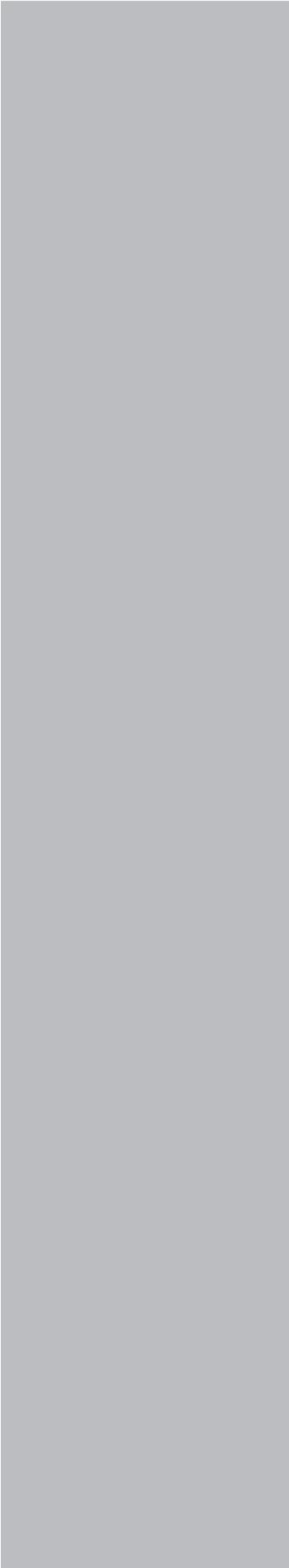


**EDUCATION OF A
DEPRIVED GROUP IN
A TOTALLY LITERATE REGION:
THE CASE OF TRIBAL
CHILDREN IN KERALA**

**REPORT SUBMITTED TO
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ABBREVIATIONS

AEO	Assistant Educational Officer
AS	Alternative School
BRC	Block Resource Centre
BS	Baseline Study
CARE	Co-operative for American Relief Everywhere
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CDS	Centre for Development Studies
COI	Census of India
CRC	Cluster Resource Centre
CSS	Centrally Sponsored Scheme
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
DPI	Directorate of Public Instruction
ES	Educational Statistics
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GED	General Education Department
HDR	Human Development Report
HMC	Hostel Management Committee
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
ITDP	Integrated Tribal Development Project
KER	Kerala Education Rule
KFRI	Kerala Forest Research Institute
KIRTADS	Kerala Institute for Research, Training and Development Studies of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
KP	Kerala Padanam
KSSP	Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishat

LG	Local Government
LPS	Lower Primary School
MCR	Mess Charge Recovery
MGLC	Multi Grade Learning Centre
MGP	Modernising Government Programme
MRS	Model Residential School
MTA	Mother - Teacher Association
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OBC	Other Backward Caste
PHC	Primary Health Centre
PPC	People's Planning Campaign
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
PTA	Parent - Teacher Association
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCP	Special Component Plan
SLM	Self - Learning Material
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
SSLC	Secondary School Leaving Certificate
ST	Scheduled Tribe
STDD	Scheduled Tribe Development Department
TC	Transfer Certificate
TDO	Tribal Development Office
TLC	Total Literacy Campaign
TSP	Tribal Sub Plan
TTC	Teacher's Training Course
UPS	Upper Primary School
VEC	Village Education Committee

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The Action Aid, India through their Chennai office approached the CSES to undertake a study on education of tribal children in Kerala. This study was envisaged to be a supplementary research-based contribution to supplement a project to redefine Right to Education in the Tribal Areas of Kerala, named as Jan Yatra. The Jan Yatra “derives inspiration from the Action Aid International Global Strategy that purports to fight for not just Right to Education but also Rights in Education”¹. The CSES, “an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization for promoting policy and action-oriented research, consultancy and training programmes”, found the proposed study to be of relevance and of great social value and responded favourably to the proposal.

The Jan Yatra had a relevant but nevertheless an ambitious set of aims. They were not amenable to be backed up by serious study of necessary academic rigour in a relatively short period that was available to us. Therefore, without detracting from the aims of the Jan Yatra, we decided to concentrate upon the three specific objectives, specified in the proposal. These were “(1) Ascertain status of education in tribal dominant districts of Kerala. (2) To increase the linkages and the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI), Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Civil Society, Village Education Committee (VEC), etc. in ensuring quality Education. (3) Building/strengthening/activating alliances, networks, Civil Society on campaign for redefining right to education”². The data collected and analysed are expected to support the realization of these three specific objectives.

Population of Tribal People

Right at the outset, it should be pointed out that, there are no tribal dominant districts in Kerala. The tribal population in the state is concentrated in four districts, they being Wayanad, Idukki, Palakkad and Kasargod. These four districts together constituted 71 per cent of the Tribal population in the state. In 2001, the Scheduled Tribe (ST) population in Kerala was 3,64,000 which account for 1.14 per cent of the state population³. According to the Census of India [COI] 1991, there were 3,21,000 Tribal people who formed 1.10 per cent of the population of Kerala. In the same year, in a Survey undertaken by the Kerala Forest Research Institute [KFRI], Peechi, there were 17,156 ST families living within forests of Kerala; in 671 settlements⁴. Obviously a significant portion of ST people is living outside the forests, since by this estimate only around 85,780 persons, at the rate of 5 per family were living within forests⁵.

The list of tribes in the state is given below.

¹ 'Jan Yatra – To redefine Right to Education in the Tribal Areas of Kerala', Project Proposal.

² 'Jan Yatra', Proposal, op.cit.

³ Census of India, 2001.

⁴ M.K.Prasad (ed), Adivasi Samarathinte Arthantharangaal, Muthanga Samarathinte Paschatthalathil Oru Apagradhanam, [Malayalam], Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishath [KSSP], Kochi, 2003, ch.1, p.12.

⁵ Ibid. p.12.

Table 1.1: Scheduled Tribes in Kerala

1	Adiyan	19	Malakkuravan
2	Arandan	20	Malasar
3	Eravallan	21	Malayan/Nattu Malayan/Konga Malayan
4	Hill Pulaya	22	Malayarayar
5	Irular,Irulan	23	Mannan
6	Kadar	24	Muthuvan, Mudugar, Muduvan
7	Kanikaran/Kanikkar	25	Palleyan, Palliyan, Palliyar, Paliyan
8	Kattunayakan	26	Paniyan
9	Kochuvelan	27	Ulladan
10	Koraga	28	Uraly
11	Kudiya, Melakudi	29	Mala Vettuvan
12	Kurichian	30	Ten Kurumban, Jenu Kurumban
13	Kurumans	31	Thachanadan, Thachanadan Moopan
14	Kurumbas	32	Cholanaickan
15	Maha Malasar	33	Mavilan
16	Malai Arayan	34	Karimpalan
17	Malai Pandaram	35	Vetta Kuruman
18	Malai Vedan	36	Mala Panickar

Source: The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Act, 2002

Among these, five groups have been identified as Primitive Tribes; they being Kattunayakan, Cholanaikan, Kadar, Koraga and Kurumba. According to a survey conducted by the Scheduled Tribe Development Department, their population was 16978 in 1996-97 spread over 4406 families in 398 settlements. They were concentrated in the districts of Wayanad, Kasargod, Palakkad and Malappuram⁶.

The Census figures themselves show wide fluctuations in ST population between the decades. Between 1971 and 1981, there was a decrease of 2.97 per cent in ST population of Kerala, but between 1981 and 1991 there was an increase of 22.67 per cent. The increase between 1991 and 2001 was 13.75 per cent. These figures do not compare with the rates of decrease/increase in any other group. There are different terms used to address the same group of people; like that of *Adivasis*, Scheduled Tribes⁷ etc. Such usages themselves could lead to discrepancies in population count.

Tribal Deprivation

Two all Kerala studies, which give insights into deprivation faced by different groups of people have been published recently. One is the Kerala Padanam, Keralam Enganne Jeevikunnu, Keralam Enganne Chinthikkunnu, [Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishat (KSSP), Kozhikode, 2006]. The other is the Human Development Report 2005, Kerala, [prepared for the Government of Kerala, by Centre for Development

⁶ Economic Review 2005, Government of Kerala, p.409.

⁷ Tribal persons who are included in the article 342 of the Constitution of India, are considered Scheduled Tribes. Tribes are determined on the basis of comparatively small population size, pre-literacy, pre-agricultural technology, geographical isolation and cultural backwardness. This term was used for the first time in 1931 by Simon Commission. See *Ibid.* p. 10.

Studies [CDS], Thiruvananthapuram]. We will look at these studies, closely, to understand the Tribal situation in Kerala better. For convenience sake, we will refer to former as KP and the latter as HDR. KP had categorized the 6000 families that they have surveyed into four socio-economic categories of very poor (14.7%), poor (48.2%), middle class (29%) and rich (8%) and numbered them I, II, III and IV. The per capita income, per capita expenditure, general conditions of dwellings and ownership of consumer goods were taken into consideration for this kind of categorization. It is interesting to note in our study that the KP did not take education as a criterion for the basic categorization, since education can play a determining as well as detrimental role in socio-economic categorization [p.28].

It was found that, while the average per capita income for rural areas was Rs. 17,678 and for urban areas was Rs. 24,238, the average per capita income for ST families was only Rs. 9022 [p.51]. One of the leading factors for determining family income in Kerala is the remittance from outside the state and the country. It was found that 16 per cent of rural families are getting an average of Rs. 5,969 and 14.6 per cent of urban families are getting an average of Rs. 6,051 from remittances. But only 1.7 per cent of the ST families receive remittances and they receive, on an average, only Rs. 4,000. In per capita income and remittances, the ST families receive the least. Compared to other groups, the per month consumption expenditure is also the lowest among ST, it being only Rs. 623 per month [p.52]. Meanwhile the per capita monthly consumer expenditure of rural families is Rs. 1,059 and urban families consume Rs. 1,397 per month [p.57].

While ST representation in the KP sample was 1.2 per cent, the share of STs among those in government service was only 0.8 per cent. They are down by 50 points in terms of representation in government service⁸. On this count, they are second only to Muslims [p.71]. In terms of employment status among ST people aged between 18 and 25, 11.8 per cent are in college, 5.9 per cent in other studies, 37.3 per cent working and 45.1 per cent unemployed. In this case also STs and the Muslims are the worst affected [p.75]. The head count of persons under the poverty line (38.7) was the highest for ST followed by SC [p.78]. Similarly the poverty indicator⁹ shows it to be as high as 8.8 for STs, the highest among all groups. Among the districts, Palakkad with 2.6 and Wayanad with 2.0 show highest levels of poverty. They are the districts with the highest population of SC and ST respectively [p.81].

As far as education is concerned, majority of ST children in the KP sample (60.7%) study in government schools, while 39.3 per cent of them study in Government Aided schools¹⁰. None of the ST children in the KP sample, study in unaided schools [p.96]. Similarly 100 per cent of the ST students in KP are found to be studying, unlike other groups, under Kerala State syllabus and none in Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) or other syllabuses [p.97]. Therefore, we have to look for ways to improve government schools if we want to increase the quality of education of tribal children.

⁸ The second minus the first, divided by the second and multiplied by 100.

⁹ Calculated in such a way that, if found to be less than one will indicate wealth and if found more than one indicate poverty.

¹⁰ In Kerala, Government Aided Schools operate on almost the same basis as the Government schools. There are no differences in fees and the salaries of teachers and other staff are paid by the Government.

Though almost all findings presented here from KP further strengthens the widely held belief that deprivation is acute among STs, one indicator points the other way. These people, poor by almost all indicators, claimed to have the highest extent of occupied land among all groups. ST families, on an average, have 138.7 cent of land. The KP itself has expressed doubts about this figure [p.53]. Further, it was found that the trend of land transactions in the last five years has resulted in perceptible gains for the rich from the poorer groups [p.87]. It could mean that the ST families which claim to have the highest average land holdings may be in the process of losing such an important asset. It should be noted that, the Adivasi Master Plan Committee, in their recommendations submitted to the State Planning Board in 2002, estimated potential beneficiaries of the scheme for distribution of land among Adivasis as given in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Details of Landless ST Families and ST Families Owning Less than One Acre

No.	District	Landless Families	Families with less than one acre
1	Thiruvananthapuram	13	1101
2	Kollam	68	776
3	Pathanamthitta	68	1032
4	Alappuzha	117	558
5	Kottayam	153	1340
6	Idukki	190	5436
7	Ernakulam	5	341
8	Thrissur	271	840
9	Palakkad	5389	2637
10	Malappuram	339	2224
11	Kozhikode	226	92
12	Wayanad	14031	12184
13	Kannur	1395	2249
14	Kasargode	226	171
	Total	22491	30981

Source: Adivasi Master Plan Committee, *Adivasi Punaradhivasa Vikasana Paripadiyude Prethyeka Suparsakal*, submitted to State Planning Board (Malayalam) p.21, 2002.

In other words, the one apparently favourable figure found in one survey need not detract us from the severity of deprivation among ST population.

The HDR also provides further insights into deprivation among STs. While Kerala had an impressive decline in Infant Mortality Rate [IMR], it seems to have stagnated around 14-15 per 1000 live births from the early 1990s. In looking at ways to further reduce the IMR it was found that [p.27].

... infant mortality seems to be still higher among children born in the households of SC/STs, fishing community and the poor. The National Family Health Survey II (1998-99) indicates that in Kerala, children born in households with a low standard of living (of whom

large numbers would be from the above mentioned groups) are 1.6 times more likely to die than children born in the households with higher standard of living. Further decline in overall IMR will crucially depend on how these groups catch up with others.

What this implies is that, children born in ST households, along with those in other deprived groups have to face the basic risk of survivability. This situation is linked with poverty. Therefore poverty eradication becomes of utmost importance when we talk about any development indicator, including education, of “outliers to the central tendency”¹¹. There are indications such as the recent trend of land transactions favouring the rich, and the backwardness of education including low quality of education in which the deprived groups are trapped, which shows that it will be very difficult to further reduce the around 15 per cent of population below poverty line [BPL] that Kerala has already achieved¹². In other words, the deprived sections of Kerala society may already be trapped in a situation of “persistent poverty”¹³. Such a situation will have long-term implications for the subject currently under our analysis.

The HDR [p.48-9] also reports that Kerala has achieved a rate of reduction of both rural and urban headcount index of poverty, which was the highest, achieved among 15 major States in India. In this achievement, the 35 social security schemes such as Public Distribution System, Free Noon Meal Scheme for School Children, Old Age Pensions to Destitutes and Rural Labourers, etc. which take up around 3 per cent of the state budget may have also played a major role. But we do not get any separate figures of these schemes in terms of Tribal Welfare.

The HDR constructed an index of generalised, non-income deprivation for every district using data from the Census 2001 and based upon deprivation of four basic necessities such as housing quality, access to drinking water, good sanitation and electric lighting [p.62]. The incidence of deprivation was found to be the highest for Wayanad district, which along with Idukki and Palakkad had a deprivation index of above 40. Thiruvananthapuram, Kasargod, Pathanamthitta and Kollam districts were below them with deprivation index ranging between 30 to 40. What is significant to our study is the fact that 62 per cent of the total tribal population in the state is concentrated in these three districts (Wayanad with 37 percent, idukki with 14 percent, and Palakkad with 11 percent). [p.63]. What it indicates is that while Kerala had significant improvement in literacy, health and poverty reduction; there is unequal access to resources by different social groups which can reduce individual welfare.

¹¹ That there are outlier groups behaving differently from the picture given by many studies of Kerala’s central tendency, has been pointed out earlier by John Kurien, ‘The Kerala Model: Its Central Tendency and the Outlier’ in Govindan Parayil (ed): Kerala: The Development Experience. Reflections on Sustainability and Replicability, Zed Books, London & New York, 2000.

¹² P.K.Michael Tharakan, “Kerala Vikasanam, Randu Padanangal”, (Malayalam), Sasthragathi, Vol.2, No.6, December 2006.

¹³ George L. Beckford coined this term in his notable book Persistent Poverty: Under-development in Plantation Economies of the Third World, New York, 1972.

Table 1.3: District-wise Index of Deprivation by Social Groups, 2001

Districts	SC		ST		Others		Overall	
	Index	Rank	Index	Rank	Index	Rank	Index	Rank
Thiruvananthapuram	54.4	13	60.1	10	37.0	11	39.5	11
Kollam	47.8	8	50.7	5	27.7	7	30.4	8
Pathanamthitta	50.3	10	54.6	7	27.8	8	31.1	9
Alappuzha	45.9	6	40.1	3	27.7	6	29.6	6
Kottayam	42.1	4	43.1	4	23.1	3	25.1	3
Idukki	40.8	2	65.3	13	40.9	13	42.7	13
Ernakulam	29.3	1	37.2	1	14.0	1	15.5	1
Thrissur	42.0	3	37.5	2	21.9	2	24.7	2
Palakkad	52.9	12	65.3	12	37.1	12	40.4	12
Malappuram	46.2	7	56.8	8	26.5	4	28.6	5
Kozhikode	48.8	9	50.9	6	26.6	5	28.3	4
Wayanad	51.5	11	66.0	14	41.6	14	46.3	14
Kannur	43.8	5	57.7	9	28.7	9	29.7	7
Kasargod	62.7	14	61.3	11	34.1	10	37.6	10
KERALA	45.5	-	57.9	-	26.9	-	29.5	-
Coefficient of variation (%)	16.5	-	19.4	-	26.1	-	25.8	-

Source: HDR 2005

According to the HDR, Kerala has managed to reduce the level of poverty among its ST population from 37 per cent to 24 per cent between 1993-94 and 1999-2000 [p.64]. In spite of it, the rural poverty among STs is more than two-and-a-half times the poverty in Kerala. One obvious reason pointed out in this respect is the higher dependence of STs on agriculture, with 33.92 per cent of them being agricultural labourers, while 23.21 per cent are engaged in self-employment in agriculture [p.65]. There is very little economic diversification among STs. Diversification could have resulted in increased wage rates. In its absence, it will result in poor material conditions of life and will restrict access to basic social amenities. The HDR also reports that the average size of landholding among STs is higher than that for SCs, OBCs and others. But it also states that in terms of landholding the STs remain vulnerable, due to several reasons. It is also pointed out that while the all-India situation meets the national guidelines which stipulates that 50 per cent of declared surplus land should be distributed among SCs and STs, Kerala lags behind with only 47 per cent similarly distributed [p.66].

Deprived Groups Amidst Others

The statistics on Kerala reveals only the aggregate generalized picture of the central tendency. The central tendency is found to be very good, particularly in comparison with other states of India. The two studies referred to earlier, KP and HDR, do give more than enough indications to the effect that the central tendency hides the real situation of the outliers, or the deprived sections of Kerala society. Several observers feel elated by the prospects of faster economic growth that Kerala has been experiencing from around 1989 onwards; including the HDR. Doubts have already been expressed with regard to the

ability of higher economic growth alone, in solving the problem of deprivation among social groups as it has been found over a very long period¹⁴. These questions we will once again be discussing in the course of this report. The important question in this regard is whether the deprivation that the STs in particular are facing is structural? If it is, can it be solved by mere economic growth alone?

Apart from the fact that what happens to the Kerala Society in general may not have the same impact upon the ST population, there is the persistent character of their deprivation. Sri. K. Radhakrishnan, former Minister for ST Welfare and present Speaker of Kerala Assembly, had said in his foreword to Janakeeyasoothranavum Pattika Jathi Pattika Varga Vikasanavum, (IMG, SC/ST Development Department, State Planning Board, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 2000) that it is shameful that even 50 years after gaining independence, a State like Kerala which is in many other aspects is considered as a Model, could not make any real difference in the backwardness of SC and ST population. He has further pointed out that a distinct portion of plan funds was earmarked for SC/ST development from the 6th Plan onwards; but the departments for the development of SC and ST got the freedom to allot a portion proportionate to SC/ST population for their comprehensive development and to design special projects accordingly, only by 1996-97. According to Sri. Radhakrishnan, it remained to be executed by the bureaucracy alone, until the advent of the People's Planning Campaign [PPC] which acknowledging the need for participation in planning, development schemes by the sections who are to benefit from them, decided to allot 67 per cent of the Special Component Plan [SCP]/Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) amount as Grant-in-Aid to the three tier Panchayats and Municipalities/Corporations. Though it was done with high hopes, in 2001, the then newly elected government decided to take back the amount from decentralized funding. The reason behind the withdrawal of funding was that the decentralized funding has not proved to be any better than the earlier departmental funding. Meanwhile those who were for decentralized funding could argue that it would have eventually proved better; but it was not given enough time to run through. What we find is that the TSP fund which started in 1987-88 at Rs. 710.65 lakhs had gradually increased to Rs. 43 crores by 2000-01¹⁵.

The situation of deprivation described by the KP and the HDR goes beyond 2000-01, when decentralized funding for ST development ceased and shifted to centralized funding once again. What we see is that whatever be the method of funding or however the funds increase, it has not made any perceptible change in the situation of deprivation of the ST population. Meanwhile other communities or social groups in Kerala, except for one or two other equally deprived groups as the STs, have made creditable achievements from the pattern of development that the state has followed. To live amidst such 'developed' groups will have doubly debilitating effects among STs. They will be constantly compared unfavourably with others to such an extent, that their self-esteem itself will be badly affected. Since other groups have

¹⁴ K.K. George and P.K. Michael Tharakan, "Sustainable Human Development in Kerala: Some Issues", Advances in Arts and Ideas, Vol.I, pp.125-128, has raised doubts about the employment generation capacity of the present growth. P.K. Michael Tharakan; 'Kerala Model Revisited: New Problems, Fresh Challenges, Working Paper No.15, CSES, Kochi, 2006, has raised further questions on the basis of political and sociological factors with regard to the ability of growth alone in solving deprivation problems.

¹⁵ M.K. Prasad (ed), op.cit., pp.63-64.

acquired social mobility through education and organization which were supported largely by asset redistribution like land reforms¹⁶, and since the STs have not been able to gain much from any of these, they cannot be expected to compete with others in the same society. In fact the early denial of the factors facilitating others' advancement, have only trapped the STs in a highly handicapped situation from which it is difficult for them to come up like others. In other words, they are not only marginalized, but also are continuously excluded from the benefits that others are able to enjoy in the pattern of development followed by Kerala.

Methodology of the Study

This is the general situation under which we had to study Education of Tribal Children. Education is by no doubt an important means through which groups get developed. We thought that in this context we should approach the educational deprivation of Tribal Children not merely as an educational problem but as a general social problem. In other words, Tribal education should be placed in the context of Tribal deprivation. If Tribal children are to grow up enjoying the same facilities that other children are enjoying in growing up, including quality education, any indication of denial of any such facilities to them has to be seen as a denial of basic rights of those children.

It is with the above perspective, we have examined the status of tribal education in Kerala. Prior to undertaking the fieldwork, a detailed survey of available literature on the tribal education in Kerala was undertaken. Information was also collected from documents of the education department as well as other developmental departments of the government. Information was collected from the following sources:

- Department of Scheduled Tribe Development
- Kerala State Planning Board
- Directorate of Public Instruction
- Department of Economics and Statistics
- Kerala Institute for Research, Training and Development Studies of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (KIRTADS)
- Centre of Excellence, Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode
- Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram

We started this study with the intention of getting district-wise empirical evidence on education of Tribal children. But soon we realized that multiplying empirical evidences in this case will only help us to repeat the same story over and over again. Instead, we realized that the areas that we chose to study had to be studied in depth. We conducted detailed field investigations in the districts of Wayanad, Palakkad and Idukki, which together contributed 62 per cent of the tribal population in the state

¹⁶ P.K. Michael Tharakan, 'Socio-Religious Reform Movements, Process of Democratization and Human Development: The Case of Kerala, South-West India', in Lars Rudebeck (et.al) (eds), *Democratization in the Third World, Concrete Cases in Comparative and Theoretical Perspective*, Macmillan, London, 1998, pp.144-172.

The research instruments (questionnaires/checklists) were prepared for collecting information/data/opinion from students, parents, teachers of regular schools and Alternative Schools, elected representatives of Local Governments (LGs). These were prepared on the basis of literature survey and depth-interviews conducted with the stakeholders.

We also found that instead of survey method, in-depth discussions, focus group discussions, case studies and interviews will be more beneficial for this study.

The following activities were undertaken as part of the field work:

1. In-depth interviews with different stakeholders
 - Officials of the Department of Scheduled Tribe Development
 - Officials of the Department of Education and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
 - Tribal children
 - Parents of Tribal Children
 - Teachers in regular schools and Alternative Schools
 - Elected representatives and officials of LGs
 - Teachers of District Institute of Education and Training
 - Individuals/NGOs running education intervention programmes for tribal children
 - Wardens and other staff of Tribal Hostels and Model Residential School
2. Focus Group Discussion with parents of tribal children in Tribal hamlets
3. Discussions with Tribal Volunteers
4. Identification of innovations and visiting sites of innovation
5. Collection of data and information from regular schools and Alternative schools
6. Case Study of Hostels for Tribal Children
7. Case Study of Model Residential School

The preliminary draft of this report was presented at a Public Hearing on the subject held on January 18, 2007 at Kozhikode. Number of social activists, NGO representatives, elected representatives and bureaucrats in addition to Adivasis themselves participated in this Hearing. The comments, criticisms and insights received from the Public Hearing have also been taken note of while finalising the report.

SECTION II

DENIAL OF ACCESS TO AND EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION: THE CASE OF TRIBAL EDUCATION

As noted in SECTION I, majority of ST children study in government schools. Therefore, if we are planning for improvement of the education of Tribal children, we should certainly concentrate upon public education and within it, government school education. A Baseline Study of Institutions Under Service Delivery Project- Lower Primary School, [Submitted to Modernising Government Programme, Government of Kerala], undertaken by the CSES, in 2006 has provided many insights into deficiencies in Governmental School System. We shall discuss those facts in reference to this study as Baseline Study (BS). The study opens with a description of what the study team found with regard to Edamalakkudy Government LPS functioning in a Tribal area and catering to 28 Tribal colonies. Let us quote in detail [p.7].

The investigator reached the school by walking for about five hours (from Pettymudi to Edamalakkudy). No vehicle was available. He had to abandon his first attempt to reach the school, as he could not get anybody who knows the place to accompany him (The investigator says he might have travelled about 20 Kilometres through the hills). The school is functioning in a 4 – room building with tin-sheet roofing. Only one of the rooms is reportedly used as a classroom. The classroom size comes to about 360 Sq.ft. The office room is functioning in one room and the remaining two rooms are used for teachers' accommodation. There are 5 desks and 5 benches in the classroom. The school does not have kitchen, toilet or water connection. It was reported that the school had reopened in the 2005–06 academic year only after two months of reopening of the schools all over the state. At the commencement of the academic year, there were about 90 students. But now only about 10 students come to the school, while the rest go for work. The local community has a more or less good opinion about the teachers and feels that it is difficult for the teachers to come to the school. They feel that it is because of the lack of interest on the part of the students that classes are irregular. But there is also a section that feels that the children feel disoriented towards studies because the teachers are irregular.

It should be added that while Edamalakkudi G.L.P.S. was one of the Schools selected for institutional Survey, it could not be surveyed because “the School was closed for the *Onam* vacation three days prior to the actual vacation” [p.6].

It is important to note that literacy levels in one Tribal colony in Ernakulam district called Pongumchuvadu (12 Kilometres away from Edamalayar in Vengoor Panchayat of Kunnathunadu taluk) which was specially taken care of in the original Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) in 1991 experienced a major setback by

1999, which was reported in a study undertaken by one of the authors of this report¹⁷. It is not too surprising that the setback has happened. The TLC planned to buildup, sustain, and maintain higher literacy levels through a campaign followed by two other stages supported primarily by institutionalization of the campaign's achievements through greater school enrolment and regular formal education. Such a strategy was particularly relevant for an educationally/literacy-wise backward social group like the STs. The plight of institutionalized formal school education system in a neighbouring region as revealed by the BS indicates that even if the steps envisaged in the afore mentioned strategy works, there are no indications which will make us optimistic. We present this evidence at the very outset to strike home the point that while a better educational system functioning at a higher level of efficiency than usual is required for the STs, they are offered a system which is far from satisfactory.

Even though the overall situation in many government schools may not be as bad as in Edamalakkudy LPS, serious deficiencies have been pointed out by the BS in other government schools also. While students from all other social groups reported percentage of presence on the day of the visit above 90 per cent, ST children reported only 80.4 per cent, (p.10, Table 2.4) indicating comparatively higher absenteeism among ST children.

With regard to infrastructure, government schools lag behind even with regard to the prescriptions of the Kerala Education Rules 1959 (KER); 54.8 per cent of schools surveyed had less than 0.4 hectares land while KER prescribes 0.4 to 0.8 hectares for LPS. Only 43.2 per cent schools had Pucca buildings (p.11, Table 2.5). Similarly KER instructions are followed only in a portion of schools with regard to compound wall (52.3%), playground (52.3%). (p.12, Table 2.6). With regard to amenities in the school, the most astounding is the fact that only 51.2 per cent of the schools had sufficient toilet for girls (p.13, Table 2.7).

While the KER stipulates that the classrooms should be separated by walls, only 29.5 per cent of schools were found to have all classes functioning in independent closed classrooms (p.14, Table 2.8). It was also found that only half of the schools had adequate benches for children and 15.9 per cent schools had adequate desks for children. Only 22.7 per cent of schools had classrooms with electric light and only 15.9 per cent of schools had electric fans in classrooms (p.15, Table 2.9). The sorry plight is seen with regard to Library room. Schools with reading corners in all classrooms were only 43.2 per cent. Meanwhile schools with sufficient facility for storing books were only 20.9 per cent (p.17, Table 2.11).

With regard to Teaching Aids also such failures are noted. Only 38.6 per cent of the schools had Encyclopedia, while only 6.8 per cent of schools had TV, only 13.6 per cent of schools had Computer (p.21, Table 2.14). With regard to cleanliness, 31.0 per cent of schools with toilets had their toilets maintained badly in terms of cleanliness and schools with kitchen/shed for preparation of noon meals had 29.7 per cent of them badly maintained in terms of cleanliness (p.21, Table 2.15). It was found that only 72.7 per cent of schools had kitchens and only 45.5 per cent schools had storeroom (p.19, Table 2.12).

¹⁷ See P.K. Michael Tharakan, The Ernakulam District Total Literacy Programme: Report of the Evaluation, MOHRD, GOI and CDS, Thiruvananthapuram, 1990, and P.K. Michael Tharakan, "Ernakulam Revisited: A Study of Literacy in the First Totally Literate District in India", in Malavika Karlekar (Ed) Paradigms of Learning. The Total Literacy Campaign in India, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 2004, 48-92.

Without adding more to the list of inadequacies already presented, one can very well envisage the sorry plight of government schools where 60.7 per cent of ST children covered by KP are studying. In addition, it should be observed that 57.1 per cent of fathers of students of government schools surveyed by the BS are labourers on daily wages. Majority has an education below 10th standard (62.7%). Similarly among their mothers 81.7 per cent are housewives (p.34, Table 3.2). What it implies is that the supplementary support expected from home will also be very low; especially parental support. Nevertheless all schools had Parent Teacher Association (PTA) while 88.6 per cent of the schools had MTA. PTAs had at least one general body meeting in the academic year in 54.5 per cent schools and 45.5 per cent had it more than once (p.30, Table 2.22). But 25 per cent of schools did not have a visit by the Assistant Educational Officer (AEO) in the previous year.

With such a sorry state of affairs of school and support infrastructure, the low level of potential parental academic support and also less than average administrative support, the Governmental Schools where not only STs but also poorer sections of society go for education, cannot be institutions for preparing students in such a way as to be successful in life after schools, as students under other managements are able to. One may question the validity of the principles of formal education on a philosophical level and argue that an alternate system may be built up. But as long as the STs along with other marginalised groups are expected to seek education through this system and they are expected to make good under this system; the system has to be improved in all respects. Being marginalised, they require special care and special forms of intervention in support. In such a situation, if only an obviously inadequate educational system is made available to them with no other feasible option, are not they being condemned to further and persistent backwardness? Many social thinkers have stressed that the availability of choices is fundamental to freedom. If STs are given only one choice that they are capable of choosing, and that too of a most inadequate one, is not our society condemning them into a situation of “educational unfreedom”?

The point raised in the paragraph just above is very different from the lack of educational performance that are attributed to STs in general and which are reported widely. In fact, the HDR has reported illiteracy rate as well as a grouping in terms of acquiring education at higher levels of schooling.

Table 2.1: Literacy Rate by Social Groups, 1991 Census

District	Non -SC/ST			SC			ST		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Thiruvananthapuram	94	87	90	87	78	82	82	67	74
Kollam	95	89	92	85	74	80	69	56	62
Pathanamthitta	98	95	96	90	83	86	76	71	73
Alappuzha	97	92	94	94	85	89	80	69	74
Kottayam	98	95	96	94	87	90	90	87	89
Idukki	94	88	91	81	64	73	68	57	63
Ernakulam	96	90	93	87	78	82	81	72	77
Thrissur	95	89	92	84	74	79	55	48	51
Palakkad	91	80	85	75	60	67	40	29	35

Table 2.1 Contd...

Malappuram	93	85	89	85	74	79	50	38	44
Kozhikode	96	87	92	91	81	86	57	48	52
Wayanad	94	86	90	82	69	75	58	43	51
Kannur	96	88	92	90	80	85	65	52	59
Kasargod	91	78	85	70	57	64	75	58	66
Kerala	95	88	91	85	74	80	63	51	57
Coefficient of variation (%)	3.5	6.5	5.0	7.6	11.9	9.5	20.1	26.1	22.7

Source: HDR 2005, p.66 Table 4.8

Table 2.2: Level of Education Among Social Groups, 1999-2000 (Rural)

Level of Education	ST	SC	OBC	Others
Illiterate	26.36	23.60	17.36	11.67
Literate without formal schooling	0.33	1.80	0.93	0.86
Below Primary	16.12	17.05	18.31	12.30
Primary	12.50	20.99	19.76	14.93
Middle	26.32	25.67	27.52	26.00
Secondary	8.22	7.49	10.72	19.50
Higher Secondary	5.26	1.67	3.20	7.44
Graduation and above	4.90	1.73	3.20	7.30

Source: HDR 2005, (p.66, Table 4.7)

Our argument is that even if the STs are fully aware of the benefits of formal education and are willing to acquire qualifications at higher levels, they are unlikely to get a high quality education which will put them on a steady equal to that of others.

The importance of education in the pattern of development so far followed in Kerala, cannot be over emphasized. Communities and social/economic groups considered backward were able to acquire social and economic mobility through formal education and employment on the basis of educational qualifications. Behind such transformation was a crucial factor of intensive and extensive commercialization of the agricultural economy of the region. The increase in cultivation of crops like tapioca and coconut, both crops which could be cultivated in small plots, helped even economically poorer landholders to make increased incomes from commercial cropping. Most of the income made out of such a cropping pattern got invested in education of the landholders' children, because by that time education was found to be the safest and surest route to social uplift and security.¹⁸ By late 1969, there was further asset redistribution in favour of the same communities who could make use of it to further educate their children. It is the children of these landholders, both middle class and lower middle class, who migrate outside the State and replenish their family budget through remittances.

¹⁸ These observations were made earlier. For instance see, P.K. Michael Tharakan "Socio-economic Factors in Educational Development: Case of Nineteenth Century Travancore", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol: XIV, No. 46-47, 1984; P.K. Michael Tharakan, "Socio-Religious Reform Movements and Demand for Indications of Development. Thiruvithamkoor 1860-1930", in Alok Bhalla and Peter J Bumke (Eds) *Images of Rural India in the Twentieth Century*, Sterling, New Delhi, 1992, pp 134-142 and P.K. Michael Tharakan: op.cit. 1998.

Landholders, even the nominal landholders, did benefit from such a transformation. In the sixties when the landless agricultural labourers also benefited in a lesser scale by the granting of Kudikidappu rights¹⁹ they also invested the small amounts they could gain, in education of their children and almost caught up with the rest of the population in school enrolment by around 1971. One prominent social group, as already pointed out, which did not thus benefit from asset redistribution and related changes were the STs. What we found out from KP is that the poorer sections of Kerala society which included the STs are losing their land to those richer than them over the last five years. A similar pattern is found in an equally important social asset, that of education, because ST students are dropping out as they go up in the educational ladder, thereby worsening their educational situation in comparison with other groups.

Table 2.3: Retention Pattern Across Social Groups 1993-94 to 2002-03

Community	Standard									
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
All Communities	100	103.92	102.58	101.94	105.14	104.32	109.77	108.40	103.80	85.55
Scheduled Castes	100	106.65	106.02	106.53	107.26	106.01	111.04	108.05	101.61	76.82
Scheduled Tribes	100	101.89	94.69	90.56	86.25	77.17	77.79	73.26	66.24	46.24

Source: HDR, 2005, p.87, Table 9.1b

Keeping these factors in mind, let us take a closer look at the education of Tribal children at the field level. According to the Educational Statistics Since Independence, published by the Directorate of Public Instruction (DPI), Department of General Education, Government. of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 2004 (to be referred here in after as ES), there were 5,001,761 students from all communities enrolled in government, aided and unaided schools in 2002-03 of which 5,33,488 students were from SC and 59,836 students were from ST (ES, p.88, Table V.26). Though the KP found no student from ST families surveyed in Unaided schools in 2005, there were 1,083 ST students in Unaided schools according to ES. Nevertheless it is a very small number.

If the education system is to be capable of turning out good ST school graduates at the end of the schooling process, there should be more ST teachers than there is now. This suggestion is not made on the assumption that only ST teachers will be able to teach ST students properly. As long as the number of ST teachers remains low as it is now, the system may have to depend upon non-ST teachers. But the argument for more ST teachers emerges out of two other observations. One is that teachers from ST community are likely to be better suited to handle dialect, and cultural differences between ST students and others as well as between different tribes. They are likely to have more understanding of the problems that every ST student is likely to face at one stage or other of the schooling process. Their increased presence is also likely to instill greater reassurance as well as self-confidence among ST students. The second observation is that if the education system fails to produce more ST teachers, recruited and employed according to qualifications, it points to its failure as a system. With these observations let us look at the number of ST teachers given by ES.

¹⁹ K.N. Raj and Michael Tharakan, "Agrarian Reform in Kerala and its Impact on the Rural Economy: A Preliminary Assessment", in Ajith Kumar Ghose (ed): Agrarian Reform in Contemporary Developing Countries, Croom Helm and St. Martin's Press, London and New York, 1983, pp.31-45.

Table 2.4: District-wise Number of SC and ST Teachers- 2002-03

Districts	Scheduled Caste Teachers			Scheduled Tribe Teachers		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Thiruvananthapuram	127	426	553	5	17	22
Kollam	67	182	249	0	0	0
Pathanamthitta	49	110	159	2	5	7
Alappuzha	69	231	300	3	1	4
Kottayam	52	216	268	11	60	71
Idukki	146	201	347	25	57	82
Ernakulam	118	252	370	4	19	23
Thrissur	119	360	479	1	5	6
Palakkad	183	266	449	13	20	33
Malappuram	315	454	769	6	9	15
Kozhikode	191	250	441	3	4	7
Wayanad	117	110	227	26	51	77
Kannur	154	249	403	6	12	18
Kasargod	50	46	96	6	12	18
Total	1757	3353	5110	111	263	374

Source: Educational Statistics since Independence, 2004, p.179, Table V.65

Of the 1,76,200 school teachers, only 374 were ST teachers. There is no doubt that the number is totally inadequate. One thing that is to be noted is that 313 teachers out of the 374 ST teachers are in the Government schools, while 55 are in the Aided Schools and 6 are in the unaided schools (ES 2004, p.179, Table V.66).

There have been some concerted efforts on the part of the Government to induce ST students to enter schools. Scholarships are given to ST students. Department of ST Development, Social Welfare Board, Social Welfare Department etc. are running hostels and providing stipend to students. The Noon Meal programme, and distribution of food grains during the festive season are also being done under official initiative²⁰. These steps must be having their favourable impact upon enrollment rates of ST students which was 1.20 per cent of the total number of students in 2003-04 (*Economic Review 2005*). But it should be noted that while the total dropout rates for all communities in 2002-03 was 1.11 and for SC was 1.33, for ST it was as high as 4.30²¹.

The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) with the objective of “universal access to primary education through formal schools or their alternatives” was introduced in six districts of Kerala, including three with highest concentration of Tribal population. In their attempt to find out the reasons for low enrollment and high drop outs, the Programme identified geographical or social isolation, poverty, linguistic barriers, lack of sufficient educational facility, gender discrimination etc. They also found a general

²⁰ For details see, *Educational Administration in Kerala*, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi, 1994.

²¹ Selected Educational Statistics, 2004-05, Directorate of Public Instruction, Thiruvananthapuram.

apathy or lack of awareness among Tribal parents about the need for education of their children. The DPEP organized Grihasadas (get together of families) to get parents to enroll their children²². It might have had at least limited effect. Yet there remained the problem of geographical isolation. While the Economic Review 2001 has estimated that there was a LPS within every 2 KMs, a UPS within every 3 KMs, and HS within every 6 KMs, there were still 1128 school-less habitations in the state. Under the DPEP, 61 new schools were started. The details are given below.

Table 2.5: District-wise Details of New Schools

District	Number of Schools
Thiruvananthapuram	0
Idukki	16
Palakkad	8
Malappuram	5
Wayanad	25
Kasargod	7
Total	61

Source: DPEP Kerala: A Retrospect, 2003

Another initiative of DPEP was Alternative Schooling envisaged to overcome the problem of ST children not being able to relate to formal schooling. It had the objective “to provide access and education to the children of the socially disadvantaged and economically backward communities by adopting new methods of Alternative Education that do not clash with their social and economic demands”²³. This programme catered to children who have dropped out as well as those who could not enroll and was limited to Tribal areas, Coastal areas and among street children, who were not covered by the regular system.

Alternatives schools (AS) are Multi Grade Learning Centres (MGLC) fashioned after the Rishi Valley School in Andhra Pradesh. Under their system of vertical grouping, students of different ages learnt together. Every child could do his/her own work with the help of Self-Learning Materials (SLM). These SLMs were serially numbered for grade I, II, III and IV to facilitate the movement of child to a higher level. The teacher was expected to be a facilitator. Academic training was supplemented by training in craft, music, athletics etc. Once the students completed their education in these MGLCs, they were issued Transfer Certificate (TC) and were mainstreamed into the regular schools in class V after an eligibility test.

The instructors of AS reported problems in communicating with children due to differences in the dialects. DPEP in Palakkad district had developed Tribal link language Learning Materials in 1998, with the involvement of Tribal community. It aimed at acquainting the Instructors/facilitators with Tribal dialects, common usages and the vocabulary of Tribal children. To solve the perceived problem of teacher apathy

²² DPEP Kerala: A Retrospect, DPEP Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 2003.

²³ Evaluation of Alternative Schooling System under DPEP in Kerala, CSES, Kochi, 2003.

and also of dialects, eligible young people from the community or neighbouring areas were recruited as teachers in AS. The candidates were to be below 30 years of age and with a minimum qualification of SSLC. They were expected to be proficient in local language and culture. They were trained by Block Resource Centres (BRCs). Though there was active participation of Tribal community and Local Government (LG) in the founding and functioning of such ASs, the Instructors/facilitators got a honorarium much lower than regular school teachers and were not eligible for any other benefits.

The CSES study found that the rate of attendance in AS was higher among Tribal Students at 79 per cent as against 58 per cent among students from coastal areas. It was also found that students from Tribal communities were more regular than those from coastal areas. Different evaluation studies conducted in regular schools under DPEP found that performance of ST students have improved, but not to the extent of the improvement by others. Since AS do not come under such evaluation, one may infer that there were not sufficient efforts to improve the programme of ST students in regular schools; or that the regular instruction was not made sufficiently Tribal sensitive. Meanwhile the efforts at opening new schools and AS centres under DPEP were generally appreciated.

The DPEP was followed by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), an effort to universalise elementary education through community ownership of the school system. The educational development of children belonging to SC/ST is to be a special focus of the SSA. Every activity under the SSA must identify the benefits that will accrue to children from these communities. It was envisaged to encourage the participation of SC/ST in the affairs of the school so that a sense of ownership of the system is felt by these communities. The interventions for children belonging to SC/ST communities are to be based on the intensive micro planning, addressing the needs of every child. Some interventions are listed below:

- Engagement of community organizers from SC/ST communities with a focus on schooling needs of children from specific households.
- Special teaching support as per need.
- Ensuring sense of ownership of school committees by SC/ST communities.
- Training programmes for motivation for schooling.
- Setting up of alternative schooling facilities in unserved habitations and for other out of school children using teachers from the concerned communities.
- Monitoring attendance and retention of children from weaker sections regularly.
- Providing content specific interventions in the form of a hostel, an incentive or a special facility as required.
- Involving community leaders in school management.

Under SSA, an amount up to Rs.15 lakhs per intervention per year and up to Rs.50 lakhs in a district in a particular year can be provided for context specific innovative intervention for girl's education and education of SC/ST children²⁴.

²⁴ The preceding paragraph is summarized from the website of Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The General Education Department [GED] of GOK, headed by the Director of Public Instruction [DPI] is another important agency in the field. They have different Programmes like the noon meal programme, Education of the Handicapped, Group Personal Accident Insurance Scheme, and Training Courses etc. Of these, the most relevant for our study is the National Programme- National Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) of the Government of India under which is included the Noon Meal Programme. Free mid-day meals to poor pupils in LPS was introduced with the material assistance of CARE (Co-operative for American Relief Everywhere) during 1961-62 as per G.O.(R) No.2013/61.Edn.dated 31-3-1961. CARE started withdrawing their support from 1984 and left the field by 1986. Government of Kerala was compelled to take over the responsibility and *Kanji* feeding was introduced from 1-12-1984. Government and Aided LPS in 222 fisher people's villages and tribal belts were brought under the scheme. Subsequently the programme was extended to all Government and Aided LPS from 31-12-1985.

During 1987-88 the scheme developed a different shape. As a matter of policy, the programme was extended to all LPS and UP sections of HS. It was introduced as a people's programme. Feeding Committee was constituted in every feeding centre. The Committee consisted of the HM of the school, President of PTA, a representative of teachers, and a nominee of the LG. A State Level Committee was also constituted to review periodically the progress of implementation of the scheme. The food materials for feeding are made available on credit basis through the Civil Supplies Corporation. The heads of schools are to collect the feeding materials from the nearest Maveli Store on production of indents duly passed by the AEO concerned. Since the introduction of the NP-NSPE by Government of India on the 15th of August 1995, the noon meal scheme in Kerala also was brought under it. Accordingly, Government of India issues 100 grams of rice per pupil free of cost from standard I to V, who are in the list of noon feeding. Further, the Government of India finances partly the transportation cost of rice lifted from Food Corporation of India go-downs to Maveli Stores. DPI statistics give a figure of 26,82,644 students being fed by this scheme as on January 2006.

In spite of such official intervention and in spite of Kerala's achievements in education, there are obvious gaps which pertain especially to ST population. The Census of India 2001 shows that the overall literacy rate for all India is 65.38 and for ST is 47.10. Kerala has better literacy rates on both counts, the overall rate being 90.92 and ST rate being 64.35. Nevertheless it should be noted that difference between overall and ST literacy rate in Kerala which is 26.57 is higher than the difference between overall and ST literacy rate for all India which was only 18.28. Nearly one-fifth of the ST population (18.3%) is around the elementary school-going age (5-14 years). The enrollment of the tribal children at the primary stage is encouraging since their share in enrollment is slightly greater than their share in the total population. But the share of tribal children is seen to be falling sharply at the secondary and the higher secondary stage and the success rate is low in the SSLC examination, required for gaining entry into Higher Secondary stream. The pass percentage of ST students in the SSLC examination was 46 per cent as against the overall pass percentage of 70 according to Economic Review 2004. Terminal Assessment Study conducted by DPEP tested the achievement levels of class II and class IV students in DPEP districts in language and

mathematics. The study shows that the mean score of the ST children is lower than that of the children belonging to general category.

One of the major reasons for tribal backwardness in education, in spite of many interventions, must be the nature of their habitation. Significant number of STs lives in relatively remote areas not easily accessible to educational institutions. In Kerala, where historically, the easily accessible settlement pattern was a major factor in high and widely distributed literacy rates,²⁵ such a factor is important. As noted earlier, a significant proportion of ST households are living Below Poverty Line. With such circumstances forcing them to give priority for immediate measures of survival, it is not surprising that ST parents do not show enough interest and motivation for the education of their children, which in turn, results further in educational backwardness. Apart from such factors which emanate from among the tribal people and the conditions under which they live and their settlement pattern, there are factors attributed to deficiencies of various schemes meant for educational development of STs. Major drawbacks identified were that of lack of efforts taken to arouse interest among the target groups and mobilize them sufficiently²⁶. When we talked to an elected member of Noolpuzha Panchayat from an ST community who is interested in educational development of the community, we realised that he was not aware that he is a member of the School Development Committee. If it can happen to an elected people's representative from the ward where a Rajiv Gandhi Model Residential School is situated, what could be the plight of other ST persons all around? The lack of awareness seen is not to be related to the individual's own educational level, because he had completed the 7th standard. Besides, he is an activist of a major political party of the region.

Obviously, the level of informal participation by elected representatives, especially of LGs is very much desired. It is not that it is totally absent. There were several instances reported where the people's representatives took initiative in distributing uniforms and note books among ST students, and chair, table and almirah among SC students preparing for SSLC examinations, attending PTA meetings, appointing substitute teachers on 'daily wages' when regular teachers were found to be absent, and even in organising street dramas in *Adivasi Oorus* to mobilize educational interest. These activities are expected to help educational efforts among STs.

Why even such efforts do not materialize in educational progress of ST children can be understood from the extreme state of deprivation under which they live. A 13 year old girl whom we met in the Maikkara (Paniya) colony of Muthanga in Wayanad district is highly representative. At the stage of 4th standard she stopped studying. After that she was sent to her aunt's house in Kuppadi, where she got engaged in collecting ginger (*inchi pani*). After a while she came back to her own house with the second wife of her father. Her father's job according to her is "taking water to the Masters at the Check Post". She has an elder brother who works in a shop. Her younger sister is studying in Government LPS, Muthanga. Her

²⁵ See P.K. Michael Tharakan, "Divergent Effects of Similar Policies: A Study of Educational Policies of Travancore and British India", Report of the Workshop-cum-Seminar on Educational Development in Kerala, NIEPA, New Delhi, October 27 – 28, 1986.

²⁶ C. Krishnan, "Awareness and Utilisation of Educational Development Schemes by Tribesfolk of Wayanad", Discussion Paper No.12, KRPLLD, Thiruvananthapuram, December 1999.

elder sister who is 17 years old is an unwed mother with an infant and she has to help her elder sister and her infant. She has to do housework including bringing water from a well. She is interested in studying further. No house in the colony has electricity. By six o'clock in the evening the place becomes quite dark. The only positive thing is that her house is tiled. But for some reason she sleeps in her neighbour's house. The younger children of the colony go to Muthanga school while the elder children go to Model Residential School (MRS) or Tribal Hostel.

Next door in the same colony we encountered a 24 year old woman who is intensely interested in education of her children. She herself has studied upto 8th standard. Though her husband and herself live by doing daily wage labour, she has managed to send her two children to school. The younger one, a girl, is studying in standard I in Muthanga. The elder, a boy is studying in the Model Residential School (MRS) Thirunelly where he was enrolled by nuns from the church. The mother tells us that the boy likes it there so much that he does not like to come home. In the MRS, his food and stay are taken care of. Occasionally the mother goes to the neighbouring shop and from there telephones the school to enquire about her son. She was able to send both her children to Anganwadis, which is only 10 minutes walk from her residence. She is dreaming of educating her children further.

In the preceding case it seems that it is the desire of the mother that has taken the children to the school; though with active assistance from outside. There seems to be the slight danger of her son rejecting his home environment. But a slightly different story is reported from Pilakavu (Urali) colony. We met a mother with two children, the elder a girl of ten years and the younger a son aged six years. The girl is in the 5th standard at Moolamkavu School. The son is going to the nearby Balawadi. The mother who had no education has plans to send her son next year to school. What was revealing was the case of the girl who on the particular day when we met the mother has not gone to school. She has not gone to school for about a month. Until 4th standard she used to go to the Aided Primary School at Naikkatty, from where she was shifted to Moolankavu school which is nearer. The teachers from Naikkatty School came enquiring when her daughter was absent. They used to visit the colony occasionally. But no teacher has come so far from Moolankavu school. The mother is a daily wage labourer and according to her, she has bought sufficient pencil, rubber and notebooks for her daughter. She went to her daughter's school twice during the current year. One was to collect the stipend money and the other was for a school meeting. At the meeting, teacher told her that her daughter is not studying properly. Though the teachers called her to discuss her daughters' absenteeism she could not go because of her work. The mother's explanation is that "the daughter is reluctant to go to school though I ask her to go". Her husband who has studied up to 4th standard, is an alcoholic and he takes no interest in the education of his children. Her daughter had to go to school some days without food. She had no major health problems, except an occasional cough, for which she has been treated by the doctor at Naikatti. In the house the only light available is the dim solar light from a common source, supplemented by a kerosene lamp. There is no cot, chair or table.

A Kattunayaka family, one of the Primitive Tribes, with a first standard girl student who had also gone to anganwadi (from Pilakavu colony) is reported to be staying in the house built for them by the Panchayat

along with her father, mother, sister, her husband and two children, and his brother. The flooring of the house is cow dung and there is no furniture or electricity, or tap water. She got enrolled in the school because the teachers from Naikkatty School came to the colony to persuade parents to send their children to school. The parents do not have any hopes that if their child studies, it would help them in their old age. Hence they have no active interest in her schooling.

Similarly a Mullu Kuruma family from Naikkatty who has a boy studying in the 4th standard, reports that he cannot even read or write. His father who has completed 9th standard, and working as a wage labourer tries to help him. His mother who is illiterate went to the PTA meeting where she was told of his inadequacy. The teachers told her that he does not take even the homework home.

An Urali Kuruma family from Pilakavu colony has father, mother, four children and grandmother staying together. The father is engaged in their traditional job of basket making, while the mother works as daily wage labourer. The elder children are dropouts, one from the 9th standard and the other from the 5th standard, from the Moolankavu Government School. The eldest dropped out reportedly because of shortage of money to meet educational expenses. The mother went to Kodag for the delivery of her fourth child and the child studying in the 5th standard accompanied her. When they came back, teachers were unwilling to readmit the boy. The third child, a girl, is studying in Naikkatty Aided LPS and since the mother is working as a labourer and the girl's brother is engaged in grazing cattle, they have enough money to meet the educational expenses of the girl child. She studies after coming back from school. Her brothers try to help her but according to the family she is reluctant to obey them. They also reported that if the parents fail to participate in PTA meetings the child gets punished. She had to give money to buy the stamp issued in connection with Navika Sena Pathaka Dinam. She also had to pay Rs.5 for the science exhibition. The parents are asked to participate in programmes conducted at school like cleaning the school compound during epidemics like chikungunya, and preparing food for camps conducted in the School etc. Last year they got notebooks from the Panchayat.

More insights were gathered from a Focus Group Discussion [FGD] held in the Pilakavu colony. There are 65 houses in Pilakavu; almost all were built by the Panchayat. The compounds are kept clean. Most of the children from this colony are studying either in Aided LPS Naikkatty or Moolankavu Government School. It was the mothers who participated in the FGD. Most of them are illiterate but they seem to be keen that their children should study. The students are mainly attending LPS or UPS. Most of the mothers reported that their children were sent to Balawadi before going to school. The teachers came to the colony to convince them that all children who are of six years in age should be enrolled in school. Nevertheless there are some who are still staying back. One parent said that some boys are irregular in attending the classes. Another parent said that their family goes to Kodag during vacation and returns one month after summer vacation. From the Naikkatty School, teachers come in search of children who are absent. Some drop out due to lack of money. The frequently occurring diseases in the colony are fever, cold, cough and throat pain. The mothers claim that their children go to school after taking breakfast. Some of them are happy with the teachers; and they pointed out a good teacher should not only teach well but should also punish the child if he/she does something wrong. In their opinion child is being

educated for the welfare of the child. Their most important suggestion was that if someone comes to give tuition every evening it would be helpful to their children.

As part of the study, we visited two tribal colonies in Palakkad district viz., Vadakottathara and Karadippara in Attappady area. The Vadakottathara hamlet consists of 73 houses and accommodates 104 families belonging to Irula tribe, a relatively forward tribal group in Attappady region. The colony is situated on the side of a major road and the nearest Primary School is about two kilometres away and the nearest Higher Secondary School is about five kilometres away at Agali. Based on the information made available by the tribal volunteer, of the 74 children in the hamlet going to school, 13 are studying in Model Residential Schools (9 students in Palakkad district, 2 in Thiruvananthapuram district, 1 in Idukki district and 1 in Wayanad district), 33 are staying in different tribal hostels and the remaining 28 students are day scholars. One of the families has a doctor working in Amrita Super Specialty Hospital, Kochi. Members of some other families are employed in the government sector. Here also we could meet many students who have dropped out of the school. For instance, a 12 year old boy who was declared 'passed in 6th standard' without attending the annual examination, discontinued his studies two weeks after the classes started in 7th Standard. His mother, who was a helper in the nearby Anganwadi, committed suicide after quarreling with his father about six years back. His father is a drunkard. He has two elder sisters; one aged 22 years is a casual labourer who studied up to 7th Standard. She had to discontinue her study as she had to look after the boy. Now the family is being taken care of by her. The younger among the sisters is studying in 10th Standard in the MRS Attappady where she joined in 5th Standard. His grandmother is staying with them. The boy was studying in Government U.P. School Kottathara. While studying in 6th standard, he went to his uncle's house and stayed there for three months. He remained absent from the school during this period. But no teacher visited his house to enquire about his absence or to persuade his father or sister to send the child to the school. He rejoined the school after three months. A leave letter was given to school authorities by his sister stating that the child was not able to attend the school because of a wound in his legs. The subject he likes most is English; he likes to speak the same with others. Throughout the discussion he used to express his opinion by using English words 'yah...yes...no...right' etc. He likes English, because he likes the English teacher who belongs to Irula tribe. He also likes his Science teacher (again a teacher belonging to Irula tribe) who teaches well according to the student. Outside the classroom, both these teachers speak to him in Irula dialect. The boy told us that he was not interested in studying. He never did his homework at home. He usually copies the homework from his best friend belonging to Irula tribe and living in another hamlet. He was interested in games and he participated in the *Adivasi Attam or Kummi*. He went for field trip to Malampuzha and the money for the purpose had been taken from his monthly stipend. He used to go to school early in the morning taking his cricket bat worth Rs.70 and then play up to 10 O'clock. Teachers check their homework and beat the students if they didn't do the homework. He also reported that teachers conducted special classes for backward children in the evening. He, along with his friends in the colony, go for performing *panchari melam* in different temples during festival season. He gets Rs.250 to 300 and food for a programme. He had Cholera, Chicken Pox and fever in the last few years. He was given herbs for treating these diseases.

It is obvious that problems in the family and lack of motivation of the boy have led to his drop out. The latter factor itself is a product of the family and community environment in which he lives. It is also clear that the boy dropped out after long absence from school. The school authorities seem not to have taken the necessary action in spite of the continued absence of the child from the school. It may also be noted that he is residing in a hamlet where accessibility to school is not a major problem.

The Karadippara colony in Attappady area in Palakkad district is in a remote location. The nearest LP School (LPS Karara) is about six kilometres (children have to travel for about one and a half hours) away. But we found that most of the children are going to school. Only children studying in the LP section are staying with their parents while most of those studying in higher classes are staying in tribal hostels. On the day of our visit (Friday), Chieftain's (Ooru Mooppan) child studying in 1st standard and two of her classmates from the same Ooru did not go to school. Their parents told us that the children often take leave from school as they 'get tired of their long walk to LPS Karara'. They also told us that children stay back at home on many days during the rainy season.

One of the main educational programmes of the Department for ST Development is the running of tribal hostels. There are 109 pre-matric hostels (68boys + 38girls + 3mixed) functioning under the department²⁷. These hostels are meant for students who do not stay within reasonable distance from the schools. Only 62 hostels have permanent building and the work is in progress for 8 hostels. At present there is no selection criteria for admission into tribal hostels. First come are first enrolled. Ten per cent seats are reserved for non-tribes but hardly anyone comes to the tribal hostels in Sultan Bathery area. The STDD meets monthly food expenses at the rate of Rs.700 per student. The Department also provides two pairs of uniform to each student (The spending could not be more than Rs. 350 per student in LP section, Rs. 500 for UP section and Rs. 600 for HS section). The Department spends Rs. 145 once in three years for each student to buy a canvas bag. The annual grant for buying sports material is Rs. 600 per hostel. There is also provision for stationery grant (Rs. 100 to LP students, Rs.125 to UP students and Rs. 200 to High School students). While all hostel inmates are given a washing allowance of Rs. 40 per month per student, the boys get an additional Rs.10 as hair cut allowance.

Almost all the grants mentioned above are not given directly to the hostel. Different items are purchased on credit basis. The STDD pays the bill to the concerned dealer. The lumpsum grant paid to the students of the hostel are received by the parents from the school. Whenever there is a medical expense, the warden gets it reimbursed by submitting bill/voucher to the Tribal Extension Officer. A Permanent Advance (PA) of Rs. 2000 is given to the hostel for purchasing fish, meat etc. Food expenses of the staff of the hostel are recovered by charging Mess Charge Recovery (MCR) of Rs. 300 per month.

In the Tribal Hostel at Vaduvanchal in Wayanad district, the sanctioned strength is 40 but the hostel could not accommodate 40 students due to shortage of facilities. Only 36 students have been admitted. Of this, four have dropped out. The hostel was functioning at Cheengeri in a rent-free building. Though

²⁷ " ST Development Programme 2005-06", Department for ST Development.

the Block Panchayat has constructed a new building for the hostel, it is under vigilance enquiry. The construction was made without consulting the Department for ST Development. Since the Panchayat has constructed a new building, the Department cannot build for the same purpose, again, according to the STDD official. The students cannot be shifted to the new building until the vigilance enquiry is over. In the hostel there were five rooms- one bedroom, warden's room, store, kitchen and a study room. There were 16 beds available and 32 students are accommodated here. There is one fan and two tube lights in the room where all the 32 students stay. A wooden shelf with three racks is placed on the floor. The storage space is totally inadequate and students' dress materials are hanging on ropes above the beds, and canvas bags are kept under the cots and in the corner of the room. Four benches and desks have been put together in a room to make a dining space. Cleanliness of the hall is average, while the other rooms and premises are kept clean. There is good ventilation. As far as the facilities are concerned, there is no telephone. Television is not in working condition. No radio is available. There is no proper library but some story books and old novels are available. Though the Hostel Management Committee (HMC) has promised to supply newspapers, they are yet to be received. The warden who has been working here for two years resides in Kulavathara, Wayanad and he goes home daily. As far as medical facilities are concerned, the doctor from the Primary Health Centre (PHC) visits the hostel once in two months for conducting health check-up. First Aid Box with all essential items are available. The common ailment seen among the students is scabies and itching. To treat this, children were taken to the PHC in Ambalavayal (about two kilometers away) either by the watchman or by the warden.

No Parents' Committee has been formed. There is a HMC in which the president of the Panchayat, the ward member, a Tribal Member of the Panchayat, parents and social workers are members. Hardly any contribution is made by the parents to the running of the hostel. There is no way of communication for the parents to establish contact with their children except visits. Parents of young children visit the hostel sometimes to wash their clothes. The warden does not hold any meeting with parents.

The students staying in a Tribal Hostel need not be from a single school. But all the students in this hostel are studying in Ambalavayal School which is about two kilometers away. They come from different places like Meenangadi, Kalpetta, Vythiri, Muthanga, Pulpally etc. Of the three hostel inmates interviewed, two said that though they liked the food etc. provided at the hostel, they preferred staying with their parents.

Another pre-matric girls' hostel is functioning at Ambalavayal since 1977. This year, 68 students have been enrolled of which 5 have dropped out. The sanctioned strength is 60. The 63 students presently staying in the hostel share the two rooms available for their use. Though there are three tiers to the beds, one tier is used to keep their luggage and the girls share sleeping space. Only two bathrooms and five toilets are available for students. The toilets are kept clean. There is tuition room with desks, benches, and a blackboard. The dining hall is kept clean and sufficient number of concrete tables and wooden benches are made available. An office room, the warden's room, a storeroom, work area and a kitchen are also there. There is telephone. Television does not work. There is no radio or library. Around 100 books are available.

Two girls dropped out because of romance-related issues, while another girl dropped out because she did not have enough money to do a surgery recommended by the doctor. The common ailment found in this hostel also is scabies. There was a case of apparent food poisoning. Though there is no Parents' Committee, when the food poisoning incident occurred, a meeting was convened in which Panchayat members, Tribal Development Officer and some parents participated. The parents are not encouraged to discuss the details about their children with hostel warden. One student who has been interviewed in this hostel also said that she likes to stay with her parents.

The situation is slightly different in the Pre-matric hostel for boys at Sholayur in Palakkad district. The hostel was started in 1988 and is functioning in a building of the Department for ST Development built originally for a handloom society. A Girls' hostel is also functioning in the same compound, but in a separate building. The sanctioned strength of the hostel is 40, but 83 students have been admitted. Attappady region does not have a post matric hostel. Therefore, students studying in Higher Secondary Schools have also been admitted in the pre-matric hostels. This, along with the increase in demand from pre-matric students leads to congestion in the hostels. Reportedly, three students have dropped out from the hostel this year. All these children were suffering from sickle cell anaemia.

Though there is a scheme for providing two pairs of uniform to each student accommodated in tribal hostels, it has not been supplied yet (seven months after re-opening of the school in the current academic year). It was stated that the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP) office could not accept the lowest bid for supplying uniform as they expected the clothes to be of inferior quality. Officials also admit that delays occur due to the official procedures in accepting bid, ordering, stitching etc.

Model Residential Schools were started in Kerala in 1990-91 for providing better educational facilities to Scheduled Tribe children. The initiative came as part of the birth centenary celebration of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. There are 18 Model Residential Schools in Kerala²⁸.

Nine out of 18 MRS have own building. Four of them are functioning in other Government buildings on a temporary basis. The remaining five schools are functioning in rented buildings. Library and Laboratory facilities are available in nine schools. All of them have drinking water and toilet facilities. Telephone is available in all schools except the one in Uduma. Computers are available in 16 schools. Vehicles are available only in four schools. Only two schools, at Kattela and Nallornadu, have play ground.

²⁸ Study on Model Residential Schools in Kerala, Evaluation Division, State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram, 2006.

Table 2.6: Model Residential Schools According to District, Category and Type

Sl.No.	MRS	Category	Type	Year of startup	District
1	Kattela	HSS	Girls	1991	Thiruvananthapuram
2	Nalloomadu	HSS	Boys	1991	Wayanad
3	Manjeri	UP	Mixed	1993	Malappuram
4	Munnar	HS	Boys	1997	Idukki
5	Attappady	HS	Girls	1997	Palakkad
6	Munderi	HS	Girls	1997	Wayanad
7	Pathanamthitta	HS	Boys	1998	Pathanamthitta
8	Chalakydy	HS	Girls	1998	Thrissur
9	Pattuvam	HS	Boys	1998	Kannur
10	Uduma	HS	Girls	1998	Kasargod
11	Kulathupuzha	HS	Boys	2000	Kollam
12	Pinnakkanadu	HS	Girls	2000	Kottayam
13	Pookode	HS	Mixed	2000	Wayanad
14	Thirunelli	LP	Mixed	2000	Wayanad
15	Palakkad	UP	Mixed	2000	Palakkad
16	Thodupuzha	HS	Mixed	2001	Idukki
17	Noolpuzha	HS	Mixed	1991	Wayanad
18	Njaraneeli	LP	Mixed	2003	Thiruvananthapuram

Source: Study on MRS in Kerala, State Planning Board, 2006

For admission, STDD invites application in December/January and conducts common admission test. Upper Income limit for admission is fixed at Rs. 40,000/- per annum in the case of SC/ST students. For primitive tribes, there is no income limit. As per norms, admission has to be provided in the ratio of 19 ST students, 13 SC students and 3 Backward Community students. In 2004-05, there were 3630 students in MRS/Ashram Schools. Out of these 2950 were STs, 510 were SCs and 170 were from other categories. But students from forward communities are also admitted in some MRSs. The argument is that their enrolment can help ST students to come up into the social main stream. Students have to reside in the school premises. The students are provided with food, accommodation, uniform, other dresses, soap, oil and towel, mirror, note books and other facilities free of cost.

Teachers are posted by the DPI in MRS. Most of them are not aware of the objective of starting the MRS²⁹. The teachers posted in these schools are not given any training before joining service. Though the Headmasters/Principals are bound to serve at least five years in the same MRS, there are frequent transfers which affect the smooth functioning of the school. Non-continuity of teaching staff as a consequence of transfers is a major problem in MRS.

The teacher-student ratio which can be taken as an indicator of the quality of education, is as follows.

²⁹ ibid.

Table 2.7: Teacher-Student Ratio in MRS

Sl. No.	MRS	Total No. of	Total No. of Teachers	Ratio Students
1.	Kattela	29	325	1:11
2.	Nalloomadu	15	225	1:15
3.	Manjeri	10	227	1:23
4.	Munnar	14	187	1:13
5.	Attappady	11	190	1:17
6.	Munderi	13	198	1:15
7.	Pathanamthitta	8	162	1:20
8.	Chalakydy	11	205	1:17
9.	Pattuvam	14	190	1:14
10.	Uduma	11	210	1:19
11.	Kulathupuzha	8	142	1:18
12.	Pinnakkanadu	9	99	1:11
13.	Pookode	10	284	1:28
14.	Thirunelli	4	175	1:44
15.	Palakkad	2	171	1:86
16.	Thodupuzha	11	179	1:16
17.	Noolpuzha	9	357	1:40
18.	Njaraneeli	3	54	1:18

Source: Study on MRS in Kerala, SPB, 2006

We made a visit to the MRS in Noolpuzha, in Wayanad. The MRS is for children of the primitive tribe Kattunayaka. A section of the classrooms are functioning in the hostel building. All the classes except 2nd and 4th have closed classrooms. There is no separate room for HM. Library is used as classroom for 10th standard. 1297 books are kept in two almirahs in the staff room. There is a storeroom and the laboratory equipments are kept there.

It was also reported that only 26 per cent of the students passed in the SSLC examination of the previous year. Most failures were in mathematics. This, according to the teachers, happened because the mathematics teacher who was teaching in the 10th standard went for higher studies and there was a gap of few months before a temporary teacher was appointed to fill the vacancy. Some teachers are taking tuition in the evening, but only for higher classes.

Most of the parents do not come for PTA meetings as almost all the parents go for daily wage labour. Only parents of tenth standard students are informed by letter about the PTA meetings.

A teacher of the school pointed out that dialect/language is a problem. Since most of the students belong to a single Tribe they talk only in their language amongst themselves. Though they get food etc. at the school, most of the students want to go home, according to the teacher. The students perform very well in extra curricular activities. They also do well in group discussions but not so much in regular classes. There are alumni of the MRS who are fully unemployed.

The hostel of the MRS was also visited. Usually students in the hostel study sitting on their beds. The study area is also not free of dust and waste paper. No garbage bin was seen. Dining hall is not cleaned properly. Toilets are not kept clean. Hostel does not have telephone but has TV and Radio. First aid box with all essential items were there. The common ailment seen among the students is scabies and itching. Many girl students suffer from anaemia reportedly because they do not consume egg and fish. Hostel warden does not usually meet parents who come to the school. Though it is said that counseling facilities are available in Tribal Hostels as well as in MRS, it was not found to be provided here. Local Government does not help the hostel and it was not known whether any monitoring committee functions at the Local Government level. NGOs do bring in few students for admission. One issue relating to NGO intervention reported by the hostel authorities is that by providing support exclusively to these students, other students feel discriminated. It was suggested that if the NGOs intervene in the functioning of hostel by providing financial or material support to students, it should be made available to all students in the hostel. A similar sentiment was expressed by some of the parents whom we met in the Ooru that some NGOs provide support only for some children in the Ooru but not to all. This, according to them has created apathy to this NGO among other parents. Four out of nine students whom we met in the MRS preferred staying at home while others felt that it was better in the school since their parents will find it difficult at home due to poverty. One student complained of severe punishment meted out by teachers and the insufficiency of food served. The child felt that the food served for the staff is better. He wants to be at home, in spite of all the problems there, because he felt that there is no freedom in school. Another student who also talked of punishment including beating felt that home is better since the school has only limited freedom.

What we have found is that both the Tribal Hostel and MRS - both innovative measures - are indeed failing to live up to the standards originally envisaged. If they are not able to maintain the standards that they are expected to, one can imagine the plight of regular schools with much less support from the existing educational/welfare system. We have already presented the perspective from the parents/households about the educational process that they encounter. We shall further discuss what we found at the level of school itself.

We visited the Mathamangalam Government UP school in Naikkatty in Noolpuzha Grama Panchayat in Wayanad district and held extensive discussions. The school is easily accessible and has got a pleasant atmosphere comparatively free of noise and air pollution. The total land area available is 3 acres and 18 cents and has a good play ground. There is a separate staff room, Headmaster's room and kitchen. There is no storeroom; hence the space behind the shelves in the HM's room is used as storage space. The school does not have a library or laboratory. Reportedly the room built for the library is now being used as computer room. The school has six computers, one of them provided by the Rotary Club and the rest by SSA. Two toilets are available for girls and one is available for boys. Besides, four toilets are additionally built with SSA fund, but are not being used. One special toilet has also been built under Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) scheme and the school verandahs were built with ramp for facilitating movement of disabled children. But there are no disabled children in the school.

It should be noted that the school has 10 divisions, but only six of them are functioning in independent classrooms. The remaining classrooms are separated by temporary partition which allows for disturbance from other classrooms. Lack of funds seems to prevent building better classrooms. In the available classrooms which are clean, electric lights are also provided. Ten benches and ten desks are provided in the classroom that we visited, and they are arranged in a semi-circle. The room had enough space which allows student movement and allows the teacher to reach the children. The teachers are regular in attending to their work. The post of one permanent teacher was vacant.

The school receives different kinds of support from various sources. The Panchayat provides a newspaper and a journal and has sanctioned Rs. 90,000/- for an open stage. The executive committee of the PTA is functioning well and its meetings are held frequently. The most important contribution made by the PTA is the nursery school which is being run using the monthly fee of Rs. 40 per child. It was usually the mothers of tribal children who participate in the PTA meetings. Reportedly, the SSA is a major contributor of funds. The school received teacher grant, school grant, maintenance grant and a grant for Yoga training for girls in this year and in the previous year, a library grant though the school does not have a library. Though the school is a Cluster Resource Centre (CRC), it does not function effectively. The Block Resource Centre (BRC) is in Sultan Bathery, but nobody from BRC visited the school in this academic year.

The school has 313 students of which around 60 per cent are ST students, from Paniya, Kattunayaka and Kuruma Tribes. There are irregular students but no drop out was reported in this academic year. Reportedly teachers visit the houses of absentees and bring them to school. They are keen to do that because a fall in enrollment can lead to drop in divisions and a possible loss of job.

There were the usual problems cited with regard to the teaching of ST children. Heavy absenteeism, lack of awareness, liquor consumption among parents, problems in their families including families with mothers alone and unwed/separated mothers etc. (which will have bearing upon the education of children), poverty, hesitation to mingle with other children, problems of language/dialect, migration of parents for ginger work (sometimes accompanied by the students), visit to relatives' houses leading to long absence from school, contagious diseases like scabies/itching and parents' lack of interest in educating their wards are some of them. The teachers felt that dialect is a problem but by around 4th standard they get over it. The Kurumar performs generally better among STs, but some Paniya students have special talents for extra-curricular activities. One of the teachers suggested that the State should first find out a solution for eliminating their poverty. For this, well-trained Tribal promoters are needed. It requires the help of the community, Panchayat, and educated persons from among the ST communities.

One of the ST students in a conversation talked about her inability to go on a field trip arranged by the school, for lack of money. She likes the school and wishes to be a school teacher herself but does not understand what is taught in Hindi class. She complained that one teacher beats her without reason. She is late on most of the days because her younger sister who comes with her to the school tends to wander about on the way.

We also visited the Aided LPS at Naikkatty, which has already been well mentioned in this report. At 9.35 a.m. when we arrived, students were cleaning the school surroundings. Classrooms are well ventilated with partially closed walls and cement floors. There is no electric light or fan in the classrooms. Only four toilets are available but they are kept clean. The school management does maintenance yearly.

Out of 227 students, 94 (41 per cent) are ST students. Two students dropped out due to difficulty of accessibility to school. Two other students are given bus fare by the teachers to reach school. Language/dialect is a problem particularly among first standard students. The ST students are generally termed to be “slow learners”. Their main problem is that they do not receive any help from their homes. Most of their parents are casual labourers and they have no understanding of the education process. Most of them drink alcohol regularly. It was suggested that a monitoring/reporting mechanism by Tribal promoters should be instituted to bring out problems faced by each family in relation to their children’s education; so that some efforts could be taken to solve them. One of the 4th standard students from the Kattunayaka Tribe with whom we had a long conversation said that she had to look after her younger sister.

We also visited GLPS, Muthanga. In two buildings there are six classrooms and a hall. An unfinished building which was started under the People’s Planning Campaign (PPC) and later abandoned is also seen. It seems the construction was abandoned due to difference of opinion between the Engineer and the Contractor. The Panchayat has built a kitchen/noon meal preparation room spending Rs. 48,000 during 1998-99.

Out of the 106 students, 81 per cent are from ST. There are two teachers from ST communities. The students face a dialect/language problem according to the teachers. The HM along with the President of the PTA does go on house visits to families of students. They would like to get more active co-operation from parents. Students suffer from scabies/itching. They absent themselves during the season of *Nellicka* (Gooseberry). No training is provided to them in their traditional skills. No PT teacher is appointed.

PTA is active and the President is also from the ST community. There is a School Support Group (SSG). Panchayat Member is helpful. They received grants from SSA, Modernising Government Programme (MGP), Grama Panchayat and Block Panchayat. But the Panchayat’s role seems to be restricted to construction of buildings, compound wall etc. The students who pass out of this LPS have to travel 4 kilometers to reach a UPS; to continue their studies. A TTC trained teacher from ST community identified the main problem with regard to ST education being the lack of support from the student’s home-environment. If one or two ST students from a colony absent themselves from the school or do not do the assigned homework, other ST students also follow suit. There is nobody to persuade them to do otherwise. She was also of the opinion that it is important to take steps to change the parents’ drinking and smoking habits.

We made a visit to the Government Tribal L.P. School, Champakkad in Idukki district. The school is located in a remote habitation which is near a hamlet of Hill Pulaya tribe on the shore of the river *Pambar*. The school presently has children from this hamlet only viz., Champakkad Hill Pulaya settlement colony. In a discussion with the Panchayat President, she pointed out that “the school is in the Chinnar

Wild life Sanctuary near the settlement (*Kudi*) of Hill Pulayas. There are 73 houses, an Anganwadi, an Ayurvedic clinic and some pucca buildings built by the Tribal department. Earlier these buildings were used as hostel for ST students. Then there were about 100 students in the school. In the 1980s, the hostel was shifted to Marayoor, 17 kilometres away from Champakkad. The student strength in the school fell drastically thereafter". In the Champakkad colony, we held discussions with a tribal family. Two of the four children in the family discontinued their studies after completing 4th standard. The younger children are studying in the nearby Government Tribal L.P. School, Champakkad. Father of the children told us that he does not have the money for meeting the bus fare to the Upper Primary School as it is located 17 kilometres away at Marayoor.

President of the Grama Panchayat also told us that many of the tribal families in the Champakkad colony, like the one reported above, discontinue their studies after completing 4th Standard in Champakkad Tribal LPS in the absence of an Upper Primary School in the nearby areas. The hostel at Marayoor accommodates only girls and therefore mostly boys drop out after 4th Standard. She also told us children in the nearby settlements are not coming to school as they have to travel through the forest and therefore remain illiterate.

The school has four teachers including the Headmaster. All teachers except the Headmaster are residing in the teachers' quarters. Some parents in the hamlet reported that Headmaster is irregular in coming to school. But they have good opinion about the other teachers and said that the teachers visit their house if the children do not go to school. The school did not have any dropout last year. School has tiled roofing, but it is not in good condition. There are four divisions in the school and three of them are partitioned by wooden screen. There is no electric light in the classrooms. Shortage of drinking water was reported. The school didn't provide noon meal on the day of our visit and on our enquiry it came out that the distribution of noon meal has been disrupted for few days due to the absence of the Headmaster.

When we enquired about the present situation in the Alternative school/Multi Grade Learning Centres which showed some prospects during the DPEP, again a mixed bag of experiences was received. As mentioned earlier, ASs were started under DPEP and was expanded to non-DPEP districts as well under SSA. The Alternative schools were started in the tribal and coastal areas. While the students in coastal schools are mostly dropouts from regular schools, most of the children in the Alternative Schools in tribal areas are first time learners. In 2004-05, 13801 children have been enrolled in Alternative Schools under SSA.

As part of the fieldwork, we visited three Alternative schools in Wayanad district under SSA. These schools were among the 20 ASs we had visited in 2002 as part of the Evaluation Study on Alternative Schooling System in Kerala conducted by CSES which was referred to earlier. On the basis of extensive discussions with AS instructors and officials of SSA, teachers of DIET and observation of the classroom process, the study team arrived at the following observations/findings about AS system under SSA.

- The curriculum followed by the alternative schools in Kerala is the same as the one formulated by DPEP and used in the regular schools. Alternative Schools follow multi-grade learning

system. To facilitate multi-grade mode of learning, self-learning materials in the form of cards were being used in the ASs for curriculum transaction instead of textbooks used in regular schools. Since children belonging to different grades are in the same classroom and there is only one teacher in the school (except in few schools where the enrolment is more than 50), this was the only feasible way of curriculum transaction. During our earlier visit in 2002, all the ASs were using the learning cards. But now, some of the ASs are using the textbooks prepared for the regular schools (eg. Valluvadi AS). Some other schools are using both textbooks and learning cards (eg: Marode AS). Another section of the AS instructors, especially those who were recruited in the initial years of the Programme and who received some amount of training for curriculum transaction in a multi-grade mode, still use the learning cards but reported inadequacy of learning materials. At this stage, it is left to the individual instructor to choose what method to follow. Using textbooks in a multi-grade classroom requires all the students (irrespective of their grade) to attend all the lessons. This will also reduce time spent by the children and the Instructor for education relevant at their learning level. It may also be noted that while there has been some efforts to bring in tribal context in the learning cards prepared for ASs, the textbooks prepared for regular schools at the state level and presently being used in many ASs do not have any local/tribal content. Enquiries revealed that the absence of sufficient number of learning cards, absence of induction training for the new teacher recruits and inadequacy of in-service training to those in service, resulted in the deterioration of quality of multi-grade learning. The situation also reflects on the attitude of the educational authorities towards the Alternative Schooling system.

- The instructors in the tribal areas reported problems in communicating with children due to the differences in the dialects of the children and the instructor. To address the issue, DPEP in Palakkad district had developed tribal link language learning materials in 1998. The materials were developed with the involvement of the tribal community. It was aimed at acquainting the instructors with tribal dialects, common usages and the vocabulary of tribal children. A three-day orientation programme was also conducted in the district in which tribal culture, art, festivals, lifestyles, folklore etc. were displayed, performed and discussed.
- It needs to be noted that the curriculum transaction is more complex and demanding in alternative schools compared to regular schools. Training, therefore, becomes much more important in the context of alternative schools. The new recruits were not given any pre-service training in managing multi-grade classes which was essential as the AS Instructors have reported difficulties in communicating with tribal children, as their dialect and culture are different from those of the tribal students. The in-service training is also grossly inadequate. When English was introduced, the instructors were not given sufficient training.
- The self-learning materials (SLM) developed under the alternative schooling programme are in the form of learning cards. The learning continuum is arranged in a linear form wherein the children select the proper cards as per the directions given in the learning ladder exhibited

in the class. The children are expected to identify the card relevant to his/her learning level from the learning ladder and pick it from the shelf or table where it is arranged. The cards are classified into those that need constant assistance of the instructor, partial assistance of the instructor, assistance from the peer group and those meant for self-learning. Despite trying to bring in tribal context in the SLM, some of the descriptions and illustrations do not reflect the socio-economic condition of the children in the alternative schools. It was also felt that many words are not in the child's setting. The environment created through the illustrations in the learning materials is that of an average or middle class family, which is different from the family environment of the tribal children studying in the alternative schools. It would be desirable and appropriate if the cards are designed and framed in such a manner that the learner's immediate environment is taken as the base for developing the subject matter further. This approach is more apt especially because the target group of learners does not have much exposure to the world outside their immediate surroundings. But even the attempts to revise the learning materials, which is presently under way, also aims only at cosmetic changes.

- Even after nine years of existence, some of the Alternative Schools do not have permanent structures. The multi grade mode of classroom transaction and the grouping of children envisaged under it require spacious classrooms. But the required classroom space is lacking in the Alternative Schools.
- The students in alternative schools, in general, have a poor socio-economic background. The low levels of parental education and the low levels of family income have led to an inadequate emphasis on the education of the children. The absence of a conducive home environment has also contributed to the drop out of children from formal schools. Often, the children are forced to work in order to supplement the family income. Nearly three-fourths of the children in the Alternative Schools in the tribal areas have never gone to formal schools
- One characteristic feature of the alternative schools is that the relationship between the children and the instructor is largely informal. In general the children are relaxed in the alternative school atmosphere. In most cases, the instructor's style of functioning is not explicitly authoritarian. The children would share their feelings about domestic issues like their parents' work, health etc. with the instructor. It appears that this is one aspect that the regular schooling system has to learn from the AS system.
- When we visited Marode Alternative School in Wayanad, there were only 13 students while the enrolment was 37. The Instructor told us that some of the children do not come to the school during harvest seasons for a few days. They go for collecting grains spilled over in the paddy fields.
- ST Children get a monthly stipend of Rs. 40 for ten months. This is being issued 3-4 times a year. In Alternative Schools, the summer vacation is less and these schools function for about 11 months. But all the incentives are provided for only 10 months as the regular

schools have two months vacation. It was also reported that the lump sum grant is often delayed.

- The provision for noon feeding is a major attraction for the children to come to the alternative schools as most of the children are from poor economic backgrounds. The supply of materials is routed through the formal primary schools. The provision for noon-meals is at the rate of 60 grams of rice and 30 grams of pulse per child. There are instances of break in supply of noon-meals. Instructors cited red tapism and problems with the headmaster of the primary school to which the alternative school is attached as the reasons for the irregular supply of noon meals.
- The teacher in the alternative schools is officially known as 'instructor' and not 'teacher'. The alternative school teachers in Kerala are appointed at a much lower salary as compared to the formal school teacher. They are paid a consolidated monthly honorarium (Rs. 2500) and Hill track allowance of Rs.500. They are not entitled to other benefits enjoyed by government employees. All these indicate that the AS teachers are considered to be lower in status by the state's education system.
- Many tribal children are first generation learners. Therefore there is very little scope for intellectual support for their education from the family. It was also found that the proportion of students who are irregular is more than the percentage dropped out. This may be true in the case of regular schools also. This calls for giving more attention to the issue of irregular attendance of students.
- The TTC holders who are presently being recruited as AS instructors do not have any understanding about the multi-grade mode of learning. Most of the instructors belong to non-tribal communities. They also are not familiar with issues relating to tribal children. Such issues are not covered in the TTC curriculum. TTC conducted in the districts where there is concentration of Scheduled Tribes should bring in more local content particularly those relating to tribal education.
- The formal schooling system in the State has been successful in providing access to school education to large sections of the society, thanks to governmental support on education in the past. The public expenditure on education as a percentage of the total governmental expenditure in Kerala was the highest among the States in India. It was as high as 37 per cent in the early eighties. But of late, the State has been withdrawing from the education sector and the share of education in governmental expenditure has come down to less than 20 per cent by 2004-05. In the case of the alternative schooling programme also, the expenditure commitments per school have been coming down steadily over the years. Viewed in this context, it appears that the government considers 'single teacher schools' as a cheaper alternative to formal schools. It may also be noted that the Alternative Schools enroll only less than one percent of the student population. But this small disadvantaged section needs

more care and attention and therefore more inputs are required to provide educational facilities to them. But the State seems to act differently. The State may also take in to account the fact that the parents of students in Alternative Schools also prefer to send their children to formal schools. The parents send the children to Alternative Schools primarily because the formal schooling system failed to accommodate them. This implies that the formal schooling system needs to adjust itself to provide quality education to the children belonging to the vulnerable sections of the society. This may need some reorientation in the functioning of the formal schools.

- In the tribal districts, a special TTC was organized for ST applicants. Though it was envisaged to organize two such courses, only one was organized. The pass outs of these courses are presently employed in the regular schools and Alternative Schools. The course has helped in improving the representation of the tribal communities in the teacher population. Perhaps such courses can be organized again. While selecting candidates for such a course, it should be ensured that merit should not be the sole criterion. It is equally important to have the representation of different tribes.
- At present the LGs are mainly providing funds for improving infrastructure. Very little inputs are provided for improving the quality of schooling. Such inputs are much more important for the schools where tribal children from poor socio-economic background are studying. Discussions with elected representatives, teachers in regular schools and Alternative Schools and examination of Plan documents of the LGs revealed that Alternative Schools receive a much lesser attention from the LGs compared to regular schools.

The specific cases narrated above strengthens the situation of abject deprivation which was suggested by the earlier observations. Next we will also look at how the public financial resources are allotted/spent towards improvement of Tribal education. We proceed on the assumption that public support is very important and crucial for improving education of a highly deprived section like that of Tribal people.

SECTION III

TRACKING BUDGET FOR TRIBAL EDUCATION

The analysis in this chapter is largely based on the State Budget documents especially the Demands for Grants. The discussion is confined to the expenditure specifically meant for tribal education incurred under the budget head 'Welfare of Scheduled Tribes'. A large number of tribal students go to government owned as well as government aided schools. Most of the expenditure on these students comes under the expenditure of the Ministry of Education. This has not been tracked in this chapter as separate data for expenditure incurred by this Ministry for tribal students is not available. The year for our analysis is 2004-05. The figures used are audited (accounts) figures. The account figures for later years are not yet available. Though the revised estimates for 2005-06 and budget estimates for 2006-07 are available, these have not been used in view of the possible divergence between these figures and the accounts figures.

Table 3.1: Budget Expenditure for Tribal Development

(Figures in Percentages)

Head	Share in Total Expenditure								
	Revenue			Capital			Total		
	Plan	Non-Plan	Total	Plan	Non-Plan	Total	Plan	Non-Plan	Total
Direction and administration	0.01	11.93	3.24	—	—	—	0.01	11.93	2.77
Assistance to district panchayats	0.20	—	0.15	—	—	—	0.16	—	0.12
Assistance to block panchayats	3.27	0.54	2.53	—	—	—	2.64	0.54	2.16
Assistance to grama panchayats	0.72	1.43	0.91	—	—	—	0.58	1.43	0.78
Education	21.60	65.69	33.55	90.38	—	90.38	34.71	65.69	41.88
Health	1.52	5.32	2.55	9.62	—	9.62	3.06	5.32	3.58
Special central assistance for Tribal Sub Plan	5.44	8.67	6.31	—	—	—	4.40	8.68	5.39
Other Expenditure	67.24	6.42	50.76	—	—	—	54.44	6.41	43.32
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Notes: 1. Figures are of Accounts. Accounts figures for later years are not yet available.
2. Capital Expenditure includes both Capital Outlay and Loans & Advances.

Source: Demands For Grants and Detailed Budget Estimates, Vol II, Budget 2006-2007, Government of Kerala

Table 3.1 shows the relative importance of education in the budgetary expenditure for tribal development, both revenue and capital put together. The table shows that education is the largest single component of the total expenditure on tribal development. Further disaggregation shows that the share of education is

nearly two-thirds of the total non-plan expenditure for tribal development. In the total plan expenditure, its share is more than one third. If we analyse the data according to the revenue-capital composition of expenditure, it is found that nine-tenths of total capital expenditure was for tribal education. One-third of the total revenue expenditure was also utilised for tribal education.

Table 3.2: Purpose-wise Classification of Budgetary Expenditure on Tribal Education

(Figures in Percentages)

No.	Purpose	Revenue			Capital			Total		
		Plan	Non-Plan	Total	Plan	Non-Plan	Total	Plan	Non-Plan	Total
1	Pre-matriculation studies ^a	—	29.05	15.42	—	—	—	—	29.05	10.54
2	Supply of clothes	—	0.34	0.18	—	—	—	—	0.34	0.12
3	Incentive to parents of tribal students	—	2.46	1.31	—	—	—	—	2.46	0.89
4	Nursery school	—	2.77	1.47	—	—	—	—	2.77	1.00
5	Bharat/Kerala darsan for STboys/girls	0.56	—	0.26	—	—	—	0.28	—	0.18
6	Peripatetic education to the primitive tribes	0.50	—	0.23	—	—	—	0.25	—	0.16
7	Model Residential/Ashram Schools ^b	59.88	—	28.10	79.65	—	79.65	69.69	—	44.41
8	Tribal hostels ^c	9.72	48.34	30.21	20.35	—	20.35	14.99	48.34	27.09
9	Boarding grants ^c	—	0.72	0.38	—	—	—	—	0.72	0.26
10	Grant to students studying in tutorials ^c	6.87	—	3.22	—	—	—	3.46	—	2.20
11	Special incentive to brilliant students ^c	1.67	—	0.78	—	—	—	0.84	—	0.54
12	Incentive to specially talented youth in sports & arts ^c	0.002	—	0.001	—	—	—	—	—	0.001
13	Upgradation of merits of ST students (100% CSS) ^c	0.14	—	0.07	—	—	—	0.07	—	0.04
14	Pre-matric Education (1 to 13)	79.33	83.68	81.64	100.00	—	100.00	89.59	83.68	87.45
15	Post-matric Education	20.67	16.32	18.36	—	—	—	10.41	16.32	12.55
16	Grand Total for Education (14+15)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	—	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Notes: 1. Figures are of Accounts. Accounts figures for later years are not yet available.

2. Capital Expenditure includes both Capital Outlay and Loans & Advances.

a. Scheme is intended for payment of lump sum grant and monthly stipend to ST students studying in pre-matric classes.

b. Out of the 18 Model Residential/Ashram Schools in Kerala, two provide Higher Secondary Education also.

c. Includes Pre-matric and Post-matric Studies. Break-up is not readily available.

Source: Demands For Grants and Detailed Budget Estimates, Vol II, Budget 2006-2007, Government of Kerala

Table 3.2 gives the purpose-wise break-up of the total budgetary expenditure on education. The table shows that an overwhelming share of the expenditure for tribal education went for pre-matric education (87 percent). The share of pre-matric education in the total plan expenditure was higher (90 percent). The entire capital expenditure on tribal education went for pre-matric education - for Model Residential/Ashram Schools (MRSs) and tribal hostels. Even in the revenue expenditure, pre-matric education accounted for more than 80 percent.

Table 3.3: Share of Revenue and Capital Expenditure in Plan and Non-plan Expenditure on Tribal Education

(Figures in Percentages)

No.	Purpose	Plan			Non-Plan			Total					
		Revenue	Capital	Total	Revenue	Capital	Total	Revenue	Capital	Total	Plan	Non-Plan	Total
1	Pre-matriculation studies ^a	—	—	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00
2	Supply of clothes	—	—	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00
3	Incentive to parents of tribal students	—	—	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00
4	Nursery school	—	—	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00
5	Bharat/ Kerala darsan for ST boys/girls	100.00	—	100.00	—	—	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00	—	100.00
6	Peripatetic education to the primitive tribes	100.00	—	100.00	—	—	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00	—	100.00
7	Model Residential/Ashram Schools ^b	43.27	56.73	100.00	—	—	—	43.27	56.73	100.00	100.00	—	100.00
8	Tribal hostels ^c	32.64	67.36	100.00	100.00	—	100.00	76.25	23.75	100.00	35.26	64.74	100.00
9	Boarding grants ^c	—	—	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00
10	Grant to students studying in tutorials ^c	100.00	—	100.00	—	—	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00	—	100.00
11	Special incentive to brilliant students ^c	100.00	—	100.00	—	—	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00	—	100.00
12	Incentive to specially talented youth in sports and arts ^c	100.00	—	100.00	—	—	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00	—	100.00
13	Upgradation of merits of ST students (100% CSS) ^c	100.00	—	100.00	—	—	—	100.00	—	100.00	100.00	—	100.00
14	Pre-matric Education (1 to 13)	44.60	55.40	100.00	100.00	—	100.00	63.84	36.16	100.00	65.28	34.72	100.00
15	Post-matric Education	100.00	—	100.00	100.00	—	100.00	100.00	—	100.00	52.84	47.16	100.00
16	Grand Total for Education (1 to 15)	50.37	49.63	100.00	100.00	—	100.00	68.38	31.62	100.00	63.72	36.28	100.00

Notes: 1. Figures are of Accounts. Accounts figures for later years are not yet available.

2. Capital Expenditure includes both Capital Outlay and Loans & Advances

a. Scheme is intended for the payment of lump sum grant and monthly stipend to ST students studying in pre-matric classes

b. Out of the 18 Model Residential/Ashram Schools in Kerala, two provide Higher Secondary Education also.

c. Includes Pre-matric and Post-matric Studies. Break-up is not readily available.

Source: Demands For Grants and Detailed Budget Estimates, Vol II, Budget 2006-2007, Government of Kerala

Table 3.3 shows the respective shares of revenue and capital expenditure in the total expenditure for different purposes, under various schemes. The share of revenue expenditure in the pre-matric education was nearly two-thirds. Its share in the capital expenditure was more than one-third. The main heads under which capital expenditure was incurred were MRSs and tribal hostels. Table 3.3 gives a further break-up of the total expenditure on tribal education for different purposes according to plan and non-plan categorisation. The table shows that plan component is nearly two-thirds of the total expenditure on tribal education. The non-plan component was only 36.3 percent. The plan component for pre-matric education was more (65.3 percent) than that for post-matric education (52.8 percent). As may be seen from Table 3.3, seven components of expenditure were entirely plan expenditure.

Table 3.4: Share of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) in Total Plan Expenditure on Tribal Education

Purpose	Expenditure under CSS (Rs.000's)				Total Plan Expenditure	Share in Plan Expenditure (%)
	50% CSS Scheme	75% CSS Scheme	100% CSS Scheme	Total CSS		
Model Residential/Ashram Schools ^a	79102	3755	14258	97114	148358	65.46
Tribal Hostel	21384	—	—	21384	31916	67.00
Upgradation of merits of ST students (100%CSS) ^b	—	—	150	150	150	100.00
Post-matric Education	—	—	21711	21711	22161	97.97
Total	100486	3755	36119	140360	212876 ^c	65.93

Notes:1. Figures are of Accounts. Accounts figures for later years are not yet available.

a. Out of the 18 Model Residential/Ashram Schools in Kerala, two provide Higher Secondary Education also.

b. Includes Pre-matric and Post-matric Studies. Break-up is not readily available.

c. Plan Expenditure for Tribal Education, which includes Heads other than the ones listed in the Table.

Source: Demands For Grants and Detailed Budget Estimates, Vol II, Budget 2006-2007, Government of Kerala.

Table 3.4 shows the expenditure on tribal education on account of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs). In the total expenditure for education, CSSs accounted for 42 percent (not mentioned in the table). The CSSs designed at the national level may not be appropriate in the Kerala context. These schemes, which account for a substantial share in the expenditure on tribal education, are unlikely to take into account the differences between tribes in different states. As we have seen earlier, the differences also exist between different tribes in terms of educational achievements. If we take the plan expenditure for tribal education separately, the share of CSSs is as high as 66 percent. Certain schemes were financed entirely by Central Government. The share of CSSs in total expenditure for MRSs was more than 60 percent. In the case of tribal hostels, two-thirds of the expenditure was on account CSSs. Of the total expenditure under CSSs, 71.6 percent was on account of 50 percent centrally aided schemes. Only 2.7 percent of the schemes were 75 percent centrally aided schemes. The remaining 25.7 per cent of the schemes were aided fully by the Central Government. None of the CSSs belong to 25 percent central assistance category (not shown in the table). The utilization of budget provisions under the CSSs was quite high.

Table 3.5: Utilization of Budgeted Funds

(Figures in Percentages)

No.	Purpose	Revenue			Capital			Total		
		Plan	Non-Plan	Total	Plan	Non-Plan	Total	Plan	Non-Plan	Total
1	Pre-matriculation studies ^a	—	100.62	100.62	—	—	—	—	100.62	100.62
2	Supply of clothes	—	99.74	99.74	—	—	—	—	99.74	99.74
3	Special incentive to talented students	—	0.00	0.00	—	—	—	—	0.00	0.00
4	Incentive to parents of tribal students	—	99.45	99.45	—	—	—	—	99.45	99.45
5	Nursery school	—	145.51	145.51	—	—	—	—	145.51	145.51
6	Bharat/Kerala darsan for ST boys/girls	100.00	—	100.00	—	—	—	100.00	—	100.00
7	Peripatetic education to the primitive tribes	10.66	—	10.66	—	—	—	10.66	—	10.66
8	Model Residential/Ashram Schools ^b	107.00	—	107.00	93.51	—	93.51	98.91	—	98.91
9	Tribal hostels ^c	208.34	94.87	103.36	71.66	—	71.66	91.19	94.87	93.54
10	Boarding grants ^c	—	96.35	96.35	—	—	—	—	96.35	96.35
11	Grant to students studying in tutorials ^c	73.64	—	73.64	—	—	—	73.64	—	73.64
12	Special incentive to brilliant students ^c	89.56	—	89.56	—	—	—	89.56	—	89.56
13	Incentive to specially talented youth in sports and arts ^c	1.90	—	1.90	—	—	—	1.90	—	1.90
14	Upgradation of merits of ST students (100% CSS) ^c	100.00	—	100.00	—	—	—	100.00	—	100.00
15	Pre-matric Education (1 to 14)	102.66	98.09	100.13	88.05	—	88.05	94.02	98.09	95.39
16	Post-matric Education	82.08	98.91	89.24	—	—	—	82.08	98.91	89.24
17	Grand Total for Education	97.61	98.23	97.93	88.05	—	88.05	92.62	98.23	94.58

Notes: 1. Accounts as a Percentage of Budget Estimate

2. Capital Expenditure includes both Capital Outlay and Loans & Advances.

a. Scheme is intended for the payment of lump sum grant and monthly stipend to ST students studying in pre - matric classes

b. Out of the 18 Model Residential/Ashram Schools in Kerala, two provide Higher Secondary Education also.

c . Includes Pre-matric and Post-matric Studies. Break-up is not readily available.

Source: Demands For Grants and Detailed Budget Estimates, Vol II, Budget 2006-2007, Government of Kerala

Table 3.5 gives the utilization of budget provisions (actual expenditure as a percentage of Budget Estimates). The table shows that by and large the utilization was quite high (95 percent). This is true about both plan and non-plan expenditure. The utilization under capital expenditure was however relatively low (88 percent). Despite this overall satisfactory utilization levels, budget provisions under three heads - special

incentive to talented students, peripatetic education to the primitive tribes, incentive to specially talented youth in sports and arts - were very low. The reasons for this low utilization requires further probe.

Tribal Development Office, Sulthan Bathery

Education was given a major share in the total budget of the Tribal Development Office (TDO). As much as two-thirds (66.4) of the expenditure of this office was meant for education. Education accounted for 55 percentage of the plan expenditure of TDO. The share of education in the non-plan expenditure was as high as 94 per cent (not mentioned in the Table).

Table 3.6 shows the expenditure under different heads of education by the TDO, Sulthan Bathery in the tribal belt of Wayanad district during the year ended March 2006.

Table 3.6: Expenditure of Tribal Development Office Sultan Bathery on Education During 2005-2006

(Figures in Rs.000's)

Name of the scheme	Expenditure	
	Plan	Non-Plan
Pre-matriculation Studies	-	7196 (95.9)
Post matric studies	1799 (99.9)	-
Post matriculation scholarship	-	1900(100.0)
Supply of clothes	-	0(0.0)
Tribal students travel expenses	-	2(100.0)
Incentives to parents of Tribal students	-	1198(99.9)
Grants to students studying in Tutorials	563(70.4)	-
Incentive to specially talented youths in Arts and sports	3(97.1)	-
Ashram school	4199(121.9)	-
Peripatetic education to the primitive tribes	601(100.0)	-
Improving Facilities in Scheduled Tribe Hostels	6757(99.4)	-
Total Expenditure for Education	13922(103.5)	10296(97.0)
Total Expenditure	25551(98.8)	10928(96.7)

Note: Figures in parenthesis are utilization of budgeted funds in percentages

Source: Collected from Tribal development Office, Sultan Bathery

As may be seen from the table, the utilization of the funds allotted was on the whole very satisfactory. However, there was no utilisation of the allotment for supply of clothes. Our enquiries had shown that the non-utilisation under this head was due to the fact that the lowest bidder supplied low quality clothes and therefore was rejected by the Department.

Tribal Hostels

There are 110 tribal hostels in the state. Table 3.7 presents the purpose-wise classification of expenditure on tribal hostel in the state.

Table 3. 7: Purpose-wise Classification of Budgetary Expenditure on Tribal Hostels

(Figures in Percentages)

Purpose	Revenue			Capital			Grand Total (Revenue + Capital)
	Plan	Non-Plan	Total	Plan	Non-Plan	Total	
Establishment Expenses ^a	23.68	55.40	50.62	-	-	-	38.60
Maintenance	-	0.45	0.38	-	-	-	0.29
Other Expense	76.32	44.15	49.00	-	-	-	37.36
Construction of Tribal Hostels	-	-	-	100.00	-	100.00	23.75
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	-	100.00	100.00

Notes: 1. Figures are of Accounts. Accounts figures for later years are not yet available.

2. Capital Expenditure includes both Capital Outlay and Loans & Advances

a . Includes Salaries, Wages, Travel expenses, Office expenses, Rent, Rates and Taxes

Source: Demands For Grants and Detailed Budget Estimates, Vol II, Budget 2006-2007, Govt. of Kerala

The expenditure pattern of the tribal hostels given in Table 3.7 shows that the establishment expenditure is the largest single component of the total expenditure. It accounts for half of the total revenue expenditure. Maintenance accounts for only very small share of the expenditure of the tribal hostels. Other expenses meant for the food, clothing and other educational and living expenses of students account for less than half of the revenue expenditure. All the capital expenditure was incurred for construction. A plan, non-plan categorization of expenditure shows that nearly two-thirds was on account of non-plan. Plan expenditure accounted for only 35.3 percent (not mentioned in the table). An analysis of the utilization of budget provisions of tribal hostels presents an overall satisfactory picture especially under revenue head. But the utilization under the plan expenditure especially capital expenditure was only 72 percent (not mentioned in the table) of the budget provisions. The utilization of budgetary position for maintenance was also quite low which may lead to poor living conditions of the tribal student inmates.

Model Residential/Ashram Schools

There are 18 MRSs in the state of which 6 were meant for girls. These schools as seen in Table 3.2, account for 44.4 percent of the total expenditure under tribal education. The disaggregated picture on the expenditure on one MRS at Noolpuzha taken as a case study by us shows that more than half (56.1 percent) of the total expenditure was for meeting establishment expenses. Other expenses which include maintenance, food, clothing, educational inputs and other living expenses account for only 44 percent. The entire revenue expenditure was incurred for establishment expenses. Utilisation of budget allocation has been found to be quite good.

Table 3.8: Purpose-wise Classification of Budgetary Expenditure on MRS

(Figures in Percentages)

Purpose	Revenue			Capital			Grand Total (Revenue + Capital)
	Plan	Non-Plan	Total	Plan	Non-Plan	Total	
Establishment Expenses	100.00	-	100.00	16.47	-	16.47	56.11
Other Expenses	-	-	-	83.53	-	83.53	43.89
Total	100.00	-	100.00	100.00	-	100.00	100.00

Notes: 1. Figures are of Accounts Figures. Accounts figures for later years are not available.

2. Capital Expenditure includes both Capital Outlay and Loans & Advances.

Source: Demands For Grants and Detailed Budget Estimates, Vol II, Budget 2006-2007, Govt. of Kerala

Expenditure on Tribal Education - Noolpuzha Grama Panchayat

Under the decentralised regime (after the 93rd Constitutional Amendment) Panchayats had been getting large share of plan and non-plan funds particularly the plan funds from the State Budget. In all the plan budgets of the Panchayat, a certain percentage has to be earmarked for Scheduled Tribes (Tribal Sub Plan component) taking into account the number of tribal population in the Panchayat. Table 3.9 shows that pre-matric education which comes under the jurisdiction of Grama Panchayat accounted for 0.09 percent to 2.99 percent during the five years for which we had collected data from the records of Noolpuzha Grama Panchayat. It is surprising but true that education projects or tribal educational institutions like MRSs and Alternative Schools working within the Panchayat did not attract funds from the Tribal Sub Plan of this panchayat in tribal belt.

Table 3.9: Share of Expenditure on Education in Noolpuzha Grama Panchayat

(Figures in Percentages)

Year	Share in Total Plan fund Expenditure	Share of Tribal Sub Plan in Total Plan Expenditure
2001-2002	1.28	18.20
2002-2003	1.61	0.00
2003-2004	0.09	34.49
2004-2005	1.66	31.93
2005-2006	2.99	32.63

Source: Noolpuzha Panchayat Records

Note: Plan funds refers to the funds devolved to the local bodies by the State Government for plan purposes

Alternative School

In the case of Alternative Schools under the SSA, the approved outlay for the financial year 2004-05 was Rs. 414.03 lakhs while the actual expenditure was Rs. 235.29. Thus only 56.83 percent of the outlay was spent for the purpose. We also collected details of the grants received in an Alternative School functioning in a tribal area viz. Noolpuzha in Wayanad district.

Table 3.10: Details of Grants Received in the Marode Alternative School for the year 2004-2005

(Figures in Rs.)

Item	Grant
Teaching Learning Material (TLM) Grant	2000
Centre Grant	1500
Mothers' camp	2405
Maintenance Grant	5000
Teacher Grant	1000
Library Grant	3500
Learn and earn	1021
Toilet	2500
For buying utensils	500
For buying Furniture	2000
For First Aid Box	500
Tank for storing drinking water	1000
Honorarium for preparing noon-feeding (helper)	500
Expenses towards preparation of noon-meal	13150
Honorarium to the AS Instructor	30000
Hill Track Allowance of the Instructor	6000
Total	72576

Notes: Grants received under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Source: Marode Alternative School Records

Table 3.10 shows the expenditure pattern of an Alternative School located at Marode in Noolpuzha panchayat. There were total 37 students in this school located in a remote hamlet of Marode. The per student expenditure works out to Rs. 1961 per year.

What these figures do indicate is that though a sizeable amount of funds are allocated for Tribal education programme, there are several crucial sectors which are not receiving the necessary attention. Besides the designing of these programmes, their implementation and delivery mechanism is found to be far from satisfactory. This further strengthens our earlier assumption that in a sector of education where highly motivated public intervention is necessary; only total neglect or half-hearted attempts are forthcoming. Considering the general situation through which the Kerala's economy and society are going through now, this has many implications. In spite of a fairly high rate of economic growth, the Tribal people along with other traditionally marginalized groups are still subjected to deprivation, poverty and underdevelopment. One way out of such a situation is through quality education for which a significant input of resources or at least income earning assets has to flow to the community of Tribal people; both at the community level as well as at the family/individual level. This does not seem to be happening. It is in this context that we are making certain specific suggestions to improve education among Tribal children.

SECTION IV

ROOTED IN PROBLEMS BUT LOOKING FORWARD

Several problems can be identified from the preceding sections, most peculiar to education of ST children and some common to general education. They could be listed as follows:

1. Irregular attendance
2. Reluctance to return to school after holidays
3. Liquor consumption among parents
4. Lack of awareness among parents and the community at large
5. Family environment not being conducive to education.
6. ST students' reluctance/difficulty to mingle with others
7. Language/dialect differences
8. Migration of parents
9. Widespread diseases like scabies/itching
10. Students being forced to stay with others when parents migrate, thereby affecting their education badly.
11. Lack of learning environment at Homes
12. Since they live together in a settlement, disturbance in one family can disturb other families.
13. Students tend to be absent for long during festivals which are different in different localities and Tribes.
14. Girls in particular have housework to attend to.
15. A widespread feeling of being second grade persons.
16. Lack of "freedom" and "severe" punishment, both resented by ST students
17. Lack of permanent teachers
18. Teachers' absenteeism

Most of these problems were encountered by other studies as well. One may try to solve each one of them by different steps which could be suggested. But the fact is that some very imaginative steps already taken are also found to be ineffective. This also is revealed by the discussion in Section II. Therefore some of these problems have to be accepted as deep rooted and even structural. On second look, it can be deciphered that the most crucial problem faced by ST students is the lack of parental support and non-conducive home environment. These are problems which can be straightaway attributed to poverty

and deprivation from which their communities suffer. Their difficulty to mingle with others, their health problems such as scabies, their lack of confidence, the peculiar problem of unwed mothers in their families or settlements are all problems which can be linked to their state of deprivation and the power and authority that others can exercise over them. In other words, we reach a basic assumption that if ST children are to be educated as other children, the deprivation and poverty that their communities face has to be eliminated first.

The implications of such an assumption is clearly beyond this study. Moreover, better and more widespread education can be suggested as means to eliminate poverty among them. Other Communities and groups in Kerala, amply demonstrate the viability of a strategy based on education for social and economic advancement. It is that kind of a strategy that is not available to the STs due to historical reasons (the land reforms and the so called Kerala Model seems to have bypassed them). Due to current policies or lack of them have resulted in the transfer of their basic right, that of land, from them to richer groups. Without this most important asset, the ST communities are likely to be far more vulnerable in the long run.

Is it wise for the State and society to ignore such problems? The demographic data available of ST population in Kerala indicates that they are a very small minority. Therefore, their various aspects of backwardness, particularly educational backwardness gets ignored in discussions of aggregate development. Kerala seems to be on the threshold of 'virtuous development' according to HDR, on the basis of earlier investment in human development. The ST communities, who lost out on the earlier investment in human development, are likely to be sidelined by the present growth phenomenon. Professor Myron Weiner had suggested in an interesting book of his³⁰ that

The central proposition is that India's low per capita income and economic situation is less relevant as an explanation than the belief systems of the state bureaucracy, a set of beliefs that are widely shared by educators, social activists, trade unionists, academic researchers and, more broadly, by members of the Indian middle class... At the core of these beliefs are the Indian views of the social order, notions concerning the respective roles of upper and lower social strata, the role of education as a means of maintaining differentiation among social classes, and concerns that "excessive" and "inappropriate" education for the poor would disrupt existing social arrangements.

By our failure to solve the problems of inadequate education meted out to ST Children, we have not escaped such strong indictment. In other words, we, both the state and the society, stands accused of denying fundamental human rights of ST children to grow up like any other child enjoying all choices that others have.

If the situation is so bad in the case of all India, the state and society in Kerala stands twice accused. Here we have managed to eliminate mass illiteracy and solved the problem of mass basic education. In

³⁰ Myron Weiner, *The Child and the State in India: Child Labour and Education Policy in Comparative Perspective*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1991, p. 5.

spite of it we have a situation where ST children are trapped in a predicament of low quality education at inadequate levels, and that too amidst a wholly literate society. It is evident that the ST children or even their parents by themselves cannot escape from such a predicament. The state and society attributes their predicament to poverty and not to inadequacy of right policies.

Right policies which are capable of empowering and emancipating the ST community to escape from deprivation are necessary. Among them is education which can be considered as a 'multiplier'³¹ which will liberate them from other forms of deprivation. Some such suggestions have already appeared in the preceding sections which are listed below:

1. Need to strengthen Pre-Primary education.
2. TTC Curriculum in districts with tribal concentration should have Tribal content.
3. The continuation of AS should be debated.
4. Teacher appointments in Tribal areas should be done with emphasis up on Tribal preferences.
5. Traditional skills and new soft skills should be transmitted through formal system.
6. The problem of difference in dialects should be adequately addressed.
7. The issue of lump sum grant, whether it should be in kind or cash, should be discussed and perhaps a flexible system should be devised.

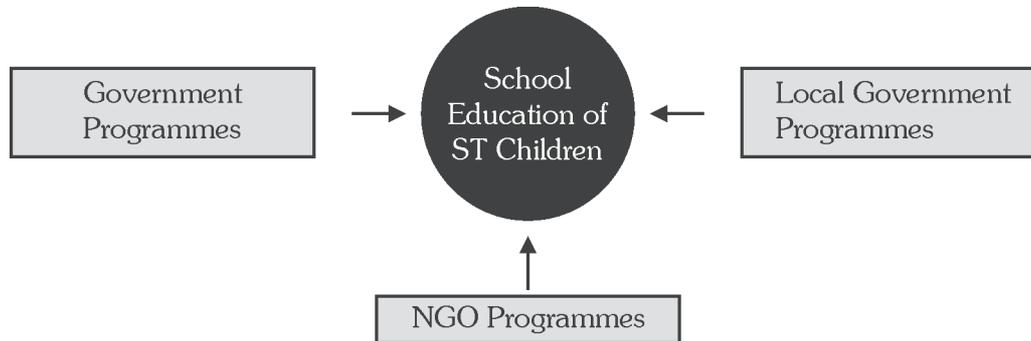
These are indeed important suggestions as to how the education offered to ST children are made better and sensitive to their requirements. But the most important problem that they face, that of lack of an appropriate home environment and practical absence of community support may not be solved by these suggestions. This obvious problem has to be tackled at least by a combination of the state, family and civil society³², which in tangible measure should mean "citizenship opportunities". Here is a more serious problem. There is hardly any civil society organization worth the name in Kerala Society at large, if we apply strict definitions such as being independent of the State and also of the "market" persuasions. When it comes to the Tribal situation, their absence is most obvious. Therefore, a very serious lacunae is to be filled up as part of the suggestion that we make. The NGOs operating in this area have not acquired a position to make any substantial change in the situation. Moreover, there are different opinions about some NGO's involvement at the school/hostel level.

What our enquiries revealed is that there are three sets of sources supporting the education of STs now. They are; the State through various schemes, programmes and Departments, Local Governments which provide different but highly restricted local assistance, and the NGOs which help in enrollment and in providing material support etc. A diagrammatic presentation is attempted below:

³¹ Katarina Tomasevski, *Education Denied, Costs and Remedies*, Zed Books; London, 2003, p.5.

³² Sitharaman Kakarala, *The Challenges of Democratic Empowerment*, Technical Report Series, Hivos-India Regional Office, Bangalore, 2004, p.46.

DIAGRAM 4. 1



Among the various programmes that we have reviewed and had discussed with stakeholders, prominence is given to MRS as the better among them. Certainly the main problem remains to be non-conducive home environment and lack of community support. The MRS to some extent can substitute or fill up such a serious gap. Therefore it is considered to be a good programme. But we saw that inadequacies have already crept in even in that programme; so has also in the programme of Tribal Hostels. Therefore, the attempt at substituting home environment solely through MRS and Tribal Hostels may not be a feasible idea. We suggest that the students who are now out of the ambit of MRS and Tribal Hostels who study in local schools should be helped by a new scheme. We suggest that a new institution called the PADITHA VEEDU (Study House) should be established in every Ooru/ Settlement/Colony. The PADITHA VEEDU should coordinate different activities of the students, such as tuition, supplementary learning, entertainment, activities promoting personal and public hygiene, leadership training, civic sense, skill development etc. These institutions will provide the students, during holidays and in the mornings and evenings, a “second home” or “home like” environment where they can concentrate on their activities under proper guidance; and away from the disturbances usually emanating from their home environment.

It should be noted that the expansion of library movement in the state had led to the formation of libraries and cultural centres across Kerala. But, of late, the library movement has lost its momentum. Moreover, they were catering to the mainstream communities and left out the outlier communities. Another initiative, the Community Centres of the Rural Development Department, also did not fulfill the desired objective in the absence of a proper understanding about what community centres are meant for. The proposed PADITHA VEEDU should also play the role of library and community/cultural centre, which never reached the Tribal communities.

The guidance should be provided by the Tribal Promoters who are expected to do social organization for the Tribal communities in a far wider area than education. In their place a new set (including of course the old promoters who should be its mainstay) of younger Tribal people, properly trained, paid and

legally recognized and holding a specifically focused activity profile of promoting education among ST children should be formed. The involvement of the Department of Education should be ensured in the activities of the Tribal Co-ordinators, along with of course the Local Government

The activities of these Tribal Co-ordinators should be held responsible to the local Panchayat who should provide them with active support through SSG, VEC etc. Such a combination of the activities of LG and the new institution like the PADITHA VEEDU can go a long way in filling up the gap of lack of civil society organizations and bring in community involvement. Secondly, through activities of the Co-ordinators, the PADITHA VEEDU can be turned into a focus institution of awareness-building among the parents as well. Therefore, both as a “second home” and later as its ambit extends to the parents and influence them too, the PADITHA VEEDU can guarantee better home environment for the education of ST children.

Along with the PADITHA VEEDU each Ooru/Settlement/Colony should have an Anganwadi/Balawadi. As has been revealed by earlier studies³³, the pre-primary education is one of the weak components of the Anganwadi system under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). There is an urgent need to strengthen the pre-primary content of the Anganwadi system. The Tribal Co-ordinators of the PADITHA VEEDU can help and derive assistance from the staff of Anganwadi too. A combination of pre-primary education which will direct the children to formal school, and a PADITHA VEEDU which will help them in out of school hours, ST education can be sustained at a level of excellence which is not available to it till now. The access to such measures should be ensured by at least by one Anganwadi and one PADITHA VEEDU being established in every Ooru/Settlement/Colony.

The NGO groups can support the PADITHA VEEDU and Anganwadi by helping in organizing them properly, creating an advocacy platform for this potentially important institution, unleashing a campaign for awareness about the denial of basic human rights of ST children inherent in the present educational system and giving material support to these institutions. Their interventions at the institution level should also cover issues relating to quality of education imparted. Moreover, while intervening at the school level or hostel level, it is important to ensure that it does not lead to a situation where only few students who can be identified with some sort of vested interest receive their assistance while large majority are left unattended.

The LGs have been focusing mainly on providing infrastructural support to the schools. But this by itself, is not sufficient to make any perceptible change in the educational attainments of highly deprived sections of the population like the STs. They need to focus more on quality related issues. This would need better attention on changing the home environment of the tribal students which can be done through strengthening the PADITHA VEEDU. Therefore, we are suggesting a new diagrammatic scheme as follows:

³³ For instance, See [Status of Pre-primary Education in Kerala](#), CSES, 2000.

DIAGRAM 4. 2

