

**Adivasi Community
Reports series**

*Educational Status of
Adivasi Children
in Gudalur and Pandalur
taluks*

Enrollment in schools

Adivasi Munnetra Sangam

&

Viswa Bharati Vidyodaya Trust

Gudalur. Nilgiris



August 2011

Education of children has become an important agenda of the adivasi community during the last decade. The number of adivasi children enrolling in schools is on the increase. So is the number of children completing high school education and aspiring to go for higher studies. Even though many more challenges – perhaps more difficult – lie ahead, the change that has come about in the educational status of adivasi children in Gudalur valley during the last 15 years is a significant one. From the year 2000, AMS and Vidyodya Trust have been closely monitoring the educational situation of adivasi children in Gudalur and Pandalur taluks through an extensive village education programme. This brief report is an attempt to present some important statistics related to adivasi children studying in schools and colleges.

The primary audience for this status report is the adivasi community members – leaders, volunteers and sangam members in all our adivasi hamlets. And, the main purpose of circulating this report is to communicate the current educational status and the challenges being faced by our children, and importantly, to highlight the issues that need to be addressed by the community. The Tamil version of this document will be circulated to as many villages as possible, through the eight Area Centres of AMS.

Being the first part in the proposed 'Community Status Reports' series, this one focuses only on the enrollment and the number of adivasi children studying in schools. Issues like drop-out of children, quality of education received by children, their ability to clear exams or financial aspects of supporting education etc will be covered in the future reports.

Methodology

All the data in this report were collected by adivasi education coordinators by visiting each AMS sangam village after the school enrollment in 2011. The number of adivasi hamlets in each of the 8 Area Centres (where this village-level survey was conducted) is given in the table below.

AMS Area Centre	No. Villages surveyed
Ayyankolly	32
Devala	21
Devarshola	38
Erumad	60
Gudalur	30
Pattavayal	33
Ponnani	29
Srimadurai	38
Total	281

Assistance of other adivasi team members in the 8 Area Centres of AMS was also responsible for completing the survey and data collection. Consolidation of the data was done by Mr.Gangadharan, Vidyodaya Trust.

No. of Adivasi Children studying in Schools / Colleges

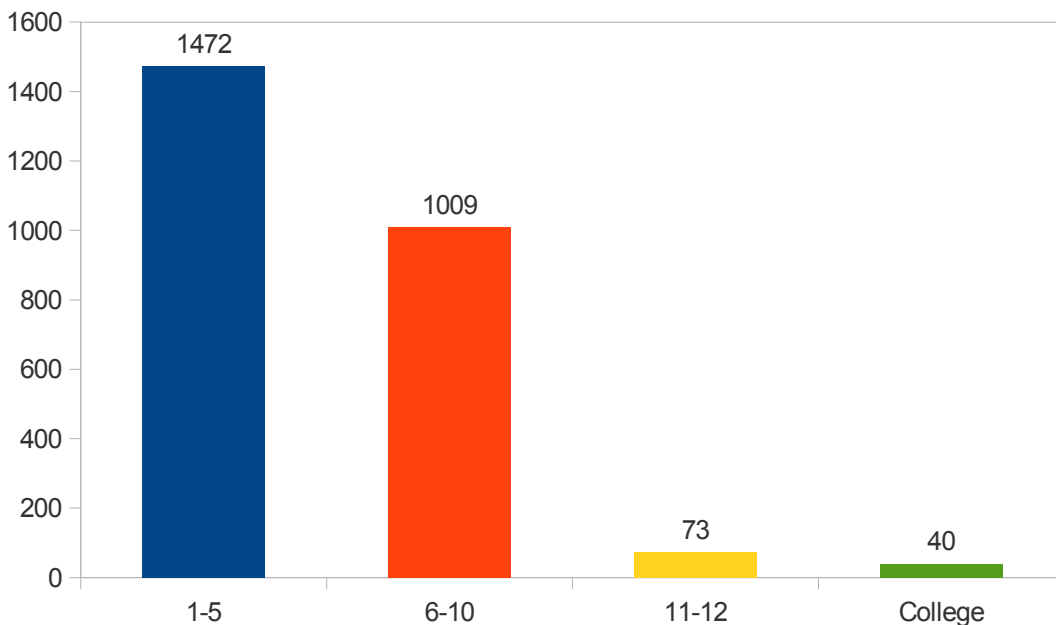
Totally, 2594 adivasi children are pursuing formal education in schools and colleges in the year 2011. When a similar survey was conducted in 2000, only about 737 adivasi children were studying in any school. Tripling of this number in a short period of 10 years is a clear indication that the adivasi community is taking the issue of getting their children education very seriously.

No. of adivasi children studying in 2011
2594
In 2000, this was only
737

Analysis of the reasons for this positive change is beyond the scope of this report and has been discussed with the community leaders many times before. So, let us just highlight that the enrollment of adivasi children has increased significantly and we need to sustain it.

In which standard are our children studying?

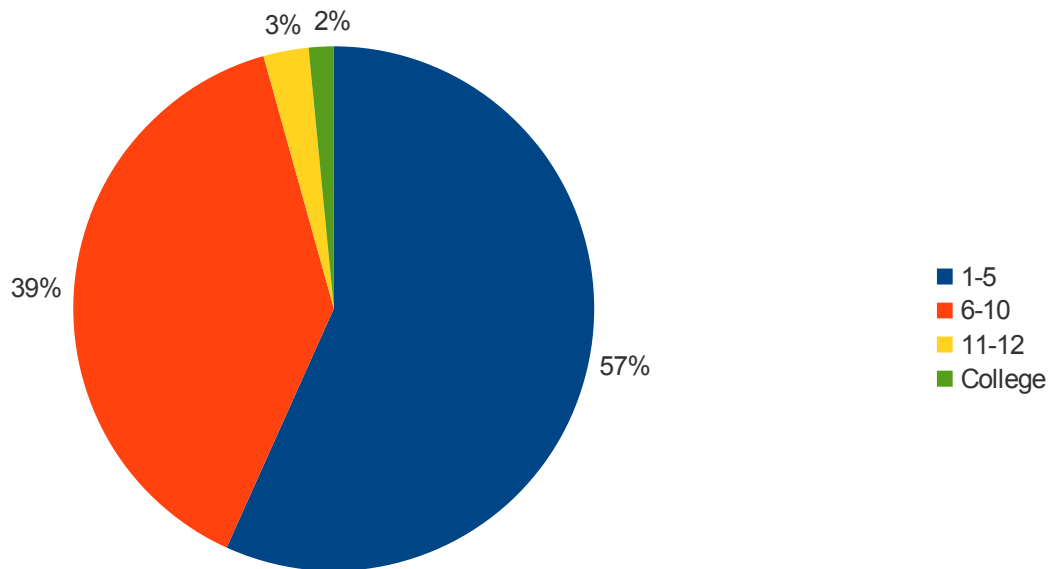
Out of the 2594 children, 2554 children are studying in schools, i.e., from 1st to 12th standards and 40 of them are pursuing college education. Of the school going children, 1472 are studying in the primary classes of 1st to 5th standards, while 1009 are studying in the higher classes of 6th to 10th. This number drastically comes down to a mere 73 in higher secondary classes of 11th and 12th.



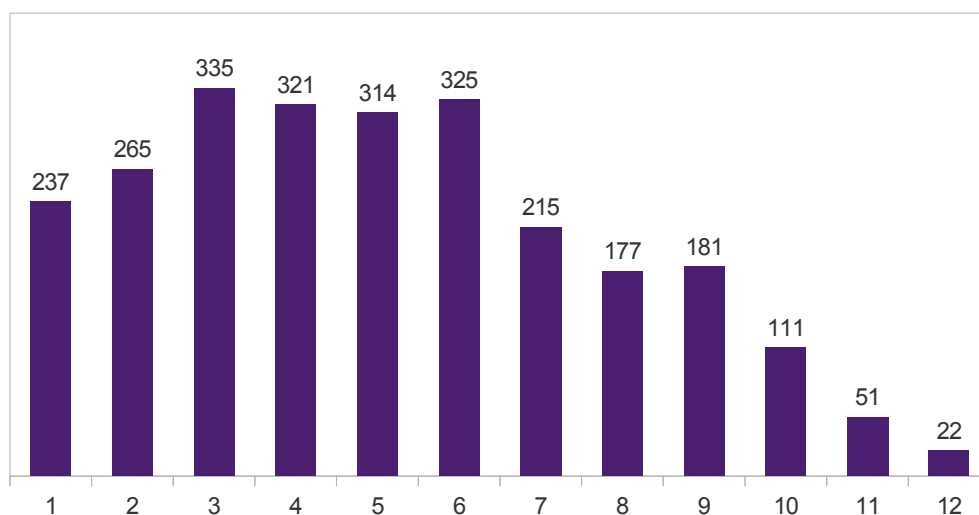
In other words, nearly 57% of our children are studying in primary classes. This comes down to just 3% when the children reach higher secondary classes. The number of children who joined 1st standard in 2001 was 279. Out of these children, after ten years, only 51 are currently studying in the 11th standard.

In 2001, **279** adivasi kids joined in 1st standard.
 Out of this, in 2011, only **51** are studying in 11th class.

Most probably, more than half of them will drop out by next year and only a handful of them will pursue college education in the subsequent years.



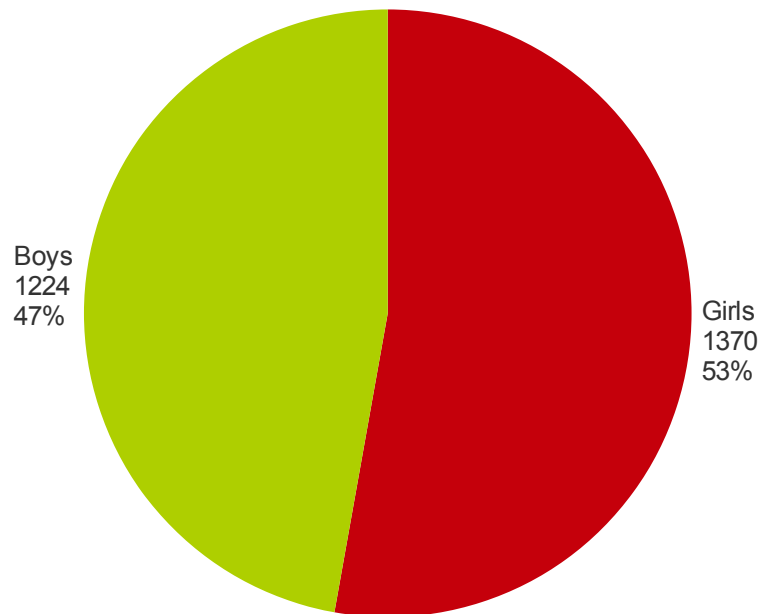
The chart below shows the classwise strength of adivasi students. As we can see, adivasi children tend to drop out of school when they move to higher classes. It is also an indication of the poor quality of education given in the primary classes. As the children are not able to cope with the studies, they tend to drop out of school.



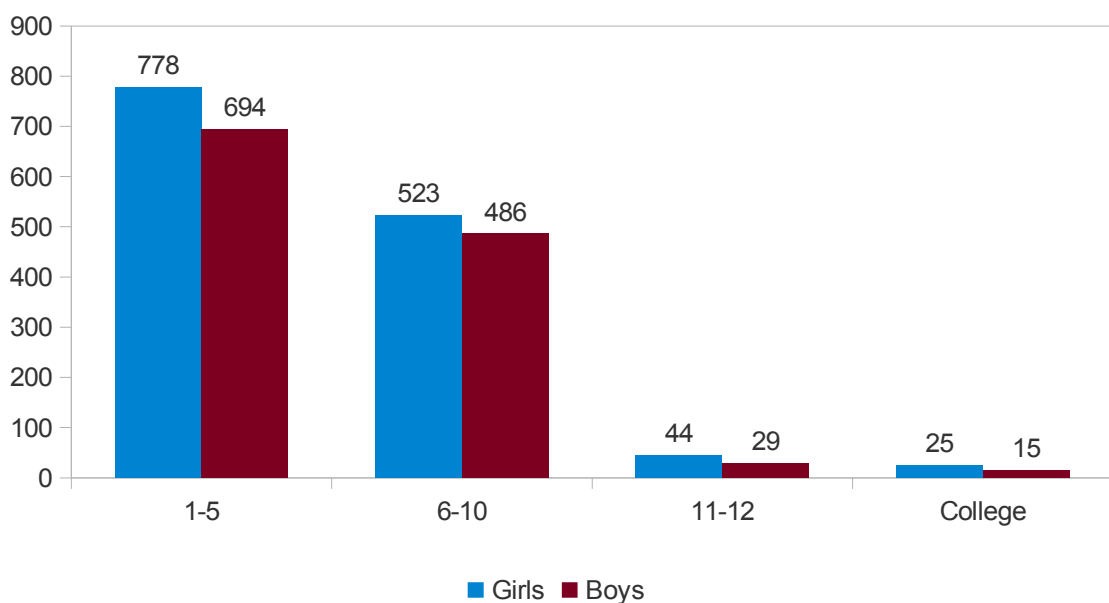
Gender of studying adivasi children

In many communities, families give more importance to the studies of boys than girls. There, girl children drop out of school earlier than boys and are made to take care of household work. What is the status of our adivasi families in this regard?

Fortunately, we do not seem to see such a discrimination against girl children in our community. Right now, actually, more adivasi girls are studying in schools than adivasi boys. The details are given in the chart below.

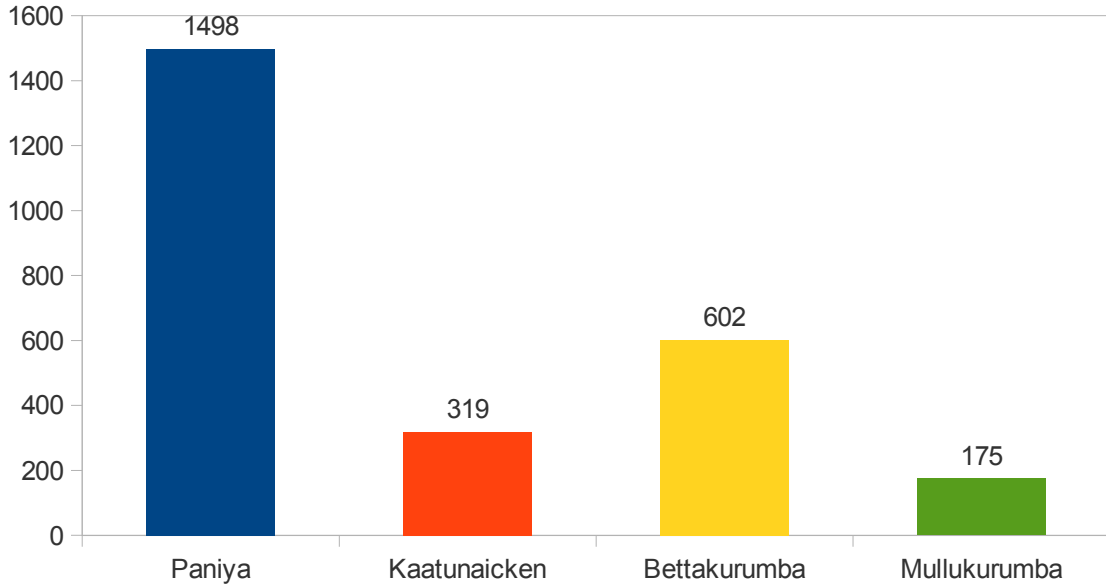


The trend is the same from primary classes to college level. This is a very good indicator and we must strive to keep the importance given to girls' education in future too, as women play a major role in improving the educational status in any community – especially in school education.

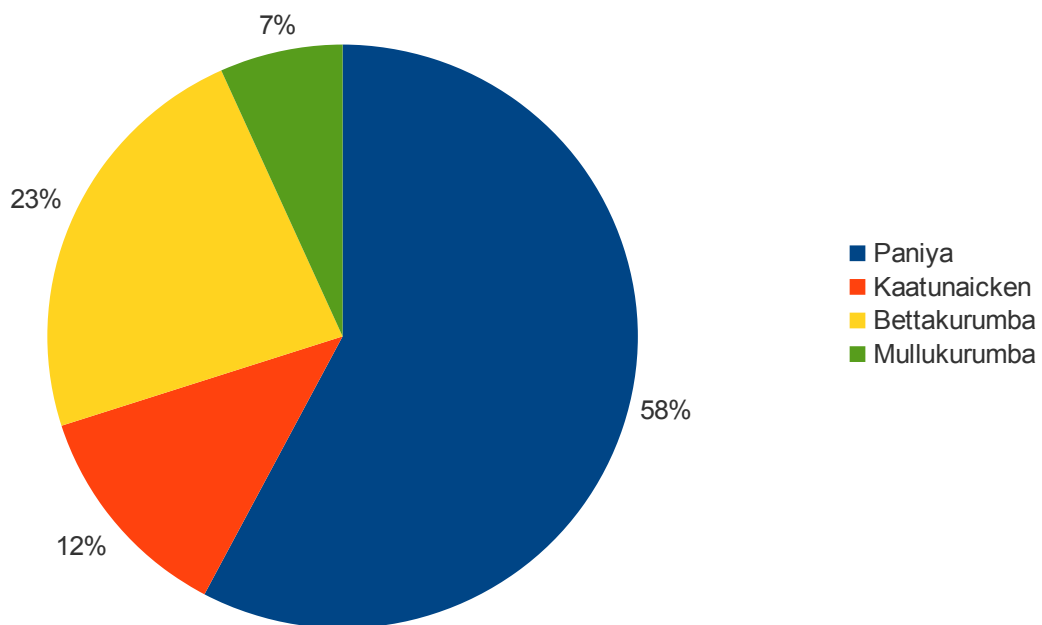


Tribewise Analysis

In Gudalur and Pandalur taluks, children belonging to all the four major tribes are studying in schools. Given the high population of Paniya tribe, it is not surprising that majority of the students belong to Paniya tribe. The tribewise number of students is given in the chart given below :

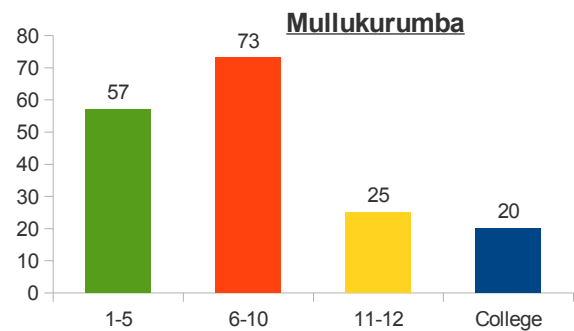
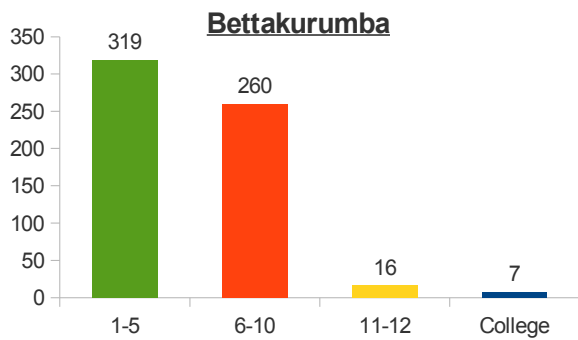
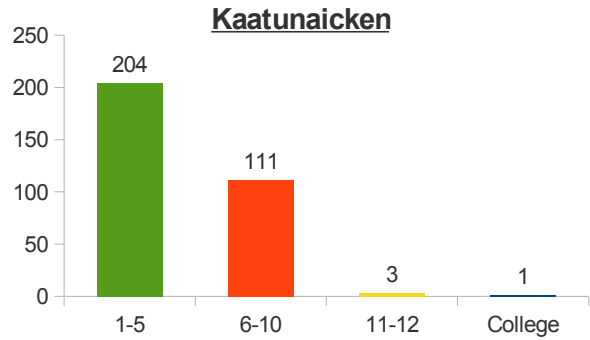
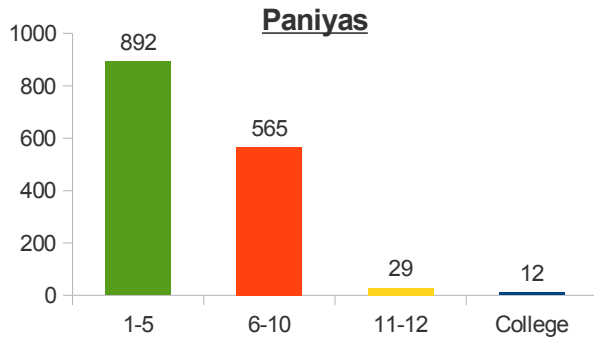


About 58% of the students belong to Paniya tribe, while Bettakurumba tribe comes next with 23%. Kaatunaicken and Mullukurumba tribe children compose of 12% and 7% respectively.



We saw before that adivasi children drop out from schools in big numbers after they reach higher classes. Does this trend remain the same across all the tribes or is there some difference? This issue is discussed in the next section.

In Paniya, Bettakurumba and Kaatunaicken tribes, the number of children studying in higher secondary classes or in colleges is negligible compared to the total number of children studying. But, in Mullukurumba tribe, the percentage of students continuing their education beyond 10th standard is quite significant. The tribewise details of students studying in different classes are given in the following charts.

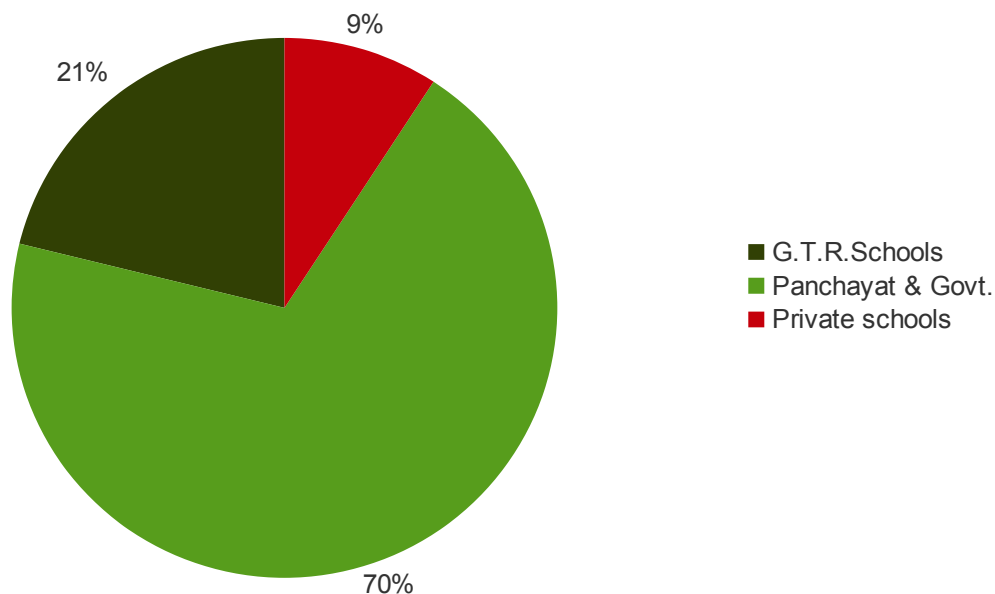


In fact, 50% of all the college going adivasi students are from Mullukurumba tribe, even though the total population of Mullukurumba tribe is estimated to be less than 10% of the total adivasi population. Need for providing support to children belonging to Paniya, Bettakurumba and Kaatunaicken tribes to help pursue higher education is clearly highlighted from these figures.

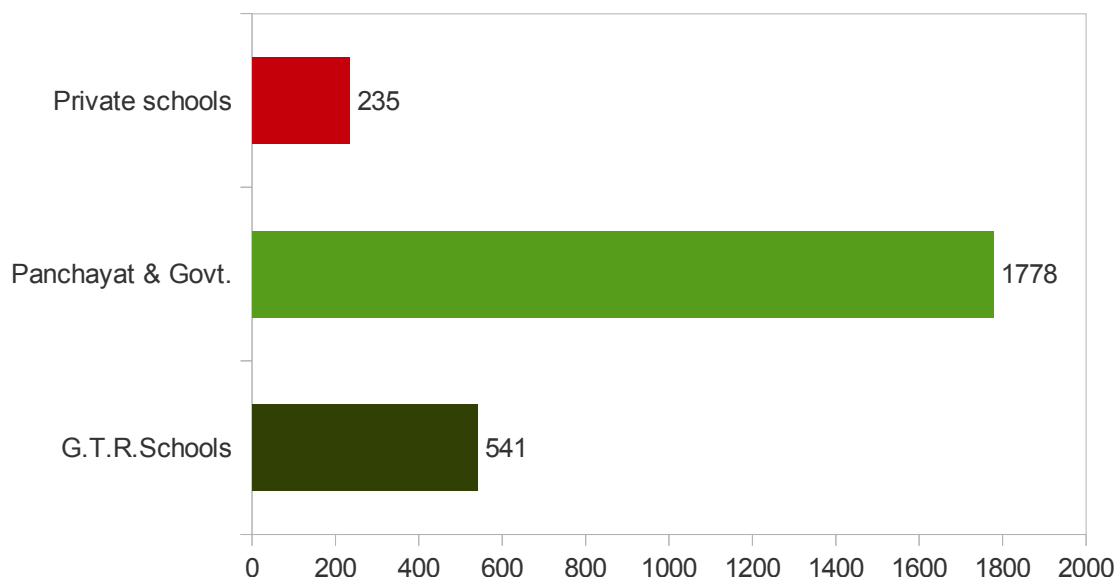
Schools in which our children study

Where are our children studying? There are different kinds of schools in these two taluks. There is a general feeling that adivasis would prefer to get their children admitted in Govt Tribal Residential schools, since food is provided there. Let us have a look at the schoolwise distribution of adivasi children from the surveyed sangam villages. For this section, we have taken the details of only the 2554 children studying in schools; college-going students' numbers are not included for this analysis.

About 70% of adivasi students are studying in Panchayat and Government schools (day-schools) and only 21% of them are studying in the Govt Tribal Residential schools. Majority of the parents think that the education provided in GTR schools is not good and they prefer to send their children to panchayat schools.



A good 235 children are also studying in private schools, paying tuition fees or other charges. Even in villages, where there is a GTR school nearby, many parents seem to prefer to send their children to panchayat / government schools. This is an important indicator that adivasi community wants their children to get good quality education.



Given the huge financial resources Government seems to be allocating to run GTR schools, the community leaders may use this statistics to lobby with the government officials for better utilisation of public funds.

Conclusion

As mentioned in the beginning, this community status report focuses only on the number of adivasi children studying in schools and colleges, their demographic profile on various parameters and the kind of schools they study.

Issues like the quality of education provided, their academic standards, constraints and challenges faced by students pursuing higher education etc. are very important to analyse. Though data related to these issues are available with us, the second part of the report will throw light on them.

The primary objective of preparing and circulating this report is to generate discussion within our community – leaders, volunteers and activists – so that AMS can fine-tune its intervention during the coming years. Everyone's views can be summarised and presented to Government and other policy makers too.