

School Environment: A Place To Nurture Life Skills – An Empirical Study Among Tribal Students, Kannur, Kerala State.



Social Science

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ABSTRACT

Over the past centuries the important of school climate in the development of life skills has been identified. Schools are the place where children spend most of their time. It is the courtyard of socialization. The reviews show that school climate is closely associated with the psycho-social and academic development of the students. Positive school environment contributes to their development and negative school environment results in underdevelopment. Tribes are socially and economically disadvantaged groups. Being born in that community the tribal students also get suffered. They lack quality life and education. The economic deprivation makes them school dropouts. In this empirical study the researcher tries to find out the school environment of ST students as perceived by them with special reference to Kannur District Kerala. The result of the study shows that majority of ST students are comfortable in their school environment.

Man is a social animal. Socialization is the process which may lead to desirable, or 'moral', outcomes in the opinion of said society that equips the man to function better in a society. As that of families school has a major role in the socialization of an individual. School climate teaches them how to behave in a group apart from family. School is a blue print of society. We all have ever memorable school days. Memories may be happiest or saddest. It constitutes a lot of events that made our life turn to different extents. The treatment which is received from the school climate is a future determining element of a student. Peer reviewed academic research has shown that positive school climate is associated with positive youth development.

The term School climate refers to the quality and character of school life which reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational structures. National Climate Council (NSCC) suggests that there are four important areas that school climate constitute: Safety, Relationships, Teaching and Learning and the external environment. More than the individual experience school climate is a group phenomenon comprising giving and takings. It includes physical, social and academic dimensions (Alexandra Loukas, 2007). The safe and supportive school environment promotes positive social relationship and it makes the students self-respected and competent. Reviews reveal that empirical research indicates, positive school climate is closely associated with academic achievement, school success, effective violence prevention, students' healthy development, and teacher retention.

As other part of the world in Kerala also tribes are socially and economically backward group. While compared to others tribal community gives less prominence to education. They believe in earnings to live. The literacy rate of Tribe is 21.16% less than that of total literacy 93.93 in Kerala. Majority of them are school drop-outs. Poverty, lack of access to educational system, unemployment, family burden etc pull them back from the school. School environment is another important cause of their educational deprivation. In many areas they lack the positive school climate, leads to the psycho-social complications and poor achievement. In this research paper the researcher tries to assess the psycho-social climate of school perceived by tribal students in Kerala.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To collect the demographic details of the students.
- To assess the school environment as perceived by the students.
- To understand the relationship between the dimensions of school environment and the socio-demographic characteristics.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted descriptive design among 30 samples 15 boys and 15 girls who were studying in Govt Model Residential school at Kannur district, Kerala. Samples were collected by using simple random sampling method from the VIII, IX and X standard students. Researcher administered School Environment Inventory developed by Anderson.G.J (1968) to understand the school environment as perceived by students which is having the following dimensions.

• Creative stimulation:

It refers to teachers activities to provide conditions and opportunities to stimulate creative thinking.

• Cognitive encouragement:

It means teachers behavior to stimulate cognitive development of student by encouraging his actions or behavior.

• Permissiveness:

It states the condition in which students are provided opportunities to express their views freely and act according to their desires with no interruption from teachers

• Acceptance:

It reflects teacher's unconditional love and recognition from the part of teachers.

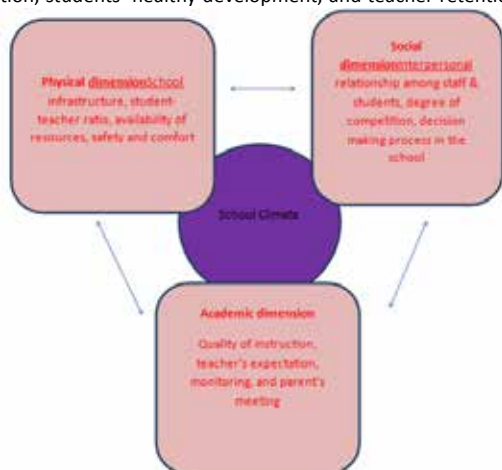


Figure 1 DIMENSIONS OF SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

• Rejection:

It implies a school climate in which teachers do not accord recognition to students' rights to deviate, act freely and be autonomous persons.

• Control:

It indicates autocratic atmosphere of the school in which several restrictions are imposed on students to discipline them.

The collected primary data was analyzed by using SPSS ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The result of the study reveals that 50% of the respondents completed 14 years, 16.7% are of above 14 years and the remaining percentages are of below 14 years old. Hence majority of them studies in IX standard, 39.3% studies in VIII and 10.7% studies in X standard. 83.3% of them come from rural areas and 16.7% comes from urban area. Fathers of 73.3% do coolie works, 13.3% works in private institutions and 13.3% doesn't have father. It also shows that four of the respondents are single parent reared children. Mothers of 76.7% are also coolie workers, 20% works in private sector and 3% are house wives. Regarding the birth order; 50% of the respondents are first born, 16.7% are middle born and 33.3% are last born.

Table 1 LEVEL OF SCHOOL CLIMATE PERCEIVED BY STUDENTS

Dimensions of school environment	Level of each dimensions perceived by students		
	Low (%)	Average (%)	High (%)
Creative stimulation	13.3	23.3	63.3
Cognitive encouragement	16.7	43.3	40.0
Permissiveness	16.7	40.3	43.0
Acceptance	10.0	20.0	70.0
Rejection	40.0	50.0	10.0
Control	33.7	46.3	20.0

It is visible from the study that majority (63.3) of the students perceive that the school environment provide adequate conditions which to stimulate their creative thinking and 70 % reveals that they are unconditionally accepted by the teachers. In case of cognitive encouragement and permissiveness the result is more or less same. Only a less percentage shows low scores. Majority of the students lie in average and low scores in the dimensions of rejection and control. It reveals that majority of the students tells that their school environment contributes to their development.

Table 2 MEAN OF EACH DIMENSIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE GENDER

Sex	N	Mean
Creative stimulation	15	51.47
Male	15	60.13
Female		
Cognitive encouragement	15	31.13
Male	15	34.40
Female		
Acceptance	15	28.67
Male	15	38.93
Female		
Permissiveness	15	20.53
Male	15	25.27
Female		
Rejection	15	18.60
Male	15	17.33
Female		
Control	15	27.47
Male	15	24.47
Female		

The above result shows that the score of all the tree dimensions except rejection and control is high among girls than that of tribal boys. Only creative stimulation shows statistically significant difference with respect to the gender ($t = 2.116$, $p < 0.05$). It means that girls are more comfortable in their school environment than the boys. Girls don't feel rejected and controlled by others in school environment. Our traditional family system may be one of the reasons behind that. In most of the families boys are getting more freedom than girls. They want the same freedom in school. But our school has upgraded to give equal opportunities and freedom irrespective of gender. This study shows that girls are relatively relaxed at school in terms of school climate.

The variable rejection only shows statistical difference with regard to the class in which they are studying ($F = 7.137$, $P < 0.05$). It is also found that there is no significant difference in the

Table 2 CORRELATION AMONG THE DIMENSIONS

Variables	Correlation value	Statistical inference
Creative stimulation & Cognitive encouragement	0.556	0.001
Creative stimulation & Acceptance	0.556	0.001
Creative stimulation & Permissiveness	0.754	0.000
Cognitive encouragement & Acceptance	0.554	0.001
Cognitive encouragement & Permissiveness	0.611	0.000
Permissiveness & Acceptance	0.669	0.000
Control & Rejection	0.01	0.24

The above table shows that there is significant positive correlation among all the variables that explains positive school environment and the variables which shows negative school environment also positively correlated each other. The study result also shows that there is a negative correlation between the variables which denote positive school environment and that of variables shows negative school environment. But it is not statistically significant.

CONCLUSION

While doing this study the researcher's intention was to express the school environment perceived by the tribal students of Kerala. It is understood from the study majority of the tribal students are comfortable in their school environment. They express that they are getting adequate care and support from the teachers. The previous studies also reveal that school climate has a significant influence on the academic performance of the students. Hence from the study it can be concluded that majority of the tribal students are in the state of ease in their schools. But we need to stretch our attention on that a minority suffers means our goals are failure. The development is impossible unless and until each and everybody gets included.

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