

Demographic Characteristics of Scheduled Tribes in India with special reference to Tamilnadu – A Study

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Abstract- . The Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are officially designated groups of historically disadvantaged people in India. The terms are recognised in the constitution of India and the groups are designated in one or other of the categories. For much of the period of British rule in the Indian subcontinent, they were known as the Depressed Classes. In modern literature, the Scheduled Castes are sometimes referred to as untouchables. The term Dalith meaning "broken/scattered" in Sanskrit and Hindi, is still common having been popularised by B.R.Ambethkar (1891–1956), the economist, reformer, father of the Indian constitution, and Dalit leader during the independence struggle, himself a Dalith. Ambedkar preferred the term Dalit to Gandhi's term, Harijan meaning "person of Hari/Vishnu (or Man of God). In September 2018, the government issued an advisory to all private satellite channels asking them to 'refrain' from using the nomenclature 'Dalit"', though rights groups and intellectuals have come out against any shift from 'Dalit' in popular usage. The Scheduled Castes and Schedule tribes comprise about 16.6% and 8.6%, respectively, of India's population (according to the 2011 Census The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 lists 1,108 castes across 29 states in its First Schedule and the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 lists 744 tribes across 22 states in its First Schedule. Since the independence of India, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were given reservation status, guaranteeing political representation. The Constitution lays down the general principles of positive discrimination for SCs and STs.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tribal development is a matter of concern and an important area of inquiry in the context of social sciences. In the recent past years, the subject has acquired huge importance both at the national and international level and even worldwide. The active support and hectic campaign by a number of international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Championing the cause of the 'indigenous people' has turned it a burning issue all over the world. Further, the United Nations' declaration of 1993 as the 'International Year for World's Indigenous People' Provides ample evidence of the upward apprehensive of the world's highest body for the development of the indigenous people in the entire world.

Meaning of Adivasi

'Adivasi' - 'Adi' means oldest and 'vasi' means inhabitant is commonly used to designate them. According to the Anthropological Survey 2011, a total of 4,635 communities are now to be found in India. Out of this total, 'tribal' or Indigenous communities number 732. The inclusion of a community as a Scheduled Tribe is an ongoing process. The essential characteristics, first laid down by the Lokur Committee, for a community to be identified as Scheduled Tribes are a) Indications of primitive traits, b) Distinctive culture, c) Shyness of contact with the community at large, d) Geographical isolation and e) Backwardness.

Characteristics of Tribal Economy

- The following nine characteristics are vested with primitive economic systems as found in tribal India⁴. They are,
- There exists absence of technological aids in a tribal economy, which results in inefficient, inadequate or even wasteful exploitation of nature as illustrated by shifting and ex-cultivation. Consequently, with great effort, the basic minimum necessary for sustenance is raised. Thus an economic surplus is questioned among the tribes.
- Economic relations are relying on barter and exchange among the tribes. Money as a "store and measurement of value and as a medium of exchange" is not widely used. Institution, connected with money, such as banking and credit are used only with non-tribal groups and this depends on the nature and frequency of contacts.
- The profit motive in economic dealings is generally absent. The role of an incentive is fulfilled by a sense of mutual obligation, sharing and solidarity among the tribes.
- Co-operative and Collective endeavor is an important feature of tribal economy.
- The rate of innovation, internal and induced is very low, and as a result, "they are stable and there is little of quick progress".

- The regular market as an institution is no more and subsequently the features of regular market, like perfect competition and monopoly are also absent. What comes nearest to it is the weekly market or the festival and seasonal meets.
- Manufacturer of goods basically for consumption is not for hoarding or exchange in trade.
- Absence of specialization based on specially adopted specific technical abilities. However, a division of labour based on factors other than specialization like sex is widely prevalent.
- The notion of property is closely related to display an expenditure of wealth rather than its accumulation.

Tribal Scenario in Indian perspective

India stands one of the largest concentrations of tribal population in the world next to Africa. The tribal areas of India are mostly sheltered and remote, as a result of it a very little is known about their lifestyle and problems related with survival. The tribes are more compared not only in relation to the general population, but also compared with scheduled caste and they were acknowledged backward social group with constitutional protection.

The gains of development efforts rarely accrued to them or have very little relevance to their problems. It is felt that the serious imbalances in the ownership pattern of assets and income distribution joined with spread unemployment and under-employment have further worsened among these sections. Hence it has been acquired serious concern among the policy makers and planners to think on all round development of these sections. The populations of Scheduled Tribes according to 2011 Census constituted 8.6 per cent of the total population of the country. The constitution of India emphasises the need of special efforts to improve the conditions of economically and socially backward sections of the society in general, which include the scheduled tribes. The details of Scheduled Tribe population in India as per 2011 census are presented in table 1

TABLE 1
Details of Scheduled Tribes Population in India As Per 2011 Census

Sex	STs population (in crores)		Growth rate (in percent)	Percentage of STs to total population
	2001	2011		
Person	08.43	10.43	23.70	8.6
Male	04.26	05.24	22.90	8.4
Female	04.17	05.19	24.40	8.8

Source: Primary Census Abstract, Census of India, 2013

The above table 1 shows that the total population of Scheduled Tribes had increased from 8.43 crores in 2001 to 10.43 crores in 2011 as its growth rate stood at 23.70 per cent. It was consisted 8.6 per cent to total general population in India as per 2011 census. The Male population contributed 4.26 crores in 2001 and has increased to 5.24 crores in 2011. Female population was around 4.17 crores in 2001 further it was increased to 5.19 crores in 2011. The population of the tribes had grown at the rate of 23.7 per cent during the period 2001-2011. Male Population was higher than Female Population, but in growth rate was less than the female population in the category of Scheduled Tribes. The details of trends and the proportion of the Scheduled Tribes population in India from 1961 to 2011 are presented in table.2.

TABLE 2
Trends and Proportion of Scheduled Tribes population in India, 1961-2011

S.No.	Year	Total Population (in millions)	STs Population (in millions)	Percentage of STs Population to Total Population	Decadal Growth Rate
1	1961	439.24	29.88	6.86	41.19
2	1971	548.16	38.02	6.94	33.84
3	1981	683.33	51.63	7.83	24.80
4	1991	846.42	67.76	8.08	24.69
5	2001	1028.74	84.30	8.20	22.70
6	2011	1210.19	104.30	8.61	23.70

Source: Various issues of Census of India Reports, 1961-2011, Government of India.

The table 2 has revealed the trends and the proportion of the Scheduled Tribes population in India. This revealed that total the population from 439.24 million in the year of 1961 to 1210.19 million in the year of 2011. The Scheduled Tribes population has increased from 29.88 million in the year of 1961 to 104.30 million in the year of 2011. The table shows that general population as well as Scheduled Tribes population was increased progressively. The per cent of the Scheduled Tribes population to the total population of India from 6.86 in the

year of 1961 has increased up to 8.61 in the year of 2011, it was constantly increased. The Decadal growth rate of Scheduled Tribes population has decreased from 41.19 per cent in 1961 to 22.70 per cent in the year of 2010. But it was increased as per cent in 2011. The above data reveals that there has been a constant increase in the population with compared to Scheduled Tribes Population.

Trends of Tribal Population in India

The details of state and union territory-wise decadal growth rate of tribal population given in the table-3

The table-3 has vividly shoes that the Scheduled Tribes percentage and growth rate of states and union territories of India. Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Lakshadweep those states have more than 50 per cent of the Scheduled Tribe population. Lakshadweep, Mizoram states have obtained 94 per cent of the tribal population. For 2001, Karnataka had 80.8 per cent of decadal growth rate, which is highest and Andaman & Nicobar Islands had 10.1 per cent of decadal growth rate, which is the lowest of Scheduled Tribes in India. For the year 2001, Scheduled Tribes had increased, but has not dwindled. In the year 2011, Uttar Pradesh had 95.06 per cent of decadal growth rate, which is highest and Daman & Diu had 9.8 per cent of decadal growth rate, which is lowest of Scheduled Tribes. Goa is the only state has not changed in Scheduled Tribe population. Nagaland and Andaman & Nicobar Islands states have got negative trends in the Scheduled Tribes population.

TABLE 3
Decadal growth rate of Tribal population in states/UTs of india

Sl.No.	State and union Territories	Percentage of STs			STs Decadal Growth rate	
		1991	2001	2011	2001	2011
	India	08.1	08.2	08.6	24.5	19.1
1	Jammu & Kashmir	NA	10.9	11.9	12.1	35.0
2	Himachal Pradesh	04.2	04.0	05.7	NA	60.3
3	Punjab	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
4	Chandigarh	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
5	Uttarakhand	NA	03.0	02.9	NA	14.0
6	Haryana	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
7	Delhi	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
8	Rajasthan	12.4	12.6	13.5	29.6	30.2
9	Uttar Pradesh	0.2	0.1	0.6	NA	95.0
10	Bihar	07.7	0.9	01.3	NA	76.2
11	Sikkim	22.4	20.6	33.8	22.6	85.2
12	Arunachal Pradesh	63.7	64.2	68.8	28.1	35.0
13	Nagaland	87.7	89.1	86.5	67.2	-03.6
14	Manipur	34.4	34.2	35.1	17.2	21.8
15	Mizoram	94.8	94.5	94.4	28.4	23.4
16	Tripura	30.9	31.1	31.8	16.4	17.5
17	Meghalaya	85.5	85.9	86.1	31.3	28.3
18	Assam	12.8	12.4	12.4	15.1	17.4
19	West Bengal	05.6	05.5	05.8	15.7	20.2
20	Jharkhand	NA	26.3	26.2	NA	22.0
21	Orissa	22.2	22.1	22.8	15.8	17.7
22	Chhattisgarh	NA	31.8	30.6	NA	18.2
23	Madhya Pradesh	23.3	20.3	21.1	NA	25.2
24	Gujarat	14.9	14.8	14.8	21.4	19.2
25	Daman & Diu	11.5	08.8	06.3	19.4	09.8
26	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	79.0	62.2	52.0	25.5	30.1
27	Maharashtra	09.3	08.9	09.4	17.2	22.5
28	Andhra Pradesh	06.3	06.6	07.0	19.6	17.8

29	Karnataka	04.3	06.6	07.0	80.8	22.7
30	Goa	0.0	0.0	10.2	50.5	0.0
31	Lakshadweep	93.1	94.5	94.8	19.0	06.6
32	Kerala	01.1	01.1	01.5	13.5	33.1
33	Tamil Nadu	01.0	01.0	01.1	13.4	22.0
34	Puducherry	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
35	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	09.5	08.3	07.5	10.1	-03.2

Source: Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Statistical profile of Scheduled Tribes in India, 2011.

Scheduled Tribes in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu, one of the prime state of the southern zone in India, has comprised of important tribal groups. According to the 2011 census, the Scheduled Tribe population in Tamil Nadu is 794697 (401068 males and 393629 females) constitutes 1.1 per cent of the total Indian tribal population. The literacy rate of the tribes is 59 per cent. 83.08 per cent of the tribal survives in hilly/rural areas and 16.91 per cent of them live in urban (town) areas.

The tribal areas of Tamil Nadu can be broadly divided into two major geographical dimensions such as the eastern coastal line and the mountainous regions of the north and west. The average elevation of the Eastern Ghats is 2000 feet and the highest peak is 6000 feet. This range is not continuous in Tamil Nadu.

The important hill ranges of Tamil Nadu are the Jawadhi hills and Yelagiri hills located in the tiruvannamalai and vellore districts, the Kalrayan hills of vellore districts, the Pachamalai, Kollimalai and Yercadu ranges of Salem, the Anamalai of Coimbatore, the Sitteri hills of Dharmapuri, the Palani hills of Madurai and the Nilgiris hills. The details of district- wise Scheduled Tribes population in Tamil Nadu, 2011 are given in the table below

The table 4 shows district-wise Scheduled Tribes population in Tamil Nadu. Salem district have 1, 19,369 population, which was highest and Karur district have 575, whose lowest tribal population in the year of 2011. Tiruvannamalai, Viluppuram, Vellore, Dharmapuri and Namakkal districts have more than 50,000 tribal populations. Madurai district has increased 85.8 per cent growth rate, which was the highest tribal growth rate and Karur district have decreased 60.3 per cent growth rate, which was the lowest tribal growth rate among the districts of Tamil Nadu. Karur, Sivaganga, Virudhunagar, Perambalur, Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli, has a negative growth rate in tribal population. Pudukkottai, Madurai, Kancheepuram, districts has witnessed more than 50 per cent increased growth rate of tribal population

TABLE 4
District-wise Scheduled Tribes Population in Tamil Nadu, as per 2011 census

Rank of Districts	Districts	STs Population (in numbers)			Decadal Growth rate	Sex Ratio	STs (in percent)
		Total	Male	Female			
	Tamil Nadu state	7,94,697	4,01,068	3,93,629	22.0	981	1.1
1	Salem	1,19,369	60,489	58,880	14.9	973	3.4
2	Tiruvannamalai	90,954	45,956	44,998	25.0	979	3.7
3	Viluppuram	74,859	37,570	37,289	17.1	993	2.2
4	Vellore	72,955	36,663	36,292	15.7	990	1.9
5	Dharmapuri	63,044	32,130	30,914	48.0	962	4.2
6	Namakkal	57,059	29,383	27,676	11.0	942	3.3
7	Thiruvallur	47,243	23,692	23,551	24.8	994	1.3
8	Kancheepuram	41,210	20,605	20,605	55.5	1,000	1.0
9	The Nilgiris	32,813	16,091	16,722	15.6	1,039	4.5
10	Coimbatore	28,342	14,245	14,097	08.1	990	0.8
11	Krishnagiri	22,388	11,419	10,969	32.1	961	1.2
12	Erode	21,880	11,024	10,856	30.1	985	1.0
13	Tiruchirappalli	18,198	9,414	8,784	-03.8	933	0.7
14	Cuddalore	15,702	7,943	7,759	33.4	977	0.6
15	Madurai	11,096	5,622	5,474	85.8	974	0.4
16	Ariyalur	10,722	5,274	5,448	25.7	1,033	1.4
17	Tirunelveli	10,270	5,109	5,161	23.1	1,010	0.3
18	Chennai	10,061	5,207	4,854	49.5	932	0.2

19	Dindigul	8,064	4,095	3,969	24.4	969	0.4
20	Kanniyakumari	7,282	3,554	3,728	33.8	1,049	0.4
21	Tiruppur	5,458	2,740	2,718	44.9	992	0.2
22	Thoothukkudi	4,911	2,466	2,445	40.0	991	0.3
23	Nagapattinam	3,756	1,847	1,909	09.8	1,034	0.2
24	Thanjavur	3,561	1,739	1,822	-02.2	1,048	0.1
25	Thiruvarur	3,034	1,466	1,568	13.5	1,070	0.2
26	Perambalur	2,584	1,292	1,292	-21.9	1,000	0.5
27	Virudhunagar	2,294	1,182	1,112	-02.7	941	0.1
28	Theni	1,835	954	881	08.8	923	0.1
29	Pudukkottai	1,283	647	636	62.0	983	0.1
30	Ramanathapuram	1,105	559	546	02.5	977	0.1
31	Sivaganga	790	394	396	-27.1	1,005	0.1
32	Karur	575	297	278	-60.3	936	0.1

Source: Directorate of census operation 2011, Chennai.

. But, the average growth rate of Tamil Nadu tribal population was 22.0 per cent in the year of 2011. As per the 2011 census Kancheepuram, Nilgiris, Ariyalur, Tirunelveli, Kanniyakumari, Nagapattinam, Thanjavur, Thiruvarur, Perambalur and Sivaganga districts have more than 1000 females to 1000 males. Sex ratio was 1070 in Thiruvarur district, which was peaking and 923 in Theni district, which was lowest among the Tamil Nadu state in the year of 2011. The Nilgiris and Dharmapuri districts have 4.5 per cent and 4.2 per cent respectively in terms of Scheduled Tribes population to the general population of Tamil Nadu in the year of 2011.

The Nilgiris district has 4.5 per cent of Scheduled Tribes compared with Tamil Nadu contributed 1.1 per cent of Scheduled Tribes to the general population of Tamil Nadu. Moreover, Out of 32 districts, Salem has witnessed highest population in terms of Scheduled Tribes population, which is 1,19,369 in Tamil Nadu and Karur has lowest Scheduled Tribes population, which is 575 in Tamil Nadu. The details of category-wise tribal communities and population in Tamil Nadu, 2011 are stated below the table

The table-5 showed that out of the 7, 94,697 Scheduled Tribes population, 45.00 per cent of them were Malayali, whose were highest and followed by 23.86 per cent of them were Irular. About 31.14 per cent of them were other tribes of Tamil Nadu in the year of 2011. Out of total tribes, 1.3 per cent of them were Paniyan tribes of Tamil Nadu. It is found that Sex ratio of Mannan tribes were 1,131 females to 1000 male population, and Koraga tribes were 656 females to 1000 males, who are lowest among the Scheduled Tribes compared with sex ratio 981 of Tamil Nadu in the year of 2011.

TABLE-5
Category-wise Tribal Communities and Population in Tamil Nadu, 2011

Rank	Tribal Communities	STs Population (in numbers)			Sex Ratio	Literacy Rate
		Total	Male	Female		
	All Schedule Tribes	7,94,697	4,01,068	3,93,629	981	47.23
1	Malayali	3,57,980	1,81,704	1,76,276	970	44.88
2	Irular	1,89,661	94,521	95,140	1,007	42.00
3	Kattunayakan	46,672	23,360	23,312	998	56.53
4	Kurumans	30,965	15,949	15,016	942	60.47
5	Malakkuravan	19,645	10,013	9,632	962	52.29
6	Uraly	12,986	6,491	6,495	1,001	40.10
7	Paniyan	10,134	4,898	5,236	1,069	42.02
8	Kondareddis	9,847	5,028	4,819	958	74.13
9	Malai Vedan	7,215	3,701	3,514	949	68.30
10	Kurumbas	6,823	3,380	3,443	1,019	54.16
11	Malasar	6,431	3,259	3,172	973	35.34
12	Kurichchan	6,100	3,181	2,919	918	62.75
13	Sholaga	5,965	3,066	2,899	946	36.61

14	Palliyar	5,288	2,643	2,645	1,001	37.97
15	Adiyan	4,426	2,247	2,179	970	35.13
16	Kanikaran, Kanikkar	3,837	1,879	1,958	1,042	72.30
17	Eravallan	2,871	1,438	1,433	997	44.37
18	Palliyan	2,252	1,146	1,106	965	43.61
19	Kaniyan, Kanyan	2,137	1,042	1,095	1,051	79.32
20	Toda	2,002	957	1,045	1,092	74.38
21	Malai Pandaram	1,439	710	729	1,027	62.96
22	Mudugar, Muduvan	1,250	661	589	891	53.28
23	Kammara	1,052	537	515	959	82.41
24	Kadar	650	325	325	1,000	67.38
25	Konda Kapus	521	265	256	966	76.58
26	Muthuvan	390	200	190	950	35.38
27	Kota	308	155	153	987	78.90
28	Palleyan	231	114	117	1,026	50.22
29	Mannan	211	99	112	1,131	79.62
30	Malayekandi	210	107	103	963	49.05
31	Malai Arayan	172	75	97	1,293	81.40
32	Aranadan	138	72	66	917	65.94
33	Koraga	101	61	40	656	60.40
34	Maha Malasar	77	43	34	791	62.34
35	Kudiya, Melakudi	66	36	30	833	65.15
36	Kochu Velan	7	4	3	750	71.43

Source: Directorate of census operation 2011, Chennai.

The sex ratio was higher among few Scheduled Tribes such as Malai Arayan, Mannan, Palleyan, Kadar, Malai Pandaram, Toda, Kaniyan, Kanikaran, Palliyar, Kurumbas, Paniyan, Uraly and Irular tribes. Among Tamil Nadu Scheduled Tribes, Kammara tribes were 82.41 per cent of literacy rate, which was highest and Adiyan tribes were 35.10 per cent, which was lowest in terms of literacy rate in the year 2011. After that, most of the tribes were getting more 50 per cent literacy rate in Tamil Nadu state.

II. PRIMITIVE TRIBAL GROUPS (PTGS) IN TAMIL NADU

Most of the tribes in the State are cultivators, agriculture labourers and wholly depend on forests resources for their livelihood. There are identified as thirty six Scheduled Tribes of varying numerical strengths in the state. Most of the Scheduled Tribes live in hilly and remote areas by primitive subsistence living and a large number of them are food gatherers by tradition and they are widely scattered in all thirty two districts in Tamil Nadu state.

Government of Tamil Nadu has recognized 17 tribes as primitive tribes and Out of 36 Scheduled Tribes, the Government of India identified six tribal communities as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) on the basis of a pre-agriculture level of technology, a stagnant or declining population, extremely low literacy and a subsistence level of the economy. These six PTGs are

- Todas – They are seen in the Nilgiris district.
- Kotas – They are seen in the Nilgiris district.
- Kurumbas – They are seen in the Nilgiris district.
- Irulas – living throughout Tamil Nadu state including the Nilgiris district.
- Paniyas – They are seen in the Nilgiris district.
- Kattunayakans – living in throughout Tamil Nadu state including the Nilgiris district.

The details of Primitive Tribal Groups and their population in Tamil Nadu, 1961- 2011 have been presented in the below table

TABLE 6
Primitive Tribal Groups and their Population in Tamil Nadu, 1961-2011

Population (in numbers)							
Sl. No.	Name of PTGs	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
1	Irulars	79,835	89,025	1,05,757	1,38,827	1,55,606	1,89,661
2	Katunayakans	6,459	5,042	26,383	42,761	45,227	46,672
3	Kotars	833	1,188	604	752	925	308
4	Kurumbars	1,174	2,754	4,354	4,768	5,498	6,823
5	Paniyans	4,779	6,093	6,393	7,124	9,121	10,134
6	Todas	714	930	875	1,100	1,560	2,002
Total		93,794	1,05,032	1,44,366	1,95,332	2,17,937	2,55,600

Source: Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Statistical profile of Scheduled Tribes in India, 2011.

The above table-6 shows the population of total Primitive Tribal Groups in Tamil Nadu. Comparatively, Irular tribes were highest among the Primitive Tribal Groups and followed by Katunayakan tribes and Paniyan tribes, but in lowest tribes as Kota tribes. Irulars, Kurumbars, Paniyans, and Todas were gradually increased in the year of 1961-2011, but it is based on their population. Subsequently, Katunayakans population has decreased from 6459 to 5042 in the year of 1971, and next in the next decade 1981, rapidly increased as 26,383 after that a constant increased their population have been increased. Kotas population was half of them, suddenly decreased from 1188 to 604 in the year of 1981 and subsequently a slow increase in the year of 1991 and 2001 also seen. Finally, more than 60 per cent of the Kotas was totally decreased in the year of 2011.

ACADEMIC STATUS OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN TAMIL NADU

A lack of motivation and awareness, social anxiety and red-tape are factors that lead to low school attendance. Irula Tribal Women's Welfare Society spend much time in helping Irula students in order to obtain caste certificates, which are a requirement after standard six. Semi-nomadic and nomadic groups have many impediments which limit school options; apart from frequent re-settlement, children are valuable members of hunting, gathering, begging and selling teams.

In some areas, the government has set up residential schools for tribal children. In Mandaparai in the Jawadhis, in Andipatti, in the Nilgiris, the schools have five teachers on paper but only one actually comes. In the Kolli Hills the nearest source of drinking water can be accessed several kilometers away. Students, who come late, are made to fetch a pot of water, which means trekking from "morning to evening" and the student misses a day of school.

The noon-meal scheme, which provides free lunch to students in all government schools, has resulted a least impact on tribe children as their school attendance is low. The details of educational status and occupational distribution of scheduled tribes in Tamil Nadu, 2011 are presented in the table.

The below table-7 represented that population, education, employment distribution of Scheduled Tribes in Tamil Nadu. Out of the 7, 94,697 tribes, 3, 75,343 of them were literate and hang back 4, 19,354 were illiterate. Comparatively, Male tribes were highly literate whereas Female tribes were highly illiterate. The total workers of Scheduled Tribes were 4, 33,299 and non-workers were 3, 61,398. The Total workers were divided as Main workers, Cultivators, Agricultural Labourers, Household Industry and other workers.

TABLE-7
Details of Academic status and occupational distribution of Scheduled Tribes in Tamil Nadu, 2011

Sl.No.	Schedule Tribes	Population (in numbers)		
		Male	Female	Total
1	Population	4,01,068	3,93,629	7,94,697
2	Literate	2,14,417	1,60,926	3,75,343
3	Illiterate	1,86,651	2,32,703	4,19,354
4	Total Workers	2,39,617	1,93,682	4,33,299
5	Main workers	2,01,538	1,52,903	3,54,441
6	Cultivators	59,907	46,192	1,06,099
7	Agricultural Labourers	73,917	71,804	1,45,721
8	Household Industry	2,403	2,876	5,279
9	Other workers	65,311	32,031	97,342
10	Non-workers	1,61,451	1,99,947	3,61,398

Source: Directorate of Census Operation 2011, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Out of the total workers, most of them were main workers and followed by agricultural labourers and cultivators. Finally, 5279 of them were engaged in household industry.

III. EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN TAMIL NADU

About 25 per cent of the Tamil Nadu tribes population depends on minor forest produce and 10 per cent on their own resources and skills such as handicrafts, snake- catching and hunting/gathering. The rest are landless agricultural labourers who get seasonal work and are at the mercy of landlords and estate owners. Wages are often much lower than prescribed under the Minimum Wage Act.

The Kanikars tribes depend on the seasonal leaf collection, mainly henna. Many of them do not have houses, and live under tamarind trees. Because of the extreme financial crunch, tribes sometimes end up, knowingly or unknowingly, in wood smuggling activities.

They are also convenient scapegoats for the real criminals. They are often in trouble and arrested for collecting forest produce or hunting in protected areas.

IV. HEALTH STATUS OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN TAMIL NADU

Most of them no longer distill their own liquor because of decreased forest access, and a lack of generational teaching and motivation. Commercial “country liquor” (sarayam) is now freely available in spite of the ban and the special police force. Many tribal groups have comprehensive systems of herbal medicines, but more and more, there are severe constraints on access to these. The time to educate the younger generation, depletion of herbal resources and a social stigma are some

V. BELOW POVERTY LINE (BPL) OF SCHEDULED TRIBES

In Tamil Nadu, 29.1 per cent of Scheduled Tribes were living below the poverty line compared with in India, 77.8 per cent of Scheduled Tribes were living below the poverty line. Need to improve the health conditions of tribals are;

- Make the awareness about preventive and curative medical care through traditional and modern health care systems.
- Awareness and understanding about healthy food habits and food processing.
- Cleanliness and sanitation into their surroundings.
- Use of balance diet to solve the problems of vitamin and protein deficiency.
- Establishment of traditional medical and care centers with qualified doctors in Ayurved, Homeopathy, Unani and Sidha.
- Availability of Physical Health Centers with adequate requirement of medicines.

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