

**DEPARTMENT  
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# PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG TRIBAL COMMUNITY USING PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT SCHEME


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Social support refers to the psychological and material resources provided by a social network to help individuals cope with stress. Such social support may come in different forms, and might involve helping a person with various daily tasks when they are ill or offering financial assistance when they are in need, giving advice to a friend when they are facing a difficult situation, providing caring, empathy, and concern for loved ones in need. Social support is the perception and actuality that one is cared for, has

assistance available from other people, and most popularly that one is part of a supportive social network. These supportive resources can be emotional (e.g. : nurturance), informational (e.g. : advice), or companionship (e.g. : sense of belonging); tangible (e.g.. financial assistance) or intangible (e.g. personal advice). Social support can be measured as the perception that one has assistance available, the actual received assistance, or the degree to which a person is integrated in a social network. Support can come from many sources, such as family, friends, pets, neighbours, co-workers, organizations, etc. Social support is studied across a wide range of disciplines including psychology, communications, medicine, sociology, nursing, public health, education, rehabilitation, and social work. Social support has been linked to many benefits for both physical and mental health, but "social support" (e.g., gossiping about friends) is not always beneficial.



**The extension activity of 1st MSc clinical psychology batch of academic year 2022-24 was held on 3rd February 2023. The visit was conducted as part of the academic curriculum. The survey team consisted of 20 members and the study was conducted among tribal community.**

The main objective of the survey was to measure the perceived social and emotional support among them. Sample Attappadi is a tribal taluk in Palakkad, Kerala, India. The main tribal groups of Attappadi are Muduga, Irula and Kurumba. These 3 communities are distributed among 3 panchayats. The study was conducted among the Irula community of Kunnanchala tribal colony, Attappadi. The traditional food of the Irula community is 'Ragi Puttu'. Their major harvest festivals are 'Shivaratri' and 'Ayyappan Vilakku'. Information regarding the communities were provided by Jomon, social worker, Government of Kerala. There were Animator field helpers from each community for effective communication between social workers and the locals. Tuitions in local language were provided to the children of the tribal communities in order to preserve the language.

The survey team also paid a visit to Bridge school, a special school nearby the colony. The objective of the school is to provide special education to dropouts from the tribal communities and to rehabilitate children who are victims of substance abuse.



## **Multi-Dimensional Scale of Percival Social Support**

Zimet and Gordon K. Farley developed the multidimensional scale of perceived social support. There are three subscales each addressing a different source of support and found to have a strong factorial validity: a) family, b) friends and c) significant others. The scale has good internal and test retest reliability as well as moderate construct validity. The Scale consists of 12 items. Seven-point scale with responses strongly agree, somewhat agree, a little agree, neither agree or disagree, a little disagree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree. Scoring Each item is scored 1-7. Total is sum of all 12 items, possible range for total is 7-84. If the total is between 49 and 68, it indicates moderate acuity and if between 12 & 48, indicate low activity.

### **Aim**


To asses perceived social support among tribal community using perceived social support scheme.

### **Method**

The sample size of the population was 10 and the samples were randomly collected from the people of Irula population. The tool used for the survey was 'perceived social support scale'. By using the mean the data interpretation was done.

### **Discussion**

The aim of the study was to assess the perceived social support among tribal community by using perceived social support scale. Social support refers to the psychological and material resources provided by a social network to help individuals cope with stress. By analyzing the results, it can be seen that



the obtained mean score is 51 .2, which indicates an average level of perceived social support among the people of 'Irula' community. The reason for such perception might be the fact that the people of this particular tribal area has better living conditions, compared to other areas. There are few townships nearby the colony. There is a school and grocery shop near to the colony. In the evenings, the members of the community gather and engage in leisure talks. This is a key factor behind the sense of belongingness among the members of the community. They are also getting enough help from government officials and professional social workers. There are better transportation facilities to Kunnanchala colony, compared to other tribal colonies in the Attappadi region. Government provides gas and electricity connection at subsidized rates to this region. The reason why there is no high social support might be that there is discrimination against tribal children in mixed schools of the area. Another reason is the lack of infrastructure and poor sanitation facilities.

## **Conclusion**

The people of "Irula" community have a moderate level of perceived social support.

