CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

The tribal labour has emerged in sizeable proportion to industrial labour, observes the national commission on labour. "The process which started towards the end of the 19th century with the exploitation of forest wealth and minerals like coal, manganese and iron ore gathered momentum since independence with the location of factories in the tribal belts. The process has led to the urbanization of tribal areas as families as a result of their lands being acquired for developing industrial complexes were no longer satisfied with the member to be absorbed in industrial employment." These tribal youths have adapted themselves to the changed way of life. Tribals may now be seen working side by side with others in mining area, iron and steel industries and in other unorganized industries like construction and building etc. The tribal laborers form substantial part of the unorganized labour force. The contribution of tribal labour in unorganized work force is immense. The problems surrounding their conditions of work also differ to a great extent from area to area. The Tribal communities for economic purpose migrate from place to place and their mobility is based on many factors influencing their pattern of employment and traditional occupations (Singh, K.S. 1982). Most of the Tribes in Cuddalore District are employed under the category of unorganized workers. According to the 1991 Census in India there are 580 recognized Scheduled Tribe (ST) with the population of 6.78 crore. It constitutes 8.08 % of the country’s total population. Their literacy rate is just 29.60 %. (Malayala Manorama Year Book, 2002).
1.1 OVERVIEW OF TRIBAL PEOPLE AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

The term "Tribe" has been derived from its Latin root 'tribes', which means "a social group". The Oxford Dictionary explains tribe as "a groups of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding them as having a common ancestor" (Fuchs, 1997). The Tribes in India have been described in different ways by colonial administrators dealing with Census matters and by anthropologists.

Certain communities in India have historically remained disadvantaged. Isolated from the main stream, they have long suffered social and economic marginalization. These communities were notified as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as per provisions contained in Clause 1 of Article 341 and 342 of the Constitution respectively. The Constitution lays down various provisions for protection and upliftment of these communities. The Scheduled Tribe communities in India are characterized by economic and social marginalization, primitive existence, geographical isolation and educational backwardness. Availability of sound database on various aspects related to these communities is crucial to framing of effective policies for their socio economic upliftment. Over the years, it has been recognized that there is a paucity of comprehensive data covering various aspects of these communities. As a step in this direction, the working group on Labour Statistics (Fourth Plan) in its interim report in the year 1964 recommended, inter-alia, collection of data on certain aspects of working and living conditions of Labour belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes communities to assess the ways and means to be adopted for their welfare.
and for improving their working and living conditions. In pursuance of these recommendations, Government of India decided, in-principle, to conduct such studies and entrusted this work to Labour Bureau under the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

The Scheduled Tribes (B. Chaudhari, 1992) of India are the aboriginal or indigenous people or the vulnerable groups of the country. They represent the oldest ethnological groups of our national population referred to as Adivasis or original inhabitants. Their origin has been traced to such races as the Proto-Austroloids who one time are believed to have practically covered the whole of India. It is believed that India derived its name Bharat from the mighty Bharat tribe.

The Government of India identified the tribes based on the following characteristics of their behaviour, viz., i) primitive way of living, ii) habitation in remote and less easily accessible area, and iii) nomadic habits (M.L. Patel, 1994). At one level, a tribe is like any other community. At another level, the tribes are communities with distinctive traits (R.C. Vama, 1995). According to the Census of India's 1991 survey report, they have identified 573 tribal communities in India. They are enumerated at 6,77,58,380 persons constituting 8.01 % of Schedule Tribal population to the countries total population of 84,63,02,688. The geographical distribution of tribal concentration in India can be broadly divided into the following seven regions:
1. Central-Southern Tribal Region (Dandakaranya Region)

2. Central-Northern Tribal Region (Hazaribagh-Maikal Region)

3. Western Tribal Region (Aravalli-Sahyadri Region)

4. North-Eastern Tribal Region

5. North-Western Tribal Region

6. Southern Tribal Pockets and

7. The Oceanic Groups

Each region has some specific features, traits, social value systems, cultural fabrics and way of life. A detailed regional study is necessary because it can provide the base for guiding the process of change in such a way that it may be in consonance with the development of the tribal communities. Their diversity during the pre-colonial days is reflected in their peculiar geographical locations, dense concentration in hills and forests, and the different occupational categories such as food gathering, hunting, shifting cultivation, settled cultivation, and urban oriented occupations. Nonetheless, most of the tribes in the country are in a state of transition.

Mostly they are educationally and economically found very backward. They have been far away from the main stream of developments. Most of them are found living in the forests and remote hills. India is the home to large number of indigenous people, who are still untouched by the lifestyle of the modern
world. With more than 84.4 million, India has the largest population of the tribal people in the world. These tribal people also known as the adivasis are the poorest in the country, who are still dependent on hunting, agriculture and fishing. According to Census 2001, tribal population in Tamilnadu is 6,51,321. There are around 38 tribes and sub-tribes in Tamilnadu, and literacy rate is 27.9% of the population. The tribal people are predominantly farmers and cultivators and they are much dependant on the forest lands. Tribes of Tamilnadu are concentrated mainly in the District of Nilgiris. Of all the distinct tribes, the Kotas, the Todas, the Irulas, the Kurumbas and the Badagas form the larger groups, who mainly had a pastoral existence. Other tribes include, Kattunayakan and Paniyan amongst others.

There has been a decline in the ST main workers from 94.2 % at 1991 Census to 81.3 % at 2001 Census. This, in turn, has resulted in corresponding increase in the marginal workers from 5.8 % in 1991 to 18.7 % in 2001. Out of total workers, ‘agricultural labourers’ constitute 37.8 %, which is similar to the national average of 36.9 % for ST population. ‘Cultivators’ account for 36.3 % and only 23.6 % has been returned as ‘other workers’. Remaining 2.4 % have been workers in ‘household industry’. Thus, there is a change in agriculture related economic activities; the workers engaged in agricultural activities (cultivators and agricultural labourers) constitute 74.1 % of the total workers against 81.8 % recorded at 1991 Census.

Tribal People constitute 8 % of the total population of India with more than 50 groups. Most of them belong to the Negrito, Proto-Austroloids,
Mongoloids ethnic groups propounded by Dr. B.S. Guha. Those groups migrated to India in the early periods. Later waves of migrants displaced these people who left the plains and valleys where they had settled and sought refuse in inaccessible forests and mountains. As by this movement they got insulated from the rest of the population and were not affected by subsequent changes in other areas, they have been able to preserve their ethnic purity and cultural individuality to a very great extent. These tribal communities are mainly food gatherers or hunters. Some of them practice the primitive method of shifting cultivation. In the Himalayan regions some of them are pastoral communities.

**Tribal Organizations:**

Classification of tribal social organizations can be made on the basis of the ways adopted by them to make a living since this has a great influence on the structure. Tribal Population can be grouped into

- Most Isolated Tribes.
- Small Nomadic or semi nomadic tribes.
- Comparatively independent groups.

Among the most isolated tribes, the Jarawas and Sentinales of Andaman and Nicobar Islands are most important. Their occupations are hunting, fishing and food gathering. The examples of nomadic and semi nomadic tribes are found in Bihar, Orissa, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. Such tribes are the Burhor, Mallar, Karias, Kadar and Cenca. They are also food gatherers but exchange their
products such as fruits, honey, bees-wax, roots and ropes from wild creepers with agricultural products grown in the plains.

The tribes that cannot be classified by their occupational habits are not easily distinguishable from the rest of the population, though they have separate languages and social customs. The tribal people who follow other professions like those are mining or working in factories, etc. are not accorded the same status, as those who come from non-tribal origin. Their inferior social ranking and ignorance leave them open to severe exploitation by employers and middlemen.

Disputes in tribal groups are settled by elders of the tribe. The lineage of clans is very important in tribal organizations and there is a deep blending of the bonds that tie the tribes to their ancestors which is shown in the jealous pride with which they guard their identity. Supernatural beliefs and recourse to magical and herbal remedies for sickness, etc. is also a strong characteristic of tribal beliefs. Prevalence of supernatural beliefs along with unwillingness to trust the workings of the reasoning process has played an important part in shaping the lives of tribal communities. These have led to witchcraft and crimes such as ritual murder, etc. These are of course rarer now, but they cannot be said to have disappeared altogether.

The work participation rate (WPR) is the percentage of workers to the total population. The WPR among the ST population at 2001 Census was 54.9 %, which was higher than that for state population as a whole (44.7 %) as well as the
state SC population (48.1 per cent). The WPR of ST population has increased if compared to 52.1% recorded at 1991 Census. The WPR of 60.1% for ST males is higher than 49.5% reported among ST females at 2001 Census. At individual tribe level, the WPR varies from 59.5% among Malayali to 40.5% among Kattunayakan. The trend is same in case of female WPR. Malayali have the highest 57.7% female WPR.

Despite long experience and acquiring adequate skills, tribals are employed only as unskilled labourers to do the manual works. Tribals in India are mostly uneducated and illiterates. Many of them are causal workers. They do work that is physically hard and work under close supervision without proper safety equipments, which results in industrial accidents and employment injuries. They must lift and carry heavy objects in addition to frequent stoop, kneel, crawl, and crouch in awkward positions, which pave the way for many health problems connected with spinal and cervical disorders. Being an unorganized sector, the conditions of tribal workers in unorganized sector are still in pathetic condition with following observations,

High incidence of grievances.

Heavy workload.

Unhygienic working conditions.

Lack of welfare facilities such as crèche, canteen, medical aid.

Less promotional opportunities.
Absence of social security measures.

Absence of formal negotiating machinery.

All the above said observation paved the way for this research.

The deplorable working condition causes many difficulties to the tribal labourers in unorganized sector. Communicable diseases like tuberculosis are also very common among tribal workers due to lack of proper medical facilities and sanitation. Lack of toilet facilities is another problem for the tribal workers. They mostly depend on open toilet and are required to wait for considerable time to get rid of sight of strangers.

The present study examines the socio-economic condition of the unorganized tribal labourers (Construction workers) in Cuddalore District. The tribal workers, as they are mostly migrant, are unorganized and exploited and therefore their health aspects are completely neglected. Tribals are educationally and economically found very backward. They have been far away from the mainstream of developments. Most of them are found living in the undeveloped areas in groups. Government of India categorized the IRULAS, MALAYALI, KATTUNAYKAN as Scheduled Tribe (S.T.) to give a special status and consideration. The present study is confined to the Irulas residing at Cuddalore District.

Irulars, one of the six primitive tribes, form a tiny minority in Tamil Nadu, numbering about 100,000 in a population of 7.21 crore. The literacy rate among Irulars is around 34 % against the State's literacy rate of 80.33 %. The
British ethnographer Edgar Thurston's historic work Castes and Tribes of Southern India, published in 1909, says that the Irulars of composite South Arcot, comprising Villupuram and Cuddalore Districts, “are chiefly found about the Gingee hills, talk a corrupt Tamil, are very dark skinned, have very curly hair, never shave their heads, and never wear turbans or sandals. They dwell in scattered huts – never more than two or three in one place – which is little, round, thatched hovels with a low doorway through which one can just crawl, built among the fields…. They are perhaps the poorest and most miserable community in the District. Only one or two of them own any land, and that is only dry land….” A century later, not much has changed for them. The coordinator of PIPS, Prabha Kalvimani, also known as P. Kalyani, said around 60 % of the Irulars in the northern Districts led a semi-nomadic life and worked in brick kilns and rice mills as bonded labourers as they found it difficult to repay the loans taken from the owners. Some of them work as cane cutters. Presently many of them are employed in construction industries which are big pool of employment of unskilled labour force in Cuddalore District. Irulars, living on the dry plains, had an amazing snake-catching skill. Over generations, they had developed a traditional knowledge system of ethno-medicine as they were badly in need of it while dealing with poisonous reptiles. At one stage, they were exploited by some Western traders, who purchased snake skins. Earlier, they were treated as friends of farmers as they used snakes to catch farm rats to prevent crop loss. Over the past four decades, however, there was a process of alienation as Irulars started losing their livelihoods and became labourers or manual workers, as bonded labourers, they faced varied forms of torture and humiliation, including sexual,
physical and psychological abuse at their workplaces. Tribal women employed in
unorganized employments are discriminated in wage payment based on sex and
which are better performed by them. Many of the national and international
enactments had not altered the socio-economic conditions of unorganized tribal
workers. Sexual harassment is also a serious problem for tribal women who seek
employment in construction works and other unorganized employments.
Incidents of child sexual abuse is also brought to light and many of the child
sexual abuses are unnoticed as the girls conceal the fact.

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1.2 UNORGANIZED LABOUR AND ITS CHARACTHERISTIC FEATURES

The term ‘unorganized labour’ has been defined as those workers who have not been able to organize themselves in pursuit of their common interests due to certain constraints like casual nature of employment, ignorance and illiteracy, small and scattered size of establishments, etc.

The Indian Economy is characterized by the existence of a vast majority of informal or unorganized labour employment. As per the Economic Survey 2007-08, 93 % of India’s workforce include the self employed and employed in unorganized sector. The Ministry of Labour, Government of India, has categorized the unorganized labour force under four groups in terms of Occupation, nature of employment, especially distressed categories and service categories.

1. **In terms of occupation:**

Small and marginal farmers, landless agricultural labourers, share croppers, fishermen, those engaged in animal husbandry, beedi rolling, labeling and packing, building and construction workers, leather workers, weavers, artisans, salt workers, workers in brick kilns and stone quarries, workers in saw mills, oil mills etc. come under this category.
2. *In terms of nature of employment:*

Attached agricultural labourers, bonded labourers, migrant workers, contract and casual labourers in construction industries come under this.

3. *In terms of Specially distressed categories:*

Toddy tappers, Scavengers, Carriers of head loads, Drivers of animal driven vehicles, Loaders and unloaders come under this category.

4. *In terms of Service categories:*

Midwives, Domestic workers, Fishermen and women, Barbers, Vegetable and fruit vendors, News paper vendors etc. belong to this category.

In addition to these four categories, there exists a large section of unorganized labour force such as cobblers, Hamals, Handicraft artisans, Handloom weavers, Lady tailors, Physically handicapped self employed persons, Rikshaw pullers, Auto drivers, Sericulture workers, Carpenters, Tannery workers, Power loom workers and Urban poor.

Though the availability of statistical information on intensity and accuracy vary significantly, the extent of unorganized workers is significantly high among agricultural workers, building and other construction workers and among home-based workers. According to the Economic Survey 2007-08, agricultural workers constitute the largest segment of workers in the unorganized sector (ie. 52 % of the total workers).
As per the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), 30 million workers in India are constantly on the move (migrant labour) and 25.94 million women workforce has been added in the labour market from the year 2000 onwards. All the more, every day 13000 Indians turn 60 years and they are expected to live another average of 17 years. Unfortunately only 10 % of the Indians save for old age. The tragedy is that the existing social security legislations cover only 8 % of the total work force of 459 million in India.

The latest report of the NSSO about the casual workers in India between 2004-05 and 2009-10 compared to that of the period between 1999 – 2000 and 2004-05 very clearly shows that there is significant increase in the number of casual workers and decline in the number of regular workers.

This report shows a substantial shift between 1999-00 and 2009-10 in the structure of the labour force which can be broadly divided into self employed, regular, and casual workers. (Casual workers are employees who do not enjoy the same benefits and security as tenured employees. All daily wage employees and some categories of contract employees are casual labourers.)

All these NSSO reports are clear evidences to prove that the labour market of India has been undergoing tremendous transformations, including growth of informal sector activities, deterioration in the quality of employment (in terms of job security, terms and conditions at work), weakening of worker organizations and collective bargaining institutions, marked decline in social security etc. To a greater extent, these transformations could be related to the
ongoing globalization process and the resultant efforts on the part of employers to minimize the cost of production to the lowest levels. It is also evident that most of these outcomes are highly correlated and mutually reinforcing. A closer analysis suggests that the growing informalisation of labour market has been central to most of these transformations, which inter alia highlights the utility of understanding the growth of unorganized sector in India and its implications.

Many thought that India’s growth could do no wrong, and took the administrative versions and interpretations for granted. Now it comes to a point that none of these can be taken for granted. Growth is slow, inflation is structural and structure of employment is not enough to cater to the growing labour force.

As per the survey carried out by the National Sample Survey Organization in the year 1999-2000, the total employment in both organized and unorganized sector in the country was of the order of 39.7 crore. Out of this, about 2.8 crore were in the organized sector and the balance 36.9 crore in the unorganized sector. Out of 36.9 crore workers in the unorganized sector 23.7 crore workers were employed in agriculture sector, 1.7 crore in construction, 4.1 in manufacturing activities and 3.7 crore each in trade and transport, communication and services. The workers in unorganized sector fall in various categories but a large number of them are home-based workers who are engaged in occupations like beedi rolling, agarbatti making, papad making, tailoring, jary and embroidery work.

According to the definition of Unorganized Sector Workers’ Social Security Act, 2007 "self-employed worker" means any person who is not
employed by an employer, but engages himself or herself in any occupation in
the unorganized sector subject to a monthly earning of an amount as may be
notified by the Central Government or the State Government from time to time or
holds cultivable land subject to such ceiling as may be notified by the State
Government. The scheduled tribe men and women come under this category of
self employed person’s category. The Unorganized labour constitutes a widely
exploited section of the society. “Unorganized sector worker” means a home-
based worker, self-employed worker or a wage worker in the unorganized sector.

The unorganized sector workers suffer from cycles of excessive
seasonality of employment, no formal employer-employee relationship and lack
of social security protection. Several legislations like the Workmen’s
Compensation Act, 1923; the Minimum Wages Act, 1948; and the Maternity
Benefit Act, 1961; the Contract Labour (Abolition and Prohibition) Act, 1970;
the Building and Other Construction Workers (RECS) Act, 1996; the Building
and Other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1996 etc. are directly or
indirectly applicable to the workers in the unorganized sector also.

The construction workers constitute one of the largest categories of
workers in the unorganized sector. According to the Sample Survey conducted by
NSSO in 1999-2000, about 1.76 crore workers are employed in the construction
activities. The Government has enacted the following two legislations for the
construction workers: 1. The Building and Other Construction Workers
(Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996.
2. The Building and Other Construction Workers’ Welfare Cess, Act, 1996;

Unorganized or informal sector constitutes a pivotal part of the Indian economy. More than 90 % of workforce and about 50 % of the national product are accounted for by the informal economy. A high proportion of socially and economically underprivileged sections of society are concentrated in the informal economic activities. The high level of growth of the Indian economy during the past two decades is accompanied by increasing informalisation. There are indications of growing interlinkages between informal and formal economic activities. There has been new dynamism of the informal economy in terms of output, employment and earnings. Faster and inclusive growth needs special attention to informal economy. Sustaining high levels of growth are also intertwined with improving domestic demand of those engaged in informal economy, and addressing the needs of the sector in terms of credit, skills, technology, marketing and infrastructure The unorganized labour is overwhelming in terms of its number range and therefore, they are omnipresent throughout India. As the unorganized sector suffers from cycles of excessive seasonality of employment, majority of the unorganized workers does not have stable and durable avenues of employment. Even those who appear to be visibly employed are not gainfully and substantially employed, indicating the existence of disguised unemployment. The workplace is scattered and fragmented. The workers do the same kind of job(s) in different habitations and may not work and live together in compact geographical areas. There is no formal employer-employee relationship between small and marginal farmers, share croppers and
agricultural labourers as they work together in situations which may be marginally favourable to one category but may be broadly described as identical. In rural areas, the unorganized labour force is highly stratified on caste and community considerations. In urban areas while such considerations are much less, it cannot be said that it is altogether absent as the bulk of the unorganized workers in urban areas are basically migrant workers from rural areas. Workers in the unorganized sector are usually subject to a lot of fads, taboos, and outmoded social customs like child marriage, excessive spending on ceremonial festivities etc. which lead to indebtedness and bondage.

The unorganized workers are subject to exploitation significantly by the rest of the society. The unorganized workers receive poor working conditions, especially wages much below that in the formal sector, even for closely comparable jobs i.e., where labour productivity are no different. The work status is of inferior quality of work and inferior terms of employment, both remuneration and employment.

Primitive production technologies and feudal production relations are rampant in the unorganized sector, and they do not permit or encourage the workmen to imbibe and assimilate higher technologies and better production relations. Large scale ignorance and illiteracy and limited exposure to the goings on in the outside world are also responsible for such poor absorption.

The unorganized workers do not receive sufficient attention from the trade unions. In general, unorganized workers are observed to be large in numbers,
suffering from cycles of excessive seasonality of employment, scattered and fragmented work place, poor in working conditions, and lack of attention from the trade unions. The extent of workforce in the organised and unorganized sectors, and their changes over time could be understood by the information provided by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Director General of Employment and Training, Government of India and published in the Economic Surveys. Accordingly, the share of organised workforce was about 8 % by 1983, which declined to 7.54 % by 2004-2005. The corresponding share of urorganised workforce was about 92.07 % by 1983, which increased to 92.46 % by 2004-2005.

**Table-1.2 Trends in Employment in Organised and Unorganized Sectors in India(in million)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Organised</th>
<th>Un organized</th>
<th>Total work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>24.01 (7.93)</td>
<td>278.74 (92.07)</td>
<td>302.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1987-1988</td>
<td>25.71 (7.93)</td>
<td>298.58 (92.07)</td>
<td>324.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1993-1994</td>
<td>27.37 (7.31)</td>
<td>347.08 (92.69)</td>
<td>374.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>28.11 (7.08)</td>
<td>368.89 (92.91)</td>
<td>397.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>26.46 (7.54)</td>
<td>358.45 (92.46)</td>
<td>384.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Labour and Employment, Director General of Employment and Training and Economic Survey (various years)

Note : Figures in brackets are percentages to the respective totals
1.3 PROBLEMS OF TRIBAL LABOUR

Tribal contribute significantly in the economic development. The tribal people both men women and children collectively engage in revenue generation activities. The tribal are very strong in physical and artistic works. Many of the works of the tribal needs skill which they learn by experience traditionally. Lack of proper training on the part of the tribal labour could not bring expected development in the tribal labour. Tribals in India are different from other countries. However, many problems hamper the growth of the tribal people. The problems of tribes of India can broadly be classified into the following categories:

i ) Socio-Cultural problems

ii) Political-constitutional problems

iii) Economic problems, and

iv) Protection of tribal from exploitation (B.D. Shanna, 1980).

Land as a prime resource has been a source of problem in tribal life because of two related reasons, first, Dependency, i.e. tribal dependency on land and second, improper planning from government agencies. Tribal people in India can be classified on the basis of their economic pursuits in the following way:
1. Foragers

2. Pastoral

3. Handicraft makers

4. Agriculturists

5. Shifting hill cultivators

6. Labourers (labourers working in Organized and Unorganized sector)

7. Business pursuits (Self employed, street vendors and Rag pickers)

All of these occupations involve direct or indirect dependency on land.

Throughout the history of Indian Civilization tribal people have increasingly lost their land because of state’s encroachment, and also lack of understanding between tribal mode of relationship and outsiders’ interests.

Tribal people’s mode of land ownership is quite different from the rest. With cross cultural research three kinds of land ownership is noted –

1. Community based ownership

2. Clan based ownership

3. Family based ownership

As commons are difficult to manage, tribal people have frequently been denied from their rights over land. The socio-cultural problems are mainly related
to social contacts, and many times followed by culture shock and depletion of traditional values of tribals. Ultimately, these may lead to the identification of crisis causing unrest. Invaders from inside the country had mainly been one of the motivating forces for associating with the tribes. It was to utilize the economic gains in terms of forest produce, agricultural produce or even possession of cultivable lands and mines, ores, etc. Cross culture was the outcome of the permanent settlement of the outsiders.

Education, especially informal education, however, compelled tribal workers to spatial mobility. This was responsible for over exposures of alien culture, and therefore, the so-called progressive tribals suffered depletion of their rich cultural heritage. For political resurgence, some constitutional measurers were undertaken by the Union Government to provide rights through Fifth Schedule for the tribals. A number of seats have been reserved in the Lok Sabha as per the Constitution. But this sort of attempt to place the tribals in the main stream of political resurgence, before raising their social outlook and creating required amount of social change, should promote the interest of tribal elites who were off-shoots of former rulers. While framing the Indian Constitution, the error committed was that the reservation for Scheduled Tribes was granted to all sections of tribes; regardless of their levels of education, income and social status which created the difference between them. This led to the poor tribes becoming poorer, and the rich tribes becoming richer. Following the principle of reservation in employment, the affluent section of Scheduled Tribes too could grab the higher posts. De-reservation of the progressive sector of Scheduled Tribes could not be
followed due to political pressure. Economic problems of the tribals should have first attracted the attention of the government after obtaining freedom, but age-old isolation policy of triabals continued to more tribal development. Keeping the tribals isolated in remote geographical setting, as stipulated by the government, did more harm rather than any good. Even the culture compulsion and existing social framework of the tribals went against their economic development. Subsidy to tribal beneficiaries under various programmes was supposed to act as important stimuli to induce capital formation in disguise, but perhaps ideas and concepts of development traveled to the tribal areas much later than that of supply of agricultural inputs and equipments. This added to several cases of adoption gaps of new technology, namely, in farming, cattle keeping or even in health and nutrition programmes which aimed at raising the production and quality of life respectively followed by boosting up of per capita income. Savings from out of family income, either for promoting capital formation or even to meet out necessities on rainy days, are no issues for their consideration. All these are deep-rooted in their economic profile of very limited wants and very limited aspirations. They lead a simple life and adopt simple modes of direct production of essential food items. Due to interaction with the outer world of greedy people, whose very action is income profit oriented, the tribals also have the growing needs of money to pay off obligation of government dues. Therefore, the moneylenders were the first with whose contact the tribals came to get loans. With this the problem of land alienation was started. Following malafide procedure, documents were prepared by the moneylenders in their own interest and tribals gradually lost their lands to them. Hence, all the above said problems
of the tribal have resulted in migration. Conceptually, migration is a phenomenon antidote to fixity or permanence. It is loaded with the sense of mobility from one place to another. In the context of tribal migration, the concept denotes non-exposure and traditionalism. Self-sustainability is a feature of stability in contrast to stagnation, which is loaded with staleness. The situation, when migration is a common feature of the tribal society, implies that their old age stability has been disturbed, followed by loss of their socio-economic equilibrium. Self-sufficiency has been the common core of tribal economy. This allowed them to survive with their limited wants and nature's bounties, by using direct mode of production, in labour intensive and capital light economic system. Basically, there are two dimensions of migration of the tribals, viz., spatial migration and occupational migration. For diversification of tribal economy, these two migrations are essentially required. With the onset of changes in its specific features through education, specialization, new technology and modern occupations, tribal society is no longer considered a tribal society. It is described as having become a caste society, peasant society or socially differentiated society as the case may be. The tribes are viewed as being absorbed into the larger society, in the process of losing total identity. At present, in economic literature; tribes are studied against the backdrop of the processes at work in those societies. Housing facilities being most fundamental requirement of human survival and a question of identity requires special attention. In India in 1996, 28% of the tribals were without houses (Economic Survey 1998). The situation is even more dreadful while trials are displaced and/or affected by development projects or natural calamities.
Strong tribal movements and protests have resulted in Supreme Court’s decision of forming 6th schedule and 5th schedule to protect tribal people from outsider’s exploitation.

Infrastructural development projects carried out by states, often with the assistance of the international community, frequently result in the displacement of peoples from homes that stand in the way of dams, highways, or other large-scale construction projects. New standards are emerging for states to address the displacement consequences of development.

World Bank estimates that only in post 1990s the construction of 300 high dams displaced four million people each year, urban projects have displaced 6 million people each year worldwide each year. Ongoing industrialisation, electrification and urbanisation processes are likely to increase, rather than reduce, the number of programmes causing involuntary population displacement. Causes or categories of development-induced displacement include the following: water supply (dams, reservoirs, irrigation); urban infrastructure; transportation (roads, highway, canals); energy (mining, power plants, oil exploration and extraction, pipelines); agriculture expansion; parks and forest reserves; and population redistribution schemes.

Despite of the abandonment of many high cost projects during 1950s and 1960s which displaced about 40 – 50 % of the tribal people from their homeland, many of these projects are in the process of restarting. In 1994 the government of India admitted that 10 million people displaced by dams, mines, deforestation and
other development projects were still ‘awaiting rehabilitation’, a figure regarded as very conservative by most independent researchers. In China the government has admitted that 7 million development-induced IDPs lived in ‘extreme poverty’ in 1989 (International River Network 1998). Estimates suggest that in Andhra Pradesh 27 % of the tribal people are displaced. Orissa has a displacement of 22 % of her tribal communities. Similar situation prevails in Jharkhand, West Bengal and Kerala.

Michael Cernea, a sociologist, who has researched development-induced displacement and resettlement for the World Bank, points out that being forcibly ousted from one's land and habitat carries with it the risk of becoming poorer than before displacement, since a significant portion of people displaced do not receive compensation for their lost assets, and effective assistance to re-establish themselves productively. Cernea (1999) has identified eight interlinked potential risks intrinsic to displacement.

**Landlessness**: Expropriation of land removes the main foundation upon which people's productive systems, commercial activities, and livelihoods are constructed.

**Joblessness**: The risk of losing wage employment is very high both in urban and rural displacements for those employed in enterprises, services or agriculture. Yet creating new jobs is difficult and requires substantial investment.

**Homelessness**: Loss of shelter tends to be only temporary for many people being resettled; but, for some, homelessness or a worsening in their housing standards
remains a lingering condition. In a broader cultural sense, loss of a family's individual home and the loss of a group's cultural space tend to result in alienation and status deprivation.

**Marginalisation.** Marginalisation occurs when families lose economic power and spiral on a “downward mobility” path. Many individuals cannot use their earlier-acquired skills at the new location; human capital is lost or rendered inactive or obsolete. Economic marginalisation is often accompanied by social and psychological marginalisation.

**Food Insecurity.** Forced uprooting increases the risk that people will fall into temporary or chronic undernourishment, defined as calorie-protein intake levels below the minimum necessary for normal growth and work.

**Increased Morbidity and Mortality.** Displacement-induced social stress and psychological trauma, the use of unsafe water supply and improvised sewage systems, increase vulnerability to epidemics and chronic diarrhoea, dysentery, or particularly parasitic and vector-borne diseases such as malaria and schistosomiasis.

**Loss of Access to Common Property.** For poor people, loss of access to the common property assets that belonged to relocated communities (pastures, forest lands, water bodies, burial grounds, quarries and so on) result in significant deterioration in income and livelihood levels.

**Social Disintegration.** Displacement causes a profound unravelling of existing patterns of social organisation. This unravelling occurs at many levels. When
people are forcibly moved, production systems, life-sustaining informal networks, trade linkages, etc are dismantled.

For the first 25 years of independence, the problem of rural housing did not receive special attention from the government excepting the rehabilitation of 5 lacks refugees till around 1960s and part of Community Development Programme in 1957, which resulted only in formation of 67000 houses.

However, major initiative was started in 1980s when the construction of houses becomes major activities of the Employment Guarantee Programme which began in 1983. The major scheme which provided an integrated approach on rural housing started in 1985 launched under rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLFGP), which further gets integrated to Jwahar Rojgar Yojna (JRY) in 1989. This scheme is known as Indira Awas Yojna which targets . Due to illiteracy and ignorance the tribals are not able to appreciate modern concept of health and sanitation. They do not take much care pertaining to their own health. They believe that diseases are caused by hostile spirits and ghosts. They have their own traditional means of diagnosis and cure.

Tribal people from their basic ways of living remote places and shyness of mixing with community at large frequently are worst sufferers of health hazards. Leprosy, skin disease, tuberculosis, anaemia and diarrhoea are very common among them. The health hazards related to pregnancy and malnutrition are faced by more than 90 % of the tribal. Good number of them fall a prey to the diseases such as forest fever, typhoid, malaria, Dengue fever, venereal diseases,
small pox, etc. Contact with outsiders further added to a few more diseases in the tribal areas. The percapita health expenditure among tribal is higher than regular population. Many scholars have focused on health and poverty as maintaining a strong interrelationship where the nexus is found to work as a double edged sword.

Traditionally tribal communities have undergone drastic changes due to large scale migration, encroachment by outsiders and increasing vulnerability of the resources on which they have traditionally depended. Though many measures like scheduling of tribal areas, creasing land transfer and recognition of the rights over resources is encouraged by the Government of India; yet, tribal are facing problems of land alienation, displacement, indebtedness and bonded labour. Many of the problems are rooted from their increasing attachment with dominant culture and lack of basic competence in education. As Walter Fernandes (2005) argues that their attachment with the dominant culture though changed their expenditure but never empowered them truly from within.

Housing facilities being most fundamental requirement of human survival and a question of identity requires special attention. In India in 1996, 28 % of the tribals were without houses (Economic Survey 1998). The situation is even more dreadful while trials are displaced and/or affected by development projects or natural calamities. Thus tribal labourers in India are facing many problems in various facets of their employments.
1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In spite of the many affirmative actions, tribals in India face insurmountable problems due to their low socio-economic conditions, poverty, unemployment, displacement, indebtedness, lack of opportunities, accessibility and awareness of the government programmes. Coupled to this, the government and private industrial establishments have initiated mega projects of mining, hydro-electric, industry, business, roads and transport which is leading to the loss of traditional land ownership and livelihood opportunities. This is resulting in large scale migration of rural tribal to urban areas in search of livelihoods either temporarily or on permanent basis which in turn resulting into the disturbances of their traditional sociopsychological family relationship, network of neighbourly relationships and the adoption of new urban culture.

Urban employment is the biggest reason for migration. As majority of the tribal are illiterates and are unskilled labour, they are easily attracted to the unorganized sector. **Construction is one of the unorganized sectors in Cuddalore District which provides employment opportunities to the migrant tribal labourers.** But the post migration scenario portrays deplorable conditions of employment of tribal. Multitude of problems surrounding the unorganized tribal workers drew the attention of Human Rights Activist, Labour Activist, and Philanthropist in the recent times. As a result research studies on tribal labour began slowly. A number of national and international laws are also applicable to tribal labour. Now the research problem is whether the protective legal measures really improved the standard of living of the tribal labour in construction.
industries? The question again arises whether the tribal workers enjoy the fruits of the protective labour laws applicable to them? With this objective a study was conducted in the Cuddalore District which is 160 kilometers from Chennai.

The Government of Tamilnadu had passed a separate Act for the regulation of employment and conditions of manual workers. The Tamilnadu Manual Workers Act was enacted as early as in 1982. The Act provides for the regulation of the employment, conditions of work and security of the employments of manual workers in certain employments in the state of Tamilnadu. Tribal workers are mostly employed as manual workers are covered under this legislation and are entitle to legal protection. The Act provides for certain social security benefits like pension and financial assistance to the construction workers including Maternity benefits.

In addition to the above said legislations specifically applicable to the manual workers, a number of other national and international laws are also applicable to tribal workers employed in many organized and unorganized employments. Now the research problem to be examined in this study is as follows:-

1. How far the protective legislations are implemented in Construction sector wherein majority of the tribal laborers are employed?

2. Whether the existing labour laws really serve the object and purpose of its enactment?
3. Whether the Socio-economic, working conditions and conditions of employment of Tribal workers in construction industries are improved after the enactment.

The examination of the above issues will certainly lead to a meaningful assessment of the existing socio-economic and working conditions of tribal workers in unorganized sector (Construction Sector) and the effective implementation of the labour legislations and its lapses if any so as to formulate a policy decision at national level. All these problems paved the way for the present study.

1.5 NEED OF THE STUDY

Tribal workers in construction industries encounter many difficulties because of their transition and transformation from their traditional works. Due to movement from forest and hills their pattern of living and drastically changed. To adjust their economic equilibrium they are forced take up alternate jobs at plains. The distressing and pitiable working conditions on account of transformation as unorganized labour from their traditional works place them in the lower strata. The review of literature suggests that few studies are available on tribal workers. Some of them were undertaken by the social scientists and Government organisations. The focus and dimensions of the study tend to vary depending up on their objective and the level at which the study was conducted. But the true studies portraying the inner problems of tribals as unorganiased workers failed to reveal the real picture in the construction sector.
There is an imperative need to take up more studies at this level to understand the problems of tribal workers in construction industries more vividly. Such an understanding is absolutely necessary to evolve appropriate strategy to deal with their problems and to bring about overall development of tribal workers including the enjoyment of their Human Rights.

So the studies of these types are absolutely needed at this point of time. Such studies will be helpful for the betterment of the tribal construction workers and society at large.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Tribal society is largely egalitarian and tribal women have been equal partners with tribal men in the contribution to household economy. Quite often their women do more physical labour in their agricultural fields and forest than that of the tribal men. Tribal women have usually enjoyed a higher social status in their own communities than Indian women in general. Many economic activities are carried out by the tribal people in plain. These tribal people both women and men are employed in unorganized employments such as Construction, Agricultural labours, casual labour, contract labour, self employed, Street vendors etc. In addition to the above a considerable portion of the tribal population are still engaged in their traditional works of snake catching, herbal medicine street vending, self employed marketing of artistic articles. Rag picking has also become one of the chief occupations besides hunting birds. In addition to the above many unorganized employments provides jobs to the tribal people.
Each jobs has distinct characteristic features and the conditions of employment and working conditions differ from each other in unorganized sector. Though tribal people are employed in all most all the unorganized employments Construction sector is found to be one of the biggest pool for the tribal people. The construction sector in Cuddlaore District is booming after Tsumani. Various construction activities carried out in the Districts becomes paradise for the tribal employments .Tribal people from hills and forest are migrating to Cuddalore District which seems to be very conducive for their habitation. It is also easy for the tribal men and women to be employed in construction sector which largely depend on strong manual labourers.

The study covered tribal men and women working as unorganized labour in construction works in Cuddalore District. Mostly tribals are employed as manual workers. Their work is unskilled in nature. Majority of the tribal labour in Cuddalore District belongs to Irulars and Kattunaickan. Considerable number of Malakuravan, Malayalee and Uraly were also found in almost all the taluks of the Cuddalore District. In addition to the above said, some of the other categories of tribal also are found to be residing and working at the plains and hill areas of Cuddalore District. Most of these tribal people are not the natives but migrated from the other Districts fifty years back. These tribal people mainly settled in groups in various towns of Cuddalore District. The study focuses the Socio economic, living and working conditions of the tribal people working in Construction sector alone. There is also an extensive scope for many more studies
in this contour to enable the administrators to devise an appropriate strategy to improve the overall conditions of tribals.

1.7 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The overall objective of the study is to understand and analyse Socio-economic, the working and living conditions of Tribal labourers and thus it has its focus on the following specific objectives.

1. To study the socio-economic profile of tribal labourers in construction sector

2. To understand the nature, pattern of employment, migratory character and living conditions of tribal workers at construction works in Cuddalore District.

3. To examine the protective labour laws applicable to the construction industries.

4. To study the social security measures extended to tribal workers in construction sector.

5. To suggest suitable measures.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For a successful research a clear and effective methodology enjoys a place of prime importance. The Research Design, Sampling size, methods of data
Collection, tools of data Collection and Process and analysis of data, which are considered as essential constituents of methodology of a social research, are carefully selected and appropriate methods were employed for this study.

**Research design**

The present study is an exploratory-cum-descriptive design. While the exploratory design is employed in order to gain familiarity with the situation of tribal workers, the descriptive design is used for portraying accurately the characteristics of tribal workers and for determining its association with the socio-economic factors. The present state of affairs of the tribal workers in Cuddalore District is studied and analyzed with statistical tools. Survey method is used for eliciting data from the target population. The researcher collected some of the information by observation of the groups.

**Sampling Method**

Tribal labourers are settled at all seven taluks of Cuddalore District. Economic concentrations of tribal labourers at plain area are taken for the present study. For the purpose of the study, 398 samples were taken under simple random sampling method from the construction sector where tribal men and women are largely employed; 200 samples from among the men and 198 samples from women employed with construction employments in all seven taluks of Cuddalore District are taken as sample from the universe. An attempt is made to cover all the Construction employments where the tribal labourers (Men and women) are employed. All unskilled, skilled categories are taken for the study.
The study also covers the Casual labour, Contract labour, independent worker on piece rate basis are also covered under this study. The samples were identified at their residence and based on the information of the groups of the tribal people the specific samples from Construction industries were drawn from among the unorganized employments.

**Pilot study**

Structured close-ended interview schedule in regional language Tamil is pre-tested to find out the validity among 25 sample population in random. Necessary changes were incorporated in the questionnaire after it was pre-tested among the above-said 25 respondents. The data collected through the schedule is tabulated and statistical tools were applied to analyze the data in scientific way.

**Data Collection**

Collection of accurate, authentic and reliable information is vital to draw valid inference and conclusion. The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. The following tools found suitable for the study is used in this study. The primary data is collected from the registered, unregistered, petty construction contractors including the large construction companies and independent constructions carried out directly by the owners.

**Interview Schedule for Tribal Laborers**

An interview schedule is used to collect information from the tribal workers in construction industries. A comprehensive structured interview
schedule was prepared for men and women workers incorporating questions pertaining to the Socio-economic, working conditions, etc. The schedule is prepared both in English and Tamil. The schedule consisted of a series of questions relating to identification details like age, education, income, length of work, hours of work, rest intervals, working conditions, fringe benefits, welfare measures, health, safety, union membership, awareness on various Acts, and working conditions were incorporated to elicit the required information.

Interview

Interview is considered as a better method to collect personal information as it gives an opportunity to the researcher to judge the reliability of answers, seek clarifications and collect all-important information required for the research. The present work seeks to collect data on personal and work life of Tribal workers in Unorganised Construction Sector. Interviews were extensively used for the data collection and were conducted with the help of structured schedule after establishing rapport with the respondents. Further on completion of answering the schedule, each respondent is interviewed informally on several issues. Apart from the interview schedule, notes on the content of the oral interview are prepared for each of the respondent separately in the blank paper attached with interview schedule. The same is also taken into consideration for the study.
Observation

Observation is considered to be one of the most effective techniques of data collection especially to study the social phenomenon. This method helped the researcher to collect the first hand information about the living and working conditions of tribal in general and tribal workers in particular. The behaviors aspects of tribals are observed to analyze socio-psychological factors by using this technique.

Secondary Data Collection

The secondary data was collected from the published books, Government agencies, Research reports, Internet resources, Acts and Commentaries relating to Tribal labourers.

Data Process and Analysis

All the schedules were initially coded providing code number on the first page. After the collection of data, all the variables are assigned numbers for facilitating computerization. The information collected is processed, tabulated and analyzed quantitatively by using statistical tools.

Scheme of presentation

The Dissertation is organized in to five Chapters. Chapter one deals with introduction. It presents the Overview of tribal people and their chief characteristics. An attempt is made to present the problems of tribal workers. Various economic activities undertaken by the tribal labourers were discussed
briefly in a separate section. The later part of the chapter encompasses, the statement of the problem, need for the present study, scope of the study, the object of the study, methodology adopted for the study, the scheme of presentation of the thesis and the limitation of the study.

In Chapter Two, a selected review of literature is presented which gives a bird’s eye view of the research done so far in the field of tribals. A special emphasis is made to present vivid picture of the construction sector and the problems associated with it to relate them to the tribal who constitute a substantial part.

The Third chapter deals with a decrepit structure of the unorganized employments and the protective labour laws applicable to the workforce employed with various constituent unorganized sector. It also portrays the glimpse picture of the tribal people employed in the said part of the informal sector.

The fourth chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the respondents. Data on socio-economics, working conditions, sexual harassment and other factors are analysed with statistical tools.

The chapter five is the final chapter which embodies the findings of the study. Challenges for the future are offered as recommendations towards the end of the chapter. It is believed that they will go a long way in improving the conditions and overall development of tribal workers
1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study has the following limitations. The tribal people are employed with many unorganized employments. Each employment is unique. However, most of them are employed with construction and agriculture comes next. The other works such as rag picking and street vending also constitute a negligible portion. So, for the purpose of the present study tribal labourers employed in construction industries are alone taken into consideration. The rest of the employments possessing different characteristic features are systematically excluded from the purview of the study. During the course of study, the researcher faced many problems. The main difficulty encountered is lack of statistical data regarding the tribal workers in unorganized construction sector. It become a Herculean task to collect data and elicit information mainly form illiterate and ignorant. They were hesitant to give information sought especially information relating to sexual harassment. As collection of data from the target population is too large for the researcher to study on Census method, the study is confined to four hundred samples selected under stratified random sampling. The study is also confined to tribal workers in Construction Industries of Cuddalore District.

1.10 An introduction to the area of the study

Cuddalore District is a District of Tamil Nadu state in southern India. The city of Cuddalore is the District headquarters. For the first time, urn burial grave goods were found in the village of Marungur in the District, carrying inscriptions
in Tamil Brahmi from the 1st century BC. The District has an area of 3,564 km². It is bounded on the north by Viluppuram District, on the east by the Bay of Bengal, on the south by Nagapattinam District, and on the west by Perambalur District. In 2006, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj named Cuddalore one of the country's 250 most backward Districts (out of a total of 640). It is one of the six Districts in Tamil Nadu currently receiving funds from the Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme (BRGF).

**Demographics**

According to the 2011 Census, Cuddalore District has a population of 2,600,880, roughly equal to the nation of Kuwait or the US state of Nevada. This gives it a ranking of 158th in India (out of a total of 640). The District has a population density of 702 inhabitants per square kilometre (1,820 /sq mi). Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was 13.8 %. Cuddalore has a sex ratio of 984 females for every 1000 males, and a literacy rate of 79.04 %. The District has a population of 22,85,395 as per the Census of 2001. It is 33.01 % urbanised. The District has a literacy of 71.85 %. This is lesser than the state's average. In Cuddalore District, there are 7 taluks, 13 Blocks, 5 Municipalities and 18 Town Panchayats. As per the Census-2001, the total population of Cuddalore District is 22,85,395 of which male account for 11,50,908 and female account for 11,34,487. The SC/ST population in the District is 6.45 lakhs. The density of population is 621 per sq.km. The total literate percentage is 62.15 %.
Cuddalore is a fast growing and large industrial city, located south of the union territory of Pondicherry (Puducherry) on Bay of Bengal. The word Cuddalore means "Sea Town". Cuddalore is known for its picturesque beaches, particularly Silver Beach, and is an emerging tourism hub. The famous Nataraja temple at Chidambaram is in Cuddalore District. The District is known for its beautiful beaches and it is therefore an emerging tourist destination. Fort St. David is another important tourist attraction in Cuddalore. India’s energy bridge to the 21-century, Neyveli Lignite Corporation, is in Cuddalore District. The Mangrove Forest 'Pitchavaram', is another tourist spot which attracts tourists. Cuddalore District was hit by Tsunami. But within two years, Cuddalore has emerged as a role model for other tsunami-affected areas on carrying out reconstruction works. By constructing over 4,000 permanent houses, the District administration has also provided decent shelters to marginalised sections such as Irula tribals and Dalits. Collector Mr Gagandeep Singh Bedi told that the UNDP had commended the District administration for having built additional houses. The District was a salient example of how public-private partnership could transform a devastated coastline into an area bubbling with life. Imbued with the motto of three Bs - "Building Back Better" - the State Government had sanctioned Rs. 158 crore for providing infrastructure in the coastal areas of Cuddalore. The construction sector has become one of the biggest sources of employment of the tribal labour in the Cuddalore District. The Cuddalore District was the first in the country to implement a pilot project on early warning system, in coordination with the UNDP, in 55 coastal villages. The District administration has prepared disaster management plans for all 681 villages with the most vulnerable areas earmarked
through participatory rural appraisal exercises. The escape routes have been charted out and safe shelters identified to accommodate people during exigencies. The District administration had provided school benches, desks and bags to all students in the coastal areas. Under the Prime Minister Relief Scheme, a monthly stipend of Rs. 300 was being given to students studying from standards 1 to 10. The Government of Tamilnadu announced its decision to construct 90,000 houses to the affected persons in the Cuddalore District during the Tsunami at the cost of Rs 100,000 per house and allotted Rs 1000 crore in the current session which is expected to provide more employment opportunities to the unskilled construction labour in the District.