



**SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONCERNS, CULTURAL PRACTICES, LIVING CONDITIONS, AND
HEALTH-SEEKING BEHAVIORS AMONG THE PRIMITIVE KATTUNAYAKAN TRIBES IN
THE NILGIRIS DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU
- AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

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Abstract

The Kattunayakan tribes, commonly referred to as forest chiefs, are a hunter-gatherer group that lives in forests, practices traditional medicine, and shuns contemporary Indian culture. In Tamil Nadu and Kerala, the landless Kattunayakan tribe is well-known for their foretelling abilities, aluminum vessel sales, pig herding, and work in the public sector. Speaking of Kattunayakan, they are grouped among 44 communities. They depend on honey for trade, food, and healing. They compete with bears and bees, and their dance and singing are historical reflections of their civilization. Few people who rely on honey and forest products have become Christians. Forests and forest products are essential to the Kattunayakan tribe, a traditional hunter-gatherer society in Tamil Nadu's Nilgiris. They are forest lords and practice a powerful religion. They use simple technologies, work as day laborers, watchmen, guides, and fishermen, and their economy is based on the forests. Using ethnographic and descriptive research techniques, the study investigates caste inclusion in the Indian Census, a contentious tool for developing public policy. It uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches and gathers information from secondary sources. This study looks into the effects of socioeconomic factors on cultural traditions, prosperity, and living standards. This point of view elevates the current issue's historical and economic significance, as well as its recognition as a critical need.

Keywords: Kattunayakan Tribes, Traditional Medicine, Indian Civilization, Hinduism, Traditional Religion, Hunting, Indian Culture and Cultural Traditions.

Theme of the article

The largest of India's 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs) is the Kattunayakan, which has a presence in areas of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. In Kerala, they can be found primarily in the Wynad and Kozhikode districts; however Wynad has the majority of them. They live in the Gudalur and Pandalurtaluk in the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu. The Kattunayakans have traditionally lived as hunters and gatherers. They derive their name from the words 'kadu' (forests) and 'nayakan' (leader/chief), denoting that they are the rulers of the forest. Due to their proficiency in honey harvesting, they are also known by other names such as Jenu (honey) Kurumbas and Thenu (honey) Kurumbas in various locales. Their Malayalam neighbours gave them the name "Nayakan." Like the majority of Nilgiri languages, the Kattunayakan language, which they describe to as "namabasha" (our language), is a South Dravidian language. Kannada, Malayalam, and Tamil are all present. Although the dialect is different and seldom understandable to Kannada speakers, Kannada is the language that predominates in it. Additionally, all Kattunayakans speak a bit of Kannada, Malayalam, and Tamil.

In the Nilgiris, the Kattunayakans are dispersed among the two taluks' 44 communities in the eight economically prosperous villages of Gudalur Forest Division. In the past, Kattunayakan communities were spread out and frequently rather small. Huts in a village are typically grouped together. Padi is the name of the settlement, and manai is the name of a single home there. True evidence of the Kattunayakans' acculturation to the local nature can be found in their traditional homes. The entrance to huts is provided at the lowest point on a sloping land without a raised basement. Small and fragile are characteristics of traditional huts. The roof is thatched with grass sourced from surrounding marshes and forests, and the walls are constructed of bamboo wattle work with mud plastering within. In the Nilgiris, there are 452 Kattunayakan houses, which together make up 1629 people. The average household size is 3.6 people, indicating that most households are quite tiny. The smallest social and economic unit among them is the nuclear family, which consists of a husband, a wife, and any unmarried children. The son constructs a separate house in the village as soon as he weds. The male line is the source of the Kattunayakans' patrilineal lineage, however post-marriage residency is not always patrilocal.

The forest has always been the foundation of the Kattunayakan people's economy. Food, drink, shelter, and non-consumable items are all provided by the forest for their needs. Hunting and gathering are the community's main sources of food and trade. The primary item collected is honey, along with other ingredients including cinnamon, nutmeg, woodland pepper, tubers, berries, leaves, and leaves. For food gathering and collection, they employ relatively basic technologies like bamboo collecting baskets and digging tools. They employ a low volume, high value gathering strategy. They forage within clearly defined bounds, and frequently the husband and wife depart together. When no other options were available, it is thought that the territorial concept of gathering forest product was an adaptation toward natural resources. Some of them, especially those who reside in Mudumalai National Park, have close ties to the Mandan Chettis and Mappilas and work in their rice fields as well as provide them with goods from the forest, like as firewood.

Along with these activities, they occasionally work as day labourers in the fields of non-tribal people, operate as watchmen, mahouts, and guides, and engage in fishing and the capture of small birds and animals. They also work as wage labourers on a neighbouring rubber and coffee plantation. While most of them are not cultivators, some of them plant a little yam, tapioca, ginger, coffee, pepper, and coffee near their homes. They are masters of the craft. The groups used to shift in a conventional way, but constraints placed on them have resulted in a culture of inactivity. With regard to task nature, method, and logic of labour, etc., the recently introduced wage labour in the plantation fits in with the traditional economic activities and has little impact on the Kattunayakan economic and social system as a whole. The Kattunayakans continue to regularly hunt and collect while they work in the plantation for pay as well as for traders and neighbours. In actuality, there was no distinct distinction between hunting and gathering and the "other" pursuits in either time or space. They occasionally gather forest produce for their own consumption or for future trade while travelling to and from the plantation where they labour. They travel through and out of coffee plantations, jungle, and rubber forests on their hunting and gathering pathways. They fish in the forest and in streams that flow across the plantation's legal bounds.

Statement of the Problem

In south India, there is a tribe known as the Kattunayakan. Literally "chiefs of the forest," their name. They are thought to have been among south India's first settlers. Their primary

source of income is the collection and sale of honey. They also hunt, fish, and gather forest goods for consumption and trade. Being a scheduled caste qualifies the Kattunayakan for preferential treatment when applying for government jobs and college entrance. One of the few tribal groups in India still practising hunter-gatherer lifestyles is the Kattunayakan. Both men and women have exceedingly low literacy rates. They don't have access to contemporary comforts like indoor plumbing or electricity, and they practice traditional medicine. The Kattunayakan are primarily found in Tamil Nadu and Kerala in south India. They make an effort to avoid contemporary Indian society and dwell in the jungles.

The Kattunayakan continue to live much like their forefathers did hundreds of years ago. The Kattunayakan prefer to live in discrete families with ten or fewer members each. The family groupings' decisions are made by an older council. In their life, honey serves a special significance. They consume it, utilize it as medicine, and barter it for necessities. In order to find honey, the Kattunayakan may scale 20–30 meter trees. Over 25 pounds of honey can be produced by one hive. They are stung by bees so frequently that their bodies become immune. Bears are their greatest rivals, which they occasionally have to fend off in order to obtain the honey. The singing and dancing of the Kattunayakan are well-known. Through song and dance, they transmit their culture's history and traditions. The monogamous Kattunayakan marry their girls when they reach puberty. Tamil and Telugu are the two main languages spoken by the Kattunayakan.

Hinduism is a part of the traditional religion practised by the Kattunayakan. An alter ego of Shiva, the destroyer, is their primary deity. They are animists who think that snakes, rocks, trees, rivers, and other creatures are home to ghosts. Many of the Kattunayakan women practice magic because they believe in it. To keep evil spirits away from them, they engage in rituals. Their forebears are revered and honoured. Few Kattunayakan have converted to Christianity. The Kattunayakan require a reliable income. They are able to thrive when honey and forest items are abundant. The Kattunayakan risk starvation if these things are not available. The life-changing message of Jesus Christ needs to be presented to the Kattunayakan in a way that they are able to comprehend. Given that the Kattunayakan Tribe's significant socioeconomic circumstances have an impact on their standard of living, income, and behaviour, particularly when it comes to seeking health, the main goal of this research article is to provide a comprehensive examination

of these situations from various perspectives. It achieves this by utilizing a variety of secondary sources for statistics as well as data referring to statistics pertinent to the article's content.

Methodology of the article

This study is heavily historical and analytical in nature. It is analytical, interpretive, and diagnostic, as well as descriptive. The study employs a theoretical and conversational methodology to integrate ethnographic and descriptive research methods. Since 1872, the annual Indian Census has provided essential data for the formulation and study of public policy. Vital data are produced by the Census Organization, which is part of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Since 2001, there has been disagreement about whether or not to include caste in the census. Proponents claim that doing so maps inequalities and represents existing social stratifications, while detractors claim that doing so just serves to reinforce them. The Tamil Nadu government's department of tribal affairs publishes a series of studies that provide information on lifestyle, customs, culture, and socioeconomic trends.

In addition to traditional archive sources, the researcher used a variety of different approaches to collect data. Secondary sources of statistical data and information will be used in this study. As a participant observer, the researcher attended several social activities attended by tribal members. The researcher arranged the data after gathering it from secondary sources in order to improve the study's objectivity and validity. Secondary sources of knowledge include pertinent literature located in various libraries. Data will be generated using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, with a focus on socioeconomic, educational, and political engagement. For each of Tamil Nadu's Scheduled Tribes, a contemporary ethnographic profile will be created utilizing qualitative approaches. Each district will receive reports outlining the findings of the household survey. In order to present a complete picture of tribes and their states, the initiative intends to integrate secondary data that already exists from socioeconomic surveys. The researcher structured the data after collecting it from secondary sources with the intention of enhancing the study's objectivity and validity. The secondary sources of knowledge come from relevant books that can be found in different libraries.

Objective of the article

The overall objective of this research article is to theoretically investigate how the Kattunayakan Tribe's socio-economic circumstances impact living standards, wealth, and

cultural traditions in the Nilgiris District, while also taking into account secondary sources of knowledge and statistical data that are currently relevant to this area of research investigation.

The Socio - Economic Concern of Primitive Kattunayakans

The Kattunayakans are split up into territorially-based local groupings; individuals who resided in a specific area made formed a group (sonta, meaning kin). The sime's composition is quite fluid. Individuals could link themselves with either of their parents' simes as well as with the sime of their spouses, according to a bilateral pattern. When it comes to the specifics of ritual, hut construction, attire, and other aspects of daily life, there are similar differences between local communities and even within clusters within them. Generally speaking, each local group is its own distinct economic, social, ceremonial, and even kinship entity. People interact frequently with one another there.

The majority of people if not all have family connections. There are no other pan-Nayakan social, ritual, or economic exchanges or institutions. The local groupings are not united even by kinship relationships. Even the closest of a Kattunayakan's relatives often lose track of him after he leaves a particular local group and stop communicating with him. Any interactions in terms of commerce, society, or even ritual that take place outside of the immediate neighbourhood mainly include non-Nayakans rather than Nayakans from other local communities. Nayakan, for instance, may attend the festivals of their neighbours, with whom they also engage in a variety of business activities. The local group is the confinement of the practical Nayakan universe for each individual Nayakan.

The political structure of the Nayaka is egalitarian, much like that of other hunting and gathering societies. The Nayaka did not hold any formal offices; there were just two exceptions, and even they were not political. The modale, or person who arrived first in the area, was the first. His primary task was to plan an annual event celebrated in memory of the ancestors. The shaman came in second. The post was open to both men and women, young and old, and it was an accomplished position. It didn't have any unique rights or obligations outside of the shamanistic performance.

Economy of Primitive Kattunayakan Tribes

The Kattunayakans are currently in the third stage of their economic transformation, which began when they were a self-sufficient group that survived in the forest by foraging and hunting

and progressed through an intermediate stage of bonded labour under Chetty landlords to a stage of agriculturists and agricultural labourers. They lived mostly as forest hunters and gatherers, with rare shifting farming taking place near their settlements. The mainstay of the economy today is non-skilled casual labour that is paid daily, along with some agricultural on the plots they own and sporadic forging in the forest., Hunting used to be an essential part of obtaining food. Since it is illegal in the tiger reserve and wildlife is scarce elsewhere, it plays a minimal role in their economic existence nowadays. Hunting was both a solitary and a social activity.

They employ snares and traps instead of highly developed technology for this. They consume the carrion that the wild animals have left behind. They also catch rats, porcupines, lizards from the jungle, and birds. In the past, gathering forest food made a significant contribution to their subsistence. During the harvest season, the entire family, including the grown children, departs the house in quest of roots, tubers, fruits, leaves, honey, deer horn, etc. Their extensive knowledge base enables them to identify which item would be common in which location. Additionally, they hunt for and gather deer antlers, which are needed to make the sickle's handles, and sell them in the neighborhood markets.

The majority of the things gathered are used for personal consumption. At the Girijan Co-operative society in Nilambur, Kerala, some medicinal plants are gathered for sale, including sadavari, mare manjal, pavatta, and padagals. The knowledge of collecting honey that the Kattunayakans possess is well known. For the purpose of gathering honey, they have created their own technology. The honey season starts in April and lasts for the following three to four months. Honey is mostly responsible for helping them during this time to make ends meet. The approach employed to frighten the bees away is smoking. They embark on nighttime honey-collecting expeditions in pairs, usually consisting of close friends or relations. One person stands at the base of the tree while the other climbs using ladders while carrying a knife, thread, and a basket.

Fishing and crab-catching are often the children and women of Kattunayakan's leisure pursuits. Fishing is conducted using basic equipment and methods. From the holes by the paddy fields, they capture crabs. Paddy, coffee, tea, and cinchona are just a few of the products that Kattunayakans grow. They also produce pepper, garlic, ginger, and cardamom. They also cultivate vegetables like potatoes, radishes, and carrots. A total of 29.84% of Kattunayakan families have land ownership, while some also have land-lease agreements with local cultivators

and landowners. Because of their familiarity with trees and wildlife, Kattunayakans are hired by the Forest Department to work in surrounding reserve forests and agricultural areas. Additionally, they raise chickens, do basketry, and earn money by selling eggs and birds.

Table - 1
The Kattunayakan tribal community lives in the Nilgiris district

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1.	Male	1261	50.85	50.85
2.	Female	1219	49.15	100.00
	Total	2480	100.00	

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

Table 1 shows that of the 2480 respondents, men made up around 49.15 percent, while women made up less than 50.85 percent. The results were as follows because men contributed more than women.

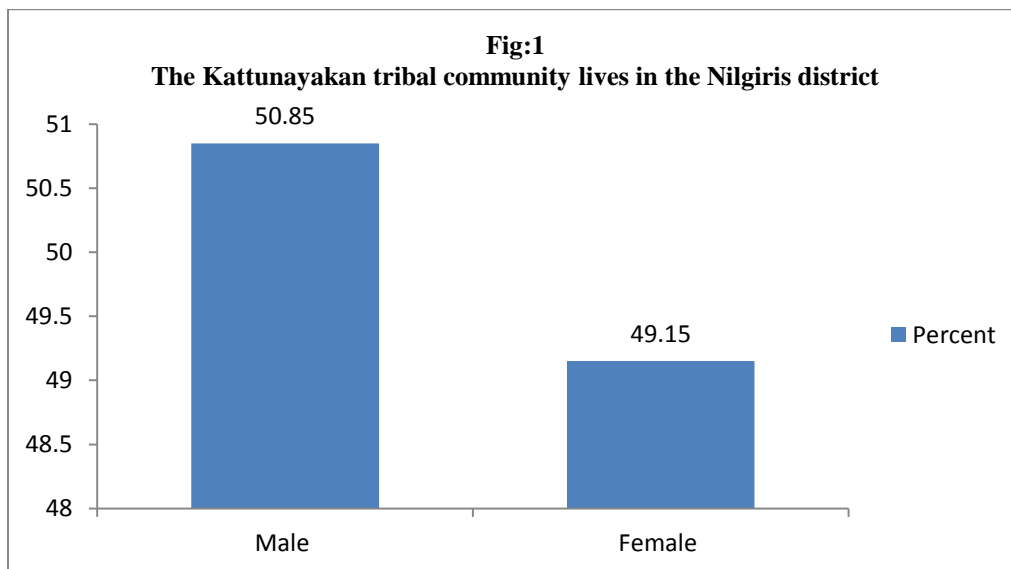


Table - 2
Age-group breakdown of Kattunayakan tribal members in the Nilgiris district

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1.	0-11 months	52	2.10	2.10
2.	1-5 years	237	9.56	11.66
3.	6-14 years	536	21.61	33.27
4.	15-18 years	172	6.94	40.21

5.	19-25 years	353	14.23	54.44
6.	26-45 years	763	30.77	85.21
7.	46-60 years	283	11.41	96.62
8.	60 & above	84	3.39	100.00
Total		2480	100.00	

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

The details and statistics in table -2 provide a thorough breakdown of how Kattunayakan are divided throughout the various age groups in the study area. As can be seen, 2.10% of persons are under the age of one year, 9.56% are between one and five, 21.61% are between six and fourteen, 6.94% are between fifteen and eighteen, 14.23% are between nineteen and twenty-five, 30.77% are between six and forty-five, 11.41% are between forty-six and sixty, and 3.39% are beyond sixty.

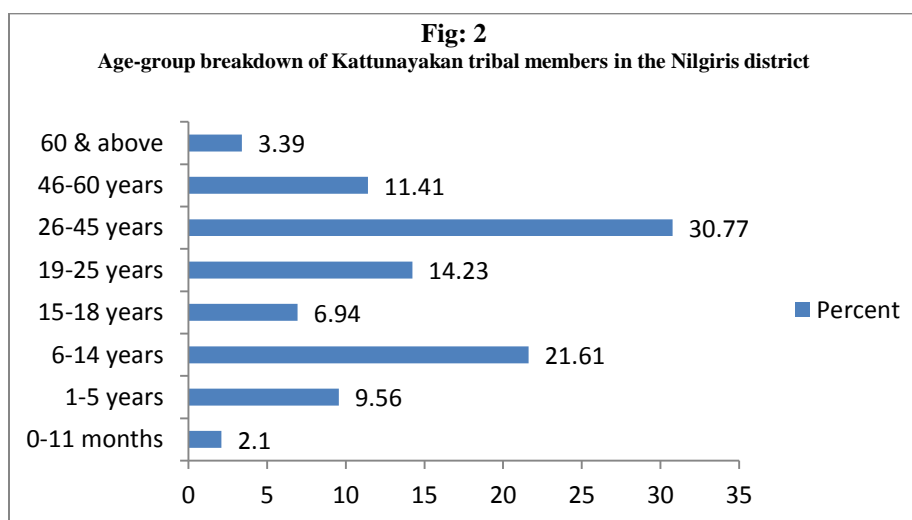


Table - 3
Education for Kattunayakan tribes in the Nilgiris district

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1.	Illiterates	1186	47.82	47.82
2.	Primary	570	22.98	70.80
3.	High School	422	17.02	87.82
4.	Higher Secondary	24	0.97	88.79
5.	Graduation	06	0.24	89.03
6.	Professional Course	01	0.04	89.07
7.	Others	271	10.93	100.00
Total		2480	100.00	

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

The content and statistical data in table -3 provide a complete explanation of Kattunayakan's educational background in the research field. 47.82% of the population is clearly illiterate, and this percentage rises to 22.98% in primary school, 17.02% in high school, 0.97% in higher secondary, 0.24% in graduation, 0.04% in professional courses, and 10.93% in other categories.

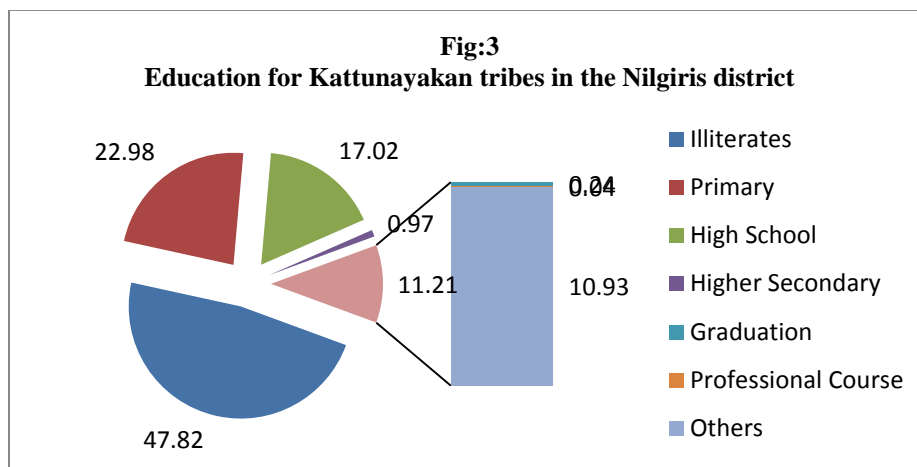


Table - 4

Marital Status of Kattunayakan tribes in the Nilgiris district

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1.	Married	1208	48.71	48.71
2.	Unmarried	1134	45.73	94.44
3.	Widower / Widow	108	4.35	98.79
4.	Divorcee/ Separated	29	1.21	100.00
Total		2480	100.00	

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

The previous table indicates that the respondents' marital status was as follows: 45.73% of people were single, 48.71% were married, 1.21 percent were divorced or legally separated, and 4.35% were widowers or widows.

Table - 5

Employment and sources of income for Kattunayakan tribes in the Nilgiris district

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1.	Wage Labor	1171	95.28	95.28
2.	Petty Business	04	0.33	95.61
3.	Govt.Service	02	0.16	95.77
4.	Private Job	17	1.38	97.15
5.	Old Age Pension	22	1.79	98.94
6.	Coffee/ Tea Plantation	00	0.00	100.00
7.	Other	13	1.06	
	Total	1229	100.00	

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

According to the aforementioned data, 95.28% of survey participants identify as wage workers, while 0.33% work for small businesses, 0.16% are employed by the government, 1.38% are employed in the private sector, and 1.79% receive an old age pension. The remaining 1.06% of respondents is either unemployed or work on coffee or tea plantations.

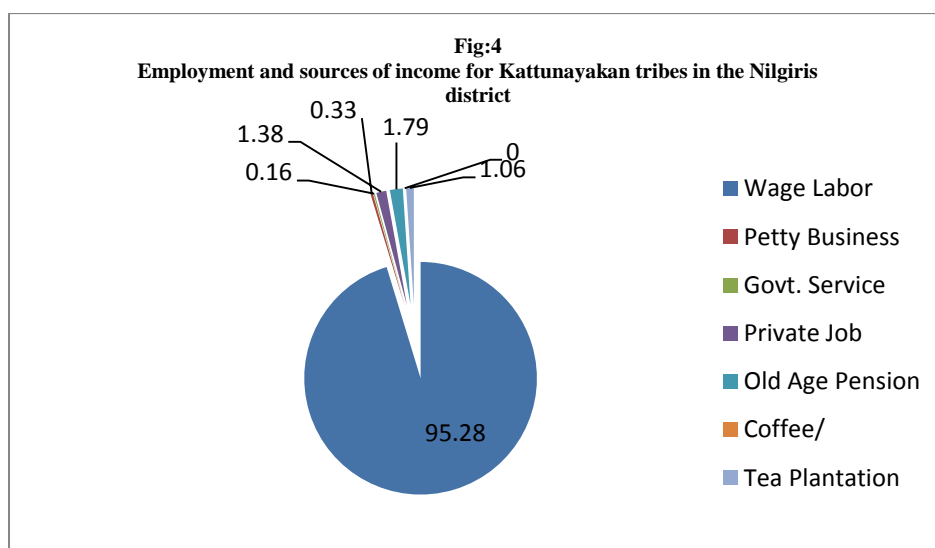


Table - 6

The Nilgiris district's Kattunayakan tribes have several types of dwellings

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1.	Thatched Hut	212	34.14	34.14
2.	Tiled	322	51.85	85.99
3.	RCC	87	14.01	100.00
	Total	621	100.00	

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

The data and statistics in table - 6 provide a thorough overview of the various Kattunayakan dwelling types in the study area. As can be observed, tiled housing accounts for 51.85% of all dwelling types, RCC accounts for 14.01%, and thatched huts account for 34.14%.

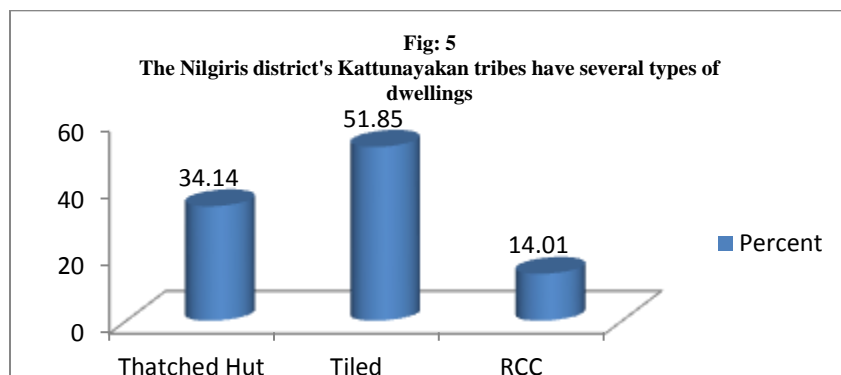


Table -7

The Nilgiris district provides electricity in the dwellings of the Kattunayakan people

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1.	Yes	261	42.03	42.03
2.	No	360	57.97	100.00
Total		621	100.00	

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

The information and statistical data in table - 7 provide a detailed explanation of the facts pertaining to the availability of electricity for homes in the Kattunayakan villages within the research region. As can be seen, 57.97% of residences have an electricity connection, compared to only 42.03% of homes.

Table - 8

Source of drinking water for the Kattunayakan tribes in the Nilgiris district

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1.	Tap	196	31.56	31.56
2.	Hand Pump	36	5.80	37.36
3.	Well	168	27.05	64.41
4.	Stream	221	35.59	100.00
Total		621	100.00	

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

The drinking water in Kattunayakan in the research region is thoroughly explained in table - 8 data and statistical statistics. The Nilgiris district's Kattunayakan derives 31.56 percent of its

drinking water from the tap, 5.80 percent from a hand pump, 27.05 percent from a well, and 35.59 percent from a stream.

Table - 9
The Kattunayakan tribes in the Nilgiris district have toilets in their dwellings

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1.	Toilet attached	02	0.32	0.32
2.	Community toilet	04	0.64	0.96
3.	Defecation in open field	615	99.04	100.00
Total		621	100.00	

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

The facts and statistical information in table - 9 fully illustrate the specifics of the family restroom options in the Kattunayakan research region. As can be observed, open-field defecation accounts for 99.04 percent of all toilet facilities, whereas communal toilets account for 0.64 percent and connected toilets account for 0.32 percent.

Table - 10
Homestead land title for the Kattunayakan tribe in the Nilgiris district

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1.	Posses	41	6.60	6.60
2.	Do not Posses	580	93.40	100.00
Total		621	100.00	

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

The facts and statistical statistics in table - 10 provide a detailed explanation of the possession of the title deed (Patta) for the Kattunayakan Homestead Land in the study area. 6.60% of people who have the title deed do this, compared to 93.40% of people who do not, as can be seen.

Table -11
Engagement in the Nilgiris district's Kattunayakan tribes' Self Help Group

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1.	Yes	240	9.68	9.68
2.	No	2240	90.32	100.00
Total		2480	100.00	

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

The information and figures in table - 11 provide a detailed account of the membership of Kattunayakan's self-help group in the research region. As can be observed, only 9.68 percent of families 90.32 percent are affiliated with a self-help group.

Table - 12

Having a Kattunayakan tribes community certificate from the Nilgiris district

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1.	Yes	1269	51.17	51.17
2.	No	1211	48.83	100.00
Total		2480	100.00	

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

According to the previous table, in the Nilgiris district, 48.83% of respondents have a Kattunayakan Community Certificate, while 51.17% do not.

Table - 13

The presence of a voter identification card, ration card, and Kattunayakan tribal identification card from the Nilgiris district

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent
1.	Ration card	Yes	127
		No	476
2.	Voter ID	Yes	145
		No	27
3.	Tribal ID	Yes	594
		No	127
Total		621	100.00

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

According to the chart in the appendix, 76.65% of respondents have a ration card for the Kattunayakan, Nilgiris district, while just 20.45% do not. 23.35% of Kattunayakan locals in the Nilgiris district have voter IDs, as opposed to 20.45% who do not. Kattunayakan people make up 95.65% of the total population in the Nilgiris district; the remaining 100.00% do not.

Accessibility of schools

School accessibility All people, regardless of disability, have equal access to education in the isolated kattunayakan tribal communities in the Nilgiris District. A plan for accessibility in schools must address curriculum access, information provision, and physical environment changes. Accessibility can be improved with modifications like ground-floor classrooms.

Table - 14

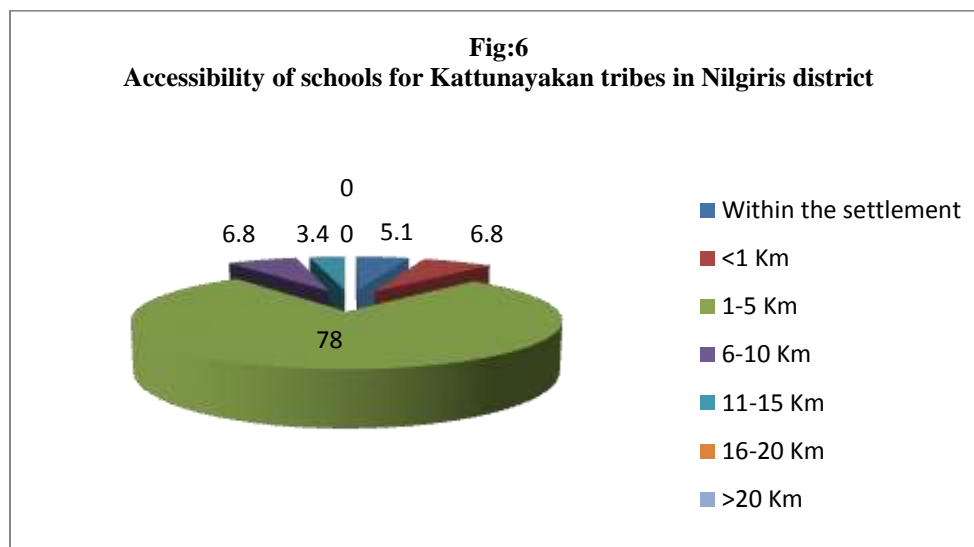
Accessibility of schools for Kattunayakan tribes in Nilgiris district

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1.	Within the settlement	03	5.10	5.10
2.	<1 Km	04	6.80	11.90
3.	1-5 Km	46	78.00	89.90

4.	6-10 Km	04	6.80	96.70
5.	11-15 Km	02	3.40	100.00
6.	16-20 Km	00	0.00	
7.	>20 Km	00	0.00	
Total		59	100.00	

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

The details of school accessibility in the research region are fully explained by the facts and statistical data in table -14. One may see that 5.10 percent of the settlement's schools are there, 78.0 percent are within a mile, 6.80 percent are within one to five miles, and 3.40 percent are within six to ten miles.



Health

In tandem with the evolution of the primary healthcare paradigm arose the societal concept of "health sought activity." It is made up of people acting to address perceived ailment, resulting in a socially constructed entity that favours a specific medical system or treatment to meet health-related requirements. Understanding the restrictions on programs for sexual and reproductive health, epidemic control, and universal immunization helps in making public health decisions. Social capital, many techniques, and a complex notion all have an impact on the action of seeking healthcare. End point models highlight treatment options and sociocultural influences, whereas process models emphasize how people react to sickness and seek healthcare.

These studies will help authorities better understand and solve health-related challenges. Organizational, geographical, economic, and cultural factors all influence the quality of

healthcare services. Geographical limitations, such as distance to medical services and transportation difficulties, are crucial. The social context, transportation constraints, and accessibility are all elements that influence the decision to seek healthcare.

Behaviour of the Kattunayakan tribe in with respect to health

The Kattunayakan people's perceptions of health and disease influence how they seek medical care. Their traditional medical knowledge is under threat due to a lack of readily available plants, societal and economic hardship, and land privatization. Despite government investments in society, the results have been dismal. People's health is in shambles, and developmental interventions influence how they act when seeking medical assistance.

Table - 15

Kattunayakan Tribes Health Centre accessibility in Nilgiris District

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1.	Within the settlement	01	1.70	1.70
2.	<1 Km	01	1.70	3.40
3.	1-5 Km	38	64.40	67.80
4.	6-10 Km	13	22.00	89.80
5.	11-15 Km	06	10.20	100.00
6.	16-20 Km	00	0.00	
7.	>20 Km	00	0.00	
	Total	59	100.00	

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

A detailed explanation of the characteristics of the Kattunayakan Tribes' Accessibility to Health Centres in the Study Area can be found in table -15. As can be seen, there are health centres for Kattunayakan tribes at distances of less than one kilometre, 64.40% at distances of one to five kilometres, 22.00% at distances of six to ten kilometres, 10.20% at distances of eleven to fifteen kilometres, 0.00 at distances of sixteen to twenty kilometres, and 0.00 at distances within the area.

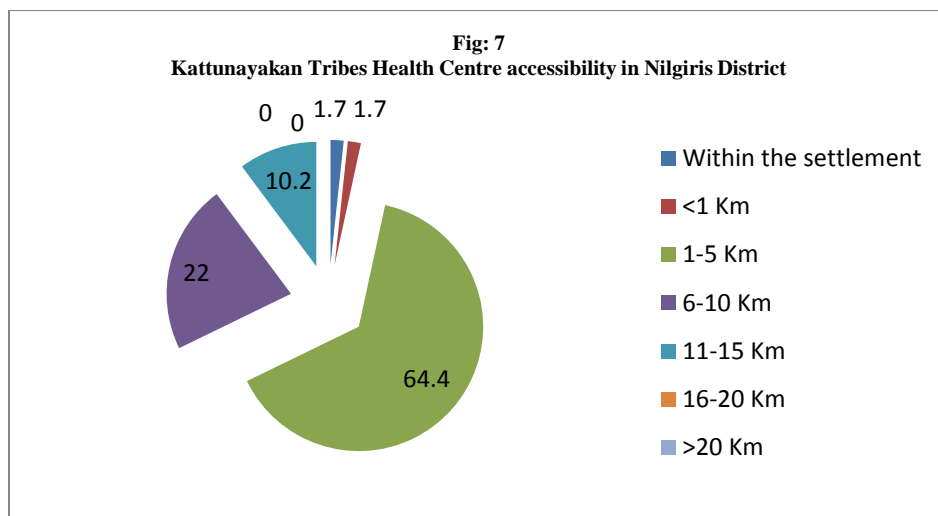


Table - 16

Utilize community hall in Kattunayakan tribes' village, Nilgiris district

S.No.	Particular	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1.	Yes	05	8.5	8.5
2.	No	54	91.5	100.00
Total		59	100.00	

Sources: Compiled and calculated from various reports of Tribal Research Centre, Ooty.

The previous figure shows that 91.5% of those surveyed at the Community Hall at the Irular Settlement in the Nilgiris region are in favour, compared to 8.5% who are opposed.

Conclusion

The Kattunayakan tribe, an early occupant of the Western Ghats, relies on forests for food and honey harvesting. The Kattunayakans are a group of landless people who live in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The Kattu Naickan tribe, found in the districts of Coimbatore, Salem, Thanjur, and Thanjavur, is well-known for its foretelling abilities, sales of aluminum vessels, pig herding, and work in the public sector. They practice a deeply ingrained religion, revere various natural objects, and have recognizable physical characteristics and a Dravidian language. They are open to assimilating into their culture and practice both tribalism and Hinduism. They are renowned for their customary methods of gathering food.

They are divided among 44 communities and speak Kattunayakan, a South Dravidian tongue. They continue to interact with other cultures and annually practice ancestral worship. There are 1629 individuals living in 452 Kattunayakan households in the Nilgiris. They live in

the Gudalur and Pandalurtaluks of Tamil Nadu's Nilgiris. Traditional forest rulers known as kattunayakans are well-known for their hunting habits. They maintain nuclear households, use ragi, rice, and millets as their main sources of food, and speak a dialect that is similar to Telgu. With mutual consent, they negotiate their marriage.

Most of Kattu Naickan's family units are nuclear. The Kattunayakan people, with a small household size of 3.6, rely on forests for food, shelter, and non-consumable products. They primarily hunt and collect honey, using simple technology and maintaining close ties with Mandan Chettis and Mappilas. They also work as day laborers, watchmen, guides, fishermen, and wage laborers on a nearby rubber and coffee plantation.

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