

# The Effectiveness Of *Oorukoottam* In Education Of *Paniya* Tribe In Wayanad District

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**Abstract:** Education is the cornerstone for the integral development of any society and it is the prime requisite for the empowerment of the disadvantaged sections of our society. So that in Indian constitution article 46 states that the state should promote with special care, the education and economic stability of the weaker sections of the people particularly the scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes. In this article deal with the educational levels of Paniya tribe and their development as the impact of Oorukoottam, the tribal beneficiary group. As paniya tribe is one of the major tribal communities, the most vulnerable group in Wayanad needs a special care and recognition by the central and state governments through a systematic and scientific approach for their total empowerment. Oorukoottam the tribal grama sabha as a decentralized form of government in tribal hamlets can empower the tribal community to the mainstream only when it is to be restructured and redefined.

**Keywords:** adivasikal<sup>1</sup>-the original inhabitants, Oorukoottam<sup>2</sup>- tribal beneficiary group, Balawadi<sup>3</sup>- play school, Gothravidya<sup>4</sup>tribal education, Gothrasaradhi<sup>5</sup>-vehicle conveyance for the tribal children ,Ooruvithya padana kendrangal<sup>6</sup>- tribal education centres.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a vital tool. It is an important characteristics of development to empower any community towards the success of human life. Education has a participatory role in the human development. According to Nelson Mandela, “education is the great engine of personal development”. So education has an objective of one’s personality growth and socialization role of humankind. The social development of human life is then strengthened through the education from birth to death. The tribal people were generally called *adivasikal*<sup>1</sup> in Kerala because they are the aboriginal group before the arrival of outsiders. Though the tribals have a socialised culture and developed knowledge at the earliest, their existence still challenges the knowledge of the modern society. Every developmental activity is made possible only through a formal educational system. And which is never meant to live inside the knowledge what they have imbibed and receive the formal knowledge. Retain what they have and enrich it.(Thomas,B 2010) One should be self reliant through the retention and enriching of knowledge what they have imbibed through the generations.

### Need and significance of the study

*Paniya* is one of the major tribal communities, which is socially, economically and educationally backward and is the most vulnerable group in Wayanad district. The majority of the people are below the poverty line. The formal education system is not capable enough to cater to their educational needs. Even though education is the vital tool for socializing every human, the *Paniya* community remains illiterate. Illiteracy is one of the major reasons for their socio- economic backwardness. On the background of constitutional provision of India, Government of Kerala has implemented *Oorukoottam* in the tribal hamlets to ensure the participatory role of beneficiaries for preparing the developmental strategies for the tribal empowerment in the tribal hamlets. (Joy George, 2007) One of the major concerns of *Oorukoottam* is the eradication of illiteracy among tribes. The present study will be helpful in identifying the impacts of *Oorukoottam* in tribal education and the major barriers in continuing the educational program through *Oorukoottam*.

Unless the barriers are identified the community will remain deprived further. It is hoped that these findings will be helpful for the further educational program and policy implementation.

### Objectives

- To study the educational concern of *Oorukkoottam*
- To identify the knowledge level of *Paniya* community in Wayanad District.
- To study the gender difference among *Paniya* tribes.
- To study the unique characteristics of *Paniya* community and their response to the educational system.
- To identify the effects of educational provisions provided by *Oorukkoottam* sub plan for tribal education.

## 2. METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

### Sample of the study

A stratified representative sample of 100 adult *Paniya* tribes and 30 tribal leaders/experts to collect information from adult *Paniya* tribes

- **Tools used for the study**

Structured interview schedule and an interview constructed and conducted by the investigator.

## 3. EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRIBES IN WAYANAD DISTRICT

Education is the cornerstone for the social economic development of any society and it is the prime requisite for the total empowerment of the weaker sections of our society, especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In Indian educational system education has limited meaning. It is largely concerned with the formal education system and structured method of imparting knowledge. (Priti Choudhary 2010) For many years the traditional tribal societies remained illiterate due to the lack of formal education but they have a system of transfer of knowledge from elders to upcoming generation through spoken language and participation in all the works. But the weaker sections of the society got retarded from the mainstream of the society. Taking into consideration their district culture, the British preferred to conveniently keep the tribal communities in isolation on the pretext of the protection of their tribal communities and preserving their culture. But unfortunately these communities left away from literacy as well as formal education. After independence an integrated approach was made for upbringing the tribal community to the mainstream with the adoption of constitution in 1950. (Bukya D.,2010) A special recognition has given for the promotion of education of Scheduled Tribes by the central and state governments (Radha S N,1982). From 1950 onwards very significant efforts have been made for the universalisation of elementary education with special care to the tribal education.

### *Paniya* tribes in Wayanad

Wayanad is a home land of various tribal communities such as Adiyar, Kattunaikken, kurichiyar, Uralikuruman and *Paniyan*. Among them *Paniyan* and Adiyar are bonded labours and Kattunaikkaen and Uralikuruman are forests dependent communities. Mullukuruman and Kurichiyar are relatively better living communities among tribes. They are basically agriculture communities. The district of Wayanad has the highest tribal population in the state accounting for 36% of the total *adivasi* population. The tribes of Wayanad account for 17.4 percentage of the total population of the district and the major *adivasi* communities in Wayanad are *Paniya*(45.12% ) (Chandrika CS & Nandakumar PM, 2015). The *Paniya* tribe, the original inhabitants of Wayanad remains as the most vulnerable tribal community in Wayanad district. Now they are still involving in the paddy field works of the landlords of the society. Though *Paniya* community is the largest *adivasi* community in the district, they do not have adequate representation in the local bodies in the leadership of the local political parties and government service. (IIM, 2006)

### Constitutional provisions for tribal education

Free and compulsory education to all children upto the age of 14 the constitutional provision given also to the tribal sector. The adoption of the constitution after the enforcement in 1952 institutionalized the universalisation of elementary education and emphasize the tribal education (Devender Bhukya, 2010) Article 46 of the Indian Constitution States that

the state shall promote with special care, the education and economic stability of the of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of social exploitations. Articles 330, 332, 335, 338 to 342 and 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> schedules of Indian constitutions reaffirm the special privileges and reservations for the scheduled tribes. The Articles 15 – 17 guarantees as the fundamental rights of everybody to have equality in education. (Jaisawal V., & Sing H. K., 2014) In the articles 29 (1), 21 (A), 350(A) of Indian Constitution provide the linguistics rights of minority and redefine the duties of the state to safeguard the weaker sections with equality in education. In addition to the constitutional provisions, in most of the educational commissions and committees stick on the importance of the tribal education. (Dr. Padhi S.G. & Garhewal, Yogyanand, 2014)

### National policy on education

The National Policy on Education in 1986 is modified in 1992 states in its 4th chapter emphasize the education for equality where education of the scheduled tribes is given clearly:

1. Open primary schools in tribal area
2. There is need to develop new curricula in the tribal language in order to open primary schools in tribal area to make the classrooms meaningful
3. Promotion of tribal youth as the leaders of the tribal areas.
4. Residential and Ashram schools should be established in a large scale.
5. Educational grants- in- aid should be given to scheduled tribes.
6. non formal and adult education should established in the tribal areas.
7. Curriculum should be formulated in accordance with the promotion of tribal culture and identity. (Dr. Padhi S.G. & Garhewal, Yogyanand, 2014)

### 4. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES OF OORUKOOTTAM

*Oorukoottam* is an assemblage of tribal beneficiaries, where the beneficiaries are identified and decisions are taken in accordance with the tribal sub plan for the Welfare of the identified members. The concerns of local self government is the participatory role of people which is the guiding spirit behind the *Oorukoottam* sessions (Joy George, 2007) The logical Development plan will be taken into consideration in the *Oorukoottam* meeting with the leadership of tribal promoters. The decentralization system in Kerala has introduced after the ninth five year plan. In the Constitutional Amendment of 73 and 74 articles has powered the local self government to take decision over the utilization of money and power. This is a turning point in the history that the three tier system of self governance has centered their attention on education for the entire development of the community.

In the initial stages for the educational development planning for the tribal students started with the nursery schools and *Balawadi*<sup>3</sup> at the *gramapanchayat* level, pre-metric hostels in the block panchayat levels, post metric hostels, job oriented training centers and special educational sub plans at the district level .(Joseph E G 2011) Moreover Government of India has launched several educational programs for all students both general and tribal after independence. The recent launch of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*( SSA 2001) and Right to Education Act on 2010 with an objective of free and compulsory education to every category of students. But the analysis shows that not much improvements occurred among the tribal students . (Dr. Padhi S.G. & Garhewal, Yogyanand, 2014). Under the SSA project in 2016 March the DIET, Wayanad had started the integral growth for the education of tribal through *Gothravidya*<sup>4</sup> program in order to get solution for dropouts and its aim is to analyse the educational condition and problems of the ethnic group and to plan a Comprehensive Action Plan. *Gothrasaradhi*<sup>5</sup> is a program under SSA for making vehicle conveyance for the tribal students to eliminate dropouts. SSA also introduced *Ooruvidhya padana kendrangal*<sup>6</sup> to get rid of the drawbacks of previous education schemes for the tribal students but even now none of these schemes eliminated the tendency of withdrawal.

### 5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This article dealt with the analysis and interpretation of the data which the investigator administered with self constructed tool of interview schedule and the investigator selected hundred samples and obtained the data collection from adult *Paniya* tribe in Wayanad district. And the investigator also conducted an unstructured interview with the tribal promoters

or leaders. *Oorukoottam* made an impact on the *Paniya* community for their total empowerment in some extent. But the analysis explicitly made clear that *Oorukoottam* educational programs did not meaningfully influence the community.

### **Literacy rate and level of *Paniya* tribe in Wayanad**

According to the survey conducted by the Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority (SSLM) 30% of the tribal people are illiterate in Wayand District in 300 tribal settlements of the total 2975 colonies in the district majority of the illiteracy found in *Paniya* and Kattunaika tribes in Wayanad ,i.e., out of total 31831, 9751 are illiterates. Among them women are 6044 and male are 3707 (Times of India, 2018)

### **Interest and awareness towards education**

Based on the interview schedule out of 100 sample 66 % of the tribes can write and read out of which 80 percentage of major category do not have the habit of reading and writing. Only 20 % of the *Paniyar* tribes read newspaper and magazines. The study realized that 34 % *Paniya* tribe are still illiterate.

### **Gender equality among tribal education**

The investigation shows that the impact of *Oorukoottam* effectively influenced the *Paniyar* tribes in Kerala. So that 87 % of the people agree with the statement that equality in education for both gender is essential and a minority of 13 % still holds the view of male domination also in education. For them women must not be equally considered with male gender. A significant number of 93% of adult tribe support women education and abruptly 7% are against women education.

### ***Oorukoottam* sub plans and educational aid four tribal education**

The present study revealed that the opinion of the majority of number 82 % is not satisfied with the *Oorukoottam* activities towards the education for the tribes and only 18 % of them agree that *Oorukoottam* is reaching out for the educational grant- in- aid to its beneficiaries. Majority of the tribes 84% are not aware of the educational scholarship/ grants by central and state government. Only 38% of the tribes utilised the educational scholarships for the same purpose and 62 % of the parents utilised the amount for their livelihood moreover many of them are drunkards and their money in their hand is in squandered.

### **The socializing role of education**

The investigator sought the opinion of the expert tribal leaders who are working among the tribal departments and could get a picture of the exploitation of the tribes. Now a days the tribes come across courageously to solve their particular issues of exploitation. 90% of the people affirms that the *Paniya* tribes strengthened and now no one is exploited by anyone. But the opinion of the 92% is that most of the students are introverted and they always mingle only with the students of same Clan. With the impact of *Oorukoottam* only 16% of the students got into the mainstream community and very few people only say 6 % empowered to be active in the public life and came to leadership. 94% of them are centered in the activities in their own hamlets and still now 88% remain backward in educational level and which led to social and economic backwardness.

### **Current level of dropouts in comparison with previous years**

The investigator conducted interview with the committed social workers (CSW) about the current dropout scale in comparison with previous years. The analysis of the drop outs from the academic year 2007 on wards shows that there is an increase in the tribal dropouts. In 2007-08 it was 61.11% and in 2011-12 it was 77.23%.it shows the considerable increase in the drop outs level. (Joy J & Shrihari M.,2014) As per the data received from the educational authorities of Wayanad in the current year (2018-2019), high level tribal dropouts among the total drop outs, i.e. 80.62 % . (SSA survey reports, 2018).The opinion of the tribal promoters and CSW reveal that the impact of *Oorukoottam* to increase the enrolment is very less. Even though the SSA project for zero dropouts of *Ooruvidhya* and *Gothrasaradhi* hopefully made a very good impact but there are still 13% of the total tribal population remaining as dropouts.

### **Effectiveness of *Oorukoottam* tribal education**

The study reveals that 62% of the people participated in the discussion hold the view that the discussions at the *Oorukoottam* are at the minimum level and the remaining 38 % opined that there were no discussions at all. The 57 % positively responded about the influence of *Oorukoottam* on education and the role of 38% hold the view that

*Oorukoottam* influences the preservation of the tribal culture. Even though the educational level has considerably improved in the tribal society, the contributions of *Oorukoottam* is only 20 % and the habit and attitude of *Paniya* tribe have changed in 32 % due to its influence. Generally the lifestyle of *Paniya* tribe changed in 47% and the 53 % still remains addicted to alcohol and drugs.

## 6. FINDING AND SUGGESTION

The present study is to find out the impacts of *Oorukoottam* in education on the *Paniya* tribe in Wayanad district. This study was conducted on a sample of adult *paniya* tribes in Wayanad district and interview with tribal promoters, Committed Social Workers, Officials, who serve under tribal departments and officials of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Wayanad. This study realised Many families were not aware of educational importance in their life and do not have any knowledge about the different projects of Grant- In - Aids for the tribal development. Nearly one half of the samples are not aware of the constitutional provisions and privileges for the development of the tribal community.

Though the *Oorukoottam* properly functions in the hamlets could not reach the success level. Literacy rate and level is much below among the tribes comparing it with other communities. It is the same situation in the dropout rate of this community. This study reveals that the dropouts level in *Paniya* tribes are above the level of general community. Even though governments have given many privileges and educational supports the backward community from time to time, the *Paniya* Tribe achieved very poor educational development. Most of the members of the tribe are unaware of the objectives of *Oorukoottam* and the tribal sub plan because of the lack of the conscientization and proper motivation. This is the reason for the poor response of the tribal community towards the education. *Paniyas* must be properly motivated to education in accordance with their interests by way of meaningful educational programs. Only when they are motivated they will realise the need of education in their life, they will be empowered and get into the mainstream society.

### Future initiatives:

- The teachers have to create a rapport and timely intervention with the tribal students in order to reduce the drop outs and it is better they often visit the tribal colonies and build up a relationship with the tribal parents, so that their presence in the PTAs can be confirmed.
- Through the *Oorukoottam* sub plans the state and Central Government should ensure the minimum infrastructure facilities and learning materials to the tribal students as the basic requirements for their study.
- The government has to appoint mentor teachers in each tribal villages and provide a full time comprehensive attention to their educational and personal development.
- The teacher should give individual attention and proper supervision for the effective and meaningful learning of the tribal students.
- The attitude of the tribal parents towards education should be improved through proper counseling and guidance.
- There should be a core committee to evaluate the developmental of progress in education and rectify if any drawbacks.
- *Gothrasaradhi*, the vehicle conveyance for tribal students should be extended to the necessary tribal areas.
- Continuous intervention from tribal departments with motivation and skill development programmes may change the total life patterns of tribes without harming their aboriginal culture.
- The adult must be conscientised with awareness programs based on fundamental rights and human values, child rights, importance of education, government projects for tribal welfare etc.
- The adult tribes should be equipped to give leadership and explain them as a teachers in the tribal hamlets
- Vocational training should be arranged for the unemployed youth.
- Teaching and Learning method should be modified making use of their mother tongue and culture.
- The involvement and frequent monitoring of tribal department authorities in every spell of actions should be strengthened.
- In order to create a good learning environment, de-addiction programs should also be conducted in the tribal hamlets.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The *Paniya* community in Wayanad as a major tribal community, the vulnerable group received many sort of supports from Government and different organizations, still remains backward in the society should be a major concern of *Oorukoottam*. The Number of dropouts are high in the previous years and in the current year the SSA and the teachers are struggling for the zero dropout schemes among the *Paniyas*, the largest tribal group in Wayanad. Their active involvement is highly imperative. Though the *Oorukoottam* is a miniature form of local self-government in the tribal hamlets, could not contribute to the level of its objectives. The objectives of *Oorukoottam* is to bring the tribal community to the mainstream society. The officials and tribal promoters have opined that a systematic and a responsible approach should come from the state and Central Governments. The education has a pivotal role in making any society empowered and it is the most effective instrument for the transformation of any backward community. *Oorukoottam* model can empower the tribal community to the mainstream only when it is to be restructured and redefined.

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