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A Study on the Enhancement of Government Benefits Received By the Tribal Households in the Nilgiris District

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ABSTRACT

The government has implemented several initiatives through local self-government to provide rural people with basic facilities like shelter, electricity, water, and sanitation. Food security is also met through the Public Distribution System, which caters to both urban and rural areas, ensuring that basic nutrition is not an issue. This study looks at the distribution of housing, water, health, and welfare benefits among six tribal communities. The results indicate a high level of inequality in the distribution of resources. Some categories are found to be fairly distributed, but health and welfare benefits are unevenly distributed. This calls for targeted interventions to correct the disparities and promote balanced development across tribal communities.

1. Introduction

The provision of government facilities and welfare schemes profoundly enhances the quality of life, especially for marginalized communities such as tribal households [Annual Report 2021-22. Government of India]. In regions like the Nilgiris, where the geography is unique and the tribal population is very diverse, government interventions form a critical role in tackling socio-economic disparities and achieving inclusive development [Bose, A. (2019)]. Tribal households in the Nilgiris often face challenges regarding access to education, healthcare, housing, and livelihood opportunities [Sharma, R., & Kumar, P. (2020)]. In order to address these challenges, the central and state governments have been introducing different schemes and facilities that aim to improve their living standards and ensure their participation in mainstream development [UNDP, Sustainable Development for Tribal Regions: Progress and Challenges, (2019)].

The article focuses on the benefits received by the tribal households in the Nilgiris districts that could exhibit the role of government facilities in changing their socio-economic conditions. Analysis by key areas such as education, health, house access, and employment will assist the research in measuring the intervention levels' efficacy and understanding the missing points which the interventions fail to improve upon. Therefore, such analyses will reveal the insights related to how far the mentioned structures have enabled tribal society through social empowerment to achieve sustained regional development. Thus, the study focuses on the reach and effectiveness of government benefits received by the sample households in enhancing their welfare.

The Nilgiris Tribal Households are a historically marginalized community, with unique socio-cultural identities and immense economic vulnerabilities. Despite a wide range of government initiatives meant to uplift the tribal populations, these communities continue to face barriers in accessing vital services such as education, health care, housing, and employment. How effective the government facilities and welfare schemes remain a critical question, given the gaps in implementation and awareness that often hinder the intended outcomes. The problem lies in understanding whether these government

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interventions adequately address the pressing needs of tribal households in the Nilgiris and to what extent these facilities have influenced their socio-economic conditions. Geographical isolation, lack of infrastructure, and socio-economic disparities further exacerbate the difficulties in reaching these communities. This study aims to examine the impact of government facilities on tribal households, especially in terms of accessibility, utilization, and impact on improving living conditions. It also aims to identify the barriers preventing effective delivery and suggest ways to enhance the effectiveness of government initiatives to foster equitable development for the tribal population in the Nilgiris. Here we have taken 60 samples from the district have 10 samples each from the six tribal communities namely Toda, Kota, Kurumba (Alu Kurumba, Betta Kurumba, and Mullu Kurumba), Irula, Kattunayakan, and Paniya.

Objectives of the Study

To analyse the accessibility of the Tribal households to the basic needs through the government

2. Methodology

2.1 Study area

The Study was conducted among the tribal Household population in the Nilgiris District. The Nilgiris District comprises of six primitive tribal communities, they are Toda, Kota, Kurumba, Irulas, Paniya, and Kattunayakan. The tribal population has mainly concentrated in the five taluks of the district, they are, Coonoor, Kotagiri, Ooty, Gudalur and Pandalur taluks. So the study area as well as the primary data collection were concentrated in the tribal settlement areas that included in these taluks.

2.2 Sample Size

The data for this study were collected from 60 tribal households in the Nilgiris districts, where 10 respondents were randomly selected from the each tribal communities.

2.1 Data Collection:

This research is quantitative in nature, analyzing the distribution of government-provided amenities across six tribal communities: Irula, Kattunayakan, Kota, Kurumba, Paniya, and Toda. The primary data were collected through structured interviews and surveys conducted within these communities. The data were analyzed to evaluate the distribution of benefits across four categories: housing, water, health, and welfare.

Structured interviews and surveys were conducted with members of each community to collect information on the benefits received. Total number of households surveyed was 60, with 10 households from each tribal community.

2.2 Data Analysis:

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to find out the percentage distribution of benefits across the different categories. The data about the distribution of advantages is represented in tabular form for comparison purposes in order to show inter-difference and intra-intercommunity disparities.

3. Results

The government has initiated various programs through the local self-government to make sure that the rural people are able to access the basic amenities. This includes provision to houses, electricity, water, and sanitation. Through the Public Distribution System (PDS) the food security has achieved through the ration shop by covering all the urban and rural areas of the country. So, the accessibility to the basic nutrients is not a question of concern. Thus, we are considering the rest of the amenities which has mentioned at first. The below tabular data highlights the distribution of benefits among six tribal communities across four categories: housing, water, health, and welfare, with notable variations in percentage contributions. The communities, including Irula, Kattunayakan, Kota, Paniya, and Toda, (16.7% each) have received a total benefit in housing, water, and health, while the Kurumba tribe received 11.7% in housing and no allocation (0.0%) in health benefits.

Table 1. Benefits received by the Households

Tribal Community	House Benefits	Water benefits	Health Benefits	Welfare Benefits	Total
Irula	10 16.7%	10 16.7%	0 0.0%	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Kattunayakan	10 16.7%	10 16.7%	10 16.7%	0 0.0%	10 16.7%
Kota	10 16.7%	10 16.7%	10 16.7%	0 0.0%	10 16.7%
Kurumba	7	10	10	0	10

	11.7%	16.7%	16.7%	0.0%	16.7%
Paniya	10	10	10	0	10
	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	0.0%	16.7%
Toda	10	10	10	10	10
	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%
Total	57	60	50	20	60
	95.0%	100.0%	83.3%	33.3%	100.0%

The welfare benefits were provided only to the Toda tribe, constituting 16.7%, while others received none (0.0%). Overall, the total benefit distribution was 95.0% in housing, 100.0% in water, 83.3% in health, and 33.3% in welfare, highlighting both equitable allocations in some categories and significant gaps in others, particularly in health and welfare.

Table 2. House built through Government Initiatives

Tribal Communities	House built		Total
	No	Yes	
Irula	0	10	10
	0.0%	16.7%	16.7%
Kattunayakan	0	10	10
	0.0%	16.7%	16.7%
Kota	0	10	10
	0.0%	16.7%	16.7%
Kurumba	4	6	10
	6.7%	10.0%	16.7%
Paniya	0	10	10
	0.0%	16.7%	16.7%
Toda	10	0	10
	16.7%	0.0%	16.7%
Total	14	46	60
	23.3%	76.7%	100.0%

The table 2 provides insight into housing conditions among six tribal communities, highlighting the proportion of houses built versus those not constructed. Of the total, 76.7% of houses were built, while 23.3% remained unbuilt. Irula, Kattunayakan, Kota, and Paniya tribes had all their houses built, each contributing 16.7% to the total. The Kurumba tribe showed a mix, with 10.0% of their houses built and 6.7% unbuilt. Conversely, the Toda tribe stands out with none of their houses constructed (16.7% unbuilt). This data underscores significant disparities, where most tribes benefit from house construction efforts, while the Toda tribe faces complete exclusion.

Table 3. Houses Owned by the Tribal Respondents

Tribal Communities	Have Own House	Total
Irula	10	10
	16.7%	16.7%
Kattunayakan	10	10
	16.7%	16.7%
Kota	10	10
	16.7%	16.7%
Kurumba	10	10
	16.7%	16.7%
Paniya	10	10
	16.7%	16.7%
Toda	10	10
	16.7%	16.7%
Total	60	60
	100.0%	100.0%

Sources: Primary Data

The table demonstrates a perfect distribution of housing ownership among six tribal communities, with each tribe having 100% ownership of their houses. Each tribe—Irula, Kattunayakan, Kota, Kurumba, Paniya, and Toda—contributes equally to the total, with each representing 16.7% of all owned houses. The total number of owned houses amounts to 60, making the

ownership rate across all tribes 100%. This uniform distribution suggests that all tribal groups have achieved equal access to housing ownership, reflecting a successful and equitable implementation of housing provisions.

Table 4. Water Connection through Government Program

Tribal Communities	Water Connection	Total
Irula	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Kattunayakan	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Kota	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Kurumba	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Paniya	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Toda	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Total	60 100.0%	60 100.0%

The table 4 showcases a uniform distribution of water connection access among six tribal communities, with each tribe having 100% access. Every tribe—Irula, Kattunayakan, Kota, Kurumba, Paniya, and Toda—accounts for 16.7% of the total water connections, contributing equally to the overall count of 60 connections. This indicates that all communities have been equally prioritized in the provision of water infrastructure, reflecting a completely equitable implementation of water supply benefits across the tribes.

Table 5. Electric Connection through Government Program

Tribal Communities	Have Electricity connection	Total
Irula	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Kattunayakan	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Kota	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Kurumba	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Paniya	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Toda	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Total	60 100.0%	60 100.0%

The table 6 illustrates a uniform distribution of electricity connections among six tribal communities, with each community achieving full (100%) access. Each tribe—Irula, Kattunayakan, Kota, Kurumba, Paniya, and Toda—accounts for 16.7% of the total. This equal allocation reflects a completely equitable distribution of electricity infrastructure, ensuring all tribal communities have been equally served electricity.

Table 6. Sanitation Facilities through Government Program

Tribal Communities	Sanitation facilities Toilet	Total
Irula	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Kattunayakan	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Kota	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Kurumba	10 16.7%	10 16.7%
Paniya	10	10

	16.7%	16.7%
Toda	10	10
	16.7%	16.7%
Total	60	60
	100.0%	100.0%

The table reveals a consistent and equitable distribution of toilet facilities among the six tribal communities, with each community having complete (100%) access. All tribes—Irula, Kattunayakan, Kota, Kurumba, Paniya, and Toda—contribute equally, each representing 16.7% of the total toilet facilities provided. This ensures that sanitation infrastructure has been uniformly implemented, reflecting a balanced approach in meeting the sanitation needs of all tribal groups.

3.1 Findings

The study focuses on the success and inequality in the delivery of benefits among six tribes: Irula, Kattunayakan, Kota, Kurumba, Paniya, and Toda. The major findings can be summarized as follows:

Housing Benefits:

Benefits for housing were received by all communities except Kurumba (11.7%). A total of 16.7% of benefits for housing were delivered, 76.7% of the houses were constructed through the government, and the distribution was 95.0%.

Water Benefits:

Each community received 16.7% of the water benefits, making the total benefit distribution 100.0%. This means that the water infrastructure was provided to all tribal communities successfully and uniformly.

Health Benefits:

The Irula, Kattunayakan, Kota, Paniya, and Toda communities received 16.7% of the health benefits, while Kurumba received none (0.0%). The total benefit distribution for health was 83.3%, showing large disparities in the allocation of health services.

Welfare Benefits:

Only the Toda community received welfare benefits (16.7%), while other communities were not receiving any welfare benefit (0.0%). This led to a total welfare benefit of 33.3%. This shows that there is more scope for welfare programs.

Ownership and Utilities:

Six tribal communities achieved 100% ownership of their houses, which shows equal availability of housing ownership. Each of the communities had 100% access to water connection, electricity, and sanitation facilities, which shows equal distribution of these essential amenities.

4. Conclusion

- The tribal areas are generally remote places which are isolated to the general public areas.
- Currently the tribal communities are living in their rural areas, where they have access to basic infrastructural facilities such as, home, water, electricity, sanitation, transportation, Communication, and banking facilities.
- The problem lies with the ineffective use of these facilities provided through government programs.
- To make use of this a proper awareness is needed which could boost the need of the tribal communities so that they could have the necessity to utilise the facilities provided by the government.

Altogether we could conclude that the basic amenity provision through local self-government programs by the government is, therefore, mixed success. There is evident success in the distribution of water, electricity, and sanitation facilities among the six tribal communities, though there exist some disparities in housing and health benefits. The welfare benefits are not evenly spread out, which leaves some room for improvement in terms of targeting and inclusiveness, especially with regard to the Kurumba and Toda communities.

These findings call for more targeted and customized intervention programs to make sure all the tribal communities are equipped with comprehensive and fair access. Future policies should concentrate on filling up the gap of health and welfare provisions without compromising the successes in distribution of water, electricity, and sanitation. This shall make the government focus more on balanced development and improve living standards for all tribal populations.

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