



CHALLENGES OF SCHEDULED TRIBES TOWARDS EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENTS IN THE WESTERN GHAT VILLAGES OF QUEPEM SUB-DIVISION IN GOA

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Abstract

Education plays a pivotal role in transforming and empowering a community. Goa, an Indian State, got liberated from Portuguese Colonial Rule in 1961, has achieved a remarkable overall literacy rate of 88.70% (Census of India, 2011). However, the literacy rate among the Scheduled Tribes (ST) was only 71%, significantly lower than the state average. To reveal bottlenecks of educational attainment in the state, primary data collected from 198 households, which contain information about the educational status of 1,018 family members. This data was collected through a structured questionnaire and schedule. Ten villages in the Quepem Sub-Division, located in the Western Ghats region of South Goa district, have been selected. The two villages around Quepem town which is bestowed with easy access to educational infrastructure, and eight villages from remote location in the hilly and forested region have been selected to find out the impact of nearness to infrastructure. Descriptive statistical techniques have been applied to analyse the data using IBM's SPSS software. Among the selected villages, the two very remotely located villages, viz. Corla-Kazugotav and Vavurla are still in the shadow from mainstream developmental activities point of view; the children scale the hills up and down several kilometres every day to attend their school. The lack of access to infrastructure, poverty and inadequate awareness about the value of formal education among the tribal community in these villages has resulted in a slower pace of social development and transformation. It is essential to create awareness about the legal rights and government schemes available for the Scheduled Tribe students towards education and economic empowerment leading to the transformation of the Scheduled Tribe community in the study region in particular and the State of Goa in general.

Keywords: Scheduled Tribe, Educational Status, Challenges, Quepem Sub-Division, Goa.

1. Introduction

It is well recognised and documented that education is the most essential and potential tool for the overall development of all the marginalised and lesser privileged population in a nation. Globally, around 123 million people between the age group of 15 to 24 years lack basic reading and writing skills (Ramachandran & Deepan, 2017). The situation of India is more concerning, where certain sections of society, like the Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities, have faced social and economic deprivations due to their educational marginalisation. The monthly average income of the ST population in India was between Rs. 5000- Rs. 10000 (Jayakumari & Palaniyammal, 2016). The tribals are referred to as the indigenous people exhibiting a sustainable lifestyle, having a unique social, religious and cultural pattern of living. Scheduled Tribe is the constitutional term to refer to the tribal population of India under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution (Vidhyarthi & Rai, 1977). They are also referred to as *Adivasi*, *Anusuchit Janjati*, etc. The country is home to over 730 Scheduled Tribes that constitute 8.6% of the total population (PIB, 2022). Goa is home to three major Scheduled Tribe communities, namely the Velips, Kunbis and Gawdas, who together constitute just 0.1% of India's total Scheduled Tribe population (Census of India, 2011). The state of Goa has one-tenth (10.8%) of its population as Scheduled Tribes. The major tribal communities have a long history, even before the colonial rulers reached Goa. These tribal communities are the original settlers and are called Mull Goenkars or the first people to arrive in Goa (Kamat, 2014).

There have been significant differentials in educational attainments showing a gap between Scheduled Tribes and other sections of the community. The gap in literacy rate at the national level between the entire population and the Scheduled Tribe population is 14% where the scheduled tribe literacy rate is 59% much lower than the national average (73%). Whereas, in Goa, the literacy rate gap is lower (9.6%) with the Scheduled Tribe literacy rate of 79.1% and 88.7% of the overall literacy rate in the state (Govt. of Goa, 2025). Even though the gap in literacy rate is lower in Goa compared to many other states, it reflects upon various challenges faced by the tribal communities in the State in terms of pursuing education. The Velips, Gawdas and Kunbis have been granted Scheduled Tribe Status in 2003 (Govt. of India, 2003). These communities are isolated in terms of geographical locations but they are living in harmony with the local environment for generations. The Velips are known for their distinct customs and vibrant festivals, often practising traditional agriculture and gathering forest products (Velip, 2016). The Gawda community, primarily residing in the southern parts of Goa, is recognised for agricultural practices and deep knowledge of local ecosystems (Fernandes & Desouza, 2022). The Kunbis are involved in agriculture and maintaining traditional rice cultivation practices, contributing to Goa's agrarian economy and cultural richness (Gawas, 2018). They are predominantly living in the remote forest and hilly areas lacking access to higher educational facilities. The ancestors of the major tribes racially belong to Proto-Australoid group (Gawas, 2015). They settled in the forested areas and had their unique way of life, using the forest and its products for their survival. Later, the forests were cleared and used for cultivating crops and developing plantations. The tribes had their separate institutions of administration (Gaonkari

system), where the village headmen, called the Gaonkar or Budhovant, would resolve the disputes. Even today the institutional practices are still seen in the tribal communities in Goa (Gawas, 2015).

Easy and affordable access to education is a very important tool to eradicate socio-economic inequalities among these communities. However, physical challenges in remote areas have limited their access to the quality education available in the towns. This has hindered the socio-economic development of the ST population, thereby widening the gap between them and the general population. There are notified welfare programs and schemes launched towards tribal welfare and community development in Goa (Govt. of Goa, 2023), but the percolation of these facilities to the needy tribal communities is not effective. The impact and the effective evaluation of the welfare scheme can be done by understanding the ground situation of the tribal communities living in far-flung areas.

There are some visible gaps and there are scopes for research especially in issues pertaining to the educational access for the ST population and attainments by them. There have been very limited available studies on the educational challenges faced by the tribal communities in the study area especially from a spatio-temporal perspective. The available literature has mostly dealt with the cultural, historical, socio-economic aspects and presently available constitutional safeguards.

Hence, this study has focused on the educational access and the challenges faced by the tribal people of the villages located in the Western Ghat region of Quepem Sub-Division in South Goa. The study has relied on grassroots information collected from the selected 10 villages. It has set two objectives: to analyse the educational status of the ST community and, secondly, to identify the hardships faced by the students from these Western Ghat villages. The current study has established its novelty by providing measurable and feasible solutions to overcome the difficulties of distance-decay aspects of educational attainment faced by the ST population living in remote areas.

2. Database and Methodology

The study has been conducted based on primary as well as secondary data. The primary data has been obtained through a structured questionnaire and a schedule obtained through personal interviews of 198 households from the 10 selected Western Ghat villages of Quepem Sub-Division in South Goa. Out of the ten villages, two villages, being located near the Sub-Divisional headquarters of Quepem town: Adnem and Ambaulim, have been selected due to their easy access to educational infrastructure. The other eight villages, namely, Barcem, Cazur, Corla, Gokuldem, Mangal, Morpiria, Padi and Quiskonda have been selected due to their farthest, remote and hilly locations in the Sub-Division (Fig. 1).

A structured questionnaire cum schedule was designed to collect information about the educational background of 1,018 members from 198 households across the study area. A stratified random sampling technique was used in collecting the primary data. The

secondary data has been compiled from the Census of India 2011 tables, newspaper articles, reports published by Govt. organisations and research papers. The data collected has been classified and tabulated, then analysed using descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation of the data using IBM's SPSS Statistics version 20 and Microsoft Excel. ArcGIS 10.8 software has been used to prepare the base map of the study area. The study has two hypotheses based on the prevailing situations reported in the literature: there is a gender gap in educational attainments among the ST population in the study area, where males have higher literacy than females. Educational qualifications of the ST population in the study area are limited to the SSC/HSSC level due to the non-availability of Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) in the vicinity. They have been tested using the Independent Samples Test for the first hypothesis and the second test has been based on the statistical figures obtained from the study.

3. Study Area

The selected villages (Fig. 1) are part of the Quepem Sub-Division, a western Ghats region with a very high number (25,290) and proportion (16.94%) of Scheduled Tribe population in Goa. This administrative division has a total population of 81,193 of which 31.15% are STs (Census of India, 2011). The Sub-Division has 11 Panchayats and two Municipalities. The selected villages in their respective panchayat areas are mostly inhabited by the ST population. There are little urban influence and migration from other communities in these eight remote villages. Two villages near the urban centres, viz. Ambaulim and Adnem have settlements belonging to different communities. The other selected eight villages have a high concentration of 80 to 100% ST population (Table 1). The literacy rate for males is 87.50% and for females is 78.35%. The total literacy rate of Quepem Sub-Division is 82.93% (Census of India, 2011). Most of the selected villages, especially those situated in the hilly and forested areas, lacked even basic facilities like tar road connectivity and public transport.

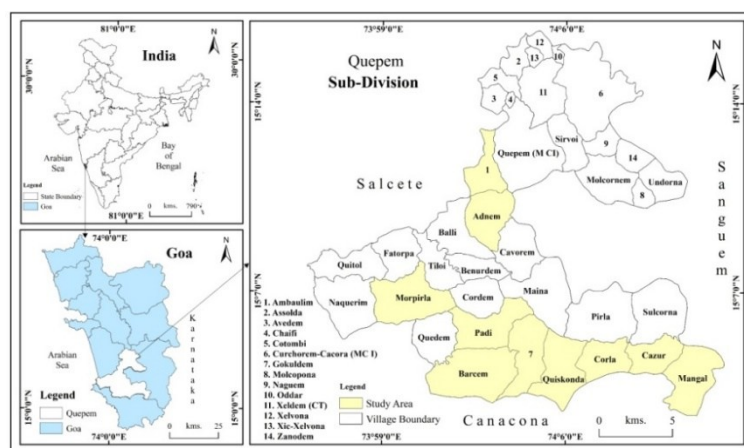


Figure 1: Location Map of the Selected Villages in Quepem Sub-Division of Goa, 2024

Source: Survey of India toposheet

The Government of Goa has taken some initiatives towards providing free education at the elementary and school level in the respective villages, considering access to elementary educational institutions is a fundamental right of the children. However, to access higher education, the children have to travel several kilometres. This is why a large group of students stay in less accessible areas, often discontinuing or stopping their further education due to the distance and public transport issues, including limited frequency.

Table 1: Scheduled Tribe Population in Selected Villages of Quepem Sub-Division, 2011.

Sr No	Names of the Villages	ST Population	Total Population	Percentage of ST Population
1	Adnem	790	1657	47.67
2	Ambaulim	2579	2987	86.34
3	Barcem	2443	2685	90.98
4	Cazur	505	510	99.01
5	Corla- Kazugotav	170	209	81.33
6	Gokuldem	526	579	90.84
7	Mangal	259	296	87.5
8	Morpirla	2752	2857	96.32
9	Padi	195	268	72.76
10	Quiskonda	490	491	99.79

Source: Directorate of Tribal Welfare, Goa's, 2011.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Accessibility to High Schools

The state government has provided elementary educational institutions in the form of Anganwadis and Primary schools in all the villages of the Sub-division. However, the distance travelled by the student within the villages varied according to the location of their houses in the wards (Table 2). For instance, Corla village didn't even have an Anganwadi, indicating a deficiency in the lowest order of social amenities. The students of some of the villages with large geographical areas like Cazur, Morpirla and Quisconda travelled between 1 and 3 km to reach elementary educational institutions, i.e. Primary Schools.

Only Adnem and Ambaulim villages had a high school within 1 to 3 km. The school-going children from the rest of the villages had to travel beyond 3 km to get access to high schools and higher secondary schools (Table 3). The students of the villages situated in hilly and remote places like Corla-Kazugotav and Vavurla had to travel beyond 10 to 20 km to reach a high school. Additional challenges were faced by the majority of the school-going children from some parts of these villages since they did not have even road connectivity nor had access to public transport near their settlements. Though there are claims about full accessibility to road amenities to most of the inhabited villages in Goa, it was disturbing to

find that even today, the school-going children of these settlements had to walk a minimum of 1 km to board a bus coming to their nearest accessible settlements.

Table 2: Elementary institutional accessibility in Quepem Sub-Division, 2023-24.

Villages	Anganwadi		Primary		
	Within the settlement	1 to 3 km	Within the settlement	Within 1 km	1 to 3 km
Adnem	✓	-	-	✓	-
Ambaulim	✓	-	-	✓	-
Barcem	✓	-	-	✓	-
Cazur	-	✓	-	-	✓
Corla- Kazugotav	-	-	✓	-	-
Gokuldem	✓	-	-	-	-
Mangal	✓	-	-	-	✓
Morpirla	✓	-	-	-	✓
Padi	✓	-	✓	-	-
Quiskonda	-	✓	-	✓	-
Vavurla	✓	-	✓	-	-

Source: Compiled by the researcher from field survey information, 2023-24.

Table 3: Accessibility to High School and Higher Secondary Schools in Quepem Sub-Division, 2023-24.

Villages	High School			Higher Secondary Schools	
	1 to 3 km	3 to 5 km	Above 5 km	3 to 5 km	Above 5 km
Adnem	✓	-	-	✓	-
Ambaulim	✓	-	-	✓	-
Barcem	-	-	✓	-	✓
Cazur	-	-	✓	-	✓
Corla- Kazugotav	-	-	✓	-	✓
Gokuldem	-	✓	-	-	✓
Mangal	-	-	✓	-	✓
Morpirla	-	✓	-	-	✓
Padi	-	✓	-	-	✓
Quiskonda	-	✓	-	-	✓
Vavurla	-	-	✓	-	✓

Source: Compiled by the researcher from field survey information, 2023-24.

It has been found that distance was a major reason for the students to stop or discontinue their education after SSC or HSSC. The villagers were facing severe hardships in pursuing education in professional colleges and post-graduate institutions, as they had to either travel more than 60 km. every day, or find accommodation in hostels or stay as paying guests around these institutions. The students found these options quite costly and unaffordable for many of them. In addition, most of the adult-aged students were helping their families in agriculture in their respective villages, deterring them from staying in other than their respective homes. Though the tribal welfare department has the post metric scholarships and other incentives, still the number of students opting for higher education was low due to these unavoidable challenges faced as mentioned here.

The educational attainment of 1,018 household members is depicted in Table 4. One tenth (10.7%) of the people were illiterate, with a higher number of females in all the villages. About one-tenth (9.3%) of people were literate, but they didn't receive any formal education, affecting both genders, especially those in the 40 and above age group. A quarter of the population had completed their studies only till SSC or HSSC (25.4%) due to the limitation of transport facilities, long distance of travelling and family pressure to share the financial and occupational responsibilities. Resultantly, they tried to somehow complete their Secondary or Higher Secondary School education and attempted to find small earning avenues to support their personal and family livelihood.

The study found that 65.84% of the surveyed ST population from 8 villages located in the remote and forested areas had attained educational qualifications till SSC/HSSC. Only 14.41% had pursued higher education and professional degrees. About 12.05% of the population was found to be illiterate and 7.70% were literate without any formal education. The sub-division has only one higher educational institution located in the approachable town of Quepem. The distance decay factor played a very important role in the selection of higher educational institutions for higher studies. This has supported the hypothesis stating that the educational qualifications of the ST population in the study area were limited to the SSC/HSSC level due to the non-availability of HEI in the vicinity.

4.2 Gender Gap in Educational Attainments

Gender disparity was reflected at all the levels of educational attainments, where the female educational status remained lower due to the cultural taboos towards female education, safety concerns, commuting-related constraints and shouldering family responsibilities from early ages. However, among the present young generation, this gap has been bridged with the increase in female education at higher education levels. A high proportion of literate and educated females were found within the respective villages of Adnem (52%), Ambaulim (52%), Mangal (54.8%) and Quisconda (51%). A very low percentage of males and females completed their graduation and post-graduation or other professional degrees. However, among them, the number of females was higher than that of males. The potential college-going male youths often assisted in their family occupation to get rid of the high labour cost and non-availability of reliable agricultural labour during the

needs. This has led to lower educational achievement for the male youths. In this context, a statistical test was performed to test gender gap in educational attainments among the ST population in the study area.

Table 4. Educational Attainment of ST population in Villages of Quepem Sub Division, 2023-2024

Villages	Gender	Educational Qualifications									Total
		Illiterate	Literate but no formal education	I to V std	VI to IX std	S&C/ H&S&C	UG	Graduation /PG	Professional (PhD, Engineer, LLB, MBA)	Technical (Diploma/IT)	
Adhem	M	6.5%		2.2%	21.7%	17.4%	-	-	-	-	47.8%
	F	4.3%	8.7%	4.3%	15.2%	19.6%	-	-	-	-	52.2%
	T	10.9%	8.7%	6.5%	37.0%	37.0%	-	-	-	-	100.0%
Ambauli	M	1.2%	6.6%	10.2%	11.4%	13.8%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	-	47.3%
	F	4.2%	8.4%	6.6%	13.8%	13.8%	-	4.8%	1.2%	-	52.7%
	T	5.4%	15.0%	16.8%	25.1%	27.5%	1.2%	6.0%	2.4%	.6%	100.0%
Barvem	M	3.3%	2.5%	5.8%	11.6%	14.9%	1.7%	8.3%	3.3%	.8%	52.1%
	F	3.3%	4.1%	9.9%	6.6%	14.0%	4.1%	4.1%	.8%	.8%	47.9%
	T	6.6%	6.6%	15.7%	18.2%	28.9%	5.8%	12.4%	4.1%	1.7%	100.0%
Cazur	M	4.3%	3.2%	12.8%	13.8%	18.1%	-	2.1%	1.1%	1.1%	56.4%
	F	7.4%	4.3%	9.6%	11.7%	5.3%	-	3.2%	2.1%		43.6%
	T	11.7%	7.4%	22.3%	25.5%	23.4%	-	5.3%	3.2%	1.1%	100.0%
Corfa	M	5.6%	9.3%	7.4%	5.6%	13.0%	-	11.1%		1.9%	53.7%
	F	7.4%	1.9%	14.8%	7.4%	9.3%	-	3.7%	1.9%		46.3%
	T	13.0%	11.1%	22.2%	13.0%	22.2%	-	14.8%	1.9%	1.9%	100.0%
Gocoldem	M	-	10.3%	9.0%	9.0%	10.3%	1.3%	6.4%	-	3.8%	50.0%
	F	3.8%	6.4%	10.3%	14.1%	9.0%		6.4%	-		50.0%
	T	3.8%	16.7%	19.2%	23.1%	19.2%	1.3%	12.8%	-	3.8%	100.0%
Mangal	M	4.8%	-	11.9%	16.7%	4.8%		7.1%	-	-	45.2%
	F	19.0%	-	9.5%	11.9%	7.1%		2.4%	4.8%	-	54.8%
	T	23.8%	-	21.4%	28.6%	11.9%		9.5%	4.8%	-	100.0%
Morpila	M	4.2%	2.8%	11.6%	10.6%	15.7%	.5%	3.7%	1.4%	1.9%	52.3%
	F	8.8%	4.2%	7.4%	6.0%	13.9%	2.3%	4.6%	.5%	-	47.7%
	T	13.0%	6.9%	19.0%	16.7%	29.6%	2.8%	8.3%	1.9%	1.9%	100.0%
Padl	M	6.4%	6.4%	4.3%	21.3%	19.1%	-	4.3%	-	2.1%	63.8%
	F	12.8%	2.1%	4.3%	10.6%	4.3%	-	2.1%	-		36.2%
	T	19.1%	8.5%	8.5%	31.9%	23.4%	-	6.4%	-	2.1%	100.0%
Quilscanda	M	6.5%	3.9%	9.8%	11.1%	12.4%	0.7	3.9%	-	0.7%	49.0%
	F	5.9%	4.6%	17.0%	10.5%	8.5%	0.7	2.6%	0.7%	0.7%	51.0%
	T	12.4%	8.5%	26.8%	21.6%	20.2%	1.4	6.5%	0.7%	1.4%	100.0%
Total	M	3.9%	4.4%	9.3%	12.1%	14.2%	.7%	4.3%	1.0%	1.3%	51.3%
	F	6.8%	4.9%	9.6%	10.1%	11.2%	1.1%	3.8%	1.0%	.2%	48.7%
	T	10.7%	9.3%	19.0%	22.2%	25.4%	1.8%	8.2%	2.0%	1.5%	100.0%

*M= Male F= Female T= Total

Source: Compiled by the researcher from field survey information, 2023-24.

An independent samples t-test has recorded a statistically significant difference in educational attainment between males (Mean = 4.15, Standard Deviation = 1.79) and females (Mean 3.82, Standard Deviation = 1.79), $t(1014) = 2.98$, with p value $< .003$ (Table 5). The 0.33-point difference in means with a 95% confidence interval (0.11, 0.55) indicates that males have achieved significantly higher levels of education than females in the study area. The hypothesis is accepted as there is a gender gap in educational attainments among the ST population in the study area, where males have higher educational attainments than females.

Table 5. Gender wise Group Statistics and Independent Samples Test

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Educational Qualifications	Male	518	4.1544	1.79385	.07882
	Female	500	3.8200	1.78941	.08003

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Educational Qualifications	Equal variances assumed	.994	.319	2.977	1016	.003	.33444	.11233	.11402	.55486
	Equal variances not assumed			2.978	1014.899	.003	.33444	.11232	.11403	.55485

4.3 Financial Schemes for Educational Upliftment

The Government of India and the State Government have placed numerous schemes and programmes to provide financial assistance to students belonging to the ST community. Some of the schemes are mentioned as follows. Central Government-sponsored schemes for the ST students include the pre-matric and post-matric scholarships, national fellowships to pursue M. Phil. and Ph.D. courses, scholarships for graduate and post-graduate levels and national scholarships for overseas studies. In addition, the Government of Goa offers several schemes for the ST students, such as pre-matric scholarships, Vidya Laxmi scholarships for girls, scholarships for home nursing courses, and aid to voluntary organisations for running hostels for ST students. Further, Gagan Bharari Shiksha Yojana, a merit-based award and recognition of high performance in the board exams of SSC and HSSC in Goa, are provided to the students. Financial assistance is also available for pre-primary schools in remote areas, as well as the Prashikshan Yatra Scheme (study tours) for school students. Short-term professional training courses for the members of the ST community are also organised in different institutions of the State.

Some visible development in the inclination to educational attainment has been observed in the selected villages. Slowly, the transformation in education has been seen in the tribal community through the beneficiaries of different tribal welfare schemes. The

published data by the Ministry of Tribal Welfare, Govt. of Goa, has stated that 4,944 (86%) of ST students across the state have availed pre-matric (IX and X class students) and post-matric central sponsored scholarships and 9122 (95%) ST students have benefited from different State Schemes (Govt. of Goa, 2024). The students who have discontinued their education have faced numerous challenges in availing these schemes, either due to their lack of awareness about the available schemes or a lack of institutional support from the Government through their schools and higher secondary schools. The awareness was found to be very limited about most of the schemes. There was high awareness about the pre-matric and post matric scholarships since the school and college administration took a lot of interest and motivated the students to avail of these schemes. The Citizen Charter published by the Directorate of Tribal Welfare, Goa noted that a very small percentage of students availed the schemes for professional courses like Home Nursing and other short-term professional training courses across the state. It also showed that there were no beneficiaries from the study area for the period of 2020-2024.

4.4 Major Problems for Educational Attainment

The findings from the study revealed some inherent challenges deterring educational attainment of the studied villages, which are discussed below.

4.4.1 Physical and Infrastructural Challenges

The tribal population residing in forested villages such as Vavurla and Corla-Kazugotav continues to face significant physical and infrastructural challenges. Many houses lack basic amenities, including toilet facilities. The community experiences frequent power cuts, poor road connectivity, unreliable internet access and limited public transport. Educational institutions are located at considerable distances from these villages, creating barriers to regular school attendance and reducing motivation among students. Consequently, most students pursue education only up to Secondary School Certificate (SSC) or Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC), with very few progressing to higher education, which in turn constrains their employment opportunities. These findings align with previous studies that highlight how geographical isolation, inadequate infrastructure and socio-economic marginalisation hinder educational outcomes among tribal communities across India. For instance, Patra, Dutta and Bharti (2025) note that infrastructural deficits in tribal regions undermine the goals of the National Education Policy. While Kavitha and Vanita (2021) emphasise that poor road and transit facilities discourage school attendance. Similarly, Maharana (2025) underscores that despite constitutional guarantees, tribal children remain disadvantaged due to structural barriers, necessitating integrated interventions in sanitation, electricity, transport and digital connectivity alongside culturally sensitive educational reforms.

4.4.2 Economic and Family Constraints

The majority of the Scheduled Tribe families in the studied villages remain dependent on seasonal agriculture as their primary source of income, which contributes to

a fragile financial base. Most of the school or college-going children were first-generation learners, and therefore, they often lack consistent moral encouragement and financial support from their families. In many cases, households expect children to contribute to the family income through early participation in agricultural work or related occupations, which reduces the time and interest available for education. This situation closely reflects findings from previous studies across India, which highlight how economic hardship, lack of parental motivation and early work participation act as major barriers to tribal education. For example, Minz, Kujur and Pujari (2024) observed that low economic status and involvement in domestic or agricultural work hinder educational attainment among tribal adolescents in Odisha. Mahata and Singh (2025) emphasised that socio-economic inequalities and cultural marginalisation continue to deprive tribal girls of equitable access to education. Similarly, Sahu et al. (2025) noted that despite government interventions, dropout rates among tribal children remain disproportionately high due to insufficient parental involvement and economic constraints. Together, these studies confirm that the challenges faced in Goa are part of a broader national pattern, underscoring the need for targeted financial assistance, parental awareness programs and livelihood diversification to strengthen educational participation among tribal communities.

4.4.3 Social and cultural barriers

There has also been lack of awareness regarding the value of formal education amongst the older generation among the people living in the isolated parts. The social customs and socially detrimental practices also restrained the children, especially the girl child, from pursuing higher education by travelling to other parts away from home. To pursue higher education, the children had to travel several kilometres, which made it time-consuming and tiring for the students to coordinate with the household work and their studies. This has broadly affected female education as most of them were from an agrarian background. All these challenges have forced the girls into early marriage or to seek jobs in nearby urban centres as per their qualifications. These challenges had limited their aspirations of achieving higher education, as observed in the villages of Vaurla and Corla. These findings resonate with the research on tribal education in India. The study by Das and Bhoi highlights that cultural traditions and gendered expectations often restrict tribal girls from continuing education beyond secondary school (Das & Bhoi, 2025). The studies confirm that the social and cultural barriers observed in Goa are part of a wider national pattern, underscoring the need for interventions that combine awareness-building, gender-sensitive educational policies and improved access to higher education facilities.

4.4.4 Emerging Behavioural Trends

Recent observations in the study villages indicate that the younger generation is increasingly influenced by the high-risk alcohol consumption pattern, overuse of social media and online gaming, which has diverted their mainstream educational focus. A concerning trend observed among some adolescent ST students is their engagement in easy money-making activities such as matka (daily result-oriented gambling) and other

digital and mobile-based gambling practices, even if only occasionally. The lure of quick financial gains from these activities has influenced a segment of the younger generation. If left unaddressed, such a pattern could lead to significant adverse consequences for both individuals and the wider community. These findings are consistent with broader research on tribal and rural youth in India. Shivdasani, writing for the American India Foundation, highlighted the complexities of alcoholism in tribal communities, noting its deep social and economic impact (Shivdasani, 2025). Jadav studied the effects of social media on tribal students in South India, finding that excessive usage often undermines educational focus and contributes to cultural shifts (Jadav, 2022).

5. Conclusion

The selected villages in Quepem Sub-Division of Goa have a large proportion of tribal population, facing major challenges in educational achievements, despite various welfare schemes aimed at helping children access proper education. The illiteracy rate among the old generation ST population of the selected villages is quite high. There is a need for public investment in setting up educational institutions at nearby sites of the tribal community. There is also an urgency to provide the remotely located villages with reliable public transport facilities with a required frequency and special care for the education of the intending female students. Awareness about the importance of formal education, especially amongst the parents, is required to help them motivate their children to get educated and empowered.

The transformation of the local communities is possible only through educational upliftment and empowerment. People's participation is necessary for a reform in the implementation of the policies and schemes of the government regarding the regional planning of these micro units. The district and sub-divisional administration should ensure the provision of basic amenities to these remote villages of the State to effectively check out-migration of the ST population from their homelands. The educated youth of the ST community of these villages need to motivate the younger generations and act as guides to provide proper directions for the school-going children. The state and central governments should ensure that educational attainment with required qualification and only merit are the necessary considerations in the employment in government and private recruitments. This will be the moral booster for good education to transform the ST community. Private parties and corporate houses enthusiastic to start educational institutes should be allowed to establish their institutions in the tribal dominated regions, if they admit and provide free education to the students from the hinterland to demonstrate the value of education to society.

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