

**Educational Status of Tribal Women among Toda, Kota and Irula Tribal Communities of the Nilgiri District, Tamil Nadu, India**

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**Abstract**

*Education helps for the development of tribal women by developing self-confidence and courage to overcome the problems which they face in their daily life. The present paper aims to analyse the levels of tribal female education particularly of three major tribal communities namely Toda, Kota and Irula (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group of India), living in the Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu. The study was based on the primary data and secondary data primary data that were collected with the help of well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule, administered to 150 respondents in the Nilgiris. Statuses of education of the tribal women have been investigated. To bring to a close, an education of women modifies the pattern of living and their entire family system.*

**Keywords:** *empowerment, PVTGS, Women education*

**Introduction**

***“There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of the women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing.”***

***-Swamy Vivekananda***

The Nilgiris is situated in Tamil Nadu in Southern India. According to the 2011 census the total population of the Nilgiri District was 735,394 lakhs. Out of which the total primitive tribal group population is 20,373. Todas, Kotas, Kurumbas, Irulas, Paniyas, Mullukurumbas and Kattunaickas are the main tribal communities found in the District. In this context, the paper has taken levels of tribal female education as a parameter to understand the status of tribal women of three major tribal communities namely Toda, Kota and Irula (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group of India) of , The Nilgiri district.

**Dashora, R. and Sharma, A. (2003)** did their study on the role of tribal women in education in three main districts from TSP area namely Udaipur, Pungarpur and Banswara of Rajasthan. They are of the view that as education helps in the attainment of overall growth, therefore, the tribal women should be educated and to speed up the literacy rate, the education for tribal women and girls needs special attention by the government. The scope of education among tribal women remained very low. Development of education among tribals and mainly among tribal women is the least among the all sections of population.

**Rao, K.R.M. and Vaidehi, S.(2004)** claimed that the enrolment of scheduled tribe is only 0.94 percent of the general enrolment during the year 2000-01, which is evident that in spite of constitutional safeguards and welfare measures, they are not able to be brought to mainstream to get education for their children. They also point out that although the government is interested in establishing many primary schools but it is not interested in establishing high schools and higher secondary schools. This demands further investigation to examine the underlying factors viz. whether the tribal parents are not interested in continuing the education to their children beyond primary education or whether the government is not interested in establishing more high schools and higher secondary schools due to financial constraints.

**Vasudevachary, A.K. (2006)** had conducted a study on tribal development in Andhra Pradesh which revealed that for educational development in the tribal areas, government has imple-

mented several educational programmes in the plan period. Of all the educational institutions, majority institutions were located in the scheduled areas only. The enrolment of schools is remarkable and due to certain reasons dropouts are also there but girl dropouts are more than that of the boys.

**Pradhan, S. K. (2010)** says that education is the most effective instrument for ensuring equality of opportunity but the tribal people are lagging far behind non-tribals due to one or more reasons. The problem associated with education of the tribal children in India is manifold, complex and inter-related. Factors like poverty, apathy of the parents and children, superstition and prejudice, lack of suitable teachers, alien language, inadequate facilities in the educational institutions and wastage and stagnation causes major hindrance in the process of education in the tribal schools, school located in tribal areas and spread of tribal education.

### **Objectives:**

The main objectives of this paper are –

- To find out the attitude towards education of tribal Women;
- To find out the gender disparity in education among the tribal population ;
- To analyze the inter tribe variation in education ;
- To identify the determinants of demand for education among the tribals ;
- To find out the problems of tribal education and
- To suggest suitable measures to improve the educational status of the tribal women

### **Methodology**

#### **Selection of Area**

The current study is related to Nilgiris district due to the fact that Nilgiris district occupies 8<sup>th</sup> rank in scheduled tribe population of Tamil Nadu constituting about 4.36 percent of tribal population of Tamil Nadu.

#### **Selection of Sample**

The study adopted multistage stratified random sampling. In the first stage the taluks of the study were selected Udhagamandalam, Coonoor, Kotagiri. In the second stage, the revenue villages for the study were selected. For the study purpose, the revenue villages having more number of tribal households were selected –Nanjanadu, Sholur, Burliar, Hulical, Kotagiri, Denadu, in the third stage the households of the study were selected. Firstly base line survey was conducted in all the households to identify the households having the population in the age group of 6 to 24. After identification, for final data collection, the households for the study were selected based on the criteria of accessibility and availability of transport facilities. From each taluk 50 households were selected and hence the total of size of sample is 150. The details of sample selection are given in Table I. The required information for the study was collected by administering an interview schedule to head of the household. The study is both descriptive and analytical in nature. The study based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data collected through interview scheduled from 150 respondents. Secondary data collected through various books, journals and websites.

**Table 1.1 Number of Sample Respondents Surveyed in The Nilgiri District**

S.No	Taluk	Revenue Village	Tribe	No.of. Households
1	Udhagamandalam	Nanjanadu, Sholur	Toda	50
2	Coonoor	Burliar, Hulical	Irula	50
3	Kotagiri	Kotagiri, Denadu	Kota	50
Total				150

**Findings of the study**

**Socio-economic profile of the selected tribal households**

The total tribal population in the selected households more than fifty percent represents the school/college going population in the age group of 6-24. In all the selected blocks, half of the existing population represents, school/college going age group of 6-24. For all categories of tribes the number of females exceeds that of males. The head of the family happened to be illiterate in some of the selected households. The number of illiterate head was higher among the Irulas. The major occupation for the selected tribal groups was found to be agriculture. Majority of the respondents have property worth of Rs 20000- Rs 40000 and amount of savings was found to be meagre for all tribal groups. The incidence of the borrowing was lesser among Todas as compared to other groups. There exists difference in percentage of expenditure allotted for education while Todas allotted 70 percent; the other groups allotted only 52 to 60 percent for education.

**Attitude towards education**

The study tried to find out the attitude of the head of the family towards tribal education among women. Of the total respondents 70 percent were having positive attitude towards education and 30 percent were having negative attitude towards education. In their view, the benefits of education were getting a job, gaining knowledge, supplementing family income and improve the standard of living. Enrolment there are exists difference in enrolment of tribal students in relation to education of head of household, family size, family income and land-ownership. There was difference in number of students enrolled at different stages of education. Primary, secondary, higher secondary level and college. The enrolment rate was higher among Todas (93 percent). For overall tribal population, the enrolment at the primary level (93percent) was found to be higher as compared to secondary and higher secondary level. The male enrolment was higher among all the tribal groups. The basic reasons for enrolment were employment and better earnings. The major reasons for non enrolment were poverty, inadequate facilities in school and poor health.

**Dropout**

There exists difference in dropout of tribal student in relation to education of head of household, family size, family income of landownership. There were differences in number of students dropping out at different stages of education. For overall tribal population, the dropout rate was higher at college level (15percent) and higher secondary level (13percent). The dropouts were higher among Kotas as compared to other 3 groups. The major reasons for dropout were non availability of school in the nearby area, long distance, inadequate facilities in school, lack of awareness, tough syllabus and difficult language and script. Disparity in education.

### **The gender disparity**

The gender inequality was found to be lower at primary level and more at secondary and college level among all the groups. The inter tribe Disparity in enrolment was found to be higher among Todas Vs Kotas and Lower among Todas Vs Irulas. The inter tribe disparity in dropout was found to be higher among Irulas Vs Kotas

### **Cost of education**

The educational expenses incurred by the family comprise of expenses on notebooks, uniform, exam fees, transport etc .On an average the tribal households spend Rs 2000-2500 on notebooks, Rs 800 on exam fees and Rs 300 for transport. Of total expenditure, 54 percent was spent for notebooks; 28percent was spent for exam fees and 18 percent on transport.

### **Problem of tribal women education**

Problems of Tribal education The study noted the basic problems of tribal women education as non -availability of school, long distance, inadequate facilities, tough syllabus, inconvenient timings, unfamiliar language, lack of teachers, difficult language and sick parents. The application of ranking technique indicated that long distance was the major problem in tribal Education.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the followings measures were recommended to improve the educational status of tribes in Nilgiris district.

- Establishment of secondary and higher secondary schools within easy accessibility;
- Providing regular transport facilities;
- Appointment of adequate number of teachers in the school;
- Motivating all the parents to send the children to school and not to work
- Creating awareness to the tribal families about the education facilities provided by The Government

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