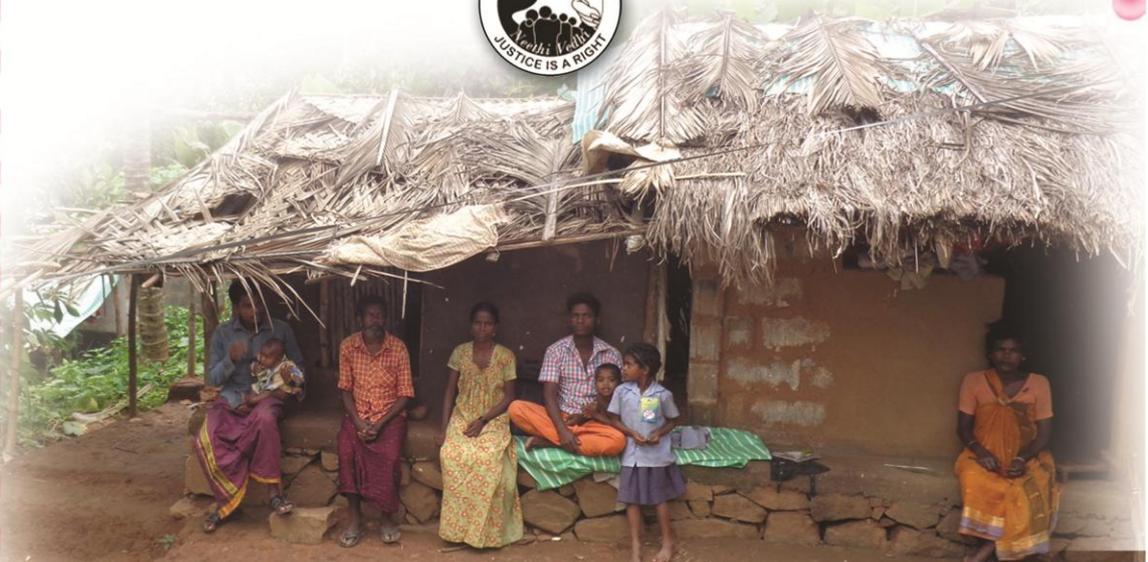




Drop Out of Adivasi Children



Neethi Vedhi



*Drop Out of Adivasi Children from Schools
in Wayanad District*

- Action Research



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It is our hope that this research study will be helpful to all those who are responsible to take steps for the bright future of Adivasi Children.

Adv. Fr. Stephen Mathew
Director

Chapter – 1

Introduction

Neethi Vedhi is a Human Rights Organization started in 2003 at Kalpetta in Wayanad District to provide legal support to Adivasis, Women and Children for defending their rights. It is the realization that lack of proper education is the root cause for the exploitation and atrocities experienced by Adivasis, that prompted us to conduct this research.

Education of Adivasi children is to be given utmost importance precisely because transformation of Adivasi life is possible only through education. It is clear that only a small percentage of Adivasi children who enter into school, complete formal school education. Quite a many of them discontinue their studies even from Primary and High school levels. A study conducted by UNICEF reveals that the drop out rate of Adivasi students in Wayanad District has increased during 2008-2013.¹ ‘Gothrasarathi’ project, which provides transportation facility for children from distant and interior places to go to the school, has not been very successful.

‘Drop Out’ of Adivasi Students is not perhaps the ideal term to be used to denote the discontinuation of children from schools. But this term has been popularly used by the common people and officials; hence it is being used throughout this study.

1.1 Topic

“Drop Out of Adivasi Children from Schools in Wayanad District” – An Action Research

1.2 Need of the Study

It is noted that there is widespread drop out among Adivasi Children of Wayanad District. The media has often highlighted it. When the field staff of Neethi Vedhi visited hamlets on school days to provide legal support to survivors of exploitation and atrocities, they often found students in the hamlets remaining

¹ The New Indian Express, Thursday, 15 October 2015

idle without going to schools. They could also understand that there are numerous issues and problems in the schools as well as hamlets leading to drop out of Adivasi children. It is this experience of field staff that prompted us to conduct this Action Research and to find out the intensity of drop out so as to suggest ways and means to the concerned officials to address the issue.

1.3 Goals of the Study

1.3.1 General Goals

1. All stakeholders become aware of the real situations and reasons for drop out of Adivasi Children and possible steps to counter this issue.
2. Provisions of Right to Education Act are properly implemented in the Adivasi areas.

1.3.2 Specific Goals

1. Understanding the extent of drop out among Adivasi children in Wayanad District.
2. Finding out situations and reasons leading to drop out among most backward Adivasi communities in Wayanad namely Paniya, Adiya and Kattunaikka.
3. Collection of opinions and suggestions from children and their parents to address this issue.
4. Presentation of recommendations to the District Administration and related Government Departments to address drop out of Adivasi Children.

1.4 Hypothesis

Provisions of Right to Education Act are not properly implemented among Adivasi children of Wayanad District.

1.5 Review of Literature

Right to Education Act guarantees Universal Free Education to all children within the age group of 6-14 years. When we analyze various studies regarding drop out of Adivasi children, it is crystal clear that number of drop outs in India is very high (Refer Chapter 3).

Chapter – 2

Preliminary Study

Child Welfare Committee of Wayanad District requested Neethi Vedhi to conduct a study regarding situations and reasons for discontinuation of Adivasi students from Schools. Accordingly, Neethi Vedhi staff visited 13 schools from three taluks of the district during the month of October and November 2014. They interacted with Adivasi students studying in 7th, 8th and 9th standards of these schools. It was convincing that Adivasi children of all these schools were facing a number of issues and a large number of students were opting to discontinue their studies.

2.1 Findings

- 1) The drop out among Adivasi children in Wayanad District is a very serious issue.
- 2) The details received from the school authorities regarding drop out did not match with the number of students actually discontinued from those schools. It was found that the names of the students were not removed from the attendance registers even if they were absent for long period.
- 3) Drop out rate is higher among boys.
- 4) Gothrasarathi project to provide transportation facility is not properly implemented.
- 5) School authorities are not able to intervene effectively regarding students who have discontinued from the schools.
- 6) Majority of Adivasi parents are not aware of the importance of education for their growth and development.
- 7) It was understood that breakfast is not being prepared in most of the Adivasi houses and the hungry students find hard to attend classes seriously. But they are not very comfortable to receive breakfast from schools exclusively given for Adivasi students as they are scared about humiliation from other students.
- 8) It is found that the drop out rate is more among children from Paniya, Adiya and Kattunaikka communities which are the most backward Adivasi groups in Wayanad.
- 9) The Government schemes, benefits and reservation facilities have not been sufficient to ensure education of the above mentioned most backward Adivasis communities.
- 10) It is also found that discrimination based on caste, religion and colour of the skin exists in many schools.

- 11) It is also clear that in schools, where the teachers give special support and encouragement to Adivasi students, the drop out rate is comparatively low.
- 12) Adivasis life is very much linked with their cultural fabric and Adivasi children find difficulty to cope up with the present curriculum.
- 13) It is noted that opportunities to participate in Arts and sports competitions and other public events are denied to talented Adivasi students.
- 14) Eventhough some Adivasi students succeed in school level sports events, they are unable to participate in district, state and national events due to financial strain and lack of proper training.
- 15) Children, who are sent to schools and hostels which are far away from their hamlets, find it difficult to continue their studies. But those who remain in the same school with their friends and supportive teachers are able to continue their studies without fail.

2.2 Situations leading to drop out

- 1) The illiterate parents are not able to motivate and encourage students by creating conducive atmosphere at homes or providing study materials to their children.
- 2) Quarrel among parents after consuming alcohol and other substances hinder the children from studying at home especially in completing their home works and projects, etc. Students, who are afraid of being humiliated in schools, avoid going to school regularly.
- 3) Lack of encouragement from parents in providing meals at proper time, washing clothes, etc.
- 4) Students staying back with the relatives during class days after vacasion or some celebrations avoid going to school later.
- 5) Lack of interest from parents in attending PTA meetings in schools and getting feedback from teachers regarding studies and attendance of children.
- 6) Distance from the schools and lack of proper transport facilities.
- 7) Utter poverty, lack of proper housing and absence of land.
- 8) The unfriendly attitude of certain teachers from other districts towards Adivasi children. Neglect of teachers to Adivasi children who are irregular and not studious.
- 9) The educational benefit schemes from the Government are not often used for study materials, uniform and other needs of students.
- 10) Discrimination and humiliation from students of mainstream society.
- 11) Adivasi students who are talented in extra-curricular activities often do not get encouragement and training. It disappoints them and gradually they avoid going to school.

- 12) A number of Adivasi students avoid going to school as they are unable to pay various fees and collections in schools.
- 13) Language issue of Adivasi students.
- 14) Inferiority complex and prejudice of Adivasi students.
- 15) Seasonal works.
- 16) Certain students who are sent from homes by parents do not reach schools under the influence of their friends.
- 17) Adivasi girls who are victims of sexual atrocities find it hard to continue their studies.
- 18) Use of substance by students and eventually leaving their studies.
- 19) Hostel students when affected by sickness are sent to their homes. A good number of them do not return even after recovery.

2.3 Reasons for Drop Out

- 1) Lack of interest and awareness regarding importance of education among Adivasi children.
- 2) Adivasi students do not get basic knowledge in alpha-numeric from primary classes. It adversely affects them in their higher classes and eventually they opt to discontinue their studies.
- 3) Most of the Adivasi students have no one to support them with proper motivation and guidance.
- 4) Humiliation of being punished by teachers before other students.
- 5) Due to lack of structured life style of Adivasis, the children find it hard to adjust with the rules and regulations of the schools.
- 6) Child marriage.
- 7) Due to financial difficulties at homes, some of the students are forced to go for work.
- 8) Health issues of some Adivasi students prevent them from regularly attending schools.
- 9) Elder children especially girls are forced to discontinue their studies to look after their younger ones.
- 10) Certain rituals related to Adivasi girls, which last for many days, force them to discontinue their studies.

2.4 Suggestions by students to counter drop out

- 1) Awareness sessions for parents and children to build up better atmosphere at home.
- 2) Tuition facilities for Adivasi students.

- 3) Introduce Learning Centres in hamlets and create mechanism for its monitoring.
- 4) Provide study materials and uniforms at the beginning of the academic year.
- 5) Adivasi cultural inclusion in the school curriculum.
- 6) Introduce special education support programmes for Adivasi students.
- 7) Provide cycles to Adivasi students to address transportation issue.
- 8) Implement Gothrasarathi project efficiently.
- 9) Organize exposure visits for Adivasi students.
- 10) Ensure counseling service for Adivasi students.
- 11) Exempt Adivasi students from all forms of fees, collections, etc. in schools like farewell, teachers' day, etc.
- 12) Ensure opportunities for Adivasi students in extra-curricular activities.

2.5 Suggestions by teachers to counter drop out

- 1) Awareness sessions for Adivasi parents to improve their socio-economic and family situations.
- 2) Provision of breakfast to Adivasi Children at hamlets.
- 3) Provision of nutritious food to Adivasi boys through ICDS programme.
- 4) Organize childrens club for Adivasi children and crushes for infants in hamlets.
- 5) Income generating programme for Adivasi women at hamlets.
- 6) Tuition facility in hamlets and in tribal hostels.
- 7) Time-bound allocation of Gothrasarathi fund.
- 8) Initiate legal steps against parents who do not take interest to send their children to schools.
- 9) Provide lump-sum grant, uniform and study materials at the beginning of the academic year.
- 10) Limit the reservation facilities and other benefits to the most marginalized communities such as Paniya, Adiya and Kattunaikka.
- 11) Appoint facilitator or Social Worker in schools to encourage and guide Adivasi students.
- 12) As the present tribal promoters are not able to influence Adivasis regarding education, appoint qualified persons from the hamlet as Social Workers.
- 13) Establish more MRS schools and tribal hostels adjoining to schools where a considerable number of Adivasis study.
- 14) Entrust teachers who are cordial to Adivasi students to visit hamlets and enquire about students.
- 15) Give importance to Adivasi language.
- 16) Vocational training including agriculture to Adivasi students.

- 17) Promote students to higher classes only on the basis of merit and attendance.
- 18) Establish district level career guidance cell.
- 19) Start more Arts and Sports schools for Adivasi children.
- 20) Organize Adivasi cultural fest.
- 21) Convergence of various Government departments and agencies providing beneficial schemes for Adivasi Children.



Chapter – 3

Review of Literature

3.1 Adivasis

Adivasi is an umbrella term for a heterogeneous set of ethnic and tribal groups considered as the aboriginal population of India.²

The word *adivasi* (*ādivāsī*, आदिवासी) is a compound of two elements that ultimately derived from Sanskrit. *Adi* means “first” or “original”; *vasi* means “dweller”. *Adivasi*, then, means the “first inhabitants”. As a designation for the indigenous peoples of South Asia the term *adivasi* came into use in the 1920s and was gradually adopted and popularized by Gandhians. In India some caste-Hindus, now prefer to call them *vanvasis*, “forest dwellers”. They are also often called “tribals” and “ST’s”. The term “tribal” was introduced by the British, while in Indian law the majority of *adivasis* belong to the “Scheduled Tribes”, that is, “tribes” to whom Schedules 5 and 6 of the Indian Constitution apply.³ There are around 573 distinct tribal groups in India of which 39 are in the State of Kerala.

The Scheduled Tribe groups who were identified as more isolated from the wider community and who maintain a distinctive cultural identity have been categorised as 'Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups' (PVTGs) (previously known as Primitive Tribal Groups) by the Government at the Centre. So far seventy-five tribal communities have been identified as 'particularly vulnerable tribal groups' in different States of India.^[18] Kattunaikkar, Cholanaikkar, Kurumbar, Kadar and Koraga tribes are the PVTGs in Kerala.

Over 95% of Scheduled Tribes still live in rural areas and economic exploitation remains their most acute problem. Most tribes are concentrated in heavily forested areas that combine inaccessibility with limited political or economic significance. Historically, the economy of most tribes was subsistence agriculture or hunting and gathering.

As per 2011 Census there are 10.43 crores (8.6%) of Adivasis in India and in Kerala 4,84,839 Adivasis which is 1.5 percent of the state population.⁴ In Wayanad district there are 1,51,443 Adivasis which is 18.5 percent of the district population.⁵ Paniya community is the largest Adivasi community in Wayanad District and in the State of Kerala as well. We have included students from Paniya, Adiya and Kattunaikka tribes which are the most backward Adivasi communities in Wayanad. Only very few Adivasis, belong to the above groups,

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adivasi#cite_note-loksabha1995-1

³ Jha and Jhingran 2002

⁴ Demographic Status of Schedule Tribe Population of India.

<http://tribal.nic.in/WriteReadData/userfiles/file/Demographic.pdf>

⁵ District wise Schedule Tribe Population – Census 2011: Table-A-11 (Appendix)

have their own agricultural land. They depend on the manual labour in the field of landlords and rich people for their livelihood. As most of them are daily workers, they are often compelled to work for long hours with low wages. Large numbers of Adivasis in Wayanad do not have proper secure housing. Though there are Government housing schemes available for Adivasis, the contractors and middle men exploit them and grab their funds.

Historically, the Adivasis have been marginalized from the mainstream of Indian society through caste system. Adivasis have been traditionally treated outside the caste structure and are seen entirely impure from within the Brahminic caste order. Adivasi societies, in turn, consider themselves distinct from the majority Hindu population of India as well as from most other organized forms of religion.

3.2 Constitutional Guarantee and Right to Education Act (RTE)

Under the constitution of the Republic of India 1950, Tribal peoples along with so-called “Untouchables” became subject to special protective provisions. The vast majority of tribes were classified as “Scheduled Tribes”. Article 341 authorizes the President of India to specify “castes, races or tribes which shall for the purposes of this constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes”. The first amendment to the Constitution passed in 1951 allowed the state to make special provision for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes of citizens of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The central Government has special Commissions for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes which issue an Annual Report. These reports give accounts of illegal actions against Adivasis and makes recommendations to improve their position. The Constitution of India, Article 366 (25) defines Scheduled Tribes as “such tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes (STs) for the purposes of this Constitution”.⁶ In Article 342, the procedure to be followed for specification of a Scheduled Tribe is prescribed.

The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years. It means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards. ‘Free education’ means that no child, other than a child who has been admitted by his or her parents to a school which is not supported by the appropriate Government, shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education. ‘Compulsory

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adivasi#cite_note-16

education' casts an obligation on the appropriate Government and local authorities to provide and ensure admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children in the age group of 6-14 years.

The RTE Act provides for the Right of children to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school; no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education; non-admitted child to be admitted to an age appropriate class; deployment of teachers by ensuring that the specified pupil teacher ratio is maintained for each school, rather than just as an average for the State or District or Block, thus ensuring that there is no urban-rural imbalance in teacher postings; appointment of appropriately trained teachers, i.e. teachers with the requisite entry and academic qualifications; development of curriculum in consonance with the values enshrined in the Constitution, and which would ensure the all-round development of the child, building on the child's knowledge, potentiality and talent and making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety through a system of child friendly and child centred learning.⁷

The Kerala Right to Free and Compulsory Education Rules 2010, the enabling state government legislation, specifies that the 'walking distance' to school in the case of children from classes 1 to 5 be set at one kilometre and from classes 6 to 8 at three kilometres. Yet, a school is hard to find within these prescribed limits in the hilly terrains of Wayanad. Authorities have offered to provide free transportation to children from such locations, referring to Clause 6 (4) of Part IV of the Rules that calls for the provision of transport and residence facilities for students from areas like small hamlets where no school exists. But what is missed is that facilities including residential schools for tribal children fail to curb the dropout rate precisely because of the 'mainstream' curriculum that is followed in these schools. Nascent minds are forced to adapt to and think in the dominant regional language, in an environment far removed from their culture. The RTE, in this regard, could lead to a narrowly-defined, perfunctory construal of education, in its effort to formalise the state-provision of training in letters.⁸

Elementary education is a priority area in the Tribal Sub-Plans from the fifth Five Year Plan. Education of ST children is considered important, not only because of the Constitutional obligation but also as a crucial input for total development of tribal communities.⁹

⁷ <http://www.mhrd.gov.in/rte>

⁸ <http://www.thealternative.in/society/one-teacher-tribal-schools-alternative-education-closing-rte/>

⁹ Tribal Development Plan, (https://www.google.co.in/?gfe_rd=cr&ei=NNJ_Vd-qJOPI8AeWiL64CQ&gws_rd=ssl#q=Elementary+Education+and+Tribal+Sub+plan)

Another important development in the policy towards education of tribals is the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 which specified ST youths will be encouraged to take up teaching in tribal areas.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan (FYP) had targeted a reduction in dropout rates from 50 percent to 20 percent at the elementary stage. Even though the drop out rates at elementary and secondary stages of education have been declining, the progress has not been satisfactory. The low Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) at the upper primary level and the increasing enrolment gap from elementary to secondary level suggests that although a larger number of children are entering the educational system, a significant proportion of them are not progressing through the system to complete elementary/secondary cycle of education. Though the drop out rate is a matter of concern in the case of all categories of students, drop out rates among disadvantaged groups, especially for girls from these groups, remain higher than the national average. This brings into focus the need to undertake measures to improve retention in schools of children from socially and economically disadvantaged communities.¹⁰

The Twelfth Five Year Plan targets for school education and literacy include: (i) ensuring universal access and, in keeping with the letter and spirit of the RTE Act; providing good-quality free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years; (ii) improving attendance and reduce dropout rates at the elementary level to below 10 percent and lower the percentage of out-of-school children (OoSC) at the elementary level to below 2 percent for all socio-economic and minority groups and in all States/UTs; (iii) increasing enrolments at higher levels of education and raise the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the secondary level to over 90 percent, at the higher secondary level to over 65 percent; (iv) raising the overall literacy rate to over 80 percent and reducing the gender gap in literacy to less than 10 percent; (v) providing at least one year of well-supported/well-resourced pre-school education in primary schools to all children, particularly those in educationally backward blocks (EBBs); and (vi) improving learning outcomes that are measured, monitored and reported independently at all levels of school education with a special focus on ensuring that all children master basic reading and numeracy skills by Class II and skills of critical thinking, expression and problem solving by Class V.

The National Programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which aims to achieve Universal Elementary Education (UEE), has a special focus on education of the tribal children. SSA intervention includes to set up schools, education

¹⁰ Education for All towards quality with equity India by National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, <http://dise.in/Downloads/education-foe-all-in-india-2014-review.pdf>

guarantee centres and alternative schools in tribal habitations for non-enrolled and drop out children; prepare textbooks in mother tongue for children at the beginning of the primary education cycle; suitably adapt the curriculum and make available locally relevant teaching learning materials for tribal students; give special training for non-tribal teachers to work in tribal areas, including knowledge of tribal dialect; deploy community teachers; establish Anganwadis and Balwadis or creches in each school in tribal areas so that the girls are relieved from sibling care responsibilities; ensure sense of ownership of school communities by ST communities by increasing representatives of STs in VECs / PTAs etc.; involve community leaders in school management, etc.¹¹

We can scarcely forget that the rights of tribal communities in India are protected by the Constitution and special legislations. As with the Scheduled Castes, members of Scheduled Tribes are beneficiaries of “positive discrimination” provisions laid down in the constitution, reserving places in education, the civil service and nationalized industries. The problems of Adivasi communities are about access to basic needs. These include, but are not restricted to, elementary education, community healthcare, sustainable livelihood support, the public distribution system, food security, drinking water and sanitation, debt, and infrastructure. For them, equality of opportunity remains largely unfulfilled. In this context, it is important to stress that the values of tribal culture are transmitted in a manner that protects the right of the bearers of knowledge to determine the terms of the transmission without exploitation or commodification. Nor can the Adivasis’ unhindered access to land and forests, including full access to the commons, especially in scheduled areas, be understated. Tribal communities have, over the decades, witnessed the fragmentation of their habitats and homelands and the disruption of their cultures through predatory tourism. All this has left them shattered and impoverished. Entire communities across States have been dispossessed systematically through state action, and have been reduced from owners of resources and well-knit, largely self-sufficient communities to wage earners in agriculture and urban agglomerates with uncertain futures.¹²

Tribals in India are the most backward community educationally. First generation learners have to face social, psychological and cultural barriers to get education. This has been one of the reasons for poor performance of tribal

¹¹ <http://www.thealternative.in/society/one-teacher-tribal-schools-alternative-education-closing-rte/>

¹² “*Aaraanu Bhoomiyude Avakaasikal*”, Madhyamam Weekly, P.P. Sathyan (<http://www.madhyamam.com/weekly/2953>)

students in schools.¹³ Poor literacy rate since independence has resulted in absence of tribals in academia and higher education.

Discrimination against Dalits and Adivasis in Education system is age old and widespread. Structural discrimination against Dalits and Adivasis in schools, colleges and Universities are often so stigmatising that they are forced to dropout from education. Dropout rate amongst Dalits and Adivasis from school remains very high. Despite professed governmental focus on SC's and ST's, the literacy rate of SC's and ST's continue to be lower than that of other castes.

Kerala's educational sector as a whole is marked by gross inequalities especially in the context of globalisation. Privatisation and commercialisation of education is hectically proceeding ahead. In this process, the marginalised sections of the population i.e. the Adivasi and Dalit sections are the worst affected. On the one hand there is a proliferation of high cost unaided schools, which generate students for the demands of the globalised economy, and on the other hand there are a large number of teacher less, roofless and wall less government and aided schools. (Source)

Education is the most important factor for man's socio-economic and cultural advancement in the modern world. The future of the Adivasis will depend much on the level of education. Educated persons can make use of the various facilities and benefits extended by different agencies and the government. (source).

3.3 UN Declaration and National Tribal Policy

The United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) and National Tribal Policy of India have extensively dealt with the education of Adivasi children. UNDRIP Section 14 mentions about the steps to be taken up by the Government and Educational Institutions for the education of Adivasi children. Adivasis have the right to establish and control systems and institutions for education in Adivasi language medium emphasizing their culture (14.1). The Adivasi communities especially the children have the right for all kinds of trainings available in the country without any discrimination (14.2). The State is duty-bound to take measures to ensure education of Adivasis especially children in their own language and culture (14.3).

Similar provisions are included in the National Tribal Policy to improve the standard of education of Adivasi children. It emphasizes the importance of teaching in tribal language medium at least till third standard so that the children would understand properly the lessons taught their by teachers. The policy had

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adivasi#cite_note-ssa.nic.in-130

directed the Governments to implement these provisions during the Eleventh Five Year Plan itself.¹⁴

In spite of all such legal provisions and policies, it is sad to note that the Universal Free and Compulsory Education ensured by RTE is still far away for most of the Adivasi children in India. The life situations of Adivasi children are different and complicated comparing to that of the children from the mainstream communities. They do face a lot of problems and issues in their families, hamlets, schools and society at large.

3.4 Adivasi Language Issue

Adivasis who are scattered in different parts of India, belonging to around 573 communities, have their own dialects distinct from the language of the mainstream communities. There are more than 270 such dialects in India.¹⁵ Though there are no scripts, these dialects have independent identity with definite rules of grammar. They have their own stories, songs, proverbs and dramas.

Adivasi children who are forced to speak a language which is not familiar to them and to read a text book printed in alien language gradually become silent in the class rooms and schools. They are active and talkative only among companions belonging to their communities. They do understand the rhythm of nature and lessons of survival but often fail in their life.

For example, in Attappady, Palakkad district, it has become a tradition to mention 'Hindu' in the column of religion, and 'Malayalam' in the column of mother tongue regarding any Adivasi child at the time of admission to school. When asked about religion or caste, their first response will be 'Adivasi'. If asked again, they might add 'Irula', 'Muduga', 'Kurumba' which are the Adivasi communities of the region. The school authorities always use prefix 'Hindu' before the names of these communities. Similarly, when they are asked about their mother tongue the children used to mention '*Irulanathu naaya*', '*Muduga naaya*', '*Kurumba naaya*' but the authorities mercilessly mention 'Malayalam' as their mother tongue. Very often the school authorities even change the names of these children.¹⁶

There are lot of differences in the language used for conversation among the tribal communities and the language used as the medium of instruction in schools. Adivasi children who are admitted for formal education do not get opportunity to use and develop their own language. An increasing number of researches strongly advocate the use of mother tongue or home language as

¹⁴ '*Nayam*', District Panchayat, Wayanad, Published by Diet Wayanad, Sulthan Bathery.

¹⁵ India Education Report, 2002.

¹⁶ "*Ee Kazhcha Oru Bhashayude Kazhchayanu*", Mathrubhumi Weekly, 7 June 2015, page 50.

medium of instruction in early stages of education. This assumes greater significance in the context of education of tribal children because their mother tongue is often quite distinct from the prominent languages in the State or regional languages. ST children face problems wherever teachers do not speak their dialects at all. From the perspective of language, it is desirable to have a local teacher from the same tribal community.¹⁷

Adivasi children who used to run around feel involved freely in playing different games and catching fish and crabs but find it very hard to cope up with the controlled atmosphere of the class rooms. As most of them have not attended pre-schools they have no basis in alpha-numerics and find it very difficult to study the lessons. Eventually, they find the schools very distant and strange from their habitate.¹⁸

If we are able to fill this serious gap in the use of language, certainly we will be able to reduce the drop out rate and ensure quality education among Adivasi students.

3.5 Issues Related to Teachers

Jansala is a joint venture of India Government and five UN agencies (*UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO & UNFPA*). As per the study by Jansala, regarding Adivasi education and language used, in most of the schools Adivasi children are unable to grasp the text books prepared in the local language of the mainstream society. The presence of non-*adivasi* teachers in the schools, where these children study, is another serious issue. The teachers do not understand the language of the children and vice-versa.¹⁹

It is imperative that schools and class rooms are to be child-friendly for proper education. As the Adivasi children are forced to study in a medium strange to them it is necessary to introduce Adivasi languages in the schools and teachers need to get familiarized with Adivasi languages. The teacher should be able to communicate convincingly with the child, he or she should understand the child well; stories and songs should be in the language of the child. If the teachers and the teaching methodology are attractive to the students, the children will be happy to go to the schools.

The teachers need to have the generosity to give special attention and support to students. They should not have prejudices against Adivasi children; they should avoid any kind of neglect. In some schools in the name of remedial teaching there is a trend to have special division of Adivasi students, blame

¹⁷ Jha & Jhingran, 2002.

¹⁸ 'Nayam', District Panchayath, Wayanad, Published by Diet Wayanad, Sulthan Bathery.

¹⁹ Education of tribal children in india and the issue of medium of instruction: A Janshala experience – Vinoba Goutham Co-ordinator, UN/Govt. Janshala Programme, Delhi, India.

Adivasi students for low standard of education, deny admission to Adivasi students in the pretext of low percentage of result, etc. These inhuman, racial and anti-*adivasi* prejudices are to be completely avoided by the school authorities.²⁰

The teachers also have the duty to convince the parents of the mainstream communities that they should not instigate discriminations on the basis of caste, colour and culture. A study of Scheduled Tribes in Attappady on scope of education and drop outs among tribal students in Kerala reveals that teachers do not take much effort to improve the educational level of the tribal students. Lack of communication, high level of absenteeism in the class, bad result in study, lack of attention in classroom by the tribals are some of the factors that has increased the indifferent attitude of the teachers towards the tribal students.²¹

3.6 Studies on Adivasi Drop Out Issue

A Report on the Status of Primary Education of Adivasi children in Andhra Pradesh & Odisha in the context of the Right to Education Act mentions that there is high drop out from schools among Adivasi students. Out of 1,94,69,006 tribal children admitted throughout India only 17,79,862 have completed high school education and other i.e., 1,76,89,144 have dropped out in between.²²

According to the survey conducted by the Kerala Institute of Local Administration in association with local bodies and the Scheduled Tribe Welfare Department, the average rate of dropout of the tribal children in the state is 36.73 percent. The age group which was under the purview of the survey was 6-25. At primary level, the drop out number was 15,364 (46.02 percent). It was 12,874 (38.56 percent) at secondary level and 1,475 (4.42 percent) at high school level. The drop out level among graduates, during the period which the survey covered, was 492 (1.47 percent). It was 194 (0.58 percent) at postgraduate level and 2,021 (6.05 percent) among those who joined Certificate Diploma courses.²³

The study conducted in Attappady, Palakkad district mentions the following situations which lead Adivasi children to drop out of schools: Extreme level of poverty, deprivation and vulnerability; High levels of exclusion, developmental, social and economic; Extremely low level of empowerment-

²⁰ 'Nayam', District Panchayath, Wayanad, Published by Diet Wayanad, Sulthan Bathery.

²¹ Scope of education and dropout among tribal students in Kerala -A study of Scheduled tribes in Attappady, Dr. Hasseena V. A. (Assistant Professor) and Dr. Ajims P. Mohammed (Principal), M E S Assemblu College, Vemballur.

²² A report on the status of Primary Education of Adivasi children in Andhrapradesh and Orissa in the context of the Right to Education Act 2009 submitted by Dhaatri Resource center for women and children.

²³ <http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/School-Dropout-Rate-Among-Tribals-Remains-High/2014/05/03/article2203265.ece>.

political, social and economic; Low level of access to entitlement; Practically zero participation in development matters with no autonomy in any form of decision-making; Poor human development with low level of literacy and access to health care; Rapid alienation of assets like land; Alarming depletion of social capital especially traditional forms of organization and leadership; Quick deterioration of traditional knowledge system and cultural attainment; 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.; and Dependency-inducing.²⁴

A study conducted among Adivasi students belonging to Paniya tribe of Wayanad district shows that there is widespread drop out from 1st to 12th standards. The reasons for drop out mentioned in this study are the negative attitude of students towards education, unhealthy family atmosphere, alcoholism of parents, poverty, influence of friends who have discontinued from schools, responsibility to look after the family, etc.²⁵

The report of the National and Dalit Adivasi Children’s Parliament organized in Delhi mentions that Adivasi and Dalit communities do not get quality education; the Government beneficial schemes especially uniform, study materials, materials for extra-curricular activities are not sufficiently made available; Adivasi children experience discriminations in schools on the basis of caste, religion and colour; and the language issue has pulled them back in studies.²⁶

In the study conducted in Attappady, all the teachers have stated that the lack of interest of the students is the primary reason for drop out. Other reasons are financial issues (92%), responsibility to look after family (85%), distance to school (80%), health issues (67%), lack of guidance (57%), ignorance of parents (53%), language issue (40%), child marriage (32%), etc.²⁷

In the report on twenty case studies on the school drop out of Adivasi students of Wayanad district, the reasons for drop out are stated as follows: the negative attitude of children due to lack of awareness regarding education; influence of friends who have discontinued from schools; alcoholism of parents;

²⁴ Scope of education and dropout among tribal students in Kerala -A study of Scheduled tribes in Attappady, Dr. Hasseena V. A. (Assistant Professor) and Dr. Ajims P. Mohammed (Principal), M E S Assemblies College, Vemballur.

²⁵ School drop outs among tribal students with special reference to paniya tribe in Wayanad, Manu George

²⁶ National Dalit and Adivasi student’s parliament -9th Dec, 2013 Jantur Mantur, New Delhi Abhay Xaxa, Prachi R Beula, Babita Neg.

²⁷ Scope of education and dropout among tribal students in Kerala -A study of Scheduled tribes in Attappady, Dr. Hasseena V. A. (Assistant Professor) and Dr. Ajims P. Mohammed (Principal), M E S Assemblies College, Vemballur.

lack of proper atmosphere to study at home; financial issues; responsibility to look after family; caste related issues; and health issues due to absence of proper and timely treatment.²⁸

All the above studies reveal that the drop out rate of Adivasi children is very high and that inspite of various schemes and programmes the education of Adivasi children is in jeopardy.

²⁸ A case study on the school drop out scheduled tribal students of wayanad district, Kerala: Jobin Joy and M. Srihari Dept. of Communication and Media Studies, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

Chapter – 4

Research Study

4.1 Preparation of Questionnaire

On 18th May 2015 sampling data collection was done from 20 Adivasi students, studying in 9th and 10th standards, who were participating in Kanal Camp organized by Neethi Vedhi. This camp was organized for the purpose of nourishing the leadership and cultural values of Adivasi children of Wayanad District. The questionnaire for the action research was finalized based on the responses of these students.

4.2 Sampling Method

A descriptive random sampling method was used to conduct this study. The hamlets for the study were identified by the field workers of Neethi Vedhi which were familiar to them and where follow up activities could be possible. The number of students interviewed from different hamlets was not identical.

4.3 Universe of the Study

The study covered 74 hamlets of 18 Panchayats in all the 4 blocks of Wayanad district namely Mananthavady, Bathery, Kalpetta and Panamaram.

4.4 Unit of the Study

The details collected from 1000 Adivasi students and 371 parents are included in the data.

4.5 Data Collection

Orientation regarding the use of questionnaire was given to the field workers of Neethi Vedhi and 18 college students, who had come for exposure visit to understand Adivasi life in Wayanad. The survey was carried out by 6 teams in three weeks in the month of April 2015. They interviewed 1200 students and 371 parents who were present at home. Data from 1000 questionnaires, which were completely filled, were entered into computer with the help of SPSS programme.

4.6 Focus Group Discussions

1. The preliminary findings of the study were presented in the meeting presided over by the Chairperson, Kerala State Child Rights Commission at the District Collectorate, Wayanad on 26th May 2015.
2. The findings of the research study were presented and discussed with Adivasi youth, who were part of the camp organized by Neethi Vedhi at Pavana Pastoral Centre, Mananthavady on 29th August 2015. The youth shared their views and opinions basing on their own experience and that of their companions from their hamlets.
3. The major findings of the research study were presented in the meeting convened by the District Collector as part of the Zero Dropout Programme on 1st September 2015.

4.7 Limitations of the Study

1. The difficulty in reaching interior and distant hamlets coupled with shortage of staff limited the study to 74 hamlets.
2. Due to random sampling and absence of any similarity in the number of students, hamlets or areas, the comparison is limited.
3. Generally Adivasi children have hesitation to respond to queries regarding their school attendance or studies. The number of students who have stated as being regular to school may not reflect the reality; the actual number of regular students might be less.
4. Obviously, a good number of students had gone for work and their informations could not be entered into the data. The number of drop out children could be more than what is mentioned in the research study.
5. Similarly, the data regarding students who had gone to visit their relatives also could not be collected.
6. As an action research more importance was given to facilitate discussions with duty-bearers responsible to take measures to address drop out issue at different levels than the technical perfection of the study.

4.8 Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Analysis of the data was done with the help of various tables and graphs given in this chapter.

Table 1
School Attendance

Details	Frequency	Percent
Discontinued	192	19.2*
Irregular	71	7.1*
Regular	737	73.7
Total	1000	100

The study shows that 73.7% students who were surveyed claim to go to school regularly, 19.2% have discontinued from their school studies and 7.1% go to school now-and-then. The students who are irregular and discontinued constitute 26.3%*. They are considered as “*Drop Out Students*” in this study.

The study done by Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) states 36.73% drop out rate at state level. Considering the Adivasi population in Wayanad district and their backwardness, there is possibility for higher rate of drop outs in the district than the State average. While we boast about the literacy rate and standard of education in Kerala, we also have to admit that the level of education among Adivasis is in a pathetic state.

Table 2
Data Block-wise

Block	Regular	Irregular	Discontinued	Total Students
Mananthavady	312	19	56	387
Kalpetta	218	23	63	304
Bathery	158	21	63	242
Panamaram	49	8	10	67
Total	737	71	192	1000

Table 3
Discontinued Students Block-wise

Block	Total Students	Discontinued
Mananthavady	387	56
Kalpetta	304	63
Bathery	242	63
Panamaram	67	10
Total	1000	192

Table 4
Irregular Students Block-wise

Block	Total Students	Irregular
Mananthavady	387	19
Kalpetta	304	23
Bathery	242	21
Panamaram	67	8
Total	1000	71

Table 5
Drop Outs Block-wise

Block	Drop Outs	Percent
Mananthavady	75	28.5
Kalpetta	86	32.7
Bathery	84	32.0
Panamaram	18	6.8
Total	263	100

The study mentions that proportionately there is more drop outs among students from Bathery and Kalpetta blocks.

Table 6
Data Community-wise

Community	Regular	Irregular	Discontinued	Total
Paniya	484	57	141	682
Kattunaikka	112	3	21	136
Adiya	87	11	24	122
Kuruma	54	0	6	60
Total	737	71	192	1000

Table 7
Drop Outs Community-wise

Community	Total students	Drop Outs	Percent
Paniya	682	198	75.3
Kattunaikka	136	24	9.1
Adiya	122	35	13.3
Kuruma	60	6	2.3
Total	1000	263	100

682 students from Paniya community participated in the survey (68.2%). The drop out rate from Paniya community is 75.3%. It is clear that comparing to other Adivasi communities there is higher drop out students from Paniya community. Surprisingly, it is noted that there is more drop out among students belonging to Adiya community than that of Kattunaikka students, belonging to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, living in interior forest areas far away from schools. It is to be noted that the Adiya-Paniya Special Package has not improved the level of education of these communities.

Table 8
Students Age-wise

Age	Regular	Irregular	Discontinued	Total
6	48	5	2	55
7	66	5	3	74
8	57	4	2	63
9	67	7	1	75
10	88	12	5	105
11	60	4	1	65
12	78	9	9	96
13	60	9	14	83
14	67	3	29	99
15	56	4	29	89
16	48	2	34	84
17	22	4	26	52
18	20	3	37	60
Total	737	71	192	1000

Table 9
Drop Outs Age-wise

Age	Drop Outs	Percent
6	7	2.7
7	8	3.0
8	6	2.3
9	8	3.0
10	17	6.5
11	5	2.0
12	18	6.8
13	23	8.7
14	32	12.2
15	33	12.5
16	36	13.7
17	30	11.4
18	40	15.2
Total	263	100

These tables show that the drop out rate increases as the students grow older. Special emphasize is to be given to the fact that 124 students out of 263 drop outs are below 14 years of Age (47.1%). It is a very grave matter that almost half of the drop out students come under the purview of the Right to Education Act which ensures Universal, Compulsory and Free Education.

Table 10
Students Class-wise

Class	Regular	Irregular	Discontinued	Total
1	44	5	5	54
2	70	4	1	75
3	80	2	4	86
4	69	10	2	81
5	73	14	17	104
6	87	6	24	117
7	88	11	34	133
8	61	6	44	111
9	69	6	26	101
10	45	5	31	81
Plus One	28	1	2	31
Plus Two	23	1	2	26
Total	737	71	192	1000

Table 11
Total Students and Drop Outs School-wise

School	Total Students	Drop Out	Percent
L.P.	296	33	11.1
U.P.	354	106	29.9
High School	293	118	40.3
Higher Secondary	57	6	10.5

Table 12
Drop Outs School-wise

School	Drop Out	Percent
L.P.	33	12.6
U.P.	106	40.3
High School	118	44.8
Higher Secondary	6	2.3
Total	263	100

While analyzing the above three tables it is clear that the drop out rate increases as students go to the higher classes. Though only 29.3% high school students participated in the survey, they account for 40.3% drop out. Similarly, regarding 5.7% higher secondary students in the survey, the percentage of drop out is 10.5.

Table 13
Students Gender-wise

Sex	Regular	Irregular	Discontinued	Total
Male	347	41	119	507
Female	390	30	73	493
Total	737	71	192	1000

Table 14
Drop Outs Gender-wise

Sex	Drop Outs	Percent
Male	160	60.8
Female	103	39.2
Total	263	100

These tables show that the drop out rate is more among boys.

Table 15
Irregular Students and Days of Absence

No. of Days	Irregular	Total
1-15 days	28	39.4
16-30 days	9	12.7
31-45 days	8	11.2
46-60 days	9	12.7
Above 60 days	12	17
Total	71	100

In the last academic year out of 71 students who were irregular, 60.6% were absent from their schools for more than 15 days. Practically, they also can be considered as students discontinued from their schools.

Table 16
Students and Period of Discontinuation

Months	Discontinued	Percent
Less than a Month	6	3.1
1-2 Months	5	2.6
3-4 Months	3	1.6
5-6 Months	5	2.6
6 Months - 1 Year	23	12.0
More than 1 Year	150	78.1
Total	192	100

Out of 192 discontinued students 78.1% have stopped going to the school since more than a year and another 12% discontinued from their schools between 6 months to one year. It shows that there is no serious enquiry or intervention from the responsible persons regarding the children who are not regular to the school.

Table 17
Students on Period of Discontinuation and Present Status

Present Status	Less than 1 Month	1-2 Months	3-4 Months	5-6 Months	6 Months - 1 Year	More than 1 Year	Total
No work	4	4	1	5	17	78	109
Manual Work	1	1	1	0	3	55	61
Self Employed	1	0	0	0	1	2	4
Looking after the siblings	0	0	0	0	2	3	5
Not responded	0	0	1	0	0	12	13
Total	6	5	3	5	23*	150*	192

173* out of 192 discontinued students have not been going school for more than 6 months. 58 among them are going for manual work and 3 are self-employed. It is necessary to take note that 95 students are remaining idle at home without doing anything special. If we can make strenuous efforts, those children could be brought back to schools. 94 students who have discontinued their studies have expressed their desire to write equivalency test and 116 of them to rejoin and continue their studies.

Reasons for and Situations leading to Drop Out

It is imperative to make serious reflection and study regarding complicated situations and reasons for drop outs among large number of Adivasi students in Wayanad District. The students were given questions regarding the reasons and situations leading to drop out with the provision of multiple choices.

Table 18
Situations Leading to Drop Out

Sl. No.	Situations	Frequency	Percent
1	Non-conducive atmosphere at home	81	30.8
2	Alcoholism of parents	53	20.2
3	Absence of orderly lifestyle in the family	48	18.3
4	No support for homework	36	13.7
5	Seasonal works	42	16.0
6	Lack of ability to grasp lessons	43	16.3
7	Lack of basic alpha-numeric learning in primary classes	29	11.0
8	Non-availability of study materials	20	7.6
9	Medium of instruction	12	4.6

These are the opinions of students. 1 to 5 refers to situations at home and others to those in schools.

Table 19
Reasons for Drop Out (Opinions of Students)

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Lack of interest of the students	191	72.6
Lack of awareness about education	73	27.7
Lack of interest of parents	64	24.3
Influence of discontinued students	52	19.8
Financial issues	46	17.5
Health issues	34	12.9
Distance / Lack of transportation facilities	26	9.9
Responsibility to look after the siblings	15	5.7
Humiliation and rejection from other students	13	4.9
Negative attitude of teachers	7	2.7
Child marriage	6	2.3
Health issues of parents	4	1.5
Atrocities	3	1.1

Table 20
Reasons for Drop Out (Opinions of Parents)

371 parents who were at home while conducting the survey of the children were asked to share their opinions regarding the reasons for drop out.

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Lack of interest of the student	362	97.6
Influence of discontinued students	88	23.7
Financial issues	81	21.8
Lack of interest of the parents	41	11.0
Lack of awareness about the importance of study	38	10.2
Alcoholism of parents	32	8.6
Lack of transport facilities	32	8.6
Non-conducive atmosphere at home	28	7.5
Lack of career guidance	16	4.3
Child labour	15	4.0
Health problems	7	1.9
Child marriage	7	1.9
Issues related to school admission	6	1.6
Lack of tribal hostel facilities	5	1.3
Absence of orderly lifestyle	5	1.3
Distance to school	5	1.3
Lack of study materials	4	1.1
Responsibility of looking after the siblings	4	1.1
Negative attitude of teachers	4	1.1
Difficulty to study	3	0.8

While analyzing the three tables mentioned above, it is quite evident that the most important reason for drop out among Adivasi children is the lack of conducive atmosphere at home for study. Alcoholism of the parents and the consequent quarrel and tension at home have been badly affecting the children. As most of the parents are not educated they are unable to inspire or help the children in their studies. Lack of interest and laziness of the children are mentioned as reasons for drop out both by children and parents. It also refers to the absence of conducive atmosphere at home for study.

The answers regarding the state of their parents at the time of survey can be seen in relation to the atmosphere at home. The students have stated that 515 fathers and 37 mothers are alcoholics. Fathers of 90 students and mothers of 30 students have expired. 38 fathers and 8 mothers of the students abandoned their

children and are living far away in new wedlock. 68 fathers and 71 mothers are suffering from serious illness. The children find difficult to go regularly to school facing all these difficult situations.

When we analyze the data of students who reside in MRS Schools and Tribal Hostels, it is clear that the drop out rate is very less among them.

Table 21
Students and their Residence

Residence	Regular	Irregular	Discontinued	Total
Tribal Hostel	106	2	12	120
MRS School	4	0	1	5
Home	627	69	179	875
Total	737	71	192	1000

Table 22
Drop Outs and Residence

Residence	Drop Outs	Percent
Tribal Hostel	14	5.3
MRS School	1	0.4
Home	248	94.3
Total	263	100

Among the drop outs 94.3 percent were residing at their homes. The fact that 5.3 percentage of drop out students were residing in tribal hostels prompt us to think seriously about the insufficiencies and mismanagement in tribal hostels.

The analysis regarding the situations leading to and reasons for drop out, we cannot rule out the unhealthy atmosphere in schools. Among the drop outs 16.3 percent found hard to grasp the lessons and 13.7 percent could not continue their studies as there was nobody to help them in their homeworks. 11 percent found their studies very difficult in the higher classes as they did not have alpha-numeric base in their primary classes. 6.8 percent among them mentioned lack of study materials, 4.6 percent mentioned as language issues as reasons for drop out. While 4.9 percent alleged neglect and teasing by their companions, 2.7 percent mentioned about the negative attitude of the teachers as reasons for drop out. A

good many among the respondents have stated that opportunities to participate in arts and sports activities have been denied to them in schools, especially at district and state level competitions. They also mentioned that necessary systems to ensure effective training for such events are also not available in the district. A number of students stopped going to school reacting to such discriminations. The absence of Adivasi friendly atmosphere in schools has also contributed to the drop out rate, though not as serious as that of home atmosphere.

It is interesting to note the responses regarding Gothrasarathi project which was started to help the students residing far away from the school to come to schools regularly.

Table 23
Availability of Gothrasarathi Scheme

Details	Regular	Irregular	Discontinued	Total
Available	182	17	32	231
Not Available	417	44	123	584
Not Aware	128	10	34	172
Total	737	71	192	1000

Table 24
Drop Outs and Availability of Gothrasarathi Scheme

Details	Drop Outs	Percent
Available	49	18.6
Not Available	170	64.6
Not Aware	44	16.7
Total	263	100

Only 231 respondents have stated that Gothrasarathy scheme is available in their schools. It is very surprising that 172 among the respondents have not even heard about such a scheme.

It is to be presumed that eventhough many education promotional programmes have been introduced, the present systems have not ensured that the facilities reach to the most eligible groups.

Suggestions to counter Drop Out

It is necessary to give special consideration to the suggestions given by the children and their parents while planning and organizing various education promotional programmes.

Table 25
Suggestions by Students to Counter Drop Out

Suggestions of Students	Frequency	Percent
Promote conducive home atmosphere	347	34.7
Ensure support of parents	509	50.9
More tribal hostel facilities	504	50.4
Increase number of MRS Schools	127	12.7
Special educational support programmes for Adivasi children	359	35.9
Lumpsum grants at the beginning of the academic year	307	30.7
Ensure availability of learning materials	240	24
Appoint tribal teachers	222	22.2
Provision of dress and uniforms at the beginning of the academic year	200	20
Special training in Arts and Sports	196	19.6
Counselling facility	184	18.4
Teaching tribal language at primary school	146	14.6
Ensure transport facilities	339	33.9
Learning centres in hamlets	467	46.7

The first two suggestions are to create better atmosphere at home, third and fourth are regarding hostel facilities, and five to twelve are related to school. The respondents also proposed to start learning centres in each hamlet to support the school education.

While going through the various suggestions proposed by the students, we get an impression that vast majority of the students are eager to continue their education. At the same time, it is also clear that there are no sufficient interventions to address the denial of their rights assured by different Acts and Schemes.

Table 26
Suggestions by Parents to Counter Drop Out

The parents who responded to the survey team have given the following suggestions to counter drop out.

Suggestions of Parents	Frequency	Percent
Awareness regarding importance of education to students	56	15.1
Awareness regarding importance of education to parents	55	14.8
Encouragement and support from parents	31	8.4
Continuous hardwork by students to study	15	4.0
Prevent alcoholism	10	2.7
Increase tribal hostel facilities	188	50.7
Promote education support programmes for Adivasi students	36	9.7
Provide career guidance	24	6.5
Give special consideration to tribal students in the school	3	0.8
Provide study materials	2	0.5
Improve transportation facilities	35	9.4
Facilitate learning centres in hamlets	26	7.0
Tuition facilities	19	5.1
Provide financial support	12	3.2
Timely distribution of due benefits	11	3.0

In order to stop drop out 50.7 percent parents who participated in the survey suggested to increase the number and facilities of tribal hostels in the district and 15 percent parents have emphasized the need for awareness programmes for both students and parents regarding the importance of education. As most of the students cannot get admission in tribal hostels, they are forced to stay back at home. As we saw earlier, most of the students do not get suitable atmosphere at home for study and eventually, they discontinue their studies.

Chapter – 5

Major Findings of the Study

- 1) The drop out rate among Adivasi students is very high in the district of Wayanad. 26.3 percent of 1000 respondents are identified as drop outs students. The details of students who had gone for manual work from those families could not be included. We can reasonably presume that the drop out rate as 35 percent.
- 2) Comparatively the drop out rate is higher in Kalpetta and Bathery blocks.
- 3) Drop out rate among Paniya tribal community (75.3%) is very high comparing to other tribal communities in Wayanad.
- 4) The study shows that the drop out rate increases in par with the increase in age. The drop out rate is rather high in high school and higher secondary levels.
- 5) In the district of Wayanad there is more drop out among boys than girls. 61 percentage of drop out students are boys.
- 6) Out of 71 students who are irregular 60.6 percent students were absent in the school for more than 15 days continuously. Practically, they also have to be considered as discontinued students.
- 7) Out of 192 discontinued students 78.13 percent have not gone to the school for more than one year and 11.98 percent for more than 6 months. It gives an impression that both the Tribal Welfare Department and the Education Department have not made any serious intervention to make enquiries regarding the drop out students and bring them back to school.
- 8) More than half of the discontinued students have stated that they are sitting idle at home. If intense efforts are made they could be brought back to school. It is important to activate the existing systems to bring back the drop out children to school.
- 9) 31.8 percentage of discontinued students agreed that they go for *coolie* work. It denotes that child labour is rampant among Adivasis.
- 10) More than 60 percentage of the discontinued students have expressed their desire to continue their studies or to write equivalency test.
- 11) The major reason for drop out is the absence of conducive atmosphere in Adivasi homes. 94.3 percentage of drop out students have been residing at home during their studies.
- 12) 46.7 percent children have expressed their opinion that hamlet level learning centres might be helpful to counter drop out.
- 13) Lack of alpha-numeric basis from the primary classes and absence of support system to complete homework at home tend to lead to drop out.

- 14) Although only a less number responded, it is also evident that there are schools in the district without Adivasi friendly atmosphere and there are also instances of discriminations from teachers. Naturally, it leads to drop out.
- 15) The wrong influence of friends who have discontinued from schools and are going for *coolie* work is a major reason of drop out.
- 16) To counter drop out the students suggest to appoint tribal teachers (22.2%) and give importance to Adivasi dialects (14.6%) in the schools.
- 17) The benefits provided to students by the Tribal Welfare Departments are insufficient and not distributed at the proper time.
- 18) Only 23 percentage of 1000 students, who participated in the survey, have stated that the Gothrasarathi Scheme is available in their schools. 172 students have not even heard about such a scheme. 33.9 percent have requested to resolve transportation issues to counter drop out.
- 19) 64.6 percentage of 263 drop out students have not received the benefits of Gothrasarathi Scheme.



Chapter – 6

Focus Group Discussions

6.1 Meeting Convened by State Child Rights Commission

As part of the implementation of Zero Dropout Programme in the district of Wayanad a meeting was held on 26th May 2015 at the district collectorate under the presidentship of Ms. Shobha Koshi, Chairperson, State Child Rights Commission. The District Collector, District Police Chief, Child Rights Commission Member, Child Welfare Committee Chairman, District Officials from different departments, representatives from NGOs, Committed Social Workers, Tribal Promoters and others participated in the meeting. The preliminary findings of this Action Research were presented in the meeting. It was stated that around 30 percentage of Adivasi students are drop outs and majority of them are from Paniya and Adiya communities.

The participants expressed various opinions and suggestions on the issue. A number of them mentioned that there are contradictions between the actual drop out and the data in the school records. The meeting suggested to consider about starting more MRS schools and Tribal Hostels in the district. It will be very helpful to appoint facilitators in the school where more Adivasi students are studying. They also stressed that proper support and facilities should be given to Adivasi students talented in Sports. They also asked to implement the Gothrasarathi and Hamlet Learning Centre schemes effectively. Some of them asked the departments to organize education promotional programmes in the hamlets during summer vacations. It was also mentioned that there should be a permanent monitoring system to counter drop out in the district. Some of the participants suggested to request the Government to appoint a special IAS officer to coordinate various welfare schemes for Adivasis in the district.

The District Collector responded that the proposal to appoint facilitators to promote education of Adivasi students has been submitted to the Government and steps have been taken to teach lessons also in Adivasi dialects. He also mentioned about ‘*Mission Plus One*’ programme to ensure admission for all students who have completed SSLC. The meeting was also briefed about the offer of the Chief Minister to start three Post-metric hostels in the district. He directed the education department that birth certificate, adhaar and such other documents should not be made mandatory for admission to the schools. He also mentioned about the instructions to form Panchayat level monitoring cell to counter drop out.

6.2 Meeting of Adivasi Youth

Findings of this study were shared with 32 participants of Adivasi youth camp organized by Neethi Vedhi at Pavana Pastoral Centre, Mananthavady on 30th August 2015. The youth responded actively to the findings especially regarding the reasons for drop out and suggestions to counter this issue. According to them, lack of interest and encouragement from the parents is the major reason for drop out. The youth also mentioned that lack of conducive atmosphere at home, child marriage, compulsion of parents that boys should go for seasonal works and girls for home-maid works as reasons for drop out.

They mentioned that after SSLC the students find difficult to continue their studies for Plus Two course which is normally in English medium. It was also observed that the change of life style of the discontinued students after getting wages for their work has been tempting their companions to leave school and go for similar works. The children who go along with their parents for seasonal works are kept away from school for a number of days and afterwards they find difficult to keep up the pace of study. Similarly, after long periods of ritual celebrations at different stages of life, the students do feel hesitant to go back to school. They also stated that a good number of Adivasi students are forced to stay back home to look after their young ones while the parents go for work. Regarding higher studies of Adivasi students, the youth felt that lack of necessary documents and complicated procedures are hindrances to get benefits from various schemes. Again, most educated Adivasi youth have not received any suitable government employment and this has discouraged the children of their hamlets from striving for higher education. The youth mentioned that most of them have not found any Adivasi role-model in their hamlets or neighbouring localities.

The youth suggested special recruitment for Adivasis for government vacancies. They demanded to appoint qualified Adivasi youth in different offices of Tribal Welfare Department. They also proposed to introduce special package to give financial help and training to Adivasi students talented in Arts and Sports. They also asked to initiate legal measures against guardians who neglect education of Adivasi children.

6.3 Meeting Convened by the District Collector

The District Collector convened a meeting of Panchayat Presidents/representatives, district officials of different departments, representatives from NGOs and Adivasi Organizations, Committed Social Workers, School Counsellors, etc., on 1st September 2015 as part of the Zero

Dropout Programme. Member of Child Rights Commission and Chairman of Child Welfare Committee participated in this meeting which was inaugurated by the District Panchayat President. The major findings of the Action Research conducted by Neethi Vedhi were presented in this meeting.

The participants responded fully endorsing the findings of the study. They stressed that Adivasi language issue, lack of support from parents, lack of basic amenities at home, alcoholism of parents, absence of role-model in the hamlets are major reasons for drop outs. The tribal representatives mentioned that the complicated procedures to get educational grant have hindered the higher studies of Adivasi students. It was agreed in the meeting that it is necessary to have coordinated efforts of officials, field staff, NGOs and people's representatives to counter drop out. It was also suggested to have monthly evaluation meeting at Panchayat level in the presence of local self government representatives, officials and social workers.

The participants asked the District Administration to take steps to start more MRS schools and Post-metric hostels. It was also suggested that the standard of Pre-metric hostels have to be improved and ensure conducive atmosphere for studies in all tribal hostels. The proposal to start facilitators from Adivasi communities in the schools where a good number of Adivasi students are admitted was also endorsed by the meeting. It was also suggested to ensure effective implementation of Gothrasarathi Scheme and Hamlet Learning Centres in the district. The participants requested Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) officials to implement programmes for Adivasi students more effectively.

The District Collector assured to implement 'Vidhyamithram' programme to ensure the education of Adivasi children and organize workshop on Right to Education for Panchayat representatives and officials. He also promised to coordinate different programmes to counter atrocities against children, child labour, child marriage and drop out at district level.

6.4 Unarvu Learning Centres

As part of the Action Research, Neethi Vedhi organized 'Unarvu Learning Centres' in selected 10 hamlets for a period of four months. In each centre a tutor, who has completed at least SSLC, was entrusted to help the students in their homework, to clear their doubts in studies and to ensure regular attendance of students in the schools. The children were given light refreshments in the evening with the help of the parents. Special camps were organized during second Saturdays and following Sundays for the students studying from 5th to 10th standards.

We could understand that the students who were regularly attending the learning centres have increased their interest in studies and most of them were regularly going to schools. It is also noted that almost all of them got better results in the first-term examinations. We could also establish good rapport with the parents of these children.



Chapter – 7

Recommendations

Basing on the findings of the study and the discussions and experiences of various stake-holders, we are happy to submit the following recommendations to the Kerala Government, State Child Rights Commission, various departments and institutions responsible to protect the rights of the children to counter drop out of Adivasi children from schools.

1. ***Adivasi Teachers***:- It is proposed to appoint Adivasi teachers through Special Recruitment in all the schools where Adivasi children are studying. It is necessary to give special training to all teachers working in Adivasi areas regarding the dialects of the particular region.
2. ***Facilitators***:- It is suggested to appoint Tribal Facilitators in schools from Paniya, Adiya and Kattunaikka tribes who are degree-holders, one each for 40 tribal students. They should be given responsibility to take care of the welfare of the children who come to school, help them to resolve their problems, encourage participation in arts and sports, and visit hamlets of students who are irregular in attending school.
3. ***Hostels***:- It is recommended to start more MRS schools in the district and to give admission for Plus Two students in all MRS schools and tribal hostels. It is also necessary to establish Post-metric hostels in the district to encourage Adivasi students for higher education. We need to ensure that all the employees in such hostels are from tribal communities of the district.
4. ***Single-window System***:- The single window system has seriously affected the higher education of Adivasi students for admission in Plus Two and Degree courses. Their difficulties to get admission through online and the hesitation to go to unfamiliar institutions often tend to discontinue their studies. Therefore, it is proposed to exempt the Adivasi students from single window system and to permit them in the schools where they have been studying with the combination of subjects in which they are interested.
5. ***Training in Arts and Sports***:- It will be ideal to establish sports schools for Adivasi students in the district. It is necessary to ensure that there are effective mechanism in all the schools to give special training to Adivasi students in Arts and Sports.
6. ***Adivasi Language***:- To address the language issue of Adivasi children it is proposed to start Pre-primary classes in tribal language medium.

Moreover, it is suggested to teach the major Adivasi Dialects in the region atleast in the Primary classes.

7. **Awareness Programmes:-** It is recommended to conduct one day awareness seminars for parents of Adivasi students at the beginning of each term. It will be good to include sessions on the ill-effects of alcohol and other substances during these seminars to help them to create conducive atmosphere at home and hamlets.
8. **Education Promotional Programmes:-** It is necessary to organize special support programmes for Adivasi students during the academic year. It will be helpful to organize special camps at hamlets during summer vacations to instill the children about the importance of education.
9. **Grants:-** Instead of giving money directly to the guardians, it is proposed to give necessary study materials, uniforms and other dress at the beginning of the academic year to the students.
10. **Gothrasarathi:-** The Tribal Welfare Department is requested to ensure that the benefits of Gothrasarathi Scheme are made available to all eligible students.
11. **Counselling:-** It is proposed that service of counsellors is to be ensured in all the schools with special focus on Adivasi children.
12. **Complaint Box:-** It is necessary to set up complaint boxes in all the schools and the District Child Welfare Committee is to be entrusted with the responsibility regarding the complaints.
13. **Learning Centre at the Hamlet:-** It is proposed to start hamlet level learning centres under the leadership of an Adivasi tutor who has completed at least higher secondary level. The tutor is to be responsible to help the students for homework, to clarify their doubts, to ensure regular attendance of children in schools and to build up rapport with the parents.
14. **Breakfast:-** As a good number of Adivasi students are forced to go to school without having breakfast, it is proposed to the Tribal Welfare Department to establish community kitchen in the hamlets with the help of *Kudumbashree* members to provide breakfast to all children of the hamlets.
15. **Prevention of Child Labour:-** In order to make sure the attendance of children in the schools it is imperative to initiate strong legal measures against employers who engage children for work and thus to ensure that the child labour is prevented in toto.
16. **Legal Measures:-** It is also necessary to initiate legal measures as per Juvenile Justice Act against the guardians who neglect to send their children to school.

17. **Monitoring Cell at Panchayat Level:-** For constant review and follow up regarding the education of Adivasi children, it is suggested to form monitoring cells in all Panchayats and Municipalities involving PRI representatives, Tribal Extension Officer, *Janamaithri* Police, Committed Social Workers, Social Activists, Women representatives, Tribal Promoters and Facilitators, teachers, representatives from NGOs and Adivasi organizations.

18. **Monitoring Cell at District Level:-** It is suggested that at the district level a monitoring cell is formed under the presidentship of the Collector, with District Police Chief, CWC Chairman, Officials of Education and Tribal Welfare Departments, District Child Protection Officer, NGO representatives, District Press Club Secretary, representatives of Adivasi organizations, etc., as members.



Conclusion

The findings of this Action Research on drop out of Adivasi children from schools of Wayanad District are quite relevant for any other district in Kerala. The findings of this study are very similar to the researches done earlier in the state. The suggestions rendered by teachers, students and parents to counter drop out are very valuable. It is our hope that this research study will help the Child Rights Commission, Child Welfare Committees, People's representatives, District Administrations, Official of Government Departments, NGOs and Adivasi organizations, who are responsible to protect rights of Adivasi students, to coordinate their activities to ensure a bright future for our Adivasi children.

Annexure (1)
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Annexure (2)
Questionnaire
Drop Out of Adivasi Children from Schools
Survey

- Survey No: _____ Family No: _____
1. Name of the Student: _____
 2. Age: _____
 3. Sex: a) Male b) Female
 4. Community: _____
 5. Contact No: _____
 6. Hamlet: _____
 7. Ward: _____
 8. Panchayat: _____
 9. Block: a) Kalpetta b) Bathery c) Mananthavady d) Panamaram
 10. Name of the father: _____
 11. Occupation of the father: a) Manual work b) Agriculture work c) MGNREGA work d) Others
 12. Current state of the father: a) Expired b) Sick c) Abandoned d) Alcohol addict 88) Others
 13. Name of the mother: _____
 14. Occupation of the mother: a) Manual work b) House wife c) MGNREGA work d) Others
 15. Current state of the mother: a) Expired b) Sick c) Abandoned d) Alcohol addict 88) Others
 16. Do you go to school? a) Regular b) Irregular c) Discontinued
 17. In which standard are you studying/had you been studying?
 18. In which school are you studying/had you been studying?
 19. Where were you staying while studying? a) Tribal Hostel b) Home c) MRS School 88) Others
 20. Are the benefits of Gothrasarathy scheme available in your school? a) Available b) Not available c) Currently not available
 21. Have you faced teasing and humiliation in school because of taking breakfast? a) Yes b) No
 22. Do you participate in Arts and Sports competitions at school level? a) Yes b) No
 23. If no, reasons? a) Lack of interest b) Lack of opportunity c) Fear d) Others
 24. Do you participate in competitions at district and state levels? a) Yes b) No
 25. If no, reasons? a) Denied opportunity b) Financial issues c) Lack of interest of the parents d) Lack of training 88) Others
 26. Are your parents participate in school PTA meetings? a) Yes b) No
 27. What are the prompting factors to go to school regularly? (*To students who are regular*) a) Great desire to study b) Encouragement from parents c) Adivasi friendly atmosphere in the school d) Conducive atmosphere at home for study e) Availability of Study Materials f) Friendly rapport with the teachers g) Good rapport with friends h) Transport Facilities 88) Others
 28. Days of Absence in the school during the last academic year? (*To students who are irregular*) a) 1-15 days b) 16-30 days c) 31-45 days d) 46-60 days e) More than 61 days

29. Period of discontinuation from school (*To students who are discontinued*)
 a) Below 1 month b) 1-2 months c) 3-4 months d) 5-6 months
 e) 6 months – 1 year f) Above 1 year
30. Presently, what are you doing?
 a) No work b) Manual work c) Self-employed
 d) Looking after siblings 88) Others
31. Are you interested to continue your studies?
 a) Yes b) No
32. Are you interested in writing equality test?
 a) Yes b) No
33. What are the reasons for irregularity or discontinuation from schools? (*To students who are irregular or discontinued*)
 a) Lack of interest of the parents b) Lack of interest of the students
 c) Distance/Lack of transportation facilities d) Lack of awareness about education
 e) Influence of discontinued students f) Negative attitude of teachers
 g) Humiliation and rejection from other students
 h) Responsibility to look after the siblings i) Health issues
 j) Financial issues k) Atrocities l) Child marriage
34. What are the situations leading to drop out? (*To students who are irregular or discontinued*)
 a) Alcoholism of parents b) Non-conducive atmosphere at home
 c) No support for homework d) Seasonal works
 e) Lack of study materials f) Harm from wild animals
 g) Lack of basic alpha-numeric learning in primary classes
 h) Lack of ability to grasp lessons i) Medium of instruction
 j) Absence of orderly life style in the family
35. What are the reasons for irregularity or discontinuation from schools regarding other Adivasi students? (*To all students*)
 a) Lack of interest of the parents b) Lack of interest of the students
 c) Distance/Lack of transportation facilities d) Lack of awareness about education
 e) Influence of discontinued students f) Negative attitude of teachers
 g) Humiliation and rejection from other students
 h) Responsibility to look after the siblings i) Health issues
 j) Financial issues k) Atrocities l) Child marriage
36. What are the situations leading to drop out of other Adivasi students? (*To all students*)
 a) Alcoholism of parents b) Non-conducive atmosphere at home
 c) No support for homework d) Seasonal works
 e) Lack of study materials f) Harm from wild animals
 g) Lack of basic alpha-numeric learning in primary classes
 h) Lack of ability to grasp lessons i) Medium of instruction
 j) Absence of orderly life style in the family
37. What are the suggestions to counter drop out? (*To all students*)
 a) Ensure transport facilities b) Ensure support of parents
 c) Ensure availability of learning materials
 d) Promote conducive home atmosphere e) Learning centres in hamlets
 f) Increase number of MRS Schools g) More tribal hostel facilities
 h) Lumpsum grant at the beginning of the academic year
 i) Teaching tribal language at primary school
 j) Appoint tribal teachers k) Special training in Arts and Sports
 l) Special education support programmes for Adivasi children
 m) Provision of dress and uniforms at the beginning of the academic year
 n) Counselling facility
38. What are the reasons for irregularity or discontinuation of students from schools? (*To all parents*)
39. What are the suggestions to counter drop out? (*To all parents*)