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Educational Status of De-notified Tribes A Study of Telangana

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A Study of Telangana

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Abstract

This paper deals with educational status of De-notified and Nomadic Tribes (DNT-NT) of Telangana vis-à-vis their socioeconomic conditions. The present study is based on primary data collected from Mahabubnagar, Khammam, Warangal and Adilabad districts of Telangana in 2013 for analysis, using random sampling techniques. The selected communities are: Yerukala, Mudiraj (Mutharasa), Budagajangalu, Dommari and Dasari. The study results show that DNTs lag far behind in attaining a minimum educational level. Moreover, children of de-notified tribes face problems in learning and language. High dropout rates found from upper primary level to a higher educational level. For a large number of families, economic constraints are the major hurdles to fulfil their children's educational dream. School environment of de-notified children are also not conducive to sustain the interest of the children in the studies. Teachers are often indifferent to these children. Some of the children of these communities experience discrimination in schools which alienate them from the studies.

Key words: Criminal Tribes Act, Nomadic Tribes, De-notified tribes, Educational status, Socio-economic, Occupational status, Enrolment, Dropout rates, Discrimination and Stigma.

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1. Introduction

In 1871, the India's British-Raj declared certain tribal, nomadic, semi-nomadic groups as '*Born Criminals*' and passed the wicked 'Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 (CTA)'. As per the CTA, wandering groups were considered as hereditary criminals who are 'addicted to the systematic commission of non-bailable offences'(Mukul 2004). In essence, they were nomadic cattle grazers, wandering singers, fortune tellers, priest, seasonal traders, acrobats, entertainers, etc. In pursuit of their traditional occupations and activities some lived in the forests and according to the British-raj only criminals would do so and therefore brought them under CTA, 1871. Some groups had to put up a resistance to British aggression against them from time to time. However, British-raj increased their might to include more and more such wandering groups, chiefly to control and contain their movements through a series of amended Criminal Tribes Acts (from 1871 to 1944) propagated throughout the different geographical and administrative units of India.

In contrast, there were of course a few communities which had criminal records, but bringing all pastoral and nomadic communities into the fold of the CTA was a major flaw in the Act (D'Souza 2001). The majority of these groups was kept in British run and monitored camps for decades in the name of reforming and emancipating them from their criminal behavior. This has negatively impacted their behavior and haunting them even after the British left India. But in actuality, they all were brainwashed and tortured to accept that they are born criminals. In 1952, the Government of India officially 'de-notified' them from CTA but renamed the old Act with the new name 'Habitual Offender's Act, 1952' and passed without much changes to it. The new Act is not very different from the 'Criminal Tribes Act, 1871'. Further, this amended Act in the post-independent India made no provisions for their livelihood. De-notified tribes have continued to face historical dislocation, dishonor, social neglect, discrimination as ex-criminals and dacoits.

The question many scholars posed was as to how a community could be considered and treated as criminals by birth. They noted that there may be a few individuals who commit unlawful acts, but the community as a whole cannot be born as criminals. This is nothing but an absurd idea which advocates a clear agenda to isolate, contain a large number of nomadic communities and exterminate some of the small princely groups from power, sovereignty, freedom, etc. (Susan 1999). It was also argued in the

literature that these groups were working as informants to the freedom fighters, providing them with food, money, and ammunition and fighting along with them in the freedom struggle. Some groups who had princely background with small kingdoms were thrown out of power and listed them in CTA so as to deprive them of ruling powers and lose their identity forever (Dandekar 2009, Yang 1985).

Meanwhile, many nomadic trading communities have gradually lost their livelihood with the advent of railways and roads and outsiders entering in their domain activities. Other groups were gradually alienated from land holdings by local dominant communities and forced to live in poor conditions. This continued even after their de-notification from CTA. Consequently, they remained backward in almost all the indicators of human development index. Today, countless de-notified tribes survive on begging for food and money from others. Some others eke out living on collecting and selling rags, performing street acrobats, as wandering priests, entertainers, etc. They possess no/little land, lack proper housing, no fixed assets and therefore wander from one place to another in search of means of survival. Urban ghettos, isolated open areas and dilapidated areas are their usual habitats. Living in such areas with a minimum or absence of basic facilities they eventually contract multiple diseases and the whole family suffers from such an outcome. In such precarious situations, children do not usually go to school and instead go for begging for food to feed their family (Radhakrishna 2001). They are isolated and excluded from mainstream development processes. Human rights violations against them are common and frequent and the reality with which they are living today. They every now and then face differential treatment leading to gradual social exclusion from the mainstream society. As a result, they lost self-respect, confidence and become voiceless, which is further pushing them in a vicious circle of chronic poverty.

1.1. Macro Picture of DNTs

The De-notified and Nomadic Tribes (DNT-NT) of India cover a population of approximately 60 million (Renke 2008). Of them, some are included in the list of Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), and a considerable number of communities are listed as Other Backward Classes (OBC). And many others do not have a place in any of the above categories. It is estimated that there are 801 De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes in the country, which may be categorized roughly as follows: 22 in SC category, 27 in ST category, 421 in OBC category, and 227 that are not any of the reserved category. A large number of Semi-Nomadic

Tribes are placed in the OBC category (D'Souza 2001; Geeta et al. 2002). In terms of population, some estimates provided a figure of 6 crores (60 million) which excludes 227 communities that are not listed in any category. The population of the communities listed as OBC is 2.2 crores. A more realistic estimate of the population of De-notified Tribes would be around 10 crores and the approximate total of all three categories, i.e., de-notified, nomadic and semi-nomadic would be around 13.5 crores (Bhasha 2012).

It is in this backdrop, this paper examines educational status of de-notified children with their socio economic conditions in Telangana.

1.2. Data & Methodology

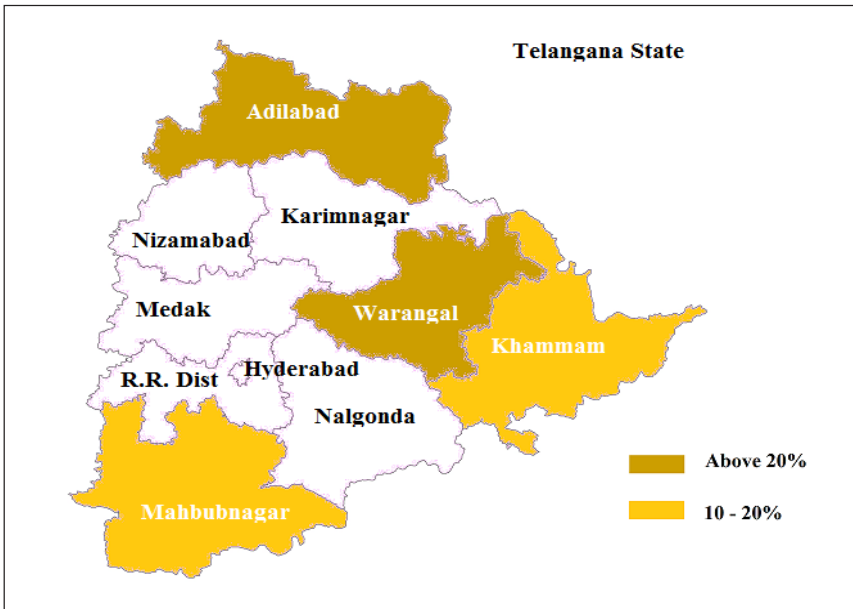
The present study is based on primary data collected from Telangana during the months of April and May, 2013. The study adopted random sampling method to select DNT communities'. It selected 5 DNT communities out of 59 de-notified communities in the state. These communities are not spread evenly in the state and found in some districts only. For that reason, the study selected 4 districts from the state where they are in moderate numbers. The selected districts are: Mahabubnagar, Khammam, Warangal and Adilabad. And the selected communities are: Yerukala, Mudiraj (Mutharasa), Budagajangalu, Dommari and Dasari. The selected sample size of the study is 574 households. Households were selected by following systematic random sampling. In the case of non-availability of de-notified tribes next DNT household was chosen for the final survey. The study employed a structured household questionnaire for collecting data. That apart, Focus Group Discussions and interviews with parents, children, elders, teachers and non-DNT individuals were conducted to supplement the quantitative data. As all DNTs have different historical trajectory of transition from nomadic to semi-nomadic to settled agriculture community, and also different degree and nature of interaction with the mainstream society; and experience of humiliation from the dominant communities, it was decided to take the communities those who continue to experience stigma, nomadic or semi-nomadic and settled agriculture DNT communities. For the purpose of the sample we classified the communities as DNT 1 who are settled agriculturalist, and DNT 2 who are still semi-nomadic and face stigma. The former is less vulnerable than the later. Since there are hardly studies on their education status, it was decided to carry out the study as exploratory. In view of the limited resources - human, financial and time - it was decided to carry out household survey focusing on their economic activities and education status of the members.

Table 1: Distribution of sample households by communities and districts

Tribe/caste	Mahabubnagar	Khammam	Warangal	Adilabad	Total
Budagajangalu	-	39 (27.1)	-	105 (72.9)	144 (100.0)
Dasari	-	-	-	72 (100.0)	72 (100.0)
Domhari	-	46 (95.8)	2 (4.2)	-	48 (100.0)
Mudiraj	-	-	157 (100.0)	-	157 (100.0)
Yerukula	100 (65.4)	-	-	53 (34.6)	153 (100.0)
Total	100 (17.4)	85 (14.8)	159 (27.7)	230 (40.1)	574 (100.0)

Source: This and all subsequent tables are based on the survey 2013.

The field survey was carried out in the state of Telangana by taking 574 households from de-notified tribe communities from four districts. The concentration of DNTs in these districts is relatively more than other districts. As mentioned above, each de-notified tribe is located in a specific district and not spread evenly across the state. Out of the total sample households, Mudiraj forms 27.5 per cent, followed by Yerukula with 26.6 per cent, Budagajangalu with 25 per cent, which account for a higher proportion of households, while Domhari has the lowest proportion of surveyed households (8.6) (Table 1). Dasari community is concentrated only in Adilabad and Mudiraj is in Warangal.



2. Socio-economic status of de-notified tribes

All the de-notified tribes do not fall under the same category to receive the benefits of the government welfare schemes. Yerukala community has been recognized as a Scheduled Tribes. Mudiraj as well as Budagajangalu, Dasari and Dommari are clubbed in Other Backward Classes (OBC). However, socio-economic condition of the later three is most vulnerable. We call them the Most Backward Classes (MBC) status.

During the contemporary period, Mudiraj and Yerukala communities lead a settled lifestyle where as Budagajangalu, Dasari and Dommari still lead semi-nomadic way of life, if not nomadic. They do lead settled life for sometime in a year keeping their current location as their permanent settlement/hamlet/village. From these settled localities they travel to other places in order to practice their traditional occupations or do petty trading for their survival. In the process, they stay few days in one place and a few days in another, thus spend a large part of the year while on the move. They possess no land and regular income generating assets and resources (Table 2).

Table 2: DNT households according to reservation status and traditional occupation

Tribe/castes	Current reservation Category	Traditional occupation
Budagajangalu	Other Backward Classes (OBC)	Fortune telling & trading petty items and begging
Dasari	Other Backward Classes (OBC)	Trading household appliances, utensil, plastic items and begging
Dommari	Other Backward Classes (OBC)	Prostitution, street performances
Mudiraj	Other Backward Classes (OBC)	Trading fruits, vegetables, grass& fishing
Yerukula	Scheduled Tribe (ST)	Basket making & fortune telling

The location of their settlements, hamlets/village indicates that a majority of the sample de-notified tribes (90%) live in rural areas. The rest (10.6%) resides in urban slums. However, the communities vary from each other in their rural-urban ratio: DNTs like Dommari, Mudiraj, Yerukula and Dasari are mainly rural based, while a section of Budagajangalu is urban based, residing at the periphery of the towns (Table 3).

Table 3: DNT's place of residence according to rural and urban areas

Tribe/caste	Rural	Urban	Total
Budagajangalu	104 (72.2)	40 (27.8)	144 (100.0)
Dasari	63 (87.5)	9 (12.5)	72 (100.0)
Dommari	48 (100.0)	-	48 (100.0)
Mudiraj	157 (100.0)	-	157 (100.0)
Yerukula	141 (92.2)	12 (7.8)	153 (100.0)
Total	513 (89.4)	61 (10.6)	574 (100.0)

A majority of de-notified households though own house; condition of houses vary. Around 9 percent reside in rented houses at their current place of residence. There are a few (2%) households who do not own house but actually dwells in the houses of others on a temporary basis. Some others (4%) are homeless dwell in open places, dilapidated buildings or government buildings such as schools, Anganwadi and Panchayat office buildings. The nature and/or quality of their housing is poor and pathetic. In most cases, the whole family consists of five and more members live in single or two small room houses without any sanitation facilities. Many others live in mud and thatched houses. Others reside in makeshift tents and temporary shelters made with iron sheets, tarpaulin etc. at road side open places.

What makes their conditions worse is the lack of basic facilities in their locality. For example, of the total sample households only about 8 per cent were able to get piped drinking water and the remaining households (92%) completely rely on unprotected hand pumps/bore wells, open wells and other unsafe sources. In order to collect water their children and women have to walk kilometers ranging from 1-3 for both drinking and household purposes. Many settlements/hamlets although having hand pumps, but mostly non-functional hence travel up to main village / town to fetch the water. Even this water is not safe, but they got no other options except to use the available water. Owing to which majority of households complain that their family members have serious health issues and thus suffering from serious diseases. There are only less than 1 per cent households who use their own toilets, but at the same time average households depend on community based toilets on sharing basis with their fellow habitants. In other aspects like access to electricity connection to their home and localities somewhat better since 73 per cent of households that had electricity connection. Households who reside in tents, dilapidated building, open places and road side do

not usually have electricity connections. A majority of households have electricity because of free power supply provided by state government for domestic purposes to all rural households including below poverty line households (single/two bulb). But, homeless, mostly from Budagajangalu and Dasari are unable to access electricity in spite of free supply in the state.

Regarding the possession of basic entitlement/documents such as ration cards, caste certificates, job cards, Aadhar cards etc. the study throws mixed results. The majority of households (82.6%) possesses Below Poverty Line ration cards, 88.2 percent have voter identity cards and 79.8 percent have Aadhar card. On the contrary, the absence of welfare or right based entitlements such as caste certificate and NREGA cards among de-notified tribe households is quite high. For instance, 44 percent households still do not possess caste certificates which are an important pre-requisite to avail reservation benefits in education and employment. Likewise, only 50.5 percent of households were possessing Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act/Scheme (MGNREGA) job cards which is again a vital component of poverty alleviation through targeted rural employment guarantee programme. In terms of health insurance, a little over 56 per cent of de-notified tribe households are having health insurance cards which are far greater than other general castes in the state. On the whole, welfare benefits to the poor are less accessed by Budagajangalu, Dommari, Dasari and Mudiraj households respectively. A community which is placed in scheduled tribe category can take maximum use of welfare benefits than those placed in OBC list (Table 4).

Table 4: The possession of basic entitlements by de-notified tribe households

Tribe	Ration Card	Voter ID Card	Caste Certificate	Job Card NREGA	Aadhar Card	Health Insurance	Others	Total
Budagajangalu	81 (56.3)	94 (65.3)	57 (39.6)	28 (19.4)	100 (69.4)	33 (22.9)	1 (0.7)	144 (25.1)
Dasari	65 (90.3)	67 (93.1)	54 (75.0)	14 (19.4)	69 (95.8)	58 (80.6)	-	72 (12.5)
Dommari	47 (97.9)	47 (97.9)	19 (39.6)	42 (87.5)	42 (87.5)	30 (62.5)	-	48 (8.4)
Mudiraj	153 (97.5)	155 (98.7)	65 (41.4)	112 (71.3)	119 (75.8)	73 (46.5)	-	157 (27.4)
Yerukula	128 (83.7)	143 (93.5)	128 (83.7)	94 (61.4)	128 (83.7)	130 (85.0)	2 (1.3)	153 (26.7)
Total	474 (82.6)	506 (88.2)	323 (56.3)	290 (50.5)	458 (79.8)	324 (56.4)	3 (0.5)	574 (100.0)

3. Occupational status

Over the years due to changes in the economy and society their traditional occupations are losing importance. There are only about 56 per cent of households are currently

practicing their traditional occupations either partially or fully. They are gradually quitting practicing of their traditional occupations or have diversified their activities. On the whole, a bulk of households appears to be involved in petty or small organized business, wage labour and agriculture respectively. Dommari, Yerukula and Mudiraj communities by and large practicing traditional occupation than others. Dommari practice prostitution for their survival, Yerukala perform basket making and fortune telling, Mudiraj do trading of grain, vegetables, grass and fishing, Budagajangalu put into practice the storytelling, singing, begging for food and, Dasari engages in selling of household appliances, seasonal fruits and begging (Table 5).

Moreover, the occupation and activities they practice are seasonal, requiring travel from one place to another till the end of a specific season. Focused group discussions confirm that although some of the occupations garner no respect yet continue to stick to their traditional occupations in the absence of other alternatives (56%). These occupations involve risk taking travel and offer not so much income. Certain occupations like prostitution face the stigma.

Table 5: Distribution of households practicing traditional occupations

Tribe	Yes	No	Do not know	Total
Budagajangalu	64 (44.4)	74(51.3)	6 (4.1)	144 (100.0)
Dasari	13 (18.0)	50 (69.4)	9 (12.5)	72 (100.0)
Dommari	41 (85.4)	4 (8.3)	3 (6.2)	48 (100.0)
Mudiraj	83 (52.8)	72 (45.8)	2 (1.2)	157 (100.0)
Yerukula	121 (79.0)	31 (20.2)	1 (0.7)	153 (100.0)
Total	322 (56.0)	231 (40.2)	21 (3.6)	574 (100.0)

All are not landless. Some of them do have agriculture land. Twenty eight per cent of de-notified tribes are holding farming land. The least land holding communities are Dommari and Dasari and majority of land owning households are from Mudiraj and Yerukala communities. On the contrary, close to 72 per cent of de-notified households are landless (Table 6). On the other hand, 80 per cent of households from Mudiraj community possess land and practice settled agriculture. As a result, their socio-economic status is better than other de-notified communities. Similarly, Yerukala not only holds land, but also get benefits under the provisions for the ST. They like Mudiraj have somewhat improved their condition. These two communities no longer face social exclusion like their other counterparts.

Table 6: Distribution of households by ownership of agricultural land

Tribe	Yes	No	Total
Budagajangalu	9 (6.3)	135 (93.8)	144 (100.0)
Dasari	1 (1.4)	71 (98.6)	72 (100.0)
Dommari	1 (2.1)	47 (97.9)	48 (100.0)
Mudiraj	125 (79.6)	32 (20.4)	157 (100.0)
Yerukula	27 (17.6)	126 (82.4)	153 (100.0)
Total	163 (28.4)	411 (71.6)	574 (100.0)

Most of the landholders received small piece of land from the government under their rehabilitation programme. Budagajangalu and Yerukala are the two communities that have a more proportion of dependent land owners than other communities. Over 92 per cent of land holding households informed that they were cultivating their land independently and have no control by others. The remaining 8 per cent have to take consent from others to cultivate their own land.

Households who practice agriculture normally gets more income than traditional occupation. Income from government and private service also offer higher income than other occupations. Petty trade can only offer an income that is sufficient to survive or feed their entire family. It is not enough to spend on their child's education, health and other emergency needs. Land is still a crucial for a rural household to lead a dignified life than any other activities except government/private jobs that need education. A respondent from Budgajangam said, "the income that we earn from petty trade, begging and wage labour is only enough to feed our family, not allow us to send our children to school, buy books and clothes for them. Further, when our family members fell sick, he/she has to suffer the illness without attending to a doctor. At the most we visit government hospitals, which may cure or make worse. This is our conditions and fate".

4. Educational status among the de-notified tribes

In order to understand educational status of the de-notified communities in the sample, we shall confine to current educational position of the members of the HHS who belong to the age group between 6 and 23 years. This age group is generally considered to be of the students at different stages of studies - primary and upper primary (6 to 12 years), high school (12 to 14 years), secondary school (14 to 16 years); and college

- under graduation and post-graduation (16 to 23 years). The children are expected to enroll at the age of six years and continue the studies minimum upto high school, at the age of 14 years. Legally, the child labour up to the age of 14 years is banned. In this section we shall examine: How many of this age group continue their studies? Table 7 gives break-up of education status of the persons of this age group. It may be mentioned that some of the respondents were not able to give precise age of the members of their family members. They were also not sure in which class their son or daughter was studying.

Table 7: Educational status of members of respondent households (6-23 age groups)

Tribe	Studying	Never Enrolled	Dropouts	Total
Budagajangalu	156 (78.0)	31 (15.5)	13 (6.5)	200 (100.0)
Dasari	82 (71.9)	13 (11.4)	19 (16.7)	114 (100.0)
Domhari	39 (62.9)	8 (12.9)	15 (24.2)	62 (100.0)
Mudiraj	107 (68.2)	31 (19.7)	19 (19.7)	157 (100.0)
Yerukula	201 (74.4)	41 (15.2)	28 (10.3)	270 (100.0)
Total	585 (72.9)	124 (15.4)	94 (10.4)	803 (100.0)

However, according to the responses from the heads of the households (HHs), 15 percent of the children in the age group between 6 and 23 years have not enrolled in a school at any stage (Table 8). Though all the communities have more than ten percent such children, Mudiraj has the highest proportion among the five DNT communities. One of the stumbling blocks in getting admission to a school is a birth certificate which school requires for the registration. Such cases are very high in Budagajangalu and Dasari families and low in Yerukula. Another reason is non-availability of school in their locality. A few did not enroll due to sickness and also 'not feeling necessity'. Focused group discussion financial constrains and hence living condition emerged as the major cause for not sending children to schools. Moreover semi-nomadic occupation requiring travelling from one place to another also discourages family from registering their children to schools.

Table 8: Reasons for never enrolling in school (6-23 age groups)

Tribe	No school nearby/ in locality	No birth certificate	School did not enrol	Other	Total
Budagajangalu	-	31 (100.0)	-	-	31 (100.0)
Dasari	-	13 (100.0)	-	-	13 (100.0)
Dommari	7 (87.5)	-	1 (12.5)	-	8 (100.0)
Mudiraj	19 (61.3)	-	6 (19.4)	6 (19.3)	31 (100.0)
Yerukula	5 (12.2)	36 (87.8)	-	-	41 (100.0)
Total	31 (25.0)	80 (64.5)	7 (5.6)	6 (4.7)	124 (100.0)

Note: This table presents information only for never enrolled children.

4.1. Drop-out rates

Though there is a trend among all the communities for sending their children to school at the age of six years or later, many children leave studies before completing secondary or higher secondary. Nearly ten percent of the students drop-out at different stages of their education. The highest proportion of the drop-out children (24%) belong to Dommari community (Table 9). The lowest rate of drop-outs (6.5%) is of Budagajangalus. As large as 77 percent of the drop-out children had been at the primary level. Of the remaining mostly left the studies at the upper primary stage. The scale of drop-out students was high among Dommari and Mudiraj communities while it was comparatively low among the Yerukula tribe. It is observed that though Mudiraj community is socio-economically better off than other communities, their children do not continue education like the children of Yerukala community. This can be attributed to the fact that Yerukala are getting ST reservation, whereas Mudiraj are placed in OBC where competition is very high among OBCs. And, comparatively their economic condition is not better than some of the OBCs. Numerically they are small than other OBCs.

One of the important reasons for discontinuing education is failure in examination. The failed students get disheartened and also often humiliated by teachers and other students. The examination performance coupled with poverty and family environment alienate several young children from schooling. Though Telugu language is the medium of instruction in most of the cases in which the students are taught, it obstructs communication between the teachers and the students. The dialects that the different DNTs speak with community members are not the same in which they are taught in

schools. Some complained that their children were facing difficulties with the language that the teachers communicate in understanding in a class room teaching. Hence, the children could not sustain interest in studies. Experience of discrimination also caused for avoiding school environment (Table 9).

Table 9: Level of education after which the child dropped out of school

Tribes	Primary school (1 to 5)	Secondary (6-8)	Higher secondary (9-12)	Graduation	Total
Budagajangalu	10 (76.9)	3 (23.1)	-	-	13 (100.0)
Dasari	13 (68.4)	5 (26.3)	1 (5.3)	-	19 (100.0)
Domhari	14 (93.3)	1 (6.7)	-	-	15 (100.0)
Mudiraj	17 (89.5)	2 (10.5)	-	-	19 (100.0)
Yerukula	18 (64.3)	7 (25.0)	-	3 (10.7)	28 (100.0)
Total	72 (76.6)	18 (19.1)	1 (1.1)	3 (3.2)	94 (100.0)

4.2. Students

However, nearly three-fourth (73%) of the children in the age-group between 6 and 23 years were reported by the heads of the households as students during the field survey. They are the first generation of learners. Among the five communities, the higher proportion of those who study is of Budagajangalu and Yerukala communities and the low among Domhari and Mudiraj. Most of them (64%) are studying at the primary level and only about five percent are at college level. Among the students, overwhelming (84%) are the primary and upper primary students. Only ten percent are studying in high schools. And, a very few who attend college belong to Yerukula and Mudiraj community. None is studying in a college from the Dasari and Domhari social groups. As mentioned above, they are economically most backward (Table 10).

Table 10: Level in which school and college going children are studying(6-23 age groups)

Tribes/caste	Primary (1 to 5)	Upper primary (6-8)	High school (9-12)	College	Others	Total
Budagajangalu	115 (73.7)	32 (20.5)	8 (5.1)	1 (0.6)	-	156 (100.0)
Dasari	50 (61.0)	24 (29.3)	8 (9.8)	-	-	82 (100.0)
Domhari	36 (92.3)	3 (7.7)	-	-	-	39 (100.0)
Mudiraj	80 (74.8)	16 (15.0)	7 (6.5)	4 (3.7)	-	107 (100.0)
Yerukula	93 (46.3)	44 (21.9)	37 (18.4)	23 (11.4)	4 (2.0)	201 (100.0)
Total	374 (63.9)	119 (20.3)	60 (10.3)	28 (4.4)	4 (0.7)	585 (100.0)

Most of these students (76%) attend government schools. These schools are in close vicinity of their hamlets. The government's campaign for enrollment, as a part of compulsory and free education policy, also contributes for registering them with the government schools. It is important to note that more than one-fourth (12%) of the DNT students study in private schools. The proportion of children enrolled in private schools is high among Yerukula, Mudiraj and Dasari tribes (Table 11). Like others, people of these deprived communities also believe that private schools are better in imparting education than the government managed schools. Moreover, the children of one out of ten families attend English medium school. The remaining students study in Telugu medium (Table 12). It is again a belief that English medium education is better than regional language. It is also a sign of status and quest for upward mobility. Children of Yerukala and Dasari are studying more in English medium than other communities (Table 12). Such families somehow manage finances to pay the fees from their meager income. They economize on spending money to meet other needs. But as education expenses increase from primary to secondary, most of such upward mobile DNT families cannot sustain their enthusiasm for education. Drop-out is its consequence.

Table 11: Percentage of children attending different educational institutions

Tribe/caste	Govt.	Private	Total
Budagajangalu	167 (87.0)	25 (13.0)	192 (100.0)
Dasari	71 (67.6)	34 (32.4)	105 (100.0)
Dommari	39 (81.3)	9 (18.7)	48 (100.0)
Mudiraj	117 (75.0)	39 (25.0)	156 (100.0)
Yerukula	165 (70.8)	68 (39.2)	233 (100.0)
Total	559 (76.2)	175 (23.8)	734 (100.0)

Note: Dropouts are excluded in the table.

Table 12: Medium of instruction of children studying among de-notified tribes

Tribe	English	Telugu	Total
Budagajangalu	10 (5.4)	176 (94.6)	186 (100.0)
Dasari	15 (14.4)	89 (85.6)	104 (100.0)
Dommari	3 (6.4)	44 (93.6)	47 (100.0)
Mudiraj	15 (9.8)	138 (90.2)	153 (100.0)
Yerukula	43 (18.5)	189 (81.5)	232 (100.0)
Total	86 (11.9)	636 (88.1)	722 (100.0)

Note: English & Telugu medium taken here; and not other medium like Hindi.

4.3. Location of schools

For most of the students, their schools are close to their place of residence. It is within three kilometer distance. But, one-fourth of students require to travel more than 3 kilometers. In some cases, children travel beyond 10 kilometers. Because of distance from the place of residence, a few students stay in hostels. Children of Budagajangalu, Dasari, and Dommari travel less than 3 kilometers whereas children of Mudiraj and Yerukula tribes travel more than 10 kilometers to reach their schools and colleges. The better off among de-notified tribes send their children to more distant places because of the availability of English medium schools. More poor and vulnerable prefer to send their children nearby schools because it involves less cost in transportation. Further, a majority of the children (68%) reach their schools and colleges by walk; 19 percent of go by bus and 13 percent students hire autos. Those children who study in private English medium schools actually travel by bus and autos. Pupils attending government schools walk to reach their schools. For instance, children from most backward communities such as Budagajangalu, Dasari and Dommari walk more than that of other children.

Most of the students of the DNT communities except Yerukula do not get scholarship and other benefits meant for the reserved categories. Though they fall in the category of OBC, many find difficulties in getting caste certificate as mentioned above. However, these children do get benefits such as midday meal, bus pass etc. meant for all students.

5. Discrimination

While attending the schools and colleges, Children of de-notified tribes experience various shades of discrimination with their fellow friends or teachers. They often feel that they were not treated at par with upper caste students. Some fellow students and teachers call DNT students by their caste in derogative connotation. A few of the teachers asked them to sit on the back benches/seats in the classroom. There were instances when DNT children had been asked to undertake manual work of cleaning the classroom, asked them to sit separately while taking mid-day meal, prevented from taking water from the same pot and glass in school.

5.1. Family environment

Most of the students of the DNTs, particularly of vulnerable communities are the first generation learners. Though their parents are uneducated, except a tiny section, less than five percent, all the respondents of the HHs said that that education was

important for both their sons and daughters. This is across the communities. A need for education has become a universal norm for all. In reply to our question, "why do they send their children for schools?" Most of them (79%) replied that education would provide them (sons and daughters) happy and comfortable life. According to them with education would provide them better source of livelihood particularly government job. With this they would make the family happy. A few also said that education would make the children more intelligent which would give them 'bright future'. The respondents had the same view both for sons and daughters' education. Interesting is that there was hardly any respondent who wanted to give education to a daughter for a marriage.

Except a small section, a majority of the respondents expressed their desire that they would like their sons and daughters study up to graduation and post-graduation. There is very little difference in their preference for sons' and daughters' education (Table 13). Except nearly one-fourth who have no idea what their son or daughter would become, majority (around 54%) wish that after the education their sons and daughter would get government employment, look after family members, remove dependency and can live independently. Nearly 24 percent of the parents would like their sons become professional like doctor, engineer, professor etc. In the case of daughters 20 percent also want them to be professionals.

Table 13: Respondents wishing what their Daughter(s) to become after completion of education

	Govt. employee		Professional		Do not know		Total	
	Son	Daughter	Son	Daughter	Son	Daughter	Son	Daughter
Budagajangalu	44 (59.5)	39 (62.9)	27(43.5)	20 (40.3)	3 (4.1)	3 (4.8)	74 (100.0)	62 (100.0)
Dasari	32 (66.7)	35 (74.5)	12 (25.0)	10(21.3)	4 (8.4)	--	48 (100.0)	47 (100.0)
Domhari	9 (22.)	2 (8.7)	23 (59.0)	-	19 (46.3)	21(91.3)	41 (100.0)	23 (100.0)
Mudiraj	33 (42.3)	17 (27.4)	7 (8.9)	3(4.8)	41 (52.6)	42 (67.7)	78 (100.0)	62 (100.0)
Yerukula	61 (70.1)	54 (66.7)	23 (26.4)	21 (26)	4 (4.6)	2 (2.5)	87 (100.0)	81 (100.0)
Total	179 (54.6)	147 (53.5)	80 (24.3)	54 (19.6)	71 (21.6)	68 (24.7)	328 (100.0)	275 (100.0)

Though there is a difference in their preference in sons and daughters' future life career, the difference is marginal. The pattern is more or less same across all the communities except Domhari (Table 14). As large as 91 percent Domhari respondents were not sure for their daughters' future career. It is also true in the case of their expectation for their daughters' education. Forty-five percent of them said they 'do

know' how much their daughters study. In the case of their sons also sizable proportion of them, 39 percent were not sure up to which level they would study. As mentioned above in the Table 7, drop-out rate is the highest among the Dommari.

Table 14: Respondents reporting the level of study, they want their Son(s) to pursue

	Upper primary/ secondary		Graduation		Post-graduation		Do not know		Total	
	Son	Daughter	Son	Daughter	Son	Daughter	Son	Daughter		
Budagajangalu	15(19.7)	17(23)	36(47.4)	21(28.4)	5(6.6)	19(25.7)	20(26.3)	17(23.0)	76(100.0)	74(100.0)
Dasari	5(11.1)	10(23.8)	19(42.2)	13(31.0)	5(11.1)	6(14.3)	16(35.6)	13(31.0)	45(100.0)	42(100.0)
Dommari	--	3(13.6)	10(34.5)	5(22.7)	8(27.6)	4(18.2)	11(37.9)	10(45.5)	29(100.0)	22(100.0)
Mudiraj	1(1.3)	13(22.40)	9(12.0)	12(20.7)	38(50.7)	18(31.0)	27(36.0)	15(25.9)	75(100.0)	58(100.0)
Yerukula	-	2(2.3)	9(9.6)	17(19.3)	54(57.4)	41(46.6)	31(33.0)	28(31.8)	94(100.0)	88(100.0)
Total	11(3.5)	45(15.9)	83(26.0)	68(23.9)	110(34.5)	88(31.0)	105(32.9)	83(29.2)	319(100.0)	284(100.0)

Notwithstanding their acceptance of importance of education for better life chances for their children and also having aspiration for higher education, most of them are unable to provide necessary financial and socio-cultural capital to their children to translate their wish into reality. Focused group discussions with parents divulged that most of the children help parents either in everyday household chores, agriculture, labour or begging for food and money. This is true for most of the communities. Children of Mudiraj and Yerukula communities which are relatively settled communities with some steady source of income help parents in household chores and also often join hands with parents in labour. The condition is worse in the case of the children whose parents are migrant labourers. In their case the children work as labourers with lowest wages. Such situation adversely affects their regularity to school and studies.

In such an adverse situation, a few parents arrange private tuition for the children. Though their number is very small, mainly because they cannot afford, the trend indicates their concern for education of their children. Others even if they want to give private coaching, they do not have resources. Sixty percent of those who take private coaching paid around four to five hundred rupees for a year. The others paid between two to three hundred rupees.

On the whole, neither in family nor in their neighborhood they hardly have any one who can inspire and guide in their studies. Though they take advice from the neighbors

or elderly members of the community while selecting a school, except school teachers of their children there is hardly anyone on whom they depend in the matter of children's education. Besides financial constraints, the parents have no time, ability and aptitude to monitor the studies of their children. Most of them (65%) have never visited the school of their children. One-fourth of the parents gone to the school when the teachers summoned them with complaints against their children. Most of the time, the complaints are related to irregularity in attendance and weak performance in examination. There are a few parents, mainly from Mudiraj community who went to school on their own to meet the teachers. Only 4.4 percent of respondents reported of being aware about school management committees and their activities. This proportion is higher among Yerukula.

6. Conclusions

For the purpose of the government affirmative measures, the de-notified tribes do not fall in one single administrative category. They are distributed among the scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and Other Backward Castes. This being an explorative study it covers only five DNT communities. One of them has ST status and the rest belong to OBCs. Many of them struggle to get caste-certificate so as to avail government benefits. Some of them have been settled cultivators and others are still semi-nomadic moving from one place to another for livelihood. The major occupation of the respondents is non-agriculture labour, petty business, hawkers, street vendors etc. A few live on begging for food and money from others. Their traditional stigma of 'criminals' haunts them. They are subject of harassment by police. These communities are discriminated and stigmatised as ex-criminal, thieves, robbers etc. which affects their routine life. They on the whole are poor, though a few have somewhat improved their economic condition with small piece of land and government employment. Most of them live below poverty line. They lack basic facilities like sanitary facilities, potable water, electricity connection, and drainage thus reside in an unhygienic environment.

They lag behind many others in literacy. Fifteen percent of the children and adults in the age group between six and twenty-three have not enrolled in school. More than ten percent are dropped-out from studies, mainly at primary and upper primary level. All parents wish to provide quality education to their children so that their daughters and sons get decent job and improve life chances. A few DNT families send their children to private and also English medium schools with a hope that they study well. From their scanty income they somehow spend for the children's education. But, it

requires a separate study to find out how far these families sustain their efforts in providing education up to higher level? However for a large number of the families, economic constraints are the major hurdles to fulfil their dream. They are not able to provide environment and support to their children for studies. School environment is also not conducive to sustain interests of the children in studies. Teachers are often indifferent to these children. Some of the children of these communities experience discrimination in schools which alienate from the studies.

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