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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank VBVT for giving me the opportunity to evaluate their Adivasi Education Programme. Although evaluating two decades of zealous work in less than two weeks appeared insurmountable, VBVT team members made it possible. My thanks are due to Mr. Ramdas, Mr. Gangadaran and Mr. Surendran for their cooperation and support throughout the process of this evaluation.

My thanks are also due to all the Area Education Coordinators, Village Animators, Village Leaders, Village Education Workers, Teachers and staff of Vidyodaya School, Teacher Trainees and children for participating in meetings and discussions and sharing their views, experiences and insights into the educational initiatives of VBVT.

I offer my thanks to Dr. Shylaja Devi for sharing some vital health data.

Finally, I thank Mr. Stan Thekaekara for his vivid sharing of the vision, trials and the triumphs of ACCCORD and Adivasi Munnetra Sangam.

I found the evaluation process both personally and professionally an invaluable experience.

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05 April 2013.
Vishwa Bharathi Vidoydaya Trust (VBVT), a charitable organization is based in Gudlaur town of the Nilgiris District in Tamil Nadu. The organization has been supporting the education of Adivasi children in Gudalur Block since 1991. VBVT’s education programme covers more than 3,000 children in 289 villages. Sir Ratan Tata and Navajbhai Ratan Tata Trust has been supporting the programme since 1999. To date, the Tata Trust’s donations amount to Rs.1.97 crore.

The education programme of VBVT aims at ensuring completion of education by every Adivasi child beyond primary level, quality of education and supportive cultural environment in educational institutions.

VBVT commissioned this external evaluation in January 2013 to assess the outcomes and the cumulative impact of the education programme. Focusing on the questions below, the evaluation process included a combination of methods and collected quantitative and qualitative data from various sources:

1. What interventions did the programme include?
2. What are the main achievements of the programme?
3. What changes did the programme contribute to at the individual, family and community levels?

ACCORD, a private organization was established for the organization and empowerment of Adivasis and to struggle for their rights. Mobilization of Adivasis around the issues of economic rights and cultural identity resulted in the formation of the powerful Adivasi Munnetra Sangam (AMS), a Taluk level federation of over 300 village level Adivasi Sangams.

While there are other institutions that support health and economic development initiatives of AMS, VBVT supports Adivasi children’s education. The programme had the following key components:
i. Direct interventions with children in the community
ii. Community engagement in education
iii. Vidyodaya resource centre
iv. Vidyodaya open school
v. Vocational placement
vi. Higher education support

The programme, covering nearly 3,000 Adivasi Children in 289 villages has contributed significantly to improve both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of education. In spite of the constraints experienced by Adivasi children in Government Residential Schools and Panchayat Union Schools, more children are enrolled and retained in them.

While ACCORD's strategy of organization and activism has united Adivasis and given them the voice to tackle discrimination and exploitation, community institutions such as ASHWINI and VBVT have improved their health and education status. Together, the initiatives have made them proud and powerful. The future of the education programme and the cultural identity of Adivasis depend on how VBVT will guide them to address the emerging challenges and a couple of inherent contradictions in the programme.
1. Introduction

“People should develop along the lines of their genius and should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture...We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will no doubt be needed, especially in the beginning. But we should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory...We should judge results, not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved.”

Jawaharlal Nehru, 1958

The grand vision of Mr. Nehru above remains unfulfilled in many parts of India, even after several decades. However, in a small pocket of Gudalur in Tamil Nadu State, it has been achieved within a short span of time; thanks to the work of individuals and institutions like Vishwa Bharathi Vidyodaya Trust working with Adivasi Groups there.

Vishwa Bharthi Vidyodaya Trust (VBVT), a charitable organisation is based in Gudalur, Nilgiris District, Tamil Nadu. VBVT has been supporting the education of Adivasi1 children since 1991 with donations received from individuals and philanthropic organisations including Sir Ratan Tata Trust and Navajbai Ratan Tata (Tata Trust).

Tata Trust has been supporting VBVT's initiatives that focused on access, Enrollment, completion and quality of education of Adivasi children in Gudalur and Pandalur Taluks2 of Nilgiris District since 1999. In 2009, Tata Trust approved a three-year grant program that aimed at working intensively in Adivasi communities and improving the social capital. The key elements of the programme that targeted children and youth are: community empowerment, improving the retention and learning levels of children and

---

1 The word that has a political underpinning in Hindi literally means the original inhabitants or indigenous people. The equivalent Tamil word is ‘Pazhankudiyinar’.
2 A word of Arabic origin meaning an administrative division for government revenue purposes.
improving vocational skills and job opportunities for youth. From 2000 to 2012, the Trust has supported VBVT’s various education initiatives to the tune of Rs.1.97 crore under the broad theme of Building Social Capital. Tata Trust’s contribution accounted for 71% of the total expenditure of VBVT on education during the period 2000 to 2012.

In view of the generous support combined with a long-term partnership and a rare opportunity to learn lessons from the educational programmes implemented from 1996 to 2012, VBVT commissioned this evaluation in January 2013. The evaluation’s main focus was the impact of educational programmes on children, youth, families and communities.

Prior to this evaluation, a review (2004) of a special grant made available to consolidate the gains of previous work of VBVT, an Annual Review (2005), an impact evaluation (2008) were conducted. A summary of findings of the reviews and the evaluation are:

- Important to reorganize the tuition centres, improve the documentation of teacher training and strengthening the resource mobilization team.
- Increased coverage
- Increased awareness about education in communities
- Demand for quality education
- Irregular attendance and high dropout in grade 6.
- VBVT contributes towards curriculum development in innovative ways
- Teachers in GTR and Panchayat Union schools have negative attitude towards Adivasi children.
- The impact of VBVT’s work on youth is new to ascertain.

Please see Annex 1 for other important findings and recommendations of the previous evaluations.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) included the following objectives:

a. Impact assessment of VBVT’s work in Gudalur and Pandalur blocks in the field of education, against proposed outcomes and impact indicators set during the
proposal development
b. Cumulative impact of VBVT's work through decade long work on education with tribal communities in the project area
c. Make recommendations based on the study for defining future direction of the work and improving its effectiveness.

1.1 Interpretational description of the ToR

Impact evaluations of development programmes are about measuring long-term social change at the individual, family and community levels. It is widely recognized that social change is a natural, innate, intangible and complex process. However, most evaluators of social change, donors and NGOs, influenced by the ‘Log frame’ model of development approach it from a simple cause and effect thinking. The premise of this model is that development projects are the most effective vehicles of social change. They can be planned, implemented, managed, monitored and evaluated with instruments such as Logical Framework Analysis or a Project Cycle Management (PCM) approach. Such a linear and logical approach undermines and ignores the valuable change processes that take place beneath the surface. Therefore, with the consensus of the VBVT team, the evaluation process began with an imaginative interpretation of the ToR (Annex 2). It helped to achieve more clarity on the purpose meaning and the methodology of the impact evaluation. Here are some salient points that emerged from the consultations with the programme team:

a. **Education is part of life**

Education is part of life and a sub-system of society. It influences other aspects of life, e.g. health, economy and polity and in turn gets influenced by them.

b. **Impact refers to long-term effects**

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is part and parcel of most social development
programmes. While monitoring is a continuous process of tracking activities of the programme, evaluations are periodic; they assess the achievements of ongoing or completed projects or programmes. Impact evaluation is a type of evaluation that assesses the contributions of a programme to the general well being of individuals and communities.

c. Impact evaluation focuses on attributable emergent changes

Impact evaluation focuses on emergent changes, both conscious and unconscious in the conditions of life of individuals, families and communities. Emergent change describes the day-to-day unfolding of life, adaptive and uneven processes of unconscious and conscious learning from experience and the change that results from that.

d. Approach to impact evaluation must be pragmatic

Evaluation of impact requires a pragmatic approach. The methods must be appropriate to the operational context, preoccupations of key stakeholders and the general limitations in terms of time and resources.

1.2 Methods of Evaluation

With the above consensuses, the following methods were applied.

Review of documents

Documents sourced from world wide web, important reports made available by VBVT on VBVT’s work, including reports of previous evaluations, minutes of area meetings kept from 1996, financial reports and documents related to Accord were reviewed and important quantitative and qualitative data were gathered. Basic

---

3 A set of systematically planned development projects and initiatives
health related data were collected from the ASHWINI in Gudalur.

**Group Discussions**

Several group discussions with Village Leaders, Village Animators, children and youth, parents, Vidyodaya schoolteachers and teacher trainees. The main focus of these discussions was VBVT’s interventions, achievements and changes in education and other aspects of life.

**School visits**

Visited one Government Tribal Residential School (Ponnani) and one Panchayat Union primary school (Kadinchankolly) and had conversations with children, teachers and support staff. Visits were also made to the SSA sponsored Residential Centres in Kozhikandy, Manvayal in Srimadurai Area and to the Thottamoola Centre in Vidyodaya School.

**Village Library visits**

Visited the village libraries in Chakkarakulam and Nelliylalam villages of Ponnani Area.

**Study Centre Visit**

Visited the Kootat Study centre which also has a Library

**Visit to Vocational Training Centre**

The evaluation team visited one vocational centre located at Manvayal in Srimadurai Area
Face-to-face interviews

Several face-to-face interviews were conducted with key functionaries of VBVT, Stan Thekkaekara, one of the founders of Action for Community Organisation, Rehabilitation and Development (ACCORD). An attempt to interview the SSA officer was unsuccessful.
2. Background

2.1 ACCORD, AMS and VBVT

The history of Adivasi Munnetra Sangam (AMS) and VBVT is intertwined with that of ACCORD (1986), a private organization founded by a visionary social activist Stan Thekkakara, his wife, Mari and a young Adivasi man, K. T. Subramainian.

ACCORD was established for the organization and empowerment of Adivasis and to struggle for their rights. Mobilization of Adivasis around the issues of economic rights and cultural identity resulted in the formation of the powerful AMS, a Taluk level federation of over 300 village level Adivasi Sangams. In 1987, ACCORD introduced a twin pronged strategy of Activism and Development to address the issues of social exclusion, discrimination and alienation of Adivasis. Health issues, especially malnutrition, high infant and maternal mortality and the problem of debt were addressed effectively through this strategy. For Adivasis’ health care, a separate organization, Association for Health Welfare in the Nilgiris (ASHWINI) was set up in 1991. ASHWINI fulfills two functions: Community health care through community health workers and trained nurses at the Area Level and the Gudalur Adivasi Hospital for referrals.

As there was no one to anchor and take forward ACCORD’s education strategy, it sought the help of VBVT, a charitable trust. It was started in Gudalur town with 35 children as Vidyodaya Matriculation School in 1991 by Ramdas, a lawyer by training and his wife, Rama to provide ‘alternative education’ to non-tribal children, mainly Ramdas and

---

5 Gudalur Adivasi Hospital records show that an infant mortality rate of 250/1000 in 1988 and a maternal mortality rate of 6.2/1000 between 1996-2000.
6 The phrase, ‘alternative education’ common in many States of India in the late ‘70s and ‘80s is comparable to ‘Progressive Education’ in England in the ‘70s. Several ‘alternative schools’ started privately by well-educated and intentioned individuals, partners and friends existed in many states. Other than the schools under J. Krishnamurthy Foundation of India, most alternative schools found in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh were very small in terms of number of children and teachers. A few
Rama’s two children, the children of ACCORD staff and the locals who were interested in VBVT's philosophy and methodology. Both Ramdas and Rama are highly experienced teachers and teacher trainers.

Following ACCORD’s request in 1991, both Ramdas and Rama had been supporting Adivasi children’s education in terms of teacher training and curriculum development. From 1996, VBVT started to focus on Adivasi children’s education by admitting 43 Adivasi children. In the next few years, Vidyodaya School became a full-time Adivasi children’s school. It also became a resource centre for Adivasi teacher training and other educational initiatives in the communities, GTR schools and Panchayat Union schools.

Right from the beginning, ACCORD had a clear vision and a strategy to hand over the control and management of all programmes to Adivasis themselves. As per this vision, AMS formally took over the programmes in 1996 and ACCORD’s role was limited to advisory. As of 1998, AMS represented 20,000 Adivasis. AMS governs technically all programmes, including ASHWINI and VBVT. Please see Annexes 3-A and 3-B for the Organograms.

2.2 The Programme Context

VBVT’s education initiatives cover 289 of the 321 Adivasi villages. It is critical to understand the programme context in order to discern its impact from the myriad of variables. Therefore, this section outlines the geographic, demographic and socio-economic context in which VBVT – Tata Trust programme is implemented and gets influenced.

such nano-schools with grand vision still continue despite the Right to Education Act’s restrictions imposed on them.
2.2.1 External Environment

Although economic inequalities persist, India’s remarkable economic growth for the past twenty years has helped to increase daily wages and reduce poverty both in rural and urban areas. In Gudalur, 71% of the Adivasi household income comes from wages. Average daily wages of men and women in 2007 were Rs.77 and Rs.50 respectively\(^7\). Today, men earn on an average Rs.200 to 250 and women Rs.150 to 200 per day. This increase in wages is said to be contributing to severe alcohol abuse among Adivasis. It is also leading to alcoholism in certain pockets.

In addition to the economic opportunities, the Constitution of India, especially Article 342, protects Adivasis. A number legislations including the Scheduled Tribes and Traditional Forest Dwellers Rights Act of 2006 are aimed at protecting the rights of Adivasis. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs at the centre and the Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department of the Government of Tamil Nadu are implementing various schemes for the welfare of Adivasis in the State with a main purpose of ‘helping’ the Adivasis and Dalits become part of the national development.

As per the revised budget estimate of the Department of Tribal Welfare, Government of Tamil Nadu, Rs.7657 lakhs was earmarked for Tribal Welfare programmes in the State in 2012-‘13. The share of education programmes in this was 15% or Rs.1187 lakhs. Out of the total budget for education, more than 63% was allocated for opening, maintaining and upgrading Government Tribal Residential schools. Tribal welfare programmes in the State are implemented to ‘mainstream’ Adivasis and education is seen as an important means for it. “Government of Tamil Nadu implements several welfare programmes for the socioeconomic and educational development of the Adi Dravidars (Scheduled Castes) and Tribals in the State. The objectives of these programmes is to facilitate the faster socio-economic and educational development of the Adi Dravidars/..."

---

\(^7\) Economy of Adivasis in Gudalur Valley, Just Change Trust, 2007.
Tribals so as to end their social seclusion and economic deprivation and also to speed up the process of integrating them with the national mainstream.”

### 2.2.2 Adivasis of Gudalur

Gudalur is one of the six Taluks of the Nilgiris district. Gudalur Block includes Gudalur and Pandalur taluks. The total population of the Block is 2,23,946 (2001 Census). There are five main groups of Adivasis in the two Taluks. They are: Paniyas, Irulas, Mullu Kurumbas, Kattu Naickas and Bettakurumbas. They are small groups of Scheduled tribes. Only the Kotas who live in the higher regions of the Nilgiris are numerically larger. Tamil Nadu Government considers the Adivasis in Gudalur Block, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups. Earlier, they were known as ‘Primitive’ Tribal Groups (PTG). According to the 2001 census figures, they constituted 6.89% of the total people in the Block. Taluk wise ST population in 1991 in Gudalur and Pandalur is 5.4% and 7.6% respectively.

As per the provisional population data for 2012 collected by VBVT, there are 16,834 Adivasis in its programme area. Please see Tables 1 & 2 for population by area and Adivasi groups VBVT works with. Annex 4 presents the map that shows the 8 VBVT Programme Areas.

In Gudalur and Pandalur Taluks, poverty, illiteracy and powerlessness existed until ACCORD and VBVT started working with Adivasis. “The tribals of lower-Nilgiris – the Moolukurmbas, Paniyas, Bettakurumbas, Kattunaickens and Irulas were a proud people who lived isolated lives in the mountains and densely forested slopes of the Gudalur Valley.

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Table 1. Population of Adivasis in VBVT Programme Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. of villages*</th>
<th>No. of families</th>
<th>Population</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponnani</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>339</td>
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<td></td>
<td>682</td>
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<tr>
<td>Srimadurai</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes main and sub-villages

When the region was opened to tea estates, many of the Paniyas and Kattunaickens were trapped like animals and sold into slavery." Although slavery has been abolished, subjugation, discrimination and exploitation by recently arrived groups of settlers were common until recently. Adivasis’ land was taken away, they were pushed further into the hilly gorges and wilds, and they were forced to work for their oppressors often without payment. The Adivasis did not mind being pushed as long as they had access to the forest. With the coming of the Forest Acts in the mid 1980's, which denied them access to the forest, they had nowhere to go and no one to turn to.

---

9 ACCORD, Towards self reliance, 1996
With the opening up of forest land for tea plantation and horticulture from 1845 and the migration of people from other parts of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Sri Lanka, Adivasis not only lost their access to the forest around them but also their worldview and the pre-agriculture free and subsistent life-style. As a consequence, Adivasis have been forced to become dependent on and get integrated into a ‘modern’ socio-economic and political system that thrives on a cycle of mindless consumption-growth-profit-exploitation.

In Gudalur area nearly 8,000 acres of dense evergreen forests were cleared in 1968 for the government-owned TANTEA Corporation for planting tea. The plantation workers, nearly 5000 of them are mainly repatriates from Sri Lanka.

Their religious worldview was one of considering themselves as part of the total ecosystem and not as superior beings with an exploitative attitude towards bountiful natural resources. The concept of property or of accumulation beyond simple needs was alien to them.
2.2.3 Access to Education

Education remained a low priority for all Adivasi groups before the entry of ACCORD in Gudalur Block. A survey (1981) indicated that out of 25,000 persons, only 1142 (4%) were literates\textsuperscript{12}. Another survey by VBVT in 2000 found that the overall tribal literacy, although low had increased to 25%. Female literacy rate was 19%.

There are 12 GTR schools and 73 Panchayat Union Schools and 24 Private schools in the programme area. The impact evaluation in 2008 observed that access was not a major concern. However, the Annual Review in 2005 commented that children had to walk a distance of 2 to 8 Kilometers to access them.

2.2.4 Access to Health Care

Malnutrition was rampant and maternal death was common in the ‘80s. The situation has changed drastically by the initiatives of ACCORD/AMS. With the introduction of Village Health Worker, ACCORD/AMS ensured access to primary healthcare right at the village level. The Gudalur Adivasi Hospital, the pride of Adivasis serves as a referral centre.

\textsuperscript{12} It is unclear how literacy was defined in the surveys and how it was measured.
3. VBVT Interventions and outcomes

The education programme that VBVT has been implementing from 1991 aims at building social capital. The term has many definitions. Most of them focus on social relations for productive benefits. For example, ‘the ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups and organizations’ and ‘features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.’ VBVT defines it in terms of enhancing the abilities of people such that they can support each other, work together for common purposes. In the Adivasi context and culture, social capital is more appropriate than ‘Human capital’ as it implies an individualistic service that is provided rather than the collective accomplishments of a community or a society as a whole. VBVT views all interventions from a collective perspective that are owned and controlled by the Adivasis themselves.

The programme implemented from 2009 to 2012 included the following key components:

i. Direct intervention with children in the community
ii. Community engagement in education
iii. Vidyodaya resource centre
iv. Vidyodaya open school
v. Vocational placement
vi. Higher education support

VBVT has three main justifications for these interventions: it is unlikely that there will any major improvements in government schools in terms of teachers’ attitude,


organization and operation of schools and the quality of education; children who continue their education beyond primary level must have opportunity for better secondary, higher secondary and post-secondary education; imparting life skills and vocational training to young people.

Table 2: Number of villages and children

Source: VBVT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Villages</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Covered</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6-16 year Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1 Coverage and Enrollment\(^\text{15}\)

The coverage of the programme both in terms of direct and indirect interventions has increased significantly. Table 2 presents the available data. Unfortunately, age specific population and Enrollment data are unavailable for all years\(^\text{16}\). This limits the calculation of actual Enrollment ratio. It also limits the calculation of school completion rates.

The figures for 2011-2012 suggest that 75% of school age children (6 to 16 years) are in schools. If the number of children not enrolled and those who drop out at different levels are combined, a sizeable proportion of children might be out-of-school. For example, 2046 boys and girls were in schools between 2006 and 2011. During the same

\(^{15}\) VBVT has defined ‘Enrollment’ in terms of number of children enrolled in Class 1 only; ‘retention’ refers to number of children from Class 2 onwards.

\(^{16}\) Training the tribal staff to collect and collate data has been a huge task and has taken some years. While they know every child in the project area, they cannot give the exact number. Thanks to one member of VBVT team, Gangadharan who has collected much of the available data.
period more than 1,357 children, mostly boys dropped out of school.\textsuperscript{17} The main reasons for boys dropping out are: economic compulsion and availability of unskilled jobs in plantations; limited access to high school education, inability of boys to cope with the academic demands of regular schools. Besides these, Adivasi parenting is more liberal, less compelling and controlling.

3.2 Community Engagement in Education

Village Education Workers play a crucial role in engaging parents in education and increasing and improving Enrollment, attendance and retention. There was a total of 21 VEWs in 2000. The number increased steadily and peaked at 68 in 2006. It declined since and the number fell to 40 in 2012. The decrease in the number of VEWs is a positive sign and signifies that parents and communities are increasingly taking responsibility for children’s participation in schools. Targets and outcomes of this intervention are as follows:

3.2.1 Enrollment of students at primary level

The programme, targets to achieve 100\% enrolment. As can be seen in Figure 2, the overall Enrollment (number of children enrolled in Class 1) in all areas increased from 279 to (in 261 villages) 341 (in 281 villages) between 2001 and 2012. Please see Annex 5 for enrolment figures by year in Class 1. The highest increase was in 2009. Although there is no clear pattern in Enrollment among different Areas, Gudalur has recorded more increase than other Areas.

\textsuperscript{17} VBVT, Report of Activities, June 2009 to May 2012. P. 8.
An analysis of Adivasi group wise Enrollment in Class 1 in 2012-'13 indicates that 62% of the total children are from Paniya group. Mullukurumba children represent the least with less than 2%.

As per the estimates of VBVT based on health data of under 5 year old children’s death and live births for the years 2006-'07 to 2011-'12, there must be a total of 302 children eligible for enrollment in Class 1 in each year. Enrolment ratios calculated based in this figure are in Table 3.

It is unclear if the 100% target refers to gross or net Enrollment. As per the figures in Table 3, the programme has achieved the enrolment targets. However, gross enrollment ratio calculated using the number of children in Classes 1 to 5 and the number of 6 to 11 year old children available VBVT sources for 2012-'13 only yields a ratio of 77% at primary level. That is below the set target. Adivasi group wise gross Enrollment ratio indicates that all 6 to 11 year old Mullukurumba children are in school. Only 73% of Paniya children go to school.
Table 3: Number of children in school by Area and Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Area</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2009-'10</th>
<th>2010-'11</th>
<th>2011-'12</th>
<th>2012-'13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayyankolly</td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devala</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devarshola</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erumad</td>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gudalur</td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattavayal</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponnani</td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srimadurai</td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Enrollment</strong></td>
<td>366</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estimated No. of eligible children</strong></td>
<td>303</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>303</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross Enrolment ratio</strong></td>
<td>121</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes children enrolled from villages not covered by VBVT and children over 5 years old.

** Includes number of children eligible for enrolment in Class 1, based on live birth and death data from the Health Team.

3.2.2 Enrollment at middle school (classes 6 to 8) level

The average middle school Enrollment was 866 between 2009 and 2012. The highest Enrollment of 1009 was in 2010. Table 4 presents the available figures. The Enrollment ratio could not be worked out since the age specific data of children was unavailable. Since the gross Enrollment ratio at primary level was only 77%, it is unlikely that the programme would have achieved the 75% target at the middle school level.
Table 4: Middle School Enrollment by Area and Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programe Area</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2009-'10</th>
<th>2010-'11</th>
<th>2011-'12</th>
<th>2012-'13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayyankolly</td>
<td>2009-'10</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010-'11</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devala</td>
<td>2010-'11</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devarshola</td>
<td>2010-'11</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erumad</td>
<td>2010-'11</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gudalur</td>
<td>2010-'11</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattavayal</td>
<td>2010-'11</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponnani</td>
<td>2010-'11</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srimadurai</td>
<td>2010-'11</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Enrollment</strong></td>
<td>2009-'10</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>1009</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of villages</strong></td>
<td>2009-'10</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: VBVT

3.2.3 Retention

VBVT defines retention in terms of enrolment in Class 2 and above and it has planned to achieve 100% retention. As per this definition, retention has increased at all levels. As can be seen in Figure 3, it has improved more consistently at high school (Classes 9 and 10) while at primary and middle school level, it recorded some fluctuations. Please see Figure 3.
Figure 3: Retention trends by levels of schooling

![Retention trends by levels of schooling](image)

Table 5: % of cohort that survived at different levels of education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>% that survived up to Class 5</th>
<th>% that survived up to Class VIII</th>
<th>% that survived up to Class X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Retention percentages in Table 5 were calculated based on four different cohorts of children enrolled in 2001, 2003, 2004 and 2005. They indicate that retention at primary level is very impressive, consistently. The average retention percentages at middle school and high school levels are 70 and 41.
3.2.4 Parent Teacher Association Meetings

Although the plan was for the Area Education Committee members to become part of the Parent Teacher Associations, this has happened in only Ayyankolli and Ponnani Areas in two schools. VBVT is aware of this limitation and realises that a lot more inputs have to be given to Area Team members before they can meaningfully engage with teachers of various schools. However, meetings are being held in villages or with groups of parents in villages wherever issues are raised. Two such meetings held in Ayyankolli, four in Devala, Five in Srimadurai, three in Gudalur, and three in Devershola and eight in Ponnani.

This data pertains to the last one and half years indicates that the impact of these meetings have not been significant to change matters as in most of these meetings the adivasis have been in minority, even in Tribal schools. However, these interactions have been picking up and will take time before the adivasi community can actually assert themselves.

VBVT has been incorporated by the SSA to conduct workshops and trainings on the Right to Education Act for the govt schools and the parent teacher associations.

3.2.5 Improvement in learning level for Tamil and Mathematics in Primary School

Although a 60% improvement target has been set, a system of testing children’s learning outcomes in Tamil and Mathematics has not been established as yet. Therefore no tests were conducted recently. Interviews with teachers reveal that children have difficulty in the subjects due to irregular attendance and inadequate support at home for children’s study.

Tests conducted independently by VBVT in the villages, Area Centres and in Children’s Camps in 2011 for a sample of 213 (34%) children attending both GTR and Panchayat Union Schools indicate that despite minimal improvements competencies are poor in Mathematics and Tamil. % of children scoring more than 50% marks has declined
between 2009 and 2011. The poor performance could be due to two main reasons: Tamil, the medium of instruction in schools not being the mother tongue of Adivasi children; inadequate attention and support to Adivasi children's learning abilities in schools. Although schools follow the policy of non-detention or automatic promotion, the poor scores, if not improved may jeopardize the efforts to increase enrolment and retention of children in schools.

Table 6: Children's performance in Tamil and Maths Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marks Range: 0% to 100%</th>
<th>% of children scored in 2011</th>
<th>% of children scored in 2010</th>
<th>% of children scored in 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;35%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;35%≤50%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;50%&lt;100%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: VBVT

3.2.6 Volunteer Teachers

A total of four trained volunteer teachers have been placed; 3 in GTR schools in Ponnani, Kallichal and Pattavayal and one in a Panchayat Union primary school in Kadichankolly. Eight others are presently working in the SSA centres run by VBVT. One of them is running the Study centre in Kootat in Erumad area and two of them are pursuing their higher education.

3.3 Direct Interventions for qualitative improvement of Education

These are interventions from outside the schools, aimed at improving the quality of education.

3.3.1 Village Libraries

The Village library actually is ‘books in a box’. It consists of a steel trunk with storybooks, story cards and indoor games and puzzles. The Library is operated whenever they want but usually happens over the weekend. A place is decided – a
veranda or the temple – and the trunk is taken there. The children gather and the librarian hands out the material and gets them back after the time is up. The librarian actually is an older child from the village. These librarians undergo monthly training as to how to use the materials, read the books out to others, in theatre, to act out stories, songs, drawing, puzzles and so on. They are also asked to keep an attendance of the children who attend the library.

84 libraries were functioning and more than a thousand children were using them initially in 2008. Most of these libraries did not work since the librarians did not get the training and other support to motivate children to use the libraries. With a new training curriculum and training, only 34 libraries could be revived initially. Today 65 libraries are functioning. Since the librarians are children, their functioning and quality depends a lot on their motivation. This has been a problem. Unfortunately, there are still no adults who can manage such a task although they appear simple.

Two such libraries were visited during the course of this evaluation. The materials, especially the story cards were very interesting and appropriate. Children in both the libraries were engaged and solving the jigsaw puzzles and reading story cards spontaneously. The evaluator asked a few children to read the story cards. Their reading ability was average and comprehension was poor. The actual number of libraries functioning and the number of children using them currently are in Figure 4. 19 of the 65 libraries started are new. Difficulty in finding the right guides has hampered the starting of more libraries as planned.
The existing libraries have been graded as Good, Average and Poor by VBVT based on the following criteria:

- Whether the library guides come for training regularly.
- Whether they conduct all the activities they learn from the training sessions for the children in the villages.
- Whether the reading list register is up to date and children are reading regularly and whether the guides are encouraging children to read books regularly.
- Whether all the guides are regular school going children.

Out of the 46 libraries assessed, 39 were graded as Good and the rest as Average. Under this intervention, 65 libraries function with fewer than 1000 children against the targets of 100 libraries and 1250 children.

This slow process is due to its reliance on children reaching a certain level and coming forward to take on the responsibility of becoming Librarians and manage the libraries since there are not many literate persons around to handle the intervention. VBVT works towards expanding this important initiative not just to 100, but to all the 300 villages.
3.3.2 Mobile libraries

Mobile libraries too did not function as anticipated due to lack of space during monsoon. However two of them have been in operation in Erumad and Ponnani. In Erumad the library covered 5 villages and in Ponnani it covered 6 villages drawing in all 66 children. In 2010, 41 children from 7 villages used them.

3.3.3 80% Attendance in primary schools

A target of 80% appeared ambitious considering the challenges of the schools not being interesting and challenging places for Adivasi children, family demands on children for support during agricultural season - especially during coffee and pepper picking and the attractions of puja and festivals. Nevertheless, the programme managed to achieve an impressive attendance of children in schools during the previous project period – 2005 to 2008. In 2011, the average attendance increased to 73%, ranging 56% in Pattavayal and 84% in Devershola. These figures include all GTR and Panchayat Union Schools.

3.3.4 Improvement in children’s confidence levels

VBVT helps to organize children’s camps every year. In 2012, children from more than 100 villages, numbering 472 participated in camps. They are organized to motivate children and improve their confidence level. The camps bring together children and adults from different villages and involve them in various individual and group activities such as singing, story telling, play acting, dancing, art and craftwork, etc. Such activities not only promote learning but also develop self-confidence, friendship and fellowship among children and adults, based on understanding, mutual respect and trust. Friendship and fellowship continue even after the camps. They help to foster unity among Adivasis and take pride in their tradition and culture. In essence, camps play an important role in developing social capital among Adivasi children and as well as adults who participate in the camps.

VBVT assesses the effectiveness of the camps through discussions with the Adivasi leadership at different levels, staff and the children who participated them. The number
of children keen on participating in camps is used as an indicator to understand the response among children for the camps.

The evaluator observed that children and also young people with the exception of those being trained in Vidyodya School appeared to be timid and shy during informal conversations and formal meetings. However, they showed curiosity and asked the evaluator questions when encouraged.

3.3.5 Development of a model for integrating tribal knowledge in school curriculum

As part of the curriculum in Vidyodaya School and for other children who attend camps or training programmes, a history of the origin-stories of the five tribes has been written down and taught. The history of the people and their struggles of the recent past are available in text and it is also narrated by elders from the community who have been identified in each tribe to teach their history, stories, songs, riddles, their rituals and their meanings.

Using Flash cards of photographs, lessons are formulated for discussion. Since these pictures usually show people that the children can identify, it sparks discussion among children.

VBVT has also developed a booklet on Food of the Adivasis. As most of this is fast vanishing, it is interesting to see these being captured and taught. Other such areas like life-styles, hunting traditions, honey gathering, etc. are being planned.

Some specific ways in which the school curriculum integrates traditional tribal knowledge are:

- The history, origin stories, the different kind of tribes, their specific characteristics are brought into the social studies syllabus.
- Their songs and dances are also part of the school syllabus.
Village elders, men and women, come regularly to the school to teach these and other matters.

Knowledge of herbs and plants is kept in touch through activities as to collection and growing them when possible.

Discussions are held on festivals both cultural and spiritual, to articulate their significance and what they attempt to perpetuate.

3.4 Supporting Vidyodaya School

Vidyodaya is a school for Adivasi children located in Gudalur town. The National Institute of Open Schooling has accredited it as a Study Centre. The accreditation not only recognizes the school as a legitimate educational institution but also permits some flexibility. Therefore, the school is able to teach relevant subjects and help children take the mandatory examinations at their own pace.

The school began with 43 Adivasi Children in 1996 has a total of 68 children and 15 teachers today. The curriculum, in addition to regular subjects such as Tamil, English, Mathematics, Science, Are and Craft, etc. has History and Geography of local Adivasis. Organised and run on the principles of Progressive Education, the school:

- Helps children learn at their pace
- Creates a non-threatening but responsible environment
- Takes children and their socio-economic and cultural backgrounds seriously
- Promotes cooperation, group work and self-learning
- Teaches based on the learning needs of each child.
- Practices active teaching and learning methods and makes the teaching and learning process enjoyable to children as well as teachers.
- Welcomes parents and relatives of children and encourages them to teach about Adivasis traditions and culture.

The school serves as a model for teaching Adivasi children and parents and children are very proud about the school. This is evident in children’s enrolment, attendance and
completion figures. AMS prefers to have a similar school in each Area so that all Adivasi children can have access to good quality education.
4. Two Decades of Adivasi Education: Changes and Challenges

Poverty, vulnerability and discrimination were the major challenges that the Adivasis faced when the founders of ACCORD came to Gudalur. It is through a clear vision, strong leadership, and a strategy that put community organization, empowerment and determination have brought about many changes.

4.1 Adivasis have successfully removed blatant discrimination

Here is an example of how Adivasis in Gudlaur Block have fought prejudice and discrimination and are proud to day about what they achieved.

“What is your son's name?” the Head Master asks the adivasi father who has come to admit his child in the Govt. Tribal Residential School. “Karan” replies the father. “What kind of a name is that?” retorts the Headmaster. “His name is Govindan,” the Head Master tells him and changes it in the register. The father tries to explain that to the child in his language. Immediately the Headmaster shouts, “Don’t speak that jungle language here, only Tamil, you understand? Leave the child and go.” The father leaves the child in the hostel and goes home only to find that by the end of the week the child is back in the house and refuses to go back, ever. Ask any adivasi here as to why he or she dropped out and this story will be repeated with minor variations.

This was the kind of attitude that we faced when ACCORD began work in Gudalur Block 20 years ago. The language, the culture, the people were all denigrated. They had lost their access to the forests with the coming of the wild life sanctuaries, they had lost what little land was in their possession to large estates and migrants; they had no education, no understanding of how the money economy worked. Every effort to get into the mainstream was met with the kind of derision that the Headmaster meted out to them.
Twenty years of sustained and persistent work has changed the situation radically. No teacher, official or public will dare to run down an adivasi in public or private. The Adivasi Munnetra Sangam has seen to that. “

Non-discrimination and respect for Adivasi children, men and women indeed is a great change and an important impact of the work of all individuals and institutions including VBVT, associated with AMS. This change would not have been possible without a long process of education and exposure in terms of numerous formal and informal meetings at multiple levels, training, visits of individuals and groups for various purposes, protests and other collective actions, cultural activities, etc. “With the awareness brought about by sangam meetings, para legal classes, protests, and issue-based battles, the Adivasi Munnetra Sangam started taking on an identity of its own.”

In Education specifically, Vidyodaya school has played a major role in increasing both parents’ and children's aspirations for education through demonstrable qualities of a good Adivasi school.

4.2 Organisation and Activism are Foundations of Change

Organisation is the collective power of Adivasis and activism is the channel of that power to bring about changes in families and communities. Organisation in terms village sangams and federations at the Area and Taluk levels helped Adivasis realize the power of their unity. This realization and the learning from their activism and achievements, especially recovery and redemption of their lost land, made them look for bigger and better causes including health and education to fight for.

4.3 Aspiration for community owned institutions

It is not an exaggeration when ACCORD boasted in the mid ‘90s that in all their development programmes, the work they did in health had the single greatest impact on

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18 Ramdas, VBVT, Educating the Natives, The Alternatives, April 27.
19 ACCORD, Towards self reliance, September 1996
the lives of the community. A system of Village Health Worker not only saved lives and improved the health of people at the village level; it also made the Adivasis expect better hospitals and schools. As a result of that expectation, Gudalur Adivasi Hospital was started.

Adivasis are proud of the hospital. Its services to non-Adivasis on some days has made Adivasis more proud and non-Adivasis to admire the achievements of Adivasis. It was the success of this hospital that prompted them to aspire for a similar institution of their own for their children’s education.

In 1995, at a Mahasabha of over 200 village leaders, it was decided that the only answer to the problem of education was to have a school owned by the Sangam, which recognised adivasi culture and language. Since, VBVT had interacted with Adivasis and their children earlier as part of supporting and coordinating ACCORD initiated education activities, the Adivasis requested VBVT to enroll their children in Vidyodaya School. It reveals therefore that Adivasis had been watching VBVT and its work in education and were influenced and impressed by it. This is how VBVT became another community owned institution for Adivasis.

4.4 The Impact of Vidyodaya School

Vidyodaya school not only teachers the Adivasi children and train Adivasi men and women to teach, it also influences the communities and leaders to enroll their children in schools. The school has played an important role in increasing the number of children enrolled in GTR and Panchayat Union Schools in the Block. This evident from the following write-up:

“In 1996, Vidyodaya, a small alternate school began taking in adivasi children. It also took in 12 young adivasis to train as teachers. The school was not so much to convince the govt about the abilities of adivasi children as it was to convince the community about their own children. As adivasi children studied alongside non-adivasis in Vidyodaya and coped with everything, the community realised what was being denied to them. In the year 2000 the Sangam geared itself to get kids into school. There was no
campaign, no drive, and no posters. A ridiculously simple solution was suggested by one of them during a planning session – Get the grandmothers and grandfathers to take the children to school! And so for the cost of a cup of tea everyday each village or group of villages appointed an old woman or man from the village to take the children and bring them back. The numbers grew in leaps and bounds from a mere 737 on school rolls in 1999 to over 2781 who actually attend school regularly today.”

Within the scope of the existing strategy, VBVT has taken a number of measures to increase enrolment, retention and completion in all schools and make the GTR and Panchayat Union schools more responsive to the education of Adivasi children:

- Talking to parents
- Talking to the children
- Putting Village Education Workers on the job
- Talking to the teachers and headmasters
- Conducting libraries to help them improve their reading levels
- Conducting camps to counsel them about the need for schooling, and to get them to articulate their problems

4.5 Vidyodaya Resource Centre

Vidyodaya Resource centre runs many training courses viz., a two-year full-time teacher training, Area Education Coordinators training, Village Librarians Training, Study Centre Guides Training, Government Teacher Training and Life-Skills Training for young people. These training courses are helping to have a small group of ambassadors for education in the communities. The courses have also created an opportunity for young Adivasi men and women to come together from different areas, interact and learn not only about education, but also about their own communities, Adivasi history and culture, the work of AMS, ACCORD, VBVT and ASHWINI, etc. The learning process has helped them to improve their own knowledge about themselves, their environment and about different subjects. As a result, they are able to function effectively as

20 Ramdas, VBVT, Educating the Natives, The Alternatives, April 27.
volunteer teachers, mentors, friends and guides and influence ideas and opinions about education in families, villages and schools. The experience has also encouraged many of them to study further. Here are some examples of the influence of VBVT in general and Vidyodaya Resource Centre in particular.

**Babu** from Aramule village in Ponnani Area had passed class 10 before he joined the training program. Currently he is pursuing a BA correspondence course in Tamil Literature in the Open University. After the training program he joined the GTR School in Ponnani area as a Volunteer teacher. He is at the school from 9 am to 4:30pm. The school has 216 children from class 1 to 8, of whom 160 are tribal. Of the four teachers in his school he is the only Tribal teacher.

His presence has been felt to be very useful by the other non-tribal teachers in the school. For instance, he can speak to younger children, in their own language rather than Tamil. Also, after his arrival, tribal children who generally sat only in the last benches in a classroom have come forward to the front rows. Babu was the one who brought this issue up with the other teachers, who then decided to change the seating arrangement in classrooms.

**Parvati** from Kariarshola village in Devala Area had passed out of class 10 before she joined the training program. Currently she is pursuing a BA correspondence course in Tamil Literature.

Immediately after her training she was involved in conducting a survey to count the number of drop outs in her Area. This gave her an opportunity to visit all the villages in the Area and meet with families too. After the survey she continued to help with other work in the area office like filling up Ration Card forms etc. She feels this work is useful and wants to continue doing it. Two months after the training she started a village library. Children from class 4 to 8 come to the sessions, which are held in the evening. She makes children sing and draw. She keeps all their work in files with her.

She says, ‘In my class, most of the children are from the Katunayakan tribe, and because they are young they speak only their tribal language and are unable to understand Tamil
which is a problem for me as I am Paniya. I teach Tamil and Maths and I cannot be sure that the children understand what I’m saying.’ According to her, children understand alphabets and word formations; however she is having difficulty taking them to the next level, helping them with sentence construction. She has not used any teaching tools yet. She says she will soon start. She says that the Area has now identified the villages around Kozhikolli as a high dropout area and so they are contemplating starting a non-formal centre there.

4.6 Young people are keen to study

Overall, the communities’ responsiveness to education has improved significantly. A general sign of this is evident in the Enrollment figures. Although, there are problems of irregular attendance and low retention families do want their children study at least up to primary level. What happens after primary? How do young people respond to education? In order to understand this, Enrollment figures of classes 8 to 10 were analysed. Table 6 presents the figures.

The retention figures indicate that the increase five to seven times more than the figures in 2001. In class X, the increase is an impressive ten folds. Further examination of the figures indicates that the response of young people is higher from 2004. The girls started responding more from 2007 since the surge in Enrollment of girls continued form that year.
**Table 7: Retention by year in Classes 6 to 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrollment in all schools that Adivasi children attend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>98</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>96</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>134</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>175</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: VBVT

The young people’s interest in education may be due to the general awareness about the importance of education and the opportunities that AMS, ASHWINI and VBVT are offering in terms of camps, training, work and financial and other support to continue their education. This is impressive despite the unfavourable conditions that exist in local schools.
5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusions drawn based on the data and analyses presented in the previous chapters and recommendations are presented here in two sections: Conclusions and Recommendations on Interventions and Conclusions and Recommendation on Theory and Approach.

5.1 Interventions and Outcomes

The education interventions, overall have contributed to educational, as well as employment (e.g. as teachers, volunteers, health workers, nurses, etc.) opportunities for Adivasi children and young people. Such opportunities in turn have increased the demand for more education. More specific outcomes of the interventions are presented below.

5.1.1 Direct Interventions

Direct interventions such as village libraries, study centres, placement of trained teachers in government schools, village libraries, etc. are aimed at improving children’s Enrollment, retention, transition and learning levels. Although overall Enrollment of both boys and girls has increased significantly, there are still some challenges in terms of children’s attendance, retention, transition and quality of education. Children do not attend schools regularly. They are absent during agricultural seasons and festivals. Retention targets are underachieved especially in classes VIII and X. A significant proportion of children are still out-of-school. Those who complete schools do not master even basic literacy and numeracy skills. Despite the earnest efforts of VBVT, government schools overall, remain indifferent to the psychosocial, cultural and scholastic needs of Adivasi children. Teachers in Government schools blame the indifference of parents for the absence of children while children decry the attitudes of the teachers and the demotivating school environment. It is a surprise that such a
blame game still continues in spite of the Adivasis’ appreciation of quality of education in Vidyodaya School, their unity and the clout they carry.

Recommendations

1. Explore the possibility of taking over and running GTR schools with necessary institutional support and management systems.

2. Develop a plan with a realistic time-line for Direct Interventions of VBVT to cease.

3. Establish a separate institution for training Adivasi teachers either under VBVT or under AMS.

4. All the above recommendations may imply VBVT severing its program implementation role and increasing its quality control role.

5.1.2 Community Engagement in Education

Village Education Workers are doing a commendable job to help enroll children in schools and spread the message about the importance of education in the village. Enrollment in lower classes is of no concern. Systematic testing of children’s learning outcomes in Tamil and Maths has not taken place.

The Early Childhood Care and Development Programme (ECCD) that was supported in the past seems to have been discontinued.

Recommendations

1. Centre for Learning Resources (www.clrindia.net) could be a helpful source of support for conducting competency tests for children. The other potential organization is Pratham (www.pratham.org)
2. Well-planned and run ECCD programmes can help to improve Enrollment and children’s learning. It is therefore recommended to revive it in as many villages as possible.

5.1.3 Far too many interventions

VBVT has been supporting many interventions. From Village Education Workers to the key persons in charge of the programme, work extremely sincerely and meticulously. A teacher interviewed for this evaluation told that she did not distinguish between her personal life and work because she is so involved in it and everyone at VBVT worked as a family. They are inspired and motivated by senior leaders and the values behind the organization. While one commends the good work of VBVT for such a long period of time, it is not possible to ignore the fact that there are far too many interventions and targets to chase. It is a wonder that VBVT team manages them without becoming the victim of project-fatigue.

The evaluator opines that it is possible to simplify the work of VBVT with a creative strategy aligned to the philosophy and values of the organization. Currently VBVT appears to compromise to some extent on its theory of education. It could be due to:

- The concern of fulfilling commitments made to the donors;
- Moral and professional commitment to help Adivasi children (as many as possible) to get quality education from formal schools that are less open for reforms and change.

5.1.4 The resources are stretched

An obvious and logical consequence of too many interventions is the stretch of the team. Some, especially in Vidyodaya schools feel the problem. It is not a surprise if one looks at the outreach services that the school provides in addition to teaching 68 kids. While some amount of stretch, occasionally is good for the efficiency of the team, continual stretch may contribute to monotony and curb creativity and critical insights.
5.1.5 AMS’ role is unclear

In theory, AMS is the governing body of all institutions – VBVT, ASHWINI, ACCORD, and the Adivasi Cultural Centre. At present, five AMS representatives are part of the VBVT Board. Besides, the Area Education Coordinators They report VBVT activities in AMS leaders’ meetings. Other than this, AMS does not seem to have any control and authority over VBVT’s policies and finances. This arrangement works and is convenient for now. It must change in the interest of AMS playing a pivotal role in governing the development institutions more effectively in the future.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a comprehensive strategy with two simple and clear options: i. to support those children and young people who are keen on getting formal qualifications; ii. to support those who want life education for informed decisions about their life and community. Focus more on the latter and tilt the current balance towards life education.

2. Do not spend your precious and scarce resources and energy to change the GTR and Panchayat Union schools. The growing number of private schools even in Gudlaur Block is an indication that Government Schools in general, do not change much. If Adivasis have a vision for education, help them start their own schools, at least one in each area to begin with. Alternatively, let AMS take over the GTR schools and run. The latter is better since a lot of public money has already gone to those institutions.

3. As part of developing a new strategy, reorganize VBVT. It may have three clearly defined units:

i. To manage the formal educational needs of children. Vidyodaya School may come under this.
ii. To head the Life Education initiatives including research, networking and communication.

iii. Support – Admin, finance and Public Relations.

4. AMS must have a committee on education and it must play a more active role as a governing body in terms of reviewing and approving policies, reviewing and approving budget, interacting with the management and ascertaining the outcomes of the programme.

5.1.6. Families’ awareness about education has implications

One of the most positive outcomes of the work of VBVT is the high awareness of families and communities about the importance of education. It reflects in increasing enrolment and retention figures. Parents and children also witness the training and employment opportunities in the existing institutions including VBVT and ASHWINI for educated young persons. Such opportunities further encourage families let children pursue higher education with an aspiration for better employment and possibly a ‘comfortable’ life away from the villages. This aspiration reflects in the following specific changes: VBVT’s revised education objective; Adivasis’ demand for good quality education through schools similar to Vidyodaya; the increased number of Adivasi young men and women pursuing higher education (including Bachelor’s Degree in Tamil Literature) and the families’ demand for education loans and scholarships.

21 “To ensure that every adivasi child completes schooling, not just to the primary level; that every child gets good education; that every child can pursue learning, (not only schooling,) to whatever level they desire and to provide the supportive and cultural environment for this with a more institutional approach.”
Recommendations

1. While the demand for more education of good quality is impressive, the socio-economic and cultural implications of the demand in terms of fulfilling it and the consequences of it must be debated at all levels.

2. Private and public returns of education of different levels may be studied in order to develop appropriate strategies and policies.

5.2 Theory and Approach

Implicit hazily in VBVT’s approach to education of Adivasis are the philosophy of Dewey, thoughts of Gandhi, Freire, J. Krishnamurthi\textsuperscript{22} and Shankar.\textsuperscript{23} This is evident in the core values of the Trust, education policies, organization, teaching and management of school, classrooms in Vidyodaya School, curriculum, teacher training, teachers’ involvement, etc.. VBVT’s educational work is the legacy of a long tradition of progressive school practice in India and abroad stretching back many decades. The fundamentals of VBVT’s educational principles of social justice, cooperation, community, taking children and their socio-cultural backgrounds seriously, active teaching and learning, deeper understanding, intrinsic motivation, freedom, etc. apply more naturally to the Adivasi milieu and education. However, the approach is not without contradictions.

\textsuperscript{22} “A school is a place where one learns about the totality, the wholeness of life. Academic excellence is absolutely necessary, but a school includes much more than that. It is a place where both the teacher and the student explore, not only the outer world, the world of knowledge, but also their own thinking, their own behavior”. - J. Krishnamurthi

\textsuperscript{23} An Engineer by training and a profound thinker, teacher and a close friend of Ramdas and Rama, who established Sathyalayam, a small and active school in Pondicherry and ran it for many years before vanishing one day in pursuit of responses to relentless questions about life.
5.2.1 Contradiction: Education in Government Schools is pathetic; but Children should have more of it.

Originally the aim was to ensure that all children received primary education. Later the objective was changed: “To ensure that every adivasi child receives at least primary education and can easily pursue schooling to whatever level they desire, in an environment that is supportive and culturally appropriate.” VBVT, while admitting that it is almost impossible to change government schools, urges and influences families and communities to enroll more children in them. While VBVT strives to promote Adivasis’ language, culture and values through the curriculum, content and methods, it teaches Tamil, English and prepares children to pass government examinations and pursue secondary and post-secondary education. It also provides scholarships to young men and women who pursue higher education.

5.2.2 Contradiction: Adivasis must safeguard and retain their values and identity and become successful in the mainstream society as well.

During discussions with village animators, students, village leaders and Area Education Coordinators, the issue of education and Adivasi identity was raised. Although everyone agreed that people loose or may loose Adivasi identity with more modern education and jobs in towns, none was prepared to argue for less education. One Animator commented, “After a period of time I as Krishnan or my children and grandchildren may exist but my Mullu Kurumba tribe may not.” Although everyone laughed at the comment, it reflects the impact of modern education brilliantly in terms of its ‘homogenizing’ or ‘mainstreaming’ power. It is therefore not surprising that governments, NGOs and donors emphasise on the importance of modern education for Adivasis and other poor communities that remain on the peripheries of the market economy.

During a discussion with teacher trainees, a trainee asked the evaluator innocently, what his tribe was. The evaluator pondered for a moment and said that perhaps his ancestors belonged to a tribe once; he did not know his tribe now and therefore he did
not have one! He implied the he had been ‘mainstreamed’ successfully without any options.

“Culture is a tricky thing. How do we define it? Who decides when customs and traditions, even ancient, cherished ones, can be dispensed with? These and many other similar questions have been debated by the Adivasi groups we (ACCORD, an NGO in the Nilgiri hills of Tamil Nadu) work with for the last 25 years. Yet, culture was not a priority, it was neither life threatening, nor in clear and present danger (we thought). And so land, human rights, health, education and housing took priority.

A quarter of a century later, we realize with dismay that the Gudalur Adivasi kids who go to local schools are losing their language, customs and traditions. [...]”

Source: Tribal Cultural Heritage in India Foundation. The original Article was written by Mari Marcel Thekkaekara for The New Internationalist, September 14, 2012.

Both ACCORD and VBVT understand that mainstreaming of Adivasis is inevitable. For example, to a question put by an interviewer about using ‘mainstream’ curriculum in Vidyodaya School, Rama, one of the founders of VBVT responded:

“This is a debate we have had within the group. The tribal peoples’ access to forest has almost gone. Their life-style is changing rapidly. They have already mingled with the non-tribals and imbibed their culture and life-styles. The fact of the matter is they can no longer live like their ancestors, no longer depend on the vanishing forests for their sustenance. It will be to their advantage if they are equipped to meet these changes with a balanced approach; otherwise they will just be swept over. We hope they will retain the tribal values that have relevance even today and accept the good brought in by modernization. It is a question of survival.”


There is a kind of helplessness in the response that may be due to the power and influence of the mainstream society that ironically marginalizes Adivasis and other
groups of poor. Such mainstreaming process takes place not only in Adivasi communities but also in all communities, States and Nations in relation to the global economy.

“The neglect of Adivasi knowledge forms, languages, and cultural practices has been detrimental to the cultural core of Adivasis and to the knowledge corpus of the nation.”

“The education administration apparatus that oversees the delivery of educational programmes has been developed and deployed in a mode of assimilation and domination which only reproduces the range of inequalities and disadvantages that most Adivasis face.”


Recommendations

1. Identify real bold alternatives to government schools and offer them to those who have opted to stay out of them due to various reasons. The alternatives could range from more Vidyodaya type Schools to strict Adivasi communities based on Adivasi values and life-style, similar to Amish communities in North America.

2. The ‘mainstream’ or modern society is in a state of crisis in many parts of the world. It is stuck without a real alternative to the current economic order and the numerous socio-economic, political and environmental problems it has created. Explore the ways of developing an alternative that is in line with the Adivasi way of life rather accepting the mainstream as the inevitable goal of education and

24 http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivisions/amish_1.shtml
development. This might imply systematic research, theorizing, application, communication and networking.

5.3 Adivasis are in control

Many Adivasi development programmes claim to empower them. However, close scrutiny of their management, particularly finances and implementation reveal that they are in fact managed and controlled by non-Adivasis. “In many cases, the introduction of new institutions including those run by private agencies and religious and welfare groups need to be reviewed. The lack of monitoring of such institutions poses a problem and may in the long run be detrimental to the broader philosophy of education. New institutions should involve participation, decision-making and monitoring by Adivasi communities. Democratic decentralisation in true sense will involve community inputs and ownership. Strengthening of School Monitoring Committees is also a way to ensure this...”

In the programmes under the AMS, including the Education Programme supported by VBVT, the management and control wrests with the Adivasis. This is due to the vision and determination of the founders of ACCORD right from the beginning. Putting Adivasis in control was a deliberate aim and a strategy of ACCORD from the outset. It was and is still strictly followed in every aspect of the programme and even in formal and informal events of all institutions associated with AMS. For example, five AMS representatives are members of VBVT Board. A few Non-Adivasis who play leadership and support roles in VBVT never undermine Adivasis, be they colleagues or community members. On the contrary, they demonstrate a leadership style that is truly enabling and empowering. This could be one of the main reasons for the programme’s overall impact.

Recommendations:

1. Study and document the management styles of VBVT and other institutions attached to AMS and communicate the results. Focus particularly on the pattern of responses that different styles have evoked across community groups (men, women, and children) and various bodies and institutions of AMS.

2. Investigate the links if any between the management styles and structures and identify factors that contribute to the effectiveness of Adivasi programmes with a particular reference to education interventions.

5.4 The economic and social cost of ‘mainstreaming’ Adivasis is not known

Adivasi Development plans and sub-plans of Central and State Governments, donors, NGOs and faith groups’ have two common objectives: i. ‘Development’ of Adivasis; ii. Protection of the interests of Adivasis. Adivasi areas in many States are used as a ‘laboratory’ to experiment with different formulae for their development. Many such ‘experiments’ have the single purpose of mainstreaming or integrating Adivasis into the larger non-Adivasi society. In spite of expending very large sums of money over the years, Adivasis in many parts of the country are still discriminated and exploited. The support for radical movements in Adivasi areas only shows that most programmes, despite noble intentions and lofty goals, most initiatives to develop Adivasis have failed miserably. Therefore, it calls for a revisit and review of mainstream’s development agenda.

Before the invasion of the mainstream society into Adivasis’ terrain and life, Adivasis were free and peace loving. Exposure to a totally different economic order, a worldview and education introduced by individuals and institutions from the mainstream society have contributed to the destruction of Adivasi communities and identity and made them vulnerable to oppression, exploitation and discrimination. Therefore, mainstreaming Adivasis to the very unequal and unjust economic and social order is a highly contradictory and contentious agenda.
The mainstream society on the contrary can imbibe many aspects of Adivasi life that will be valuable to the social, economic, political and environmental challenges facing the mainstream society in India and elsewhere. The real and practical alternatives to the challenges can be found in Adivasi communities. Therefore, it is only logical and sensible that the mainstream is not bent on ‘developing’ and changing the Adivasis.

**Recommendations:**

1. Research the mainstreaming Adivasis agenda and its results
2. Communicate the results to Adivasi groups
3. Support Adivasis to resist the agenda as long as they can and protect their identity and way of life.
**Annex 1: Main Findings and Recommendations of previous reviews and evaluations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
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| *Village Education Programme* | The coverage of number of school going children for the year under review far exceeded the target set (more than double the set target). It is indeed a very impressive record - 479 children were put in school whereas the target was only 220 children. (2005)  

In the total coverage of 2259 school-going children, in all the eight areas together, there were 1070 girls (47%) and 1189 boys (53%). There are also variations in the sex ratio of school going children among the eight areas (2005).  

The Education Team and the Village Education Workers expressed their Sense of achievement in helping a large number of children to go to school and retaining them in school.  

Village representatives of the area committees could assist in reaching the unreached through their visits to a few villages in a month with the messages of education of children.  

Cultural camps held periodically in the areas covered could be organized, catering to clusters of villages, in the areas not covered.  

VEWs and youth volunteers could also be trained for communicating the expectations of the village community/Parents to the teachers; encouraging parents to attend Parent - Teacher Association meetings in schools: taking up the school specific issues affecting children's learning in association with the Village Education Committee and parents. |
definitely up to Class V and now extending slowly and steadily up to Class VII (2005).

Attendance was reported to drop during festive seasons among the Tribals - generally from December to February during which time they visit their relatives in different villages and take their children along. This trend is becoming less with better parent awareness on the importance of education (2005).

Students’ participation in school has increased in terms of enrollment. However, irregularity in attendance and increasing dropout rates particularly from class 6 onwards among boys are two sources of problem (2008).

It is rightly said that Village Education workers have played a very crucial role in the programme by their
continuous and committed efforts in taking the children to school in the morning and bringing them back in the evening. They seemed to have taken the responsibility of convincing or reminding parents about sending their children to school. It is no exaggeration to say that they made it possible for the programme to achieve the 100% enrollment of children in schools and their retention definitely up to class V (2005).

Community member’s awareness about education has increased, neither enrollment nor access to primary school is a matter of concern, there is a demand for “quality” education with quality being defined as basic education coupled with livelihood skills, concern for lack of “access” to secondary education (2008).
Village Level Institutions  
The number of children attending the tuition centers was 213 less than last year (2004). The attendance in the centres seemed to be fairly high - an average of 75% with a range of 68-83% in different areas. During the field visit (Nov. 2005) a meeting with nine teachers from eight centres was held and a visit to one of the Centres Veramanga in Ayyankolli area was also made (2005).

Recognition of the need for a place in every village for the children to study as they have little or no space for studying at home resulted in the idea of study centres in every village. Though there was enthusiasm, heavy rains pointing to the need to put up pucca structures, paucity of funds and time needed to raise funds have come on the way of implementation of this

Tuition Centres can be viewed as a temporary measure for about five years Strengthening of the primary and middle school level education in the area should help in reducing the need for such support.

The Tuition Centre, the study centre and the Village Library could be merged and made into Village Library and Learning Centre - a lively place for catering to the learning needs of the children.
Regular library sessions were being held with children coming to Tuition centers on Saturdays. In the year under review (2004-05) there were 32 village Library centres with 336 students using the facility. The number was reported to be increasing rapidly (2005).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Vidyodaya Resource Centre and Training Centre</strong></th>
<th>One feature that stands out is the experience of VBVT in training ten adivasi youth as teachers, who had taken up key responsibilities in both education and development programmes (2005). The training tuition centre teachers seemed to focus on developing skills in dealing with different subject matter areas using relevant teaching - learning materials. Last year they were trained to teach Tamil and Maths and in the</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Taking into consideration the problems listed by Tuition Centre Teachers (reported in an earlier section), the training could be much more comprehensive for them to tackle the problems themselves. Teachers need to develop their own skills in basics (3 Rs) and also help children develop these skills (which is being done at present). The village librarians could also be part of the intensive library sessions, at least once in a quarter for them</td>
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current year the focus is on English and social studies (2005).

Students' performance in Language and Math tests in classes 3, 4, and 5 shows a need for improving learning levels. Observation of students in classroom shows that in Vidyodaya School, students are engaged in learning with joy. The same cannot be said of students in GTRS and Panchayat Union Schools (2008).

The curriculum in Vidyodaya schools uses the principle of teaching through local curriculum and language. The curriculum for children, area coordinators, teacher training and training the trainers, study centre guides, volunteers in library, and for VEWs is by and large in consonance with the job profile and well defined at the same time with scope for several to get a broader perspective on the library activities. This is urgent in view of the rapidly increasing number of village libraries.

The teacher education programme of VBVT be streamlined. The objectives are to be specified, the contents in terms of conceptual - base and in terms of methods of teaching specific subject matter areas be identified and introduced systematically to the teacher trainees through well planned experiences of learning.
areas of dynamism. The VBVT as a resource centre is contributing to curriculum development in innovative ways (2008).

| **Vocational Training and Placement** | Apprenticehip in work-spots is identified as a meaningful way of acquiring skills for the adivasi youth. In the year being reviewed (2004-05) as per the plan, the programme could not find a suitable person to take on the responsibility of vocational training and placement. Hence there is not much of a progress in this regard (2005).

Vocational linkages for youths need to be strengthened by advocacy measures for issuance of certificates and a developing a module for effective counseling so that counselors can be trained for their responsibilities.

One or more of the vocational or career counselors could be identified as resource person(s) and could be invited to come and provide information on the possible options of vocations for the tribal youth and also the training options available in their own area.

Experiences, in provision of opportunities for developing a skill and earning a living, of Inter-face forestry project of the government of Tamil Nadu could be of value. |
| **Vidyodaya School** | It is believed by VBVT that the cultural context of children is important and the tribal cultural activities are to be part of the school curriculum. VBVT organised camps in the forest areas in which children and adults participate singing, dancing, sharing their experiences and knowledge of flora and fauna of the area etc. (2005).

Vidyodaya School had English medium from 1991 - 2003. Tamil Medium was introduced in June 2004 (and the school is affiliated to the Elementary Education Board). Discussion with the teachers in Vidyodaya School revealed that they had divided opinion about the medium of instruction - A few were for Tamil medium and a majority was for English medium (2005).

A number of publications linking tribal languages and Tamil, be made and also be utilised in the classroom frequently (It was surprising that there is no budgetary provision for this). Teacher training could have a component on Bilingualism. |
As such, the classes in Vidyodaya had small number of children and individual attention was possible. The perception that children learn only from the teachers may cause the problem. Promotion of peer learning and individual learning with classroom becoming an activity centre could resolve this issue (2005).

Individual attention given to each child is indeed commendable. But all assessments of children’s learning were made by teachers only. Children are excluded in the assessment process. Moreover, these procedures do not measure thinking or problem solving skills, in-depth subject knowledge and how well a child can direct his/her learning and these procedures also ignore the different learning styles of children (2005).

Vidyodaya can move towards "Authentic Assessment" - a recent trend in assessment of learning. This is to assess fairly accurately the real learning of ALL children. This kind of assessment actively involves children, give them feed back from teachers and peers, allow them to make choices and demonstrate their strengths and successes and encourage them to build on what they already know.
Annex 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Impact Assessment

of

Viswa Bharati Vidyodaya Trust’s (VBVT) project

Building Social Capital through Education in the Tribal Communities of Gudalur, Nilgiris

January – February 2013

Background: The Vishwa Bharati Vidyodaya Trust (VBVT) was registered as a charitable trust in 1993 in Gudalur, Tamil Nadu working towards providing quality education services for children from the Adivasi communities of Nilgiri hills in Tamil Nadu. In the initial years, the main activity of VBVT was initiation of Vidyodaya School that was based on alternative pedagogy and curriculum. VBVT’s involvement with the Adivasi community began by assisting ACCORD (Action for Community Organization, Rehabilitation and Development) in educational initiatives. ACCORD is a sister non-profit organization in Gudalur that works on tribal rights together with, VBVT, Ashwini (for health intervention) and Just Change (for livelihoods and marketing intervention) with the aim of supporting the tribal organization called Adivasi Munnetra Sangham (AMS). VBVT is managed by a board of 9 members which consists primarily of Adivasi members. VBVT comprises of a team of 80 persons, almost entirely drawn from the local community.

VBVT launched its outreach programme in the year 2000 and has since been supported primarily by the Sir Ratan Tata Trust, Mumbai focusing on enrolling tribal children in the government schools, providing academic support to school going children in their village and working with the community members on educational issues and providing educational services for tribal children through the Vidyodaya School.

In 2009, a three year program grant was sanctioned for strengthening the extension efforts of VBVT towards vocational training of adolescents and youth, thereby strengthening the social capital of the tribal communities. VBVT requested and was given a grant by the Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust, Mumbai, of Rs 11.08 million for a three-year period beginning June of 2009. VBVT agreed to further this fund to an extent of Rs. 3.3 million. In June of 2012, at the end of the project period, as there was an unspent balance of the NRTT funds, the Trust agreed to a No-cost Extension of the project for further period of 10 months. VBVT committed to bring in around Rs. 2 million for the programmes of this period. In all the average Annual expenditure is around Rs. 4.00 million with NRTT providing 70% of the funds and VBVT bringing in around 30%. Over the years VBVT has been supported by individual donations, the UPS Foundation USA, Charities Advisory Trust UK, Sir Ratan Tata Trust. Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust, Action Aid, UK, Asha for Education, USA, Adivasi Tee Project, Germany.

The Education portfolio of the Trust has supported work towards enhancing access and quality of education to children from marginalized backgrounds with special focus on tribal and dalit communities.
Proposal: VBVT’s focus in the grant has been on building the social capital in the tribal community by working intensively with children and the youth. The main strategies were to ensure retention and academically support students while providing skill enhancement and employment opportunities to young people together with community empowerment and cadre building. The Grant had completed three years in May 2012 but has been extended as there was some unspent balance of funds, for a further period of 10 months ending March 2013. The project is currently in the fourth year of its functioning.

The main strategies proposed for ensuring retention and academically supporting students, while providing skill enhancement and employment opportunities to young people, together with community empowerment and cadre building. The project was expected to lead to: (i) VBVT reaching out to a total of 1,694 children through various programmes i.e. the Vidyodaya School (104), 10 Study centers (250), 100 village libraries (1,250) and 3 open school sub-centers (90) from 300 villages in all 8 areas (clusters); (ii) 40 teachers would be trained as teachers and placed in schools / centers; (iii) 100% children attending libraries will have improved reading - writing competencies, whilst those attending study centers will be able to achieve 60% of the age specific competencies in Tamil and Mathematics; (iv) development of curriculum and content of the training for various short term capacity building programmes for librarians and government teachers and long term training programmes for creating skilled teachers; (iv) skill training of 225 youths for providing educational and employment opportunities and setting up 8 entrepreneurial units; (v) providing financial support to 100 children and tutorial support to 600 children to continue their higher education; (vi) use of curriculum developed on Adivasi history and culture in education and training programmes, leading to increased self-esteem among the community members; and (vii) practice of improved teaching learning methods in schools, through which the Adivasi children are treated with sensitivity in the school environment.

At the end of the project period the following impact were projected to be achieved:

**Expected impact:** Indicators have been laid down in the proposal to track progress in the project. Impact of the project could be expected at multiple levels: (i) **Children / Students:** 90% retention upto class 10 with an average attendance of 80% in the schools; children attending the library session will achieve 100% competencies in reading and 80% in writing; Mathematics and Language (Tamil) abilities will improve to 60% for all children attending the Study Centers; children studying in the Vidyodaya School will improve academic capacities to average 75% in Class 5 and 60% in class 8; tribal children are confident about their cultural leanings and their identity; 200 students will be able to avail financial support for tutorials and loans which enable them to continue their studies, thus curbing the dropout rate; (ii) **Youth:** 800 young people will be aware of career and employment options which they can access; skilled and confident young people from the community will have an edge while seeking jobs; development of successful enterprises by Adivasi youth based on their skills, technical and managerial training; (iii) **Teachers and the education administration:** Teachers attendance in schools will improve to 75%; 80% appointments in all schools is expected
to be completed through the work of the area committees and their involvement with the PTAs; (iv) **Trainees:** 225 youth trained locally, while 80 youth will be trained and skilled from recognized institutes; and (v) **Innovative curriculum:** integration of tribal knowledge and culture in the school curriculum would be demonstrated, among others.

For assessing the Impact of the program – with focus on past 3.5 years, while also bringing out changes in the overall educational status of the tribal communities VBVT has brought out in past 10-12 years with Trust support.

**Objectives of the assignment:**

- d. Impact assessment of VBVT's work in Gudalur and Pandalur blocks in the field of education, against proposed outcomes and impact indicators set during the proposal development
- e. Cumulative impact of VBVT's work through decade long work on education with tribal communities in the project area
- f. Make recommendations based on the study for defining future direction of the work and improving its effectiveness.

**Scope of Work:**

2. For each project component, map current outcomes and impact and its quality against the proposed impact / outcome planned when project was planned and any new components as they emerged during the course of the project. Capture impact in both quantitative and qualitative terms.
3. Key areas of intervention are: Direct educational intervention, Community engagement, Vidyodaya Resource Center, Vidyodaya Open School, Vocational Placement and Higher Education Support in terms of: (i) number of students, parents, community members, youth, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) and other officials of education department impacted through the program (ii) **Direct Educational Intervention:** assessment of parameters related to functioning and impact of the libraries, like quality of trainings of librarians, attendance of children, impact of books on reading levels of the children, quality and usage of learning materials, efficacy of findings of the test papers through a random sample assessment of learning levels of children, assessment of impact of learning camps conducted (iii) **Community Engagement in Education:** quality and efficacy of trainings of Village Education Workers, quality and impact of Village Education Worker's meetings and Village Education Committee meetings in terms of attendance, impact on community participation and quality of education in government schools and Parent Teacher Associations (iv) **Vidyodaya Resource Center:** quality and impact of teacher training program on trainees of the current batch in terms of understanding of educational concepts and the application of teaching skills in classrooms; quality and impact of training of Area Education workers in terms of community engagement and facilitation of PTA and community meetings; assessing the development of
cultural curriculum, namely documentation of herbal medicinal plants, stories and riddles and curriculum for medicinal plants for classes 3, 4, 5 and 6; (v) **Interactive Cultural Center:** Assess progress of development of bilingual book on history of the people's struggle in Gudalur including the historical evolution of the predominant tribes in the Gudalur area along with the other planned documentation; (vi) **Vidyodaya Open School:** assessing the progress of children enrolled in Vidyodaya Open School in terms of attendance, performance in OBE examinations, assessing the progress of development, usage and impact of reworked culture specific curriculum, including crafts, life skills education and documentation on tribes; (vii) **Vocational Placement:** ascertain the status and impact of the in-house vocational training program in terms of quality and efficacy of the trainings, relevance of the trainings conducted, post training follow up and placements with employment exchanges/market, status of linkages with other training institutions for sharing of best practices and technical expertise; (viii) **Higher Education Support:** assessing the status of financial support to students and adolescents and savings fund of children, with emphasis on utilization of the funds.

4. Outline areas of high and low impact while exploring reasons for the same

   g. Make recommendations for improving quality and effectiveness of the work along with specific suggestions for the future direction of VBVT.

**Methodology:** The above mentioned parameters need to be assessed using both quantitative and qualitative methodology and can include the following: (i) visiting Vidyodaya school, SSA Residential Bridge Course Centres, 4-5 libraries, teachers training program, Area Education Committee meetings, study centers, Teacher training program center, camps, vocational training center (soap, umbrella making etc) and AMS field office; (ii) intensive discussions with VBVT team, along with students, library coordinators, teacher trainees, youth, community members, AMS members, PTA members, including interviews and observations; (iii) review curriculum, contextually relevant teaching learning aids, manual related work; (v) interaction with SSA officials, government school teachers and parents and (vi) assessment of learning levels of children enrolled in Vidyodaya Open School, those being supported in tuition centres, bridge courses on a sample basis and verify the testing against assessments that VBVT has for these students.

**Timeline:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Expected output</th>
<th>Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desk-review and preparatory work</td>
<td>To study the proposal, background documents, progress reports and annual work plan and develop the evaluation formats for assessment, if any.</td>
<td>2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field visits</td>
<td>i) Visit to VBVT center, Vidyodaya school, libraries, Area Education Committee, Area Education Committee meetings, Teacher training centers, Vocational Training Centers</td>
<td>5 days</td>
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</table>
(ii) Meetings with stakeholders being part of the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report writing and finalization</th>
<th>Detailed final report</th>
<th>Analysis and Report writing: 7 days Finalization of the report: 2 days</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total days</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>16 days</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Expected outcome:** Draft report should be submitted to the VBVT by February 10th. The report should entail:

1. Executive summary
2. Short background chapter
3. Brief note on methodology
4. Chapter on findings
5. Recommendations

The NRTT and VBVT will share feedback on the draft report. Final report should be submitted within 8 days of receiving feedback from both.
Annex 3-A: Organogram - AMS

The diagram illustrates the organizational structure of AMS, which includes:

- Health (ASHWINI)
- Education (VBVT)
- Cultural Revitalization (Adivasi Cultural Center)
- Community Organization Economic Development (ACCORD)

The diagram also shows connections to:

- ALT
- AMF
- Estate
- Just Change
Annex 3-B: Organogram - VBVT
Annex 4: VBVT Programme Areas
Annex 5: Enrolment in Class 1 from 2001 to 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Annex 6: Activities and Outreach: Current Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity/Area of Work</th>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>Achieved Status – March 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>**A) (iii)  Provision of libraries at the village level to provide an opportunity to</td>
<td><strong>Outreach</strong> (i) 100 libraries, reaching out to 1,250 children; and (ii) 150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children to access age appropriate, innovative materials, books and other resources.</td>
<td>children reached through 6 mobile libraries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv)  Specific activities include: (i) running and consolidating existing libraries in</td>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong> (i) 80% attendance; (ii) 100% children will be able to read story card 1-100; and (iii)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the eight areas and further reinforcing them with books and infrastructure;</td>
<td>80% will be able to write simple sentences and single paragraph stories.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) expansion of the programme; (iii) conducting mobile libraries for a 6-month</td>
<td><strong>Impact</strong> (i) Improved attendance in primary schools upto 80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>period wherever need and potential is observed; and (iv) using 2 day residential</td>
<td>(ii) At primary level, children’s overall grades in class will improve to 50%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>camps as a motivation mechanism for children and the community.</td>
<td>(iii) Stimulating children’s interest in reading as well as books; consequently, they find it</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>easier to cope with school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**B) 6.  Consolidating the existing Study Centers in order to provide sound</td>
<td><strong>Outreach</strong> 10 study centers reaching out to 250 children.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>academic support to school going children in the community.</td>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong> (i) 60% improvement in learning levels as per the baseline in Tamil and Maths; (ii)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.  Main activities include: (i) conducting a baseline test to assess academic</td>
<td>bi-annual cultural programmes held in the community; and (iii) active follow up on school /</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>levels as well as social skills in children of the 6-12 age group; (ii) child</td>
<td>education issues by community members with teachers / schools.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grouping based on</td>
<td><strong>Impact</strong> (i) 80% attendance in the centers; (ii) Regularity and retention till class X up to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90%; (iii) Improvement in children’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Village Libraries
- There are 66 Libraries reaching out to 941 children
- Mobile libraries – 4 Mobile libraries were conducted reaching out to 17 villages and 114 children
- 136 Village librarians have attended the training programmes regularly
- In turn these librarians have been able to reach out to 936 children.

### Study Centres
- Study centres revived after the Teacher training programme. Initially 7 study centres were in operation. This has reduced to 3 now as the teachers who were running the centres have been taken on in the GTR or panchayat schools.
- The 3 centres mentioned include 2 of the SSA’s Drop out centres. In each of these centres 53 children were studying. The Kootat centre has 30 children. In all the centres over the 3 years VBVT was able to reach out to 181 children.
| the assessment within the centers and identification of hard spots for focused planning; (iii) focus on extra-curricular activities like public speaking, drama, creating space for cultural activities and inputs; and (iv) testing of academic levels of children in Language and Mathematics. | confidence levels resulting in greater participation in academic and extra-curricular activities. |

2 Community engagement for enhancing children's access and academic progress in government schools

a. Ensuring attendance and retention of children by addressing issue of access by supporting Village Education Workers (VEW's); promotion of the Area Education Committee (AEC) and Parents Teachers Associations (PTA) to act as an active local group to monitor schools.

b. Specific activities include: (i) VEW's ensuring that children attend school regularly with target of 80% attendance; (ii) AEC to seek membership in the PTA, while ensuring regularity of meetings, attendance of members and AEC representation in the PTA executive committee; (iii) AEC members identify critical areas where inputs are required

| Outreach | 40 VEW's enable access to schools for 475 children; 8 AECs to be formed, which will cover 109 government and private schools covering a total of 2,704 Adivasi children from classes 1 to 12 and reaching out to 20,000 parents through 86 PTA's |

| Outcomes | (i) 100% enrollment and retention of students at primary level and 75% at middle school level; (ii) 75% teachers appointed in schools leading to improved Parent To Teacher (PTR); (iii) meetings held annually of each PTA; (iv) 60% improvement in learning level for Tamil and Mathematics in Primary School; and (v) appointment of 12 tribal youth in the school as trained volunteer /teachers. |

| Impact | (i) Teachers’ attendance improved to 75% and 80% appointment in all schools  
(ii) Improved relationship between teachers and community  
(iii) Retention of students to be 75% in middle and high school level |

| a. 41 VEW's have been taking 531 children to school over these three years. The number of VEWs vary depending on the need.  
b. AEC's have been formed in all the 8 Areas and while some of them function actively taking part in the PTA meetings, others are still learning the ropes. |
from VBVT and plan action ahead; (iv) monitoring government schemes, especially those for Adivasi girls from Class 3-6; and (v) formation of block level PTA to draw strategies for ensuring implementation and improvement of the school.

3) **Development of the Vidyodaya Resource Center for building of local cadre in education and culture and training of government teachers**

A) a. Develop the resource center to train full time teachers who can lead the educational activities of VBVT; conduct short term training programmes for librarians for thematic and cultural inputs; and provide input sessions and interaction with government teachers.

b. The main activities include: (i) preparation of training curriculum and schedule with inputs from external resource person for the two year course and short term courses; (ii) finalizing the training instructors and resource persons and resource material along with the trainees from the areas; (iii) regular Outreach

(i) 40 fully trained persons and 20 partially trained local educators; (ii) training of 100 village librarians; and (iii) reaching out informally to 230 school teachers from 2,704 government schools while engaging actively with 25 teachers annually.

**Outcomes**

(i) 90% attendance for the course; (ii) 90% trainees gain an understanding of alternative pedagogies and methods, as well as ability to handle academic subjects like health, skill development and tribal culture; (iii) 1,250 children attending libraries will receive sound support resulting in improved reading and writing capacities of children; (iv) improvement in learning levels of students in Tamil and Maths by upto 75% for class 5 and upto 60% in other subjects.

**Impact**

(i) 600 children benefited by the trained cadre of personnel specializing in elementary education. (ii) 75% of teachers use better teaching practices in the schools. (iii) Development of social capital

Teacher Training

a. The training programme is on stream – the curriculum was finalized with the help of Dr, Saraswathi
b. the schedules were finalised
c. The trainees were taken on through the Area teams
d. In the first batch 17 joined but 2 left in between for personal reasons.
e. 15 of them completed the training and of whom 2 are pursuing higher studies while the rest are working with VBVT
f. As the first batch training started late we could take on the second batch only on August 2012.
g. This batch started with 17 trainees of whom 2 left because of personal reason
h. This training is going on with a revised curriculum based on the experience of the previous batch. Some aspects particularly with regard to motivation were enhanced and also academic levels have been given special emphasis.
i. Attendance in both the courses have been very good.
j. Village Librarian trainings have been going on on a monthly basis. In all 32 sessions were held.
monitoring, review and support provided to Librarians through 12 sessions annually by the coordinators; and (iv) placement of first batch of 20 trained teachers in government schools, study centers and open school sub centers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Curriculum to be used with children in the Vidyodaya School and the Study Centers and short duration courses on topics ranging from Adivasi culture to legal - civic education to developing social skill for adolescents; establishing an interactive cultural center and museum to exhibit the innate knowledge and ways of Adivasi life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. Main activities include: (i) documenting and collating native knowledge of medical plants, honey collection, songs, traditional stories, histories of the community into a curriculum framework; (ii) developing short, practical syllabus and course materials for wide ranging topics; (iii) developing and designing the programme keeping in mind the client group; and (iv) preparation of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outreach

(i) Reach out to 180-200 youth from the 15 to 20 years age group through six sessions annually held over two days; (ii) deployment of culture specific curriculum in study centers and Vidyodaya school.

### Outcomes

(i) Documentation and developing a bank of Adivasi knowledge focusing on indigenous occupations, knowledge and dissemination through booklets and video / 12 audio CD's; (ii) exposure and raised confidence levels in tribal youth; (iii) curriculum for medicinal plants from Classes 3 – 8; and (iv) development of curricular framework for inclusion into school syllabus.

### Impact

(i) Development of a model for integrating tribal knowledge in school curriculum, resulting in the enhancement of relevance of education which is connected with day to day realities of tribal communities (ii) Development of community leaders for the future with renewed orientation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4) Supporting the Vidyodaya School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
a. Support to the Vidyodaya Middle School as a demonstrative unit for provision of holistic quality education for Adivasi children. Reaching out to a larger number of children through open centers affiliated with the school.

Main activities include: (i) regular teaching at the school where children will participate in the Open Basic Examination for Levels A, B and C; (ii) introduction of Adivasi history, culture and native knowledge as parts of the curriculum along with new crafts; and (iii) Vidyodaya School becoming a demonstrative school for teachers trainees, besides becoming a Nodal center for NIOS by initiating 3 sub-centers in the third year of the project and seeking linkages with national and international tribal institutions and schools.

**Outreach**
The school will reach out to 100 regular students, and 90 children through the three open school sub-centers.

**Outcomes**
(i) 90% attendance of students in the school with 1:10 PTR; (ii) class 5 students average 75% in all subjects, while class 8 students average 60%.

(ii) the school becomes a demonstration site for Activity Based Learning (ABL) as well as a training center.

**Impact**
(i) Development of self-confidence and leadership qualities in students
(ii) Teacher development resulting in independent functioning by a teacher, with 4 teachers emerging as trainers

In the project period the School has reached out to 158 students. The NIOS sub—centres were not started as NIOS decided its OBE scheme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5) Vocational Education Programme for developing the technical skill set among youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In the project period the School has reached out to 158 students. The NIOS sub—centres were not started as NIOS decided its OBE scheme.
### Skill development of youth through following activities:

1. Conducting two counseling sessions annually in each area (16 sessions annually) focused at the 13-20 years age group.
2. Setting up of 8 work units (4 each in second and third years).
3. Identification of youth keen on pursuing their vocational education by attending local trainings and apprenticeships workshops.
4. Facilitating placement opportunities.
5. Provision of technical and financial assistance.
6. Entrepreneurial development of the trainees.
7. Tracking of students and their employment progress.

### Outreach

Skills training to 225 youth over a 3 year period through 30 identified institutes.

### Outcomes

1. 2,400 students will have greater information about courses, areas and choices of work.
2. 300 youth registered in the employment exchange bureau.
3. Provision of a means for livelihood for youth who have studied up to class 10 and 12.

### Impact

1. Incentive created for 80 youth to continue studies and develop professional skills.
2. Improved earning capacity leading to better standing in society.
3. Developing first generation of Adivasi leaders who will be entrepreneurs.

### 6) Support for Higher Education of Adivasi students

a. Providing financial support for tutorials to students at secondary / higher secondary level through:
   1. Identification of students requiring financial support from classes 8 - 12.
   2. Conducting two counseling sessions annually with students to enhance their motivation and taking stock of their progress.
   3. Negotiating with parents regarding contribution towards tutorials, besides finalizing concessions.
   4. Regular follow-ups by the AEC.

b. Initiating the children's bank to instill the practice of saving among students.

### Outreach

600 students benefited by tutorial support in the course of 3 years; 1,600 children avail of savings scheme.

### Outcomes

1. 100% students will pass with 50% results in all classes.
2. 16 tutorials will be sensitized to the needs of the Adivasi students with parent's contribution up to 50% of tutorial costs.
3. 32 meetings annually with over 1,500 families on the savings and loan schemes.
4. 80-100 children will receive interest-free loans annually for pursuing their studies.

### Impact

1. 50% students who complete class 10 to pursue higher education through university / technical courses.
2. Parents take

### During the project period

Skills training was given to 185 youth through 22 identified training centres.

Counseling became a core programme and 334 students in Class-group 9 to 12 underwent these programmes in 30 sessions.

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| children from an early age, while providing facilities for availing loans to meet regular school related needs. This will be done through: (i) community meetings to discuss the savings scheme and establishing linkages of loans to savings; (ii) setting up area committee for student selection and loan sanctioning; (iii) setting up revolving fund in the areas to provide loans to children; and (iv) developing systems of local accounting at the area level for tracking students and funds, while training children to keep an account of their savings. | responsibility for the education of their children which increases as children do well in studies; (iii) introduction of savings as a practice in the lives of children and parents; and (iv) continuity of children’s education will be ensured through savings of children, which is estimated to be in the region of Rs. 300,000. |