

## **Empirical Study Of Social Capital Among Tribal Communities In The India**

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**Abstract—** The conceptualization of social capital may vary among academics due to their divergent focuses on specific facets of the construct. These elements encompass the functions, outputs, sources, and effects of the subject matter. The indigenous tribal populations of India are currently experiencing various times of transformation. The distinctiveness of a particular tribe is determined by its lifestyle, customs, and rituals. These entities might be located in various regions across the nation. This study will provide novel perspectives on the impact of social capital on these outcomes. The acquisition of this novel information would enable indigenous people to effectively adjust to changing circumstances with enhanced flexibility compared to prior limitations. Furthermore, the objective of this study was to provide suggestions for enhancing the social capital of the Paniya tribes residing in Tamil Nadu.

**Keywords:** Social Capital, Tribal Community, Trust, Networking and Community.

### **Background of the Study**

Within the scope of this investigation, the social capital of the Paniya Tribes in the Virudhunagar region is of paramount importance. Based on the results of this study, it can be inferred that a robust and dynamic social capital holds significant prominence in determining the prosperity of a community, particularly in the case of the Paniya tribal communities situated in Tamil Nadu. The user's text is already academic. No rewriting is necessary. The term "social capital" typically encompasses the concepts of trust, altruism towards individuals within one's social network, and a propensity to adhere to communal norms while also sanctioning those who deviate from such norms.

The statement made by Bowles and Gintis (2000) highlights the manner in which individuals establish and maintain interpersonal relationships in various aspects of their everyday existence, such as within their familial units, local communities, and professional environments. According to Krishna (2007), social capital is perceived as a resource that emanates from social structure and can be beneficial in the pursuit of diverse favorable outcomes. In the context of the reconstruction process, the significance of relationships is comparable to their importance in society. The efficacy of this restoration cycle is particularly pronounced within tribal communities due to their

notable levels of interdependence and variety. The concept of "social capital" pertains to a valuable resource that highlights the significance of social connections that lead to advantageous outcomes.

The concept of "social capital" encompasses the interconnectedness of individuals within social networks, encompassing connections, trust, communication, and collaboration, which are both upheld and strengthened through these social interactions. Communities characterized by elevated levels of social capital are prone to have enhanced academic achievement, alongside reduced instances of criminal activity and violence. Furthermore, it is plausible that the youth residing within these communities are more inclined to experience increased levels of happiness, improved overall well-being, and an extended lifespan (Putnam, 2000). Families, especially parents, encounter challenges in accessing support, particularly during periods of breakdown in available resources. Children who are brought up in such situations may experience a disproportionate amount of negative consequences, resulting in an increased likelihood of engaging in self-destructive behaviors such as substance abuse, despair, self-harm, aggression, and acts of violence. The notion of social capital encompasses the comprehensive social milieu, while also underscoring the significance of social processes in the formation and resolution of social issues. Instead of solely concentrating on an individual's conduct, social

capital encompasses the wider social context (Osterling, 2007). Sustainable development might potentially be attained by enhancing social relationships, interactions, and coherence among young individuals through the integration of novel concepts within the familial, communal, and educational domains.

This study incorporates the multifaceted nature of social capital, encompassing both the social and historical dimensions of social capital activities as experienced within tribal societies. These practices are situated and constructed upon. The fundamental focus of study lies in the examination of many dimensions of social capital, such as group participation, trust, conformity to societal norms, social cohesion, community connections, and voluntary engagement. A society characterized by a significant accumulation of social capital is expected to exhibit a greater capacity to effectively address and overcome obstacles, in contrast to a society with a lower level of social capital accumulation, which may struggle to address issues with comparable efficacy. This phenomenon may be attributed to the requirement of employing protocols and networks in instances where individuals may exhibit reluctance to participate or engage in social communication.

The objective of this study is to examine and evaluate the social capital of the Paniya tribal communities situated in the Virudhunagar district, employing the specified variables. Social capital primarily pertains to the social relationships and networks that exist across various cohorts of individuals. Social capital can be observed in a scenario where individuals exhibit a shared sense of belonging, possess similar ideologies, place trust in one another, and collaborate harmoniously to achieve shared objectives (Kramer, 2006).

The essence of social capital is generated from a multitude of distinct aspects of interpersonal connections, encompassing the persistence of interactions between individuals and external entities, reciprocal exchanges, trustworthiness, as well as shared values and norms. The inclusion of trust within the framework of this notion embodies its fundamental principle. According to Fukuyama's (1999) scholarly essay on social capital, the concept can be defined as a collection of informal beliefs or standards that are commonly held by individuals

within a particular organization, hence promoting cooperation among its members. The inclusion of a citation is necessary to support the information provided. In accordance with the World Bank's report in 1999, it is stated that social capital encompasses the frameworks, linkages, and norms that exert influence on the extent and nature of a society's social engagements. The inclusion of a citation is necessary to support the claim being made.

The enhancement of social relationships within a community facilitates the development of a collective sense of cohesion among its members. The concept of 'capital' can be applied to pleasant interactions and relationships, which hold significant value within a society and in interpersonal connections. One perspective to consider is the concept of communal wealth or social capital. The asset in question possesses the capacity to provide community members with opportunities to enhance their overall welfare and reduce their vulnerability to unfavorable circumstances. Buchan (2003) posits that social capital can be conceptualized as a cohesive force consisting of community norms, values, and networks that foster collective efforts towards a shared objective. Without this binding element, the consequences may include both human alienation and environmental deterioration. Hence, the term "social capital" pertains to the interrelationships and networks that individuals possess, rather than solely focusing on their individual attributes. Social capital is commonly referred to as a "invisible form of capital" due to its reliance on concealed social structures and interactions that serve as the fundamental building blocks of networks. According to Koniordos (2008),

## Methodology

Numerous research have been conducted on the socioeconomic conditions of scheduled tribes in India by sociologists, economists, and agricultural scientists. These studies have produced a variety of findings. The current research examines how social capital can contribute to a better understanding of society as a whole, as well as the role that understanding plays in the process of sustainable tribe development. "The measurement of social capital may be used to inform policy in their area of responsibility, as well as the kinds of policy questions that measurements of social capital may help to answer, and the manner in which policy efforts may have an impact on social capital." The purpose of the project is to investigate how different amounts of social capital could influence the outcomes of a variety of different aspects of sustainable development (OECD, 2002). The current research will make a contribution toward a better understanding of the role that social capital plays in affecting these outcomes. This insight will enable tribal cultures to adjust more quickly to change than civilizations that had a certain number of resources. Building social capital in communities is likely going to become an increasing focus for social capital policy and practices in the Paniya Community if the relationship between social capital and tribe growth is found to be sufficiently robust.

The primary objective of this study was to make some suggestions on methods that may be utilized by the paniya tribes located in Tamil Nadu to increase their level of social capital. When compared to other Paniya tribes, they were one of the most backward and unsophisticated people groups. The social capital of the Paniya tribes was evaluated based on trust, social norms, networking, reciprocity, collective action and collaboration, and other factors. The research is also attempting to provide intervention techniques for the purpose of increasing the level of social capital among the Paniya tribes that are located in Tamil Nadu.

A survey was carried out in the five tribal villages inhabited by the Paniya people in the district of Virudhunagar. There are a total of 168 tribal households located in these communities. The data were acquired from 65 different houses through the use of a straightforward random sampling approach. The researcher gathered

information from local tribal residents of the Virudhunagar district primarily through the use of questionnaires as the instrument of choice. The nature of the questionnaire was that it was closed. The first section discusses socio-demographic statistics, the second section discusses various aspects of social capital within tribal societies, and the third section discusses the management of social capital. A questionnaire is a research instrument that consists of a series of questions with the objective of gathering information from respondents. Typically, a questionnaire will consist of a number of questions that the respondent will be required to answer in a predetermined format. The IBM SPSS version 21.0 was utilized by the researcher for the analysis of the data. In order to obtain an appropriate interpretation from the data that was available, both frequency analysis and percentage analysis were utilized.

## Result and Discussion

Based on a study conducted on the socioeconomic circumstances of the Paniya Tribes, it was found that a significant proportion of 75.4% of their population engaged in informal labor within the unorganized sector, primarily for daily wages. Based on the analysis of residential stability, a significant proportion of individuals belonging to the Paniya tribe (49.3 percent) have been in their current area for a period exceeding 60 years. Moreover, within this demographic, a majority of 52 percent possess personal assets, while a significant proportion of 47.7 percent also possess residential properties. The study elucidated the saving behaviors of the Paniya tribes, unveiling notable findings such as the fact that 33.8% of individuals within this community possess savings in post office institutions, while 29.2% maintain accounts with banks, and 26.3% allocate their assets to private chit funds. Considering the well-being of the Paniya Tribes, it can be observed that 63.4% of individuals exhibit a condition of normal health, whereas 36.6% experience ordinary health and are susceptible to seasonal ailments. The evidence indicated that the health status of the Paniya tribes had significantly returned to a condition of normalcy.

The assessment of the social capital of the Paniya tribes encompassed various dimensions, including trust, generalized norms, social networks, reciprocity, collective action, and collaboration. The researcher employed a standardized measure

established by the World Bank to assess the social capital of the Paniya Tribes. Based on the research findings, it can be observed that a significant proportion of the Paniya Tribes exhibit a decreased emphasis on societal norms and standards compared to their ancestors. The Paniya tribes' inclination towards a helping mindset was found to be lacking commendability due to the increasing lack of trustworthiness and self-centeredness among their peers. Specifically, 69.1 percent of the Paniya tribespeople did not accept any form of assistance from others, while 72.8 percent displayed a lack of enthusiasm in providing support to others. Nevertheless, the seasoned individuals inside the community revealed that throughout their youth, all residents in that specific locality coexisted together, fostering a collective sentiment of unity commonly referred to as a "we feeling." Conversely, based on the feedback provided by 71.7 percent of the participants, there exists a lack of mutual trust among them. According to the findings, a significant majority of 73.9 percent express the view that both group participation and group cohesion are currently at a remarkably diminished state. Based on the perspectives of 87.5% of the participants, the level of protection for women and children was deemed satisfactory. This conclusion is derived from the empirical data collected through the observations made by the participants. The data reveals that a significant proportion of the Paniya tribes (68.4 percent) have limited interaction with their neighbors, whereas 32.6 percent maintain positive relationships with them. The individuals made regular visits to their respective residences and actively engaged in a diverse range of social events and gatherings hosted by their neighbors. The study additionally indicated a lack of significant involvement in community events, club activities, and community help during emergencies, as reported by 65.3%, 73.9%, and 66.7% of respondents, respectively. According to the perspective of 78.3 percent of individuals, there was a lack of cooperation among community members in participating in communal dining practices during festivals and ceremonies, despite the fact that such activities held religious significance. Approximately 54.6% of the population lacks a sense of community, whereas the remaining 45.4% has a feeling of collective oneness. The study found that social capital among the Paniya tribes is significantly low and has been declining over time.

The investigation aimed to examine the influence of the elder generation on this trend and discovered that trust, togetherness, group cohesion, and team spirit were prevalent among the younger members of the community. There is a tremendous desire to impart the uplifting lessons to both present and future generations.

The research presented a range of intervention strategies aimed at enhancing social capital, not just inside the indigenous Paniya tribe community, but also among other indigenous tribal communities. The fundamental strategy for enhancing the socioeconomic conditions of the Paniya tribes involves the collaboration between higher educational institutions, conducting research in forest areas, and obtaining patents for products and information. This approach aims to identify and enhance indigenous knowledge. Conducting an ecological assessment of the resources present in the forest region is necessary to mitigate potential conflicts arising from the trade-off between livelihood benefits and environmental conservation. This approach is expected to yield positive outcomes in terms of maintaining the ecological integrity of the forest area through sustainable extraction practices. The revitalization and enhancement of the department of tribal development by the government is important in order to optimize its efficacy and effectively address the needs and demands of the tribal population. The collaboration and efficient communication across government departments are of utmost importance. Collaboration between the tribal department and other pertinent governmental bodies, including as the health, education, local self-government, and forest departments, has significant importance. This collaborative effort aims to facilitate the provision of employment opportunities, training programs, social services, and educational initiatives, in addition to healthcare services, to the tribal communities. To ensure effective management of welfare programs for indigenous groups, it is imperative to conduct a social audit. The establishment of a monitoring cell is important throughout all tribal communities to assess the efficacy of tribal welfare programs. It is recommended that the government provide support to non-profit groups in their endeavors to enhance the educational attainment, civic consciousness, health awareness, and overall quality of life within the Paniya community through

a participatory approach. It is recommended that non-profit organizations take the initiative to offer these programs for the Paniya community. The enhancement of trust, commitment, and solidarity within indigenous communities can be facilitated by augmenting the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) through the implementation of various initiatives such as awareness campaigns, street performances, distribution of informational materials like palm and leaf leaflets, and similar endeavors. This intervention aims to enhance the social work practice of case work, group work, and community organizing within the Paniya tribes by fostering the development of team building skills, promoting cooperation, and facilitating joint action.

### Conclusion

Social capital is characterized by intangible types of capital, namely trust, norms, networks, reciprocity, and collective action. These types of capital are imperceptible to the unaided human sight, although their effects are readily observable. Social capital is defined by the presence of trust, shared norms, interconnected networks, and collaborative collective action. This comprises the various elements of a society, including its structures, relationships, and practices, all of which collectively influence the extent and diversity of social interactions within it. A fundamental characteristic shared by all manifestations of social capital is their focus on favorable outcomes resulting from constructive social interactions. The multifaceted nature of social capital and the challenges associated with its conceptualization and comprehension contribute to the diverse interpretations found in existing research on the subject. The current investigation examined the socioeconomic characteristics of the Paniya tribes with the aim of enhancing comprehension of this population. Based on the results of the investigation, the scholars concluded that the Paniya tribes exhibited a significantly diminished degree of social capital. There exists a notable lack of mutual trust among the individuals, and a significant proportion of the population refrains from engaging in collective endeavors. The researcher's conclusion was that there existed little communication among individuals and a lack of reliance on neighbors, especially during emergency situations. Consequently, the researcher has put forth strategies to enhance social capital within the

tribal community, in collaboration with governmental agencies and welfare initiatives.

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