

BRIDGING EDUCATIONAL GAPS: A STUDY ON BENEFICIARY PERCEPTIONS OF THE TAMIL PUDHALVAN SCHEME IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT:

The research "Bridging Educational Gaps: A Study on Beneficiary Perceptions of the Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme in Coimbatore" investigates how college students view the success of the Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme, which offers ₹1,000 monthly financial support to economically backward male students. Coimbatore, as the leading district in implementation, was selected as the research site. Drawing on the responses of 150 participants, the study indicates that students identify the scheme as largely beneficial, especially to poor and rural students.

Nonetheless, the scheme is perceived to be less effective in increasing academic motivation or curtailing child labor. Correlation analysis reveals the strong association among perception, effect, and suggestions, and shows the need for concerted efforts. The study proposes that the scheme be supplemented by financial aid, academic, and emotional support, awareness campaigns, and improved accessibility to enhance overall effectiveness of the scheme. To conclude, though the scheme helps in eradicating the monetary barrier, it requires a multi-dimensional approach in order to derive broader educational and social impacts.

Keywords: Perception, tamil pudhalvan scheme, financial support.

INTRODUCTION :

Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme is a major scheme introduced by the Tamil Nadu Government to increase higher education for male students from economically backward class students. The scheme was formally inaugurated on August 9, 2024, by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin at Coimbatore, which identified the district as a key place of implementation. Under this program, male students who have undergone their education from Classes VI to XII in government or government-aided schools where the medium of instruction was Tamil are eligible to get a monthly financial grant of ₹1,000. This assistance will be provided up to the successful completion of their first undergraduate degree, diploma, or ITI course. In the Coimbatore district, the scheme has been a grand success, with 22,311 beneficiaries registered till November 2024, and it is the state's top district in implementation. The main reasons for the success of this tamil pudhalvan scheme are Coimbatore has numerous colleges and technical institutions, where students from various regions of the country come to pursue studies, District administration organized almost 400 special camps to enroll eligible students and opened almost 8,000 bank accounts of rural and other district students who are studying in Coimbatore, Continuous follow-ups were done so that the scheme reached all eligible students, enabling easy higher education system. Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme is also one of the schemes as part of a program by Tamil Nadu government for creating scope for all the students to pursue higher education as an addendum to schemes such as Pudhumai Penn Scheme that is exclusively targeting female students. These schemes combined altogether will focus on having a socially inclusive education system in such a way that no student gets deprived of opportunities due to their financial drawbacks anywhere in the state.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Eahambaram & Harish (2023) in their research article, "A study on parents awareness of Pudhumai penn government scheme" with special reference to Tirupur city" found that a scheme which has gone a long way in empowering numerous women to become financially independent and self-sufficient and it gives tremendous financial support to enable women to accomplish their aspirations and it is ease of application process makes it accessible to a huge majority of players.

Moorthy & Christina Jeyadevi (2023) in their paper entitled "A Study on Awareness of Central Government Policies for the Sustainable Development of Rural India with special reference to Coimbatore discloses that, even though numerous government schemes are present and being formulated throughout the country. People from southern regions, are not highly aware of such schemes. As per the research, the participants had a medium level of knowledge about Central Government schemes. Based on these findings, the researchers provided suggestions to enhance awareness and enable easier access to the benefits of such schemes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Though the government has been in the vanguard of promoting higher education through schemes like the welfare schemes of the Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme, offering ₹1,000 of monthly support to eligible male students in government schools, there still is a wide gap between policy delivery and awareness among beneficiaries. Even in the district of Coimbatore, where educational infrastructure is quite well-developed, not many students of colleges remain unaware of the schemes or half as knowledgeable as they ought to be regarding the benefits and procedures for getting the benefits. Although some of the beneficiaries are satisfactorily benefited by the support, quite many of them are prevented from gaining the benefits due to administrative constraints, weak outreach, or inappropriate counseling. This lack of awareness and satisfaction defeats the very purpose of these programs: to provide educational continuity and improvement of students belonging to economically weaker sections. Therefore, it is imperative to establish the knowledge, awareness, and usage of such welfare schemes among college students in Coimbatore, to recognize what obstacles are serving as barriers towards their effective implementation, and provide meaningful recommendations with a view to enhancing their reach and efficacy.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What is the demographic profile of the college students surveyed in Coimbatore district?
- What is the perception of college students regarding the usefulness, adequacy, and accessibility of the Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme?
- What suggestions can be proposed to improve perception and accessibility of the Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme among college students?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To analyze the demographic profile of the respondents in Coimbatore district.
- To examine the perception of students regarding the effectiveness and impact of the scheme.
- To provide relevant findings and suggest actionable measures to enhance the scheme's reach, perception, and efficiency.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The research has a number of limitations. The sample is limited by resource and time constraints, which can impact the representativeness of the results. Additionally, the research is limited to Coimbatore district, and therefore the results cannot be applied in other areas. The reliance on self-reported data is subject to awareness and recall bias since students may exaggerate their knowledge of the Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme. The time period of the study also constrains its potential to measure changes in attitudes over the long term or the development of the scheme. In addition, the data collection processes may not reflect the richness of student experience, and there could be bias through non-even access or participation, especially among rural students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

The research is mainly based on primary data gathered with the help of a structured interview schedule from 150 college students in the Coimbatore district through a convenient sampling method. Secondary data was collected from multiple sources such as magazines, academic journals, and

trustworthy websites. Percentage Analysis, Multiple Dichotomy analysis, and Garrett Ranking Method to rank the factors as per the preferences and responses of the students.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS REGARDING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT OF THE SCHEME.

The mean ratings of the agreement level of the respondents have been assigned as 1 for 'Not beneficial at all', 2 for 'not very beneficial', 3 for 'Somewhat beneficial', 4 for 'beneficial' and 5 for 'very beneficial'. The mean ratings have been found out for each item and are given in the following table.

Table no.1.1

Perception of students regarding the effectiveness and impact of the scheme

services	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
The scheme is beneficial for students from poor backgrounds	200	1	5	4.4238	.76802
₹1,000 per month is sufficient to meet educational expenses.	200	1	5	4.0476	.58500
The scheme has helped me continue my education.	200	1	5	3.8429	.88533
The scheme is implemented fairly and transparently	200	1	5	3.7143	1.03262
The support motivates students to focus more on studies.	200	1	5	3.5238	1.15825
The application process for the scheme is easy and accessible	200	1	5	3.7619	1.08952

Source : Primary data

The total mean perception of students regarding the effectiveness and impact of the scheme with the highest score 4.4238 has been found for 'The scheme is beneficial for students from poor backgrounds' with a standard deviation of .76802 and the lowest mean score 3.5238 for 'The support motivates students to focus more on studies' with a standard deviation of 1.15825.

FRIEDMAN RANK TEST:

Table no.1.2

Benefits of Awaing Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme

Ranks		
Particulars	Mean Rank	Actual Rank
Motivation for Rural and Marginalized students	1.48	1
Promotes Educational Continuity	2.40	2
Covers Government and Aided Schools	3.12	3
Improves Social Equity	3.71	4
Reduction in Child Labor	4.31	5

Test Statistics ^a	
N	200
Chi-Square	392.488
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. Friedman Test	

From the above table, it is clearly shown that “Motivation for Rural and Marginalized students” mean value of 1.48 ranked highest among the respondents, followed by “Promotes Educational Continuity” with mean value of 2.40, followed by “Covers Government and Aided Schools” with a mean value of 3.12, followed by “Improves Social Equity” with the mean value of 3.71, followed by “Reduction in Child Labor” has the mean value of 4.31 has been ranked least among the respondents.

CORRELATION:

Table no.1.3
Correlation Analysis of Perception, Impact and Suggestions of Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme

		Perception	Impact	Suggestions
Perception	Pearson Correlation	1	.667**	.742**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	146	146	146
Impact	Pearson Correlation	.667**	1	.842**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	146	146	146
Suggestions	Pearson Correlation	.742**	.842**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	146	146	146
	Pearson Correlation	1	.667**	.742**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000

The correlation table shows that there is moderate correlation between all the factors. The highest correlation is .842 between impact of the Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme. And the lowest correlation between level of impact towards the perception of tamil pudhalvan scheme and level of impact towards the tamil pudhalvan scheme. All the factors are positive correlated.

Hence, it is positive correlation.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

Strong Perceived Benefit for Poor Students:

The highest mean perception score (M = 4.4238, SD = 0.76802) indicates that students strongly agree the scheme is beneficial for those from poor backgrounds.

This confirms the core objective of the scheme — financial inclusion and support for underprivileged students — is being effectively met.

Weaker Impact on Academic Motivation:

The lowest mean score (M = 3.5238, SD = 1.15825) was for the statement: “The support motivates students to focus more on studies.”

This suggests that financial aid alone may not be sufficient to significantly increase academic motivation among all students.

Ranking of Perceived Impacts (Based on Mean Values):

1st: Motivation for Rural and Marginalized Students (M = 1.48)

2nd: Promotes Educational Continuity (M = 2.40)

3rd: Covers Government and Aided Schools (M = 3.12)

4th: Improves Social Equity (M = 3.71)

5th: Reduction in Child Labor (M = 4.31)

Students ranked the scheme's motivational effect on marginalized students the highest, indicating that it plays a key role in keeping these students in school.

Conversely, reduction in child labor was ranked lowest, suggesting this outcome is either less visible or less attributed to the scheme by students.

Moderate and Positive Correlations Among All Factors:

All factors show positive correlation, indicating that they tend to move together — when one aspect of the scheme is perceived positively, others are likely to be viewed positively as well.

The highest correlation (.842) indicates a strong relationship between the overall impact of the scheme and specific factors, signifying consistent perceptions of its effectiveness.

The lowest correlation, though still positive, exists between perception and level of impact, suggesting a weaker alignment between belief in the scheme and its felt impact.

SUGGESTIONS:

According to the findings, some suggestions can be made to increase the impact and effectiveness of the Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme. Although the scheme is well appreciated for offering financial aid to economically backward students, particularly rural and downtrodden communities, it can be seen that mere financial support might not be sufficient to highly encourage students academically. Hence, the government can think of incorporating other mechanisms for academic support like mentorship, after-school tutoring, and career counseling to encourage students to maintain their focus on studies. In addition, because students have not firmly associated the scheme with an avoidance of child labor, increased awareness of the long-term advantage of pursuing further education is needed. Parent, community, and school outreach programs could be helpful in bridging this gap and reaffirming the importance of education as against early employment. To ensure that the objectives of the scheme are being achieved, constant monitoring and feedback from the beneficiaries should be made institutional. This would enable the government to better comprehend the problems of the students and make the scheme more effective accordingly. Lastly, an effort must be made to notify all such students eligible under the scheme and provide them with facilities to avail the same without red-tape restrictions. Through integrating financial aid with academic, psychological, and societal assistance, Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme can become an even greater and lasting contributor in students' lives.

CONCLUSION:

The Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme has appeared as a robust initiative that can help improve the educational opportunities for male students of economically backward and marginalized communities of Tamil Nadu. The results depict that the scheme is generally known to be supportive, especially considering financial assistance and its contribution in ensuring educational availability for rural and disadvantaged students. But the relatively lower score in sub-domains like academic motivation and perceived impact on child labor indicate that the scheme's gains are not yet being maximally realized in terms of enhanced educational enrolment or lasting social change. While the scheme has taken great strides towards surmounting economic disadvantages to education, it can be reinforced further with coordinated support services, publicity efforts, and more intensive interventions. Overall, Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme is capable of making a significant contribution towards educational equality and social emancipation, but for full impact, a multi-dimensional effort beyond scholarship is essential.

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