Chapter - VII

Major Findings and Conclusion

This study is focused on the problems of Paliyans, their awareness level and availability of the state and central government schemes for the tribes in the study area. The major findings of the study are as follows.

• Among respondents 35.31 per cent belong to the age group of 31-40. Age is the important factor to identify the socio economic levels of the respondents. The overall sex ratio of respondents is 155 males consisting of 51.2 per cent and 148 females consisting of 48.8 per cent. In this study the researcher chose respondents on the basis of the more or less equal distribution in the sample selection because it is the important criterion to identify the awareness level of the both genders in the study areas.

• The study reveals that majority of the respondents belong to Hinduism which consists of 89.1 per cent and 10.89 per cent of the respondents belong to the Christianity. This indicates that majority of the respondents in the study area belong to the Hindu religion. 'Kuttichathan', 'Kuliyan', 'Kattu Bhagirathi' or 'Kali', 'Malakkar',

218
'Mariyamma' and 'Ayyappan' are the chief god and goddesses of Paliyan tribes.

- Marital status revealed that out of 303 respondents a vast majority of them were married with 65.67 per cent followed by 30.03 per cent of the respondents who were unmarried and only 4.29 per cent of the respondents were widows/widowers.

- Regarding educational qualifications 30.03 per cent of the respondents have completed the SSLC/HSC level of the education and 25.74 per cent of the respondents have completed the middle school level of the education.

- The occupational status of the respondents shows that majority of the respondents were in agriculture and its allied business. It was observed that majority of the women respondents were working as agricultural Coolies. Eighty five respondents accounting for 28.05 per cent of the total respondents were following their family traditional business of hunting in the forest areas.

- The primary occupation of the tribal people in the study area was agriculture. Hard physical works are usually done by male members, like ploughing, ridge making and the like. Light works like weeding, harvesting are done by women.
• Majority of the respondents mostly depend upon agriculture. Due to heavy rain, and droughts and animals interruption agriculture had met loses. The data furnish that 174 respondents accounting for 57.42 per cent of the total respondents were under the monthly income category of less than Rs. 2000.

• Majority of the respondents family members were working as agricultural coolies because of their traditional followings. Out of the total 25.41 per cent of the respondents family occupation was business such as trading the agricultural products and medicinal plants, running a petty shop, tailoring and so on. Only 17.49 per cent of the respondents are doing agriculture in their lands.

• The government of Tamilnadu has allotted under housing scheme of Free houses site pattas to Tribals and provisions of basic amenities to their habitants. Under this scheme free house site pattas are issued to the houseless tribal families. Due to this aid provided by the government of Tamilnadu majority of the respondents had their owned houses. It was drawn from the study that 65.67 per cent of the respondents were living under thatched houses and 19.80 per cent of the respondents were living under the habitation of concrete houses. Eighty per cent of the tribal houses are government -built and 20% of them are self-built. Due to inaccessibility, government could not build houses in certain areas. Houses of Paliyans usually consist of one or two rooms.
• Regarding the type of family in the study area 63.69 per cent of the respondents belong to the joint family structure.

• As far as tribal society in India is concerned in the joint families the household size is significantly higher than the national average. The study reveals that 20.13 per cent family size was having the 0 – 2 children and 182 respondents accounting for 60.06 per cent of the total were having the 3-4 four children in their families.

• The analysis clearly indicates that 40.26 per cent of the respondents report that non availability of school nearby is the main factor to affect the education of the tribal children because they are basically isolated from the modern society in all the progressive sectors. Nearly 40 per cent of the respondents said that the parents were not interested them to send to schools and this is another factor that affects the education of the children.

• The main reason for the low level of education among tribes is the peculiar nature of their habitations. The social and economic conditions prevailing in the tribal settlements are not conducive for better education. Moreover, the parents of the tribal children being generally illiterates cannot insist on their children attending classes regularly. The analysis portrays that 50 per cent of the respondents said that hill area is the important factor to affect the tribal education.
• The reasons for the acute poverty in the tribal society as far as respondents are concerned has been concentrated in three major concepts like simple and traditional occupation, lack of knowledge adopting new technologies and less economic sources that lack of surplus money. The results of the study shows that 54.45 per cent said that no modern technology in Agriculture is the main reason for the tribal poverty.

• Among the 303 respondents 42.24 per cent of them said that less interest in agriculture was the important reason for the less productivity in the tribal agriculture. The tribal people earn by forestry shifting cultivation, settled agriculture and industrial labour, animal husbandry, fishing, traditional commerce including handicrafts.

• The study finds that 39.93 per cent of the respondents were illiterats. Among them 43.80 per cent of the respondents said that lack of knowledge to adopt the new technology in agriculture is the main reason for less production in the agriculture.

• As far as occupational category of the respondents is concerned the traditional practices was the important factor for the less production in the tribal agriculture. Out of the total 42.57 per cent of the respondents were spending more money for their family expenses than their income. Another 21.12 per cent of the respondents said that spending more money to the children’s education increases the indebtedness and 20.13
per cent of the respondents said that another reason that is more medical expenses increase the indebtedness.

- Among the 303 respondents a majority of 39.93 per cent had mortgaged their lands to the local landlords. Another 22.77 per cent of the respondents had mortgaged their lands to the moneylenders. The money lender will "bail out" the borrower from his financial woes, and give him a temporary solution for his problems. This assistance may be all that is needed to put a business owner back on his feet. He may be able to refinance the loan in a couple of years.

- The study finds out 39.93 per cent of the respondents belong to the occupational category of Agriculture/ Agricultural coolie. Among them 55.37 per cent of the respondents said that their pledging source as their landlords. Paliyans are primarily agricultural labourers but a very few families possess land holdings.

- As far as the period of pledge shows that 29.37 per cent of the respondents had pledged their lands to the moneylenders for the period of 0-2 years. Out of the total 21.45 per cent of the respondents had pledged their lands for the period of 2-4 years and 10.89 per cent of the respondents pledged their lands for the period of 4-6 years and 8 years above respectively. This finding infers that the respondents who had pledged their lands for more than 4 years, could not repay the loan
amount in a particular period. Initially they had pledged their lands just for one year.

- From the study it is understood that 39.27 per cent of the respondents were approaching money lenders for fulfillment of their urgent economic needs. Whenever they need money, they get money from the money lenders even though they levy more interest. Out of the total 25.74 per cent of the respondents were approaching the informal sources due to access to get more money without documents and 15.18 per cent of the respondents said that they were approaching the informal sources due to the access to credit at door steps.

- The study explains the disadvantages of receiving the money from the informal sources. A majority 32.67 per cent of the respondents reported that short duration of the repayment.

- Majority of the respondents, as far as educational status of the respondents is concerned said that short duration of repayment with high rate of interest is the disadvantage of receiving money from the informal sources.

- It is found out from the study that 50.16 per cent of the respondents had possessed fallow lands. This fallow land does not produce much productivity to fulfill the tribal needs because this kind of land depends upon the seasonal rainfall.
• According to the respondents 60.06 per cent of them had not possessed land under the forest areas and only 20.13 per cent of the respondents had possessed land under the forest areas.

• Lands possessed by the tribal people in the study area under forest, shows that 16.17 per cent of the respondents had cultivable land under forest area. This includes lands available for cultivation, whether not taken up for cultivation or taken up for cultivation once but not cultivated during the current year and the last five years or more in succession for one reason or other.

• Regarding the land alienation a vast majority 40.26 per cent of the respondents had faced the land alienation problems in different ways and 39.93 per cent of the respondents had not faced any land alienation problem in the study area.

• When analysing the persons responsible for land alienation it is revealed that money lending (8.91 per cent) is among the earliest routes through which tribal land has been alienated in Theni District. The land would be in possession of the lender until the borrower repays the money completely. This process of land occupation occurred on a larger scale in tribal tracts in the study area. The debt burden could be reduced by tribals only by conceding their lands. The landlords (19.47 per cent) entered into these bonds of friendship and purchased land in the names of their tribal friends.
• When analysing the educational status of the respondents and the persons responsible for land alienation it is found that landlords are the most responsible for the land alienation among tribal landholders.

• The average landholding of tribal households in these tribal districts is only 1.06 standard acres. The problem of land alienation is a much deeply connected phenomenon with full contradictions relating to the existing socio-economic order in the prevailing society.

• The large scale transfers of ownership of lands are being allowed to go out of hands through illegal and benami transactions by sale of the lands to others due to the continuous drought in the tribal living areas of the Theni district which accounts for 5.28 per cent. Another form of land alienation is related to the leasing or mortgaging of the land which accounts for 8.89 per cent.

• Among the respondents 41.91 per cent faced the lack of irrigation system in shifting cultivation. Another 25.08 per cent of the respondents lands have been suffered due to frequent soil erosion in the rainy seasons because most of the tribal lands are slope. Yet another 13.20 per cent of the respondents faced the problem of burning of the vegetation.

• Basically tribal houses are transformable that means that the interior areas are rearrangeable and of multiple use. They are defined and set with modular, transformable, collusive and transportable walls. The building itself consists of just the floor, roof, exterior walls and the
empty space within. Majority of the (36.30 per cent) respondents said that their houses had been damaged due to the soil erosion during the rainy season. Of the total 30.03 per cent of the respondents mentioned that heavy rain is the main reason for the suffering of their houses. Yet another 13.86 per cent of the respondents’ houses were damaged due to wild animals.

- The study depicts that a vast majority (54.78 per cent) of the respondents had the habit of alcoholic drinking. Among the men and women in the paliyan tribal population, alcohol is held in esteem as a product of nature and as a gift of god, and as both food and medicine. Most traditional alcoholic beverages have a low alcohol content and tribal people have beliefs, attitudes and rituals that govern alcohol consumption in day to day life.

- The analysis reveals that 16.50 per cent of the respondents had sold and mortgaged their lands due to the habit of drinking and now they had addicted to the alcohol because of selling their lands and houses due to indebtedness. Of the total 14.52 per cent of the respondents have been addicted to alcohol due to the health problems. If they do not drink regularly they could not concentrate in any form of works and they felt tremulous over the body.

- From the study it is understood that most of the respondents felt that the consequences of unemployment is poverty, migration, starvation and
alcoholic addiction. It was found out that 39.60 per cent of the respondents migrated from their inhabitants to other parts of the district to get employment. This is resulting in large scale migration of rural tribals to urban areas in search of livelihoods either temporarily or on permanent basis which in turn resulting into the disturbances of their traditional socio-psychological family relationship, network of neighbourly relationships and the adoption of new urban culture.

- The tribal agricultural work depends upon nature. Therefore, in a certain period of the year there is heavy work, while in the rest, the work is lean. It is found from the study that in the sowing and harvesting period, the tribals may have to engage themselves day and night. Of the total 19.80 per cent of the respondents said that transfer of land to outside money lenders or rich farmers is due to non-repayment of the debts. This is another reason for unemployment of the total 14.85 per cent of the respondents told, lack of modern technology in the existing agriculture industry and deforestation because the primary sector in the region is almost exclusively forests and land, much of it is used for shifting cultivation.

- Regarding the awareness about welfare programmes 35.31 per cent of the respondents had awareness about the vocational training centers which was mostly provided by the state agencies as well as the NGOs in the tribal areas. It is aimed at upgrading the skills of the tribal youths in
various traditional modern vocations depending upon their educational qualification, present economic trends and the market potential, which would enable them to gain suitable employment or enable them to become self employed.

- According to the findings of the present study 29.70 per cent of the respondents had awareness about the TRIFED. Of the total 70.29 per cent of the respondent were not aware of the TRIFED because they were involving in different income generating industries.

- The analysis clearly portrays that the major health problems of the tribes such as malnutrition account for 59.73 per cent, Jaundice 19.47 per cent and 20.79 per cent of the respondents continuously suffered from Typhoid.

- There are some major reasons for the prevalence of the poor health condition among the tribes i.e. 20.13 per cent of the respondents said that lack of proper house is the reason for the health problem. Another 19.80 per cent of the respondents felt that poverty is the another reason for the poor health problems of the tribal groups. 12.21 per cent of the respondents said that lack of health care services the another reason for the prevailing health problems.

- As for as awareness about schemes is concerned, 39.27 per cent of the respondents were aware of the JBY scheme and among them 19.80 per
cent of the respondents had benefited under this scheme. The analysis shows that 19.47 per cent of the respondents had awareness about the LAMP society, among them 12 per cent of the respondents had benefited under this scheme. This indicates that most of the respondents were not aware of the JBY and the LAMP schemes.

- Among the tribal respondents 38.61 per cent of them had awareness about the ashram school scheme. The Ashram School definitely uplifts the poor & deprived tribal children as tribal children are very poor and their parents cannot just afford to send their children to school.

- In the paliyan tribal community 9.57 per cent of the respondents were benefited by soil conservation facilities. That means soil testing for the agricultural production, supply of mechanical tools for furrowing the lands in the slope hills areas for cropping, applying new soils instead of the existing soil conditions are these. A meagre 5.61 per cent of the respondents in the study area had benefited under the agriculture facilities under the central assistance programme.

- Regarding the benefits received from the primitive Tribal Groups scheme, 19.80 per cent of the respondents had benefited by the housing and infrastructure and 10.23 per cent of the respondents received land development and 6.60 per cent of the respondents had the health aids under this scheme. From the analysis it has been concluded that very minimum numbers of respondents were categorized under the PTGs.
• The study exhibits that 11.55 per cent of the respondents had received the educational training provided for the tribal youths.

• As for as membership in the SHGs is concerned 19.14 per cent of the respondents have been members in the SHGs. Though the state governments and the NGOs had initiated to form the SHGs in the tribal areas to improve the tribal life status, they were not members in the SHGs. This indicates the pathway had been closed in some way to attain the benefits of the SHGs.

• Nearly all the groups keep their savings in a group account deposited in a local bank. Most of the SHGs have monthly savings, though savings are weekly in some villages where the savings per month is higher. In the tribal area the NGOs and the Banks encourage small weekly savings.

• It is understood from the analysis that 12.21 per cent of the respondents had regularly saved an amount of Rs. 50 -100 in their savings account in the bank or post offices. It was observed from the field that most of the respondents were not willing to save the money because their income level was very too low and their family income was not sufficient to run the family.

• Regarding the expenses of savings amount it is revealed that 11.55 per cent of the respondents used their collective group savings amount for the children educational purpose of their group members with less credit.
facility. A meagre 4.29 per cent of the respondents benefited with the collective savings amount for their group member’s medical expenses.

- It was found that all the respondents in the SHG had received the loan amount. It is found out that the loan has been taken from their own savings by the individual members of the income generating activities, consumption purposes, immediate contingency purposes, medical treatment and education of their children and also for the betterment of the future development of the generation. Another 6.93 per cent of the respondents had received the loan for medical purposes of their family members. Yet another 5.61 per cent of the respondents received the loan for the agricultural purposes and 3.13 per cent of the respondents received the loan for the purpose of their children’s education.

- Significant changes in the living standards of the SHG members have taken place in terms of increase in income levels, assets, savings, borrowing capacity and income generating activities. Moreover the participation of tribal women in the economic activities and decision making at the household and society level is increasing.

- Regarding the role of the NGOs for the development of tribals is preparing the tribal people for a change which is basically an advocacy role, viz. development of education, incorporating self-sustainable development and form public opinion about govt. policies or social issues, consciences for environmental problem, literacy, health, use of
appropriate technology for family planning and empower the poor to overcome psychological inhabitations and opposition of appraisers. It was found that 19.14 per cent of the respondents were only aware of the NGOs which are prevailing in the study areas.

- The study finds that 10.89 per cent of the respondents opine that the NGOs create educational awareness and its important and governmental schemes for the tribal educational development in the study area. Of the total 4.29 per cent of the respondents had attained the health awareness and governmental funding the tribal welfare, which were provided by the NGOs. Another 12.54 per cent of the respondents reported that the NGO is the major organization to stop the drop outs in tribal educational system. A pre-school training programme for the tribal child which is provided by the NGOs can help to place the tribal students on an equal footing with the non-tribal.

- When analysing the awareness about the dropouts of the children among the Paliyan tribes 9.57 per cent of the respondents were aware of the enrolment of dropout and non school going children Among them 8.91 per cent of the respondents had felt that the main function of the vocational education committee is increasing the enrolment of the girl children in the schools.
• The small scale enterprises based on skills and their tribal knowledge were encouraged by the NGO through proper training facilities. Based on the respondents’ responses nearly one third of the respondents had undergone training programmes provided by the NGOs.

• Degradation of forests has reduced the resource availability and the employment opportunities for tribals and has also affected the food availability, livelihood options and the quality of life of the tribals. The study clearly portrays that 31.02 per cent of the respondents had got employment regularly in soil related works in the forestry department. Another 30.36 per cent of the respondents worked as weeder in the forestry that means they have to uproot the weeds and unwanted trees in the forestry. Yet another 29.37 per cent of the respondents had got the work in planting the plants in the forest areas.

• The importance of the need of livelihood generating activities based on locally available resources so that gainful employment opportunities could be created at the doorstep of tribal people. A majority (40.59 per cent) of the respondents had offered the employment opportunities in the forestry such as planting, rearing and irrigating and monitoring the plants, collecting the medicinal plants in the forest covered areas, collection of the non-timber woods and so on. Nearly one third of the respondents had undergone the training which was provided by the
department. Such trainings are based on the income generating activities as like handicrafts, weaving the baskets, cattle and sheep rearing.

**Conclusion**

Paliyans are a contemporary hunting and gathering society living in the forest and they relatively are nonviolent and peace loving innocent tribes. They were nomads till time memory. Only in the early 50s, they started to wear limited dresses. The male were half naked and used to put the dhoti in the waist and the dress used by the male was then used by the women as dress. The habit of wearing the sarees and other modern dresses were found in their changed life style only in the later period few them have been exposed to the outside world and started to settle down in the foothills.

Nowadays the main occupation of the paliyan tribes was agriculture and its allied activities, But they are following the traditional practices in the agriculture, which promotes them for less production and also it depends upon the seasonal monsoon. Next to agriculture and traditional occupation they have now become gatherers. Their knowledge on medicinal plants is extraordinary and has a rich expertise about herbs. They used to collect the medicinal plants from the interior forest. Their rights on forest and their present with nature are to be relooked as they have been traditionally protecting and conserving the forest resource for sustainable use. They collect honey from the branches of towering tall trees and rock caves skillfully. The income of the Paliyans depends upon their traditional business such as agriculture and hunting.
gatherings. It is misfortune that the paliyans tribal are still under exploitation during the market their products.

This study has intended to analyse the problems among the scheduled tribes of Theni district in Tamilnadu. The study demonstrated the socio economic background of the tribal people, the problems found among the tribals, their level of awareness of government schemes and the role of supportive system for welfare of the tribals.

The study concluded that among the respondents male outnumber the female and a vast majority of the respondents belong to Hinduism. Most of the respondents were married and many of the householders depend on agricultural and its allied activities for their livelihood either by cultivating land or engaging themselves agricultural coolies (including hunting and gathering). As far as type of family is concerned most of the respondents were belonging to joint family system. As far as tribal education is concerned some social factors such as low awareness over the educational schemes provided by the state and central government, parents illiteracy, no motivation from the family as well as society, inability to understand the medium of instruction, attitude of peoples towards the education and opportunity cost of time spent in school severely affects the tribal education system.

Indebtedness is one of the core problems in the paliyans economy. A large number of paliyans are indebted with either formal or informal agencies. The major reason for indebtedness is poor income. Informal agencies have
established umbilical relationship with the tribals through their friendly dealings and sweet coated languages. After giving the loan to individuals the moneylender would not ask for repayment of entire loan, they will ask only the interest portion. Payment of interest portion was not difficult for tribals. Money lenders constitute the major source of credit for majority of tribal’s regular employment for one year and with advance payment. Distance is the important factor which decides the access to credit from formal agencies. When the formal agencies are nearby may be easily accessible to borrower. Very few peoples are residing nearby formal agencies especially the SHGs. Informal agencies were the easy accessible source of credit to tribals.

The nature of the land they have possessed in the tribal village is mostly undulating hilly areas whereby type of cultivation is found unproductive, troublesome and hazardous. The tribal hilly land is less fertile, less productive and fully unirrigated. It is observed from the study area that majority of the respondents were willing to do the agriculture but lack of irrigation, lack of knowledge to adopt the new technologies, domination of intermediates to market their products, converting land possessed in the forest into the reserved forest by the central as well as the state government, increasing indebtedness restrict them into to do the agriculture. Paliyans size of land is also getting shrunken day by day because of the further division of landed property which is another factor of economic insolvency. The paliyans used to live in joint
families but in the recent times the numbers of nuclear families are increasing gradually and thus, the land of an extended family is also getting fragmented.

The study reveals that a vast majority of the respondents mortgaged their land to the local landlords and moneylenders which leads to land alienation. The environmental factors like lack of knowledge over modern environment, narrow and traditional mentality as well as practices, alcoholic addiction and agricultural background are barriers to tribals to attain education.

The study concluded that majority of the tribes live under poverty line. The tribes follow many simple occupations based on simple technology. Most of the occupation falls into the primary occupations such as hunting, gathering, and agriculture. The technology they use for these purposes belong to the most primitive kind. There is no profit and surplus making in such economy.

The wide spread poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, absence of safe drinking water and sanitary conditions, poor maternal and child health services, ineffective coverage of national health and nutritional services and the like are the major contributing factors for dismal health in tribal communities.

Women are paid a lesser wage than the male labourers. Payments are made in cash generally in non-agricultural works. On the other hand either cash or both cash and kind are the modes of payments in the agricultural labourers. Here the wage earnings often get a lesser wage indirectly. Since there is no market nearer to the village and communication system is not well extended, cultivators often sell out their agricultural products at a very cheap rate to the
traders who regularly visit the village within their own vehicles after the own harvesting is over. All the factors collectively do not provide a stable economic condition for the paliyans tribes.

Another important problem is habit of alcoholism. Among the men and women in the paliyans tribal population, alcohol is held in esteem as a product of nature and as a gift of god, and as both food and medicine. Most traditional alcoholic beverages have a low alcohol content and tribal people have believes, attitudes and rituals that govern alcohol consumption in day to day life. Ritualistic and ceremonial use occurs with ceremonial and festive occasions celebrated among the tribes. As far as paliyan tribal primitive society is concerned they are facing lots of barriers in communication.

The central government has sanctioned to the state governments, the NGOs, the Educational institutions, the private organizations to provide the vocational training centers to tribes. Scheduled Tribes are the most marginalized section of the society, therefore to assist their socio-economic development; there is an imperative need to provide more employment avenues and income generation opportunities. It is aimed at upgrading the skills of the tribal youths in various traditional/modern vocations depending upon their educational qualification. The overall analysis reveals that the majority of the respondents did not aware about the welfare programmes, because of the illiteracy and the traditional habits of superstitions. Even the government had allotted the lot of welfare schemes; they did not receive the any benefits from
the available sources. In the study area a lot of the NGOs were working for the development of the tribes, but they are not willing to attend any training and self employment trainings in the study area.

The economic programmes of tribal development agencies were directed towards providing them land and inputs to reorganize the cooperative and marketing structure through setting up the LAMPS, construction godowns and roads, and development of animal husbandry, agro and forest based cottage industries etc. The family based economic programmes included land reclamation, land development and soil conservation, supply of agricultural inputs, popularisation of root crops and improvement local crops, animal and bird keeping, construction of dug wells and the like which was provided by the LAMP society. But due lack of awareness and lack of participation very few paliyans peoples had benefited over this scheme.

Majority of the paliyans people were not aware of the various schemes sponsored by the state and the central government. Though very few of them had benefitted over the welfare and developmental programmes they had been faced by the problem of exploitation by the officials and non-officials in the study areas.

The NGO Sector in Theni District, Tamilnadu, has emerged as an effective third sector after the Government and the private sector. This is mainly because of the results of various initiatives taken by the NGOs. The District Administration, of Theni district has initiated several welfare projects
on top priority in collaboration with the NGOs and the Administration’s strategies have become more flexible to incorporate people oriented approaches. The services of the NGO is known for community development of the paliyan tribes. Their initiatives on eradication of illiteracy and commitment on tribal rehabilitation are bolt attempt on protecting and promoting the very base of the forgotten race in their own inhabitation. They have constructed permanent house for the Paliyans in the settlement areas.

In the overview of the paliyans in the study areas, it was concluded. That the state and the central government have enacted the lots of welfare and development programmers for the betterment of the tribes, they did not receive benefits of the schemes, because majority of the paliyans were illiterate and also not interested to aware about the schemes. The NGOs have played vital role in the study areas to increase the tribal awareness level among the paliyans.