Nomadic Tribal Communities in Tiruvarur District, Tamil Nadu

A Census Report

Vanavil Trust

in collaboration with

Centre for Social Justice and Equity

Madras School of Social Work.

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(Funded by Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department, Government of Tamil Nadu)
Madras School of Social Work.

Nomadic Tribes in Tiruvarur District, Tamil Nadu

Census Report

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Period of Survey - March 2024 – May 2024

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Introduction

The Nomadic Tribes are groups of people who are not settled in one location and travel in caravans to various places for pastoral activities, trade, transport of goods and as performing artists and craftworkers. Sections of the nomadic Tribes have been musicians, acrobats, soothsayers, singers and artisans. The Nomadic, Semi-Nomadic Tribes and Denotified communities (Idate, B. 2017) constitute 10% of the total population in India. This population comprises many castes, tribes and unlisted communities who were affected by the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. More than 466 communities (Idate, B. 2017) were notified as criminal tribes by the British Colonial Government from 1871 to 1931, and most of them were placed in settlements which were open prisons. The one thing that is common to all the Denotified and nomadic tribes is the fate of being branded 'born' criminals (Devy, G.N. 2004). Even during and after the Indian independence on August 15, 1947, the notified tribes were still under surveillance and in settlements created by the British government. It was on August 31, 1952, that the tribes notified as criminals under the Criminal Tribes Act were 'Denotified', and technically got their freedom.

However, while the government de-notified them, it also passed the Habitual Offenders Act in 1952 to keep vigilance on the previously criminalised tribes. The stigma of being labelled criminals thus stuck with them and posed many difficulties in claiming their rights as citizens. The 5-year gap between Indian Independence and Denotification has proved consequential, for a majority of the NT/DNT/SNT communities were yet to be enumerated when the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution, which deals with the duties of the state towards tribes and castes listed in the former, was drawn up. This has meant that those who are not in a position to make and enforce claims to being placed in the Schedule (for lack of documents, or 'proof' they were listed in Criminal Tribes of Madras presidency of other kinds), do not stand to avail of the various provisions listed in it for the furtherance of the rights and entitlements of the Scheduled castes and tribes.

Lacking identity documentation and other means to secure government assistance with respect to modern education, yet possessing skills (performance with Bulls, Soothsaying, playing musical instruments, Hunting) that were not likely to fetch them a means of livelihood, in a modernising economy, most of the nomadic tribes resorted to begging, rag picking and small itinerant trading.

Background

Since 2005, Vanavil Trust has been dedicated to improving the lives of Nomadic Tribal communities, ensuring access to education, protection, healthcare, and nutrition for Nomadic Tribal children, and creating livelihood opportunities for Nomadic Tribal women. In collaboration with Praxis, ROSA, and TENT Society, Vanavil trust conducted a participatory survey shedding light on the challenges faced by Nomadic Tribal communities. The comprehensive report, published in 2023, focused on the socio-economic conditions of four Nomadic Tribal communities: Boom Boom Maatukarars, Narikuravars, Kaatunayakars, and Lambadas, residing in 15 hamlets across four districts in Tamil Nadu.

Additionally, Vanavil Trust conducted a detailed study on the livelihood and debt status of Nomadic Tribal women from the Boom Boom Maatukarar community across six districts: Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur, Thanjavur, Mayiladuthurai, Cuddalore, and Trichy.

Ms. Revathi Radhakrishnan, the Director of Vanavil Trust, was invited to consult on a panel addressing the issues faced by Tribal and Nomadic Tribal communities in Tamil Nadu at the Centre for Social Justice and Equity, housed at the Madras School of Social Work. During this consultation, she emphasized the importance of conducting a census survey to understand the socio-economic status of Nomadic Tribal communities better. She highlighted that such data would enable the government to devise policies ensuring the inclusion of Nomadic Tribal communities in all social welfare schemes and initiatives.

Responding to Ms. Revathi's suggestion and recognising Vanavil Trust's 19 years of dedicated work with Nomadic Tribal communities, the Madras School of Social Work invited Vanavil Trust to join the sub-committee formed to study Nomadic Tribal communities in Tamil Nadu. Vanavil Trust was tasked with conducting a census of Nomadic tribes. Proposing to begin with a sample survey, funded by CSJE, Vanavil Trust committed to undertaking a census of all Nomadic Tribal communities residing in the Tiruvarur district as this data would not only provide valuable insights but could also serve as a template for future government surveys and initiatives.

Focus of the Study

This survey was initiated with the focus of supporting the efforts of the Tamil Nadu state government in uplifting the nomadic tribal communities. The Tamil Nadu government has been actively looking into the issue of nomadic tribal communities and have taken huge strides to ensure their inclusion in the social welfare schemes by initiating a survey of Nomadic Tribes under the command of chief secretary of Tamil Nadu. The census survey conducted in the Tiruvarur district focuses on the housing situation of nomadic tribal communities. Here are the key points highlighted in the survey:

1. Land Ownership Status
The survey provides detailed information on the land ownership status of nomadic tribal communities in the Tiruvarur district.

2. Type and Condition of Houses
The survey assesses the type and condition of houses inhabited by nomadic tribal communities, including whether they are permanent, temporary, or makeshift structures along with the materials used in building them.

3. Availability of Basic Public Amenities
The survey focuses on the availability of basic public amenities such as access to water, sanitation, electricity, fuel, healthcare, etc., in the settlements of nomadic tribal communities.

4. Access to Government Schemes

The survey examines the access of nomadic tribal communities to government housing schemes and programs. In addition to housing schemes, the survey also assesses the access of nomadic tribal communities to other welfare schemes such as education, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), etc.

By providing detailed information on these aspects, the census survey aims to highlight the housing and basic amenities-related challenges faced by nomadic tribal communities in the Tiruvarur district.

Excerpt from Renke Commission Report on Housing situation of Nomadic Tribes (2008)

Housing is an area where these communities face very serious problems. They do not have any record of rights (patta) for their residential plots, though they have been living in those areas for generations, be they in public or private lands or waste lands, or on the roadside or in the fringe of the villages. This aspect is clearly reflected in the Community Survey of the Commission (see Annexure 5, Pp. 24-26). They face constant harassment of demolition of their settlements and eviction by the local revenue officials, municipal authorities, realtors, police and the politicians. They constantly live under these threats. Most of them live in small kutcha houses (if we call them so) made of jute rags, polythene or tin sheets, etc., without any sort of public amenities like safe drinking water supply, drainage, internal roads, etc. Though these may be called as some kind of shelter, they do not protect them during the rainy season.

Excerpt from Idate Commission Report on Housing situation of Nomadic Tribes (2014)

While Nomadic tribes are generally on the move in pursuit of their traditional occupations, many DNTs today are settled. However, the majority of these communities live under precarious living conditions. lt is seen that 84 out of the 122 communities surveyed in 11 states have been found to be living in tents/Jhuggis (Renke Commission report, 2008). During the field visits to various settlements in rural and urban areas in States in the past two years, the Commission has observed that many of these settlements did not have basic facilities and infrastructure like sanitation, clean drinking water, drainage, electricity, etc. More than fifteen percent of the petitions received by this Commission relate to the issue of lack of proper housing and basic amenities.

Most of the families the Commission interacted with either lived in semi-permanent structures or kutcha/makeshift structures. Many did not have something as basic as an electricity connection in their homes. Out of all the houses visited, only 53 percent reported having electricity connection. Over 50% of those with whom the team interacted, lived in semi-pucca or makeshift structures, and 8% lived in tents with their families.

Demographics of the Survey

- **Community:** Boom Boom Maatukarar, Narikuravar, Kanikkar, Malai Kuravar, Josiyakarar, Kuravar, Enadi
- **District:** Thiruvarur
- **No. of Hamlets:** 17
- **Blocks/Panchayats:** Mannargudi, Thiruthuraipoondi, Muthupettai, Srivanjiyam, Needamangalam, Kudavasal, Nannilam**,** Thiruvarur
- **No. of Households:** 559
- **Methodology:** Census Survey (Quantitative)

Process Summary

The process for the census survey began with the design of the interview schedule. A comprehensive census schedule was created and reviewed by several eminent individuals, including Ms. Revathi R., the Managing Trustee of Vanavil Trust; Ms. V. Geetha, a feminist historian specializing in caste, gender, education, and civil rights; Dr. Senthil Babu, a historian and professor at the French Institute of Pondicherry; and Dr. Tathagata Sengupta from the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education. Based on their feedback, improvements were made to enhance the effectiveness of the questionnaire.

The revised questionnaire was then submitted to the Centre for Social Justice and Equity at the Madras School of Social Work. To facilitate data collection, Kobo Collect was identified as an appropriate tool, considering its accessibility and functionality in low-network areas. Ms. Devi, a software engineer, volunteered to upload and test the questionnaire on Kobo Collect, ensuring its usability and accuracy.

The training of field data collectors involved identifying 29 data enumerators from various backgrounds, including educated youth from the community, Master of Social Work students from the Central University of Tamil Nadu, anthropology graduates, Vanavil staff members, and local college students. Two half-day training sessions were conducted on February 23rd and 26th, focusing on the purpose of the survey and the usage of the questionnaire. Enumerators were also provided with guidance on using the Kobo Collect tool for conducting the survey.

Data collection commenced on February 27th, 2024. Each enumerator was assigned a specific hamlet and given a target number of surveys to complete, with a coordinator appointed for each hamlet. The survey for the Boom Boom Maatuakarar community was completed, and additional efforts included other nomadic communities in Thiruvarur district, such as the Enadi, Kuravar, Kanikkar, Josiyakarar, Narikuravars, and Malai Kuravar. In total, surveys were conducted in 559 households, surpassing the initial target.

Following data collection, the data was homogenized, and charts were created to visualize the information. The final data was then collated and analysed to generate a comprehensive report. This report includes verified data presented through charts and graphs, an analysis of key trends, challenges, and opportunities faced by the nomadic communities in Thiruvarur district, and policy recommendations based on the identified needs.

1. Population – Households & People

Number of Nomadic Tribal Households

In the course of this survey, data were meticulously collected from 559 households encompassing 2,056 individuals across 18 nomadic tribal hamlets within the Thiruvarur District. The nomadic tribal communities that participated in the survey included Boom Boom Maatukarar, Nari Kuravar, Domman, Erikalolu, Josiyakarar, Kanikkar, Malai Kuravar, Paambaati, Eeyam Poosaravarm, Uppu Kuravar, and Irular.

Population Overview

The total population enumerated in the census survey is 2,056, comprising 1,027 males and 1,029 females. In terms of age groups, there are 520 children aged 0-10, 325 children aged 11-17, and 1,211 adults aged 18 and above. The tables below represent the block-wise and community-wise distribution of the nomadic tribal populations in Thiruvarur District**.**

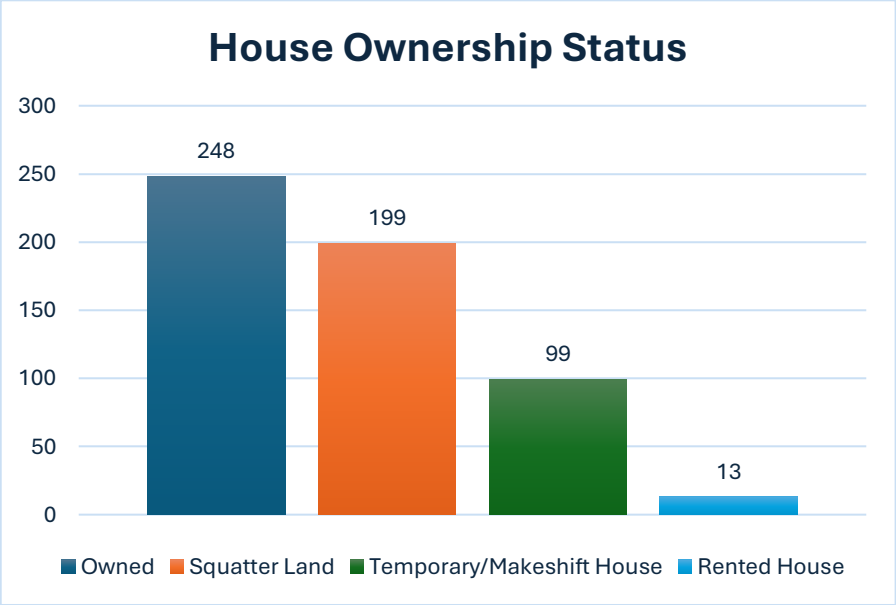
Block/Village Panchayat	No. of Nomadic Tribal Households	Population of Nomadic Tribes
Kudavasal	1	4
Mannargudi	180	643
Muthupettai	80	294
Nanilam	47	191
Needamangalam	65	171
Thiruthuraipoondi	186	953
Grand Total	**559**	**2056**

Nomadic Tribe	No. of Households	Population of Nomadic Tribes
Boom Boom Maatukarar	216	876
Domman	1	4
Eeyam Poosaravar	3	9
Erikalolu	4	15
Josiyakarar	1	4
Irular	40	105
Kanikkar	50	186
Malai kuravar	25	81
Nari kuravar	215	766
Paambaati	3	8
Uppu kuravar	1	2
Grand Total	**559**	**2056**

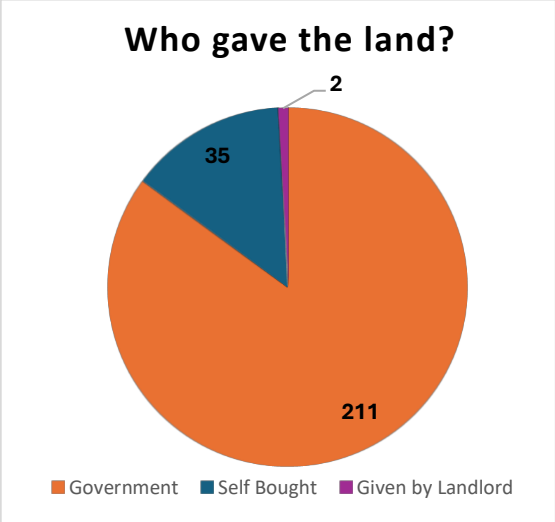
2. Status of Housing Among Nomadic Tribes

2a. House Ownership Status

This census survey recorded the house ownership status of each surveyed nomadic tribal household. Out of the 559 households surveyed, 248 households owned land, either provided by the government or purchased by themselves; 199 households were living on squatter land without documentation; and 112 households did not have a house or were living in temporary shelters such as tents, rented houses, or under trees.



Among the 248 households that owned the land they lived on, 211 households had received land from the government, 35 households had purchased the land independently, and 2 households had been gifted the land by landowners in recognition of their service. Of the 211 households that received land from the government, 156 households did not have formal documentation (patta) for land ownership.



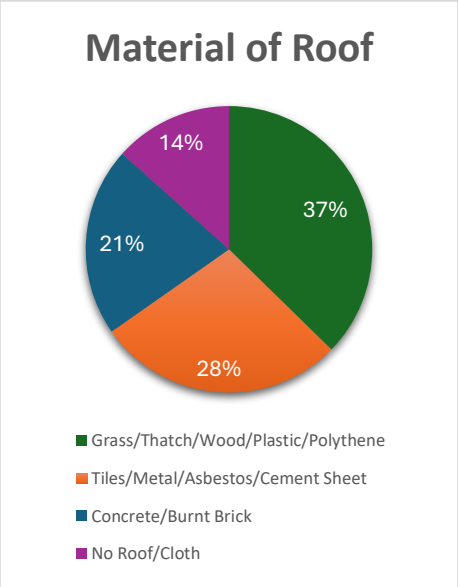
2b. Houses and Construction Materials Used

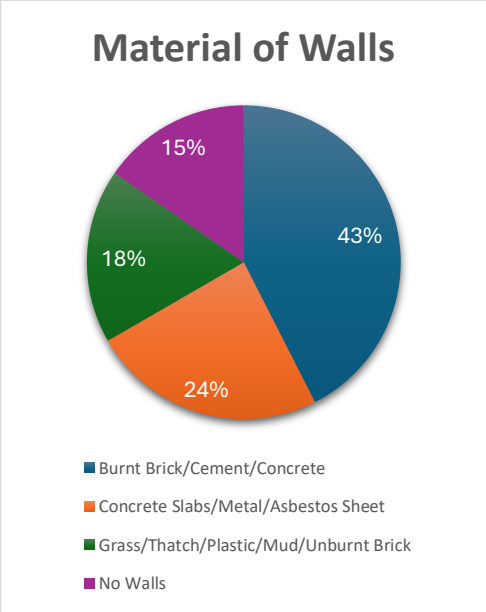
The census survey classified houses based on the construction materials used for the roof, walls, and floor.

Houses by Material of Roof

The materials used for constructing roofs among the nomadic tribal people included concrete, metal/asbestos/cement sheet, grass/thatch, tiles, wood, plastic/polythene, burnt brick, and cloth. The distribution is as follows:

Material of Roof	No. of Houses
Grass/Thatch/Wood/Plastic/Polythene	187
Tiles/Metal/Asbestos/Cement Sheet	140
Concrete/Burnt Brick	107
No Roof/Cloth	67





Houses by Materials of Wall

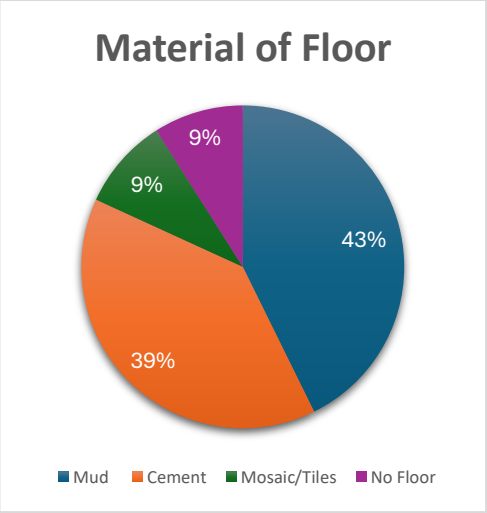
The walls of the houses were made from various materials such as burnt brick, cement/concrete, concrete slabs, metal/asbestos sheet, mud/unburnt brick, wood, plastic/polythene, and grass/thatch. The distribution is as follows:

Material of Wall	No. of Houses
Burnt Brick/Cement/Concrete	213
Concrete Slabs/Metal/Asbestos Sheet	121
Grass/Thatch/Plastic/Mud/Unburnt Brick	90
No Walls	77

Houses by Materials of Floor

The predominant materials used for constructing floors were cement, mud, and mosaic/tiles. The distribution is as follows:

Material of Roof	No. of Houses
Mud	214
Cement	196
Mosaic/Tiles	46
No Floor	45



2c. Houses and their Habitable Condition

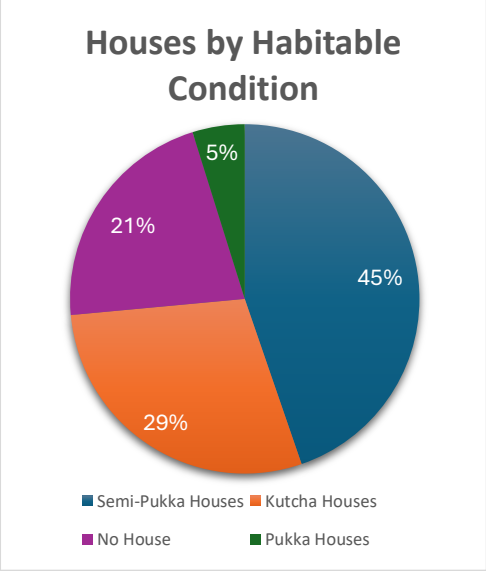
The households in this survey are further classified based on the materials used in construction and the overall condition of the houses. The classifications are as follows:

- Pukka Houses: Houses that are in good condition.
- Semi-Pukka Houses: Houses that are in liveable condition.
- Kutcha Houses: Houses that are in dilapidated condition.
- Households with No Houses/Temporary Arrangements: Households without permanent housing.

Out of the 559 households surveyed, the distribution of houses according to habitable condition is as follows:

Habitable Condition	No. of Houses
Semi-Pukka Houses	250
Kutcha Houses	161
No House	121
Pukka Houses	27

Out of the 559 houses surveyed, a staggering 282 houses, constituting approximately 50% of the total houses, are deemed uninhabitable. This alarming statistic shows the dire living conditions faced by many the nomadic tribal households within the surveyed area.

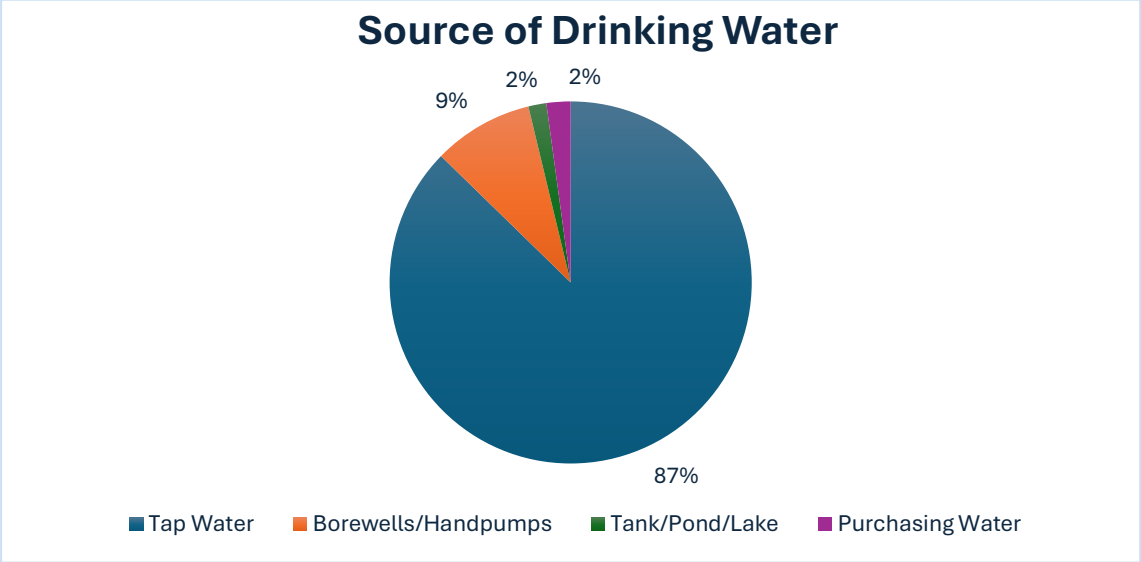


3. Nomadic Tribal Households & Basic Amenities

3a. Drinking Water

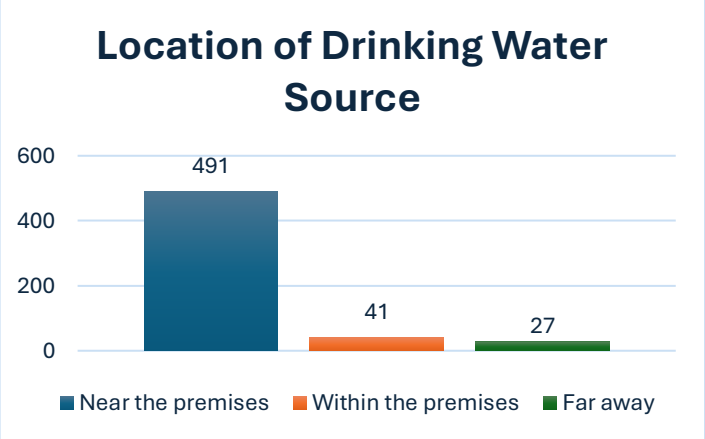
(i) Availability of Drinking Water

According to the census survey, tap water constitutes the major source of drinking water among the nomadic tribal hamlets. Out of the 559 households surveyed, 488 households had access to drinking water from tap water. Additionally, 50 households used water from borewells or handpumps, while 9 households relied on water from tanks, ponds, or lakes for drinking purposes. Notably, 12 households did not have access to drinking water and had to purchase water for drinking and cooking, spending between Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,500 per month.



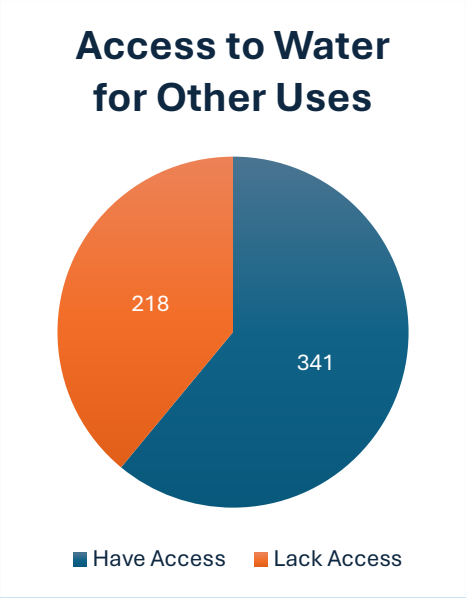
(ii) Location of Drinking Water Source

The survey also reveals that only 41 households have a drinking water source *within* their premises (inside their house), 491 households have a drinking water source *near* their premises (in their street or settlement), and 27 households have to obtain their drinking water from a *faraway* source (away from their settlement).



3b. Availability of Water for Other Uses (Washing, cleaning, toilet)

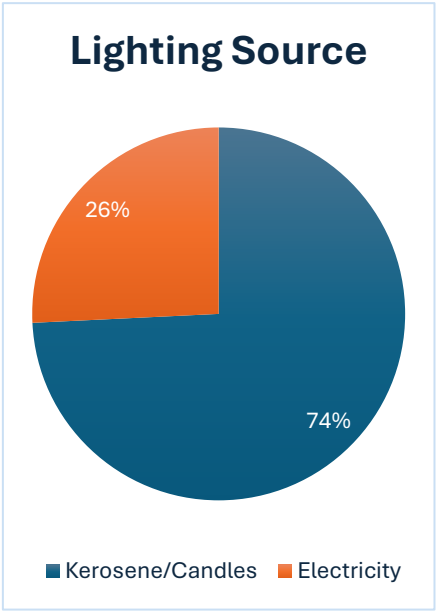
In the surveyed sample of 559 households, it was found that although the majority have access to drinking water, a significant portion lacks access to water for purposes beyond consumption, such as washing, cleaning, and sanitation. Specifically, 218 households were identified as lacking access to water for these additional uses. The primary alternative sources for such water were common ponds or lakes near the settlements. However, the seasonal variation in water availability, particularly the drying up of the ponds and lakes during the summer months, increases the challenge of water accessibility for all nomadic tribal households during this period.



Water for other uses Access Status	No. of Households	Water Source
Have Access to water for other uses	341	Common Tap/Tank & Borewell
Lack Access to water for other uses	218	Pond/Lake (affected by change of seasons)

3c. Electricity & Source of Lighting

According to the survey, the primary sources of lighting in nomadic tribal households are kerosene and candles, with 415 out of the 559 households (approximately 74.2%) relying on them for illumination. This highlights a heavy reliance on traditional, non-electric forms of lighting which are less efficient and more hazardous compared to electricity. Only 144 households, or about 25.8%, reported having access to electricity. This data brings to light the significant disparity between the state's declared electrification status and the lived reality of these communities.



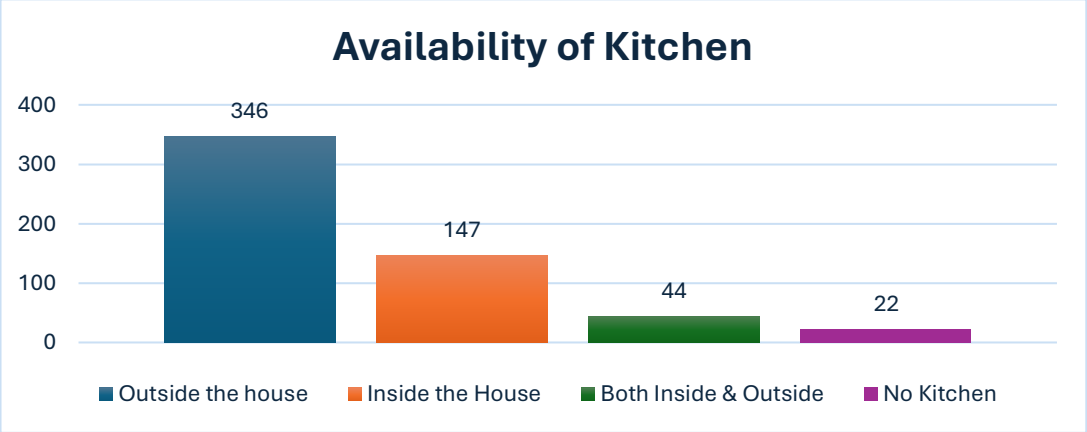
Lighting Source	No. of Households	Percentage
Kerosene/Candles	415	74.2%
Electricity	144	25.8%

Despite Tamil Nadu being declared 100% electrified in 1987, the survey results illustrate that most nomadic tribal hamlets still lack access to electricity connections. This situation poses challenges not only in terms of lighting but also in overall development and quality of life, as electricity is a crucial component of modern infrastructure that supports education, healthcare, and economic activities.

3d. Kitchen & Fuel Availability

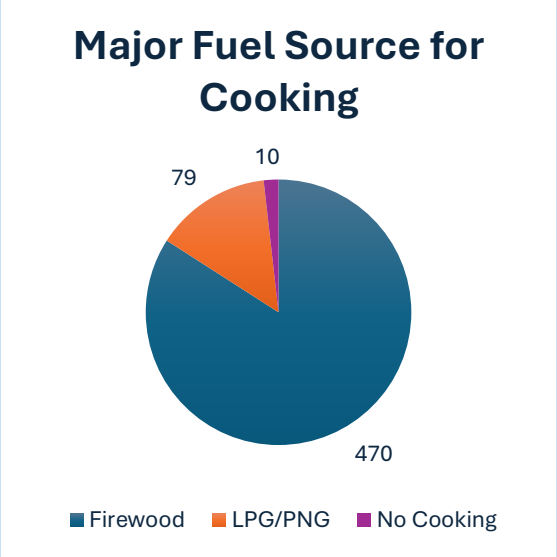
(i) Households & Availability of Kitchen

The census survey indicates that among the surveyed households, 147 have kitchen facilities situated within their houses. In contrast, 346 households have kitchen setups outside their houses. Additionally, 44 households possess kitchen facilities both inside and outside their residences. There are 22 households where no kitchen facilities are available either within or outside their houses.



(ii) Households & Fuel for Cooking

According to the census survey, firewood emerges as the predominant fuel source for cooking among nomadic tribal communities, with over 470 households relying on it. In contrast, 79 households utilize LPG/PNG as their primary cooking fuel, while 10 households do not cook altogether.



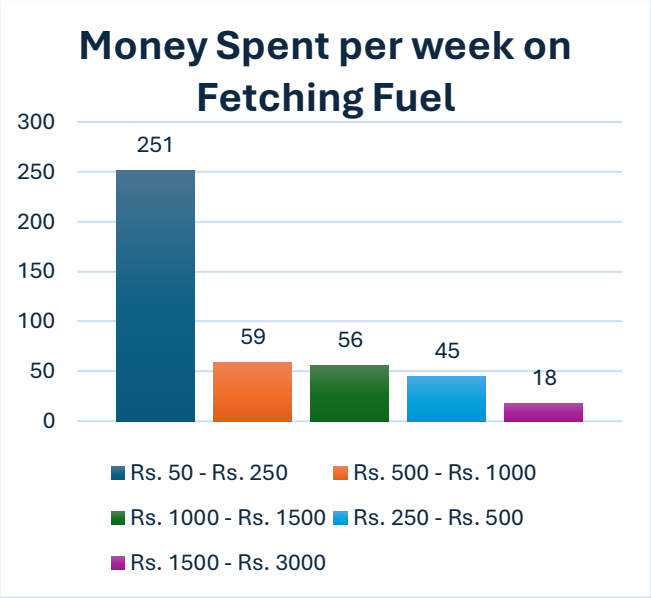
Major Fuel Source for Cooking	No. of Households
Households using firewood	470
Households using LPG/PNG	79
Households not cooking	10

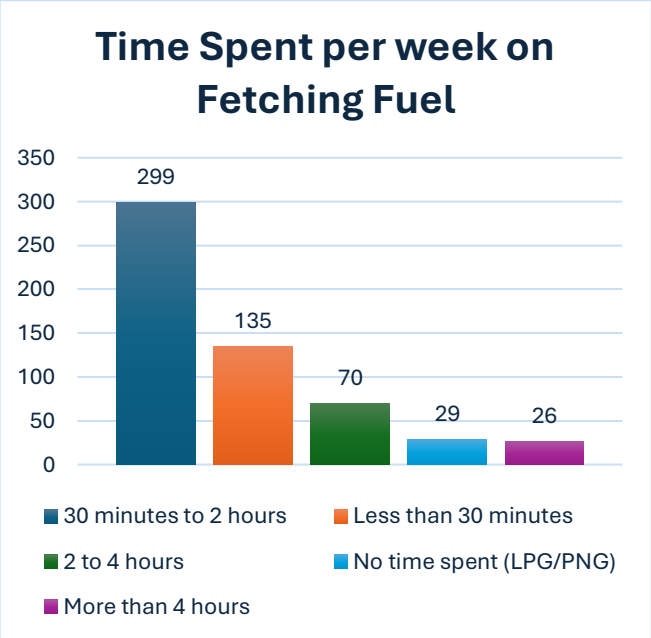
Among the surveyed households, 236 are equipped with LPG/PNG connections, yet only 79 of them opt to utilize these connections as their main cooking fuel source. Notably, out of the 236 households with LPG/PNG connections, merely 114 obtained them free of charge, with the remaining 122 households paid for their connections. The reluctance to adopt LPG/PNG for cooking primarily stems from concern regarding the high cost of gas cylinders.

Status of Gas Connection	No. of Households
Households with LPG/PNG connections	236
Households with free LPG/PNG connections	114
Households with paid LPG/PNG connections	122
Households using LPG/PNG as main fuel source	79

Among the surveyed households, approximately 25% (130) do not incur any expenses on their cooking fuel. For those who do, expenditure varies widely, ranging from Rs. 50 to Rs. 3000 per month. In ascending order of monthly expenditure:

- 251 households spend between Rs. 50 and Rs. 250
- 45 households spend between Rs. 250 and Rs. 500.
- 59 households spend between Rs. 500 and Rs. 1000.
- 56 households spend between Rs. 1000 and Rs. 1500.
- 18 households spend between Rs. 1500 and Rs. 3000.





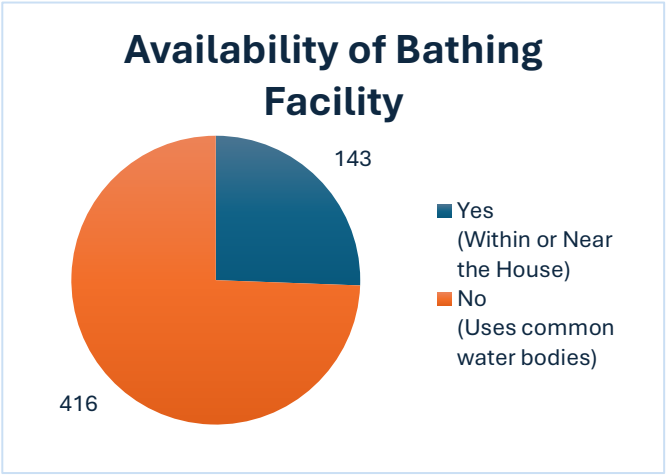
In addition to the money spent on acquiring fuel for cooking, households also invest a considerable amount of time each week in collecting firewood.

Time Spent on Fuel Collection Per Week	No. of Households
30 minutes to 2 hours	299
Less than 30 minutes	135
2 to 4 hours	70
No time spent (use LPG/PNG or no cooking)	29
More than 4 hours	26

3e. Availability and Access of Sanitation Facilities

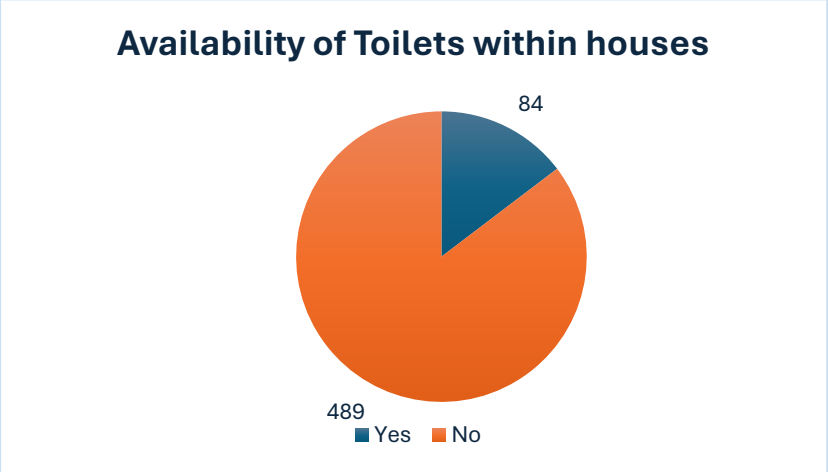
(i) Availability Bathing Facility

As per the survey data, among the households surveyed, it was found that bathing facilities are scarce. Only 143 households have bathing facilities either within or near their houses. In contrast, a significant majority of 416 households do not have any type of bathing facilities within their premises and instead utilize common ponds, rivers, or lakes for bathing.



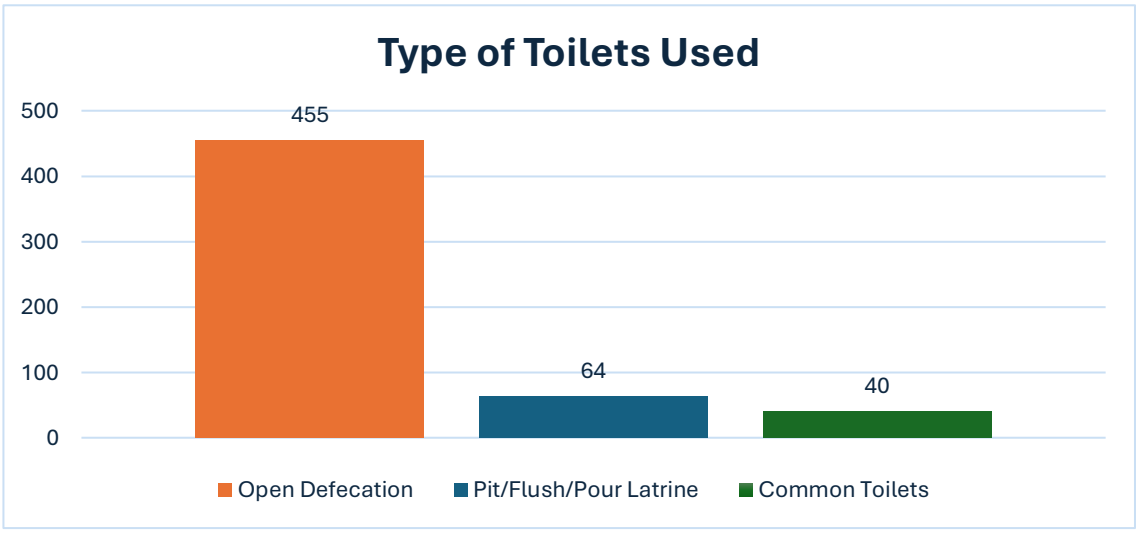
(ii) **Households and Toilet Facilities**

Similar to bathing facilities, there is a significant discrepancy in toilet access. Among the 559 households surveyed, only 84 households have toilets within their house premises, while the majority, 489 households, do not have access to toilets within their houses. Further analysis shows that out of the 84 households with toilets on their premises, 20 lack access to water, rendering the toilets unusable.



Among the surveyed households, 455 lack access to both private and public toilets, and use open spaces for defecation. These household members have to walk 1 to 2 kilometres each time, with challenges arising during nighttime due to the secluded and dark nature of the areas near the hamlets.

Among the 104 households with toilet access, 64 have private toilets within their housing premises, which may be pit, flush, or pour toilets. Meanwhile, 40 households utilize common latrines situated near their houses or settlements.



4. Nomadic Tribal Households & Access to Government Schemes

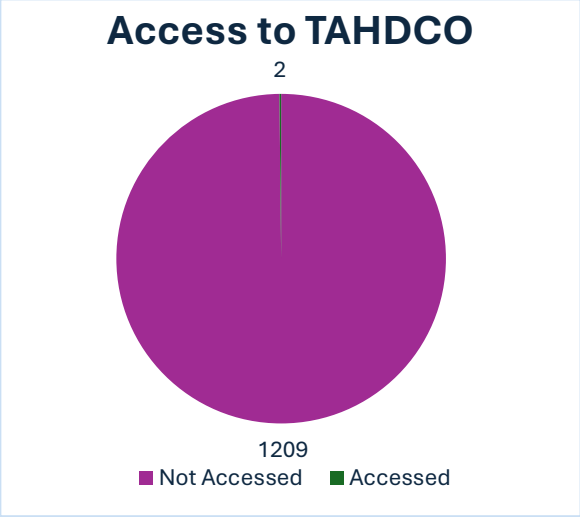
In this section, we will examine the access to various government welfare schemes by nomadic tribal people in Tiruvarur District. The government schemes considered for this survey include
- TAHDCO (Tamil Nadu Adi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation)
- SHGs (Self-Help Groups)
- Health Insurance
- PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana) for Housing
- Scholarships in School
- Post Matric Scholarship
- Marriage Assistance
- Pregnancy Assistance
- ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services)
- Ration Shop Access
- 1000-rupee plan
- Free bus for women
- Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam (Mobile Healthcare Services)
- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)

Access to these schemes will be evaluated at the individual level, where necessary, to accurately depict the extent of access or lack of access to them among nomadic tribal communities in the region.

4a. Financial Assistance

(i) Tamil Nadu Adi Dravidar Housing & Development Corporation (TAHDCO)

The Tamil Nadu Adi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation Limited (TAHDCO) was established in 1974 with the aim of enhancing the socio-economic status of marginalized communities in Tamil Nadu. Over the years, TAHDCO has implemented various programs to promote economic development among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, including schemes for land purchase/development, entrepreneur development, self-employment, and financial assistance to Self Help Groups (SHGs).



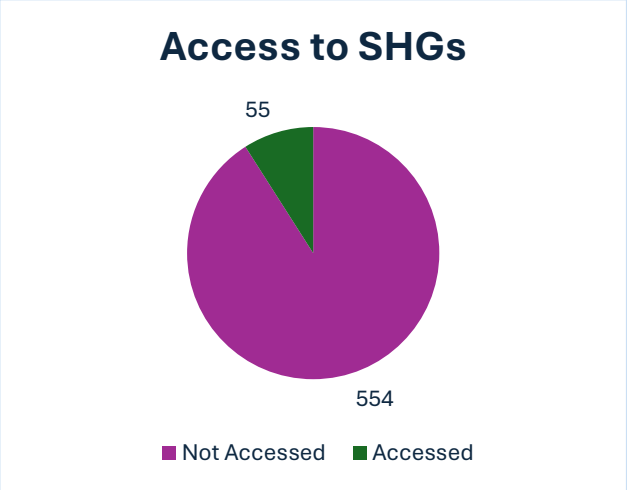
In Tiruvarur District, TAHDCO has approved 1871 applications for financial assistance between 2014 and 2023. The total subsidy disbursed to Adi Dravidars in the district during this period amounts to Rs. 20,72,31,346, as reported in the TAHDCO Review Report.

However, despite these efforts, the utilization of TAHDCO's financial assistance among nomadic tribal communities in Tiruvarur District remains notably low. Out of the 1211 adults residing in the 18 nomadic tribal hamlets, only 2 adults have accessed financial assistance from TAHDCO during the specified period.

(ii) Self Help Groups supported by Government Schemes

The Self-Help Group (SHG) scheme was established to empower rural women and support their livelihoods. In Tiruvarur district, there are reportedly 11,276 SHGs supported by the government, as per the latest data available on the Ministry of Rural Development website. These SHGs have a total of 1,25,007 beneficiaries, out of which only 133 are from Scheduled Tribal communities.

However, it's crucial to note that many individuals in nomadic tribal communities lack community certificates necessary for classification under the Scheduled Tribe category. Consequently, they face barriers in accessing SHGs. Out of the 609 adult women residing in the 18 nomadic tribal hamlets, only 55 have been able to access government-supported SHGs.

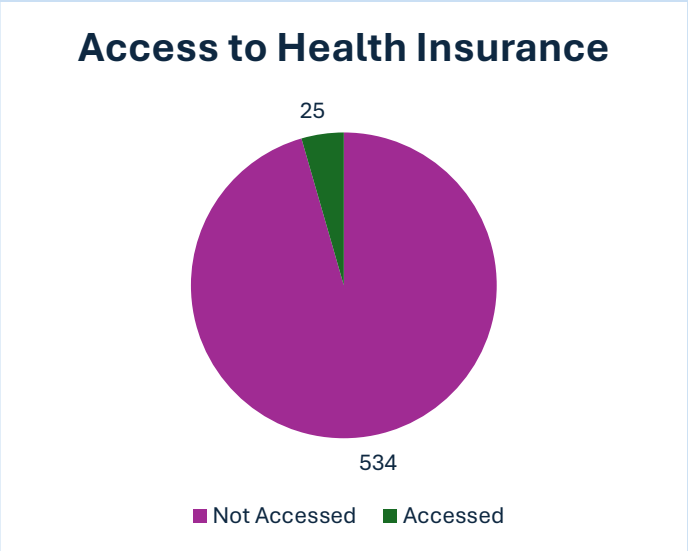


4b. Health Services

(i) Health Insurance (Central/State)

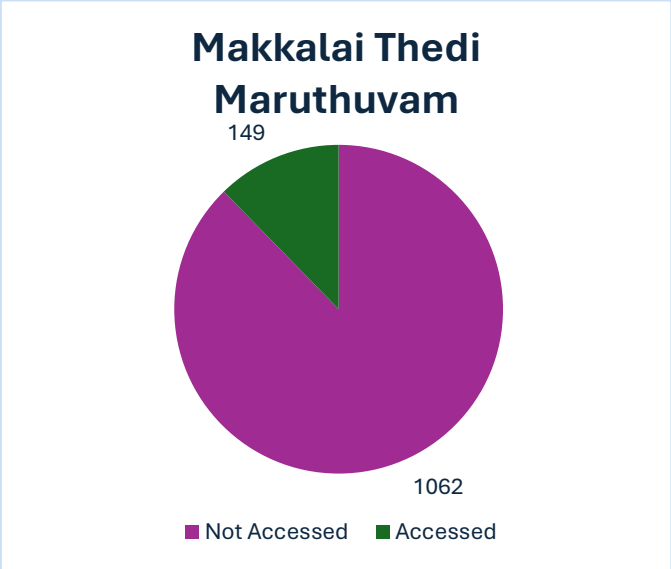
Health insurance coverage is a critical component of ensuring affordable healthcare and is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The connection between good health and wellbeing and poverty eradication underscores the importance of such initiatives. In line with this, the Tamil Nadu government launched the Chief Minister Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme, also known as Kalaingar Kaappittu Thittam, on 23.07.2009. As of January 2022, this scheme covered 1.37 crore families, offering insurance coverage up to Rs. 5,00,000 per family per year.

Despite the widespread coverage of the scheme, access to government-provided health insurance remains limited among nomadic tribal households. Out of the 559 households surveyed, only 25 have accessed this insurance, while 534 households have not accessed it. This highlights a significant gap in health insurance coverage within the nomadic tribal community.



(ii) Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam

The Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam (MTM) Scheme, initiated by the Government of Tamil Nadu, offers a range of home-based health care services to address the health needs of beneficiaries within their families. This program aims to ensure a continuum of care and improve access to healthcare services.



According to the survey data, out of the 1211 adults who participated, 149 individuals reported accessing the mobile healthcare services provided by the MTM scheme. This indicates some level of utilization and awareness of the program among the surveyed population.

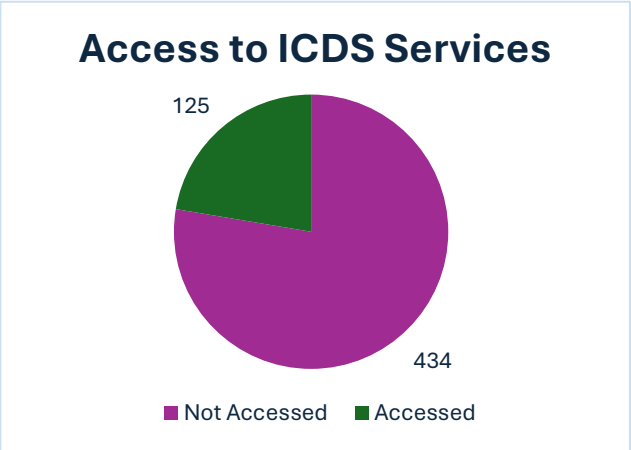
4c. Nutrition and Food Security

(i) Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program, implemented by the Tamil Nadu government, aims to provide nutrition, pre-school education, and monitor the health and personal hygiene of children under the age of 6, as well as pregnant and lactating mothers. This community-based program operates through Anganwadi centres, which serve as crucial hubs for delivering these services.

In Tamil Nadu, a total of 54,439 Anganwadi centres have been established to ensure widespread availability of ICDS services. However, access to these centres among nomadic tribal households remains limited. Among the 559 households surveyed across 18 nomadic tribal hamlets:

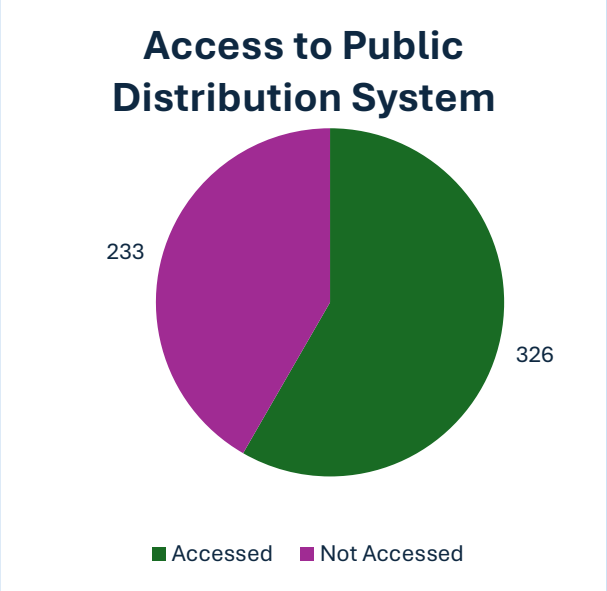
- Only 125 households had access to Anganwadi centres.
- 6 nomadic tribal hamlets did not have any Anganwadi/ICDS centre near their settlements.
- In the remaining hamlets, only 1 to 20 families in each settlement were accessing the services provided by Anganwadi centres.



This data underscores the need for enhanced efforts to improve access to ICDS services, particularly among nomadic tribal communities, to address nutrition and food security concerns effectively.

(ii) Public Distribution System

The Public Distribution System (PDS) plays a crucial role in ensuring food security for the people of Tamil Nadu by providing cereals and pulses at free or subsidized costs. The system primarily benefits Priority Household (PHH) ration cardholders, who include individuals with disabilities, those without shelter, beggars, widows, and others facing economic hardships. PHH cardholders are entitled to receive 5kg of rice per person in the household, along with other subsidized commodities like sugar, oil, and kerosene.



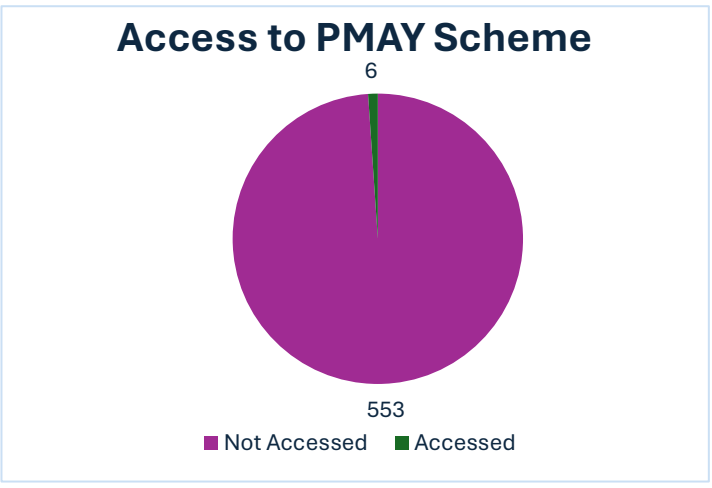
Among the nomadic tribal families surveyed, approximately 60% (326 families) have accessed this scheme and hold a ration card. The PDS emerges as the most utilized scheme by the nomadic tribal people, providing crucial food security assistance.

However, it's concerning that almost 40% of the surveyed nomadic tribal families, approximately 233 households, do not possess a ration card. As a result, they are deprived of the food security benefits provided by the state through the PDS.

4d. Pradhan Manthiri Awaas Yojana (PMAY) – Housing Scheme

The Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) aims to provide pucca houses with basic amenities to all houseless households and those living in kutcha and dilapidated houses in rural areas by 2022. Implemented in Tamil Nadu from April 1, 2016, PMAY-G aims to address the housing needs of vulnerable populations.

According to the audit report for the scheme covering the period from April 2016 to March 2021, a total of 31,423 houses have been constructed under PMAY-G in the district of Tiruvarur. However, despite approximately 50% of the surveyed households living in dilapidated houses, only 6 households (1%) have accessed the PMAY scheme to build houses.



This data indicates a significant gap between the number of households living in dilapidated conditions and those benefiting from the PMAY-G scheme in Tiruvarur district. Efforts are needed to improve awareness and accessibility to housing schemes like PMAY-G among vulnerable populations to address their housing needs effectively.

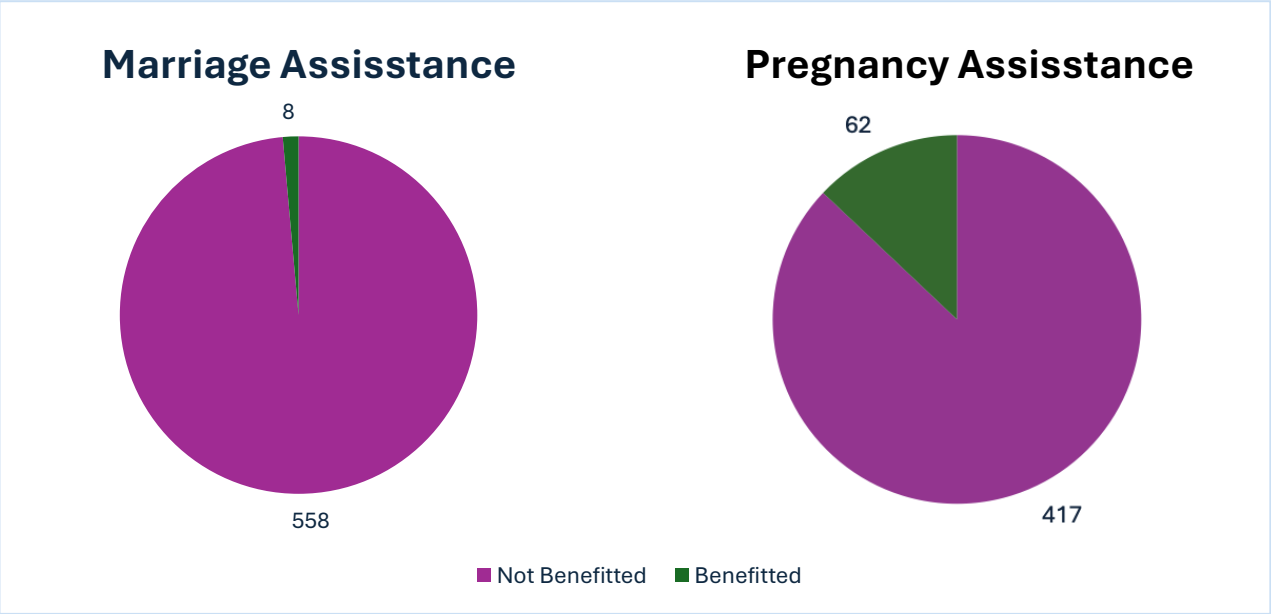
4e. Women Welfare Schemes

(i) Marriage and Pregnancy Financial Assistance

The Tamil Nadu Government implements various marriage assistance schemes aimed at supporting women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, daughters of widows, remarriage of widowed women, and inter-caste marriages. Despite the presence of these schemes, the utilization among surveyed individuals is low. Among the 566 married, widowed, or divorced women who participated in the survey, only 8 have received marriage financial assistance from the government.

Similarly, the Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Maternity Benefit Scheme (MRMBS) provides financial support to poor pregnant mothers above the age of 19 for up to two deliveries. Beneficiaries receive Rs. 18,000 and a nutrition kit worth Rs. 2,000 in instalments during their pregnancy. Out of the 609 adult nomadic tribal women who participated in the survey, 566 are married, divorced, or widowed, and 479 of them have children and are above the age of 19. Despite being eligible, only 62 of these women have received financial assistance under the MRMBS scheme.

These figures reiterate the need to improve awareness and accessibility to government assistance schemes for marriage and pregnancy among nomadic tribal women. Efforts to streamline the application process, increase outreach, and address any barriers to accessing these schemes could help ensure that eligible individuals receive the support they need.



The low utilization of Marriage and Pregnancy assistance schemes can be attributed to several significant factors, including the historical nomadic lifestyle of these communities, lack of accessible services, inconsistent birth locations, and the prevalence of child marriages.

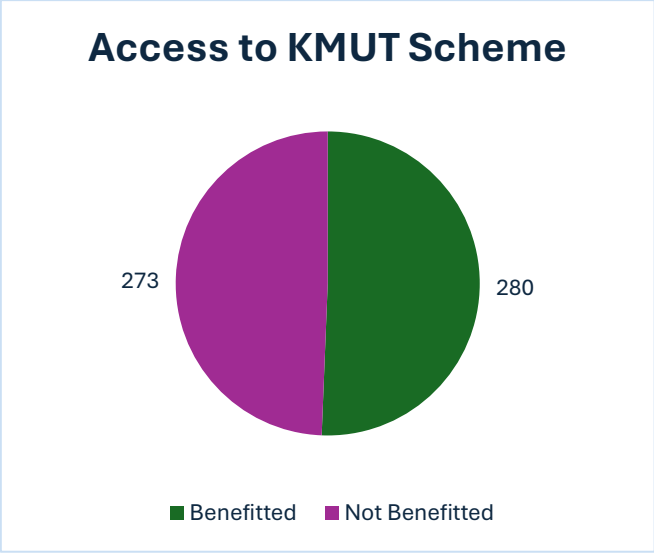
For pregnancy assistance, many older nomadic women had home births while living a nomadic lifestyle without identity documents or a permanent address, making it difficult

to access government schemes. Additionally, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) centres, which provide crucial maternal and child health services, remain largely inaccessible to nomadic tribal communities. Even today, many women give birth in locations different from their registered address, complicating the verification process required to access the schemes. Furthermore, child marriage is still prevalent among these communities, with many women giving birth before turning 19, thus disqualifying them from the scheme.

The low utilization of marriage assistance schemes is primarily due to a lack of awareness among the nomadic tribal population. Many eligible women are not informed about the availability and benefits of these schemes, leading to minimal uptake. This gap in awareness underscores the necessity for targeted outreach and education efforts to ensure that eligible individuals are informed and can take advantage of the support available to them.

(ii) Kalaingar Magalir Urimai Scheme

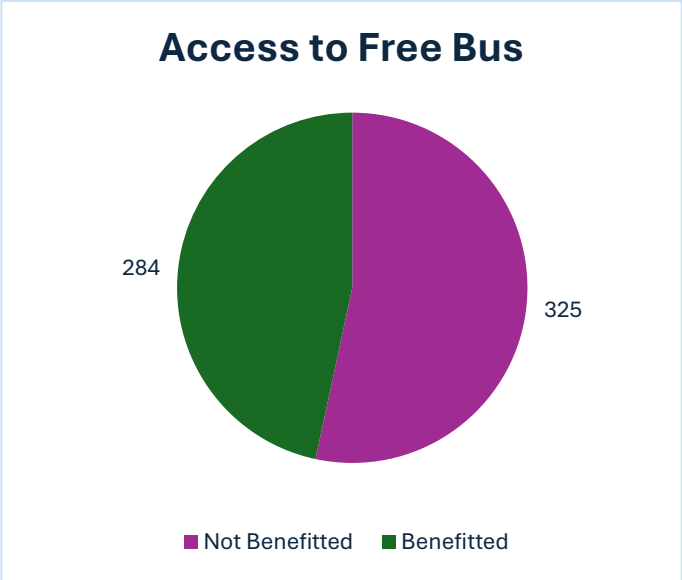
The Tamil Nadu government's Kalaingar Magalir Urimai Thogai (KMUT) Scheme aims to empower women over the age of 21 by providing them with financial assistance of Rs. 1000 per month, with the goal of reaching one crore women across the state. Launched on September 15th, 2023, this scheme has made significant progress in reaching nomadic tribal women in the region. Among the 553 eligible nomadic tribal women who participated in the survey, approximately 50% of them (280 women) have benefitted from this scheme. This indicates a substantial reach and impact of the KMUT Scheme among nomadic tribal women in Tiruvarur district.



(iii) Free Bus Scheme for Women

Similarly, the Tamil Nadu government's initiative to provide free travel for women in government buses, introduced in 2021, has had a significant impact on nomadic tribal women in the region. This scheme offers free travel facilities to all women, including transgender women, in ordinary fare city buses for travel within the city/district. Out of the

609 women who participated in the survey, 284 women have benefitted from this scheme. This scheme emerges as the most accessed state welfare scheme by nomadic tribal women in Tiruvarur district.



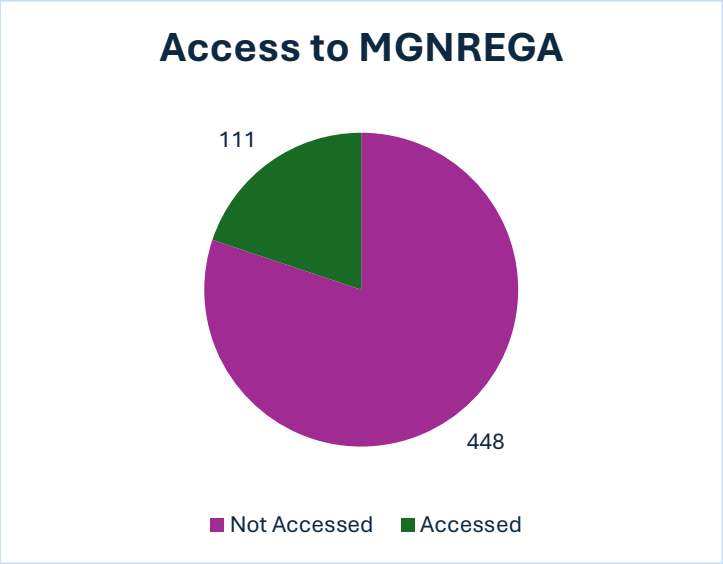
These data points highlight the positive impact of government welfare schemes like the KMUT Scheme and the Free Bus Scheme for Women on the lives of nomadic tribal women, providing them with financial assistance and improved access to transportation services, thereby enhancing their overall well-being and empowerment.

In contrast to the marriage and pregnancy assistance schemes, we can see that a significant number of nomadic tribal women have accessed newer welfare schemes such as the Kalaingar Magalir Urimai Thogai (KMUT) Scheme and the Free Bus Scheme for Women. Approximately 50% of the 553 eligible women have benefited from the KMUT Scheme, while 284 out of 609 women have utilized the Free Bus Scheme. The higher accessibility and utilization of these schemes can be attributed to their broad eligibility criteria, simpler application processes, impactful outreach efforts, and immediate, tangible benefits. These schemes have significantly improved the financial stability and mobility of nomadic tribal women, highlighting the positive impact of well-implemented and accessible welfare programs.

4f. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a significant social welfare measure aimed at guaranteeing the right to work and enhancing livelihood security in rural areas. It provides at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to at least one member of every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. According to the NREGA website, there are a total of 2,52,057 active workers under the scheme in Tiruvarur district, out of which 1,77,430 are women workers.

However, despite the large number of active workers, only 111 households out of the 559 surveyed households have accessed work through the MGNREGA scheme. One of the main reasons for the nomadic tribal population's limited access to the scheme is that most of their settlements are located near towns or cities where the NREGA scheme is not applicable. This geographic constraint presents a significant barrier for nomadic tribal communities in accessing the benefits of the MGNREGA scheme, highlighting the need for tailored solutions to address the unique challenges faced by these communities in accessing rural employment opportunities.



4g. Individuals who have not accessed any welfare schemes

Despite limited reach of state welfare schemes among the nomadic tribal communities, some initiatives have significantly impacted the NT population in Tiruvarur district. Notable schemes include women's welfare programs like the free bus scheme and the Kalaingar Magalir Urimai Scheme, along with the public distribution system, which has benefited 60% of the surveyed population.

However, there remains a portion of the NT community that has not accessed *any* state welfare measures. Among the 1,211 adults surveyed, 222 have not benefited from any of the social welfare schemes mentioned in this report. This indicates that 20% of the surveyed adult population has not been reached by these protective and developmental state efforts.

5. Nomadic Tribes and Education

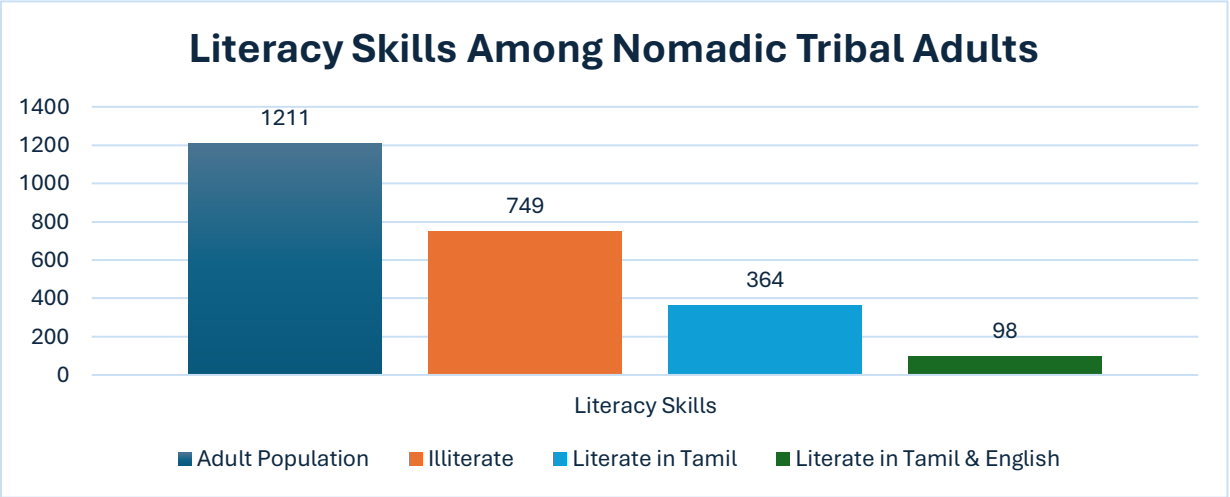
Education plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of individuals and communities, serving as a catalyst for socio-economic development and empowerment. However, among marginalised communities such as nomadic tribes, access to quality education remains a significant challenge. Nomadic tribes face numerous barriers to education, including geographical isolation, socio-economic deprivation, social stigma and cultural discrimination. In this segment, we investigate the complexities surrounding education among nomadic tribes.

5a. Educational Level

(i) Educational Among Nomadic Tribal Adults

Literacy Skills

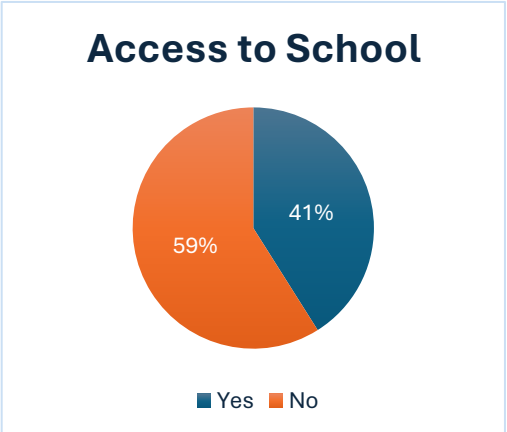
In the surveyed population of 1211 adults, 462 individuals reported that they have literacy skills, indicating their ability to read and write in at least one language. Among these literate adults, 364 respondents indicated proficiency in reading and writing Tamil, reflecting the prevalence of the regional language within the community. Moreover, 98 adults demonstrated bilingual proficiency by stating their ability to read and write both Tamil and English. Conversely, a substantial portion of the surveyed population, comprising 749 adults, were identified as illiterate.



(ii) Access to Education & Level of Education

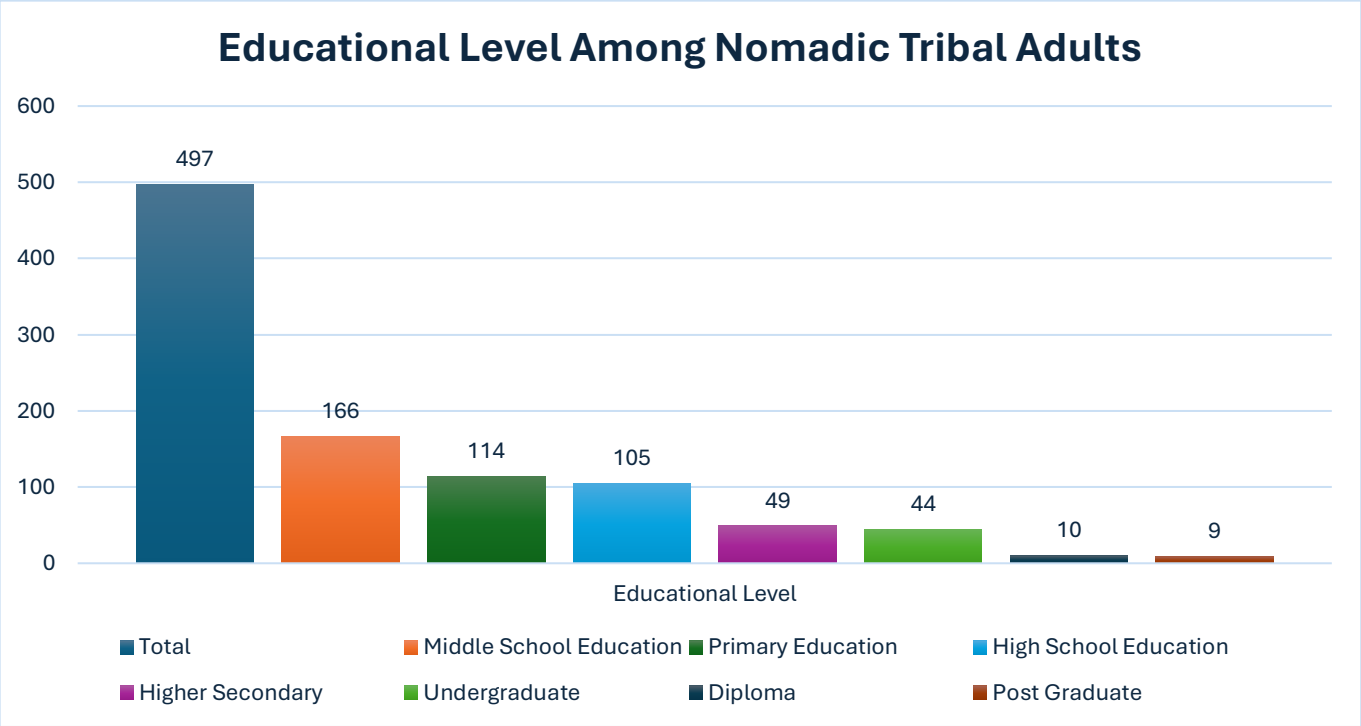
Among the 1211 adults who participated in the survey, a total of 497 individuals, constituting approximately 41.0% of the participants, have had the opportunity to access formal education through schools.

Of the 497 educated adults, 114 individuals discontinued their education at the primary level and



166 respondents discontinued after completing middle school (class 8) education. Additionally, 105 adults discontinued their education at high school level and 49 individuals discontinued their education after higher secondary level.

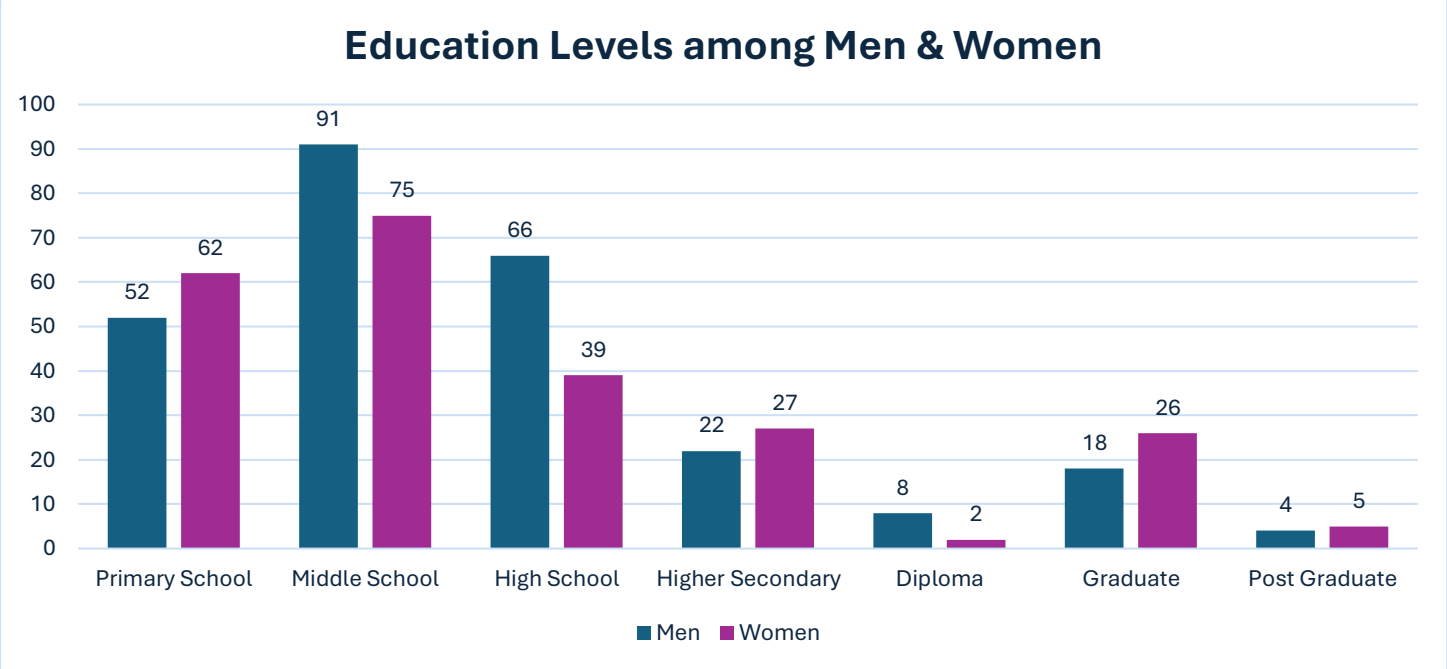
A smaller group within the educated population pursued higher levels of education. Among these, 10 adults hold a diploma, 44 individuals have earned undergraduate degrees, and 9 individuals have attained postgraduate degrees.



Despite these small proportions of educational attainments, a substantial proportion of the nomadic tribal adult population—comprising 714 individuals—have never had the opportunity to attend school.

(iii) Education and Gender

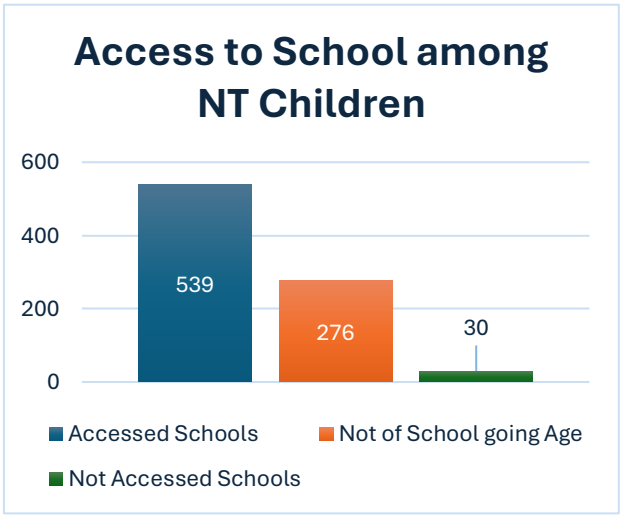
Among the nomadic tribal communities in Tiruvarur district, women have a higher completion rate at the primary school level (62 women vs. 52 men), but their numbers drop sharply at high school (39 women vs. 66 men). Men lead in middle school education (91 men vs. 75 women), while higher secondary education sees similar completion rates for both genders (22 men vs. 27 women). Diploma course completion is low for both genders (8 men vs. 2 women). Notably, more women have achieved graduate (26 women vs. 18 men) and post-graduate degrees (5 women vs. 4 men), indicating that women who persist past secondary education are more likely to pursue higher education.

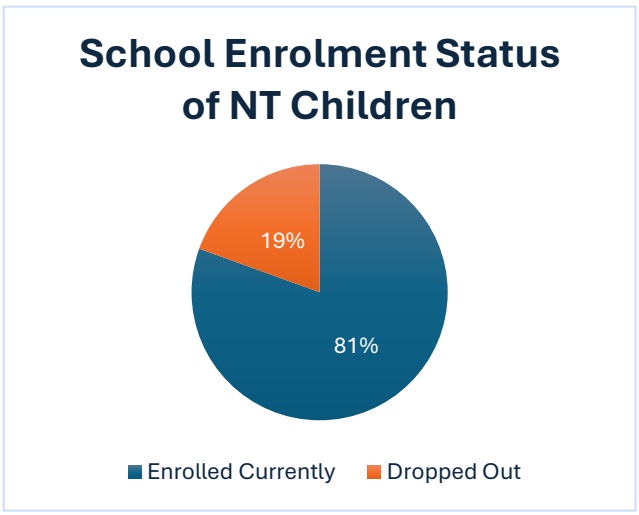


5b. Education Among Nomadic Tribal Children

(i) Access to School

Of the 845 children surveyed, a total of 539 children have had the opportunity to access formal education through schools. This subset of children represents approximately 63.8% of the surveyed population. However, it's important to note that 276 children are not of school-going age, indicating that they have not yet reached the age where formal education typically begins. Additionally, 30 children, despite being of school-going age, have never had the opportunity to attend school, highlighting significant barriers or challenges to accessing education within their communities.





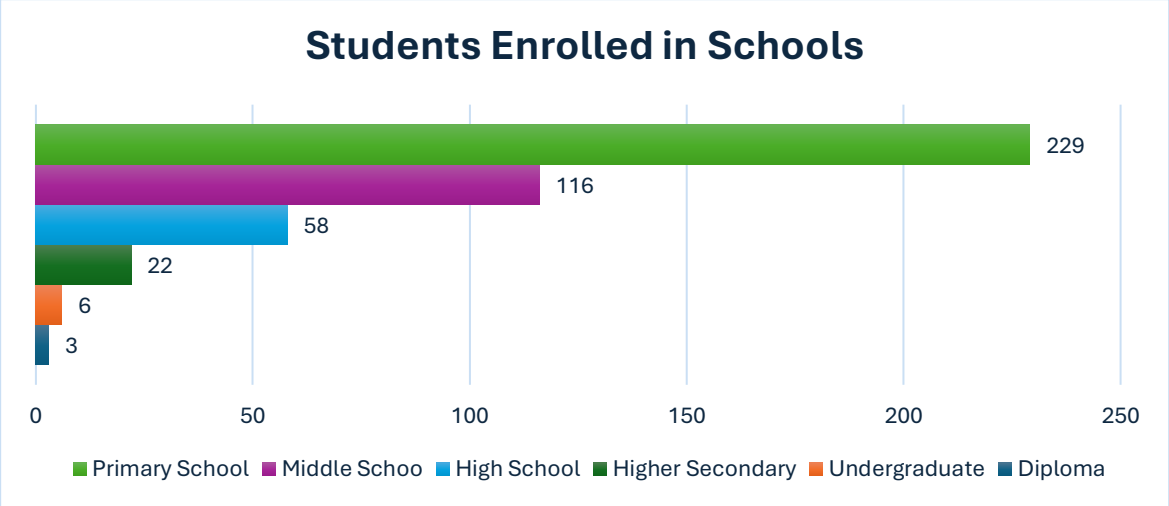
Of the 539 children who have accessed schools, 105 children i.e. approximately 19.5% of the children have discontinued their education and dropped out of schools for various reasons. These reasons include a lack of interest in academics, issues with other children or teachers at school, and instances of discrimination.

(ii) Levels of Education

Among the 434 children currently enrolled in schools, we observe a gradual reduction in the number of children as the education level progresses. The highest number of children, 229 (approximately 52.8%), are attending primary school.

However, as the educational journey advances beyond primary school, we note a decline in enrolment numbers. For instance, 116 children (approximately 26.7%) are enrolled in middle school, marking a significant but expected decrease from the primary level. This trend continues with 58 children (approximately 13.4%) attending high school, reflecting a further reduction in enrolment as children progress towards higher academic levels.

Furthermore, the declining trend persists as we move to higher education levels, with only 22 children (approximately 5%) enrolled in higher secondary school. Finally, a notably smaller proportion of enrolled children, 6 (approximately 1.4%) pursuing undergraduate education and 3 (approximately 0.7%) are pursuing diploma education.



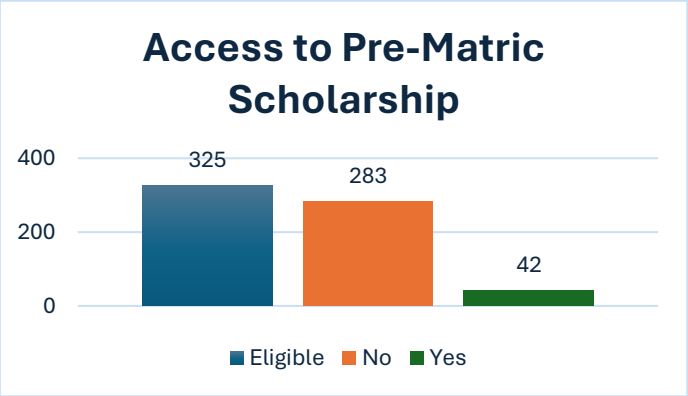
The observed trend of decreasing enrolment numbers as education levels indicates that accessibility remains a significant challenge, particularly among nomadic tribes, who often reside in areas with inadequate educational facilities, making it difficult for children to access schools beyond the primary level.

Socio-economic constraints also play a pivotal role, as families within nomadic tribes may face financial hardships that limit their ability to afford to send their children to school beyond a certain level. Additionally, child marriage and child labour are still prevalent among nomadic tribal communities, serving as major factors affecting the education of children. These harmful practices often disrupt schooling, as children, especially girls, are compelled to assume familial responsibilities at a young age, thereby hindering their educational progression.

5c. Scholarships

(i) Access to Pre-Matric Scholarship

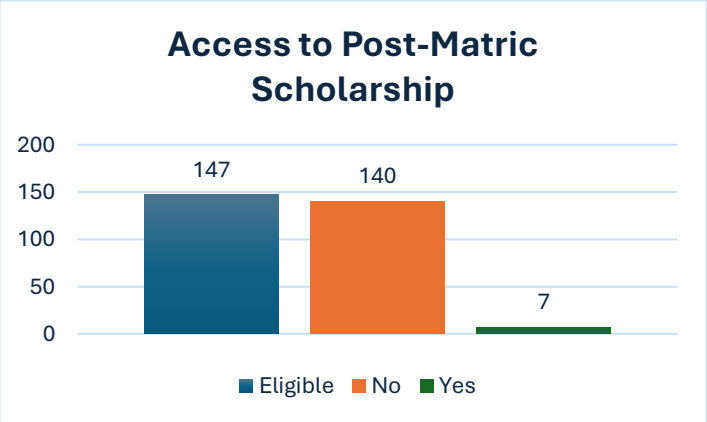
The Pre-Matric Scholarship scheme aims to support children from scheduled tribal communities who are studying in classes IX and X by providing them with financial assistance. Among the nomadic tribal individuals who participated in the survey and have completed high school, totalling 325, only 42 have accessed the pre-matric scholarship provided by the government.



A significant barrier to accessing the pre-matric scholarship, reported by nomadic tribal students, is the lack of a community certificate. This documentation is often required to prove eligibility for various government schemes and benefits, including scholarships. As a result, many eligible students are unable to access the support provided by the pre-matric scholarship scheme due to this administrative hurdle. Efforts to streamline documentation requirements and increase awareness about the scholarship scheme could help address this issue and ensure greater access to educational opportunities for nomadic tribal students.

(ii) Access to Post-Matric Scholarship

The Post-Matric Scholarship scheme is designed to support students from Scheduled Tribal and Scheduled Caste communities who are pursuing higher secondary or college education. Among the nomadic tribal individuals who participated in the survey and have accessed higher secondary or college education, totalling 147 individuals, only 7 have accessed the post-matric scholarship so far.



This data indicates a low utilization of the post-matric scholarship scheme among nomadic tribal students who are pursuing higher education. Addressing any barriers or challenges faced by nomadic tribal students in obtaining the necessary documentation or meeting eligibility requirements could further facilitate their access to post-matric scholarships and support their educational aspirations.

6. Nomadic Tribes and Identity Documents

This section highlights the access to various identity documents among the nomadic tribal population in Tiruvarur district. Identity documents are essential for individuals to access government services, social welfare schemes, and other benefits. For nomadic tribes, obtaining these documents can be particularly challenging due to their mobile lifestyle, lack of permanent address, and bureaucratic hurdles. The following data provides insights into the extent of access to these critical documents within the nomadic tribal communities surveyed.

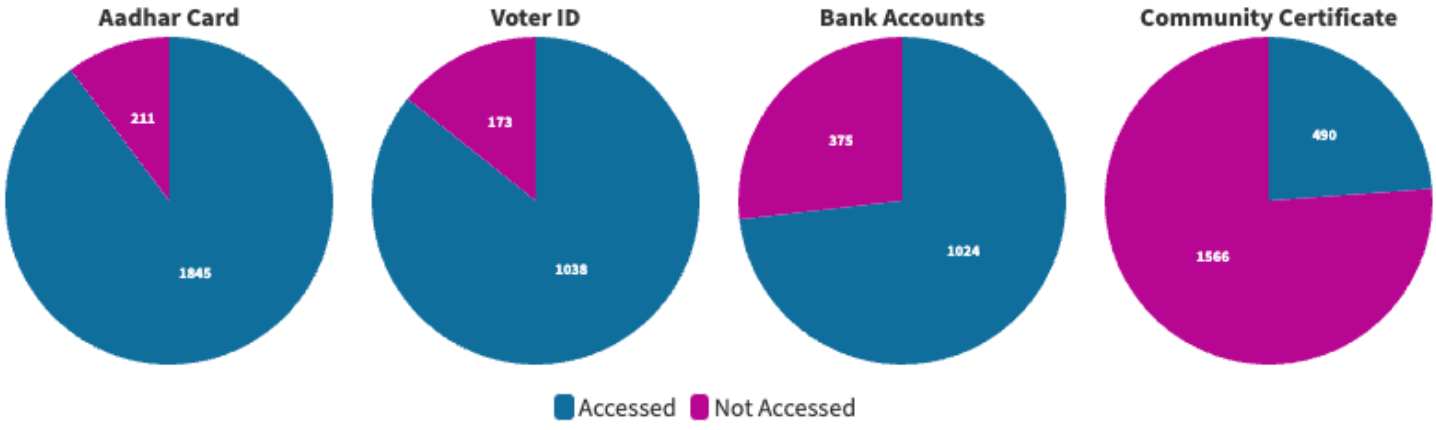
In the survey conducted among 2,056 individuals from nomadic tribal communities in Tiruvarur district, it was found that 1,845 individuals possess Aadhaar cards, making it the most accessed identity document among the population.

Out of the 1,211 adults eligible for voter identification cards, 1,038 have successfully obtained this document. This represents a substantial portion of the eligible population, reflecting their participation in the democratic process and their ability to exercise their voting rights.

Bank account ownership is another critical aspect of financial inclusion. Of the 1399 eligible for bank accounts, 892 adults and 132 children have bank accounts. However, it is noteworthy that out of the 892 adults with bank accounts, only 464 possess ATM cards, which facilitates easier access to their funds. Additionally, there are 67 bank accounts that are currently inactive.

Community certificates are crucial for accessing welfare schemes designed for disadvantaged communities. However, only 490 individuals (291 adults and 199 children) in the surveyed population of 2056 possess community certificates. This limited access underscores a significant barrier to obtaining essential benefits. Among those with community certificates, 46 individuals hold Most Backward Classes (MBC) certificates, 9 have Scheduled Caste (SC) certificates, and 435 individuals, possess Scheduled Tribe (ST) certificates.

Nomadic Tribes and Identity Documents



7. Nomadic Tribes and Livelihood

This section delves into the livelihood patterns of nomadic tribal communities in Tiruvarur district, shedding light on the diverse economic activities that sustain these communities. The data presented will offer insights into the various occupations and income-generating activities these tribes are engaged in.

Livelihood Activities of Nomadic Tribal people in Tiruvarur District

Among the surveyed population, various occupations are undertaken to sustain their daily lives. A small but significant number, 35 individuals, engage in begging as a means of livelihood. This group comprises 9 men and 26 women, indicating a higher prevalence of this activity among female members of the community. Additionally, 22 individuals, including 10 men and 12 women, are engaged in rag-picking, a labour-intensive and often hazardous occupation that reflects the harsh economic realities faced by the members of these communities.

A significant number of individuals, 398 in total, work as petty vendors, selling plastics, fancy items, and other minor goods. This group includes 270 men and 128 women, demonstrating the entrepreneurial spirit prevalent among the nomadic tribes. Daily wage labour is a prominent source of income, with 250 individuals involved in such work. Among these labourers, 164 are men, and 86 are women.

Music and cultural performances also play a crucial role in the economic activities of the nomadic tribes. Traditionally, these communities have been known for their musical and performance skills, often earning a living by performing and seeking alms. Today, 57 men continue to carry on this tradition by working as musicians at temple ceremonies and marriage functions. Salaried employment, although less common, provides stable income for 34 individuals. A substantial portion of the population remains unemployed.

Occupation	Men	Women	Total
Begging	9	26	35
Rag-picking	10	12	22
Petty Vendors	270	128	398
Daily Wage Labourers	164	86	250
Musicians	57	0	57
Salaried Workers	19	15	34
Unemployed	72	343	415
Grand Total	**601**	**610**	**1211**

Among the 415 unemployed individuals, a vast majority are women (343) compared to men (72), highlighting the gender disparities in economic participation within these communities. In addition to these occupations, women often engage in household work such as fetching firewood, collecting water, cooking, and other domestic chores, which are all forms of unpaid labour. This further underscores the gender disparities in economic participation and the additional burden of unpaid labour on women in these communities.

8. Intersectionality of Habitable Dwelling Conditions and Socio-Economic Parameters among Nomadic Tribes – An Analysis

This section undertakes an in-depth examination of the intricate relationship between the habitable standards of housing and important socio-economic metrics within nomadic tribal communities. Through meticulous analysis, the aim is to bring out the nuanced interplay between housing quality and diverse dimensions encompassing educational attainment, access to basic infrastructure, possession of requisite identity documentation, and access to government welfare schemes.

8a. Housing Conditions and Basic Infrastructure

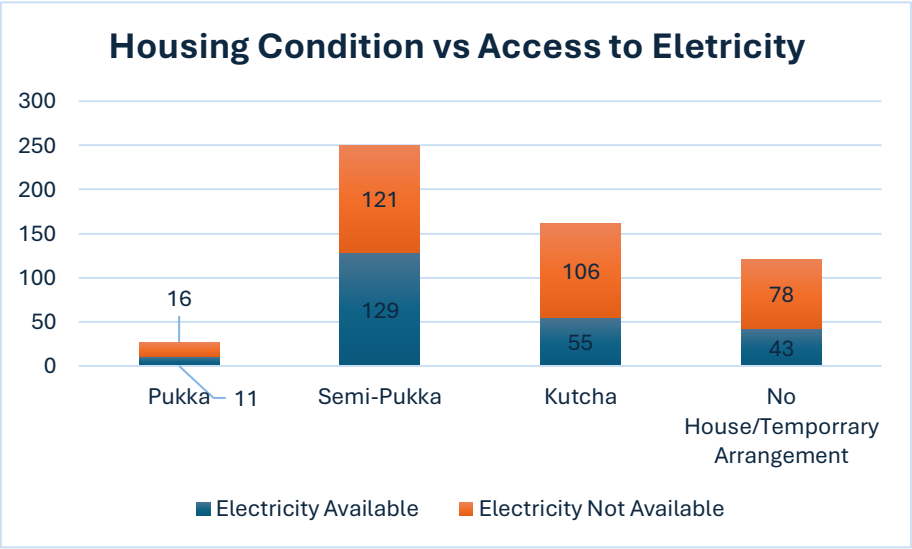
(i) Electricity

The analysis of electricity access across different housing categories within nomadic tribal communities' sheds light on the disparities in infrastructure and living conditions.

Among the total of 27 pukka houses surveyed, 11 households have access to electricity, accounting for approximately 40.7% of pukka houses. Conversely, 16 households, constituting about 59.3%, lack electricity access. Out of the 250 semi pukka houses surveyed, 129 households have electricity access, representing approximately 51.6% of semi pukka houses. However, 121 households, accounting for roughly 48.4%, do not have access to electricity.

Among the 161 kutcha houses surveyed, only 55 households have electricity access, comprising merely 34.2% of kutcha houses. On the other hand, 106 households, representing about 65.8%, do not have electricity access. Of the 121 households living in temporary arrangements, 43 households have electricity access, making up approximately 35.5% of such households. However, a substantial majority of 78 households, constituting around 64.5%, lack access to electricity.

These statistics highlight the disparities in electricity access across different housing categories, with pukka and semi-pukka houses having relatively higher access rates compared to other housing types. Conversely, kutcha houses and temporary arrangements face more significant challenges in accessing electricity.



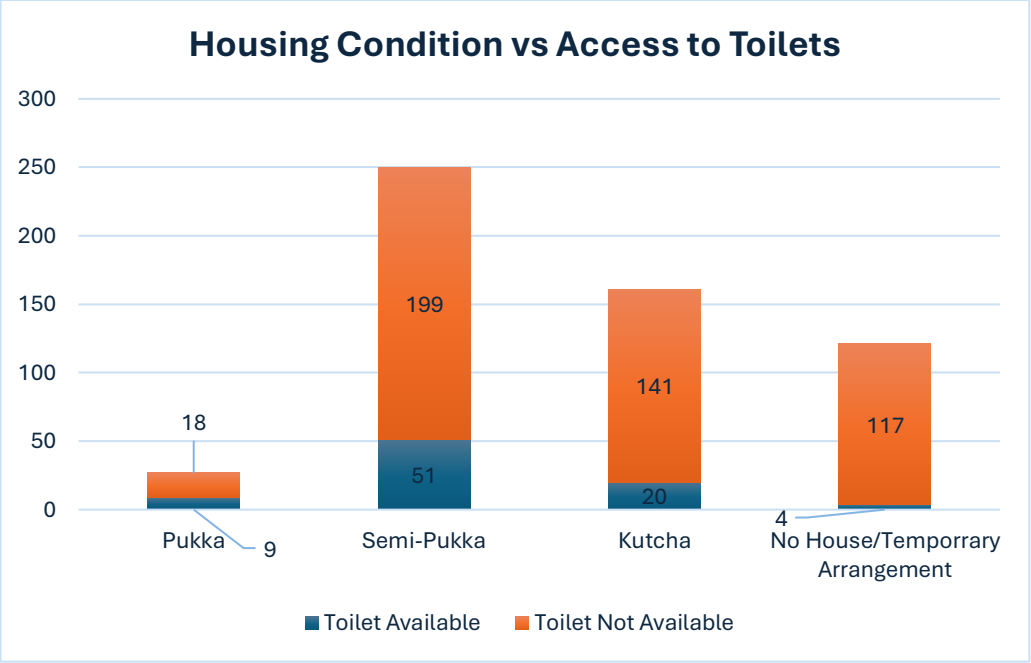
(ii) Toilet Facilities

Analysing the availability of toilet facilities across different housing categories provides the following insights into sanitation infrastructure.

Out of the 27 pukka houses surveyed, 9 households have access to toilet facilities, representing approximately 33.3% of pukka houses. Conversely, the majority, comprising 18 households (66.7%), do not have access to toilets. Among the 250 semi pukka houses surveyed, 51 households have access to toilet facilities, accounting for approximately 20.4% of semi pukka houses. However, a significant majority of 199 households (79.6%) do not have access to toilets.

Of the 161 kutcha houses surveyed, 20 households have access to toilet facilities, making up roughly 12.4% of kutcha houses. On the other hand, a substantial majority of 141 households (87.6%) do not have access to toilets. Among the 121 households living in temporary arrangements, only 4 households have access to toilet facilities, constituting approximately 3.3% of such households. Meanwhile, 117 households (96.7%) lack access to toilets.

These statistics highlight significant disparities in toilet facility access across different housing categories, with pukka houses having relatively higher access rates compared to other housing types. Kutcha houses and temporary arrangements face particularly pronounced challenges in accessing toilet facilities.

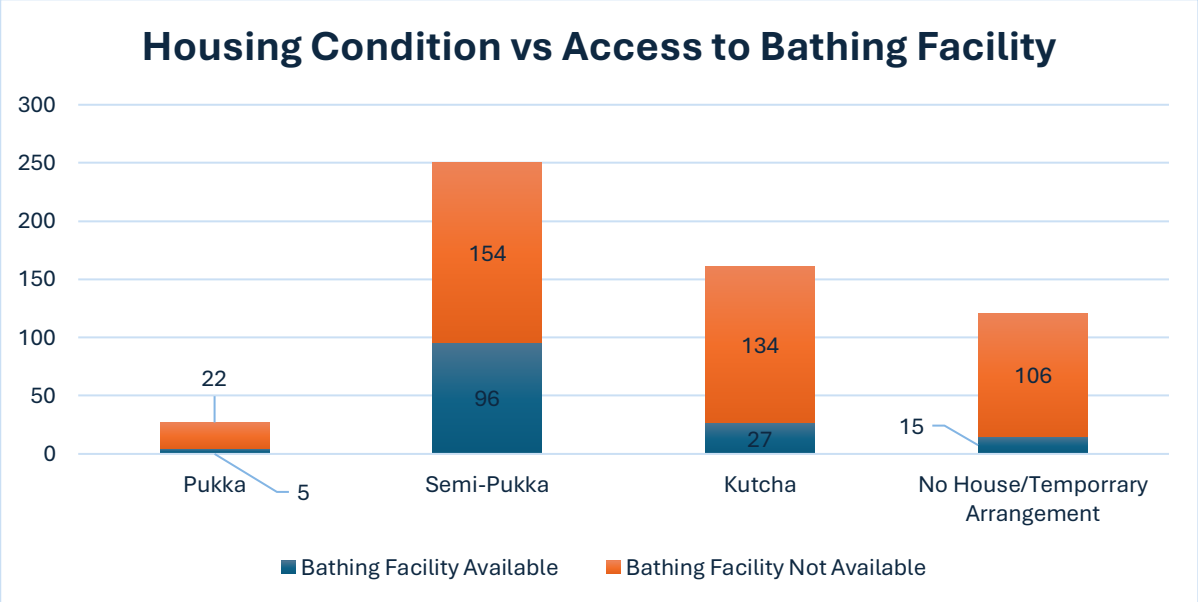


(iii) Bathing Facilities

Out of the 27 pukka houses surveyed, 5 households have access to bathing facilities, representing approximately 18.5% of pukka houses. The majority, comprising 22 households (81.5%), do not have access to bathing facilities. Among the 250 semi pukka houses surveyed, 96 households have access to bathing facilities, accounting for approximately 38.4% of semi pukka houses. However, a significant majority of 154 households (61.6%) do not have access to bathing facilities.

Of the 161 kutcha houses surveyed, 27 households have access to bathing facilities, making up roughly 16.8% of kutcha houses. On the other hand, a substantial majority of 134 households (83.2%) do not have access to bathing facilities. Among the 121 households living in temporary arrangements, 15 households have access to bathing facilities, constituting approximately 12.4% of such households. Meanwhile, 106 households (87.6%) lack access to bathing facilities.

These statistics reveal disparities in bathing facility access across all housing categories, with pukka and semi pukka houses having relatively higher access rates compared to kutcha houses and temporary arrangements.



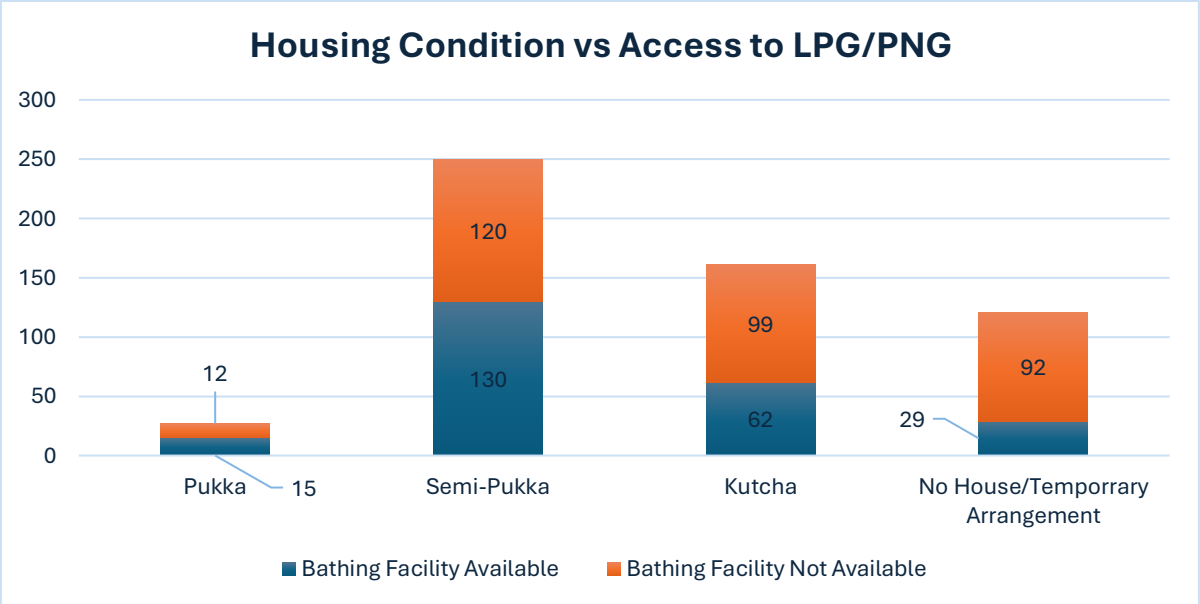
(iv) LPG/PNG Connection

Analysing the availability of gas connections across different housing categories provides valuable insights into the energy infrastructure and cooking practices among the nomadic tribal communities

Out of the 27 pukka houses surveyed, 15 households have gas connections, representing approximately 55.6% of pukka houses. Conversely, 12 households (44.4%) do not have gas connections. Among the 250 semi pukka houses surveyed, 130 households have gas connections, accounting for 52% of semi pukka houses. However, 120 households (48%) lack gas connections.

Of the 161 kutcha houses surveyed, 62 households have gas connections, making up 38.5% of kutcha houses. A significant majority of 99 households (61.5%) do not have gas connections. Among the 121 households living in temporary arrangements, 29 households have gas connections, constituting approximately 24% of such households. Meanwhile, 92 households (76%) do not have gas connections.

The analysis of gas connection availability reveals significant disparities among different housing categories. Pukka and semi pukka houses have relatively higher percentages of gas connections (55.6% and 52%, respectively), indicating better access to modern cooking facilities. In contrast, only 38.5% of kutcha houses and 24% of temporary arrangements have gas connections, highlighting severe access issues in these more vulnerable housing types. This suggests that many households in kutcha and temporary housing rely on traditional biomass fuels. These disparities also reflect broader socio-economic inequalities within the community, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to improve health and economic equity.



8b. Housing Conditions and Educational Attainment

This analysis examines the relationship between housing conditions and educational attainment among adults and children living in different types of housing structures: Pukka houses, Semi Pukka houses, Kutcha houses, and those in no house/temporary arrangements. The data is broken down into two sections: adults and children of school-going age.

Adults' Educational Attainment

Below table shows the educational level of adults with respect to the type of house they are living in,

Education Level	Pukka (64)	Semi Pukka (545)	Kutcha (350)	No House/Temporary (252)
Postgraduate	2	4	3	0
Graduate	3	23	8	10
Diploma	1	5	2	2
Higher Secondary	3	19	14	13
High School	12	41	34	18
Middle	9	78	48	31
Primary	5	58	28	23
Never Been to School	29	317	213	155

We can see that the percentage of population who have never been to school is high (61.5%) among the adults residing in temporary arrangements or who do not have houses and lowest (29.7%) among the adults residing in pukka houses. Similarly, the educational the per centage of population who have completed their high school education is high among those residing in pukka houses (18.7%) than those residing in other type of houses (semi pukka – 7.5%, kutcha – 9.7% and no house/temporary arrangement – 7.2%).

The percentage of adults who have pursued their education beyond high school are 14.1% in pukka houses, 9.3% in semi pukka houses, 7.8% in Kutcha houses and 10% in no houses/temporary arrangements.

Children's Educational Attainment

Below table shows the educational level of children of school going age with respect to the type of house they are living in,

Education Level	Pukka (33)	Semi Pukka (270)	Kutcha (161)	No House/Temporary (106)
Graduate	1	3	0	2
Diploma	0	3	0	0
Higher Secondary	1	14	4	3
High School	5	23	11	8
Middle School	8	59	33	16
Primary	9	109	67	45
Never Been to School / Drop Out	9	58	46	32

From the data, we can see that the percentage of students who have dropped out or who have never been to school is similar between children living in kutcha houses (28.6%), temporary arrangements (30.2%) and children living in pukka houses (27.3%). The percentage of children who have dropped out or never been to school is slightly lesser in semi-pukka houses (21.5%).

Similarly, the percentage of children enrolled in middle school and above is higher in pukka (45.4%) and semi pukka (36.7%) houses when compared to kutcha (29.8%) and temporary houses (27.3%).

Overall, we can see that there is a clear trend of higher educational attainment among adults and children who are living in more permanent housing (Pukka and Semi Pukka houses) and Temporary arrangements and Kutcha houses have the highest percentages of individuals who have never attended school/dropped out of schools. This highlights the importance of housing stability in facilitating access to education.

8c. Housing and Identity Documents Correlation Analysis

In this section, we explore the correlation between housing conditions and the possession of identity documents among nomadic tribal communities in Tiruvarur district. Housing stability and access to essential identity documents are two critical determinants of socio-economic well-being and inclusion in welfare schemes. Understanding the relationship between these factors can shed light on the challenges faced by the nomadic tribal communities in accessing basic services and government benefits. We will analyse the possession of identity documents such as Aadhaar cards, voter IDs, and community certificates among individuals residing in different types of housing arrangements.

Below table gives the overview of identity documents among the nomadic tribal population in Tiruvarur district across type of houses they live in.

Housing Status	Total Population	Aadhaar Cards	Community Certificates	No. of Adults	No. of Adults with Voter IDs
Kutcha	586	518	116	350	301
Pukka	105	98	34	64	56
No House/Temporary Arrangement	434	361	91	252	205
Semi Pukka	931	868	249	545	476
Grand Total	**2056**	**1845**	**490**	**1211**	**1038**

We can see from the data that in Kutcha houses, 518 out of 586 individuals (88.4%) possess Aadhaar cards, while Pukka houses have a slightly higher rate at 98 out of 105 individuals (93.3%). Those in no house or temporary arrangements have the lowest rate, with 361 out of 434 individuals (83.2%), and Semi Pukka houses have a high rate of 868 out of 931 individuals (93.2%).

For community certificates, Kutcha houses show the lowest access at 116 out of 586 individuals (19.8%), compared to Pukka houses at 34 out of 105 individuals (32.4%). Temporary arrangements show 91 out of 434 individuals (21%) have community certificates, and Semi Pukka houses stand at 249 out of 931 individuals (26.7%).

Regarding voter IDs, Kutcha houses have 301 out of 350 adults (86%), Pukka houses have the highest rate at 56 out of 64 adults (87.5%), no house or temporary arrangements show 205 out of 252 adults (81.3%), and Semi Pukka houses have 476 out of 545 adults (87.3%).

Overall, the data indicates better access to identity documents for those in more permanent housing (Pukka and Semi Pukka houses) compared to those in less stable housing (Kutcha houses and no house/temporary arrangements).

9. Policy Recommendations

This comprehensive study of the nomadic tribal communities of Tiruvarur district, sheds light on the development progress intertwined with persistent challenges. Despite the efforts towards inclusivity by our Tamil Nadu State government, the nomadic tribal communities are left behind in the developmental and welfare measures.

Acknowledging Tamil Nadu's legacy of pioneering social reforms aimed at uplifting marginalized communities, we present the following recommendations with a hope of strengthening the state government's ongoing efforts to enhance the lives of nomadic tribes in the state. These recommendations are put together with the intent to augment existing policies, fostering an environment conducive to the holistic development and empowerment of marginalised communities.

9a. Housing and Basic Amenities

1. Formalise Land Ownership:
Expedite the process of issuing patta (land ownership documents) to households who have been allotted land by the government but lack formal documentation. This will help secure their rights and access welfare schemes.

2. Improve Housing Quality:
Implement a financial assistance or low-interest loan scheme to provide financial assistance to Nomadic Tribal households for constructing permanent housing structures. Prioritise households with limited financial means to build safer homes.

3. Provide Basic Amenities:
Prioritise infrastructure development in Nomadic Tribal settlements to ensure access to essential services like electricity, safe drinking water, and sanitation facilities.

4. Allocate Free Land:
Allocate unused or government-owned lands to Nomadic Tribal communities for housing purposes, ensuring they have access to secure tenure and land ownership in locations with basic amenities and infrastructure.

9b. Education

1. Streamline Scholarship Programs:
Simplify the process for obtaining community certificates and other necessary documents to ensure Nomadic Tribal students can easily access pre-matric and post-matric scholarships.

2. Improve Access to Schools:
Establish more schools in Nomadic Tribal areas and provide transportation facilities to ensure children can attend schools regularly. Enhance outreach and support programs to reduce dropout rates and promote higher education.

9c. Employment Opportunities

1. Enhance Employment Schemes:
Adapt employment schemes like MGNREGA to suit the unique needs of Nomadic Tribes. This could involve providing employment opportunities that are flexible and location independent.

2. Promote Entrepreneurship:
Promote the formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) among Nomadic Tribal populations and provide microfinance options to support small-scale businesses and entrepreneurial activities. Ensure that Nomadic Tribal women have equal access to these opportunities.

9d. Health and Nutrition

1. Improve Access to ICDS Centres
Introduce mobile ICDS units to reach remote Nomadic Tribal settlements and foster partnerships with local NGOs for outreach to ensure all Nomadic Tribal children and mothers have access to essential health, nutrition, and early childhood development services.

2. Enhance Healthcare Services:
Increase awareness and access to healthcare schemes like the Chief Minister Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme and Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam. Establish mobile healthcare units to serve Nomadic Tribal settlements.

9e. Social Welfare and Financial Assistance

1. Expand Financial Inclusion:
Improve access to banking services and financial literacy programs to ensure Nomadic Tribal families can utilise financial services effectively.

2. Improve Access to Welfare Schemes:
Enhance outreach and simplify the application process for various welfare schemes to ensure greater participation by Nomadic Tribal communities. This includes housing schemes like PMAY, educational scholarships, and health insurance programs.

3. Provide Financial Assistance for Marriage and Pregnancy:
Increase awareness on marriage and pregnancy assistance schemes to ensure eligible women receive the support they need.

4. Facilitate Identity Document Camps:
Organise periodic camps in Nomadic Tribal hamlets to assist individuals in obtaining community certificates and other identification documents like Aadhaar and voter IDs.

By implementing these policy recommendations, the government can significantly improve the socio-economic conditions of Nomadic Tribal communities in Tamil Nadu, ensuring their inclusion in social welfare schemes and enhancing their overall quality of life.

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Photos From the Field


with my Galaxy A03

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(Established by Adi Dravidar & Tribal Welfare Department, Govt. of TN)

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