated that their quality of education is not satisfactory mainly due



to employment status of their parents. In the district of Kasarkod 68% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level opinion that occupation of the parents is the prime motive for the success of their education and 63% of school students had same opinion. An average 70.25 percent of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level had mentioned family background is important element for the success of education among them and 64 percent School going Schedule Tribe had same opinion.

### **Unawareness about various Schemes for promoting education**

From the analysis we could understand that in the district of Wayanad 86% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level mentioned that there are little aware about various schemes implemented by the governments for the promotion education among Tribes and 92% of school student had same opinion. Idukki district 83% of Schedule Tribe girls pursuing college education and 90% of school level Schedule Tribe girls opinioned that their awareness about various promotion schemes for education is limited. Similarly in the district of Palakkad 87% of Schedule Tribe girls in college level and 94% of school going girls stated that their knowledge about various schemes for the promoting education is limited. In the district of Kasarkod 88% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level opinion that awareness about various education schemes available for promoting their education and 93% of school students had same opinion. An average 86 percent of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level had mentioned that they having limited knowledge about various schemes for promoting tribal education and 92.25 percent School going Schedule Tribe had same opinion.

### **Problem of effective Communication**

Tribes speak different languages and hence the problem of communication comes in the way of tribal education. The non-tribal students used to tease the tribal students regards their languages, and their life style that is intolerable to tribal students especially girls.

We understand that in the district of Wayanad 79% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level agreed that the problem of communication is another important factor which determined the level of education among tribes and 63% of school student had same opinion. Idukki district 82% of Schedule Tribe girls pursuing college education and 67% of school level Schedule Tribe girls opinioned that their education level was unsatisfactory due to their ineffective communication. Similarly in the district of Palakkad 84% of Schedule Tribe girls in college level



and 68% of school going girls stated that the problem of communication had negative affected their level of education. In the district of Kasarkod 83% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level opinion that effectiveness of communication is the prime element for the success of their education and 66% of school students had same opinion. An average 82 percent of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level had mentioned effective communication is playing vital role for the success of education among them and 66 percent School going Schedule Tribe had same opinion.

### **Parents love and affection**

Most of the Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level mentioned that their parents are afraid for sending their girl children faraway place for pursuing higher degree. The percentage of respondent differing from one district to another in Wayanad 89%, Idukki 63%, Palakkad 74% and Kasarkod 87%. So the average the 78.25 percent of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level had mentioned their parent afraid to send their girl children for higher studies.

### **Administrative factors**

Higher officials working in the tribal welfare departments are non tribes, so they are taking little efforts for the welfare of the tribes especially in the field of education. The fund misappropriation is another curse to not resolve various problems affecting tribal girl's education in our society. Since independence if the administration had been utilize the funds properly for promoting tribal education then why there is an unfilled education gaps in tribes and non tribes?

In the district of Wayanad 79% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level mentioned that efficiency of the administration is important factor to determine the level of education and 65% of school student had same opinion. Idukki district 84% of Schedule Tribe girls pursuing college education and 76% of school level Schedule Tribe girls opinioned that their education level was unsatisfactory due to inefficiency in administration for the development of tribes. Similarly in the district of Palakkad 81% of Schedule Tribe girls in college level and 74% of school going girls stated that their quality of education is not satisfactory due to the inefficiency in administration for the development of tribes. In the district of Kasarkod 78% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level opinion that good administration is the prime motive for the success of their education and 69% of school students had same opinion. An average 80.5 percent of Schedule

Tribe girls studying in college level had mentioned efficient administration is important element for the success of education among them and 71 percent School going Schedule Tribe had same opinion.

### **Attitude of the Teachers**

There is a lack of communication between teachers and students, so the teachers do not give proper guidance for solving their student's problem. Similarly instead of motivating tribal students teachers are insulting them in front of others that are unbearable to them especially girls and they are not satisfied with internal assessment made by the teachers. More over suspicion over the sincerity of the non-tribal teachers also discourage parents to send their girl children to school. These are the main reason for heavily drop out of the tribal girls from the schools in rural area of the state.

From the analysis we could understand that in the district of Wayanad 62% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level mentioned that cordial relationship between teachers and students is important to determine the level of education and 53% of school student had same opinion. Idukki district 64% of Schedule Tribe girls pursuing college education and 55% of school level Schedule Tribe girls opinioned that their education level was unsatisfactory due to lack of cordial relationship between tribal students and teachers. Similarly in the district of Palakkad 61% of Schedule Tribe girls in college level and 54% of school going girls stated that their quality of education may improve if the teachers having good relationship with them . In the district of Kasarkod 58% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level opinion that cordial relationship between teachers and students is important to determine the level of education and 52% of school students had same opinion. An average 61.25 percent of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level had mentioned relationship between teachers and students are important element for the success of education among them and 53.5 percent School going Schedule Tribe had same opinion.

### **.Psychological factors**

There is a lack of encouragement and motivation by the family members, friends and teachers for being education to tribal girls. In higher studies tribes themselves feel they don't have the capacity to attain degree. More over teacher used to say you are belong to Schedule Tribe so need not study more for obtaining a job.

From the analysis we could understand that in the district of Wayanad 70% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level mentioned that various psychological factors negatively affected the level of education and 63% of school student had same opinion. Idukki district 71% of Schedule Tribe girls pursuing college education and 66% of school level Schedule Tribe girls opinioned that their education status had affected various psychological factors. Similarly in the district of Palakkad 70% of Schedule Tribe girls in college level and 63% of school going girls stated that their quality of education is not satisfactory mainly due to the negative psychological factors. In the district of Kasarkod 69% of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level opinion that psychological factors is the prime motive for the success of their education and 64% of school students had same opinion. An average 70.25 percent of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level had mentioned psychological factors is important element for the success of education among them and 64 percent School going Schedule Tribe had same opinion.

#### **Political factors**

In college, tribal students actively involving the student's politics so they are missing the regular classes and their examination result are getting failure. Politicians' utilizing tribal children for pasting the poster and for participating strikes. Even they are actively involving various political activities; they are not getting chances for contesting in election. After their college days even politicians are also least bothered about tribal student's problems so they are exploited by the local politicians and their friends.

Tribal girls studying in college level stated that campus politics has been negatively influence the level of education but the percentage of response differing from one district to another i.e., 82%, 84%, 87% and 79% respectively in the Wayanad , Idukki , Palakkad and Kasarkod and an average 83 percent.

#### **Locational Factors**

Author already point out that Kottayam district in Kerala state is a leading district to provide better education to female tribes. Similarly women tribes from urban are more educated than rural tribes. So the location is the important factor which influences education level of female tribes in the state of Kerala. Most of the Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level mentioned that where they are residing is one of the important factors which influence level of education. There is a difference in respondents opinion on district wise i.e., 85%, 82%, 74% and 83%

respective in the district of Wayanad, Idukki, Palakkad and Kasarkod. An average 78.25 percent of Schedule Tribe girls studying in college level had mentioned Location is another important factor for higher studies.

### **Conclusion**

Tribes have unique traditions, distinct culture and peculiar approach towards their life and religion. Both Central as well as State Governments has been introducing various schemes for the promotion of tribal education. Even after introducing various promotional schemes for the development of tribal education, result was not satisfactory. Author understood that timely payment of scholarship, economic conditions of the family, lack of proper guidance, attitude of the society, occupation of the parents, unawareness about various schemes for promoting education, problem of effective communication, more affection and love parents are not ready to send their children faraway place for higher studies, lack of standard hostel facilities, poor maintainance of class rooms, misappropriation and incomplete use of funds, attitude of the teachers, psychological factors, campus politics and location are the various factors determined the promotion of education among female schedule tribes in Kerala state. The Government should maintained proper accountability and auditing system to know the effectiveness of various schemes implement by the administration for the promotion of education among tribes particularly female. If any failure reported about the implementation from administration side, the Government should take serious action against administrative officers and others involved in that. Tribal development authorities and agencies should take responsible to create awareness programmes about the importance of education to the tribal parents and their children's. Government should be aware about to conduct training programmes to non-tribe teachers for understanding the language of tribes and also to teach them worth of their profession. There should be a cordial relationship between tribes, teachers, tribal welfare officers and non tribes are essential to improve the education level among the tribes in India particularly Kerala state.

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