

UTILIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITIES: A STUDY AMONG IRULA TRIBE IN ATTAPPADY REGION OF KERALA

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ABSTRACT

Scheduled tribes in India are generally considered to be 'Adivasis' meaning indigenous people or original inhabitants of the country. They belong to different racial stocks and religious back grounds and speak different dialects. Discrimination against women, occupational differentiation, and emphasis on status and hierarchical social ordering that characterize the predominant mainstream culture are generally absent among tribal groups. Higher education is education or learning at a College or University. The Accessibility to higher education for Students from scheduled tribe in Attappady is increasingly opting distant places due to the shortage of higher education facilities in their region. The present paper is analyzing the accessibility of higher education for Irula Tribes in Attappady of Kerala. The information was collected from the student's opted higher education among Irula Tribes through quantitative methodology. Result of the study indicates that, in Attappady there are various kinds of educational barriers and students seeks good education for their better career. Accessibility and utilization of higher education facilities in Attappady is very pathetic. So all tribes are depending outside of the attappady for higher studies. This study further infers that accessibility to higher education for the tribal students' needs to be improved.

Key words: Higher education, Accessibility, Irula Tribes

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the primary agents of transformation towards development it impacts and input not only for economic development of tribes but also the inner strength of tribal communities which helps them in to meet the challenges of life. India has the single largest tribal population in the world, scheduled tribes constitutes 8.6 percent of the total population of the country. They are the most economically impoverished and marginalized group in India. In national education policy the government of India has given special emphasis on the removal of disparity by attending to the needs of those who have been denied equality so far this back ward people are not able to have an access to the education facilities which have been provided near their places of habitation .The social rhythm

and traditions followed by these people and the lack of adequate economic security available to such persons prevent them to grow and become an integral part of the overall economic developmental process of the society. Dr. Amarthiyasen recently emphasized that education as an important parameter for any inclusive growth in an economy. so education is an important avenue for upgrading economic and social condition of scheduled tribes. The family factors also play an important role in students educational achievement (Mishra & Azeez, 2014).

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Irula are the second largest tribe in Kerala, living in the attappady region of Palakkad District. They live in three panchayaths of attappadi block. There are 26525 Irula people are living as 192hamlets. (9474 are living in Agali, 9076 are living in Sholayoor and 6703 are living in Pudhur grama panchayth). Irulas are mainly agriculturist; they are cultivating the crops like paddy, raggi, dhal, plantains, chillies and turmeric. Both men and women take an effective part in agriculture, hunting, and the rearing of children. The Irulas of Attapaddy worship Maleswaramkadavual swami who is believed to exist on the Malaswaram peak. Recently government has taken the initiatives for taking the students to the schools and colleges. Though having all these facilities in the region students feel lack of facility to reach in colleges for higher education. The numbers of educational institutions are less when comparing the number of tribal students. 25% of the Irula populations are students who are going for higher education. Only 3 institutions for higher education are available in their region. Accessibility and utilization of higher education facilities in Attappady is very pathetic. So, all tribes are depending outside of the Attappady for higher studies, so the need and importance of the study is to understand the facility of higher education and its utilization.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The sample of the present study constitutes irula students from three panchayaths of Attappady block in Palakkad district, Kerala. The samples constitute 30 students who are depending other district or state for higher education from Irula tribe in Attappady. Researcher randomly selected the students between the age group of 15-27 from the three panchayaths of Attappady block. A self-structured questionnaire used as the tool of data collection. Questions were asked on the support of parents for their higher studies and reason to choose the institutions outside of the Attappady and the necessity of improvement of educational facilities in their region and their perception on reservation etc...

RESULTS

The study explored the possible answers of the accessibilities of higher education for the students of Irula tribes in Attappady. Quantitative information is analyzed critically to understand the situation.

Table 1. Socio Demographic Profile

Table No.	Characteristics	Number	Percent
1.1	Age		
	15-18	4	13.33
	19-23	21	70
	24-27	5	16.67
	Total	30	100
1.2	Sex		
	Male	15	50
	Female	15	50
	Total	30	100
1.3	Type of family		
	Nuclear	26	86.67
	Joint	4	13.33
	Total	30	100
1.4	Economic status		
	APL	11	36.7
	BPL	19	63.3
	Total	30	100
1.5	Education		
	UG	16	53.33
	PG	5	16.67
	TTC/ITI	8	26.67
	B PHARM	1	3.33
	Total	30	100

While analyzing the table the 70% of the respondent are between the age group of 19 to 22 they are the majority from 30 respondents. 16.67% of the respondents are between the age group of 23 to 27 and 13.33% of the respondent between the age group of 15 to 18. The most number of respondents are coming under the group of 19 to 22 because higher education starts after the plus two educations. Some of them have taken a break for joining post-graduation after their graduation.

Researcher can conclude that, there is an equal participation of female and male respondent. 15 students from male category and 15 from female. The percentage is 50 for both female and male. It shows that gender is not a problem for the students for their higher studies in the area.

Table depicts that, occupation of parent of the respondents, 80% of the respondents parents are done coolie works that means 24 parents are going for coolie work. Other 20% of the respondent's parents are done government job that means there is 6 parents are government employees. When we analyze the data of monthly income it's mentioned that 70% of the respondent's monthly income is in between of 600 to 1000 INR and the 30% of the respondent's monthly income is below 100 to 500

INR. Majority of the respondent are very poor they can only get 100 to 500 rupees in a month. And only 30% of getting 600 to 1000 rupees in a month. Most respondents can't satisfy their basic needs. It's highlighted that 60% of the respondent's family consists 2 to 4 members. And 40% of the family members of the respondent have 5 to 8 members in their family. 86.67% of the families are nuclear family and 13.33% of the families are joint family. 63.3% of the families are BPL category and 36.7% of the families are APL category. Government employees are including in APL category and the coolie workers are include BPL category.

Most of the respondent are the under below poverty line and they facing economical crisis and they can't afford the educational expenses.

Table 2.educational status of the respondents

Table No.	Characteristics	Number	Percent
1.1	Course studying		
	UG	16	53.33
	PG	5	16.67
	TTC/ITI	8	26.67
	B PHARM	1	3.33
	Total	30	100
1.2	Reason to choose the course		
	Interest	25	83.33
	Scope for job	2	6.67
	Got admission	3	10
	Total	30	100
1.3	Type of colleges		
	Aided	13	43.33
	Un Aided	3	10
	Government	14	46.67
	Total	30	100
1.4	Residential status		
	Hosteller	27	90
	Day scholar	3	10
	Total	30	100
1.5	Financial assistance		
	Parents	12	40
	Government	18	60
	Total	30	100

From the above table it can be highlighted that 53.33% of respondent are choose UG courses of their higher education. 26.67% of the respondent choose TTC and ITI courses for their higher studies. 16.67% of the students choose PG courses and only 3.33% choose B Pham course.

This table mentioned that most of the student doing UG courses after their plus two. Post-Graduation is done by only less number of students'. Only 1 student going for B Pham courses and others are TTC and ITI student

Table 3. Educational barriers of Attappady

Sl. No.	Characteristics	Number	Percent
	Course studying College without facilities	18	60.7
	Less seats	4	13.33
	No transportation facilities	4	13.33
	Less number of courses	4	13.33
	Total	30	100

While analyzing this table 60.7% of the respondents considered the main educational barrier of Attappady is that colleges without facilities. 13.3% of the respondents are consider the less seats are the barrier of Attappady. Other 13.3% of the respondents are said about no transportation facility is the main barrier and last 13.3% of the respondents are mentioned less number of courses is the main problem in educational system in Attappady.

There are 4 educational barriers seeing in Attappady in their higher education there are colleges without facilities, less seats, no transportation facility and less number of courses.

Table 4. Educational facilities expected by respondents

Sl. No.	Characteristics	Number	Percent
	Good college with good transportation facility	7	23.33
	Good college /research centre/expert teachers/hostel facility and increase in number of seats	7	23.33
	good transportation facility , Good college /research center/expert teachers/hostel facility and increase in number of seats	7	23.33
	More courses	5	16.67
	increase the number of courses	4	13.33
	Total	30	100

The figure shows that 23.33% of the students are expecting good transportation facility from the government. Other 23.33% of the people expecting Good collage /research Center/expert teachers/hostel facility and increase number of seats.20% of the students are expecting % with good transportation facility.16.67% of the student expecting such facilities only like expecting Good collage /research center/expert teachers/hostel facility. Only 6.67% of the student interested to get such facilities like increases the number of courses. Other 6.67% of the respondents like to get facilities like more courses with good facilitated college.

Through this table we can understand that all students various kind of facilities and all are agreed that in Attappady there is no more facilities for students to get good higher education. But most of the respondent opinion is to get a good collage, expert teachers and good transportation facility.

Table 5.Support of parents to study outside/inside their region

Sl No	Support of parents to study	Frequency	Percentage
1	Inside	26	86.7
2	Outside	4	13.3
Total		30	100.0

While analyzing this table it can be highlighted that 86.7% of the respondents parents are support them to study outside of the Attappady only 13.3% of the respondents parents interested to take admission in inside of the Attappady.

Through this table Researcher can understood that lots parents are like to send their children to outside of Attappady for their higher studies because there is good facilities. Some of them not interested to send outside because they want their children within them.

Table 6. Reason to choose outside for higher education

Sl no.	Reason	Number	Percent
	Financial problems	15	50
	not getting admission	7	23.33
	Not interested and no interest of parents	3	10
	Reservation or according to their mark.	5	16.67
	Total	30	100

The table highlighted that 50% of the respondent facing financial problems so they can't study in Attapady .23.33% of the people facing not getting admission in attapady so they are not able studied inside of Attapady.16.67% of the respondent get admission outside of the Attapady because of 10% of the respondent are not interested to study inside of Attapady.

These are the reason behind why they choose outside for higher education. When they studied inside of Attapady the educational expense is more comparing outside studies because the transportation fair is high.

DISCUSSION

The present study is a reflective of the incessant situation regarding higher education in the tribal belts of India. The sample of the study constitutes irula tribal students who opted outside district or state for higher education in Attappadi block of Palakkad district, Kerala. Tribals are the indigenous communities among them irulas are having their own cultures and traditions. From this study the socio-demographic aspects of the region are evident in the sample selection. There is an equal participation of female and male respondents.15 students are males and 15 from female. The percentage is 50 for both female and male. It shows that gender is not a problem for the students for their higher studies in the area. Percent of the respondents belong to nuclear family is higher and the respondents living as joint families is 4 out of 30 respondents, it indicates the changing patterns of family set up in the region.63 percent of the respondents are poor and they are coming under Below Poverty Line and faces financial crisis because of that they are not able afford to educational expenses. 11 out of 40 respondents are above poverty line. Most of the respondents are Undergraduate students and it follows TTI/ITC, post-graduation and B pharm. Apart from these 4 courses no students are enrolled for any other course. Usually they prefer these courses only.

The research has investigated the reason to choose above course is purely their own interest and only few replied with they got admission and joined for the course. Majority of the tribal students are studying in government or aided institution that is 90 percent and the remaining 10 percent of the respondents are studying in un aided institutions.90 percent of the students are hostellers and only 3 of them are day scholars. Regarding the financial assistance for their studies is undertaken by government for the majority of the respondents (60percent). 40 percent of the respondents parents funding for their education and it causes financial crisis to the respondent families.

The study analyzed the educational barriers that reflected in Attappady in their higher education are colleges without facilities, less seats, no transportation facility and less number of courses. From the research that all students are in need of various kind of facilities and all are agreed that in Attapady there is no facilities for students to get good higher education. But most of the respondents opined that they are in need to get a good college, expert teachers and good transportation facility. From the point view of parents they like to send their children to outside of Attappady region for their higher studies, were good facilities are available. Some of them are not interested to send their children to outside district or state because they want their children with them. When the irula tribal students are studying by residing inside of attappady, the expenses for their education is very high.

CONCLUSION

The present is an indicative of the irula tribal student's utilization of higher education facilities and accessibility to higher educational facilities. The Irula people of attappady face lots of social and economic issues. Lack of accessibility to better higher educational facility is one of the major setbacks of them while discussing the overall development or prosperity of the region. They are utilizing higher educational facilities outside of their region or out of states. Though they have various kinds of educational barriers and students have an idea what they want to get good education inside of Attappady. Higher education is learning from colleges and university. And the accessibility and utilization of higher education facilities in Attappady is not good. So, all tribes are depending outside of the Attappady for higher studies. If the better facilities are providing in their own geographical region will lead to increase in the number of students who are enrolling for higher education.

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