

An Analysis Of The Socio-Economic Survey Of Scheduled Tribes In Tamilnadu, A Special Reference To The Nilgiris District

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I. INTRODUCTION

The population of STs in India as per the 2011 census was 104,281,034 constituting 8.61% of the total population. The tribal population of India and West Bengal had grown at the rate of 17.64% and 13.93% during the period of 2001-2011 respectively.

Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka all converge in southern India's Nilgiris Hills, a region of mountains, forests, and tea plantations that rises to a height of 2,400 meters. The highlands are comprised of undulating grasslands and "shoala," or small pockets of temperate woodland. The Nilgiris Hills experience the second-highest annual rainfall in India, at nearly 14 feet. This rain happens during the monsoon season, which lasts from June through August, making up more than 80% of the total. The woodlands are damp and lush on the southern, windward side of the hills. The leeward, northern woodlands are dry and overgrown.

The Toda, Kota, Badaga, and Kurumba are a few of the odd tribal communities that call the Nilgiri Hills home. These tribes were kept somewhat separate from other groups by the hills below, which used to have steep slopes, dense woods, and high rates of malaria and other maladies. Through a complicated trade network, the Badaga, Toda, Kota, and Kurumba tribes have historically depended on one another for various goods and services. Also, they conduct business with the nearby hills' Irula, Uralus, Paniyan, and Chetto populations. The Kota provided the Badagas with music at funerals, thatching, carpentry, and other services in exchange for food and clothing. The Kurumbas were used as a defense against other Kurumbas' sorcery. By going through each tribal group it is significant to understand the basic socio-economic status of these communities on basic indicators. The present article throws light on the review of the socio-economic status of the tribes in the Nilgiris district.

II. POPULATION OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN THE NILGIRIS DISTRICT

The below-mentioned table explains the population status of various tribal groups in the Nilgiri district. There are six tribes in Nilgiri District. The tribal population status of Nilgiri district is 26566, in which the male population constitute 49.25% and the female population is 50.75%. Among these six primitive tribes, the Paniyan tribes has the highest tribal population which is estimated to 7882 (29.66%). Among this whole population the male population constitute 49.24% and female population is 50.76%.

The population of Toda group is least which constitutes 6.05% of the total tribal population of the Nilgiri district.

Table 1
Population of Scheduled Tribes in the Nilgiris district

| Name of the PTG | | Male | Female | Total |
|-----------------|-----|-------|--------|--------|
| Toda | No. | 798 | 810 | 1608 |
| | % | 49.63 | 50.37 | 100.00 |
| Kota | No. | 991 | 1033 | 2024 |
| | % | 48.96 | 51.04 | 100.00 |
| Kattunayakan | No. | 1261 | 1219 | 2480 |
| | % | 50.85 | 49.15 | 100.00 |
| Irular | No. | 2974 | 3046 | 6020 |
| | % | 49.40 | 50.60 | 100.00 |
| Kurumbas | No. | 3179 | 3373 | 6552 |

| | | | | |
|----------------|-----|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| | % | 48.52 | 51.48 | 100.00 |
| Paniyan | No. | 3881 | 4001 | 7882 |
| | % | 49.24 | 50.76 | 100.00 |
| Total | No. | 13084 | 13482 | 26566 |
| | % | 49.25 | 50.75 | 100.00 |

Source: Tribal Research Centre Udhamandalam 2011

Household distribution

The household distribution of various tribal groups in the Nilgiris district is explained in the below-mentioned table. From the table, it is evident that the number of households in the Paniyan groups constitutes 26.71% followed by Irular (24.48%), and Betta Kurumba (12.96%). The Mullu kurumbas constitute the least household distribution that is, 5.21%.

Table 2
Household distribution

| Name of the PTG | No. of Households | % |
|----------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Toda | 388 | 5.80 |
| Kota | 509 | 7.62 |
| Alu Kurumba | 529 | 7.92 |
| Betta Kurumba | 866 | 12.96 |
| Mullu Kurumba | 348 | 5.21 |
| Irular | 1635 | 24.48 |
| Kattunayakan | 621 | 9.30 |
| Paniyan | 1784 | 26.71 |
| Total | 6680 | 100.00 |

Source: Tribal Research Centre Udhamandalam 2011

III. INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITY

While analyzing infrastructure facilities we consider three variables such as type of houses, availability of electricity connection and sources of water which we consider as one of the basic necessities of life. The type of houses is divided into three categories they are, a thatched hut, Tiled, and RCC. Traditionally tribal people live in forest areas where they dwelled for their whole lifetime. Due to changes in the economy, the concept of a house, built in various building materials including thatched leaves, bricks, mud, sheets etc. came into being.

Electricity is one of the most important infrastructure facilities in the 21st century. While analyzing the given data, it can be inferred that electrical connection has been available to 4942 tribal households which constitute 73.98% of the total tribal households in the Nilgiris District.

Drinking water is an essential infrastructure for every living being to fulfil their needs and activities. Every government take various efforts to bring safe and hygienic drinking water facilities. Generally, tribal people are minorities who are deprived of basic needs and access to infrastructure facilities. The tabulation details of these three variables are figured in the Table 5.

Table 3
Infrastructure Facility

| Name of the PTG | Thatched Hut | Tiled | RCC | Electricity connection | Tap | Hand Pump | Well | Stream | No. of Households |
|----------------------|--------------|-------|------|------------------------|------|-----------|------|--------|-------------------|
| Toda | 35 | 252 | 101 | 366 | 304 | 1 | 64 | 19 | 388 |
| Kota | | 431 | 78 | 504 | 509 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 509 |
| Alu Kurumba | 118 | 267 | 144 | 340 | 418 | 0 | 20 | 91 | 529 |
| Betta Kurumba | 104 | 687 | 75 | 472 | 531 | 37 | 58 | 240 | 866 |
| Mullu Kurumba | 24 | 270 | 54 | 332 | 71 | 59 | 218 | 0 | 348 |
| Irular | 330 | 914 | 391 | 1490 | 1030 | 67 | 136 | 402 | 1635 |
| Kattunayakan | 212 | 322 | 87 | 261 | 196 | 36 | 168 | 221 | 621 |
| Paniyan | 260 | 1099 | 425 | 1177 | 636 | 4 | 981 | 163 | 1784 |
| Total | 1083 | 4242 | 1355 | 4942 | 3695 | 204 | 1645 | 1136 | 6680 |

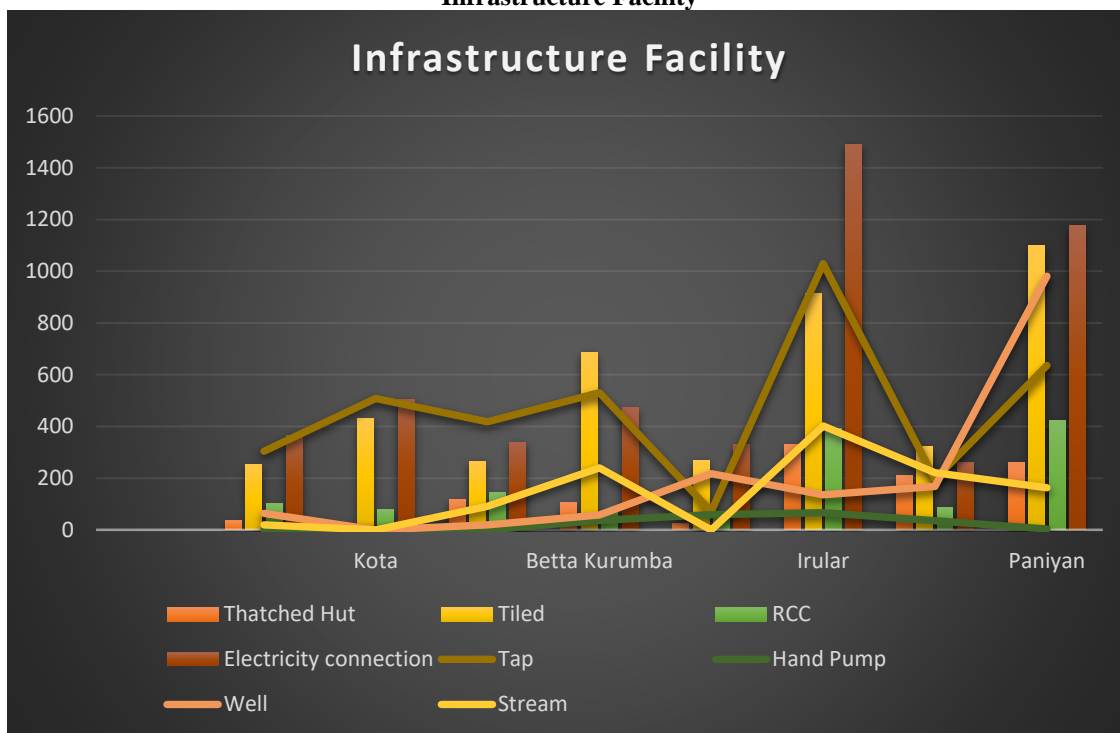
Source: Tribal Research Centre Udhamandalam 2011

Out of 6680 tribal households, 5.80% of Toda people are living in various types of houses including thatched huts, tiled and RCC. Like that 7.6% of Kota tribes, 7.9% alu kurumba, 12.9% of betta kurumba, 5.2% of mullu kurumba, 24.4% of Irula group, 9.2% of Kattunayakan, and 26.7% of Paniyan groups are also dwells in various types of houses as mentioned above.

The tribal households who do not have an electrical connection can be aggregated to 1738 which constitute 26.01% of the total households of 6680. The reason is some households do not want to electrify their

houses, they prefer to use traditional kerosene lamps and candles for lightening. And they are interested to use modern or contemporary equipment or tools for fulfilling their household activities. The graphical representation of infrastructure facilities are explained through the help of combo chart which shown in the Figure3.

Figure 3
Infrastructure Facility



In this analysis, the sources of drinking water have been divided into four categories. They are tap, hand pump, well and stream. In total, 3695 (55.3%) households use tap water for drinking and household purposes. Around 1645 (24.6%) households are using well for collecting water and 1136 (17%) are dependent on streams for the same. Even after having all these sources, some people still depend on the hand pump facility, which constitutes around 3% of the total tribal households in the Nilgiris district.

IV. OCCUPATION/ SOURCES OF INCOME

As per the data we can see that a total of 13,532 tribal people are engaged in various economic activities. For the data collection purpose, the entire economic activity is divided into seven categories. They are wage labourers, Petty Businesses, Govt. services, old age pensions, coffee/tea plantations other activities including tobacco making, agriculture, hunting etc....

The tribal people from the Paniyan group constitute 33.01% of the workforce and are engaged in various economic activities to meet their living expenses. By combining both Toda and Toda Christian groups constitute around 3.93% of the workforce in Nilgiris District. Approximately 5.46% workforce represents the Kota Tribe. By combining the various division among the Kurumba tribe, we can say that a total of 3263 (24.11%) workforces are engaged in multiple jobs.

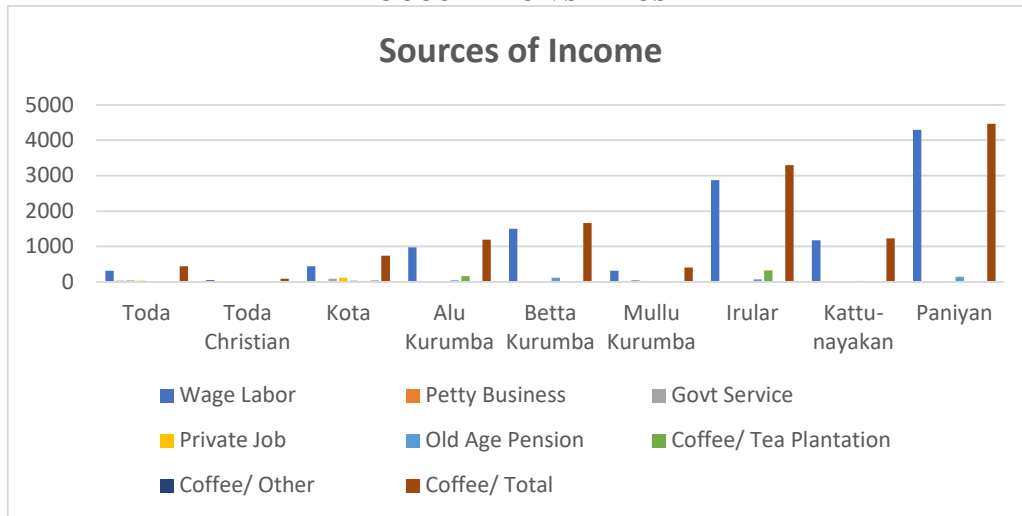
TABLE 4
OCCUPATION STATUS

| Name of the PTG | | Wage Labor | Petty Business | Govt Service | Private Job | Old Age Pension | Coffee/ Tea Plantation | Other | Total |
|-----------------------|------|--------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Toda | N o. | 311 | 38 | 45 | 35 | 10 | 0 | 3 | 442 |
| | % | 70.36 | 8.60 | 10.18 | 7.92 | 2.26 | 0.00 | 0.68 | 100.00 |
| Toda Christian | N o. | 54 | 1 | 15 | 14 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 90 |
| | % | 60.00 | 1.11 | 16.67 | 15.56 | 6.67 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| Kota | N o. | 439 | 1 | 92 | 117 | 32 | 23 | 35 | 739 |
| | % | 59.40 | 0.14 | 12.45 | 15.83 | 4.33 | 3.11 | 4.74 | 100.00 |
| Alu Kurumba | N o. | 976 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 46 | 160 | 2 | 1189 |
| | % | 82.09 | 0.00 | 0.34 | 0.08 | 3.87 | 13.46 | 0.17 | 100.00 |
| Betta Kurumba | N o. | 1502 | 1 | 20 | 24 | 118 | 0 | 0 | 1665 |
| | % | 90.21 | 0.06 | 1.20 | 1.44 | 7.09 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| Mullu Kurumba | N o. | 311 | 1 | 48 | 24 | 0 | 1 | 24 | 409 |
| | % | 76.04 | 0.24 | 11.74 | 5.87 | 0.00 | 0.24 | 5.87 | 100.00 |
| Irular | N o. | 2875 | 1 | 19 | 14 | 69 | 324 | 0 | 3302 |
| | % | 87.07 | 0.03 | 0.58 | 0.42 | 2.09 | 9.81 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| Kattunayakan | N o. | 1171 | 4 | 2 | 17 | 22 | 0 | 13 | 1229 |
| | % | 95.28 | 0.33 | 0.16 | 1.38 | 1.79 | 0.00 | 1.06 | 100.00 |
| Paniyan | N o. | 4293 | 0 | 3 | 20 | 140 | 8 | 3 | 4467 |
| | % | 96.10 | 0.00 | 0.07 | 0.45 | 3.13 | 0.18 | 0.07 | 100.00 |

Source: Tribal Research Centre Udhagamandalam 2011

Among these various categories of jobs, a majority of 22.7% of tribal people are wage labourers. When comes to petty business around 0.34% of tribal people in the Nilgiri district are dependent on this economic activity. Even if we are considered the tribal people as minorities, some of them have utilized their educational opportunities in a productive way and have found careers in government services which constitute 1.8% of the total workforce of the Nilgiris tribes. The tribal people who are employed in coffee or tea plantation constitutes 3.8%. All together we can see that they have found their own job activities to meet their living in a responsible way. This is illustrated in the below-mentioned bar diagram.

**Figure 2
OCCUPATION STATUS**



V. EDUCATION STATUS OF TRIBAL IN NILGIRIS DISTRICT

As per the available statistics, we can review that 8555 were illiterate, who cannot read and write their mother tongue (Tamil). Among these six tribal groups in the Nilgiris district, a majority of 47.82% of illiterates are from Paniyan Tribes. When it comes to primary education 27.4 % of the Toda (combining both Toda and Toda Christian) group are having Primary Education. Around 15.65% of people from the Mullu Kurumba tribal group had completed their higher secondary education. But when we analyze their higher education graduation we can see a decreasing trend as a majority of them are not interested to study further. Mainly because they want to continue their traditional economic activity. They also do not have the desire to save, invest and to increase their financial assets.

**Table 3
Educational Status**

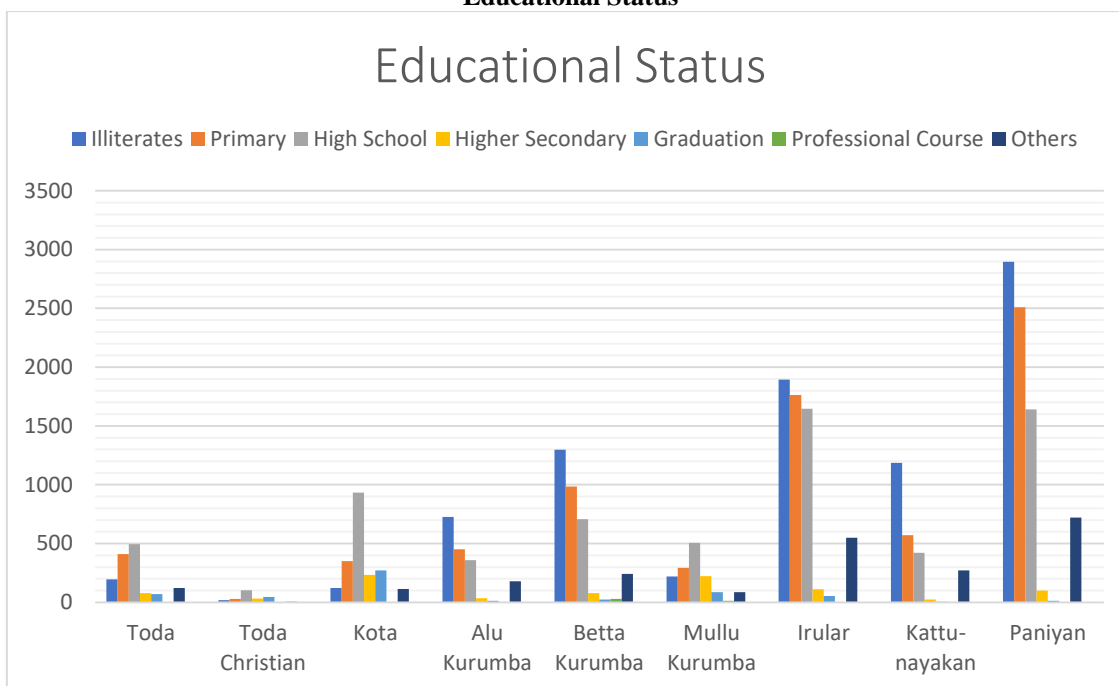
| Name of the PTG | Illiterates | Primary | High School | Higher Secondary | Graduation | Professional Course | Others | Total |
|-----------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Toda | No. | 196 | 411 | 494 | 77 | 69 | 0 | 123 |
| | % | 14.31 | 30.00 | 36.06 | 5.62 | 5.04 | 0.00 | 8.98 |
| Toda Christian | No. | 18 | 30 | 103 | 33 | 45 | 3 | 6 |
| | % | 7.56 | 12.61 | 43.28 | 13.87 | 18.91 | 1.26 | 2.52 |
| Kota | No. | 122 | 351 | 933 | 233 | 272 | 0 | 113 |
| | % | 6.03 | 17.30 | 46.10 | 11.50 | 13.40 | 0.00 | 5.58 |
| Alu Kurumba | No. | 725 | 452 | 360 | 35 | 14 | 0 | 179 |
| | % | 41.08 | 25.61 | 20.40 | 1.98 | 0.79 | 0.00 | 10.14 |
| Betta Kurumba | No. | 1298 | 986 | 708 | 77 | 24 | 28 | 241 |
| | % | 38.60 | 29.32 | 21.05 | 2.29 | 0.71 | 0.83 | 7.16 |
| Mullu Kurumba | No. | 219 | 294 | 505 | 223 | 86 | 12 | 86 |
| | % | 15.37 | 20.63 | 35.44 | 15.65 | 6.04 | 0.84 | 6.04 |
| Irular | No. | 1895 | 1763 | 1647 | 110 | 55 | 0 | 550 |
| | % | 31.48 | 29.29 | 27.36 | 1.83 | 0.91 | 0.00 | 9.14 |
| Kattunayakan | No. | 1186 | 570 | 422 | 24 | 6 | 1 | 271 |
| | % | 47.82 | 22.98 | 17.02 | 0.97 | 0.24 | 0.04 | 10.93 |
| Paniyan | No. | 2896 | 2509 | 1642 | 101 | 12 | 0 | 722 |
| | % | 36.74 | 31.83 | 20.83 | 1.28 | 0.15 | 0.00 | 9.16 |

Source: Tribal Research Centre Udhamandalam 2011

The graphical representation of the educational status of the tribes in the Nilgiris district is illustrated

through the below-given bar diagram. Illiteracy is more prevalent in the Paniyan Tribal group and around 13.40% of graduates are from Kota group and 0.83% of postgraduates are from Betta Kurumba.

Figure1
Educational Status



VI. Conclusion

By analyzing the socio-economic status of the tribes based on basic indicators, we can conclude as follows:

- The total tribal population in the Nilgiris district is twenty six thousand five hundred and sixty six only (26,566).
- The population of the Toda group is the least which constitutes 6.05% of the total tribal population and the Paniyan group constitutes the highest tribal population which is 29.66% of the total tribal population in Nilgiris District.
- Among the three kinds of housing (thatched hut, tiled and RCC), 16% of households are still living in thatched huts and 64% are living in tiled houses. When it comes to electricity 26.01% of the total households do not have electricity connections. Because they prefer to use traditional kerosene lamps and candles for lightening. In their settlement, they have access to drinking water facilities through well, taps and hand pumps. 55.3% of the tribal households are using tap water facilities both for drinking and household activities. Around 24.6% depends on well, 17% depends on stream and the remaining 3% of the tribal people are hand-pump for the same.
- In total 13,532 tribal people are engaged in various economic activities like wage labourers, Petty Businesses, Govt. services, old age pensions, and coffee/tea plantations. Around 22.7% of tribal people are wage labourers followed by 3.8% working in coffee and tea plantations and 1.8% in government services.
- Out of the total 26,566 samples, 8,555 were illiterates that is, 32.2% of the tribal people are illiterate. Among these, 2896 (34%) of illiterates are from Paniyan Tribes.

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