Department of Economics & Statistics

Madras Institute of Development Studies

Theni

TNHPS
Tamil Nadu Household Panel Survey

Tamil Nadu Household Panel Survey

Pre-Baseline District Report 2018-19

Tamil Nadu Household Panel Survey (TNHPS)

Pre-Baseline Survey (PBS) District Report 2018-19

Theni District

February 2024

Principal Investigator & Project Coordinator — **Prof. Kripa Ananthpur**

Principal Investigator — **Prof. L. Venkatachalam**

Principal Investigator — **Dr. K. Jafar**

In collaboration with
the Department of Economics and Statistics,
Government of Tamil Nadu

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Madras Institute of Development Studies
79, Second Main Road, Gandhi Nagar
Adyar, Chennai 600020
Ph: 24411574 / 24412589
www.mids.ac.in

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Table of Contents

List of Tables 2
List of Figures 3
Acknowledgements 4
Summary of PBS Findings 6
1. Introduction 9
1.1 Profile of Theni District 9
1.2 About the TNHPS and the Pre-Baseline Survey (PBS) 10
2. Survey Response 11
3. Key Findings 12
3.1 Demographic Indicators 12
3.2 Development Indicators 13
3.2.1 Education 13
3.2.2 Education Status of Population (Age 7 and above) 14
3.2.3 Employment Status 18
3.3 Socio-Economic Indicators 23
3.3.1 Ownership of Agricultural Land 23
3.3.2 Ownership of Agricultural, Allied Agricultural and Fishing Assets 25
3.3.3 Presence of Household Assets 26
3.3.4 Possession of Ration Card 27
3.3.5 Type of Ration Card 28
3.4 Household Income 29
3.4.1 Annual Household Income from Various Sources in the year 2017-2018 29
3.4.2 Income Inequality in Theni District 30
3.4.3 Households' Expectation of Change in their Income in the Next 5 Years 31
3.5 Basic Infrastructure 32
3.5.1 House Ownership Status 32
3.5.2 House Type 33
3.5.3 Primary Drinking Water Source 34
3.5.4 Electricity 34
3.5.5 Primary Cooking Fuel 35
3.5.6 Sanitation 37
4. Conclusion and Recommendations 39
References 41

List of Tables

Table 2.1	Distribution of Sample Households – Response-wise Percentages	11
Table 3.1	Social Group-wise Distribution of Households	13
Table 3.2	Literacy Rates between Census 2011* and PBS 2018	14
Table 3.3	Formal Schooling of Population - Social Group-wise Percentages	16
Table 3.4	Highest Formal Educational Attainment of Population – Area-wise Percentages	16
Table 3.5	Highest Formal Educational Attainment of Population – Gender-wise Percentages	17
Table 3.6	Highest Formal Educational Attainment of Population - Social Group-wise Percentages	17
Table 3.7	Functional Literacy of Population with No Formal Schooling – Area-wise Percentages	18
Table 3.8	Functional Literacy of Population with No Formal Schooling - Social Group-wise Percentages	18
Table 3.9	Work type of Employed Population – Area-wise Percentages	21
Table 3.10	Percentage of Population Engaged in Different Types of Livelihood Activities – Social Group-wise Percentages	21
Table 3.11	Composition of Population not in the Labour Force – Social Group-wise Percentages	23
Table 3.12	Type of Agricultural Land Owned by the Households – Area-wise Percentages	24
Table 3.13	Ownership of Agricultural Land - Social Group-wise Percentages	25
Table 3.14	Size of Agricultural Land Owned by the Households – Area-wise Percentages	25
Table 3.15	Presence of at least one Household Asset - Social Group-wise Percentages	27
Table 3.16	Possession of Ration Card at the Household Level – Social Group-wise Percentages	28
Table 3.17	Mean Annual Household Income from Different Sources in the FY 2017-2018 (INR)	29
Table 3.18	Gini Coefficient of Income Inequality- Area-wise	30
Table 3.19	Households' Expectation of Change in Income in the Next 5 Years – Area-wise Percentages	31
Table 3.20	Households' Expectation of Change in Income in the Next 5 Years - Social Group-wise Percentages	31
Table 3.21	Ownership Status of the Households' Dwelling/ House - Social Group-wise Percentages	32
Table 3.22	House Constructed Under a Government Scheme - Social Group-wise Percentages	33
Table 3.23	Primary Cooking Fuel in Household - Social Group-wise Percentages	36
Table 3.24	Presence of Latrine within the Premises of the Household - Social Group-wise Percentages	37

List of Figures

Chart 3.1	Age-wise Distribution of Population	12
Chart 3.2	Formal Schooling of the Population - Area-wise Percentages	15
Chart 3.3	Gender-wise Education Status of Population - Gender-wise	15
Chart 3.4	Employment Status of Population (Age 14 years and above) – Area-wise Percentages	20
Chart 3.5	Employment Status of the Population – Gender-wise Percentages	20
Chart 3.6	Composition of Population Not in the Labour Force – Area-wise	22
Chart 3.7	Composition of Population Not in the Labour Force – Gender-wise Percentages	22
Chart 3.8	Ownership of Agricultural Land	24
Chart 3.9	Ownership of Agricultural, Allied Agricultural and Fishing Assets – Area-wise	26
Chart 3.10	Ownership of at least one Household Asset – Area-wise	26
Chart 3.11	Possession of Ration Card	27
Chart 3.12	Type of Ration Card at the Household Level	28
Chart 3.13	Lorenz Curve and Income Inequality	30
Chart 3.14	Ownership Status of the Households' Dwelling/House – Area-wise	32
Chart 3.15	Types of Houses – Area-wise Percentages	33
Chart 3.16	Primary Source of Drinking Water of Households	34
Chart 3.17	Comparison of Households with Electricity between Census (2011) and PBS 2018	35
Chart 3.18	Comparison of Primary Cooking Fuel – Theni and Tamil Nadu	35
Chart 3.19	Comparison of Primary Cooking Fuel – Rural and Urban	36
Chart 3.20	Presence of Latrine within the Premises of the Household	37
Chart 3.21	Presence of Latrine in the Premises of Different Types of Houses – Area-wise	38
Chart 3.22	Alternate Practices of Defecation by the Households without Latrine	38

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Summary of PBS Findings

Demographic Indicators

- Theni had a sample size of 5,406 households, of which 58.77 percent of households were from rural areas and 41.23 percent of households were from urban areas.
- The district had a huge demographic dividend with close to two-thirds of the population aged between 6 and 45 years. Around one-third of the population was between 26-45 years of age.
- The BC and SC social groups were the largest in number, together constituting around three-quarters of the total households in the district.

Education

- The PBS estimates showed that the literacy rate in the district had increased from 77.26 percent (Census 2011) to 82.81 percent in 2018 and continued to be lower than the state average of 85.40 percent.
- A wide gender gap in literacy rate at 12.68 percent prevailed in the district in 2018, which was higher than the state gender gap at 10.82 percent. The gender gap was wider in rural areas at 14.22 percent than in urban areas at 11.86 percent.
- Less than half of the ST population in the district had received formal education, while more than three quarters of the population belonging to the other social groups had done so.

Employment

- The share of unemployed population—about 3.58 percent—was higher in the district compared to the state estimate of 3.50 percent. Around 50 percent of the population was employed and the rest at 46.3 percent were not in the labour force.
- While around 70 percent of the male population was employed, the share of females employed was less than one-third at about 32.30 percent.
- Around 65 percent of the female population was not in the labour force, and among these, majority of them at about 73.47 percent were associated with attending to domestic duties as a homemaker.
- Though Theni is largely an urban district, around one-third of the employed population were employed as casual labourers in the agriculture sector. Also, close to 40 percent of the SC and more than half of the ST population were employed as

casual labourers in agriculture. Casual labourer in this sector was predominant in both urban and rural areas of the district.

Land Ownership and Assets

- The percentage of households owning agricultural land in the district was lesser than that at the state level estimate of 12.36 percent.
- Around 36 percent of the households that owned agricultural land in the district depended on rain-fed irrigation alone.
- Nearly 89 percent of the agricultural land-owning households in the district were holding marginal or small agricultural lands—less than two hectares.
- Around 15 percent of the households in Theni district owned at least one agricultural, allied agricultural or fishing asset. This was lower than the state PBS estimate of 20.92 percent.
- Around 23.79 percent of ST and 14.12 percent of SC households did not own any household asset, including a mobile phone.

Household Income

- The mean annual household income of Theni district was ₹1,15,409, which was lower than the state PBS estimate of ₹1,42,752; in the urban areas it was ₹1,19,813.7 and in rural areas it was ₹1,08,413.50. Theni was ranked fourteenth out of 32 districts with respect to this parameter.
- The mean income from salaried work (₹1,85,478.40) was the highest, followed by self-employment (₹1,14,308.40).
- The Gini coefficient for income inequality in Theni district (0.514) was lower than the state estimate (0.563). Income inequality across households in rural areas of the district (0.484) was found to be lower than that of the urban areas (0.530).
- While around half of the General Category households and more than one-third of the SC, MBC and DNC in Theni district expected an increase in their future income; more than 40 percent of the BC and DNC category households expected their future income to remain the same.

Housing and Drinking Water

- Around 70 percent of the households in the district were living in their own house, which was lower than the state level estimate of 75.16 percent. In rural areas, more

than three-quarters of households lived in an own house whereas in urban areas it was only two-thirds.

- Out of the households that lived in an own house in the district, only 9.81 percent of houses were built under a government scheme. ST and SC category households had the highest percentage of houses built under a government scheme in the district compared to other social groups.
- Close to two-thirds of the households in the district at 64.63 percent were living in pucca houses, which was higher than the state level estimate of 63.42 percent.
- The primary source of water for households in the district was piped water into the dwelling in urban areas and public tap/standpipe in rural areas, just like at the state level.

Electricity and Cooking Fuel

- Theni district witnessed an increase in electrification in its rural areas between 2011 and 2018, with an increase from 91.6 percent in 2011 to 96.66 percent in 2018.
- In 2011, firewood was being used as the primary cooking fuel by 43.27 percent households in the district and LPG was used by only about 44 percent of the households. In 2018, around 87 percent of the households were using LPG.
- Around two-thirds of the ST households and around 19 percent of the SC households in the district still used firewood as the primary cooking fuel.

Sanitation

- The percentage of households with latrine within the premises of the house had increased from 39.35 percent in 2011 (Census, 2011) to 68.67 percent in 2018 in the district. Theni district was ranked twenty first in the state among the 32 districts in terms of this indicator.
- Around two-thirds of ST households did not have access to a latrine within the house premises.
- The proportion of households in the district following open defecation had declined tremendously from 40.14 percent in 2011 to 13.06 percent in 2018.

1. Introduction

1.1 Profile of Theni District

Theni district in Tamil Nadu was formed in the year 1996 from the bifurcation of Madurai district. It is in the southern region of the State, with Dindigul in the north, Madurai in the east, Virudhunagar and borders of Kerala in the south, and borders of Kerala in the west.

According to Census (2011), Theni had a total population of 12.45 lakhs, accounting for approximately 1.73 percent of Tamil Nadu's total population, which was 7.21 crores. The district comprised 3.38 lakh households, with 53.82 percent residing in urban areas. The male population was 48.15 percent, and the female population was 51.84 percent. Theni demonstrated a child-sex ratio of 933.98 compared to the state average of 943.27. Within the social groups, 20.72 percent of the population belonged to the Scheduled Castes, while 0.15 percent belonged to the Scheduled Tribes. The literacy rate in Theni district stood at 77.26 percent, compared to the state's average of 80.09 percent. The male literacy rate was reported to be 85.03 percent, while the female literacy rate was reported to be 69.46 percent, highlighting the need for investment in women's education.

In the fiscal year 2018-19, Theni's Net District Domestic Product (NDDP) was ₹17,37,276 lakhs, ranking at twenty seventh among all districts. The district's per capita NDDP was recorded at ₹1,27,305, ranking it at twenty third among districts. Nonetheless, the per capita NDDP of the district was below the Tamil Nadu average of ₹1,83,884 (Department of Economics and Statistics, 2023). In terms of sectoral distribution, the primary sector (agriculture and allied) contributes approximately 24 percent to its domestic income, while the secondary (industry) and tertiary (service) sectors contribute approximately 15 percent and 61 percent, respectively (Department of Economics and Statistics, 2017).

According to the Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission (2017a), Theni ranked thirtieth in terms of the Human Development Index with a score of 0.539, indicating the need for improving the development of the general population. It ranked seventeenth in the Gender Inequality Index with a score of 0.075, which is a moderate score. In terms of the Child Development Index, the district ranked sixteenth with a score of 0.652, indicative of an average performance in developing the youth. Additionally, Theni ranked twenty fourth in terms of the Multidimensional Poverty Index with a score of 0.6. The district must invest heavily and address the below-average performance in poverty alleviation.

Theni district faces economic challenges, evident from its lower NDDP and per capita income rankings. With a focus on human development, child welfare, and poverty reduction, the district must channel substantial efforts to uplift its overall progress, particularly in addressing its below-average performance in poverty alleviation.

1.2 About the TNHPS and the Pre-Baseline Survey (PBS)

The Tamil Nadu Household Panel Survey (TNHPS) has been designed as a longitudinal survey, beginning with a Pre-Baseline Survey or the PBS—an extensive household listing activity—followed by a Baseline Survey (Wave 1) and subsequent periodic surveys (Wave 2, Wave 3 etc.). The TNHPS aims to analyze the patterns of change in various socio-economic indicators, including households' income, occupational structures and living conditions.

The PBS collected data on a comprehensive set of socio-economic indicators for the period 2018-19 with the results providing district-level estimates for these indicators, and informing the sampling design and the associated sampling frame for the first wave of the TNHPS. The PBS estimates act as an important intermediate database between Census 2011 and Census 2021 (more so in its absence) for the Government of Tamil Nadu. The PBS surveyed around 2,12,282 households in the erstwhile 32 districts of Tamil Nadu across 1,476 Primary Sampling Units684 rural PSUs and 792 urban PSUs.

This report analyzes data from the PBS for the Theni district and presents the findings. Wherever possible, the report compares the district PBS estimates with the most recent census data of Theni (Census, 2011) and the state PBS estimates (TNHPS-PBS, 2021) to assess the socio-economic development of Theni district. The sample size for the district was 5,406 households, among which 3,177 households were from rural areas and 2,229 households were from urban areas. The blocks covered during the survey were: Andipatti, Bodinayakanur, Chinnamanur, K Myladumparai, Periyakulam, Theni and Uthamapalayam.

2. Survey Response

For the Pre-Baseline Survey (PBS) 2018-19, a total of 5,774 households in Theni district were selected using a multi-stage stratified sampling design[1]. The area-wise distribution of the total sample as well as the survey response is given in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Distribution of Sample Households – Response-wise Percentages

Response of Households	Area Type					
	Rural		Urban		Theni	
	Number of HHs	Percentage	Number of HHs	Percentage	Number of HHs	Percentage
Response	3,177	92.70	2,229	94.97	5,406	93.63
Non-Response	17	0.50	67	2.85	84	1.45
Non-sample	233	6.80	51	2.17	284	4.92
Total	**3,427**	**100**	**2,347**	**100**	**5,774**	**100**

Theni district had a lower response rate—willingness of households to participate in the TNHPS-PBS—of 93.63 percent compared to the state response rate of 96.5 percent. Interestingly, urban areas had a higher response rate compared to the rural areas. Around 1.45 percent of households were not willing to participate in the survey. About 4.92 percent of the selected samples were removed as they were not considered as households as per the definition used in the PBS[2].

[1] Detailed explanation of the Sampling Methodology is available in the TNHPS-PBS State Report (see TNHPS-PBS, 2021).

[2] A household is defined as a group of persons normally living together and taking food from a common kitchen. The category called non-sample consisted of institutions, houses of NRIs and other buildings where there was no kitchen.

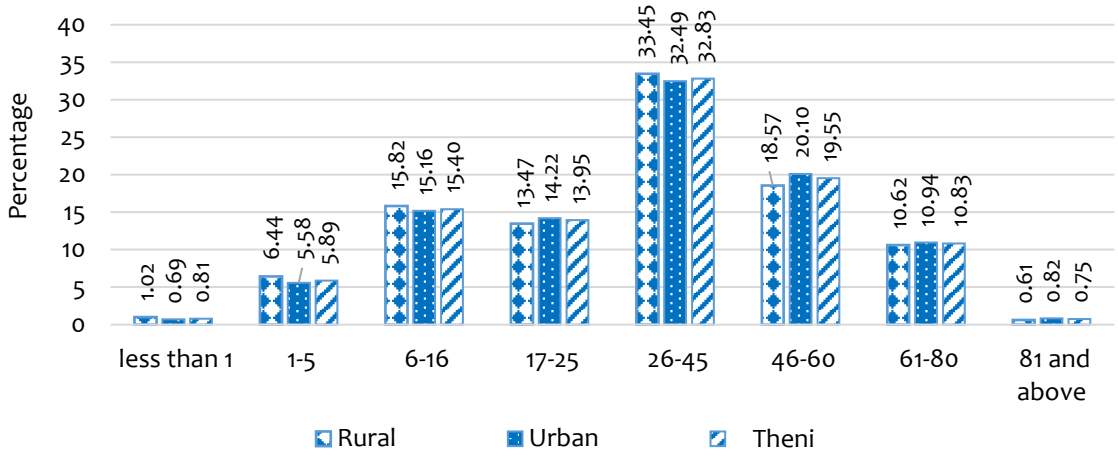
3. Key Findings

3.1 Demographic Indicators

As per the PBS estimates, the average household size[3] in the district had reduced from 3.69 in 2011 (Census, 2011) to 3.33 in 2018. As per the PBS estimates, 51.84 percent of the population in the district were female, and 48.15 percent of the population were male. Around 19.39 percent of the households in the district were headed by females, which was higher than the state estimate of 18.93 percent (TNHPS-PBS, 2021).

Chart 3.1 shows the age-wise distribution of the population in Theni district.

Chart 3.1 Age-wise Distribution of Population



As per the PBS estimates, almost one-third of the population in the district were in the age group of 26 to 45 years. Within the district, the population between ages 17 to 60 years was higher in urban areas at 66.81 percent than rural areas at 65.49 percent. The proportion of senior citizens—above 60 years—in the district's population at 11.58 percent was higher than that at the state level of 11 percent (TNHPS-PBS, 2021).

The percentage of currently married population in the district was 72.14 percent. A higher percentage of males were currently married compared to females. The widowed female population was notably higher than the widowed male population. A higher percentage of males had never married compared to females.

The religion-wise distribution of the households in the district as per the PBS estimates shows that 92.17 percent of the households practiced Hinduism, 6.59 percent practiced Islam and 1.19 percent followed Christianity.

[3] Household size is defined as the number of family members currently living in the household during the PBS survey.

Table 3.1 shows the social group-wise distribution of the households in the district.

Table 3.1 Social Group-wise Distribution of Households

Social Group	Percentage
SC	21.56
ST	0.57
BC	54.32
MBC	14.93
Denotified Communities (DNC)	8.30
General	0.23
DK/RF	0.10
Total	**100**

As per the PBS estimates, the highest percentage of households in Theni district belonged to the BC category. The percentages of SC and ST households in the district were 21.56 percent and 0.57 percent in 2018

It is important to note that only six households belonged to the General Category (0.23%) were sampled from Theni district. Hence, the results pertaining to this social group and the discussion in the report must be interpreted in this context.

3.2 Development Indicators

In this section, we discuss the PBS estimates on various development indicators such as literacy rate and employment status in Theni district.

3.2.1 Education

The change in literacy rate of Theni district and the state of Tamil Nadu during the period 2011 and 2018 is given in Table 3.2. As per Census 2011, a person aged seven and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language, is treated as literate. In the PBS, literacy rate is measured including those that have formal schooling and those that can read and write a simple sentence.

Table 3.2 Literacy Rates between Census 2011 and PBS 2018*

Gender	Rural		Urban		Theni		Tamil Nadu	
	2011	2018	2011	2018	2011	2018	2011	2018
Male	81.64	87.04	87.96	90.76	85.03	89.43	86.77	90.97
Female	63.38	72.82	74.59	78.90	69.46	76.75	73.40	80.15
Total	**72.58**	**79.65**	**81.25**	**84.56**	**77.26**	**82.81**	**80.09**	**85.40**

***** The represented trend should be understood under the context that the Census does 100 percent enumeration whereas in the PBS, a sample is surveyed.

As per Census 2011, the literacy rate in Theni district at 77.26 percent was lower than the state average of 80.09 percent. The PBS estimates showed that in the year 2018, the literacy rate in Theni district had increased to 82.81 percent, which continued to be lower than the state average of 85.40 percent. The district had registered a 5.55 percent increase in literacy rate in this period when the state had registered a 5.31 percent increase. The difference in literacy rate between the state average and Theni district was 2.83 percent in 2011, which had declined to 2.59 percent in 2018 as per the PBS estimates. In terms of literacy rate, Theni was ranked twentieth among the then 32 districts in 2018 (TNHPS-PBS, 2021).

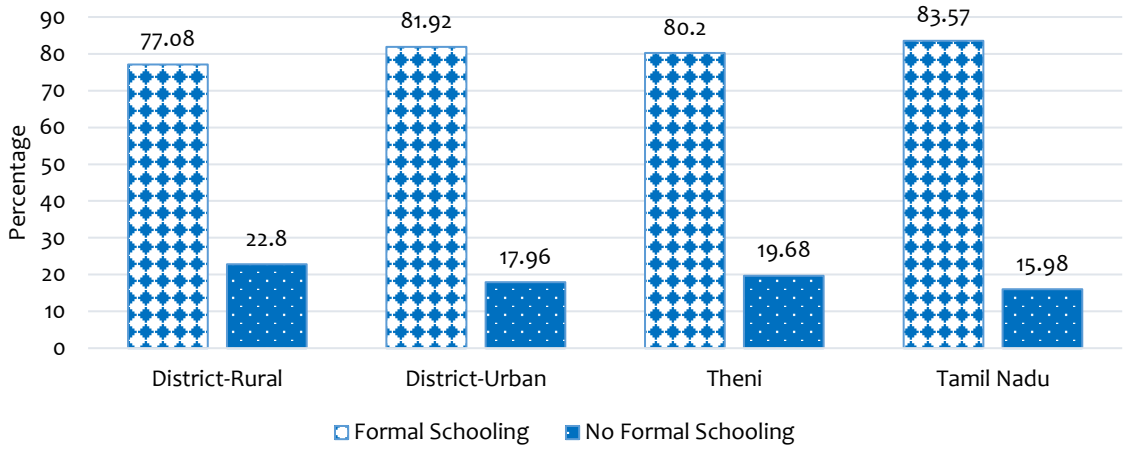
Both male and female literacy rates in Theni district had recorded an increase between 2011 and 2018, though a wide gender gap still prevailed. The gender gap in literacy rate had declined from 15.57 percent in 2011 to 12.68 percent in 2018, which was still higher than the state gender gap of 10.82 percent in 2018.

Both rural and urban literacy rates recorded an increase between 2011 and 2018, though the rural literacy rate was still 4.91 percent lower than the urban literacy rate in 2018. The gender gap in literacy rate was higher in rural areas at 14.22 percent than in urban areas at 11.86 percent.

3.2.2 Education Status of Population (Age 7 and above)

In this section, we discuss the education status of the population aged seven and above in Theni district. The area-wise education status of population in the district is given in Chart 3.2.

Chart 3.2 Formal Schooling of the Population - Area-wise Percentages

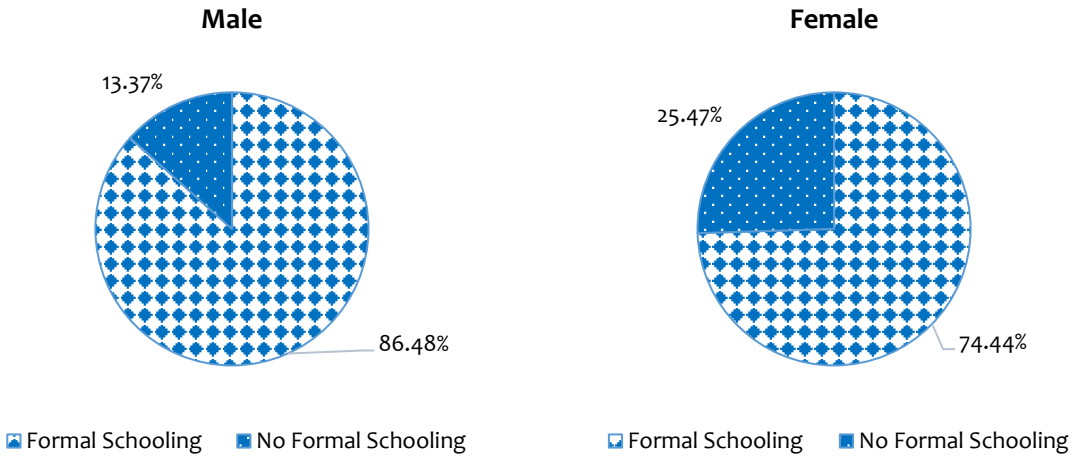


*Others and Don't Know/Refuse to Answer categories are not included in any chart, unless their value is substantially high. Therefore, the total might not add up to 100 percent.

Chart 3.2 shows that around 80 percent of the specified population in the district had attended formal schooling, which was higher than the state estimate. The percentage of population with formal education in urban areas was much higher than in rural areas of the district.

Chart 3.3 shows that the percentage of the population that had acquired formal education in the district was much higher among males compared to females, again denoting a wide gender gap, like in literacy.

Chart 3.3 Gender-wise Education Status of Population - Gender-wise



A district level analysis on education attainment status had shown greater divergence across various social groups.

Table 3.3 Formal Schooling of Population - Social Group-wise Percentages

Education Status	Social Group						
	SC	ST	BC	MBC	DNC	General	Theni
Formal Schooling	75.08	49.05	82.86	78.71	80.97	100	80.20
No Formal Schooling	24.84	50.59	17.03	21.11	18.86	0.00	19.68
Others and DK/RF	0.08	0.36	0.11	0.18	0.17	0.00	0.12
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 3.3 shows a wide variation across social groups in accessing formal schooling. While more than 80 percent of the BC and DNC population in the district had received formal education, only around half the ST population had done so. The results for the General Category must be interpreted in the context of their sample size, as discussed in Section 3.1.

To take this analysis further, Table 3.4 gives detailed information on the current highest level of formal educational attainment of the population that had received formal education.

Table 3.4 Highest Formal Educational Attainment of Population – Area-wise Percentages

Educational Attainment	Area Type		
	Rural	Urban	Theni
Primary (I to V)	23.95	20.21	21.48
Middle School (VI to VIII)	23.75	22.65	23.02
High School (IX to X)	20.78	21.00	20.92
Higher Secondary (XI to XII)	15.41	16.28	15.99
Bachelor's degree	8.64	11.17	10.31
Diploma Degree	4.24	3.87	3.99
Post Graduate Degree	3.09	4.65	4.12
Other Higher Education	0.00	0.02	0.01
Others/DK/RF	0.15	0.15	0.15
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**

Around 81.41 percent of the district's population—aged seven and above, had completed up to higher secondary level of schooling. The percentage of population that was either pursuing or had completed tertiary education—such as bachelor's degree, diploma, or post graduate degree and above—was 18.43 percent, which was lower than the state estimate of 20.02 percent (TNHPS-PBS, 2021). Also, this figure was higher for urban areas than rural areas of the district.

Table 3.5 Highest Formal Educational Attainment of Population – Gender-wise Percentages

Educational Attainment	Gender		
	Male	Female	Theni
Primary (I to V)	19.40	23.72	21.48
Middle School (VI to VIII)	21.90	24.23	23.02
High School (IX to X)	22.53	19.22	20.92
Higher Secondary (XI to XII)	15.88	16.10	15.99
Bachelor's degree	10.74	9.85	10.31
Diploma Degree	5.17	2.71	3.99
Post Graduate Degree	4.21	4.02	4.12
Other Higher Education	0.00	0.02	0.01
Others/DK/RF	0.17	0.13	0.15
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 3.5 shows that a higher percentage of females at 83.27 percent had completed up to higher secondary compared to males at 79.71 percent. In tertiary education, a higher percentage of females were either pursuing or had completed post-graduate degree compared to males, whereas the case with respect to diploma degree percentages was the reverse.

Table 3.6 Highest Formal Educational Attainment of Population - Social Group-wise Percentages

Educational Attainment	Social Group						
	SC	ST	BC	MBC	DNC	General	Theni
Primary (I to V)	22.21	30.20	20.39	22.71	24.28	17.24	21.48
Middle School (VI to VIII)	21.44	39.17	23.75	22.52	22.81	13.48	23.02
High School (IX to X)	20.73	15.30	21.15	20.15	21.58	22.37	20.92
Higher Secondary (XI to XII)	16.90	6.43	15.99	13.79	18.00	17.53	15.99
Bachelor's degree	9.83	5.02	10.52	11.96	6.72	24.79	10.31
Diploma Degree	4.20	0.63	3.89	4.70	3.33	0.00	3.99
Post Graduate Degree	4.57	2.51	4.19	3.88	3.07	4.60	4.12
Other Higher Education	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.01
Others/DK/RF	0.11	0.73	0.13	0.23	0.21	0.00	0.15
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

The social group-wise analysis in Table 3.6 shows that most of the SC and ST population in the district had completed up to higher secondary level of schooling. The percentage of population with tertiary education—bachelor's degree and above—was higher among the MBC category at 20.61 percent compared to other social groups. The estimates for the General Category must be interpreted in the context of their sample size of just six

households as discussed in Section 3.1. Similar to the national and state level trend, the percentage of population with higher educational qualification in the district was lower among SC and ST categories.

About 19.68 percent of the population had not received formal education in Theni district (refer Chart 3.2); the PBS investigated the ability of those who could read and write a simple sentence with understanding or functional literacy.

Table 3.7 shows the functional literacy status of the population with no formal schooling. Only 13.29 percent of the population without formal schooling had functional literacy. The population—age seven and above—in urban areas of the district had better functional literacy rate than the rural areas.

Table 3.7 Functional Literacy of Population with No Formal Schooling – Area-wise Percentages

Functional Literacy	Area Type		
	Rural	Urban	Theni
Yes	11.27	14.70	13.29
No	88.62	85.30	86.67
DK/RF	0.11	0.00	0.04
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 3.8 shows the functional literacy status of population with no formal schooling, across various social group categories. The specified population in the DNC category had the highest percentage population at 18.39 percent with functional literacy followed by ST category population at 17.81 percent, though the functional literacy was low across all social groups. Since all the six General Category households have attained formal education, they are not represented in the respective table.

Table 3.8 Functional Literacy of Population with No Formal Schooling - Social Group-wise Percentages

Functional Literacy	Social Group					
	SC	ST	BC	MBC	DNC	Theni
Yes	10.49	17.81	12.12	18.39	18.77	13.29
No	89.51	80.75	87.83	81.61	81.23	86.67
DK/RF	0.00	1.44	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.04
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

3.2.3 Employment Status

This section looks at the employment status of the household members, types of employment that they are engaged in, the unemployment rate at the district level and comparison of these findings with the state PBS estimates. In the PBS, the population aged 14 years and above has been classified as employed, unemployed and not in the labour force[4].

The employed category—population aged 14 years and above—includes the following:

(i) People who are self-employed in agriculture,

(ii) People who are self-employed in allied agricultural activities,

(iii) People who are self-employed in non-agricultural activities,

(iv) People who worked as casual labourers in agriculture,

(v) People who worked as casual labourers in industry,

(vi) People who worked as casual labourers in the service sector,

(vii) People who worked as casual labourers in other domains,

(viii) People who worked as salaried employees in the government sector,

(ix) People who worked as salaried employees in the private sector,

(x) People who are involved in multiple occupations, and

(xi) People who are involved in other types of work.

The unemployed category includes those aged 14 years and above, who did not work but was actively seeking and/or available for work.

The not in the labour force category consists of the following:

(i) People who attended educational institutions,

(ii) People who attended domestic duties only,

(iii) Rentiers, pensioners, remittance recipients, etc.,

(iv) People who are not able to work due to disability and

(v) Others (including begging, etc.).

[4] Percentage of population employed = (Number of employed persons 14 years and above/Total population of the district 14 years and above) *100
Percentage of population unemployed = (Number of unemployed persons 14 years and above/Total population of the district 14 years and above) *100
Percentage of population not in the labour force = (Number of persons 14 years and above not in workforce/Total population of the district 14 years and above) *100

Chart 3.4 Employment Status of Population (Age 14 years and above) – Area-wise Percentages

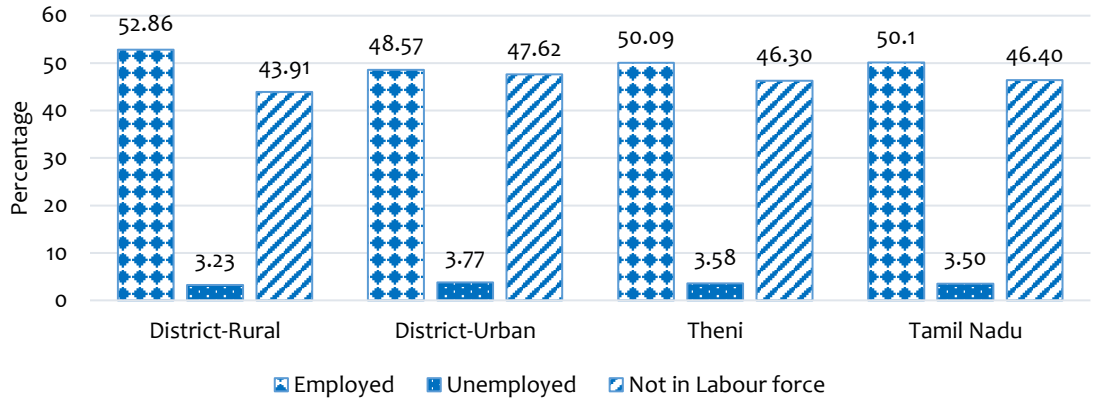
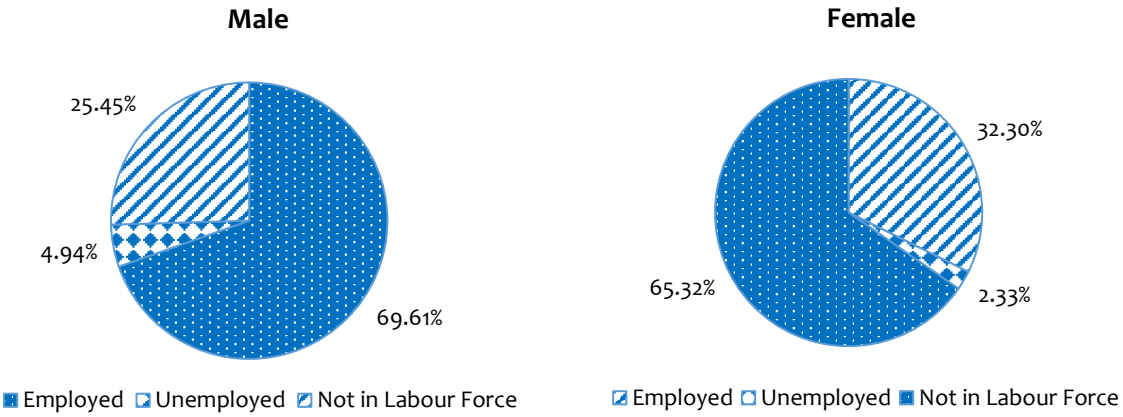


Chart 3.4 shows that the overall percentage of employed population—14 years and above—in the district was similar to the state estimate. Also, the share of unemployed population was slightly higher in the district compared to the state. The percentage of population that was employed was higher in rural areas of the district than the urban. The unemployment status in rural areas of the district at 3.23 percent was lower than the state's rural estimate of 3.6 percent and urban areas of the district at 3.77 percent was higher than the state's urban estimate of 3.3 percent (TNHPS-PBS, 2021). Theni district was ranked fourteenth among all districts in Tamil Nadu in terms of employed population and ranked seventeenth highest in terms of the unemployed population (TNHPS-PBS, 2021).

Chart 3.5 Employment Status of the Population – Gender-wise Percentages



While around 70 percent of the specified male population was employed, only around 32 percent of the females was employed Decreased female labour force participation has been well documented at the national level (Das et al., 2015; Desai, 2017; Desai & Joshi, 2019). The district female work participation was higher than both the national average at 23.3 percent in 2017-18 (National Statistical Office, 2019) and the state estimate of 29.96

percent. Close to two-thirds of the female population was not in the labour force, and among these, majority of them at about 73.47 percent (refer Chart 3.7) were associated with attending to domestic duties as homemakers. Theni district was ranked thirteenth in terms of employed female population and ranked fourteenth highest in terms of unemployed female population (TNHPS-PBS, 2021).

Table 3.9 Work type of Employed Population – Area-wise Percentages

Work Type	Area Type		
	Rural	Urban	Theni
Self Employed Agriculture	6.02	1.99	3.50
Self Employed Non-Agriculture	9.83	15.06	13.10
Self Employed Allied Agriculture	2.75	0.82	1.54
Casual Labourer Agriculture	43.97	25.49	32.42
Casual Labourer Industry	6.05	14.80	11.52
Casual Labourer Service	7.95	17.13	13.69
Salaried Worker Government	5.18	8.32	7.14
Salaried Worker Private	16.09	15.51	15.73
Casual Labourer (Others)	0.35	0.45	0.41
Multiple Occupations	1.73	0.28	0.82
Other	0.01	0.05	0.04
DK/RF	0.09	0.09	0.09
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**

Close to one-third of the employed population depended on agricultural sector for employment. While the greatest proportion of the working population in the state were salaried workers in the private sector at 21.82 percent as per the state estimates (TNHPS-PBS, 2021), majority of the working population in Theni district was casual labourers in the agriculture sector. The casual labourer in the agricultural sector was most common in both the rural and urban areas of the district.

Table 3.10 Percentage of Population Engaged in Different Types of Livelihood Activities – Social Group-wise Percentages

Work Type	Social Group						
	SC	ST	BC	MBC	DNC	General	Theni
Self Employed Agriculture	2.08	0.72	3.58	4.12	6.05	0.00	3.50
Self Employed Non-Agriculture	7.25	13.50	14.18	19.79	11.00	0.00	13.10
Self Employed Allied Agriculture	1.60	2.15	1.44	1.35	1.93	16.10	1.54
Casual Labourer Agriculture	39.28	52.43	26.20	35.09	44.70	0.00	32.42
Casual Labourer Industry	12.54	0.61	12.90	9.60	5.31	0.00	11.52
Casual Labourer Service	11.88	0.97	16.44	10.02	9.97	16.96	13.69
Casual Labourer (Others)	0.20	1.22	0.29	0.20	2.03	0.00	0.41
Salaried Worker Government	8.50	9.96	7.60	4.98	4.32	0.00	7.14
Salaried Worker Private	15.04	18.09	16.79	14.11	13.33	49.97	15.73
Multiple Occupations	1.50	0.36	0.50	0.68	1.17	0.00	0.82
Other	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	16.96	0.04
DK/RF	0.11	0.00	0.08	0.05	0.18	0.00	0.09
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

In Theni district, agricultural sector continues providing employment opportunities for a significant share of employees in the district. Most of the SC, ST, MBC, DNC, and BC households were involved as casual labourers in agriculture in Theni district. The proportion of SC and ST category households involved as casual labourers in agriculture at district level was higher than those of the respective categories at the state level at 33.33 percent and 41.32 percent respectively (TNHPS-PBS, 2021). The results for the General Category must be interpreted in the context of their sample size of six households.

Chart 3.6 Composition of Population Not in the Labour Force – Area-wise

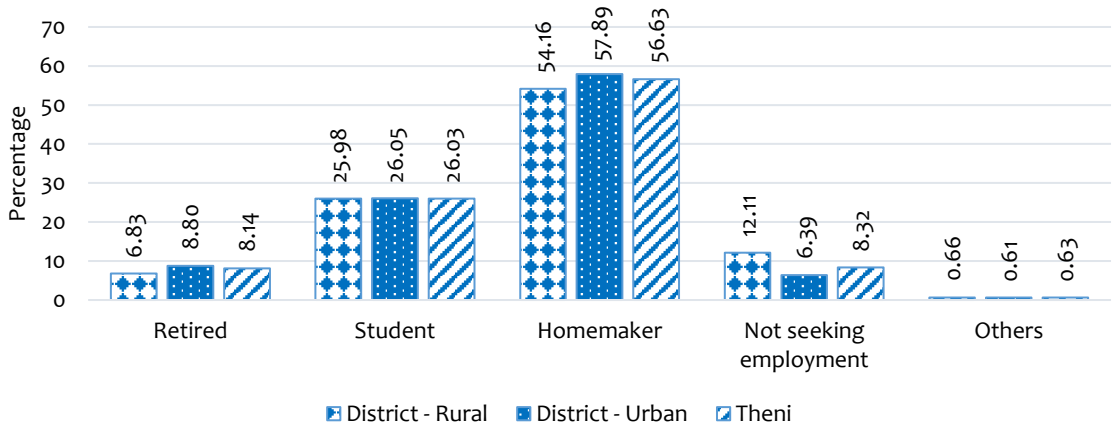
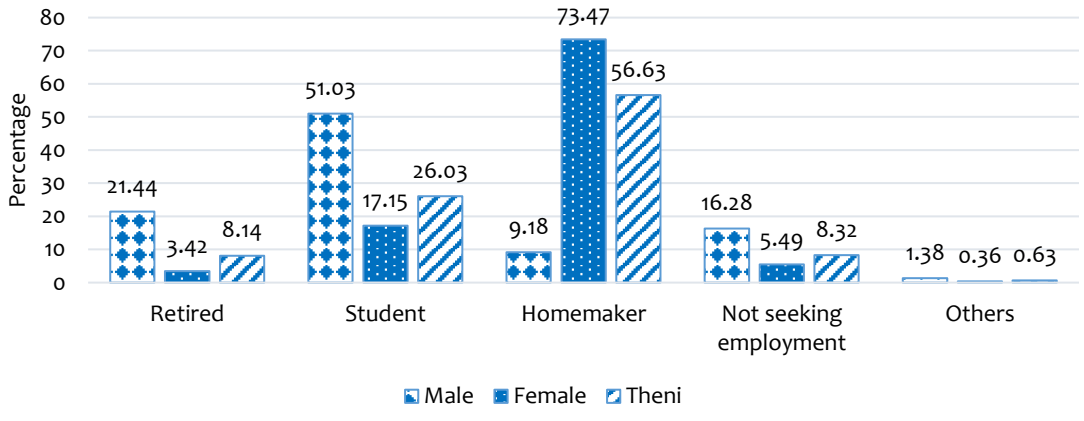


Chart 3.6 shows that, similar to the trend at the state level (TNHPS-PBS, 2021), more than half the population that was not in the labour force in the district comprised homemakers involved in unpaid domestic duties of the household, followed by students. The proportion of the population that was not seeking employment or was students; and the percentages of retired people and homemakers was higher in urban areas than rural areas.

Chart 3.7 Composition of Population Not in the Labour Force – Gender-wise Percentages



While Chart 3.3 represents the lower female involvement in formal education, Chart 3.7 shows the staggeringly low participation of not-working females i in higher education.

Compared to males, only 17.15 percent of the females who are not-in-labour-force were students. Similar to the state trend, majority of the male not-in-labour-force population were students, whereas a majority of females was homemakers. It must be noted that the study did not capture unpaid domestic labour or any other form of unpaid labour carried out by women.

Table 3.11 Composition of Population not in the Labour Force – Social Group-wise Percentages

Current Status	Social Group						
	SC	ST	BC	MBC	DNC	General	Theni
Retired	7.10	0.00	8.52	9.20	6.31	12.47	8.14
Student	31.10	23.53	23.65	25.91	31.76	8.26	26.03
Homemaker	51.45	67.60	58.98	57.28	50.93	55.48	56.63
Not seeking employment	9.87	8.87	7.86	6.60	9.88	23.79	8.32
Others	0.07	0.00	0.77	0.71	0.86	0.00	0.63
DK/RF	0.41	0.00	0.20	0.30	0.26	0.00	0.26
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 3.11 shows that within all social groups, the percentage of homemakers was the largest compared to other categories in the district. The DNC and SC categories had a higher percentage of not-working population as students compared to the other social groups. While majority of the employed DNC and SC population were casual labourers (see Table 3.10), students account for a significant share of the not-working population from these two social groups.

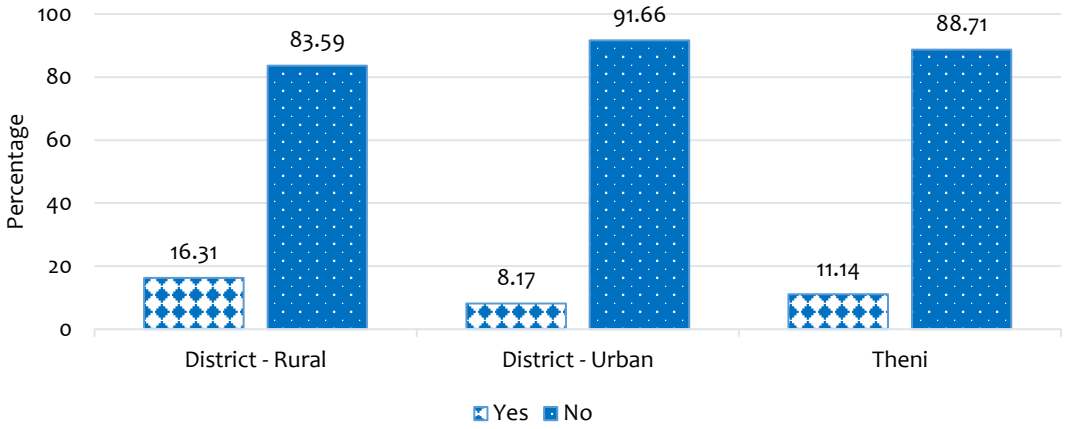
3.3 Socio-Economic Indicators

The PBS estimates for various socio-economic indicators of Theni district such as ownership of agricultural land, household assets and income are shown in this section.

3.3.1 Ownership of Agricultural Land

The PBS estimates of ownership of agricultural land at the household level in the rural and urban areas of Theni district are given in Chart 3.8. The TNHPS PBS definition of land ownership does not include leased-in land or other forms of holdings, exclusively represent ownership of agricultural land. The fourth round of National Family Health Survey (NFHS, 2015-16) was a secondary source of data that followed the same definition for ownership of agricultural land.

Chart 3.8 Ownership of Agricultural Land



Theni is largely an urban district. The percentage of households owning agricultural land in the district was lower than that at the state level at 19.41 percent. The district was ranked twenty eighth in the state in terms of agricultural land ownership (TNHPS-PBS, 2021). Area-wise comparison shows that a lower proportion of households in rural and urban areas of the district owned agricultural land compared to the respective state level rural and urban estimates at 29 percent and 8.61 percent respectively (TNHPS-PBS, 2021).

Table 3.12 Type of Agricultural Land Owned by the Households – Area-wise Percentages

Type of Agricultural Land	Area Type		
	Rural	Urban	Theni
Only Irrigated Agriculture Land	68.29	45.43	57.64
Only Unirrigated Agriculture Land	27.12	46.76	36.27
Both Irrigated and Unirrigated Agriculture Land	3.16	7.25	5.06
DK/RF	1.44	0.56	1.03
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 3.12 shows that, as per the PBS estimates, around 58 percent of the households that owned agricultural land in Theni district had irrigated land. The proportion of households having irrigated agricultural land was higher in the district compared to the state estimate of 50.03 percent (TNHPS-PBS, 2021). A higher percentage of urban households owned irrigated agricultural land compared to the rural households in the district. Well irrigation, canal irrigation and tanks are the major sources of irrigation in Theni district (Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission, 2017b).

An analysis of the social group-wise ownership of agricultural land by households (Table 3.13) showed that the proportion of agricultural-land-owning households remained high among the DNC, MBC and BC categories. Though 25 percent of the ST in the state-owned

agricultural land (TNHPS-PBS, 2021), only 0.61 percent of the ST households owned agricultural land in the district.

Table 3.13 Ownership of Agricultural Land - Social Group-wise Percentages

Agricultural Land Ownership	Social Group						
	SC	ST	BC	MBC	DNC	General	Theni
Yes	10.40	0.61	10.57	11.14	17.94	0.00	11.14
No	89.48	99.39	89.24	88.77	82.06	100	88.71
DK/RF	0.13	0.00	0.19	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.14
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Based on the size of agriculture land, the PBS classified the land owned by the households into marginal, small, semi-medium, medium, and large. Of the households that owned agricultural land, the percentage of households under each size category is given in Table 3.14.

Table 3.14 Size of Agricultural Land Owned by the Households – Area-wise Percentages

Size of Agricultural Land (in Hectares)	Area Type		
	Rural	Urban	Theni
Marginal (0.01 - 0.99)	73.35	66.99	70.54
Small (1 - 1.99)	15.76	21.81	18.43
Semi Medium (2 - 3.99)	9.00	6.10	7.72
Medium (4 - 9.99)	1.76	3.62	2.58
Large (10 and above)	0.13	1.48	0.73
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 3.14 shows that 88.97 percent of the agricultural land-owning households in the district were holding marginal or small agricultural lands—less than two hectares. This figure was similar to the state level estimate of 89.54 percent (TNHPS-PBS, 2021). The share of semi- medium and medium landholdings was higher than that of the state at 2.22 percent, but the share of large land holdings was lower than that of the state at 0.75 percent (TNHPS-PBS, 2021)

3.3.2 Ownership of Agricultural, Allied Agricultural and Fishing Assets

In this section, we discuss the ownership of agricultural, allied agricultural and fishing assets such as tractor, pump set, dairy animals, poultry birds, mechanized and non-mechanized boats, amongst the households of Theni district.

Chart 3.9 Ownership of Agricultural, Allied Agricultural and Fishing Assets – Area-wise

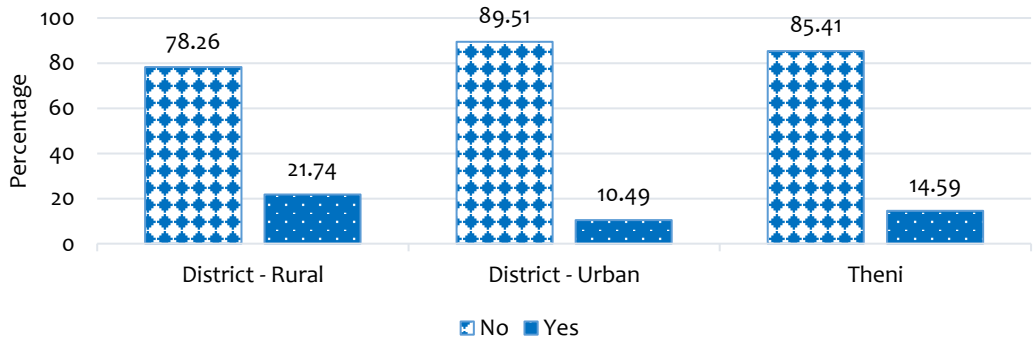
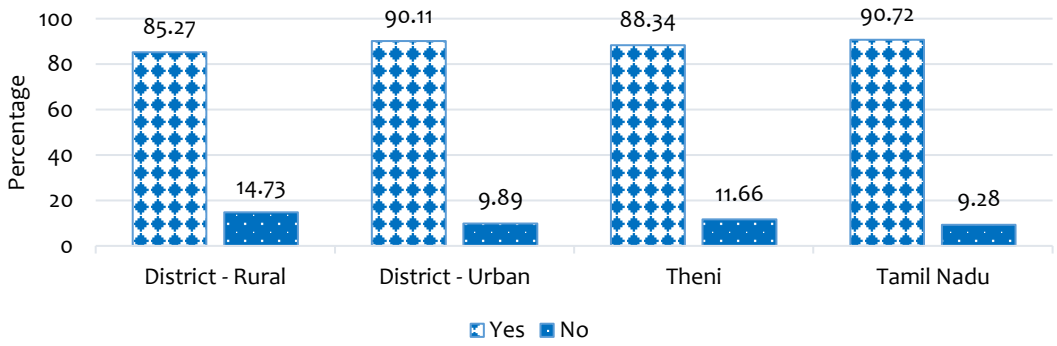


Chart 3.9 shows that only 14.59 percent of the households in Theni district owned at least one agricultural, allied agricultural and fishing asset. This estimate was lesser than the state estimate of 20.92 percent (TNHPS-PBS, 2021). The ownership of such assets was higher in rural areas than urban areas. The ownership pattern was higher in urban areas of the district compared to the state urban estimates of 7.67 percent and ownership pattern was lesser in rural areas of the district compared to the state rural estimates of 32.69 percent (TNHPS-PBS, 2021).

3.3.3 Presence of Household Assets

Chart 3.10 shows the percentage of households in Theni district that own at least one household asset. Household assets include Air Conditioner (AC), refrigerator, two-wheeler, four-wheeler, and mobile phones. The PBS estimates found that the combination of mobile phone and two-wheeler was the predominantly owned assets in rural areas whereas a combination of refrigerator, two-wheeler and mobile phone was largely owned in the urban areas.

Chart 3.10 Ownership of at least one Household Asset – Area-wise



The percentage of households owning at least one household asset in Theni district was lower than the state estimate. Within the district, urban areas had a higher percentage of households owning at least one household asset than the rural areas.

Table 3.15 Presence of at least one Household Asset - Social Group-wise Percentages

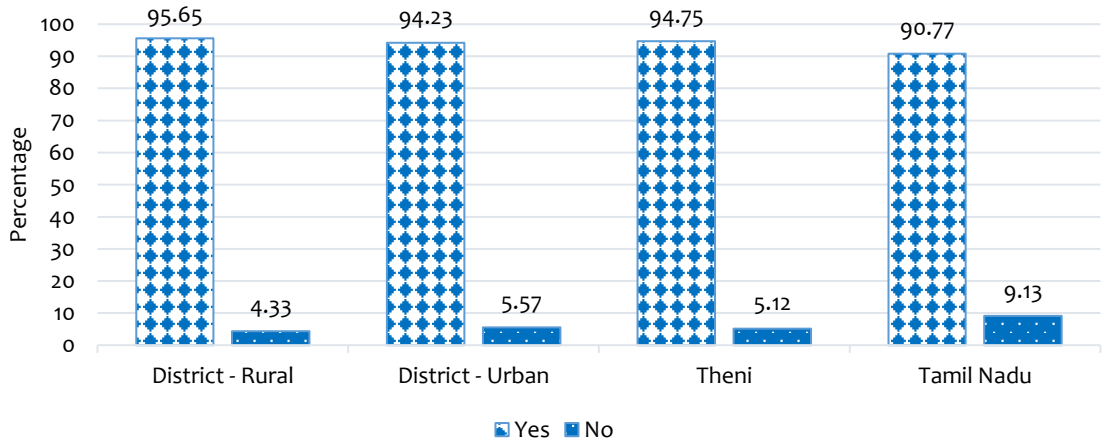
Presence of Household Asset	Social Group						
	SC	ST	BC	MBC	DNC	General	Theni
Yes	85.88	76.21	89.39	87.04	90.62	100	88.34
No	14.12	23.79	10.61	12.96	9.38	0.00	11.66
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

The PBS estimates show that, more than 85 percent of the SC, BC, MBC, and DNC households owned at least one household asset, whereas almost 24 percent of ST households did not even own a mobile phone. The results for the General Category must be interpreted in the context of their sample size, as discussed in Section 3.1.

3.3.4 Possession of Ration Card

Possession of a ration card can be treated as a determinant of socio-economic status at the household level. It plays a vital role in inclusion—or exclusion—of households from the government welfare schemes such as the availability of subsidised items from public distribution system and subsidies LPG connection, for instance.

Chart 3.11 Possession of Ration Card



The percentage of households that possessed ration card in rural, urban, and overall areas of Theni district are given in Chart 3.11. The district estimates on the percentage of households that possess ration card was higher than the state estimate. Within the district, a higher percentage of rural households possessed ration card compared to the urban households.

Table 3.16 Possession of Ration Card at the Household Level – Social Group-wise Percentages

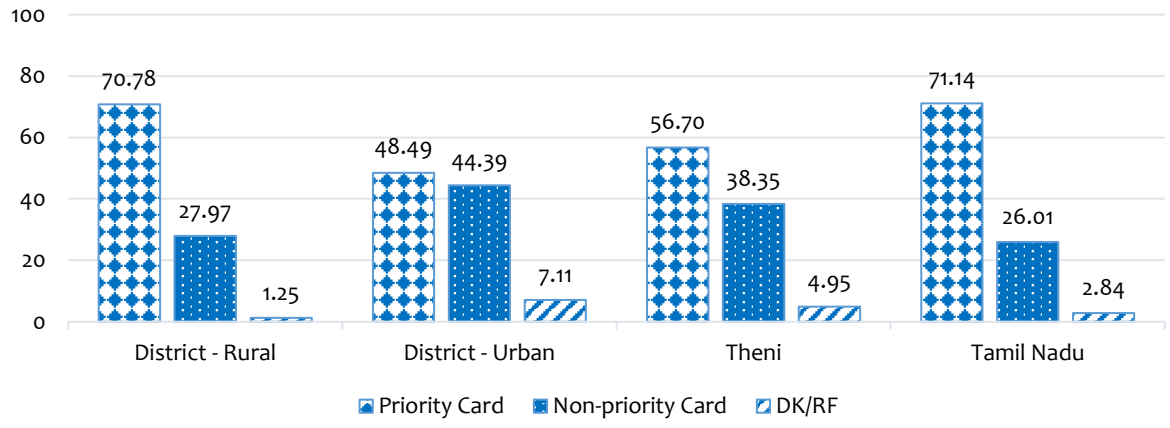
Possession of Ration Card	Social Group						
	SC	ST	BC	MBC	DNC	General	Theni
Yes	92.79	87.98	95.39	95.29	94.96	100	94.75
No	7.05	12.02	4.43	4.71	5.04	0.00	5.12
DK/RF	0.16	0.00	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.13
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Social group-wise estimates on the possession of ration card at the household level are shown in Table 3.16. More than 90 percent of households belonging to all social groups, except for ST category, possessed ration cards in the district. The results for the General Category must be interpreted in the context of their sample size, as discussed in Section 3.1.

3.3.5 Type of Ration Card

According to the National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013, ration cards are broadly categorized into Priority Households (PHH) and Non-Priority Households (NPHH). Households with priority ration card are the target group of various social welfare schemes such as Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) among others. The percentages of households possessing priority and non-priority ration cards in rural and urban areas of Theni district are given in Chart 3.12.

Chart 3.12 Type of Ration Card at the Household Level



The percentage of households possessing priority ration cards in the district was much lesser compared to the state level estimate. A higher percentage of rural households possessed priority cards than urban households.

3.4 Household Income

3.4.1 Annual Household Income from Various Sources in the year 2017-2018

In this section we analyze the annual income of households in Theni district from various sources for the year 2017-2018. The sources of income are income earned from activities such as agriculture, allied agriculture, salaried work, self-employed, wage labour and other sources. The category 'other sources' consists of other income sources such as pension, remittances, investments, and other mixed categories. Table 3.17 shows the mean income of households that depend on various sources of income in Theni district.

Table 3.17 Mean Annual Household Income from Different Sources in the FY 2017-2018 (INR)

Source	Rural	Urban	Theni	Tamil Nadu
Agriculture	1,16,808	89,189	1,05,839	61,830
Allied Agriculture	96,078	94,829	95,463	38,576
Salaried	1,53,465	2,05,310	1,85,478	2,29,857
Self Employed	1,11,516	1,15,676	1,14,308	1,47,403
Wage Labour	43,502	44,127	43,890	47,734
Other Sources	69,307	1,22,192	97,300	97,646
Total	**1,08,414**	**1,19,814**	**1,15,409**	**1,42,752**

The mean household income was higher among the households with salaried income and lower among the households that depended on wages. Overall, the mean annual household income of Theni district was 19.15 percent lesser than the state estimates of ₹1,42,752. Among the then 32 districts, Theni was at fourteenth place in terms of mean annual household income (TNHPS-PBS, 2021).

In rural areas of Theni district, the mean household income was ₹1,08,413.5, which was higher than the state rural estimate of ₹92,765 (TNHPS-PBS, 2021). The mean household income was higher among the households with salaried income. Lower mean income was reported among the households that engaged in wage labour as a source of income.

In urban areas of Theni district, the mean household income was ₹1,19,813.70, which was lower than the state urban estimate of ₹1,99,629 (TNHPS-PBS, 2021), but higher than the district rural estimate ₹1,08,413.50. The mean household income was higher among the households that depended on salaried income. Lower mean income was reported among the households that engaged in allied agricultural activities and wage labour.

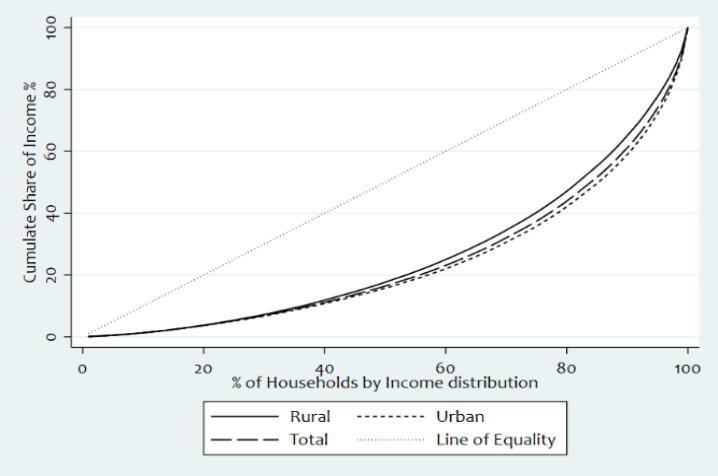
3.4.2 Income Inequality in Theni District

The Gini coefficient measures inequality levels in income or wealth where the coefficient value of 0 denotes perfect equality and 1 denotes perfect inequality (across households). The income inequality in Theni district (0.514) was lower than the state estimate (0.563)[5]. Similar to other district estimates, the income inequality across households in urban areas of the district (0.506) was found to be similar to that of the rural areas (0.501).

Table 3.18 Gini Coefficient of Income Inequality- Area-wise

Area	Gini coefficient
Rural	0.484
Urban	0.530
Theni	0.514
Tamil Nadu	**0.563**

Chart 3.13 Lorenz Curve and Income Inequality



Lorenz curve is a graphical representation of inequality in the distribution of income or wealth of the population. Chart 3.13 shows that in Theni district, the bottom 60 percent of the household held around 20 percent of the total income; the bottom 80 percent of households held a little more than 40 percent of total income and the top 20 percent of households have around 60 percent of total income. Both Chart 3.13 and Table 3.18 show that income inequality was higher in urban areas compared to the rural areas of the district.

[5] Other studies have estimated the Gini coefficient for Tamil Nadu, for instance - Chandrasekhar et al. (2021) estimated the Gini coefficient of income inequality for Tamil Nadu as 0.378 in 2018-19 using data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) (2018-19).

3.4.3 Households' Expectation of Change in their Income in the Next 5 Years

Besides the present income of the households (in the year 2017-18), the PBS had also investigated the households' expectation of change in income in the next five years. The expectation of a household head on the change in the household's income in the future depends on various factors such as probability of a household member's entry (or exit) to (or from) the labour market, expected possession of financial and non-financial assets and so on. These variables can capture the level of optimism—or pessimism—that each household has about their future economic status.

Table 3.19 Households' Expectation of Change in Income in the Next 5 Years – Area-wise Percentages

Expectation of Change in Household Income	Area Type			
	Rural	Urban	Theni	Tamil Nadu
Higher	35.23	32.67	33.60	50.06
Lower	14.61	27.27	22.66	8.17
About the same	49.57	35.88	40.87	31.66
DK/RF	0.59	4.18	2.87	10.11
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

While more than one-third of the rural households in the district expected their income to increase in the following five years, the percentage of households expecting a decline in their future income was higher in urban areas compared to the rural areas. Also, around 40 percent of the households in the district anticipated their future income to remain the same.

Table 3.20 Households' Expectation of Change in Income in the Next 5 Years - Social Group-wise Percentages

Expectation of Change in Household Income	Social Group						
	SC	ST	BC	MBC	DNC	General	Theni
Higher	36.45	27.15	31.21	36.39	37.27	47.57	33.60
Lower	24.83	34.42	23.34	21.19	14.24	34.82	22.66
About the same	36.72	38.43	42.25	39.81	44.73	17.61	40.87
DK/RF	1.99	0.00	3.20	2.61	3.77	0.00	2.87
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

While more than one-third of the SC, MBC and DNC households in Theni district expected an increase in their future income; more than 40 percent of the BC and DNC category households expected their future income to remain the same.

3.5 Basic Infrastructure

In this section, we discuss the PBS estimates of variables such as house ownership and type of houses, electrification status, drinking water and sanitation.

3.5.1 House Ownership Status

Chart 3.14 Ownership Status of the Households' Dwelling/House – Area-wise

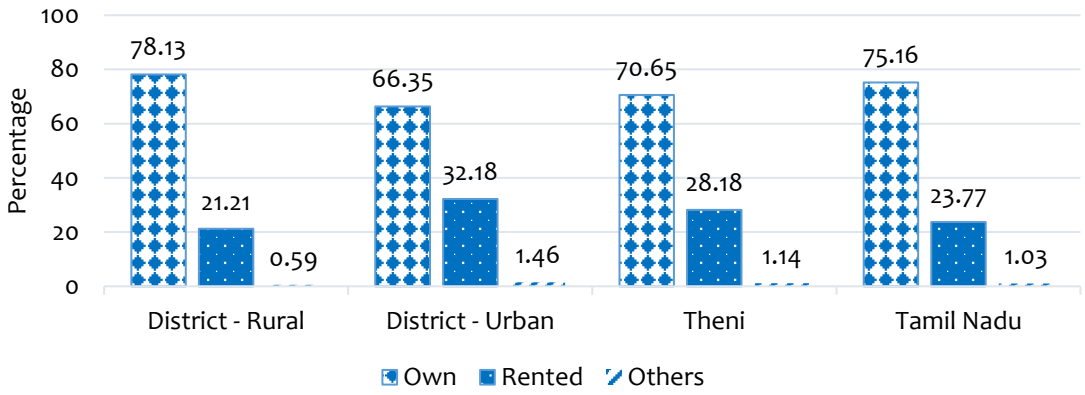


Chart 3.14 shows that the proportion of households living in their own house in the district was lower than the state level estimate. Theni district was ranked twenty fourth among the then 32 districts of Tamil Nadu in terms of percentage of households living in their own house (TNHPS-PBS, 2021). While most of the households in rural areas lived in their own house, a large proportion of urban households was relying on rented houses for their stay. Around one percent of households was living in other houses such as relative's house, encroachments etc. This data does not capture the ownership of a house in a different geographical location.

Table 3.21 Ownership Status of the Households' Dwelling/ House - Social Group-wise Percentages

Ownership Status	Social Group						
	SC	ST	BC	MBC	DNC	General	Theni
Own	80.33	97.56	65.89	74.51	68.23	64.04	70.65
Rented	18.63	1.22	32.77	24.94	30.15	35.96	28.18
Others	1.02	1.22	1.34	0.37	1.61	0.00	1.14
DK/RF	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.03
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 3.21 shows that more than 95 percent of ST and more than 80 percent of the SC households in the district lived in their own house, while only around or more than two-thirds of the BC and DNC category households were doing the same.

A detailed analysis of ownership of houses showed that out of the 70.65 percent households (see Chart 3.14) that lived in an own house in the district, 9.81 percent of

houses was built under a government scheme, which was lower than the state estimate of 14.12 percent (TNHPS-PBS, 2021). The social group-wise analysis of this parameter is given below.

Table 3.22 House Constructed Under a Government Scheme - Social Group-wise Percentages

House Constructed under the Government Scheme	Social Group						
	SC	ST	BC	MBC	DNC	General	Theni
Yes	24.44	60.41	3.76	5.20	7.29	0.00	9.81
No	75.52	39.59	96.24	94.80	92.71	100.00	90.18
DK/RF	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 3.22, shows that, in Theni district, ST households had the highest percentage of houses built under a government scheme compared to other social groups. None of the four house-owning General Category households that owned a house in Theni district had done so.

3.5.2 House Type

Based on the material used for wall/roof or quality of houses, the PBS classifies the houses as Kutccha, Pucca and Semi-pucca. The percentages of houses that come under each type of house are as follows.

Chart 3.15 Types of Houses – Area-wise Percentages

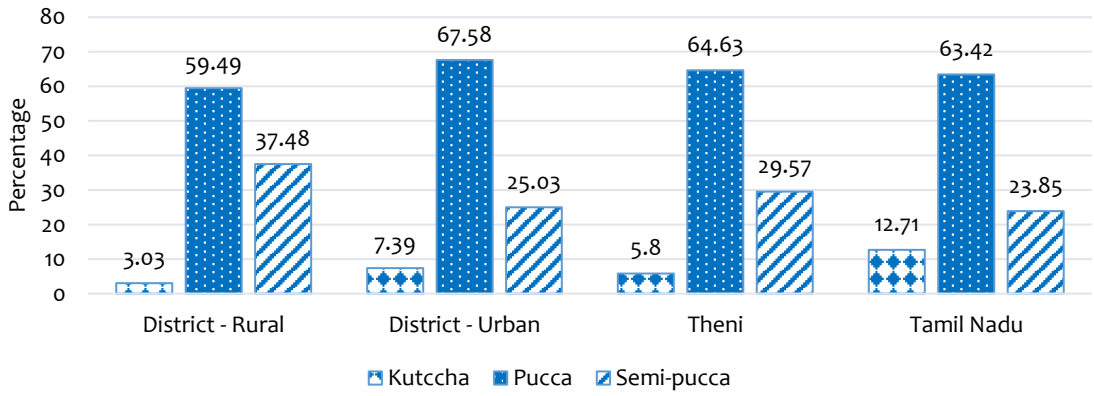


Chart 3.15 shows that majority of households in Theni district were living in pucca houses. The district estimate was marginally higher than the state estimate on the percentage of households living in pucca houses at 63.42 percent. The percentage of Pucca houses in rural areas and their percentage in urban areas were higher than their respective state rural and urban estimates at 52.93 percent and 75.22 percent respectively (TNHPS-PBS, 2021).

3.5.3 Primary Drinking Water Source

In this section we discuss the PBS findings on primary source of drinking water of the households in Theni district. The primary sources[6] of water are: bottled water, piped water into dwelling, piped water to yard or plot, public tap or standpipe, tube well or borehole. Other water sources include protected well, unprotected well, rainwater collection and surface water (tank/pond/river/dam).

Chart 3.16 Primary Source of Drinking Water of Households

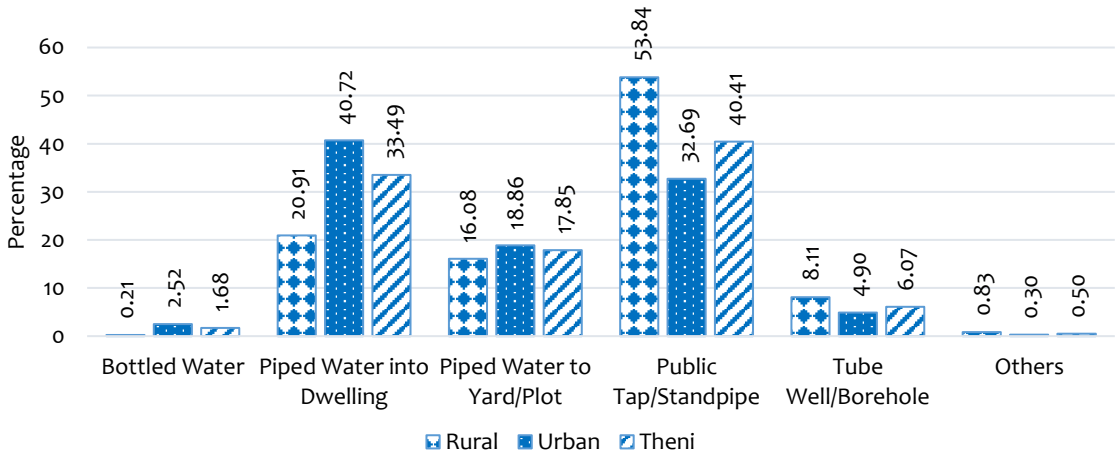


Chart 3.16 shows that 40.41 percent of households in Theni district was using public tap or standpipe as their primary source of drinking water, which is higher than the state estimate of 32.84 percent (TNHPS-PBS, 2021). The state estimates showed that piped water into the dwelling in urban areas at 37.02 percent and public tap/standpipe in rural areas at 44.51 percent were the primary water source of households (TNHPS-PBS, 2021). Likewise, in Theni district, piped water into the dwelling was predominantly used in urban households and public tap/standpipe was predominantly used in rural households.

3.5.4 Electricity

Tamil Nadu had witnessed mass electrification during the last decade. A comparison of households with electricity connection between Census (2011) and 2018 state PBS estimates (TNHPS-PBS, 2021) shows that state is close to the status of complete electrification in case of urban areas. The electrification status has improved in rural areas as well.

[6] Primary source - Water that is availed for the greater part of the year

Chart 3.17 Comparison of Households with Electricity between Census (2011) and PBS 2018

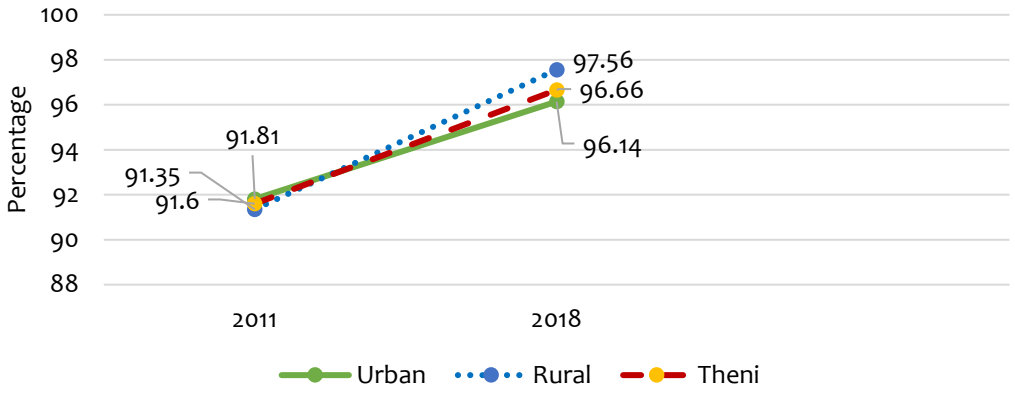


Chart 3.17 shows the electrification status of households in Theni district, along with a comparison to the electrification status during Census (2011). It shows rapid electrification in rural areas of Theni district between 2011 and 2018. The rate of growth of households with electricity was higher in rural areas compared to the urban areas. The electrification status in the district was than lower than the state estimate of 97.6 percent (TNHPS-PBS, 2021).

3.5.5 Primary Cooking Fuel

A comparison of Census (2011) and the PBS estimates on the main fuel[7] used for cooking by the households in the district is given in Chart 3.18.

Chart 3.18 Comparison of Primary Cooking Fuel – Theni and Tamil Nadu

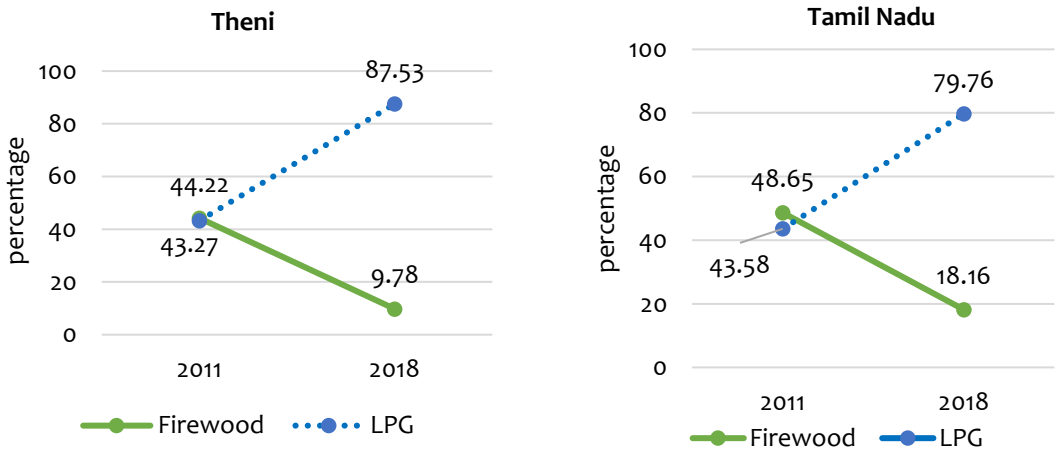


Chart 3.18 shows that, although the use of LPG as the primary cooking fuel had increased tremendously in the district from 2011 (Census 2011) to 2018 encompassing more than 85

[7] Main Fuel: Fuel that is used for the greater part of the year

percent of the households, firewood was still used by around 10 percent of the households. Compared to other districts of Tamil Nadu, Theni district was ranked tenth in terms of LPG use and ranked twenty fourth in terms of firewood used as primary cooking fuel (TNHPS-PBS, 2021).

Chart 3.19 Comparison of Primary Cooking Fuel – Rural and Urban

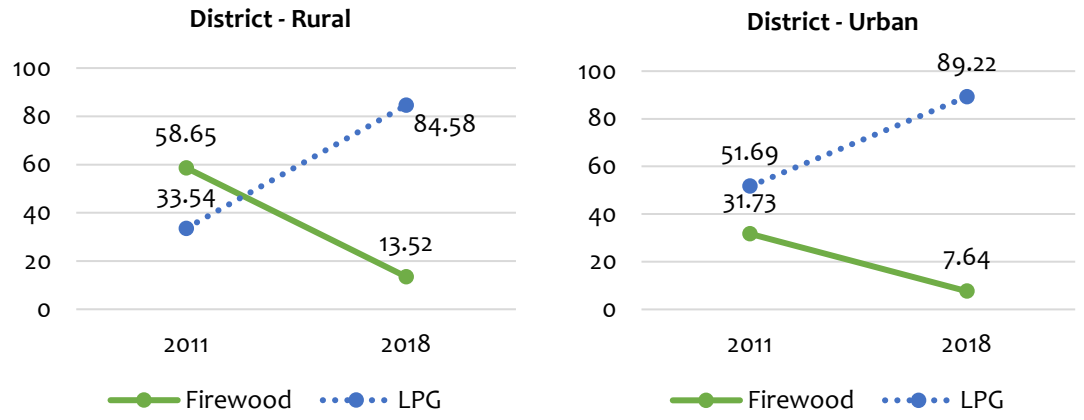


Chart 3.19 shows that the predominant fuel in rural areas in the district had changed drastically from firewood to LPG in the period 2011-18. LPG uptake had increased further in urban areas, and that of firewood had dropped to a minuscule amount during the same period.

Table 3.23 shows the use of various fuels for cooking among households of different social groups in Theni district.

Table 3.23 Primary Cooking Fuel in Household - Social Group-wise Percentages

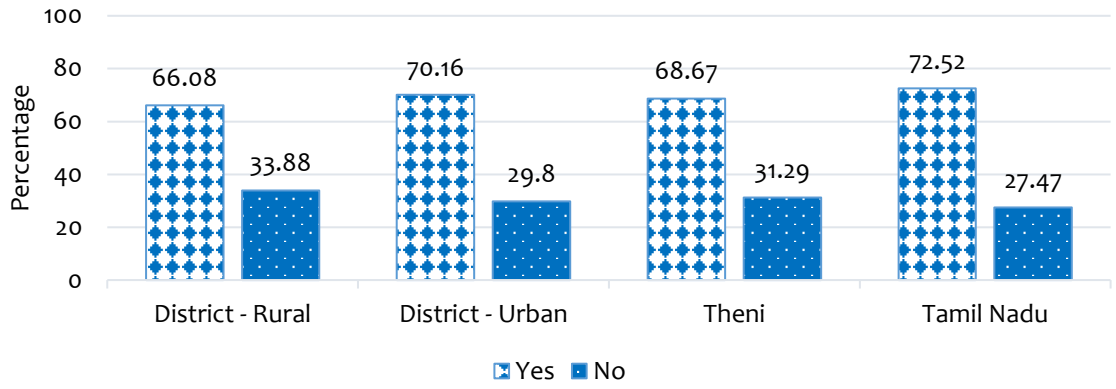
Primary Cooking Fuel	Social Group						
	SC	ST	BC	MBC	DNC	General	Theni
Fire wood	19.44	66.68	5.91	7.07	11.42	0.00	9.78
Kerosene	2.61	2.44	2.25	2.67	3.09	0.00	2.45
LPG	77.77	30.88	91.72	89.91	84.50	100	87.53
Others (Gobar gas, Electricity, etc.,)	0.14	0.00	0.10	0.33	0.98	0.00	0.22
DK/RF	0.03	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.02
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 3.23 shows that, more than 80 percent of the BC, MBC and DNC category households used LPG as the primary cooking fuel, whereas, around 67 percent of the ST households and around 20 percent of the SC households still used firewood as the primary cooking fuel. The results for the General Category must be interpreted in the context of their sample size, as discussed in Section 3.1.

3.5.6 Sanitation

The PBS estimates on households with and without latrine is given in Chart 3.20.

Chart 3.20 Presence of Latrine within the Premises of the Household



The percentage of households with latrine within house premises had increased from 39.35 percent in 2011 (Census, 2011) to 68.67 percent in 2018. As per the state estimates, Theni district was positioned twenty first among the 32 districts in terms of this indicator (TNHPS-PBS, 2021). The percentage of households equipped with latrine facilities in the district was lower than the state level estimate. It is pertinent to note that almost one-third of the rural households did not have access to a latrine within their house premises.

Table 3.24 Presence of Latrine within the Premises of the Household - Social Group-wise Percentages

Latrine within House Premises	Social Group						
	SC	ST	BC	MBC	DNC	General	Theni
Yes	48.68	33.86	77.49	64.81	70.95	100	68.67
No	51.32	66.14	22.47	35.19	28.90	0.00	31.29
DK/RF	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.16	0.00	0.04
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 3.24 shows the presence of latrine within the premises of the household across various social groups. While more than three-quarters of BC households had a latrine within the premises of the house, almost two-thirds of the ST households and more than half of the SC households did not have a latrine within the premises of their house. The results for the General Category must be interpreted in the context of their sample size, as discussed in Section 3.1.

The presence of latrine facilities in the premises of households owning different types of houses in total, rural and urban areas of Theni district was compared in Charts 3.21.

Chart 3.21 Presence of Latrine in the Premises of Different Types of Houses – Area-wise

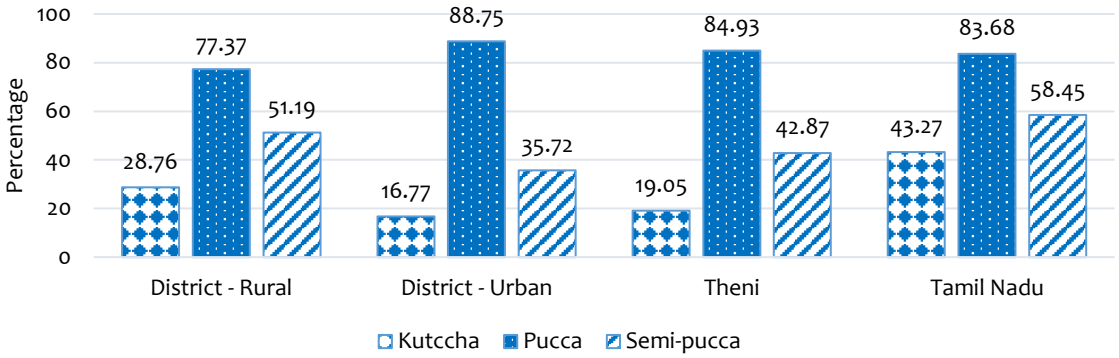


Chart 3.21 shows that the percentage of pucca houses with latrine facilities was higher than for semi-pucca and kutccha houses in the district. Except for Pucca houses, the percentages of latrine facilities in kutccha and semi-pucca houses in the district were lower than their respective state estimates. A higher number of pucca and kutccha houses in urban areas of the district had latrine facilities than rural areas.

The percentage of total households in the district following open defecation had declined from 40.14 percent in 2011 (Census, 2011) to 13.06 percent in 2018. The alternative practices of defecation followed by 31.29 percent of the district's households (see Chart 3.20) that did not have a latrine within the premises of the house is shown in Chart 3.22.

Chart 3.22 Alternate Practices of Defecation by the Households without Latrine

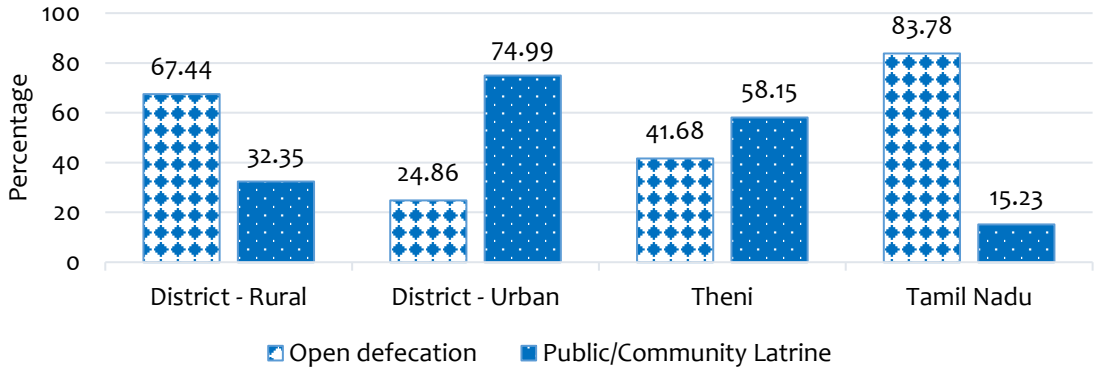


Chart 3.22 shows that 41.68 percent of households without latrine within the premises of the houses in Theni district was following open defecation, which was significantly lower than the state level estimate. The practice of open defecation was higher in rural areas than `urban areas of the district. Theni district was ranked twenty-eighth in terms of the percentage of total households following open defecation.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Pre-Baseline Survey (PBS) 2018-19 of Theni district was conducted from the sample of 5,406 households in the district who were willing to participate in the survey. The survey focused on five major indicators: i) demographic indicators, ii) development indicators, iii) socio-economic indicators, iv) household income and v) basic infrastructure.

The district estimates on the percentage of employed population was similar to the state estimate while that of female work participation was higher than that of the state. The proportion of agricultural land-owning households having irrigated agricultural land was higher in the district compared to the state estimate. Compared to the state estimate on the percentage of households living in pucca houses, the district estimate is marginally higher. The district performed better than the state in terms of higher LPG use and lower firewood use as primary fuel for cooking. Although the percentage of households equipped with latrine within house premises in the district was lower than the state estimate, open defecation rate was lower in the district as many of the households without latrine facilities used public/community latrine.

The literacy rate in Theni district was lesser than the state estimates. The district was ranked twentieth in the state in terms of this indicator. The district requires better educational infrastructure to improve the literacy rate further. There was a wide gender gap in literacy rate and attainment of formal schooling in the district, with the gap being wider in rural areas. A large proportion of females above the age of 14 who were not in the labour force were homemakers, though a large proportion of males in the same group were students. Policies targeted at improving the education status of women may be crucial to close this gender gap. A social group-wise disparity also existed in the district where the prevalence of formal education was lower among the ST and SC households compared to other social groups. Around 19.68 percent of the population in the district had not received formal education and more than 80 percent of the specified population—among the 19.68 percent of the population without formal education—did not have functional literacy. Government intervention in the form of adult literacy programs such as the famous "*Arivoli Iyakkam*" may ensure that the population with no formal education gets access to functional literacy.

Around one-third of the employed population was engaged as casual labourers in the agricultural sector. Though female work participation in the district was higher than that at the state level, it continued to be significantly lower than that for males. The employed population in all social groups—except General Category—were predominantly employed as casual labourers in the agricultural sector, which yielded lower incomes. Policy

interventions targeted at these marginalized sections and efforts to increase agricultural incomes may help reduce these disparities.

The percentage of households equipped with latrine facilities in the district was lower than the state estimate. Around two-thirds of the ST households and more than half of the SC households in the district did not have access to a latrine within the house premises. Firewood usage was also relatively high among ST and SC households in the district. Social group-wise targeting of policies to increase the adoption of LPG and promote latrine facilities might prove beneficial in bridging the gap.

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A collaborative project between
Department of Economics and Statistics &
Madras Institute of Development Studies

The Tamil Nadu Household Panel Survey (TNHPS) is designed as a longitudinal survey where a set of sample households in Tamil Nadu will be surveyed at specific intervals to analyse the change in their socio-economic conditions over time. The TNHPS aims to analyse how individuals, families, communities, and society are transforming in Tamil Nadu. Understanding this transformation is important for informed policy-making and for society in today's modern world where open links with other states and countries lead to enormous movement of people, ideas, technology, capital, and goods and services. The Pre-Baseline Survey (PBS) elicited information from 2,12,282 households across different districts of Tamil Nadu on a comprehensive set of socio-economic indicators. This serves as the sampling frame for the Baseline Survey (BLS) of subsequent rounds of comprehensive surveys of 7,45,653 individuals in the state.

Based on the information collected during the PBS 2018-19, this report provides a baseline on key socio-economic and demographic indicators of the district along with brief notes on the methods and processes followed in collecting, processing and analysis of data. As the first state-level initiative for collecting comprehensive household panel data through digital data collection methods, TNHPS emerges as an important source of information for evidence-based policymaking in the state.

For more information, please contact:
TNHPS Research Manager
Madras Institute of Development Studies
79, Second Main Road, Gandhi Nagar, Adyar
Chennai 600020 Ph: 24411574 / 24412589
www.mids.ac.in
Email : researchmanager.tnhps@gmail.com