



Employment and Income Dynamics of Kattunayakan Tribals in Tamil Nadu: A study

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Abstract

The livelihood sustenance of the Kattunayakan tribe plays a crucial role in the development of society. The present study focuses on the employment and income patterns of the Kattunayakan tribals in Tamil Nadu. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study, with a total of 500 sample respondents selected. The simple percentage method was used for analysis. The respondents provided insights into their lifestyle, standard of living, and the challenges faced by their community. Their occupations include agriculture, construction, hunting, daily wage labor, and allied activities. The study found that, in recent times, their community has experienced some development. It was suggested that government intervention is essential, particularly in providing land pattas to them.

Keywords: *Kattunayakan Tribal, Agriculture Employment, Income, Government intervention*

Introduction

A tribe is a social division in a traditional society consisting of families linked by social, economic, religious, or blood ties, sharing a common culture and dialect. A tribe possesses distinct qualities and characteristics that make it a unique cultural, social, and political entity. In India, tribes constitute 8.6 percent of the total population, numbering 104.28 million as per the 2011 Census, and they cover about 15 percent of the country's area. In other words, the total population of Scheduled Tribes is 10.43 crore, accounting for 8.6 percent of the country's total population. The share of the Scheduled Tribe population in urban areas is a mere 2.8 percent. Nilgiri district had the highest percentage (3.16 percent) of the Scheduled Tribe population in Tamil Nadu (Saraswathi Nandhini R and Sathyamurthi K, 2016).

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Review of earlier studies

The present study were collected many articles of difference issues but the researcher has been mentioned only few review of literature as below.

According to **Seetha Kakkoth, (2005)** has study found that the traditional huts are small, flimsy structures. The walls are of bamboo wattle work with mud plastering inside and roof is thatched with grass obtained from nearby forests and wetlands.

Nurit Bird David, (1987) study was found that the first “professional” who subjected this community to intensive anthropological studies. This study provides a brief profile of the Kattunayakans with reference to ethnographic accounts from the nineteenth and the twentieth century’s by travelers, administrators and planters on the tribe. The paper provides a brief selective summary of the Kattunayakans including aspects of their economy, social organization and kinship. The author points out that the recently introduced labour work in the plantations does not greatly affect the Kattunayakan economic and social system because the Kattunayakans don’t plan their day in advance.

Seetha Kakkoth, (2005) study found that the Kattunayakan population The Kattunayakan is distributed in Wayanad, Malappuram and Kozhikode Districts of Kerala State. 85 percent of this tribe lives in Wayanad district. According to 1971 and 1981 census was 5565 and 8803 respectively. The 1991 Census showed the population as 12155 consisting of 6271 and 5884 females. Sex ratio among them is 938.29. As per the Socio-Economic Survey of 1996-97, their population was 11871 with 5991 males and 5880 females.

Verma, (1996) study explains that until 1919, they were one of the 'Depressed Classes'. Subsequently, the Indian Franchise Committee of 1919 granted these classes separate nomenclatures for census reports, and in 1931 they were known as primitive tribes. They were known only by order of 1951 as scheduled tribes.

Objectives of the study

The present study are following objectives are

1. To study the socio-economic conditions of the Kattunayakan tribals in Tamil Nadu.
2. To analyze the employment patterns of the Kattunayakan tribals in Tamil Nadu.
3. To identify the problems faced by the sample respondents in the study area.

Methodology

The present study used both primary and secondary data. A total of 500 sample respondents were selected. Primary data were collected through a well-prepared and pre-tested interview schedule. Secondary data were gathered from various sources such as books, journals, newspapers, district statistical handbooks, and websites. The simple percentage method was used as the analytical tool in this study.

Data and interpretation

Table 1 Sex of the respondents

sex of the respondents		
Gender	Frequency	Percent
male	298	59.6
female	202	40.4
Total	500	100

Sources: computed from primary data

The table presents data on the sex of respondents, indicating that out of a total sample size of 500 individuals, 298 were male, accounting for 59.6% of the sample, while 202 were female, making up 40.4% of the total. This suggests a majority of male respondents in the sample.

Table 2 Age of the respondents

age of the respondents		
Age group	Frequency	Percent
21-40	229	45.8
41-60	227	45.4
above 61	44	8.8
Total	500	100

Sources: computed from primary data

The table provides information on the age distribution of respondents, categorized into three age groups. Among the total sample size of 500 individuals, 229 respondents fall within the 21-40 age range, representing 45.8% of the sample, while 227 respondents are in the 41-60 age bracket, comprising 45.4% of the total. Furthermore, 44 respondents are above the age of 61, making up 8.8% of the sample. This data indicates a relatively balanced distribution across the 21-60 age range, with a smaller proportion of respondents aged above 61.

Table 3 Educational Status of Sample Respondents in The Study Area

Education of the department		
Education level	Frequency	Percent
illiterate	91	18.2
primary level	128	25.6
secondary level	196	39.2
higher secondary level	55	11
degree level	26	5.2
PG level	4	0.8
Total	500	100

Sources: computed from primary data

The table presents data on the education level of individuals within a department, detailing frequencies and percentages. Among the total departmental population of 500, the majority of individuals have attained education up to the secondary level, with 196 respondents accounting for 39.2%. Following this, 128 respondents (25.6%) have completed education at the primary level, while 91 individuals (18.2%) are

categorized as illiterate. Additionally, there are 55 individuals (11%) with education up to the higher secondary level, 26 (5.2%) at the degree level, and only 4 (0.8%) at the postgraduate level. This breakdown illustrates a diverse educational background within the department, with a significant portion having education up to the secondary level or below, and smaller proportions reaching higher levels of education.

Table 5.4 Occupational status of sample respondents in the study area

occupation of the respondents		
types	Frequency	Percent
agriculture	25	5
private	341	68.2
government	99	19.8
others	35	7
Total	500	100

Sources: computed from primary data

The table outlines the occupation distribution among respondents, presenting frequencies and percentages. Among the 500 individuals surveyed, the majority, constituting 341 respondents (68.2%), are employed in the private sector. Following this, 99 respondents (19.8%) work in government positions, while 25 individuals (5%) are engaged in agriculture. Additionally, 35 respondents (7%) fall into the "others" category, representing various occupations not specifically listed. This breakdown underscores a predominant presence of private sector employment among the respondents, with government employment also notable, while agriculture and other occupations comprise smaller segments of the surveyed population.

Table 5 income level of sample respondents in the study area

how much income per day		
income level	Frequency	Percent
upto 200	4	0.8
201-400	58	11.6
401-600	167	33.4
above 600	271	54.2
Total	500	100

Source: computed from Primary data

The table provides insights into the daily income levels among respondents, presenting frequencies and percentages. Among the total sample size of 500 individuals, the majority, comprising 271 respondents (54.2%), earn above 600 units of currency per day, indicating relatively higher incomes. Additionally, 167 respondents (33.4%) fall into the income bracket of 401 to 600 units per day, while 58 respondents (11.6%) earn between 201 to 400 units daily. A small fraction, with only 4 respondents (0.8%), report earning up to 200 units per day. This breakdown highlights a significant proportion of the surveyed population earning higher daily incomes, while smaller segments earn moderate to lower levels of income.

Table 6 Monthly incomes of sample respondents in the study area

monthly income		
income level	Frequency	Percent
5001-10000	27	5.4
10001-15000	101	20.2
15000-20000	145	29
above 20000	227	45.4
Total	500	100

Source Primary data

The table presents data on the monthly income levels among respondents, detailing frequencies and percentages. Among the total sample size of 500 individuals, the majority, comprising 227 respondents (45.4%), report earning above 20000 units of currency per month, indicating relatively higher income brackets. Additionally, 145 respondents (29%) fall into the income range of 15000 to 20000 units monthly, while 101 respondents (20.2%) earn between 10001 to 15000 units. A smaller fraction, with 27 respondents (5.4%), report monthly incomes ranging from 5001 to 10000 units. This breakdown highlights a significant portion of the surveyed population earning higher monthly incomes, with smaller segments earning moderate to lower levels of income.

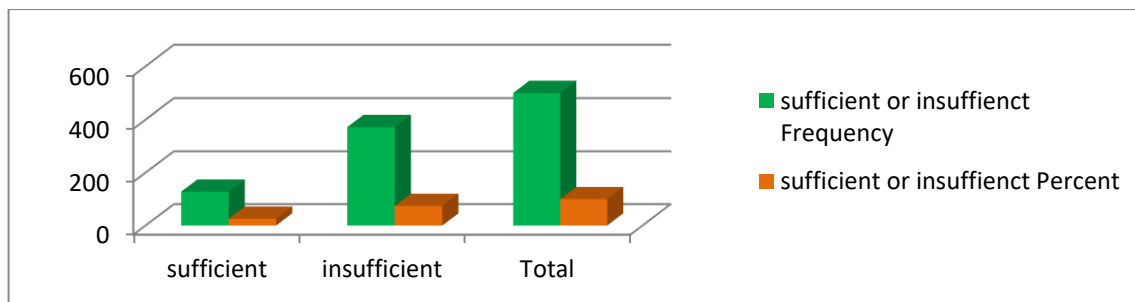
Table 7 Status of income from Agriculture of sample respondents in the study area

agriculture income		
Income level	Frequency	Percent
below 5000	97	19.4
5001-10000	80	16
above 10000-20000	36	7.2
Above 20000	2	0.4
No	285	57
Total	500	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table indicates that the distribution of agricultural income levels among respondents, indicating a majority with no income (57%), followed by those earning below 5000 (19.4%) and 5001-10000 (16%). A smaller percentage falls into higher income brackets, with 7.2% earning above 10000-20000 and only 0.4% reporting incomes above 20000. The figures underscore a significant portion of the population relying on agriculture for subsistence, with a relatively small fraction achieving higher income levels, possibly indicative of varying degrees of success and challenges within the agricultural sector.

Figure1 whether income are sufficient or not sufficient of sample respondents in the study area



Source: primary data

Table8 level of saving amount in sample respondents in the study area

Level of how much		
	Frequency	Percent
upto 2000	17	3.4
2001-4000	16	3.2
4001-6000	19	3.8
above 6000	27	5.4
not saving	421	84.2
Total	500	100

Source: primary data

The data indicates that a vast majority of respondents, 84.2%, are not saving any money, which highlights a significant lack of financial reserves among the population surveyed. Among those who do save, only a small number manage to save significant amounts, with 3.4% saving up to rupees2,000, 3.2% saving between rupees2,001 and rupees4,000, 3.8% saving between rupees4,001 and rupees6,000, and 5.4% saving above rupees6,000. These figures suggest that while a few individuals are able to save, the amounts are generally minimal, reinforcing the notion of financial strain faced by the majority. Overall, the data paints a concerning picture of saving behavior, with most individuals unable to set aside any funds for future needs.

Table 9 sources of saving of sample respondents in the study area

sources of saving		
	Frequency	Percent
bank	2	0.4
post office	31	6.2
chit fund	35	7
others	23	4.6
not applicable	409	81.8
total	500	100

Source: computed from primary data

The data reveals that a staggering 81.8% of respondents do not engage in any saving activities, rendering the question of sources of saving not applicable for them. Among those who do save, post offices and chit funds are the most common sources, with 6.2% and 7% respectively. Only a small fraction, 0.4%, utilize

banks for saving. The low percentages for traditional saving methods suggest limited engagement with formal financial institutions and highlight a reliance on alternative saving mechanisms. Overall, the findings indicate a significant gap in saving practices within the surveyed population, reflecting a potential need for greater financial education and accessibility to banking services.

Table 10 status of have debts in the sample respondents in the study area

Do you have debts		
	Frequency	Percent
yes	325	65.0
no	175	35.0
Total	500	100

Source: Computed from Primary Data

The data indicates that a significant majority, 65%, of respondents carry debts, while only 35% report being debt-free. This high percentage of individuals with debts suggests widespread financial pressure within the surveyed population, potentially impacting their ability to save or invest in their futures. The contrast between those in debt and those without highlights a critical area of concern regarding financial stability and the challenges many face in managing their financial obligations. Overall, the findings underscore the need for resources and support to help individuals navigate their debt and improve their financial well-being.

Table 11 sources of debt in sample respondents in the study area

Sources of Debt		
	Frequency	Percent
Bank	95	19.0
Chit fund	53	10.6
Debtors	181	36.2
Friends and relatives	7	1.4
Makila mandran	13	2.6
Self help group	151	30.6
Total	500	100

Source: primary data

The data on sources of debt reveals that the majority of individuals rely on debtors as their primary source, accounting for 36.2% of the total responses. This is followed by self-help groups at 30.6%, indicating a significant reliance on community-based financial support. Banks contribute to 19.0% of the debt sources, while chit funds represent 10.6%. Friends and relatives are a minimal source of debt, comprising only 1.4%, and makila mandran accounts for 2.6%. Overall, the findings suggest a diverse range of debt sources, with informal channels like debtors and self-help groups being particularly prominent.

Table 12 expenses for food of sample respondents in the study area

for food expenses

	Frequency	Percent
below 2000	31	6.2
2001-4000	182	36.4
more than 4000	287	57.4
Total	500	100

Source: computed from primary data

The data on food expenses reveals that a significant majority of respondents, 57.4%, spend more than 4000, indicating a tendency towards higher food expenditures. Meanwhile, 36.4% of respondents fall within the 2001-4000 range, suggesting a moderate spending level. In contrast, only 6.2% of respondents spend below 2000, highlighting that lower food expenses are relatively uncommon in this sample. Overall, the findings suggest that most individuals prioritize or require a larger budget for food.

Table 13 expenses for non food of sample respondents in the study area

for non food expenses		
	Frequency	Percent
below 2000	13	2.6
2001-4000	207	41.4
more than 4000	280	56.0
Total	500	100

Source: computed from primary data

The data on non-food expenses indicates that a substantial portion of respondents, 56.0%, spend more than 4000, reflecting a trend towards higher expenditures in this category. Additionally, 41.4% of respondents fall within the 2001-4000 range, indicating a significant level of moderate spending. In contrast, only 2.6% of respondents report non-food expenses below 2000, suggesting that low spending in this area is quite rare. Overall, these findings highlight that the majority of individuals allocate a considerable budget for non-food expenses, with few opting for lower expenditure levels.

Table 14 expenses for health of sample respondents in the study area

for health expenses		
	Frequency	Percent
below 5000	224	44.8
5001-10000	231	46.2
10000-20000	45	9.0
Total	500	100

Source: primary data

The data on health expenses reveals a nearly even distribution between lower and moderate spending, with 44.8% of respondents spending below 5000 and 46.2% spending between 5001 and 10000. This indicates that a significant portion of the population manages to maintain health expenses within these more affordable ranges. Conversely, only 9.0% of respondents report spending between 10000 and 20000, suggesting that high health expenditures are less common. Overall, the findings imply that most individuals tend to have relatively

moderate health expenses, with a smaller segment incurring significantly higher costs.

Table 15 Employment pattern of the households in the study area

source of main employment		
	Frequency	Percent
farming activity	2	.4
poultry activity	2	.4
construction activity	46	9.2
hunting	5	1.0
other (self)	356	71.2
government	89	17.8
Total	500	100

Source: primary data

The data on the source of main employment reveals that a substantial majority, 71.2%, are engaged in "other (self)" activities, indicating a strong trend toward self-employment or entrepreneurship among respondents. Government employment follows with 17.8%, suggesting a significant but smaller segment of the population is employed in public service. Construction activity accounts for 9.2%, while farming and poultry activities are minimal, each representing only 0.4% of the respondents. Hunting is similarly low at 1.0%. Overall, these findings highlight a predominant reliance on self-employment, with traditional sectors like farming and poultry playing a negligible role in the respondents' primary sources of income.

Table 16 how many times working in the land by sample respondents in the study area

how many times working in the land		
	Frequency	Percent
2-4 hours	36	.4
4-6 hours	71	.4
6-8 hours	135	9.2
more than 8 hours	4	1.0
other (self)	254	50.8
Total	500	100

Source: primary data

The data on the frequency of working on the land indicates that a significant portion of respondents, 50.8%, classify their working hours as "other (self)," suggesting a variety of personal definitions or arrangements regarding their agricultural labor. Among the more structured timeframes, the largest group works 6-8 hours, with 135 respondents (9.2%), followed by 4-6 hours with 71 respondents (4.4%) and 2-4 hours with 36 respondents (4.4%). Only 4 respondents (1.0%) report working more than 8 hours. Overall, the findings highlight that while many engage in self-defined work schedules, the majority of structured working hours tend to fall within the 6-8 hour range.

Table 17 season work of the sample respondents

season work of the sample respondents		
	Frequency	Percent
seasonal work	80	16.0
non-seasonal work	310	62.0
Not applicable	110	22.0
Total	500	100

Source: primary data

The data on the seasonal work of respondents reveals that a significant majority, 62.0%, are engaged in non-seasonal work, indicating stable and consistent employment throughout the year. In contrast, 16.0% of respondents participate in seasonal work, suggesting a smaller segment of the population experiences fluctuations in their employment based on the seasons. Additionally, 22.0% of respondents indicated "not applicable," which may include those who do not engage in traditional forms of employment. Overall, these findings highlight that most respondents benefit from steady, year-round work, while a smaller portion relies on seasonal employment.

Main sources of employment of sample respondents in the study area

what are the main sources of employment		
	Frequency	Percent
construction activity	64	12.8
others	197	39.4
government	77	15.4
others	162	32.4
Total	500	100

Source: primary data

The data on main sources of employment reveals a diverse range of employment types among respondents. The largest group, 39.4%, falls under the "others" category, indicating a variety of less-defined or alternative forms of employment. Construction activity accounts for 12.8%, showing a notable but smaller share. Government employment comprises 15.4%, reflecting a significant segment engaged in public service. Additionally, another "others" category (32.4%) suggests a potential overlap or a distinction among alternative employment types. Overall, these findings highlight a diverse employment landscape, with a considerable number of respondents engaged in various unspecified or self-defined roles.

Conclusion

The Kattunayakar tribals of southern Tamil Nadu are an indigenous community with deep-rooted traditions, primarily known for their expertise in honey collection, traditional medicine, and forest-based livelihoods. Despite modernization, they continue to preserve their unique cultural identity and connection with nature. However, they face challenges such as limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. To ensure their sustainable development, a balanced approach is needed one that respects their traditional knowledge while integrating them into mainstream society through education, skill development, and livelihood support. Efforts in preserving their heritage, securing their forest rights, and improving their

socio-economic conditions can lead to their overall well-being while maintaining their ecological wisdom. The present study was empowering; the Kattunayakar, Tamil Nadu, can showcase an inclusive model of development that values both progress and indigenous traditions.

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