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## EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF TRIBAL COMMUNITIES IN TAMIL NADU

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### ABSTRACT

This comprehensive study focuses on the living conditions and development needs of tribal communities in Kodaikanal villages, with a special emphasis on creating awareness about their legal rights and duties. Through a survey conducted in 15 revenue villages of Kodaikanal, including Kookal, Vilpatty, Poombarai, Mannavanoor, Poondi, Vellakavi, Adukka, Poolathur, Pannikadu, Thandikudi, Kamanur, K.C.Patty, Periyur, Pachalur, and Vadagouchi, the study explores various aspects such as education, employment, healthcare, and infrastructure. The findings reveal significant gaps in basic facilities, emphasizing the urgent need for government intervention. Additionally, the study proposes strategies to empower these communities, including increasing awareness of legal rights, promoting education, and supporting entrepreneurship. The aim is to foster positive change and improve the overall well-being of tribal populations in the region.

**Key words :** Tribal Communities, Development Needs, Legal Rights & Duties, Empowerment, Government Intervention, Sustainable development.

In the serene landscapes of Kodaikanal, tribal communities have intricately coexisted with nature, preserving a delicate equilibrium that has withstood the test of time. However, the evolving landscape of environmental legislation, particularly the Wildlife Protection Act, underscores a pressing need for heightened awareness within these communities. This study is a comprehensive exploration into the living conditions and development needs of Kodaikanal's tribal villages, with a specific emphasis on fostering a profound understanding of the Wildlife Protection Act. As stewards of the region's rich biodiversity, these tribal communities wield a profound influence on wildlife conservation. Yet, the effectiveness of their conservation endeavors can be significantly elevated through a nuanced comprehension of the legal frameworks in place. This research endeavors to gauge the current awareness levels among tribal populations concerning the Wildlife Protection Act, pinpointing areas where knowledge gaps persist. The marginalized tribal populations grapple with a spectrum of issues, spanning inadequate infrastructure and healthcare to restricted educational and employment opportunities. Recognizing the pivotal role of empowerment through awareness, this study investigates the current state of awareness among these communities regarding their legal rights and duties.

Tribal communities in India have harmoniously coexisted with the various elements of forest ecosystems, as evidenced by their customary rights over forest produce and traditional knowledge encompassing conservation strategies. However, during the colonial era and the early years of independence, the legal framework and democratic social parameters paid scant attention to recognizing the rights of forest-dwelling communities. The legislative and institutional mechanisms of the time tended to subjugate tribal communities, particularly through forestry and wildlife conservation activities. Acts such as the Indian Forest Act, 1927, and the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, did not adequately address the concerns of inhabitants in forested landscapes. Similarly, the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 lacked a comprehensive consideration of tribal peoples in protected areas. To rectify this, the Indian Parliament enacted the Forest Rights Act, 2006, aiming to acknowledge the rights of these communities over forested land and encourage their active participation in forest conservation and management. The Act bestows ownership rights and access to collect, use, and dispose of minor forest produce, encompassing all non-timber forest products of plant origin. Unfortunately, conflicts between the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs over the implementation of forest rights in protected areas, particularly in tiger reserves, have hindered proper execution. This disjointed approach has led to an exclusionary conservation stance in tribal habitats.

The Paliyar tribes, deeply rooted in the Kodaikanal hills, embody a significant aspect of India's tribal landscape, housing the world's second-largest tribal population. With around 4,635 populations and 72 tribes, constituting 8.6% of India's total population, the Paliyars depend on activities like collecting wild honey and edible roots from forests for their livelihood. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act of 2006 (FRA) recognized the importance of traditional grazing practices, granting community

rights through gram sabhas. However, recent court orders in Tamil Nadu, referencing outdated laws, imposed severe restrictions on grazing, contradicting the FRA. Despite the FRA being in effect since 2009, the recognition of forest rights in Tamil Nadu remains inadequate. This situation threatens the traditional lifestyle and livelihoods of tribal communities. This research, through a meticulous survey, aims to illuminate prevailing conditions, identify pivotal developmental areas, and propose interventions conducive to holistic empowerment. The primary focus is amplifying the voices of tribal communities, nurturing a profound understanding of their needs and aspirations. Simultaneously, the study advocates for targeted policies and initiatives aligned with their rights and duties. By championing heightened awareness, the research seeks to enable tribal communities to navigate the complexities of wildlife protection laws, facilitating more impactful contributions to the preservation of their natural environments. This study envisions not only documenting existing conditions but also serving as a catalyst for initiatives and policies fostering the harmonious coexistence of tribal communities and the diverse wildlife they safeguard. The Sustainable Tribal Development approach serves as a crucial instrument in realizing the global goals of 'No Poverty' (SDG 1) and 'Zero Hunger' (SDG 2). By actively addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by tribal communities, this approach becomes an agent of change in reducing poverty, improving health, and enhancing livelihoods. Through fostering the resiliency of vulnerable populations, it contributes to creating a world marked by inclusivity, sustainability, peace, and prosperity. In aligning with this vision, the study on awareness levels and development needs of tribal communities in Kodaikanal becomes a microcosm of the broader commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind.

Kodaikanal, located near Palani in the hills of Tamil Nadu, is aptly named "The Gift of the Forest." Recognized as the "Princess of Hill Stations," Kodaikanal has a rich history as a retreat and popular tourist destination. In the Kodaikanal block, there are 15 revenue villages, including Kookal, Vilpatty, Poomburai, Mannavanoor, Poondi, Vellakavi, Adukka, Poolathur, Pannikadu, Thandikudi, Kamanur, K.C.Patty, Periyur, Pachalur, and Vadagouchi. The earliest inhabitants were the Palaiyar tribal people, and references to Kodaikanal date back to Tamil Sangam literature of the early Common era. Modern Kodaikanal was established in 1845 by American Christian missionaries and British bureaucrats as a retreat from the heat and diseases of the plains. In the 20th century, elite Indians recognized the value of the hill station and began relocating there. According to the 2011 census, Kodaikanal had a population of 70,018, with a sex ratio of 1,004 females for every 1,000 males, above the national average. The literacy rate was 79.78%, higher than the national average. The city housed 9,442 households and had educational institutions, including government pre-primary schools, primary schools, middle schools, secondary schools, a government arts and science college, a management institute, and non-formal training centers. Agriculture in the surrounding villages includes terrace farming of plums, pears, chile peppers, carrots, cauliflower, cabbage, garlic, and onions. Popular local souvenirs include handcrafts, homemade chocolates, postcards, and Eucalyptus oil. According to

the 2011 religious census, Kodaikanal had a diverse population with 48.84% Hindus, 12.0% Muslims, 38.69% Christians, along with Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and others.

### **Statement of the Problem**

A comprehensive exploration is imperative to unravel the intricate dynamics surrounding endowments and entitlements, with a particular focus on understanding the varying perceptions of justice accessibility among diverse vulnerable groups in societies. This endeavor necessitates an examination of the historical context, delving into the reasons behind the absence of demands for access to justice by tribal communities in the past and elucidating the contemporary shift in this paradigm. Gender disparities further warrant attention, and drawing comparative examples to highlight the contrasting statuses is crucial. The interplay between the state, its citizens, and their rights must be scrutinized, particularly in the context of preoccupation rights. Additionally, a thorough analysis is required to understand the achievement of political citizenship, the significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and the examination of legislations that may undermine people's rights. The right to development should emerge as a focal point, with a detailed elucidation of its core propositions and an exploration of the responsibilities of societal duty holders. It is pivotal to position NGOs as duty holders, exemplified by instances where advocacy for non-formal education faced legal repercussions. Examining the state's obligations, especially through illustrative examples like the government's approach to citizens' rights regarding agricultural land, adds a poignant dimension to these nuanced discussions. This comprehensive exploration sets a meaningful backdrop for the study, providing valuable insights into the broader context of rights, justice, and development.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To study the source of awareness among tribal communities regarding wildlife protection with a focus on the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers in the study area
2. To assess the awareness of tribal populations regarding government Schemes and policies.
3. To identify and analyze the development needs of tribal communities, focusing on housing, roads, water supply, education, employment, and healthcare in the study area.

### **REVIEW OF EARLIER WORKS**

1. **Jithin ( 2017)** seeks to converge on the modern notion of participatory conservation through community conserved areas where the rights of the local communities were recognized under the existing legal structure and coexistence with protecting the livelihood avenues of local communities in forest areas .

2. **Madhusudan, M.( 2005)** examines the plight of tribals and opines that only rarely did the state recognise the tribal population's historical rights over land and resources and acquire these with due compensation.
3. **Apoorv Kurup (2008)** Advocates a range of constitutional and statutory reforms that would institutionalize tribal autonomy and permit the tribes to maintain their individual identity while participating in national development.
4. **Prithvi K G ( 2023)** Discusses the Indian perspective in balancing the rights of tribals and wildlife conservation and showcases the history of wildlife conservation in Indian forests, the implementation of such laws and their impact on tribals. The authors also enunciate the Constitutional and statutory protections available to the tribals, and the role of the judiciary in upholding tribals rights.
5. **Dr. (Mrs.) Johani Xaxa (2013)** focuses on tribal rights and development. The tribal rights can be seen as a part of the larger human rights discourse. Developmental works like industrialization, urbanization, Dams for Hydro-electric projects and irrigation, mining's etc resulted in displacement of rural poor tribals. The displacement has taken them back to some more years to develop. Thus, their rights are ignored by the government. The country is developing at the cost of rural poor tribals.
6. **Chinmaya Satpathy ( 2016)** The study measured the extent of awareness and availability of civil , political, cultural, economic rights to tribal women and their extent of participation in village development .
7. **Kumud Chandra Naik ( 2017)** discusses the issue of backwardness of the tribal population. The author states that it can only be effectively addressed by redesigning the present education system taking into account the needs, aspirations and attitude of the community .
8. **Partha Sarathi Sarkar ( 2021)** tries to intervene to offer a good living for the tribal people which will make the development of India much more sustainable. The people are hardly aware about the Constitutional provisions and they are not getting proper privilege to design their living.
9. **Apoorva A( 2023)** aimed to understand indigenous communities, their power to exercise rights and their aspirations for development. While evaluating the social and economic rights of the Indian tribal communities, the paper attempted to outline the problems, and possible sustainable future options, relying on primary and secondary sources for its analysis.
10. **Jagannath Ambagudia ( 2022)** discusses the concerns of the larger public good and explores the changing relationship between the judiciary and the tribal communities in India and states that the judiciary has maintained inconsistency concerning the judicial pronouncements on tribal rights in India.

## Methodology of the study

For this study, descriptive research was conducted, and samples were collected using a convenient sampling method. The sample frame encompasses individuals from different villages in the Kodaikanal revenue block. Demographic factors such as the total number of houses, population, children, scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, literacy, total workers, main workers, marginal workers, cultivation, and agricultural laborers in 15 villages of Kodaikanal were analyzed. A total of 70 responses were collected from individuals in 10 villages of Kodaikanal. Gender, educational qualification, occupation, etc., served as independent variables. The factors acting as benefits of awareness of laws and government schemes, as well as the factors acting as negative aspects of non-awareness of laws and government schemes, were used as dependent variables. The suggestions of the respondents were categorized based on their needs or concerns related to house, road, water, school, employment, power supply, college, pension, land, toilet, hospital, and transport. The collected data were presented in tables to facilitate correlation analysis.

## Analysis of the study

**Table 1: Demographic Status of Adukkam Panchayat**

Paticulars	Male	Female	Total
Total No. of Houses	-	-	937
Population	1857	1808	3665
Child(0-6)	206	187	393
Schedule Castes	398	387	785
Schedule Tribes	199	200	399
Literacy	90.01%	77.54%	83.83%
Total Workers	1054	567	1621
Main Workers	1022	544	1566
Marginal Workers	32	23	55
Cultivators	-	-	113
Agricultural Labourer	-	-	1166

Source: Census of Tamil Nadu, 2011

Adukkam is a sizable village situated in the Kodaikanal Taluk of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu. It is home to a total of 937 families, with a population of 3,665 according to the 2011 Population Census. Among the residents, 1,857 are males, and 1,808 are females. In the village of Adukkam, children aged 0-6 make up 10.72% of the total population, totaling 393. The average

sex ratio is 974, lower than Tamil Nadu's state average of 996, and the child sex ratio is 908, also below the state average of 943. Adukkam boasts a higher literacy rate compared to Tamil Nadu, recording 83.83% in 2011, surpassing the state's rate of 80.09%. Male literacy stands at 90.01%, while female literacy is at 77.54%. The village is governed by a Sarpanch, elected as the head as per the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act. Adukkam's demographic composition includes 21.42% Scheduled Caste (SC) and 10.89% Scheduled Tribe (ST) of the total population. Out of the total population, 1,621 individuals are engaged in work activities, with 96.61% describing their work as Main Work (employment or earning for more than 6 months), and 3.39% involved in Marginal activity, providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Among the workers engaged in Main Work, 113 are cultivators (owner or co-owner), while 1,166 are agricultural laborers.

## 2. Kamanur

Table 2: Demographic Status of Kamanur Panchayat

Paticulars	Male	Female	Total
Total No. of Houses	-	-	1048
Population	1835	1864	3699
Child(0-6)	190	180	370
Schedule Castes	161	175	336
Schedule Tribes	16	11	27
Literacy	87.72%	71.50%	79.51%
Total Workers	1220	1033	2253
Main Workers	1186	1001	2187
Marginal Workers	34	32	66
Cultivators			32
Agricultural Labourer			1532

Source: Census of Tamil Nadu, 2011

Kamanur, situated in the Kodaikanal Taluk of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, is a village with 1,048 families. The population of Kamanur stands at 3,699, including 1,835 males and 1,864 females, according to the 2011 Population Census. Children aged 0-6 make up 10.00% of the total village population, numbering 370. The average sex ratio in Kamanur is 1,016, surpassing the Tamil Nadu state average of 996, and the child sex ratio is 947, higher than the state average of 943. While Kamanur village has a slightly lower literacy rate compared to Tamil Nadu, recording 79.51% in 2011 against the state's 80.09%, male literacy stands at 87.72%, and female literacy is at 71.50%. Governed by a Sarpanch elected under the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act, Kamanur's demographic composition includes 9.08% Scheduled Caste (SC)

and 0.73% Scheduled Tribe (ST) of the total population. Out of the total population, 2,253 individuals are engaged in work activities, with 97.07% describing their work as Main Work (employment or earning for more than 6 months), and 2.93% involved in Marginal activity, providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Among the workers engaged in Main Work, 32 are cultivators (owner or co-owner), while 1,532 are agricultural laborers.

### 3. Kilakkuchettipatti

Table 2.3: Demographic Status of Kilakkuchettipatti Panchayat

Particulars	Male	Female	Total
Total No. of Houses	-	-	872
Population	1509	1586	3095
Child(0-6)	145	155	300
Schedule Castes	372	373	745
Schedule Tribes	112	119	231
Literacy	75.22%	57.72%	66.26%
Total Workers	1019	867	1886
Main Workers	991	829	1820
Marginal Workers	28	38	66
Cultivators	-	-	43
Agricultural Labourer	-	-	1057

Source: Census of Tamil Nadu, 2011

Kilakkuchettipatti, situated in the Kodaikanal Taluk of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, is a substantial village with 872 families. The population of Kilakkuchettipatti is 3,095, comprising 1,509 males and 1,586 females, according to the 2011 Population Census. Children aged 0-6 constitute 9.69% of the total village population, numbering 300. Kilakkuchettipatti boasts an average sex ratio of 1,051, exceeding the Tamil Nadu state average of 996, and a child sex ratio of 1,069, higher than the state average of 943. However, the village records a lower literacy rate compared to Tamil Nadu, with a rate of 66.26% in 2011 against the state's 80.09%. Male literacy stands at 75.22%, while female literacy is at 57.72%. Governed by a Sarpanch elected under the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act, Kilakkuchettipatti's demographic composition includes 24.07% Scheduled Caste (SC) and 7.46% Scheduled Tribe (ST) of the total population. Out of the total population, 1,886 individuals are engaged in work activities, with 96.50% describing their work as Main Work (employment or earning for more than 6 months), and 3.50% involved in Marginal activity, providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Among the



workers engaged in Main Work, 43 are cultivators (owner or co-owner), while 1,057 are agricultural laborers.

#### 4 . Kookkal:

Table 4: Demographic Status of Kookkal Panchayat

Paticulars	Male	Female	Total
Total No. of Houses	-	-	1811
Population	3569	3455	7024
Child(0-6)	428	389	817
Schedule Castes	1105	1109	2214
Schedule Tribes	57	55	112
Literacy	80.36%	63.67%	72.11%
Total Workers	2287	1686	3973
Main Workers			
Marginal Workers	85	244	329
Cultivators	-	-	1522
Agricultural Labourer	-	-	1952

Source: Census of Tamil Nadu, 2011

Kookkal, situated in the Kodaikanal Taluk of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, is a substantial village with 1,811 families. The population of Kookkal is 7,024, comprising 3,569 males and 3,455 females, according to the 2011 Population Census. Children aged 0-6 constitute 11.63% of the total village population, numbering 817. Kookkal village has an average sex ratio of 968, below the Tamil Nadu state average of 996, and a child sex ratio of 909, also lower than the state average of 943. The literacy rate in Kookkal is lower compared to Tamil Nadu, recording 72.11% in 2011 against the state's 80.09%. Male literacy stands at 80.36%, while female literacy is at 63.67%. Governed by a Sarpanch elected under the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act, Kookkal's demographic composition includes a substantial population of Scheduled Castes, constituting 31.52%, while Scheduled Tribes (ST) make up 1.59% of the total population. Out of the total population, 3,973 individuals are engaged in work activities, with 91.72% describing their work as Main Work (employment or earning for more than 6 months), and 8.28% involved in Marginal activity, providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Among the workers engaged in Main Work, 1,522 are cultivators (owner or co-owner), while 1,952 are agricultural laborers.

#### 5. Mannavanur

Table 5: Demographic Status of Mannavanur Panchayat

Paticulars	Male	Female	Total
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Total No. of Houses	-	-	2223
Population	4162	3955	8117
Child(0-6)	464	422	886
Schedule Castes	624	608	1232
Schedule Tribes	84	98	182
Literacy	80.50%	57.26%	69.15%
Total Workers	2805	2328	5133
Main Workers			4654
Marginal Workers	232	247	479
Cultivators	-	-	1469
Agricultural Labourer	-	-	2881

Source: Census of Tamil Nadu, 2011

Mannavanur, situated in the Kodaikanal Taluka of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, is a sizable village with 2,223 families. The population of Mannavanur is 8,117, comprising 4,162 males and 3,955 females, according to the 2011 Population Census. Children aged 0-6 constitute 10.92% of the total village population, numbering 886. Mannavanur village has an average sex ratio of 950, below the Tamil Nadu state average of 996, and a child sex ratio of 909, also lower than the state average of 943. The literacy rate in Mannavanur is lower compared to Tamil Nadu, recording 69.15% in 2011 against the state's 80.09%. Male literacy stands at 80.50%, while female literacy is at 57.26%. Governed by a Sarpanch elected under the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act, Mannavanur's demographic composition includes 15.18% Scheduled Caste (SC) and 2.24% Scheduled Tribe (ST) of the total population. Out of the total population, 5,133 individuals are engaged in work activities, with 90.67% describing their work as Main Work (employment or earning for more than 6 months), and 9.33% involved in Marginal activity, providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Among the workers engaged in Main Work, 1,469 are cultivators (owner or co-owner), while 2,881 are agricultural laborers.

## 6 . Pachalur

Table 6: Demographic Status of Pachalur Panchayat

Paticulars	Male	Female	Total
Total No. of Houses	-	-	657
Population	1182	1185	2367
Child(0-6)	127	100	227
Schedule Castes	205	195	400

Schedule Tribes	153	160	313
Literacy	71.94%	52.07%	61.87%
Total Workers	758	753	1511
Main Workers			1283
Marginal Workers	103	125	228
Cultivators			180
Agricultural Labourer			864

Source: Census of Tamil Nadu, 2011

Pachalur, located in the Kodaikanal Taluka of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, is a substantial village with 657 families. The population of Pachalur is 2,367, including 1,182 males and 1,185 females, according to the 2011 Population Census. Children aged 0-6 constitute 9.59% of the total village population, numbering 227. Pachalur village has an average sex ratio of 1003, higher than the Tamil Nadu state average of 996, and a child sex ratio of 787, lower than the state average of 943. The literacy rate in Pachalur is lower compared to Tamil Nadu, recording 61.87% in 2011 against the state's 80.09%. Male literacy stands at 71.94%, while female literacy is at 52.07%. Governed by a Sarpanch elected under the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act, Pachalur's demographic composition includes 16.90% Scheduled Caste (SC) and 13.22% Scheduled Tribe (ST) of the total population. Out of the total population, 1,511 individuals are engaged in work activities, with 84.91% describing their work as Main Work (employment or earning for more than 6 months), and 15.09% involved in Marginal activity, providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Among the workers engaged in Main Work, 180 are cultivators (owner or co-owner), while 864 are agricultural laborers.

## 7. Periyur

Table 7: Demographic Status of Periyur Panchayat

Paticulars	Male	Female	Total
Total No. of Houses	-	-	863
Population	1600	1602	3202
Child(0-6)	164	164	328
Schedule Castes	631	652	1283
Schedule Tribes	1	0	1
Literacy	84.33%	66.90%	75.61%
Total Workers	1077	916	1993
Main Workers			1879
Marginal Workers	62	52	114
Cultivators			64

Agricultural Labourer			1575
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Source: Census of Tamil Nadu, 2011

Periyur, situated in the Kodaikanal Taluka of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, is a sizable village with 863 families. The population of Periyur is 3,202, comprising 1,600 males and 1,602 females, according to the 2011 Population Census. Children aged 0-6 constitute 10.24% of the total village population, numbering 328. Periyur village has an average sex ratio of 1001, higher than the Tamil Nadu state average of 996, and a child sex ratio of 1000, also higher than the state average of 943. The literacy rate in Periyur is lower compared to Tamil Nadu, recording 75.61% in 2011 against the state's 80.09%. Male literacy stands at 84.33%, while female literacy is at 66.90%. Governed by a Sarpanch elected under the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act, Periyur's demographic composition includes 40.07% Scheduled Caste (SC) of the total population. Out of the total population, 1,993 individuals are engaged in work activities, with 94.28% describing their work as Main Work (employment or earning for more than 6 months), and 5.72% involved in Marginal activity, providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Among the workers engaged in Main Work, 64 are cultivators (owner or co-owner), while 1,575 are agricultural laborers.

#### 8 :Poolathur

Table 8 : Demographic Status of Poolathur Panchayat

Paticulars	Male	Female	Total
Total No. of Houses	-	-	865
Population	1424	1386	2810
Child(0-6)	139	127	266
Schedule Castes	246	251	497
Schedule Tribes	81	82	163
Literacy	81.17%	71.25%	76.26%
Total Workers	868	694	1562
Main Workers			1546
Marginal Workers	6	10	16
Cultivators	-	-	61
Agricultural Labourer	-	-	287

Source: Census of Tamil Nadu, 2011

Poolathur, a substantial village in the Kodaikanal Taluka of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, is home to 865 families. According to the 2011 Population Census, Poolathur's population is 2,810, consisting of 1,424 males and 1,386 females. Children aged 0-6 make up 9.47% of the total

village population, numbering 266. The average sex ratio in Poolathur is 973, lower than the Tamil Nadu state average of 996, with a child sex ratio of 914, also lower than the state average of 943. In 2011, the literacy rate in Poolathur was 76.26%, slightly below Tamil Nadu's 80.09%. Male literacy stands at 81.17%, while female literacy is recorded at 71.25%. Administered by a Sarpanch elected under the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act, Poolathur's demographic composition includes 17.69% Scheduled Caste (SC) of the total population. Out of the total population, 1,562 individuals are engaged in work activities, with 98.98% describing their work as Main Work (employment or earning for more than 6 months), and 1.02% involved in Marginal activity, providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Among the workers engaged in Main Work, 61 are cultivators (owner or co-owner), while 287 are agricultural laborers.

### 9. Poombarai

Table 9: Demographic Status of Poombarai Panchayat

Paticulars	Male	Female	Total
Total No. of Houses	-	-	1494
Population	2840	2734	5574
Child(0-6)	349	294	643
Schedule Castes	349	351	700
Schedule Tribes	9	8	17
Literacy	81.77%	61.93%	71.95%
Total Workers	1892	1529	3421
Main Workers			3101
Marginal Workers	70	250	320
Cultivators	-	-	1027
Agricultural Labourer	-	-	1819

Source: Census of Tamil Nadu, 2011

Poombarai, a sizable village in the Kodaikanal Taluka of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, accommodates 1,494 families. According to the 2011 Population Census, Poombarai's population is 5,574, comprising 2,840 males and 2,734 females. Children aged 0-6 constitute 11.54% of the total village population, numbering 643. The average sex ratio in Poombarai is 963, lower than the Tamil Nadu state average of 996, with a child sex ratio of 842, also lower than the state average of 943. In 2011, the literacy rate in Poombarai was 71.95%, slightly below Tamil Nadu's 80.09%. Male literacy stands at 81.77%, while female literacy is recorded at 61.93%. Administered by a Sarpanch elected under the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act, Poombarai's demographic composition includes 12.56% Scheduled Caste (SC) of the total population. Out of the total population, 3,421 individuals are engaged in work activities,

with 90.65% describing their work as Main Work (employment or earning for more than 6 months), and 9.35% involved in Marginal activity, providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Among the workers engaged in Main Work, 1,027 are cultivators (owner or co-owner), while 1,819 are agricultural laborers.

#### 10. Poondi

Table 10: Demographic Status of Poondi Panchayat

Paticulars	Male	Female	Total
Total No. of Houses	-	-	1432
Population	2969	2847	5816
Child(0-6)	335	361	696
Schedule Castes	395	407	802
Schedule Tribes	43	25	68
Literacy	79.50%	53.86%	67.05%
Total Workers	1882	1663	3545
Main Workers			2644
Marginal Workers	412	489	901
Cultivators	-	-	1379
Agricultural Labourer	-	-	1008

Source: Census of Tamil Nadu, 2011

Poondi, a sizable village in the Kodaikanal Taluka of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, is home to 1,432 families. The village's population, as per the 2011 Census, stands at 5,816, with 2,969 males and 2,847 females. Children aged 0-6 constitute 11.97% of the total population, numbering 696. The average sex ratio in Poondi is 959, lower than the Tamil Nadu state average of 996, while the child sex ratio is 1078, higher than the state average of 943. In 2011, the literacy rate in Poondi was 67.05%, slightly below Tamil Nadu's 80.09%. Male literacy stands at 79.50%, while female literacy is recorded at 53.86%. Administered by a Sarpanch elected under the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act, Poondi's demographic composition includes 13.79% Scheduled Caste (SC) of the total population. Out of the total population, 3,545 individuals are engaged in work activities, with 74.58% describing their work as Main Work (employment or earning for more than 6 months), and 25.42% involved in Marginal activity, providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Among the workers engaged in Main Work, 1,379 are cultivators (owner or co-owner), while 1,008 are agricultural laborers.

## 11 :Thandigudi

Table 11: Demographic Status of Thandigudi Panchayat

Paticulars	Male	Female	Total
Total No. of Houses	-	-	874
Population	1565	1558	3123
Child(0-6)	168	155	323
Schedule Castes	229	221	450
Schedule Tribes	114	119	233
Literacy	86.97%	73.06%	80.00%
Total Workers	1017	809	1826
Main Workers			1786
Marginal Workers	18	22	40
Cultivators	-	-	180
Agricultural Labourer	-	-	820

Source: Census of Tamil Nadu, 2011

Thandigudi, a substantial village in the Kodaikanal Taluka of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, accommodates 874 families. As of the 2011 Census, the village's population is 3,123, comprising 1,565 males and 1,558 females. Children aged 0-6 constitute 10.34% of the total population, numbering 323. Thandigudi exhibits an average sex ratio of 996, equal to the Tamil Nadu state average, while the child sex ratio is 923, slightly lower than the state average of 943. In 2011, Thandigudi's literacy rate was 80.00%, marginally below Tamil Nadu's 80.09%. Male literacy stands at 86.97%, and female literacy is recorded at 73.06%. Administered by a Sarpanch elected under the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act, Thandigudi's demographic composition includes 14.41% Scheduled Caste (SC) of the total population. Out of the total population, 1,826 individuals are engaged in work activities, with 97.81% describing their work as Main Work (employment or earning for more than 6 months), and 2.19% involved in Marginal activity, providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Among the workers engaged in Main Work, 180 are cultivators (owner or co-owner), while 820 are agricultural laborers.

## 12 Vadagouchi

Table 2.12: Demographic Status of Vadagouchi Panchayat

Paticulars	Male	Female	Total
Total No. of Houses	-	-	1190
Population	2259	2175	4434
Child(0-6)	242	240	482
Schedule Castes	447	425	872
Schedule Tribes	392	363	755
Literacy	76.05%	61.40%	68.88%
Total Workers	1491	1304	2795
Main Workers			2688
Marginal Workers	55	52	107
Cultivators	-	-	148
Agricultural Labourer	-	-	2366

Source: Census of Tamil Nadu, 2011

Vadagouchi, situated in the Kodaikanal Taluka of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, is a sizable village with 1,190 families. The population, recorded in the 2011 Census, is 4,434, consisting of 2,259 males and 2,175 females. Children aged 0-6 make up 10.87% of the total population, numbering 482. Vadagouchi displays an average sex ratio of 963, lower than the Tamil Nadu state average of 996. However, the child sex ratio is 992, surpassing the state average of 943. In 2011, Vadagouchi's literacy rate was 68.88%, below Tamil Nadu's 80.09%. Male literacy stands at 76.05%, while female literacy is recorded at 61.40%. Governed by a Sarpanch elected under the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act, Vadagouchi's demographic composition includes 19.67% Scheduled Caste (SC) and 17.03% Scheduled Tribe (ST) of the total population. Out of the total population, 2,795 individuals are engaged in work activities, with 96.17% describing their work as Main Work (employment or earning for more than 6 months), and 3.83% involved in Marginal activity, providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Among the workers engaged in Main Work, 148 are cultivators (owner or co-owner), while 2,366 are agricultural laborers.



## 13 Vellagavi

Table 13: Demographic Status of Vellagavi Panchayat

Paticulars	Male	Female	Total
Total No. of Houses	-	-	27
Population	422	402	824
Child(0-6)	56	45	101
Schedule Castes	16	11	27
Schedule Tribes	89	82	171
Literacy	86.34%	63.87%	75.24%
Total Workers	289	253	542
Main Workers			477
Marginal Workers	23	42	65
Cultivators	-	-	77
Agricultural Labourer	-	-	366

Source: Census of Tamil Nadu, 2011

Vellagavi, situated in the Kodaikanal Taluka of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, is a medium-sized village with 227 families. The population, recorded in the 2011 Census, is 824, comprising 422 males and 402 females. Children aged 0-6 constitute 12.26% of the total population, numbering 101. Vellagavi exhibits an average sex ratio of 953, lower than the Tamil Nadu state average of 996. The child sex ratio is 804, also lower than the state average of 943. In 2011, Vellagavi's literacy rate was 75.24%, slightly below Tamil Nadu's 80.09%. Male literacy stands at 86.34%, while female literacy is recorded at 63.87%. Governed by a Sarpanch elected under the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act, Vellagavi's demographic composition includes 20.75% Scheduled Tribe (ST) and 3.28% Scheduled Caste (SC) of the total population. Out of the total population, 542 individuals are engaged in work activities, with 88.01% describing their work as Main Work (employment or earning for more than 6 months), and 11.99% involved in Marginal activity, providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Among the workers engaged in Main Work, 77 are cultivators (owner or co-owner), while 366 are agricultural laborers.

## 14 : Vilpatti

Table 14: Demographic Status of Vilpatti Panchayat

Paticulars	Male	Female	Total
Total No. of Houses	-	-	3589
Population	6696	6741	13437
Child(0-6)	714	753	1467
Schedule Castes	1368	1359	2727
Schedule Tribes	114	107	221
Literacy	86.11%	72.48%	79.29%
Total Workers	4345	2922	7267
Main Workers			6210
Marginal Workers	515	542	1057
Cultivators	-	-	1220
Agricultural Labourer	-	-	3334

Source: Census of Tamil Nadu, 2011

Vilpatti, a large village situated in the Kodaikanal Taluka of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, is home to 3,589 families. The population, recorded in the 2011 Census, is 13,437, with 6,696 males and 6,741 females. Children aged 0-6 make up 10.92% of the total population, numbering 1,467. Vilpatti exhibits an average sex ratio of 1007, higher than the Tamil Nadu state average of 996. The child sex ratio is 1055, also higher than the state average of 943. In 2011, Vilpatti's literacy rate was 79.29%, slightly below Tamil Nadu's 80.09%. Male literacy stands at 86.11%, while female literacy is recorded at 72.48%. Governed by a Sarpanch elected under the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act, Vilpatti's demographic composition includes 20.29% Scheduled Caste (SC) and 1.64% Scheduled Tribe (ST) of the total population. Out of the total population, 7,267 individuals are engaged in work activities, with 85.45% describing their work as Main Work (employment or earning for more than 6 months), and 14.55% involved in Marginal activity, providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Among the workers engaged in Main Work, 1,220 are cultivators (owner or co-owner), while 3,334 are agricultural laborers.

## 15 Kodaikanal

Table 15: Demographic Status of Kodaikanal Panchayat

Paticulars	Male	Female	Total
Total No. of Houses	-	-	754
Population	1452	1379	2831
Child(0-6)	159	138	297
Schedule Castes	686	631	1317
Schedule Tribes	0	0	0
Literacy	87.70%	76.87%	82.40%
Total Workers	875	538	1413
Main Workers			1304
Marginal Workers	49	60	109
Cultivators	-	-	49
Agricultural Labourer	-	-	971

Source: Census of Tamil Nadu, 2011

Kodaikanal, a sizable village in the Kodaikanal Taluka of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, accommodates 754 families. According to the Population Census 2011, the village is home to 2,831 residents, with 1,452 males and 1,379 females. Children aged 0-6 constitute 10.49% of the total population, numbering 297. Kodaikanal exhibits an average sex ratio of 950, lower than the Tamil Nadu state average of 996, and the child sex ratio is 868, also lower than the state average of 943. In 2011, Kodaikanal boasted a higher literacy rate compared to Tamil Nadu, with a rate of 82.40% as opposed to the state's 80.09%. Male literacy in Kodaikanal stands at 87.70%, while female literacy is recorded at 76.87%. Governed by a Sarpanch elected under the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act, Kodaikanal village thrives as a community in the Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu. In Kodaikanal village, 46.52% of the population belongs to Schedule Caste (SC), while there is no Schedule Tribe (ST) population. Out of the total population, 1,413 individuals are engaged in work activities, with 92.29% describing their work as Main Work (employment or earning for more than 6 months), and 7.71% involved in Marginal activity, providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Among the workers engaged in Main Work, 49 are cultivators (owner or co-owner), while 971 are agricultural laborers.

Table: 16 Classification of Village wise Respondents

Name of the Place	No. of Respondents
Kaduguthadi Puthur	14(20.0)
Koorkkal	4(5.7)
Kottakombu	17(24.3)
Moolaiyur	8(11.4)
Patalangadu	4(5.7)
Perungadu	4(5.7)
Thandikudi	2(2.9)
Vadakaraiparai	11(15.7)
Valagiri	2(2.9)
Vilpatti	4(5.7)
Total	70

Source: Primary Survey

Table 16 shows that about 20 percent of the respondents from Kadukuthadi Puthur village, 5.7 percent of the respondents from Koorkkal, 24.3 percent of the Kottakombu village, 11.4 percent, 5.7 percent 5.7 percent, 2.9 percent, 15.7 percent, 2.9 percent and 5.7 percent are from Moolaiyur, Patalangadu, Perungadu, Thandikudi, Vadakaraiparai, Valagiri and Vilpatti respectively.

Table: 17 Classification of Gender

Gender	No. of Respondents
Male	34(48.6)
Female	36(51.4)
Total	70

Source: Primary Survey

Gender wise Respondents among the total survey respondents, 48.6 percent are male, and 51.4 percent are female.

Table: 18 Classification of Educational Status of Respondents

Education level	No. of Respondents
Illiterate	42(60.0)
Primary	05(7.1)
Middle School	08(11.4)
SSLC	08(11.4)
HSC	03(4.3)
Degree	03(4.3)
Post Graduate	01(1.4)
Total	70(100.0)

Source: Primary Survey

Educational Status of the Respondents of the total respondents, approximately 60 percent are illiterate, 7.1 percent have completed primary education, 11.4 percent have finished middle school, another 11.4 percent have completed SSLC, 4.3 percent have completed higher secondary education, and only 4.3 percent and 1.4 percent of respondents have completed a degree and postgraduate degree, respectively.

Table: 19 Classification of Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	No. of Respondents
No Job	06(8.6)
Cooli	46(65.7)
Agriculture	11(15.7)
Hunting	01(1.4)
Private	04(5.7)
Self Employment	02(2.9)
Total	70(100.0)

Source: Primary Survey

In Table 19, it is revealed that 8.6 percent of the respondents are unemployed, 65.7 percent are employed as laborers, 15.7 percent are involved in agricultural activities, 1.4 percent pursue hunting as their occupation, 5.7 percent work in private companies, and 2.9 percent are engaged in self-employment.

Table: 20 Classification of Highest Education of the Households

Education Level	No. of Respondents
Illiterate	20(28.6)
Primary	06(8.6)
Middle	12(17.1)
SSLC	21(30.0)
HSC	04(5.7)
Degree	04(5.7)
Post-Graduate	02(2.9)
Total	70(100.0)

Source: Primary Survey

Table 20 : Highest Educational level of the Households

In Table 20, it is indicated that the highest education level within respondents' families varies: 28.6 percent of families are classified as illiterate, 8.6 percent have attained primary education, 17.1 percent have completed middle school education, 30.0 percent have achieved high school education, and 5.7 percent have reached higher education levels. Specifically, 5.7 percent and 2.9 percent of families have attained degree and postgraduate degree education, respectively.

Table: 21 Classification of Occupation of Head of the Households

Occupation	No. of Respondents
No Job	02(2.9)
Cooli	56(80.0)
Agriculture	07(10.0)
Hunting	01(1.4)
Private	01(1.4)
Self Employment	03(4.3)
Total	70(100.0)

Source: Primary Survey

Table 22 : Occupation of the Head of the Households

Among the total respondents who are heads of households, 2.9 percent do not have a specified occupation. The majority, 80.0 percent, are engaged in manual labor as coolies, while 10.0 percent are involved in agricultural activities. A smaller proportion, 1.4 percent, is engaged in hunting, and an additional 1.4 percent work in private companies. Furthermore, 4.3 percent of heads of households are self-employed.

Table: 23 Classification of Awareness of WildLife Protection Act and Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 among Respondents

Yes	40(57.1)
No	30(42.9)
Total	70(100.0)

Source: Primary Survey

Table 23: Awareness of Wild Life Protection Act among Respondents

Among the total respondents, 57.1 percent are aware of Acts related to animal hunting, while 42.9 percent lack awareness on the subject.

Table: 24 Classification of Sources of Awareness of WildLife Protection Act

Sources	No. of Respondents
Not Applicable	30(42.9)
Forest officers	31(44.3)
News paper	04(5.7)
Television	05(7.1)
Total	70(100.0)

Source: Primary Survey

Table 24 : Sources of Awareness of Wild Life Protection Act

Table 24 indicates the sources of awareness regarding animal hunting. Among the total respondents, 42.9 percent lack awareness. Those who are informed about it, 44.3 percent, 5.7 percent, and 7.1 percent acquired knowledge through forest officers, newspapers, and television, respectively.

Table: 25 Classification of Awareness of Government Schemes

Awareness of Government Schemes	No. of Respondents
Yes	46(65.7)
No	24(34.3)
Total	70(100.0)

Source: Primary Survey

Table 25 : Awareness of Government Schemes

Approximately 65.7 percent of the respondents are aware of government schemes, while 34.3 percent lack awareness regarding these schemes.

Table: 26 Classification of Suggestions by Respondents

Particulars	No. of Respondents and their Suggestions		
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
House	42(60.0)	09(12.9)	05(7.1)
Road	11(15.7)	07(10.0)	10(14.3)
Water	01(1.4)	11(15.7)	04(5.7)
School	04(5.7)	16(22.8)	10(14.3)
Employment	06(8.6)	09(12.9)	12(17.1)
Power supply	01(1.4)	04(5.7)	8(11.4)
College	01(1.4)	00(0.0)	00(0.0)
Pension	01(1.4)	00(0.0)	03(4.3)
Land	03(4.3)	01(1.4)	00(0.0)
Toilet	00(0.0)	09(12.9)	11(15.7)
Hospital	00(0.0)	03(4.3)	03(4.3)
Transport	00(0.0)	00(0.0)	04(5.7)
Total	70(100.0)	70(100.0)	70(100.0)

Source: Primary Survey

Table 26 illustrates that the majority of respondents, approximately 60 percent, express a primary need for a pucca house, while 16 percent prioritize the need for roads. Additionally, 6 percent, 9 percent, and 2 percent of respondents indicate a need for schools, employment, and water, respectively. Few respondents mention other facilities such as hospitals, toilets, and pensions as their foremost requirements. The prevalent priorities among the respondents are housing, roads, water, and schools.



## Discussions

In Kottakombu, the absence of proper roads and schools is evident. Some elderly individuals receiving a meager old-age pension of Rs. 1000 for an extended period request an increase in the amount. Many unemployed youths express a willingness to adopt and maintain parts of the forest for revenue generation with the permission of the forest department. They propose utilizing forest products like honey, cardamom, pepper, and herbal items. Lack of transport facilities deprives them of newspapers and government information. In Patlangadu Village, the scarcity of houses, electricity, and road facilities contributes to a challenging living environment. In Thandikudi, inadequate roads and houses situated on sand dunes create insecurity for tribal residents. Vadakari Parai faces challenges with houses built on rocks, leading to transportation and communication difficulties. Residents emphasize the need for roads, schools, and regular newspapers. In Kaduguthadiputhur, educated tribal women struggle with unemployment, and the village lacks toilet facilities. Moolaiyar faces commuting challenges for school-going children due to the distance. Valagiri residents highlight issues with water supply and unemployment, seeking support from the forest department or bank loans. Vilapatti J Nagar residents live without essential facilities like water, roads, toilets, and electricity, reminiscent of pre-Independence India. They express concerns about wild animals, emphasizing the need for safety measures. In Perunkadu, the absence of roads, schools, safety, and communication with the broader society poses significant challenges for the residents.

## Conclusion

The survey conducted in the villages of Kodaikanal reveals a stark contrast between the advancements in the modern world and the challenging living conditions experienced by the tribal communities. These marginalized communities lack access to basic facilities, living in conditions reminiscent of a bygone era. It is imperative that immediate and comprehensive steps be taken by the government to uplift their quality of life and address the socio-economic challenges they face. The study emphasizes the crucial role of social welfare schemes in alleviating economic stress and reducing poverty among tribal populations. Urgent measures are required to enhance financial allocations for innovative schemes tailored to the specific needs of scheduled tribe people. The implementation of the Forest Rights Act should be expedited, ensuring fair land entitlements and simplifying the claims verification process. Additional support for soil and water development processes, high-yielding seeds, and agricultural training can significantly improve the livelihoods of tribal farmers. Furthermore, economic opportunities can be expanded by involving local tribal individuals in forest protection efforts and promoting eco-tourism. Education and training for the youth in ecotourism activities can open new avenues for economic development. The establishment of sewerage and sanitation facilities in taluka and district headquarters is essential to prevent waterborne diseases. Access to potable drinking water and individual sanitation facilities at the household level should be prioritized to enhance health and improve the human development index. In fostering sustainable development, the state

government should encourage entrepreneurship among tribal communities, particularly focusing on agro-based industries and utilizing forest resources. Empowering educated youth in these areas will not only enhance economic prospects but also contribute to the overall development of the scheduled tribe people. The findings underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach, combining policy interventions, financial support, and community engagement to bring about positive change in the lives of the tribal communities in the surveyed villages of Kodaikanal.

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