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**A study exploring the discrimination and caste based violence
aimed at Arunthaiyar children in schools in Coimbatore,
Erode, Ramanathapuram, Shivagangai and Tuticorin districts
in Tamil Nadu, India**

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Executive Summary

Arunthatiyar children in Tamil Nadu

All across the world there are many children who are living without parental care or in inadequate care. The figures are quite high and according to EveryChild (an international child rights charity), working in parts of Asia, Africa and parts of Former Soviet Union countries, it is almost more than 24 million children who grow up without parental care. These children's survival is often threatened by greater risk of malnutrition, violence and exploitation; their future lost by missing out on school and their childhood. According to UNICEF Child protection Information Sheet (2006) there are 87.6 million child orphans in Asia constituting the highest number in the world. But in several countries including India, no data is systematically compiled about these children at the national or sub-national level.

Tamil Nadu is a large state among the 28 states in India being about the eleventh largest by area and the seventh most populous state. It is one of the largest contributors to India's Gross domestic Product and the most urbanised state in India.¹ However despite the development, the child sex ratio with 942 girls per 1000 boys as per the 2001 Census is on a downward journey from 948 in 1991. This could be due to issues of child malnutrition or neonatal mortality or prevalence of infanticide and female feticide. Children are affected by the impact of socio-cultural identities and caste, gender, urbanisation and globalisation have a direct impact on women and children.

Tamil Nadu is also one of the states which has a high population of the Arunthatiyar community. Pallar, Parayar and Arunthatiyar are the three major dalit groups in the state of Tamil Nadu. Among them, Arunthathiyars are considered to be the lowest in the dalit hierarchy, the 'Dalit among Dalits' - the 'untouchables'. It is one of the most oppressed, depressed and the poorest among the poor in the Indian Society. In Tamil Nadu, Arunthathiyars are densely concentrated in the western districts namely Coimbatore, Erode, Tirupur, Karur, Namakkal, Salem and Dharmapuri districts and loosely spread over in the other parts of the state. There are about 60,00,000 Arunthathiyars in Tamil Nadu. They are also identified with different names such as Chakkliar, Thoti, Madiga, Pagadai, Adi Andra, Madiga and Madari in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Often compelled to do very menial low dignified jobs, Arunthathiyars are more vulnerable to be forced to perform all undignified tasks (manual scavenging, death messages for upper caste community, dead body burials, dead

¹ Directorate of Economics & Statistics of respective State Governments and for All India-Central Statistical Organisation-28/02/2008

cattle removal, drum beating in upper caste death funerals etc.) in the society. Poor living conditions, desperate search for a dignified livelihood and decent wages, constant exploitation and harassment from moneylenders and upper caste landlords are part of the day-to-day life of an Arunthaiyar.

Their children are most exploited and abused and face discrimination at the hands of the upper caste community and lag behind or outside the sphere of quality education, health, development and participation. The United National Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC) core principles of promoting survival, development, protection and participation of children still remain a distant reality for the Arunthaiyar children. The children are not sent to school because of the poor socio economic status of this community. Many Arunthaiyar children having dropped out of school are part of the labour force in the industries, construction sites and brick kiln sites, many children work as bonded agricultural labourers or rope makers, domestic labourers or work in restaurants or tea shops. The children face rampant discrimination and social exclusionary practices like the two tumbler system, forced to clean toilets in schools, calling them by derogatory names and treating them as untouchables takes these children deeper in the web of exploitation and marginalisation. The look of these children indicates that they are impoverished, malnourished and anaemic.

In this situation when a majority of the Arunthaiyar community work as manual scavengers or bonded labourers, working on the agricultural farms, rope making, construction sites, the children are mostly left behind by their parents to fend for themselves while they go to work. If the child is too young, the child is left in the care of extended families or relatives or the neighbourhood community while the parents go to work. In cases when the child becomes an adolescent, he/she starts working to support the families. Most of these children never go to school or would have dropped out of school due to caste based discrimination and ridicule and humiliation they face on a daily basis in the school or in the public sphere. Hence even though these children may have parents, they do not have 'parental care'. The presence of parents does not ensure quality care and it is inadequate for the holistic development of these children.

Arunthaiyar Human Rights Forum (AHRF):

Arunthaiyar Human Rights Forum is a state level human rights forum formed in 2005. It comprises of young Arunthaiyar activists working in 14 community based organisations across 12 districts in western Tamil Nadu. Out of the 14 organisations, two community based organisations - namely Rights and Education Centre (READ) at Sathyamangalam, Erode and Rural Women Development Trust (RWDT) at Salem are EveryChild's programme partners on

the 'Engal Kural'² (Our voice) programme. AHRF is working specifically towards creating awareness on discrimination and atrocities against Arunthaiyars; eradication of manual scavenging primarily associated with Arunthaiyars; fighting against the scourge of untouchability. The forum's strategy has been to mobilise and empower the Arunthaiyar community by forming thrift and credit societies towards sustainable economic stability; document and report caste based atrocities faced by Arunthaiyars to National and State level Human rights Institutions; access to quality primary and higher education for Arunthaiyar children and strengthening Arunthaiyar men and women's political participation. It conducts periodic trainings and leads on research initiatives to gain a deeper understanding of the status of Arunthaiyar women and children in Tamil Nadu. In 2008, AHRF had organized its first state level Arunthaiyar cultural night event to create a platform for the Arunthaiyar community to reclaim and assert their socio-cultural identity.

- **Vision:** To come together to build a state level forum and demand rights and entitlements for the Arunthaiyar community
- Form the central platform for joint action for the member organizations: undertake advocacy and lobbying with a unified voice, particularly at state, national and international level: form the focal point for capacity building and training.
- Towards change: Political, cultural, social, economic and educational upward mobility of Arunthaiyar community- especially women and children

EveryChild is an international development charity fighting to protect some of the world's most vulnerable children without parental care or in inadequate care. It works in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, South America and the Caribbean. EveryChild believes that all children have the right to grow up in a safe and loving family environment, with a secure future. More than 24 million children grow up without parental care, their survival often threatened by greater risk of malnutrition, violence and exploitation; their future lost by missing out on school, and their childhood. Working with local partners across countries, EveryChild keep children safe when they are alone and at risk. EveryChild protects children in danger of ending up on their own by keeping families together and get children back to a safe and caring family, wherever it is possible.

² EveryChild *Engal Kural* programme focuses on prevention of exploitation and marginalization of Arunthaiyar children without parental care or at risk of losing parental care under the bonded labour system in Tamil Nadu

In India, EveryChild has been supporting programmes and partners based in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu on the issue of most marginalized children without parental care/ or in inadequate care who are trafficked/at risk of being trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) and forced labour including domestic workers and children who are living and working on the streets.

AHRF and EveryChild: common focus on 'children without parental care' or 'children in inadequate parental care/at risk of losing parental care':

Towards the fulfilment of its vision and mission, EveryChild in India has been supporting and strengthening AHRF to respond to the issues of Arunthiyar children at risk of losing parental care or without parental care in Tamil Nadu. The focus of EveryChild and AHRF has been to respond to the issue of children without parental care.

AHRF and EveryChild, as a part of the situation analysis have identified Arunthiyar children without parental care in Tamil Nadu in the following categories:

- Children without parental care: child bonded laborers; girl children working in textile industries under Sumangali Thittam; child laborers working on brick kiln sites, rope making, construction sites, restaurants, tea-stalls
- Children at risk of losing parental care/ lack of adequate parental care. : children left behind by parents engaged in manual scavenging; children of seasonal or temporarily migrant parents; children of agricultural labourers; school drop outs; HIV/AIDS affected/infected children

AHRF and EveryChild's Research Initiative: 2008-2010

Within the above mentioned categories of Arunthiyar children, few categories were prioritised by AHRF and EveryChild. In 2008, four studies were commissioned by EveryChild through AHRF in order to understand the status of Arundhatiyar children in western Tamil Nadu.

The focus of the present study is to probe into the prevalence of discriminatory practices including caste-based discrimination and exclusion experienced by Arunthathiyars children in schools of rural Tamil Nadu. The main consideration was that even after many decades after independence the situation of Arunthathiyars has not changed even when other Dalits such as Parayars and Pallars have made some progress in the Independent India. This is why 'Arundhatiyars' are called Dalits among Dalits. More significantly the

discriminatory practices faced by the Arundhathiyar children needs immediate attention as it means that another generation of Arundhatiyars are initiated into the world of discrimination in such a way that they think that it may be normal and natural.

When focusing on the school going children, the study probed specifically into the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the nature and forms of discriminations. When doing so, the link to various systems such as the belief system, the occupational system, the *jajmani* system, the educational system, and the public system are also explored upon with the respondents. Since it is a study on the experience of discrimination, the perceptions and responses of the subjects, namely the children themselves, are recorded. These will be further corroborated by other children's responses and adults from the same community. So the research instruments and tools would have to be deployed in such a way as to avoid opinions marching around as data.

In the present study exploring the discrimination and caste based violence aimed at Arunthathiyar children in schools in Coimbatore, Erode, Ramanathapuram, Shivagangai and Tuticorin districts-Tamil Nadu, 666 Arundhathiyar children from the age group of 11 to 14 years were covered. The children were from Coimbatore, Erode, Ramanathapuram, Shivagangai and Tuticorin districts of Tamil Nadu.

Keeping these in mind the study focused on various areas that govern the life spheres of school going children. Cultural, Economic, relational and interactional spheres are few such spheres. When it comes to the thematic areas, the following are considered:

1. Discrimination in seating arrangement in class rooms
2. Discrimination in providing of noon meals
3. Discrimination practiced to pursue Sports and Games
4. Discrimination on Skill development
5. Discrimination in providing Scholarships
6. Constraints to receive community certificate
7. Restriction over Higher Education
8. Restriction to access education loans from Bank
9. Discrimination over management of children in Anganwadis
10. Distance from Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (universalisation of education)

11. Drop-out rate high
12. Practice of early marriage
13. Pronouncing caste name
14. Forcing to do cleaning work in schools
15. Sexual Harassment of girl children

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To find out various forms of discrimination and caste based violence faced by Arunthaiyar children in schools.
- To propose recommendations and prepare an action plan to eliminate the discrimination and caste based violence aimed at Arunthaiyar children in schools.

The key findings are as follows:

Majority of the students' parents (534) were daily wage earners working as coolie in various sectors.

262 children reported being abused and discriminated on the basis of their caste name.

607 children reported cleaning the schools bathrooms.

148 children reported doing the house hold work of their teachers.

228 children reported being sexually harassed in schools.

Almost 50% of children were denied scholarships opportunities.

532 children dropped out of schools mainly as a result of the discrimination and harassment.

Key Recommendations arising out of the study:

Legal and Social Awareness:

- Bonded labour re-survey (2007) to reflect the actual numbers of Arunthaiyar bonded labourers and child bonded labourers.
- Effective implementation of the Bonded labour System (Abolition) Act 1976; Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993.

- Establish Legal advisory forum consisting of Arunthathiyars constituted at District level to bring to the notice of the Government issues relating to violence against Arunthatiyar children- child labour or discrimination and caste based violence
- Increase the Arunthatiyar reservation from 3% to 6% for employment, education.
- Increased awareness on government welfare programmes, schemes for Arunthatiyar children.

Education:

- Special residential schools for Arunthatiyar children - under the Adi Dravadiar welfare department.
- Scholarships for Arunthatiyar children with a special focus on drop-out children for primary and higher education.

Community driven initiatives:

- Design, plan, develop and implement community based model of care and protection for Arunthatiyar children in collaboration with key stakeholders in the district.
- Organizing and reviving District and State level Arunthatiyar Panchayat Presidents' Association; creating awareness in schools and community against violence against Arunthatiyar children; action oriented training to eliminate child labour.
- SHGs should be formed by organizing Arunthatiyar students' Parents and create linkages with financial institutions to avoid obstacles over accessing subsidised loans.
- A sharing meeting for Arunthatiyar students and parents conducted at Block level at least once a month to review issues related to violence against Arunthatiyars and disseminate information about Govt provisions and various welfare schemes of scheduled castes
- Village level task force group initiated to specifically monitor development of Arunthatiyar children registered with the Anganwadis and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan centers at least once a month.
- Explore opportunities for higher education or vocational courses for Arunthatiyar children and same to be conducted in collaboration with organisations in all Arunthatiyar dominated areas.

- Design and employ Community Driven Development (CDD) approach in collaboration with the Panchayats.

Sample Size

S.No	Name of the District	No of Student	%
1	Ramanathapuram	120	18
2	Coimbatore	103	15
3	Erode	269	40
4	Tuticorin	97	15
5	Sivagangai	77	12
	Total	666	100

269 students (40 per cent) from Erode district; 120 students (18 per cent) from Ramanathapuram; 103 numbers of students from Coimbatore; 97 students from Tuticorin- Total of 666 Arunthathiyar students were covered in this study.

Selection and Sampling

The selection of the villages is made on the purposive sampling basis. The criteria for selecting villages are:

1. The indicators from other studies pointing to the prevalence of discrimination in these villages
2. Pre-Knowledge of the issue of discrimination
3. The presence of NGOs and CBOs in the Arundhathiyar dominated areas
4. The availability and familiarity of volunteers in the respective villages

The research techniques

In addition the conventional research tools such as the following are relied

upon:

- Group Interview
- Group Discussions
- Focused Group Discussions
- Biographical method
- PRA techniques

Chapter – I

Introduction

Arunthaiyar in Indian caste system

Arunthaiyar are considered as the lowest in the lowest strata of the Indian Caste System. They are called the 'Dalits among Dalits'. They are most vulnerable to be forced to perform all undignified tasks in the society. However, they are expected to treat the other Dalit caste with respect. The women of this community are expected to perform household chores for other upper caste Dalits.

Atrocities against Arunthaiyars:

Forcing Unclean Activities on Arundhathiyar Students

For all practical purposes and conceptual clarity, the term unclean activities will be used here in this study to include activities that are regarded unclean primarily by Arundhathiyar students, that are performed either as a punishment activity or as traditional service offered to schools or school teacher under economic and caste obligations.

In the villages across Tamil Nadu, the caste logic has pervaded the nook and corners of villagers mind, that 'unclean' is associated with lowliness. Unclean activities have been assigned to the castes occupying the lower rung of social ladder. Thus the onus invariably falls on Arundhathiyar students who by virtue of their economic bondage, through feudal relationships are being forced to undertake these activities in schools, which non-Arundhathiyar students regard and avoid as dirty and polluting.

This is merely a mirror image of what happens at the village community. Even now, in villages in many parts of Tamil Nadu any Arundhathiyar who protest

against or refuse to perform these unclean activities assigned on them will be fined a prohibitive sum by the village Panchayat. And in extreme cases he/she and the whole family may be excommunicated for such refusals.

There are situations where non-Arundhathiyars have used highly repressive measures like brutal attack on Arundhathiyars by forcing them to toe the line, leading to violent clashes and casualties. However in majority of the cases when Arundhathiyars have shown collective protests and boycotts, non-Arundhathiyars have to scale down from their stiffness and upper caste toughness to negotiate with Arundhathiyars by conceding a few grounds in the process, so that Arundhathiyars can resume the unclean activities.

Arundhathiyars are employed at low levels doing cleaning and sanitation work when they migrate to urban areas. It is reported that about 40% of Arundhathiyars are engaged in sanitation related work and 98% of the sanitation activities in Tamil Nadu are performed only by Arundhathiyars.

In the past any Arundhathiyar failing to perform these occupations were levied fine by the Panchayat. Now the fine is levied on Arundhathiyar students who refuse to do these activities in such a veiled manner: No scholarship, failing in exams, etc.

Compelling the Arunthathiyar children to do cleaning work in schools:

This process is initiated at the school level itself. An institution that is supposed to be dominated and governed by secular values is made out to be the zone for seclusion and discrimination of people on the basis of their caste identity. Invariably Arundhathiyar children are forced to perform unclean activities like cleaning the classrooms, corridors and in many cases toilets. For the noon – meal scheme kitchen, the Arundhathiyar children are forced to collect

firewood.

They are made to be errand boys for teachers as they are the ones who must clean the tea glasses and their Tiffin – boxes. Very intriguingly, when it comes to buying tea from the tea shops non-arundhathiyar children are made to go. But when it comes to cleaning, it is the Arundhathiyar children who have to do it.

In all these, the female students of Arundhathiyar community are involved the most. In some schools, such unclean occupations are forced upon the Arundhathiyar students in a very subtle and polished way, by dividing students into different task-based groups. Invariably the Arundhathiyar students are put in the hygiene committee that is responsible for cleaning works sometimes, the hygiene work is thrust upon the students as the basis of color of the ribbon worn by girl students. Again compulsorily, Arundhathiyar students became part of the hygiene committee, since they are not allowed to wear certain other color ribbons, other than the ones suggested by the school teachers. These school teachers always recommended a particular color, which is assigned for the hygiene committee.

In the school itself there are zones into which Arundhathiyar children are not entitled to enter. Computer room, teachers staff room are some of the places prohibited for Arundhathiyar children. Even the toilets are not to be used by Arundhathiyar children, even though they are the ones who are forced to clean them.

The school system as whole is hardly lenient on Arundhathiyar students. Even for the lightest of the disobedience, or non – adherence of rules, the punishment is severest. For example if Arundhathiyar children come late for the school, besides the verbal tirade that humiliates them the most. They are made to

redeem themselves from the mistaken by performing works like cleaning the toilets and other such chores. Arundhathiyar Students are reduced to their bodies

Violence against Arunthathiyars:

The pattern of atrocities committed against Arundhathiyars has a uniformity that holds certain significance. These atrocities are brutal resulting in grievous hurt on Arundhathiyars, in extreme situations in murder. They are aimed at generating dread, scare, and fear psychosis in the minds Arundhathiyars so that Arundhathiyar would be forced remember associatively about challenging the domination of non-Arundhathiyars with subsequent bloodshed and loss of life if necessary. These violent acts are, more often than not, accompanied by a massive destruction of properties and economic resources such as arson, breaking household utensils and setting fire on crops in the lands owned by Arundhathiyars in order to disable the community economically.

The idea behind maintaining the similar pattern of atrocity against Arundhathiyars is to root out Arundhathiyar resistance, socially, psychologically and economically, leading to a collapse of Arundhathiyars' economic order.

As argued later in this report, the higher incidence of atrocity cases is reported from those situations and context where Arundhathiyars have challenged non-Arundhathiyars domination in common spheres such as temple worship, temple festival use and denial of traditional services and labour etc.

The higher incidence of atrocities are also related to another factor, namely increasing politicization of Arundhathiyars, particularly the Parayars and Pallars among them. While the politicization coupled with corporatisation of

caste identity (Arundhathiyar identity cutting across all Arundhathiyar castes still remains underachieved) has increased the situations of confrontations with non-Arundhathiyars, the higher degree of politicization has also resulted in the visibilisation and reporting of incidence of humiliations and discrimination faced by Arunthathiyars, otherwise ignored and accepted as normal.

- ◆ In almost all the villages except Kanyakumari, Arundhathiyars are bonded to non-Arundhathiyars for having taken loan from the latter. While all the Arundhathiyars in these selected villages may not be trapped into this veiled bondage, each village has few families, at least, living in such conditions of continued bondage with non-Arundhathiyar landlords or moneylenders. They are K.K. Nagar (Nilgiri Dt), Jagirnaikenpalayam (Coimbatore Dt), Dasarahalli (Dharmapuri Dt) and Machampattu (North Arcot)
- ◆ In almost all the villages there are instances of atrocity committed on Arundhathiyars within the past ten years with about 25% of the incidents having happened in the last one-year period.
- ◆ Arundhathiyars participation in urban Industrial economy and the consequent freedom from the dependency on non-Arundhathiyar landlords have triggered off violent reprisals from non-Arundhathiyars.
- ◆ The intense political consciousness and organized movements and the overall politicization of Arundhathiyars are, by and large, responsible for bloody retaliations from non-Arundhathiyars on the one hand and subsequent reporting of the same to public, as Arundhathiyars are beginning to increasingly recognize the injustice in inter-caste social transactions.
- ◆ In about 80% of the cases the atrocities on Arundhathiyars have risen from individual-directed to group-directed. This is largely due to

Arundhathiyars' refusal to accept an act of aggression on a single Arundhathiyar as an individual issue.

- ◆ Increasing urbanisation and penetration of media have awakened Arundhathiyars to recognize the abnormality of their respective rural social order and subsequent questioning of the same.
- ◆ In the Southern Districts of Tamil Nadu, where land reforms were implemented successfully and seriously, the atrocities committed on Arundhathiyars were very high, as the Arundhathiyar tenant cultivators and Arundhathiyar peasants have demolished the economic supremacy of non-Arundhathiyars cannot accept the fact that they are losing hold.
- ◆ Of all the cases of atrocities committed on Arundhathiyars, about half of them have occurred in Traditional / Cultural spheres, like Temples, drum beating, bull fight.
- ◆ In western Tamil Nadu, the ratio between occurrence of atrocities and reporting is 10: 3, as Arundhathiyars are bound by economic ties with non-Arundhathiyars on the one hand and they accept their subservience on the other.
- ◆ Taking recourse to legal provisions against discrimination is on the increase though a common Arundhathiyar person does not know about it even today.
- ◆ In those villages where there is the presence of Arundhathiyar movements and Human Rights NGOs there is considerable awareness about legal provisions and PCR Act 1995, PAR 1989 Act. However it does not apply to the whole population of Arundhathiyars in these villages, but only to one or two youth who have been exposed to these awareness campaigns and workshops.
- ◆ The general Arundhathiyar public in selected Villages is absolutely

unaware of the legal provisions available against Untouchability.

- ◆ However in those Villages where Arundhathiyars have experienced brutal atrocities leading to their brushing against law enforcing agencies and judicial system, a reasonable section of men have knowledge about PAR and PCR acts.
- ◆ However Arundhathiyar women's awareness about these legal provisions ranges from abysmally low to absolutely nil.
- ◆ Many Arundhathiyars are terribly scared of Police even in those villages where Police excess has not been recorded before. In those villages where Police excesses have been recorded thing become only worse.
- ◆ Police respond more swiftly on non-Arundhathiyars complaints rather than Arundhathiyars seeking their interventions.
- ◆ Police failing to register Arundhathiyars complaints under PCR and PAR acts even when the charges merit such registration. Many a times Arundhathiyars complain of Police registering even the gravest of Untouchability related crimes under mild sections so as to enable non-Arundhathiyars to go off the look.
- ◆ Police force showing respect and politeness to non-Arundhathiyar landlords and aggression and filthy language to Arundhathiyars
- ◆ In at least five cases Arundhathiyars have contested in the recent Panchayat elections that are not reserved constituencies just to symbolically express their dissent at non-Arundhathiyars electing a non- Arundhathiyar candidate unopposed.
- ◆ There are many villages, where there is a striking absence of "hinge persons" (Hinge persons are those who are educated, self-conscious of their connection between traditions of the Community and modern possibilities, operating between rural and urban contexts,

though stationed in rural areas) who can bring the energies of modern laws (institutions to traditional Arundhathiyar communities. This is majorly due to absence of educated among Arundhathiyars on the one hand and educated Arundhathiyars permissibly leaving the villages for greener pastures in urban areas on the other.

- ◆ This leaves Arundhathiyars to depend on the odd Arundhathiyar School Teacher or NGO personnel to fall back upon in time of crisis.
- ◆ In many villages it is rare to come across native Arundhathiyar Villages to write decent complaint to Police, as the capable ones have migrated out.
- ◆ The fears for Police force have compelled Arundhathiyars to seek redressal in Panchayat at the village level that allegedly favours non-Arundhathiyars only.
- ◆ Lack of Urban connection, and friendship outside the next work of Arundhathiyar Villages, are cited as reasons for Arundhathiyars not knowing a possible world where Arundhathiyars are better off and live in some equality.
- ◆ Many Arundhathiyar boys and young men have repeatedly affirmed the need to be part of an Arundhathiyar Political party or Arundhathiyar movement to guard against Police excess or non-Arundhathiyar aggression.
- ◆ The Northern region of Tamil Nadu where there is a widespread involvement of Arundhathiyar movements in fighting for Arundhathiyar cause, Arundhathiyar youths are aware of the need to part of a movement and also the importance of building a corporate identity for Arundhathiyars across Tamil Nadu. Many youths are actually part of the Arundhathiyar movements or forums.
- ◆ In Northern and Southern regions now complaints against

atrocities are filed under the banner of Arundhathiyar movements, rather than by affected individual complainants.

- ◆ Arundhathiyars feel that when charges are filed under the banner of movements, Police cannot discourage or prevent them from registering them under mild acts, but only under PCA or PAR acts only if the charges merit it.
- ◆ The worst affected among Arundhathiyars are Arundhathiyars as they remain the least organized under any political party or movement. The awareness among Arundhathiyars is the lowest among all Arundhathiyar castes.
- ◆ Parayars and Pallars have organized themselves under the banner of Political parties and social-cultural movements..

Cost – reduction or caste-exploitation?

In many schools, it was found that whenever there are no salaried workers for doing cleaning work, the school is content to use Arundhathiyar children to perform these activities, such as cleaning the overhead tank, water tank, toilets and school – premises, play grounds etc. In one school they have not even tried sincerely to fill-up the vacancy for a post of cleaning workers. Few others schools have totally dispensed with the cleaning workers, since such jobs are forced upon Arundhathiyar children. Even though such activities are related upon each student, eventually each other student assigned this task is an Arundhathiyar.

In some cases, even when such workers are available, he / she delegate the work to Arundhathiyar children. That is why some students reported that they would have to carry the registers, circulars from one class to another, even which there is a peon to do the job.

Carrying the burden of family and communities:-

The worst experience of being a member of oppressed community is to carry the burden of identity of not just oneself, but the entire family or community.

In the Arundhathiyar students case too, it is evident that very often they are not just seen as themselves, but as symbols of the community or family. The punishment given to the student is also the punishment given to the family or even community. In one instance in the study, it was found that for the task performed by the father of the Arundhathiyar boy, the student was humiliated, because the teacher thought that his father did not do the cleaning job well in the teacher's house. The teacher said that "the way you study is like your father's work. Both of you do it very badly".

In another instance, the student had to do the toilet cleaning work, because his father, who is the person under contract to do the cleaning work, could not report to work due to ill-health. For his father's absence, the son was punished by forcing him to become the substitute.

Panchayat Office

The fact that the Panchayat office is located in non-Arundhathiyar locality in all the villages except one, which is an all-Arundhathiyar village, means it remains out of reach for Arundhathiyars to lay any upon it. Even in those few rare cases where Arundhathiyars do enjoy limited privileges, they come more as concessions to Arundhathiyars than as what is rightfully available to them.

This is further compounded by the fact that in many villages, not only the Panchayat office is located far away from Arundhathiyar colonies, but also the Arundhathiyar colonies remain outside the field of vision of Panchayat. This is summed up gravely by the statement often uttered by non-Arundhathiyar

Panchayat leader who says as reported by Arundhathiyars in the study village, "I occupy the chair of Panchayat President purely on account of my caste members supporting my candidature, not the least due to Arundhathiyars voting for me. My primary loyalty goes to my caste members and the ilk. I care the least for others - whether they have voted for me or not. For me their support is immaterial therefore they are immaterial to me too". This is very devastating an opinion as much as it is cold bloodedly true.

As much as Panchayat remains a non-Arundhathiyar entity for Arundhathiyars, the village itself is a non-Arundhathiyar property for non-Arundhathiyars as they treat Arundhathiyars presence at best as peripheral and at worst an appendage. It is the perceptual constitution of Panchayat to have Arundhathiyars often stand outside. This becomes sadly complete as Arundhathiyars occupy the fringes of the villages geographically.

The situation is worse in the Arundhathiyar minority villages, where Arundhathiyars get the best of Panchayat initiated and implemented schemes *the last*, if ever they get them, and get it in the worst form. Ironically, this is against the backdrop that suggests that the overall situation is better in Tamil Nadu than in other States.

For the non-Arundhathiyar Panchayat office located conveniently in non-Arundhathiyar streets, the affairs of the Panchayat can be carried out without the participation of the Arundhathiyars as Arundhathiyars in some villages have reported. Arundhathiyars are hardly called upon to attend the Panchayat meetings which are announced by the message deliverer (interestingly an Arundhathiyar in majority of the cases) who drums the message across the village. Arundhathiyar colonies are not necessarily included in his itinerary.

In the Arundhathiyar majority villages, the situation is not dissimilar. If anything, it produces more situations to painfully remind Arundhathiyars of their powerlessness, marginalized social standing and 'object hood' (opposite 'subject hood' that suggests agency). They say they would be better off minus this role that brings them into contact with situation of powerlessness.

Many Arundhathiyars have confessed that their unwillingness to take part in the Panchayat proceedings-much less in its decision making process-is to avoid getting in contact with the harsh reality that only returns to them experiences of powerlessness and humiliation. This is applicable to many State services that Arundhathiyars avail with much reluctance as the process to avail them is bitter-filled with humiliation, relative powerlessness.

Arundhathiyar youth, who have tasted equality in urban settings that ensures anonymity, show higher degree of hesitation to relate to local level State Service providing institutions for the same reasons cited above. But the situation where Arundhathiyar youth are an organized force, there is renewed rigour with which to take on State services irrespective of the negative consequences that they are fraught with. Yet they are rare except in Northern Tamil Nadu where higher rate of politisation of Arundhathiyar youth has occurred.

The results are:

- Arundhathiyars hesitate to enter Panchayat office in majority of the villages, fearing negative repercussions from non-Arundhathiyars.
- Even when Arundhathiyars enter, they are not permitted to sit down on the chairs provided.
- Arundhathiyar Panchayat presidents too often stand up at seeing non-Arundhathiyar members and only on getting their permission they get

seated.

If at all there are any Arundhathiyar candidate has been elected as Panchayat President, that candidate is a candidate by 'consensus', meaning, he was chosen and nearly anointed to be the Panchayat President for his pliable character vis-à-vis non-Arundhathiyar demands. Therefore it is mandated upon Arundhathiyars to continually demonstrate their differences and loyalty to non-Arundhathiyars. One Panchayat President who is an Arundhathiyar told us that she would stand up on the dais whereas the Vice President who is a non-Arundhathiyar would be seated. If the Vice-President was in a good mood he would permit the Panchayat President to be seated besides him. She said that she has stood through many proceedings and functions in her short tenure so far.

A cursory look at the relationship between villages having Arundhathiyar Panchayat Presidents and degree of caste based discrimination against Arundhathiyars suggest, that there is no marked difference or decrease in Arundhathiyars' experiencing discrimination in comparison to those villages where non- Arundhathiyars are Presidents. The problem remains the same for Arundhathiyars, irrespective of President ship vested in the hands of Arundhathiyars or not.

No additional accruing of benefits, not even timely availability of services, or proper delivery of services legitimately reserved for Arundhathiyars, when Arundhathiyar is the President.

Curiously, in the Arundhathiyar constituency the participation of non-Arundhathiyars is limited to anointing or nominating a convenient and deferring Arundhathiyar candidate. Unless there is a competition among non-Arundhathiyars themselves in campaigning for their own chosen Arundhathiyar candidates, the political participation of non-Arundhathiyars in

arriving in the polling booths to vote is abysmally low. Despite this awareness that their victory owes nothing to non-Arundhathiyars voting for them, Arundhathiyars have to remain loyal and subservient to non-Arundhathiyars. Contrast this with the situation cited in the beginning of this section wherein the situation was described of non- Arundhathiyar Panchayat President ignoring the Arundhathiyar colony as he claims to have won the election with the support of his own fellow caste members and not with the support of Arundhathiyars.

Specific findings

1. Arundhathiyars are the worst affected, as they are never permitted to sit in the Panchayat offices. Their concerns are always addressed last. They hesitate to go into the Panchayat office.
2. Arundhathiyars cannot sit in front of non Arundhathiyars.
3. Even though there is an Arundhathiyar President, there is still no political freedom. Non-Arundhathiyar political participation is low.
4. Arundhathiyars hesitation to enter the Panchayat office is quite widespread
5. Non-Arundhathiyar President often claim that they have won without the support of Arundhathiyars, so they ignore Arundhathiyar concerns.
6. In some cases even when permitted, Arundhathiyars do not want to sit in the Chair provided in the Panchayat offices.
7. Arundhathiyars are not necessarily invited to take part in *gram sabha* meetings organized by Panchayat members
8. Even the Arundhathiyar Panchayat Presidents are not permitted to sit in front of non-Arundhathiyars even if that person is lower in authority.
9. In the meeting where Arundhathiyars Vice Presidents have to sit along with non Arundhathiyar Presidents, the Arundhathiyar Vice Presidents sit along with non Arundhathiyars only after non-

- Arundhathiyars permit them to do so.
10. Arundhathiyar Ward members too are not permitted to sit along with non- Arundhathiyar members in Panchayat meetings. This applies to as many Panchayat office located in Arundhathiyar areas.
 11. In the case of Arundhathiyar Presidents being women, their positions get only worse. Non-Arundhathiyar Ward members control them.

VILLAGE ROADS

The most excruciating experience of being an Arundhathiyar student in the schools dominated by non-Arundhathiyars, is the way caste system render Arundhathiyars students to be self-aware and self-conscious individuals at all times, and for the worse. Their self-awareness is more about their 'lesser mortal' character to the extent of treating them as natural outcomes of being Arundhathiyars. Nowhere do these become more visible than in the controlled body language that Arundhathiyars students have to adopt and the self-consciousness with which they have to tread the sociographical space. We could observe the limited range of physical postures within which Arundhathiyars students have to operate in the presence of a non-Arundhathiyars. Arundhathiyars students are not supposed to make eye contact with upper caste teachers, point fingers at them, wave their hands around, speak loud, laugh in guffaws, stand with their back straight, walk at a leisurely pace, stand at a close distance etc. The students acknowledge that they could not show their open defiance against these restraints. They hint at those sporadic moments of resistance often ending in severe punishment, such as being failed in the exams, chasing them away from the schools, forcing them to kneel down in the open, compelling them to bring their parents etc. The young Arundhathiyars related the stories of Arundhathiyars incurring the wrath of non-Arundhathiyars due to acts of defiance, though more out of perceptions of upper caste than the truth. In one such incidence a middle-aged

man was tied to a pole for two days as he dared to wear clean and starched dhotis. He was let off only after the whole community of Arundhathiyars tendered a collective apology.

1. Though free to go, Arundhathiyars do not roam unnecessarily as they live in different areas.
2. Old generation is denied entry into village roads.
3. Arundhathiyars do not go via Non-Arundhathiyars streets unnecessarily.
4. Though free to ride bicycles, Arundhathiyars opt to walk through Non- Arundhathiyars streets.
5. Arundhathiyars students dismount a cycle if they enter upper caste streets or meet upper caste elders.
6. Arundhathiyars have to be careful not to dash into Non-Arundhathiyar children or adults.
7. Arundhathiyar students are called by nicknames if they are seen walking through Non- Arundhathiyars streets.
8. Although young educated Arundhathiyars are beginning to wear trousers and ironed clothes, they are often viewed derisively by non-Arundhathiyars.
9. An Arundhathiyar student shared about the need to look disheveled and ill dressed in the presence of upper caste non-Arundhathiyars. He shared that as a school student when he was staying in the hostel, he used to come to the village wearing neatly ironed pant and shirt. However before entering in to the village he would change to wrinkled or less bright clothes behind the bushes in order that he may look non-threatening to the non- Arundhathiyars. In the same way on his return trip to hostel the same steps would be reversed. He said that he used to carry "a harijan (dalit) dress" in his bag on his homecoming trips.
10. When walking on the public roads, waiting at the bus stop and

travelling in a bus an Arundhathiyar student has to constantly be self-aware of his 'lowliness' and that he should not offend the sensibilities and tread on the sentiments of upper caste non- Arundhathiyars.

11. If an Arunthathiyar happened to walk in the paddy fields he/she should not trample on fields even accidentally for it would mean that the field is polluted beyond redemption.
12. When an upper caste person came from the opposite direction, the Arunthathiyar has to step down from the mound and stand carefully between the mound and the growing rice crops in the field.
13. In the public road also the Arunthathiyars have to walk only along the edges of the road, not in the middle. If they have to ride their own vehicles, they have to ride at the edge of the road if they see upper caste members are walking down or riding. During bus journey they have to stand and offer seats to non- Arundhathiyars even if they arrived last into the bus. For these Arundhathiyars the streets are meant only for passing through and not as places to hang around.

STATE SERVICES AND AMENITIES

The Arundhathiyar village being away from the main village is not favored by government for implementing development programmes and access to amenities. The upper castes retain and usurp all the amenities that should go otherwise to Arundhathiyars.

General tendencies:

1. Arundhathiyars students are worse-off in getting the state services.
2. Arundhathiyars students are at the mercy of non-Arundhathiyars in getting the services and amenities allotted to them
3. Arundhathiyars in general and Arundhathiyar students in particular perceive the State and its machineries as purely non-

- Arundhathiyar agencies. This applies particularly to Police Station, Village Panchayat Offices, Electricity Board, Rural and Urban bureaucratic arms like Collectors office, Thasildar Office, etc as well as banks. The Arundhathiyars students feel:
- i. It is controlled by non-Arundhathiyars.
 - ii. It favours non-Arundhathiyars.
 - iii. They are unwelcome in these places.
 - iv. Arundhathiyar students could not recall a single incident where something happened in these institutions strengthening their morale.
4. Arundhathiyars students view NGO's in high regard. It has created awareness in them, to act conscientiously and avowedly pro-Arundhathiyar.
 5. It is only after non-Arundhathiyar students feel fully served, such as noon- meals, Arundhathiyars get the amenities and services allotted.
 6. Even in Arundhathiyar leading Panchayat, services are not forthcoming, as Arundhathiyar Presidents operate under severe pressure from non- Arundhathiyars who may even be clerks in the Panchayat office.
 7. The best, long-lasting, costly services like cement road, sodium vapor lamp, colour TV etc. go to non-Arundhathiyars first, and later, to Arundhathiyars. Such facilities are useful for better school performance, entertainment and education.
 8. Even when there is provision for access to public utilities, their maintenance is not there. Thus there are street lamps but not working, Cement road full of pot holes Taps no water, dried OH Tanks, TV rooms with TV occupied by non-Arundhathiyar sarpanch houses
 9. In most cases of service being provided, come at a price. Arundhathiyars had to pay a Prohibitive sum as bribe for getting them, including

- getting the community certificates and scholarships.
10. The non-Arundhathiyar character of the services and amenities arise largely from their location in non-Arundhathiyar areas. This applies in large cases to Post office, PDS shops, Panchayat office, Library, Health Centre, and Schools.
 11. In few cases where there are separate services available for Arundhathiyars and Non-Arundhathiyars, like TV room, Water sources (OH Tanks), Arundhathiyars feel that it was to prevent Arundhathiyars from entering into non-Arundhathiyar Zones. However Arundhathiyars are relieved to have such separate services available to them.
 12. Anganwadi workers are often cajoled by non-Arundhathiyars so they do not visit Arundhathiyar colonies to bring the children and to drop them.
 13. In all the services meant to serve Arundhathiyars a non-Arundhathiyar's presence cancels out its positive impact, like noon-meal scheme and Anganwadis.
 14. Non-Arundhathiyars take away most of the benefits meant for poor people meaning mostly Arundhathiyars, through false entering of Data. There are several Villages where poor Arundhathiyars have been identified as APL whereas some rich non-Arundhathiyars as BPL people in many cases the Arundhathiyars boys and girls recall that it is another educated Arundhathiyar who took them to enroll in Schools and not their Parents. The Date of Birth registered in School documents for Arundhathiyars are simply a convenient figure pulled out of air by those educated Arundhathiyar companion, as even parents do not exactly recall the original birth dates of their Children.
 15. Arundhathiyars engagement with State machineries is more often than not accompanied by a feeling of anxiety, humiliation, powerlessness, outright rejection and standing at the fringe of society.

16. Arundhathiyars are not best served by State agencies as the control is in the hands of non-Arundhathiyars. For example Water Supply, TV Room, Sports wares etc. (Siruvani).
17. Mere provision is not sufficient to ensure that State services are available to Arundhathiyars. Discrimination exists in the forms of:
 - a. Timing.
 - b. Duration of availability.
 - c. Control
 - d. Quality.
 - e. Location (Low Land, Accessibility)
 - f. Distance
 - g. Size (Colony houses are very small).
18. Among Arundhathiyars the worst affected were traditionally cobblers.
19. The poorest among Arundhathiyars are severely affected and more distanced from accessing State services.
20. Pallars are better served among Dalits.
21. The allotments of Group houses to Arundhathiyars under various schemes have not covered all eligible Arundhathiyars, for various reasons cited in the section on general tendencies. The coverage is 60% in the region with remaining 40% living in lands not entitled yet.
22. The living conditions are so appalling with each one room house holding minimum three families as the houses allotted in 1987 have families that grew from single occupancy to many members.
23. As the houses are very small Arundhathiyar children are found sleeping in public places like Temples, Elevated Platforms under tree, Community Hall if available, Schools etc.
24. The pathways providing accessibility to Arundhathiyar colony houses are in bad shape as the land acquired to build colonies is surrounded by non-

Arundhathiyar lands who fence it and prevent roads from being laid.

25. The health services are not easily accessible for Arundhathiyars as Arundhathiyars put it "For non-Arundhathiyars the services come to their door steps, for Arundhathiyars we have to go to its door step." This holds true for services of health service Personnel, who are often stationed in one non-Arundhathiyar place and make every body comes to that place, instead of making home visits.

INTER-CASTE RELATIONSHIP IN VILLAGES

In the study villages it could be found that the inter caste relationship is governed by age old traditions of inequality and hierarchy, particularly in the one-to-one interaction in private domains, namely family, homes and inter-dining. Except in few villages, all other villages under the study, report the strict prohibition on Arundhathiyars entering the non-Arundhathiyar houses as well as inter-dining between Arundhathiyars and non-Arundhathiyars. This suggests that when it comes to inter-personal transactions involving Arundhathiyars and non- Arundhathiyars, the individuals are governed by age-old traditions and caste perceptions. Sadly, there are reports in the study which state the non-Arundhathiyars willingness to enter into an *equal relationship* with other Dalits such as Pallars and to some extent with Parayars in public life such as schools and offices, but unwillingness to observe the same with Arundhathiyars. This suggests the difficult situation Arundhathiyars live in.

Similarly in situations involving one-to-one relationship between Arundhathiyars and non-Arundhathiyars, Arundhathiyars are still compelled to choose a deferential body language and words. In all the villages, Arundhathiyars acknowledge the compulsion to observe obedience and demonstrate reverence to non Arundhathiyars, when they meet him/her on

one-to-one or face-to-face basis. However as much as it is acknowledged by Arundhathiyars, it is also less observed, as Arundhathiyars invent new ways to avoid entering into such one-to-one transactions.

Even on the part of Arundhathiyars, there is a sound recognition of the fact that the discrimination, evinced and practiced by non-Arundhathiyars in the realm of their private lives, does not prove to be as demeaning and demoralizing as that in the public sphere in which Arundhathiyars have stakes. They view this sphere to be the last bastion of casteism to wage a war against, even as they understand that the ideology governing this sphere is the product of the logic that influences the public sphere and common sphere. Once casteism is eliminated in the latter, in the former it will loosen.

This is the reason why no campaign has been organized against Arundhathiyars being denied entry into non-Arundhathiyar houses. There were "temple entry" movements but not "Non-Arundhathiyar Home entry movements."

The degree and extent of denial and violations practiced against Arundhathiyar is second highest in group life, as the sway of traditional caste relationship still remain strong here. Arundhathiyar participation in temple worship, temple festivals, and other common ceremonies is still limited as non-Arundhathiyars deny them an equal space. Denial and violations are still practiced in matters of persisting traditional occupation imposed on Arundhathiyars on the one hand and denying the benefit of same traditional services to Arundhathiyars on the other. Also high in the list are denial of barber service and washing services to Arundhathiyars, denying participation to Arundhathiyars in non-Arundhathiyar marriages and other ceremonies and prohibiting Arundhathiyars from participating in market relations at par with non-Arundhathiyars.

Group and collective life domain still have not loosened up enough to rid itself of casteism and accommodate the participation of Arundhathiyars in full steam. Being coextensive to the cultural spheres, group life domain still remains bound by the cultural notions regarding purity and pollution. By strictly maintaining and preserving the symbolic order enveloped by a cultural universe that legitimizes the domination of non-Arundhathiyars over Arundhathiyars, non-Arundhathiyars are reestablishing hierarchy that keeps non-Arundhathiyar above Arundhathiyars.

Extreme amount of intolerance is demonstrated by non-Arundhathiyars, when Arundhathiyars claim to re-structure the symbolic order on equal terms. Violent retributions from non-Arundhathiyars are common, not so much when Arundhathiyar claim equal share in material prosperity and economic resources, but when Arundhathiyars stake their claims in the cultural resources, privileges and honor. This seriously threaten to upset the equilibrium of the symbolic order constructed so much in favour of non-Arundhathiyars superiority over Arundhathiyars.

1. Entering into non-Arundhathiyar house stands out as the most widely practiced discrimination.
2. In almost cases it seems to be a voluntary action on the part of Arundhathiyars not desire to enter the houses of non-Arundhathiyar houses as a considerable number of Arundhathiyars recall incidents of being chased away, scolded, humiliated for having mistakenly, or deliberately entering non-Arundhathiyar houses.
3. Even now in 80% of the selected villages Arundhathiyars are permitted entry only up to the backyard of the non-Arundhathiyar houses.
4. In majority of the villages, Arundhathiyars are deliberately discouraged

from entering into non-Arundhathiyar house, by offering only those chores performed outside the house, in the backyard.

5. In almost all the villages, Arundhathiyars are fed only outside the house structure in verandas, backyard, in cowsheds.
6. In few villages, Arundhathiyars are not even permitted to enter the non-Arundhathiyar streets through the main street, they can only enter via the back street.
7. Most of the rich non-Arundhathiyars houses are architecturally designed in such a manner that Arundhathiyars can enter and exit via separate pathways; there is also a separate place in the backyard for feeding them after they finish the household chores demanded of them.
8. In few villages, even today, Arundhathiyars have to remove their chappals or carry them as they go near the non-Arundhathiyars house.
9. Whereas in majority of the houses non-Arundhathiyars enter Arundhathiyar houses, as and when desired by non-Arundhathiyars.
10. The non-Arundhathiyar youths who are otherwise classmates to Arundhathiyars or co-workers in urban areas prohibit Arundhathiyars from entering their houses and themselves come outside their houses for conversation. In those extreme circumstances where the non-Arundhathiyars have to eat with Arundhathiyars, the non-Arundhathiyars boys come out and join Arundhathiyars in the veranda to eat.

Arundhathiyar women, when going for cow-shed cleaning or other domestic chores, many of them carry their vessels to eat their food offered to them or they keep a separate vessel in the non-Arundhathiyar houses where they go for regular work. The vessels are often old and used.

Objectives of the study:

1. To understand the socio-economic-political background of Arundhathiyars in TamilNadu.
2. To identify and understand the various forms of discrimination and caste based violence aimed at Arunthathiyar children in schools.
3. To prepare the recommendations and suggest an action plan to eliminate the discrimination and caste based violence in schools.

Sample Size

S.No	Name of the District	No. of Students	%
1	Ramanathapuram	120	18
2	Coimbatore	103	15
3	Erode	269	40
4	Tuticorin	97	15
5	Sivagangai	77	12
	Total	666	100

The above table is the description of the distribution of the students' district wise/village wise. It is also apparent that the total number of samples taken for each district-269 students (40 per cent) from Erode district; 120 students (18 per cent) from Ramanathapuram district; 103 students from Coimbatore; 97 students are from Tuticorin district. A total of 666 Arunthathiyar students are covered in this study.

Selection and Sampling

The selection of the villages is made on the purposive sampling basis. The criteria for selecting villages are:

- The indicators from other studies pointing to the prevalence of

discrimination in these villages.

- Pre-Knowledge of the issue of discrimination.
- The presence of NGOs and CBOs that are part of the Arundhathiyar Federation.
- The availability and familiarity of volunteers in the respective villages.

In some situations, the village identified by the Arundhathiyar movement or by a reputed NGO working for the Arundhathiyars cause, will be chosen in its place, provided it meets the population criterion to some extent. Same can be said of villages where Arundhathiyar population has totally migrated leaving only few families behind. The advice and suggestion of the Arundhathiyar activists and Arundhathiyar NGOs were needed for finding a replacement village. This not only helped the study to win legitimacy from the perception of the Arundhathiyar activists and NGOs but also instilled in them a sense of ownership of this study. They became the potential allies in implementing the action plan to be formulated on the basis of conclusions arrived at in this study, in future.

Another strategy by which legitimacy for the study was achieved and easy access was gained to the selected villages was, by seeking the cooperation of Arundhathiyar movements, Arundhathiyar CBOs, NGOs working for the Arundhathiyar cause, or Arundhathiyar activists and academics, by taking their help in facilitating smooth data collection. It is because of the initial introduction which they provided that the data collection in the villages was made possible.

Recruitment and Training of Research investigators

Since this study aspires to make significant departures in matters of choice of research tools and techniques on the one hand and the aspect of the reality it

wishes to look into, it becomes important that researchers that possessed sensitivity and had previous experience of having witnessed caste-based discrimination were selected. Hence, it was preferred to involve Arundhathiyar investigators who were not distant from the target group's experiences in the select villages. Moreover even strategically, the study at the village level was outsourced to the Arundhathiyar CBOs or NGOs, so that they develop a sense of ownership to this study. This naturally resulted in the involvement of Arundhathiyar researchers.

This is very much in keeping with the community researcher method proposed by alternative social research programmes. More often than not, the NGO or CBO volunteers who became researchers are none other than the very people who are also the subjects of the study on Arundhathiyars. It is possible for them to retrospectively reconstruct their childhood experiences of discrimination and exclusion. This way, the 'subjects' of the research have become "co-researchers" and 'researchers' become 'subjects' for a variety of reasons as indicated below:

- In most of the orthodox quantitative research exercises, it is the intentions of the researcher team that dominate the research agenda, rather than the 'intentions' of the co-researchers. Given the options, the co-researchers would have shared what makes immediate sense and what holds deep relevance to their lives, rather than merely respond to that of researcher. In this research, a non-conflictual interplay of intentions of researchers and co-researchers has come into effect.

To achieve this, the research exercise which generates an enabling human/social process, rather than that which limits itself to asking right questions is designed. Essentially, social research is not asking right

questions but is allowing right processes to emerge

- In much of the conventional research projects, the researchers expect deeply- felt and authentic answers and information from the co-researchers, even while the researchers aspire to remain authentic only to their research design and its structure, rather than to the co-researchers. In other words, while the researchers want the co-researchers to speak from their heart, the researchers themselves remain cerebral as they are remembering sequences and structured answers.

In a radical understanding of research on Arundhathiyar children, a creative and authentic union of heart-to-heart dialogues and conversations is permitted, by turning the researchers into feeling and acting persons rather than as thinking persons only. Foundationally, social research cannot be subject-object interaction, but a subject-to-subject dialogue.

The outcome of such process is that not only the co-researchers end up undergoing changes—changes of expectations, or self-awareness, but also the researchers, who give up the impossible objectivity for the sake of critical subjectivity. Quite apart from the mutual transformation that a qualitatively oriented social research causes in the primary actors of social research, such research need also to presume and eventually lead to a broader social change through expression of responsibility and solidarity between the researchers and co-researchers. It is in this sense, the social research as an action research is visualized.

The community researchers are characterized by their consistency of involvement across the length of study and the subsequent programmatic

interventions. The community researchers also operate along shared-conscience basis. If the researchers are primarily triggered by the passion to touch the lives of the Arundhathiyar people positively, such passion must be passed on to and generated in the community researchers too. This produces a heightened commitment and responsibility. It also creates moral accountability to each other. It goes without saying that there is no limit of the membership in this community of researchers who can agree to share the conscience of the others who are already citizens of the community.

Along with this goes the other noble intention of taking this study as a process to conscientise few Arundhathiyar youth transforming them into leaders who would take up Arundhathiyar cause in future, if this happens then this study can be declared a grand success. This is one more reason why it wished to persist with Arundhathiyar investigators throughout.

In accordance with this intention this study had taken the services of 5 investigators staying with the study from its inception to end. However the gender balance of the investigators team is tilted heavily in favour of male as only as few female investigators joined the team.

These investigators were given intensive two-day training off the field and continuous on-field training for application of quantitative and qualitative research tools. The training programme was aimed at instilling what can be called embodying the questions skill.

Care has been taken to embody the queries in the feeling, living human persons and feel them in the same way co-researchers themselves are experiencing the agony, joy and anguish of issues explored. In the same manner, evolve enquiries in the way the co-researchers may have evolved and pieced themselves together in their real lives.

This necessitates all the research questions, have to be internalized in such a manner that they haunt the heart/mind of the researcher. Internalization has to happen in the form of imaginatively living and feeling the questions along with co-researchers. This cannot happen if the living universes of the researchers and co-researchers are thought to remain separated and irreconcilable. Put differently, the researchers have to carry these questions in the heart and ask them in the manner in which one Arundhathiyar would ask the other -- not so much in the manner of getting answers but also collectively searching for them. It is here research turns into an illuminating humanist exercises, leadings both the researcher and co-researcher to a position of critical-self-awareness or critical subjectivity.

Research tools and Techniques:

The proclaimed purpose of the study is not only to empirically study the prevalence of the practice of discrimination and exclusion, but also to record in Arundhathiyars' own voice, the inner meaning and psychological interiority of Arundhathiyars having to lead the life of subjugated people, with a longest history of discrimination practiced against them.

The study therefore aspires to make a striking departure from the quantitatively inclined studies of the practice of caste-based discrimination and exclusion. This it wishes to accomplish by entering into the psychic interiority of Arundhathiyars children as they experience a sense of disorganization of self if subject to humiliations and rejection, as they construct a moral and emotional universe for themselves to inhabit despite all the odds staked against them by the society, as they evolve creative strategies and build life skills and capacities on their own in themselves to cope with the soul-destroying world they reside in.

In all these, the Arundhathiyars children's idioms, categories, and linguistic tools will be given priority, as it is a people's report on the status of caste-based discrimination and exclusion.

This study relies heavily upon the application of both quantitative and qualitative research tools as well as the engagement with the field reality on a continuous and sustained basis.

Therefore this study would be ethnographic, through personal observation. The supplementary methodologies would be semi-structured interviews, focused group discussions, participatory rural appraisal tools etc. The findings would also be substantiated by few case studies.

The study will be carried out by one researcher per village, in close association with a local Arundhathiyar contact person. The researcher would visit the village for many sessions of interviews and discussions. The information will be collected through (a) personal observation; (b) Interview with key informants and (c) focus group discussion.

The research techniques used are:

In addition to these conventional research tools such as

- Group Interview
- Group Discussions
- Focused Group Discussions
- Biographical method
- PRA techniques

Many alternative and process-oriented research tools have been deployed to serve the purposes of rapport building, action research and experience capture. They are as following:

1. Observations: Naturalistic observation is an act of non-intrusive observation of people in their naturalist everyday settings. Here the people operate in their own time and space without having to comply with the time-space requirements of the researcher. Many of the questions conventionally included in interview schedules were answered through observations-for that the researchers have to spend more time in the field.

However observations about the interiors of lives and living spaces will have to result from/after strong trust-building relationship. Particularly in the context of our present research on Arundhathiyar children, details relating to their food habits, where they purchase their food, where they bathe, the belongings etc can be collected through observation.

2. Conversation: Establishing conversation may seem easy, but more often than not, one notices that even the most sensitive of the researchers ending up interviewing the participants than conversing with them. This is because: Conversation presupposed equality of positions - Conversation entails listening -Conversation presumes that participant can contribute to the self-awareness of the researcher.

Though conversations may be an open-ended process of mutual knowing, there is space for in-depth probing. But such probing has to happen in an environment of mutual trust, listening, caring for the experience and dignity of the participant. What is the better way to initiate a conversation, than to listen to the stories of each other?

3. Story telling: Humans communicate intensely and authentically, through stories. When allowed to tell stories, people are at their speaking best, though there may be over dramatizations. Thus while collecting experiences of Arundhathiyar children, they were facilitated to tell stories. The stories can be

in the form of life stories, family stories, and stories of an event/s that happened in their lives, anecdotes or occasion. Here again in-depth probing is possible, if trust and honest listening is established.

4. Memory Triggering: When conversing with Arundhathiyar one has to pay close attention to the material universe of the people and other memory traces in the form of photographs, letters, bills, pictures, written or print materials that they may possess. These material objects can unleash memories of the events that center on them. Asking them to narrate about their place in their lives can trigger memories in them, otherwise missed out in the larger story. These smaller stories can provide rich answers to the conditions of their living.

Limitations:

In its drive to prepare a report that carries Arundhathiyars feelings and perceptions, this study has acquired Arundhathiyar children-centric character both by choice and by default. By choice: as the investigators stayed in Arundhathiyar colonies, viewing the social transactions through Arundhathiyars' eyes throughout. By choice, also because the access to Arundhathiyar colonies were made possible with the help of Arundhathiyar activists and Arundhathiyar individuals that meant Arundhathiyar children in the villages identified with the investigators as much as non-Arundhathiyars distanced themselves from them.

By default: as non-Arundhathiyars hardly felt drawn into participating in this study for they regarded the investigators as having clearly taken sides with Arundhathiyars in the village. This becomes even more acute as Arundhathiyar investigators made no secret of their Arundhathiyar identity.

Therefore this study has presented the rural life in the selected cases largely from Arundhathiyars point of view.

The study has been done in villages purposively selected. The realities obtained in the villages were not correlated with any other variables, even when the data threw up tempting uniformities across the villages. For example, land ownership versus degree of caste-based discrimination and exclusion. Yet this study refuses to make any neat causal connection between one phenomenon and other on its thin strength of data obtained in fifty villages, which is few for making grand claims. Thus, what is obtained in this study are only tendencies and trends, not cause-effect relations.

Specific Limitations

- a. Following from the above, this study cannot be a basis for making generalization across the state extending to other villages. The trends and tendencies highlighted in this study are themselves hypothesis to be explored further.
- b. This study scores weakly on gender dimension as only one female investigator was involved in this study. The access to Arundhathiyar girl children's life circumstances and experiences were very seriously hampered by the fact that most of the investigators were male.

Chapter II – Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter II – Analysis and Interpretation

Conceptualization

Understanding and identifying prevalence of discriminatory practices including caste based discrimination and exclusion of Arunthatiyar children in the schools.

The discriminatory practices and exclusion of Arunthatiyar children is as follows:

- Discrimination in seating arrangement in school class rooms.
- Discrimination in providing Noon Meals.
- Discrimination practiced to pursue Sports and Games.
- Discrimination in pursuing Skill development training.
- Discrimination in providing Scholarships.
- Constraints to receive community certificate.
- Restrictions over Higher education.
- Restrictions to access education Loan from Bank.
- Discrimination over maintenance of children in Anganwadies (Mother and Child care centres under the Integrated Child Development Scheme).
- Distance from *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (universalisation of education)
- High Drop-out rate.
- Practice of earlier Marriage.
- Pronouncing caste name.
- Forced to do cleaning work in schools.
- Sexual Harassment of Arunthatiyar girl children

Socio Economic Political Profile of selected Villages

S.No.	Name of the	Name of the Village	Total Populatio	Arunthaiyar Population/ Families
1	Ramanathapura	Athiuthur	8459	476/94
2	Coimbatore	Vilankurichi	1100	/80
3	Coimbatore	66 th division	4500	/350
4	Coimbatore	Pachapalayam	900	/75
5	Coimbatore	Goudayam palayam	750	/50
6	Coimbatore	Pelladhi	800	/75
7	Coimbatore	Vellanai patti	1000	/110
8	Coimbatore	Thekkam patti	2000	/200
9	Coimbatore	17 th ward	25000	3000/450
10	Erode	Ikkarai negamam	3235	1993/175
11	Erode	Ikkarai negamam	3235	1095/115
12	Tuticorin	Tuticorin 7 th ward	3850	650/119
13	Tuticorin	Tuticorin	12500	2100/575
14	Sivagangai	Kaanchirangaal	832	146/48
15	Sivagangai	Peruratchi	1260	463/167
16	Sivagangai	Ilayaan kudi	- -	297/73
17	Tuticorin	Mappillaiyurani	5000	1425/285
18	Tuticorin	Thithampatti	2000	110/28
19	Ramanathapura	Aadhankothangudi	3100	/49
20	Ramanathapura	Kadalad	3402	85/517
21	Ramanathapura	Sevur	- -	162/30
22	Erode	Aadhankothankudi	6000	/1500
23	Erode	Kotha mangalam	1040	1000/100
24	Erode	Kotha mangalam	2143	1250/200

Situation in Village schools:

Just like any other state-sponsored institutions schools remains largely a non-Arundhathiyar institution in villages in terms of control and moral claim laid upon them. Although a gradual abandoning of village schools by non-Arundhathiyars was observed as they preferred to send their children to other schools, not normally to be found in the villages, but only in the nearby town and cities. While the non-Arundhathiyar children are fewer in number in comparison to Arundhathiyar children at the primary school level, the participation of non-Arundhathiyar children overtakes that of Arundhathiyar children as the level of schooling moves up from primary to middle to High

school. Some of the key observations in these schools in villages are as follows:

1. In majority of villages, Arundhathiyar students and non-Arundhathiyar students do not sit together to eat except in two villages covered in the study. Interestingly non-Arundhathiyars have moved away from using village schools in favor of schools in the cities leaving them to be used by Arundhathiyars and other poor working class non-Arundhathiyars.
2. Arundhathiyars students in Middle Schools do not relate to non-Arundhathiyar students in the same school. Outside of schools the parent teacher associations in many schools do not include Arundhathiyar parents and even in few situations, where they have been permitted, Arundhathiyar parents do not come as they feel embarrassed and fear humiliation.
3. Non-Arundhathiyar parents advise their children not to mix with Arundhathiyar students. In some cases even teachers are advised by parents not to encourage that among students.
4. In many schools it was found that Arundhathiyar students are seated separately from non-Arundhathiyar students. However there are few villages where there were separate water sources or at least separate glasses. Arundhathiyars complain that their children do not get reasonably good guidance from non-Arundhathiyar teachers whereas non-Arundhathiyar students are given favorable treatment. Arundhathiyar students are made to run errands for non-Arundhathiyar teachers.
5. In few villages both Arundhathiyar teachers and progressive non-Arundhathiyar teachers are warned of serious consequences if they attempt to violate village traditions relating to practice of untouchability and discrimination of Arundhathiyars.

6. Non Arundhathiyar teachers do not relate fully and freely with Arundhathiyar teachers in the same school. The presence of an Arundhathiyar teacher gives Arundhathiyar students and parent's enormous amount of self-confidence to treat the schools with a sense of moral ownership. However it is only in those villages where Arundhathiyar movements have worked hard to create a corporate Arundhathiyar identity due to which there is a collective sharing of communal suffering and history between Arundhathiyar teacher and Arundhathiyar student and his/her parents.

Few youth spoke of the discriminatory attitude of the teachers in allotting marks to Arundhathiyar student's vis-à-vis non-Arundhathiyar students. They were few more Arundhathiyar boys who told that they were failed by the non-Arundhathiyar school teacher which led to them dropping out of schools.

However there are few instances of good benevolent by non-Arundhathiyar teacher who instilled a definite sense of self-worth in the minds of Arundhathiyar students. Arundhathiyar students remember these 'kind hearted 'and' progressive non- Arundhathiyar teachers for the catalyst effect they had in making schools a place to visit with self- worth.

TABLE – 1
Village wise distribution of students

S.No.	Name of the District	Name of the Village Panchayat	No of students	%
1	Ramanathapuram	Athiut	22	5.35
2	Coimbatore	Vilankurichi	26	6.33
3	Coimbatore	66th division	9	2.18
4	Coimbatore	Pachapalayam	9	2.18
5	Coimbatore	Goudayam palayam	3	0.73
6	Coimbatore	Pella	30	7.29
7	Coimbatore	Vellnai patti	6	1.45
8	Coimbatore	Thekkam patti	18	4.37
9	Coimbatore	17 th	2	0.49

10	Erode	Ikkarai negamam	90	21.89
11	Erode	Ikkarai negamam	50	12.16
12	Tuticorin	Tuticorin 7th ward	44	10.70
13	Tuticorin	Tutico	25	6.08
14	Sivagangai	Kaanchirangaal	22	5.35
15	Sivagangai	Perurat	25	6.08
16	Sivagangai	Ilayaan kudi peruratchi	29	7.05
17	Tuticorin	Mappillaiyurani	14	5
18	Tuticorin	Thithampatti	14	5
19	Ramanathapuram	Aadhankothangudi	15	6
20	Ramanathapuram	Kadal	56	22
21	Ramanathapuram	Sev	27	11
22	Erode	Sikkarasam palayam	64	26
23	Erode	Kotha mangalam	20	8
24	Erode	Kotha mangalam	45	17
			666	100%

Table No. 1 elucidates on the village wise distribution of the selected samples. It is apparent that 5 districts are chosen like *Ramanathapuram*, *Coimbatore*, *Erode*, *Tuticorin* and *Sivagangai*. A total of 666 Arunthathiyar students were interviewed from various Panchayats of all the 5 districts. An equal representation of samples was not taken rather the samples were chosen randomly in all the Panchayats. The more number of representation of samples goes to the *Ikkarai negamam* Panchayat of Erode district where 90 students (22 per cent) were interviewed for the study. Based on the number of Panchayats it is seen that a high representation of samples is taken from Coimbatore district i.e., samples from 8 Panchayats were taken for the study.

TABLE – 2
District wise distribution of students

S.No	Name of the District	No of Students	%
1	Ramanathapuram	120	18
2	Coimbatore	103	15
3	Erode	269	40
4	Tuticorin	97	15
5	Sivagangai	77	12
	Total	666	100

The above table is the description of the distribution of the students district wise. It is seen that Table No. 1 elucidates on the village wise distribution of the selected samples. It is apparent on the total number of samples taken for each district. The 269 students (40 per cent) from Erode district; 120 students (18 per cent) from Ramanathapuram district; 103 students from Coimbatore; 97 students are from Tuticorin district. A total of 666 Arunthathiyar students were covered in this study.

TABLE – 3
AGE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDENTS

S.No	Particulars	No of Student	%
1	1 to 3	18	4
2	4 to 5	35	6
3	6 to 8	166	25
4	9 to10	112	17
5	11 to14	246	37
6	15 to 18	89	14
	Total	666	100

The Age wise distribution of the selected samples is reflected in the above table shows that the samples covered a majority from the age group of 11-14 years which represents 37 %. The other 25% is from the group of 6-8 years and 17% from 9-10 years age group.

TABLE – 4
Sex wise distribution of students

S.No	Particulars	No of Students	%
1	Male	362	54
2	Female	304	46
	Total	666	100

The sex wise distribution of the students in this study is presented where in it is shown that 362 students (54 per cent) are male students and 46 are female students (46 per cent).

TABLE – 5

Parents occupation wise distribution of students

S.No	Particulars	No of Students
1	Coolie	534
2	Glass work	10
3	Tiles work	30
4	Driver	12
5	Vehicle Business	5
6	Sound Setting	4
7	Business	3
8	TMC	7
9	Bank	2
10	GH	4
11	Agri Coolie	49
12	Tailor	3
13	Social work	3
	Total	686

Occupation of the parents of the selected Arunthathiyar students is described in the table. It shows that a majority of the 534 student's parents are daily wage earners where they work as coolie in various sectors. The subsequent occupation of the parents of 49 students is Agricultural coolie and 12 are drivers. The table above gives a general picture that most of the parents of the selected samples are coolies and they earn a meager amount of income per day.

TABLE – 6
Class wise distribution of students

S.No	Particulars	No of Students	%
1	Anganwadi-0-6 years	26	0.72
2	1 st std	49	5.35
3	2 nd std	60	9.73
4	3 rd std	51	7.05
5	4 th std	55	10.7
6	5 th std	68	10.2
7	6 th std	73	13.86
8	7 th std	80	11.92
9	8 th std	48	7.29
10	9 th std	55	6.81
11	10 th std	42	7.54
12	11 th std	19	1.70

13	12 th std	26	1.94
14	DEG / DIP	13	1.45
15	Teacher Training	1	0.24
	Total	666	100

The standard wise distribution of the students selected for the study is illustrated-it is seen that a majority of the students-73 students are in 6th standard. 80 students which constitute 11 per cent are studying in the 7th standard; 10.2 per cent of them who are 68 in numbers are at their 5th standard and the other 10 per cent (55 students) are studying in their 4th standard. It is seen that the most of the samples cover under their educational status from standard 4 to 7.

TABLE – 7
Population wise distribution of villages

S.No.	Name of the District	Name of the Village	Total Population	Arunthathiar Population/ Families
1	Ramanathapuram	Athiuthur	8459	476/94
2	Coimbatore	Vilankurichi	1100	/80
3	Coimbatore	66 th division	4500	/350
4	Coimbatore	Pachapalayam	900	/75
5	Coimbatore	Godayam palayam	750	/50
6	Coimbatore	Pelladh	800	/75
7	Coimbatore	Vellana patti	1000	/110
8	Coimbatore	Thekkam patti	2000	/200
9	Coimbatore	17 th ward	25000	3000/450
10	Erode	Ikkarai negamam	3235	1993/175
11	Erode	Ikkarai negamam	3235	1095/115
12	Tuticorin	Tuticorin 7 th ward	3850	650/119
13	Tuticorin	Tuticorin	12500	2100/575
14	Sivagangai	Kaanchirangaal	832	146/48
15	Sivagangai	Peruratchi	1260	463/167
16	Sivagangai	Ilayaan kudi peruratchi	- -	297/73
17	Tuticorin	Mappillaiyurani	5000	1425/285
18	Tuticorin	Thithampatti	2000	110/28
19	Ramanathapuram	Aadhankothangudi	3100	/49
20	Ramanathapuram	Kadalad	3402	85/517
21	Ramanathapuram	Sevu	- -	162/30

22	Erode	Aadhankothankudi	6000	/1500
23	Erode	Kotha mangalam	1040	1000/100
24	Erode	Kotha mangalam	2143	1250/200

The population wise distribution of the Arunthathiyars living in the five districts taken for the study is shown in the table. Each of the districts has covered various Panchayats and its population and the Arunthathiyar families are given. It is evident that out of the selected samples, Arunthathiyar population is high at 17th ward of *Coimbatore* district where they constitute about 3000 consisting of 450 families. Each and every village has its own population and the families existing are given in the table above.

Violations and violence on school-going children from Arundhathiyar community assume different forms in different places. They do not have any sign of abatement, but only multiply their newest forms and intensify their nature.

Particularly Arundhathiyar school-going children's experience is based on many forms of violence that can be extremely distressing. What is even more worrying is that a secular public institution like schools tends to faithfully reproduce the caste logic and hierarchy intensely practiced in the village community. Tragically, the very institutions, namely the schools, that should have set an example for the village community to follow, have replicated caste perceptions and hierarchy. This is more starkly evident in the seating arrangement followed in the schools sampled for the study.

Firstly, an entry to school or class rooms, Arundhathiyar children are prohibited from wearing slippers in just the same way their parents are prevented in the upper class areas of villages. Girls are prevented from wearing flowers in their hair.

This way the school establishes itself as the upper caste space into which

Arundhathiyars are allowed only as a matter of concession and charity. One would have expected them to be de-casted spaces, rather than re-casted spaces.

The concentric circle of caste system follows Arundhathiyar children wherever they move, even schools are no exception. In these cruel concentric circles, Arundhathiyars are forced to inhabit the outer most of the circles, if not the space adjacent to the last perimeter.

TABLE – 8

Discrimination in seating arrangement in school class rooms

S. no	Particulars	No. of students	No. of village
1	Yes	230	10
2	No	436	14
	Total	666	24

The table shows the discrimination faced by Arundhathiyar children in the seating arrangements. It is observed that a majority of Arundhathiyar students-230-from 10 villages faced discrimination in seating arrangements. The remaining 436 students from 14 villages have not faced any discrimination in seating arrangement.

In the interiors of the class rooms, Arundhathiyar children are seated separately in the rear. Because the front and centre are sacred spaces, not accessible to Arundhathiyars. If one thinks that it is a perverted logic of Hindu religion, one has to correct himself, since the same system is followed albeit with slightly less intensity in Christian schools, and Muslim-managed schools.

But the worst happens in the so-called secular schools, like Panchayat schools, Anganwadis, and Government High / Middle Schools which are located in villages.

This caste-driven separation continues outside the class rooms even in to the

open spaces. Here again the Arundhathiyar children will have to sit under the trees during study hours, whereas caste-Hindu children can remain in the class rooms during study hours.

Spatialisation combined with hierarchy results in more distress for Arundhathiyar children. In class rooms where benches are provided for children, Arundhathiyar children are forced to remain content with a place on the floor when it comes to seating. Not only here, in any places, the elevated spaces/platforms are reserved for upper castes.

Spatialisation/Hierarchy joins hands with separation in further harassing Arundhathiyar children. In many schools, there are separate water facilities and water tanks for these children.

If this type of discrimination and violence is just one side of the coin, there is this non-material and subtle form of discrimination and violence on the other.

On the top of non-material violence, stands the denial of the mental and intellectual capabilities of Arundhathiyar children. Such denial further leads to suppression and under development of the existing mental and intellectual capabilities of the children from Arundhathiyar community.

This happens both passively and actively; passively in the form of simple non recognition of Arundhathiyar children's mental/intellectual capabilities. The active denial happens in the form of deliberate recognition and reduction of the children's ability to only body labour. This body labour too is recognized only for performance of cleaning tasks – tasks that caste system has always reserved for most oppressed.

It was evident in the many of the sampled schools-almost all the cleaning activities are performed only by Arundhathiyar children. These activities

include cleaning the toilets, schools premises, vessels of the noon-meals, tea cups used by teachers. In some cases such tasks are performed even at the teacher's houses. By doing this, the Arundhathiyar children are re-assigned to the caste-hierarchy, even when the very purpose of joining schools is to escape from the clutches of occupation-determining-caste system.

TABLE – 9

Forced to do cleaning Work

S. no	Particulars	No. of students	No. of village
1	Yes	607	22
2	No	59	2
	Total	666	24

Table no. 9 represents the distribution of the number of students engaged or forced to do cleaning work. It is seen that a high majority of the Arunthathiyar students, who constitute-607-around 22 villages are forced to do cleaning work in their schools. This shows the pathetic condition of the Arunthathiyar students and the high discrimination given to these students in schools.

TABLE – 10

Discrimination in providing of noon meals

S. no	Particulars	No. of students	No. of village
1	Yes	322	9
2	No	344	15
	Total	666	24

Table no.10 shows the discrimination faced in providing food during the noon-meal scheme by the Arunthathiyar students. It is observed from the table that 322 students from 9 Panchayats have faced discrimination in the noon meal scheme and also it is seen that 344 students from 15 Panchayats have found no

discrimination in this scheme provided. Another non-material form of violence is complete invisibilization of the very presence of both the Arundhathiyar children and their future.

Many children complained that the teacher and non-Arundhathiyar students would treat them as non-existent, by not focusing on their studies, their needs and aspirations. Even the noon-meals comprising of protein supplements like eggs are not reserved for them. Their needs and aspirations are always negotiable and dispensable. Teachers do not pay attention to their achievements also, even if some Arundhathiyar students are self-taught with considerable success. If Arundhathiyar students do not perform well, the teachers did not bother to address the issue.

Combined with this invisibilisation of the Arundhathiyar students, is the identity-burden. Identity-burden refers to the condition of self-consciously remembering one's identity such as caste identity or gender identity or religious identities.

The purpose of identity-burden is to discipline and regulate the behavior and conduct of the subject persons. While all persons may be victims of one form of identify-burden or another, the Arundhathiyar children are victims of multiple identity-burden, that too in a secular space like schools.

For Arundhathiyar students, each and every moment in school premises are moments that constantly remind them of their repressed and subjugated status.

The tragedy is that when they are verbally reminded of their identity. It is a tragedy, because others experience their identity-burden only subtly.

TABLE -11
Pronouncing caste name

S. no	Particulars	No. of students	No. of village
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1	Yes	262	11
2	No	404	13
	Total	666	24

262 Arunthathiyar students from 11 villages are teased by pronouncing caste names in the schools. These activities have affected the children psychologically. Many children are verbally reminded by those (both student and teachers) around them in school about their lowly existence and status. These children reported as to how their teacher would scold them saying-“you toilet-cleaning caste fellow get up or shut-up!” “the entire toilet cleaning caste fellows come and collect your books!” etc. If any Arundhathiyar student comes late the teacher would insult the students, “why come late? When are you cleaning toilets?” or “why are you late?” “have you gone with your father to clean toilet in the village?” In some other cases, the students were asked to come to the teachers home with their father for cleaning tanks, toilet or sewage blocks. In fact, using the Arundhathiyar students only for cleaning-related activities is another form of identity-burden.

In addition to the invisibilisation of the needs and aspirations of Arundhathiyar students, their desire for friendship with other caste members is also denied. Students from other castes are severely reprimanded for the friendship with Arundhathiyar students. Thus, they are reduced to remain friends only with their own caste members. There is also report about subtle form of untouchability being practiced-in not touching the note books of Arundhathiyar children; not touching their Tiffin carriers. Not only the untouchability of children, but even untouchability of the objects used by them. The caste-ridden society finds new ways of practicing untouchability. It creates a universe of objects touched and used by Arundhathiyar children.

Caste hierarchy finds its way when the children are made to sit and eat during

the noon-meal eating sessions. While non-Arundhathiyars are prevented from eating first, they are also forced to sit separately from the places occupied by others. Their social position as “low and polluting caste” is reproduced when they are forced to eat amidst dirt and left-overs spilled by the previous eaters. The school system thinks it is natural that these ‘unclean’ caste members eat their food also in the unclean surroundings. Thus even the minimum cleanliness is not observed when Arundhathiyar children come to eat their noon-meals.

The same system treats them as dispensable people, by not giving importance to their nutritional needs. While eggs must be supplied as part of the noon-meal, Arundhathiyar children do not get it if non-Arundhathiyar children happened to eat more.

The subtle discrimination occurs in the form of requiring Arundhathiyar children to write their names on the back of the plates. Even though plates are common property, such discrimination do occur. Similarly the Tiffin boxes brought by the Arundhathiyar students will have to be kept away from others. Arundhathiyar children will be served less amount of meals and would be dismissed if they demand more, saying “for toilet-cleaning people this is enough!”.

To top it all, the vessels used for preparing and cooking the meals will have to be necessarily washed by girl students from Arundhathiyar community. Only after cleaning they would be allowed to return to the classes.

Arundhathiyars time is not considered valuable. They are controlled by castes on which they depend for their livelihood. Therefore, they cannot decide when work starts and when it ends. They cannot afford to draw the line between work and leisure. There is no room for play or leisure. Their life is life-in-everlasting-work. They ought to be ready to make themselves available for

their services to the upper castes.

TABLE – 12
Discrimination practiced in pursuit of Sports and Games

S. no	Particulars	No. of students	No. of village
1	Yes	322	8
2	No	344	16
	Total	666	24

Discrimination in games and sports is faced by the Arunthathiyar students has been observed. It is seen that 322 students from 8 Panchayats have faced discrimination and the other 344 students from 16 Panchayats have not faced any discrimination while playing games.

In the moral and experiential universe of Arundhathiyar, there is no time or space to play. This reality, reasserts itself in the schools too. The Arunthathiyar children cannot have the luxury of being involved in sports and leisure activities. No one encourages them to take part in sports. If any Arunthathiyar child wished to engage in sports, there was discouragement and punishment. The time after the class hours is reserved for servicing the school or servicing the teachers at their residences. Quite often Arundhathiyar girl students cannot leave school without cleaning the common toilets and school premises. Arunthathiyar boy students spend more time running errand for teachers, even substituting themselves as the school peon in carrying registers and circulars from one class to the other. Thus sports never figure either in the imagination of Arundhathiyar students nor as a moral imperative on the part of the school.

Because of the specific but tragic socialization of Arundhathiyar students, there

is no inherent craving for participation in leisure activities as they have been conditioned to treat their non-invitation to participate in sports as natural.

Even in those situations wherein there is some scope of engagement in sports, such opportunities are restricted to physical activities such as *kabadi*, but never in those sports such as carom, chess that requires mental capabilities. In continuation of their body-labour centric life, their sports activity is also most body-centric.

If any Arundhathiyar student is able to participate in schools and thereby excel in sports, such achievement is not celebrated in the same way as it would have been for a non-Arundhathiyar student. Very often such reasons are cited such as, school name will be spoiled if weak (Arunthathiyar) students take part in sports etc.

TABLE – 13
Discrimination in Skills development

S. no	Particulars	No. of students	No. of village
1	Yes	183	7
2	No	290	13
3	Not applicable	193	4
	Total	666	24

The table shows the discrimination faced by Arunthathiyar children in being given opportunities for skill development. It is observed that a majority of the 290 students from 13 villages have not faced any discrimination in obtaining skill development provided in schools. The remaining 183 students from 7 villages have faced severe discrimination in this aspect.

In fact, other than just allowing them to school, no investment, either emotional or moral or financial is made in further improving the skills and talents of Arundhathiyar students. May be the school authorities think that the very act

of admission to school as so revolutionary and a big sacrifice, that no more importance must be given to further working on their welfare. Thus, Arundhathiyar children are not encouraged to take part in many extra-curricular activities, not sent for any cultural programmes, not given opportunities to improve their drawings, oratorical, singing /musical skills.

TABLE – 14
Discrimination in providing Scholarship

S. no	Particulars	No. of students	No. of village
1	Yes	363	15
2	No	303	9
	Total	666	24

Table no.14 shows the discrimination faced in providing scholarship to the Arunthathiyar students. It is observed from the table that 363 students from 15 Panchayats have faced discrimination in obtaining scholarship and also it is seen that 303 students from 9 Panchayats have found no discrimination and they get scholarship without any hindrances based on the caste.

This is one more form of violence brought out by the study in the denial of opportunities and life-chances that would result in enhancement of life itself. The dominant castes attempt to curtail the life-enhancing chances available for the oppressed castes. In the case of Arundhathiyar students scholarship is an important incentive for joining schools, as its very availability emboldens the parents of Arundhathiyar students to send them to schools even though the scholarship money would be available only later for the fees they pay in advance, it is still a great motivator. Sensing this as important factor for higher number of Arundhathiyar students attending schools, the entire

schools and community system conspires to deny or at least delay this entitlement.

This is a strategic step to cut off one vital supply of energy to Arundhathiyar students. In this exercise not just the school system, but the entire community as a whole is involved and even the state representatives such as Village Administrative officers-VAO etc. For the Arundhathiyar families encounters with state institutions and their agents such as VAOs etc. is highly distressing an experience.

These momentary encounters humiliate the Arunthathiyar community and children in a way that they are dismissed by the system. They fear and intensely hate these moments, and try as much to avoid them as possible. But acquiring scholarship for their children forces them to have these encounters even though they could have been minimized and even dispensed with.

Both for the parents of Arundhathiyar students and for the students, the journey towards successfully availing scholarship is both arduous and nightmarish. Very often the school teachers and office staff force the students to bring one certificate or the other. Sometimes merely to harass them, they ask for too many documents and certificates. The children in turn force their parents, who are made to run from pillar to post before they get the certificates required by the school authorities. Occasionally, before the certificated are collected, the last date for applying for scholarship is over or out of fatigue the parents of Arundhathiyar children give up any hope for scholarship.

Another tactic adopted by the school system is to withdraw any information related to scholarship and deliberately refuse to build procedural literacy for the students or parents of Arundhathiyar community. When some

parents muster up the courage to seek information, they are humiliated and no information or clarification is given. If at all it is finally given, the students have to part with some money as commission to the school authorities. Similarly when they have to collect the certificates they have to bribe the certificate providing officer. This can also be extremely discouraging.

The exact act of collecting certificates can be a devastating experience for the students. Finally after going through the ordeal of making themselves eligible for scholarship, the students will be called in the most contemptuous manner to collect their scholarship money. The students have reported in some cases, they will be humiliated saying "You toilet-cleaning children go and collect your scholarship amount."

It is against this background that some 23 Arunthathiyar children have availed scholarship out of the sample population. Even in these very few successful cases, some active NGOs or CBOs or political activists having contributed with their efforts in getting scholarship.

TABLE – 15
Discrimination in acquiring community certificate.

S. no	Particulars	No. of students	No. of village
1	Yes	381	17
2	No	285	7
	Total	666	24

Discrimination in acquiring caste certificate for the Arunthathiyar students is observed and it is seen that 381 students from 17 Panchayats have faced discrimination and the other 285 students from 7 Panchayats have obtained the certificate without any discrimination.

Related to scholarship, but also connected to getting other benefits is this issue of acquiring community certificates. Very often enjoying the benefits of many schemes and programmes requires possession of community certificates. But for Arundhathiyar parents, it proves to be another stressful experience. The social and political system more often than not adopts a strategy called “deliberate misunderstanding” to deny the benefits arising out of possession of community certificates. One instance of deliberate misunderstanding is by recording the names of Arundhathiyar children in Christian category, while registering them with Hindu names. When the parents of Arundhathiyar children, who are illiterate, do the same out of ignorance, the system does not have the concern to correct it. Very often there is no proper training or information disseminated to these people in order to help them through this process easily.

All these also indicate the severe dearth of social capital with Arundhathiyars. This becomes even more starkly evident in the case of availing bank loans.

TABLE – 16
Restrictions to access Bank loans

S. no	Particulars	No. of students	No. of village
1	Yes	475	14
2	No	65	2
	Not applicable	126	8
	Total	666	24

The table shows the discrimination faced in getting access to loan facilities by the Arunthathiyar students. It is observed that a majority of the 475 students from 14 villages have faced discrimination in obtaining bank loan facilities.

They are unaware of the facilities availed by the Bank and in some of the cases it is seen that the Bank Managers refuse to provide educational loan to these students. Only a meager distribution is seen amongst the 65 students from 2 villages who availed loans.

The bank system functions with the assumption that everyone who wishes to avail its services would possess adequate social or asset capital in the form of knowing people to act as guarantor. Quite often such introducers are relatives or friends who fulfill the requirements of being a guarantor. But the banks fail to appreciate that there are many who have been historically oppressed and prevented from building social capital. Arundhathiyars are one such group that has been repressed from time immemorial by the dominant caste from building social capital not only vertically but even horizontally. The cruel caste system prevents the Arundhathiyar members from building solidarity in their neighborhood. Worse still, even though Arundhathiyar spend most of their time with dominant castes, as servants and service providers, the long duration spent is not a guarantee for earning their support and trust. That's why, when Arundhathiyar seek to open a Bank-account, they are not able to get anyone to introduce or sign as their guarantor.

This results in very few Arundhathiyar children reporting that their parents have a bank account. These state domains still functions as non- Arundhathiyar domain. In the moral universe of Arundhathiyars, these state domains such as Government offices or schools or Banks, are marked as inaccessible domains into which gaining entry can happen only if they are shown charity by the dominant castes. This is because, when finally some Arundhathiyars opened bank accounts, and seeks loan for business or education they were simply denied on grounds that they would not be able to repay or they cannot do any business as they do not have entrepreneurial skills etc. Eventually for those

who were sanctioned some loans, the amount has been negligible.

Problems Faced By Arundhathiyar Girls Students

TABLE – 17

Sexual harassment of Arunthathiyar girl children

S. no	Particulars	No. of students	No. of village
1	Yes	228	11
2	No	399	11
	Not applicable	39	2
	Total	666	24

Sexual harassment is highly evident amongst the 228 students from 11 villages. They are harassed in terms of physical, verbal, mental abuse. In most of the cases they are harassed especially the girl students by their own class teachers. These students are unable to take further action to safeguard themselves.

Arundhathiyar girl students occupy a troubled position in the schools. Standing at the intersection of criss-crossing discrimination emanating from various agents, Arunthathiyar girl bears the brunt of vagaries of society that comprises of forces, which competitively deny her agency, dignity, and mobility.

Non-Arundhathiyar teachers ogle at her lustfully when he is not treating her as a lowly 'worm'. The non-Arundhathiyar woman teachers who regard her as polluting dirt, treats her no more than a slave who can be filthily abused on the one hand and made to run errands on the other. These are the circumstances within which an Arundhathiyar student in Tamil Nadu village schools is bound.

In all the study villages it is difficult to find a Arundhathiyar girl child who has been educated, at best, beyond 12th standard, who has traveled, at best,

beyond her district head quarters, who is nourished and does not look anemic, who has not delivered her first baby around the earliest age of 15 and latest by 17.

TABLE – 18
Drop-out students

S. no	Particulars	No. of students	No. of village
1	Yes	532	20
2	No	134	4
	Total	666	24

Drop out among Arunthathiyar children is highly evident from schools- a majority of 532 students from 20 villages have dropped out from their school due to various factors. Discrimination, harassment, and other forms of factors influence high to make them drop their studies.

The reasons for their dropout and social backwardness:

- ◆ Resistance from the family to send Arunthathiyar girls to schools.
- ◆ Fear of insecurity in villages.
- ◆ Lack of physical facilities like accommodation, school, transport, and medical facilities.
- ◆ The girls were forced to take care of the siblings when the parents are away for work.
- ◆ Girls were forced to do domestic chores, which prevent them from attending school.
- ◆ Working to earn for the family prevent the girls from attending school.
- ◆ Working with parents to earn their livelihood made the children drop out from schools.
- ◆ Because of the sickness and unemployment of parents girls were

forced to work.

- ◆ Many were forced to get married at young age, which stops schooling.
- ◆ Social restrictions are that the girls should stop education after marriage.
- ◆ In some areas there are complaints from Arundhathiyar students about non-Arundhathiyar teachers' misbehavior, blackmail and sexual exploitation by the male staff of other high caste people.
- ◆ Distance of schools from home is long.
- ◆ Inability of understand the curriculum of the classes.
- ◆ Fear of alienation of girls from their environment as a result of education.

TABLE - 19

Practice of early marriage of Arunthathiyar children

S. no	Particulars	No. of students	No. of village
1	Yes	613	21
2	No	53	3
	Total	666	24

This table shows the distribution of the students who marry early. It is evident that more than 600 students marry early. This is seen in 21 villages. Only a meager distribution of 53 students in 3 villages is an exception.

For Arundhathiyar girls the status of being an adolescent does not last more than two years, in the best of circumstances, as she gets married to a person at least five year senior to her by the age of 15 or 16, forcing her enter into adulthood that culminates in her achieving motherhood in a year or two thereafter.

The domestic bliss does not last even for a year, as she becomes a wage-earner with renewed vigor to run the family and to earn the respect of her in-laws in a patriarchal set up that tolerates male irresponsibility in the name of valor and prestige, but not that of a woman.

The world that she knows and sees is never her own, as it is known and seen through her mother's eyes till she becomes married, thereafter it through her husband's eyes. That is why, the researchers could not hear from or see in Arundhathiyar girls the grand dreams, larger visions, and expansive mental horizons. Nor does the girl has any awareness about comparable life styles led with the privileges or in protection of the laws.

This renders Arundhathiyar girls the most oppressed of the oppressed. They cannot hope to build any solidarity with any section of humanity in India, leave alone their own husbands or other non-Arundhathiyar women.

TABLE NO – 20
Restriction over Higher Education

S. no	Particulars	No. of students	No. of village
1	Yes	559	20
2	No	92	3
	Not applicable	15	1
	Total	666	24

Table no.20 shows the discrimination faced by the Arunthathiyar children in availing higher education. It is observed from the table that 559 students from the 20 Panchayats have faced discrimination. This merely dilutes the right of equal opportunity in accessing quality education. Only 92 students from 3 Panchayats experienced no discrimination for further studies.

Higher studies remain a dream for many Arundhathiyar girls. Both in case of those who are on the verge of moving to higher studies as well as for those who look up to that as a possibility later, higher studies in the form of college education remain distant. For an oppressed community that has been systematically deprived of its ability to control its own life, making a decision on higher education is vested not in their hands, but on someone else. Quite often crucial decisions affecting the future of Arundhathiyar children are made by others either actively, or through denial and discouragement. Particularly for girl children of Arundhathiyar community, once they attain puberty, their lives are in threat, as they are subjected to sexual harassment and eve teasing. In the event of any threat from upper castes resulting in outraging of modesty or sexual attack, the weak position of Arundhathiyars compels them to take recourse to non-confrontational stance like marrying the girls early and curtaining their mobility in public sphere. The later includes dropping them out from schools. Many a time, the girls are the first ones to be withdrawn from education.

Even for boys, higher education is very hard to come by, as the total seats reserved for SCs are taken away by the better placed and creamy sections among the SCs. Being Dalits among dalits, Arundhathiyars often get excluded even from reservation. This combined with persistent poverty and lack of social capital discourages them from even conceiving of a future in higher education institutions like colleges and universities.

The absence of model figures that could inspire them to go for higher education is another reason for lack of college-going boys and girls among Arundhathiyars. There are no opportunities to have career guidance from well-wishers, as those on whom they depend on for livelihood, prefer to keep the Arunthathiyar

children they are now, rather than inspire them to go for higher studies. Very often the families where higher education is possible are from that of dominant castes. They have a vested interest in discouraging Arundhathiyars going for higher studies. They despise the Arunthathiyars desire for higher education by saying “for toilet-cleaning fellows like you, there is no need for higher education.”

Beyond all these, for those who make it to higher studies, there are other hurdles such as denial of choice in subjects in colleges. The difficulty is finding financial resources, like bank loans, to support their educations.

The troubles and tribulation of staying in education are not just limited to the school-going boys and girls, even for those toddlers who go to Anganwadis, life is no better. The disciplining of Arundhathiyars starts early in life as soon as they enter into public domain wherein they have to interact with other caste members.

TABLE – 21

Discrimination over maintenance of Children in Anganwadies

S. no	Particulars	No. of students	No. of village
1	Yes	227	8
2	No	388	14
	Not applicable	51	2
	Total	666	24

The table illustrates the differences seen in the Anganwadi centres between Arunthathiyar and non – Arunthathiyar students. It is shown that nearly 227 students from 8 villages have faced discrimination in the Anganwadi centres like dropping them in home, maintaining the children etc., by the staff. The 388

students have not been faced any differences in the Anganwadi centers.

The conspiracy of upper caste in committing violence upon the oppressed castes occurs in two forms: One, active denial of rights, privileges and access to services and public goods; second by confirming more prestige and privileges to its own members thereby discriminating the oppressed castes by contrast. This act of discrimination by contrast, is quite acute in the way children are treated in Anganwadis. For example the Anganwadi workers who visit the non - Arundhathiyar areas to bring their children personally to Anganwadi, refuse to accord the same to Arundhathiyar children, who have to be dropped by their parents or will have to reach Anganwadi on their own. The same applies to dropping also. While non-Arundhathiyar children are dropped by the Anganwadi workers in person, Arundhathiyar children are left either to be picked up by their parents or will have to find their ways back home on their own. The fact that in most villages, Anganwadis are located in the non-Arundhathiyar areas makes it a difficult experience for Arundhathiyar children.

At the premises of Anganwadi, the treatments are different too. While the Anganwadi workers attend to the needs of non-Arundhathiyar children including cleaning their bodies when they respond to nature's calls, they chase away the Arundhathiyar children when they defecate or urinate. When not chasing them away, they send for their mothers so that they would come and do the cleaning work. This disrupts the work life of women, as these day care centers do not effectively free them caring for their children so as to attend to other chores.

Even at this tender age, the children are seated differently, with Arundhathiyar children sitting in the rear portions and non - Arundhathiyar children

occupying front. The Anganwadi workers use caste names when addressing the Arundhathiyar children in the most demeaning manner. If the Arundhathiyar children litter in the school premises they have to be cleaned by themselves, whereas the same done by non – Arundhathiyar children will be cleaned by Anganwadi workers. In other words, the disciplining of Arundhathiyar children so as to perform their ‘caste occupation’ is initiated at such an early age.

What is worse, in some places, there are two plate system adopted in such a gentle and subtle way, that Arundhathiyar children plates and vessels are often used only by them and never get mixed up with other children’s vessels. Never would an Arundhathiyar children be allowed to touch, leave alone use, non – Arundhathiyar children’s plate.

All these are done to discourage Arundhathiyar from sending their children to Anganwadis. In some villages, such tactic has succeeded in totally appropriating the Anganwadi for non-Arundhathiyar communities.

TABLE – 22
Distance from SSA

S. no	Particulars	No. of students	No. of village
1	Yes	162	9
2	No	504	15
	Total	666	24

Table no. 22 shows on the benefits obtained by the Arunthathiyar students through Sarva Siksha Abiyan Scheme. It is evident that out of the selected samples the 504 number of Arunthathiyar students have not obtained any benefits out of the SSA scheme. Rather only 162 students are benefited from 9

villages are benefited.

Even against this otherwise dark reality facing Arundhathiyar students; SSA comes as a small bright spot, with many children from Arundhathiyar community being able to use the school system at least during the primary stage. However, the school system or even Anganwadis desist somehow from taking responsibility for the growth and progress of Arundhathiyar children. Such ones is still yoked on the parents of Arundhathiyar's children. Even after sending their children to school, or Anganwadis, the parents have to keep themselves ready to take responsibility for such petty things like resolving fight among themselves, cleaning their litter and bodily excretions.

Similarly, for every small blunder committed unwittingly by the Arundhathiyar children at school, the correctional measures are not adopted by the school system, because such measures are reserved only for non – Arundhathiyar children. Even for the pettiest of the blunders committed by Arundhathiyar children their parents are sent for but when such acts of blunder or mistakes committed by non–Arundhathiyar children, the teachers and others in school take correctional steps like advising, counseling and motivating. In the perception of Arundhathiyar children this discrimination causes much anguish. For the parents it is deeply agonizing an experience to come to school, when they are sent for by the school authorities, because their children have committed some mistakes. More often, the Arundhathiyar parents are made to wait for longer hours before the teachers meet them. They are not allowed to enter into the staff rooms when coming to schools. If they are allowed in some cases, they have to leave their chapels. On the top of all these, are the humiliating words of the teachers. They are often recipients of statements like “why the hell lowly people like you want to send your children to school” or “people like you can never study” etc.

Chapter III

Findings, Conclusion & Recommendations

Chapter III Finding, Conclusion & Recommendation

Major Findings:

Seating arrangement favoring non-Arundhatiyar children:

1. Discrimination is followed in seating arrangement in and outside the class room.
2. Arunthathiyar students were not allowed to sit together along with non-Arunthathiyar student as they were seated separately.
3. Arunthathiyar students were forced to sit on the floor while the non Arunthathiyar students sat on benches.
4. Arunthathiyar students were not allowed to sit in the front row and made to sit at the back from a distance from non Arunthathiyar students.
5. Arunthathiyar students were strictly prohibited to touch non Arunthathiyar students.
6. Arunthathiyar students were seated separately in the last corner of class room.

Discrimination practiced in providing noon meals in the school to the Arundhatiyar children:

1. Arunthathiyar students were not given priority for noon meals and the meals were given separately at last.
2. Separate vessels were used for cooking for Arundhatiyar children and the vessels were cleaned by using feet and wearing slippers.
3. Not provided eggs in the noon meals.
4. Separate plates were used for Arunthathiyar students and they were asked to mention their names to practice untouchability.
5. Arunthathiyar students who sat on the last bench were told to wash the vessels used for cooking.

Discrimination practiced in Arundhatiyar children's pursuit of sports and Games trainings:

1. Arunthathiyar students were not permitted to participate in sports and games.
2. The non-Arunthathiyar teachers did not encourage the Arunthathiyar student to participate in sports.
3. Even if some Arundhatiyar students managed to participate in the sports competitions and performed well, the non-Arunthathiyar teachers did not congratulate or celebrate the winning of these Arunthathiyar students.

Prohibition on skill development training for Arundhatiyar children:

1. Arunthathiyar students were not encouraged to participate in any competitions such as Essay Writing, Elocution or Drawing.
2. Due to unawareness among Arunthathiyar students about skill development trainings their participation in the competitions is very low.

Discrimination followed in providing scholarship to Arundhatiyar children:

1. The school administration refused to provide information on availability of scholarship to the parent of Arunthathiyar students.
2. The parents and children from Arundhatiyar community were forced to bring the evidence of their caste-like caste certificate; most Arundhatiyar do not have these certificates because of the huge levels of corruption in acquiring caste certificates from the government.
3. The scholarship for Arunthathiyar students is given to non Arunthathiyar students by changing their names.

4. The teachers practiced discrimination for giving scholarship to the Arunthathiyar students.
5. School administration did not give any answers on this issue upon being asked and told the research team to seek responses from the Govt. directly.
6. There was a practice of charging commission fees from the Arunthathiyar children to avail any scholarships.
7. Scholarship forms were not sent and so scholarship was not received.
8. Teachers called the Arunthathiyar children by addressing children them as-children from the municipality-who clean the drains; the children would be told to stand in line to see if the Scholarship has arrived.
9. The VAO refused to provide the Arunthathiyar children the relevant community certificate so that the scholarships could not be availed.

Constraints faced to receive community certificate.

1. The non Arunthathiyar VAO refused to give assign to issuing community certificate.
2. Issuing community certificate as *Adi Dravidar* instead of writing as Arunthathiyar.
3. The school administration guide non-Arunthathiyar students to fill up application forms for community certificate as the Arunthathiyar students were refused on it.
4. Demanding Ration Card/ Family Card, and demanding enough documentary evidence by addressing them by their caste name.
5. Delay in issuing caste certificates.

Restrictions on access to higher education:

1. Discourage by teasing using Arunthathiyars caste name as "Sakkiliya pulle" "what is the use of study for you people?"
2. Arunthathiyar students were not given equal opportunities to choose their desired subjects for higher education and were thus forced to drop out.

Restriction on access to education loans from banks:

1. Arunthathiyars were unaware of the procedures followed in banks for eg; demanding asset documents etc.
2. Arunthathiyar students were denied or provided negligible amount for education on such grounds as capacity to repay; seeking security.
3. Unaware of loan facilities availed due to the lack of relationship between the banks and Arunthathiyars.
4. Refusal of the Bank Manager to provide loan amount for Arunthathiyar students.

Discrimination in taking care of Arunthathiyar Children at Anganwadis:

1. Non Maintenance of Anganwadis even though separate centres are available.
2. Anganwadis workers did not carry the Arunthathiyar children.
3. Preference given to non Arunthathiyar children in giving meals.
4. Discrimination practiced amongst children by having separate plates for Arunthathiyar children.
5. Only non Arunthathiyar children dropped at their homes after school.

SSA scheme not reached to the students

1. Only non Arunthathiyar students benefited under the SSA scheme and not the Arunthathiyar students.

Recommendations

1. Organize Arunthathiyars students forum at schools and block level to impart awareness on the forms of school violence and methods to overcome it.
2. By organizing District and State level Arunthathiyar Panchayat Presidents' Association and awareness and action oriented trainings should be given to eliminate school violence.
3. NGOs' have to be motivated to organize awareness campaign at school level to alleviate the discriminatory practices among the students.
4. Village level task force group should be initiated to monitor anganwadies and SSA centers at least once a month.
5. Periodical sharing meeting should be organized at the block level for school going children to share their problems related to school violence.
6. Arunthathiyar female children /students should be mobilized as a forum and information about various types sexual harassment and self protective measures in and out of schools should be imparted.
7. A strategic campaign and awareness program about the sexual harassment and higher education should be conducted in all Arunthathiyar areas; for that a well planned Community Driven Development (CDD) approach strategy has to be developed and adopted.

8. Legal awareness program should be conducted periodically in all habitations of Arunthathiyars to empower and enhance access to Legal provisions/actions to combat atrocities and harassment of school going Arunthathiyar children.
9. A Legal advisory forum consisting of Arunthathiyars should be constituted at least at District level to bring to the notice of Government the violence faced by the Arunthathiyar students in schools.
10. Arunthathiyar students should be motivated to participate in sports and extracurricular activities adequately.
11. A sharing meeting for Arunthathiyar students and parents should be conducted at block level at least once a month to review issues related to school violence and disseminate information about Govt provisions and various welfare schemes related to SC.
12. A mass movement /demonstration should be conducted at the District level once in two months to capture Government/Public attention towards school violence on Arunthathiyars.
13. SHGs should be formed by organizing Arunthathiyar students' parents and create bank linkages to avoid the restriction over education loans.

Conclusion:

This study has clearly revealed the magnitude and the depth of school violence in the rural area of Tamil Nadu. The discriminatory practices are still being enforced against the Dalits and Arunthathiyars amongst the dalit group all across Tamil Nadu even against the constitutional framework and the many Central and state enactments and amendments. The upper castes Hindus practice untouchability over dalits as if it's their birth right. The journey of empowerment of dalits over hundreds of years has come across many hurdles. As for the Arundhathiyar community issues lot needs to be still done. In fact, the rural Tamil Nadu has witnessed many atrocities towards Arunthathiyars' children particularly the Eastern, South and Western part the Tamil Nadu has been known for the practice of school violence discrimination on Arunthathiyar children. In this study various types of violence have been identified. The issues stated above need a huge action oriented mass effort to overcome them. Towards this, pressure groups, Arundhathiyar based political party and NGOs have to come together and plan to eliminate atrocities through mass movements, demonstration, awareness campaign and agitation.

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