


Ethnographic research on primary education of tribals: a scoping review

Jemy Jose Mathew, Kennedy Andrew Thomas

Department of Education, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru, India

Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history:</p> <p>Received Oct 28, 2024 Revised Jun 19, 2025 Accepted Jul 19, 2025</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>Cultural inclusiveness Ethnography Indigenous people Multilingual education Primary education</p>	<p>Ethnographic research offers comprehensive learning outcomes by examining the socio-emotional, economic and cultural components crucial for comprehending marginalized groups' experiences. This study aims to examine the methodologies used in studies and the gaps in the literature on the primary education of tribal communities, highlighting the limitations of the current research approaches. Using the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) of Arksey and O'Malley's six-step framework, the scoping review has considered 19 studies of 406 research articles published from 2015 to 2024 across the databases Scopus, JSTOR, and ERIC. The review highlights that most of these studies used descriptive survey design, mixed-method research design, and ethnographic research design. While the first two document barriers, the ethnographic studies provide richer cultural in-depth also. However, gaps in the literature include a lack of interventions for specific tribes, such as the Mannan community in Kerala, India, and the integration of indigenous knowledge, which is only possible through cultural inclusiveness. The findings suggest that future research should prioritize interdisciplinary collaboration and teacher training in multilingual education (MLE) through ethnographic methods for developing culturally sensitive interventions. These recommendations aim to contribute to developing more culturally inclusive educational practices and policies in the primary education curricula.</p> <p><i>This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.</i></p> <div></div>
<p>Corresponding Author:</p> <p>Jemy Jose Mathew Department of Education, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) Bengaluru, Karnataka 560029, India Email: jemy.mathew@res.christuniversity.in</p>	

1. INTRODUCTION

The right to education is a basic human right that helps people to develop their socio-economic familial conditions. It is an effective tool when it comes to the development of the oppressed, specifically tribal and indigenous people who are residing in the deep forest. It is indeed an effective tool for making them inclusive to societies by developing their economic conditions [1]. Tribal people at the global level face more difficulties while trying to access high-quality education, which includes problems like cultural differences with the general educational system [2], language barriers as they have different dialects [3], institutional discrimination [4], and geographical isolation [5]. Around 8.6% of India's total population belongs to tribal communities [6], and many still reside in the deep forests or some underdeveloped areas, which sometimes makes them have difficulties accessing education. While numerous studies can be found on infrastructural issues, there is limited literature focusing on the sociocultural factors affecting the academic performance of tribal students. This gap in research requires further investigation to provide tribally specific insights within a broader research agenda. Hence, this scoping review aims to analyze the literature on the primary education of tribals and to explore the

potential and application of ethnographic research methodologies in the field of primary education related to tribal people.

Ethnographic research, as a qualitative research approach [7], is a type of research in which the researcher observes a specific group of individuals by participating in their day-to-day activities in their natural settings to document and understand their culture, beliefs, and practices [8], which is vital for investigating complex social processes like schooling. So, this kind of research can be used to obtain in-depth knowledge about the procedures, practices and results from educational settings that cannot be obtained from quantitative research [9]. One of the key advantages of utilizing the ethnographic research method is that the researcher can capture and document the rich experiences of the people [10] by spending a long time in the field [11] by engaging/participating with people [12] observing their practices on day-to-day life [13], and leading interviews and focus group discussions [14]. Subsequently, the ethnographers can understand the social and cultural settings where education takes place [15]. For instance, when an ethnographer starts his/her research on elementary education in a tribal community, he/she could watch the activities in the classroom, communicate with the students, teachers and other non-teaching staff, and collect diverse perspectives. Also, he/she will attend community gatherings to get insight into the larger socio-cultural familial elements affecting educational results.

Another benefit of ethnographic research is the researcher can record people's subjective experiences [16]. To measure educational outcomes, standardized examinations are utilized in quantitative approaches; however, they may fail to reflect/sometimes ignore the implicit or hidden facets of education [17], [18]. In contrast, the ethnographic study can offer more comprehensive outcomes of learning by looking at the emotional, social, and cultural components [19], which is crucial for comprehending the experiences of marginalized groups like tribals or indigenous people who come from different cultural backgrounds including the dialects of their own communities. For example, an ethnographer who conducts a study on education among a tribe will explore how those cultural beliefs can influence a learner's performance and could observe like a student practising a new skill by engaging in cultural activities like storytelling and crafts, that are not generally included in the traditional school curriculum.

By providing insights into the needs and experiences of the students of these communities, ethnographic research can influence educational policy and practice. Educators and policymakers can use ethnographic research to determine the pros and cons of those educational techniques that are currently used and also can develop more effective interventions that are fit to the demands of the students and, thereby, the community. For example, a researcher can use an ethnographic approach to reveal the necessity of multilingual education (MLE) that can integrate regional languages, the tribals' dialects, and their customs. Even though ethnographic research still has many benefits, researchers are still neglecting to do so due to the demand of a long time and money, which makes it difficult to obtain financial support from the institutions [20]. Furthermore, a common misconception is that ethnographic study is less precise than quantitative methods, even though it requires high competence and methodological rigor. To overcome these challenges, it is crucial for educators, policymakers, and researchers to recognize the significance of ethnographic research in education and to invest in its advancements [21]. This approach requires extensive training and sustained support by creating a positive environment among researchers, educators, and communities to ensure ethical research practices that honor local cultures. Moreover, conventional criteria for evaluating ethnographic research should be re-examined to appreciate the unique and irreplaceable knowledge that this approach can offer.

2. METHOD

Scoping reviews aim to evaluate the scope of literature on a specific topic and can provide a clear picture of the volume of literature and studies [22]. In addition to answering the questions of who, where, and how, it offers a detailed overview of the relevant research by explaining what and why explanations of inquiry [23]. The present study is based on Arksey and O'Malley's framework [24]. Arksey and O'Malley's framework includes six stages, the 6th being optional: i) identifying the research question, which is generally broad in nature; ii) identifying relevant studies, a process that is as comprehensive as possible; iii) study selection, with the establishment of inclusion/exclusion criteria, based on familiarity with the literature; iv) charting the data, a stage that includes sifting, charting, and sorting information according to key issues and themes; v) collating, summarizing, and reporting the results, which provides both a descriptive and numerical summary of the data and a thematic analysis; and vi) a consultation exercise, an additional, parallel step involving key stakeholders to inform and validate study findings [25].

2.1. Identifying research questions

The researchers sought to examine the primary education of tribal students and the challenges in developing these people to increase the enrollment rate and reduce the dropout rate. The researchers proposed the following research questions to collect the literature related to the study.

- What are the research designs used in the studies related to the primary education of tribals?

- What are the findings of the studies related to tribals' primary education?
- What are the strengths and limitations of the methodologies used in these studies?
- What are the major gaps in the current literature on the primary education of tribal communities?
- How can ethnographic research methodologies be applied to develop more effective educational interventions for the tribal groups?

2.2. Identifying relevant studies

The researchers used a systematic search strategy based on the research questions to locate the most comprehensive studies on tribal primary education. We developed key terms to search on databases such as Scopus, JSTOR, and ERIC. The key concepts or search strings used to guide the search are outlined in Table 1. Hand-searching review articles and references sections also identified some relevant studies.

As per the Arksey and O'Malley framework, the inclusion and exclusion criteria helped compile the relevant studies for review. During the initial and later phases, eligibility criteria were applied iteratively. The research articles published after 2015 were included in this review as they could provide insight into the recent progress in the primary education of tribals. The criteria for inclusion and exclusion are shown in Table 2.

2.3. Study selection

The 406 research articles were identified which were published from 2015 to 2024 in Scopus, JSTOR, and ERIC on primary education of tribal students using the pre-set keywords (the search string). The other filters used for determining the research articles are open access, full text, the language of the article, and the subject of education. Many studies were found repetitive and irrelevant, and 365 papers were excluded. After screening the title and the abstract of the research articles, 41 articles were sought for retrieval. Following the full-text screening, 8 articles were assessed for eligibility, and 33 were removed during data extraction. In the end, by including 11 relevant articles from other sources, 19 articles were selected for the review. The preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) flow diagram of the screening and selection of the studies for the review is shown in Figure 1.

2.4. Charting the data

The data was chartered in alignment with the steps of Arksey and O'Malley's framework of scoping review. The 19 studies were selected after the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The details of those studies according to the author, year, location, research design, findings of the study, and the limitations are given in Table 3 (see in Appendix) [26]–[44].

Table 1. Key search terms

Sl. No.	Key terms
Term 1	"Primary education" AND tribes
Term 2	"Primary education" AND indigenous

Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criterion	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Time period	Published after 2015	Published before 2015
Publication Type	Research articles on the primary education of tribal students were published in peer-reviewed journals	Discussions, newspaper articles, editorials, PhD thesis, reviews, meetings, and abstracts of conference reports on the level of tribal education
Focus	Studies related to primary education on tribal students	Studies other than primary education on tribal students
Language	English	Any language other than English

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Collating, summarizing, and reporting the results

In this section, the researchers provide a summary of findings from the reviewed studies on the primary education of tribal students. The systematic search identified 406 studies from different databases, of which 19 met the inclusion criteria. These studies were sourced from Scopus (n=56), JSTOR (n=305), ERIC (n=45) and other sources (n=8). The geographical locations of these studies are India (n=13), Turkey (n=1), Nigeria (n=1), Australia (n=1), Kenya (n=1), Mexico (n=1) and Ethiopia (n=1). Most of the studies were conducted in Asia, primarily in India, and the absence of literature from South America and Europe was observed.

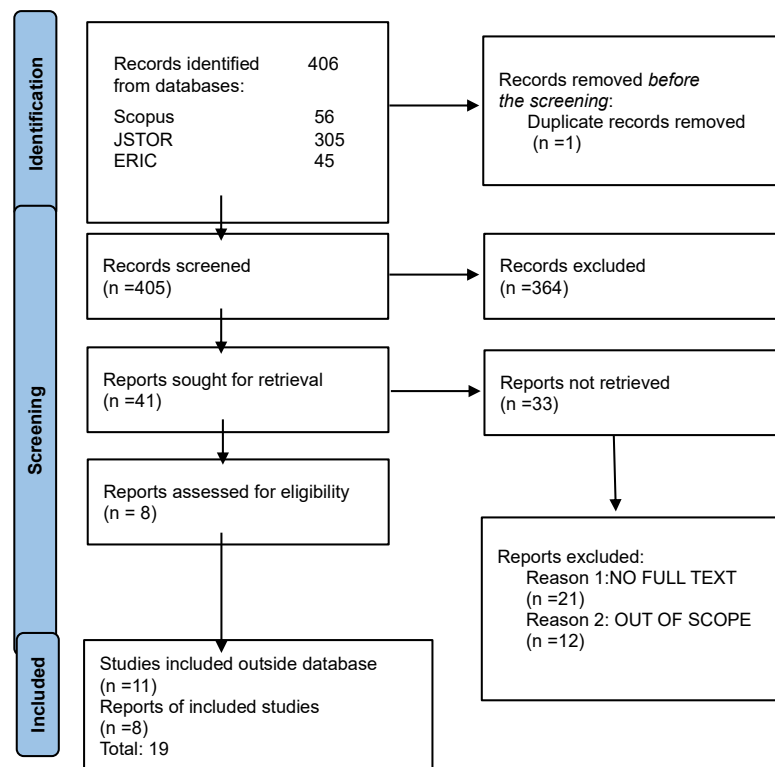


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram of the screening and selection of the studies for the review

- R.Q.1. What are the research designs used in the studies related to the primary education of tribals?

This review highlights that a diverse range of methodologies has been utilized in the studies related to the primary education of tribals, reflecting the complexity and multifaceted nature of the subject. Of the 19 relevant and selected research studies reviewed, 4 used descriptive survey designs [26]–[29], and three utilized descriptive methods [30]–[32]. The primary goal of these 7 studies was to document enrollment patterns, gender differences, and educational accessibility in tribal areas and rely on quantitative data from official records. In contrast, 4 studies utilized ethnographic methods [33]–[36], offering in-depth, culturally contextualized insights through participant observation and interviews and another 4 studies adopted mixed-method research design [37]–[40], integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to understand the issues comprehensively. Also, 2 case studies [41], [42] and 2 secondary research designs [43], [44] were found. The pie-chart diagram for the methodologies utilized in the selected studies on the primary education of tribals is shown in Figure 2.

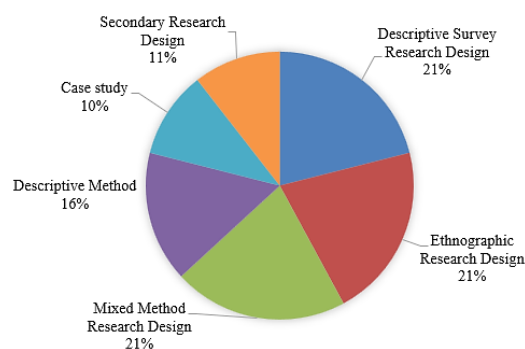


Figure 2. Pie chart diagram for the methodologies utilized in the selected studies on the primary education of tribals

- R.Q.2. What are the findings of the studies related to tribals' primary education?

The outcomes of the studies on the primary education of tribal communities reveal several critical insights and recurring issues. A notable finding is that MLE teachers are not prioritized in non-MLE schools,

leading to an emphasis on infrastructure over effective teaching strategies [41]. Although MLE teaching does not immediately impact students' studies, low retention remains a significant concern among tribal students, with gender-specific differences indicating lower retention rates for girls [26], [27], [29]. The studies highlight various problems, including low retention rates influenced by gender, category, and area-specific differences [26]. Ethnographic data analysis underscores the daily life routines and socio-economic aspects impacting tribal education [33]. A decline in tribal enrollment is observed at both primary and upper primary stages, exacerbated by cultural, social, and occupational forces [27]. Furthermore, the multilingual nature and lack of instructional materials hinder the use of the mother tongue in education, though high mean scores evidence the feasibility of mother tongue education [28]. Specific challenges include financial shortages, difficulty comprehending taught subjects, and disinterest in studies, contributing to high dropout rates. Parents' occupation and illiteracy also affect children's academic achievement and enrollment in ashram schools [30]. Low participation and high dropout rates are also noted among nomadic pastoralist children, influenced by school intrinsic factors such as distance and lack of facilities [31].

Efforts to integrate indigenous knowledge into the curriculum show promise in improving literacy rates [34] and classroom participation [40]. However, cultural and economic factors and curriculum irrelevance hinder educational success [42]. Pastoral parents often prioritize economic benefits over daughters' education, and challenges such as poverty, transportation issues, and fear of animals contribute to irregular attendance. Special coaching needs and dissatisfaction with hostel conditions further complicate the educational experience for tribal students [36]. Government schemes and tribal development agencies strive to improve education and literacy rates but face challenges related to resource flow and administration [43]. Policies often lack a focus on practical skills, limiting their effectiveness. Historical marginalization and limited post-independence assimilation policies contribute to ongoing exploitation concerns and discontent within tribal communities [44].

- R.Q.3. What are the strengths and limitations of the methodologies used in these studies?

The research studies on the primary education of tribals utilized different research methodologies, and each has its own strengths and weaknesses. The descriptive studies, including descriptive survey research, were used majorly in the studies related to the tribals and provided insights into trends like multilingual nature, high dropout rates, enrollment, retention, and area-specific differences, but often lacked detailed solutions [26]–[32]. The other method used was the ethnographic research method; it offered rich context and deep cultural understanding but struggled with scattered data [33]–[36]. In mixed-method research, limited sample sizes and lack of intervention impacted the analysis and reduced the generalizability design [37]–[40]. Some research was done on secondary research, resulting in the limited potential for new findings [43], [44].

The capacity of ethnographic design to offer a rich, detailed cultural context [34], something other designs sometimes fail to do, sets it apart from other approaches. The socioeconomic circumstances and day-to-day activities [33] of tribal tribes are extensively examined in ethnographic studies, providing valuable insights into these communities' particular difficulties. Reframing the educational systems sensitive to cultural differences is emphasized by this design's ability to capture the lived experiences and cultural subtleties of tribal children and their families [35]. A degree of depth and context that is crucial for tackling the intricate problems of primary education in tribal groups is provided by ethnographic research, notwithstanding its difficulties with data organisation and interview dynamics [36].

- R.Q.4. What are the major gaps in the current literature on the primary education of tribal communities?

While reviewing the articles on primary education among tribal communities on a global level, it was revealed that there were studies that emphasized low retention rates, and dropouts, but were not able to provide proper interventions that address all those issues [26], [27], [31]. For the Mannan community, there was a study that highlighted significant challenges like travelling issues and infrastructure, for accessing education, but there is a lack of particular strategies to solve these barriers [32]. Additionally, while cultural integration is relevant for the education of tribes [34], [35], no studies have explored how the culture of Mannan communities can be included in the curriculum to improve engagement and retention. Also, data limitations and potential barriers were seen in some studies on tribal education [36], [38], [42]. Moreover, financial instability [30] and parental occupation [39] were also noted, but researchers lack a proper solution to mitigate these challenges. Also, it is noted that the Mannan community primary education has not been explored thoroughly in research studies to ensure that educational policies and practices are sensitive to their socio-economic, cultural, and familial settings.

- R.Q.5. How can ethnographic research methodologies be applied to develop more effective educational interventions for tribal groups?

The ethnographic research approach can be used in educational interventions for tribal/indigenous groups such as the Mannan community, providing insight and an in-depth understanding of their sociocultural environmental context. Integrating culture into the curriculum (e.g., traditional practices and storytelling, can be included in the school curricula) to make more effective student engagement by improving literacy rates [33], [34]. Usually, studies help in identifying the different barriers to accessing education like language

barriers, physical inaccessibility, and dropouts, [26], [31], [38] but in ethnographic research, by engaging with the students, family, and teachers, the researcher can explore not only just logical barriers but also the other social and psychological factors like attitude towards education, the attitude of the teachers and other members of the school towards the students from the tribal communities [36]. Also, engaging with parents and community leaders can help the ethnographer develop interventions, including capacity-building programs for parents to support their children's educational needs [35].

3.2. Discussion

Through Arksey and O'Malley's framework [24], the scoping review sought to investigate different methodologies utilized and their limitations and gaps in literature during the research on the primary education of tribals. Key search terms were developed to search in databases such as Scopus, JSTOR, and ERIC, and 406 research articles were identified, of which 19 articles remained after the study selection procedure. The review of these studies revealed a predominance of descriptive survey design and mixed-method research design and rigorously documented structural barriers such as insufficient infrastructure and MLE challenges, but have often been too shallow to reveal the thick socio-cultural nuances that make tribal learning environments different from mainstream schools and districts.

Ethnographic methods provided richer insights into the cultural and socio-economic factors influencing tribal students' educational experiences. For example, Studies conducted on the Santal communities in West Bengal [36] show the impact of fear of animals, classes open on festival days, transportation issues and traditional childhood challenges on educational accessibility. It also allows for a deeper exploration of parents' attitudes towards education, aspirations and practical challenges by providing valuable insights into their cultural identity. Similarly, another study highlighted how integrating indigenous knowledge and Turkana mother tongue stories in pastoralist schools improves literacy rates [34]. In contrast, descriptive research designs identified gender disparity in retention rates without exploring deeper socio-cultural and other policy factors that might affect their rates [26], [27], [29]. Findings from the selected studies for the review emphasise that low retention rates, gender disparities, and socio-economic hardships are common in tribal primary education. The observed results align with previous research on indigenous education, suggesting that culturally relevant approaches improve educational outcomes. Also, the study conducted on indigenous students from Mexico [35] provides a longitudinal insight into identity formation within inequitable societal structures. It also highlighted the need to restructure/reframe the educational setting so that ethnic identities are recognised and can be emphasized rather than masked by equality discourse. An ethnographic study seems to be the best-fit solution for a holistic research approach, wherever the socio-cultural background of the sample is a necessary factor, as it includes daily activities or the lived experiences of the participants.

A significant gap remains in the literature regarding educational support for the marginalised. For instance, the Mannan community is one such community that is understudied and needs more research on social and cultural factors affecting primary school students, even though one study has noted the challenges faced by them, such as the physical inaccessibility, requiring students to travel more than 5 km to schools [30], [45], [46]. Similarly, a study conducted in Tripura pointed out the language barriers, economic difficulties, and inadequate infrastructure [31], yet its cross-analysis with the existing policies has not been discussed. Hence, further studies must be conducted on such communities worldwide, focusing on how indigenous knowledge and other cultural practices can be effectively integrated into educational frameworks to improve engagement and retention through interdisciplinary tie-ups. MLE for teachers and ethnographic studies should be set as integrated modules for the betterment of the educational needs of tribal students [47]–[50].

3.3. Limitations of the study

To begin with, articles that were published before 2015 were disregarded. Thus, earlier foundational research that could possibly provide a global historical context or faith development of tribal education was not included. Also, abstracts of conference reports led by experts, newspapers, editorials, PhD theses, and reviews were not considered. This made it hard for alternative viewpoints to be included, and therefore, newness or less professional evidence of the challenges faced by tribal communities in accessing education was also left out. Moreover, the review only studied primary educational research without touching on secondary or higher education studies, which might have a more comprehensive image of youth going through school. The research excluded scientific publications that were not in English, which is a flaw because it may result in ignoring the research done in local languages and in regional contexts as well, which might provide relatively deeper cultural and locally related insights, especially where English is not the major language.

3.4. Educational implications

The findings of this scoping review have significant practical implications for improving educational outcomes among indigenous and tribal communities. Outcomes of an ethnographic research highlight the need

for culturally responsive teaching by integrating tribal dialects, traditions, and their knowledge systems into the primary education system. The research with evidence states that in order to achieve better educational outcomes, teachers should be able to engage with the students in much deeper aspects, and for that, they should be trained in MLE and culturally inclusive pedagogies. Furthermore, policy reforms must ensure community engagement by incorporating parents and local leaders in the planning and implementation of educational initiatives. Infrastructure improvements, such as accessible schools and mobile classrooms, are essential to address geographical and logistical barriers, particularly in communities like the Mannan tribe. In future, utilizing ethnographic methods within educational research and policy-making to ensure nuanced, context-specific, customisable strategies that go beyond generalised schemes. Educational practices should also prioritize interdisciplinary collaboration, digital innovation tailored to indigenous contexts, and the development of monitoring frameworks that measure not only academic achievement but also cultural relevance and social inclusion. These steps will contribute to more inclusive, effective, and sustainable educational policies for marginalised tribal populations.

3.5. Suggestions for future research

Future research should focus on in-depth follow-up, ethnographic studies that examine how integrating indigenous knowledge and cultural practices impacts learning outcomes over time. There is a critical need for in-depth, tribe-specific research, particularly on unexplored groups like the Mannan community. The researchers should explore how familial, linguistic, and cultural factors shape educational access and retention, thereby affecting educational sustainability. Comparative studies between different tribal groups and between tribal and refugee or migrant communities could also uncover broader insights into marginalisation in education. Additionally, future studies should explore the role of technology and digital tools in promoting inclusive, culturally grounded education in remote areas and to ensure their place in a future educational environment. Collaborations across disciplines such as education, anthropology, and public policy are essential to design and evaluate holistic interventions that are both culturally and contextually appropriate.

4. CONCLUSION

Research on the primary education of tribals is carried out using a variety of methodologies such as descriptive survey studies, ethnographic methods, and mixed-method research designs. It was found that ethnographic research design can offer an in-depth cultural context and even reveal the sociocultural factors affecting educational access. Key findings include low retention rates, gender disparities, inadequate facilities, and language barriers. Gaps in the literature included studies on teaching science subjects in tribal languages, a lack of comparison research with other groups, such as refugees, and long-term educational impacts. The Mannan community, the tribal community from Kerala, remains understudied and requires more studies on the socio-cultural familial factors that can influence their primary education. The findings suggest that further studies should focus on interdisciplinary collaborations and teacher training in MLE by integrating indigenous knowledge into curricula to create sustainable educational outcomes for the tribal students of primary schools.

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Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	O	E	Vi	Su	P	Fu
Jemy Jose Mathew	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Kennedy Andrew	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓		✓		
Thomas														

C : Conceptualization

M : Methodology

So : Software

Va : Validation

Fo : Formal analysis

I : Investigation

R : Resources

D : Data Curation

O : Writing - Original Draft

E : Writing - Review & Editing

Vi : Visualization

Su : Supervision

P : Project administration

Fu : Funding acquisition

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors state no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The authors confirm that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article.

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APPENDIX

Table 3. Summary of selected studies

Authors	Year/location	Research design	Findings	Limitations
[26]	2023, India	Descriptive survey research design	Low retention rates, gender-specific differences in retention rates and area-specific differences among tribal students.	Limited focus on solutions to improve retention rates.
[27]	2022, India	Descriptive survey research design	Tribal enrollment declines at primary and upper primary stages. A significant tribal portion shares gender disparity in enrollment. Cultural, social, and occupational forces contribute to tribal enrollment decline. Mobile schools should be functional and increased in tribal areas.	Lack of detailed discussion on specific interventions for improvement.
[28]	2021, Nigeria	Descriptive survey research design	The multilingual nature and lack of instructional materials hinder mother tongue use. Language acquisition devices aid in learning the mother tongue first. Mean scores show a high extent of mother tongue feasibility in education.	The structured questionnaire may not capture the nuanced or in-depth perspectives of the participants.
[29]	2021, India	Descriptive survey research design	Tribal students have low retention rates at the upper primary stage. Gender disparity in retention rates observed, girls have lower rates. Zone Hariganwan has the lowest retention rates compared to other zones.	The study focuses on enrollment and retention rates without exploring deeper socio-cultural, economic, or policy-related factors that might affect these rates.

Table 3. Summary of selected studies (continue)





Authors	Year/location	Research design	Findings	Limitations
[30]	2020, India	Descriptive method	Students in both upper primary and lower primary levels of Mannan Community face physical inaccessibility, which is more prevalent in upper primary. Also, they must travel more than 5 km to reach the school. In addition, the reasons for the dropout are financial shortage, difficulty comprehending taught subjects, and disinterest in studies. Parents' occupation influences the academic achievement of children in primary education.	The lack of information on school dropouts hinders comprehensive data collection.
[31]	2020, India	Descriptive method	Tribal students face challenges like language barriers, economic difficulties, inadequate infrastructure, parental attitudes, and gender inequality.	Lacks in-depth analysis, which could provide better insights into how issues like language barriers or economic challenges affect students over time.
[32]	2018, India	Descriptive method	Tribal literacy lags behind, especially in Odisha and Mayurbhanj districts. Government schemes aim to improve tribal education and literacy rates. Tribal development agencies face challenges in resource flow and administration.	Lacks deep analysis or long-term solutions. Emphasizes ICT without fully addressing cultural or educational intersections.
[33]	2022, Turkey	Ethnographic research design	Since the parents of refugee students do not know Turkish, they cannot make sense of the Turkish education given to their children at the TEC. Also, the students learned Turkish by playing PUBG with Turkish players outside the temporary accommodation centre.	Data organisation challenges due to scattered information.
[34]	2019, Kenya	Ethnographic research design	Integrating indigenous knowledge in pastoralist schools improves literacy rates. Turkana mother tongue stories enhance literacy instruction in Turkana County.	Limited focus on broader educational system challenges.
[35]	2019, Mexico	Ethnographic research design	It is essential to reframe the educational system so that ethnic identities are recognized and emphasized rather than masked by equality discourse.	Power dynamics during interviews are challenging to report and analyze the data.
[36]	2018, India	Ethnographic research design	Classes during the festivals, poverty, transportation problems, and fear of animals are the reasons for the irregularity of the students in the schools. The study also reveals the need for special coaching and the hosteller's dissatisfaction with their hostels' menu, cleanliness, and hygiene.	Challenges in organizing the data.
[37]	2021, Australia	Mixed-method research design	Year 3/4 class showed significant growth in mathematical achievement. Indigenous mathematics education programs in Australia lack consistent improvement.	Frequent student movement between classes and in and out of the school resulted in incomplete data, affecting the consistency of the findings.
[38]	2020, India	Mixed-method research design	Primary education lacks mother tongue use, hindering academic success. Teachers use the Odia language, impacting tribal children's learning. Parents' illiteracy affects children's education and enrollment in ashram schools.	Limited sample size, potential bias, and lack of random selection.
[39]	2019, India	Mixed-method research design	The results indicated five reasons for students' dropouts in the primary level of education: economic conditions, lack of interest, housework, family responsibilities, and parents' migration from one place to another.	Lack of detailed analysis on the impact of interventions.
[40]	2018, India	Mixed-method research design	Indigenous knowledge inclusion enhances tribal students' classroom participation. Teachers support integrating traditional knowledge into the curriculum for students' interests.	Lack of detailed analysis on the impact of indigenous knowledge.
[41]	2017, India	Case study	MLE teachers are not prioritised in non-MLE schools. Focus on infrastructure. Students show no immediate impact on studies with MLE teaching.	The study does not track students' progress over time, which would be essential for assessing the long-term effects of the program.

Table 3. Summary of selected studies (continue)





Authors	Year/location	Research design	Findings	Limitations
[42]	2019, Ethiopia	Case study	Low enrollment, male-biased, and dropout among pastoralist children. Cultural, economic, and school factors affect primary education participation. Pastoral parents view daughters as a source of income, hindering education. Challenges include curriculum irrelevance and low literacy rates among pastoralists	Limited access to specific govt data on pastoralist's children.
[43]	2015, India	Secondary research design	Tribal literacy lags behind, especially in Odisha and Mayurbhanj districts. Government schemes aim to improve tribal education and literacy rates. Tribal development agencies face challenges in resource flow and administration.	Focuses on the data from previous sources lacks the data on the current situation.
[44]	2015, India	Secondary research design	Tribal education policies lack practical skills focus, hindering development efforts. ST children face challenges accessing primary education due to distance. Tribal communities were historically marginalized, leading to discontent and revolts. Post-independence policies limited tribal assimilation, leading to exploitation concerns.	Limited assimilation policy restricted cultural considerations in planning.

BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS



Jemy Jose Mathew     is an experienced educator and researcher in the field of education. She is currently pursuing her PhD in Education at CHRIST University, Bengaluru. She also holds UGC NET certification. She has worked as a Junior Project Fellow at NCERT and as an assistant professor at CHRIST Nagar college of Education, Thiruvananthapuram, where she taught mathematics pedagogy. Her research spans tribal education, cultural intelligence, emotional maturity, online learning anxiety, and women's entrepreneurship. She is also the creator of the Emotional Maturity Scale EMS-MJJMPM, published by the National Psychological Corporation. She can be contacted at email: jemy.mathew@res.christuniversity.in.



Kennedy Andrew Thomas     is the director of the Centre for Education Beyond Curriculum (CEDBEC) and professor in education at the School of Education at CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore, Karnataka, India. His Doctor of Philosophy, Master of Education, and Bachelor of Education are from Bangalore University, and his master of arts in psychology is from Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu, India. He has published research articles in international and national journals and authored and co-edited books/chapters of reputable nature. He is a resource person in the fields of research, education, and technology, and he delivered multiple sessions and organized numerous national and international seminars every year under the CEDBEC, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore. He is a research supervisor for Doctoral scholars, and many MPhil studies have been completed under his guidance. He is an active member of multiple professional associations that work on research and education. He can be contacted at email: kennedy.andrew@christuniversity.in.