



Attainment of Linguistic Skills and Educational Issues of Malampandaram Tribes in Kanjirappilly Taluk, Kottayam District, Kerala.

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Kottayam district have tribal areas in the borders of Pathanamthitta and Idukki. On the borders of Kanjirappilly Taluk, Kuzhimavu, with Idukki district, there are The Malai Pandaram, malampandaram or Hill Pandaram a nomadic scheduled tribe. They are the indigenous ethnic groups depends totally on forest resources for living. They have a local dialect known as pandara bhasha but communicate with others in Malayalam. They are little bit reluctant in communication. The Malai Pandaram's livelihood and economy is overwhelmingly forest based. Main source of income is gathering of forest resources like honey, pepper and olibanum (kaattu kunthirikkam). The forest areas are under the government and now they are allotted with own land. But due to nomadic nature, they are not settled down in a specific space.

They travel from Kanjirappilly border to Pathanamthitta through Sabarimala forest. They worship sabarimala sree ayyappan as the controller of the forest and the lives. They are basically light skinned short people with unique physique. They consume forest resources like tubers and fruits from the forest. They didn't wash their clothes usually. Single piece of cloth is used inside their settlement usually. When they have to visit the mainstreamed areas, they deny it because of not having proper clothes. Mainstreamed society offers clothes and supplies to them through tribal volunteers, asha workers of tribal department, anganwadi or schools. But they use the cloth continuously for ten to fifteen days and dispose the clothes. They do not feel comfortable to wash clothes using soaps and drying afterwards. Notable skin diseases are seen in elders and children. Basically children love to wander in the forest and hamlet premises rather than coming to school. Children would not prefer early travels to school because of their preference to wander, explore and play. The parents also are not much concerned about the importance of quality participation of children in school.

To study about the educational status and educational needs of Malampandaram tribes in Kanjirappilly block, a parental meeting was organized by the researcher at Government upper primary school kuzhimavu. As the researcher is the District Programme Officer of Samagra Shiksha Kottayam, the intervention was smooth. The teachers involved in classrooms of the children of malampandaram group, children and their parents from the tribal hamlet were invited for the meeting. Teachers reported high absence rate of children having only 10 percentages to 30 percentage of attendance.

They have to travel through dense forest to reach up to school. Tribal department gotrasaradhi vehicle service is there but children are not ready to attend regularly. Vehicle has to wait near the hamlet for a long time, but due to the wandering nature of children, tracking is not easy. Due to the issue of regularly washing the clothes, available children hesitates to come to school. Due to the issue of decline in attendance and quality school participation, teachers and Samagra Shiksha volunteers reported educational issues, especially in linguistic skills in Malampandaram tribe children in Kanjirappilly block, Kottayam District, Kerala. (The contribution of Reebi Varghese, Block project coordinator for administrative support is appreciated.)

Objectives of the study

- To analyze the learning level of malampandaram tribe children in Kanirappilly taluk.
- To find out the issues of malampandaram tribe children for continuous absenteeism.
- To analyze the absenteeism tendency of malampandaram tribe children and suggest possible solutions.

Related work

- Malampandaram are nomadic tribes traced along the achankovil and pamba river basins in reserved forests of Kollam and Pathanamthitta district, Kerala. (Kumar S V, Kumar K S & Swapna, 2011).
- MalaiPandaram tribe's condition is very pathetic even though there are number of programmes intended for the quality education of tribal students. The study points out the need for an area specific education among these tribal areas. (RS. Manjusha K A Online ISSN: 2249-7315 2019 February 1, indianjournals.com.)

- They are very timid, nonviolent, retiring their relation with outsiders. They live in small groups of 1-8 families, near streams/rivulets of the forest for 30-60 days and travels back and forth through the forest. Medicinal plants used by malampondaram tribes in achankovil forests of Kerala to cure snake bite, wound and bone fracture Jose Mathew And George KV, Life Sciences Leaflets ISSN 2277-4297 Aug 2013.
- The main occupation of Malampondarams was categorized as hunter, collector of forest product or self employed. Malampondaram is the group that is nomadic and is largely dependent on natural resources for both food and cash income. (Gubbi, Sanjay, and Matthew Linkie)
- Local adaptive learning strategies are contributing in quality learning of children from ethnic indigenous group with specific local language. Effectiveness of Local Adaptive lessons for First standard children in Edamalakkudy tribal hamlet, Idukki district, Kerala.(P Vasu, Dhanya)

Hypotheses

(Group 1: children in GUPS and GHS Kuzhimavu under Malampondaram tribal category)

Group 2: children in GUPS and GHS Kuzhimavu other than Malampondaram tribal category)

- HO 1: There is statistically no difference in between the mean values of listening skill in group 1 and group 2
- HO 2 : There is statistically no difference in between the mean values of speaking skill in group 1 and group 2
- HO 3: There is statistically no difference in between the mean values of reading skill in group 1 and group 2
- HO 4 :There is statistically no difference in between the mean values of writing skill in group 1 and group 2
- access facilities as per current status are enough for the children to regularly participate in school.
- Local linguistic or cultural experiences are not influencing the learning level of children in malampondaram tribal category.

Methodology

Descriptive and analytical research study design is adopted for the study. Rather than interview method, Local and oral history methods were also used for the collection of data. Primary data was received with the help of Local Self Government Members, ST promoters, members of the tribal group, tribal students from the schools and teachers involved in their studies.

Structured questionnaire consisting of 10 questions using print forms were distributed to the Local Self Government Members, ST promoters, members of the tribal group (parents), and teachers. Secondary data was collected from the journals and articles. Details of attendance were collected from attendance register in GUPS Kuzhimavu and GHS Kuzhimavu. An open ended multigraded test focused with LSRW skills was conducted to the children of tribal group and non tribal peers. Picture explanation orally and written format and story completion and extension was the implemented strategies for the multigraded test.

Data analysis

Open ended multi graded test was implemented in 18 malampondaram tribe children and 18 other peers studying in the similar classes and within the same age group. They all were exposed to similar academic experiences in school. So researcher considered it as dependent samples (related groups). Paired samples T Test was implemented to analyze the samples. All questionnaire data were imported into SPSS statistical software.

Group 1: Malampondaram tribal group learners in GUPS Kuzhimavu and GHS Kuzhimavu

Learners	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Learner 1	1	1	0	0
Learner 2	1	1	0	0
Learner 3	2	1	0	0
Learner 4	1	0	1	1
Learner 5	3	1	1	1
Learner 6	1	0	0	0
Learner 7	1	0	1	0
Learner 8	0	0	0	0
Learner 9	0	0	0	0
Learner 10	1	1	0	0
Learner 11	1	0	0	0
Learner 12	2	1	1	0
Learner 13	2	1	1	0
Learner 14	1	1	0	0
Learner 15	1	0	0	0

Learner 16	0	1	0	1
Learner 17	0	0	0	1
Learner 18	1	1	0	0

Group 2: learners in GUPS Kuzhimavu and GHS Kuzhimavu other than Malambandaram group.

Learners	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Learner 1	3	4	2	2
Learner 2	3	4	3	3
Learner 3	2	4	2	2
Learner 4	1	2	1	2
Learner 5	4	4	3	3
Learner 6	2	4	3	4
Learner 7	2	3	2	2
Learner 8	4	4	4	4
Learner 9	1	2	2	2
Learner 10	2	4	3	4
Learner 11	2	4	4	4
Learner 12	3	3	3	4
Learner 13	4	3	2	2
Learner 14	2	4	3	2
Learner 15	2	4	3	3
Learner 16	1	2	2	1
Learner 17	2	3	3	2
Learner 18	2	4	3	2

Testing hypotheses.

(Group 1: children in GUPS and GHS Kuzhimavu under Malampandaram tribal category

Group2: children in GUPS and GHS Kuzhimavu other than Malampandaram tribal category)

Skill	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Listening 1	18	1.06	1	0.802	0.189
Listening 2	18	2.33	2	0.97	0.229
Student's t test			-6.06		
DOF			17		
P			<.001		

HO 1: There is statistically no difference in between the mean values of listening skill in group 1 and group.

Analyzing the listening skill of group 1 and group 2, p value is less than .001 and not in significant level. So the null hypotheses can be rejected. It can be inferred that there is a significant gap in listening skills of malambandaram tribal children rather than the other mainstreamed groups.

Skill	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Speaking 1	18	0.556	1	0.511	0.121
Speaking 2	18	3.444	4	0.784	0.185

Student's t test		-14.7
DOF		17
P		<.001

HO 2: There is statistically no difference in between the mean values of speaking skill in group 1 and group 2

p value of comparison of group1 and 2 is less than .001 and not in significant level. So the null hypotheses can be rejected. It can be inferred that there exists a significant gap in speaking skills of malambandaram tribal children rather than the other mainstreamed groups.

Skill	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Reading 1	18	0.278	0	0.461	0.109
Reading 2	18	2.667	3	0.767	0.181

Student's t test	-9.77
DOF	17
P	<.001

HO 3: There is statistically no difference in between the mean values of reading skill in group 1 and group 2

Analyzing the reading skill of group 1 and group 2, p value is less than .001 and not in significant level. So the null hypotheses can be rejected. It can be inferred that there is a significant gap in reading skills of malambandaram tribal children rather than the other mainstreamed groups.

Skill	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Writing 1	18	0.222	0	0.428	0.101
Writing 2	18	2.667	2	0.97	0.229
Student's t test	-8.65				
DOF	17				
P	<.001				

HO 4: There is statistically no difference in between the mean values of writing skill in group 1 and group 2

P value of comparison of group1 and 2 is less than .001 and not in significant level. So the null hypotheses can be rejected. It can be found that there exists a significant gap in writing skills of malambandaram tribal children rather than the other mainstreamed groups.

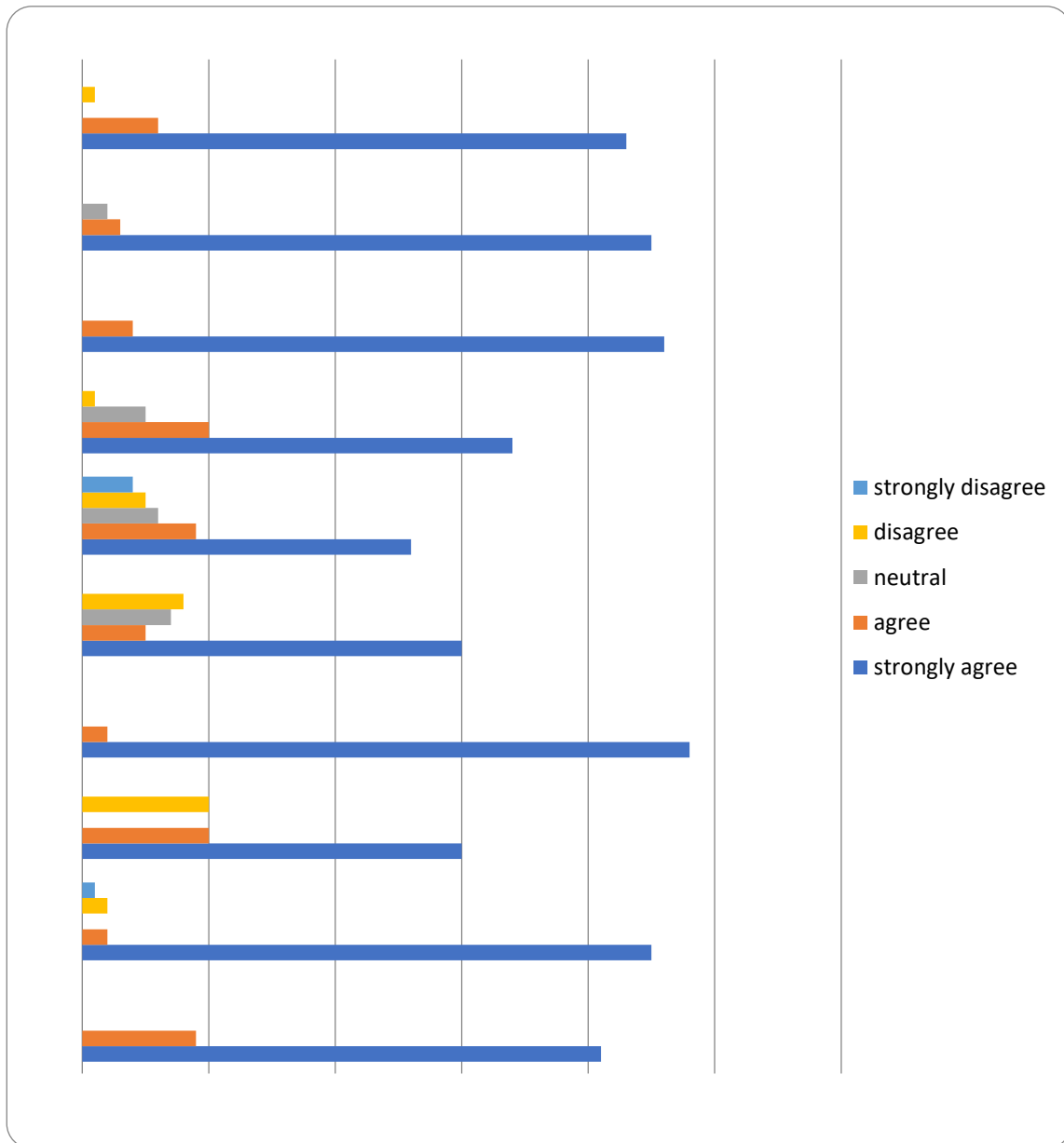
Hence from the observations and statistical calculations, it can be inferred that, Malampandaram tribal children have educational issues in attainment of linguistic skills rather than the mainstreamed children with similar school experiences. This results insists the need of special intervention as to ensure quality education to them.

To collect the concerns, opinions and suggestions about quality education of malambandaram children, structured questionnaire in Malayalam was distributed in printed format. The respondents included 28 parents (malambandaram tribal group), 12 teachers (Teachers from GUPS and GHS Kuzhimavu, Kanjirappilly), one tribal promoter and concerned 9 LSG members near to the tribal area.

Q No	Statements	Respondents' opinion(in Percentage)				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	The geographical hindrances to the hamlet are affecting the child's regular participation in schools.	82	18	0	0	0
2	Local language in hamlet affects the attainment of linguistic skills in children.	90	4	0	4	2
3	Gap in cultural experiences in classroom experiences affects child's learning achievement.	60	20	0	20	0
4	Facilities provided by the authorities are to be upgraded with volunteer assistance to ensure regular participation of children in classrooms.	96	4	0	0	0
5	Nomadic nature of the tribal group affects child's retention in schools.	60	10	14	16	0
6	Nomadic or exploring types of children are having difficulties in learning retention.	52	18	12	10	8
7	Reluctance and ignorance from the side of parents are affecting the learning level of children.	68	20	10	2	0
8	Absence of learning facilities in home affect child's learning attainment.	92	8	0	0	0

9	Socially and economically backward situations are affecting child's learning.	90	6	4	0	0
10	Adapted experiences and advanced ICT facilities rather than in normal classrooms are needed for the children for more achievement in learning.	86	12	0	2	0

RESPONSE FROM THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, PROMOTER AND LSG MEMBERS (28 PARENTS, 12 TEACHERS 1TRIBAL PROMOTER AND 10 LSG MEMBERS)



PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS

DISCUSSIONS

Since the tribal population malapandaram are unique as per their nomadic nature, their educational issues are to be specially catered. As per the opinion from the parents, tribal promoters and LSG members, Geographical hindrances are affecting the participation of children in school. As they feel emotionally secure inside the deep forest dwelling areas and they use forest gatherings as their basic food, they are usually reluctant to reside in mainstream

areas. So large geographical parity occurs between their dwelling place and school resulting in poor participation in school. Also more academic facilities are demanded by the group for the enhancement of learning standards of children. An integrated intervention covering home and school environments will enhance the quality of learning and better participation in school.

CONCLUSIONS

Marginalized category of children including malampandaram tribal group needs specially focused learning enhancement programmes which are adaptable and flexible as per their immediate surroundings. Since the exposure to the outer world is less as compared with the mainstream population, children should get more exposure through ICT facilities and direct field visits. Due to the specific nomadic nature of the community, children have less learning facilities, which must be enhanced through equipping hamlets with learning facilities and assuring a traveling educational volunteer with the children. Also, parental awareness programmes are to be periodically planned so as to ensure academic support in children. Schools can take initiation to ensure proper convergence between parents and school. Stakeholders in school may be connected through the parents by transforming school into a nodal point of tribal mainstreaming initiatives. To ensure retention of children, parents needed to be properly aware about right to education, importance of being educated, career opportunities, benefits of proper education to enhance their life standards and proper utilization, care, strategies and market value of their local products.

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