

Education and Its Discontents: Investigating Barriers to Schooling among De-notified and Nomadic Communities

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Abstract

This article is based on a study carried out between 2013–2015 in nine states in Central, Western and Southern India on socio-economic status and educational attainment among the de-notified, nomadic and semi-nomadic communities. The primary objective of the study covering 76 communities and 13,020 households was to track the barriers to educational attainment and the specific linkages between socio-economic status and education among these communities.

Keywords

De-notified communities/tribes (DNT), National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Communities (NCDNT), discrimination, Criminal Tribes Act

Introduction

The social realities of adivasi communities in India are complex and fraught. Despite constitutional guarantees, earmarked budgets as well as policy initiatives for seven decades, adivasi peoples in the constitutional era in India have faced chronic

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and escalating immiserisation and have been pushed to the margins of vulnerability (Xaxa Report, 2014). Several scholars have underscored the need to recognise the specific and continuing vulnerabilities of de-notified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes arising from their historical experience. From 1871 onwards, a large number of hunting communities began to get declared as 'criminal tribes' by the British Government, under the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871. Although Nehru described this legislation as 'a blot on the law book of independent India', these communities re-christened the 'de-notified' tribes continued to be the target of criminal law in the newly independent Indian State (Radhakrishna, 2009). The view of hunting communities as 'criminal' in contemporary India draws on this colonial history of criminalisation.

The far-reaching effects of such criminal labelling are evident in a fact-finding report of the National Commission of De-notified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Communities (hereafter NCDNT), which interrogates the official view of nomadic communities (NT) as predisposed to criminality (NCDNT, 2007). As the NCDNT points out, there are several communities in the country—de-notified and nomadic—which have been historically disadvantaged. They have been grouped into various categories, such as scheduled castes (SCs), scheduled tribes (STs) and the other backward classes (OBCs). These categorisations were, however, neither logical nor uniform across the states and there are several communities, which are still not included in any of these categorisations and are placed within the general category. There have been several committees and plan documents since 1947, which have looked at the status of these communities and at indices of deprivation generally, but the findings and recommendations have remained unaddressed.

The National Advisory Council Working Group on Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (2011) had suggested several legislative and policy initiatives. The most relevant for our present purposes is the recommendation for target-based programmes and schemes which would enable de-notified communities (DNT) to access all the benefits extended to SC/ST/OBCs, expand and improve livelihoods through mainstreaming of on-going programmes and schemes in the sphere of health, education, ICDS, NREGA, women and girl children, NRLM to cite a few.

This article is based on a study carried out in nine states in Central, Western and Southern India on socio-economic status and educational attainment among the DNT and NT with a view to track the barriers to educational attainment and the specific linkages between socio-economic status and education among these communities.

Socio-economic Profile

The nine states of India in which the study was conducted are Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. A primary survey was undertaken covering 13,020 households selected through random sampling across 76 communities drawn from the NCDNT list consisting of 20 NT and 56 DNT. The exception was Goa, which had a single NT, Dhangar Ghoul, which was surveyed through a census covering all households. The communities selected were distributed unevenly across social groups (Table 1). The study employed a comprehensive household questionnaire, which was tested through a pilot survey. Along with the household questionnaire, information

Table I. Distribution of Communities Surveyed

S. No.	State (No. of Households)	No.	Community (No. of Households)	Category (DNT/NT)	Social Group		
					ST	SC	OBC
1	Maharashtra (1944)	1	Kolhati (179)	NT			✓
		2	Gosai (136)	NT			✓
		3	Muslim Garudi – madari (119)	NT			✓
		4	Kaikadi (229)	DNT			✓
		5	Chhapparband (Muslim) (152)	DNT			✓
		6	Banjara (276)	DNT			✓
		7	Wadar (271)	DNT			✓
		8	Rajput Bhamta (83)	DNT			✓
		9	Pardhi (199)	DNT		✓	
		10	Ramosi (156)	DNT			✓
		11	Kanjarbhat (144)	DNT			✓
		12	Dhangar Gouly (1722)	NT			✓
2	Goa (1722)	13	Salat Ghera (147)	NT			✓
		14	Turi (147)	NT			✓
3	Gujarat (1574)	15	Wagher (157)	NT		✓	✓
		16	Vanjara (155)	NT			✓
		17	Miyana (186)	DNT			✓
		18	Chhara (177)	DNT			✓
		19	Chuvailia Koli (151)	DNT			✓

(Table I Continued)

(Table I Continued)

S. No.	State (No. of Households)	No.	Community (No. of Households)	Category (DNT/NT)	Social Group		
					ST	SC	OBC
4	Madhya Pradesh (1497)	20	Dafer (157)	DNT			✓
		21	Koli (147)	DNT			✓
		22	Sandhi (150)	DNT			✓
		23	Loharpita (150)	NT			✓
		24	Sikligar (150)	NT			✓
		25	Nayakda Bhiil (150)	NT			
		26	Bagri (150)	DNT	✓		
		27	Banchada (150)	DNT		✓	
		28	Kalbelia (137)	DNT		✓	
		29	Nat (152)	DNT		✓	
		30	Kanjar (152)	DNT		✓	
5	Chhattisgarh (1467)	31	Banjara (149)	DNT			✓
		32	Pardhi (157)	DNT		✓	
		33	Kasai (204)	NT			✓
		34	Jogi (45)	NT			✓
		35	Rajgond (139)	NT		✓	
		36	Dhangar (239)	NT			✓
		37	Devar (169)	NT		✓	
		38	Gosai (146)	NT			✓
		39	Pardhi (186)	DNT	✓		
		40	Bairagi (170)	DNT			✓
		41	Banjara (169)	DNT			✓

(Table I Continued)

(Table I Continued)

S. No.	State (No. of Households)	No.	Community (No. of Households)	Category (DNT/NT)	Social Group				
					ST	SC	OBC		
6	Andhra Pradesh (1100)	42	Boya (150)	DNT			✓		
		43	Budabukkals (148)	DNT			✓		
		44	Dasari (18)	DNT			✓		
		45	Guwalakulam (79)	DNT	✓				
		46	Hindu Koyas (61)	DNT	✓				
		47	Kati Kapari (59)	DNT			✓		
		48	Konda Dhora (117)	DNT	✓				
		49	Mondibanda (142)	DNT			✓		
		50	Pamula (23)	DNT			✓		
		51	Relli (152)	DNT					
		52	Shikari (151)	DNT		✓			
		53	Budagajangalu (144)	DNT			✓		
7	Telangana (574)	54	Dasari (72)	DNT			✓		
		55	Dommari (48)	DNT			✓		
		56	Konda Dhora (157)	DNT	✓				
		57	Yerukula (153)	DNT	✓				
		58	Chennadasar (200)	NT					
		59	Dhangar Gouly (200)	NT		✓			
		60	Rajagonda (199)	NT			✓		
		61	Chapperband (201)	DNT	✓				
		62	Dungri Garasia (199)	DNT	✓				
		7	Karnataka (2001)						

(Table I Continued)

(Table 1 Continued)

S. No.	State		Community (No. of Households)	Category (DNT/NT)	Social Group		
	(No. of Households)	No.			ST	SC	OBC
			Gantichor (183)	DNT		✓	
			Handi Jogis (173)	DNT		✓	
			Haranshikari (185)	DNT	✓		
			Kanjarabhat (199)	DNT			✓
			Korama (200)	DNT		✓	
			Pardhi (62)	DNT	✓		
			Attur Kilnad Koravar (20)	DNT			✓
8	Tamil Nadu (1141)		Attur Melnad Koravar (168)	DNT			✓
			Boyars (230)	DNT			✓
			Dombs (41)	DNT			✓
			Jogis (49)	DNT			✓
			Koravars (224)	DNT			✓
			Thottia Naickers (212)	DNT			✓
			Valayars (197)	DNT			✓
			13020				
				NT: 20 + DNT: 56 = 76 (100.0)	14 (18.4)	12 (15.8)	50 (65.8)
	TOTAL						

Source: Field survey.

Table 2. Location of Households

State	Urban	Rural	Total
Maharashtra	968 (49.8)	976 (50.2)	1944 (14.9)
Goa	120 (7.0)	1602 (93.0)	1722 (13.2)
Gujarat	570 (36.2)	1004 (63.8)	1574 (12.1)
Madhya Pradesh	344 (23.0)	1153 (77.0)	1497 (11.5)
Chhattisgarh	698 (47.6)	769 (52.4)	1467 (11.3)
Andhra Pradesh	470 (42.7)	630 (57.3)	1100 (8.4)
Telangana	61 (10.6)	513 (89.4)	574 (4.4)
Karnataka	1133 (56.6)	868 (43.4)	2001 (15.4)
Tamil Nadu	189 (16.6)	952 (83.4)	1141 (8.8)
Total	4553 (35.0)	8467 (65.0)	13020 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey.

was also collected on the villages/habitations, and through focused group discussions and interviews with parents, children, elders, teachers and people belonging to other social groups in these areas.

Sixty-six per cent of the communities surveyed were classified under OBCs (Table 1). Across the states, households were predominantly rural (65%), especially in case of Goa (93%), Telangana (89%), Tamil Nadu (83%) and Madhya Pradesh (77%) (Table 2).

Land and Livelihood

Despite this predominantly rural character of the sample households, only 16.5 per cent reported having agricultural land. Among the states, Chhattisgarh reported a high proportion of households with land (34.6%) followed by Telangana (28.4%), Maharashtra (23.8%), Madhya Pradesh (23.1%) and Andhra Pradesh (22%). In Chhattisgarh, the land was mostly held by Pardhi (80.6%), Rajgond (60.4%), Banjara (58%) and Dhangar (53.6%), whereas in Telangana it is mostly held by Konda Dora (79.6%) and to some extent Yerukula (17.6%). In Maharashtra, more than half of Kaikadi (60.7%), Banjara (57.9%) and Rajput Bhamta (50.6%) households possessed agricultural land, whereas in Madhya Pradesh a higher proportion of Bagri (74%), Banjara (50.3%) and Nayakda (30.0%) possessed agricultural land. In Andhra Pradesh, Mutharasa (93.2%) and Boya (77.3%) households owned land in significantly large proportions.

Sixty-eight per cent of those who possess land were found to cultivate independently. Among states, in Gujarat, this proportion stood at 100 per cent followed by Telangana and Madhya Pradesh (92% each), Karnataka (85%) and Andhra Pradesh (82%) (Table 3).

Eighty-one per cent of the households reported average land holding as 1–5 acres followed by 8 per cent accounting for below one acre and 8 per cent owning 6–10 acres; a very negligible proportion of households reported land holding of

Table 3. Availability of Agricultural Land and Cultivation

State (N = 13020)	Possession of Agriculture Land	Cultivating Independently
Maharashtra	463 (23.8)	262 (56.5)
Goa	17 (1.0)	1 (0.7)
Gujarat	161 (10.2)	161 (100.0)
Madhya Pradesh	346 (23.1)	317 (91.6)
Chhattisgarh	508 (34.6)	176 (34.6)
Andhra Pradesh	242 (22.0)	198 (81.8)
Telangana	163 (28.4)	150 (92.0)
Karnataka	228 (11.4)	193 (84.5)
Tamil Nadu	26 (2.3)	4 (15.4)
Total	2154 (16.5)	1462 (67.9)

Source: Field Survey.

Table 4. Distribution of land (in acres)

State	No. of households with land				Total
	<1	1-5	6-10	>10	
Maharashtra	–	409 (88.3)	27 (5.8)	27 (5.8)	463 (100.0)
Goa	12 (70.6)	4 (2.4)	1 (5.9)	–	17 (100.0)
Gujarat	115 (71.4)	30 (18.6)	10 (6.2)	6 (3.7)	161 (100.0)
Madhya Pradesh	–	343 (99.1)	3 (0.9)	–	346 (100.0)
Chhattisgarh	40 (7.9)	378 (74.4)	87 (17.1)	3 (0.6)	508 (100.0)
Andhra Pradesh	8 (3.3)	226 (93.3)	3 (1.2)	5 (2.1)	242 (100.0)
Telangana	13 (8.0)	140 (85.9)	5 (3.1)	5 (3.1)	163 (100.0)
Karnataka	–	199 (87.3)	24 (10.5)	5 (2.1)	228 (100.0)
Tamil Nadu	2 (7.7)	9 (34.6)	15 (57.7)	–	26 (100.0)
Total	190 (8.8)	1738 (80.7)	175 (8.1)	51 (2.4)	2154 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey.

more than 10 acres (Table 4). In Goa and Gujarat, unlike other states, a large proportion of households had less than an acre (71%).

The proportion of households reporting agricultural labour was more than one-fourth in case of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Engaging in non-agricultural labour was highest in Tamil Nadu (82%) followed by Karnataka (52%) and Gujarat (54%). The proportion was almost one-third in case of Madhya Pradesh and Telangana and more than one-fourth in case of Andhra Pradesh. Households reporting business or trade was nearly one-third in case of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, whereas the proportion of cultivators was highest in Chhattisgarh (19%) followed by Andhra Pradesh (16%), Madhya Pradesh and Telangana (13% each) (Table 5).

Table 5. Primary Occupation of Households

State	Cultivator/ Farmer		Agriculture Labour		Non- Agriculture Labour		Artisans		Trade/ Business		Service		Professionals		Traditional Work		Others		Total	
Maharashtra	187 (9.6)	479 (24.6)	656 (33.7)	111 (5.7)	210 (10.8)	104 (5.3)	12 (0.6)	28 (1.4)	157 (8.1)	1944 (100.0)										
Goa	34 (2.0)	7 (0.4)	833 (48.4)	5 (0.3)	206 (12.0)	341 (19.8)	1 (0.1)	111 (6.4)	184 (10.7)	1722 (100.0)										
Gujarat	112 (7.1)	24 (1.5)	842 (53.5)	-	128 (8.1)	70 (4.4)	-	398 (25.3)	-	1574 (100.0)										
Madhya Pradesh	192 (12.8)	253 (16.9)	490 (32.7)	-	93 (6.2)	67 (4.5)	-	331 (22.1)	71 (4.7)	1497 (100.0)										
Chhattisgarh	284 (19.4)	107 (7.3)	250 (17.0)	321 (21.9)	83 (5.7)	172 (11.7)	-	94 (6.4)	156 (10.6)	1467 (100.0)										
Andhra Pradesh	177 (16.1)	45 (4.1)	301 (27.4)	-	355 (32.3)	18 (1.6)	-	97 (8.8)	107 (9.7)	1100 (100.0)										
Telangana	75 (13.1)	34 (5.9)	179 (31.2)	-	168 (29.3)	15 (2.6)	-	66 (11.5)	37 (6.4)	574 (100.0)										
Karnataka	73 (3.6)	283 (14.1)	1049 (52.4)	10 (0.5)	257 (12.8)	110 (5.5)	-	162 (8.1)	57 (2.8)	2001 (100.0)										
Tamil Nadu	-	315 (27.6)	931 (81.6)	-	123 (10.8)	50 (4.4)	149 (13.1)	187 (16.4)	-	1141 (100.0)										
Total	1134 (8.7)	1547 (11.9)	5531 (42.5)	447 (3.4)	1623 (12.5)	947 (7.3)	162 (1.2)	1474 (11.3)	769 (5.9)	13020 (100.0)										

Source: Field Survey.

Of significance here is the fact that overall only 11 per cent reported continuing traditional work—the highest proportion who reported in the affirmative were the households from Gujarat (25.3%), Madhya Pradesh (22%) and Tamil Nadu (16.4%) (Table 5). In Gujarat, the community with highest proportion engaged in traditional occupation was Dafer (80.3%), Vanjara (43.9%) and Salat Ghera (30.6%). In Madhya Pradesh, communities who were engaged in traditional work included Loharpita (77%), Sikligar (60%), Pardhi (32.5%) and Kalbelia (29.4%). In Tamil Nadu, the highest proportions who were continuing traditional occupation were found among Valayars (32.3%).

Seasonal Migration

As a reflection of the distress prevailing in the rural areas and farming sector, these communities look for alternate and supplementary livelihoods often migrating to urban areas in search of casual work in the informal sector. Short-term migration was found to be high among the communities living in Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh. Across the states, 23.6 per cent of the total respondents reported that they are migrants. The pattern shows that states, such as Telangana (59.4%), Tamil Nadu (41.0%), Chhattisgarh (40.4%), Andhra Pradesh (34.8%) and Karnataka (29.2%), have a large number of households with migrants (Table 6).

Among the total migrants, 79.3 per cent of the respondents migrated in search of better livelihood options while some have local specific reasons which led to migration. For instance, 10.7 per cent of the respondents from Gujarat migrated because of the earthquakes while 15.8 per cent of the respondents migrated as they were denied the access to their traditional occupation of collecting forest resources. In Karnataka, 33 per cent reported that their dwellings/habitations were demolished and they were relocated to their current location. The frequency of

Table 6. Migration to Current Location

	Original Residents	Migrants	Total
Maharashtra	1644 (84.6)	300 (15.4)	1944 (100.0)
Goa	1722 (100.0)	–	1722 (100.0)
Gujarat	1434 (91.1)	140 (8.9)	1574 (100.0)
Madhya Pradesh	1229 (82.1)	268 (17.9)	1497 (100.0)
Chhattisgarh	874 (59.6)	593 (40.4)	1467 (100.0)
Andhra Pradesh	717 (65.2)	383 (34.8)	1100 (100.0)
Telangana	233 (40.6)	341 (59.4)	574 (100.0)
Karnataka	1417 (70.8)	584 (29.2)	2001 (100.0)
Tamil Nadu	673 (59.0)	468 (41.0)	1141 (100.0)
Total	9943 (76.4)	3077 (23.6)	13020 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey.

migration per year is high. Among the total migrants, 40.5 per cent migrate once in a year while a large number of them migrate multiple times each year. The pattern across the states suggests that states, such as Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, have large number of migrants reported as staying for 1 to 3 months in a place while migrants from other states tend to stay for longer duration at their destinations.

In terms of location of residence, contrary to popular perception, long duration of stay (either since birth or for more than 30 years) was reported in many states with Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh having more than 80 per cent of the households with stable, long-term residence. This indicates changes from nomadism to settled residence. This trend was lowest in Chhattisgarh (27%) and relatively lower in Goa (53%), Tamil Nadu (53%), and Karnataka (44%).

Living Conditions

With regard to assets and infrastructural facilities available at the household level, 72 per cent of households reported ownership of house (Figure 1). This was, however, lowest in Goa (12.7%) which has the majority of households without proper title, whereas in Karnataka one finds 22 per cent live in rented premises followed by Tamil Nadu (16.9%). The structure of the house throws light on the vulnerable conditions the households live in despite ownership of the house. More than one-third of the houses were kutcha followed by semi-pucca (30.1%) (Figure 2). Pucca houses were reported by only 19.6 per cent of the households and the proportion was highest in Andhra Pradesh (35%). In case of kutcha, it was highest in Chhattisgarh (61%) and lowest in Gujarat (3.1%). The main source of drinking water was piped water (41%) and tube/borewell (40%) (Figure 3). Across states, one could observe variations: piped water facility in households was lowest in Gujarat (2.4%), Andhra Pradesh (3.7%) and Telangana

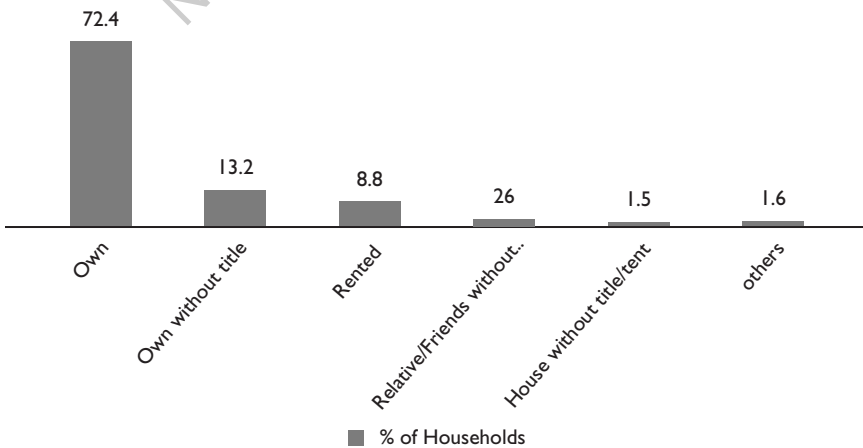


Figure 1. Ownership of House

Source: Field Survey.

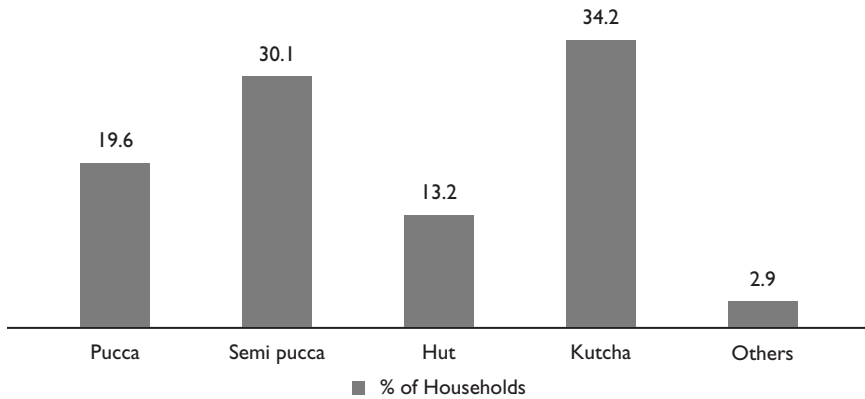


Figure 2. Type of House

Source: Field Survey.

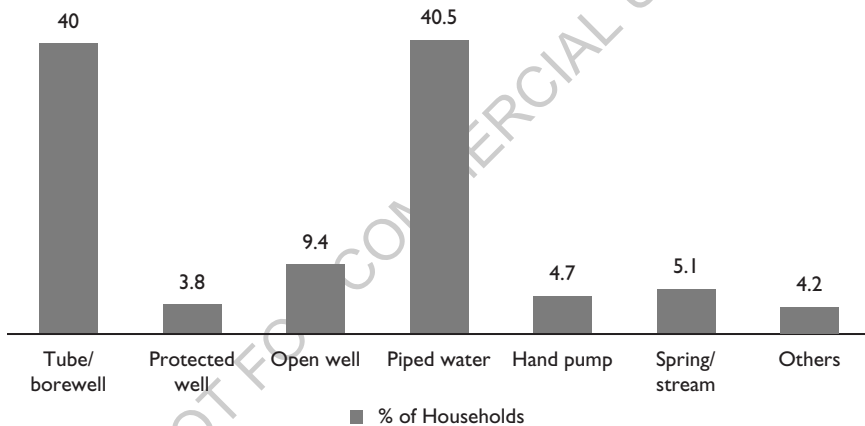


Figure 3. Main Source of Drinking Water in Households

Source: Field Survey.

(8.7%) and highest in Karnataka (79.5%) and Maharashtra (72.8%). In Gujarat, 32 per cent of households reported use of open well, whereas in Madhya Pradesh the corresponding proportion was 25.5 per cent. In Madhya Pradesh, around 20 per cent each also reported use of protected well, hand pump and spring/stream. Spring/stream as source of drinking water was also reported by 16 per cent of households from Goa and in the case of Andhra Pradesh, 10 per cent reported use of hand pump.

In terms of access to toilets, only 26.2 per cent of households replied in the affirmative and the proportion was highest in Maharashtra (42.5%) and lowest in Madhya Pradesh (11.9%). On the contrary, 80 per cent of the households had access to electricity, lowest being 53 per cent in Maharashtra and highest in Tamil Nadu at 97 per cent (Figure 4).

In terms of appliances and amenities, mobile phone/telephone was reported highest by households in Goa (95.9%) and lowest in Karnataka (51.2%).

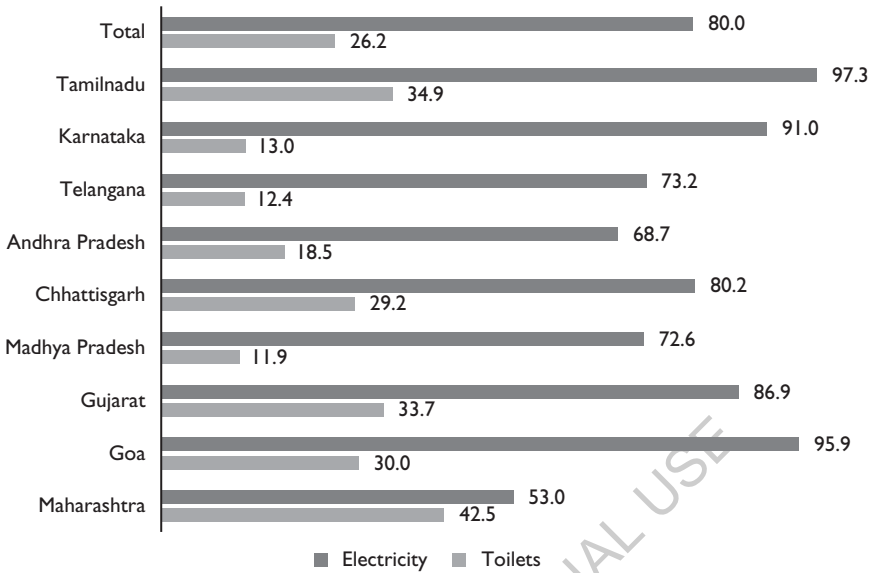


Figure 4. Access to Toilets and Electricity in Households

Source: Field Survey.

In case of television, less than 50 per cent of the households replied in the affirmative. This proportion was 65 per cent in Goa, 66 per cent in Maharashtra and 71 per cent in Tamil Nadu. However, if one takes stock of assets like computer/laptop which can be important in educational purposes, a very low proportion of households reported in the affirmative at 4.3 per cent. This was highest in Tamil Nadu (18.5%) and Maharashtra (8.4%), while it was lower than 1 per cent in Goa, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. Similarly, possession of bicycle (18.3%) and scooter/motorcycle (19.5%), which could facilitate commuting to educational institutions was also low. The proportion that owned bicycles was highest in Goa (42.9%) and lowest in Telangana (2.4%). In case of motorised two wheelers, the share of households was relatively high in the states of Telangana (43.6%), Chhattisgarh (41%), Maharashtra (28%), Tamil Nadu (27%) and Andhra Pradesh (25.1%). Interestingly, the proportion of households with radio was 100 per cent in Goa, followed by 23 per cent in Maharashtra and 14 per cent in Tamil Nadu (Table 7).

Identity Cards and Access to Entitlements

In a situation where entitlements may only be accessed through valid identification documents/cards, most households were in possession of voter IDs (81.8%) and ration cards (70.7%). The lowest proportion of households with ration cards was in Goa (4.3%). It should be recalled that the majority of the households in Goa did not own house with title deed and this may be related to the low proportion of ration cards among Dhangar Ghouly households. In Maharashtra, the proportion of households with voter ID was only 61 per cent—households from

Table 7. Household Assets and Amenities

State	Table/ Chair	Electric Fan/Cooler	Kitchen Appliances	Radio	Cycle	Refrigerator	Television	Computer/ Laptop	Telephone/ Mobile	Scooter/ Motorcycle	Four Wheeler	Total
Maharashtra	1223 (62.9)	1504 (77.3)	1145 (58.8)	453 (23.3)	401 (20.6)	477 (24.5)	1282 (65.9)	163 (8.4)	1615 (83.1)	548 (28.2)	32 (1.6)	1944 (100.0)
Goa	1722 (100.0)	1524 (88.5)	1681 (97.6)	1722 (100.0)	740 (42.9)	57 (3.3)	1116 (64.8)	16 (0.9)	1652 (95.9)	59 (3.4)	29 (1.7)	1722 (100.0)
Gujarat	1020 (64.8)	1173 (74.5)	505 (32.1)	72 (4.6)	69 (4.3)	83 (5.3)	446 (28.3)	41 (2.6)	1232 (78.3)	148 (9.4)	30 (1.9)	1574 (100.0)
Madhya Pradesh	284 (19.0)	510 (34.0)	-	94 (6.3)	292 (19.5)	76 (5.1)	319 (21.3)	9 (0.6)	802 (53.6)	147 (9.8)	14 (0.9)	1497 (100.0)
Chhattisgarh	581 (39.6)	738 (50.3)	571 (38.9)	43 (2.9)	300 (20.4)	314 (21.4)	647 (44.1)	34 (2.3)	815 (55.6)	602 (41.0)	-	1467 (100.0)
Andhra Pradesh	719 (65.4)	594 (54.0)	43 (3.9)	17 (1.5)	59 (5.4)	43 (3.9)	460 (41.8)	11 (0.1)	608 (55.3)	276 (25.1)	17 (1.5)	1100 (100.0)
Telangana	482 (84.0)	341 (59.4)	21 (3.7)	4 (0.7)	14 (2.4)	35 (6.1)	253 (44.1)	15 (2.6)	379 (66.0)	250 (43.6)	22 (3.8)	574 (100.0)
Karnataka	959 (49.7)	881 (44.0)	756 (37.7)	156 (7.8)	385 (19.2)	67 (3.3)	973 (48.6)	66 (3.3)	1024 (51.2)	202 (10.1)	40 (2.0)	2001 (100.0)
Tamil Nadu	725 (63.5)	822 (72.0)	371 (32.5)	164 (14.4)	125 (11.0)	225 (19.7)	814 (71.3)	211 (18.5)	784 (68.7)	310 (27.2)	138 (12.1)	1141 (100.0)
Total	7715 (59.3)	8087 (62.1)	5093 (39.1)	2725 (20.9)	2385 (18.3)	1377 (10.6)	6310 (48.5)	566 (4.3)	8911 (68.4)	2542 (19.5)	322 (2.5)	13020 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey.

Gosavi (7.4%) and Chapparband (10.5%) had very low share. In terms of Aadhar card, 51 per cent of households replied in affirmative: the highest was in Goa (100%) while lowest was in Tamil Nadu (20.3%) and Chhattisgarh (19%). In Tamil Nadu, none of the Attur Kilnad Koravar and Jogi households had Aadhar card, while in case of Dombs and Valayars the proportion was 63 per cent and 52 per cent. In Chhattisgarh, Kasai (67%), Devar (28%) and Dhangar (19%) report possession of Aadhar card, while in case of rest of the communities it was 10 per cent or below. Caste certificate is important to access reservation in education and public employment. However, only 48 per cent of households possess caste certificate. The proportion was highest in Goa (100%) and Karnataka (62.8%), and lowest in Chhattisgarh (22.5%). In Chhattisgarh, Devar (54%), Banjara (43%) and Rajgond (32%) households had access to caste certificates, while it was less than 10 per cent among Jogi (8.9%), Gosai (4.8%) and Kasai (3.9%). With respect to possession of health cards, less than one-third of the households replied in affirmative—it was highest in Goa (77.4%) and lowest in Madhya Pradesh (10.8%). In Madhya Pradesh, the proportion of households with health cards was highest among Nayakda Bhil (21.6%) and Kanjar (16.6%), while it was lower than 15 per cent among the rest of the communities. The NREGA cards were reported by 21 per cent of households, highest in Telangana (50.5%) and lower than 20 per cent in Tamil Nadu (16.8%), Maharashtra (16.4%), Gujarat (15.5%) and Karnataka (13.5%) while none of the households possessed NREGA cards in Goa (Table 8).

Access to Public Services

Access to Anganwadi/Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programmes was reported by 74 per cent of the households. The lowest was in Tamil Nadu (34.6%) and it was less than 70 per cent in the states of Gujarat (67%), Karnataka (64%) and Madhya Pradesh (62%). In terms of access to Primary Health Care Centre (PHC), it was seen that 72 per cent of total households had replied in the affirmative. It was highest among Goa (100%) and lowest in the state of Gujarat (44%). It was below 60 per cent in the states of Madhya Pradesh (49%), Andhra Pradesh (51.7%) and Telangana (53.3%) (Figure 5).

Educational Attainment

According to the report of the NCDNT, only 42 per cent of the de-notified communities and 28 per cent of the NT have access to schooling (NCDNT, 2008). The proportion of children accessing Anganwadi centres was also reported to be similar. Instances of discrimination were also reported. The survey commissioned by the NCDNT found that the distance between schools and habitations did not conform to the norms set out by the Government of India. Further, the distance from village/habitation increased as children moved from primary-to-tertiary levels of formal education. Of the total de-notified population surveyed by NCDNT (14148), it was reported that negligible numbers of children were able to

Table 8. Identification and Entitlement Documents

State	Ration card	Voter ID	Caste Certificate	MGNREGA			Total
				Job Cards	Aadhar Card	Health Card	
Maharashtra	1227 (63.1)	1180 (60.7)	783 (40.2)	318 (16.4)	727 (37.4)	379 (19.5)	1944 (100.0)
Goa	74 (4.3)	1722 (100.0)	1722 (100.0)	-	1722 (100.0)	1332 (77.4)	1722 (100.0)
Gujarat	1395 (88.6)	1506 (95.7)	530 (33.7)	244 (15.5)	457 (29.0)	293 (18.6)	1574 (100.0)
Madhya Pradesh	1064 (71.1)	1286 (85.9)	596 (39.8)	557 (37.2)	754 (50.4)	162 (10.8)	1497 (100.0)
Chhattisgarh	1244 (84.8)	1260 (85.9)	330 (22.5)	508 (34.6)	279 (19.0)	813 (55.4)	1467 (100.0)
Andhra Pradesh	950 (86.3)	903 (82.1)	349 (31.7)	321 (29.2)	685 (62.3)	310 (28.2)	1100 (100.0)
Telangana	474 (82.6)	506 (88.1)	323 (56.3)	290 (50.5)	458 (79.8)	324 (56.4)	574 (100.0)
Karnataka	1763 (88.1)	1859 (92.9)	1257 (62.8)	270 (13.5)	1301 (65.0)	274 (13.7)	2001 (100.0)
Tamil Nadu	1010 (88.5)	438 (38.4)	393 (34.4)	191 (16.8)	232 (20.3)	290 (25.4)	1141 (100.0)
Total	9201 (70.7)	10660 (81.8)	6283 (48.3)	2699 (20.8)	6615 (50.8)	4177 (32.1)	13020 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey.

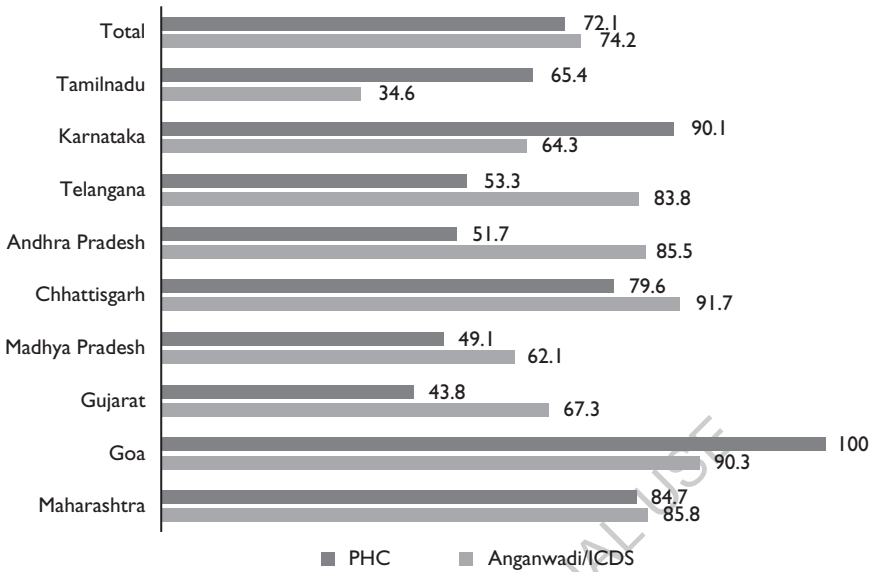


Figure 5. Anganwadi/ICDS and PHC

Source: Field Survey.

avail of hostel facilities: the highest number being 12 children (five boys and seven girls) in the upper primary schools. However, the picture is quite different for NT where the total population of 4,340 who participated in the survey, there were only four girls in hostels but a significantly larger number of boys in hostels (224 in primary level and 220 in upper primary level). This drops drastically to three and four boys in the secondary and higher secondary levels, respectively.¹

Taking note of these concerns of the NCDNT, the Union Cabinet approved in principle the specific recommendation for

framing of an appropriate scheme for grant of Pre-matric and Post-matric Scholarships and Construction of Hostels for students belonging to Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes not included in the lists of the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes after following the requisite process including appraisal by the Expenditure Finance Committee. (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 30 January, cited in NCDNT, 2008)

This section presents an in-depth view of educational attainment among de-notified tribes based on the primary data on the educational status of the de-notified tribes in the states. Educational status of the respondents in households indicate that 28 per cent of them were never enrolled followed by 26 per cent who report currently studying and 17 per cent reporting as dropouts. In addition, 21 per cent of the respondents report 'completion'. A closer look at these responses indicates discontinuation of education after primary or at best secondary school in a majority of cases. In case of those 'never enrolled', the share was more than one-fourth across the states, except in Andhra Pradesh (20.5%), Tamil Nadu (18%) and

Maharashtra (5.5%). The proportion of 'never enrolled' was highest in Madhya Pradesh (48%); across tribes, 76 per cent of Pardhi and 64.4 per cent of Loharpita were never enrolled, and although it was lowest among Kanjar they still accounted for 21 per cent. In Karnataka, the proportion of 'never enrolled' stood at 40 per cent and the incidence was high across tribes—Rajgond (67%), Kanjarbhat (52%), Handi Jogi and Dhangar Gouly (around 48%), Dungri Garasia (46%). Even across other tribes, the incidence varied from one-third to one-fourth of the sample covered, highlighting the abysmal levels of access to education.

Among drop-outs, one could discern that in the states of Goa (30.3%), Gujarat (26.5%) and Madhya Pradesh (25.1%), the share was more than one-fourth. Among the drop-outs in Goa, majority (82%) had dropped out at the primary level. In Gujarat too, almost three-fourths of the drop-outs (73.7%) indicate primary level education, whereas in Madhya Pradesh, a similar trend could be observed with 75.8 per cent of the drop outs indicating primary level education. Across tribes, in Madhya Pradesh more than one-third of respondents were reported as 'drop-outs' among Bagri (39.2%), Kanjar (37%) and Pardhi (37.6%), while Banchada also had around 31 per cent of dropouts. In Gujarat, the incidence of 'never enrolled' was more than half of the respondents among Dafer (53%) and Salat Ghera (54%), while it was almost 45 per cent among Sandhi respondents (Table 9).

Table 9. Educational Status of Members of Respondent Households

	Child <6	Currently Studying	Never Enrolled	Dropouts	Completed	Total
Maharashtra	838 (8.9)	2574 (27.4)	513 (5.5)	1649 (17.6)	3814 (40.6)	9388 (100.0)
Goa	819 (9.1)	2142 (23.8)	2271 (25.2)	2728 (30.3)	1041 (11.6)	9001 (100.0)
Gujarat	908 (9.9)	1854 (20.3)	2844 (31.1)	2426 (26.5)	1111 (12.2)	9143 (100.0)
Madhya Pradesh	–	1717 (26.6)	3117 (48.3)	1620 (25.1)	–	6454 (100.0)
Chhattisgarh	992 (13.3)	1604 (21.5)	2122 (28.4)	487 (6.5)	2267 (30.3)	7472 (100.0)
Andhra Pradesh	602 (22.6)	968 (36.3)	546 (20.5)	175 (6.6)	372 (14.0)	2663 (100.0)
Telangana	239 (20.1)	464 (39.0)	287 (24.1)	93 (7.8)	106 (8.9)	1189 (100.0)
Karnataka	777 (7.7)	3105 (30.8)	4041 (40.1)	604 (6.0)	1558 (15.4)	10085 (100.0)
Tamil Nadu	314 (6.7)	1132 (24.0)	849 (18.0)	138 (2.9)	2286 (48.4)	4719 (100.0)
Total	5489 (9.1)	15560 (25.9)	16590 (27.6)	9920 (16.5)	12555 (20.9)	60114 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey.

More than one-third of the members of respondent households in the states of Andhra Pradesh (36.3%) and Telangana (39%) reported being 'currently enrolled'. In the states of Karnataka (30.8%), Maharashtra (27%) and Madhya Pradesh (26.6%), their proportion was more than one-fourth (but less than one-third) and close to one-fourth in case of Goa (23.8%) and Tamil Nadu (24%). In the rest of the states, it was lower than one-fourth of the respondents—Gujarat (20.3%) and Chhattisgarh (21.5%) (Table 9). Across states, primary and middle school education (Class 1–Class 8) accounted for the majority of the currently enrolled—it ranged across states—more than 80 per cent in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, three-fourths or more (but less than 80%) in Karnataka and Gujarat, and more than 50 per cent in Madhya Pradesh (63%), Chhattisgarh (69%) and Goa (54%). Interestingly in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, the proportion of primary-level education among currently enrolled was lower at 29 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively. In Tamil Nadu, those currently enrolled in graduation and post-graduation accounted for 21.2 per cent and research and professional degrees 7.8 per cent, whereas in Maharashtra, secondary level accounted for 51 per cent, higher secondary 24 per cent and graduation 10 per cent.

A significant proportion of respondents reported education as 'completed' in the states of Maharashtra (40.6%), Chhattisgarh (30.3%) and Tamil Nadu (48%) (Table 9). On closer examination, it was found however, that in Maharashtra, of these, 48 per cent had completed up to primary level, more than one-fourth secondary level and 16 per cent higher secondary level. High incidence of primary-level education was found among Muslim Garudi-Madari and Chapperband (Muslim) at 63 per cent; and half or more than half of the respondents in case of Gosavi and Wadar, Kaikadi and Kolhati communities. In Chhattisgarh, also, majority of the respondents among those reporting 'completed' had primary-level education (60%) and in Tamil Nadu one-third each had completed primary- and secondary-level education followed by higher secondary (22%). In Tamil Nadu, however, among Attur Kilnad Koravar the completion rate is higher among higher secondary (32 %) and above graduation (more than one-fourth). However, among Jogis, 45 per cent 'completed' only till primary and this high incidence can be seen among Boyars (44%) and Dombs (53%) as well.

Information on instances of discrimination was also elicited in the household survey. Across states, there were instances of discrimination reported. Calling children by the name of community, segregation in seating at school, separate drinking water facilities, discouragement from participating in sports and other activities were commonly reported. Large number of households reporting discrimination with regard to drinking water from same pot and glass were from Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka.

Across the states, the involvement of parents in decision-making with respect to education and schooling of children was found to be lacking. While this might be in part due to the lack of education and awareness among parents, a deeper reason lies in the social and physical distance of the school from their life worlds and habitations. Notwithstanding this trend, parents wanted both their sons and daughters to study well and secure government jobs and aspired for a good education.

Spoken Languages, Mother Tongues and Medium of Instruction

The present study finds that there are vast differences in languages of communication used by DNT and NT in different contexts. While 68.2 per cent of the total respondents use their respective mother tongues (which are different from the official state language) for communicating among the family members at home, 29.3 per cent of the respondents speak in the official language. We find that majority of the respondents from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu speak Telugu and Tamil, respectively, at their homes, while a large number of respondents from Gujarat and Maharashtra reported that they speak Hindi at home (Table 10).

The study also examined languages of communication among extended kin and community; and in public spaces and found a preponderance of use of dialects in community spaces and official language in public spaces and schools.

Especially pertinent to an understanding of school performance is the pattern of language use in school. Across the states, the proportion of students using the official state languages remains very high. As an exception, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have significant number of students (44.2% and 37.9%, respectively) reporting that they use languages (and dialects) other than official language in school (Table 11).

In the case of medium of instruction followed in the schools of children currently enrolled from these communities, language-use patterns become clearer. Although majority of the respondents use their mother tongues or dialects at their home, their children have to learn other languages to enter formal education. Majority of the respondents report that their children are taught in the official state language. As an exception, majority of students in Goa (79.0%) and Chhattisgarh (83.1%) enrolled in schools, where English and Hindi are followed as the medium of instruction (Table 12).

Table 10. Language Spoken at Home

State	Official State language	Mother Tongue	Hindi	Urdu	Total
Maharashtra	615 (31.6)	1178 (60.6)	137 (7.0)	14 (0.7)	1944 (100.0)
Goa	–	1722 (100.0)	–	–	1722 (100.0)
Gujarat	531 (33.7)	872 (55.4)	171 (10.9)	–	1574 (100.0)
Madhya Pradesh	469 (31.3)	1028 (68.7)	–	–	1497 (100.0)
Chhattisgarh	231 (15.7)	1236 (84.3)	–	–	1467 (100.0)
Andhra Pradesh	753 (68.5)	347 (31.5)	–	–	1100 (100.0)
Telangana	518 (90.2)	56 (9.8)	–	–	574 (100.0)
Karnataka	–	2001 (100.0)	–	–	2001 (100.0)
Tamil Nadu	704 (61.7)	437 (38.3)	–	–	1141 (100.0)
Total	3821 (29.3)	8877 (68.2)	308 (2.4)	14 (0.1)	13020 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey.

Table 11. Language Spoken at School

State	Official State Language	Mother Tongue	English	Hindi	Urdu	Total
Maharashtra	1814 (93.3)	69 (3.6)	7 (0.4)	16 (0.8)	38 (2.0)	1944 (100.0)
Goa	1722 (100.0)	–	–	–	–	1722 (100.0)
Gujarat	1566 (99.5)	4 (0.3)	3 (0.2)	1 (0.1)	–	1574 (100.0)
Madhya Pradesh	1464 (97.8)	33 (2.2)	–	–	–	1497 (100.0)
Chhattisgarh	1345 (91.7)	122 (8.3)	–	–	–	1467 (100.0)
Andhra Pradesh	1058 (96.2)	42 (3.8)	–	–	–	1100 (100.0)
Telangana	491 (85.5)	76 (13.2)	7 (1.2)	–	–	574 (100.0)
Karnataka*	759 (37.9)	886 (44.2)	140 (7.0)	216 (10.8)**	–	2001 (100.0)
Tamil Nadu	709 (62.1)	432 (37.9)	–	–	–	1141 (100.0)
Total	10928 (83.9)	1664 (12.8)	157 (1.2)	233 (1.8)	38 (0.3)	13020 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey.

Notes: * In Addition to Kannada the rest of the languages were also reported to be spoken at school.

** Combination of Hindi and Urdu spoken at school.

Table 12. Medium of Instruction

State	Official State Language	English	Other local languages	Hindi	Urdu	Total
Maharashtra	2421 (94.1)	133 (5.2)	20 (0.8)	–	–	2574 (100.0)
Goa	433 (20.2)	1693 (79.0)	16 (0.7)	–	–	2142 (100.0)
Gujarat	1636 (88.2)	218 (11.8)	–	–	–	1854 (100.0)
Madhya Pradesh	1666 (97.0)	51 (3.0)	–	–	–	1717 (100.0)
Chhattisgarh	56 (3.5)	215 (13.4)	–	1333 (83.1)	–	1604 (100.0)
Andhra Pradesh	934 (96.5)	34 (3.5)	–	–	–	968 (100.0)
Telangana	408 (87.9)	56 (12.1)	–	–	–	464 (100.0)
Karnataka	2899 (93.4)	188 (6.1)	–	–	18 (0.6)	3105 (100.0)
Tamil Nadu	910 (80.4)	191 (16.9)	31 (2.7)	–	–	1132 (100.0)
Total	11363 (73.0)	2779 (17.9)	67 (0.4)	1333 (8.6)	18 (0.1)	15560 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey.

Note: This table refers to respondents who are currently studying.

The simultaneous use of different languages in the contexts in which children live and learn leads to various issues including the difficulties in teaching and learning practices and children's capacity to manage multiple languages in the formal context of early schooling. Similarly, the content and focus of the mainstream school curriculum hardly connects with the living conditions and cultural contexts that students from these vulnerable communities can associate with. These factors seem to have their impact on the educational attainment of children from these communities.

Conclusions

The patterns of education emerging across the states are a reflection of the institutional arrangements including policies, administrative structures, institutions and programmes functioning at different levels. Beyond excluding these communities from accessing modern education, the findings also reflect the close interconnections between deprivation, poverty, unemployment/underemployment, discrimination, cultural marginalisation and educational attainment.

The study shows that many of these families are now moving to the lowest levels of other forms of livelihoods like non-agricultural labour. In the absence of better job opportunities, many of them are forced to take very risky, low-paid and casual work or resort to the begging. The current situation where majority of the communities do not possess agricultural land or material resources to engage with land, this pushes them into wage labour and forced migration, the latter especially having a direct bearing on family stability and educational access. It is important here to make a distinction between cultures of nomadism (where the community negotiates mobility, settlement and residence in familiar ways that are culturally rooted), and forced/distress migration, which throws communities into precarity at every level.

We notice the shrinking scope of following traditional occupations. Alongside providing necessary support and training that may help them in utilising the new opportunities outside, we also underscore the importance of extending support to sustain some of the traditional occupations. For instance, providing subsidies to make traditional occupations economically viable.

We have attempted to highlight some specific issues related to the poor educational status of DNT and NT in the country. The educational status across states reveals that number of those 'never-enrolled' was high across states. In terms of drop-outs, the southern Indian states along with Chhattisgarh fared relatively better with low levels of drop-outs, but the completion reported by respondents has been strikingly low at the primary- or secondary-level education. This is a matter of concern. In other words, while drop-outs as reported might have been low, the 'completed level of education' at graduation or above formed a very low proportion across states covered in the study.

The existing social relations, more particularly, the discrimination and stigma that students from these communities face in the class rooms and outside, also have adverse effects on their education. Many of them shared different practices that socially

isolate them in the schools. Most of the poor, non-literate parents from these groups are unable to support their children in schooling contexts. But, importantly, most of them aspire to see their children getting better education and job opportunities.

We find that many of respondents from the communities surveyed use their mother tongue as the main medium for communication at homes and among the community members but majority of their children study in schools where the medium of instruction in early schooling is Hindi or state's official language resulting in a disconnect and learning difficulties that are a barrier to continuing in school. Alienation of parents and children from schooling contexts is a major impediment to educational attainment.

A majority of the students across the nine states that participated in this study attended government schools—between 88 per cent and 90 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh and 75 per cent in Telangana and Goa.

Although there is a proliferation of private schools across the country, this study has shown conclusively yet again that children from the most marginalised communities continue to attend government schools. Strengthening the government schooling system is an immediate need—in terms of infrastructure, teacher capabilities and curricular reform. More generally, the study points to the inadequacy of existing institutional arrangements which are minimal and poor in quality, and ridden with in-built forms of exclusion that obstruct schooling (Kannabiran, 2017). The findings also highlight how specific local factors influence the access communities have to these arrangements. Evidence suggests that many existing measures do not recognise the specificities of aspirations and needs of these vulnerable communities.

Given their poor access to material goods, most of these communities have not been able to utilise the opportunities outside their reach and remain among the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in the country. It must also be noted that a majority of the communities surveyed in these states come under the category of OBC and this is reflective of the larger reality—forcing us to re-examine indices of vulnerability and stigmatisation, and their reflection in social protection. Based on the evidence collected on various indicators across the different states in the country, the present study concludes that existing policy regimes have not improved the status of DNT and NT. They continue to be denied effective voice, are forced to live in poor conditions and suffer from an inter-generational neglect that deprives them of real and viable opportunities for social and economic mobility despite the fact that formal education remains a core aspiration among them, for the large part unrealised.

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Note

1. Annexure 4 of NCDNT 2008. The survey on education was conducted for the NCDNT by Synovate. We are grateful to Shri Balkrishna Renke for providing us with a copy of this annexure.

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