



# AN OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIOECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF TRIBES IN THE NILGIRI DISTRICT

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## Introduction

The majority of Tamil Nadu's tribal people work as farmers, agricultural labourers, or rely on the forest for their survival. Tamil Nadu's tribal communities are dispersed across practically all of the districts, and they have made a substantial contribution to the management of the woods. More information must be produced in order to better comprehend the current dependence of tribal people on forests, their altered way of life as a result of ecological disturbances. The goal of this study is to measure the tribal people's integration into the mainstream of economic and social development in order to close the economic, educational, and social status gap between the tribal and non-tribal populations.

It has been determined that the data obtained and extracted from the Pilot survey, as well as data compiled from secondary sources like various government reports websites, magazines, online media, social media, published and unpublished materials, and various issues of the Census of India reports, are the most appropriate for the study.

## Significance of the Study

The goal of tribal development is to include tribal people in mainstream economic and social development by bridging the economic, educational, and social status gap between tribal and non-tribal communities. Nature is at the centre of their socio-cultural existence. Tribals' access to resources and employment opportunities has decreased due to forest degradation, which has also had an impact on their quality of life, access to food, and options for a living. More information must be produced in order to better comprehend the tribal people's current dependence on trees, their changing lifestyles as a result of ecological disturbances, and their relationship to and dependence upon them.

## Objectives

- To examine the socio-economic status of the selected households in the Nilgiris District.
- To find out the educational status among the tribal population in the Nilgiris District

## Data Collection

A pilot study was conducted prior to the field survey procedure to observe the living condition and living environment of the selected 50 respondent households in the study area.

## Analysis of Results

We have selected 50 households for conducting a pilot survey to examine the socio-economic status and the income generation activities of the tribes in the Nilgiris district. For this, we have covered all the six tribes in the Nilgiris district, such as Toda, Kota, Kattunayakan, Paniya, Irula, and Kurumba. To examine the basic socio-economic status of these tribes we take population details, Housings details, educational status, and employment status of the selected samples from the proposed study area.

## Tribal Population Status

The survey has covered 50 households which include 214 populations that represent the six tribes. The below table explains the population details of the selected households from the study area.

**Table1**  
**Tribal Population Status**

Name of Tribe	Frequency	Percent
Toda	47	22.0
Kota	28	13.1
Irula	26	12.1
Kurumba	18	8.4
Paniya	28	13.1
Kattunayakan	67	31.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>100.0</b>

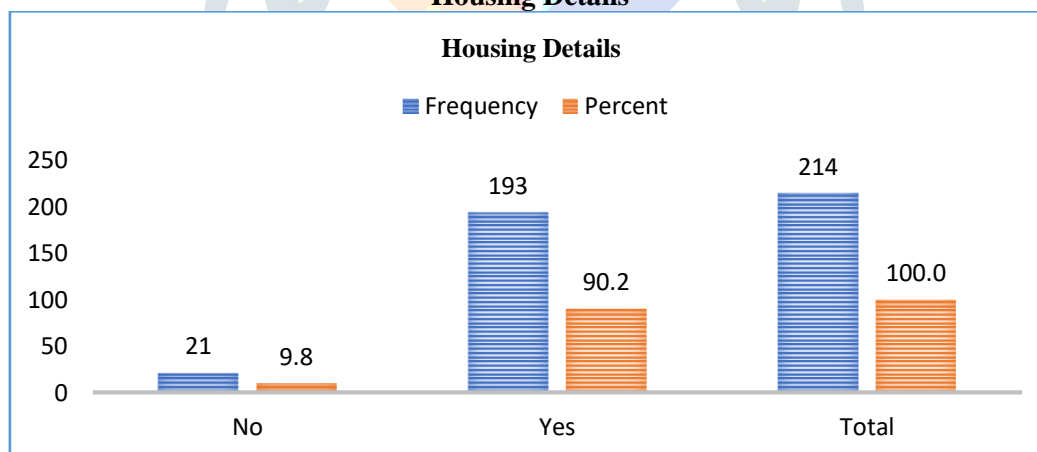
Source: Primary Data

From the above table, it shows that a majority of 31.3% of respondents are from the Kattunayakan tribe followed by Toda with 22%, Kota and Paniya with 13.1% of the respondents from Kattunayakan. The least representation was from the Kurumba tribe, ie, 8.4%.

## Housing Details of The Tribes

Out of the total 214 family respondents 193 (90.2%) are living in their own houses. And these houses are built by the financial help and governance of government authorities through tribal welfare schemes. The remaining 9.8% is living in rental homes. Along with this, the study has also considered the house details such as roof type, wall type and floor type of the houses. The graphical illustrations of housing details are mentioned below through the help of bar diagram.

**Figure1**  
**Housing Details**



Source: Primary Data

## Roof of the Houses

For examining the roof materials of the houses, I have considered four materials namely, asbestos roof, country tile, modern tile, and terraced (pucca roof). While considering the roof of the houses 57% of the respondent's houses have terraced roofs followed by 20.1% with asbestos roofs. There are houses with modern tiles (10.3%) and 12.1% of houses are constructed with country-tiled roofs.

**Table 3**  
**House facility**

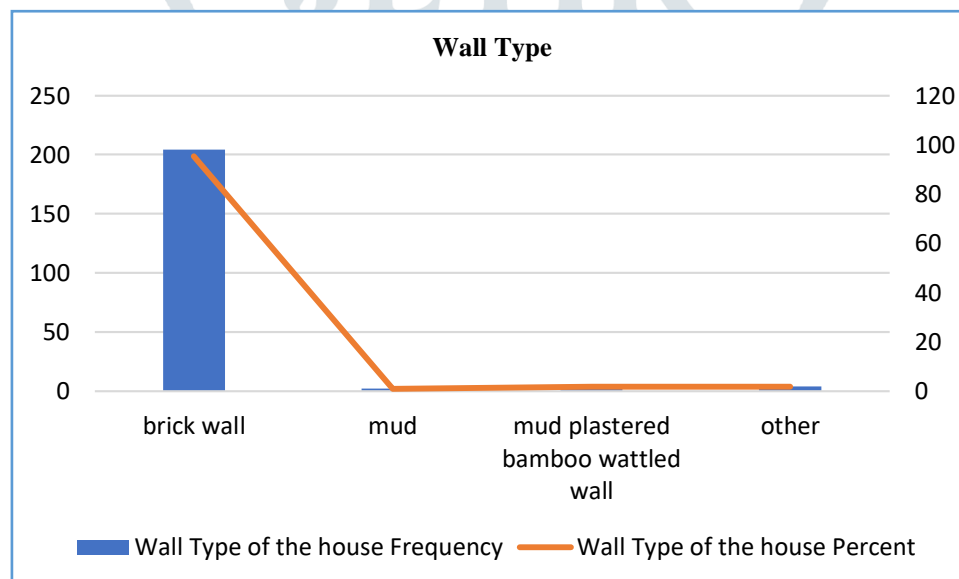
Roof of the house		
Material	Frequency	Percent
Asbestos Roof	43	20.1
Country Tile	26	12.1
Modern Tile	22	10.3
Terraced (Pucca Roof)	122	57.0
Others	1	.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary Data

## Wall Type of the Houses

For studying the wall type we mainly considered three materials say, brick wall, mud, mud plastered bamboo wattled wall. Around 95.3% of the respondent's wall types are built with brick materials and 1.9% of walls are equally built up with mud-plastered bamboo wattled walls and other categories include the bamboo wattled wall. This explained through the below-mentioned bar chart

**Figure 2**  
**Wall Type**



Source: Primary Data

## Floor Type of the Houses

For studying the wall type we mainly considered three materials say, brick wall, mud, mud plastered bamboo wattled wall. When it comes to the floor type majority of 93.9% of houses are furnished with cement floor. Only 6.1% are finished with mud floor.

**Table 5**  
**Floor type**

Floor type		
Material	Frequency	Percent
Cement	201	93.9
Mud	13	6.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary Data

## Sanitation and Toilet Facility

Sanitation and its facilities are the basic needs of every creature. Being described as minorities it is essential to analyse whether the tribal people are facilitated with sanitation and toilet facility. Even after the introduction various tribal development schemes and programs, there are still houses which don't have proper sanitation and toilet facility.

**Table 6**  
**Toilet facility**

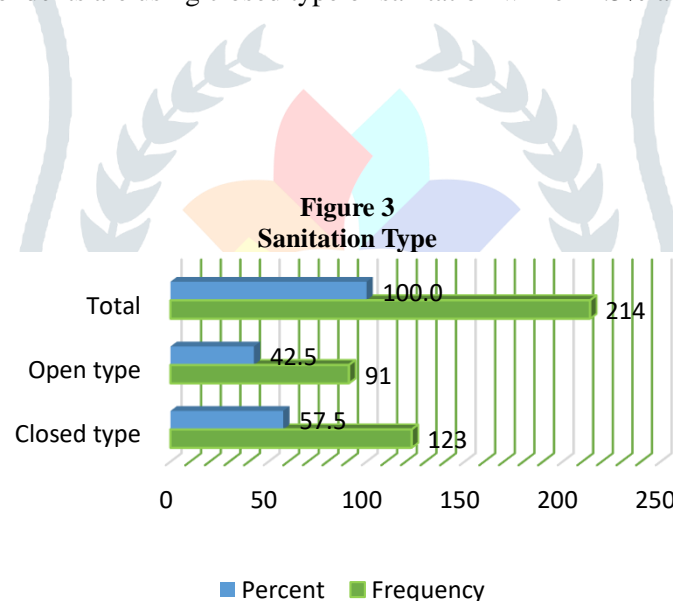
Availability of Toilet	Frequency	Percent
Dry	90	42.1
Flush out	124	57.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary Data

The above-mentioned table explains toilet facilities available in the selected respondent's households. 42.1% of respondents depends on dry toilets that has no proper drainage facility. The rest of 57.9% depends on the toilets having proper drainage facility.

## Sanitation Type

The below-mentioned figure explains sanitation type of toilet facility which includes open type and closed type. Out of 214 respondents 57.5% of respondents are using closed type of sanitation while 42.5% are using open type of sanitation.



Source: Primary Data

## Educational Status

From the survey, it has been examined that out of all 214 respondents, 200 samples are considered to measure the educational level of each one. Around 25% of the respondents are able to complete their high school education, followed by 17% who are able to complete their upper primary education and 13% of respondents with their higher secondary education.

**Table 7**  
**Education Status**

Education Status		
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	20	10.0
Primary Education	28	14.0
Medium/Upper Primary	35	17.5
High School	50	25.0
Higher Secondary Education	27	13.5
Graduation	13	6.5
Post Graduation	1	.5
Technical Education/Professional Courses	6	3.0
Valid	20	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary Data

Around 3% of tribal people has qualified many professional or technical course which help them to get professional job profiles. Only 5% of the tribals are able to attend the higher educational qualification (Post graduation).

### Relationship Between Gender and the Educational Qualification Of Tribes

The crosstab results in Table 8 examine the relationship between gender and educational qualification. Out of 44 respondents, 25.3% of females and 25.0% of males have completed their high school education. Around 14.7% of females and 17.5% of males have finished their upper primary education. Only minority respondents are able to attend their higher education. Out of 10% of illiterates, 12.6% are females and 6.3% are males.

**Table 7**  
**Education qualification and Gender of the family members Cross tabulation**

Education qualification and Gender of the family members Crosstabulation					
			Gender Of The Family Members		Total
			Female	Male	
Education qualification		Count	12	8	20
		% within Gender of the family members	12.6%	10.0%	11.4%
	Graduation	Count	7	5	12
		% within Gender of the family members	7.4%	6.3%	6.9%
	High School	Count	24	20	44
		% within Gender of the family members	25.3%	25.0%	25.1%
	Higher Secondary Education	Count	12	15	27
		% within Gender of the family members	12.6%	18.8%	15.4%
	Illiterate	Count	12	5	17
		% within Gender of the family members	12.6%	6.3%	9.7%
	Medium/Upper Primary	Count	14	14	28
		% within Gender of the family members	14.7%	17.5%	16.0%

	Post Graduation	Count	0	1	1
		% within Gender of the family members	0.0%	1.3%	.6%
	Primary Education	Count	12	9	21
		% within Gender of the family members	12.6%	11.3%	12.0%
	Technical Education/Professional Courses	Count	2	3	5
		% within Gender of the family members	2.1%	3.8%	2.9%
Total		Count	95	80	175
		% within Gender of the family members	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data

Among 17 illiterates, 12.6% are female illiterates and 6.35 are male illiterates. From this we can see that female illiterates are higher than the male illiterates.

## Employment Status

From the field study we get to know that the tribes are primary depends on few occupations. They are building works, coolie, house maid, garden worker, painting, sales and tea leaves plucking. In tribal groups.

**Table 8**  
**Employment details**

Job profile of the family mem		
Job category	Frequency	Percent
building works	5	5.2
Coolie	35	36.4
housemaids	1	1.0
other activities in the garden and estate	6	6.3
Tea leaves plucking	6	6.3
painting	1	1.0
Salesman	6	6.3
others	36	37.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary Data

From the above table, we can see that, out of 96 respondents a majority of 36.4% of respondents are engaged as coolie workers to meet their daily and family expenses followed by 37.5% are concentrated in farming and agriculture allied activities which comes under the job category "Others". Around 6.3% of respondents are working as salesmen, tea leaves pluckers, and gardeners.

## Conclusion of the Analysis

- Based on the study, out of the total 214 samples 193 (90.2%) are living in their own houses which were built under the governance of the government schemes and projects. Even if they are living in their own home, they have no property registered in their own name.
- These houses are built in good condition which are featured by terraced roofs, brick walls, and cement floors. That is 57% of the houses are built with terraced roofs, 95.3% of houses are built with brick walls, and 93.9% of floors are polished with cement.

- When it comes to sanitation and toilet facilities, 57.9% of respondents are uses toilets that can be flushed out and 57.5% of toilets are closed type. Even after getting assistance from the government in the construction of hygienic toilets, 42.5% of respondents did not get toilet facilities and they are forced to open defecation.
- While analyzing the educational status of the tribes we can see that 10% of respondents are illiterates, 25% have passed high school sections, and 17.5% of the respondents are passed upper primary sections. Only 6.5% of respondents have completed their graduation. As we move on to check the higher education level among the selected respondents, it will be a negligible count. We can conclude that the importance of education among the tribal community has less significance because they prefer to send the next generation to send jobs as soon as they are aged 17 onwards.
- When we consider the female and male educational status among the selected tribal respondents, show that female illiteracy is higher than male illiteracy. That is, female illiteracy is 12.6% and male illiteracy is 6.35%.
- The analysis of the employment status of the tribes shows that a majority of 36.4% of respondents are engaged as coolie workers to meet their daily and family expenses followed by 37.5% are concentrated in farming and agriculture allied activities which comes under the job category “Others”. Around 6.3% of respondents are working as salesmen, tea leaves pluckers, and gardeners.

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