CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Growth with social justice" has been the avowed objective of planned development in India. As such various programmes and measures have been implemented during the last about three decades to achieve this objective. However, as is widely accepted, the economically weaker sections of our population have not benefited much by the various development efforts. Therefore, growing disparities, both regional and social, have drawn attention of people all over the world arousing great concern to the distributive aspects in the economic process on the one hand and to the recognition of pockets of backwardness on the other.

The level of living is the degree of needs satisfaction as it can be observed through time, it can also be described as a flow of welfare which the population enjoys in a unit of time. It must be distinguished from the flow of goods and services which assures the satisfaction of needs or brings welfare. It is only the value of the flow of goods and services that can be expressed in terms of money.1

There are differences in the levels of living between regions, villages and even within a village. The regional differences indicate the extent of prosperity or backwardness of a particular region which may be due to several natural, economic and social factors. Inter-village differences are generally on account of varying social and economic environment. People in villages having a large population of backward and depressed classes lead a lower level of living. Further, within a village, cultivating households can afford a better level of living as compared to the landless labourers. Higher position on the agrarian ladder certainly denotes a better social and economic status. Differences on account of various social factors also are too apparent.

During the First Five Year Plan, the main programmes for tribal development were for economic and educational development, improvement of communication, health facilities etc. In the Second Five Year Plan the emphasis was on economic development, agriculture, cottage industries, forest, co-operatives, etc. During the Third Five Year Plan, the priority was given again to economic uplift, education

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health, housing, and communication schemes. The Fourth Five Year Plan came up with the idea of area development approach. The Fifth Five Year Plan gave birth to "Tribal Sub-Plan" concept. During the Sixth Five Year Plan, the emphasis was again on agriculture, irrigation, etc.

The geographical and topographical factors have rendered certain areas very difficult to access and as such these areas have been left out of developmental process through which India has been passing. Due to long segregation, these areas have slowly and slowly drifted into realms of backwardness and the quality of life went down gradually. Thus, a substantial tribal population of the country is one such important segment which has almost been left out of the main stream of the development process.3

Broadly, tribe is an aggregated people sharing social values, common dialect, territory and culture. But in a restricted sense, tribe means a group of people usually under a chief and maintaining distinct cultural traits.4

Tribals are scattered in different parts of the world and are away from the modern civilization in natural surroundings and in small, sometimes autonomous communities. However, with the process of expansion of infrastructural facilities such as education, health, banking, transport and communication, the tribal people are gradually breaking their isolation and are now expanding their contact with the outside world. The tribal people differ very much from one another in social traits, organisation, relation, social values, cultural pattern and in attitudes and beliefs. Generally each has a typical dialect of its own.

Fortunately, the problem of development of the tribal areas has recently been given due priority as well as attention. The All India Conference of anthropologists held in May 1972 formulated a plan of action in which Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti were classed among unsearched areas. The plan further observed "it is indeed deplorable that we have very scanty information about some of the sensitive areas of the country." T.S. Negi observed that "Himachal Pradesh as a whole may well be treated as an 'Unsearched area' because the work done

so far on scheduled tribes is so scanty, sporadic and sketchy as not to amount to any mentionable research. Hence the question of tribal development is of great significance for Himachal Pradesh which has a fairly large proportion of such people.

Himachal which extends over an area of 55,538 Sq. Km. has a population of about 42 lakhs, giving a crude density of 77 persons per Sq. Km. Of the total population in the State 24.62 percent are scheduled castes and 4.61 percent are scheduled tribes. The scheduled tribes are mostly concentrated in the districts of Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti and Pangi and Bharmour tehsils of Chamba district. Tribal areas are nestled in the remotest parts of the State where transport, means of communication and other necessary infrastructural facilities are nearly non-existent. The road length per 100 Sq. Km. in such areas works out to 7 Km. as against the average of 24 Km. for the State as a whole. The density of population varies from 2 persons per Sq. Km. in Lahaul-Spiti to 9 persons per Sq. Km. in other tribal area as against 77 persons per Sq. Km. in whole of Himachal Pradesh. Thus tribal areas and backward area are synon-

amous. The H.P. State Planning Board provided Rs. 44.91 crores out of the total outlay of Rs. 50 crores for the years 1980-85. Since, the government of Himachal Pradesh has been spending huge amounts of money for the development of scheduled tribes, it is of great concern to the State and to all departments engaged in the development process to know whether there has been any tangible improvement among the tribals or not. Experiences from these areas may be utilized for forming as well as for improving the strategy for development.

Scope and Objectives

All economic and social development activities are planned for the welfare of its people and this is truly reflected in their levels of living which is the end product of all economic efforts. The term level or content of living denotes all elements, material as well as immaterial benefits of an individual group. Levels of living is used synonymous with levels of consumption, because the pattern of consumption of a people throws light on their economic well-being by bringing out relative importance of various items and groups of items in the total scheme of their consumption. The more affluent

a society is, the more diversified, ordinarily, is its consumption expenditure over necessities, comforts and luxuries. A society living at subsistence level, on the other hand, will exhaust all its resources available for consumption over primary necessities of life like food, clothing, fuel and light and a little may be left over even for what may be called secondary necessities like housing, medical aid, etc.

Level of living also helps in measuring inter-regional inequalities, household inequalities and consumption inequalities. Furthermore, it gives an idea as to how best the economic resources of a country or region have developed in shaping the living conditions of its people. If, as a result of the development efforts, an improvement is recorded there is reason for satisfaction that the efforts have been in the right direction. On the other hand, if the results observed are otherwise, it serves as a good warning to planners that the development activity needs to be channelised differently, or at least deserves close monitoring to avoid wastages, etc.

Human beings have recurrent needs such as the need for food, shelter, medical assistance, education, etc. etc. These are satisfied with the flow of goods and services obtained by the people. Satisfaction of needs
means receiving welfare. Therefore, the flow of goods and services brings welfare to population. The flow of welfare to population is carried by way of development efforts put forth in the form of various programmes and plans, augmenting their employment, output and productivity which in turn leads to increase in income. This incremental increase has two uses: one in the form of waste product or conspicuous consumption and secondly the utilization of additional income earned acts as a catalytic agent for raising the levels of living of the population. The level of living reflects the average per capita productivity in an economy. However, all the variables that determine it, are not amenable to monetary measurement, the average per capita productivity and the level of living rest upon the basic factors of (a) natural resource endowment (man-land ratio) and (b) the institutional endowment. The institutional endowment, however, is quite important and comprehends a number of sociological factors including the distribution of income depending upon the distribution of the means of production. A directly measurable indicator of the average per capita productivity is the labour participation rate. But in a developing state like Himachal Pradesh having low level of living, this can meaningful only if it is related to the employment level which again could be
seen in relation to the complex sociological factors particularly the institutional endowment. Therefore, the present study is intended to examine the levels of living of tribals in Himachal Pradesh with the following specific the objectives:

(a) to investigate and study the present level of living of tribal people in Himachal Pradesh.

(b) to find out the mode of their living, habits and facilities of feeding, clothing, housing, recreation, medical, education etc.

(c) to highlight various connected problems and suggest ways of raising the levels of living of these people.

Level of living throws light on the economic well-being of the people. It tells us about individual, society, village, state or nation, its level of affluence and subsistence. The study would throw light on the present levels of living of tribals, their mode of living habits and availability of facilities for clothing, housing, recreation, medical etc. as determined by the amount spent on each item.

**Layout of the Thesis:**

Along with the introductory chapter the study is organized into eight more chapters. The second chapter reviews available literature on the subject. Detailed information on the methodology adopted in the selection of the sample, specification of the model and limitation
etc. is the content of the third chapter. Chapter IV presents profile of Himachal Tribals and their development under sub-plan era. **Profile** of the block and economy of selected villages are presented in the fifth chapter. The next chapter examines the **components of food intake and consumption pattern**. The influence of occupation on levels of living is presented in the seventh chapter. Chapter VIII brings out inter and intra village disparities and **inequalities**. The last chapter summarizes the main findings and draws some policy implications.