

## Barriers in the Educational Attainment of Tribal Girl students in Salem District of Tamil Nadu State, India

Maanhvizhi Emayavaramban<sup>a,1</sup>, Ramesh Kumar Kandasamy<sup>a,1</sup>, Selvam Muthusamy<sup>b,3</sup>,  
Manivannan Manickam<sup>c,4</sup>

<sup>a</sup> District Institute of Education and Training, Salem, Tamil Nadu, India

<sup>b</sup> Principal, District Institute of Education and Training, Salem, Tamil Nadu

<sup>c</sup> Tamil Nadu Open University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

maanhvizhi@gmail.com

<sup>1</sup> maanhvizhi@gmail.com \*; <sup>2</sup> ramesh255293@gmail.com; <sup>3</sup> mosuselvam@gmail.com; <sup>4</sup> manivannantnou@gmail.com

### Abstract

The objective of this study is to identify the barriers prevailing among the tribal girl students in the attainment of their education. A qualitative study was conducted in 7 hill ranges of Salem district, Tamil Nadu, India, with a semi-structured interview schedule. A total of 21 small group discussion for female tribal students (n=50), teachers are working in tribal areas (n=31), and parents of tribal girl students (n=18). It was found that lack of public transport, poor staff pattern, unavailability of basic infrastructure facilities like road, the curriculum that does not provide support for their poor economic conditions, with very little scope for vocational education, formed barriers to educational attainment. It is concluded that providing proper public transport, vocational education, stable and sufficient staff, due care by the parents, availability of nearby schools would raise educational attainment.

### Keywords:

Girls' education, Malayali tribe, and Educational constraints.



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## INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Ghats are a range of hills that run parallel to the East coast of southern India. They are discontinuous range and found surrounding in Salem district. The tribal clan present in these hill ranges is only one type, which is called 'Malayali.' The name Malayali means "hill dweller" (Janaki, 2000). The economy of Malayali centers around agriculture. Besides cultivation, sericulture, bee-keeping, herding of cattle, goat and sheep, rearing of pig and poultry, and collection of honey and minor forest produce are undertaken to supplement their

subsistence (Naseer, 2015). Malayali tribes are listed in the serial number 25 in the scheduled tribes. They are found in the hill areas of Salem. The hill locks of Shervaroyan, Kalvarayan, Pachaimalai, Palamalai, Bodhamalai, and Aranuthumalai form the parts of Eastern Ghats. They are not claimed as ancient hill tribes, but they have migrated from plains to the hills in the middle of the eighteenth century from Kanchipuram, speak Tamil and practice agriculture.

Malayalis are grouped into 'Periya (big) Malayali' inhabiting Shervaroyan hills, 'Chinna (Small) Malayali' inhabiting Kolli

hills, and 'Middle (Nadu) Malayali' who are living in Pachamalai hills (Mohapatra, 2017). The total tribal population in India is 8.2%. Many anthropological research studies have been conducted among various tribes in India. Very few studies are available which have uncovered the tribal women's status in India. According to the Directorate of Census Operation 2011, Chennai, the total tribal population of Tamilnadu is 7,94,697, with 4,01,068 males and 3,93,629 females, which are 1.1 of the total population. The tribal population of Salem district is 1,19,369, with 60,489 male and 58,880 female population, which is 3.4% of the total population, and this population is third highest in the state after The Nilgiris and Thiruvannamalai districts of Tamil Nadu.

The tribal population who inhabitant the hilly and rural areas is 83.08 percent, and those living in the urban areas are 16.91 percent (Majumdar, 2017). The tribal population inhabiting inaccessible forests and hilly areas are economically poor, illiterate, and lag far behind in all walks of their life when compared to other sections of the population, irrespective of the number of welfare schemes designed and executed by the government for their education and well especially to the womenfolk of these population it is very little or no improvement in the literacy rates. Improvement in literacy

rate is an important key for the socio-economic development of any of the community. As there are very little improvements in the literacy rates of these people, their development in the socio-economic aspects is also negligible.

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, values, skills, beliefs, and also moral habits. It plays a vital role for everyone irrespective of age, gender, caste, creed, religion, and the locality of residence. It is the most powerful tool which can uplift a person's social and economic status. It is one that could transform one's behavior. Education not only helps in economic development, but it also helps in social and community development. It helps in the development of the individual and the community either immediately or for the future. It helps in the development of personal endowments, uplift the capacity of the individuals, overcome all the hurdles, and expand opportunities for the well-being of the individual (Majumder, 2018). To uplift the position of women in society, the education that she gets plays a vital role. The inequalities that are existing in the society which are caused by gender bias can be reduced only through educating the womenfolk.

The effect of girls' education has a great impact on the whole family. This, in turn, has a positive impact on society. Kofi

Annan, the former Secretary-General of the UNO, has rightly said girls' education and empowerment of women is a vital tool for development. Girls' education gives upliftment to herself, her community, and her country (Zimmermann, 2020). Tribal women, when provided with education, can change their way of life, play a vital role in the upliftment of the family and society. The tribal women in the rural parts are deprived of education for various reasons (Das, 2009) observes that the potential of the tribal people has not been identified or they have not realized their potentials due to low levels of literacy.

Many agreements have been signed for girls' education. Even though international agreements like Millenium Developmental Goals have been signed, the number of students who are not enrolled in schools number to 264 million in developing countries. About the number, in the rural areas, it is double when compared to urban areas.

Periyar, who is called 'Socrates of South India,' was an important social reformer of Tamil Nadu. He has insisted upon the education of women and their empowerment to a greater extent. He also adds that when there is a male child and a female child in the family, and the parents do not have enough money to educate both the children, the girl child should be educated, which would help

in the development of the entire family instead when a boy is educated it is only educating a single person (Sithardhanan et al., 2018). To provide greater educational opportunities to women, many schemes like free uniforms, books, bus passes, and also separate schools and colleges for women have been set up. Exclusive women's university named 'Mother Theresa Women's University,' located in Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, has also been inaugurated by the government of Tamil Nadu by Tamil Nadu Act 15-1984.

Even then, the literacy rate of the women population is 73.44 % in Tamilnadu, which is very less when compared to the state average of 80.09 %. But the literacy rate of the tribal population of the state is 48.3 % only. This shows that there is a massive difference between the literacy rate of common people and tribal women, which is due to certain barriers prevailing that hinder their educational attainment (Desai 2008). Anuradha Manav (2013), in her work *Indian Tribes and Culture*, discussed the fact that government schemes have not reached the tribals, which is evident from the lack of basic facilities like poor road and public transportation, electrification, water facilities, etc.; the problems faced by the tribal people can be categorized into Socio-economic issues, health issues, educational issues, and employment issues.

Neeraja et al. (2011), in their study titled 'An Analysis of Tribal Women's Education in India,' says the tribal woman is forced to adhere to certain rules and regulations that control her freedom, and the life of her house, her family, her children, and her own life. The fact remains that a large number of tribal women have missed education at different stages.

The main problems prevailing in tribal education are school infrastructure facilities, availability of suitable teachers, appropriate curriculum, the medium of instruction, and method of teaching. There is an increase in the dropout rate of girl students from the school due to these prevailing problems. Hence it is essential to find out the reason for the decline in the literacy rate of the girl students in this hilly area.

Based on the above discussion, the study aimed to identify the barriers that are prevalent among the tribal girl students to attain education in the major seven hill ranges in Salem district. The findings of this research will help in the identification of all the hindering factors for an increased dropout rate, and thus it can be checked after the completion of the study. The study is formulated in such a way to develop policies to foster prosocial values, character development, and democratic virtues in tribal girl students studying in schools. Hence this study would help in the overall

development of the tribal girl students who will be the samples of the future population that is underdeveloped.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Ethical Consideration

This study was approved by the State Research Approval Committee (2019-2020), constituted by the State Council of Education Research and Training (SCERT), Tamil Nadu State, India. Participants were given a talk about the objectives of the research and a declaration of the investigators stating that the information collected would be treated confidentially.

### Study Area



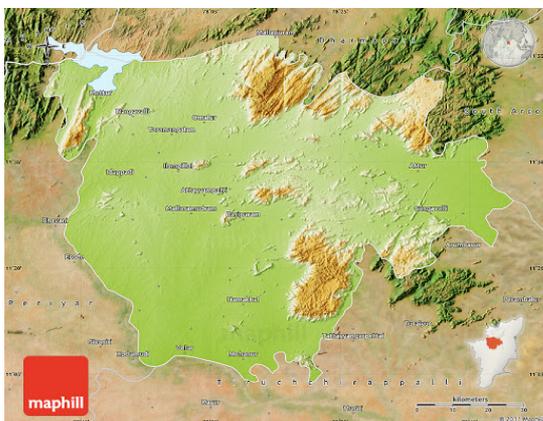
\* Source Ramesh Kumar and Anbazhagan

**Figure 1. Map showing the geographical location of the study area (2018)**

Salem is a district that is located in Tamil Nadu state of India (Figure 1), surrounded by mountains that are evident

from its root word 'SAILAM.' These mountains are the important backbone for the industrial development of Salem. Salem is famous for Stainless steel, Magnesite, Bauxite, Sago, and also Textiles. The coordinates of Salem district are 11.6643° N and 78.1460° E. The average climatic condition of Salem district is between 39 °C to 21 °C. Annual average precipitation is 58.1 mm, and humidity is 66%.

The mountain ranges found in Salem district belong to the Eastern Ghats. The major mountain ranges of Salem district are the Shervaroyan hills, Jarugu hills, Bodhai malai, Pachaimalai, Palamalai, Kalvarayan hills, and Aranoothumalai. These hill ranges are belonging to the Eastern Ghats. These hills range are found in Ayothiyapattinam, Valapaddy, Pethanayakenpalayam, Gangavalli, Kolathur, Yercaud, Panamaruthupatti, and Kadayampatti blocks of Salem district.



**Figure 2**Map showing the tertiary view of the study area.

### **Study design and Setting**

Hammerberg et al. (2016) study focuses on the standpoint of the samples and wants to answer questions on their experience and perspectives. Qualitative research can be used. The data collected is not amendable to counting or measuring. The techniques used in qualitative research includes Small-group discussions for studying beliefs, attitude, normative behavior of the samples. Semi-structured interviews to gather information on focused topics, in-depth interviews to have a better understanding of conditions prevailing, experiences, analysis of texts, and documents like reports generated by government, media, articles, and websites. Semi-structured interview schedules that formed as directions for 'Small group discussion' was used. 'Small group discussion' was conducted with tribal girl students belonging to the hilly area, teachers who are working and handling classes in schools which have tribal population and parents of those girl students was chosen as a sample to conduct an in-depth qualitative study about the barriers that are hindering the educational attainment of these students was done. This small group interview was conducted between January 2020 and February 2020.

### Sample of the Study

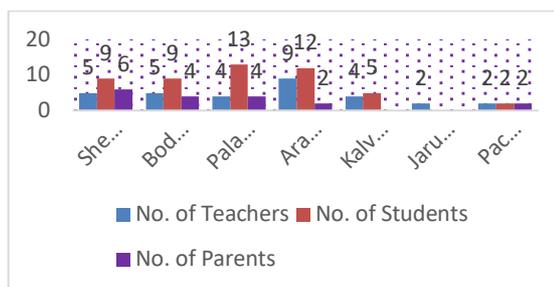
The population of the study comprises of all the girl students who are going to schools of all levels from primary classes to higher secondary classes, the teachers handling these students and their parents. The method employed for selecting the samples from the population was purposive sampling.

For collecting samples, six criteria were fixed. They are (i) Availability of the students in the school (about the regularity of the students to the school), (ii) Cooperating behavior of the students for the data collection, (iii) Willingness of the parents and teachers to collect data from their children, (iv) Access to the school through some sort of transport, (v) Availability of the teachers in the school and their willingness to disclose the information and (vi) Availability of the Parents in the school or at their home and their willingness to disclose the information.

A total of 50 tribal girl students who were studying in the tribal area, 31 teachers who are handling them, 18 parents whose girl students are studying in the tribal area (Shown in Table 1 and compared in Figure 2 were selected randomly from Shervaroyan hills, Jarugu hills, Bodhai malai, Pachamalai, Palamalai, Kalvarayan hills, and Aranoothumalai hill ranges.

**Table 1** Frequency Distribution of Samples Based on Their School

Sl. No.	Name of the Hill Range	No. of Teachers	No. of Students	No. of Parents
1	Shervaroyan hills	5	9	6
2	Bodhai malai	5	9	4
3	Palamalai	4	13	4
4	Aranoothumalai	9	12	2
5	Kalvarayan hills	4	5	0
6	Jarugumalai	2	0	0
7	Pachamalai	2	2	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>31</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>18</b>



**Figure 3** Graphical representation of frequency distribution of samples

### Data Collection

Small group interview for students, teachers, and parents was conducted in each of seven different hill ranges were taken up for the study. Total of 21 small group interview was conducted. Semi-structured interview schedules were designed for students, teachers, and parents separately. The semi-structured interview was validated by conducting a pilot study. Face validity and content validity of the tool were determined by eight experts, four teacher

educators, and four teachers who are handling tribal girl students. Two of the investigators visited the schools in person and conducted small group interviews with the students, teachers, and parents. Either a teacher or a well-known person from the public acted as a moderator. Generally, these moderators were mid-day meal workers who were working in a school, and this person was also one of the village inhabitants. Hence both the samples and the investigators were feeling comfortable and also helped in the triangulation of research data. One of the investigators conducted the interview, and the other recorded the data.

students concerning the Home environment and Parental attitude, School environment and its location, Social / Traditional / Cultural aspects, Environmental and Infrastructure aspects.



**Figure 4** mall group interviews with the students

During data collection was intended to find the prevailing barriers that hinder the attainment of education for the tribal girl



**Figure 5** Small group interviews with the teachers and parents

### Data Analysis

Hammerberg et al. (2016) analysis of data in qualitative studies involves the systematic collection, organization, description, and interpretation of textual data and also visual data.

After the collection of data from each study area, they were grouped, and a detailed analysis was conducted. The data collected were segregated, and they were categorized according to the objectives framed for the study. The categorized data were grouped

based on the themes that were arrived for conducting the study. The collected data was analyzed qualitatively from interview transcript, field notes (notes taken in the field during the conduction of the study), video, audio recordings, images of the samples, and Documents.

The collected data were grouped into seven different area studies. The information

got was used for finding the similarities and dissimilarities between each study area and used for comparing and contrasting the barriers that are prevalent in each study area.

## RESULTS

Influence of hame environment and parental care aspects in tribal girl children.

**Table 1. Result Influence of hame environment and parental care aspects in tribal girl children**

Home Environment	Shervaroyan Hills	Bodhai Malai	Palamalai	Aranoothu Malai	Kalvarayan Hills	Jarugumalai	Pachamalai
Parental Care towards education	Parents don't care for their ward's education.	Parents care least about their wards education.	Parental care is average on their wards towards education.	Parent care is given more importance.	Parents care least about their wards education	Parental care is average on their wards towards their education	Parental care is average on their wards towards their education
Economic status of the family	Poor economic status, they work in estates and earn very meager money.	Poor economic status.	I mixed economic people.	Average economic status, men go too far places to work, and women stay on farms and work.	Good economic status.	Economically poor.	Average economic status, men go too far places to work, and women stay on farms and work.

<b>Burden by Household work for girl students</b>	Students are burdened with household work and have no time to study.	Students are burdened with household work and have no time to study.	Students support household work, but they are not burdened.	Students support in household work.	Students are burdened with household work and have no time to study.	Students support household work, but they are not burdened.	Students are not burdened with household work.
<b>Economic support by students to their parents</b>	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Family issues, Extramarital affairs, Polygamy</b>	Prevalent to a greater extent and disturbs the students.	Prevalent to a greater extent and disturbs the students.	Negligible.	Prevalent to a greater extent but does not disturb the students.	Prevalent to a greater extent and disturbs the students.	Prevalent to a lesser extent.	Negligible.

Parents in the Shervaroyan hills work as daily laborers in coffee estates, and they leave home by 7 in the morning and return by 6 in the evening; hence the girl students are burdened up with all the household chores like washing, cleaning, cooking, taking care of their younger siblings and have no time to do academic-related activities at home. The same situation is prevalent in Bodhaimalai. Parents start their work in the farms where they cultivate flowers between 2 am to 11 am and 6 pm to 8 pm. Hence students perform all the household chores and also help their parents economically by working in the fields. These people are economically poor as they depend

on an agent for marketing their flowers and spend most of the money on repaying their loans and their interest.

People in the Palamalai range are with a mixed economy. People who are living on the banks of the river have fertile agricultural land, but the other part of the hill has less fertile land; hence both men and women leave their wards to the elder members of the family or in hostels and go to nearby states Kerala, Karnataka or nearby districts Erode, Namakkal, Dharmapuri and work as labors. Both the parents in Kalvarayan hills also go too far from places where coffee estates are located to work for four months in a year. They mostly take their wards with them;



<b>Public transport</b>	We have limited public transport.	No public transport.	No public transport, no proper road facility.	We have limited public transport.	Limited road facilities, limited public transport.	No public transport to reach their habitat from the foothills, limited public transport in the foothills.	No public transport to reach their habitat from the foothills, limited public transport in the foothills.
<b>Electrification</b>	Available to all houses.	Not available fully. Few houses are with solar panels.	Available to all houses.	Not available completely.			
<b>Mobile phone and internet access</b>	Not available, no usage of smartphone, no internet access.	Not available, no usage of smartphone, no internet access.	Not available, no usage of smartphone, no internet access.	Not available, no usage of smartphone, no internet access.	Not available, no usage of smartphone, no internet access.	Not available, no usage of smartphone, no internet access.	Not available, no usage of smartphone, no internet access.

Improper conveyance hinders the mobility of children to schools in Palamalai, Pachamalai, and Jarugumalai due to increased steepness of the roads, due to the unavailability of public transport in these ranges. Even when public transport is available to some area, they are limited. Students have to start early from home and return in the late evenings due to limitations in time and the number of buses. There is a long wait time, which has increased the number of opportunities for girls falling in love, marry in haste at a very early age without any intimation to parents, which is

the main cause for an increased dropout rate. This is due to the lack of attention for their wards by the parents and also due to the lack of proper guidance and counseling regarding the adverse effects of early marriages and the importance of education. Girls in all these ranges perform better than boys academically even though they have many barriers to study. Inaccessibility to electrification is another struggle in their education. Due to the lack of electrification in the interior parts, students are not able to perform their academic activities at home. Even in this twenty-first century, many

places are isolated from the word with an indecorous communication network. Because of improper communication networks, teachers find it very difficult to contact their parents and intimate about the absents of the students when they do not turn up to schools. Even though the state government provides free energized textbooks, with the lack of smartphones and internet facilities, the students have no scope to learn beyond their textbooks.

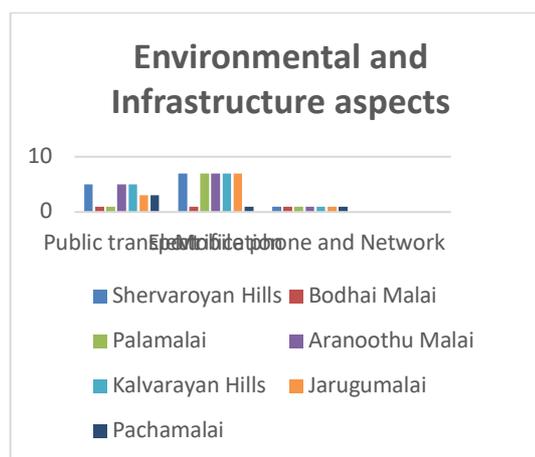


Figure 7. Graphical representation of environmental and infrastructure aspects

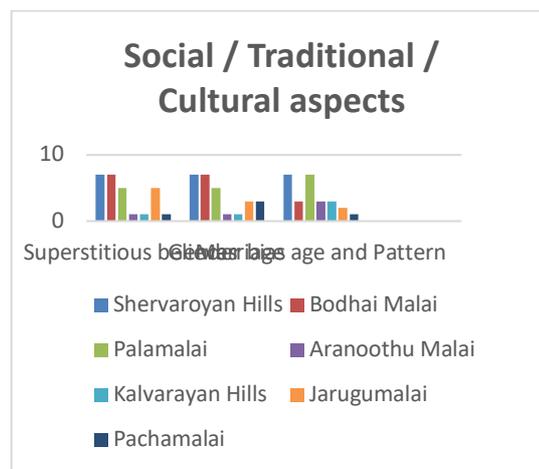
Table 3. Influence of Social, Traditonal, and Cultural Aspects in Girls Education

Cultural and Traditional Aspects	Shervaroyan hills	Bodhamalai hills	Palamalai	Aranoothu Malai	Kalvarayan Hills	Jarugumalai	Pachamalai
Superstitious believes	Prevailing to a greater extend.	Prevailing to a greater extend.	The limited practice of these believes.	The limited practice of these believes.	The limited practice of these believes.	The limited practice of these believes.	The limited practice of these believes.
Gender Bias	Prevalent to a greater extend.	Prevalent to a greater extend.	Prevalent.	Not prevalent.	Not prevalent.	Prevalent to a lesser extent.	Prevalent to a lesser extent.
Marriage age and Pattern	Girls marry very early; they fall in love and marry when they are in class 9 or at the age of 15.	The marriage age is between 15 to 18 in this area. They marry between different ranges.	Marriage age is between 18 to 21. Girls are allowed to study if they wish, and they are married	Marriage age is between 15 to 21. Suppose the girls want to study the study. When they fall	Marriage age is between 15 to 21. Suppose the girls want to study the study. When they fall in	The marriage age is between 15 to 18 in this area.	Marriage age is between 15 to 21. If the girls want to study the study. When they fall

	Boys also marry at the age of 18 to 20.	Love marriages are more prevalent at a very early age.	after they finish their studies.	in love, they marry at an early age.	love, they marry at an early age.		in love, they marry at an early age.
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Superstitious believes high in the Shervaroyan hills and Bodhamalai hills. Girls are placed out of the village for ten days during puberty, which is a problem of safety. When these girls are alone away from the house, there may be dangers of wild animals and insects, lack of proper guidance regarding menstrual hygiene by the elders of the family, lack of proper sanitation facilities like toilets, water, etc. The absence from school also affects the studies by keeping their mind away from school. Limited superstitious believes followed in Pachamalai, Palamalai, Jarugumalai, and Kalvarayan hills. There is no prevalence of superstitious believes in the Aranuthumalai range. More importance is given to boy children in the family. Many families do not practice family planning to have a hereditary heir for the family. They give birth until they give birth to a male child. It has been

reported grandmother, mother, and daughter had delivered babies together. The elder girls are burdened with lots of household chores, and they drop out of school to take care of their younger siblings. To reduce the burden of the family, these girls also help through economic activities. Early marriage age also affects the girls' education, which is done by the students themselves without knowing the importance of education.



**Figure 8 Graphical representation of the influence of social, traditional & cultural aspects**

School-Related Problems	Shervaroyan Hills	Bodhai Malai	Palamalai	Aranoothu Malai	Kalvarayan Hills	Jarugumalai	Pachamalai
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<b>School access</b>	Presence of dangerous streams, slippery roads on the way to school.	Houses are located near the school.	Dangerous slippery and steep roads, wild animals pass on the way to school, no proper road.	Students have to walk for a long distance to schools, or they have to use limited public transport.	Students have to walk for a long distance to schools, or they have to use limited public transport.	No dangerous places to cross for the students to reach school.	Poor road facilities, no dangerous places to cross for the students to reach school.
<b>Performance in Educational activities</b>	Girls perform better than boys. The overall performance of the students is average.	Girls perform better than boys. The overall performance of the students is average.	Girls perform better than boys. Girl students have better performance.	The student's performance is average.	The student's performance is average.	The student's performance is average.	The student's performance is average.
<b>Availability of Primary, Upper Primary, High and Higher Secondary School</b>	Primary and Upper primary schools are present near the houses—higher secondary school at a distance of 25 km from interior hamlets.	Primary school is present at the top of the hill. Upper primary school is present at the foothills. High and Higher secondary hills not present in this range.	Primary, Upper Primary, and High School are present in the hamlets which are on the top of the hill. Higher secondary school is not available in the range.	Primary, Upper Primary, and High School are present in the hamlets which are on the top of the hill. Higher secondary school is not available in the range.	Primary and Upper primary schools are present near the houses—higher secondary school at a distance of 15 km from interior hamlets.	Primary School alone is present in the hamlets, which are on the top of the hill. Higher secondary school is not available in the range.	The primary residential school is present at the top of the hill. Upper primary school is present at the foothills. High and Higher secondary hills not present in this range.
<b>Availability of Teachers</b>	Adequate	Adequate	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit
<b>Residential school Facilities</b>	Higher Secondary School is available at a greater distance within this range itself.	Not available in this range.	Residential High School is available in this range.	Residential High School is available in this range.	Higher Secondary School is available at a greater distance within this range itself.	Not available in this range.	Residential Primary School is available in this range itself.

<b>The regularity of Students to school</b>	Few students are irregular, which is not known to the parents.	Regular to school.	Very few students do not come to school regularly.	Absenteeism is very common.	Absenteeism is very common.	Regular to schools.	Regular to schools.
<b>Internet and Technology based education</b>	No Internet access. Technology-enabled education is practiced by teachers in this area.	No Internet access. Technology-enabled education is practiced by teachers in this area.	No Internet access. Technology-enabled education is practiced by teachers in this area.	No Internet access. There is no usage of technology-enhanced teaching.	No Internet access. Technology-enabled education is practiced by teachers in this area.	No Internet access. There is no usage of technology-enhanced teaching.	No Internet access. Technology-enabled education is practiced by teachers in this area.

The students in the Shervaroyan hills, Kalvarayan, and Pachamalai have to pass through dangerous, slippery streams, slippery roads that are dangerous during the rainy season. It is not a safe route for younger students, but the older students take care of the younger students to reach primary and upper primary schools. Students have to travel a long distance by walk or through public transport, which is limited in Shervaroyan hills, Kalvarayan, Aranoothumalai to reach higher secondary school. Palamalai students walk long distances, which are passed by wild animals like the bear on their way to primary and high school. Due to these issues, there is an increased rate of absenteeism leads to a negative impact on education. Bodamalai, Pachamalai, and Jarugumalai people do not have high and higher secondary schools in their range. Hence they have to travel long.

Parents have a fear of sending their wards to distant places to go to school.

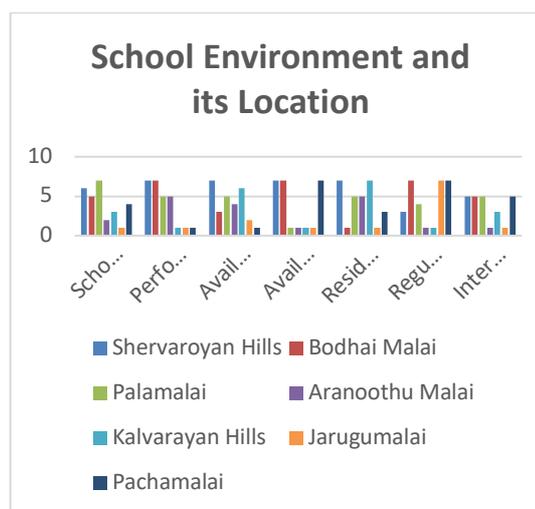
The number of teachers is insufficient in Palamalai, Aranoothu Malai, Kalvarayan Hills, Jarugumalai, and Pachamalai. The inadequate number of teachers is an important barrier for these hill ranges. Residential schools, when available, have inadequate infrastructure and capacity for girl students, which has further increased hindrance for educational attainment.

Students, after completing their high school, should select a stream for their higher secondary, which is grouped as Science, Arts, or Vocational. Usually, science subjects are preferred by students who perform better in academics. Vocational subjects are meant for students who are planning for a vocational education after schooling and planning to earn. The availability of streams which can be studied

easily by the students like Arts, Vocational streams are not available in the hilly areas.

The students in all these ranges absent from school for many days. The students in the Aranuthumalai range attend functions and other social gatherings and absent themselves for more than ten days at a stretch. They attend functions not only in their hamlets, but they even go to the nearby hamlets; hence the number of days they stay away from school is increased to a greater extend. Students in the Kalvarayan hills migrate with their parents to nearby states for labor work from January to May of every year. Hence they are irregular to schools. The students in other ranges are also retained for economic activities during coffee picking season, flowering season, and other agricultural work, which has a great negative impact on the education of these girl students.

There is no internet facility in any of these ranges, and hence online learning cannot be done. The textbooks are provided with videos that can be opened with a quick response code. Usage of these videos cannot be done by the students of these areas; hence the visual learners suffer a lot. However, when the teachers are available and are technically sound, they download the videos and provide the students with the learning experience.



**Figure 9. Graphical representation of School-Related Issues**

## DISCUSSION

Transport, communication, parental care, economic status, access to school, infrastructure, social beliefs, and awareness of the parents play a vital role in the education of girls students in these tribal areas. Despite an increase in the general literacy rate of the country, the condition of tribal girl students is in pathetic condition both in their attainment and achievement. There are multiple barriers for tribal girl students in attaining literacy. A few of the issues are enrolment and retention. These factors are influence by the individual, members of the family, and also environmental aspects (Bhagavatheeswaran et al., 2016). Girl students who work at home and absent also work to earn money for their needs. A large number of students who depend upon their hard work for financial assistance. There is no time for girls to study

at home since they have to take care of their younger siblings and help in the fields (Majumdar, 2017; Remadevi, 2008; Bhasin, 2007), which are also revealed in the present study. They absent themselves for a longer duration as they accompany their mothers in household work and also accompany their work (Majumdar, 2017). The findings of the present study have a difference from this finding as the girl students are left alone at home to take care of their younger siblings. Sometimes they carry their younger sibling under school age with them to school. Absenteeism is a vital problem in tribal areas (Saritha, 2014). Absenteeism among the tribal students is due to a lack of public transport and parental care (Vander Ploeg et al., 2013). These findings are similar to the present study, along with these reasons. The students absent themselves from attending functions and other such family gatherings also. Administrative problems are caused by poor attendance (Remadevi, 2008). The higher poverty rate is an important obstacle in attaining education among the tribal girls in India (Mohapatra, 2017). Due to poverty and poor economic conditions, tribal people have a lack of interest in education. Parents in the tribal area find it tough to send their students to school (Majumdar, 2017). The findings of the present study deviate from it because parents do not have any idea about the education of their wards; instead, they

take up a neutral stand. Teachers consider the prevailing syllabus uncomfortable since they have not worked with an activity-based curriculum, which is also felt by students. Restructuring of the curriculum is very important (Remadevi, 2008), and the findings of the present study go further deeper, which recommends the inclusion of vocational education for the students, the introduction of vocational groups in the higher secondary classes. Even though there is no scope for tribal activities like hunting, dancing, singing, agricultural practices, archery in the curriculum (Saritha, 2014), children learn them without much difficulty. The findings of the present study deviate from Sahu (2014), as the samples of the present study stay a negative attitude towards tribal girls' education.

Tribal girls at the secondary level facing problems with their economical background, family status, and the infrastructure facilities in the school. A study conducted by Renuka (2017) also discloses the same findings. Students do not actively participate in learning due to a lack of motivation. The present study exposes that the student's age increases more barriers to hinder their education. A study reported by Remadevi (2008) also expresses educational attainment is indirectly proportional to the age of the students. The research of Barile (2012) reported that the students had a better

understanding of the teaching climate. The rate of the drop was very less in higher classes. But present study identifies dropout rate is high in higher classes. The present study identifies insufficient staff patterns effects the academic performance of the students. A study carried by Majumdar (2017) also expressed the same.

Indecorous road facilities and transport are the major roles in reaching school. Apport from that tribal village is scattered, and hence they have to walk long distances to reach schools. The environment is an important factor that influences educational attainment (Saritha, 2014). In the study area, enrollment of the tribal girl students is very low in the higher education levels, and also the dropout level is extremely high, as reported by Balagopal (2020). A wide gap is seen between the school culture and family culture for these tribal students. This gap has resulted in many discipline issues and also academic issues (Dar, 2017). The present study suggesting as the study conducted in the tribal areas of Sundargarh and Keonjhar, that the schools should be provided with the needed basic facilities like more number of teachers, innovative teaching-learning process to attract the tribal teachers, the appointment of teachers belonging to tribal population, changes in the curriculum which suits the tribal students.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

An elaborate study of these students has given more and more components that hinder and form barriers for the educational attainment of tribal girl students.

### **Appointment of Staff**

A separate psychologist or a part-time psychologist or a student-friendly teacher can be appointed to address all the problems faced by the adolescent tribal students. Appointment of an adequate number of teachers, ministerial staff for the office, escorts for students of primary classes to take the students from home and back to school.

### **Sensitization Programmes**

Sensitize the problems of the tribal girl students to their parents, counseling them to provide sufficient love, affection, and care for their wards along with its rectification to help them to ensure their educational attainment. Sensitizing the students on the importance of education, job opportunities after studying,

### **Training programs**

They are training the teachers to handle tribal students, providing vocational training for all the students from upper primary classes. District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) can conduct training for the teachers to provide counseling and guidance

for these students academically, emotionally, and vocationally, motivational sessions for the students to rectify their problems and motivate them to complete their education.

### **Comprehensive Tribal Development Centre**

A development center can be established in each hill range, which would comprise a group of people from various departments. The group may contain an educationist, anthropologist, psychologist, sociologist, an officer from the tribal developmental department, and so on. They can meet at regular intervals and find solutions for the local problems, and they can help the tribal girl students in all the aspects right from social, emotional, and other such.

### **CONCLUSION**

Reduction in the literacy rate of the tribal population is due to poor educational attainment, especially with the girls' population. The important findings of the study suggest that lack of proper public transport, parental love, insufficient staff, and infrastructure facilities, along with lack of motivation, has formed vital barriers in the attainment of education for tribal girl students. Bhopal, 1998 emphasis that women's marital status is influenced by both education and employment. Gupta's study

signifies that mainstreaming of the tribal population is more important. Since they are not mainstreamed, they stay away from the development process. All the issues related to the educational scenario of the tribes are emphasized. The paper suggests that to mainstream the tribal population, it is important to make them socialize, which could be possible through quality education. Educationists, stakeholders from various departments like tribal welfare, school education, transport, rural welfare, and so on should make a note of these findings so that they can rectify the lacuna to create a conducive environment.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Our gratitude goes to the State Research Committee of SCERT, Chennai, who approved this study for funding and the teachers and authorities who formed the backbone for this work.

### **FUNDING SOURCE**

This work was supported by the Annual Grant (2018-19) fund for Research of District Institute of Education and Training (District unit of State Council of Educational Research and Training, Uthamacholapram, Salem, Tamil Nadu State, India).

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