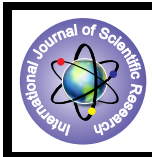


# Tribes in Kerala as the Victims of Dropout -A Study on Attappady



## Economics

**KEYWORDS :** Adivasis, tribal culture, Dropout, Alienation, Mainstream culture

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### ABSTRACT

*Scheduled Tribes in India are generally considered to be 'Adivasis,' meaning indigenous people or original inhabitants of the country. The tribes have been confined to low status and are often physically and socially isolated instead of being absorbed in the mainstream Hindu population. Psychologically, the Scheduled Tribes often experience passive indifference that may take the form of exclusion from educational opportunities, social participation, and access to their own land. All tribal communities are not alike. They are products of different historical and social conditions. They belong to different racial stocks and religious backgrounds and speak different dialects. Discrimination against women, occupational differentiation, and emphasis on status and hierarchical social ordering that characterize the predominant mainstream culture are generally absent among the tribal groups. Adivasis are not as a general rule regarded as unclean or polluted in the same way as the Scheduled Caste population is perceived by the mainstream culture. However, the mainstream Hindu population considers the general tribal population as primitive, technologically backward, and illiterate. Since the 16th century, the tribes have been perceived as sub-humans who live under primitive conditions. All the reasons are the route cause of the alienation of tribals in education and the Dropout. By giving more emphasis on other activities in the tribal hamlet, they are ignoring the value of education.*

### INTRODUCTION

India is homeland to a number of tribal communities with diverse eco-cultural, socio-economic and geographical backgrounds. According to the 2001 Census, Scheduled Tribes (notified by the Government of India under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution) constitute 8.14% of the total population of the country, numbering 84.51 million. In the state of Kerala, 1% of the total population is tribal population, comprising of 36 unique Scheduled Tribes (ST) whose livelihoods are also varied: hunting-gathering, shifting cultivation, settled agriculture, contract labour, etc., are some of them.

**Table 1.**  
**Dropout arte in Attappady**

Location	2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011	
	Number of Dropouts	Percentage of Drop outs	Number of Dropouts	Percentage of Drop outs	Number of Dropouts	Percentage of Drop outs
Agali	187	32.5	149	33.2	120	30.9
Pudhooor	190	33.1	145	32.3	124	27.6
Sholayoor	197	34.2	154	34.3	144	32.1

**Source: Survey Data**

### Tribesfolk in Attappady

Tribal hamlets of Attappady are found in all the three panchayaths, namely, Agali, Pudhur, and Sholayoor. Irula hamlets dominate in all the three panchayaths. Kurumbas reside only in Pudhur and Sholayoor is an exclusively Irula Panchayath. Numerically, Irulas form the largest tribal community (82.25 per cent) followed by Mudugas (12.53 per cent), and Kurumbas (5.22 per cent). The annual compound growth rate of Kurumbas during the period 1961 to 1981 was 2.44 per cent as against 1.61 per cent in the case of Mudugas, and 2.41 per cent in the case of Irulas

**Table 2**  
**Reasons for dropout from the perception of teachers**

Reasons	Frequency	Percent	Rank
Lack of interest in study	60	100.0	1
Economic problem	55	91.7	2
Health problem	40	66.7	5

Distance from home to school	48	80.0	4
Increases household responsibilities	51	85.0	3
Lack of awareness of parents	32	53.3	7
Crime activities in school	5	8.3	11
Language problem	24	40.0	8
Early marriage	19	31.7	9
Lack of food	5	8.3	10
Lack of proper guidance	34	56.7	6

**Source: Survey Data**

### Reasons for Drop-out among tribal students

**1. Low socio-economic status:-** Tribals enjoy low socio-economic status. Miller (1988) has identified four major classes of variables such as cognitive variables, physical variables and motivational variables where disadvantaged learners show poor performance as compared with the advantaged groups.

**2. Tribal concepts of pleasure:-** Tribals are giving more importance for their pleasure such as dance, music and other types of entertainments prevalent in the society.

**3. Existence of ethnic stereotypes:-** Stereo typing is a natural and inevitable. It helps us to organize life. But such typing turns in to prejudice or stereotypes when based on little facts and it is used as a mechanism to establish the myth of racial or cultural superiority.

**4. Tribal concept of learning:-** In most of the tribal cultures learning is an active pleasurable event mostly carried on among peers. But the existing system of education does not take in to account their learning style.

**5. Linguistic problems:-**Tribal languages, except a very few, belong to Austro-Asiatic language family and are different from dominant non tribal languages of India which belong either to the Indo European or the Dravidian family. In most of the time tribals face acute problems in language.

**6. Problem of learning English:-** Tribals need for English is great, they face problems in learning than their non-tribal counterparts. For tribals their typical use of regional languages interferes with English. For them English are 5th or 6th languages.

**7. Problems in learning to read:-**Tribals have long oral tradition. Their culture is oral. Their history, myths and traditions are orally handed down from generation to generation. Most of the

language does not have scripts of their own; their oral tradition still continues to exist.

**8. Psychological problems:** - Financial problems of the tribals always make the tribals in a very depressed condition. They have lots of wants and but the means to satisfying them is very less. It leads to many psychological issues

**9. Academic and administrative problems:** - Even though the number of programmes for the upliftment of tribal education is many, the percentage of people receiving these benefits is very less. Administrative authorities are always showing very neutral attitude towards the education of the tribals.

**10. Indifferent attitude of tribal parents:** - Tribal parents are mostly illiterate. They always show a very indifferent attitude towards the education of their children. They are interested in providing household responsibilities to their children a very early stage of their education.

**11. Indifferent attitude of tribal teachers:** Teachers do not take much effort to improve the educational level of the tribal students. Lack of communication, high level of absenteeism in the class, bad result in study, lack of attention in classroom by the tribals are some of the factors that has increased the indifferent attitude of the teachers towards the tribal students.

**12. Indifferent attitude of tribal students:** Students clearly said don't like someone forcing me to get up early in the morning. So, I was unhappy to go to school... Subjects like Malayalam and Science are good for me, but, English, Hindi and Mathematics are very tough. I could not follow English and Hindi classes.

### Conclusion

Tribal problem act as one of the most crucial problem in the education of tribals in Kerala. The problems of tribal education refer to the quality of school provision, suitable teachers, relevance of content and curriculum, medium of instruction, pedagogy, and special supervision. A majority of schools in tribal areas are without basic infrastructure facilities. Normally, school buildings in tribal areas have thatched roofs, dilapidated walls, and non-plastered floors. Research evidence shows that a large number of tribal schools do not have teaching-learning materials, or even blackboards. In tribal areas the opening of a school is equated with the posting of a teacher and same is the case with 'ashram' schools. Though the demand for changing the content and curriculum to suit the tribal context has been an old one, no serious effort has been made in this direction in any state, except for some sporadic pilot projects. It is high time to invite the attention of the school authorities on reducing the dropout among the tribal students.

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