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According to students and their parents, the problem of truancy can be solved if authorities concerned arrange bus transportation to a higher secondary school in the nearby village Natrampalayam. KRISHNAGIRI: Nestled in the lap of western ghats are many tribal villages and one such village -- Doddamanju tribal panchayat village -- looks quite beautiful here with its vastly varying culture and dialects. However, when it comes to children's education, villagers continue to lag far behind.

With just one high school in the panchayat, students, completing their high school (Class X), drop out of studies and start doing odd jobs. According to students and their parents, the problem of truancy can be solved if authorities concerned arrange bus transportation to a higher secondary school in the nearby village Natrampalayam, among other requests.

The school in Doddamanju panchayat in Anchetty taluk is about 110 km away from the district headquarters of Krishnagiri and 20 km away from Doddamanju. School Education Department said that the government high school in Doddamanju tribal panchayat was upgraded to high school in 2011 and since then a total of 213 students have appeared for the class X exam. Though 174 students -- 92 boys and 82 girls -- passed the boards, only 45 students have joined for higher education (class XI and other ITI courses). There is only one boy who has completed his post-graduation from the village. In the academic year 2019- 2020, 46

students appeared for class X exam and attained all pass, only seven students joined for class XI and four for the Industrial Training Institute said an educational department source. TNIE trekked to the village to find out the condition and found out that a few students after completing their boards switch to jobs in spinning mills at Erode, Tirupur and Namakkal districts.

One of the students who completed class IX from Doddamanju GHS and went to a spinning mill near Erode during this lockdown said that he earned `8, 000 each month for two months. However, he joined class X at his school after permission was denied for him to reach his native. Similarly, Chinnan from Onnepuram village, said, "My daughter completed class X a few years before, but since we had no road facility, let alone bus facility, students walked eight km to reach Sivalingapuram and then boarded the bus for Anchetti, which is 12 km away. This tedious and strenuous trekking led

to reluctance in parents and students," he said. A mini-bus facility was started by the TNSTC from Anchetti to Doddamanju in 2018 and that has led to a few admission to class XI in the school.

Cases of Child Marriage Meanwhile, due to early drop out from schools, many cases of child marriages have been taking place in the village. Apart from this, three girls have killed self over love disputes. Frightened parents are thus reluctant to send their wards to faraway schools and urge the government to upgrade the school in Doddamanju to a higher secondary school. A school teacher said that though the government should arrange a bus facility to the government higher secondary school at Natrampalayam, which would prevent drop out after class X. Teacher also mentioned that a junior assistant should be appointed administration work as there are only five teachers for the total 304 students.

Denkanikottai District Education Officer Jothi Chandra said that they are processing the work to upgrade the school and have communicated at the State-level authorities. Thally constituency DMK MLA Y Prakash said that he would speak about the transport issue to the district authorities and try to arrange bus facility from Doddamanju to Natrampalayam.

Trouble for students in continuing higher education A major problem faced by the students is that the higher secondary schools run by the State government are present in Anchetti, Natrampalayam, Denkanikottai, Thally, and a government model school at Bodichipalli. Hostel facility for boys is only available in Anchetti and for girls, it is there in Bodichipalli near Kelamangalam, Thally and Denkanikottai.