



RESEARCH ARTICLE

BASIC AMENITIES IN TIRUPATTUR, VELLORE DISTRICT: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Tirupattur is one of the oldest towns in Tamil Nadu located at Vellore District. According to an article presented in 'The Times of India' (2010), 82% rural India still lacks basic amenities which include drinking water, sanitation and electricity. The present study was undertaken to understand the public's opinion on the basic amenities available in Tirupattur, Vellore District, Tamil Nadu. The views of the public were systematically collected based on a structured interview schedule which facilitated them to denote/order and rate the effectiveness of the basic amenities which they deem fit according to their perception. The study revealed significant findings on the existing conditions with regard to the provision of drinking water facilities, standards of roads and adequate community transport. The study also provided insights into the availability of ATM's, significance of Sanitation, Garbage & Pollution facilities existing in the town of Tirupattur. Significant measures need to be taken by the local community, concerned authorities and the respective Government in curbing into the nature of the various problems with regard to the current scenario.

Key words: Basic Amenities, Water Supply, Road Facilities, Garbage, Sanitation and Pollution etc.

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INTRODUCTION

The term basic amenities denotes, basic facilities that are provided by the government to make life easier and pleasant for the people. Tirupattur is one of the oldest towns in Tamil Nadu located in Vellore District. The essential meaning of the town 'Tirupattur' implies a group of ten villages located in a common periphery. According to an article presented in 'The Times of India' (2010), 82% rural India still lacks basic amenities which include drinking water, sanitation and electricity. The NSSO study on Housing Condition and Amenities in India 2008-09, points out that around 64% of rural households don't have a bathroom as compared to 22% in urban areas. As per the report, 15% of rural population are still looking for a dependable source of water. Similar plight plagues 8% urban populace even though 74% have access to safe drinking water.

Amenity

Amenities play an important role in understanding the growth and development of a village, town, district or state. The basic commodities available define the life style and condition of the people living. In defining amenities as desirable conveniences, it is essential to denote the factors that make life worth living for the common man. In understanding the current context of the necessary amenities there is a growing need to highlight the effectiveness and the extent to which these entities are seen as being useful to the community at large. Equally important are the less visible types of support that make people feel at home in an area and create a sense of local identity and belonging, like volunteers or community workers who can encourage new residents to meet their neighbors and get involved in shared community activities. Extra support is also needed to help understand and use new and emerging environmentally sustainable technologies.

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Conceptual Clarity on Basic Amenities

According to the Webster's Dictionary, Basic Amenities refers to things considered to be essential to make life easier and more pleasant. In an extensive study conducted by Eldis (2007), on the Basic amenities in urban India: analysis at state and town level, denoted the following entities:- provision for drinking water, road facilities, banking facilities, educational sectors, garbage, sanitation and pollution control facilities, community transport and electricity. In lieu with the same, the current study undertaken highlights the existing scenario as portrayed by the community on the provision for drinking water facilities, road standards, community transport, banking/ATM facilities, garbage, pollution and sanitation amenities as perceived by the people in Tirupattur town.

Provision of Drinking Water

According to an article in 'Hindustan Times' (2017), India has more people in rural areas 63.4 million living without access to clean water than any other country. This fact can be also seen in most underdeveloped towns and major cities. Drinking water supply in India continues to be inadequate, despite longstanding efforts by the various levels of government and communities at improving coverage. The adequacy of good drinking water effectively determines the growth of any town and Tirupattur is no different.

Road Facilities

The town environment is often the growth engine of a country, they interconnect the food supply and the rural population as custodians of the environment and ecosystems. A major constraint with developing towns are the maintenance and construction of new roads to meet the growing need of the population. The fact is that most of these roads are unfortunately, sub standard. The adoption of traffic rules being followed, conditions/standards of existing roads become highly questionable in developing areas.

Community Transport

Community transport enables people to live independently, participate in their community and to access education, employment, health and other services. Community Transport plays an important role in the life style of people and enable the common man to commute to various areas for his livelihood and other needs. Connectivity impacts the living conditions in two ways. One, it gives the communities more reliable and quicker access to outside products, services, information, and social linkages. Two, it is basically concerned with improving the mobility of individuals and the goods and services they need.

Bank/ATM Facilities

The impact of demonetization on 8th November 2016, had left the common man becoming a hunter and gather in search of working ATM's in most towns and rural areas. People in most towns had resorted to measures of curbing their expenses because their respective banks were only rationing cash. Many daily wage workers were unable to find work and this disrupted the life of the common man. ATM, facilities has become a necessary entity for the common man today.

It has developed into a mandatory commodity that makes life easier. However, the questions remains on the such ATM's, having sufficient availability of cash, versatile security and safe condition for its use.

Sanitation, Garbage & Pollution

In an article by 'Deccan Chronicle' (2016), "India ranks top for having the greatest number of urbanites living without a safe, private toilet(157 million) as well as the most urban dwellers practicing open defecation 41 million". The availability of adequate toilet facilities, dustbins, proper drainage systems and pollution control measure denote the development of any town or city and in Tirupattur, it is a factor to be reckoned with.

Review of Literature

R. B. Bhagat (2011), in an article on "Urbanization and Access to Basic Amenities in India", stated that, the access to basic amenities like electricity, drinking water, toilet facility, wastewater outlet and clean fuel are critical determinants of quality of urbanization. The study revealed variations in the availability of basic amenities like electricity, LPG and drinking water and show a direct relationship with the size of cities and towns. The study also stated that big cities show better availability of basic services compared to small urban centres. The regional disparity in the pattern of basic amenities closely follows the level of urbanization at the state level. The states with low availability of basic amenities in urban areas are also the states with low level of urbanization. On the other hand, access to basic amenities varies in accordance with the size categories of cities and towns except for toilet facility and sanitation.

Afrin Hossain & Anhar Zihan Athoi (2014), in their research on "Amenities for Decentralized activity in Rural Bangladesh", stated that, the priority of services and facilities are the core requirements by the local respondents. A lot of variation was revealed regarding requirements of the local and non-local people among the five districts (Moulvibazar, Bogra, Bagerhat, Pabna, Kishoregonj). Based on the analyses, the study recommends the improvement of facilities like Water Quality and Electricity, Transportation Facilities and Community Facilities that should be provided to keep people from moving to major cities and living a decent life in their hometowns.

Arjun Kumar (2014), in an article on "Access to Basic Amenities Aspects of Caste, Ethnicity and Poverty in Rural and Urban India", stated that, basic amenities such as drinking water facility, sanitation facilities and drainage arrangement require special attention in both rural and urban areas with more focus towards rural areas. Even for identical economic groups (poor and non-poor), SCs and STs were found lagging behind in reducing the gap with lower rate of improvement than others and also in the existing levels in 2008–2009.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Aim

The present study was undertaken to understand the public's opinion on the basis amenities available in Tirupattur, Vellore District, Tamil Nadu.

Objectives

- To highlight the availability of adequate drinking facilities
- To denote the effectiveness of road and community transport
- To understand the availability of adequate ATM facilities
- To bring to light the current condition of Sanitation, Garbage & Pollution levels in Tirupattur.

Universe & Sampling

The study was conducted within the periphery of Tirupattur, which is a part of Vellore District in Tamil Nadu. Public Opinion was collected based on a structured interview schedule which facilitated the public to denote/order and rate the effectiveness of the basic amenities which they deem fit according their perceptible. Data was collected using the non-probability sampling method which adhered to the convenient sampling technique. A sample of 400 respondents were taken for the study.

Tools of Data Collection

Name of the Instrument	Reliability	Rating Scale	Data Collection Method
Understanding the Basic Amenities at Tirupattur Self-Structured Scale	<i>Established .887Cronbach's Alpha</i>	Likert 5 Point Rating Scale with positive and negative questions	Questionnaire Method was adopted

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents with regard to their commonly used sources for Drinking Water

S.No.	Sources used for Drinking Water	Frequency (N:400)	Percentage (%)
	Bore well/ Hand pump	99	24.8
	Public tap/ Public Tank	106	26.5
	Community well	9	2.3
	House hold water supply (piped)	55	13.8
	Packed Water Cans	125	31.3
	Others	6	1.5

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents with regard to the Importance given towards the Provision of Drinking Water

S.No.	Provision of Drinking Water in Tirupattur	Frequency (N:400)		Percentage (%)	
		Low	High	Low	High
	Sufficient availability of Drinking Water	118	282	29.5	70.5
	Satisfaction with the cleanness of drinking water available	147	253	36.8	63.3
	Water available (from the main source) throughout the year	186	214	46.5	53.3
	Overall satisfaction on the provision of drinking water Service at Tirupattur	150	250	38	62

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents with regard to their Perception on the existing Road Facilities

S.No.	Road Facilities in Tirupattur	Frequency (N:400)		Percentage (%)	
		Low	High	Low	High
	Standard & Conditions of Roads	252	148	63	37
	Maintenance of Roads	253	147	63.3	36.8
	Construction of New Roads	240	160	60	40
	Adoption of Traffic Rules	247	153	61.8	38.3
	Road Safety	293	107	73.3	26.8
	Road Discipline	300	100	75	25
	Overall condition of Road Facilities	264	136	66	34

Research Design

Descriptive studies are aimed at finding out "what is," so observational and survey methods are frequently used to collect descriptive data (Borg & Gall, 1989). The Descriptive research design thus was adopted in the present study since the research aims in understanding, highlighting and describing the public's opinion on the various amenities available in Tirupattur.

Analysis of Data

The presented Table 1, denotes that, less than one third (31.3%) of the respondents state that they purchase packed water cans for their daily purpose of water for drinking, while a little more than one fourth (26.5%) state that they make use of the community public taps and water tanks for water. Less than one fourth (24.8%) of the respondents state that they uses bore well and hand pumps for drinking water, while a little more than one tenth (13.8%) of the respondents state they use the supply of Cauvery water provided by the Government in their homes for drinking. A very marginal (2.3%) and (1.5%) of the respondents state that they make use of the community well and other resources available for drinking water. From the above table it is evident that Cauvery water is used by only a little more than one tenth of the aforesaid population. Majority of the population use packed water cans for the purpose of drinking water inferring a boon in the production of water packing units in Triupattur. Water being the soul elixir of life should be available across all streams to people in the Town of

Tirupattur. It should also be noted that that significant efforts should be taken both by the people and the government in the protection, conservation and use of water. Table 2, clearly denotes the fact that majority of the respondents state that there is sufficient availability of drinking water, cleanliness, and provision of drinking water services in Tirupattur. This fact could be cross referenced with table 1 that underlines the fact

that one third of the population makes use of only packed water cans for the purpose of drinking. It is evident from the above table, that a vast majority (75%) and (73.3%) of the respondents state that the factors contributing to road discipline and road safety were found to be low resulting in a number of documented and undocumented accidents. Majority of the respondents (60%) and above, denote that the condition of roads, maintenance of roads, adoption of traffic rules and construction of new roads were found to be in a very low state. The table also reveals that, majority (66%) of the respondents' state that the overall road facilities existing in Tirupattur were found to be in a very deprived state. This is also evidently seen with the poor construction and conditions of roads existing in and around Tirupattur. Apart from the highways, a vast majority of the roads are in a pitiable state in the Town. Even the so called highways exist with a number of path holes and debris left unmaintained from the construction of drainage pipes, water pipelines and other maintenance work.

bus stand in Tirupattur, creates a huge traffic congestions and overcrowding for the general public. The roads that lead to the common bus stand are very narrow and the position of road side shops impose more traffic blockages. From the presented Table 5 it is evident that a significant vast majority (87.3%) and above denote a low rating with regard to the Regular Maintenance of ATM's, Availability of Cash in such ATM's and the Safety & Security at ATM's. It could be also inferred from the table that majority (64.5%) of the respondents state a low rating on the availability of ATM facilities. ATM's have now become an essential commodity in the life style of the common man while banking is an essential economical factor in the day to day life of the people. The availability of adequate money in ATM's, Safety, Security and Maintenance denotes the current status of people residing in this town. It can be inferred from the above Table 6 that, a vast majority (79.3%) and (71%) of the respondents denote a low rating with regard to the existing pollution control measures and prevailing

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents with regard to their Perception on the availability of Community Transport

S.No.	Community Transport Facilities in Tirupattur	Frequency (N:400)		Percentage (%)	
		Low	High	Low	High
	Availability of well-maintained and adequate Local Buses	247	153	61.8	38.3
	Availability of Regular Train Facilities	252	148	63	37
	Adequate buses for long distance travel	240	160	60	40
	Public Transport Discipline/Overcrowding	253	147	63.3	36.8
	Regular maintenance of Public Transport	293	107	73.3	26.8
	Overall Community Transport	257	143	64	36

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents with regard to their Perception on the availability of Bank ATM Facilities

S.No.	Bank ATM Facilities in Tirupattur	Frequency (N:400)		Percentage (%)	
		Low	High	Low	High
	Availability of ATM's	258	142	64.5	35.5
	Availability of Cash in ATM's	355	45	88.8	11.3
	Regular Maintenance of ATM's	349	51	87.3	12.8
	Safety and Security at ATM's	347	53	86.8	13.3
	Overall Bank ATM Facilities	327	73	82	18

Table 6. Distribution of Respondents with regard to their Perception on Sanitation, Garbage & Pollution

S.No.	Sanitation, Garbage & Pollution Facilities in Tirupattur	Frequency (N:400)		Percentage (%)	
		Low	High	Low	High
	Availability of Adequate Dust Bins	248	152	62	38
	Sanitation Facilities	255	145	63.8	36.3
	Cleanliness of the Neighborhood and Regular collection of Garbage	224	176	56	44
	Adequate Drainage Facilities	284	116	71	29
	Facilities existing towards Pollution Control	317	83	79.3	20.8
	Overall Facilities existing towards Sanitation, Garbage and Pollution Control	266	134	66	34

On understanding the perception of the public on community transport facilities provided, it is evident from the above Table 4, that a vast majority (73.3%) of the respondents state that the regular maintenance of public transport was found to be low. Majority of the respondents (60%) and above denote a low rating with regard to the availability of regular train facilities, adequate buses for long distance travel and overcrowding of public means of transport. The table also clearly states that, majority (64%) of the respondents infer a low rating with regard to the existing overall community transport facilities available to the general public of Tirupattur. With the increase in the bus fare tariff from January 2018 in Tamil Nadu, it is the responsibility of the concerned authorities to bear on understanding and meeting the needs of the general public of Tirupattur. For the common man to commute to far places via train, he/she has to travel a minimum of 8 to 10 kms to Jolerapettai for availing adequate train facilities. The existing

drainage facilities in Tirupattur. It is also revealed that, majority (63.8%) and (62%) of the respondents infer a marginal rating with regard to adequacy of sanitation facilities and availability of dust bins in an around the periphery of Tirupattur. More than half (56%) of the respondents state a low rating with regard to the cleanliness of the neighborhood and the regularity of collection of garbage by the local municipality. With regard to the overall facilities existing towards Sanitation, Garbage and Pollution Control, it is evident from the above table that majority (66%) of the respondents notify a low rating based on the same.

FINDINGS

The growth and development of any town or city clearly depends on the lifestyle and basic amenities available to its general public. From the presented research undertaken, it is

evident that almost one third (31.3%) of the respondents purchase packed drinking water. Majority of the respondents (66%) state that the overall road facilities existing in Tirupattur were found to be in a very deprived state. Vast majority (73.3%) of the respondents state poor maintenance of public transport facilities, while majority (64%) of the respondents infer a low rating with regard to the existing overall community transport facilities available to the general public. The study also highlights that a significant vast majority (87.3%) of the population denote a low rating with regard to the regular maintenance of ATM's, availability of money in ATM's and the Safety & Security at ATM's. With regard to the overall facilities existing towards Sanitation, Garbage and Pollution Control, it is evident from the above table that majority (66%) of the respondents notify a low rating based on the same.

Suggestions and Conclusion

According to an article in the daily 'The Hindu' on 8th October 2016, Tirupattur was to be declared a district. The article goes on to state that "since Tirupattur is not been declared a district, development work are delayed. People from Tirupattur and its adjoining villages travel 300 km up and down if they work at the Collectorate in Vellore. Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri and Salem". On understanding the context of the research undertaken and correlating it with the above statement it is evident that there are many factors to be taken into consideration with regard to the same. The common man has the right to avail good drinking water. While the production of water cans is a now a prospective business, the price of such water cans needs to be checked. The government can ensure necessary steps in providing clean drinking water to various parts of the town that are even situated in the outskirts of Tirupattur. The developments of roads and its maintenance should be regularly checked. It's not that only the highways and the pathways to the residence of top notch officials have access to good roads but also for the common man to enjoy this benefit. Community transport provides access for the general public to commute to their respective work, native place and general access. The increase of bus fare proves only one thing, that the facilities provided should match the tariff prescribed. The research also highlights the inefficiency in the functioning ATM's with adequate security and maintenance. Care should be taken by the local banking authorities, that there is sufficient availability of cash, trained security personnel and a well maintained environment. Sanitation, Garbage and Pollution Control clearly determine the quality of life experienced by the people.

Significant measure need to be taken by the local community, concerned authorities and the respective Government in curbing into the nature of the problem. Mother Nature has given us many resources, as the father of our nation once acclaimed "be the change you want to see", it's only fair that every citizen embarks on a change in making their respective streets and surroundings clean. For, the only way to change to change the world is to begin with a self-introspection of oneself. This research undertaken does not mean to project a negligible picture of the facts prevailing, but to only call a spade a spade, which is the true essence of any research undertaking.

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