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AN ALTERNATIVE BLUE PRINT, A WHITE PAPER FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE ‘PANIYA’ TRIBES IN WAYANAD, KERALA, INDIA
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my only daughter, Angeline Rose Joe. Your smile continues to inspire my quest for knowledge. This critical step of my life would not have been possible without the support of my teachers and friends who helped me and guided me in the entire process of writing the thesis.
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Chapter 1

Introduction: Context and Background of research

I am Joseph Athrashaery Ulahannan from India. I am a teacher of English language and literature. I belong to the Southern State of India called Kerala. Basically, I am from a countryside. My parents are farmers. I am a widower and I have a sweet young daughter, Angeline Rose Joe. She is just six years old and my parents take care of her.

I have taught for almost nine years; six years in the south Indian states and three years in the Republic of Maldives. I still don’t know how I ended up in the teaching profession, because I was trained and equipped to be an army officer in the Indian Army; however, I ended up in schools and colleges. I love teaching and I have a passion for it. My passion for teaching sprang from my childhood reading and philosophical thinking. Indian philosophy has influenced me deeply. I always wanted to do something I really loved; and, here I am as a teacher.

My culture influenced me and shaped me and made me what I am. India is a land of immense diversity and culture. It has influenced generations and nations. The multicultural background of India sowed the seed for my present research enquiry. I think teaching is the best profession for a person with an inquisitive mind set. I believe life is for exploration, learning, making friends, and constant enquiry. All these aspects have influenced me and encourage me to keep going.

I want to go back to my country after finishing this master’s programme and live there with my daughter. I also want to be a part of the larger educational system of my
country, offering my contributions to make changes, to be changed, to laugh and to make laughter, and to spread happiness to all I can in all ways I can.

My area of interest is literature. I was teaching English literature in college for nine years where I focused my attention on literary theory and criticism. I want to do my Ph. D in literature. I also have a goal to write a novel which I plan to complete within five years. Literature is a way of enquiry. It is also a beautiful window through which we can get a wider picture of the world around us. So, I love literature and love to live in literature.

**Research Focus**

I also feel that I have certain responsibilities and commitments to my society when it comes to education. I am from a remote non-industrialised village in India. My village is surrounded by deep forest and it is beautiful. I really want to contribute to my village’s education. Certain things need to be changed and certain aspects modified. Most people from my district are tribe members who are scheduled under the government of India as part of their protection and preservation. The central, state governments and education systems have tried many ways to provide modern education to them. But, from my first hand observations and various studies conducted by other organizations it is clear that, imparting modern education among them, make them afraid and stressed. In light of the observation and studies, I feel that the colonial term “uplifting of tribes” becomes irrational.
Governments have provided infrastructure to our village tribal members but still they are on the verge of extinction and destruction because the fast-changing technological and modern mechanical world is completely alien to them and they fail absolutely to adapt to it. This observation is the motive behind my research proposal. Through this proposal what I intend to do is figure out what could be done to preserve their culture through a more culturally relevant education system.

I have been pondering this topic for a long time; how does the present education system in my place - in their attempts to “modernise” education for tribal students - fail to engage students within society? Whenever government and modern educators have tried to integrate tribes into mainstream education system they tend to move away from or reject this integration and show a tendency to return to their own cultural roots or abode, which is forest or nature.

**The “Paniya” Tribe**

The group of tribes located in my district of Kerala province of Southern India are called “Paniya.” Traditionally, they were the victims of the feudal system that existed in my place for centuries. They usually live in colonies. Education Departments, in collaboration with Tribal Departments, have tried to incorporate tribal students into the mainstream system. But, all the attempts fail and besides, members of the tribal group seem to go to a culture shock and frustration because they cannot adjust with the so-called modern education system or modernity (Niju, 2013). A more in-depth look into the Paniya “people of the forest” will be highlighted in chapter 3 of this research.
Research Overview

The reality of modern education attempts in my home village has led me to the following questions: What is the best education system which cater to the needs of tribal “Paniya” students? What may be a better, more culturally relevant option other than the failed modern, mainstream approach? Might it be wiser or better leaving them as they are in their own places? There are many questions in my mind right now about the problems faced by tribal students in schools. This research will demonstrate that the educational leadership in Kerala has not taken up the issue of tribes seriously and that an ideal way of education is not the one presently imparted upon forcefully but one that is guided and acquired through greater understanding of “Paniya” people. But the main highlight of this research project is creating a white paper which provides an alternative and more culturally sensible education system that provides the frame work for a non-conventional school which includes “the Paniya” culture and tribes as a whole. It is in fact a blue print of an alternative school for the education of the “Paniya” tribe in Wyanad district of Kerala.

Ninety nine percent of tribal students in my village of Kerala drop out of modern schooling before they reach secondary schools (Niju, 2013). The reason for dropping out includes, importantly, the fact that they are forced to do schooling in a second language and not their mother tongue. They are forced to learn a new language Malayalam, unlike other kids. The conflict between mother tongue and a second language makes them feel unable to cope, afraid, and inadequate. In these instances, education becomes a tool of
discrimination, exclusion, and regulation to the periphery instead of the tool of empowerment it is touted and glorified to be (Makenzie, 2012).

Educational leaders and teachers require immense sensitivity to be able to understand and address this inequality of opportunities and resources. In this regard there is a direct relevance of bell hooks’ (2003) concept of “the democratic classroom where each kid’s voice is heard and where teachers care for the children’s souls seeing them as individuals with a past, present, and valid individualities” (p.29). Althusser’s(1968) ideological state apparatus comes to my mind where education works intentionally and otherwise as a tool of the ruling class or the mainstream society to control, to exclude, and to dehumanise. These questions keep coming to my mind. What other options are there? How can “Paniya” tribal culture be preserved along with the advantages of modern education and developments and of the wider world that exists?

The answer to these research questions can be found everywhere in Kerala and especially, throughout the length and breadth of the Wayanad district. Several active groups and non-governmental organisations are working with the education of tribes. I have many professors, friends, and hundreds of friends from the “Paniya” tribal community itself. Asking them questions and reading in detail about these issues have helped me build a plan. The Tribal Department in my place has also proved to be a valuable source of information for this research project.
Through this research project I propose a more relevant plan for the education of the “Paniya” tribes in my place. I have created an ideal and more culturally-responsive school system for this tribe.

‘Paniya’ means ‘workers’ in my language, Malayalam is the first language of the state and a second language for the “Paniya” tribes since they speak “Paniya” language, which is their mother tongue and it doesn’t have script. They are the original inhabitants of the Wayanad district, in the South Indian state called Kerala. The-school that I have designed is a strikingly avant-garde school system for ‘learning with nature’ without disturbing its normal course. In her research paper, McBee (2003) highlights the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge and way of life into academic formal schools. Her study found the following:

We can recover some of the lost enchantment by creating trails toward nature-based Indigenous knowledge. Learning from its rich repository, where time is cyclical and humans are deeply imbedded in relationships with all of Nature, might bring back the captivating delight into the lives of modern day people.

(p.15)

To address this issues of learning with nature and having access to such a system, an alternative plan is essential. This white paper is an attempt to solve these two problems.

Through this plan the tribal students will have access to a more locally-relevant educational system for training and community living. This proposed design will eventually support the “Paniya” tribe to be self-sustaining and self-reliable individuals
who can then chase their community life in the same traditional way, with the added vitality and self-esteem that was lost for many generations under the fraternities of mighty landlords and upper classes. Further, their aspirations can also bound outward to seek successful careers in the outside main-stream world if they wish to. Research by Chako (2005) highlights the present condition of tribal education and the necessity of change in its approach in the following words:

   It seems that education does not have the same meaning for the STs that it has for the middle and upper strata of society. They are at the lower strung of the social ladder and have been deprived of the basic necessities of life for generations. Consequently, the idea of pursuing education for its own sake does not interest them. They do not look at it as an opportunity for self-expression, self-realization, or personality development. (p.122)

   A different perspective in the education of the tribes is essential to incorporate their participation and preservation. A culturally relevant education system can help them in different ways. Chako (2003) is of the opinion that the cooperative forces in a different education can deliberately cultivate among children the necessary intellectual and emotional dispositions and attitudes for dealing with change in general, impart to them the necessary technical and social skills, and teach them to react to change intelligently when it occurs. It can do this by keeping abreast of social changes and modifying in each generation the heritage it may teach in its schools. (p.177) Community and tribe based education.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Wayanad is predominantly agrarian. The name of the district is derived from agriculture. It is; ‘the land of paddy fields.’ Tribal population exist and live around agriculture practices and their culture is so deeply connected with forest and agriculture that separating them from these two virtually kills them. They are the original inhabitants of the place. They are known as Paniyar or Paniyan, which means coolie labours in the native language, Malayalam. They are an ethnic group of India. They primarily inhabit the northern districts of the South Indian state, Kerala. They speak the “Paniya” language, which belongs to the Dravidian family. The Government of India has included the Paniya tribe in the scheduled tribes’ category for their protection and preservation (Karade, 2009) their population is around 94,000. According to Charu (2000) a tribe is ”a collection of families or common group bearing a common name, the members of which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos, regarding marriage, professions and have developed a well assured system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations.” Vidyarthi (1981) defined a tribe as a social group with definite territory, common name, common district, common culture, behaviour of an endogamous group, common taboos, and existence of distinctive social and political system, full faith in leaders and self-sufficiency in their distinct economy.

The Paniyas are considered by outsiders as educationally backward. This assumption is based on the fact that none of them survive beyond grade four in their
modern, primary education (Niju, 2013). In the sphere of higher education their presence and participation is zero. The possibility of finding the attendance and involvement of even a single Paniya student, teacher, or educational leader in the higher educational and leadership domain is impossible. This educational backwardness of the tribe has been a topic for heated debates in the political and social venues of Wayanad. One of the reasons is that the mainstream education system failed to integrate them into the design or intentions for schooling. A tribal community development programme was introduced by the Government of India to integrate tribal population into the mainstream education system. It was a comprehensive programme of education that included development of agriculture, animal husbandry, education, health and communication services etc. Later it was accepted as a major strategy for the education of the tribes. But Sujatha (1999), in her studies observes that the benefits of the tribal community development programmes was later trickled down to urban areas and the relatively powerful upper class representative and leaders cornered all the benefits of it for the benefit of their own communities and people. The tribe’s needs were never met.

The second reason, which is significant, is that they do not want to be integrated with the mainstream society. A tribal survey conducted by Platt (2016) shows the following:

A lack of satisfaction with educational seemed to be greatest in the tribal community. None of the tribes surveyed had completed their schooling until 6th standard. Tribe members participated in the survey specifically noted that while
they had the desire to pursue technical trainings they were not interested to take the time off in order to do it. (p.24)

A tribal survey conducted by Leeson (2017) concludes: “There is a still a wide spread feeling among the tribal that education make their off-spring deviant, insolent and alien from the rest of their society. Since some of the tribal educated boys felt alienated and cut off their bonds with their families and villages after getting education and good education” (p.1).

A pertinent study in this field by Niju (2013) showed, as per the socio–economic survey 1996-97, the number of primitive tribes who passed tenth grade is 66 only. Another significant factor affecting the successful integration and education of the tribal population in India as well as Kerala is the ever prevailing caste system. The mainstream society stigmatize the tribes and keep them away from their children. Chako (2005) throws light on this issue; “In the caste-ridden civilization of India, for instance, there was a vested interest to maintain the social distance vis-‡-vis the tribals. History will show that tribal populations in India have served as a reserve pool of backwardness, to maintain the superior position of others” (p.99).

Observations by Jogin (2014) states that due to the lack of improved methods of teaching according to their mental and cultural standards of “paniya” tribes many number of tribal children do not join schools and even if they join, they lose interest and discontinue their education, because of all these reasons, much and positive development in education as well as professional education has not been achieved by tribal
communities, in general. Buriya, (2015) a tribal student reveals the following in an interview with the Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine;

The educational schedule - the school year, daily classes and holidays - is organized with little understanding of tribal cultures. Tribal festivals and celebrations and the seasonal pursuit of agriculture and gathering are not taken into consideration in planning educational timetables. All too often teachers hold classes as they would in cities or towns, ignoring the daily or seasonal habits of tribal pupils. (p.2)

The medium of instruction is another problem to the promotion of education among tribes. Most of the primitive tribal languages in Kerala don't having any script of their own. The curriculum and syllabus in mainstream schools are framed mainly for non-tribal students. Buriya (2015) painfully explains the plight of her people in school in the following words:

Some tribes still speak their language. While adult males are often bilingual, the women and children speak tribal dialects almost exclusively. Yet, a tribal child, on entering school, is suddenly expected to understand the state language. Children cannot understand the teacher, let alone answer questions. Many teachers assume that tribal students are slow; even if the teachers are sympathetic, overcoming this language barrier requires a great deal of effort. It would help considerably if tribal pupils were taught, during their first years in school, in their
tribal language. They could then be gradually encouraged to learn the regional language. (p.2)

My project is aimed at addressing three major issues. Firstly, identify factors which failed to integrate tribal culture into Wayanard’s mainstream education system, secondly, identify factors which create reliance among the tribes to be integrated into it and finally, to suggest an alternative plan for their education. This paper also addresses the issues of equality, equivalence and learner progression among the marginalized tribes. Rather than adopting strategies for education inclusion that reinforce nomadic groups’ sociopolitical marginalization, this research will suggest an alternative plan for the education of the marginalized and less privileged people of Wayanad. Instead of normal, so called mainstream society schools, an educational system based on the mobility, culture and spiritual way of living of the nomadic community will be represented as more effective. Wheatley & Frieze (2011) quoted Tagore in their similar observation:

The best of us still have our aspiration for the supreme goal of life, which is so often mocked by prosperous people who now control the world. We still believe that world has a deeper meaning than what is apparent, and that there in the human soul finds its ultimate harmony and peace. We still know that only in a spiritual wealth does civilization attain its end, not in a prolific production of materials, and not in the competition of intemperate power with power. (p. 117-118)
In this situation, I feel that a community based education system is ideal for the education of tribes of Wayanad. Jernigan, Valarie Blue Bird et al. (2015) defines community based education as “systematic inquiry and practice with the participation of those affected by an issue to education and action for social change” (p. 4).

Besides community based education, an education system which supports coexistence is essential. Bartal (2004) states: “coexistence is a state of mind shared by society members who recognize the rights of another group to exist peacefully as a legitimate, equal partner with whom disagreements have to be resolved in nonviolent ways” (p.19). Coexistence was an inherent part of the tribal way of living. Attaining coexistence is an unlimited challenge because of the negative relations between the tribes and the mainstream groups. Bartal (2004) is of the opinion that: “these negative relations, the result of ethnocentric beliefs or intractable conflict, are widely shared and their abolition requires deep societal change. Education for coexistence plays an important function in this change” (p.37).

The tribal district is an underdeveloped hilly district, a hill station at the edge of the Deccan Plateau. Modernisation has not touched the place. In fact, it is a boon because nature and ecology is intact as it is without human intervention and developmental destructions. It is important to have an alternative educational plan because the tribes are a minority group, marginalized, exploited, subjugated, stigmatized and are not integrated with mainstream society. Niyatha (2014), in her journal notes that there is an unrest among the tribes of Kerala. She stresses that “Marginalization, landlessness, alienation of land, and displacement are the root causes of their unrest” (p.13). Only an alternative
education system can cater to their needs because the present education system has already failed in addressing their needs. Niyatha (2014) is of the opinion that education which is available to the majority is not available to the poor tribes. Buriya (2015) is of the opinion that:

The content and the method of tribal education must be objectively evaluated. Tribal youth have unique historical and social backgrounds but need special attention and orientation in their attempts to bridge two cultures. Many school and college curricula which tribal youths encounter are either irrelevant to them and/or offer only negative views of tribal societies. While national and state governments, in theory, offer many benefits, concessions and facilities to tribal students, few of them reach the intended recipients. (p.3)

Research by Rupavathi (2016) highlighted the failure of Indian education in addressing the needs of the tribes in India. Though education is priority in India’s political system it failed in addressing the issues faced by tribes in the educational sphere. Niyatha R (2014) notices that at present, the education sector as a whole in the state is characterized by the existence of a dual system:

One segment comprising high quality institutions catering to the affluent 5 per cent of the population and the second consisting of low quality institutions meant for the masses. The state has never made any attempt at equitable distribution of quality higher education, the access to which is virtually barred to children of marginalized groups. (p.18)
All the above mentioned researchers indirectly stress the importance of having an alternative plan in education for tribes. The problems of language, caste, western education system, forced integration, class struggle and suppression are the reasons behind supporting a more tribal education in India (Bhagavatheeswaran, 2016). There is a mounting countrywide realization in India that education is a means for integration and assimilation of tribal students in mainstream education system. But life is an ailing project for the tribes in the country. Jose (2016) says it is primarily because; “the present mainstream education has a limited usefulness in overcoming prejudice, discrimination and marginalization of tribals in Indian society” (p.6).

David and Chakraborty (2016) share the same view. They have identified the key areas of failure in tribal education of Kerala. They say that tribal education in Kerala is replete with problems mainly due to the absence of understanding of the tribal culture, remoteness and the dispersed nature of tribal habitation; language barriers and enforcing of Malayalam, the official language of the state of Kerala, as the medium of education for all; socio-cultural disparities between tribes as well as between tribes and outsiders; poverty; and above all neglect of basic developmental needs and amenities for either tribal or non-tribal teachers in the area and no allocation of resources for tribal education.

A changed political perspective is needed for a deep change. Though the articles I reviewed identified the problems, none of them go into a pessimistic attitude towards addressing the issue of tribal education. A change is required and this research offers a solution.
Alternative educational approaches in tribal education have been gaining ground (Dyer 2016). Dyer maintains that a system which is not different from their culture, language and way of living is the ideal one for them. The governments and educational leaders must be proactive in addressing the issue of tribal education. With a changed paradigm, change can be made. But it needs vision and courage and a political will power. There are changes happening around the world in the sphere of education. After studying various alternative educational schools around the world for marginalized communities and people Wheatley and Frieze (2011) observed about changes it made to its benefactors;

They may have been told they’re “backward” or don’t possess the requisite expertise to solve their own problems. Had they accepted current thinking, they would have sat back and waited passively for help to come from the outside—from experts, foreign aid, heroic leaders. But instead, they walked out. They had the good sense not to buy into these paralyzing beliefs about themselves and how change happens. They walked on to discover that the wisdom and wealth they need resides in themselves—in everyday people, their cultural traditions and their environment. They’ve used this wisdom and wealth to conduct bold experiments in how to create healthy and resilient communities where all people matter, all people can contribute. Their creativity and hard work make it easier for us to see that a different world is possible. (p. 22)

Education systems – outside modern schooling - are not new to the world. *Shikshanthar* and *Gem Schools* are some of the successful and established alternative
school programmes in India. They are the best examples for the promotion of more locally-relevant educational practices Wheatley and Frieze (2011) highlight a shift in India from ‘transacting to gifting’:

The transactional culture of today promotes self–interest and scarcity; people strive to take as much as they can and accumulate more than they need. In a gift culture—common in many traditional societies—generosity prevails and money loses its power. Shikshanthar is experimenting with gift culture replacing mindless growth with the confidence that we have what we need. (p. 24)

While it may not be denied that education poses a crucial step for tribal progress, it also needs to be recognized that tribal children have very low levels of participation in the imposed schooling system, and that the pace of tribal promotion strategies is very slow. Besides that, most educational strategies promote the British education system considered by the political and educational leadership which is dominated and controlled by colonised minds as the best education system (Bara, 2010). Similarly, as cautioned by Sundar (2010), if governments do not take any radical steps for the development of tribal education, the position of education among tribes will be a level of anguish, misery and death. This research offers a solution in this direction by designing an educational option that seriously considers tribal education and inclusive growth. Joseph (2016), in an article written in the national newspaper, India Today suggests the following steps for the education of tribes:
For the progress of the tribal community, there is a dire need of educational systems that blend well with the tribal background and lifestyle.

In the initial stages, the medium of instruction should be one that is familiar to them, and then gradually, they can be encouraged to take up regional languages.

Tribal education should not be restricted to only learning but should evoke the responsibilities of the concerned individual towards his entire community.

Students should be taught to safeguard their own rights as well as the rights of their community and resolve to combat exploitation against their people.

I think, a culturally responsive curriculum will be ideal for reviving the spirit of tribal students. A system which includes community’s land, environment, region, culture, river, forest, animals, spirituality, language and traditional knowledge. The idea of incorporating tribal tradition and traditional knowledge in education is important. Ragoonadan and Mueller (2017) say that; for the tribes knowledge is traditional and is specific to place, usually transmitted orally, and rooted in the experience of multiple generations. It is determined by an Aboriginal community’s land, environment, region, culture and language. Their studies highlight the fact that “traditional knowledge is usually described by Aboriginal people as holistic, involving body, mind, feelings and spirit” (p.2). I am convinced that this is the right kind of approach that needs to be put in
practice in tribal education. It is all inclusive, place based, dynamic and a motivating force to fight against the tides of alienation and social stigma.

Classroom practices where focus is given on building trust and a sense of community is essential for the integration of tribes into education. I am of the opinion that the entire school system should be teaching basically the question related to the inquiry of the self, and encouraging reflection on the interdependence between self and other and its interplay with the larger sociopolitical context. These principles are a kind of cultural humility, which asks the question, (Cochrane et al., 2017) “how can I better understand the other through this experience?” Cultural humility is defined as “an ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the person” (p.108). I hope that through a culturally relevant education system which includes tribal culture and practices a deep change can be made in the sphere of education. This white paper is a humble attempt towards that end.
Chapter 3

“Paniya,” the people of forest.

Before embarking on a journey with the “‘Paniya’ tribe” it is essential that a clear idea of their culture, background, ethnicity, milieu and practices be understood well. According to the Government of Kerala (2011), the tribal group called, “‘Paniya” is statistically the largest among the tribes of Kerala” (p.78). The government of India has categorised them as scheduled tribes for their protection and preservation, as part of its protective discrimination policy. They are the prime scheduled tribes of Kerala as well. They are mainly settled in Wayanad, a hilly highland district of Kerala. Wayanad is a part of the greater Deccan Plateau in South India. A few of the “Paniya” settlements are found in the nearby districts called, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Palakkad. According to the Government of Kerala (2011), “71.95% of the ‘Paniya’ are settled in Wayanad alone” (p.79). “Paniyas” form the leading tribal community in Wayanad, but they are the most backward in every respect. They are a subjugated group of people having no land and surviving with little conveniences of life (Nair, 2010).

“‘Paniyas’

According to Nair (2010), “the name “Paniya” is derived from the Malayalam word ‘pani’ which means labor” (p.58). In general the term “Paniya” in Wayanad denotes those tribes who earn their bread and butter from daily menial labor. Thus the word “Paniya” literally means 'labourer' or worker.
Physical Appearance

The color of the ‘‘Paniyas’’ varies from dark to dark-brown. Das (2017) observes that they are;”dark skinned tribe, short in stature, with broad noses and curly or wavy hair” (p.28). They speak a language which is a blend of both Malayalam with Tamil words (Waryar, 2011).

The “Paniyas” can be categorized into two groups depending on the place of their settlement: Those living in the plain land in groups and collaboration with other members of the tribe and those who live in the interior of dense forests (Das, 2017). Those who live in the dense forest mainly live in the Nilambur forests of Malappuram district of Kerala, India. The ‘‘Paniya’’ dwelling places are called ‘‘padis’’ which is generally a constellation of huts.

Figure 1. An Elder Panichi (Arun, 2017).

Figure 2. Paniya Attire (Arun, 2017).

They call it ‘pire’ or ‘chala’.
The ‘Paniya’ attire is modest and can be distinct from that of the other tribal communities. Usually, a long cloth which is called ‘mundu’ is worn by the male (Ayyappan, 1992). They wrap the long cloth around their waist and another piece is used to wrap the shoulder covering the entire body. The ‘Paniya’ women who are called ‘panichi’ use the ‘mundu’ and a smaller cloth covering their breast and armpits. A scarf called ‘arati’ is tied around their waist. They prefer red color for the scarf for formal rituals and ceremonies.

**Food**

Traditionally, ‘The Paniyas’ are hunter-gatherers’ relishing the liberty and self-reliance of wandering life in the dense forests. They make use of edible roots, leaves, varieties of roots and tubes, crabs, fish etc. for their diet. Rice is also one of their staple foods. Besides these, wild edible seeds, tapioca, vegetables and animal flesh are all included in their food items. Urbanization has increased the availability of alcohol (Rural
Development Survey, 2015). Alcohol consumption is common among the tribes. They make their own beverages for intoxication and consume almost anything for it.

**Social customs**

A ceremony called ‘Ear-boring’ piercing, both the ears of the girl child when she becomes three years old is of prime importance to “the Paniyas.” (Antony, 2008).

This is done using sharp small bamboo needles. Later, a traditional mix of ginger juice, turmeric paste and ash is applied for healing the wound. The first menstruation of a girl is considered very important among them. She reaches puberty, maturity and feminine status in the community through an elaborate ritual. During menstrual periods a woman is considered ritually impure by “The Paniyas” so she is banned from entering kitchen and performing household duties. She is isolated to the corner and is accepted back to normal routine of the household after a purification ceremony at the seventh day (Antony, 2008).
Marriage customs

‘Paniyas’ prefer marriages by mediation and negotiation with the blessing and rituals of the elders and other members of the clan (Johny, 2010). If objections arise eloping with the lover is also common among the tribes, which is later accepted into the community without much objections. Payment of a bride price by the bride to the groom is important. This is usually by giving money, cattle or grains. Initiation for the marriage must begin from the groom’s side. It is not acceptable if a girl begins the marriage proposal. It is customary that the boy offers a fixed sum of thirty kilograms of rice or grains, which is called ‘Uchal’ to the girl’s father in the first year and ten kilograms of it in the subsequent years without fail. The girl’s father has every right to call his daughter back to his home for good if the ‘Uchal’ is not paid by the husband (Johny, 2010).

Funeral Rites

The place of burial of ‘Paniya’s’ is usually near their ‘padi.’ which means common colony. Mourning is observed by the members of bereaved family for seven days. The mourner who is called ‘Noombukkaran’ in the house is supposed to perform the rituals on the seventh day. He is not permitted either to take bath or eat fish or meat, during the customary mourning period. A ritual called ‘Eyampula kayikkal’ is performed on the seventh day (Trivedi, 2016).
Religion

“The Paniyas” are polytheists. Most of their gods are associated with forest or they dwell in the forests (Ayyappan, 1992). Their prime God is an elf which they call “Kuttichathan”. Besides these Gods, there are other colleagues to the elf in the name of “Kuliyan” and “marakkar” carrying out their preservation and punishment duties respectively. 'Kattu Bhagavathi' or 'Kali' are other female Goddesses whom they worship. 'Mariyamma' and 'Ayyappan' are also important god and

Figure 5. Paniya Elders with their God (Arun, 2017).

Figure 6. Paniya women celebrating their harvest (Arun, 2017).
goddesses of ‘‘Paniyas’’ (Ayyappan, 1992). All these Gods appear in their songs and rituals. They usually place their Gods at the foot of a nearby sacred tree or in forest.

‘‘Paniyas’’ festivals are also occasions for them to give offering to their gods. There are number of festivals in different seasons. They celebrate festivals of their own and common harvest festivals of the state, Kerala with similar interests. The most important festival of Wayanad district, called “Valliyoorkaavu Festival” is celebrated by all the people of Wayanad in general (Johny, 2010). It is a festival spanning ten days in the month of March. “The Paniyas” give more importance to the festival. It is generally considered as a tribal harvest festival. Its history dates back to decades. “The Paniyas” flock to the festival from the first day itself. They come with camping items and mats to sleep on. They generally go back to their own homes only at the end of the festival. They stay there, sleep there and actively involve themselves in the festival. Free food is offered at the festival to all people irrespective of cast or religion.

Communal Life

Community is like an institution for them. “The Paniya” cluster of families are called colonies. A colony consists of fifteen to twenty families. Each colony is headed by a chief or elder who is called, “Chemmi.” He is the eldest member of the colony. A chief is always respected and obeyed by the members of the group. In case of disputes or clashes trial and punishment is carried out by the chief. In most cases the decision of the chief is final and unquestioned (Waryar, 2011). The chief’s power is transferred from generation to generations through male offsprings. In case a chief does not have a son, the husband of his daughter becomes the chief. If the chief doesn’t have any off springs
the position goes to his brothers. A council of elders is formed for the smooth function of the community and the elder chief presides over the meeting. The council has the right to advise the chief regarding important issues concerning the community. The chief is also the head priest among the tribe. He arranges marriages and death rituals. The role of the chief as the head of the community has reduced over the years. These days he just presides over the meetings.

“The Paniyas” were slaves of wealthy higher class landlords when feudalism and slavery were common practices in the state (Ayyappan, 1992). The landlord had every right of their ‘Paniyas.” I know many stories told by my father and grandfather of “The Paniyas” being killed brutally for not obeying the landlord’s order. Even today, “The Paniya” colonies are named after the house name of the land lord who once owned the entire colony.

**Type of Family**

“The Paniyas” have large and extended families in general. Although “the Paniya” are monogamous bigamy is also a common practice among them. They live in large groups in common colonies. “The Paniyas” do not follow any birth controls. As a result most have many children in many wives. In general, there are no strict laws or practices among them when it comes to sex and sexual practices. “Present day governments take care of the tribes and they are provided free education and food in their schooling. Besides this, “The Paniyas” have reservation and their separate right in all walks of life (Trivedi, 2016).
AN ALTERNATIVE BLUE PRINT, A WHITE PAPER FOR THE EDUCATION OF
THE ‘PANIYA’ TRIBES IN WAYANAD, KERALA, INDIA

Album: “The Paniya” life at a glance

Figure 7. A Paniya Chief with his Grand Children (Arun, 2017).
AN ALTERNATIVE BLUEPRINT, A WHITE PAPER FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE ‘PANIYA’ TRIBES IN WAYANAD, KERALA, INDIA

Figure 8. Paniya in Paddy Filed for Harvest (Arun, 2017).

Figure 9. A Paniya Woman doing Manual labour (Arun, 2017).
Figure 10. Paniya Children Searching for Fish and Crabs (Arun, 2017).

Figure 11. Rice is a staple food (Arun, 2017).
Figure 12. Paniyas Fish in Groups (Arun, 2017).

Figure 13. An elder Paniya Woman (Arun, 2017).
Figure 14. A Paniya Grandmother (Arun, 2017).

Figure 15. A Paniya Mother Sharing Raw Honey Comb with Children (Arun, 2017).
AN ALTERNATIVE BLUE PRINT, A WHITE PAPER FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE ‘PANIYA’ TRIBES IN WAYANAD, KERALA, INDIA

Figure 16. Paniya Festival Dance (Arun, 2017).

Figure 17. Paniyas Go in procession to visit their Gods (Arun, 2017).
Figure 18. A Colony of Paniya or “Paniya Purai” (Arun, 2017).
Chapter 4

Frame work for the school called “Stream”

Stream School Objectives

As mentioned previously, my-project intent was to create a school on white paper. With this in mind I have designed a plan for a culturally relevant and self-sustaining school with a separate syllabus, campus, materials and subjects to learn in which the Paniya students contribute their efforts and skills to produce rice, vegetables and other food crops. The agriculture practice will be completely organic. Seeds will be very traditional and pure. The food thus produced can be suitable for the school for almost an entire season, almost making them self-sufficient. The proposed school will also have separate curriculum which is based on agriculture and living. Even the need for electricity will be met by utilizing solar panels and homemade electricity generators. Students will not know the difference between schooling and normal life. The end product of this project is the design of a master plan for this school. I need to do a lot further reading, enquiry and studies in this regard. What I have planned to do is explore similar school systems around the world and learn about them, their administration, activities, daily life, sustainability, financial sources, managements, productivity, student participation, outside support etc.

The ultimate goal for the children –or students – of the Paniya tribe is that normal life will be their schooling and their schooling will be as normal as life is; never separated from society, day-to-day life and its realities. All students and even visitors would take
care of their own cooking, dining and other daily routines. The food will be very simple and natural with no added extravagances of conceit or fanfare. The school will have a well-maintained library that includes books of all ranges and literary taste. The school will also have a specially designed and separate curriculum and syllabus to cater to the needs, tastes and skills of the tribal students. The traditional martial arts of my province Wayanad called, “kalaripayattu” will be integrated as an integral part of the syllabus as part of physical education and self-defence.

Tribes are good artists. They have an innate sense for rhythm, songs and dances as they are part of their rituals and prayers for rites and festivals. Their talents very much attach to their ancient and pure rural tribal culture. As part of their schooling they will create well-designed paintings, statues made out of natural material, hand-crafted greeting cards, and useful items. Visitors can help the school maintain itself by purchasing these less expensive, yet rich in value, mementos and thus help this quiet revolution away from the main-stream academic trials. This is going to be an important aspect of the school. A study by Jojo (2013) stated that; “Most of the tribal children are struggling to access the schools and those who do manage to gain access, fail to get quality education. Most of them appear to be mis-oriented and grapple with the vast and emerging problems in the tribal belts” (p.10).

Stream School Philosophy

The name of this proposed school is “Stream.” In the name itself it shows the flexibility and flow without being stagnant and dead. Ever changing and adapting the
education for Paniya children flows naturally through generations. Stream school has a holistic outlook: Education for total liberation is the motto in Stream. Education is taken as a lifelong process not as a sectarian academic exercise. Humans are seen as a part of nature not the other way around. As it is in the Paniya culture, every living organism is important in this education system. Wildlife, plants, animals, fish, water and air are integral part of the system in which they live, grow together and benefit each other.

**Spirituality.**

Stream school will also be based on the principle of spirituality, science and a spirit of enquiry – which are integral parts of Paniya culture. By spirituality, I do not mean adherence to any particular religion but communion with nature and the universe in general. Scientific temper, spirituality and the spirit of enquiry are an integral part of the curricular and non-curricular activities of the school.

**Teachers as facilitators.**

In Stream school the bond between the student and the teacher will be from person to person, not from position to position. All the importance will be given to learning and facilitation and not teaching rote learning and mere absorption of facts. Teacher as an all knowing entity will be absent in this school. The hierarchy of knowledge shall be vanished. Art, music, dance, folk songs, martial arts, fishing, farming and animal husbandry will be an integral part of the school curriculum.
Stream School Policies and Beliefs

- Community integration. Community and school are one; not separate entities.
- School infrastructures are built and maintained with the help of students and community.
- Students and teachers live in the school in close proximity with their home colonies and learn by doing.
- Agriculture practices are integral part of the syllabus.
- No discipline committees or disciplinary actions to any student of teachers except the normal laws and rules of the land.
- Integration of nature, animals into classroom.
- Preservation and sustainability of the ecosystem.
- Self-farmed food items, crops, vegetable, etc.
- Every student will learn at least one trade like carpentry, sewing, weaving, processing of food etc.
- No time prefixed for yearly tests for all the grades. Every day is learning and every day is test.
- Harmony, respect, values and ethics of the land, tradition, culture and believes are respected and practiced everywhere.
- No religious and political dogmas are represented in the school under any circumstances.
- Music, painting, drama and other arts are integrated accordingly.
Parents and students actively involve themselves in school activities.

No plastic or plastic products in school.

**Intent of Stream School**

The character and culture of Stream will be to realize a way of living that is whole, rational and intellectual. Stream will not be a center for sheer brain and memory skills. Teachers and students will be trained to look outside academic excellence. Students will be trained to explore not only the outer world but also the internal conditioning, ways of thinking and behavior. The total educational process will be to nurture and maintain a sensitivity to apprehend the importance and limitations of knowledge, thus helping the individuals to think for themselves, to nurture an immense feeling of confidence, and to be creative human beings in all walks of life. Educational philosopher from India, Krishnamoorthy (2014) rightly put it in words:

A school is a place where one learns both the importance of knowledge and its limitation. It is a place where one learns to observe the world without a particular point of view or conclusion. One learns to look at the whole of man's endeavor, his search for beauty, his search for truth and a way of living that is not a contradiction between conclusion and action. It is a place where both teacher and the taught learn a way of life in which conflict ends. It is the concern of these schools to bring about a new generation of human beings who are free from self-centered action, to
bring about a mind that has no conflict within itself and so end the struggle and conflict in the world about us. (pp.3)

Stream School Curriculum

‘Gurukula’ system of education.

The school, Stream, in general will be run based on the principle of ‘gurukula’ education system. The genesis of this traditional education system of India is based on Vedas, the ancient Indian texts. This system is as ancient as Vedas as it is mentioned in the Vedas themselves. Singh (1998) says that according to the Vedas, “education is an obligation to every citizen. It was considered a sin and crime if somebody did not send their children for education. Nobody was meant to be uneducated in the society” (p.102).

The word ‘gurukula’ can literally be translated as the house of the teacher. The proposed school will be a house and home for both teachers and students alike. The most important aspects of community living, cooperation, preservation and sustainability of culture, and life-long learning will be the prime objective of the school.

Stream School will have include both lower and upper schools. This will be based on the age level of the students. In all the grades the students and the teachers are encouraged to think and derive at answers through guidance and correction. Extra-curricular activities will be strongly encouraged. Examinations and tests will be given less priority. There will not be any grading of the students and no annual examinations in the school.
Folklore, music and theatre.

Folk, music and plays form an integral part of Stream school curriculum. The traditional oral myths and folk stories of “Paniya” culture will find a place in the school curriculum. The folk tales which are transmitted orally from generations to generation will be preserved in the school – not as a promotion of superstition, rather a part of showing respect for ancestors.

The “Paniya” tribe is known for their use of musical instrument called ‘thudu’ and ‘kuzal.’ ‘Thudi’ is a small drum made out of the skin of dead wild animals like wolf and fox. ‘Kuzal’ is a long bamboo pipe similar to a bugle or flute. These instruments are integral part of all the rituals of the tribe. Every “Paniya” child learns their use from their grandparents. The tribal elders will be incorporated with the daily activities of Stream school to ensure that children learn and benefit from their music, story, and Teachings.

“Kalaripayatu”, the martial art of Kerala.

“Kalaripayatu” is the martial art of the state in general. This traditional form of martial art has existed in Kerala for centuries. In the old feudal times, rulers maintained ‘Kalari’ warriors who defended the feudal lord and often had to give up their lives in honor of their masters. Rather than being a martial art form, ‘Kalaripayatu’ is a spiritual discipline. It is a self-defence technique. This form will be introduced in the Stream school for making the students physically and mentally fit to live, not to defeat others. More than a martial art form it has been successfully
practiced as a treatment form in Kerala. ‘Kalaripayatu’ needs minimum eighteen years of continuous rigorous training and practice to be a master in it. It uses deadly weapons and steps in its advanced stage. The Stream school intend to include the basic principles of it and the students will always be encouraged to continue until perfection if they wish.

**Wildlife, flora and fauna.**

Searching for a specific class room in Stream school will be a difficult task since the entire campus and community itself is the class room. Students will learn from various places across the campus that include – but is not limited to -, the agriculture field, the pottery shed, the library, the kitchen, the cow shed, the amphitheater etc. Learning extend to the nearby river where the students learn swimming and fishing. The adjoining forest will be a class room for observing and learning about wild life, animals, trees, birds, worms, butterflies etc. Importance will be given to the awareness of their tribal past and knowledge. By doing so they will feel proud of their past and will start celebrating their ancestry instead of feeling stigmatized.

**Farming and agriculture practices.**

My direct and personal observation of the Panyia tribal has made me understand that they are self-sustaining communities. The natural way of farming and agriculture practices make them self-sufficient when it comes to food and agriculture. The “Paniya” tribe in general are farmers by all means. Their deep knowledge of variety of food crops, seeds, root crops, forest and wildlife help them not only to survive but
also to grow as a community without much intervention from the urban lifestyle.

Rarely do the tribes depend on finished goods and service from the cities, except for clothes, refined materials. The “Paniyas” practice organic farming. This is the model which will be followed in Stream school in farming. All of the forest-based foods are rich in nutrition and are found very easily. The tribes survive in extreme drought and flood on food from forest. Besides, the preservation forest food doesn’t need any artificial fertilizers or nurturing or care. They survive and grow in plenty.

Tribal communities collect nutritious food from nearby forest. They know that it is essential to maintain and preserve forest. So they are the natural guardians and protectors of wildlife themselves. The forest department of Kerala has permitted the tribal communities to collect forest food. Natural honey, all kinds of edible fruits, and roots are collected and used by the tribes. The Stream school will follow the same principles. Instead of depending largely on wild forest the school will try to build its own ecosystem which grows such organic product. It is important to notice that the importance of forest-based foods is likely to increase due to climate change. So it is the need of the time that we focus on more organic and self-sustaining agriculture systems. Tribes have a deep sense of the relationship between nature and human. The common saying among the tribes; “we are the sons of the forest” (Ayyappan, 1992, p. 28).

The daily activity of Stream will come to an end at nine in the night. Before retiring to their dormitories there will be a meeting and reporting where all the members of the school gather in the amphitheater. All the students will share the tasks
they accomplished during the day. This include a complete report to the following points: (a) the practice in the martial art, the level of learning and general comments; (b) the menu and responsibilities in the kitchen for the next day; (c) the maintenance of paddy and vegetable field and the people responsible for it; (d) the maintenance of the live stocks in the farm, their stable and shed and the name of the members who will accompany the animals to the forest the next day; (e) reports from the field and the progress and maintenance of the crops, fish, fertilizers and help needed; (f) Report on regular classes, theatre, dance and music lessons; (g) a list of birds, animals, butterflies and trees they have observed; and (h) a report regarding the welfare and well-being of the younger students and the elder students who are responsible for looking after the younger students.

Stream School Location

Stream School is planned to be set on a 50 acre land in Wayanad district of Kerala, India. The location will be at the foot of the Brahmagiri mountain ranges, surrounded by deep forest and villages. The location of Stream and its policies will be alien to the outside world because it is going to be non-conventional. The thick forests adorning the contiguous mountain base are home to wild animals such as elephants, tigers, wild hogs etc. It is anticipated that those animals will roam through the campus and surrounding villages, free without human intervention. For the outside world, to be able to spend a few days here, one astoundingly realize the embryonic and relieving fact that humans are highly adaptable. Away from home, away from even internet and cellphones a guest should find the little huts of simplicity as a natural space of harmony
between humans, culture, nature, and education. Through this research project, the design of Stream School, which is an integral part of the land, the forest, the water, the animals and the agriculture practices of the place has taken shape. It is a natural learning space where tribal students can sustain and feel at home.

**Stream School Funding**

As the designer and promoter of Stream School I plan to generate funding through self-generated funding, and by forming a trust of likeminded people, colleagues and teachers. Tribal promoters, and non-governmental and governmental agencies will be actively included in the process of policy making and execution without much compromise to the core values of the school. Academic buildings will be in the form of tribal colonies and classes will be conducted in small huts. Student residential quarters will also be similar, and a small library and a tribal museum will also be part of the school’s infrastructure. A special place to learn the martial art of Kerala called ‘Kalari’, an amphitheater, playground, recreation center etc. will all be included in the campus in close proximity.

**Stream School Infrastructure**

Stream school is basically an experiment in providing culturally relevant and self-sustaining education to the Paniya tribal community. It is a school based on the concept of commune. It aims at exploring the varied learning spaces and methodologies. The Stream school will be a commune rather than a traditional academic institution. It is a way of communal living, where learning happens through its natural spaces and phases.
The decision to design a community-based school was taken as a result of my personal observation that collective living is a great success among the tribes of Wayanad. I have also observed that alienating a tribe member is the easiest way to destroy him/her easily and completely. Modern schooling and society has damaged elements of fraternity amongst tribes.
Chapter 5

Conclusion and suggestions

India is a land of immense diversities. In the country, Kerala state is rich and diverse with its large number of tribes. They are one of the most economically underprivileged and marginalized groups in India. According to the Government of India Census (2011) “With a population of more than 10.2 crores, India has the single largest tribal population in the world. This constitutes 8.6 per cent of the total population of the country (p.56). It is clear to the whole world that education is one of the primary agents of transformation towards development of any community.

Education has become a fundamental tool through which indigenous communities can develop the strength of themselves and their communities which in turn will help them in meeting the new challenges of the 21st century. This research and proposed tribal education model enriches the diversities and essence of the tribal Paniya people. The main intention of this research design is not to change the people according to the needs of modern education, but frame education in such a way that the Paniya people fit seamlessly into the frame work of education without alienating or stigmatizing anyone involved in the process. It is this idea which has inspired me in proposing this culturally-relevant way of education as a better fit – other than a modern schooling approach for the “Paniaya” tribes of my place.
The proposed Stream School design is not simply a series of activities, or a process which may either improve the immediate living conditions of the tribes or increase their financial wellbeing. It is a significant and important means through which “the Paniya” tribe and their society can not only survive but also prosper without being hit by the powerful waves of modernity, climate change and future shock. This education system intends to develop the personal endowments of the tribes, building their capacity levels, overcoming barriers, and expanding opportunities for a continued enhancement in their well-being.

Professor Amartya Sen, the Nobel laureate for Economics (2006) emphasizes education as an important parameter for any inclusive growth in an economy. There is no doubt that literacy and educational attainment are dominant gauges of social and economic development among the various tribal groups in India. Sharma (2002) points out that; “Currently, the tribes lag behind not only the general population but also the Scheduled Caste population in literacy and education. This disparity is even more marked among Scheduled Tribe women, who have the lowest literacy rates in the country” (p.56).

Gender disparities is huge among “The Paniya” tribes (Bara, 2010). This gap is visible in their education as well. Various governments have undertaken many reforms and educational strategies to address this problem but all of them ended up as failures. Being a person who grew up in a tribal area, what I understood is that the current educational practices and the system itself is not inclusive of the tribes and their culture. I have been teaching in and out of the
country for fifteen years. What I realize, from my experience and observation as a
teacher, is that the so called mainstream society and upper elite class students and
parents do not want their education happening with the lower class tribal students
as their classmates. “The Paniya” tribe knows it. They do not want to be alienated,
stigmatized and treated as intruders. Another important factor in the failure of
many educational reforms for the tribes is that the target audience, the tribes, are
not aware of the various reforms and incentives created by the governments for
their benefit. It is because of the lack of literacy and awareness. I believe that just
formulating a plan for the educational, social and economic upliftment of the
tribes is not enough. The policies die in their birth without a system approach
where the governments and authorities are aware of the input, the process and the
output. It needs leaders who are aware of the issues and leaders who want to make
a difference.

Spivak, says in her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” that subalterns need
to represent themselves and the outsiders have no right or privilege to represent
the subalterns (Selden, 1985). The mainstream society act as the saviors of the
tribes and attempt to educate them and teach them imagining themselves as
leaders or protectors of the tribes. Spivak ridicules this mindset: “White men
saving brown women from brown men” (p. 132). The tribes must learn the art of
leading themselves and representing themselves in all walks of it. They know it
but WE, with a SAVIOR COMPLEX offer solutions to THEIR problems which
we never understand or comprehend.
The Stream School aims at creating such leaders who will be capable of leading themselves. It is a school of the tribes, for the tribes and by the tribes. I do not think that creating a white paper will solve all the problems of the tribes. But I am hopeful and optimistic about the possibilities the school can offer. The changes it can make, at least in including “The Paniya” community as a whole in an educational paradigm will be the first attempt made in the history of Wayanad district and its educational sphere.

To make this difference at a holistic level, “The Stream School” needs support and guidance by all means. The following suggestions are addressed towards governments and various other non-governmental organizations who work in the field of tribal promotion and planning. These suggestions include local level policy making for shelter, for working and living conditions of the students and staff, for clean water supply to the school, for making effective drainage system and waste disposal, and its possible utilization. In the initial stage all the school facilities will have felt needs which need to be addressed and solved before expanding to large-scale establishments. So, the overall input, cooperation, suggestion and guidance from all members of the community will be essential for the growth of the school.

In establishing a school exclusively for “The Paniya tribes”, the following problems are put forward as major issues which need solutions and suggestions. I am hopeful that there will be responses from tribal promoters, non-governmental organizations and policy makers.
The school needs new techniques, reliable and affordable building materials which are safer and fire and water proof. Subsidies and loans with affordable lower interest rates with long term period of return. Solar energy will be the prime source of energy for the school. But in typically tropical Wayanadian climate, solar energy cannot be relied upon throughout the year. As a solution I suggest the use of cow dung gas plant and other bio-gas plants in a small scale to meet energy needs. This plan needs an effective master plan to carry out the idea in a cost effective way.

Another important consideration is making provisions and relaxations in law from the forest department to acquire the wood, timber, cane and bamboo needed for the construction and maintenance of the school which is going to be near the forest itself. A proper license system has to be created for this. Continuous and uninterrupted water supply is essential for the day-to-day running of the school. The available stream and river can be utilized for addressing this problem, but more elaborate plans must be made to address the issue of severe drought and water shortage during summer. Besides, anticipating epidemics and other disease, preventive methods in health and safety must be formulated. I welcome suggestions and proposals from these areas.

Animal husbandry is a part of tribal life. To make it more scientific, awareness classes, workshops, scientific equipment, and training has to be
planned and organized on maintaining, feeding, milking of the cattle, primarily cow stock which the school intend to have.

The school intends to have its own paddy fields and farm area. It has to be scientifically planned, executed and maintained. It needs expertise and plans. Health centers, clinics and the presence of medical professionals is another important need of the school to maintain a hygienic, disease free and a healthy school community. I think that the medical center should be one which gives importance to the tribal medicine and its due respect and importance. Local herbal medicines and plants can be utilized and preserved along with it.

Vocational training like carpentry, construction, sewing, stitching, fishing and farming needs the help of professionals in training and earning income for the school. Tribal art and art products have high demand in Kerala. There should be provisions to make the tribal art commercial for stable income for the school and to bring them to the main stream world of art and literature.

I believe that the success and failure of the school depends upon the holistic and systematic planning and implementation. It is to be noted that all the suggestions and problems put forward have eventual solutions, resolutions and suggestions. With the hope in my mind I, hereby conclude the white paper.
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