Ruptures in Global Development: Restorying 'Inclusive Education for All' with Indigenous/Adivasi Youth in Casteist-Colonial India

by

Naivedya Parakkal

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Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Michelle J. Bellino, Chair
Professor Donald Freeman
Professor Fatma Müge Göçek
Professor Camille M. Wilson

Naivedya Parakkal

naivedya@umich.edu

ORCID iD: 0009-0001-3735-377X

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my Ammaji, Jenny Parakkal, and Achaji, Andrews Parakkal. I am, forever yours. Thank you will not suffice.

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Table of Contents

Dedication ..... **ii**

Acknowledgements ..... **iii**

List of Tables ..... **x**

List of Figures ..... **xi**

List of Abbreviations ..... **xii**

Abstract ..... **xiii**

Chapter 1 Introduction **1**

Research Rationale 3

Research Significance 7

Situating 'Inclusive Education for Development' in Still-Colonial India 8

India: Background Information 9

'Post'-colonial and 'Pre'-colonial Caste: Colonial Continuities, Education, and Development in India 11

India's Education Policy: 'Caste-ing' National Development and Identity 15

Casteist Coloniality and its Significance for Research's Orientation to Education 18

Research Design, Questions, and Methods 19

Conclusion 21

Organization of the Dissertation 22

Chapter 2 Research Context and Theoretical Framework **26**

Research Context 26

The Macro-Meso Context: Global and National Education Policy Regimes 29

The Meso-Micro Context: Education and Development in Kerala, Attappady, and Thanchiyoor 32

Theoretical Framework 46

Multiple Logics and Practices of Coloniality: Towards Counter-Colonial Theorizing 46

Education for Development Policy, and Experience: Mainstream and Counter-Colonial Perspectives 49

The Politics of Inclusion in Education: Mainstream and Critical Orientations 58

Framing Global South Youth: Personhood, Experiential Learning, and Intellectual Capacities 64

Imagining Education 'Otherwise': Emerging Perspectives 71

Conclusion 75

Chapter 3 Research Design 77

Research Design: Ethnographic Comparative Case Study with Nested YPAR 77

CCS and Blurring Boundaries of Case Study Research: Rationale for Research Design 78

Ethnographic CCS and Nested YPAR 83

Research Questions 84

Methodology and Methods 85

Focal Policy Selection: Process and Rationale 86

Site Selection and Negotiating Access: Attappady and Thanchiyoor 87

Research Interlocutors and Data Generation Methods 97

Data Analysis 103

Limitation: What Might Change the Findings and its Interpretations 105

Chapter 4 Inclusion in Education: Policy Priorities at the Macro-Meso Scale 107

Contextual and Operational Dimensions of Inclusion in Global ESD Framework 110

Meanings, Goals, and Subjects of Inclusion: Global ESD's Contextual Dimension 111

Targets and Indicators: Global ESD's Operational Dimension 117

Contextual and Operational Dimensions of Inclusion in India's Education Policy 123

India's Adaptation of Meanings, Goals, and Subjects of Inclusion: Converging Vision 124

Synthesis of Global and National Policy Analysis 132

Conclusion: Why does this Matter? 134

Chapter 5 ST Youth Experiences of Inclusion in Still-Colonial Attappady 136

Counter-Colonial Narrative 1: The Forest and I know and Understand Each Other 140

Remaking Land as Property: ST Youth's Insights about Development, Loss, and Precarity 142

Counter-colonial Narrative 2: As if we are Clowns 148

Viewing ST development as Spectacle that Benefits Settlers 149

Counter-colonial narrative 3: So much disdain, always. 152

Structural Discrimination and Exclusion: ST Youth Identify Settler-Colonial Strategies 153

Counter-colonial Narrative 4: Multiple Desires and Shifting Subjectivities 161

Conclusion: Development, Experiential Learning, and the Limits of Inclusive Education . 164

Chapter 6 YPAR as Response to Rupture: The Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective (YRAC) 168

The Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective: An Origin Story 172

Phase 1: From Consternation to Consideration (Meetings 1 and 2) 175

Phase 2: Confirmation and Contemplation 178

Phase 3: Collaboration and Questions (Meetings 7-12) 185

YPAR as Response to Rupture: Implications for Educational 'Transformation' 186

Chapter 7 Denials, Risks, and the Right to Complex Personhood: Insights from the Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective (YRAC) 189

Well-Intentioned Policies and Harmful Practices: YRAC's Exploration of the Misuse of Disability Accommodation Guidelines in Attappady Schools 192

Policy Findings: National and State Guidelines for Scribe Allotment 193

Scribe allotment process: Youth experiences 196

Why do schools misuse disability accommodation guidelines? 201

YRAC insight 1: On Refusals and the Subjects of Inclusion 203

YRAC Insight 2: The Risks and (Im)possibilities of Youth Action 207

YRAC Insight 3: Asserting Rights to Complex Personhood 213

Asserting and Enacting the Right to Complex Personhood as a Navigational Strategy . 214

Conclusion: Youth Strategies and Settler Denials 218

Chapter 8 Imagining Education 'Otherwise': Reflections on 'What Stands in the Way' ..222

What Stands in the Way of Inclusive Education for All? Key Insights from Comparative Case Study 225

Denial 227

Separability 231

Responsibility 234

Restorying Inclusive Education for All: Transformative (Im)possibilities and Pedagogical Opportunities 237

Conclusion 241

Bibliography 243

List of Tables

Table 3.1 Focal policy documents 87

Table 3.2 Research interlocutors..... 97

Table 4.1 Meanings, goals, and subjects of inclusion in the global ESD agenda..... 114

Table 4.2 Inclusion in SDG 4: Divergences between contextual and operational dimensions .. 119

Table 4.3 ESD's inclusion guidelines and adaptations in India's education policy 125

Table 4.4 India's strategies for and evaluation of ST inclusion 131

Table 7.1 Settler denials and youth strategies..... 220

List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Correspondence between B.R. Ambedkar and W.E.B. DuBois (Source: Ambedkar, 1946 and Du Bois, 1946) 12

Figure 2.1 Research context: Actors and institutions in the macro-meso and meso-micro context 28

Figure 2.2: Elements of the macro-meso context 31

Figure 2.3 Nested administrative units: India, Kerala, Attappady 39

Figure 2.4: Key elements of the development apparatus in the meso-micro context 41

Figure 2.5 Thanchiyoor, Attappady: A view from the focal hamlet's center 44

Figure 2.6: Layout of key locations in Attappady and Thanchiyoor 45

Figure 3.1 Adapted CCS design- Direction of comparison developed by following the inquiry. 82

Figure 4.1 India's Performance Grade Index (PGI): Performance by state (Source: Adapted from Ministry of Education, 2021; Areas in Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir are contested areas occupied by India) 130

Figure 5.1 Murugan’s forest remade into farmland 141

Figure 5.2 Poster announcing protest march against AAC 146

Figure 5.3 A news article reporting the use of educational theater performance in Attappady.. 150

Figure 6.1 Images from YRAC's meeting 4 181

Figure 6.2 Images from YRAC meetings 5 and 6 184

Figure 7.1 Redirecting gaze: From Madhu to Settler 190

Figure 7.2 Manufacturing disabilities: Tenth class school leaving certificate 200

List of Abbreviations

AAC	Attappady Agricultural Cooperative
BJP	Bhartiya Janata Party
CCS	Comparative Case Study
DYFI	Democratic Youth Federation of India
EFA	Education for All
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
KSTDD	Kerala State Scheduled Tribe Development Department
ITDP	Integrated Tribal Development Project
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MTA	Ministry of Tribal Affairs
NEP	National Education Policy
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ST	Scheduled Tribes
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization
YPAR	Youth Participatory Action Research
YRAC	Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective

Abstract

The global 'Education for Sustainable Development' (ESD) agenda enacted through the Sustainable Development Goal 4 seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable education to all by the year 2030. Like many nation-states around the world, India has adapted the global guidelines for inclusion in its latest education policies. Attappady, a 'tribal development block' in Kerala, India, and the Indigenous/Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities living there have been targets of education and development programs for decades. The region, which has sustained members of the Irula, Muduga and Kurumba tribes for centuries, has now been impinged on by the state development apparatus that oversees most day-to-day aspects of ST peoples' lives. Comparative and International Education scholarship has shown that the core assumption of the ESD agenda is that improving schooling and existing education systems will create inclusive and equitable societies. However, despite nearly seven decades of efforts to 'develop' Attappady, this beautiful mountain valley, and its residents continue to be left behind in key indicators of development and educational achievement.

This dissertation seeks to examine this conundrum by comparing global and national education policies' vision and outcomes for inclusive education with the experience of ST youth in Attappady. I do this through an ethnographic, comparative case study of 'inclusion' in ESD policy and experience. That is, I examine the processes of sense-making around inclusion across global and India's education policies through a thematic analysis of focal policy documents. By employing multiple ethnographic methods, I compare policy priorities for inclusion in relation to ST youth's experiential learning in Attappady. Ethnographic methods are supplemented by the insights of the Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective (YRAC), which was formed as part of this dissertation's Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) component.

Findings of this research highlight how ST youth's understanding about education, development, and inclusion are mediated through their recognition that the persistent exclusion they experience in their everyday encounters are systemic and embedded in settler-colonial strategies adopted by the non-ST dominated development apparatus. I argue that a key aspect of

policy guidelines that stand in the way of fulfilling ESD's promises of "inclusive education for all", is its framing of inclusion as removing education barriers for a wide range of groups considered 'vulnerable' or 'disadvantaged' populations. When compared with the experiences of ST youth, the depoliticized and decontextualized conceptualizations of inclusion in policy are exacerbating exclusion while reinforcing deficit-based stereotypes of the populations it seeks to 'include'. To navigate systemic exclusion, youth learn and adopt creative skills, strategies, and desires that are rarely perceived as pedagogically pertinent within policies.

This dissertation offers a "restorying" of inclusive education as a step towards understanding and possibly transforming interconnected, exclusionary educational structures. Drawing on young people's nuanced and compelling insights, I argue that ST youth in general and the youth co-researchers of YRAC in particular are restorying the failure of inclusive education in Attappady by redirecting gaze towards structural "ruptures" in formal education and offering possibilities for inclusion that go beyond the identity-based inclusion prioritized by global and national education policy. As experts in navigating and living in a precarious and uncertain colonial-modern world, youth participants, and co-researchers of this dissertation are offering invitations and openings for educators, policy makers, and development practitioners to imagine education 'otherwise', thereby demonstrating the urgency of the educational task of learning from youth.

Chapter 1 Introduction

"I know the forest and the forest knows me", Murugan, a young Scheduled Tribe (ST) man from the Irula tribe explained to me. We were sitting by the banks of the Bhavani river, surrounded by the forests and mountains that were an essential part of Murugan's childhood experiences. As a boy, Murugan could freely roam the forests without being afraid of elephants and tigers because he had "learned that the beings in the forest will not harm if they know that we respect them". Murugan's adventures in the forest ended when the state development and forest departments introduced forest and land conservation projects across Attappady. Thanchiyoor hamlet, one of 192 hamlets in the 'tribal development block' of Attappady in the state of Kerala, India, and Murugan's home hamlet, was particularly affected by the development efforts because it is located around the boundaries of the Silent Valley National Park. In the late 2000s, Murugan remembers joining hamlet members to protest state orders restricting the entry of ST peoples into the forests that they revere. However, even today, entry into Thanchiyoor hamlet is monitored by a forest police check-post, and ST peoples' entry into the forest is monitored and controlled by the forest police.

Other young residents of Thanchiyoor hamlet have never had the opportunity to venture into the forest land that surrounds their home. However, they join hamlet elders in asserting that the environmental and social precarities that have become a part of their everyday experiences, may be attributed to state-led or state-supported development interventions that do not consider or consult ST peoples and their knowledges and experiences. Preetha, an ST youth activist and co-researcher made an astute observation that connects non-ST people's denial of the validity of

ST knowledges with broader themes around power, the precarities wrought by development interventions, and the failure of an education system that neither teaches to respect not to value difference and interconnectedness:

> During the 2019 floods, half the hamlet was under water… the flood impacted us so badly because of how the Attappady Agricultural Cooperative built the check-dam across the river. I don't know the technical details, but [hamlet elders] have been telling the organization that floods can be prevented only if the dam is constructed further downstream. But no one is listening…what I am trying to say is, people at the top, at the 'administration level', they are creating most problems. But we must not ask anything or question them. They think that because they have 'power' they can disrespect us…the problem is 'power' not just education. Non-ST people, whether they are politicians or doctors or bus drivers, they have not learned to respect people who are not from their community. Our people [ST] have more humanity, that is why we keep respecting them even if they don't respect us. That is ST peoples' weakness. Our humanity is our weakness.

In a context that continually categorizes ST peoples in deficit terms and situates ST bodies as the site of development, education, and health problems, Preetha redirects attention to the role of those in power in creating problems. As far as Preetha is concerned, the problem is that non-ST/settlers have not "learned to respect" difference, which she views as an essential aspect of being human.

These conversations with youth are emblematic of the experiences and insights expressed the Adivasi/Scheduled Tribe (ST)/Indigenous[1] youth of Attappady—a place that has sustained the Irula, Muduga, and Kurumba tribe peoples for centuries, but has now been impinged on by the Kerala state and local development apparatus. These examples are drawn from many

[1] In academic research explorations, especially in publications that are produced within the Northern academy, Adivasis (literally translated to original inhabitants) are referred to as the "indigenous people of India". Official state documents refer to Adivasis as "Scheduled Tribes (ST)", and "tribal". All these terms are mired in the politics of naming. While scholars like G.N. Devy assert that the term "Indigenous" does not articulate the complex histories and identities of the Adivasis, while influential Adivasi scholar, theorist, and poet Virginius Xaxa assert that Adivasis are indeed the Indigenous Peoples of India. Academic scholars refrain from using "tribal" because of negative, colonial connotations, and the term "scheduled tribe" is rejected by some Adivasi communities because of its roots in British colonial segregation of Adivasi communities as "notified criminal tribes". In this dissertation, I use the abbreviation ST to refer youth interlocutors because they have explicitly stated it to be their preference. I also use the term Adivasi/ST while referring to the Indigenous Peoples of India.

dialogues, stories, and discussions, all emphasizing the tensions between the wisdom, history, and experiences of Attappady's ST peoples, and education for development interventions that frame them as damaged in order to develop them. Young people like Murugan, and Preetha often encounter narratives about the transformative potential of formal education for individual and tribal development. Simultaneously they experience persistent exclusion and discrimination in their everyday lives, within and outside formal educational spaces. ST youth notice and employ creative strategies to navigate the tensions between mainstream framings of inclusive education for development and their everyday experiences of systemic exclusion and discrimination. This dissertation is about these tensions between education policy and experience, the strategies employed by ST youth to navigate these tensions, and their vision for transforming education for addressing these tensions.

Research Rationale

It is well-documented that education is regarded a central driver of global development (Andreotti, 2011; Bellino, 2018b; Klees, 2010; Mason et al., 2019; Robertson et al., 2007). Global education and development institutions like the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank, as well as national governments connect education with a range of goals including poverty eradication, improving health, skill development and increased chances of employment, and environmental conservation. These assumptions about the role of education in facilitating development guided my first visit to Attappady in 2012, and my subsequent work as an employee of the Kerala State Tribal Development Department (KSTDD) from 2014-2015. I am a dominant caste, middle class, educated, lighter-skinned non-ST Malayalee[2], and my

[2] Malayalam is the 'official' language of the state of Kerala, and natives of Kerala are referred to as Malayalees. However, Malayalam is not the first language of ST peoples in Kerala. As members of the Irula tribe, all residents of

engagements with ST peoples in Attappady were shaped by an uncritical impulse to 'help' ST peoples (Cook, 2008; Kluttz et al., 2019; Land, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2014). This means that I believed in policy promises claiming that the "path to ST development lies in the transition from low-income jobs to high income occupations…access to higher education and research, sustainable means of livelihood, [and] skill training" (Kerala State Planning Board, 2018). I grew up in Kerala learning about and taking pride in the fact that the state consistently ranked first in the country's education and development indices. Attappady was and continues to be considered an exception within laudatory narratives of Kerala's development achievements. Therefore, my goal was to do my part in 'helping' ST peoples to develop', so that they may join in the the 'success' of the rest of the state.

However, over the past decade, ST interlocutors from Attappady, and critical development scholars have challenged me to think critically about the notion of education for development. For example, from Puliyan moopan[3], Valli chechi[4], and other ST mentors from Attappady, I learned that for ST peoples, "there is no development without land restoration" (Fieldnotes, July 2018). Similar to many global development projects invested in "settler futurity" (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013) the historical and ongoing violence related to land appropriation and alienation in Attappady is either absent or included peripherally in development programming and practice (Adam et al., 2018; Manjusha & Jojo, 2023; Nirmal & Rocheleau, 2019; Parakkal et al., 2019). This silence about state-supported land alienation is

Thanchiyoor hamlet speak the Irula language. This is why 'Malayalee' is one of the terms used by research interlocutors to refer to non-ST natives of Kerala. They also sometimes use the Malayalam word for 'settler' to refer to non-ST native of Kerala.

[3] The term 'moopan' has two meanings that I am aware of. It is used to refer to the head or leader of the hamlet, irrespective of their age. It is also used as a term of respect for elderly ST men. Elderly ST women are referred to as moopathi or muthashi.

[4] Chechi is a Malayalam word that translates to elder sister and is used to demonstrate respect for an older cis-woman.

significant because the state of Kerala ranks first in India's development and education index. Therefore, within narratives of Kerala's exceptional development achievements (Drèze & Sen, 1997; Ramachandran, 2006). Attappady, with its low literacy rates and poor health indicators is considered a mere anomaly that can be improved through the 'right' kind of development intervention.

Policy and popular constructions of Attappady and ST peoples as "backward" maps on to robust literature that implicates the actors, institutions, and processes of global development and education governance in the production of imaginary categories and subjectivities that are rooted in artificial binaries—developed versus developing, literate versus illiterate, empowered versus vulnerable, and so on (Battiste, 2005; Ferguson, 2005; Kapoor, 2008; Maldonado-Torres, 2004; Spivak, 2004). Meanwhile, critical CIE scholars argue that globally converging education ideologies have led to national policies that prioritize "the modernist and economic imperatives of schooling" (Tikly, 2004, p. 34) thereby reproducing, and creating new hierarchies of power, and deficit subjects.

To explore how ST youth's educational and development experiences shape their subjectivities, in 2019, I conducted an exploratory study in the Model Residential School (MRS) in Attappady. Two ninth grade students explained how society's constructions of ST peoples as 'backward' shapes their understanding of valid knowledge and their future aspirations. Jinu described how she enjoyed learning from their grandparents during the summer vacation about things that "only Adivasi people know". She spoke with pride about knowing how "to harvest honey and to differentiate between medicinal and poisonous plants". However, Bhuvi asserted that possessing these knowledges will not stop people who "mock [them] for being Adivasi, and call [them] backward". Jinu agreed and added that ST peoples will "receive respect from society

only by studying well in school and becoming a doctor or an IAS officer". Therefore, Bhuvi and Jinu's access and achievements in formal education spaces neither guarantees social mobility, which is a key promise of the 'education for development' agenda (Bellino, 2020; Froerer, 2011; Still, 2011), nor does it offer opportunities to thrive in learning spaces that privilege alternate knowledge systems (Katz, 2004). In this way, Bhuvi and Jinu's perspectives align with many young people in the Global South who strategically accommodate harmful and deficit-based narratives about educational success in order to navigate exclusionary structures (Bellino, 2018d; Swartz et al., 2020; Tuck, 2012).

Drawing on the insights of young people like Bhuvi and Jinu, the wisdom of ST elders like Valli chechi and Puliyan moopan, and on critical scholarship in the fields of Comparative and International Education, Indigenous/Adivasi studies, and Global South Youth Studies, I returned to Attappady in September 2021, to further understand the tensions between education policy priorities and promises of 'inclusive education for all', and ST youth's everyday learning experiences. Throughout this dissertation, I try to highlight the ways in which ST youth participants and co-researchers guided me to respond to calls to "pay attention to the relentlessly appropriating, differentiating, and repressing work of development [and education]"(Costa & Costa, 2019, p. 362). This dissertation seeks to join critical, education scholarship that trace and examine aspects of the education for development agenda transnationally and translocally (Bajaj, 2011; Bellino, 2017; Brown et al., 2017; Chua, 2014; Katz, 2004; Kendall, 2007; Mukhopadhyay & Sriprakash, 2013a). By comparing young people's learning experiences and interpretations with global education policy promises, its national adaptations, and local enactments, I take seriously the calls for multi-scalar interrogations of education that can extend understandings about "challenges and opportunities are associated with the policy uptake and broader use of

findings from non-dominant, innovative and social justice-oriented education research approaches" (Manion et al., 2019).

Research Significance

At first glance, the situation in Thanchiyoor in particular and Attappady in general, would appear to be a familiar case of the "game of development" (Uvin, 1998) playing out among the state development apparatus and ST peoples. The place and its people have long been part of the large and still growing global community, which is experiencing persistent exclusion, multiple precarities, and conflict that has been created, exacerbated, or sustained in the name of development (Burde, 2014; Escobar, 1995; Ferguson, 1994; Wainwright, 2008). But the distinctiveness of Thanchiyoor hamlet's origin and structure, the nexus of overlapping state and non-state development agencies that operate in the hamlet, and the hamlet members' particularly precarious relationship with land sets it apart.

As I argue in this dissertation, ST youth in Thanchiyoor hamlet are not only noting the role of formal education in solidifying the myth that Indigenous/ST peoples are 'less-developed'. Rather, they view life in Attappady and the unrelenting influence of a non-ST peoples-led development apparatus in their everyday lives as settler-colonial control. Efforts to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all" (Government of India, 2020; UNESCO, 2016) must necessarily account for the implications of youth perspectives and experiences that are shaped by multiple forms of colonial control. This is especially relevant when viewed in relation with India's casteist-colonial continuities, its current geopolitical context, and the ongoing violence against marginalized caste, Adivasi/ST, and Muslim communities. Against this background, how do ST youth learn from and draw on their everyday encounters with education

and development? How do they draw on these lessons and experiences to shape their understanding about inclusive education and its role in development?

The significance of examining these questions and youth constructions of inclusion in education in relation to global and national policy guidelines are two-fold. One, the core assumption of the global education agenda is that improving schooling and existing education systems will create inclusive and equitable societies, reduce poverty, and 'protect' the planet. However, the world is more formally 'educated' than it has ever been, and yet it is grappling with more planetary crises than ever, while persistent exclusion of historically marginalized people continue under populist and techno-bureaucratic regimes (Benavot & Naidoo, 2018; Wulff, 2021). To make sense of this conundrum, it is not sufficient to study the definitions and "dividing practices" (Ball, 1990) of inclusion in policy texts. Rather, it is crucial to understand the constructions and experiences of inclusion and exclusion as "embodied in the social, cultural, and ideological underpinnings of the local context" (Nguyen, 2010, p. 353). Two, responding to calls to excavate the operations and logic of coloniality in education policy and practice (V. Andreotti, 2012; Patel, 2016; Stein et al., 2019), and to imagine education "otherwise" (Crawley, 2016) require the intellectual, pedagogical, and experiential expertise of young people in the Global South. To do this, I include in this dissertation the voices of a group of exemplary ST youth, whose critical analysis and careful critiques of their education and lived experiences offer crucial insights for "restorying" (Corntassel et al., 2009; Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2016) inclusive education policy.

Situating 'Inclusive Education for Development' in Casteist-Colonial India

The story shared in this dissertation gained coherence in large part due to the insights of ST youth in Thanchiyoor, and in particular with the work of the Youth Researchers of Attappady

Collective (YRAC). As I elaborate in the following chapters, the YRAC 's formation and research constitute the Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) component of this dissertation. The co-researchers of YRAC encouraged a significant shift in this research's conceptualization—from an exploration of how historically oppressed/marginalized/subaltern youth experience 'education for development' interventions, towards an inquiry into how ST youth navigate and learn from their everyday learning experiences in a settler-colonial context. In order to situate this shift, and to explain the significance of colonial continuities within India's geopolitical context, in the section that follows, I offer a brief account of India's ongoing colonial legacies.

In constructing this narrative, I take seriously Patel's (2016) call for an "intentional reckoning with the worldviews" used to formulate and share knowledge (p. 20). Therefore, the following description is shaped by the insights of research interlocutors who continually challenge my understanding and investments in casteist-colonial violence as a dominant caste, non-Hindu, lighter-skinned, educated, middle-class woman. Rather than attempting to relate a colonial historiography of India, in this section I offer a "springboard" to understanding casteist coloniality in India in relation to formal education, and to reflect on its implications for global and national promises of inclusive education for all. To do this, I first begin with an overview of the country that outlines basic demographic information and geopolitical context.

India: Background Information

The Indian subcontinent has had its share of invasions and empires, which has shaped its current sociocultural constitution[5]. The Aryan invasion around 1500 B.C. is viewed as a crucial

[5] Unless otherwise specified, this section on India's background is drawn from CIA (2023)

aspect of the creation of what we know as ‘caste’. The Maurya and Gupta empires flourished from the fourth and third centuries B.C to the sixth century, while Afghan and Turk invaders ruled parts of the region in the 10th and 11th centuries. The Mughal empire held dominion over the Indian sub-continent in the 16th and 17th centuries, during the latter part of which European invaders started gaining foothold. By the 19th century, the British established itself as the dominant political power in the region, and the British Crown, under the leadership of Queen Victoria conducted a direct takeover of South Asia in 1857.

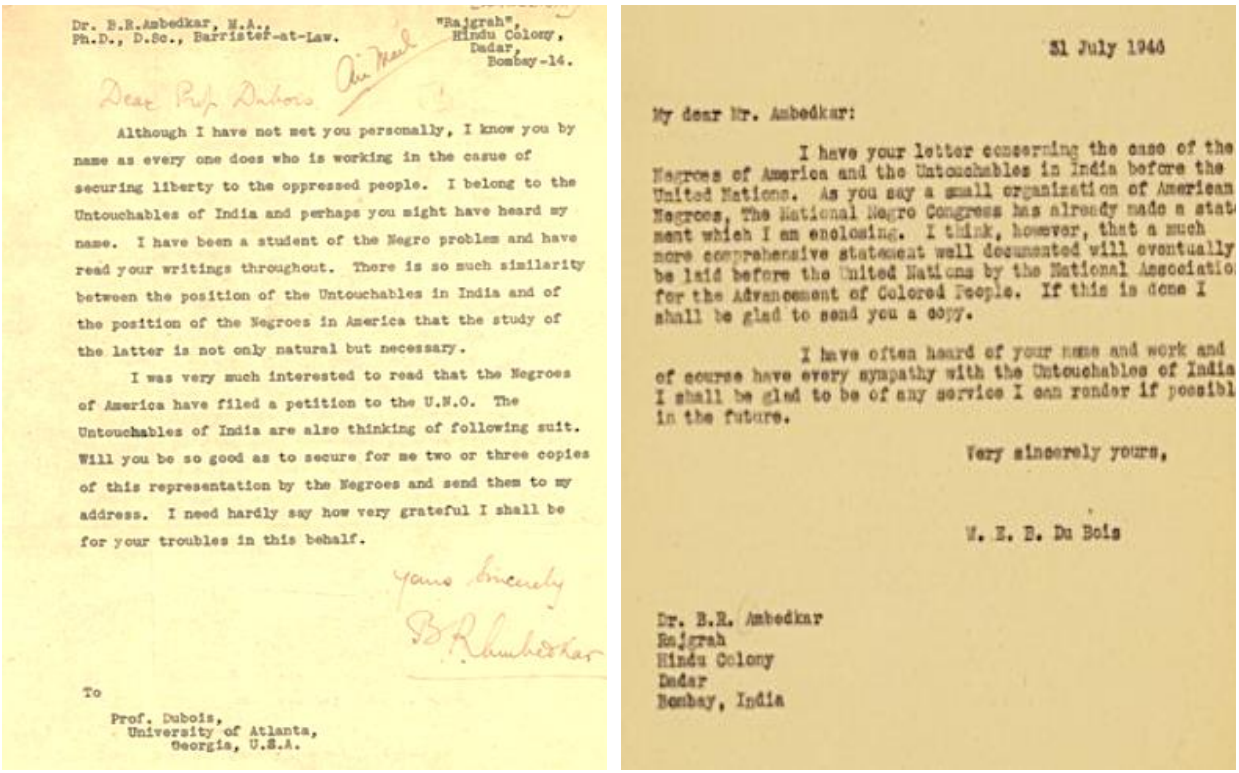
India gained independence from the British in 1947, during which it was declared a “sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic” (Constitution of India, 1949, 2022). In 2023, with a population exceeding 1.3 billion, India is on its way to becoming the most populous country in the world. Youth constitute one of the largest demographics of India’s population, with over 66 percent of the population being under the age of 35, and nearly 30 percent of the population being between the ages of 15 and 24. Following the current, Hindu nationalist government’s violent takeover of the formerly semi-autonomous state of Jammu & Kashmir, India now has 28 states and eight union territories (see Kuszewska, 2022 and Pandow & Kanth, 2021 for more information on this ongoing conflict in the Jammu & Kashmir region). As I detail in Chapter 4, under India’s latest national education policy, India’s education system has been integrated under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan or the “Holistic Education for All” initiative. This overview provides a background for understanding the relationships between colonial continuities, caste, and education that I expand in the following sections.

‘Post’-colonial and ‘Pre’-colonial Caste: Colonial Continuities, Education, and Development in India

Many South Asian scholars argue that the modern caste system as we know it, emerged in the second half of the 19th century, during which the British Crown, after conducting a direct takeover of India in 1857, took steps to “know and classify Indian society in order to govern better” (Banerjee-Dube, 2014, p. 517). By drawing selectively from the existing work of orientalist scholars, missionaries, and conservative Hindu scholars, the British administration decided to replace local, diverse, and multi-faceted village institutions, and classified Indian society into ‘natural categories’ based exclusively on the *varna* scheme which became known as the caste system (Dirks, 2001; Banerjee-Dube, 2014). The *varna scheme* classifies society into 4 categories in decreasing order of ‘purity’ - Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas (the dominant castes) and the Sudras (marginalized caste). The Dalits (formerly Untouchable caste) are considered so ‘impure’ that they do not merit a position in the system. The Adivasis (Scheduled Tribes), who were not considered to be part of the caste system, was systematically incorporated into the system through census-based categorizations like “denotified tribes” and “criminal castes” (Costa, 2019). Robust historical accounts assert that British colonialism constructed caste as a fixed, modern category (Banerjee-Dube, 1987; Dirks, 2001). This “discourse of differentiation” was strengthened through country-wide surveys and census reports published by the British administration, which “corrected” the “blurred nature of caste and religious affiliation” resulting in the construction of a “morphological view of caste” (Banerjee-Dube, 2014, p. 145).

Dalit and critical caste scholarship assert that ‘caste’ might have got its name from British colonial governance, but they reject the notion that the British “colonial state transformed fluid sets of relationships into rigid categories” during the course of colonial rule and anti-British

nationalist movements in the 1900s (Costa, 2019, p. 510). Prominent Dalit scholars like B.R. Ambedkar and Sharankumar Limbale have long argued that caste-based relations precede British colonial rule in shaping social, cultural, land, and labor relations (Ambedkar, 1936; Costa, 2019; Limbale, 2004). In order to demonstrate this point, I present a correspondence between B.R. Ambedkar and W.E.B Du Bois in Figure 1.1.



Dr. B.R.Ambedkar, M.A., Ph.D., D.Sc., Barrister-at-Law.

"Rajgrah", Hindu Colony, Dadar, Bombay-14.

Dear Prof. Dubois

Although I have not met you personally, I know you by name as every one does who is working in the cause of securing liberty to the oppressed people. I belong to the Untouchables of India and perhaps you might have heard my name. I have been a student of the Negro problem and have read your writings throughout. There is so much similarity between the position of the Untouchables in India and of the position of the Negroes in America that the study of the latter is not only natural but necessary.

I was very much interested to read that the Negroes of America have filed a petition to the U.N.O. The Untouchables of India are also thinking of following suit. Will you be so good as to secure for me two or three copies of this representation by the Negroes and send them to my address. I need hardly say how very grateful I shall be for your troubles in this behalf.

Yours Sincerely

B.R.Ambedkar

To

Prof. Dubois,
University of Atlanta,
Georgia, U.S.A.

31 July 1946

My dear Mr. Ambedkar:

I have your letter concerning the case of the Negroes of America and the Untouchables in India before the United Nations. As you say a small organization of American Negroes, The National Negro Congress has already made a statement which I am enclosing. I think, however, that a much more comprehensive statement well documented will eventually be laid before the United Nations by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. If this is done I shall be glad to send you a copy.

I have often heard of your name and work and of course have every sympathy with the Untouchables of India I shall be glad to be of any service I can render if possible in the future.

Very sincerely yours,

W. E. B. Du Bois

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
Rajgrah
Hindu Colony
Dadar
Bombay, India

Figure 1.1. Correspondence between B.R. Ambedkar and W.E.B. Du Bois (Source: Ambedkar, 1946 and Du Bois, 1946; All rights for this document are held by the David Graham Du Bois Trust, *Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries*)

Ambedkar and Du Bois share several similarities, both in their personal achievements, convictions and actions, and in their multiple roles as scholar, activist, and leaders of rights movements. For example, Du Bois was the first Black American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University, and Ambedkar was the first Dalit and Indian to earn a Ph.D (from Columbia University). Du Bois challenged his contemporaries like Booker T. Washington to offer critical

responses around issues of integration, rights of Black peoples, and legal justice. Similarly, Ambedkar's disagreements with dominant caste leaders of the Indian National Movement like M.K. Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru are well-known, and he has repeatedly argued against the possibility of caste integration in a Hindu society. Du Bois is a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), while Ambedkar led the committee that created the Constitution of a newly independent India.

In his letter to Du Bois in 1946, a year before India gained independence from the British, Ambedkar, who refers to himself as an "Untouchable of India", draws parallels between the oppressed people in South Asia and the United States—the Dalit caste people and African-American/Black people. This exchange highlights an important aspect of coloniality in India, which is often disregarded in dominant discussions about colonialism in South Asia—caste. While British colonialism is the conventionally legible form of coloniality in India, colonialism in this context cannot be separated from the persistent and continually transforming practices of casteist coloniality, which predates British rule (Guru, 1995; Ambedkar & Rodrigues, 2002; Limbale, 2004, Costa & Costa, 2019; Osuri, 2019). To illuminate this historical, intersecting, and ongoing feature of colonialism in the South Asian context, at the risk of reducing complexity, I relate two narratives about crime and violence against marginalized caste and Adivasi/ST peoples in India, from the years 1936 in British-colonial India, and in contemporary, 'post-colonial' India.

In his influential collection of essays, "The Annihilation of Caste", Ambedkar (1936, 2014), describes an incident, which highlights the dangers of viewing colonialism as casteless and as exclusively related to British settler-colonialism. In 1936, an "Untouchable" caste member of a village in north-west India, invited his fellow caste village members for a

communal meal. He had recently returned from a pilgrimage and in offering the meal, he was fulfilling a spiritual commitment towards his community. While the Dalit (Untouchable) community members were eating, a large group of dominant caste Hindus attacked them with sticks and canes, defiled the food, and beat the Dalits until they fled the scene. The dominant caste Hindus justified this assault by arguing that the Dalit host "was impudent enough to serve ghee (clarified butter), and his guests were foolish enough to taste it" (Ambedkar, 1936, p. 176). For the assaulters, ghee, which was an expensive commodity, was reserved for the enjoyment of upper caste communities. And Dalits, regardless of whether they could afford ghee, were simply too "impure" to include ghee in their meals and had to be punished for the audacity of consuming it.

In 2022, over eight decades after the incident described by Ambedkar, in 'post-colonial' India, Inder Meghwal, a nine-year-old Dalit boy was beaten to death by his teacher for drinking water from a pot reserved for 'upper caste' community members (Press Trust of India, 2022; Zaffar, 2022). In February 2023, Viswanathan, an Adivasi/ST youth in Kerala was assaulted by a group of non-ST men for allegedly stealing a mobile phone, and he was later found hanging from a tree near the hospital where his wife was in labor. The latest report by India's National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) confirms that these seemingly disparate reports of crimes against India's Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) people only provide a glimpse of the extent and persistence of ongoing casteist-colonial violence in India. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), in 2021, registered cases of "crimes or atrocities" against SC and ST people were 50,291, and 8,802 respectively, with crimes ranging from "simple hurt" to assault and murder (National Crime Records Bureau, 2021, pp. 525-637). The NCRB's estimates do not demonstrate the full extent of anti-Dalit and anti-Adivasi violence because it disregards

crimes committed by the state and its armed forces, and it only considers police cases that are registered under the Indian Penal Code. Nevertheless, tracing the official crime rates against SC and ST populations published by NCRB in the past decade reveals that casteist-colonial violence perpetuated by dominant caste communities is unrelenting.

These events from 1936 to 2023 highlight an important aspect of colonialism in the Indian sub-continent—"caste supremacy shapes a hegemonic commonsense" that Dalit, Adivasi, SC, and ST lives and bodies matter less (Da Costa, p. 507). Dalit-Adivasi scholarship and indeed the ST peoples in Attappady have challenged me to redirect my investment in the colonialism-nationalism binary that I learned from postcolonial studies (Guha, 1993), towards contending with the fraught relationships between caste and coloniality—relationships that existed before and during British colonial rule (as demonstrated by Ambedkar's letter to Du Bois), and that continue to animate 'post-colonial' sociocultural relations and practices in India. Crime rates against SC and ST people have definitely been exacerbated during the right-wing, Hindu nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party's (BJP) regime (see Appendix 1). However, as critical race scholars argue about race in the United States, casteist-colonialism in India is persistent and ongoing (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Limbale, 2005). It is this understanding of India's ongoing and often disavowed (by dominant caste South Asians) casteist-colonial legacies that guide the ways in which this research and its interlocutors make sense of the relationship between inclusion, education, development, and learning.

India's Education Policy: 'Caste-ing' National Development and Identity

India's national government published a new education policy in 2020. The last major revision in the national education policy was made in the year 1992, and planning for the latest version began in 2015, soon after the ruling Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) came into power. The

Ministry of Education (previously known as the Ministry of Human Resource Development) created a committee to "formulate a new education policy for the country through an inclusive, participatory and holistic approach" (Government of India, 2015). Inputs for the draft policy, which was published in 2018, and for the final version published in 2020 were sought from the public through social media campaigns.

The new education policy describes education as "fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development" (p. 3). The policy's introductory section asserts that India's "continued ascent and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth [and] social justice" is contingent on its ability to provide quality education for young people, especially since India has "the highest population of youth in the world" (p. 3). The policy asserts its commitment to the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) agenda and states that "the entire education system be reconfigured to support and foster learning, so that all of the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved" (p. 3). To do this, the policy mandates a restructuring in the school structure from a "10+2 to a 5+3+3+4 structure. The rationale for this restructuring is to provide "a strong base for Early Childhood Care and Education from age 3", and to provide a strong foundation for developing a "deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen" (pp. 6-7).

Three years into the adoption of the new policy, the notion of 'education for development' is increasingly becoming a site for upholding dominant caste identity as the most valid national identity, Hindu values as legitimate Indian values, and neoliberal and meritocratic

ideologies. For example, when 12th grade students in India's state and private schools began the school year in April 2023, they received new and revised history and politics textbooks, which include alterations that have spurred renewed debates about the ruling Bhartiya Janata Party's (BJP) Hindu nationalist agenda (Guru et al., 2023) . The deleted passages in the new textbooks erase the role of Hindu extremists in the assassination of M.K. Gandhi, one of the prominent leaders of the Indian national movement for independence and omits mentions of the 2002 Gujarat riots during which India's current prime minister and his army of religious extremists orchestrated the murder of hundreds of Muslims. When questioned about the reason for removing the word "upper-caste Hindu" in describing Gandhi's assassin, the director of the National Council of Educational Research and Training responded by stating that "experts" wanted to reduce children's course load, and that he could not comprehend "how it is such a big thing" (Raj, 2023).

Emerging scholarship exploring the Indian national government's "education for Hindu rashtra (nation)" agenda have focused on the state's efforts to exclude and erase religious and caste minorities. For example, Bhatty & Sundar (2022) found that 38 percent of government-mandated corporate social responsibility projects are devoted to formal education. Amounting to a total investment of 1.4 billion dollars in 2018, these projects are required to center India's "culture and values" that are "blatantly embedded in a [dominant caste] Hindu framework" (pp. 638-639). However, in their historical exploration of the national government's use of textbooks as a site for defining national identity, Anand & Lall (2022) argue that even though the rise of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) has strengthened the Hindu-centric agenda in education, Indian textbooks have always normalized dominant caste Hindu identity and worldviews.

Casteist Coloniality and its Significance for Research's Orientation to Education

Postcolonial and decolonial theories are insufficient for understanding India's particular brand of casteist-coloniality. Dalit and Adivasi scholars offer strong critiques of postcolonial theories by pointing to its inattention to caste in favor of a nationalism-colonialism binary, thereby absolving dominant caste Indians of their role in colonial violence (bodhi & ziipao, 2019; Da Costa, 2019; Jangam, 2016; Pandian, 2009). Decolonial theories that focus on "delinking" from and "disobeying" colonial-modern epistemes and aesthetics foreground European/Western modernity (Bhambra, 2014; R. Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014; Grosfoguel, 2007; Mignolo, 2011a). However, as Costa (2019) argues, "the wounded sensibility of the colonized in South Asian history is not only of European vintage" (p. 504). And as this dissertation demonstrates, ST youth in Thanchiyoor, Attappady are *learning* to make connections between casteist colonial violence and conventionally recognized form of coloniality (British colonialism), through their experiences in formal, non-formal, and informal education, professional, and service spaces, and their daily encounters with the region's development apparatus and the non-ST people that dominate in these spaces.

Understanding this background of India's colonial continuities and legacies of caste domination in relation to the historical and ongoing "intimacies"—that is the "circuits, connections, associations, and mixings" of variously colonized people globally (Lowe, 2014, pp. 19-21), is central to the ways in which research interlocutors and I frame education. As I argue in this dissertation, the tensions between global/national 'inclusive education for development' policy and ST youth's sense-making around education, development, and inclusion may be attributed to three mainstream/dominant-caste orientations to education: (1) the denial of systemic colonial violence, and "residual intimacies of [casteist]-colonialism and slavery"

(Lowe, 2014, p. 19) in global education for development policies and its national adaptations; (2) separability through hierarchical ranking of humans, other-than-human beings, regions, and knowledges; and (3) cultures of responsibility founded on an us/them dichotomy, which inflicts harm in the name of help, and renders transnational and translocal connections and alliances against oppression less visible. These orientations to education translate into policy and practices that prioritize learning acquired within formal educational institutions over learning acquired through everyday experiences. Also, they legitimize learning as an individual endeavor devoid of context and connectedness. These orientations to education form an implicit thread in the chapters that follow, as I "learn to learn from" (Spivak, 2004) ST youth in Thanchiyoor about education(s), inclusion, and its role in development.

Research Design, Questions, and Methods

This dissertation is an ethnographic, comparative case study (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016) of 'inclusion' in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) policy. I examine how the meanings and outcomes of inclusion in global ESD policy guidelines are adapted in India's national education policies. I compare these education policy constructions of inclusion with the ways in which ST youth's everyday experiences with education and development interventions shape their understanding of inclusive education. This policy and ethnographic explorations are complemented by a "nested" Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) component (Bellino & Kakuma Youth Research Group, 2018; Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Caraballo et al., 2017), which explores the tensions between policy and experience, and offers insights to address these tensions.

In order to compare global ESD policy prescriptions, its national adaptation in India's education policies, and the ways in which ST youth in Attappady experience education local

enactments of policy guidelines, I conceptualize this dissertation's research context as 'unbounded' and I operationalize this unbounded, multi-scalar research context by adapting the Comparative Case Study (CCS) approach (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016). The CCS approach serves as a heuristic for examining the processes and meanings around ESD as they "they develop over time, in distinct settings, in relation to systems of power and inequality and in increasingly interconnected conversation with actors who do not sit physically within the circle drawn around the traditional case" (p. 17). Drawing on Kwauk (2010), I conceptualize the research context in macro-meso, and meso-micro terms.

The macro-meso scale includes two related education policy frameworks—the global Education for Sustainable Development regime, and India's national education policy framework. The meso-micro scale connects ST youth, and members of Thanchiyoor hamlet with Attappady's development apparatus, and Kerala's educational landscape. Across the macro-meso and meso-micro scales I ask:

1. How is inclusion framed in the global Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) agenda, and adapted in India's national education policy and implementation frameworks?
2. How do ST youth in Attappady draw on their experiential learning and everyday encounters with development to shape their conceptions about inclusion in education?
3. As co-thinkers in a collaborative inquiry project, how do ST youth advocate for transforming inclusive education policy and practice?

To explore these questions, I draw on a "bricolage" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2014) of methodological frameworks that include Indigenous and decolonizing (Battiste, 2013; Kovach, 2021; Sumida Huaman, 2019; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012), Adivasi/tribal (s. r bodhi & ziipao, 2019;

Xaxa, 2016) and Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) methodologies (Bellino, 2018a; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Guishard, 2009) . I also draw on methodological stances that insist on redirecting the gaze of research and on reconceptualizing education policy and practice in ways support educational possibilities outside multiple manifestations of coloniality (Ahenakew et al., 2014; Andreotti, 2016; Shahjahan, 2013). The data sources at the macro-meso scale are key global, national, and state-level policy documents and websites. At the meso-micro level, I employ multiple qualitative methods—participant-observation, life-story interviews, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, and focused and unstructured group discussions.

Conclusion

This dissertation is primarily an exploration of the tensions between Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) policy visions and strategies for inclusion, its national adaptations, and the experiences of ST youth in Thanchiyoor hamlet in Attappady, India. In exploring these tensions and young peoples' perspectives, I attempt to attend to Bellino's (2023) call to "pay attention to their conceptions of critical reflection, analysis, and action", in order to understand their insights about "forces that inspire and impede transformative action" (p. 12). The questions and methods I adopt in this dissertation are directed towards a "restorying" of inclusive education for all, which is guided by two related views on the function and processes of restorying. In general, I understand restorying as "making decolonizing space [through] counter-narratives...as told by Indigenous peoples themselves" (Corntassel et al., 2009, p. 138). In particular, this dissertation's YPAR collaboration exemplifies a view of restorying as a tool for young people to "write themselves into existence, first narrating and analyzing their lived experiences and then synthesizing and recontextualizing those stories to represent a diversity of perspectives and reshape dominant narratives" (Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2018, p. 346). By

comparing policy guidelines for inclusive education and ST youth's lived realities, this dissertation seeks to explore educational possibilities that not only include, but also respect, love, and cherish young people.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 is divided in two parts. In the first part of chapter 2, I describe how I conceptualize this dissertation's research context to facilitate comparison of policy design, adaptation, and experience across multiple scales. I describe the 'macro-meso' by introducing the focal policy agenda—Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and its adaptation in India's national education policy (NEP 2020), and its implementation framework—SSA (Samagra Shiksha Abhiyaan: holistic education for all). Next, I highlight the key contextual landmarks of the meso-micro scale by introducing the unique educational and development landscape of the state of Kerala, India. I also situate Scheduled Tribes (ST)/Adivasi/India's Indigenous peoples, the 'tribal development block' Attappady, and the focal hamlet, Thanchiyoor. In the second part, I describe the theoretical framework that informs this research. I begin by framing my understanding of coloniality and counter-colonial thinking. The rest of the theoretical framework is organized around four strands of related scholarship: (1) mainstream and counter-colonial perspectives of education for development policy, practice, and experience; (2) mainstream and critical orientations to the politics of inclusion in education; and (3) Global South Youth scholarship; and (4) emerging scholarly visions for an education 'otherwise'.

In Chapter 3, I describe this dissertation's research design and methodology. I begin by explaining the ethnographic, comparative case study (CCS) design with a nested YPAR components and situate this design in relation to the macro-meso and meso-micro context. This followed by the research questions that guide this dissertation, and the methods of participant

inclusion, data generation, and analysis. Throughout the chapter, I pause at key moments to reflect on my methodological commitments and the ways in which I tried to enact it.

In Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 I detail the findings of this dissertation. Chapter 4 responds to my first research question—*how is inclusion framed in the global Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and adapted in India's national education policy and implementation frameworks?* I describe the contextual and operational dimensions of 'inclusion' agenda and compare it with India's adaptation in its national education policies to highlight key operational misalignments. I provide a synthesis of the policy findings by making connections conceptualizations of inclusive education and education for development

Chapter 5 addresses the second research question—*how do ST youth in Attappady draw on their everyday education and development experiences to shape their conceptions of inclusion in education?* I present four counter-colonial narratives to illustrate how ST youth experience development as settler-colonial control, which is enacted by non-ST/settlers, educators, and development actors through specific strategies. These narratives also highlight how youth experience and recognize persistent exclusion and discrimination as a structural issue that is embedded in societal norms. The final section of this chapter illustrates the ways in which ST youth's everyday experiences with colonial and exclusionary structures shape their desires and aspirations. I conclude this chapter by connecting key insights from the counter-colonial narrative to reflect on experiential learning, development and the limits of current conceptualizations of inclusion in education.

In Chapter 6, I reflect on the origin, co-formation, and research processes of the Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective (YRAC) to argue that the YPAR collaboration is itself a navigational strategy adopted by co-researchers to sharpen their understanding of exclusionary

structures and to re-present and teach their understanding to others inside and outside their communities. I describe YRAC's three month-long work in three phases, and I pause and linger at moments of critical consideration, celebration, confrontation, conflict, and collaboration during the YPAR process. I argue that the YRAC's formation and processes of inquiry are significant methodologically and empirically because for YRAC the topic of persistent exclusion matters because it allows them to make sense of and account for their experiences in educational, professional, and service spaces as structural ruptures that constitute their everyday lives in a settler-colonial context, rather than as individual failure that can be repaired through the 'right' kind of inclusive education and development intervention.

Chapter 7 presents YRAC's findings, and responds to my third research question—*as co-thinkers in a collaborative inquiry project, how do ST youth advocate for transforming inclusive education policy and practice?* The first section of this chapter is co-written with YRAC co-researchers based on the script of a digital story we created to represent our findings. This co-authored section highlights the misuse of disability accommodation guidelines by comparing national and state policy prescriptions and the experiences of ST youth in Thanchiyoor hamlet. This section also includes a link to the digital story on YRAC's YouTube channel. Next, I draw on the YPAR process, discussions, and actions to describe how youth co-researchers employ strategies in order to navigate life in a settler-colonial space. These insights inform my argument that ST youth enact navigational strategies like "refusal" (Tuck & Yang, 2012), "risk calculus" (Bellino, 2015), and the "right to complex personhood" (Gordon, 1997, Tuck, 2009) to counter our (dominant caste/non-ST settler/educator/researcher/development practitioner) "denial" of our continued investment in the "securities and satisfaction of colonial-modern living" (Stein et al., 2022).

In the concluding Chapter 8, I synthesize the main findings from Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 to examine "what stands in the way" (Bellino, 2017) of imagining an education 'otherwise' (Crawley, 2020, Whyte, 2016), which disrupts the settler-colonial strategies and structural exclusion that ST youth experience every day. The framework I use to synthesize the findings and situate the macro-meso context in relation to the meso-micro context is centered on three orientations that stand in the way of imagining education and inclusion otherwise—the "denial" of education's entanglements with colonial violence, the principle of "separability" of enacted through categorical ranking of human value, and the estrangement of human and non-human/more-than-human relations, and the subordinate cultures of "responsibility" that inflicts harm in the name of 'help'. Finally, drawing on the main findings of this dissertation I expand on the ways in which youth "restory" inclusive education for all, and reflect on the transformative and pedagogical implications of this restorying for imagining education in a precarious and uncertain world.

Chapter 2 Research Context and Theoretical Framework

This research is an exploration of the tensions between the global Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) agenda's vision and strategies for inclusive education, and the ways in which young people experience and advocate for inclusion in education.. Specifically, I compare how inclusion is framed in global ESD guidelines, adapted in India's national education policy, and experienced by Scheduled Tribe (ST) youth in the state of Kerala. In this chapter, I describe how I conceptualize the research context in ways that facilitate comparison of policy design, adaptation, and experience across different and overlapping scales. First, I provide a brief overview of the 'macro-meso' context, which represents policy design and adaptation at the global and national levels. Next, I conceptualize the 'meso-micro' context of this research by introducing the state of Kerala and its unique education and development landscape. I describe how the 'tribal development block' of Attappady and the Indigenous/Scheduled Tribe (ST) peoples who live there are situated within official narratives of Kerala's exceptional education and development achievements. Finally, I frame the "development apparatus" (Escobar, 2012; Ferguson, 1994) in the meso-micro context by introducing Thanchiyoor, which is this dissertation's focal hamlet. The second part of this chapter outlines the theoretical framework that informs this dissertation.

Research Context

In order to examine these different dimensions of global policy flows, comparative scholars recommend reconceptualizing the research context as 'unbounded' (Gupta & Ferguson,

1997; Shore & Wright, 1997). An unbounded research context disrupts the global-local binary by unsettling the presumed fixity of the physical or geographical setting of the research and by drawing attention to the processes of meaning making across different scales and over time (Carney, 2009; Ferguson, 2012; Tsing, 2005). As I elaborate in Chapter 3, 'unbounding' the context is a key aspect of the Comparative Case Study design (Bartlett & Vavrus (2017), along with fluid conceptualizations of culture and comparison. Briefly, for Bartlett & Vavrus (2017) 'unbounding' the context implies that context is no longer viewed as "a container for activity; it *is* the activity" (p. 12). This view of the context emphasizes that it is constructed, relational, and spatial, and influenced by "actors and events over time in different locations and different scales" (p. 19). An attention to "scale" is another important aspect of unbounding the context. Bartlett & Vavrus draw on critical geography theories to argue that even though "scale is often used to distinguish local, regional, national, and global levels", in an unbounded context, "one would pay close attention to how actions at different scales mutually influence one another" (pp. 13-14). They insist that relational analysis of a phenomenon of interest requires a "multi-scalar focus" that attends to:

> …processes of sense-making as they develop over time, in distinct settings, in relation to systems of power and inequality, and in increasingly interconnected conversations with actors who do not sit physically within the circle drawn around the traditional case…rethinking context steers us away from "bounding" a study a priori and, instead, makes the project one of identifying the historical and contemporary networks of actors, institutions, and policies that produce some sense of a bounded place for specific purposes (pp. 11-15).

It is this view of an unbounded research context that informs this dissertation. Specifically, I am examining the "processes of sense-making" around inclusive education for development across: (1) global and India's national education policies; (2) in relation to young people's learning and navigational experiences in Attappady, Kerala; (3) against the background

of historical and ongoing global and regional colonial continuities I do this by adopting Kwauk (2014) framing of the research context in “macro-meso” and “meso-micro” terms, which is an adaptation of Bartlett & Vavrus’ (2017) conceptualization of the field across horizontal, vertical, and transversal axes . This research context and the macro-meso and meso-micro scales are represented in Figure 2.1.

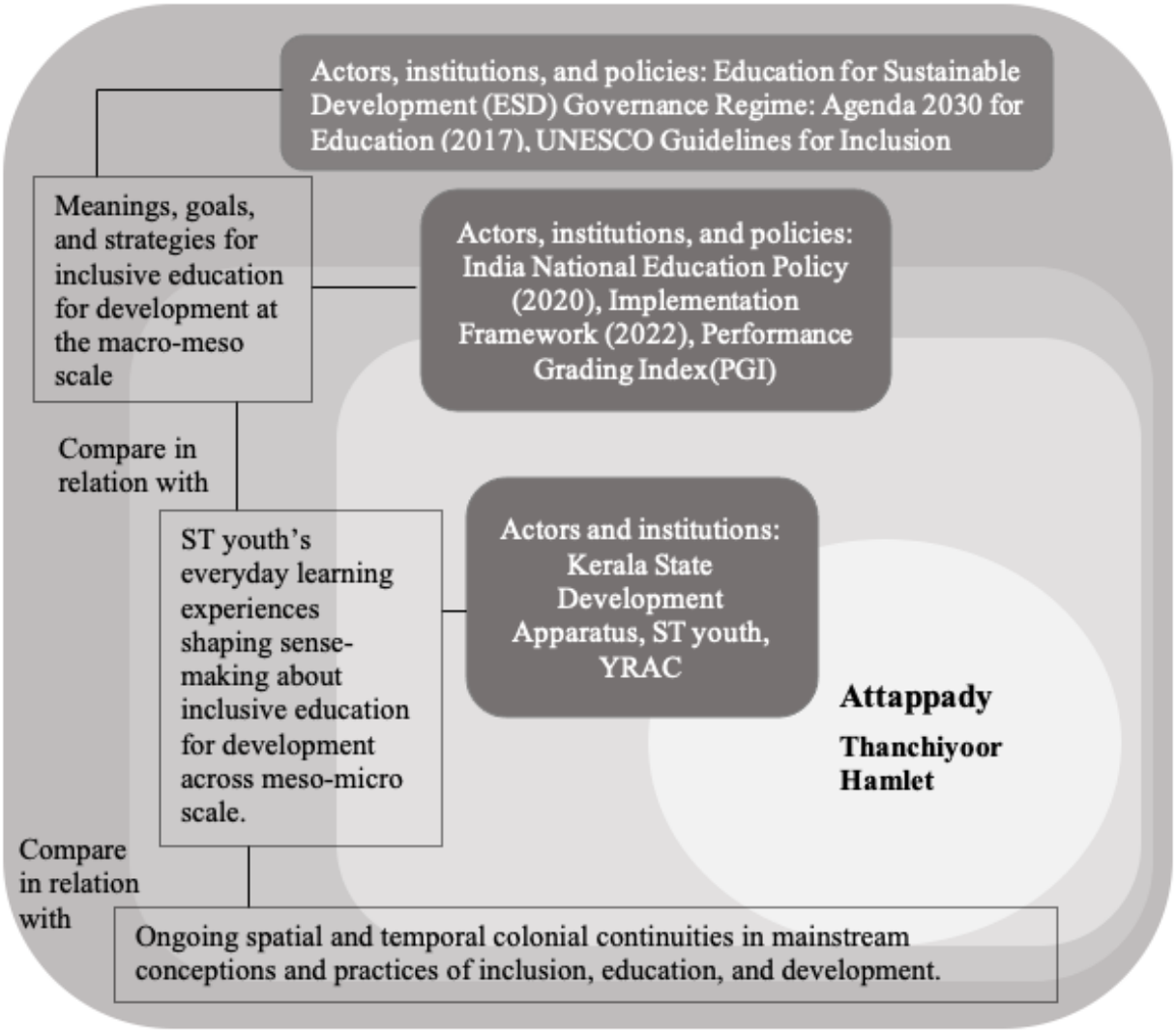


Figure 2.1 Research context: Actors and institutions in the macro-meso and meso-micro context

A macro-meso and meso-micro conceptualization of the context (rather than macro, meso, and micro) highlights the flows of meanings, actions, and experiences of inclusion in ESD policies across interconnected and overlapping scales. Additionally, as I expand in the research

design, such a framing allows to flatten the global, national and local scales so that the macro level is neither above nor below the other levels but is added as a connection to national and local levels (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016; Kwauk, 2014). The macro-meso scale is constituted by the global Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) policy guidelines, and its adaptation in India's national education policy framework. The state of Kerala's adaptation and enactment of global and national guidelines, and the ways in which Scheduled Tribe (ST) youth in Attappady experience and make sense of inclusion in everyday education and development encounters constitute the meso-micro scale. In the next section, I expand on these two elements of the research context.

The Macro-Meso Context: Global and National Education Policy Regimes

The macro-meso scale is comprised of two related education policy governance regimes—the global Education for Sustainable Development regime, and India's national education policy. The meanings of policy or governance regimes are varied and contested. In this dissertation, I understand education policy regimes or governance regimes as the rules, norms, principles, actions, actors, and processes of meaning-making that dominate and sanction global and regional education policy and practice (Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012; Tikly, 2020b). Key actors that constitute policy regimes include multilateral institutions like the United Nations and the World Bank, regional and national governments, civil society organizations and international NGOs like Save the Children and AISEC International as well as philanthropic organizations. Together these networks of actors and processes constitute a policy governance regime that shape education policy, practice, and outcomes in different countries. The global policy regime in the macro-meso scale is the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

regime that is operationalized through the Sustainable Development Goal 4 for Education (SDG 4).

The idea of education as a driver of global development gained prominence in regional and national development programming after government delegates from 155 countries signed the World Declaration on Education for All, widely known as the 1990 Jomtien Declaration (UNESCO, 1990). Nearly three decades later, in 2015, 160 member states of the United Nations accepted the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" in which they define 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are intended to "end poverty and set the world on a path of peace, prosperity and opportunity for all on a healthy planet" (United Nations, 2015, p. 2). Education's role in global development is highlighted through the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) for ensuring "inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UNESCO, 2016). The Incheon Declaration provides a framework for enacting and measuring the outcomes of SDG 4, and it provides 10 targets and 13 indicators for assessing national and regional progress in achieving inclusive quality education for all (UNESCO, 2016). I expand on these targets and indicators in Chapter 4, and it is these goals, targets, indicators, institutions, and actions sanctioned through the SDG 4 framework that constitutes the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) policy governance regime (González-Gaudiano, 2016; Kopnina, 2020; Tikly, 2020).

The influence of the SDG 4 agenda in India's latest National Education Policy (NEP 2020), demonstrates why ESD is a global education policy regime. India's education policy, implementation framework, and system for measuring national education outcomes have been explicitly and implicitly shaped by the ESD regime. For example, NEP 2020 asserts that India's "entire education system [will] be reconfigured to support and foster learning, so that all of the

critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved" (Government of India, 2020, p. 3). This reconfiguration is being enacted for school education through the nation-wide Samagra Shikha Abhiyan (SSA) or the scheme for "holistic education for all". This implementation framework affirms NEP's commitment to the ESD governance regime through its vision statement, which seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality and holistic education from pre-school to senior secondary stage in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 for education and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020" (Ministry of Education, 2022, p. 12). The goals and strategies included in the education policy (NEP 2020) and the implementation framework (Ministry of Education 2018, 2022) are adapted into 80 indicators for measuring the educational outcomes of India's states and union territories through the national Performance Grading Index (PGI) portal. The key elements of the macro-meso context are summarized in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Elements of the macro-meso context

I elaborate on these elements of the macro-meso context and on the ways in which inclusion is framed and operationalized in policy, implementation, and measurement frameworks in Chapter 4. In the following section, I shift attention to the meso-micro context, which introduces the state of Kerala, its unique educational landscape, and situates Attappady, the focal hamlet Thanchiyoor, and Scheduled Tribe (ST) within this landscape.

The Meso-Micro Context: Education and Development in Kerala, Attappady, and Thanchiyoor

In the meso-micro section I introduce the key contextual and conceptual landmarks that are relevant to understanding young people's educational experiences in Thanchiyoor, which is the focal site or focal hamlet of this research. Thanchiyoor is one of 192 'tribal hamlets' or ooru in the 'integrated tribal development block' of Attappady located in the Indian state of Kerala. As I explain in this section, Thanchiyoor is a hamlet that was formed as part of a national development intervention in the 1980s, and the education experiences of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) youth that live in this hamlet are shaped by and mediated through different development schemes and actors. Therefore, I begin by introducing the state of Kerala through the lens of the official story of exceptional development and educational outcomes. Next, I situate Scheduled Tribe (ST) peoples and Attappady within state and national narratives of development and education's role in facilitating it. Finally, I describe Thanchiyoor hamlet and explain the elements of the "development apparatus" (Escobar, 2012; Ferguson, 1994) that operates and shapes the experiences of hamlet members.

Introducing the State of Kerala: An 'Official' Story of Exceptional Development

The state of Kerala, located at the southernmost tip of India, boasts of many firsts. In 1957, Kerala became the first state in India (and the second region in the world), to democratically elect a communist government In 1991, Kerala became the first Indian state to achieve total literacy , and in 2016, it was declared the first Indian state to achieve universal primary education (Kumar & George, 2009; Lukose, 2009; Mathew, 2017). These singular accomplishments, combined with Kerala's reputation as an exceptional development case in the 'developing' world, has made Kerala an "object of fascination for scholars and policy makers

concerned with development and social justice the world over" (Jeffrey, 1992, p. ix). And despite being beset by a host of environmental and health precarities in the last five years, including the Okhi cyclone in 2017, unseasonal storms and state-wide flooding in 2018 and 2019, the Nipah virus outbreak in 2018, and the COVID-19 pandemic, Kerala continues to rank first in India's Sustainable Development Goals index score (NITI Aayog, 2021). Kerala also outperforms all Indian states in the SDG 4 education index with a score of 80 compared to India's average score of 57. These achievements are frequently highlighted in Kerala's policy and planning documents, and official policy narratives attribute the state's high educational outcomes to "advances in human development" and its "network of social welfare" (Kerala State Planning Board, 2017).

The origin story of Kerala's exceptional development narrative has been traced back to the publication of a human development report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) in 1975 (United Nations, 1975). The report asserted that Kerala's literacy levels, life expectancy rates, low infant mortality rates, and quality of life index resembled development indicators of regions in the 'developed' world (Devika, 2012; Lieten, 2002; Lukose, 2005; Parayil & Sreekumar, 2003). Since Kerala scores high in human development indicators despite its low economic growth rates, the state is viewed as disrupting dominant international development assumptions that conflate human development with economic advancement (Drèze & Sen, 1997; Franke & Chasin, 1992). After Nobel-prize winning development economist Amartya Sen highlighted Kerala as a replicable model for non-economic development in the 'developing' world the 'Kerala Development Model' (KDM) became firmly established in policy framing and popular imagination (Kerala State Planning Board, 2017; Ramachandran, 2006; Sen, 1997).

Literacy and formal education play a central role in Kerala's development story, and proponents of the Kerala Development Model attribute its success largely to the transformative capacity of universal access to free primary and secondary education (Drèze & Sen, 1995; Forsberg, 2017; Kumar & George, 2009; Kurian, 2020). For decades, Kerala has maintained its position as an education frontrunner in global indicators of education progress, demonstrating high and increasing enrollment rates, shrinking dropout rates at secondary and postsecondary levels, and universal access to basic school infrastructure. The Kerala State Planning Board summarizes this official narrative of the role of education in the state's development by asserting that "the bedrock of Kerala's development achievements is school education, because [it] was the instrument that made progress in other fields possible" (Kerala State Planning Board, 2017, p. 65) The planning board establishes the Kerala's exceptional status by claiming that "in contrast to most of the country, the State can justifiably boast of a school education sector that is not only comprehensive and universal in its coverage, but also set on a path of ever-increasing quality" (p. 32). This official story of Kerala's unique education and development achievements have been critiqued and complicated by scholar activists working in Kerala, which I will expand later in this chapter while framing development. Next, I continue to review the contextual landmarks of the meso-micro field.

Situating Scheduled Tribes (ST) Peoples in Kerala's Development Story

Kerala state has historically followed the lead of the national government in its approach to "tribal development". Scheduled Tribe peoples in Kerala constitute about 1.45 percent of the state's total population, which is less than 500,000 people (Directorate of Census Operations Kerala, 2011). The 2011 national census estimates that about 108,000 ST households are living in about 5000 hamlets across six districts. These hamlets are located either inside or at the

borders of "reserve forests", that is forest land that is owned by the state and managed by the state forest department. In order to situate ST peoples in Kerala's development story, I pause briefly to review policy narratives about Scheduled Tribe (ST) or the Indigenous peoples of India, who are classified in policy documents as a "Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Group (SEDG)" (Government of India, 2020, 2022; Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2020), thereby making them the primary subjects of development and inclusion.

Policy Narratives of ST/Indigenous Peoples of India: A Brief Interlude

Adivasi, Indigenous Peoples of India, Scheduled Tribes (ST), tribal communities, and tribes are just a few of many names and categories attributed to one of the earliest inhabitants of the South Asian sub-continent (Xaxa, 1999). Adivasis, translatable in many Indian languages as *'Adi*-First, *vasis*-inhabitants', are not categorized as Indigenous peoples by the Indian state, and therefore do not come under the jurisprudence of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007. However, the tribe communities in India have been provided special rights in the Indian constitution, if they are "scheduled" by the state as "tribes" (Costa, 2019; Damodaran & Dasgupta, 2000), leading to the official adoption of the term "Scheduled Tribes (ST)". The colonial continuities that guide this categorization are striking. For instance, in post-independence India, anthropological surveys, census data, and state advisory committees used biological data, including "cephalic and nasal" indices, to categorize Adivasis (bodhi, 1992). Additionally, India's policy definitions continue to draw on colonial anthology to classify people as Scheduled Tribes. In a recent report published by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MTA), the criteria for specifying a community as Scheduled Tribes are stated to include "primitive traits", "geographical isolation", "shyness of contact", and "backwardness" (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2020).

According to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, ST peoples constitute 8.6 percent of India's population, and the 2011 national census identified over 705 types of tribes spread across India. The governance of ST peoples is primarily overseen by the national Ministry of Tribal Affairs, State Tribal Development Departments, and block-level Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP) offices. The goal of this structure is to adopt a "more focused approach on the integrated socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes" (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2020, p.1). The Indian state's role in and rhetoric around "tribal development" has evolved from a paternalistic protection of the 'backward' Adivasis from non-tribe communities to facilitating "integrated development" through "economic upliftment", "building the inner strength of the community" and peaceful and good governance (bodhi, 2021). I expand on the relationship between the state and ST peoples later in the chapter when I frame the Adivasi/ST and global Indigenous theories that inform this research.

ST Peoples, Education, and Development in Kerala

Despite Kerala's reputation as a frontrunner in development indicators, ST development in the state is seen as lagging behind several states in the country. For instance, a state-wise comparison of the gap between overall literacy rates, and ST literacy rates, Kerala's literacy rate gap was found to be 18.2, which is higher than the national average of 14 (Kerala State Planning Board, 2021). Even though gross enrollment rates of ST students at the primary and secondary levels remain high, the proportion of ST students enrolled in post-secondary education courses was a mere 2.2 percent compared to the state average of 85 percent. The Kerala planning commission recognizes these "problems of inequality – with respect to education, employment, income and health , between people of the Scheduled Tribes and the general population" in its development report published in 2021. For the planning commission and the Kerala Scheduled

Tribes Development Department (KSTDD), the path to ST development "lies in the transition from low-income jobs to high income occupations, to modern means of production, access to higher education and research, high quality infrastructure, sustainable means of livelihood, skill training, modern agriculture and industrial production". The issue of ST development then becomes a mere anomaly that can be corrected through the right kind of development interventions.

Attappady, one of seven "tribal development blocks" in Kerala has long been positioned as one such anomaly necessitating government and non-government interventions to address the so-called "issues of underdevelopment and deprivation among people of the Scheduled Tribes" in this region (Kerala State Planning Board, 2020). In the following section I expand on what it means to be a tribal development block and I briefly review the key contextual features of Attappady's geographical and administrative landscapes.

Introducing Attappady: A 'Tribal Development Block' in Kerala

Under India's three-tier governance system, each of the 28 states has three nested governance units at the district, block, and local (panchayat) levels. Attappady is one of seven blocks in the state of Kerala that has been designated as a 'tribal development block', primarily due to a larger and more concentrated population of Adivasi communities in the region. According to the National Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the goal of organizing ST peoples throughout the country into tribal development blocks is to protect the "interest of tribals through administrative support and promotion of development efforts" (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2021). There are 193 tribal development blocks in India, and the administrative, institutional, and financial mechanisms in each of these blocks are led by the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP) office. Being a 'tribal development block' means that Attappady's administrative

hierarchy differs from other administrative blocks in Kerala. The primary administrative unit in Attappady is the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP), which operates under the jurisdiction of the Kerala Scheduled Tribes Development Department (KSTDD), operating under the aegis of the Government of Kerala and the National Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Collectively, these government agencies focus on the "integrated socio-economic development of Scheduled Tribes" by designing and implementing development schemes centered around education, health, housing, employment, skill development and income-generation (Kerala Scheduled Tribes Development Department, 2020; Kerala State Tribal Development Department, 2019; Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2020). These departments also support, supplement, and monitor the operations of other government departments, voluntary organizations, and NGOs operating in tribal blocks like Attappady. The nested administrative units of the research context is illustrated in Figure 2.3.

Attappady block consists of three panchayats (local governance units)—Agali, Pudur and Sholayur and is home to three Adivasi tribes, namely, the Irular, the Mudugar, and the Kurumbar. The members of the three tribes constitute 42 percent of the block's population (ITDP, 2019), and they live across 192 ooru or hamlets situated across three panchayats. Ooru literally translates to hamlet, and in the context of Attappady's "tribe" culture, it used to be a self-sustaining social, political, economic, and cultural unit. Every ooru has a cluster of homes with at least 20 or more families from the same tribe. Every ooru has a moopan (village head), a mannukaran (agriculture, land and spiritual liaison), and a bhandari (protector of ooru's wealth). The rest of Attappady's population are referred to as "general" or "settler" or "Malayalee" or "vandevasi". Due to time and logistical constraints, members of settler communities are not participants in this research. However, informal conversations with local acquaintances from

Muslim, Christian, and Hindu communities have shaped my understanding of the complexities and nuances of development in Attappady.

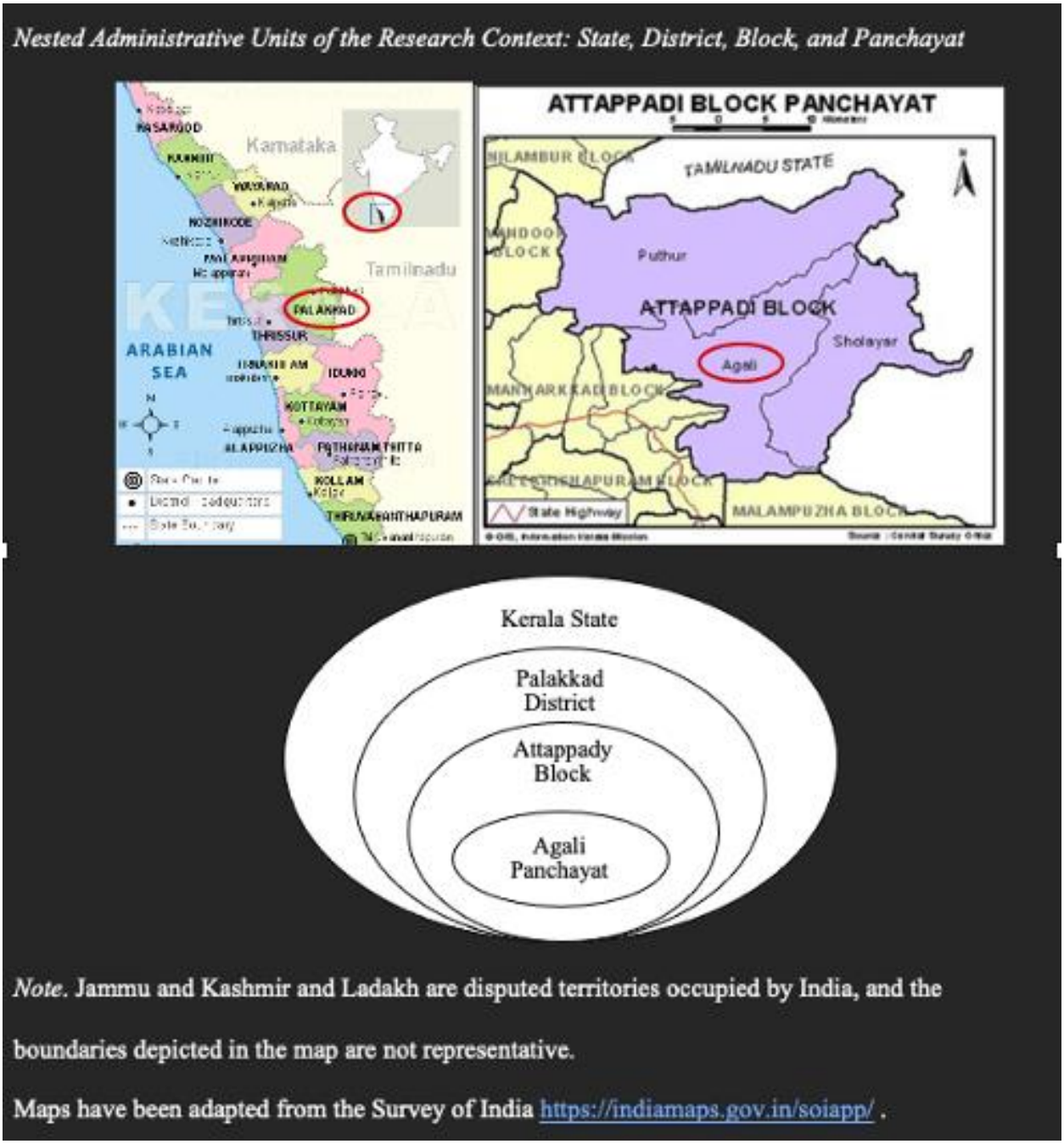


Figure 2.3 Nested administrative units: India, Kerala, Attappady

Introducing Thanchiyoor and the Development Apparatus in the Meso-Micro Context

Thanchiyoor is located in Agali panchayat, and it is one of several hamlets in Attappady that is located at the periphery of the Silent Valley National Park and a restricted forest region. Thanchiyoor is different from a majority of hamlets in Attappady because it was formed in the 1970s as part of a nationally funded and state-implemented development project called the Western Ghats Development Project (WGDP). The WGDP was introduced in 1972 and it aimed at alleviating the environmental, social and economic stress experienced by people living along the Western Ghats mountain range (Adam et al., 2018) These interventions centered on providing livelihood opportunities and increasing agricultural production, and in Attappady, the development intervention was implemented through the formation of the Attappady Agricultural Cooperative (AAC).

Central to the meso-micro context is the relationship between ST peoples in Attappady and the development apparatus that they interact with daily. International development and post-development scholars define development apparatus as a complex set of knowledge flows, institutions and practices linked to global development and its various local forms (Chowdhury, 2016; Cima, 2015; Dubuisson, 2020; Fisher, 1997). Ferguson (1990) and Escobar's (1995) influential ethnographies illustrate the workings of the development apparatus by examining World Bank projects in Lesotho and Colombia, respectively. Both scholars view the World Bank as an embodiment of the development apparatus since it successfully "affirms and contributes to the spread of the dominant economic worldview" (Escobar, 2012, p. 196) through its projects. Therefore, the object of these scholars' research are "not the people to be 'developed', but the apparatus that is doing the 'developing'" (Ferguson, 1990, p. 17). A key element in their theorization of development apparatus is its depoliticization or "anti-politics" of development,

which involves justifying the need for development by viewing local conditions and peoples as isolated and individual 'problems' require technical rather than political or systemic solutions.

Even though Ferguson and Escobar's research methods differ significantly, and both have been critiqued for undermining the agency of the development apparatus' target population , in relation to this dissertations' meso-micro context, I conceptualize Attappady and Thanchiyoor's development apparatus as the set of institutions, projects, actors, and interventions that seek to 'develop' ST peoples. The key elements of Attappady's development apparatus are included in Figure 2.4.

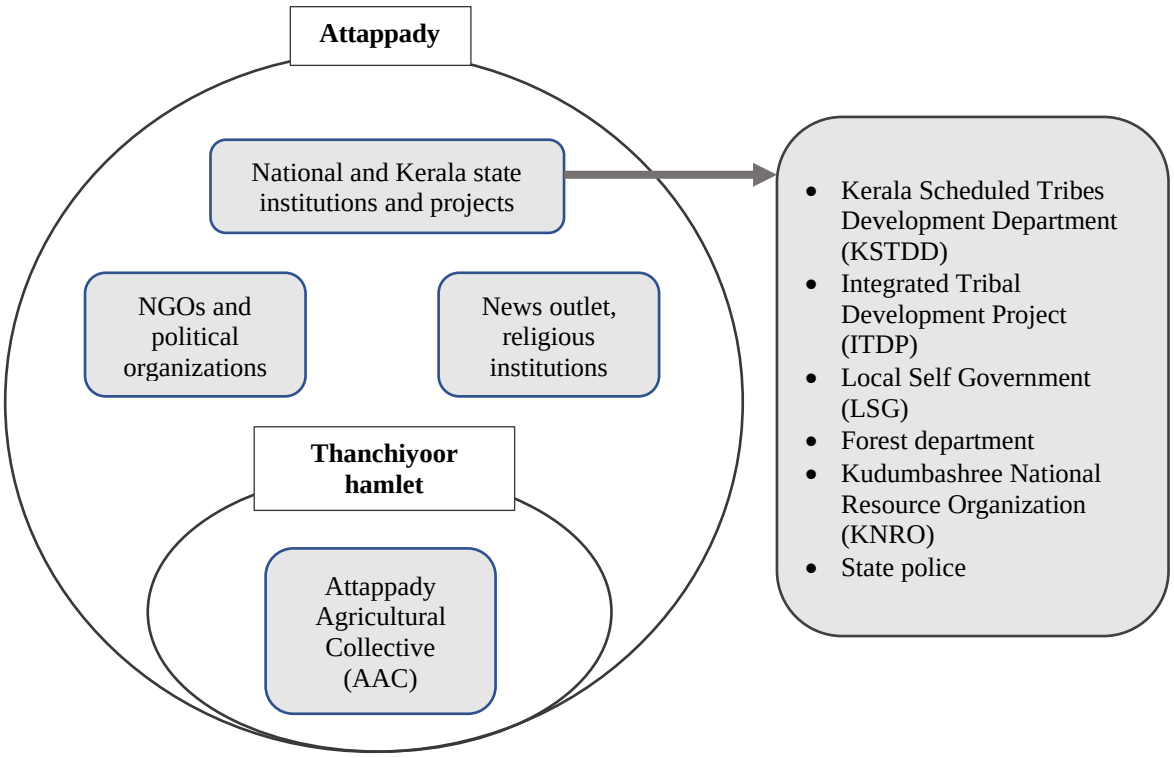


Figure 2.4: Key elements of the development apparatus in the meso-micro context

The Attappady Agricultural Cooperative (AAC). The Attappady Agricultural Cooperative (AAC) is an actor in the development apparatus that is unique to Thanchiyoor and

three other hamlets in Attappady. The AAC is a cooperative farming society that was established in 1975 as part of the Western Ghats Development Project with the “aim of improving the lives of 420 landless tribal families of Attappady". In its website, the stated objectives of the AAC society include accelerating the pace of development, making land more productive without disturbing the ecological balance of the forests, creating employment opportunities, and facilitating “socioeconomic and cultural changes among STs of Attappady”. The AAC is primarily a farming society and in order to facilitate agricultural activities and to create employment opportunities for ST peoples, the Kerala state government, which appropriates and owns forest land in Attappady, assigned nearly five percent of Attappady’s total land to the AAC. The society now own 1092 hectares of land[6] across four farm-based hamlets, out of which Thanchiyoor’s hamlet and farmland equals 283 hectares[7]. Coffee, pepper, cardamon, and honey are the main commodities cultivated in Thanchiyoor’s farmland.

As an AAC farm-based hamlet, Thanchiyoor is constitutionally different from most hamlets in Attappady. Other hamlets are comprised of anywhere between 20 to 100 households of family and extended family members of the same tribe (Irula, Muduga, or Kurumba) who live on land that has been passed on intergenerationally. The 85 households that constitute Thanchiyoor consists of members of the Irula tribe who were resettled in the region from hamlets all over Attappady. Responding to my questions about how households were selected and assigned to the four farms, hamlet elders and first-generation members of Thanchiyoor explained how they were encouraged by officers from the Integrated Tribal Development Program (ITDP) to consider moving from their "tharavadu" (ancestral home/hamlet) to a new farm-based hamlet. The offer to resettle was supplemented by promises of membership and voting rights in the AAC

[6] 2700 acres, which is nearly equivalent to University of Michigan’s five campuses combined.
[7] 700 acres, which is nearly equivalent to University of Michigan’s North campus.

cooperative society, allocation of five acres of land to the head and primary member of AAC, year-long employment and equal rights in making decisions regarding crop selection, cultivation, and sale. Even as hamlet elders and second-generation hamlet lament that they failed to save any of the pamphlets that included the terms of the resettlement, they insist that at the time it seemed like a good idea since resettlement promised an escape from poverty, hunger, and the limited access to livelihood opportunities in their tharavadu.

During my initial visits to Thanchiyoor ooru, I marveled at the infrastructural facilities within and around its boundaries. The well-paved road made of interlocking cement tiles was a refreshing change from the broken, pothole-infested roads that are the norm in Attappady. The road is flanked on either side by concrete houses, trees, flower gardens, and the lush green farmland of AAC. Thanchiyoor has its own temple, high school, homeopathic hospital, tea shop, community center, and ration shop located at the center of the hamlet and these facilities are easily accessible to all members of the hamlet. Thanchiyoor residents wash clothes, bathe, fish, and relax by the Bhavani river that flows adjacent to the hamlet. Thanchiyoor is therefore, a unique hamlet in Attappady because it is an AAC farm-based hamlet with access to infrastructure amenities that surpass the quality of many hamlets I have visited and lived in. However, Thanchiyoor also resembles many hamlets because of the contentious relationship between the hamlet members and the development apparatus. This is described in detail in chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7. A photograph of the Thanchiyoor hamlet, and a visual depiction of Thanchiyoor situated within Attappady, and the locations of key institutions are presented in Figures 2.5 and 2.6.

Figure 2.5 Thanchiyoor, Attappady: A view from the focal hamlet's center

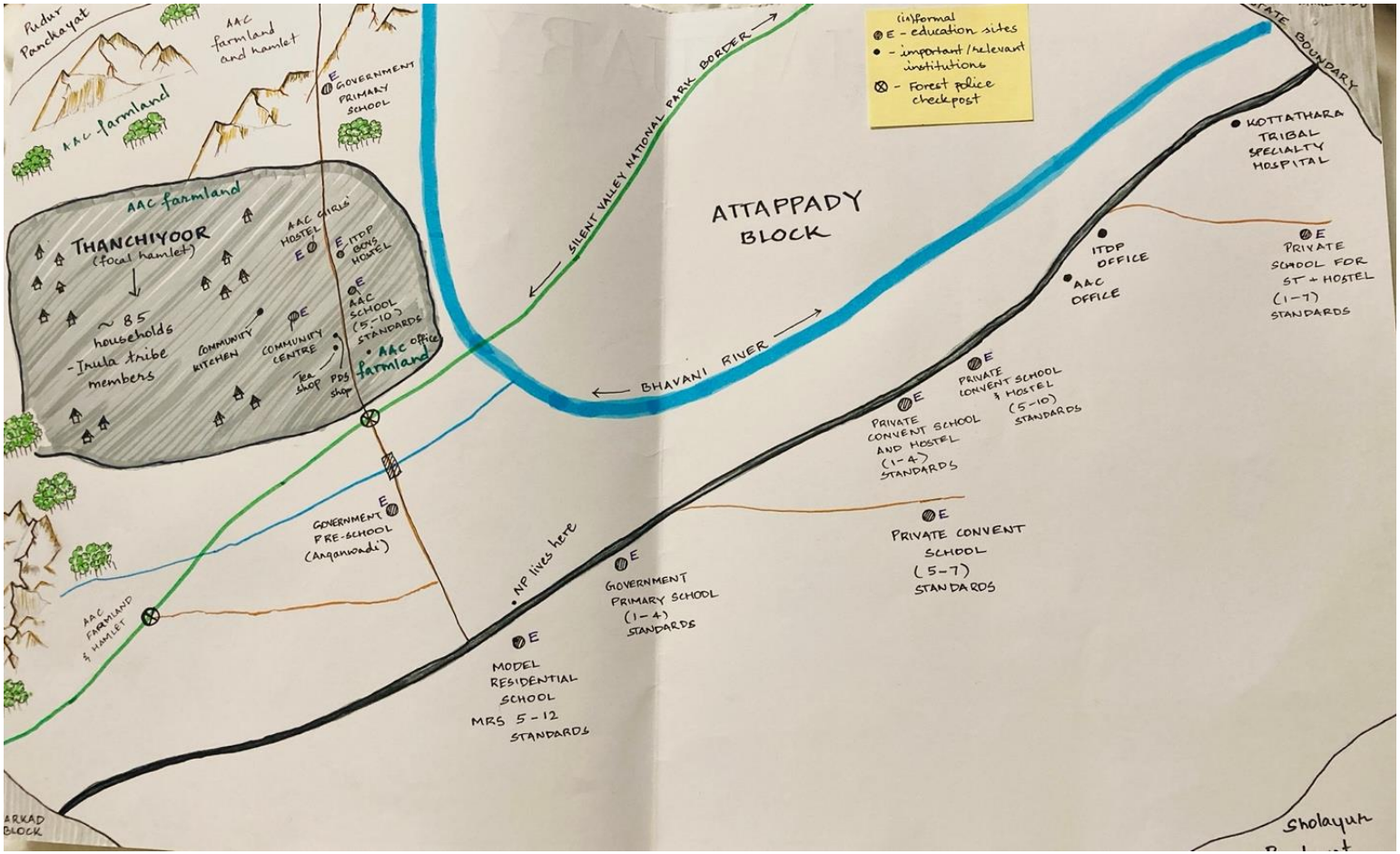


Figure 2.6: Layout of key locations in Attappady and Thanchiyoor

Theoretical Framework

I situate this dissertation in the overlapping fields of Comparative and International Education (Manion et al., 2019; Takayama et al., 2016), Global South Youth Studies (M. J. Bellino, 2017; Swartz et al., 2020; Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2013b), and Indigenous/Adivasi/Tribal studies (Smith et al., 2018; Xaxa, 2016) . As I described in the research context, in this dissertation, I am examining the "processes of sense-making" around inclusive education for development across: (1) global and India's national education policies; (2) in relation to young people's learning and navigational experiences in Attappady, Kerala; (3) against the background of historical and ongoing global and regional colonial continuities. Therefore, this research is informed by and builds on scholarship interrogating the ongoing coloniality in global education research and practice. I draw from a range of education scholars who employ the lens of the ongoing logic and practices of coloniality (Andreotti et al., 2015; Patel, 2016; Stein et al., 2019). I begin this section by framing my understanding of coloniality and counter-colonial thinking. The rest of the theoretical framework is organized around four strands of related scholarship: (1) mainstream and counter-colonial perspectives of education for development policy, practice, and experience; (2) mainstream and critical orientations to the politics of inclusion in education; and (3) Global South Youth scholarship; and (4) emerging scholarly visions for an education 'otherwise'. I conclude by synthesizing how these different but inter-related strands of scholarship inform this research.

Multiple Logics and Practices of Coloniality: Towards Counter-Colonial Theorizing

The broad conception of coloniality that informs this dissertation is adapted from definitions offered by decolonial scholars. Coloniality as an analytic category and field of inquiry emerged from theorizations about ongoing continuities of colonial domination within the

modernity paradigm. Scholars like Grosfoguel, and Maldonado-Torres use the term coloniality to refer to hierarchies and patterns of power that emerged as a result of settler colonialism, but that "define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production, well beyond the strict limits of colonial administration" (Grosfoguel, 2011; Maldonado-Torres, 2017,p. 97). For Quijano (2001) and (Mignolo, 2011), modernity and coloniality are inextricably linked, with coloniality being the "darker side" or shadow of modernity. Therefore, coloniality refers to what is erased, disavowed, or denied in celebratory accounts of modernity and modern world-views (Bhambra, 2014; Spivak, 2004) When viewed as hierarchies and patterns of power, coloniality highlights the "spatiality (expansionist control of land), onto-epistemic racism (elimination and subjugation of difference), and the geopolitics of knowledge production (Andreotti, 2016, p. 103), that constitutes the "colonial-modern" (Mignolo, 2001) world we live in.

Even though these broad conceptions of coloniality inform this research, the meso-micro context is guided by a focused and context-specific framing of coloniality that challenges the tendency within different strands of anti-colonial scholarship to "begin, end, and orient all conversations about colonialism, nationalism, and imperialism to Europe and the West" (Da Costa, p. 358). Such an orientation is especially relevant in the South Asian context because coloniality is rarely recognized as an ongoing feature of the Indian state as well as its social formations. Also, ST/Adivasi scholars have highlighted the colonial practices of the Indian state by illustrating ways in which ST/Indigenous dispossession have been regarded as an inevitable aspect of national advancement (s. r. bodhi & jojo, 2019). They assert that ST peoples in India has experienced two "waves of colonialism" or "double colonialism" (Xaxa, 1999) through the British empire, and through the occupation of ST lands by the Indian state and by non-ST/settler populations.

In order to foreground and account for these multiple manifestations of coloniality, in this dissertation, I frame the logic and practices of coloniality through a "multiple colonialisms" lens (Da Costa & Da Costa, 2019). A multiple colonialisms framework begins with the assumption that we live in still-colonial conditions (Fanon, Said, Lowe), and these conditions are characterized by multiple, converging, and co-existing forms and articulations of colonialism. Da Costa & Da Costa (2019) offer a few of the many ways in which colonialism is articulated in their theorization:

> colonization via imperial war, military borders, colonization through enslavement and carcerality, colonization facilitated through changing state systems, colonization generated via corporate plunder, development projects, and conservation-led displacement, and various uneven forms of migration (forced, indentured, refugee, and voluntary) that foster ongoing settlement on Indigenous lands (p. 54).

As the findings of this research suggest, ongoing settlement on ST land in Attappady, and the development and conservation-led displacement of ST peoples demonstrate the relevance of employing a multiple colonialisms lens. Therefore, in order to attend to the relational, but incommensurable nature of global, regional and state-specific forms of colonial violence enacted through the ESD policy regime, a multiple colonialisms framework guides this dissertation.

In this dissertation, I use the term "counter-colonial" (Rau & Ritchie, 2010) to refer to scholarship and perspectives that interrogate the workings of multiple colonialities in education and development. I view countercolonial theorizing as including postcolonial, decolonial, Indigenous, and Southern perspectives and aiming towards a "proactive dialogical openness of 'counter-ing' colonized thinking with alternative narratives reflective of hope, regeneration, and transformational shifts" (Rau & Ritchie, p. 362). With this view of coloniality and countercolonial thinking as the guiding lens, in the next section, I review the scholarship that shapes and informs this dissertation.

Education for Development Policy, and Experience: Mainstream and Counter-Colonial Perspectives

In this section, I synthesize existing scholarship about the entangled, complex, and contradictory landscape of global education policy and practice that has informed this research. Through this synthesis, I illustrate the ongoing relevance of examining disjuncture at different scales of education policy, practice, and experience, as opposed to studying just its localized impact. That is, examining existing theories about the shifting modalities of 'education for development' policy in relation to empirical scholarship exploring the context-specific adaptations, practices and experiences that animate these policies, are significant for making sense of the contemporary landscape of this dissertation's macro-meso and meso-micro context.

I regard development as a "global design"[8], which like capitalism, globalization, and modernity is based on "aspirations to fulfill universal dreams and schemes" (Tsing, 2005) Given its position as a global design, scholarship and debates about development, its meanings and goals, the actors who define, provide, and receive development, and about the ways in which

[8] A brief history of the emergence of development as a global design: The origin of the era of development and its conceptualization as a program for universal progress is the United State President Harry Truman, and the vision he presented in the 1949 Inaugural Address (Gabay & Ilcan, 2017; Green et al., 2007; Robertson et al., 2007). Truman envisioned a "program of development" that would disseminate United States' scientific and industrial progress for the growth of "the underdeveloped areas" of the world. In his speech, development was delinked from the "old imperialism [and] exploitation for foreign profit" and was envisaged as a program based on "concepts of democratic fair dealing" that would help people "realize their aspirations for a better life" (Truman, 1949). Over the past seven decades, the rationale and schemes for fulfilling these aspirations for global development have been influenced by varying paradigmatic stances including modernization theories (Rostow, 1960) human capital approaches (Harbinson & Myers, 1965), and the logic of neoliberal globalization. Postcolonial and decolonial scholars have theorized the continuities between the "old imperialism" that Truman rejects in his speech, and the ongoing knowledge production and practices associated with development (Bhavnani et al., 2009; Connell, 2014; G. Spivak, 1999). Most notably, (Mignolo, 2000) referred to development and modernization as the most recent form of "global design". Mignolo argues that global designs emerge out of "imperial local histories" (p. 32). He views imperial Spain's conversion of Christianity from a local to a global phenomenon as the first global design. Imperial England and Europe displaced "Christian designs into secular civilizing missions", and imperial United States displaced the old civilizing order by a global design of development (L. E. Delgado et al., 2000; Mignolo, 2011b).

development success is measured is vast and contested. There are divergent views about education's role in equipping people and nation-states with the knowledge and skills that are required to achieve a range of national and global development goals including economic growth, poverty eradication, technological advancement, sustainability, and universal human rights (Green et al., 2007; Mason et al., 2019; Robertson et al., 2007). Therefore, to offer conceptual clarity about the education for development theories that inform this research, and to highlight its assumptions and silences, I have organized this literature into mainstream, critical, and coloniality-oriented approaches to education for development. Even though this exercise in "collapsing complexity" (Rappleye, 2011) risks oversimplifying the nuance of these theories, it is crucial for examining "affinities, divergences, complementarities, and contradictions among them in order to maximize the effectiveness of the struggles of resistance against oppression" (Santos, 2018, p. 8).

Mainstream Orientations to Education for Development

In this dissertation, I conceptualize mainstream approaches as those adopted by the ESD governance regime in the macro-meso context. In these approaches, development is defined primarily in economic terms, even when ensconced within narratives of sustainability, human rights, and social justice . The conceptions and goals of development have shifted over the past seven decades to focus on modernization and economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s, structural adjustment programs and globalization in the 1980s and 1990s, and subsequently on poverty elimination, and neoliberal forms of good governance, poverty elimination, human rights, and sustainable development[9] (Huckle & Wals, 2015; Mason et al., 2019; Overton et al.,

[9] Until the late 1980s, modernization and human capital theories dominated education for development policy and practice. Modern education, with a focus on universal primary education was viewed as essential for low-

2020). However, the fundamental assumption that economic growth is an essential requirement for national and individual development has remained constant. In the ESD policy regime, this assumption is enacted through the "sustainability-through-growth" (Kopnina, 2021) paradigm. According to Kopnina (20221), this paradigm is characterized by slogans like "Peace, Prosperity, Planet" that aim to continue the expansion of the global economy while attending to sustainability and the preservation of the planet for future generations.

Education is designated a central role in all these shifting conceptions of development, by facilitating the incremental inclusion of 'developing' nations and citizen-subjects into the 'developed' world (Ferguson, 2005). The commonality in these approaches is that education and development problems like low school completion rates, unemployment, poverty and poor health people and nation-states are attributed to the failure and deficits of people, institutions, and state governments. The approaches assume that education and development problems can be addressed through the 'right' kind of intervention supplemented through development aid (Verger et al., 2014), individual and collective effort, and global best-practices and evidence-based research (Manion et al., 2019; O'Reilly, 2010). Therefore, mainstream approaches view education as primarily responsible for providing the skills to compete for upward socioeconomic mobility, to participate in the global economy, and to contribute to national development. Universal targets, indicators, and standardized testing are the key strategies recommended for

income countries to pass through the "five stages of economic growth" in order to become developed. Human capital approaches legitimized viewing education as a tool for equipping people with the knowledges and skills required to compete in the global economy. An exclusive focus on economic development was abandoned (at least rhetorically) in the late 1980s, after the post-Washington consensus and its recognition of the failure of structural adjustment programs. At the Education for All conference at Jomtien in 1990, definitions of development shifted to incorporate ideas like good governance and universal human rights. The 1990s also signified a shift from economic development indicators like GDP (Gross Development Product) to non-economic ones like HDI (Human Development Index). For a comprehensive, systematic review of globalization, development and education research, policy and practice, see Robertson, Novelli, Dale, Tikly, Dachi & Alphonce (2007)

measuring the success of individual and national educational outcomes. In the ESD regime, these assumptions are complemented by commitments to care for the planet and to achieve ecological sustainability (Brissett & Mitter, 2017; Schulte, 2022).

Critical and Countercolonial Perspectives of Education for Development

Even as the mainstream ESD agenda is adopted and reinscribed in national and state education reforms, critical scholars have been unsettling mainstream assumptions by drawing attention to the multitude of ways in which ESD's singular aspirations for universal development through education are experienced and transformed in the Global South (M. J. Bellino, 2018b; Khoja-Moolji, 2018; McWilliams & Bonet, 2016; Swartz et al., 2020; Wadhwa, 2021).These scholars assert that the dominance of neoliberal worldviews as well as the enduring coloniality (Sultana, 2022; Takayama et al., 2016; Whyte, 2017) constitutes the ESD policy regime.

Neoliberal Dominance in Mainstream Approaches. Policy regimes and dominant actors in global education governance do not name neoliberalism as its driving theoretical framework. However, education and development scholars argue that global interventions like Education for All (EFA 1990-2005) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG 2000-2015) cast education, and indeed all social relations in economic terms (Connell & Dados, 2014; Rizvi, 2017). In their systematic review of education and development scholarship, (Robertson et al., 2007) found that logic of mainstream approaches are guided by the fundamental assumptions that development is ultimately dependent of economic growth, and that all economies are constituted by similar elements, and can therefore be treated alike (p. 209). In the ESD policy regime, these assumptions are complemented by the antithetical belief that ecological sustainability can be achieved while sustaining the neoliberal economy—an economy that fundamentally values production and consumption at the cost of environmental degradation

(Kopnina, 2021). Elliot (2020) explains that the most widely used definition appeared in the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987) and it views sustainable development as being able to "balance the needs of existing and future generations with the need to preserve the environment" (p. 23). This definition was widely critiqued for its vagueness, with critics of the term 'sustainable' speculating that if understood uncritically, this ubiquitous framing of sustainable development can be interpreted as sustaining the status-quo (V. D. O. Andreotti, 2021; Brissett & Mitter, 2017; Tikly, 2020b).

Scholarly analyses of global education frameworks have demonstrated how a neoliberal worldview is regulated through discursive moves. For instance, Nguyen's (2010) textual analysis of key documents in the EFA framework revealed that discourses of efficiency, cost-effectiveness, management, and accountability are ubiquitous (p. 347). This finding has been confirmed by comparative educations scholars who assert that the underlying neoliberal logic of global education frameworks have resulted in the quantification of education, quality and equity, have marginalized issues of teaching and learning, and promoted competitive individualism thereby denuding education of relationality and potential for public good (Blackmore, 2019; Samoff, 2003; Sriprakash, 2013).

Dominant institutions within the global educational governance system—what Klees (2010) refers to as "actors in the world system of neoliberal globalization"(p. 15), are implicated and critiqued for their investment in upholding neoliberal and colonial-capitalist continuities (Connell, 2013; Kendall, 2008; Klees, 2010; Spring, 2008). In addition to constructing education as a commodity, these scholars argue that institutions like the World Bank and the IMF have worsened global inequity and poverty through its development policies. For example, the negative impacts of the structural adjustment programs introduced by the IMF and the World

Bank in Asia, Africa, and South America in the 1990s, which mandated governments to reduce spending in public education are well-documented (Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012; Unterhalter & North, 2011). These scholars view the global education for development agenda as a form of "compensatory legitimation" (Weiler, 1984, as cited in Klees, 2010, p. 16), aimed at restoring legitimacy and compensating for the global inequity and crises brought on by interventions like the structural adjustment programs implemented by these very actors.

Logic of Coloniality in Mainstream Approaches. It well-documented that the education for development paradigm often perpetuates a single notion of progress and incremental development (see Andreotti for references). Scholarship that interrogates the operations of coloniality draw attention to the ways in ESD's universal claims of inclusive and equitable education for development "do not actually make everything everywhere the same" (Tsing, 2003, P. 4). The countercolonial critiques of mainstream approaches that inform this research are centered around: (1) knowledge production about development and unsettling common-sense conceptions of education's role in facilitating development; and (2) Complication mainstream constructions of imaginary subjects and subjectivities.

Knowledge Production and Imaginary Subjects of Development. Scholars who are pushing for the recognition and dismantling of the coloniality of knowledge that is embedded in ESD (Takayama, Sriprakash, & Connell, 2016; Tikly & Bond, 2013; Shajahan, 2012; Andreotti, 2011), question the "universal dreams and schemes" (Tsing, 2005, p. 5) in which mainstream development actors are invested in. These interrogations are accompanied by calls for imagining alternative conceptualizations of education in relation to development (Bhavnani et al., 2009), which are multi-scalar, pluriversal, and geo-epistemically diverse (e.g., Escobar 2011; Grosfoguel, 2012; Patel 2016). For example, Santos (2016) asserts that "there is no global social

justice without global cognitive justice" (p.42) and argues for pluriversal (rather than universal) "epistemologies of the South". Santos' work and literature that builds on it insist that the "suppressed, silenced, and marginalized knowledges" (Santos, 2018, p. 8) are fundamental for interrupting the colonialities embedded in global designs like capitalism, development. Other countercolonial strategies aimed at opening up space for alternative knowledges and conceptualizations of development include "epistemic disobedience" (Mignolo, 2007), "epistemic reconstruction" (Quijano, 2004), "Southern theory" (Connell, 2008), and ecology of knowledges (Santos, 2018).

Countercolonial education scholars assert that imagining plural ways of framing and enacting development would require for the dominant caste and transnational elites to contend with our implication in systemic harm (Andreotti, 2015; Corntassel, 2012; Stein et al., 2021).The global development agenda and the educational interventions that are assumed to facilitate it, often ignore, deny, or disavow the role of colonialism and associated epistemic violence in the creation of the wealth of what, when, and who are considered 'developed'. This aspect of knowledge production about development that constitutes the epistemological dominance and which sanctions forgetting the role of power and coloniality have been theorized in many ways. For example, Spivak (1999, 2003, 2004) refers to the "sanctioned ignorance" and "constitutive disavowal" of historical and ongoing colonial violence that permits dominant caste actors in the Global North to define, discipline, and monitor marginalized caste actors in the Global South. Kapoor (2014) points to global development's "imperialist amnesia" (p. 1127) regarding Cold War and post-Cold War formations which allowed the construction of a power dichotomy in which an irreproachable and developed West/North would help/aid the 'less-developed' East/South. According to these scholars, the central problem is the unacknowledged and

unexamined epistemological and ontological dominance of the global North, enacted through a "sanctioned ignorance" of the inherent violence and unsustainability of the "Modern/Colonial Capitalist/Patriarchal Western-centric/Christian-centric [Brahman/Savarna-centric] World-System" (Andreotti et al., 2015; Grosfoguel, 2007; Mignolo, 2007, 2011; Shahjahan et al., 2017)

Unsettling the Mainstream Assumptions of Education for Development: Experiences from the Global South

This dissertation research seeks to join the area of critical, collaborative, public scholarship that turns "the spotlight to the lived experiences of the largely unsung but key protagonists of the South" (Bhavnani et al., 2009, p. 6), and positions them, not merely as data sources to understand "alternate" meanings of development, but as intellectual and pedagogical authorities who can reimagine what comes to be viewed as development interventions, and what those reimaginations entail for education. There is robust empirical literature that explore the context-specific ways in which the global development and education agenda are experienced by people and communities in the Global South. These experiences manifest as accepting, refusing, or transforming dominant assumptions of the global and national development projects. For example, Moomal, a participant in a human rights camp in Pakistan noted that development interventions do not account for the diverse ways in which the lives of rural women are shaped by distinct political and socioeconomic conditions (Khoja-Moolji, 2016, p. 753). Alejandro—a Guatemalan youth critiquing the inadequacy of the state's postwar transition, unsettled the validity of commonsense development expectations by asserting that "develop means exploit" (Bellino, 2018b, p. 373). Indeed, the dominant assumption that development projects can lead to "peace, prosperity and opportunity" (United Nations, 2020, p. 2), is disrupted by marginalized communities in Colombia, Nepal, Afghanistan, Kenya, and many regions around the world

where development and aid can be conceived as contributing to conflict, violence, and despair (Bellino, 2017; Burde, 2014; Escobar, 2004; Rappleye, 2011; Tikly, 2020).

Formal education and schooling practices and experiences are also transformed by the strategies recommended by the global education governance regime. For instance, an ethnographic exploration of a target-driven education intervention in Karnataka, India, revealed that schools' priorities shifted from providing context and need-specific pedagogic strategies to attempts to achieve pre-figured top-down targets (Sriprakash, 2013). Scholars who document neoliberal trends in education have shown how schools and formal education spaces that privilege competitiveness, marketability of skills, and global standardized testing requirements, are increasingly becoming sites of anxiety, precarity, and frustration (Angus, 2015; Blackmore, 2019; Brown, 2017; Lukose, 2005; Mathew, 2017; McWilliams & Bonet, 2016). Particularly relevant to the research context of this dissertation is the well-established argument that mainstream education for development policy and practice operate by isolating education from its sociocultural, economic, and political contexts. By "decontextualizing and depoliticizing" education policy (Kendall, 2004, p. 36), any failure in policy implementation is delinked from the policy design 'experts' and located at the individual, community, state or national levels.

ST peoples in India have long asserted that development is linked to the "colonial idea of modernity" (bodhi, 2009, p. 9). Adivasi scholars in the Tribal Intellectual Collective of India (TICI) argue that in India, development has caused destruction of ST land and resources, displacement of ST peoples, while simultaneously essentializing and disavowing their culture and social realities. For example, Wadhwa (2020) and Costa (2017) ethnographic explorations demonstrate how national development projects and land appropriation have created precarities and conflicts that Adivasi/ST youth navigate in different ways. Many scholars and activists in

Kerala reject dominant development stances that employ indicator-based evidence to represent regions like Attappady, and the inequities among Adivasi and Dalit-Bahujan communities in Kerala simply as an unfinished agenda in the Kerala development model (Devika, 2016; Kjosavik & Shanmugaratnam, 2004; Mathew, 2017; Steur, 2011). They assert that Kerala's construction as a replicable model of development in South Asia, is founded on privileged-caste communities' historical and ongoing violence and appropriation of productive resources (like land) from Adivasi and Dalit-Bahujan communities. These critical educators also argue that the systematic cultural, social and political construction of Kerala as a casteless state, which is central to the state's development narrative, erases historical and ongoing caste- and class-based segregation in education, health, and access to employment opportunities.

The Politics of Inclusion in Education: Mainstream and Critical Orientations

In framing the politics of inclusion, I begin by agreeing with scholars who assert that inclusion is a contested and complex socio-political terrain situated across disciplinary traditions and lived experiences(Armstrong et al., 2010; Barton, 1997; Forlin, 2013; Hardy & Woodcock, 2015; Mitchell, 2015; Taneja Johansson, 2014). The historical landscape of the concept of inclusive education includes meanings, frameworks and practices that are not directly related to ESD. For example, Terzi (2008) and Lo's (2007) review of inclusion-based literature describe the historical emergence of the concept of inclusion, and its transition from meaning "integration" of children with "special needs" to inclusion of children with disabilities. The idea of inclusive education has different 'origins' and in their systematic review, Armstrong et al. (2011) illustrate the four origins of 'calls for inclusion'. These calls for inclusion include: (1) critiques of 'mainstreaming' students with disabilities and calls for special needs education; (2) critiques of inclusion through special education influenced by social models of disability; (3)

critiques of neoliberal education reforms and its engagements with difference; and (4) links to global development and the adoption of inclusive education as an international goal.

This research is shaped by scholarship that considers the politics of inclusion in education. My understanding of the politics of inclusion is centered on the role of power and relationality in understanding processes and experiences of inclusion and exclusion (Armstrong et al., 2011; Nguyen, 2010; Thomas & Glenny, 2002). To understand policy meanings of inclusion in relation with youth experiences of inclusion and exclusion, I review two related strands of literature that examines inclusion in global education governance frameworks, and that unsettles the assumptions of global inclusion agenda by considering the role of power and relationality in inclusion/exclusion in education.

Exclusionary Continuities in Global Education: From 'Special Needs' to Inclusive Education

In the context of global governance, inclusive education has a global presence, yet is understood, practiced, and experienced in varied and disparate ways. Inclusion is described as a "slippery concept" (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996) that underlies the global education for development and its many regional adaptations and is conceptualized and supported through international frameworks and declarations (Johnstone et al., 2020; Peters, 2007).The concept of inclusive education was first introduced within global governance regimes by the Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs (UNESCO, 1994). However, over time the meanings of inclusion and inclusive education has been revised and broadened to address the exclusion of marginalized and minoritized children. This reframing of inclusion emerged as central in governance regimes like Education for All, the Millennium Development Goals, and most recently ESD. In 2005, UNESCO officially reframed its definition of inclusion and positioned it as a key strategy in education policies:

> Inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education (p. 13).

While global education policies primarily define inclusion as oppositional to exclusion, that is, inclusion is expected to reduce exclusion, a range of meanings are attributed to the role and outcomes of inclusion in education. In their review of the inclusive education frameworks in international education agenda, Werning et al. (2009) found that definitions of inclusive education usually emphasize access to children with diverse educational needs, and opportunities for equal participation in learning (p. 17). In more recent frameworks of ESD, this focus on access and opportunity is being extended to promote inclusive education as a human right that must guide educational policies and practices (Kefallinou et al., 2020)). For example, while defining inclusive education, UNESCO (2017) states that the "central message is simple: every learner matters and matters equally" (p. 12). For UNESCO, and India's national education policies, integrating the principles of inclusion and equity in education reform involves, "valuing the presence, participation and achievement of all learners, regardless of their contexts and personal characteristics" (Government of India, 2022; UNESCO, 2017). In the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda, inclusion is a driving notion and aspiration for most of the 17 goals and is closely linked to the agenda's motto of "leaving no one behind" (Brisset & Mitter, 2017; Koehler et al., 2020).

As I explain in Chapter 4, "leaving no one behind" and "every learner matters equally" are universal rights-based views of inclusion espoused by the ESD agenda, which presumes that everyone on the planet will be included in a just, prosperous, and sustainable planet (UN, 2016). On the one hand, within ESD and some academic discussions, these expansive visions for inclusion are expected to be adapted my national governments into context-relevant inclusive

education policies. On the other hand, critical scholarship notes the ways in which the ubiquity of meanings associated with inclusive education is resulting in national adaptations that share the vague, universal aspirations of the global education agenda, with no evidence that regional enactments of inclusion are dismantling existing power structures (Florian, 2019; Kopnina, 2020; Unterhalter, 2019). Florian (2019) asserts that current approaches to inclusion are bound to reproduce exclusion because it retains the assumptions of 'special needs' education that because it "pathologizes difference", while being disproportionately targeted at historically marginalized groups (p. 695). This results in "targeted responses to individual difference" (Florian, 2019, p. 694), thereby upholding the logic of exclusion.

Even though 'inclusive education' gained prominence in the global ESD regime as a result of critiques that interrogate the assumptions, practices, and transformative potential of special needs education (Ainscow, 2020; Tomlinson, 1985), it remains contested with disagreements about definitions, enactments, and evaluation, especially since its broad meaning remain ensconced in the notion that the main goal is to educate 'all' children in 'regular' schools (Papastephanou, 2019; Shore & Gronne, 2020; Zembylas, 2019). Additionally, mainstream approaches to inclusion assume that it is inherently good and preferred, while ignoring key questions about "who is in, who is out, how come, who decides, who benefits, and who loses?" (Slee, 2001, p. 175). The approaches to inclusion that I discuss next insist that the structural transformations that are required to achieve ESD's vision of "leaving no one behind" are entirely missing in global education policies and its normative view of inclusion.

Interrogating Power and Coloniality in Inclusive Education

Critical policy scholarship shows that global education agenda and its national adaptations continue to uphold the ideological hegemony of 'official knowledge', with no evidence that

enactments of inclusive education are transformative (Vally & Spreen, 2012). Significantly, critical policy-based research has highlighted the ambiguities and confusion in regional and national enactments of inclusive education policies, which reproduce exclusionary practices. Scholarly critiques of modernist views of inclusion and exclusion insist that the two concepts are inter-related, and not oppositional in the ways in which they are framed in global development agenda. For example, in their review of historical theorizations of inclusion, exclusion, and marginality Koehler, Cimadamore, Kiwan & Monreal (2020) draw on Perlman (1976) to argue that in the context of modernity and development, inclusion does not necessarily imply the reduction or absence of exclusion. Instead, coloniality/modernity and its capitalist continuities necessitate a "stable system biased towards the benefit of some actors" and the exclusion of others, in order to facilitate the "operation of basic markets (labor, capital, credit, land, knowledge)" (p. 17).

Inclusion scholars like Slee & Allan (2001), and Armstrong et al. (2010) argue that inclusive education is founded on contradictory intentions and assumptions, which makes practical incongruities inevitable. In this perspective, exclusion is an "established tradition in the invention of modern schooling" and relies on the "sorting of human capital" (Slee, 2001). Inclusion and development are both linked to colonial modernity, and therefore are also in individual, expansionist, teleological commitments that foreclose community-based and relational modes of learning and living with each other. To clarify this relational nature of the politics of inclusion, Spicker (2020) compares social exclusion with poverty, both being "relational concepts". Spicker argues that exclusion like poverty cannot simply be understood in terms of income, resources, identity, and capabilities of individuals or groups of people, and instead must be treated in relation to the broader social and economic context. This means that

mainstream inclusive education efforts that focus on access and participation without considering dimensions of power and dominance will continue to leave people behind (Sen, 2000; Roy, 2014).

The global education priorities, particularly those of the United Nations intergovernmental agenda has long been critiqued for producing depoliticized and decontextualized policies. For instance, Kendall (2004) critiques the education and development models favored by international techno-experts through what she refers to as the "successful failure" of Free Primary Education (FPE) policies in Malawi. Through a multi-scalar ethnographic and policy exploration, Kendall argues that mainstream global education models "isolate the education sector from the socio-cultural, political, and economic relations in which it is embedded" (p. 36), allowing policy makers and governments to locate policy failure at the individual and community level ((Dubois, 2015; Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Fenwick, 2010)). Similarly, Sriprakash et al. (2020) assert that the World Bank's discourse of a 'global learning crisis' is founded on racial erasure and uninterrogated systems of domination that allow technoscientific approaches to education to remain as the only rational option for development and inclusion (p. 677). By revealing concealed hierarchies of power and relational dimensions of inclusion and exclusion, these scholars draw attention to the ways in which ESD's inclusion agenda is founded on the exclusion of a plurality of knowledges, perspectives, and ways of being.

Nguyen (2010, 2018) interrogates the global education landscape through the lens of coloniality and Southern theory to describe two ways in which politics of inclusion is exercised by global and national actors. One way relates to the politics of knowledge production and the definitions of inclusion that are preferred in policy texts. Nguyen calls for renewed attention to

the “wider structure of power and knowledge upon which policy text is framed”, as well the discursive moves employed to “mask expressions of exclusion” (p. 350). Second, even as Nguyen (2018) highlights the need for continuing to address exclusion, they rejects the notion of inclusive education simply as a universal educational movement intended to address historical injustice. Rather, the important question to consider is on whose terms inclusion and strategies for inclusion are defined (p. 32).

Framing Global South Youth: Personhood, Experiential Learning, and Intellectual Capacities

In the Handbook of Global South Youth Studies, Cooper et al. (2018) define Global South youth as young people who " live with increased population density; greater competition for opportunities; more income poverty, unemployment, and inequality; and regular experience of greater rates of violence” (p. 7). In illustrating the need for “remaking youth studies as Global South youth studies”, the editors of the handbook argue that the concept of Global South resonates more closely with youth living in Africa, South America, the Caribbean, and parts of Asia. While they acknowledge that the North and the South cannot be associated with geographical regions, the work presented in the handbook focuses exclusively on youth living in these regions, and by scholars who share their country of origin. My understanding of Global South youth is informed by Wilkerson’s (2020) conceptualization of caste, and Spivak’s (2018) emphasis on the class continuities that are ignored in dominant understandings of the Global South. I take seriously Wilkerson’s (2020) call for “recalibrating” how we view ourselves by taking into account the relationship between race and caste. For Wilkerson, race “is the front man for caste” (p. 27), with caste being the fixed and rigid infrastructure, or the “bones” holding together and legitimizing the “ranking of human value” (pp. 27-36). My understanding of Global

South youth is based in this connection between race (which is predominantly considered relevant in Euro-American contexts), and caste (which is chiefly considered relevant in South Asian contexts), and takes into account class continuities and "location of enunciation" (Grosfoguel, 2004).

This dissertation is informed by research and practice that view young people and their experiential knowledges, not merely as data sources that can inform existing education policy and practice, but as intellectual and pedagogical authorities who can transform education (Guishard, 2009; Bellino, 2017; Gutierrez & Lipman 2016, Ginwright & Cammarotta). Specifically, I focus on three related concepts in Global South youth literature—personhood, navigational strategies, and youth action. My attention to these concepts are guided by its resonances with the everyday experiences of ST youth in Thanchiyoor.

Personhood

I understand personhood as associated with young people's sense of self and being, identity, sense-making, belonging, dignity and respect. This research is primarily informed by Gordon's (1997) emphasis on recognizing and respecting the complex and contradictory subjectivities of people who "live in the most dire circumstances" (p. 4). Conceptualizing this recognition as the "right to complex personhood", Gordon highlights the importance of understanding that people "possess a complex and oftentimes contradictory humanity and subjectivity that is never adequately glimpsed by viewing them as victims or, on the other hand, as superhuman agents" (p. 4). This conception of complex personhood has been adapted by many education and youth studies scholars. For example, writing in favor of research that centers Indigenous "desire" as opposed to damage, Tuck (2009) argues that recognizing complex personhood involves inviting and accepting "mis/re/cognitions" (p. 421) in order to sustain

collective balance. Love (2016) discusses complex personhood in the context of hip hop educational youth spaces where "ideas of determination, resistance, and the long enduring fight for Black freedom" exist alongside the "seductiveness of the material and psychological conditions of capitalism, sexism, and patriarchy" (p. 415). Denying the right to complex personhood, especially to youth, can have dire consequences as demonstrated by Pritchard's (2013) analysis of media coverage of the violence experienced by queer youth of color. As Patel (2016) argues, mainstream education research is yet to embrace a complex view of personhood, instead prioritizing the categorical distinctions and dichotomies embedded in modernist and individualist views of personhood (see also, Besley, 2003; Khoja-Moolji, 2017; Morarji, 2014)). While these scholars explicitly draw on Gordon's (1997) theorization of complex personhood to make sense of young people's everyday realities, this research is also informed by views of personhood that emphasizes the importance of valuing complexity, contradiction, and the messiness of people's experiences.

A range of scholarly work engages with the notion that the denial to the right to complex personhood is a key settler-colonial strategy. In a compelling thesis that explores breathing as a site of racial politics, Crawley (2020) argues that viewing personhood as a stable, as opposed to "irreducibly incoherent, refusing stillness and statis", is embedded in the desire to "fully cognize, fully know, fully conquer" (p. 216). Indigenous scholars and communities have demonstrated the multiple ways in which personhood has always been unstable and relational. Drawing on and reconfiguring Gordon's (1997) conception of personhood, Māori scholars Orman, Kidman, and Jahnke (2020) implicates Global North's construction of youthhood through a "linear age model" in undermining the intellectual, economic, social, and spiritual potential of young Māori. They are joined by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars who assert the importance of unsettling

the logic of coloniality/modernity and its hierarchical ranking of human and non-human value that diminish Global South youth's complex and in-flux personhoods. For Global South youth, and for Indigenous youth this implies accommodating, resisting, and/or transforming one-dimensional constructions of their personhood by adopting distinct and creative navigational strategies.

Young People's Navigational Strategies, Actions, and Intellectual Capacities

I associate navigational strategies and capacities with the "improvising, strategizing, hustling, and survival" (Swartz et al., 2020, p. 12) that young people engage in daily. Approaches for understanding youth development and adaptation have shifted over time. Ginwright & Cammarotta (2002) describe how psychological models of youth development that focused on youth problems gave way to asset-based models in the early 1990s. Proponents of asset-based approaches center the need for providing youth with the supports and opportunities that can build on their internal assets (e.g., values, character, aspirations), and external assets (e.g., relationships, skills). Resilience approaches offer a view of youth development that focus on positive adaptation during adversity and beating the odds (Schoon and Byner, 2020). The asset-based approach is complemented by resilience-oriented views of youth adaptation because both approaches focus on positive adaptation without considering the broader societal context. Besides, as Ginwright & Cammarotta (2002) argue, these orientations to youth development assume a universal, modernist conception of youth, while primarily centering the individual rather than their circumstances.

This research privileges young people's social context, relations, and creative engagements with the "failing promises of exclusionary modernity" (Hoechner, 2016) as central to the strategies they adopt and adapt to navigate it. I focus on navigation as a concept because it

describes how young people "disentangle themselves from confining structures" (Vigh, 2020. P. 44). Navigation accounts for complex personhood by offering a lens to view young people's decisions to risk, resist, participate, and/or refuse as strategic decisions that are "rooted in a sense of the past as well as a search for a future, in action and imagination" (Swartz, p. 67). Scholars have identified a range of navigational strategies that Global South youth adopt, which includes silence (Wadhwa, 2020), resistance (Ahenakew et al., 2014; Dimitriadis, 2013; Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2013a), and deceptive hope (M. J. Bellino, 2021). While these works inform this research, as I describe in Chapters 5 and 7, I focus on two strategies that are relevant to the everyday lives of ST youth—risk calculus (Bellino, 2015) and refusal (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Bellino (2015) theorizes risk calculus as a construct that constitute and mediate young people's decisions about the modes and manner of participating in civic issues that are relevant to their every lives. The concept of risk calculus is particularly relevant for young people living in contexts of persistent violence and precarities, because their security and "self-efficacy rests on the extent to which they understand risk as necessary and productive in a turbulent and unpredictable environment" (p. 538). The construct of risk calculus is of particular relevance in education planning and practice for historically marginalized youth whose youth responses to injustice can manifest as resistance, adaptation, refusal, activism, and/or silence, depending on the "trade-off between the risks one endures in the present and the risks one is willing to undertake in order to change that present" (Bellino 2015 p. 540).

In this dissertation, "refusal" is a generative concept for understanding the different ways in which young people navigate risk calculus. Nakata (2007) asserts that life in a colonial context prompts Indigenous peoples to adopt self-interested and pragmatic forms of sense-making as a response to the "seemingly absurd logic of colonial reasoning" (p. 432). For Nakata, this form of

Indigenous agency can be practiced through "myriad refusals, non-engagements, and ambivalent or conditional deferrals of and to colonial meaning" (p. 433). Tuck & Yang (2012) sharpens the conceptualization of refusal by arguing that "refusal as a generative form" has different aspects. First, refusal turns the gaze back on power by redirecting attention to the "colonial modalities of knowing persons as bodies to be differentially counted, violated, saved, and put to work" (p. 241). Second, refusal creates and promotes alternative spaces for representation that challenged colonial preoccupations with fixity and control. Through this lens, refusal becomes a critical intervention that interrogates colonial knowledge production and its preoccupation with documenting pain and damage.

Young People's Intellectual Capacities: YPAR as Epistemology and Pedagogy

This dissertation is informed by scholarship that prioritizes the intellectual capacities of young people in understanding and rearticulating systems of oppression (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Quijada Cerecer et al., 2013; Swartz et al., 2020). Specifically, I draw on existing scholarship and youth projects that provide "empirical evidence as tools in ideological struggle…[which] is not to reject the system and all its elements but to rearticulate it, to break it down to its basic elements and then to sift through past conceptions to see which ones, with some changes of content, can serve to express the new situation" (Fine, 2008, p. 216). Therefore, this dissertation views Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) not only as a methodology, but as an "epistemology" (Fine, 2009), a "problem-solving education" (Bettencourt, 2020), and a "dual pedagogy" (Scorza et al., 2017).

My understanding of YPAR as epistemology is shaped by Fine's (2009) assertion that participatory action research is "a radical epistemological challenge to the traditions of social science" (p. 215). This is because of its assumption that systematically excluded peoples carry

critical wisdom about the "history, structure, consequences, and the fracture points in unjust social arrangements", thereby disrupting taken-for-granted understandings about who holds knowledge and for whom social science research should be undertaken" (pp. 215-216). In framing YPAR as dual pedagogy, Scorza, Bertrand, Bautista, Morrell, & Matthews (2017), draws in their work with the Council of Youth Research to assert that YPAR considers youth as experts of their own experiences as well as "public pedagogues in their own right" (p. 155). Since YPAR involves adults and youth learning from each other from collaborative research, as well youth teaching themselves and others, it is both a methodology and a dual pedagogic practice. This research also views YPAR as a "problem-posing education", which focuses on the "process of engaging in inquiry" as well as the product of inquiry, thereby prioritizing flexibility and the different skills, experiences, and intentions that different participants bring to the research process (Bettencourt, 2020, pp. 160-161). YPAR as problem-posing education mean that young people's knowledge and experiential perspectives are combined with the adult facilitator's resources in order to engage in collective decision-making, dialogue, and action to challenge oppressive structures (Bettencourt, 2018; Torre et al., 2008).

Framing YPAR as epistemology, dual pedagogy, and problem-posing education has implications for the ways in which this research makes sense of young people's experiential learnings and its potential for transformation. For example, reflecting on her YPAR collaboration with the Kakuma Youth Research Group (KYRG), Bellino (2023) complicates expectations of transformative methodologies in ways that are pertinent to this research. Told from the perspective of an "adult, Western, white, nonrefugee" co-researcher working with refugee youth in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, Bellino (2023) describes her initial surprise when youth co-researchers appeared to respond to exclusionary schooling and post-secondary structures

through “calls for expanding individualized opportunities” and actions that reinforce meritocratic scripts, despite the “awareness of the structural constraints of formal education” (p. 11). She makes sense of these tensions through a critical and ongoing reflection on how her “own conceptions of educational equity and justice”, and expectations about ‘transformative’ responses to oppression, made KYRG’s pursuit of ways to “stay motivated in the face of many challenges” and to “make school more bearable”, unintelligible as critical action (p. 12).

In their multi-year YPAR project, Making Sense of Movements (MSOM), Black and Indigenous co-researchers and high school students in Toronto explored “school pushout” in the context of pervasive racism and inadequate responses by school personnel. Nixon, Habtom & Tuck (2022), the adult co-researchers of MSOM, situate the project in relation to “ongoing legacies of settlement and slavery”, to argue in favor of theorizing interconnected systems of oppression and colonial violence (e.g., racism, antiblackness, casteism, anti-Indigeneity) as “a rupture rather than an injury”. The authors introduce this theorization with a conjecture that is relevant to this research—settler colonialism and anti-blackness constitute our everyday lives and is an undeniable “something lurking in the shadows” (p. 133). Framing racism and systemic exclusion and discrimination in education “as more than a treatable injury, but rather as a rupture caused by ongoing antiblackness and anti-Indigeneity” (p. 155), opens up possibilities beyond identity-based conceptions of inclusive education and measurement and testing-based strategies for inclusion.

Imagining Education ‘Otherwise’: Emerging Perspectives

Imagining “otherwise” possibilities is a lens that many scholars are adopting in the context of multiple planetary crises. In his genre-defying exploration of blackness and “breath”, Crawley (2020) argue that “otherwise” as a word, and “otherwise possibilities” as a phrase

"announces the fact of infinite alternatives to what *is*" (p. 2). Crawley's (2020) question drives this dissertation—"how to detect…such possibility otherwise, such alternative to what *is* as a means to disrupt the current configurations of power and inequity?" (p. 3). Da Silva's (2014) innovative thesis about "difference without separability" invites a critical reflection about 'otherwise' possibilities:

> What is at stake? What will have to be relinquished for us to unleash the imagination's radical creative capacity and draw from it what is needed for the task of thinking The World otherwise? Nothing short of a radical shift in how we approach matter and form (p. 58).

While different scholars frame this concept in different ways (Crawley, 2020; Stein et al., 2021, Whyte, 2016), they all underscore that the many forms of planetary crises and ongoing colonial violence are not simply the consequence of modernity or development gone wrong. Rather, they are what constitute colonial-modernity and make modern/developed ways of being possible. In Chapter 8, I reflect on three orientations of the ESD agenda and my own work in Attappady that stand in the way of imagining education otherwise—denial, principle of separability, and subordinate cultures of responsibility.

Denial, Separability, and Responsibility

In Stein, Andreotti, Susa, Ahenakew & Cajkova's (2022) considerations for moving from "education for sustainable development" to "education for the end of the world as we know it", the authors point to a key limitation of education for sustainable development (ESD). As an orienting vision for educational transformation, it is set up to fail because it denies the impossibility of unending growth on a finite planet. They assert that the promises of can only be fulfilled within colonial structures that are built to sustain the dominance of certain groups, at the expense of Other groups of people and beings. For Stein et al. (2022), the ongoing illusion that

ESD and its many adaptations can produce equitable and just societies (UN, 2015) are rooted in four types of denials. These are the denial of: (1) systemic colonial violence, which is premised on racialized, gendered, and caste-based exploitation, resulting in a worldview that considers violence as external, exceptional, or justified in order to facilitate a larger vision like universal development; (2) ecological unsustainability of the dominant system, which is premised on the assumption that perpetual growth and sustainability are compatible goals, resulting either in a rejection of climate change, or in 'green' solutions within the existing system; (3) conditions of entanglement, which is premised on ignoring relationality or viewing it as peripheral rather than as central to existence, resulting in assertions of individualism and personal advancement; and (4) the extent and depth of the problems we face, which sustains the illusion that quick fixes can empower, include, and develop (pp. 279-280).

Da Silva (2016) calls for "re-thinking sociality" by releasing our grip on separability. To explain separability as a principle, and as an orientation, Da Silva illustrates how experiments in particle physics have long been yielding understandings of the world and the universe that are rooted in principles of uncertainty and non-locality[10]. The colonial-modern social world on the other hand is invested in constructions of cultural difference that require separation—between human and non-human beings, as well as between groups that are considered to possess fixed attributes and identities.

Da Silva (2016) emphasizes relationality and entanglements as crucial for interrupting the presumptions of separability. Her vision for reorienting cultural difference requires interrupting a principle of separability that considers:

[10] Da Silva (2016) draws from the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, and Nadeau & Kafatos (1999) non-locality principles both of which relates to the properties of atomic and sub-atomic particles.

> … the social as a whole constituted of formally separate parts. Each of these parts constitutes a social form, as well as geographically-historically separate units, and, as such, stands differentially before the ethical notion of humanity, which is identified with the particularities of white European collectives (p. 63)

For Da Silva, current critical tools are "specimens of modern thought" (p. 57) and therefore invested in separating and delimiting the ethical notion of humanity. The work of Indigenous scholar Battiste (2005, 2013) closely examines this logic of separability embedded in modern-colonial ways of knowing and being. She contrasts this with the relational and complex Indigenous knowledge systems and its potential for facilitating 'otherwise' thinking. Similarly, a range of scholars examine colonial-modern education's propensities to partition, rank, categorize, and divide (Ferguson, 2005; Grosfoguel, 2007; Patel, 2016; Stein et al., 2022; Todd, 2016; Wynter, 2003).

Responsibility and solidarity are concepts that are interrogated in relation to imagining education, inclusion, and justice 'otherwise'. Spivak (2004) uses the phrase subordinate cultures of responsibility in the context of global development and its sanctioned ignorance of violence. She describes development as a reaffirmation of "social Darwinism", in which responsibility is framed as the "burden of the fittest (p. 57). However, since the mainstream development agenda views development as detached from its links to ongoing colonial violence, the responsibility for the 'failure' of development is placed on the subordinate Other. The ways in which an unethical understanding of responsibility may uphold exclusionary structures and cement separability are increasingly being documented. For example, Pashby & Sund (2020) demonstrate how global citizenship education in schools in the Global North continue to be invested in a depoliticized view of the world resulting in students and teachers who perceive development and inclusion in terms of benevolent 'help' rather than a critical righting of wrongs. For Gaztambide-Fernández (2012), a "decolonial pedagogy of solidarity" is a productive way to facilitate a pursuit of

"modes of human relationality that might constitute forms of resistance to, as well as healing from coloniality" (p. 43). This dissertation is informed by these critical reinterpretations of responsibility, answerability, and solidarity (Kluttz et al., 2019; Mohanty, 2002; Morris, 2016; Patel, 2016).

Conclusion

Two recent and ongoing events in India capture the relevance of the theories and concepts outlined in this chapter in relation to the multi-scalar research context. India's latest draft of the National Youth Policy (NYP 2021) includes a section on 'inclusive resources and inclusive pedagogies', which asserts that "tribal youth in India are not at par with mainstream populations in terms of educational attainments and employment opportunities" (p. 17). The goal for ST youth development is to "take special efforts" to uphold "justice, liberty, and equality" on their behalf (p. 50). One such initiative is the GOAL (Going Online as Leaders) program introduced by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in partnership with Facebook/Meta. The initiative intends to identify "renowned people" to "mentor and empower" 5000 ST youth in core areas that include "digital literacy, life skills, leadership and entrepreneurship, and sector-specific skills" (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2023). The aim of the GOAL program is to "equip" ST youth to "gain leadership skills", to "identify and find solutions for challenges in society", and to use the knowledge they gained from the program to "support their livelihood as well as society's socio-economic status". This initiative reflects many assumptions of mainstream 'education for development' and 'inclusive education for all' agenda described in this chapter that are rooted in denials, separability, and a subordinate culture of responsibility.

The significance of coloniality as a lens for interrogating inclusion in India is especially evident given the simmering conflict between ST peoples and state-supported armed forces in

the “tribal belt” of central India. The conflict began in early 2022 and ST women and youth continue to lead protests against coal companies who are illegally (but with the state’s consent) acquiring ST forest land for expanding coal mines. This form of dissent is unintelligible as empowered action to the state, and for supporters of capitalist development, so their response is to suppress ST youth’s resistance through the deployment of state police and armed forces, who continue to brutalize and murder ST peoples with impunity (Survival International, 2021). The context and concepts described in this chapter serve as a lens to make sense of these tensions between policy goals and actions.

Chapter 3 Research Design

This dissertation draws on a combination of methodological approaches that value uncertainty, contradiction, and answerability over generalizable evidence, knowledge ownership and the assimilation of difference in education research (Patel, 2016; Silva, 2016; Stein, 2021). To design this research and methods of data generation, I have drawn on a "bricolage" " (Denzin & Lincoln, 2014) of methodological frameworks that include Indigenous and decolonizing (Battiste, 2013; Kovach, 2021; Sumida Huaman, 2019; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012), Adivasi/tribal (bodhi & ziipao, 2019; Xaxa, 2016), and Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) methodologies (Bellino, 2018c; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Guishard, 2009). In this chapter, I first describe the ethnographic, comparative case study (CCS) design, the research questions, and the methods of data generation and analysis. In the second part of this chapter, I describe the methodological commitments and stances that inform this research. I do this by presenting key turning-points in the research that resulted in shifts in research sites, participants, and methods.

Research Design: Ethnographic Comparative Case Study with Nested YPAR

This dissertation is an ethnographic, Comparative Case Study (CCS) of the phenomenon of inclusive Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) with a nested Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) component. In chapter 2, I conceptualized this dissertation's research context as 'unbounded' in order to compare ESD policy design, adaptation, and experience across the macro-meso and meso-micro scales. 'Unbounding' the context and a process-oriented approach to comparison are key aspects of the Comparative Case Study design (Bartlett &

Vavrus (2017). This view of a case departs from traditional case methodological stances in ways that are pertinent to this dissertation's exploration of the phenomenon of inclusive ESD. I expand on this next.

CCS and Blurring Boundaries of Case Study Research: Rationale for Research Design

Comparative education scholars suggest that 'unbounding' of the research context complicates the "assumption that comparison is, by definition, cross-national or cross-cultural" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 34). Unbounding unsettles the presumed fixity of the physical or geographical setting of the research, while simultaneously drawing attention to the processes of meaning making across different scales and over time (Carney, 2009; Ferguson, 2012; Tsing, 2005). This view of context and comparison departs from traditional case study methodologies that emphasize the importance of bounding the case. For example, Yin (2011) specifies the need to "clarify the boundaries" of the case based on the unit of analysis, by distinguishing who or what remains inside and outside the unit (p. 33). This notion of a case as a "container for activity" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 12) is shared by other case methodologists like Stake (2006) who assert that a case is a "bounded system" that is "coherent", with certain features included "within the boundaries of the case, and other features outside" (p. 135). For Miles & Huberman (1994), a case is "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (p. 32), and Merriam (1998) asserts that a phenomenon that is "not intrinsically bounded" cannot be considered a case (p. 27).

The CCS approach diverges from these established orientations to case study research through its focus on a "process-oriented comparison". Bartlett & Vavrus (2017) defines process-oriented comparison of cases as an exploration of:

> processes of sense-making as they develop over time, in distinct settings, in relation to systems of power and inequality, and in increasingly interconnected conversations with actors who do not sit physically within the circle drawn around the traditional case (p. 11).

When a case is viewed in terms of processes of meaning-making around the phenomenon, its design must account for the "iterative and contingent tracing of relevant factors, actors, and features" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 39). And according to Bartlett & Vavrus, an "a priori bounding of the case" limits the possibility of an "emergent design", since bounding "defines out the realm of study factors that may well be very relevant" (pp. 38-39). In this dissertation, I examine the "processes of sense-making" around inclusive education for development across: (1) global and India's national education policies; (2) in relation to ST youth's people's experiential learning in Attappady, Kerala; and (3) against the background of historical and ongoing global and regional colonial continuities. Two conceptual and methodological underpinnings of the CCS approach make it a well-suited research design for this exploration. I expand on this in the following sections.

Sociocultural View of Policy Facilitating Multi-Scalar Research

Unlike instrumentalist approaches to policy studies that investigate "what works" in different contexts, Bartlett & Vavrus (2017) note that the CCS approach is influenced by a sociocultural lens, which opens up possibilities to view policy as:

> …a deeply political process of cultural production engaged in and shaped by social actors in disparate locations who exert incongruent amounts of influence over the design, implementation, and evaluation of policy (pp. 1-2).

CCS's attention to the political contestations that shape the policy, practice, and experience cycle, and the cultural and social processes that shape and are shaped policy design, adaptation, and experience addresses a key limitation of existing policy and case study research. Bartlett & Vavrus argue that even though robust theoretical explorations of sociocultural views of policy as practice exists, there continues to be limited "methodological clarity as to how one "might explore the formation and appropriation of policies across multiple sites and scales has heretofore been limited" (p. 2). A CCS design attends to this limitation through a multi-scalar conceptualization of context, which situates "the nation-state within a world marked by global agencies and agenda", while simultaneously emphasizing "local-national and local-global" connections (p. 41).

The goal of this dissertation is not to understand whether inclusive education policies are effective or ineffective. Rather, I seek to understand global and national ESD policy actors' meaning-making, interventions, and desired outcomes around inclusion in education *in relation to* ST youth's experiential, everyday learning that shape their conceptions and advocacy for inclusion in education. Understanding how inclusive ESD "shapes and is culturally produced in social life" requires careful and simultaneous attention to different scales, and to the "flows of influence, ideas, and actions through these levels (Bartlett & Vavrus, 207, p. 41). In designing the unbounded, multi-scalar context, I take seriously, Bartlett & Vavrus' recommendation to consider CCS as a heuristic that aids in the process of "following the inquiry in an iterative, emergent research designs" (p. 5). This leads to the next feature of CCS design that makes it a meaningful heuristic for understanding the phenomenon of inclusive ESD.

CCS and a Heuristic for Developing an Iterative and Emergent Design

According to Bartlett & Vavrus (2017), the CCS approach is primarily a heuristic that views "comparing and contrasting [as] essential analytical moves" that can open up ways to "follow the inquiry in an iterative, emergent research design" (p. 7). Instead of 'bounding' the case, the CCS approach promotes an iterative, evolving, and emergent orientation to the ways in which the boundaries of the case are conceived. In adopting and adapting the CCS approach, I heed Bartlett & Vavrus' call to pay attention to "careful, evolving, iterative attention to the contours of the research design and how boundaries perceived by participants come to be meaningful" (p. 32). For instance, my preliminary research design focused on understanding how 'education for development' policies are enacted in formal, non-formal, and informal educational spaces in Attappady, and experienced by young people. However, COVID-19 related restrictions limited my access into formal and non-formal educational spaces, which resulted in me "following the inquiry" into Thanchiyoor hamlet and the Attappady Agricultural Cooperative (AAC) school. For reasons that I describe later in this chapter, I excluded AAC school from the research design. However, I include the experiences of ST youth who attended AAC school, and the co-researchers' research question *emerged* out of their experiences in the school. Therefore, even though I placed the AAC school 'outside the boundaries' of this research design, it continues to be meaningful to this research because of the ways in which youth participants and co-researchers view the school in relation to their everyday experiential learning.

The CCS approach as a heuristic, rather than a "set of rules" also allows me to adapt the ways in which I conceptualize the "directions for comparison" (p. 9). For example, Bartlett & Vavrus recommends comparison across three axes—the horizontal axis, "which compares how similar policies may unfold in different locations", the vertical axis, "which insists on

simultaneous attention to and across multiple scales", and the transversal axis, "which historically situates the processes or relations under consideration" (pp. 20-21). However, given the CCS design's emphasis on following the inquiry in an iterative and emergent way, I adapted the "direction of comparison" based on the spaces I am able to access, and on what is meaningful to research participants. This means that, instead of comparing the phenomenon of inclusive ESD across horizontal, vertical, and transversal axes, I compare the flows of meanings and experiences related to inclusive ESD across the macro-meso and meso-micro contexts. This direction of comparison is represented in Figure 3.1.

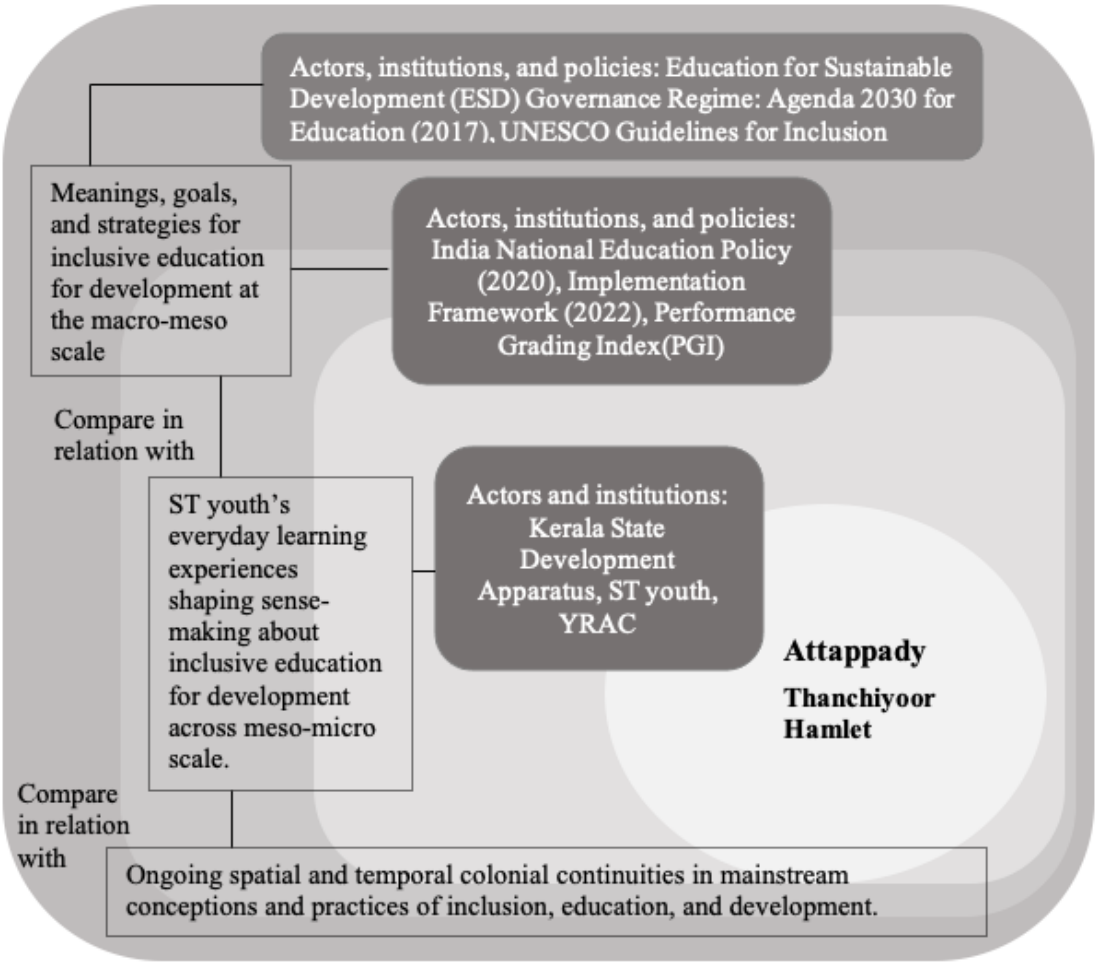


Figure 3.1 Adapted CCS design- Direction of comparison developed by following the inquiry

Ethnographic CCS and Nested YPAR

In explaining the influence of "multi-sited ethnography" on the CCS approach, Bartlett & Vavrus (2017) draw from contemporary anthropological literature to argue that an ethnography is inherently comparative "given that the ethnographer as the instrument of research is constantly comparing [their] experiences and assumptions to those of the participants" (p. 17). They assert that the CCS approach seeks to understand and include the perspectives of "social actors in the study", a feature that is common in ethnographies and ethnographically-oriented research (p. 39). In this dissertation, I employ multiple qualitative methods—participant-observation, life-story interviews, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, and focused and unstructured group discussions, with the view of "representing at least partly in its own terms the irreducibility of human experience" (Willis & Trondman, 2000, as cited in Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 39).

"Nested" within this ethnographic documentation of experiences and perspective of inclusive ESD is a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) component. Emerging scholarship has combined ethnographic methods with participatory research to collaboratively construct empirical and theoretical insights about education (Bellino & Kakuma Youth Research Group, 2018; Bertrand, 2018; Morales et al., 2017). As Bellino & Kakuma Youth Research Group (2018) illustrate through their exploration of "information gaps" in Kakuma refugee campl, "nesting" YPAR within ethnographic explorations open up possibilities "beyond projects into sustainable efforts authored and maintained from within communities" (p. 494). Here again, the emergent design facilitated by the CCS approach enabled the incorporation of a YPAR component into this dissertation's design, even though it was not a part of the preliminary design. Later in this chapter, as well as in Chapter 7, I expand on the ways in which this research draws on the methods and methodological stances of YPAR. However, the circumstances that

led to the co-formation of the Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective (YRAC), mean that the nested YPAR component in this research is not only a methodology, but a ”radical epistemological challenge” (Fine, 2009), a dual pedagogy (Scorza et al., 2017), and a problem-posing education practice (Bettencourt, 2020). I have elaborated on these orientations in Chapter 2.

Research Questions

This research is guided by three research questions:

1. How is inclusion framed in the global Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) agenda, and adapted in India’s national education policy and implementation frameworks?
2. How do ST youth in Attappady draw on their experiential learning and everyday encounters with development to shape their conceptions about inclusion in education?
3. As co-thinkers in a collaborative inquiry project, how do ST youth advocate for transforming inclusive education policy and practice?

I view these research questions as inter-related and located across the macro-meso and meso-micro levels. Several iterations of these research questions, especially during the first six months of fieldwork, were focused on youth and hamlet members’ experiences with the development apparatus, and the ways in which these experiences shape their perceptions about the role of education for development. Inclusion, or rather persistent exclusion emerged as a theme after I met Soumya and Vrinda in January 2021. The co-researchers of the YPAR project had identified exclusion in educational, professional, and service spaces as the diving analytical category during our preliminary meetings. However, I recognized inclusion/exclusion as a central theme in the ethnographic data as well, after leaving

Thanchiyoor. The goal of researching these questions is not only to compare the tensions and resonances across global and national inclusive education guidelines, and ST youth experiences in Attappady. I also seek to make a case for considering young people's experiences and intellectual capacities in reimagining inclusion in education.

Methodology and Methods

This dissertation draws on a combination of methodological approaches that value uncertainty, contradiction, and answerability over generalizable evidence, knowledge ownership and the assimilation of difference in education. To design this research and methods of data generation, I have drawn methodological stances that insist on redirecting the gaze of research and on reconceptualizing education policy and practice in ways support educational possibilities outside multiple manifestations of coloniality (Corntassel & Hardbarger, 2019; Kovach, 2021; Land, 2014.; Patel, 2016; Sumida Huaman, 2019)

Based on Wilkerson's (2020) global-historical theorization of caste as "an invisible guide" to artificially construct "a fixed and embedded ranking of human value" (p. 27), I am a non-ST/settler and a dominant caste, middle class woman. Therefore, even though I draw on counter-colonial theoretical frameworks and engage in reflection and action to interrogate my complicity in dominance and colonial violence, as a dominant caste person I acknowledge that I carry with me the "unconscious signals of encoded superiority" (Wilkerson, p. 41). Unlearning this "programming of caste" through which I consciously or unconsciously enact an "expectation of centrality" (p. 42) is an ongoing process. In the following sections, I describe the data generation and analysis methods. I have connected relevant methods with my methodological commitments and enactments during data generation.

Focal Policy Selection: Process and Rationale

The central role of institutions and actors in the global education policy regime in guiding national education agenda is well-established (Benavot & Naidoo, 2018; Carney, 2012; Sriprakash, 2012) This is especially true for countries in Asia, Africa, and South America. For instance, the leaders of the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) adopted the Johannesburg declaration in 2018 confirming their commitment to the global education governance agenda:

> We reiterate our commitment to the strengthening of multilateral institutions of global governance to ensure that they are able to comprehensively address global challenges. We reaffirm our commitment to the United Nations, as the universal multilateral organization entrusted with the mandate for maintaining international peace and security, advancing global development, and promoting and protecting human rights. (p. 2).

As described in Chapter 2, India's national education policy and implementation framework are guided by the ESD agenda and the targets and indicators of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). I adopted an iterative approach to selecting the focal policy documents based on my evolving research questions. In the initial months of fieldwork, I reviewed 10 global, 10 national, and 10 state policy documents to understand the existing meanings and goals attributed to ESD, and to get a sense of the types of interventions to look out for during ethnographic interactions. I categorized these documents into three genres: (1) Policies that framed the meanings and goals of ESD; (2) Documents that offered frameworks of action or strategies for implementing ESD; and (3) Annual reports or reviews of ESD initiatives.

Focal policy documents at the global level	Focal policy documents at the national level
Primary documents 1. UN Education 2030 Incheon Framework for Action (2015) 2. UNESCO guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education (2017)	Primary documents 1. National Education Policy (2020) 2. Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan: Framework for Implementation (2022)
Focal policy documents at the state level	
Primary texts 1. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan—Kerala Annual Plan (2022-2023) 2. Kerala State Planning Board—14th Five Year Plan (Education) 3. Kerala State Planning Board—Working Report on School Education	

Table 3.1 Focal policy documents

During fieldwork and initial data analysis, experiences of exclusion and discrimination emerged as a central category in the ethnographic and YPAR data. Therefore, I selected 'inclusion' as the analytical lens for the second round of policy analysis. The focal or primary policy documents selected for analysis are included in Table 3.1.

Site Selection and Negotiating Access: Attappady and Thanchiyoor

This dissertation draws on my research, professional and personal experiences while living in Attappady for two years (2014-2015 and 2021-2022) and working with ST youth and communities for nearly a decade (2012-2022). Research interlocutors and colleagues turned friends and mentors in Attappady have invited and encouraged me to critically reconsider my own investment in 'tribal' development and empowerment, and to call into question the presumed universality of global prescriptions for education and development. Therefore, Attappady was always my choice for a dissertation research site. Choosing Thanchi ooru and the youth living there as the central case came about as more serendipitously. The initial six months of my

dissertation fieldwork (September 2021-February 2022) was conducted while COVID-19 related restrictions were still in place.

Since Attappady is a 'reserve forest' region, restrictions for entering its borders were stricter than the rest of the state, with the forest monitoring and sometimes denying entry into the region. I was able to enter because I presented documents showing that I was affiliated with Kerala's Centre for Development Studies (CDS). Since I needed permission from the ITDP Project Officer (PO) to conduct research in any of the 192 hamlets of Attappady, I contacted the ITDP's Assistant Project Officer (PO) who was a former colleague, and previously an administrator at Attappady's Model Residential School. He introduced me to the PO, who said that because of COVID-19, he could only grant access to one hamlet, and he listed about ten hamlets for me to consider. Later I realized that all the hamlets he listed were under the joint jurisdiction of ITDP and the forest department, and this meant having to navigate a maze of bureaucratic forms and permissions in order to do research.

Of the hamlets listed by the PO, I chose Thanchiyoor for two reasons. First, I knew that the hamlet was part of a cooperative farming society that I had worked with during my tenure in 2014 as a development officer in Attappady. Second, out of the ten or so hamlets listed, only Thanchiyoor hamlet had a high school within its boundaries. Since my initial research questions were centered on the formal and informal educational experiences of ST youth, I was keen to understand how the presence of a high school in such close proximity might shape the educational experiences of young people in the hamlet. However, as I describe next, the high school was not included in the data generation process.

Permissions, Invitations, (Dis)Trust, and Researcher Positionality

When I first arrived in Thanchiyoor hamlet in late September 2021, and introduced myself to Nenjan moopan, Thanchiyoor's hamlet head, he said, "ah so you have come to study about ST (Scheduled Tribe) people". Before I could interject and clarify the goals of my research, he went on to explain that many students come to Attappady to "know more about tribal culture and customs". He quickly proceeded to introduce me to his family and neighbors. When I requested an appointment to meet with them to share and clarify my research goals, they suggested that I return during the weekend.

I couldn't return the next weekend or the next because renewed pandemic-related restrictions meant that the bureaucratic permissions required to gain entry into a hamlet like Thanchiyoor, which is under the 'protection' of the forest department, were constantly in flux. And an invitation from the hamlet head was not enough to grant me entry beyond the police-manned forest check-post. I was finally allowed to enter the hamlet in early December because I had received conditional permission to visit the AAC tribal school and hostel, located within Thanchiyoor hamlet. The school is jointly managed by the Kerala State Scheduled Tribal Development Department (KSTDD), its local implementation wing, the Integrated Tribal Development Project office (ITDP), and the AAC, Attappady's agricultural and farming cooperative society.

I received this official permission letter after nearly eight weeks of navigating a bureaucratic maze, which I was a member of only six years ago as an employee of KSTDD. A change in government and shifts in political allegiances meant that my former research participants and mentors, colleagues, and reporting officers in the department and in Attappady, could do little to support my efforts to negotiate access into the hamlet. When I was finally

allowed to go past the forest check-post into Thanchiyoor, I was in high spirits, and I sought out Nenjan moopan to share my exciting news. His reaction to the changes in my plans unsettled me, and I noted this in my fieldnotes:

> "My former interactions with Nenjan moopan had left me feeling like maybe I am not an intruder. He didn't seem too interested in my research, but he never struck me as being aloof or unfriendly. But today, when I told him that I was permitted access to the SVAC school and hostel he said, "That is good. Now you can ask them for help...I am in a bit of a rush".
> I started going to the AAC school and hostel regularly. But, as days went by, I noticed

that hamlet members who used to stop to chat with me on the streets, and ask questions as I walked by their homes, would now simply smile, and move away when they saw me approaching. I noticed that people in the little teashop in the hamlet would slip away when they saw me coming, and I felt unwelcome in this space where hamlet elders and children frequently hang out. After declining a few of my calls, Nenjan moopan asked me to stop calling him and said, "I don't have the information you need. You should contact AAC or ITDP".

This disconcerting breakdown of relationships with hamlet members was accompanied by an equally perplexing reaction to my presence in the SVAC school and hostel. The Principal and teachers were coolly civil to me. My attempts to begin conversations by sharing anecdotes from my work in Attappady were met with smiles and silences. I was not permitted to observe classes, and even though students crowded around me during breaks to play with my gadgets, they shied away from having a conversation with me. I was however, permitted to teach after-school English lessons in the girls' hostel, and these lessons were observed by the hostel warden. In less than two months, my access to the school and hostel was revoked after a tenth-grade student in the school was tested positive for COVID-19, and classes were shifted to online mode.

These futile attempts to gain invitation to spaces left me feeling dejected, and I struggled with the ethics of repeatedly trying and failing to gain entry into a space where I was clearly

unwelcome (see Battiste, 2013; Tuck, 2018; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). In response to questions about whether a non-Indigenous person may adopt Indigenous research methodologies, Kovach (2021) asserts that relationship and responsibility, rather than identity are crucial considerations. Kovach suggests reflecting on two questions—"do I have a relationship with the Indigenous community with whom I seek to conduct research? Am I trusted by that community? (p. 39). Since my answers to these questions were a resounding no, I began reconsidering my research site and design. I continued to reach out to my former colleagues and mentors, and one of them connected me to a development officer in the ITDP office. After listening to my research goals, he introduced me to Sradha chechi, a Thanchiyoor hamlet member, an ST rights activist, and an employee at the local self-government office. I reflect back on my first meeting with Sradha chechi as a critical intellectual, and emotional turning point—both for my dissertation, my assumptions about the relationship between hamlet members and the development apparatus, and for how I, and my role in the hamlet was perceived.

Sradha chechi was the first person in the hamlet who encouraged me to reconsider my assumptions about the relationship between AAC and the members of the hamlet. In 2014 as an employee of the Kerala Scheduled Tribe Development Department (KSTDD), I had accompanied the ITDP programme officer to understand the operations of the AAC farm. At the time, I was impressed by a cooperative development model that hired people from the ST community, not only as laborers in the farm, but also as management officers. Additionally, the cooperative society was making a small profit and at the time, a profitable organization that was built on principles of ST participation and cooperation seemed like a successful and replicable model to me. Over cups of hot tea and slices of apple, Sradha chechi patiently listened to my experiences. She asked me questions about my research goals, my expectations about hamlet

members' participation, and about who would have access to the findings of the research. In the end, she said, "People here did not know all this. They just saw you going to AAC school and hostel every day and thought that you were working for them. You could have informed the moopan, or at least reached out to me sooner instead of taking so much 'tension' for such simple matters".

In the months that followed, the personal connections and invitations that Sradha chechi had facilitated for me, and the spaces and conversations that these connections opened up for me, played a crucial role in building trust and facilitating my invitation into spaces in Thanchiyoor. And as I describe in the following methodological interlude, building trust and reciprocal relationships were contingent upon demonstrating an epistemological and methodological commitment against "damage-centered" research (Tuck, 2009). This is implied in Sradha chechi's assertion that hamlet members would engage with me only if I was able to "prove" that I wasn't interested in "surveys" or in inquiring about their problems. I enacted Sradha chechi's feedback by committing to a "desire-based" (Tuck, 2009) to data generation. The following interlude also includes the influence of this commitment on who I interact with, and what spaces I occupy.

Researcher Reflexivity, Ethics, and Enacting Methodological Commitments: An Interlude

I was born and raised in Kochi city in Kerala, which is about 130 miles from Attappady. Growing up, the little I knew about Attappady, and Scheduled Tribe Peoples was from news reports that were very similar to this story that appeared in a prominent national and state news outlet:

> Attappady, one of the most backward tribal hamlets in Kerala, which has been in the limelight for long for the wrong reasons—infant mortality, malnutrition, poverty and underdevelopment, is now slowly turning a new leaf…to become the first completely literate tribal block in the country (Press Trust of India, 2019).

As a young 'development professional' in early 2010, it is these narratives of Attappady's 'underdevelopment' that motivated me to work there. Since 2012, I have been associated with KSTDD and ITDP in Attappady as a former employee and as a research student.

I am a dominant caste, middle class, non-ST/settler person and my early work and engagements with communities in Attappady were shaped by a mode of solidarity that is critiqued by Indigenous peoples around the world—the impulse to 'help' ST people (Kluttz et al., 2019; Land, 2014.; Morris, 2016; Spivak, 2004) This means that I believed in the transformative power of education and its role in fulfilling the promises of universal development, and I accepted my assignment as a consultant for the Kerala Scheduled Tribes Development Department in the hope of 'doing my part' in 'developing' ST people. For example, during my tenure as a designated development officer in Attappady, I also led a pilot 'tribal' entrepreneurship scheme funded by the office of the Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Tribes. While implementing this scheme, I collaborated with ITDP officers to identify the scope for micro-entrepreneurial projects in Attappady. When the funding for the scheme expired without even one 'successful', income-generating project, my team and I attributed this failure to the limited interest demonstrated by Adivasi youth and women. When the funding for the scheme expired without even one 'successful', income-generating project, my team and I attributed this failure to the limited interest demonstrated by Adivasi youth and women. We suggested that Adivasi youth must be 'motivated and encouraged' to 'improve themselves' through educational workshops for financial management, skill identification and income generation.

Damage-centered to Desire-Based Commitments

This brief account of my early work in Attappady (2012-2015) illustrates how I aligned with mainstream approaches to development by situating the cause of failure with ST youth and situating them in the us/them binary that characterizes the global development agenda (Kapoor, Andreotti). Additionally, my work was informed by and also sustained "damage-centered" (Tuck, 2009) narratives. Eve Tuck argues that the social sciences have been predominantly concerned with documenting the pain, deficits, and flaws of Indigenous peoples in order to justify research or interventions that seek to address illusory damages. Feminist scholar Danai Mupotsa (2010) similarly calls for methodologies and interventions that view everyday lives of historically marginalized people "without resorting to modes of description that emphasise the long list of oppressions" they encounter, and do not "render any alternative modes of narration as inauthentic" (p. 3). When Sradha chechi advised me to find ways to show hamlet members that I do not intend to do "surveys" to find out their problems, I assume that she was guiding me away from damage-centered research and towards a "desire-based" framework (Tuck, 2009, 2010).

Eve Tuck theorizes desire-based frameworks as an "antidote" to damage-centered narratives. The key difference between the two frameworks is that damage-based frameworks highlights the event of pain and damage and hides the colonial structures of violence. Desire-oriented approaches do "not deny the experiences of tragedy, trauma, and pain" (Tuck & Yang, p. 231). Instead, these experiences and events are situated in relation to the past and future, and the knowledge derived from these experiences are highlighted as valid and wise. My understanding and initial enactments of a desire-oriented approach was shaped this project's research associates—Soumya and Vrinda.

Learning Desire-Oriented Commitment with Youth Research Associates. After meeting with Sradha chechi twice, she introduced me to Soumya and Vrinda—two young ST women from Thanchiyoor. Soumya has completed a Teacher Training Certificate (TTC) course, and Vrinda has received her higher secondary completion certificate (12^{th} grade), and when I met them in January 2021, they were in the process of applying for post-secondary opportunities. Sradha chechi had asked them to show me around the hamlet, and to "take care" of me. Over time they became paid research associates, co-facilitators of YRAC, and two of my closest interlocutors and companions in the hamlet, and in the hamlet, I was known not by my name but as the 'doummi (fat) chechi" who walks around with Vrinda and Soumya.

In January 2021, Soumya and Vrinda invited me to join the funeral rites of a hamlet member. Funeral ceremonies are communal events in which all hamlet members gather to celebrate the spirit that has passed on. There I saw Nenjan moopan (the hamlet head) again, who I hadn't contacted after the conversation described in the previous section in order to respect the boundaries he had set. However, I wished for a fresh start and a renewed relationship with the hamlet head for two key reasons. First, two of my research mentors from other hamlets in Attappady—Puliyan moopan and Nanjan moopan, had explained how the state development apparatus has undermined the importance of the hamlet head by appropriating the head's rights to monitor entry and actions in the hamlet. Until January 2021, I did not have the hamlet head's permission to conduct research, and I was spending time in Thanchiyoor hamlet because I had permission from ITDP and AAC. Continuing to conduct research without the hamlet head's permission and guidance would put my actions in opposition to a methodological commitment to Tuhiwai-Smith's (2012) assertion that "being invited is a first and tentative step in rebuilding a relationship between indigenous communities and researchers" (p. 20). Second, I wished to act

on Sradha chechi's advice to find ways to demonstrate that this research intends to redirect gaze towards the role of education and development policy and practice in perpetuating the myth of ST backwardness. Therefore, I sought help from Soumya and Vrinda, who met with Nenjan moopan separately and was able to help set up a meeting with the moopan.

In preparing for the meeting, I created a visual story detailing how I came to select my topic and research site. Heeding to Soumya's advice to "just be honest" and Rodriguez's (2010) call for researchers to tell stories of what "we have learned about our own subject positions and emotional responses" (p. 495), I used photographs, video-clips, elements of project proposals that I co-wrote as an employee of KSTDD, and findings from my previous research, to tell a story about my decade-long professional and research experiences in Attappady. Accounting for the questions raised by the research associates (Soumya and Vrinda) when they reviewed this presentation, this presentation highlighted how ST activists in Attappady encouraged me to critically reconsider my own investment in 'tribal' development and empowerment, and to call into question the presumed universality of global prescriptions for education and development.

During this presentation, Nennjan moopan and I were joined on the front porch of his house by his family, his neighbor Shaktivel, Soumya, Vrinda, and a rather raucous rooster who seemed to bother no one but me. After I completed my presentation, Soumya broke the ice by jokingly saying that the moopan and everyone else thought I had come to do "chara panni (spy work)" for AAC. Nenjan moopan confirmed this and said that he thought that I was an "English tuition" teacher sent by AAC. In the impromptu group discussion that followed, I learned about the conflict between hamlet members and the AAC, and the legal proceedings related to AAC's attempt to lease out Thanchiyoor farmland to build a resort. Prior to this discussion I was considering ways to reconnect with the AAC school after it reopened. However, after learning

about the fraught relationship between AAC and hamlet members, I informed the hamlet head that I will be excluding AAC school from this research. Soumya, Vrinda, and I met with Nenjan Moopan two more times during fieldwork to give updates and request feedback and permission for the evolving trajectory of research.

Research Interlocutors and Data Generation Methods

The perspectives from Attappady that inform this dissertation's conceptualization and findings have emerged from multiple sources across different phases of research. I have categorized the research interlocutors into mentors, participants and interviewees, youth participants and youth co-researchers. The criteria for inviting interlocutors to participate varied and I employed multiple qualitative methods to generate data. The types of interlocutors and corresponding data generation methods are summarized in Table 3.3.

Table 3.2 Research interlocutors

Type of Interlocutor	**Name**	**Role**
Research mentors	Valli	ST activist, Head of women's self-help group
	Puliyan	Former hamlet head (Kosatadavu hamlet)
	Nanjan	ST activist, President of PTA in Model Residential School (Vaanayi hamlet)
	Aiswarya	ST activist, former Attappady Block President (Agali)
	Sradha	ST activist, Member of Attappady's eco-development committee (Thanchiyoor)
	Gopalan and Thambaan	Hamlet elders and former members of the AAC director board (Thanchiyoor
Participants and interviewees (2nd generation hamlet members)	Neeti, Mari, Kaara	Unit leader (Mari), and members of the employment guarantee scheme
	Bhagavaty	Hamlet member and Vanya's mother
	Leelamani	Hamlet member and Soumya's mother
	Kaaliyamma	Hamlet member and former ST promoter
	Saraswati	Hamlet member and storyteller
	Usha, Maruthi, Sakeena	Thanchiyoor community kitchen leads
	Nenjan	Hamlet head
	Kaara	Hamlet member

Type of Interlocutor	Name	Role
	Shaktivel	Hamlet member
	Pushpa	Hamlet member
Youth participants	Naresh	Completed 12th grade, daily wage work
	Lavanya	Completed TTC, bridge school teacher
	Parvaty	ST promoter, preparing for PSC exam
	Murugan	Completed 10th grade, Retaking 12th grade state exams
	Vishnu	Completed 10th grade, Retaking 12th grade state exams
	Manikandan	Completed 12th grade, enrolled in a vocational education college
	Athira	Completed 12th grade preparing for PSC
Youth co-Researchers	Preetha Soumya Adheesh, Vrinda, Dhaneesh, Saritha, Sheela, Seema	
YRAC's interviewees	Ritwick, Ramesh, Vanya, Ramesh	

Research Mentors: Adapting life story methods

My research mentors in Attappady are seven ST activists and elders who have shaped my understanding of development and ST activism and resistance. I have an ongoing relationship with two mentors (Valli chechi and Puliyan moopan, who passed on in 2021) since 2012 and two ST activists since 2015 (Nanjan moopan and Aiswarya chechi). Their varied experiences, stories, and theories about development in Attappady have informed my understanding about land alienation, the infant mortality 'crisis', education challenges, unemployment, and the lost dialogue between human and non-human beings. As described in the previous section, Sradha chechi offered feedback and suggestions that transformed the research design. Her candid insights about her varied experiences as a teacher, ST promoter, ST rights activist, and a local self-government employee encouraged me to seek for narratives of joy, power, and transformation. Gopalan muthasan (passed on in August 2022) and Thampan muthasan, referred to as the former 'pulis' (tigers) of the hamlet by the young people, were the first ST members of AAC's director board in the 1980s. They are story-tellers and philosophers whose nuanced discussion about the formation of AAC's farm-based hamlets and the shifting relationship

between ST members and AAC complicated my own understanding of Attappady's development apparatus.

I adapted Atkinson's (1999) life story interview method to understand the "subjective essence" of my mentors' life experiences (p. 116). The life story method insists on facilitating the interview so that the story may be told "in the form, shape, and style most comfortable to the person telling the story" (p. 120). Since I was already acquainted with exemplary storytelling skills of my mentors, I adapted elements of the life story method for interviewing the seven research mentors.

The life story interviews of Valli chechi, Puliyan moopan, Nanjan moopan, and Aiswarya chechi were conducted after conducting "pre-interview planning" (p. 120) in order to prepare questions that can build on what I already know about their experiences from previous interactions. These interviews were conducted between September and December 2021 while I was navigating the bureaucratic maze to get permits to conduct research in Thanchiyoor. The interviews with Sradha chechi were conducted over multiple meetings of one to three hours duration between January 2021 and June 2021. My first interaction with Gopalan and Thambaan muthasan was at an informal gathering of first-generation members of the AAC board. They are also grandfathers of two youth co-researchers, who acted as mentors to the YRAC. All interviews were conducted with the verbal consent of my mentors. I did not request to record the interviews, but I received consent to take copious notes. The rich narratives and complex theorizations offered by my research mentors cover a range of topics from love and marriage to ecological degradation and national-level Adivasi/ST politics. Even though these insights have informed and transformed this research by situating education and development in relation to

Attappady's sociocultural and political histories, and to the shifting configurations of power in the region, these stories are not reproduced in this dissertation.

Youth and Hamlet Participants: Participant-Observation and Semi-Structured Interviews

From January 2021 to March 2021, I accompanied the research associates Vrinda and Soumya to explore different parts of the hamlet and the forest and river that surround the hamlet. I was also invited to participate in some of the hamlet's everyday activities. For example, I hung out with Sakeena, Maruthi, and Usha in the hamlet's community kitchen as they prepared evening meals. I was not allowed to help with cooking, but I joined in while they prepped, chopped, and chatted, and I always received a generous portion for "taste testing". We were often joined by a group of children from the hamlet, who were shy and silent the first time we met, but then transformed into active, loud and sometimes bossy little beings who were thoroughly unimpressed by my Irula language learning skills. I accompanied Neeti, Maari, and Kaara chechis to the work site of the state's employment guarantee scheme, enjoyed tea, 'vettucake' and the company of Leelamani, Bhagavaty, Manikandan and other hamlet members who were familiar fixtures in the tea shop. I also occasionally joined the research associates and other members of the YRAC to festivals, movies, and lunches. These daily interactions were recorded in a notebook that I carried with me constantly. I shared the notebook with participants and children who requested to see the contents, and towards the end of my fieldwork, this notebook had field notes as well as mementos and notes from hamlet members.

The thirty youth and hamlet participants were included based on the relationships formed during the interactions. The conversations and informal group discussions (documented through jottings and fieldnotes) with the participants informed my in-depth, semi-structured interview guide (Charmaz, 2011; Maxwell, 2013), which was specifically tailored for each of the 29

participants. The first round of semi-structured interviews were conducted between April 2022 and June 2022. These interviews lasted between one and two hours and would build on themes that were discussed during earlier unstructured conversations. These narrative-style interviews (Clandinin, 2012; O'Toole, 2018; Paulson, 2011) were centered around the participants educational and professional trajectories, their experiences in in/formal learning spaces, the ways in which they navigated limited post-secondary opportunity structures, and general questions about education, equity, and development in Attappady. I received consent to audio-record 24 interviews. Six interviews were documented through written notes.

The second round of interviews were primarily for member-checking and did not exceed 30 minutes. Not all member-checking interviews were formal, sit-down interviews, and these interviews were not recorded but was documented through detailed field notes. Additionally, based on the emerging themes from the field notes and individual interviews, I conducted a two group interviews with the organizers of the hamlet's community kitchen.

Co-Researchers: YPAR

> Participatory research claims to be an approach to knowledge creation available to even the most oppressed people of the world. Yet I find myself, a white, middle class, college educated, North American, feminist doctoral student, obsessively questioning: Can I really do this?
>
> - Patricia Maguire, Doing Participatory Research

In Chapter 7, I elaborate on the 'origin' story of the Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective (YRAC), the four phases of the collaborative inquiry project, and the moments of celebration and frustration, levity and rage, hope and despair, and resistance and accommodation that are emblematic of YRAC's ongoing work. In this dissertation, in addition to being a methodology, YPAR is an epistemology (Fine, 2008), in which the process of research is as significant as the product or action (Bettencourt, 2020; Scorza et al., 2017). Since I elaborate this

in detail in chapter 7, in this section, I provide only a very brief summary of the formation, constitution, research questions, and methods employed by the YRAC.

The Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective was formed in response to issues of inequitable and limited post-secondary educational and professional opportunities raised by ST youth in Attappady. The motivation for conducting a collaborative inquiry emerged when research associate Soumya inquired about the possibility of "doing something" to address ST youth exclusion in education. I asked her if she had a specific experience in mind, and she explained how a couple of years ago, AAC's school had posted job vacancies for teachers, but young ST women from Thanchiyoor hamlet were not even considered for interviews. Soumya explained that similar incidents happen daily, and that "people should know". After discussing the possibilities and potential challenges of organizing a collaborative youth inquiry, Soumya, Vrinda, and I created and distributed flyers inviting youth in Attappady to attend a meeting to brainstorm the possibility of doing a "group project" about their educational experiences. The Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective was formed out of the eight young people who attended the first meeting.

All co-researchers of the YRAC are residents of Thanchiyoor hamlet, and their age range between 18 and 24. As members of the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI), all members also have prior experiences with political activism. Over a period of 12 weeks, the YRAC met 12 times, and each meeting lasted between one and five hours. As I discuss in Chapter 6, co-researchers requested to record specific portions of the meetings. Therefore, the meeting data was recorded as a combination of participant-observation based fieldnotes, and audio recording-based meeting summaries and transcripts. Youth co-researchers also met two times without me. These meetings that excluded me we held with Thanchiyoor hamlet elders,

and as I describe in Chapter 6, these meetings were key turning points in YRAC's work. Over three months, we reflected on our experiences in in/formal learning spaces, and in social and professional contexts. The dominant theme that emerged during our first four meetings, shaped the goal of our inquiry. We wanted to understand how and why ST youth experience persistent exclusion in schools and post-secondary learning and professional spaces. Through self-reflections, peer interviews, and exploring state and national-level education policy documents, the YRAC reflected on education and development interventions ST youth in Thanchiyoor experience in their daily lives.

Data Analysis

The guiding analytical approach is constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2005), which means that the theories and focal themes have emerged from close and iterative analysis of the data. Such an approach also recommends combining data collection and analysis so that methods too as iterative, since each round of analysis will inform subsequent iterations of data. However, data processing in the field was constrained due to frequent and extended power outages and limited and slow internet access. Therefore, I made sense of my field notes and reflective memos by mapping key ideas and interlocutors' quotes on poster paper and sticky notes. This mode of analysis guided my semi-structured interview guides and my lens for participant-observation in the final months of fieldwork.

After returning from Thanchiyoor, I began processing and analyzing the data simultaneously. I examined the field notes, interview transcripts and summaries, and YPAR discussion transcripts and summaries closely in the qualitative analysis software NVivo. In the first cycle of coding (open coding), I used a combination of in vivo codes (short phrases from interlocutor's language), and process codes (to denote conceptual ideas). I also employed

"affective coding" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) to locate the subjective experiences in the data. Before proceeding to the next round of coding, I organized the initial codes into bins. This was followed by a more "focused" coding to understand thematic resonances across initial codes. I used these focused codes to write reflective memos, and during this process 'exclusion' and 'recognizing patterns of exclusion' emerged as the central theme. This informed my decision to revise the policy selection to understand the ways in which 'inclusion' is framed.

After selecting the focal policy documents, I conducted a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke) of the global policies. This analysis was guided by the following questions: (1) How are the meanings, goals, roles, outcomes, and subjects of inclusion (i.e., the contextual dimension) in education framed? and (2) How is the contextual dimension operationalized into targets and indicators to measure the outcomes and success of inclusion? I analyzed India's national education policy and its implementation framework through the lens of UNESCO's (2017) policy assessment framework, which was cited in India's implementation framework. The UNESCO assessment framework has four dimensions and 16 features to guide and assess national inclusive education agenda. I adapted the policy assessment framework into four key guidelines to assess national education policy's commitment to inclusion, and these guidelines informed the content analysis of national policies. I examined the extent to which India's education policies:

1. emphasize inclusion and equity as overarching principles that guide quality education.
2. frame, monitor and assess inclusion in terms of presence, participation, and achievement of all learners.
3. identify barriers to presence, participation, and achievement and challenge non-inclusive, discriminatory, and inequitable educational practices.

4. Promote inclusion and equity at all levels of the education system, while ensuring that education leaders, staff, and teachers understand and support national policy goals for inclusion and equity in education (UNESCO, 2017)

Finally, I compared the policy analysis themes with the codes and themes of ethnographic data.

Limitation: What Might Change the Findings and its Interpretations

A key limitation of this research that might influence how the findings are interpreted is the missing perspectives of the non-ST/settlers living around Thanchiyoor, and across Attappady. Although designated as a tribal development block, the vandevasis or settler populations of Attappady constitute the numerical majority in the region and represent nearly 58% of the population of Attappady (Kerala State Planning Board, 2017). Before the formation of the state of Kerala in 1956, "upper" caste landlords colluded with British colonial officials to implement land reform policies that transformed the status of Attappady's Adivasis from original custodians of the land to tenants on their own land. The British colonial-era land laws required Adivasis to pay land revenue taxes and to offer forest produce to colonial officials in exchange for the right to cultivate their own land. These land laws also set in motion infrastructure activities to ‘develop’ the inaccessible mountainous forest region. In the early 1950s, post-independence legislations, land reforms, poverty, and dreams of land ownership brought people from the plains of Kerala, and from the neighboring states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka to Attappady. In a span of thirty years, between 1951 and 1981 the population of the settler community increased from just nine percent to nearly 60 percent (GOI, 2014). At the time, Adivasi communities’ in Attappady had a self-sustaining, subsistence-based way of living that encouraged a “moral economy based on trust and reciprocity” (Adam et al., 2020), and their

relationship with land was based on custodianship rather than ownership. This meant that settler communities were able to appropriate land by forging ownership documents and through forceful acquisition. By 1982, 62 percent of land that was previously under the custodianship of ST peoples was acquired or appropriated by the settler communities, and by the state and forest departments. This migration of 'settler' communities, and the legally and ethically contested means by which they came to own a majority of land in Attappady, while displacing Adivasi communities to less accessible and un-cultivable regions, is at the crux of Attappady's unresolved land alienation issue (For more historical context see (Kozhisseri, 2020; Nirmal & Rocheleau, 2019; Parakkal, Pellissery & Sampath, 2019)

Governance structures in Attappady and other tribal development blocks in the country has facilitated the establishment of a powerful "development apparatus" (Escobar, 1995), and settler communities are an integral part of Attappady's development apparatus because of its role in the ongoing production of "new arrangements of knowledge and power, new practices, theories, (and) strategies" (Escobar, 1995, p. 43) to define and regulate the subjects of development—the ST peoples. Due to time and logistical constraints, members of settler communities are not participants in this research. However, informal conversations with local acquaintances from Muslim, Christian, and Hindu communities have shaped my understanding of the complexities and nuances of development in Attappady.

Chapter 4 Inclusion in Education: Policy Priorities at the Macro-Meso Scale

As outlined in previous chapters, the core assumption of the global education agenda is that improving schooling and existing education systems will create equitable societies, reduce poverty, and 'protect' the planet. However, the world is more formally 'educated' than it has ever been, and yet it is grappling with more planetary crises than ever, while persistent exclusion of historically marginalized people continue under populist and techno-bureaucratic regimes (Means & Slater, 2019; Pashby et al., 2021; Stein, 2021). In order to examine this conundrum, in this chapter I aim to make sense of policy framing, guidelines, and indicators aimed at inclusion and equity in education. I discuss the findings of my first research question—*how is inclusion framed in the global Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) agenda, and adapted in India's national education policy and implementation frameworks?* Through this exploration, I aim to understand aspects of policy design that stand in the way of the "inclusive education for all" agenda.

For decades, education has been a central development priority in global, regional, and national development agendas. And for decades, critical scholars, practitioners, and communities in the Global South have demonstrated how education for development policies and processes have constructed deficit subjects, spurred conflicts and exacerbated injustices (Wainwright, 2008; Uvin, 1998). While a significant increase in primary school access around the world (93 percent net enrollment rate) is attributed to the success of the Education for All (EFA 1990-2000), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG 2000-2015), there is growing evidence

that the global mass enrollment initiatives of the 1990s and 2000s have not resulted in significant learning outcomes (Bengtsonn et al., 2020; Wulff, 2020). Moreover, it is estimated that more than half of the world's children who do not have basic literacy and numeracy skills are already present in schools (Rose, 2015).

The most recent iteration of policy regimes intended to address and complete the "unfinished business" (UNESCO, 2016) of EFA and MDG, and to develop the world through education is the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) regime enacted through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4). The goal of ESD/SDG4 is to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030 (UN, 2015), and it was adopted by government and non-government representatives from 160 member-states of the United Nations. ESD's focus on inclusion and equity represents a shift from its preceding global education policy regimes—Education for All (EFA 1990-2000), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG 2000-2015). While EFA and MDG's central focus was on universal primary education, ESD is framed to broaden the scope and flexibility of learning and its potential for global equity (King, 2017; Le Blanc, 2015; United Nations, 2020). The United Nations views ESD as a framework linking "people, planet, and prosperity", and considers the goals and targets as broad and ambitious enough "to offer something for everyone working in education" (UNESCO, 2016).

Critical policy analyses and empirical explorations of SDG and ESD policy and practice have shown that this ambitious vision of offering "something for everyone" (Wulff, 2020) has not been translated into inclusive education for everyone. Scholars have interrogated various dimensions of SDG 4 at global and regional levels to demonstrate the threats, challenges, and opportunities associated with the agenda. At the global level of policy framing, clarity and

consensus about the meanings of inclusion and quality education remain elusive. While aspirations for inclusion and equity are central in the goal statements, these aspirations are rarely translated or operationalized in the seven targets and 13 indicators, which continue to quantify inclusion and equity (King, 2017; Unterhalter, 2019) UN's Agenda 2030 framework emphasizes the "interlinkages" between the 17 sustainable development goals (UNGA, 2015, pp. 2, 31, 34), but the linkages between education goals and goals related to sustainable consumption and production, climate change, and living in harmony with non-human actors (goals 12-15) were found to be weak and unclear (Vladimirova & Le Blanc 2016, Komatsu, Rappleye, Silova 2020?).

This lack of clarity about the interlinkages between goals, and the misalignment between the goals, targets and indicators in key global policy documents like the UN Agenda 2030 Framework for Action, and policy regimes preceding ESD have harmful, long-term implications at the regional and national levels of policy adaptation and implementation. For instance, studies examining how people experience EFA and MDG frameworks demonstrate that the quantification of education quality has shifted regional education priorities to focus on numbers over the well-being of people (Mukhopadhyay & Sriprakash, 2013b). Emerging evidence on the grass-roots realities of SDG4 implementation show that high enrollment rates have resulted in teacher shortages and ironically in rising drop-out rates and exclusion (Wulff, 2020). And as ethnographers have shown, young people around the world are employing creative strategies to engage with the failing promises of this exclusionary educational structure (Bellino, 2020; Demerath & Lynch, 2014.; Hoechner, 2011)

Against this background, I explore the meanings, targets, and indicators for inclusion and equity in the UN 2030 framework of action for education and its adaptation in India's national

education policy and implementation frameworks. I focus on inclusion as the main analytical concept for two reasons. One, it is one of the most frequently repeated terms in policy texts, with multiple associated meanings and strategies. But, more importantly, this policy analysis is driven by a central theme that emerged from ethnographic and YPAR data in Attappady—ST youth's everyday experiences in formal and non-formal education, as well as in professional, service, and health spaces are characterized by persistent exclusion and structural discrimination. Therefore, the objective of this policy analysis is to make sense of policy constructions and adaptations of inclusion in education, and to understand what might be standing in the way of creating inclusive and equitable learning spaces.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section describes the contextual and operational dimensions of inclusion in the global ESD framework. I discuss the meaning, goals, roles and subjects of inclusion, the key shifts in policy conceptions of inclusion in education, and the key operational misalignments between the contextual and operational dimensions of the global ESD agenda. In the second section, I present the contextual and operational dimension of India's national education policy (NEP 2020), and its implementation framework—Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA—holistic education for all initiative). I explain the resonances between global and national conceptions of inclusion in education, and the ways in which the operational misalignments in the global agenda are reflected in national policies. Finally, I synthesis these findings through the lens of power and coloniality.

Contextual and Operational Dimensions of Inclusion in Global ESD Framework

As discussed in Chapter 2, critical educators and development practitioners have long argued that the post-war global development and education agenda embrace and ensconce some version or combination of modernization, human capital, and neoliberal capitalist worldviews.

Given the rising discontent with how the neoliberal ideology has been adapted by populist governments and technocrats to exacerbate existing inequities while promoting unsustainable ways of living, the post-2015 development agenda enacted through the sustainable development goals (SDGs) sought to introduce a new set of justice-oriented priorities in education (Brissett & Mitter, 2017; United Nations, 2016) Unlike the millennium development goals (MDGs) that were designed and agreed upon primarily by actors from 'developed' nations, the SDGs have been described as the most inclusive sociopolitical process of consensus-building the world has ever seen (Brisset, 2017, UNGA, 2015; Wulff, 2020).

It is perhaps this shift towards a participatory approach to goal setting with contributions from government representatives, non-profit agencies, scholars, practitioners, and civil society leaders from around the world, that makes the SDG4 vision different from its precedents. While EFA and MDG focused almost exclusively on equal (as opposed to equitable) access, literacy and numeracy outcomes, the SDG 4 agenda affirms its commitment to inclusion, equity, quality, and lifelong learning. The primary vision of SDG 4 is to "transform lives through education…as a main driver of development and in achieving the other proposed SDGs" (UNESCO, 2016, p. 7). In the next section, I explore how this transformative vision is framed in global policy texts by examining the meaning and goals attributed to inclusion in education.

Meanings, Goals, and Subjects of Inclusion: Global ESD's Contextual Dimension

The Incheon Declaration constitutes the world's commitment to education for sustainable development (ESD) through the SDG 4. This declaration entitled '*Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning for all'* recognizes "inclusion and equity in and through education as the cornerstone of a transformative education agenda" (UNESCO, 2015, p. 6). The policy's vision statement clearly indicates an approach to education that departs

from a narrow focus on economic benefits, and emphasizes education's transformative potential as a public good, and inclusive education as "leaving no one behind" (UNESCO, 2016, p. 7, p. 24, p. 25, p. 27). The declaration first defines inclusion and equity, and its meanings are captured in point number seven in the preamble.

> …we therefore commit to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes. No education target should be considered met unless met by all. We therefore commit to making the necessary changes in education policies and focusing our efforts on the most disadvantaged, especially those with disabilities, to ensure that no one is left behind.

Throughout the declaration, inclusion is primarily framed around the two main themes highlighted above: (1) access, participation, and outcomes; and (2) leaving no one behind.

The Incheon Declaration repeats its commitment to a rights and justice-oriented approach to envision SDG 4 throughout the documents. This commitment is reflected in the meaning and role attributed to inclusion in education. The declaration framed inclusion in terms of equitable access and opportunity for all (e.g., p. 7, 12, 25), diversity (pp. 7, 24, 26), maximizing student participation (pp. 9, 29, 39), and recognizing rights and respecting cultural difference (pp. 7, 24, 26, 49). Thus, the central meaning and role assigned to inclusive education is that it "leaves no one behind".

The Incheon Declaration's emphasis on inclusion as ensuring equitable access, participation, and outcomes, and as leaving no one behind is expanded and sharpened in UNESCO's 2017 *'Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education'*. This guide was developed by experts from different educational institutions around the world and is intended primarily to support national governments and policy makers in "embedding inclusion and equity in educational policy" (p. 10). In its introduction, the guide reiterates that the objective of developing that guide is to assist governments to "create system-wide change for overcoming

barriers to quality educational access, participation, learning processes and outcomes, and to ensure that all learners are valued and engaged equally" (p. 10). If the central message in the Incheon Declaration is to "leave no one behind", in this guide "every learner matters and matters equally" (p.12, p. 13, p. 47) is viewed as the central principle for creating inclusive education systems.

The guide recognizes that enacting the vision for inclusion requires systemic changes at every level of the education system and recommends integrating and/or reviewing six principles of inclusion and equity in national education policies. The essence of these principles are: (1) Inclusion is an ongoing process that involves valuing and removing barriers to the "*presence, participation, and achievement*[11]*"* of diverse learners; and (2) Developing context-specific and comprehensive definitions of inclusion and equity that "respects and learns from difference" is underscored as a key principle for building inclusive education systems (pp. 12-14). When compared to the Education for all (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) agenda, the vision for post-2015 education agenda enacted through the SDG 4 framework is characterized by unprecedented shifts in how inclusion in education is framed.

Key Shifts in Vision for Global Education: Toward Relational, and Holistic Inclusion

The ESD agenda and its vision for inclusion in education are characterized by three unprecedented shifts that set it apart from previous policy regimes like Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals. These shifts represent a pluralizing and relational turn in definitions of inclusion, a recognition of the limits of economic rationale for inclusion, and a focus on equitable "presence, participation, and achievement" over equal access. Before I expand

[11] presence: where children are educated, and with how reliably and punctually they attend; participation: quality of their experiences whilst they are there and thus must incorporate the views of the learners themselves; and achievement: outcomes of learning across the curriculum, not merely test or examination results (UNESCO, 2017).

on the three shifts, the many definitions, goals, and subjects of inclusive education outlined in the Incheon Declaration are summarized in table, with representative statements from the policy text.

Table 4.1 Meanings, goals, and subjects of inclusion in the global ESD agenda

Meanings, Goals, and Subjects of Inclusion: Global ESD's Contextual Dimension	
How is inclusion in education defined or described?	Leaving no one behind
	Every learner matters and matters equally
What are the goals and roles of inclusion in education?	Inclusive education is the "basis for realizing other rights and goals"
	Promotes "social justice and cohesion"
	Ensure learner diversity
	Provide equitable and full access for all
Who will be 'included'?	"Excluded learners include those from the poorest households, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous people, and persons with special needs and disabilities"

Shift 1: Plural and Relational Inclusion in Education

As outlined in chapter 2, inclusion in education has been historically framed in terms of social or universal inclusion, characterized for instance by notions like education for *all*, or universal access. The EFA and MDG agenda have been extensively critiqued for failing to recognize that taken-for-granted definition of "all" excludes marginalized groups around the world (Wulff, 2020). The vision and goals of the ESD policies I reviewed has taken a "pluralizing" turn (Megret, 2008), which means that inclusion is framed to account for people's plural rights to education, and to recognize the different groups may have unique experiences that can only be addressed by imagining new types of rights (Megret, 2008; Johnstone, Shuelka, & Swadek, 2020). Conceptions of inclusive education that consider plural rights emphasize the context-based differences in the experiences of historically marginalized people. Additionally, plural inclusion strategies focus on removing systemic barriers to education (Sayed & Moriarty,

2020; L. Shore & Gronne, 2020) . These aspects of the pluralizing turn is captured in UNESCO's (2017) guide:

> Developing policies that are inclusive and equitable requires the recognition that students' difficulties arise from aspects of the education system itself, including: the ways in which education systems are organized currently, the forms of teaching that are provided, the learning environment, and the ways in which students' progress is supported and evaluated. Even more important is translating this recognition into concrete reforms, seeing individual differences not as problems to be fixed, but as opportunities for democratizing and enriching learning. Differences can act as a catalyst for innovation that can benefit all learners, whatever their personal characteristics and home circumstances (p. 13).

The excerpts presented above demonstrate that the pluralizing turn in definitions of inclusion is accompanied by a focus on recognizing and removing structural barriers to inclusive education, while creating educational spaces in which every learner can thrive, irrespective of their differences. The Incheon Declaration identifies plural rights by explicitly naming girls, children with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, refugees, internally displaced and children in conflict contexts migrants, and ethnic and linguistic minorities. By viewing inclusion in education as equal access for all, as well as attending to issues of structural barriers, power, and differences, ESD's goals and vision prioritize a plural and relational conception of inclusion. Definitions of inclusion, and the roles attributed to it in the global policy documents I reviewed clearly recognize that people have distinct rights and context-specific barriers to inclusion that must be addressed by examining exclusionary and discriminatory educational structure.

Shift 2: Accounting for the Limits of Economic Rationale

Existing scholarship on the process of SDG 4 production has confirmed that these shifts toward plural and relational conceptions of inclusion emerged during post-2015 consultation processes during which groups with differing ideologies sought to influence the direction of setting the agenda for global education. Benavot & Smith (2020) describe these groups as

aligning with the "humanist camp" or the "economic camp" (p. 241). The humanist camp pushed for centering inclusion, social justice, and equity-based goals, while the economic camp stressed the ongoing relevance of quality education for economic development and to meet the demands of the labor force (see Wulff, 2020, Unterhalter, 2019 for detailed accounts of the emergence of the post-2015 education). The role of the humanist camp in shaping the vision, rationale, and principles of inclusion in ESD policies is apparent in the Incheon Declaration's vision statement, which encapsulates the new justice-oriented priorities of the global education agenda:

> The new education agenda's focus on inclusion and equity – giving everyone an equal opportunity, and leaving no one behind signals another lesson: the need for increased efforts especially aimed at reaching those marginalized or in vulnerable situations…The renewed attention to the purpose and relevance of education for human development and economic, social and environmental sustainability is a defining feature of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda. This is embedded in its holistic and humanistic vision [that] goes beyond a utilitarian approach to education…It understands education as inclusive and as crucial in promoting democracy and human rights and enhancing global citizenship, tolerance and civic engagement as well as sustainable development. Education facilitates intercultural dialogue and fosters respect for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, which are vital for achieving social cohesion and justice" (pp. 24- 26).

The language in this section establishes the agenda's commitment to transformation and inclusion by identifying the limitations of a "utilitarian approach to education" and a redefinition of inclusion in education as integral to promoting civic engagement and sustainable development. By emphasizing a "holistic and humanist vision" for education, the declaration is prioritizing human rights and social justice over economic growth. The vision statement's recognition of the need for transcending the economic or "utilitarian" paradigms and the many ways in which inclusion and equity have been framed in the preamble, vision, rationale, and principles statements of the declaration (pp. 1-29) suggest that the priorities of the humanist camp prevailed in shaping the vision for the goals of the SDG 4 agenda.

Shift 3: Presence, participation, and achievement over access

The EFA and MDG agenda have been critiqued for its narrow construction of inclusion as merely access (e.g., ensuring universal primary education), and quality as proficiency in literacy and numeracy skills (Johnstone et al., 2020; Kendall, 2007) . In UNESCO's (2017) guide for ensuring inclusion in education, this limitation is identified as follows:

> As long as learning is defined narrowly as the acquisition of knowledge presented by a teacher, schools will likely be locked into rigidly organized curricula and teaching practices. In stark contrast, inclusive curricula are based on the view that learning occurs when students are actively involved, taking the lead in making sense of their experiences (p. 19)

This statement represents a clear departure from prior focus on access by emphasizing the importance of participation. The guide clearly defines inclusion as "a process that helps to overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners" (p. 7, p. 13). The guide defines presence as consistent and easy access to educational spaces, participation as the quality of learners' experiences and the extent to which the learners' perspectives are incorporated, and achievement as learning outcomes beyond test results. How are these goals, roles, and rationales for inclusion operationalized to set parameters that can be adapted by countries to understand the extent to which plural, humanist, and participation-based inclusion have been successfully implemented? I expand on this question in the next section about the targets and indicators of the SDG 4 framework.

Targets and Indicators: Global ESD's Operational Dimension

In the previous section, I demonstrated how the contextual framing of inclusion in global education is characterized by a much-needed commitment to transforming education through a plural-relational approach to inclusion recognizes the value of difference and the need to remove structural barriers to education. This commitment is translated into 10 targets and 13 indicators

in the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). I reviewed the targets and indicators to understand the extent to which they align with the meanings and roles of inclusion described in SDG 4. To do this, I analyzed the targets and indicators in relation to the three key shifts in framings of inclusion described in the previous section. These are: (1) plural-relational over social inclusion; (2) humanist over economic rationale; and (3) inclusion as presence, participation, and achievement.

Key Divergences between Contextual and Operational Dimensions of Inclusion in ESD

When viewed independently of the ESD or SDG 4's contextual dimensions (sections that define and assign roles to inclusion and equity in education), the operationalization of inclusion, equity, and quality into targets and indicators are dominated by three key divergences from ESD's vision for inclusion. One, the targets and indicators to measure the success of inclusion in education prioritize presence as access and test-based achievement over participation. Two, the plural framing of inclusion is not translated in actionable terms, leaving the 'subjects' of inclusion largely to the interpretation of national governments. Finally, SDG 4's commitment to view education "beyond utilitarian terms" is not reflected in the framing of targets and indicators. The divergences are summarized in Table 4.2 in which the specific targets of SDG 4 are juxtaposed with the three conceptions of inclusion.

Table 4.2 Inclusion in SDG 4: Divergences between contextual and operational dimensions

Target and *indicator*	**Inclusion framed as**	**Plural versus universal**	**Holistic versus Economic**
4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes	Access and achievement	Universal	Economic
4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education	Access and achievement	Universal	Economic
4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.	Access	Universal-social	Economic
4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	Achievement	Universal-social	Economic
4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations	Access	Plural-relational	Economic
4.6: By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy	Test-based achievement	Universal-social	Economic
4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.	Achievement	Universal-relational	Humanist
4.7.1: Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment	Achievement	Universal-relational	Economic
4.a: Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all	Access	Plural-relational	Economic (access)
4.b: By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries	Participation	Plural-social	Economic
4.c: By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States	Access	Universal-social	Economic

Operational Divergence 1: Inclusion as Access and Achievement, not Participation

The emphasis on an inclusive, transformative agenda for global education in the Incheon Declaration and UNESCO's guide, as well as in goal 4 itself, is not reflected in the targets and indicators. In six out of 10 targets (4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.a, 4.c) and seven out of 13 indicators (4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.2.1, 4.4.1, 4.5.1, 4.a.1, 4.c.1), inclusion is framed in terms of access to different educational levels, the presence of children and youth in different levels of education, and test-based learning outcomes or achievement. Only one target (4.b) aligns with UNESCO's definition of participation, that is, the quality of experience and extent to which subject's perspectives are incorporated. However, this is a financing-related target and the main actor in this target is 'developed' nations providing official development assistance (ODA) to "developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries" (UNESCO, 2016).

Operational Divergence 2: Prioritizing Universal over Plural Inclusion

As noted in policy finding 1, the consideration of plural-relational inclusion in the global agenda is a significant shift from previous policy regimes. However, with the exception of two out of 10 targets (4.5, 4.a), and one indicator (4.5.1), SDG targets and indicators remain vague about identifying populations or groups of peoples that will benefit from plural inclusion efforts. Five out of 10 targets identify plural-rights bearers based on gender (4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6), but UNESCO's conception of gender remains strictly within the binary of boys and girls, and men and women. This means that decisions about inclusion strategies for non-binary, gender non-conforming, and transgender children are entirely dependent on national governments and their policy consultants. Even the two targets that identify potential subjects of plural-rights inclusion, name only "children in vulnerable situations", persons with disabilities, and Indigenous Peoples.

Additionally, these targets fail to address the requirements of relational inclusion, since their framing focuses exclusively on physical access at all educational levels, and the presence of inclusive infrastructural facilities.

Operational Divergence 3: Economic over Social-Justice Rationale for Inclusion

The post-2015 development agenda is marked by declarations that "business as usual" is undesirable. The Incheon Declaration asserts that a key lesson from EFA and MDG goal is that "business as usual will not bring quality education for all…[and] it is of utmost importance to change current practices and mobilize efforts and resources at an unprecedented rate" (p. 25). As policy finding 1 suggests, this vision is supported by discursive shifts towards imagining a "new model of development" that goes "beyond a utilitarian approach to education" (p. 26). However, the targets and indicators suggest that in practice, inclusion and quality in education are more likely to be measured in terms of numbers and cognitive measures. For instance, the success of targets related to access and learning outcomes are exclusively measured by indicators related to achievement in reading, mathematics, literacy, and numeracy skills (4.1, 4.6). Target 4.5, which highlights the importance of skill acquisition by youth only measures digital literacy and information and communications technology skills. The term vocational education or training appears in three targets (4.3, 4.4, 4.b), and is accompanied by references to building "relevant" skills, reinforcing the role of education in developing work-related skills.

Moreover, even though the Incheon Declaration repeatedly reiterates the central role of teachers in ensuring quality education (pp. 28, 33, 51, 54), there is only one target (4.c) that considers teachers, and their value is framed in terms of increasing "supply". In addition to viewing teachers as mere inputs to be adjusted based on supply and demand, this target overlooks well-established evidence that suggest that in many 'developing' regions, qualified

and experienced teachers are often concentrated in schools that serve children from advantaged backgrounds (Moriarty, 2020).

Target 4.7 as (Un)exceptional: Not all targets and indicators are framed in instrumentalist and utilitarian terms. Target 4.7 stands out due to its focus on acquisition of knowledge related to "sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, global citizenship", and a "promotion of a culture of peace…and diversity". This target is measured using indicators that assess the extent to which global citizenship education and education for sustainable development are mainstreamed into national education policies. Education scholars have noted that over the past decade, global education policy is increasingly shifting towards "affective" goals and priorities, which are characterized by the inclusion of themes around social justice, respecting difference, and diversity, and building equitable societies (Sayed et al., 2020). This affective turn in target 4.7 is symbolically significant. However, it is undermined by its broad and partially formulated measures of success. For example, global citizenship education constitutes a wide range of knowledges aligned with opposing ideological stances. A learner can be encouraged to be an "economic global citizen" (Richardson, 2008) who contributes to the global economy or a "critical global citizen" (Andreotti, 2011) who reflects, and acts based on their understanding of colonial legacies and ongoing power inequities. Similarly, sustainable development can be taught as a personal responsibility to 'protect' the planet, or as opening up spaces for questioning how current systems reproduce climate-related precarities.

Target 4.7 represents the only target under SDG 4 that captures knowledge acquisition related to sustainable lifestyles, respecting difference, and building inclusive and peaceful societies. Yet, its unfocused conceptualization, ambiguous learning needs and vague measures of success associated with target 4.7 mean that its transformational capacity depends on how

national and state government interpret and incorporate the target in education policy and planning.

How are the contextual (meanings and goals), and operational (targets and indicators) of inclusion in education adapted by India's national education policy, implementation framework, and education performance measurement system? More importantly, how is inclusion of Scheduled Tribes (ST) children and youth framed and enacted? I explore these questions in the next section.

Contextual and Operational Dimensions of Inclusion in India's Education Policy

The UNESCO guidelines for inclusion and equity, and the Incheon Declaration Framework for Action are cited and referenced widely in India's national education policy (NEP 2020), and implementation framework—Sarva Shikhsa Abhiya (SSA 2022). As explained in the data analysis flow in Chapter 3, I assessed the NEP 2020 and SSA 2022 using the dimensions and features of inclusion recommended by UNESCO (2017) in its policy assessment framework for national governments. I adapted the policy assessment framework into four key guidelines to assess national education policy's commitment to inclusion. These guidelines informed the content analysis of national policies. To ensure clarity, I restate these guidelines that guided my understanding of the extent to which India's education policies: (1) emphasize inclusion and equity as overarching principles that guide quality education; (2) frame, monitor and assess inclusion in terms of presence, participation, and achievement of all learners. (3) identify barriers to presence, participation, and achievement and challenge non-inclusive, discriminatory, and inequitable educational practices; (4) Promote inclusion and equity at all levels of the education system, while ensuring that education leaders, staff, and teachers understand and support national policy goals for inclusion and equity in education (UNESCO, 2017)

India's Adaptation of Meanings, Goals, and Subjects of Inclusion: Converging Vision

By analyzing India's national education policy and implementation framework using UNESCO's policy assessment guide, I found that there is a clear and intentional alignment between the contextual dimensions of UNESCO's guidelines, and with the principles of inclusion and equity that India committed to by ratifying the Incheon declaration. The influence of these global documents are evident in NEP's vision to reconfigure India's education system to "support and foster learning, so that all of the critical targets and goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved" (p. 3). Similarly, the SSA 2022 implementation framework draws from UNESCO's guidelines for inclusion to assert that the framework "recognizes the critical importance of factoring in various elements of inclusion and equity, understood as a principle that supports diversity among all learners and a concern with fairness" (p. 40). Citing directly from the UNESCO guide, the policy defines inclusion and equity as "every learner matters and matters equally" (p. 40).

The meanings and roles attributed to inclusion in India's education policies mirrors the plural-relational and humanist approach of the ESD agenda. Instead of a universal approach to inclusion, the policy recognizes plural rights by stating that inclusive education will provide equal access and opportunities while creating "conditions in which the disadvantaged sections of the society – children of SC, ST, Minorities, landless agricultural workers and children with special needs, etc. – can avail the opportunity" (Government of India, 2022, p. 14). The implementation framework also recognizes the need for removing structural barriers, and systemic changes. While defining the traits of an inclusive education system, the policy points to the significance of the "system's capacity to reform itself for enhancing its ability to address its own weakness and to develop new capabilities" (p. 83).

There are clearly identifiable alignments between the features of inclusion described in the UNESCO (2017) and the concepts and policy statements related to inclusive education in India's education policy. In Table 4.3, I demonstrate the resonance between global and national conceptions and visions for inclusive education by juxtaposing global guidelines with representative statements from NEP 2022.

Table 4.3 ESD's inclusion guidelines and adaptations in India's education policy

Features of an inclusive education policy: Adapted UNESCO (2017) guidelines		**Representative statement from NEP 2020**
1	Inclusion and equity are overarching principles that guide all education policies, plans, and practices. Policy statements strongly emphasize inclusion and equity-based principles.	"full equity and inclusion as the cornerstone of all educational decisions to ensure that all students are able to thrive in the education system" (NEP, 2020, p. 5).
2	Frames, monitors and assesses inclusion in terms of presence, participation, and achievement of all learners.	"The education system must aim to benefit India's children so that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of circumstances of birth or background" (NEP, 2020, p. 24)
3	Identifies barriers to presence, participation, and achievement and challenge non-inclusive, discriminatory, and inequitable educational practices.	"To help ensure that schools have positive learning environments, the role expectations of principals and teachers will explicitly include developing a caring and inclusive culture at their schools, for effective learning and the benefit of all stakeholders" (NEP, 2020, p. 21)
4	Promote inclusion and equity at all levels of the education system, while ensuring that education leaders, staff, and teachers understand and support national policy goals for inclusion and equity in education.	"This policy reaffirms that bridging the social category gaps in access, participation, and learning outcomes in school education will continue to be one of the major goals of all education sector development programme" (NEP, 2020, p. 24).

India's national education policy frameworks conform with global ESD guidelines for inclusive education by centering inclusion as a central principle, framing inclusion in terms of presence, participation and achievement, and aiming to attend to structural barriers. Additionally, India's "humanist and holistic" policy stances mirror shifts in global shifts toward plural, relational, and humanist conceptions of inclusion, demonstrated in national goals for ensuring equitable inclusion of Scheduled Tribe (ST) students.

Ensuring Equitable Inclusion of ST Children and Youth: India's Goals and Strategies

India's national education policy aims to "uplift children from tribal communities" (NEP, 2020, p. 25) by providing inclusive and equitable education. Scheduled Tribe (ST) children and youth are one of many subjects of inclusion in India's national education policy (NEP 2020) and implementation framework (SSA 2022). The policy seeks to bridge "social category gaps in access, participation, and learning outcomes in school education" (p. 24) through its guidelines for including five categories of children who are grouped together as SEDGs (Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Groups) that are:

> …broadly categorized based on **gender identities** (particularly female and transgender individuals), **socio-cultural identities** (such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Communities, and minorities), **geographical identities** (such as students from villages, small towns, and aspirational districts), **disabilities** (including learning disabilities), and **socio-economic conditions** (such as migrant communities, low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor) (p. 24)

The goal of this categorization is to bridge "gender and social category gaps" for children who have been "historically underrepresented in education" (p. 24), and the policy identifies reasons for this underrepresentation of each category of SEDG children. NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of special efforts to provide inclusive education to ST students because of their low transition rates from primary (10.6 percent) to secondary education (6.8 percent) (p. 25). The policy attributes the underrepresentation of Scheduled Tribe (ST) children in education to "historical factors", which are not explained on expanded on anywhere in the policy. It also attributes low enrollment and retention rates to cultural factors:

> Children from tribal communities often find their school education irrelevant and foreign to their lives, both culturally and academically. While several programmatic interventions to uplift children from tribal communities are currently in place, and will continue to be pursued, special mechanisms need to be made to ensure that receive the benefits of these interventions (p. 25).

Even though the policy states that ST children find school education irrelevant to their daily lives, the policy guidelines for addressing this issue focuses on setting up mechanisms to bring them to school anyway. For example, the policy suggests "cycling or walking groups" (p. 25) to increase participation of SEDG children who live in regions where schools are not easily accessible. Residential school and boarding facilities are also offered as strategies for retaining ST children. In addition to these strategies, the NEP 2020 mentions ST/tribe/tribal students in relation to only four issues—high drop-out rates (p. 25), establishing residential schools for early childhood education in tribal blocks (p. 278), and as a part of "knowledge systems of India" to be introduced at all levels of school education (pp. 16, 54).

This limited attention to ST students and strategies for inclusion in the NEP 2020 is reflected in its implementation framework—the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA 2022 holistic education for all). Even though the framework dedicates a separate chapter title 'Inclusive Education'(pp. 142-152), entire chapter attends exclusively to describing the goals, strategies, and outcomes for children with disabilities. Chapter 8 that addresses equity-related goals, strategies, and outcomes focuses almost entirely on gender-based inclusion. The only exception to this is the final section of the chapter (pp. 139-141), which details strategies for SEDG who are identified as "Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Communities (OBC)" (p. 140).

In this final section of the policy document's eighth chapter, the primary strategy for inclusion of students categorized as SEDG involves declaring regions of the country with a concentrated population of SEDG as SEZ (Special Education Zones). However, the document does not provide details about how these zones are to be identified and governed. Moreover, the special projects for ST inclusion are not connected to the creation of SEZs. Instead,

recommendations include “special enrolment and retention drives, career guidance and counselling programs, awareness programs for improving education and empowerment, and holistic development forums for children” (p. 140). The policy document does not include further guidelines regarding the goals and content of these awareness programs and development forums, and it does not provide actionable strategies.

In the implementation framework, I found only two guidelines for ST inclusion that are supplemented with actionable interventions. The first is related to support for developing and distributing free textbooks in ‘tribal’ languages:

> …with bridging materials to facilitate a transition to the State language of instruction and English. The textbooks should keep the principle of equity and inclusion at the forefront, proactively break extant stereotypes and reflect sensitivity to gender, caste and class parity, peace, health and needs of differently abled children.

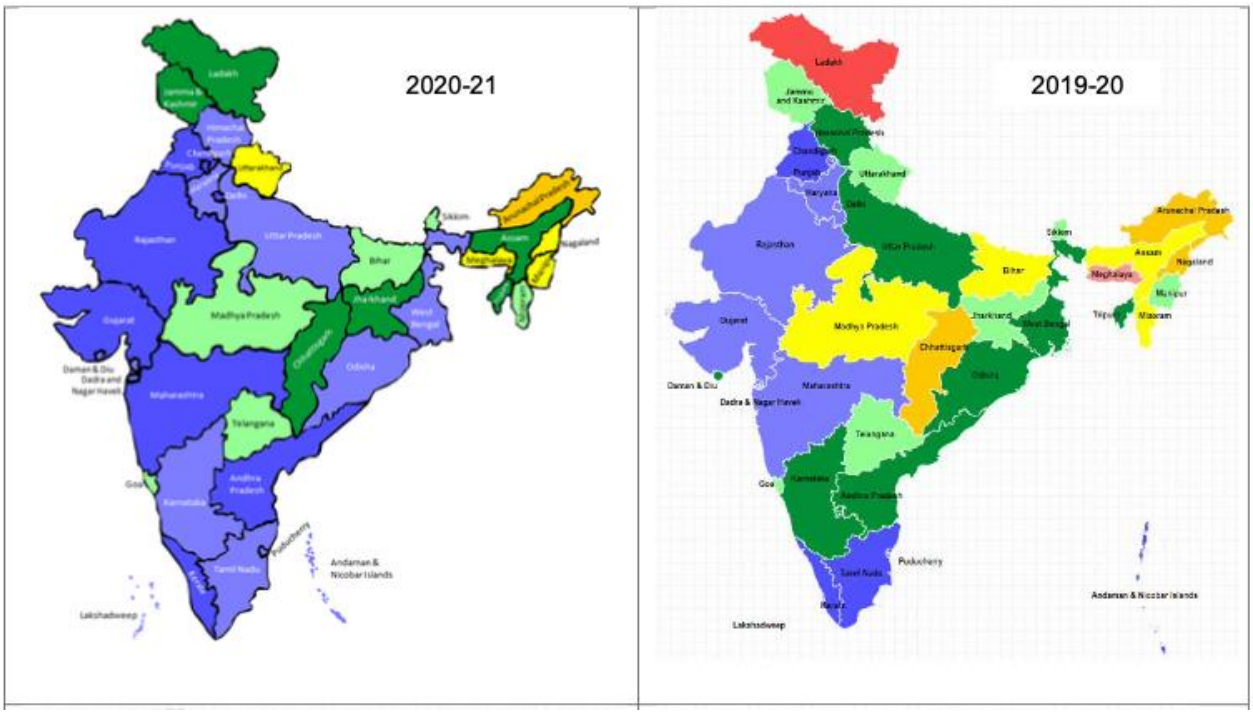
The second guideline recommends setting up ‘bridge courses’ for ST students. As I explain in the next section, this guideline is significant because ST youth in Attappady have easy access to these bridge course. The policy emphasizes the need for a multi-lingual bridge course that prioritize ST children’s first language. The recommended interventions include developing educational material with the support of resources available in the community, special training for non-ST teachers who teach in ST areas, establishing resources centers for supporting ST children and their communities, and involving the community to “reduce social distance” between school and ST peoples (p. 108).

India’s Performance Grading Index (PGI): Operationalizing Inclusion

India’s national education policy (NEP) and implementation framework (SSA) provide the vision, guidelines and strategies for inclusion and equity in education. These guidelines have been adapted into targets and indicators under the Performance Grading Index (PGI) system. A nation-wide education monitoring tool developed in 2017, the PGI was instituted based on the

rationale that an "efficient, inclusive and equitable education system is contingent upon regular monitoring of interconnected matrices of inputs, outputs, and outcomes (Ministry of Education, 2021, p. 2). The PGI system implicitly aligns with the SDG 4 agenda, which recommends that national governments must institute "education management information systems" (UN, 2016, p. 32). Additionally, by classifying Indian states and Union Territories into indicator-based grades, the PGI system mirrors Global Learning Metrics (GLM) systems presented through country rankings and league tables (Benavot et al., 2020).

The PGI evaluates states' progress based in their performance is five domains—learning outcomes, access, infrastructure and facilities, equity, and governance process. Every year, data related to 70 indicators across the five domains of the PGI are compiled from previously established information management systems (UDISE+, NAS, MDM), and from data submitted by MIS coordinators of each state (Ministry of Education, 2021). The PGI uses a complex "weightage"-based system (MoE, 2021, p. 2) to assess the performance of each Indian state, and to categorize states into ten levels, with one being the highest level of performance with a weight/score range of 951-1000 points. The lowest performance level is ten and it is assigned to states with a score/weight range of 0-550 points. In order to give a sense of the levels by state performance in education, Figure 4.1 show changes in states' level between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.



Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9	Level 10
Score Range	951-1000	901-950	851-900	801-850	751-800	701-750	651-700	601-650	551-600	0-550
Colour										

Figure 4.1 India's Performance Grade Index (PGI): Performance by state (Source: Adapted from Ministry of Education, 2021; Areas in Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir are contested areas occupied by India)

Out of the five domains, the access and equity domains reflect the national education policy's commitment to ensure inclusion through access and achievement. However, the access domain only measure enrollment, retention, and transition rates, and the percentage of out-of-school children who have been "mainstreamed". The equity domain is the only domain that names ST students. The two out of 17 indicators that relate to ST students are: (1) difference in student performance in language and mathematics between ST and general category students in elementary school; (2) difference in transition rates from elementary to secondary school between ST and general category students (MoE, 2022, pp. 16-17). India's vision, strategies, and expected outcomes for inclusion are summarized in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 India's strategies for and evaluation of ST inclusion

India NEP and SSA strategies for ST inclusion
Policy goal: Introduce interventions to "uplift" ST children 1. Residential and boarding schools for ST children to increase retention rates. 2. Categorize regions with a concentrated population of ST children as Special Education Zones (SEZ). 3. Introduce enrolment and retention "drives". 4. Conduct awareness, empowerment, and development programs/forums for ST children. 5. Distribute free textbooks to ST children, and bridging material to ease transition education in the official state language. 6. Strengthen bridge course programs and introduce ST community engagement.
India PGI indicators for measuring ST inclusion
1. ST enrollment, retention, and transition rates 2. Difference in student performance in language and mathematics between ST and "general" category children.

As much as India's vision and goals for inclusion aligns with the ESD agenda, it also reflects ESD's misalignments between goals, targets, and indicators to measure the success of inclusion in education. This misalignment manifests as vague and disparate strategies for the inclusion of ST children, which translates into a narrow conception of successful inclusion based solely on access and test-based achievement. The SDG agenda has been widely critiqued for laying the responsibility of implementation almost entirely on national governments without providing accountability frameworks (Wulff, 2020). However, since India's education policy adaptation aligns so closely with the contextual and operational dimensions of the ESD agenda, even if there were strong, global accountability systems in place, India's policies and strategies would still mirror the misalignments in SDG 4. Therefore, it is unlikely that accountability measures would have substantial effects on inclusion efforts and learning outcomes.

Synthesis of Global and National Policy Analysis

Critical and counter-colonial scholars have long argued that inclusive education, like development is founded on contradictory intentions and assumptions, which makes practical incongruities inevitable (Larsen et al., 2019; Zembylas, 2019b). Conceptually, exclusion is an "established tradition in the invention of modern schooling" (Slee, 2001), and in the division of the world into developed and developing. Inclusion and development are both linked to colonial modernity, and therefore are also invested individual, expansionist, teleological commitments that foreclose community-based and relational modes of learning and living with each other (Nguyen, 2010; Walton, 2018). As this policy analysis indicates, current conceptions of and strategies for inclusive education are primarily characterized in terms of removing education barriers for a wide range of what is considered 'vulnerable' or 'disadvantaged' populations. Even as education policy documents emphasize the role of a 'holistic" and "humanist" approach to inclusive education for creating equitable societies (UNESCO, 2016; Government of India, 2020), when operationalized into targets and indicators, this relational vision for inclusion is translated in ways that uphold competitive individualism.

As Table 4.2 (p. 110) presented earlier in this chapter illustrates, the SDG 4 targets are rooted in a utilitarian, economic view of inclusion. Inclusion remains narrowly construed in terms of access to formal and vocational educational spaces, and proficiency in language and mathematics. This divergence between the vision and operationalization of inclusion in the global ESD agenda is reflected in India's national education policy and implementation framework, where the successful inclusion is measured in terms of enrolment rates, retention rates, and transition rates of "socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDG)". Additionally, both global and national education policies continue to frame inclusion and education as

individual endeavors, which is emphasized through slogans like “leaving no child behind” (UNESCO, 2016), and “no child loses any opportunity to learn because of circumstance of birth or background” (Ministry of Education, 2020). The ideological individualism embedded in inclusive education policy is evident in the most widely used definition of inclusion in global and national education policies—ensuring presence, participation, and achievement for all in schools and higher education. Presence is measured through enrolment rates, retention rates and transition rates, achievement is measures primarily by testing language and mathematical skills, and policies remain unclear about how successful participation is to be defined.

There is no question that global and national education policies must continue addressing the issues of inclusion and exclusion. As Zembylas (2019) asserts inclusion is “necessary as it signals a reciprocal acknowledgement of our underlying interconnectedness” (pp. 734-735). However, this analysis demonstrates that it is more important to understand how, and, on whose terms, these issues of inclusion are defined. By documenting the “dividing practices” (Ball, 1990) of global and national education policies, this analysis confirms what is already established about global education policy regimes like Education for All. The SDG 4 and ESD agenda are marked by colonial-capitalist continuities that are concealed beneath the rhetoric of “transformational agenda”. In the global policy framework, these colonial-capitalist continuities appear in the analysis in the form of divergences between the goals, and actionable priorities for inclusion, represented by the universal, economic, and access-orientated definitions of inclusion. In India’s national education policy and framework, these continuities are represented by the narrowing between the goals and indicators for ST/Adivasi inclusion.

The ESD’s refusal to contend with its own hierarchies of power and systems of exclusion is evident in its definition of the facilitators and recipients of inclusive education. The

global policies consistently represent the targets of inclusion and development as vulnerable, disadvantaged, Indigenous peoples, migrants, and refugees. This adoption of marginality as the criteria for being 'included' is also reflected in India's education policies, in which the subjects of inclusion are referred to using the umbrella term SEDG (Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Groups). This practice of categorizing the subjects of intervention exclusively in terms of the marginalized, while erasing the role of those in power and relationality is a defining feature of global and national education and development policies. The ESD and India's national education policies continue this legacy by purporting to center inclusion, without addressing entrenched power hierarchies. As I argue in Chapter 2, the "sorting of human capital" (Slee, 2014) is a central aspect of the mainstream 'education for development' agenda. Therefore, as long as inclusion is primarily defined and operationalized in terms of "removing barriers", and "ensuring the presence, participation, and achievement" for a never-ending, ever-growing list of 'disadvantaged' or 'vulnerable' identities, populations and contexts, "inclusion as a political ideal, and inclusion as practice" (Larsen et al., 2019, p. 1050) will continue to be characterized by discrepancies and incongruencies.

Conclusion: Why does this Matter?

It is well-established that there is an ongoing lack of conceptual clarity about inclusion in education (Armstrong et al., 2011; Bellino & Abdi, 2022; Zembylas, 2019a). As (Armstrong et al., 2010) argue, even though policies espouse a "rhetoric of inclusion, the reality for many remains one of exclusion and the panacea of 'inclusion' masks many sins" (p. 5). Issues of power and relationality have been central to critical theorizations of inclusion for long. For example, Sen (2000) emphasized that inclusion and exclusion must consider relationality, that is, the ways in which people relate to each other. This would mean that inclusion does not simply entail

ensuring “presence, participation, and achievement” of “disadvantaged” of “vulnerable” groups. Instead, it requires understanding how people relate to each other in context-specific ways. Similarly, for Roy (2014), conceptions of inclusion cannot preclude considerations about political structures and contestations. The centrality of power and relationality in transforming current conceptions of inclusion is emphasized by Nguyen (2010), who insists on the importance of examining “the local forces that shape the social construction of inclusion and exclusion as embodied in the social, cultural, and ideological underpinnings of the local context” (Nguyen, 2010, p. 353).

Attending to Nguyen’s call gains relevance in the case of Kerala because of its status as a ‘top-performer’ in education. Kerala’s education department is yet to develop an implementation framework and curriculum based on the new national education policy. However, the state government published an annual work plan based on India implementation framework (SSA). This work plan details education initiatives, review of past performance, and new interventions for the year 2022-2023. ST students are mentioned in three interventions—creation of a “tribal reading club” (p. 34), introducing a “special package for tribes” (p. 35), and provision of free uniforms for all girls and ST boys (p. 24). Interventions under the equity domain of PGI focus exclusively on gender and disability. Unlike national level policies, the Kerala state government does not publish all its policies, so there are likely to be more information that cannot be accessed online. Kerala has been consistently performing highly in the equity domain of PGI. In 2020-2021, Kerala received the overall highest score in the country with 928 out of 1000 points and is the “top performer in equity” with a total of 218 out of 230 points. How do ST youth who live in the country’s ‘top performer in equity’ experience education and development interventions in their daily lives? I explore this question in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 ST Youth Experiences of Inclusion in Still-Colonial Attappady

> …whatever the British used to do, the way they used to see Indians, that is how these officers and Malayalees look at ST peoples now. The British used to trade in spices in India and then go back with all the money. Malayalees and government officers are doing the same thing in Attappady. People come from other places and set up shops and make money and then go back. They have land here and they have land there. House here, house there. People from outside come here saying they want to do positive things, but they are actually just taking advantage of the situation here.
>
> --Preetha, YRAC and Thanchiyoor hamlet member

I begin this chapter with Preetha's insight comparing life in Attappady with life in British-occupied India to illustrate ST youth's recognition of living in a still-colonial state. While Preetha is the only youth participant and co-researcher who explicitly made connections to British colonial practices, all youth participants shares experiences and insights that illustrate the ways in which ongoing colonial logic is inextricably linked to their everyday encounters with education and development.

Preetha is pursuing a masters' degree in economics and like all families in Thanchiyoor, Preetha's grandparents relocated to the hamlet from their ancestral hamlet in pursuit of land ownership and permanent employment as members of the Attappady Agricultural Cooperative (AAC). As described in Chapter 2, the AAC is a cooperative farming society that was established

in 1975 as part of the Western Ghats Development Project (WGDP)[12], and Thanchiyoor is one of four farm-based hamlets created and managed by AAC. As Thanchiyoor's hamlet head Nenjan moopan explains in Chapter 3, the hamlet members and AAC share a contentious relationship premised on AAC's unfulfilled promises of land ownership, self-determination, and year-long employment.

This chapter responds to my second research question: *How do ST youth draw on their everyday education and development experiences to shape their conceptions of inclusion in education?* Education and development are entangled phenomena in Attappady in general but are more pronounced in Thanchiyoor hamlet on account of its origin as constitutive of a development intervention. All research interlocutors, in varying degrees of emphasis, asserted that the already contentious relationship between ST Peoples and the state development apparatus has been exacerbated by AAC's successful efforts to gate-keep and influence many aspects of hamlet-members everyday lives, including school choice and access to employment and post-secondary opportunities. Therefore, development and education are inextricably linked in Thanchiyoor, but not in terms of its transformative potential as presented in the ESD agenda.

All youth participants insist that having a college degree will increase their chances of getting a permanent job, which they view as being essential to leading a stable life. However, youth reflections about their educational trajectories, access to opportunities, and everyday life in Thanchiyoor demonstrates not only a "region-specific loss of credibility" of development

[12] The WGDP is a set of state-led interventions introduced in 1972 and its goal was to alleviate the environmental, social, and economic stress experienced by people living in three different Indian states along the Western Ghats mountain range (Adam et al Nandakumar 2014, p. 2). These interventions centered on providing livelihood opportunities and increasing agricultural production for ST communities and marginalized groups that live in and around the mountain range. In Attappady, the development intervention was implemented through the formation of a cooperative farming society which I refer to using the pseudonym AAC (Attappady Agricultural Cooperative).

narratives (Ferguson, 2005). Rather, as I argue in this chapter, Thanchiyoor youth view AAC and the state development apparatus as a project of colonial control that limits their capacities to thrive in educational, professional, and service spaces inside and outside Attappady.

I relate the findings by presenting youth participants' "counter-colonial narratives" (Rau & Ritchie, 2012) Utilizing elements of counter-stories (Solorzano et al., 2000) and critical narrative methodologies (Clandinin, 2006), Rau & Ritchie (2012) frame counter-colonial narratives as a way to attend to the pervasiveness and persistence of colonization, while providing pathways towards disrupting the multiple logic of coloniality through the histories and wisdom of Indigenous peoples. I construct and present these narratives with the goal of "restorying" (Corntassel et al., 2009) dominant education and development assumptions that undermine the intellectual capacities of young people in general, and ST youth is particular. Additionally, by presenting extended narratives, I aim to demonstrate how ST youth in Thanchiyoor hamlet are intuitively "occupying and transforming theorizing spaces" (Anzaldua, 1998, p. xxv), that are traditionally the domain of researchers and educators like me.

Nevertheless, in *constructing*[13] these narratives I am mindful of bell hooks' (1990) poignant message drawing attention to researchers' preoccupation with recognizing and re-presenting the voices of the marginalized. Therefore, even as I present ST youth's counter-colonial narrative, "I am still author, authority…the colonizer, the speaking subject" (hooks, 1990, p. 343).

[13] The four counter-colonial narratives that I present in this chapter have been constructed in different ways. The first narrative by Murugan is from a single 2.5-hour long interview transcript, which I have edited and re-arranged. The second narrative by Saritha is compiled from semi-structured interviews, and field notes and discussions coded to Saritha. Vrinda and Dhaneesh's narrative is from a recorded discussion during one of YRAC's break-out sessions. Similarly, the final narrative by Adheesh and Preetha are also from a recorded discussion during YRAC's meeting. All narratives have been translated from Malayalam to English.

Through young people's counter-colonial narratives, in the following sections, I draw attention to how young people experience development as settler-colonial control. Murugan and Saritha's narratives provide insights into how control is exercised by the state and state-supported institutions like AAC through specific colonial strategies that sustain the myth that ST personhood is characterized by 'backwardness' and vulnerability (which I will be referring to as the 'myth of ST backwardness' in this chapter). These narratives are emblematic of the experiences of many research interlocutors who argue that development is not a solution to ST peoples' imaginary 'backwardness'. Instead, the notion of development, the institutions that presume to facilitate it, and its erasure of 'problems' that are most meaningful to ST peoples everyday lives, are deeply implicated in ST dispossession. The real and harmful implications of the pervasive myth of ST backwardness are illustrated by Vrinda, Dhaneesh, Preetha, and Soumya in the third counter-colonial narrative, in which they draw attention to the structural nature of the persistent exclusion and discrimination that they experience daily in formal educational and health service spaces. I have intentionally included non-educational spaces because youth experiences and insights point to their understanding of education as connected to the socio-cultural, political, and economic realities of their daily lives.

When viewed in relation to policy findings and existing literature that interrogates the silence about power and relationality in global and national agenda (Kendall, 2004; Nguyen, 2010; Sriprakash et al., 2020), these counter-colonial narratives and findings reveal the limitations of the ways in which inclusion is framed and operationalized in global and national ESD/SDG 4 policies. Young people's insights also highlight the ways in which the contemporary status quo in inclusive education, which is characterized by definitions and strategies for inclusion based on individual attainment, and a disregard of reciprocal relations (Amsler, 2019;

Larsen et al., 2019; Slee, 2014; , manifest in their daily lives as systemic exclusion, discrimination, and colonial violence.

Counter-Colonial Narrative 1: The Forest and I know and Understand Each Other

> When I was a boy (this is in the early 2000s), I used to accompany my uncles and cousins when they went to places like Kavakad to build guest houses for the forest department. To get to Kavakad we had to travel nearly 12 hours through the forest. The upper canopy of the forest is so thick, the forest remains dark all day, and we have to wade through elephant grass that came up to the shoulders of the older men. My uncle would lead us and tell us to be on the lookout for signs that people who travelled before us has left on tree trunks…No, I wasn't really scared. I loved going on those journeys. We used to bind food and supplies in cloth bags and even though we were scared that we might encounter elephants and tigers, I looked forward to those adventures. Besides, I have always felt that the forest and I know and understand each other. I would be more scared if I come to your city and you ask me to cross the road with so many cars and buses whizzing around…All this changed when AHADS (Attappady Hill Area Development Society) started working in Attappady and they worked with the forest department to limit our entry into the forests. They still justify it saying that they want to conserve the forests, but we never harmed the forest. Even when we farmed on forest land, or collected firewood, we used to shift our locations to make sure that the land and the forest has time to strengthen and recuperate. But, in mid-late 2000s, AHADS and the forest department started recruiting young ST men as forest guards and watchers. Their duty was to roam the forest and to report anyone who entered the forest to take firewood or collect honey. And that is how they turned our own people against us. Today, the forest department is one of the most powerful actors in Attappady, both in terms of funding and influence. About five or six years ago, a DFO (district forest officer) passed an order that ST peoples must not enter the forest with any type of sharp object. That was the limit. Many of us from Thanchiyoor and neighboring hamlets held a protest march at the forest police check-post until the order was repealed. But we no longer have the relationship we had with the forest and the land…And the thing that make me angry and sad is that they say they are doing it for our benefit, to help us, but they are really just doing it for themselves. So that they can feel good about themselves.
>
> Especially the forest department--they bring visitors and students, and they walk through the hamlet to see how ST peoples live. Like we are things on display…
>
> --Murugan, Thanchiyoor hamlet member

I begin with Murugan's story about his childhood adventures in the forest because I, like many of my ST participants and research mentors, as well as Indigenous scholars, believe that land and relations to land must be central in discussions about (de)colonization and development justice (Battiste, 2013; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012) Murugan's narrative serves as an example of how ST Peoples experience the loss of land. Among my youth interlocutors, only Murugan is old enough to have had the opportunity to freely roam the forests and "form a bond" with the "land, trees, and all other being in it". Like Indigenous Peoples around the world, elderly hamlet members in Thanchiyoor and other hamlets in Attappady have related similar stories in which they describe forests as sentient, non-human beings with whom they share a relationship built on reciprocity, trust and reverence (bodhi & ziipao, 2019; Ormond et al., 2020; Wane, 2013).

Figure 5.1 Murugan's forest remade into farmland

Murugan's quiet sense of loss about no longer having a relationship with the forest and the land highlights the significance of viewing youth's everyday experiences through the lens of settler colonialism. While youth participants who are in their late teens and early twenties do not share Murugan's ontological bond with the forest and land, their perceptions about land restoration and reparation are influenced by their changing relationship with it. As Tuck & Yang (2012) assert, the central concern and site of contestation and value for settler-colonial governments is land and everything in and around it (water, forest, air). Settlers not only appropriate land, make it their homes and their source of wealth, but they also perform "a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence" (p. 5) by disrupting the sustainable and spiritual relationships that Indigenous Peoples share with land. Remaking land as property that can be owned to exploit or protect is a key colonial strategy employed by Attappady's development apparatus.

Remaking Land as Property: ST Youth's Insights about Development, Loss, and Precarity

Murugan alludes to this remaking while describing how Kerala's forest department and the Attappady Hill Area Development Society (AHADS) restricted ST peoples access to the forests that surround their hamlet in the late 2000s. In order to understand Attappady's development apparatus as settler-colonial control, some background related to Kerala and India's forest land laws are important. In Kerala, the state is able to restrict entry into forest land because of the provisions of the Kerala Forest Act, 1961. Under the provisions of this act, the state can declare eligible land as 'reserved' forest land and take legal ownership. State control over forest land was strengthened further through the Kerala Private Forest Vesting Act, 1971. This act allowed the state to 'vest' or secure privately owned "ecologically fragile land", in order to protect and conserve it. Similar laws were enforced nationally, resulting is an increase in ST land

alienation and eviction 1960 and 1980 (Kjosavik & Shanmugaratnam, 2004; Nirmal & Rocheleau, 2019; Parakkal et al., 2019)

In 2006, the national government sought to address this issue of ST land alienation through the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA). This act was intended to recognize the unrecorded rights of Adivasi/ST peoples who for generations, have called forests their home, and to offer reparations to ST communities for decades of dispossession (FRA, 2006). The FRA was also intended as a departure from the "fortress model" of conservation, a settler-colonial approach to conservation that ignores allegiances between humans and land (Schneider, 2022). In Attappady, the introduction of the Forest Rights Act coincided with the establishment of the Attappady Hill Area Development Society (AHADS), which is considered the most comprehensive development project implemented in Attappady to date (Adam et al). AHADS was established in 2005 as part of the state-sponsored Attappady Wasteland Comprehensive Environmental Conservation Project aimed at "halting ecological and social degradation and improving the livelihood base of…tribal communities" (AHADS, 2010, p. 19).

The defining feature of the FRA and AHADS' development efforts was its community-centered and participatory goals. The Forest Rights Committees (FRC) that were formed across the country to include ST/Adivasi perspectives in forest management continues to operate across Attappady. However, research mentor Sradha chechi who is a member of the region's FRC asserted that the committee are simply "for show". In this way, Attappady and ST peoples' experiences with the community-centered and participatory goals articulated in the Forest Rights Act, and in 'conservation for development' projects like AHADS align with those of Indigenous peoples around the world because the ways in which it upholds colonial relations of power

(Schneider, 2021). In Attappady, and particularly in Thanchiyoor, which is located within the boundaries of the Silent Valley National Park and biosphere reserve, through the interventions of AHADS and the forest department (through its implementation of the FRA) forest land was remade as state property to be protected, regenerated, conserved, and managed (FRA, 2006, p. 40). And as Murugan's narrative illustrates, by restricting ST peoples entry into forest land the state forest department and the development apparatus in Attappady may be interpreted as reinforcing the colonial, fortress model of conservation.

Critical scholarly analysis of the FRA 2006 and its implementation in Indian states have shown that it has failed to redress ST Peoples' historical rights deprivation (Hembrom, 2022; Kozhisseri, 2020; Steur, 2011). Furthermore, rhetorical efforts by the state and by state-supported mega-development projects like AHADS to recognize ST rights and enact participatory development, while continuing to redefine and mainstream ST Peoples relations with land (Sakhrani, 2019, p. 106) is symptomatic of a "colonial politics of recognition" (Coulthard, 2014) Coulthard (2014) characterizes the colonial politics of recognition as a settler-colonial strategy that involves "reconciling Indigenous peoples' assertions of nationhood with settler-state sovereignty via the accommodation of Indigenous identity-related claims through the negotiation of settlements over issues such as land, economic development, and self-government" (p. 151). Drawing on Franz Fanon's theorization of political recognition and its role in sustaining and reproducing settler-colonial governance, and Taiaiake Alfred's work on Indigenous resurgence, Coulthard argues that the colonial politics of recognition serves the settler-colonial state by appearing to acknowledge and address historical injustice through "symbolic acts of redress" (p. 155), while its practices remain entrenched in Indigenous dispossession.

Murugan's narrative, when viewed in relation with the Forest Rights Act's goals to recognize and provide reparations for ST dispossession, and AHAD's vision for a "participatory eco-restoration" model illustrate how actors in Attappady's development apparatus are employing the colonial politics of recognition to remake land as property and to disrupt ST Peoples relations with their land and forest. The FRA in particular was aimed at recognizing the harm and dispossession that ST people experienced through the implementation of laws like Kerala's Forest Act of 1961. Despite this recognition of historical injustice, Murugan's narrative demonstrates how the implementation of FRA in tandem with development projects like AHADS continue to uphold the settler-colonial logic, which insists on severing the spiritual and ontological relationship between ST peoples and land.

While Murugan's narrative expresses a sense of loss about the rupture in his relationship with land, other ST youth are noticing other ways in which state development actors like AAC, and the Integrated Tribal Development Department (ITDP) employ the colonial politics of recognition to sustain ST dispossession. Indeed, comparing the conditions upon which the AAC and its farm-based hamlets were created, with the ongoing precarities that ST youth in Thanchiyoor are experiencing reveals the insidious work of the colonial politics of recognition. As I described in Chapter 2, AAC was established as part of a multi-state development intervention. Attappady AAC's offer to provide reparations to 420 landless ST families, brought families from all over Attappady to Thanchiyoor hamlet. An important element of the reparations contract was that each family that joined the AAC would receive ownership and leasing rights to five acres of land in the newly created hamlet. Nearly 40 years after joining AAC and living in Thanchiyoor, hamlet members' dreams of land ownership remain unfulfilled. While explaining these details about the formation of the hamlet, Soumya, one of the research associates, co-

researchers, and residents of Thanchiyoor hamlet drew my attention to a tattered, barely legible poster on the community center's outer wall. The poster, which I have included in Photograph 4, notifies hamlet members about a protest march from Thanchiyoor to the AAC office in Agali. The main heading explains that the protest is to "demand AAC to return ST/Adivasi peoples' land ownership documents"

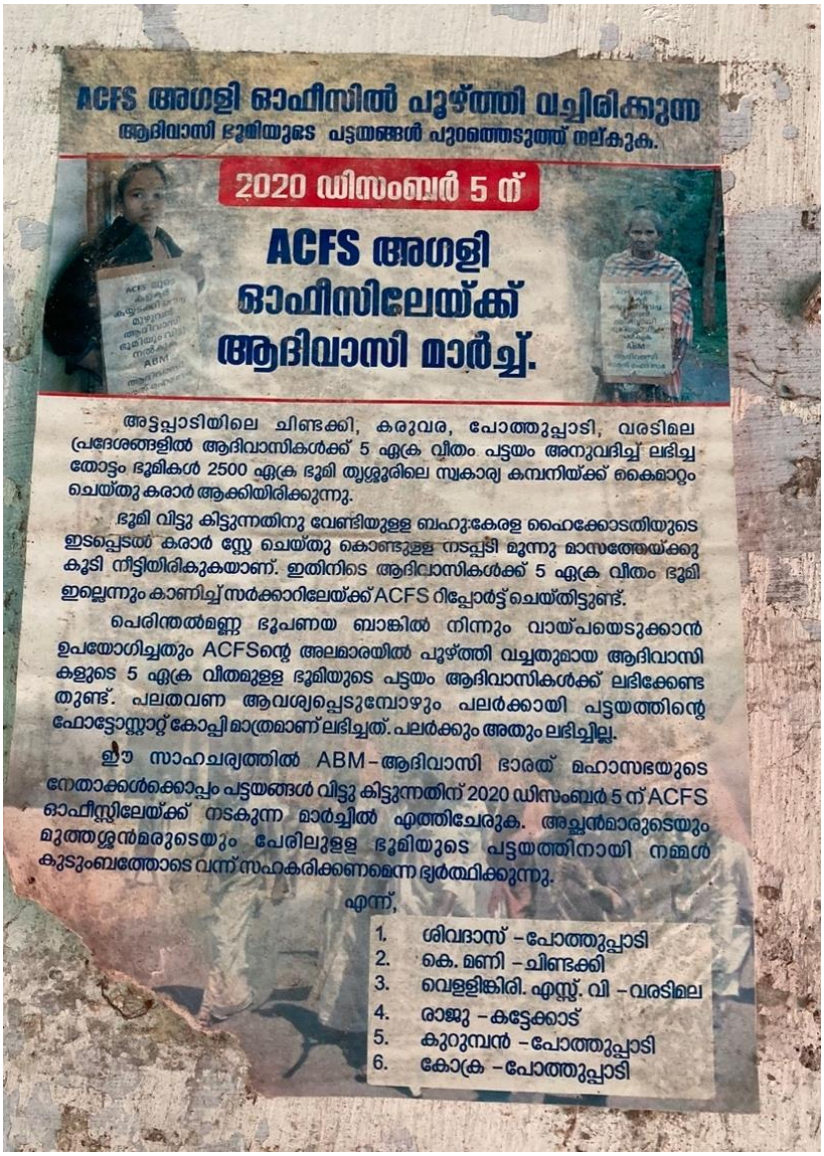


Figure 5.2 Poster announcing protest march against AAC

Soumya explained why this protest march was organized in December 2020 even though pandemic-related restrictions were in place:

> I don't know the full details. But sometime in 2019, some people came to the hamlet to look around. They even came to see the forest land outside our home, and then they just went away. Later we heard that AAC had decided to lease out Thanchiyoor's farmland and the forest surrounding it to some resort or property development people in Trissur (adjoining district). We were brought here saying that this land would be ours. But, AAC just leased it out without the permission or knowledge of most hamlet members. The hamlet head and other elders are saying that if we hadn't found out about this arrangement, we would have to do slave work (adimapani) on our own land for 44 years. Anyway, the hamlet head and other leaders filed a case in the High Court, and they ordered AAC to stop what they are doing (cease and desist order).

Soumya's insights demonstrate how young people are not only noting the colonial politics of recognition that AAC and other development actors are employing to gain control over land in the name of ST development and land restoration. They are also recognizing the new forms of precarities introduced by these forms of recognition. Soumya was joined by other youth participants who expressed a sense of ongoing anxiety about not having documents to prove that their family owns land, and the possibility that they could be evicted at any time. Soumya emphasized this sense of ongoing precarities:

> We were very anxious because had just had Chikku, and my husband was not getting work, and we don't even have documents to prove that the land on which our house is located in ours. All we could think of was that they could kick us out of this land whenever they want (Discussion-based field notes, February 2021).

Soumya's anxiety that AAC and/or the state could "kick" them out any time was shared by all research interlocutors in Thanchiyoor. Since nothing tangible emerged as a result of the protest march in December 2020, and given the multiple and ongoing environmental, economic, and political precarities that they experience, Thanchiyoor hamlet members are on edge. Describing the situation, hamlet head, Nenjan moopan told me, "we are always cautious and trying to

prepare ourselves for anything that happens" (Interview, April 2021). This statement about the situation in the hamlet appears representative of the types of precarities introduced by AAC and its colonial politics of recognition.

Murugan and Soumya's narratives demonstrate the specific ways in which ST youth experience the activities of the development apparatus as settler-colonial control. Murugan and older hamlet members might be experiencing the development apparatus' colonial politics of recognition in terms of loss and yearning for the forests he can no longer visit. Younger hamlet members like Soumya are noting the ongoing precarities introduced and sustained by development interventions. In the next section, I draw on Murugan's closing comments in the first counter-colonial narrative to introduce the second narrative by YRAC co-researcher, and hamlet member Saritha. In his closing remarks, Murugan expresses anger at the forest department's duplicity for creating a spectacle of ST Peoples everyday lives. In the following counter-colonial narrative, Saritha expands on the second settler-colonial strategy employed by Attappady's development actors—the creation of spectacle to represent and reinforce the myth of ST 'backwardness' and to justify continued occupation.

Counter-colonial Narrative 2: As if we are Clowns

> There is so much money coming to Attappady in the name of ST development, and I don't understand why they use that money to stage plays in every hamlet…Every few months some organization or other will come to each hamlet and present a play. It is supposed to educate us and raise our awareness about different issues. And what are the issues? ST Peoples alcoholism, empowering ST women, ST women's health, ST youth leaving drug addiction to become doctors. If you look at each of these issues properly you will see that problem is not ST People's lack of awareness. It is common knowledge here that ST Peoples used to brew our own alcohol during festivals, marriages, and funerals. Alcoholism became a problem here only after these other people started coming to Attappady with their different types of alcohol. I have seen them giving പാരായം (cheap, illegally brewed liquor) to the men in this hamlet to make them do extra work. That is

> how they became addicted. Then, next issue, women empowerment. Upper caste people have all these degrees and knowledge but when a woman gets her period, many of them still treat the woman as impure and isolate them. We were never like that. When ST women got their period, the community would take care of them, not abandon them. Caring and respecting women are considered a big deal now. But ST Peoples have been practicing this for so long, but they still want to teach us about empowerment…Then they talk about women's health and how to prevent malnutrition and infant deaths. When did infant mortality rates increase in Attappady? Only in the last few years. So obviously the reason is not that we don't know how to take care of our health. What I don't understand is why others feel the need to do this kind of performance (പ്രഹസനം). And why do all these plays portray ST Peoples as uninformed and clueless? The worst part is that they hire STs to act in these plays. They use our people and stage plays that insult us in front of everyone. As if we are clowns. And then they put photos on social media and newspapers to show how they are educating us and improving us.
>
> *--Saritha, YRAC and Thanchiyoor hamlet member*

With the exception of one youth, all my research interlocutors rejected the portrayal of ST Peoples and Attappady as 'backward'. In this narrative, Saritha is revealing one way in which the myth of ST backwardness is perpetuated by Attappady's development actors—through the use of spectacle—literally.

Viewing ST development as Spectacle that Benefits Settlers

While disparate theorizations of spectacle exist, I am drawing specifically on Indigenous scholar Sandy Grande's (2019) conceptualization of spectacle as a tool for the settler state to consolidate power and to secure settler futurity. Drawing on Nick Couldry's insights about "systems of cruelty requiring its own theater" (Couldry, 2012, in Grande, 2019), Grande argues that settler colonialism is a system of cruelty that employs spectacle in multiple forms to legitimize the colonizer's norms, values, and worldviews, while simultaneously erasing the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples. In Saritha's narrative the spectacle literally takes the form of theater and performance which portray ST Peoples as addicts and as vulnerable victims who

need to be empowered and educated to improve themselves. Since photographs and reports about these plays appear in social media and news outlets, the spectacle "provides the conceptual frame" through which non-ST/settlers imagine ST Peoples. An image of such a news story is presented through Figure (number). More important, Saritha's counter-narrative explaining her experience in relation to different 'problems' assigned to ST Peoples (alcoholism, health, empowerment) demonstrates how spectacle is employed in Attappady to erase the lived experiences and voices of ST Peoples, while concealing the development apparatus' role in establishing the myth of ST backwardness, and in supposedly correcting it.

Figure 5.3 A news article reporting the use of educational theater performance in Attappady

In their closing remarks, Saritha and Murugan briefly allude to the ways in which different actors in Attappady's development apparatus frame their work as 'helping' or serving ST Peoples. Murugan states that the forest department treats ST Peoples as "things on display" by bringing visitors and students to the hamlet to show how STs live and how the department is helping to conserve the forests. Saritha provided an example of how plays that position ST Peoples as "uninformed and clueless" are reported in the media as successful tools that can be used to "educate and improve" STs. With the exception of two youth interviewees, all research interlocutors expressed some version of this recognition that development activities in Attappady mainly serve to make non-ST/settlers "feel good about themselves" (Murugan).

By connecting the spectacle of ST development with this insight about settler subjectivity, Murugan, Saritha, and other participants are confirming Baloy's (2016) argument that "settler subjectivity is produced through engaging with Indigenous peoples as spectators" (p. 197). I suggest that in Attappady, spectatorship is a settler-colonial strategy employed by development actors to deny ST Peoples' political and intellectual rights and capacities. Non-STs/settlers employ this strategy by engaging in "looking relations" (p. 189) that position ST Peoples as spectacles—spectacles to be viewed and to use Murugan's words to be "put on display" as subjects to be developed, helped, and educated, while obfuscating our role in ST dispossession. The next counter-colonial narrative illustrates how the recognition and experiences of the settler-colonial strategies represented in Murugan and Saritha's narratives (colonial politics of recognition and ST development as spectacle) are shaping ST youth's everyday experiences in educational and ST-focused service spaces.

Counter-colonial narrative 3: So much disdain, always.

Vrinda: From first to fourth standard, we all went to the convent school in Seengara. At the time, most children in this hamlet used to go there, including Adheesh, Soumya, and Vrinda. The teachers there would make many of us work in the school's garden and sometimes we had to help clean the kitchen. Some of the boys even had to collect cow dung for manure.

Dhaneesh: I have studied in schools and polytechnic institutions inside and outside Attappady and everywhere we go, if they find out that we are ST they will make some kind of derogatory comment (തരംതാഴ്ത്തും)…Others don't 'respect' us. I have noticed that as a person's education level increases, they disrespect us more and more…

Vrinda: I have noticed that too. Our education levels are increasing, and we are able to access social amenities like schools, hospitals, and government offices. But in all these places we experience discrimination (വിവേചനം) and insults (താഴ്ത്തിപ്പാറയു)…Even during COVID—there was a big testing camp in this area organized by ITDP and the health department. The funds came to Attappady because it is a tribal block, but when I went there for testing with Krishna (brother) and Soumya, they made us, and many ST people stand at the back of the queue. There were non-ST people who were friendly with the organizers who came late but was tested first. When we arrived at the camp, they had given us token numbers, but they didn't conduct the tests in that order.

Dhaneesh: My problem is not only with being asked to wait while non-ST people get tested. It is with the way they behave with us. So much പുച്ഛം (disdain), always, everywhere.

Vrinda and Dhaneesh, YRAC and Thanchiyoor hamlet members

The socio-economic exclusion that ST youth in South Asia, and Indigenous youth around the world experience in schools, higher education, and access to post-secondary employment is well-documented (Kumar, 1983; Nakata et al., 2012; Ormond et al., 2020). While many of these studies explore issues of access, achievement, and quality of learning experiences (Finnan et al., 2017; V.A & Mohammed, 2014), a few critically examine how ST youth experience integration/assimilation, segregation, and other inclusive education efforts (s. r. bodhi & jojo, 2019; Subramanian, 2015) Vrinda and Dhaneesh's narrative contributes to these critical insights by illustrating the ways that exclusion has become a part of everyday life.

Structural Discrimination and Exclusion: ST Youth Identify Settler-Colonial Strategies

I argue that this exclusion is primarily experienced as structural discrimination inflicted by non-ST/settlers. I draw from disability scholars' conceptualization of structural discrimination as one of three social processes through which disability stigma is enacted—Individual discrimination, self-stigma, and structural discrimination (Ochran, 2021, p. 32). Individual discrimination occurs when an able-bodied person mistreats or disparages on account of a perceived disability, while self-stigma occurs when a person with disability internalizes negative attitudes towards disability. Structural discrimination is not dependent on individual action but occurs as an "expression of collective sentiments of a social unit" (Ochran, 2021, p. 33). This form of discrimination is usually entrenched in dominant social norms and occurs within spaces that are meant to be inclusive and/or neutral. Next, drawing on youth interviews I demonstrate how ST youth reflect on exclusion as structural discrimination in formal education spaces, and in ST-focused service spaces

Structural discrimination through colonial unknowing: Formal educational spaces

In her narrative, Vrinda's describes how she and other youth participants were made to do manual labor in primary school. This 'convent school' had boarding facilities, and in the early 2010s, most children in the hamlet were enrolled at this school for ST children. Preetha, who also attended the same school, reflects on her experience to emphasize the structural nature of discrimination:

> …I used to like being asked to do work. Only gardening. We could chat and play in the mud and did not have to study or sit in class. I didn't like kitchen work though. I laugh about it now, but what they did was wrong. That's what I was saying earlier about society being like that. I don't think the teachers or sisters in that convent school realized that they were doing something wrong. Neither did we, but we were just children (Interview transcript, March, 2021)

By sharing her speculation about teachers not realizing that they are discriminating or "doing something wrong", Preetha is highlighting a key characteristic of structural discrimination—its roots in prejudiced social norms and values that are deeply entrenched among dominant groups (Link & Phelan, 2001). And the embedded social norm that Preetha is pointing to involves positioning ST Peoples as less than the non-ST/Settler. Preetha goes on to relate that this kind of discrimination is performed outside Attappady as well:

> I had a bad experience when I went to attend college (post-secondary institution) in Palakkad town. I was staying in the college hostel, and I was allotted three roommates. We became friends immediately. We used to sit up and talk late into the night, go shopping—it was nice. Then somehow, they found out that I am ST. It is not difficult to find out. You just have to look at the attendance register. After that they started becoming aloof. One girl especially said some really mean things. The hostel warden was Nair (upper caste) so she took their side. After that it was difficult for me to stay in that hostel. I told my mother about it, and she met the warden to understand what was going on, but the warden insulted her as well. After that I didn't go back. I am not blaming my roommate or the warden. They are just doing what society teaches them. (Interview transcript, March 2021).

While relating her experience in school and in college, Preetha emphasizes that the individuals who discriminated against her is not to blame, since "they are just doing what society teaches them". Preetha's recognition that the cause of ST exclusion and discrimination is embedded in established social norms is crucial. This is because it points to the need for reorienting inclusive education efforts to address this structural discrimination. The Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective (YRAC) and I elaborate on this reorientation in the next chapter.

Adheesh, another youth participant, and co-researcher described his experience in a post-secondary technical college in Attappady to illustrate another characteristic of structural

discrimination—it occurs through subtle actions and gestures that are illegible to non-ST/settler, in spaces and institutions that are meant to be inclusive and/or neutral. Adheesh said:

> The first two years of college went very well. Classes were only okay, but I had good friends and I would at least get passing marks in the exams. But in my third year, a lecturer wrongly accused me of talking and disrupting the class and he insulted me in front of everyone (including non-ST classmates) saying that people like me shouldn't be given any opportunities. When I tried to explain that I hadn't done anything, he just asked me to get out of the class. After that I didn't go to college for several days because I was feeling angry, and I did not want to face my friends. My mother went to the college and met with the head of the department. He told her that none of the teachers have any complaints against me, and that the lecturer might have said those things because he was having a bad day. He told her that such small matters should not be taken seriously. I went back after a couple of weeks and no one said anything, but after that incident I lost interest and failed my exams (Interview transcript, May, 2021)

As described in the policy analysis in Chapters 4, global and national education frameworks view technical and vocational institutions as a key inclusion strategy for historically marginalized youth. Adheesh's narrative highlights how structural discrimination lurks in institutions that are meant to be inclusive, or at least considered 'neutral'. The lecturer's comment about limiting opportunities for "people like [Adheesh]" (ST Peoples) is one that all research participants have heard in multiple contexts and is a stereotype that is rejected by most. However, when Adheesh's mother met with the Principal of the technical college to inquire about the event with the lecturer that resulted in Adheesh decision to stop going to college, the Principal dismissed the event as trivial. He attributed the lecturer's outburst to him having a "bad day" and advised his mother to ignore "such small matters".

It is this aspect of structural discrimination—the extent to which it is embedded in dominant groups' worldviews that allows non-ST/settlers to "unknow" the harm caused by our policies, practices, and interactions. (Vimalassery et al., 2016) view colonial unknowing as a settler strategy that allows dominant caste, and in Attappady's case, non-ST/settlers to establish

what counts as "evidence, proof, or possibility" (p. 22), and what experiences are dismissed or disavowed. Employing colonial unknowing as a strategy allows non-ST/settlers to "secure the terms of reason and reasonableness" (p. 25), and of what counts as exclusion and discrimination. For example, the Principal in Adheesh college employs colonial unknowing to trivialize the interaction between Adheesh and the lecturer as a "small matter". This "small matter" however, resulted in Adheesh's physical and emotional withdrawal from higher education.

If Adheesh's narrative describes colonial unknowing as a strategy that normalizes structural discrimination, Preetha's experiences demonstrate a recognition of "colonial unknowing as an epistemological orientation" that shape how non-ST/settlers' reinscribe structural discrimination. As an epistemological orientation, colonial unknowing complements and extends concepts like "sanctioned ignorance" (Spivak, 1999), colonial agnosia (Arndt, 2002), imperialist amnesia (Kapoor, 2014), and epistemologies of ignorance (Sullivan & Tuana, 2007). It aligns with these previous concepts that consider the role of "constitutive disavowal" (Spivak, 1999) in reproducing systemic harm by foreclosing analysis and reflection of uneven power relations. However, colonial unknowing extends these ideas by insisting that as an epistemological orientation, unknowing situates ignorance *in relation* to "historical formation of social difference" (Vimalassery et al. 2016) . Preetha's insistence that teachers in primary school, and her roommate and warden in the college hostel were just doing what "society teaches them to do" demonstrates her recognition of colonial unknowing as an epistemological orientation. This is because, she is situating non-ST/settlers' ignorance of and complicity in structural discrimination in relation to the ways in which historical definitions and perceptions of ST Peoples as Other have 'taught' us to unknow the ways in which we exclude, discriminate, and dispossess ST Peoples.

Through their experiences, Adheesh, Preetha, and Vrinda are noting that they do not view ST exclusion as isolated incidents that occur in certain spaces. Instead, they demonstrate their understanding of how the notion of ST youth as being deficient is embedded in societal norms, and how non-ST/settlers' colonial unknowing renders our role in reproducing the myth of ST backwardness unintelligible.

Discrimination through Colonial Politics of Recognition: ST-focused service spaces

ST youth, and especially young women shared several experiences of discrimination in hospitals and health services, particularly in the ones operated or affiliated with Attappady's state development apparatus. Vrinda and Dhaneesh's narrative describes their experience at a COVID-19 testing camp that was conducted in late 2020 near Thanchiyoor hamlet. All youth participants and other research interlocutors who attended the testing camp shared similar experiences of having to wait while non-ST/settlers got tested, being asked to return another day after waiting all day, healthcare providers not "making eye contact" (Lalitha, personal interview, May 2021), and of being denied information about testing procedure. Health-related discrimination and precarities are magnified for young ST women and mothers. Soumya, YRAC's 23-year-old co-facilitator and Thanchiyoor hamlet member, shared an event that demonstrates the horrific violence perpetuated by healthcare actors in Attappady:

> Everyone says that Kottathara hospital (KH) is improving ST health. It is called a Tribal Specialty Hospital but there is nothing special about it. My cousin went into labor when we were in Agali, so we had to take her to KH. She was in a lot of pain but there were no doctors in sight. The on-duty nurses were not responding to any of our questions. Finally, three doctors came. They didn't say one word. They just looked, wrote something in their books and went away. Later we found out they were medical students. My cousin finally gave birth with just one nurse assisting her. It is god's grace that kept her and her baby safe. But after that I decided that I will never go to KH. I gave birth to Cheeku in a hospital in Mannarkad, and they took good care of us…But recently, KH has started conducting medical camps for ST women and children, and they are forcing me to take

> Cheeku there. ITDP has made some sort of rule because of which our family will not get rations if we don't provide certificates to show that we are attending the medical camp. I told them that I am doing all the tests in Mannarkad, then the officer became angry and started saying that ST women don't care about our children. So, I took Cheeku and they were poking him multiple times with needles and not allowing me to comfort him when he cried. So, I started crying and asked them to give my baby back to me. I overheard the doctor telling the nurse that 'these people don't know what is good for them', and then they forced me out of the room. Whatever happens I won't take Cheeku there again. I will only do what is best for my son.

Soumya and her son Cheeku's experience in Kottathara hospital illustrates a key relationship between the politics of recognition, colonial unknowing, and systemic harm. Soumya and Lalitha's experiences in ST-focused service spaces demonstrate the dangers of what Tuck & Yang (2012) describe as the "politics of recognition that is rooted in naming pain", damage or victimhood (p. 228). Even though Tuck and Yang offer critiques of about damage- or pain-centered politics of recognition in the context of social science research and the academy's concerns with "providing recognition to the presumed voiceless" (p.221), I argue that ST-focused institutions in Attappady employ the same strategy to justify and sustain settler-colonial control in the region.

The government hospital located in the Kottathara region in Attappady was reassigned as a Tribal Specialty Hospital (KTSH) in 2013 in response to rising levels of infant mortality in Attappady. After infant deaths in Attappady and the poor state of the health system were reported in national news outlets, the Kerala health department and the Scheduled Tribes Development Department introduced a multimillion-dollar health and development package to provide free and high-quality healthcare services to ST Peoples. ST activist from Attappady, and one of my research mentors, Vanji chechi told me that the facilities available in KTSH are not proportionate to the funds the hospital received. She said, "I don't know the exact amount, but I have been keeping track of all the health packages that have been coming to Attappady since 2013, and I

know that it is crores and crores (millions)" (Personal interview, December 2021). In an interview to a news outlet, a former tribal welfare officer revealed that the amount exceeds Rs. 400 crores (about five million USD). Despite such a large investment, the hospital can only accommodate 54 patients at a time, and it does not have functioning scanning or ultrasound equipment (TOI, 2022).

Amidst these allegations that the Kottathara Tribal Specialty Hospital has misused funding, Soumya's assertions about ill-treatment, forced compliance, and discrimination has been confirmed by an ethnographic exploration of ST Peoples experience with healthcare services in Attappady (George et al. 2020). Soumya's claim that she would be denied rations if she does not take her son to KTSH is related to compliance measures adopted by the health system in Attappady. The study found that pregnant women and women with infants from all hamlets in Attappady are required to report at the hospital every month. Like Soumya and many other ST women, George et al's (2020) study participants viewed these measures as disruptive and harmful. Non-ST/settler doctors and health practitioners in the study justified these measures as "last resort for the benefit of the community" (p. 11), echoing the refrain that Soumya overheard.

The case of the Kottathara Tribal Specialty Hospital illustrates how interventions that emerge out of a damage-centered politics of recognition. The hospital was established and funded based on a logic of damage that locates blame on ST women and their health practices and beliefs. Kerala is considered to have the best healthcare system in India (NITI Aayog, 2021), and despite this achievement, Attappady's infant and maternal mortality rates are among the highest in the country. The KTSH was established to address this perceived damage. However, this logic of damage allows non-ST/settler development actors to design interventions that focus

on the *event* of rising infant death, rather than on the *structures* of historical land alienation that deprived ST peoples of land on which they produced seasonal, and sustainable sustenance.

By focusing on the *event* of high ST infant mortality, rather than the *structure*s that enabled historical dispossession, the logic of damage enables and sustains a deficit-based hierarchy in which the 'damaged' body or peoples (ST Peoples) are delayed or set back in their path to development and "must catch up (but never can) to the settler/unpained/abled body (or community or people or society or philosophy or knowledge system)" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 231). In his critique of eurocentrism, Chakrabarty (2001) theorized this impossibility of 'catching up' by describing how "Indians, Africans, and other 'rude' nations are consigned to an imaginary waiting room of history" (p. 12). Similarly, Ferguson (2005) asserts developmentalist assurances that require "third world people to wait, to have patience, for their turn to come" (p. 232) have lost credibility in many regions around the world.

While postcoloniality and interrogations of modernity can facilitate a global exploration of the workings and limits of damage-centered politics of recognition, Indigenous, desire-based analysis seeks to "interrupts the metanarrative of damaged communities". Soumya's assertion that "she know what is best" for her child, Vrinda's recognition that rising education levels have not reduced discrimination against ST Peoples, and Saritha and Murugan's examples of the ways in which development interventions are designed to benefit non-ST/settlers illustrate important ways in which ST youth are interrupting the narrative that positions ST Peoples as less developed/'backward'. In the final counter-colonial narrative and section of this chapter, I discuss how these insights shape and shift ST youths' desires and subjectivities.

Counter-colonial Narrative 4: Multiple Desires and Shifting Subjectivities

Preetha: When I was a child, at least until 5th or 6th standard, I never thought of myself as having anything less or as lacking anything. I just wanted to study, get decent marks and I used to perform very well in school. During middle and early high school, I was always first in class. And during that time, I used to feel very proud of myself because I used miss classes[14] often and I was still the best in my class. My friends used to say that I will do big things. But after growing up and seeing the world, I don't think that way…one reason is that it is difficult to block out what people say about you. But another thing I have learned is that people who have lots of knowledge, I don't mean education, they are humble, and they know that they have more to learn…Sometimes I want to become a politician and change our situation, sometimes I think I should just get a job in bank. That is why I have been going for bank exam coaching classes. And sometimes I just want to leave Attappady, get an okay job and an okay income and just live.

Adheesh: My main goal in life now is find a stable 9-5 job. Any kind of permanent job that will allow me to take care of my family and have enough savings to go for a trip sometimes. I've lived near the border of the Silent Valley National Park all my life and I have still not visited it…I decided to take commerce as my main subject during degree because I was interested in starting a small business with my brother. We were thinking of starting either a mechanic shop or maybe a dog-breeding venture. All the Malayalees want Rottweilers now. Something that we can call ours. I have been trying to get a loan to start the business, but who will give a loan to someone who has no land or house in their name. I have been doing odd jobs to try and save some money. I went to work at the rubber company in Trissur. The pay was better than any government job, about 12,000 rupees every month. But the working conditions there was terrible...I was there for two months. My parents asked me to come back home after they saw how unhealthy I was becoming. I have also been taking the public service commission exams and trying to get a job as a forest guard or an office assistant…but I am also doing odd jobs to save as much money as I can. I have been learning about dog-breeding from YouTube and trying contact people who might support small-business ventures.

Preetha & Adheesh, YRAC and Thanchiyoor hamlet members

In the final section of this chapter, I explore experiences of structural discrimination and life in a settler-colonial context shape the desires and subjectivities of ST youth. Drawing on Tuck (2009), I suggest that desire, rather than aspiration is a more productive theoretical concept

[14] Preetha's home life was volatile during her teenage years.

in a settler-colonial context because of its ability to disrupt the dichotomies of conformity versus resistance (p. 419). Desire represents an assemblage of "experience, ideas, and ideologies" that ST youth employ or practice that may or may not reproduce, and/or resist settler-colonial structures. I find that this theorization of desire matches the everyday lived experiences of people who "at different points in a single day, reproduce, resist, are complicit in, rage against, celebrate, throw up hands/ fists/towels, and withdraw and participate in uneven social structures" (p. 420)—experiences that I have witnessed and participated during this research and my work with YRAC.

Viewing Preetha and Adheesh's discussion through the lens of a desire-based framework show that ST youth sometimes align their aspirations and plans with existing opportunity structures—Adheesh writing PSC exams to get a government job, and other times they rage against the limited opportunities that they can access—Preetha wanting to leave Attappady to lead an 'okay' life. None of the youth participants expressed a sense of failure or a lack of desire to get jobs that are considered high status by non-ST/settlers. My questions about future aspirations and goals were mostly met by a desire to lead the kind of life that Adheesh describes—a stable job, enough time to spend with family, and enough money to care for their parents and to perhaps for a trip occasionally. Therefore, a desire-based approach points to a key aspect of ST youth's subjectivity that is neither addressed nor supported by the institutions in which youth experience structural discrimination—ST youth's capacity to view their pursuit of low-status jobs as navigational strategies rather than evidence of failure.

There is a key difference between the navigational strategies adopted by ST youth participants and existing research on youth aspirations which builds on a critical question posed by Bellino (2018) in the context of refugee education in Kakuma—why are youth decisions to

"pursue economically viable, 'low status' work seen as markers of failure, rather than as persistent and innovative strategies in a context of scarcity?" (p. 553). Existing youth-based research confirm the importance of this question by showing the many ways in which young people in contexts of conflict, and precarity contend with the disappointment and shame associated with their inability to conform to a single form and linear trajectory of educational success (M. J. Bellino, 2018a; Demerath, 2000; Littler, 2013) However, I suggest that the subjectivity and desires of youth participants are mediated through their awareness of structural discrimination and the recognition that they live in a still-colonial state.

This awareness might explain why youth participants never expressed a sense of having failed in their post-secondary ventures. Even when they officially 'failed', it was not perceived as personal failure. For example, Dhaneesh (from counter-narrative 3) failed in his third-year vocational training examination. While waiting to re-take the exam, Dhaneesh registered for a coding course in Avodha, which is an online skill-development platform recommended by the national government. The platform aims to provide 'education for a job' and allows students to pay for the course after they get a job. Similarly, Aarathi (YRAC member), and Soumya (YRAC co-facilitator) who hadn't received any opportunities after completing high school and diploma in education respectively, registered with the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) while they applied for other opportunities. Soumya has a bachelor's degree in history and was recently selected as a primary school teacher in a government school in Attappady.

Preetha and Adheesh's narrative demonstrate how ST youth are actively exploring multiple and multidirectional trajectories of success within a limiting opportunity structure (Bellino, 2018). All but one youth interlocutors viewed ST peoples' limited success in

educational, professional, and service spaces not as personal failure, but primarily as obstacles in a settler-colonial society that is designed to diminish and exclude Indigenous peoples.

Conclusion: Development, Experiential Learning, and the Limits of Inclusive Education

Based on these experiences and insights of ST youth in Thanchiyoor, Attappady, I respond to my second research question (how do ST youth in Attappady draw on their experiential learning and everyday encounters with development to shape their conceptions about inclusion in education?), by highlighting key features that constitute ST youth's everyday experiences, and sense-making. One, young people's learning—both formal and experiential, their daily encounters with development, and the ways in which they draw on these experiences to make sense of inclusion and exclusion are mediated through the lens of living in a settler-colonial context. The first and second counter-colonial narratives by Murugan and Saritha, and Preetha's comparison of life in Attappady with British colonial rule are emblematic of ST youth's recognition of the settler-colonial strategies that they navigate daily. They view the AAC and the state development apparatus as a project of colonial control that limits their capacity to thrive in educational, professional, and service spaces inside and outside Attappady. Murugan and Soumya's insights highlight how development actors like the AAC, AHADS, and ITDP, and national policies like the Forest Rights Act 2006 employ "colonial politics of recognition" by implementing interventions that appear to address historical injustice and land alienation but instead exacerbates ST dispossession and ongoing precarities.

Saritha's perceptive analysis of 'educational' performances staged by state and non-government development agencies illustrates how non-ST/settlers employ "spectatorship" as a strategy to sustain the myth that ST peoples are "pinoka vibhagam/backward communities" and are therefore in need of development interventions. Youth participants implicates the settler-

dominated state and media, in constructing and perpetuating negative frames of reference through which non-ST/settlers imagine ST people. Parvaty, a former ST promoter[15] who is currently preparing to take the public service commission (PSC) examination narrated an experience from her tenure as an employee of the state development department, which encapsulates how the colonial politics of recognition and spectatorship constitute development in Attappady, and functions to dispossess ST peoples:

> …so much money come to Attappady in the name of development. You must have heard that joke about how if all the development funds were equally distributed among ST peoples, we would all be millionaires… I feel so angry because many of these organizations or people, they say that they are working for our benefit, and they take the money and help themselves. A simple example of this is the jeep service from Mukkali to the Silent Valley Forest. Those jeeps were introduced as part of a scheme to provide employment for ST people, especially ST men who live in this hamlet. But have you seen a single ST person driving those jeeps? All that money came to ITDP or whatever organization because ST peoples live here. But who is benefitting from it? Not ST peoples (Personal Interview, May 2022).

As residents of a 'tribal development block', ST youth's everyday lives, and the formal educational, professional, and service spaces they traverse are entangled with development. For Adivasi/ST peoples who live in any tribal development block in India, formal and non-formal education, employment opportunities, healthcare, housing, food rations, and access to public services are mediated through state and state-supported development apparatus. And as this dissertation's interlocutors argue, the idea of development privileged by this apparatus is premised upon the existence and consequent reform of an imaginary, deficient, 'never-developing Other—ST peoples. This means that current inclusive education for development efforts are targeted at 'including' imaginary subjects into an inherently exclusionary, colonially

[15] The Integrated Tribal Development Project hires one ST youth per hamlet, who acts as a liaison between the hamlet and the state development department. ST promoters have a one-year tenure during which they are paid a monthly stipend.

defined social system. How might inclusion and education progress differently if it sought to "transform the interconnected structures that marginalize some populations while privileging others" (Patel, 2016, p. 23), instead of attempting to include individuals and groups into a system that is designed to exclude them?

Preetha, ever the budding social theorist, addresses this question in her response to my inquiry about how she might rethink formal education based on her everyday experiences:

> I have one, no, two important principles that I always try to follow. Do not hurt anyone intentionally and have respect for everyone and their different circumstances. That is what I have learned through my own 'life experiences'. This is an important lesson, but I did not learn it in school or college…There can be competition, no problem, but people must learn to care and respect others. This should be taught in school, especially to 'upper caste' people because they don't know how to think about other people's situation. They only know how to think about their job, their family, their 'status'…I am not blaming them. But I think real education begins with learning to care for and respect each other (Personal interview, April 2022).

Preetha's elegantly articulated call for educational transformation centers a key feature that is missing from the Education for Sustainable Development's (ESD) vision and strategies for inclusion—relationality (see Chapter 4). Preetha emphasizes the limitation of an education system that does not teach people to "care for and respect each other" and locates blame on this system for the ideological and ontological individualism of 'upper caste' people who "only know how to think about their job, their family, their 'status'.

Soumya and her son Cheeku's experience in the Kottathara Tribal Specialty Hospital, the incident in the COVID-19 testing camp narrated by Vrinda, and Dhaneesh's vocational education experiences are emblematic of the system exclusion, disrespect, and discrimination that ST youth navigate in their daily lives. The narratives presented in this chapter demonstrate how youth view these exclusionary experiences in relation to education and development interventions that deny our "underlying connectedness and mutual vulnerability" (Zembylas,

2003, p. 737). Given the contemporary status quo, which is characterized by definitions and strategies for inclusion based on competitive individualism, Slee (2014) argues for "intersubjectively reinterpreting" conceptions and strategies for inclusive education. Preetha's "principles" offer a starting-point for these reinterpretations. The formation and research of the Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective (YRAC), which I describe in the following chapters, builds on Preetha's insights, and responds to calls for interrogating the "contradictory intentions and interventions" (Larsen, 2019, p. 1050) that stand in the way of inclusive and equitable education.

Chapter 6 YPAR as Response to Rupture: The Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective (YRAC)

> "When a comm builds atop a fault line, do you blame its walls when they inevitably crush the people inside? No; you blame whoever was stupid enough to think they could defy the laws of nature forever. Well, some worlds are built on a fault line of pain, held up by nightmares. Don't lament when those world fall. Rage that they were built doomed in the first place"
>
> --Hoa in 'The Stone Sky', Book Three of the Broken Earth Trilogy, N.K. Jemisin

Metaphors about building houses and living in unstable houses are often employed to make sense of the operations of interlocking systems of oppression and to imagine ways to navigate an unjust and "unhinged" world. In her three-times Hugo award winning Broken Earth Trilogy, N.K. Jemisin employs the house metaphor to redirect attention to the hubris of those who build "doomed" worlds and systems on fault lines of settler-colonialism and systemic oppression. Isabel Wilkerson likens the United States to an old house, which has a flawed foundation, and has been incurring damages over the years. She argues that leaving these damages unattended with the rationale that the people who live in the house now did not build it, "will not offer protection against the consequences of inaction" (Wilkerson, 2020, p. 26). The 'Gesturing Decolonial Futures Collective' assert that the "house modernity built" is showing cracks and leaks and is becoming increasingly shaky. They argue that the ways in which "the root causes and possible solutions to the house's current instability" are understood depends on who and how the problem with the house is diagnosed (V. O. Andreotti et al., 2015; Stein et al., 2020, 2022).

These metaphors related to diagnosing and seeking solutions for unstable houses are central to how I frame this chapter, which describes the 'origin' story, and the processes, events, methods, and pedagogical moments that shaped the Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) component of this research. This chapter was previously framed as a methodological reflection, in which the Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective (YRAC) 'emerged' out of serendipitous events and meetings. Specifically, as I expand in this chapter, the YRAC originated from a rhetorical question posed by research associate Soumya—"I feel like we must do something, but what can we do"? Since a YPAR component was not initially part of this dissertation's research design, and perhaps because of my "programmed expectation of centrality" (Wilkerson, 2020, p.41) as a dominant caste person, I initially interpreted Soumya's question and the events that led up to it as serendipitous turning-points that allowed *me* to facilitate a YPAR project. However, by considering Fine's (2008) conceptualization of "YPAR as epistemology" (p. 215), and critically reflecting on the political inclinations and activism of the YRAC co-researchers, I find that the YRAC's origin story is significant for more than just methodological reasons[16].

To return to the metaphor of unstable houses, when viewed through this lens, the findings presented in Chapter 5 demonstrate that many ST youth and all YRAC co-researchers' everyday learning experiences are mediated through their understanding that the house they live in is "built on the stolen lands and broken backs of those whom it now excludes, or relegates to its basement floor, and at the cost of the flourishing of other-than-human beings" (Stein et al., 2022, p. 277). With the exception of three participants (Saranya, Paru, Haresh) whose responses to navigating life in an unstable house was based on repairing damage by working harder and being more

[16] I thank my dissertation committee members for encouraging me to rethink how I understand and frame the 'findings'.

confident, ST youth interlocutors of this research have been diagnosing damages and seeking opportunities and platforms to draw attention to the magnitude of the breaches in the house's foundation. For example, as I explain later in this chapter, all co-researchers of the YRAC are members of the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI), and in 2019, they successfully acquired funds and resources to repair the road leading to their hamlet. They are also members of local self-government committees, and co-founders of a local youth club, which had to be discontinued because of lack of funds. Two co-researchers were active in left-wing political clubs during their undergraduate education. They have also successfully advocated for access to computer, printing, and internet access. In short, youth interlocutors have been living in and with the damaged house and its ruptured foundation, seeking and adopting creative strategies to navigate its failing structure long before I 'positioned' them as co-researchers.

When considered against this background, and in light of the three phases of the YPAR project, which I explain in this chapter, YRAC's origin is not merely a serendipitous turning-point in *my* dissertation. Rather, it may be regarded as one of the many strategic and perhaps intuitive strategies that ST youth adopt to sharpen their understanding of the ruptures in the house's foundation, and to explore ways to draw attention to it while creatively navigating its failing structure. If this is the case, then Soumya's question—"what can we do?", may be understood as an invitation to me, which is significant for two related reasons. One, efforts to position young people as experts, and to support them in "seeing, naming, and challenging their lived experiences with oppression" (Bellino, 2023, p. 2) are key aspects of the transformative agenda of YPAR approaches (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Kirshner, 2010). YPAR projects generally involve adult researchers inviting young people to co-create "counter-spaces" or "youthtopias" to make sense of exclusionary and oppressive structures and imagine new

possibilities (Ginwright 2008; Morales, 2016; Morrell, 2008). However, if viewed as an open invitation to me to join them as a co-thinker, Soumya's question challenges this "cultural expectations of adult authority" (Bettencourt, 2020, p. 154) and facilitation in collaborative projects. Soumya actively "renegotiates [her] relationship with a [non-ST] adult", thereby co-creating and co-facilitating a "problem-posing educational" space (Freire, 1970, cited in Bettencourt, 2018)—the Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective (YRAC).

A "problem-posing education" focuses on the "process of engaging in inquiry", in which young people's knowledge and experiential perspectives are combined with the adult facilitator's resources in order to engage in collective decision-making, dialogue, and action to challenge oppressive structures (Bettencourt, 2018; Torre et al., 2008). YRAC functions as a problem-posing educational space in which ST youth researchers channel their knowledge and perspectives to identify and explore an educational problem that is most pertinent to their everyday lives, while drawing on the resources of the adult researchers (me) to make connections with national and global education policy. When viewed as a problem-posing educational space, the origin, research, and actions of YRAC becomes a response to my second research question. *How do ST youth in Attappady draw on their experiential learning and everyday encounters with development to shape their conceptions about inclusion in education?*—they recognize that "exclusion is an established tradition in the invention of modern schooling" (Slee, 2014), and *strategically* seek opportunities and spaces to survive, if not thrive, while holding non-ST/settlers accountable for upholding exclusionary practices. The YRAC as a "problem-posing education" space is one of other spaces that ST youth create or participate in.

In the following sections, I describe the 'origin story', the processes, events, activities, and methods that shaped the YRAC. I have divided YRAC's three month-long work (April to

June 2022) into three phases, and in this chapter, I pause and linger at moments of critical dialogue, celebration, confrontation, and collaboration during the YPAR process. Also, I include excerpts from my fieldnotes, as well as from transcripts and jottings-based recreation of conversation, which demonstrates the key methodological and epistemological conundrums that YRAC as a group, and I as a non-ST/settler co-researcher encountered during the project. I have shaped this interlude as a narrative that tells the story of a group of intelligent and critical young thinkers, and their joy, rage, and persistence.

The Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective: An Origin Story

By mid-March 2022, my research associates Vrinda, Soumya and I had developed a work schedule that worked for all of us. Twice every week, we would meet in the community center at around 3 pm. They showed me around the hamlet, the farm, and the river, and facilitated many of my preliminary interviews. Many times, I would meet Vrinda, Soumya, their mothers and Soumya's three-year-old son, Chikku, as they walked back from the river after doing laundry. When Soumya and Vrinda handed over buckets of washed clothes to their mothers, little Chikku's big, round, kohl-rimmed eyes would well up with tears as he whimpered and protested against being separated from his amma. Every time this happened, I would tell Soumya to let him join us at the community center, and every time Soumya would tell me, "Chechi, he must learn to stay away from me. If I get a job, I can't be with him all the time". During our preliminary meetings, Soumya and Vrinda spoke at length about their educational experiences, politics, and about their families. Soumya and I would laugh with, and sometimes at, Vrinda when she showed us the conversations and memes that she shared with her friends on her WhatsApp group. Children from hamlet would join us and sometimes interrupt us while we

worked in the community center, and towards the end of our project, parents would come to the community center looking for their 'lost' children, and sometimes join us in our conversations.

During one of our early meetings, I asked Soumya and Vrinda whether there was an educator or an ST activist, or any person at all that they admired for the work that they are doing. Their response was unanimous and immediate—"Ramesh sir". Ramesh M is an ST activists and educator from the district of Kasargod in north Kerala, and he has been working in Attappady for nearly two decades. Currently, he leads the State Rural Livelihood Mission's 'Bridge Education' program. Soumya and Vrinda told me that he "tells things as it is" and he "treats us with respect and always asks us about our family". Vrinda then played a few folksongs on her phone that were written, composed, and performed by Ramesh M. I asked them if they might be interested in interviewing him if I was able to arrange it. This suggestion was met with a mix of anticipation and apprehension. Soumya asked, "but chechi, he is a big [important] person. What will we say to him?". To which Vrinda responded, "he is a human yes. Why should we be scared to meet him?". We agreed to request an appointment after each of us prepared a set of questions or topics that we would want to discuss with him

The interview with Ramesh was rich, complex, and thought-provoking and he spoke passionately about the successes and challenges of education and development in Attappady and in other ST blocks in Kerala and India. In my field notes, I reflected on our trip back to the hamlet after the interview, and this conversation with Soumya and Vrinda is a critical turning point in this research:

> Vrinda was silent during the entire interview, but as soon as Ramesh sir left, she said, "enthale, we went to his office to get information from him, but he made us sit on nice chairs and gave us tea and two types of biscuits. This is why ST people should try to reach his position"...During the interview, Soumya asked several thoughtful questions, and shared her experiences as a student and later as a teacher in the bridge course in Thanchi hamlet. However, she was mostly silent during our trip back to the hamlet,

> listening to and nodding along as Vrinda and I spoke about the interview, discussed our rather incompatible sentiments about Tamil and Malayalam cinema and its male "superstars", and made plans to watch KGF in the theatre next week. It was late evening when we approached the hamlet, and I was experiencing a rare moment of tranquility, rendered not only by the silence and stillness that I have come to associate with the perpetually cool, mountainous, forest path that leads to Thanchi hamlet, but also by the satisfaction of a successful interview and a good day's work. And then Soumya started speaking, and she shook me out of my momentary complacency. She said," Chechi, not everyone gets an opportunity to go and speak like this with someone like Ramesh sir, and to be invited to speak with the teachers in the bridge school is a big deal. I feel like we should do something, but what can we do?" Soumya's question was framed as a rhetorical one, but it is a question I have been struggling with. As a non-ST Malayalee who have had the privilege of listening and sharing everyday stories of ST youth and family, what can I do to honor their stories in ways that go beyond analyzing and sharing with the academy, and with government officers, who I know from experience, do not deign to engage with qualitative research. I feel unsettled for not engaging with Soumya's question. We had reached the hamlet, and to be honest, I might have put off that conversation intentionally. While I am excited at the prospect of brainstorming ideas for "doing something", I am also anxious and fear the consequences of doing something that will ruffle feathers and impact my increasingly tenuous relationship with AAC officers" (Fieldnotes, March 2022).

My reservations to engage with Soumya's question about 'doing something' was based on my assumptions about what a YPAR project 'ought' to do. I had little conviction that I could facilitate conditions in which young people learn about the ways in which "injustices are produced…are designed to privilege and oppress; but are ultimately challengeable and thus changeable" (Cammarota & Fine, 2008, p. 2). Upon reflection, I realized that these anxieties were premised upon my own assumption that what Soumya meant by "doing something" aligns with what I imagine as a researcher.

The next time I met with Soumya, I asked her what she meant by wanting to "do something" and inquired if she was thinking about any specific experience or event when she posed the question. She explained how a couple of years ago, SVAC school posted job vacancies for teachers. When Soumya and other qualified ST women in the hamlet arrived at the school on the date scheduled for interviews, they were told that the positions were already filled. It is well-

known in the hamlet, and among AAC and ITDP officers that they have only been hiring non-ST teachers in the SVAC school for over two decades. Soumya explained that she feels like "these people think that we don't understand or know what is going on because we remain silent. I just want them to know that we know". This discussion resulted in a series of events that led to the formation of YRAC.

Phase 1: From Consternation to Consideration (Meetings 1 and 2)

After learning about Soumya's experience, I told Soumya and Vrinda about the YPAR methodology, and the possibilities and challenges associated with doing such a project. I clarified that I have never been part of such a project, and that all I know about it is from what I've read and what I've learned from my 'teachers' in university. While I was discussing my own anxieties about the challenges of doing such a project, and listing all the problems we could encounter, Soumya put her hand on my shoulder, gave it a little shake and said, "Chechi don't take so much 'tension'. We'll just 'try' and see. Anyway, we are all free during the summer. At least we can all get together and chat".

After this conversation, I did not return to Thanchiyoor hamlet for a week. . I informed Soumya and Vrinda that I needed time to organize my increasingly unwieldy data. This was true to an extent, but I was also experiencing the consternation and doubt reflected in Maquire's (1999) question in her personal journal—"can I really do this?". I was keenly aware that any kind of organizing within the hamlet will be brought to AAC's notice and this could have repercussions on my ability to continue research. But more importantly, I feared that we could start a conflict within the hamlet from which I can easily withdraw but could have lasting impacts on the young people who will continue to live in Thanchiyoor. In our next meeting, when I shared that Soumya, Veena, and I might consider facilitating a group project with youth

from the hamlet, they responded with their own fears and consternations. Vrinda did not think such a project was realistic. And Soumya argued that the least they can do is try. This is a jottings-based recreation of the conversation that ensued:

> Vrinda: Nobody will come for things like this. People in this hamlet have their own little groups, and everyone is scared of everything."
> Soumya: What is the harm in trying? We don't want the entire hamlet to come no? Chechi, how many youth can be part of a project like this?
> Naivedya: I don't think that there is a limit. Decisions about participation are usually made during the initial stages of the project.
> Soumya: Ah, so that is fine. We know that our DYFI group will come. I spoke to Adheesh about our interview with Ramesh sir, and he was interested in knowing what we are doing.
> Vrinda: But then people will say that we discriminated against them and only invited DYFI people.
> Naivedya: We could think of a way to inform everyone in the hamlet that we are planning to do a youth research project (Soumya interrupts)
> Soumya: Yes, let us call an oorukootam (hamlet meeting) (Vrinda interrupts)
> Vrinda: You think people will come for an oorukootam if we call? They don't even come if the ST promoter or the moopan calls.
> Soumya, cautiously optimistic as always, argued in favor of organizing a hamlet meeting

until Vrinda grudgingly conceded. I offered to draft flyers and posters informing hamlet members about the youth research project and inviting them to an oorukootam. After reviewing, revising, and printing the flyers, we approached the hamlet head, and a representative of the hamlet elders for their feedback and consent. We personally reached out to over forty families in the hamlet, and posted flyers near the community kitchen, the community center, and the teashop.

An oorukootam to inform, brainstorm and inquire about initiating a youth research project was held on April 5, 2022. As Vrinda predicted, eight youth who came to the first meeting were affiliated with the Thanchiyoor unit of the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI)—a youth organization associated with the Communist Party of India (described in the next section). The meeting was held in the community center located adjacent to the community

kitchen, and we had scheduled the meeting during the evening meal in the hope that we could pique the interest of hamlet members who come to collect their meal. Elderly hamlet members and children sat with us in the community center while eating their meal. A few young people peeped in and said hello but did not join the meeting.

Meeting 1

During the first meeting, Soumya, Vrinda, and I spoke about what motivated us to think about doing a group project. 23-year-old Adheesh, one of the attendees, and the President of the DYFI Thanchiyoor unit wanted to know what the topic of the project would be, and before I could respond, Soumya declared, "the project must be about the educational problems that we face as ST youth". I reflected on this moment in my field notes:

> Soumya is clearly emerging as a leader in this project. Everyone who came to the meeting deferred to her on what the topic of inquiry should be. From our prior conversations I know that her personal interests lean toward advocating for maternal health, so I was not quite prepared for her resolute declaration about choosing education problems as the topic. Soumya's statement was followed by a short but lively discussion about misrepresentation of ST peoples in education, and society in general….I know that I should have clarified that the decision about the topic must be a collective one, but I also did not want to undermine Soumya's position within the group.

Meeting 2

Grounding this project in a YPAR approach means that the questions and themes that drive the project must be decided and iteratively reviewed by youth co-researchers (Cammarota, 2018.; Caraballo et al., 2017; Caraballo & Lyiscott, 2018). In order to convey this point to the group without undermining Soumya's leadership, for the next meeting, which was held in the community center just two days later, I prepared a multi-modal presentation reviewing youth-led projects conducted in India (Shah, 2015), Kenya (M. J. Bellino & Kakuma Youth Research Group, 2018), USA (Cahill, 2004; Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2013b), Canada (Bradford et al., 2017), and China (Leung et al., 2017). These projects employed a range of methods including photo-

voice, interviews, and autoethnographic reflections to understand and sometimes act on issues that were most relevant to youth in a particular context. Topics included (in)access to educational opportunities, celebration of youth identity, environmental precarities affecting youth, and gendered practices in young people's communities. The action or product of the projects I chose to show also varied, and included a digital story, a website and social media platform, photo display from a photovoice project, and audio essays. Soumya and Vrinda reviewed this presentation before the meeting, and Soumya said, "this is a good idea. Some of the youth told me that they were feeling shy because they don't know enough. This will be useful for them".

The second meeting ended with the eight youth and I agreeing to reflect on these different youth-led projects and to decide whether and how we wanted to participate. Before leaving, Adheesh invited me to attend the DYFI meeting scheduled to happen in Thanchiyoor on April 9. I view the events at this meeting as having confirmed the youth's interest and resolution to do this project. The rest of this chapter relies heavily on co-researchers'/collaborators' words and ideas to describe the remaining phases of this project.

Phase 2: Confirmation and Contemplation

Before YRAC's third meeting, I attended the DYFI unit meeting that Adheesh had invited me to. The Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) is a left-wing youth organization. Although DYFI's website rejects affiliation to any political party, members of the YRAC sought membership in the organization in order to ease the process for joining Kerala's Communist Party of India—Marxist (CPI(M)). Parents of all members of YRAC have been affiliated as a member or in a leadership role with DYFI, and later in CPI(M). Ms. Iswari Naresan who became the first ST woman to become the President of an administrative block in Kerala in 2019 began her political work with the DYFI, and the organization has historically

served as platform for youth with political aspirations to join the Left Democratic Front (LDF)—Kerala's current ruling political alliance. DYFI describes itself as a "forward looking and progressive youth organization inspired by anti-imperialist, democratic and socialist ideas who take up the idea of organising the young men and young women of our country" (DYFI website). DYFI's guiding motto is "Jobs for all, Education for all", and one of its 30 objectives is to "safeguard the rights of Dalits, minorities, tribal people and other deprived sections" (DYFI, 2022).

Four members of the YRAC occupy leadership positions within DYFI's Agali panchayat division. Adheesh is the President of the DYFI Thanchiyoor unit, Vrinda is the Vice President, Preetha is the Treasurer, and Dhaneesh is the Joint Secretary. The DYFI unit meeting was held in Thanchiyoor hamlet in an open area adjacent to the community center. Seven out of eight youth attended this meeting, which was presided over by Asha and Ajeesh, the regional President and Secretary of Attappady's DYFI wing. Asha, Ajeesh and I were the only Malayalees or non-ST peoples attending the meeting.

Meeting 3

Following this DYFI meeting, the YRAC co-researchers and I met in the community center, and this debriefing laid the foundation of the project that later came to be called the YRAC (Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective). Our meeting began with what I considered an uncharacteristic and tense silence. Hoping to cut the tension, I said that I was very impressed by how they advocated for their hamlet. Preetha, the treasurer of DYFI's Thanchiyoor interrupted to ask, "what is the point? They are just not listening. Chechi, how many times did I talk about repairing the bridge. I told three times. Still, they didn't include that point in the minutes of the DYFI meeting. They do this every time."

Preetha's assertation gave way to a heated discussion in which Adheesh, Vrinda, Dhanush, and Soumya recounted the many ways in which they were not heard by non-ST leaders of DYFI. I took this opportunity to suggest make two suggestions. I suggested that a youth project like the one that we have been planning could serve as a platform for amplifying their voices. I also proposed that through this project, we could think about ways to redirect DYFI leadership's attention to the priorities of Thanchiyoor youth and hamlet. Towards the end of the meeting, Preetha said, "Chechi, I was thinking of joining the project just to help you. But now I really want to do something". And Adheesh said, "Chechi you tell us how to start. We will take it from there."

Meeting 4: Identifying Relevant Issues, Concerns, and Debates

In the next meeting, which was held a week after the DYFI meeting, I organized an activity so that the group could get a sense of the questions that they would like to explore. I introduced the activity as a way to identify the driving issues of the group. YPAR methodology recommends that the youth frame their own research questions. However, I refrained from using language around 'identifying research questions' because in a previous meeting youth engaged more readily when asked about issues (vishayangal), concerns (aashankagal), and debates (vivadhangal) that were most pertinent to their daily lives. During the activity, the group reflected on three guiding questions: (1) In your educational, professional, and daily experiences, what moments, people, and actions have been most supportive for your learning and well-being? (2) In your educational, professional, and daily experiences, what moments, people and actions have posed challenges to your learning and well-being? (3) If you had the opportunity to design education practices for your siblings or children, what changes or additions would you make based on your life experiences? We wrote our ideas on sticky notes and stuck it on the wall. This

activity was accompanied by discussions about the stories or experiences behind each of our sticky notes, interspersed with laughter and reflection as we reminisced on moments from our schooling, post-secondary experiences, and everyday life.

Figure 6.1 Images from YRAC's meeting 4

As discussions were winding down, the meeting had already exceeded two hours, and children and hamlet members were starting to arrive at the community kitchen for their evening meals. I concluded the meeting saying that we can definitely identify the central issues that the group is interested in by thematizing the ideas in the sticky notes and its accompanying stories. Soumya, Vrinda, and Preetha volunteered to join me to do this, and before our next meeting, we had identifying three central issues: (1) Educational opportunities and ST representation; (2) Positive learning experiences and environments; and (3) Challenges faced by ST students in school. We wrote these issues and relevant sub-themes on a poster and displayed it in the community center. I offered to create a digital version of the poster and posted it on our WhatsApp group.

Meetings 5 and 6: Brainstorming and debating focus of inquiry

The next two meetings were held at the house I had rented near Thanchiyoor. This is because the youth wanted to select another location for the group meetings because the community center had too many "distractions". It was challenging to find a location within the hamlet that was convenient and agreeable to everyone due to lack of space and comfortable seating arrangements. Soumya and Vrinda, who had come to my place earlier asked whether I would be willing to host the meetings, and I readily agreed. These meetings that were held on two Saturdays in April, and each meeting lasted between three and five hours respectively. The meetings were like workshops during which we did activities and had extended discussions together and in break-out groups, while munching on biscuits, fruits, chips, and cake. We had two 'working' lunches during which, fueled by spicy Chicken Biriyani and decadent payasam, the group's focus of inquiry emerged and shifted. Initially we divided ourselves into groups and each group chose a topic and a 'product' that they would share. Soumya and Vrinda wanted to do a digital story about exclusionary practices in schools and professional spaces. Adheesh and Seema decided to explore how and why ST youth had access to limited post-secondary opportunities through an audio essay. While initially unable to reach a consensus about the topic, Anitha, Preetha, Dhanush, and Sheela agreed to examine to challenges faced by ST students in schools through a photo-voice project.

The first activity I suggested after deciding our topics was that we all free-write all our initial ideas and experiences related to our topics. I distributed index cards, but Vrinda wanted to know if I will be "checking" their answers. Even though I said that this was just to get our thoughts out and that I will only hear what they wanted to share with the group, there was a tense silence during which, with the exception of Soumya and Preetha who were writing fast and furiously, everyone else just looked at the card without writing anything. I waited for a few

minutes and was about to suggest that they could do this activity in pairs when, in a delightful demonstration of "developing the empowered self" (Elias, 2019):

> Seema said, "Chechi, instead of writing can we just talk about it. There is so much to say, but I don't know how to write all that".
> Preetha agreed and added: "we have so many important things to say. When I write I am not getting that 'flow'. Chechi, why don't we just talk like we usually do, and we can record what we are saying. Then we won't lose our ideas".
> I consider this moment as a transformative one, both for the group, and for myself as the

adult researcher. By challenging the modes of expression and documentation for this project, and thereby my own assumptions about the best way to arrive at a research topic, Seema and Preetha were asserting a central aspect of youth identity in YPAR collaborations—the awareness that their experiences, identity, and knowledges are important and valuable for making sense of and transforming injustice in their social context (Bellino, 2022; Cahill, 2004; Caraballo et al., 2017; Ginwright et al., 2006).

What followed was a discussion that lasted nearly 90 minutes during which the group debated, celebrated, raged, interrogated, and reflected about : (1) their dreams and hopes as individuals and as ST youth; (2) Madhu's murder (which I describe in Chapter 7) and what it has means for ST peoples in Attappady; (3) the pros and cons of India's reservation system for ST peoples in education and professional spaces; (4) the politics of development and youth activism in Attappady; (5) Post-secondary opportunity structures; and (6) health and education schemes that they encounter every day. I transcribed, coded, and summarized this discussion and in our next meeting, the group reviewed, changed, and added information during a 'gallery walk' style activity

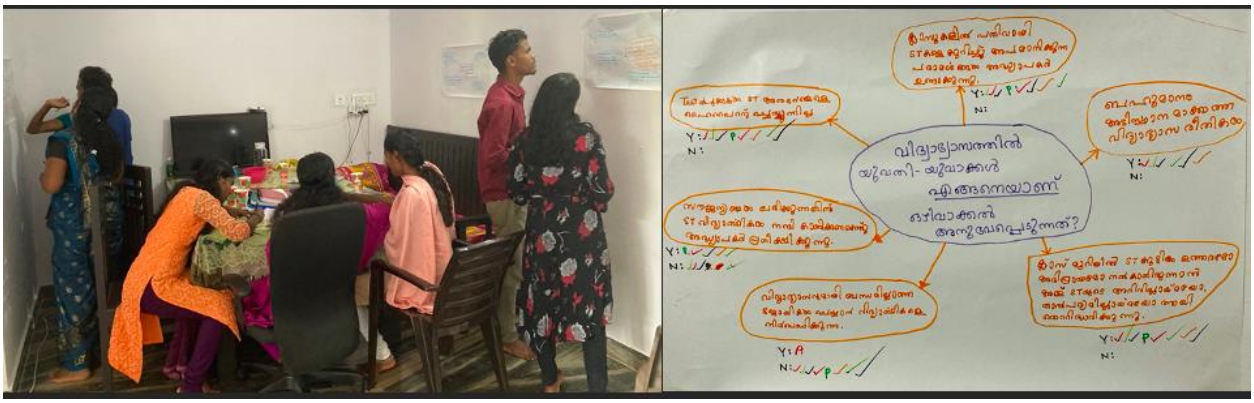


Figure 6.2 Images from YRAC meetings 5 and 6

During lunch that day, Soumya asked whether I really wanted them to cover different topics, and Preetha added that they wanted to make sure that "what we do must be useful to you, Chechi". My response was rooted in my understanding of critical YPAR in that I view this project as a way to learn about injustice with my co-thinkers, and to collectively think of ways to speak back to power in the hope of transforming current inequities. I emphasized that what I want is for us to collectively learn about any issue or problem that is most pertinent to this group. I recorded the group's response in my field notes:

> Soumya explained that the group had met in her house a few days ago and they were joined by her grandfather who was the first ST person to be elected as a board member of AAC. They wanted to do something "strong" for this project and were bouncing off ideas with each other. Adheesh interrupted to say that they were mainly just listening to the stories that 'muthasan' (grandfather) was saying because in his youth he was a pulli (tiger). He said that in the past, AAC's non-ST officers valued the inputs from muthasan and his peers, and Seema made it sound like he was chiding them for being "madiyanmaar" (lazy) and for not being active in furthering the cause of ST peoples… The AAC school was at the center of their discontentment… While discussing various aspects of AAC's actions and interventions over the past decade, Vrinda raised an issue that has influenced the learning experiences of members of the YRAC, as well as that of many children who attended the AAC high school—the practice of certifying ST students as disabled in order to 'allocate' a scribe who will write the 10th grade state board examination on the 'disabled' students' behalf. One YRAC member was certified as having a learning disability and allotted a scribe by the AAC school. However, the teachers in the YRAC member's higher secondary school (grades 11 and 12) did not detect any learning disabilities, and they were able to pass the 12th grade state board exam without the assistance of a scribe. After listening to their discussion and description of the

scribe issue, I shared that I viewed this as an excellent example of how education policy guidelines that are intended to support ST children are causing harm in practice.

I whole-heartedly welcomed the decision to focus on this issue and I rejoiced in the youth's ownership of the project and their desire to identify, understand, communicate, and hopefully transform an educational justice issue that is important to them.

Phase 3: Collaboration and Questions (Meetings 7-12)

With a focal topic to pursue, the YRAC examined the following questions: (1) What are national and state policy guidelines for allocating a scribe to write on behalf of students taking the 10^{th} standard Kerala state board examinations; and (2) What are the experiences of ST children from Thanchiyoor hamlet who were allocated a scribe for the state board exam? In order to account for our individual expertise, availability of resources and interests, we explored these questions by delegating the research methods over a period of six weeks. These methods include:

1. Identifying and analyzing relevant policy documents: Preetha, Soumya, and Naivedya
2. Preparing structured interview guide, selecting interview participants, and conducting interviews : Vrinda, Adheesh, Dhaneesh and Aarati
3. Analyzing interview-based notes for main themes: Soumya, Sheela, and Naivedya
4. Comparing policy guidelines with interviewee's experiences: Whole group, led by Preetha, Soumya, Adheesh, Sheela, and Naivedya

We created a "digital story" (Davis & Foley, 2016; Greene et al., 2018; Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2017) to disseminate our findings, and the final script is adapted from the many versions of the script that was co-written by Preetha, Soumya, Vrinda, Adheesh, Sheela, and Naivedya. Adheesh and Preetha provided stylistic inputs and videos, and the final edit was done by Naivedya.

In the next chapter, I present YRAC's findings by expanding on the two key takeaways from the digital story, which is published in YRAC's YouTube channel @YouthResearchersofAttappadyCollective. One, national and state guidelines insist that schools must conduct regular surveys and tests to identify children with disabilities at an early stage, preferably before the child enters high school. If a student is identified as having any of the 21 forms of disabilities listed in the policy, schools must provide the appropriate and consistent pedagogical and remedial support. However, all our interviewees and their peers who were allotted a scribe were identified as having learning disabilities less than six months before the 10^{th} standard state board examination. Two, while national policy guidelines have clear instructions, procedures, and extensive accountability measures for identifying and certifying a student as disabled, Kerala state's guidelines are brief and have been inconsistent in its various iterations over the past decade. Nevertheless, the experiences of interviewees' and their peers suggest that the schools and the medical system in Attappady are allied in wrongly certifying ST children as disabled, presumably with the goal of ensuring that schools in Attappady receive the much-coveted '100 percent pass' status in the state board exams. The YRAC and I expand on these findings in Chapter 7 .

YPAR as Response to Rupture: Implications for Educational 'Transformation'

Reflecting on her YPAR collaboration with the Kakuma Youth Research Group (KYRG), Bellino (2023) complicates expectations of transformative methodologies in ways that are pertinent to this research, and how I reframe YRAC's formation and processes of inquiry as methodologically *and* empirically significant. Told from the perspective of an "adult, Western, white, nonrefugee" co-researcher working with refugee youth in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, Bellino (2023) describes her initial surprise when youth co-researchers appeared to

respond to exclusionary schooling and post-secondary structures through "calls for expanding individualized opportunities" and actions that reinforce meritocratic scripts, despite the "awareness of the structural constraints of formal education" (p. 11). She makes sense of these tensions through a critical and ongoing reflection on how her "own conceptions of educational equity and justice", and expectations about 'transformative' responses to oppression, made KYRG's pursuit of ways to "stay motivated in the face of many challenges" and to "make school more bearable", unintelligible as critical action (p. 12). Similarly, my initial bifurcation of the origin and *processes* of YRAC as only methodological significant, and the *product* of the collaboration—the digital story, as the empirical evidence of transformative action, are indicative of my assumptions about what counts as critical, actionable responses to systemic exclusion.

In their multi-year YPAR project, Making Sense of Movements (MSOM), Black and Indigenous co-researchers and high school students in Toronto explored "school pushout" in the context of pervasive racism and inadequate responses by school personnel. Nixon, Habtom & Tuck (2022), the adult co-researchers of MSOM, situate the project in relation to "ongoing legacies of settlement and slavery", to argue in favor of theorizing interconnected systems of oppression and colonial violence (e.g., racism, antiblackness, casteism, anti-Indigeneity) as "a rupture rather than an injury". The authors introduce this theorization with a conjecture that is very similar to the perspectives of ST youth in Attappady—settler colonialism and anti-blackness constitute our everyday lives and is an "undeniable something lurking in the shadows" (p. 133). Framing racism and systemic exclusion and discrimination in education "as more than a treatable injury, but rather as a rupture caused by ongoing antiblackness and anti-Indigeneity" (p. 155), opens up possibilities beyond identity-based conceptions of inclusive education and measurement and testing-based strategies for inclusion.

For ST youth interlocutors in general, and the YRAC in particular, the topic of persistent exclusion matters because it allows them to make sense of and account for their experiences in educational, professional, and service spaces as structural ruptures that constitute their everyday lives in a settler-colonial context, rather than as individual failure that can be repaired through the 'right' kind of inclusive education and development intervention. Youth co-researchers' experiences with the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI), which I described earlier in this chapter, is an example of how their actions and activism are not invested in fixing structural inequities. Rather, they seek spaces and knowledge, and employ strategies that allow them to "survive and sustain hope within a restrictive context" (Bellino, 2023, p. 2) that continually disrespect their personhood and deny their intelligence and creativity. As Preetha explained to Adheesh, "Malayalees from outside Attappady are making all the decisions here. Their worldviews are 'different', and it is not like they are our mother or father that they will care about us. That is why we must stand together…At least they will know that we can recognize all the things they our doing in our name" (YRAC meeting transcript, May 2022). In Chapter 7, the YRAC and I expand on these knowledges and strategies that ST youth employ to navigate, not repair settler-colonial education and development structures.

Chapter 7 Denials, Risks, and the Right to Complex Personhood: Insights from the Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective (YRAC)

Madhu, a young ST man from the upper-Thanchiyoor hamlet, was beaten to death by a mob of non-ST/settlers and the police in February 2018. Five years have passed since Madhu's murder, but he continues to stay in the memory of ST peoples in Attappady. Co-researchers of the Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective (YRAC) still recall the events of the day when Madhu—beaten, bound, and partially disrobed, was paraded through Thanchiyoor all the way to the main road by a large group of non-ST/settler, Malayalee men who were heard chanting, "kallane pidiche, kallane pidiche—we caught the thief, we caught the thief). Madhu had allegedly stolen tomatoes and rice from a local grocery store, for which he paid with his life.

Madhu's death was followed by an uproar of demands for justice from national and state news and social media outlets. Two members of the YRAC were part of a committee that was formed by the state's Integrated Tribal Development Project office to monitor the progress of police investigations into the cause and perpetrators of Madhu's murder. The committee was dismantled in 2020 when the ST committee members expressed dissatisfaction about the ways in which the role of the state and forest police in Madhu's death were being unaddressed. In March 2023, the state's SC/ST special court described Madhu's murder as the "first lynching case" in the state of Kerala and charged 14 non-ST/settler men to seven years of "rigorous imprisonment" (Express News Service, April 6 2023). The state police was acquitted of all charges.

Calls for justice in the Madhu murder case are usually accompanied by an image of Madhu, his hands bound by his lungi, his shirt torn off, and his body covered in mud, as a group

of non-ST men interrogate him. I present one of these frequently used photographs with a key alteration. Drawing inspiration from Gonzalez-Day's 'Erased Lynching' (Gonzalez Day, cited in Tuck & Yang, 2012), I have removed Madhu from the picture, to redirect the viewer's attention—from the pain and humiliation of an ST youth towards the settlers and the impunity with which they occupy and violate ST bodies on ST land.

Figure 7.1 Redirecting gaze: From Madhu to Settler

By altering the photograph and redirecting the viewer's gaze to the perpetrators of violence, I highlight a key theme that emerged from the YRAC's work, which also responds to

my third research question—*as co-thinkers in a collaborative inquiry project, how do ST youth advocate for transforming inclusive education policy and practice?* Based on three months of self-reflections, open and focused discussions, structured interviews with ST youth in Thanchiyoor hamlet, and consultation with hamlet elders, the YRAC advocates a redirection of gaze—from the perceived disadvantages and damages of ST youth and children to the worldviews and practices of those who exclude and discriminate. YRAC's findings extend the insights presented in Chapter 5 by demonstrating the ways in which ST youth are navigating structural discrimination and persistent exclusion while living in a still-colonial context.

Even as youth assert that the unconditional restoration of land and ST self-determination are central to any inclusion-oriented intervention, in this chapter, the YRAC offers to offer insights about reframing inclusive education in ways that are relevant to ST youth's everyday experiences. Additionally, YRAC is engaging in a dual pedagogy (Scorza et al., 2017)—by teaching each other about the nuances of education policy guidelines and its connections to their everyday experiences, and by teaching me, and the audiences of the digital story about how policies that are designed to include 'Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Groups' (to use the term employed by India's Ministry of Education), result in exclusionary and harmful practices. When viewed in relation to the ways in which inclusion in framed in global and national education policies, YRAC's findings illustrate that ST youth advocate for transforming inclusive education by drawing on their experiential learning to unsettle policy assumptions about the subjects of inclusion and about the actions and strategies that are legible as participation in education.

The first section of this chapter describes the findings of YRAC's focal project—the exploration of the 'scribe allotment puzzle' or the misuse of disability accommodations in Attappady's schools, and the digital story uploaded on YRAC's YouTube page to represent these

findings. Next, I build on these findings and the research process to offer youth's navigational strategies that remain largely unaccounted in dominant understanding of youth action and resistance. In the final section, I reflect on the implications of YRAC's work on reorienting inclusive education policies.

A note on authorship. The first section of this chapter that describes the 'scribe allotment puzzle' and the digital story is co-written by the YRAC. The section is adapted from the script that was written by Preetha, Soumya, Vrinda, Adheesh, Sheela, and I. Therefore, I use the first-person, plural pronoun (we) in the section. In the following sections, I use the first-person, singular pronoun, even as I draw heavily on recorded and transcribed YRAC meetings and discussion to present their/our insights.

Well-Intentioned Policies and Harmful Practices: YRAC's Exploration of the Misuse of Disability Accommodation Guidelines in Attappady Schools

In this section, the YRAC presents the findings of our focal inquiry, which is guided by two related questions: (1) what are national and state policy guidelines for providing accommodations for children with disabilities during the tenth-class state board examination? and (2) what are the experiences of ST children from Thanchiyoor hamlet who were provided accommodations for the state board exam? Chapters 4 and 6 detail the rationale and significance for focusing our inquiry on disability accommodations. These chapters also describe the processes and methods we employed to explore these questions. In order to account for our individual expertise, availability of resources and interests, we explored these focal questions by delegating the research methods over a period of six weeks. These methods include:
we explored these focal questions by delegating the research methods over a period of six weeks. These methods include:

1. Identifying and analyzing relevant policy documents: Preetha, Soumya, and Naivedya
2. Preparing structured interview guide, selecting interview participants, and conducting interviews : Vrinda, Adheesh, Dhaneesh and Aarati
3. Analyzing interview-based notes for main themes: Soumya, Sheela, and Naivedya
4. Comparing policy guidelines with interviewee's experiences: Whole group, led by Preetha, Soumya, Adheesh, Sheela, and Naivedya

To represent and disseminate our findings, we created a digital story, which is uploaded on YRAC's YouTube page (@YouthResearchersofAttappadyCollective). The final script of the digital story is adapted from the many versions co-written by Preetha, Soumya, Vrinda, Adheesh, Sheela, and Naivedya. Adheesh and Preetha provided stylistic inputs and videos, and the final edit was done by Naivedya. In this section, we first describe our policy findings from the national and state guidelines we analyzed. Then, we highlight ST youth's experiences of being allotted disability accommodations by drawing on structured interviews with three youth recipients of accommodations from Thanchiyoor hamlet. Finally, we reflect on the potential reasons for why a policy that is intended to be inclusive results in exclusionary and harmful practices in Attapady. We conclude this section with YRAC's digital story.

Policy Findings: National and State Guidelines for Scribe Allotment

Ensuring the inclusion and participation of children with disabilities in the schooling system is considered one of the highest priorities of India's latest national education policy (NEP 2020). The policy defers to the Right to Education Act (RTE 2009), and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPWD 2016) to define inclusive education as one in which "students with and without disabilities learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students" (NPE 2020, p. 26). Since the latest policy implementation framework (SSA 2022) was not published during this research, we

consulted the framework published in 2018 (SSA 2018). The rationale for this decision was that both NEP 2020 and SSA 2018 provided guidelines for inclusion based on the RPWD act 2016.

National Guidelines for Ensuring Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities

According to SSA 2018 and the Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) scheme, all government and government-aided schools are required to ensure access to all children, including children with disabilities. The policy refers to children with disabilities as CWSN (Children with Special Needs), and it lists 21 types of disabilities that government schools must be prepared to accommodate. This includes visual and hearing disability, intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, general and specific learning disabilities, and others. According to the policy, children diagnosed with one or more of the 21 disabilities with a "severity rating of 40 percent or higher" are entitled to request accommodations during the 10th standard state board examination (p. 20). These accommodations include providing compensatory time, permitting assistive devices, and allotting a "reader", "prompter" or "scribe" to assist the student during the examination.

The guidelines for providing accommodations to children with disabilities are accompanied by important caveats from the Rights to Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act regarding schools' responsibilities in identifying and mentoring these children. First, schools are required to "detect specific learning disabilities in children at the earliest and take suitable pedagogical and other measures" to support them (SSA, 2018, p. 61). Secondly, state governments and local authorities must conduct a survey of school children every five years to identify children with disabilities and to monitor the extent to which their needs are met in schools. Thirdly, schools must provide a stipend of 200 rupees per month (approximately $25) to girls with disabilities to encourage their regular participation. These caveats are intended to

ensure equal participation as well as to empower children with disabilities and their parents to choose and advocate for the right educational support when they appear for the 10th standard board examinations.

Kerala's guidelines for disability certification and scribe allotment

Unlike the national implementation framework and the RPWD act 2016, Kerala state's guidelines on the inclusion of children with disabilities that we were able to access were unclear. For instance, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Kerala) Rules, 2020, refers to CWSN only once and in relation to special institutions "dealing" with children with disabilities (p. 8). The Kerala Disability Act, 2015, holds the health, social justice, and local self-government departments responsible for providing "detection and early intervention measures" at the panchayath level (p. 12). According to the act, schools are responsible for developing "appropriate methods to assess and identify children with disabilities", providing "adequate and appropriate support services", and adapting the curriculum and pedagogical measures to meet the needs of children with disabilities (pp. 16-17). We were unable to locate policy guidelines for implementing these policy mandates. However, the state education department publishes a "Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) Notification" annually, and we analyzed the notifications for 2012, 2016, and 2022 to understand the state's process for certifying a student as disabled and for allotting a scribe. Although there are minor variations in the three notifications, the broad set of guidelines are as follows:

1. To certify a student as having a disability, the student must be examined by two doctors in the presence of their parent, and a teacher from the school that they are enrolled in. First, a doctor specializing in the relevant area of disability will examine the student and identify the type and severity of the disability.
2. The student will be tested again by the Chief Medical Officer, Civil Surgeon, or Superintendent of the hospital, who will then provide a certificate recommending accommodations for the student. The national and state policies include a recommended

format for this certificate. However, the type of tests to be administered to the students are unspecified.

3. If a student has a disability certificate with a severity rating that exceeds 40 percent, they are entitled to a range of accommodations during state board examinations. Although national guidelines provide some flexibility in terms of who can request a scribe or a reader (GoI, 2018, p. 2), the 2012 and 2016 state notification clarifies that only students diagnosed with dysgraphia are allowed to request a scribe (SSLC, 2021, p. 13). The 2022 notification does not provide any specific guidelines for the types of disability that can be allotted a scribe. The 2022 notification does not offer any particular criteria for determining which disabilities and eligible for requesting a scribe during examinations.

After we generated these initial policy findings, we decided to compare these specific policy guidelines and processes with the experiences of youth in the hamlet who were allotted a scribe by the AAC school during the state board examinations. Only three youth from the hamlet agreed to be interviewed about their experiences. We will refer to our interviewees as Ramesh, Vanya, and Ritwik. Ramesh graduated from tenth grade in 2015, Vanya graduated in 2018, and Ritwik wrote his 10th standard state board exam in March 2022. Our analysis of youth experiences in relation to policy guidelines revealed how, in the absence of targeted measures to address structural discrimination, well-intentioned policies can exacerbate the exclusion experienced by ST youth.

Scribe allotment process: Youth experiences

School's process for identifying candidates for scribe allotment

Ramesh, Vanya, and Ritwik all graduated from AAC high school. However, only Ritwik remembers the number of students who were allotted a scribe in his cohort of 18 tenth graders for the 2022 state board exam. Out of the 18 students, 15 were allotted a scribe. This information was confirmed by the non-ST/settler facilitator who spent time at AAC school in January 2022. All interviewees were called to the Principal's office, and they were informed that "someone else

will write the exam for [them]" (Vanya). A teacher from the school visited the interviewee's parents and suggested that their child will have a better chance of 'passing' the board examination if the parent consents to having the child tested for a "writing difficulty" (Ramesh). We spoke to Vanya's mother, who explained:

> Vanya's social studies teacher came to see me a few months before the exam. He said that there is a way to make sure that Vanya will pass in all subjects and that many students in Vanya's cohort is using this facility. He made it sound like it was good opportunity, and he said that all we would have to do was agree to send Vanya for a small test to show that she has a writing difficulty and then someone else will be allowed to help her write the exam. At the time I thought it was good. If she passes and gets decent marks in the tenth standard board exam, then she can get admission in the Model Residential School. I found out later that the test was to show that Vanya has some sort of problem (points to head).

Like Vanya and her mother, Ramesh and his mother readily agreed to the tests because they assumed it was a good way to ensure that they would pass the examination. However, they were unaware that being certified as requiring a scribe would mean that Ramesh's school leaving certificate would indicate that he has some form of disability. On the other hand, Ritwik was initially unconvinced that he needed help to write, especially because he knew that it would be indicated on his certificate:

> I asked them why they are taking me for these tests. I know that I don't have any writing difficulties. Then the teacher told me that I don't come to school regularly and so I will need help to pass the exam…I have not seen my certificate yet, but because I was given a scribe, I am sure that the certificate will say that I have some mental problems. And all because I didn't go to school regularly. If students don't come to school, then there must be a reason. The teachers don't ask about that.

It is possible that Vanya and Ramesh were less informed about the scribe allotment process, as it appears that the practice became more widespread after the 2013-2014 academic year. Although we were unable to locate any policy changes to support this claim, two members of the YRAC

who graduated from AAC school in 2014 stated that none of the students in their cohort or senior class was allotted a scribe.

Testing for imaginary disabilities

All interviewees were taken for the 'tests' by a teacher from the school. Ramesh was accompanied by his mother, but Vanya and Ritwick did not have a parent or guardian with them. Vanya and Ramesh had similar testing experiences. They were both taken to a hospital in Attappady, and they were asked to wait in a room with students from other schools. They were asked to identify a few Malayalam alphabets and read a few sentences. Then they waited until all the students from AAC school were tested, and then they returned to Thanchiyoor. Harish and Vanya explained their testing process:

> **Ramesh**: We were first taken to a hospital in Palakkad, but they sent us back saying that they don't do these types of tests. Then we went to a hospital in Attappady. The doctor asked me to write a few alphabets on a board and made me read some sentences. Then he said this boy is okay. But I still got a scribe, and in my certificate, it says that I have a mental problem.
> **Vanya**: Everyone in our batch was taken to a hospital in Attappady, and before we went in, our teacher told us not to do anything that the doctor instructed. He asked me to read some sentences and write Malayalam alphabets, and I knew everything. But our teacher was standing there, and I was a bit scared to do something that he asked us not to do. So, I pretended like I didn't know anything. But in my 12th standard state board exam, I passed without a scribe. The teachers there knew that I don't have any problems.

Harish and Vanya's experiences demonstrate the lack of information provided to students and parents about the process and consequences of scribe allotment. Ramesh expressed confusion and disappointment about being certified as having a mental disability, while Vanya and her mother continue to be frustrated and angry about the misinformation and its consequences. As Vanya's mother stated, once the hamlet members know that a student was allotted a scribe, they will assume that "there is something wrong with the child". This sense of

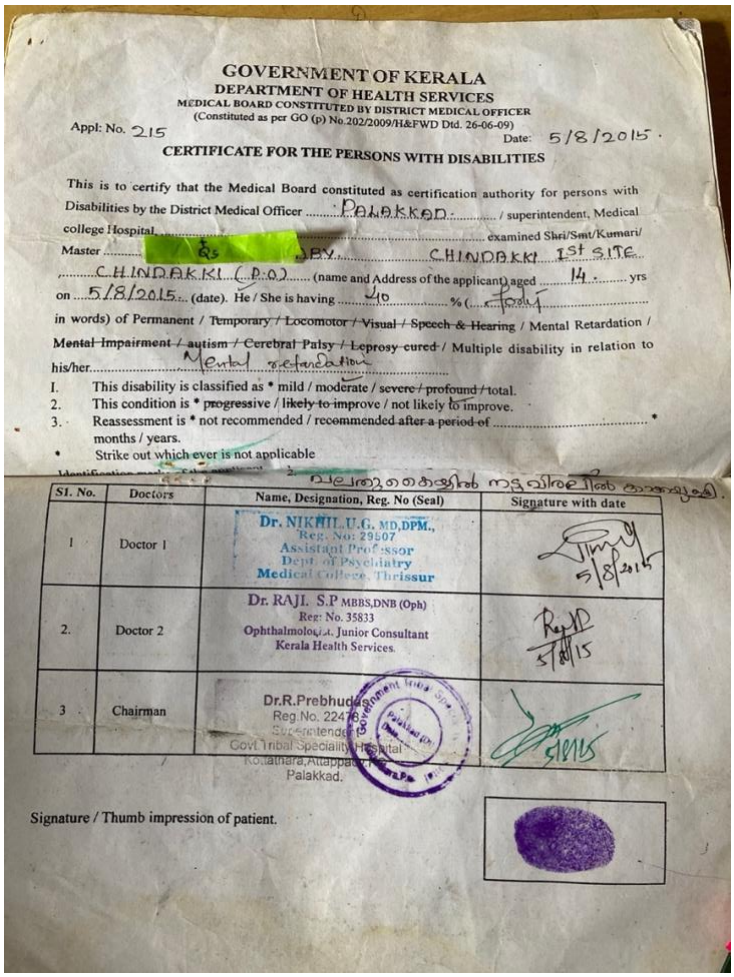
frustration was shared by Ritwick, who said that in his case, the teachers and 'doctors' did not even pretend like students were being tested:

> We were taken to a school. There were many students there, and some people were sitting behind a row of benches. We were called one at a time, and they asked me some basic information like my name, my parent's name, and my address. Then I read some alphabets that were written on the board…I don't know what kind of doctors they are or which hospital they came from. They will ask us to do something, and we must just do it without asking any questions.

A member of YRAC (Adheesh) who participated in protests against the Tribal Specialty Hospital in Attappady for ill-treatment of ST women, and the lack of infrastructure and medical supplies suggests that the testing might have been shifted to a school because ST and social activists have been closely monitoring the hospital's activities.

Imaginary Disabilities and Real Consequences

Regardless of where the testing is done, the YRAC is in complete agreement with Ritwick's assertion that ST youth and peoples are expected to unquestioningly comply with the demands of non-ST/settlers and accept the imaginary categories and identities that position us as unambitious, backward, and lazy. We are grateful to Ramesh for sharing his secondary school leaving certificate with us (Photograph 5), which demonstrates the duplicity of the scribe allotment process.



GOVERNMENT OF KERALA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
MEDICAL BOARD CONSTITUTED BY DISTRICT MEDICAL OFFICER
(Constituted as per GO (p) No.202/2009/H&FWD Dtd. 26-06-09)

Appl: No. 215 Date: 5/8/2015.

CERTIFICATE FOR THE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

This is to certify that the Medical Board constituted as certification authority for persons with Disabilities by the District Medical Officer PALAKKAD. / superintendent, Medical college Hospital ..... examined Shri/Smt/Kumari/ Master [redacted] S/O ..... CHINDAKKI 1st SITE ..... CHINDAKKI (P.O) (name and Address of the applicant) aged 14. yrs on 5/8/2015 (date). He / She is having 40 % (forty in words) of Permanent / ~~Temporary / Locomotor / Visual / Speech & Hearing~~ / Mental Retardation / ~~Mental Impairment / autism / Cerebral Palsy / Leprosy cured~~ / Multiple disability in relation to his/her Mental retardation

1. This disability is classified as * mild / moderate / ~~severe / profound~~ / total.
2. This condition is * ~~progressive / likely to improve~~ / not likely to improve.
3. Reassessment is * not recommended / recommended after a period of ..... * months / years.

* Strike out which ever is not applicable

Sl. No.	Doctors	Name, Designation, Reg. No (Seal)	Signature with date
1	Doctor 1	Dr. NIKHIL.U.G. MD,DPM., Reg. No: 29507 Assistant Professor Dept. of Psychiatry Medical College, Thrissur	5/8/2015
2.	Doctor 2	Dr. RAJI. S.P MBBS,DNB (Oph) Reg: No. 35833 Ophthalmologist, Junior Consultant Kerala Health Services.	5/8/15
3	Chairman	Dr.R.Prebhudas Reg.No. 22478 Superintendent Govt.Tribal Speciality Hospital Kottathara,Attappady Palakkad.	5/8/15

Signature / Thumb impression of patient.

Figure 7.2 Manufacturing disabilities: Tenth class school leaving certificate

We compared Ramesh's disability certificate with his account of the testing process, and what we know about him as a fellow youth in Thanchiyoor hamlet. The following unanswered questions emerged from the comparison:

1. Ramesh stated that he was taken to a hospital in Palakkad, and on being denied testing, he was brought to a hospital in Attappady. If this is the case, then why is the attesting psychiatrist located in Thrissur Medical College which is located in another district?
2. Ramesh does not have visual disabilities. Why has an eye specialist co-signed the certificate?
3. Ramesh confirmed that he was able to read and write everything that was required of him during the test. Why has he been diagnosed with "mental retardation" with 40 percent severity?
4. Ramesh has won prizes in drawing competitions and clay modelling. Some of the sculptures displayed in the AAC school staff room was created and donated by him. If

> teachers had suspected that Ramesh had any form of learning disability, as a creative young person, Ramesh might have been open to remedial support to address his difficulties. Why wasn't Ramesh tested in eighth or ninth standard? Why was the disability diagnosed in August 2015, a mere seven months before Ramesh was due to appear for the state board examination?

These unanswered questions demonstrate the real and ongoing harm perpetuated against ST youth in educational spaces. More importantly, it begs yet another question—why do schools misuse disability accommodation guidelines?

Why do schools misuse disability accommodation guidelines?

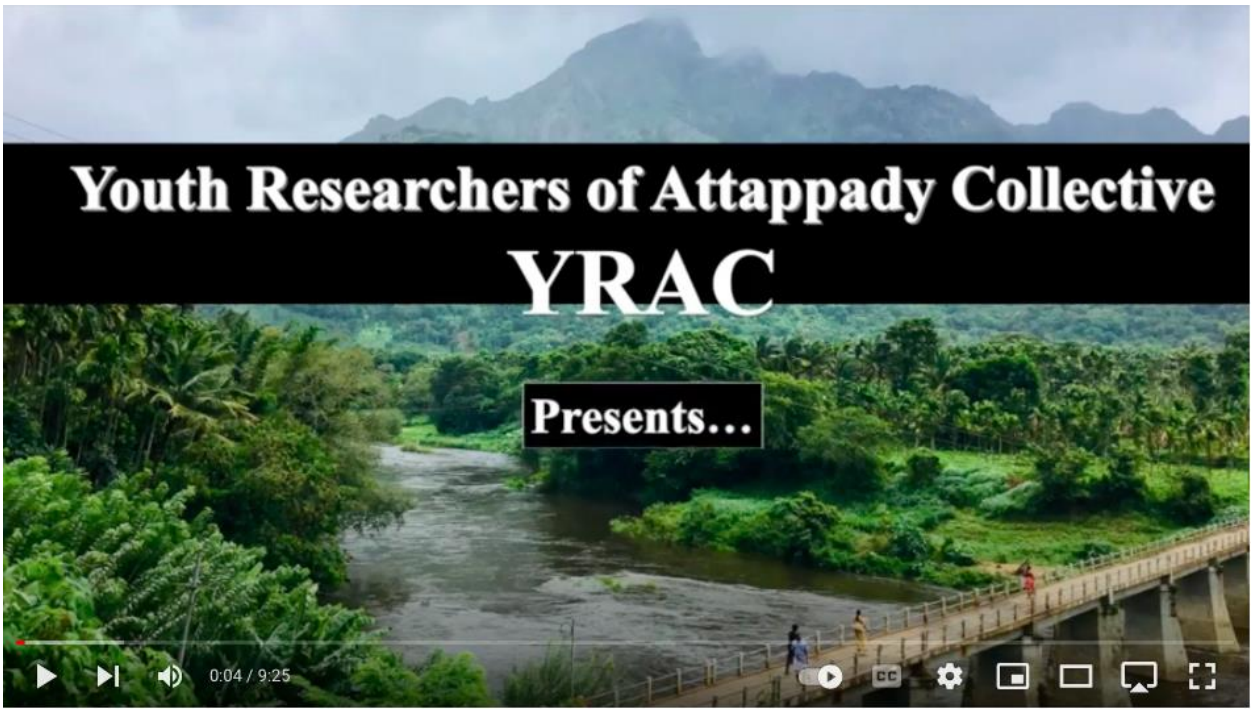
Soumya, Vrinda, and Naivedya interviewed a prominent ST activist who stated that the activist has been receiving reports of malpractices and wrongful certification from ST youth across Attappady. They claimed that schools are under increasing pressure to ensure that all students receive 'passing marks' of 35 out of a total of 100 for every subject. Teachers and administrators in Attappady fear that government and government-aided schools that are unable to maintain this "100 percent pass" status will either be closed or merged with a more successful school. The activist speculates that schools provide scribes to students that are unlikely to receive passing marks.

We did not find evidence or guidelines that describe the consequences or the measures that will be taken against a school if it does not receive the 100 percent pass status in the 10^{th} standard state board examination. Policy indicators that assess school performance primarily focus on transition rates from primary to secondary school, achieving level appropriate language and mathematics skills based on test-based assessment in classes 3, 5, and 8, and maintaining high enrolment and retention rates, and regular attendance (Performance Grading Index, 2021).

Although it is possible that schools receive guidelines that are not publicly available, news coverage about the state board exam results suggest that pass percentages are considered

important indicators of school and student success. For example, this year's state board exam results were published in June 2022, immediately after we interviewed Ramesh, Vanya, and Ritwick. The prominent newspapers we read included headlines like, "Kerala SSLC exam results published: Overall pass percentage is 99.26 percent" (Malayala Manorama), and "Kerala SSLC results: 2314 schools record 100 percent pass status" (Mathrubhoomi). Besides, in many schools in Attappady and all over Kerala, after the exam results are published, enlarged photos of students who received A+ in all subjects are displayed in and around the school. Therefore, even though we do not have access to official guidelines or indicators, it is clear that pass percentages and grades have become important measures of school success.

The YRAC presents these findings in a digital story that is linked below [external link—opens on YouTube]. The digital story is a summary of our findings in Malayalam, and it does not contain English subtitles.



YRAC insight 1: On Refusals and the Subjects of Inclusion

The findings in the previous section, which is co-authored by the YRAC, illustrate how a policy guideline intended for the equitable inclusion of children with disabilities is being translated into exclusionary and harmful practices and experiences in Attappady's schools. In this section, I draw on these findings, and on YRAC's discussions, reflections, and peer-interviews to highlight YRAC's stance on the subjects of ST inclusion.

I found that the co-researchers of YRAC are opposed to any intervention, educational or otherwise, that perpetuate the myth that ST peoples are 'backward'. As described in Chapter 5, youth in Thanchiyoor are noticing the strategies like "spectatorship" and "colonial unknowing" that the settler-colonial development apparatus employs to sustain the myth of ST peoples' backwardness. However, youth also recognize that they have limited access to resources and institutional support that is crucial for resisting, or at least successfully navigating discriminatory educational practices. The frustration associated with recognizing the various forms of exclusion that ST youth encounter, and being unable to navigate these exclusions in ways that preserve our dignity and intelligence is evident in YRAC's peer-interviewee Ramesh's insight about who should be eligible for requesting disability accommodations:

> Someone like Preetha's brother should be given a scribe because he was diagnosed with a mental illness when he was a small boy. Then the boy who lives next to the hamlet head's house, he should also be given a scribe because he has that problem with his hand, and he won't be able to write fast. But in my case, and someone like Vanya, we can read and write well. But our teachers did not understand us. They were never interested in what we know, and the things we can do. Even someone like Ritwick, I know he is curious, and he wants to learn new things. But he does not know how to express his interests, so teachers think that he is lazy and careless, and then they give him this disability certificate. ST students have to take extra effort to prove what we are capable of. We have to keep showing them that we

have knowledge and talents. We should be more confident. Maybe then they will stop this scribe allotment.

Not only is Ramesh aware of the type of disabilities that are eligible for scribe allotment, but his observation about how ST youth are also misunderstood by teachers and educators, resonates with all members of the YRAC. Ramesh's insights and methods of navigating discriminatory practices align with Indigenous scholar Martin Nakata's view of Indigenous agency, as well as YRAC's own strategies for making sense of their everyday experiences. Nakata (2007) asserts that life in a colonial context prompts Indigenous peoples to adopt self-interested and pragmatic forms of sense-making as a response to the "seemingly absurd logic of colonial reasoning" (p. 432). For Nakata, this form of Indigenous agency can be practiced through "myriad refusals, non-engagements, and ambivalent or conditional deferrals of and to colonial meaning" (p. 433). The latter of these strategies might explain Ramesh's hope that the system will change if ST youth are confidently able to demonstrate their talents and knowledges.

During a debriefing meeting, I asked the co-researchers about their thoughts on Ramesh's hope that educational malpractices will end if ST children and youth demonstrate their confidence and knowledges. The following discussion ensued:

Sheela: Ramesh is right. Most of us are silent and aloof, especially in the presence of non-ST people.
Aarathi: I don't know if things will change if we show more confidence, but Sheela is right. Sometimes I stay silent because that is the safest thing to do.
Preetha: Most of us do that. We stay silent because whenever we speak, they ignore us or trivialize what we say. That is okay. But I don't think that we are the ones who have to change.
Saritha interrupts: I don't think that anything that we do will change the way they treat us.

While the YRAC supports and employs non-engagements and refusals as strategies to navigate life in a still-colonial Attappady, they remain unconvinced that the burden of changing the system must fall on ST youth. The YRAC agrees that a majority of ST youth, including

themselves have remained silent and aloof, and they concede that this might explain why teachers assume that ST children have imaginary learning disabilities. Regardless, they refused the notion that ST youth should change to meet the expectations of non-ST/settlers. In the same debriefing meeting Adheesh noted that teachers, development practitioners and non-ST/settlers around Kerala and India have been systematically educated into viewing ST peoples as "below their standard", and to perceive ST dispossession as normal or necessary for development. Preetha noted that ST youth frequently encounter situations in which they are expected to accept assaults on their dignity with grace, because it is supposed to be "for our own good" (Preetha). Emphasizing how exclusionary practices are justified, Adheesh said:

> If we say anything or argue, they will say that we must be grateful because so much money, time, and effort is being spent to help ST people. If we remain silent, then they will say 'oh these kids are too shy'…something like this scribe problem will only happened in Attappady and to ST peoples.

YRAC and ST youth's frequently navigate this tightrope act. On the one hand, resisting or even pointing out discrimination might lead to shaming or exclusion. On the other hand, silence and "invisibility functions both as a mode of protection and a risk" (Bellino, 2017, p. 208) since remaining silent or appearing indifferent to this type of patronizing 'support' can reproduce myths of ST youth as lazy and passive. Therefore, even as YRAC hesitates to directly resist the misuse of disability accommodations, they refuse to share Ramesh's hope that non-ST/settlers will include and respect ST youth if they work a bit harder, speak more confidently, or excel in school. There is no "cruel optimism" (Berlant, 2011) or "deceptive hope" (Bellino, 2020) here. The YRAC is emphatic in their assertion that structural exclusion in education can only be addressed if non-ST/settlers "learn to respect people who they consider different from them" (Personal Interview, Preetha, April 2022).

I view YRAC's decision to create the digital story as a signifier of "refusal" as a generative stance (Tuck, 2009; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Through the digital story, YRAC is not simply declining to change to meet the manufactured standards of non-ST/settlers, they are inviting viewers to rethink and question taken-for-granted assumptions about ST youth and inclusive education practices. By deciding to create a product that can be viewed and understood both by ST peoples and non-ST/settlers, the YRAC is asserting their refusal of pre-figured identities by redirecting the viewers' gaze from the perceived deficits of ST youth, towards the discriminatory, colonial apparatus and its "spectatorship for pain" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 323). The digital story also represents YRAC's efforts to reorient the focus and goals of inclusive education policies by drawing attention to how a misalignment between policy goals and indicators of success are resulting in the misuse of disability accommodation guidelines. They illustrate this misalignment by comparing the goals of policy guidelines with their experiences to suggest that as long as success in the state board examinations is measured through indicators like schools with '100 percent pass status', or students who have received many A+ grades, the guidelines will continue to exclude both ST children and children with disabilities.

Reflecting on the implications of these findings, I suggest that the digital story and YRAC's critical theorizations about ST agency and capacities demonstrate the difference between "the category of [ST] youth and the lives of [ST] youth" (Cerecer, Cahill, & Bradley, 2013, p. 217). Through their research and work, the YRAC joins critical youth around the world who have reframed how young people's capacities are viewed from passive recipients to active agents and critical thinkers (Bellino, 2022; Ginwright et al., 2006; Kirshner, 2009). By examining the misalignment between inclusive education policy and the ways in which ST youth experience it, the YRAC stays in solidarity with critical youth groups who continue to refuse,

resist, conform, and transform the exclusionary and often colonial terrain that they navigate (Burke et al., 2017; Delgado, 2015; González Ybarra, 2022; Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2018).

YRAC Insight 2: The Risks and (Im)possibilities of Youth Action

I regard the YRAC as an example of a "youthtopia". Akom, Ginwright, and Cammarotta (2008) define youthtopias as spaces where:

> youth depend on one another's skills, perspectives, and experiential knowledge, to generate original, multi-textual, youth-driven cultural products that embody a critique of oppression, a desire for social justice, and ultimately lay the foundation for community empowerment and social change (p. 3).

Based on the actions, processes, and activities of YRAC described in this chapter, and in Chapter 4 and 6, YRAC aligns with every aspect of Akom et al. (2008) definition of youthtopia. However, what happens when co-researchers disagree on the modes of sharing the "original, multi-textual, youth-driven cultural product" that they created, even when they unanimously agree that it represents their ingenuity, creativity, and discernment? What if youth refuse to risk the consequences of sharing this original, cultural product with educators, development practitioners, and non-ST/settlers, who they fear are unwilling to unlearn their views of ST youth as vulnerable, passive recipients who need to be uplifted/helped/safeguarded but never heard/consulted/respected? In this section, I draw on the tensions that arose while brainstorming ways to disseminate and publish the digital story point to reflect on the ways in which persistent structural discrimination, non-ST/settlers' colonial unknowing, and an awareness of the dangerous consequences of resistance can alter a youthtopia.

YRAC's work illustrates that facilitating "counter-spaces" Solorzano et al. (2000) and "youthtopias" can elicit stories, debates, reflections, and products that disrupt common-sense assumptions about the capacities of ST youth, as well as complicate dominant conceptions of inclusion in education policy and practice. The digital story is a product that has emerged from

this counterspace, and it was specifically selected as a mode of representation with the goal of sharing it in multiple social media platforms. For example, during the seventh meeting, we decided to focus our inquiry on the scribe allotment issue, I wondered what medium we would prefer. Adheesh said, “it has to be something serious and bold (kaaryamaayi kaanikannam)”. Soumya and Vrinda chimed in saying that it must be something “we can put on Facebook” and share with our friends and family. Preetha said that she preferred a video or “something we can tag education officials”. Amidst all the excitement, Sheela who was sitting beside me whispered, “I think this is going to cause problems”. She shared her apprehensions about getting into trouble with AAC and ITDP if they know “we did this”. Preetha immediately presented options to conceal our identity, and I explained the ways in which I can assist in maintaining anonymity. After revisiting other YPAR projects that I had compiled for YRAC’s initial meetings, we decided to choose digital story as our medium. We chose Malayalam as the language of the story because as Vrinda pointed out, the digital story must be accessible to Irula STs, as well as STs from other tribes and non-ST people.

Several weeks later, during our 11th official meeting, we viewed a first edited draft of the digital story. After enjoying some celebratory payasam (sweet rice pudding) and congratulating ourselves on the clarity of our presentation (Soumya), the beauty of the visuals (Sheela), and the general adipoli-ness (awesomeness) of the project (Preetha), I reintroduced the subject of publishing the digital story. Preetha immediately pointed out that we had already decided to publish it on social media. However, since I sensed an unusual hesitation among other members of the YRAC, I clarified that there is not compulsion to share the digital story with a broader audience. Drawing on the principles of YPAR and critical counterspaces, I explained that the work of the YRAC is crucial and worthwhile if we decide the audience of the digital story is only

the members of the YRAC, or people in YRAC's trusted networks, or the oorukootam (hamlet gathering), or a broader audience that may include non-ST peoples. Following these remarks, a heated debate around safety, risks, community belonging and interests, and ST justice ensued. I am presenting a lengthy excerpt from this discussion as a rich example of the role of risk and refusal in youth action:

> **Preetha**: There is no doubt that we should share this with people outside the hamlet. This problem with scribes is experienced by ST children all over Attappady, not just our hamlet.
> **Soumya**: Nobody we know has done something like this before. I think posting it on Facebook will be nice. Like that group in Anavayi hamlet who posts photos about their rituals. And we already know that our community elders don't know much about this issue (Adheesh interrupts)
> **Adheesh**: I don't know what kind of bravery is making you tell all this. What will happen if someone at AAC or ITDP get to know that we are behind this? We might get into trouble (Preetha interrupts)
> **Preetha**:What trouble? How long are you going to play safe?
> **Vrinda**: Preetha, you already have a bachelor's degree, and after you finish your masters' degree you will have a chance of getting a job outside Attappady. I am not like that. I have to depend on these people to get any type of job in the future.
> **Soumya**: That is true, but I took the TTC[17] hoping to get a job in AAC school, but I feel like that is not going to happen. If we wait for them to do anything for us, we will just keep waiting. My son will start pre-school soon, and I want him to be treated well. And for that they should know how they have wronged us. Alle (Isn't it) chechi?
> **Naivedya**: …what I fear and what I feel guilty about is that even though I am around to support you in creating this digital story, and even though the YRAC will be an integral part of my dissertation, I am just saying okay bye and leaving after you have shared this experience with me (Preetha interrupts)
> **Preetha**: Chechi, this is a project that we did because we are interested in making sure that the truth about the scribe issue comes out. Whether you are here or not, we have to think about how to let our community know about this so that schools and AAC do not do this to our children in the future (Dhaneesh interrupts)
> **Dhaneesh**: Athe (See), Preetha don't pretend like you know what is good for our community. You have lived most of your life outside Thanchiyoor. I think we need to consult our elders before we move forward. At least then we can say that we didn't make these decisions on our own.

[17] Teacher Training Certificate that has been recently accredited as D.Ed (Diploma in Education).

I offer this fraught discussion to demonstrate how young people's "risk calculus" (M. Bellino, 2015) can shape and transform youth participation and action, within and beyond critical counterpaces or youthtopias. In Chapter 2 I discuss how youth have employed counterspaces as sites of possibility and transformation, resistance and activism, and for seeking material and non-material support. However, for counterspaces like the YRAC that do not have institutional support, and for numerous youths in the Global South, resistance, activism, and civic engagement are mediated through risk structures that they encounter and navigate daily. Bellino (2015) theorizes risk calculus as a construct that constitute and mediate young people's decisions about the modes and manner of participating in civic issues that are relevant to their every lives. The concept of risk calculus is particularly relevant for young people living in contexts of persistent violence and precarities, because their security and "self-efficacy rests on the extent to which they understand risk as necessary and productive in a turbulent and unpredictable environment" (p. 538). Therefore, in order to facilitate inclusive and safe spaces for youth, it is important to understand how they make sense of and navigate risk structures to make decisions about different forms of participation and action—as refusal, resistance, disengagement, indifference, or transformation.

The discussion I presented above serves as an example of how members of the YRAC analyzed each other's risk structures to make decisions about the audience of the digital story. In particular, this discussion draws attention YRAC members' "subjective experience of risk and security, social trust in fellow citizens, and political trust in state actors and institutions" (Bellino, 2015, p. 539). Adheesh, Vrinda, and Dhaneesh, who have been in the process of applying for jobs or for post-secondary education opportunities for over a year, were opposed to publishing the digital story to a wider audience because they were unwilling to risk their future

employment opportunities. Their unwillingness to be associated with the digital story because they fear the unknown consequences that might arise from making the story public demonstrates how their limited trust in AAC and other government institutions, shape their decision to choose refusal over resistance. Soumya and Preetha on the other hand have specific reasons for choosing risk over security.

Soumya is willing to take the risk of being associated with the digital story for the sake of her son who will soon enter formal educational spaces. Her decisions are informed by the hope that ST children will be treated respectfully if ST youth demonstrate their awareness of the ways in which non-ST/settler in general, and teachers and administrators of AAC school in particular "have wronged [them]". Consistent with her modes of participation inside and outside YRAC, Preetha's willingness to take risk is rooted in a form of reflexive "tragic optimism"(González-Gaudiano, 2016; Santos, 2018). Preetha is a secondary caregiver to a younger brother who has a mental disability, and as I described in the previous chapter, she is inclined towards political activism for ST rights. Since the issue of scribe allotment and YRAC's findings about misalignments between policy and practice are at the intersection of Preetha's personal and political interests, she is willing to take risks so that "they can't do this to our [ST] children in the future". However, Vrinda, Adheesh, and Dhaneesh's collective risk calculus prevailed by highlighting how Preetha, who has the highest formal educational qualification, would not have to bear the costs of publishing the digital story, since she "has a chance of getting a job outside Attappady". Dhaneesh's final remark about considering the feedback of hamlet elders highlights how he has drawn on support from his community to navigate risk structures.

The elders that YRAC consulted included the hamlet head, parents of all youth members, as well as first-generation ST members of Thanchiyoor. Hamlet elders who have occupied

leadership positions in the community insisted that the digital story must be circulated widely. Sradha chechi said, "of course you need to share this with people outside our hamlet. You have done a good thing so why would you not share this with parents and children who can benefit from your knowledge…and then whatever comes after that, we must be willing to face the consequences—whether they are good or bad". A few parents of the youth members however cautioned us against people in the hamlet who does "chaara panni" (spy work) for AAC. Vrinda's mother Lakshmi chechi said, "I think this will create problems. Vrinda has passed the exam for a forest guard position in Attappady. If higher officials know that she was involved in this, she might not even be called for an interview". The feedback of hamlet elders mirrored the risk calculus employed by YRAC. Their comments were centered around issues of weighing the benefits of sharing knowledge and the costs of being betrayed by other hamlet members. The final outcome of these deliberations is that the digital story is uploaded on YouTube as a private video, and the YRAC is circulating and sharing it amongst our trusted networks.

The construct of risk calculus is of particular relevance in education planning and practice for groups like ST youth who continually encounter and navigate multiple forms and "waves of colonialism" (Costa & Costa, 2019; Xaxa, 2021). In a settler-colonial space like Attappady, youth responses to injustice can manifest as resistance, adaptation, refusal, activism, and/or silence, depending on the "trade-off between the risks one endures in the present and the risks one is willing to undertake in order to change that present" (Bellino 2015 p. 540). For Preetha, Soumya, and hamlet elder Sradha chechi, publishing the digital story to a broad audience is a way to hold people in power accountable, and to assert the intellectual capacity of ST youth. In their perspective, embracing risk and in Sradha chechi's words "facing the consequences, whether good or bad" is a vital part of sharing knowledge that can "benefit ST

children all over Attappady. On the other hand, for Dhaneesh, Vrinda, Adheesh, Lakshmi chechi and Sheela, calling out people in power and critiquing the practices they endorse is a foolhardy "kind of bravery" that could "get [ST youth] in trouble" (Adheesh). They understand the potential costs of being associated with the digital story and are unwilling to risk the ire of government officers in Attappady and the employment positions they control.

YRAC Insight 3: Asserting Rights to Complex Personhood

The experience and wisdom of young people who live in still-colonial conditions in an ostensibly post-colonial nation-state present unique challenges and opportunities for reframing inclusive education policy and practice. As I discuss in Chapter 2, critical scholarship has demonstrated the ways in which the global education policy regime's conception of inclusion are at odds with its vision to "leave no one behind" (Bonal & Fontdevila, 2017; Larsen et al., 2019; Naraian & Amrhein, 2020). Chapter 4 demonstrates the ways in which the SDG 4 and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) agenda, and India's national adaptation of ESD's inclusion guidelines frame inclusion primarily in universal and utilitarian terms. This means that strategies for inclusion are focused on reducing barriers to education, to ensure access and participation for all. Additionally, despite the ESD and India's national education policy's "transformative" vision for education, the targets and indicators for educational inclusion continue to measure its success in terms of test-based achievement, and the percentages of learners who are able to complete secondary education, gain vocational skills and employment.

Gupta & Vegelin (2016) and Johnstone et al. (2021) assert that viewing inclusive education as a barrier-reducing activity would necessarily entail addressing structural inequality at multiple scales, from redistribution of resources and reconfiguring the global aid apparatus to changing local decision-making processes. The misuse of disability accommodations discussed

in the YRAC's digital story is just one example of the ways in which barrier-reducing interventions that do not address structural inequities can translate into exclusionary and harmful practices. YRAC's enactments of refusal and risk calculus are just two examples from a range of strategies that young people employ as they navigate exclusionary spaces. Against a background of rising, techno-capitalist ideologies, corporate partnerships, and simplistic solutions in education (Means & Slater, 2019; Otting, 2018; Stein, 2017) how can educators learn to recognize, respect, and support young people's complex and contradictory strategies and subjectivities?

Asserting and Enacting the Right to Complex Personhood as a Navigational Strategy

I reflect on this question by presenting a vignette from one of YRAC's meetings, which represents that ways in which young people assert and contend with their contradictory decisions and actions. I do this to illustrate a key lesson offered by the YRAC to rethink inclusion in education. In Chapters 4 and 6, I describe YRAC co-researchers' prior experiences with political activism as members of the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI)[18]. This vignette is from a YRAC meeting held in April 2022, immediately after the youth co-researchers and I returned from a DYFI meeting. To provide context, four of YRAC's co-researchers hold leadership positions in DYFI, and they view their role and responsibilities in terms of advocacy. Even though their role is to support the block and division heads in political and social work

[18] The Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) is a left-wing youth organization. Although DYFI's website rejects affiliation to any political party, members of the YRAC sought membership in the organization in order to ease the process for joining Kerala's Communist Party of India—Marxist (CPI(M)). Parents of all members of YRAC have been affiliated as a member or in a leadership role with DYFI, and later in CPI(M). Ms. Iswari Naresan who became the first ST woman to become the President of an administrative block in Kerala in 2019 began her political work with the DYFI, and the organization has historically served as platform for youth with political aspirations to join the Left Democratic Front (LDF)—Kerala's current ruling political alliance. DYFI describes itself as a "forward looking and progressive youth organization inspired by anti-imperialist, democratic and socialist ideas who take up the idea of organising the young men and young women of our country" (DYFI website). DYFI's guiding motto is "Jobs for all, Education for all", and one of its 30 objectives is to "safeguard the rights of Dalits, minorities, tribal people and other deprived sections"

activities, as well as to advocate for funds for their hamlet, they explained that they have been experiencing a lack of reciprocity from the predominantly non-ST/settler leadership. The frequency of meetings to discuss issues like road and bridge repair, installation of streetlamps, and employment opportunities for ST youth in Thanchiyoor have steadily decreased, even as youth continued to volunteer their time and energy for activities like fund raising and preparing and distributing lunch in hospitals.

After returning from this particular DYFI meeting, the following discussion ensued:

> **Soumya**: We are very concerned about that bridge, it is so damaged.
> **Sheela**: If there is a flood like the one we had in 2019, that bridge will fall, and our hamlet will be completely isolated. No one will be able to come in or go out.
> **Preetha**: That is why I kept repeating that the bridge needs to repair. But they didn't even acknowledge what I was saying. I felt so embarrassed, saying the same thing again and again, but I couldn't remain silent either.
> **Adheesh**: This is why I am drawing back and avoiding DYFI. I am really sick of it.
> **Preetha** (in a raised voice): Adheesh what is the point of drawing back. You will make everyone else feel 'negative'. It is not like we will get everything that we want as soon as we demand it. We have to try again and again.
> **Adheesh**: I am not being negative. But I don't want to be insulted and ignored wherever I go.
> **Vrinda**: Adheesh is right. whenever I go for DYFI's block or regional level meetings, all ST youth are made to stand. There would be many free seats, but they will tell us that it is reserved.
> **Adheesh** (shouts): Vivechanam, vivechanam (Discrimination, discrimination).

During YRAC's meetings, discussions like this in which youth rage against, hope for, feel optimistic, and altogether give up were common. In another meeting, Adheesh who had asserted that he was "drawing back" from DYFI on account of being undervalued and insulted, said that he plans to seek membership in the Communist Party of India (Marxist), which is DYFI's parent political party, when he is old enough, and has decided to continue working with DYFI.

I view this strategy adopted by Adheesh and other youth in Thanchiyoor hamlet, wherein they make contradictory decisions, and simultaneously accommodate and resist exclusionary spaces and practices, as rooted in their assertion of their "right to complex personhood". (Gordon, 1997; Tuck, 2009; Tuhiwai-Smith; 2012). Within Indigenous theorizations, asserting the right to complex personhood "involves making room for contradictions [and] mis/re/cognitions, usually in an effort to sustain a sense of collective balance" (Tuck, 2009, p. 421). Recognizing contradictions and working to sustain collective balance aptly describes Preetha's actions a few hours after her altercation with Adheesh. After a morning of discussions and activities, we were about to break for lunch when Preetha apologized to Adheesh and the following conversation ensued:

> **Preetha**: Adheesh, I shouted because I was so 'depressed' when you said that you are going to withdraw from DYFI. Sometimes I also feel tired of everything, and if I had an option I would leave. But I can't. Most of us can't. So, we have to stick together. The non-ST people are different from us. They have different 'identities', different 'opinions' so we have to stand up for ourselves.
> **Dhaneesh**: Aiyo Preetha is becoming Englishkari [Others start laughing because Preetha has risen from her chair and is speaking animatedly].
> **Preetha**: [laughs] Adheesh, I won't let you withdraw, you wait and see.

To me, this shared moment of vulnerability, advocacy, levity, and persistence was not only truly touching, but it also has key pedagogical implications for imagining counter-colonial policies and practices. Reflecting on the possibilities and challenges of reimagining education, Andreotti (2012) asks how teaching and learning can be theorized in ways that "take account of power relations, of the complexity of the construction of the self and of alterity, and of the situatedness and the limits of [our] own constructions and theorizations" (p. 22). In Preetha's apology to Adheesh and in her insistence that she will not allow him to withdraw from political activism, she enacts all elements of teaching and learning practices that are posed in Andreotti's

(2012) question. Preetha considers issues of power, difference, and collective action when she acknowledges that non-ST people have "different opinions and ideas" and argues that ST youth must learn to "stick together" and advocate for opportunities and rights. She recognizes the contradictions in her constructions of self as an ST youth activist when she admits that there are times when she wishes to withdraw. Also, her admission that options to leave Attappady are not readily available to her demonstrates a keen awareness of the limits of her geo-politic (in Attappady) and body-politic (as an ST youth) situatedness (Grosfoguel, 2007).

Highlighting the complex personhoods, critical thinking, and the creative strategies that ST youth employ to navigate the world is not intended to conceal or deny the structural discrimination and state violence that youth encounter daily. In the case of disability accommodations and scribe allotment, ST youth have to carefully contend with policy makers, teachers, administrators, and doctors in Attappady who classify ST children as disabled to meet targets. Members of the YRAC expressed frustration about having to struggle to preserve their dignity in formal educational spaces, as well as within organizations like the DYFI:

> **Adheesh**: There was a block-level meeting in Agali a few months back. The block DYFI president stood on stage and said that [changes voice to resemble politician's intonation] 'nobody needs to join or volunteer with DYFI if they think that they will get a job or any other benefits'. He became angry and started shouting and saying that ST youth are only working to get benefits [Dhaneesh interrupts]
> **Dhaneesh** We didn't reach because there were so many people, and we didn't want to cause trouble. But the way he spoke, something in the tone or manner, it was like he was talking to his slaves (adimakal).

Similar references to non-ST/settlers treating ST youth as insignificant and like adimakal (slaves) were made multiple times during the meeting. Soumya wondered why despite "all the knowledge and intelligence we [ST peoples] have, we do their adimapani (slave work)". Adheesh recounted his experience during election season when non-ST DYFI members "would

speak nicely and involve" ST youth members only to "pretend like we don't exist" right after the elections. As Adheesh and Dhaneesh expressed during the discussion, their discontentment with the lack of reciprocity in relations between ST and non-ST members of DYFI is compounded by frequent remarks about ST youth's perceived laziness, indifference and dependence on hand-outs.

Conclusion: Youth Strategies and Settler Denials

Stein, Andreotti, Susa, Ahenakew & Cajkova's (2022) considerations for moving from "education for sustainable development" to "education for the end of the world as we know it" is relevant for rethinking inclusion in ways that account for YRAC's insights and strategies. The authors point to the limitations of education for sustainable development (ESD) as an orienting vision for educational transformation by arguing that it denies the impossibility of unending growth on a finite planet. They assert that the promises of ESD (and therefore its prescriptions for inclusion) can only be fulfilled within colonial structures that are built to sustain the dominance of certain groups, at the expense of Other groups of people and beings. For Stein et al. (2022), the ongoing illusion that ESD and its many adaptations can produce equitable and just societies (UN, 2015) are rooted in four types of denials. These are the denial of: (1) systemic colonial violence, which is premised on racialized, gendered, and caste-based exploitation, resulting in a worldview that considers violence as external, exceptional, or justified in order to facilitate a larger vision like universal development; (2) ecological unsustainability of the dominant system, which is premised on the assumption that perpetual growth and sustainability are compatible goals, resulting either in a rejection of climate change, or in 'green' solutions within the existing system; (3) conditions of entanglement, which is premised on ignoring relationality or viewing it as peripheral rather than as central to existence, resulting in assertions

of individualism and personal advancement; and (4) the extent and depth of the problems we face, which sustains the illusion that quick fixes can empower, include, and develop (pp. 279-280).

Examining these denials in relation to YRAC's work and insights, I find that ST youth in Attappady are navigating the consequences of our[19] denial of systemic colonial violence, and of our denial of relational ways of being. While I view the other two types of denials just as relevant, YRAC's insights point specifically to the relevance of the denial of colonial violence, and the condition of entanglement. For instance, in Chapter 5, Preetha, Murugan, and Saritha's counter-colonial narratives illustrates the ways in which Attappady, and its development apparatus employ settler-colonial strategies to sustain ST dispossession. While laws like the Forest Rights Act 2006, and development interventions like AAC are grounded in language and ideas that center respect for ST peoples, and offers to provide reparations for historical injustice, Thanchiyoor hamlet members and youth have demonstrated the ways in which these interventions are: (1) rooted in settler/development apparatus' denial of human and non-human entanglements, thereby legitimizing the notion that disrupting ST peoples relations with land and forests is necessary to facilitate development and progress; and (2) rooted in settler/development apparatus' denial of systemic colonial violence because development in Attappady is premised on land expropriation, and the systematic exclusion and harm of ST peoples.

The YRAC demonstrates the ways in which these denials manifest as misuse of disability accommodation guidelines, and humiliation and discrimination in educational, professional, and service spaces. This chapter, and Chapters 5 and 6 illustrate the navigational strategies that ST

[19] My use of 'our' is intentional. It signifies the entangled group of actors across multiple scales of ESD in general, and dominant caste non-ST Malayalees like me, in particular.

youth employ to navigate the consequences of settler denial. These denials and navigational strategies are summarized in Table 7.1.

Type of settler denial	**Denial facilitates**	**Consequences of denial for youth (selective)**	**ST youth's navigational strategies**
Systemic colonial violence, condition of entanglement	Interventions for ST 'development' that justify land appropriation and sustains the myth of ST backwardness.	Ongoing precarities, assaults on dignity and ST identity, exclusion and structural discrimination, imaginary disabilities	Desire-oriented futurity (see Chapter 5), asserting right to complex personhood, accommodation, risk-calculus based participation or non-participation

Table 7.1 Settler denials and youth strategies

Findings of the policy analysis presented in Chapter 4 illustrate how policy constructions of the subjects of and strategies for inclusive education are primarily characterized in terms of removing education barriers for a wide range of what is considered 'vulnerable' or 'disadvantaged' populations. Even though ESD, the latest global agenda, and its adaptation in India's national education policy are marked by what is considered unprecedented shifts in conceptions of inclusion that prioritize plural, relational, and humanist visions, when operationalized into targets and indicators, this vision for inclusion is translated in ways that uphold competitive individualism. YRAC's insights illustrate the importance of understanding how, and on whose terms issues of inclusion in education are defined and enacted. Imagining inclusion, education and development in ways that disrupt structural discrimination and account for youth's navigational strategies like refusal and risk calculus, require a reimagination of the subjects and strategies of inclusion. This means that non-ST/settler educators, policymakers, and the global development apparatus will have to first contend with and interrupt the denials we

exercise through strategies like colonial unknowing, the colonial politics of recognition, and spectatorship of pain, deficits, and damage. In the final chapter, I synthesize the main findings of this dissertation, and reflect on what stands in the way of imagining inclusion and education 'otherwise'.

Chapter 8 Imagining Education 'Otherwise': Reflections on 'What Stands in the Way'

On a humid, and uncharacteristically hot day in May 2022, I was sitting in the dark but cool community center in Thanchiyoor hamlet, Attappady with the co-researchers of the Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective. We were enjoying sweet but tepid mango juice and discussing the limited post-secondary opportunities available to ST youth in Attappady, when Preetha asked, "Chechi, what do you think about the reservation policy?". India's reservation policy is a form of affirmative action that mandates that all states must reserve at least 7.5 percent of total positions in government jobs and higher educational institutions for ST peoples (Bhaskar & Kumar, 2021) I said that I consider it an important policy for addressing historical injustice. Reluctantly, I also admitted that until about 10 years ago, I had believed that the policy was denying opportunities to people with 'merit'. My belief was in line with ongoing assertions by dominant caste/class people who produce ST youth's perceived inability to advance educationally and professionally as evidence to claim that the policy has made ST peoples dependent on free hand-outs and benefits even as people with 'merit' lose out on opportunities.

Preetha agreed that this is exactly the sentiment she has heard from non-ST people in her undergraduate and graduate classes. She related an incident in which a dominant caste boy (Nair caste) in her undergraduate class argued for abolishing the reservation policy. The boy quoted Swami Vivekananda to claim that since Kerala is a caste-free state, all people are equal and must have equal access to opportunities. After Preetha related this incident, Adheesh asserted that he agrees with the dominant caste boy, and a heated debate about the reservation policy and the goals of inclusion in education and employment ensued:

Adheesh: I think that this whole idea of reservation should be avoided. What is the point? There are so many ST people, and they reserve just two or three seats. How will that bring equality?
Preetha: Ajith, can I ask you something, how do you understand reservation? What does it mean? Who should be given reservation?
Adheesh: It should be given to backward castes (thazhnajaathi) [Preetha interrupts]
Preetha: You are saying backward? Is that how you describe yourself? Should we be calling ourselves backward?
Adheesh: Ah then I can ask back, why do they say that reservation is only for backward communities. I didn't invent that term. I am simply saying that this is how reservation is described.
Priya: Okay, but are you saying that reservation must be completely removed, or are you saying that it is irrelevant for some sectors?
Adheesh: For example, in the PSC (public services examination) reservation is not useful. Thousands of ST youth will write the exam, so what difference will two or three reserved seats make? If the reservation policy is expected to bring change, then they should change the system so that more ST people can access these employment and education opportunities. Otherwise, the reservation policy is just for namesake. So that they can say, 'oh we are doing all this for STs, but they are still not advancing'.

This debate between Adheesh and Preetha encapsulate two key ideas presented in this dissertation. One, young people are observing the disjuncture and tensions between the promises of inclusive education and their own experiences of persistent exclusion. They are also noticing how education policies like the reservation policy and the scribe and disability accommodation policies analyzed by the YRAC in chapter 7, are exacerbating existing inequities and discriminatory practices. Two, Preetha and Adheesh's dialogical approach to making sense of deficit categories that policies impose on ST youth, and the challenges of inclusive education policies in its current form, illustrate the significance of reframing inclusion based on the intellectual capacities of young people, rather than their "disadvantages" or "vulnerabilities".

In the spirit of Preetha and Adheesh's insistence that inclusion cannot "just be for namesake", in this chapter, I reflect on "what stands in the way" (Bellino, 2017) of imagining "otherwise" (Crawley, 2020; da Silva, 2016) educational possibilities. As described in Chapter 2,

an education ‘otherwise’ requires remembering existing modes of learning that has been disavowed by colonial-modern education systems. It also requires “re-thinking sociality” (Whyte, 2016) without the fixities and imaginary categories produced by colonial-modern world-views and practices, and the violence they authorize against “humanity’s cultural” (non-Indigenous/non-dominant caste/non-White) and “physical (non-human/more-than-human) Others” (da Silva, 2016, p. 59; Crawley, 2020).

In this chapter, I discuss what I learned by comparing policy priorities and strategies for inclusion in the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) policy regime, with ST youth’s everyday encounters with education and development in the tribal development block of Attappady in Kerala, India. I do this by returning to the research design and questions with the goal of providing an overview of the key findings of this dissertation. I also consider the actions and perspectives proposed by the YRAC and youth participants in relation to current scholarly work that seeks to understand the “challenges and opportunities associated with the policy uptake and broader use of findings from non-dominant, innovative and social justice-oriented education research approaches” (Manion et al., 2019). The key themes I highlight in this chapter are intended as invitations and openings for understanding how the tensions between policy and ST youth’s experiences, and the strategies youth employ to navigate a precarious and exclusionary world can offer insights for reimagining inclusion in education. The framework I use to discuss the findings and to situate the macro-meso scale in relation to the meso-micro scales is centered on reflecting on three orientations that stand in the way of imagining education and inclusion otherwise. These are: (1) Denial of education and development’s entanglements with colonial violence; and (2) Separability about categories, distinctions, dreams, and futures; and (3) Subordinate cultures of responsibility.

What Stands in the Way of Inclusive Education for All? Key Insights from Comparative Case Study

As I explain in Chapter 3, the goal of this dissertation is not to understand whether inclusive education policies are effective or ineffective. Rather, I seek to understand global and national ESD policy actors' meaning-making, interventions, and desired outcomes around inclusion in education (macro-meso scale) *in relation to* ST youth's experiential, everyday learning that shape their conceptions and advocacy for inclusion in education (meso-micro scale). The comparative case study design served as a heuristic to "follow the inquiry" (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017), and to compare policy in relation to young people's experiential learning against the background of ongoing spatial and temporal colonialities in mainstream conceptions and practices of inclusion, education, and development. Three inter-related research questions that are located across the macro-meso and meso-micro scales guide this comparative case study. These are: (1) how is inclusion framed in the global Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) agenda, and adapted in India's national education policy and implementation frameworks? (2) how do ST youth in Attappady draw on their experiential learning and everyday encounters with development to shape their conceptions about inclusion in education?; and (3) As co-thinkers in a collaborative inquiry project, how do ST youth advocate for transforming inclusive education policy and practice?

Comparing findings across Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, I argue that a key aspect of current policy guidelines that stand in the way of fulfilling ESD's promises of "inclusive education for all" is its framing of inclusion in terms of removing education barriers for a wide range of what is considered 'vulnerable' or 'disadvantaged' populations. Critical education scholars have argued that a conception of inclusion that requires a reduction of exclusion will inevitably lead to

incongruities between policy and practice. This is because the invention of colonial-modern schooling is premised on exclusion, which is enacted by prioritizing meritocratic ideals, single trajectories of education success, and competitive individualism (Ainscow, 2020; Bellino & Abdi, 2022; Nguyen, 2010; Papastephanou, 2019a; Slee & Allan, 2001). These incongruities are evident within global and national education policies, which I have described as operational divergences in Chapter 4. These divergences are characterized by the differential framing of inclusion in policy goals and policy outcomes. Even as education policy documents emphasize the role of a 'holistic" and "humanist" approach to inclusive education for creating equitable societies (UNESCO, 2015; Government of India, 2020), the targets and indicators to gauge the outcomes of interventions for inclusion remain narrowly construed in terms of access to formal and vocational educational spaces, and proficiency in language and mathematics. More important, when compared with the experiential insights of ST youth in Attappady, I find that the depoliticized and decontextualized conceptualization of inclusion in global and national policies are not only exacerbating exclusion, but also reinforcing deficit-based stereotypes of the populations it seeks to 'include'.

For ST youth in Thanchiyoor, inclusion or rather exclusion is a deeply political and systemic phenomenon that has become a part of their everyday lives. As counter-colonial narratives in Chapter 5 illustrate, young people's learning—both formal and experiential, their daily encounters with development, and the ways in which they draw on these experiences to make sense of inclusion and exclusion are mediated through the lens of living in a settler-colonial context. As residents of a 'tribal development block', ST youth's everyday lives, and the formal educational, professional, and service spaces they traverse are entangled with development. And as this dissertation's interlocutors argue, the idea of development privileged

by the development apparatus (across global, national, state, and translocal levels) is premised upon the existence and consequent reform of an imaginary, deficient, 'never-developing Other—ST peoples in the case of Attappady, India. And here the contradictions between policy and experience become evident—current inclusive education for development efforts are targeted at 'including' imaginary subjects into an inherently exclusionary, colonially defined social system. ST youth are not only recognizing this contradiction, but they are also locating the 'problem' of inclusion on the system of formal education that rewards the ideological and ontological individualism of dominant caste people, while refusing to "teach people to care for and respect each other" (Preetha, Personal interview, April 2022).

How can ST youth's insights teach us (dominant caste educators, development professionals, policy makers) to reorient the 'problem' of inclusive education? How can we learn from the tensions between policy and ST youth's experiences to imagine inclusion 'otherwise'? I reflect on these questions by expanding on three orientations of current education policy and practice that stand in the way of reorienting inclusion.

Denial

Denial is a productive lens to make sense of the tensions between policy promises and ST youth experiences. As discussed in Chapter 7, Stein et al. (2022) argue that our (human and non-human) current predicament (planetary crises, pandemics, poverty) is rooted in a denial or "sanctioned ignorances" (Spivak, 1999) or "constitutive disavowals" of innately unsustainable and harmful desires, habits, and ways of being (Ahenakew et al., 2014; Ghosh, 2016; Z. Todd, 2016b). As I argue in this section, the tensions between policy and experience may be attributed to the denials that constitute the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) agenda and its national adaptation in India's education policies.

The global, national, and regional actors committed to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), clearly assert that education is *for* global development, emphasizing its aspiration for a universal, "single, renewed education agenda" (UNESCO, 2016, p. 7). In chapter 4, I described how the SDG and ESD agenda sought to introduce inclusion and equity-focused priorities through a global consensus-building process. This shift was in response to critiques of the neoliberal ideology espoused in previous global education policy regimes like Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals, and the "unfinished agenda" (UNESCO) of ensuring quality education for all. The stated vision of ESD is to "transform lives through education…as a main driver of development and in achieving the other proposed SDGs" (UNESCO, 2016, p. 7).

The counter-colonial interrogations of mainstream education for development paradigms that I discussed in Chapter 2 highlight the limits of ESD's universal and transformational aspirations. An important critique of ESD points to how the proponents of the agenda imagine the problems and subjects that need to be developed, included, and transformed. The analysis of global and national policies in Chapter 4, demonstrates that the ESD agenda is characterized by misalignments between policy goals/vision for inclusion and expected outcomes. The Incheon Declaration and UNESCO's (2017) guidelines define inclusion in plural, relational, and non-economic terms. That is, its conception of inclusion emphasizes the need to recognize and remove structural barriers to education, while striving to account for the diverse experiences of different groups of people. However, upon analyzing how this vision for inclusion is operationalized into global targets and indicators, I found that none of the measurements of successful inclusion consider structural inequities. Furthermore, most targets and indicators

prioritize modes of inclusion that seek to measure access (enrollment rates, retention rates), test-based achievement, skill acquisition and students' ability to be employed.

It is this misalignment between vision and outcomes that point to the relevance of viewing the disjuncture between policy and experience through the lens of denial. In framing denial, Stein et al. (2022) assert that:

> …the predicament we face is not primarily rooted in ignorance and thus solvable with more know- ledge, nor primarily rooted in immorality and thus solvable with more normative values; rather, it is rooted in denials that stem from harmful desires for and investments in the continuity of the securities and satisfactions promised by modernity-coloniality (p. 274).

The misalignments between goals and outcomes clearly demonstrate that the policy makers and proponents of the ESD agenda and its adaptation in India's national education policies are not ignorant about the limits of framing inclusion in economic and universal terms. Policy statements that allude to existing power hierarchies are also scattered throughout the documents, suggesting that the limits of normative structures are legible to the actors who design, sanction, circulate, adapt, and implement the ESD agenda. Policy misalignments confirm Stein et al. (2022) assertion that the predicament this dissertation explores (tensions between policy and experience) is neither rooted in ignorance nor immorality, which would be solvable through more knowledge about structural harm or a "non-coercive rearrangement of [colonial-modern] desires" (Spivak, 2004). Instead, the tensions between policy and ST youth's experiences are rooted in our[20] (dominant caste) denial of our own investment in the continued "securities and satisfactions" of colonial-modern life.

[20] My use of 'our' is intentional. It signifies the entangled group of actors across multiple scales of ESD in general, and dominant caste non-ST Malayalees like me, in particular. My use of the term 'dominant caste' is informed by Isabel Wilkerson's (2020) conceptualization of the relations between race and caste. In this chapter, my use of us/our indicates non-ST, dominant caste educators, policy makers, and development practitioners.

The youth interlocutors of this research are recognizing the ways in which non-ST/settlers enact these denials to sustain the myth that ST peoples need to be 'helped' and 'developed'. In chapter 5, I described how ST youth experience development and life in a 'tribal development block' as settler-colonial control. Young people's counter-colonial narratives demonstrate how the state development apparatus, which includes the Attappady Agricultural Cooperative (AAC), the Integrated Tribal Development Department (ITDP), the forest department, and other state and non-state development agencies enact the "denial of systemic colonial violence" (Stein et al., 2022) through specific strategies. One of these settler-colonial strategies aligns with Coulthard's (2014) theorization of a "colonial politics of recognition". This strategy through which the state recognizes historical injustice through actions that reinforce Indigenous dispossession and reinforce colonial patters of power is described in Murugan's narrative. In his counter-colonial narrative, Murugan describes how a state-supported, mega-development project that aimed to restore ecological balance, and improve the lives of ST peoples resulted in practices that restricted and denied access to their ancestral lands and the forests they revere. Murugan, like many ST youth in Attappady are noticing this colonial politics of recognition through which the state is able to promise transformation through development and simultaneously act in ways that only benefit those in power. Murugan's clearly defines this strategy when he asserts that state actors and non-ST/settlers justify development efforts in Attappady by claiming to do "it for [ST peoples] benefit", when really it is mainly intended for non-ST/settlers to "to feel good about themselves".

Dhaneesh, Preetha, and Vrinda demonstrates another settler strategy to exercise denial—"colonial unknowing" (Vimalassery et al., 2016). Colonial unknowing allows dominant caste, and in Attappady's case, non-ST/settlers to establish what counts as "evidence, proof, or

possibility" (p. 122), and what experiences are dismissed or disavowed. Dhaneesh in particular, connects the *event* of being humiliated in front of his non-ST classmates, with the *denial* of colonial violence. Dhaneesh expressed frustration about the lecturer who said that "people like" Dhaneesh (ST people) should be denied opportunities because they "waste it". However, Dhaneesh said he was "more angry" when his experience was trivialized by the educational institution's head. Instead of holding the non-ST lecturer accountable for caste-based discrimination, the institution's head suggested that Dhaneesh must not "take these little things seriously". These experiences serve as example of how ST youth encounter "denial of systemic colonial violence" daily, which allows non-ST/settlers to justify and/or trivialize ST dispossession and discrimination.

Separability

Interrogating ESD and its investment in separability and certainty is another way to understand and appreciate ST youth's lived realities and perspectives. As discussed in Chapter 2, da Silva (2016) calls for "re-thinking sociality" by releasing our grip on separability. To explain separability as a principle, and as an orientation, Da Silva illustrates how experiments in particle physics have long been yielding understandings of the world and the universe that are rooted in principles of uncertainty and non-locality[21]. The colonial-modern social world on the other hand is invested in constructions of cultural difference that require separation—between human and non-human beings, as well as between groups that are considered to possess fixed attributes and identities.

[21] Da Silva (2016) draws from the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, and Nadeau & Kafatos (1999) non-locality principles both of which relates to the properties of atomic and sub-atomic particles.

Global and national policy documents' identification of the subjects of inclusion and development demonstrate how the principle of separability operates at the macro-meso level. In the analysis of policy documents, I found that there is a clear distinction between the groups that are identified as the facilitators of development and inclusive education, and the groups that are targets or beneficiaries of interventions. For example, in the Incheon Declaration and UNESCO's guidelines, the facilitators of SDG 4 for ensuring inclusive education include member nation-states, global education governance institutions like UN, UNESCO, The World Bank, and OECD, 'developed nations' and aid providers, and teachers, schools, and CSO (Civil Society Organizations). These groups are tasked with the "responsibility" of ensuring inclusive development for the "vulnerable", "disadvantaged", "developing countries, less-developed countries, small island states and African countries", as well as girls, the poor, youth, and refugees.

YRAC's digital story illustrates the harm caused by designing and implementing inclusion strategies that presuppose separability. India and Kerala's policy guidelines for providing disability accommodations during state board examinations are premised on one, fixed separation—children with one or more of 21 types of disabilities, and able-bodied children. And, if a child is medically certified as having a disability, then the child is entitled to disability accommodation. YRAC's research shows how this logic of inclusion is separate from the state's achievement-based outcomes, which measures success in terms of the number of schools that are able to achieve '100 percent pass'. I argue that these presumptions of separability—(1) between children with and without disabilities, and (2) between strategies and expected outcomes of inclusion, allow schools, hospitals, and development actors to reinterpret inclusion guidelines in ways that reproduce exclusion and discrimination. YRAC's refusal to hope that working harder

or being more confident will transform their educational experiences, and their insistence that reframing inclusion requires an education in which people "learn to respect people who they consider different from them" (Preetha), may be viewed as a testament to their commitment to relational definitions of inclusion. That is, inclusion that is rooted in principles of mutual learning across cultural difference, and human and non-human boundaries

Da Silva (2016) emphasizes relationality and entanglements as crucial for interrupting the presumptions of separability. Her vision for reorienting cultural difference requires interrupting a principle of separability that considers:

> … the social as a whole constituted of formally separate parts. Each of these parts constitutes a social form, as well as geographically-historically separate units, and, as such, stands differentially before the ethical notion of humanity, which is identified with the particularities of white European collectives (p. 63)

In the context of this research, Attappady and ST peoples are the "geographically-historically separate units" that the global, national, and state ESD agenda aim to integrate into the colonial-modern, 'developed' world. And, in ESD's adaptation in India's national policies, ST peoples, along with other "Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Groups" (Ministry of Education, 2022) stand differentially from the notion of 'developed' humanity, which is identified primarily with dominant caste/class communities.

Apart from enacting separability by framing inclusion in terms of abstract identities and rigid subjectivities, development and ESD's agenda for inclusion also denies entanglements between human, non-human, and more-than-human entities. Education for Sustainable Development is premised on reconciling ecological sustainability with growth-based development (Kopnina et al., 2020; Andreotti, 2019), giving the illusion that the two concepts are not separate. However, through the denial that unsustainability is what makes development and colonial-modernity possible (Andreotti, 2021; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Spivak, 2004;

Ferguson, 2005), the ESD agenda succeeds in separating interventions for development from interventions for ecological conservation. Murugan and Soumya's narratives serves as an example of how ST Peoples experience this separation between development and ecological conservation. In his narrative, Murugan explained how his childhood was filled with adventures into the forest, and that he believes that the forest "understands" him. However, conservation-for-development programs like the state-supported Attappady Hills Area Development Society (AHADS), and laws like the Forest Rights Act (2006) that uphold the principle of separability are interrupting the spiritual and ontological bonds between ST peoples and land.

Responsibility

As I describe in Chapter 2, in the context of this dissertation, the orientation to responsibility that stands in the way of imagining education 'otherwise' is a "subordinate culture of responsibility" (Spivak, 2004) as opposed to ethical responsibility or answerability. Briefly, Spivak (2004) uses the phrase subordinate cultures of responsibility in the context of global development and its sanctioned ignorance of violence. She describes development as a reaffirmation of "social Darwinism", in which responsibility is framed as the "burden of the fittest (p. 57). However, since the mainstream development agenda views development as detached from its links to ongoing colonial violence, the responsibility for the 'failure' of development is placed on the subordinate Other (see also, Andreotti, 2011; Kapoor, 2004). The Incheon Declaration uses the word 'responsibility' ten times in the 70-page long document (pp. 8, 9, 13, 23, 24, 57, 58, 61, 64). The ESD agenda is "inspired by a humanistic vision of education and development based on human rights and dignity, social justice, inclusion...and shared responsibility" (p. 7). The document does not explicitly state the actors/entities that share the responsibility for ensuring inclusive education for all. However, the document does state

clarify that inclusion efforts will focus on the "most disadvantaged, especially those with disabilities, to ensure that no one is left behind" (p. 7). Specifically, the documents frames responsibility in terms of "we" (member nation-states, global education governance institutions like UN, UNESCO, The World Bank, and OECD, 'developed nations' and aid providers) as responsible *for* ensuring that they ("vulnerable", "disadvantaged", "developing countries, less-developed countries, small island states and African countries", as well as girls, the poor, youth, and refugees) are not left behind.

In Chapters 5, 6, and 7, youth participants and co-researchers have described the many ways in which development actors have justified discrimination and violence claiming that it is for "their own good". In YRAC's digital story, teachers convinced youth to permit being certified as disabled by promising that they will definitely pass the state board examination, and passing will help them in the future. Soumya describes how she had to stand by while doctors were examining her baby without her consent and when she protested, she overheard the doctor saying, "these people don't know what is good for them". In her counter-colonial narrative, Saritha demonstrates how Attappady's development apparatus' unethical orientation to responsibility reproduces stereotypes of ST peoples as 'backward', 'uneducated', and 'clueless. Saritha, Murugan, and Preetha also shared how they experience certain development interventions as non-ST settlers' spectatorship of ST peoples everyday lives—as Murugan puts it, "as things on display".

My work as a 'designated development officer' in Attappady in 2014-2015 may serve as an example of the enactment of subordinate cultures of responsibility. As a development officer, I led a pilot 'tribal' entrepreneurship scheme funded by the office of the Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Tribes. While implementing this scheme, I collaborated with ITDP officers to identify

the scope for micro-entrepreneurial projects in Attappady. This included options for agricultural, arts and crafts, and 'tribal' music projects. Our goal was to support and empower ST peoples, particularly youth, to find consisting income generating ventures. While conducting a multi-hamlet feasibility study, my colleagues and I were frustrated by the limited interest demonstrated by the community. When the funding for this scheme expired without even one successful income-generating project, my team and I attributed this failure to ST/Adivasi youth and peoples' lack of entrepreneurial vision. In our report, we recommended interventions for "motivating and encouraging" ST youth to "improve themselves". These interventions included skill identification initiatives and educational workshops for financial literacy and management.

Reflecting on my work as a development officer in relation to the findings of this dissertation, I find myself lingering on uncomfortable wonderings. During a feasibility study, I distinctly remember entering a hamlet, and most men and young people stopped what they were doing and disappeared. Only a few women remained, and they only gave monosyllabic answers. When I returned to the office, I was on the verge of tears because I could not fathom why people who did not know me would intentionally be rude to me. My response to the way in which the hamlet members refused to engage with me, a dominant caste/class, 'educated' development officer is rooted in Wilkerson's (2020) assertion that dominant caste actors are programmed to expect centrality. In rejecting my expectation of centrality, perhaps members of that hamlet were enacting strategies like risk calculus (Bellino, 2015), refusal (Tuck & Yang, 2012), and asserting the right to complex personhood (Gordon, 2008; Tuck, 2009)—strategies to navigate the denials, and commitments to separability and unethical responsibility that a dominant caste woman like me might/will enact.

Restorying Inclusive Education for All: Transformative (Im)possibilities and Pedagogical Opportunities

How might inclusion and education progress differently if it sought to "transform the interconnected structures that marginalize some populations while privileging others" (Patel, 2016, p. 23), instead of attempting to include individuals and groups into a system that is designed to exclude them? I suggest that the findings of this research and the pedagogical insights of the Youth Researchers of Attappady Collective (YRAC) open up possibilities to engage productively with this question. "Restorying" (Corntassel et al., 2009; Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2018; Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2016) inclusive education by comparing policy and experience may be conceived as a step towards understanding interconnected and exclusionary structures, and the "wicked problem" (Fine et al., 2018; Rittel & Webber, 1973) of inclusion in education and development.

Young participants and co-researchers restory inclusive education in two ways. When restorying is understood as "making decolonizing space [through] counter-narratives…as told by Indigenous peoples themselves" (Corntassel et al., 2009, p. 138), the counter-colonial narratives in Chapter 5 challenge dominant understandings about education, development, and inclusion/exclusion at the macro-meso and meso-micro levels. ST youth draw on their everyday experiences and encounters with education and development to illustrate how young people recognize and navigate the settler-colonial strategies employed by the state and non-ST/settlers who uphold policy and popular constructions of ST peoples as 'backward' or 'less-developed'. The counter-colonial narratives of ST youth represent a key aspect of the restorying process wherein they "question the imposition of colonial histories" (Corntassel et al., 2009, p. 143) on their communities. For ST youth, exclusion is a part of everyday life, and addressing exclusion in

formal education necessarily requires a redirection of gaze towards structures that impede educational inclusion. Unlike policy priorities for "reducing structural barriers to education" (UNESCO, 2015; Ministry of Education, 2020), young interlocutors of this research encourage us to reconsider the subjects of inclusion, and the ideological and ontological individualism ingrained in formal education. As YRAC co-researcher Preetha articulates in her call for educational transformation, possibilities for "inclusive and equitable societies" (UNESCO, 2016) will remain elusive as long as formal education refuses to center relationality through mutual care and respect. According to Preetha, formal education's legitimization of a destructive individualism in which dominant caste people "only know how to think about their job, their family, their status", stands in the way of inclusion and equity in education.

Drawing on these counter-colonial narratives, I argue that ST youth in general and the YRAC in particular are restorying the failure of inclusive education in Attappady by redirecting our gaze towards structural "ruptures" in formal education. Similar to the co-researchers of the Make Sense of Movements project in Canada (Nixon, Habtom & Tuck, 2022), ST youth in Attappady view systemic exclusion "as more than a treatable injury, but rather as a rupture" (p. 133) that can neither be attributed solely to individual failure, nor fixed through a 'right' kind of inclusive education intervention. Viewed through the lens of rupture, Soumya's question about "doing something" and the series of events that resulted in the co-formation of the YRAC may serve as an example of inclusive education that goes beyond identity-, measurement-, and testing-based strategies for inclusion prioritized by global and national policies.

The process of YRAC's formation and research, as well as the digital story representing our findings are itself examples of restorying inclusive education. As I describe in Chapter 7, YRAC's origin may be regarded as one of the many strategic and perhaps intuitive strategies that

ST youth adopt to sharpen their understanding of the persistent exclusion that they encounter daily, while exploring ways to navigate and draw attention to exclusionary, colonial structures that they encounter as ST peoples in Attappady and Kerala. The digital story exploring the misuse of disability accommodations in Attappady's schools serves as a tangible artifact of the restorying process as co-researchers "write themselves into existence, first narrating and analyzing their lived experiences and then synthesizing and recontextualizing those stories to represent a diversity of perspectives and reshape dominant narratives" (Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2018, p. 346).

The co-researchers of YRAC also offer key pedagogical opportunities for rethinking education in the context of multiple, ongoing planetary crises, and in imagining an "education for the end of the world as we know it" (Stein et al., 2022). Scholarly explorations about the puzzle of educating in an increasingly "unhinged, metamorphosing world" (Beck, 2016) are on the rise since the exacerbation of climate change events, the surge in global right-wing nationalism, and the COVID-19 pandemic. These explorations deliberate on the kind of education(s) that might enable us navigate an uncertain, unsustainable, and failing world (Haraway, 2016; Shirazi, 2020; Silva, 2016; Stein et al., 2022; Tsing et al., 2017). ST youth participants of this research draw from their intergenerational knowledge to join scholars who assert that they have been navigating the uncertainties, contradictions and harmful consequences of an inherently unsustainable and violent colonial-modern world system long before dominant caste actors and institutions named and recognized the urgency of the 'crises' (Hembrom, 2022; Nyambura, 2016; Todd, 2018). Ruby Hembrom (2022), a member of the Santhal tribe in North India, the founder of aadivani, India's first Indigenous publishing company, and an Atlantic Fellow for

Social and Economic Equity at the London School of Economics encapsulates this idea in the context of the pandemic:

> Coping, holding up, getting through, surviving, managing, carrying on and their synonyms are the instinctive verbs I'm ambushed with when asked about our publishing venture adivaani's well-being in the wake of Covid-19…[however] the lockdown doesn't impact my publishing work – as I run adivaani like we're in a perpetual crisis anyway; and if anything the quarantine is an extension of our everyday work reality since our inception (p.1).

Hembrom's assertion of navigating life in "perpetual crisis" is reflected in ST youth's recognition of the historical and ongoing precarities introduced and sustained by a settler-colonial development apparatus. And as the co-researchers of YRAC teach us, to live in perpetual crisis and contexts of persistent uncertainty and exclusion require learning strategic skills and strategies to navigate, "survive and sustain hope" (Bellino, 2023, p. 2), while "staying with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016). For Haraway (2016), a commitment to staying with the trouble is crucial for navigating an unhinged world:

> In the face of unrelenting historically specific surplus suffering in companion species knottings, I am not interested in reconciliation or restoration, but I am deeply committed to the more modest possibilities of partial recuperation…Call that staying with the trouble (p. 8).

Based on the findings of this dissertation, I argue that the co-researchers of YRAC are experts in "staying with the trouble". They draw on their everyday experiential learnings to employ strategies like refusal, risk calculus, and strategic resistance to navigate the precarities and uncertainties wrought by an education and development apparatus that steal their land, continually disrespect their personhood, and deny their intelligence and creativity. Preetha captures the commitment to stay with the trouble through "partial recuperation", when she addresses the pessimism of her co-researchers and asserts that, "we must stand together…At least they [non-ST/settlers] will know that we can recognize all the things they our doing in our

name" (YRAC meeting transcript, May 2022). This dissertation demonstrates the urgency of "learning to learn from" (Spivak, 2004) youth and their experiential knowledges. Returning to Patel's (2016) question in the light of this discussion, restorying mainstream educational concepts and practices through the "perspectives and experiences of those who have been routinely marginalized or silenced" (Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2018) can offer insights and possibilities to understand and potentially "transform the interconnected structures that marginalize some populations while privileging others" (Patel, 2016, p. 23). Through their insights, knowledge, and actions, youth participants and co-researchers of this dissertation are offering invitations and openings for educators, policy makers, and development practitioners to understand the tensions between policy and youth's experiences, and to learn the strategies youth employ to navigate a precarious and exclusionary world.

Conclusion

The co-researchers of YRAC wanted to make sure that I would highlight their "intelligence and knowledge". As Preetha observed, "people must know that ST youth are capable of thinking. Even if people in Kerala might not know about our work, at least let people in America know our value…make sure you include photos from our photoshoot". My goal in this dissertation has been to describe the tensions between Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) policies, its national adaptations, and the experiences of ST youth in Thanchiyoor hamlet in Attappady, India. I have also sought to highlight the creativity and criticality that ST youth have demonstrated in identifying, navigating, resisting, and being joyful in a still-colonial state.

At first glance, the situation in Thanchiyoor hamlet and in Attappady would appear as a familiar case of development failure. The experiences of ST peoples in Attappady resonate

with Indigenous and marginalized communities around the world who are constantly navigating the violence and discrimination enacted in the name of development (Burde, 2014; Devika, 2010; Escobar, 2004; Neumann, 2013; Roy, 2019). However, as I describe in this dissertation, Thanchiyoor hamlet's formation as part of a development intervention, and the multiple, overlapping state and non-state actors like ITDP, AAC, AHADS, and the state forest department that operate inside and outside the hamlet's boundaries sets the hamlet apart. Thanchiyoor and its residents are not simply experiencing development interventions, they are the development intervention. And the everyday life, actions, and needs, including education, employment, health-related needs, food security, and many others are experienced and mediated through the development apparatus, which ST youth experience as settler-colonial control.

The insights and experiences of the youth interlocutors and co-researchers of this dissertation provide a lens for rethinking education through a multiple colonialisms framework (Costa & Costa, 2019; Xaxa, 1999). This is particularly relevant in the South Asian context because of dominant, nationalist ideologies that reject India's role as a colonial power in the region. Through their critical and counter-colonial work, the YRAC and Thanchiyoor's youth are providing pedagogical openings for educators and policy makers to interrupt our denial of systemic colonial violence at the macro, meso, and micro scales of education policy, design, adaptation, and implementation. And by interrogating the subjects of inclusive education, noting how education and development actors categorize humans and separate us from non-human sentient beings, youth are providing entry-points for imagining education 'otherwise'.

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