Chapter VII

Summary of Conclusions and Suggestions
In the foregoing chapters the lot of the tribals in Andhra Pradesh, the hazards of their problem-ridden lives and their living condition, have been studied in detail, with the focus on some selected tribal villages in the districts of Prakasam and Nellore, and with particular reference to the role of Public Distribution System, the chief source of food items, in the lives of the tribals there. The various chronic problems of the tribals have been analysed at the micro-level. It remains to summarise the main lines of the argument developed, and the findings of the inquiry, and also to offer some relevant suggestions to surmount the existing problems of the tribals, in particular the problems of food and supply of essential food items to them through the Public Distribution System, so that their lives and living conditions may be bettered. To provide the necessary background of the study, a brief account of the tribals in general and in Andhra Pradesh is given before the tribals of the selected area are considered. The problems faced by tribals in all the tribal villages of Prakasam and Nellore are more or less identical. These two districts are adjacent to each other geographically and they have many similarities in their socio-economic aspects. If there are any variation in their living conditions and problems it is only a matter of degree. Therefore such studies as the present one are very much useful to devise comprehensive packages of development for the upliftment of the tribals.

In India the tribals are largely concentrated in the Northern, Eastern and Central regions. They are the unrivalled majority in at least 30 districts of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Lakshadweep, Dadra and
Nagar Haveli. 83.99 per cent of Nagaland's is tribal. Meghalaya has 80.58 per cent of tribal population. Dadra and Nagar Haveli have 78.82 per cent and Arunachal Pradesh has 69.82 per cent of tribal population. The states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Bihar have almost 58 per cent of the total tribal population of India. Some of the most primitive tribes of the world live in the regions of Southern India. In India the Scheduled Tribes constitutes about eight per cent of our total population, according to the 1991 census. Most of them live in hills and jungles and in other relatively inaccessible areas. Therefore for several generations they have been isolated. As a result they are far behind others in socio-economic development. The Indian tribes ethnically are not homogeneous. The Interior tribes are Pro-Australoid, the tribes of North-East are of Mongoloid. Some tribes of the Deccan have Negrito admixture. However, the bulk of them belong to the Pro-Australoid ethnic stock. D N. Mazumdar has called them Indo-Australoid type. Linguistically, the Indian tribes speak languages of different families like Austric, Dravidian or Tibeto-Burman. Culturally they show different pattern of life in different parts of the country. Some of them are matriarchal like the Khasis and Garos of Meghalaya, and the remaining are patriarchal. Among them are food collectors, trappers, hunters, artisans, shifting cultivators, settled agriculturists and labourers of various kinds. Their social organisations also vary from one of nomadic communities to large and complex bigger and permanently settled tribes.
In India, the tribes are socially and economically primitive and backward, and their lot is worse than that of the rest of the population in the country. The Tribal areas have remained undeveloped or at best under-developed, and neglected for centuries. They remain aloof if not alienated from the rest of Indian society, and have yet to become a part of the main stream. Their conditions of living are precarious aggravated by long and continuous neglect by the rulers and a total lack of appreciation of their special problem. Lack of transport and communication and other facilities, prevents them from joining the main stream. Till recently many of them were bonded labourers of moneylenders. The outside world know nothing about bonded labour as the afflicted tribals depended for their mere subsistence on the moneylenders, who were none other than the village land-owners and could not afford to complain against them. Even now, forced unpaid labour is the curse of tribal India. Contact with non-tribals has only increased their problems. Outsiders have wrought havoc in their lives. The vulnerability of tribal population to exploitations by minor government officials as well as moneylenders, landlords, petty traders and other agents of vested interests can largely be traced to their illiteracy, honesty and general ignorance of the world outside the narrow confines of their traditional environment.

Most tribals are caught in the debt trap. This is primarily due to their low income, uneconomic holdings, primitive techniques of cultivation, lack of irrigation facilities and absence of employment potential. Insecurity appears to be their badge wherever they are.
The tribal economy is largely influenced by their habitat and the level of knowledge the tribals have about natural resources and their skills for exploiting them. The factors governing production, distribution and consumption in tribal areas are guided more or less by ethnic cultural, non-acquisitive and non-monetary factors. Even the food gathering tribes divide the traditional areas of collection of minor forest produce on the basis of the wants of each household and its ability of collection. The entire village community takes care of destitutes, widows, the physically handicapped etc. The tribal communities are generally at the subsistence level of economy. Their concept of property is also distinct and different. Among the Chenchus trees in specific places and honeycombs are clan property. In other cases, the first identifier will be the owner. If a person sees first honeycomb on a tree, he makes a small cut on it and nobody touches it. He can extract honey whenever he find time. Similarly, if one wants a particular tree he makes a small cut on it. The cut or mark, establishes his ownership no other person would touch it.

Tribal economy is backward, under-developed and exploited, and the impact of development programmes and the tribals' capacity to absorb them are limited. Chronic problems of poverty, poor living standards and low income are rampant in their lives, which have resulted in severe suffering. They are always shows of the means to gratify even the basic human needs of food, clothing and shelter. They live below the poverty line. Further, illiteracy, and age-old and persistent superstitions have complicated their problems. Therefore they have
become an easy prey to moneylenders who have forced many of them into bonded labour. This condition has continued even to this day. As their earning levels are very low, they have to find alternative sources of income for buying the food they need. Many of them depend on forest-based food items, which do not provide balanced and nutritious diet to them. Most of the times they are underfed. During the months of unemployment gruel is their food. Most of them suffer from malnutrition and ill health for want of sufficient food. During the rainy season they are afflicted by Malaria, diarrhoea, fever, anemia etc. They do not have proper medical facilities.

Andhra Pradesh is the traditional home of 33 recognised Scheduled Tribes, spread over the state. But the majority of them live in the border areas of the state in the north and north-east. Thirty of them are found living in the sprawling 30,030 sq.kms of the scheduled areas and contiguous non-scheduled sub-plan areas in the districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East-Godavari, West-Godavari, Khammam, Warangal, Adilabad and Mahaboobnagar. The scheduled area in the state, which is the chief habitat of the tribe, constitutes 11 per cent of its total geographical area. The density of population is 125 persons per sq.km as against 194 in the plain areas. The Visakhapatnam district has the highest number of scheduled villages and Mahaboobnagar has the smaller, while Khamma has the largest scheduled area.

On the basis of socio-ethnic characteristics, the tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh can be divided into the following five geographical regions:
1. **Gonds-Kolam region:** the tribal areas of Adilabad,

2. **Koya-Konda Reddy region:** the tribal areas of Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam, the two Godavari districts, and the area along the Godavari gorges;

3. **Khond-Savara region:** the tribal areas of Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam,

4. **Chenchu region:** the tribal areas of Mahaboobnagar, Nalgonda, Kurnool, Prakasam and Guntur;

5. **Plain areas:** inhabited by the Yanadis, Yerukulas, Banjaras or Lambadas

The various tribal communities of Andhra Pradesh can be divided into the following tentatively according to their economic activity:

- **Food gathering** – Hunting, Fishing, Food Collection including minor forest produce
- **Pastoralism**
- **Shifting Cultivation**
- **Settled Cultivation**
- **Artisan**
- **Industrial and Mining Labour.**

**Food Collection, Hunting & Fishing**

The tribal communities who are totally dependent upon flora and fauna are very few. They require vast geographical areas, and their tools are very simple and primitive, and do not have enough skills to exploit these resources even when
they are plenty. They shift their habitat from place to place as per the availability of wild game or forest products but they do not move out of their traditional territory. They do not know the concept of property. Their material culture is very simple. The Chenchus are mainly hunters, gatherers and collectors of minor forest produce in Andhra Pradesh. All the tribal groups living in the forest areas collect roots, tubers, wild fruits etc. for their domestic consumption as well as for sale. They also collect minor forest produce, process and sell them to the Girijan Cooperative Corporation or other private merchants. The dependence of food gathers on forest and other natural resources is more than that of other groups who domesticate animals or plants. The tribals in general are fond of fish and go for fishing even to distant canals, ponds, tanks etc. The Yanadis alone are traditional inland fisherman and rodent catchers.

**Shifting Cultivation**

Shifting cultivation is known as “Podu” in coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh and “Vegad” in Kolami and “Padaka” in Gondi dialect of Adilabad district.

This ancient form of cultivation is practiced all over the world, especially in forests and mountainous tracts. It continues to be the mainstay of economy of the hill people in South and South-east Asia. In our country, shifting cultivation was prevalent in most tribal areas till about a hundred years ago. Many of these people, however, have graduated to settled agriculture.
However in Andhra Pradesh, shifted cultivation is extensively practiced in the districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari and Khammam and sparsely in the Adilabad district. It is estimated that 62,504 families are engaged in over an area of 62,948 hectares. On an average, each family has one hectare of land for this purpose.

The tribal problems have increased with the introduction of modern law and national forest policy and forest laws. The intrusion of the Indian Penal Code into tribal life and interference with their customs has undermined the social solidatary of the tribes. For generations, the tribal people in India, have practiced a crude type of cultivation, known as “shifting cultivation”. Since it leads to deforestation, it was prohibited in most areas and the tribals were forced to take a different kind of agriculture which was sophisticated and new to them. The excise laws hit them hard. They depended on the forests for edible roots, and fruits and freely hunted the game. In actuality, their economy is forest based. Hunting was prohibited in preserve forests. Even they were deprived of their ritual hunt in reserve forests. Though some privileges are given to them, in actual practice, they are ignorant of them.

During the times of the British, not much was done for the welfare of the tribals. As the tribals lived in inaccessible areas, and administration of those areas was difficult, the British followed the policy of “Leave them alone”. For more than 100 years these areas were under the control of Local Zamindars, Muttadars and Mokhasadar, who used to collect rent from them and pay a lump sum to the
Government. Soon after Independence, the policy-makers realised the grave situation in the tribal areas and not afford to keep this particular section of its population in isolation and in a primitive stage. Hence the policy makers directed their attention to the welfare of Tribes. The Tribals were given certain constitutional privileges and these groups were incorporated in the V Schedule of the Indian Constitution, and called the Scheduled Tribes. A number of special provisions their progress and safeguards for their interests were included in the Indian Constitution. And to carry them out at the practical level, massive programmes of tribal development have been launched. In spite of all this, a lot remains to be done.

Tribal India depicts the persistence of a large number of problems. They have to be identified clearly before attempts can be made to solve them and the tribes developed. The problems of Tribal development can broadly be classified into two categories: one, which the tribals face, and the other, which the functionaries working in a tribal society come across.

Whatever be the strategy for tribal development, it has to be speedy and time bound, and part of integrated area development. The programmes should be such as to suit the genies of the tribal people and ensure elimination of all form of exploitation, establishment of justice and improvement in the quality of their lives.

Keeping in view the plight of the tribals, various developmental programmes have been taken up by the Government at the centre as well as the state for improving the living conditions of the tribal population. These
programmes to cover agriculture, irrigation, animal husbandry, housing, co-operative credit, education, health, distribution of essential articles etc. They also aim at protecting the interests of the tribals by providing them with a legal framework to protect and streamline their development and raise their standard of living. To serve them better and more quickly tribal sub-plans also have been devised and implemented in different states and union territories. They are linked with the state plan, special central assistance, centrally sponsored schemes and institutional finance. In this regard various institutions are also buckled down to work for the welfare of the tribals. In Andhra Pradesh the Girijan Primary Co-op. Marketing Society Limited, Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDA) and Commercial Banks have been functioning for the welfare of tribals by way of extending financial and other related support to them. The Public Distribution System too is involved in promoting tribal welfare.

Public Distribution System

The present Government of India has adopted area specific approach to revamp and strengthen the functioning of the Public Distribution System. This involves the identification of areas having a high concentration of poor and deserving people. Nearly, 1,842 blocks have been selected throughout the country. They include 143 blocks covered under the Desert Development Programme (DDP), 596 under the Drought-prone Area Programme (DAP), 1,048
under the Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDP) and 55 designated hill areas.

The Public Distribution System has been reoriented to meet the specific needs of the tribal people. More Fair Price Shops are being opened in tribal dominated blocks. Goods are being taken as near to the tribal people as possible. Under the Central sponsored scheme of Financial Assistance to the states and union territories, funds are made available to purchase mobile vans to be operated in hilly, inaccessible and remote tribal areas, and to serve as mobile Fair Price Shops. Arrangements have been made to construct godowns in the North-Eastern States, which are predominantly tribal areas, and in Himachal Pradesh, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Jammu and Kashmir.

The British introduced the PDS in 1939 to meet the food shortages and famine conditions pertaining them in the country. The inequality of income and wealth, unemployment and under-employment are the characteristic of any developing country. The poverty index evolved by the department of Human Resource Development is also attaching great importance to public intervention in this area. There are 40,567 Fair Price Shops functioning in the State, of which 7,659 are in urban areas, while 32,908 are in rural areas. The reservations provided are 15 per cent for the Scheduled Castes, 6 per cent for Scheduled Tribes, 25 per cent for the Backward Classes, 3 per cent for the Physically Handicapped and 30 per cent for Women. Of the fair price shops 6,944 are run by Scheduled Caste persons, 1,549 by Scheduled Tribes, 831 by the Physically Handicapped,
10,999 by Backward Class candidates and 1,768 shops are in the Co-operative sector. The Girijan Co-operative Corporation (GCC) is running 833 fair price shops in Agency area (Tribal areas). As on date, 12,623 Fair Price Shops are being run by women. The minimum general educational qualification for appointment as Fair Price Shop dealer is 10th Class pass. In case, candidates with these qualifications are not, those who have studied at least up to the 5th Class are considered. The upper age limit prescribed for appointment, as dealer is 40 years.

The powers of sanctioning of new Fair Price Shops vest with the Collectors in the districts, and the Chief Rationing Officer in Hyderabad. To ensure that Fair Price Shops are located within easy reach of consumers, Collectors have been instructed to open new fair price shops at the rate of one shop for every 1650 persons, subject to its economic viability.

The Public Distribution System has a specific strategy and policy to supply and channelise systematically the ration products. Essential items like Rice, Wheat, Sugar, Palmolein Oil, Kerosene Oil etc., are supplied through the Public Distribution System:

**Wheat**

The Government of India has allotted 8,000 MTs. APL wheat per month for distribution through the PDS. The consumer price is fixed at Rs. 7/- per kg. w.e.f. 01-12-2001.
Sugar

From 1-1-2000, 28,267 MTs of levy sugar have been allotted based on population of the 1991 census. The consumer price of sugar is Rs. 13.50 per kg. Now IT assessés are eliminated from the supply of levy sugar through the PDS.

Only the BPL families are entitled to Sugar @ 500 grams per head p.m. from February, 2001. Accordingly the allocation of Sugar is reduced to 9,690 tonnes p.m. from 30,400 tonnes p.m. All the APL families are eliminated. But the sugar allotted is not adequate for the BPL families in Andhra Pradesh as there more than 40.63 lakhs of such families. Government of India is being addressed to release 19,000 more tonnes of Sugar.

Kerosene Oil

A quantity of 69,633 ltrs., kerosene is being released every month. The Wholesalers as per the allotment made by the Collectors lift it. Wholesalers also transport it to the retail points for delivery. The end consumer price of K Oil is Rs. 9.50/- per litre w.e.f. 01-03-2007.

Palmolein Oil

Based on requirement and lifting by A.P. State, Palmolein Oil is allotted. The Consumer price is Rs. 24.- per litre. (Sachet)

Food Advisory Committees

Food Advisory Committees have been constituted at various levels. They are intended to strengthen and monitor the supply system.
- State Food Advisory Committee
- District Food Advisory Committee
- Mandal Food Advisory Committee
- Corporation Food Advisory Committee
- Circle Food Advisory Committee
- Municipality Food Advisory Committee
- Ward Food Advisory Committee (In Municipalities)
- Divisional Food Advisory Committee
- Fair Price Shop (Urban) Food Advisory Committee
- Fair Price Shop (Rural) Food Advisory Committee

The committees have a broad based membership covering women and youth, the SCs/Sts/BCs/Minorities and also for Social Workers and representatives of Consumer Organisations. All recognised political parties are represented on these Committees at District, Corporation, Mandal, Circle and Municipality levels.

Vigilance Cell

The Vigilance cell has been active in implementing the various Control Orders under the Essential Commodities Act. Its officers inspect fair price shops and private dealers in food grains, edible oils, pulses, sugar, petroleum products etc. and also the Mandal Level Stockist Points and promptly report against erring officials for necessary action to ensure that the commodities meant for the Public Distribution System are not diverted to their places.
Preventive Detentions

Apart from conducting regular raids and booking cases, the Cell has been taking stringent action against smugglers, blackmarketeers and hoarders. Under the Essential Commodities Act, 1980. These detentions have a salutary effect on unscrupulous traders who are deterred from resorting to such undesirable practices. The Advisory Board, Andhra Pradesh High Court and the Supreme Court confirm more than 70 per cent of the detentions, which is a remarkable achievement in the annals of Preventive Detentions.

Besides the field staff of the Vigilance Cell, Civil Supplies Department been instructed to intensify the number of inspections of business premises, establishments, and Fair Price Shops to unearth hoarding, black-marketing and diversion of food grains from the Public Distribution System into black-market.

The role of A.P. State Civil Supplies Corporation is worth mentioning in the distribution of PDS ration items. It channelises and controls the entire distribution of food items and ensures supply of these subsidised items to the targeted people. The corporation whenever the situation warrants intervenes in marketing operations to control the prices of essential commodities. When the prices of essential items rise abnormally, the Corporation enters the market to supply them at reasonably lesser prices through their outlets and nullify the artificial scarcity created by businessmen. The Girijan Cooperative Corporation, a unique body in the history of tribal development, established in 1956 by the Government of Andhra Pradesh strives to achieve the socio-economic upliftment
of the tribals. It is the first of its kind and no other state has a like body. It distributes essential items in the tribal belts through its outlets. There are 45 Girijan Primary Marketing Cooperative Societies with the 9 Integrated Tribal Development Agencies of the state in the tribal belts.

**PDS in sample areas**

There is no separate Public Distribution System for the Tribal areas. The system that exists for the distribution of food items to all people who are living Below the Poverty Line (BPL) is applicable to the tribals also. There is no exclusive mechanism and package for the tribals not only in Andhra Pradesh but also in all the other states of our country. Different states choose different channels of distribution of food items. In Andhra Pradesh the Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC) is involved in this task through its outlets. The Civil Supplies Department too distributes them through Fair Price Shops. Regarding dealership and the issuing of ration cards, the Government of Andhra Pradesh does not have any separate structure for giving more advantage to the tribals. Usually in the sample villages of tribals, items like Rice, Wheat, Sugar, Kerosene Oil, Edible oil etc., are distributed to the tribals. But in the Girijan Cooperative Corporation depots they are selling other items also like Dhals, Soaps, Onions and other requirements in addition to the products supplied by the Civil Supplies Department. The Civil Supplies Department has entrusted the task of distributing
the essential food items to the GCC, where its network is expanded considerably on the same terms and conditions of the Civil Supplies Department.

In its Process of Public Distribution System, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has issued two types of ration cards, Viz., white cards and pink Cards. White Cards are issued to those people who are living Below the Poverty Line and the Pink Cards are for those who are living Above the Poverty Line. There is some difference between them regarding the products distributed. White cardholders get more subsidised food items than Pink Cardholders. In the state there are about 1,13,02,702 white cardholders and 51,53,031 pink cardholders as on December 2001. In the sample district of Prakasam there are 4,77,682 White cardholders and 2,07,429 Pink Cardholders utilising the Public Distribution System. In the Nellore, the other sample district, there are 4,47,976 White cardholders and 1,55,918 Pink cardholders.

In Prakasam out of the 6,85,111 cards in the entire district, there are 96,340 cards in the 6 sample revenue mandals. In the Dornala Mandal 5,697 are white cards and 1,248 are Pink cards, in Yerragondapalem mandal, 7,824 are white and 1,907 are pink, in Kothapatnam Mandal 9,577 are white and 1,314 are pink cards, in the Chirala mandal 27,899 cards are white and 14,515 are pink, in Singarayakonda Mandal 9,644 cards are white and 4,115 are pink and in the Ulavapadu mandal 10,227 are white cards and 2,353 cards are pink.

In Nellore of the total of 6,03,894 ration cards, 75,736 cards are issued in the six sample mandals. In the Allur Mandal out of total of the 14,077 ration
In the Kovur mandal 12,735 cards are white and 4,322 are Pink. In the Venkatachalam mandal out of the 12,191 cards, 9,875 are white and the rest 2,316 are pink. Out of the 10,437 cards in the Rapur Mandal, 8,927 are white and 1,510 are Pink. In the Sydapuram mandal out of the 11,419 cards, 9,796 cards are white and 1,623 are pink. Out of the 10,555 cards in Kota mandal, 8,719 are white and 1,836 are pink.

**Fair Price Shops in Sample Areas**

In Andhra Pradesh the Fair Price Shops are allotted to various categories of people keeping in view the necessity of the shops to cater the needs of the beneficiaries in and around that particular area. The State Government follows a reservation policy for sanctioning of Fair Price Shops: for SCs 15 per cent, for STs 6 per cent, for BCs 25 per cent, for PHs 3 per cent, for Women 30 per cent, and others 21 per cent.

In Andhra Pradesh there are 7,038 Fair Price Shops in urban areas, 32,815 in rural areas, in all 39,853 shops supplying food items. In Prakasam there are 1,887 Fair Price Shops of which 200 are in urban areas and 1,687 in rural areas. In Nellore there are 291 in urban areas and 1,502 in rural areas.

In the sample mandals of Prakasam District, Domala has 24 Fair Price Shops, all are in rural areas. In Yerragopalapalem all the 32 shops are in rural areas, in Kothapatnam all the 29 fair price shops are in rural areas. In Chirala out of the 84 fair price shops, 24 are in urban areas and 64 are in rural areas. In Singarayakonda,
there are 26 fair price shops and in Ulavapadu there are 27 fair price shops, and all are in rural areas.

In the Nellore District, out of the 32 fair price shops in Allur Mandal, 7 shops are in urban areas and 25 in rural areas. There are 44 shops in Kovur, of which 25 are in urban areas and 19 in rural areas. In Venkatachalam, there are 30 fair price shops all located in rural areas. In the Rapur Mandal there are 45 Fair Price Shops of which 9 are in urban areas and 36 in rural areas. In Sydapuram, all the 40 Fair price shops are in rural areas. And in the Kota mandal there are 32 fair price shops in all of which 6 are in urban areas and 26 in rural areas.

Though there are good number of Fair Price Shops in the vicinity of tribal areas, the tribals have not been able to get their total advantage. The Tribal respondents complain that the location of the shops is not ideal and in some cases they have to walk 5 to 10 kms to reach the Fair Price Shop. And the supply system also is not satisfactory. The tribals in the sample villages of Prakasam and Nellore are not free from hardships regarding the usefulness of the Public Distribution System.

There is no guarantee that all the people living in tribal areas are getting the share of the food items due to them. The tribals suffer from shortage of foodstuffs in some seasons. All the sample respondents report that they do not get insufficient food items from the Public Distribution System. The quantity of food items supplied through the Fair Price Shops is not at all sufficient for them. In the seasons when they have wage employment, the tribals manage to buy the required

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food items, but in the seasons when they are unemployed they face acutely the problem of finding food, as food items are supplied through Public Distribution System are not enough for them.

In Prakasam, 66.67 per cent of the respondents buy the food items through Fair Price Shops and 33.33 per cent buy in the Girijan Cooperative Corporation Depots. And there are no cooperative outlets in the tribal belts of the Prakasam district. Where as in Nellore, 91.67 per cent of the respondents buy in Fair Price Shops and 8.33 per cent buy in the GCC Depots.

In almost all the sample tribal villages in both Prakasam and Nellore districts, the tribals say that there is no special subsidy on the items supplied to them through Public Distribution System. They plead that they need more subsidized food items to meet their needs.

Regarding the price charged in the PDS, in Prakasam 11.67 per cent of the respondents say that the prices charged through Public Distribution System are high. To the majority of the tribals accounting 82.92 per cent it is moderate and for 5.41 per cent it is low. But the fact remains that these prices are not as low as they ought to be. The same trend is observed in the Nellore district. In Nellore for 7.50 per cent of the respondents the prices are high, for 77.08 per cent it is moderate and for 15.42 per cent it is low. The sample tribals in the Nellore district also say that the PDS prices are moderate, but not within their reach.

Almost all the sample respondent tribals in all the sample villages of Prakasam district maintain that the quantity supplied by the Public Distribution
system is insufficient for them. Even in Nellore the tribal respondents express the same opinion.

Since quantity of food items supplied through Public distribution system is insufficient, the tribals have to depend on other sources. Sometimes they have to go to the open market for purchase of food item and thereby they have to incur more expenditure. In the open market they have to buy on cash basis, and that aggravates their financial problems because they have to borrow from moneylenders, and remain in debt forever.

The Public Distribution system is expected to supply food items of quality at reasonable price and safeguard the interests of tribal consumers. But no food item is available without adulteration and with correct weighment even in the open market. The Department of Civil supplies is very particular to protect the interest of the consumers and supply to all qualitative products at reasonable prices with correct weighment through its outlets. When it comes to actual performance of the outlets, there is a wide gap between intention and actuality.

In Prakasam 20.83 per cent of the respondents say that the quality of the food items is inferior and for 79.17 it is moderate. There is not even to say that it is superior or satisfactory. The same trend is seen in the sample villages of Nellore. For 14.58 per cent of the respondents the quality is inferior, for 85.42 per cent it is moderate, and for none it is superior.

In Prakasam district 20.42 per cent of the respondents have some awareness of the number of items supplied, their quantity, price, and the need to report when
there is any irregularity, the redressal mechanism etc. But 79.58 per cent of the respondents are not aware of them. Those who are have little awareness are aware of one or two aspects mentioned above. Whereas in Nellore, 35 per cent of the respondents have some awareness and 65 per cent do not have any about all aspects of the food items.

Price Variation

In Prakasam, 33.33 per cent of the respondents are aware of variation in the prices of items sold and 66.67 per cent do not have any idea of it. But these tribal respondents are not able to identify and know the difference between the actual price and the selling price due to their illiteracy and ignorance. There is a nominal hike in the prices charged by the Fair Price Shop dealer ranging from 0.25 paisa to 0.50 paisa per kg. In Nellore, 16.67 per cent of the respondents know there is some price variation but the majority (83.33 per cent) does not about it.

Promptness of Supply

In Prakasam, 72.5 per cent of the tribal respondents believe that supply of food items is very regular and 27.50 per cent say that it is very irregular. Personal observation during the field study revealed that there are many lapses in the supply system and the dealers are not regular in supplying the food items to the tribals. The dealers are mischievous and do not supplying the food items at the right price or at the right time in the right quantity and at the right place. In
Nellore district 58.33 per cent of the respondents say that the supply is very regular but for 41.67 per cent the supply is very irregular.

**Cheating by FPS dealers**

In Prakasam 35.83 per cent of the respondents report that the Fair Price Shop dealers are cheating them by way not supplying the items as prescribed by the Government, by charging high prices, indulging in under weighment, adulteration etc. But 64.17 per cent do not know Fair Price Shop dealer is cheating them and is indulging many malpractices. In Nellore 41.67 per cent of the respondents are aware that Fair Price Shop dealers are cheating them and 58.33 per cent are not aware of it. It is unfortunate that the tribals because of their ignorance are not aware of shopkeepers’ mischief. They do not know how to identify the actual problems or deficiencies in the Public Distribution System. Everywhere it is clear, except perhaps in urban areas, that the Fair Price Shop dealers are playing tricks in supplying of the food items. Sometimes they sell away the entire stock allocated for tribal areas in the open market and skip off the supply during a particular period. Or they pretend to supply a fraction of what is due and invent some excuses to justify their action.

**Questioning habit of Tribals**

In Prakasam of the sample tribals 35.83 per cent who have some awareness of the cheating indulged by Fair Price Shop dealers, and 46.52 per cent of the respondents question the officials about the irregularities in the Public Distribution...
System. Whereas the remaining respondents do not report of questioning the officials in this regard. Those respondents who questioned the officials regret that they did not get any response from the officials to their queries. In Nellore 66 per cent of the respondents have questioned the officials about the mischief of the shop dealers. But the remaining has not. Those who questioned the officials say that they did not get any prompt response from them for their queries. It was clear during the field study that the reaction of the tribal respondents against malpractices of Fair Price Shop dealers is rather limited. Further, the issues raised by them before the officials are either of little significance or are not sufficiently legal. That is because, they do not have any clear ideal of all these things. They are not able to express themselves properly. As a result the Fair Price Shop dealer continues his exploitation without any fear or worry.

_Satisfaction about the Supply System_

Almost all the respondents in Prakasam are not satisfied with the supply system through Fair Price Shops. For 60 respondents the low quality of items supplied is the main cause, for 80 respondents it is high price, for 2 respondents adulteration is the reason and for 46 respondents irregular supply is the reason, and for all of them (100 per cent) insufficient quantity is the main reason for dissatisfaction. In the Nellore district also almost all the respondents are dissatisfied with the present supply system. For 42 respondents the low quality of goods supplied is the main reason, for 20 it is exploitation, for 100 respondents
irregular supply and for all the respondents insufficient quantity of the items supplied is the factor for their dissatisfaction.

**Impact of Public Distribution System**

The Government announces the price structure of the items supplied from time to time in view of inflation, and tries to see that the tribals are not adversely affected. The price of the Rice was Rs. 2.00 per kg prior to 1992. Since then it has been revised upward to Rs. 3.50 upto 1st August, 1996. Again it was revised to Rs. 5.50 with effect from 10-04-2000 and then it was reduced to Rs. 5.25 paise with effect from 26-07-2000. There were changes in the quantity of items supplied. At first it was 5 kg per member and the maximum was 25 kg per family. Then during 1992 it was reduced to 4 kg per member and to maximum of 16 kg per family. Subsequently from 1-1-1993 it was 4 kg per member and a maximum of 20 kg per family.

The Sugar prices also fluctuated during the decade, and rose from Rs. 4.85 per kg to 13.50 per kg. In the beginning it was Rs. 4.85 per kg and at present it is Rs. 13.50 per kg, and only 1 kg per family is given. The prices of Wheat also changed from Rs. 2.60 per kg in 1991 to Rs. 7.00 as on 1-12-2001. However no minimum and maximum regarding the quantity was fixed. Wheat was supplied depending on the availability of stock. However, in case the stock was sufficient 1 kg as minimum and 20 kgs as maximum per family were fixed.
The prices of Kerosene Oil also underwent changes over the decade. Prior to 1996 it was Rs. 3.00 per litre and it was raised to Rs 6.00 on 23.03.2000. At present the price is fixed at Rs. 8.00 with effect from 22.11.2000. Regarding the quantity, 3 lts of kerosene for cardholders who have One Gas Cylinder, 8 lts for those who do not have gas connection, and 5 lts of kerosene to the cardholders residing in rural areas.

**Economic Advantage**

There is a total saving of Rs. 11.00 on 4 kgs of rice if Low quality of rice supplied through the Public Distribution System and Rs. 35.00 if they are getting high quality of Rice. That is the difference between the PDS price and the Market price. Obviously the savings can be considerable. If entire quantity of rice required by the tribals were supplied through the Public Distribution System, certainly their economy would certainly develop. But the tribals do not get all the rice and other items in a month. If the PDS can supply all their requirements without imposing a limit, the tribals can utilise their savings for other useful purposes. It could help them to tide over their difficulties during seasons of unemployment.

**Standard of Living**

In Prakasam, 96.25 per cent of the respondents admit that certainly there is some improvement in the standard of living because of the PDS. The remaining 3.75 per cent do not find it so. In Nellore, 95.83 per cent of the respondents accept
that their standard of living has gained because of the PDS, but 4.17 per cent do not think so. It is clear that there is some positive contribution to the living standards of the tribal people to the extent the products are supplied through the PDS. But the gains are limited because the PDS does not supply all their requirements. They believe that if the Government provides food items at subsidised prices and without imposing any ceiling on the quantity, their gains would be far greater.

Problems of Tribals in the Sample Districts

The problems confronting the various tribal groups in the tribal villages of the study area, the Prakasam and Nellore districts may be briefly recalled, since the focus has been on them. Their problems are much the same as those faced by the other tribals in general in the state.

The tribals’ problems are chiefly socio-economic. Food, the PDS, health, sanitation, education, transport, electricity, etc., are their everyday concerns.

Food

In the sample districts most of the tribals take Rice, Jawar, Roots, leaves etc. for their food. Their earning being poor, they cannot afford to buy all their food requirements. Therefore, they depend on moneylenders and landlords to get their food articles. Even those who practices ‘podu’ are not able to earn enough. Sometimes their investment on it in terms of money and labour does not bring them adequate returns. The ‘podu’ crops are grown only in particular season when
the tribals will have employment. In other seasons, they do not get work even as coolies to earn their livelihood. This situation drives them towards moneylenders, unrelieved indebtedness and bonded labour. Want of adequate food brings malnutrition and starvation. In the study area it is the children and the aged who suffer from malnutrition, ill health and starvation, especially during the July to September period when it would rain heavily.

Public Distribution System

The sample respondents find the PDS unsatisfactory regarding the quality and quantity of rice supplied. The rice supplied is inferior and sometimes so bad that it cannot be eaten. Sometimes, however, the rice supplied is very good. Underweighment of the ration items seems to be very common. The ration shop-dealers are indifferent to the tribals' complaints about the quality, quantity and weighment of the essential items. The tribals have the additional problem of fetching the rationed items home from the Fair Price Shops, which are located at distant places. In the rainy season the shops are not approachable, as the roads become slushy and unusable. And quantity of the food items supplied to them is not adequate. They have to depend on moneylenders and others for loans. In the rainy season the food items meant for the tribals are sold by the dealers elsewhere at higher prices. Those who question are threatened. They silently endure their lot. As they do not have any voice or awareness of the mechanism of the Public Distribution System, they are not able to protest.
The Fair Price Shop dealers also have their problems. They complain that the quantity of the food items given to them by the Civil Supplies Department is always less. They have to invest in advance some money to lift the stock from the FCI godowns. To raise the sum they have to pay interest. They have problems of transporting the materials to the FPS points. Further profit margin fixed by the Government is so trivial that is not sufficient even to meet their daily expenses. Therefore, they say, they have to resort to unethical business practices to earn their livelihood. Further they also complain that due to the politics in the villages between rival groups baseless charges of malpractices and irregularities are brought against them.

In the present inquiry problems confronting the tribals are obtained directly from the sample tribals themselves. The sample tribals were asked question on the various problems they faced regularly in getting the food items through Public distributions system. Irrespective of their responses what is very clear beyond any doubt is that the Fair Price Shop dealers are not distributing regularly all the food items earmarked for the tribals and that they do indulge in corrupt practices. However, the tribals are not able to give a correct picture of the Public Distribution System because of their ignorance, unawareness and fear.

The tribal respondents in Prakasam and Nellore were asked about the problems they faced regarding transport, water facility, shelter, facilities for education, health, electricity, finance, etc. In Prakasam 6.38 per cent of the respondents have reported that they had transport problem to reach the nearby
towns. For 14.89 per cent of the respondents water scarcity was their problem. For 6.38 per cent absence of proper shelter was the problem, for 6.38 per cent absence of education facility for their children, for 25.53 per cent lack of health facility, for 14.89 per cent want of electricity were the main problems. Lack of required finance for meeting the cultivation and other expenditure was the problem for 25.53 per cent of the respondents.

In Nellore for 5.45 per cent of respondents transport was the main problem, for 7.27 per cent it was water facility, for 12.75 per cent lack of shelter was the problem. For 20 per cent of the respondents lack of education facility, for 21.82 per cent lack of health facility, and for 21.82 per cent lack of sufficient finance for cultivation and others were the common problems.

It is rather discouraging that almost all tribal respondents did not have any clear idea of the special programmes meant for them under operation for agriculture development by either the Government of India or the State Government. They even did not know about the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) and other related agencies. In this connection they revealed that they were not getting any incentives/benefits from the Government/NGO's for agricultural purpose. But for a few, who received some incentive-based facilities like Seed, Bullock Carts, Agriculture tools etc., most others did not receive any facilities or benefits from the Government. They also said they did not have any knowledge of all the programmes meant for their development.
Problem of Malnutrition and Starvation Deaths

The food the tribals eat do not contain sufficient nutritional values, and therefore malnutrition and problem of ill health are common. Unhygienic surroundings and want of sanitation aggravate their problem of ill health. There are occasional instances of starvation death too. Almost like silver living in a dark cloud in the sample districts of Prakasam and Nellore, the problems of deaths due to starvation are not as severe as they are elsewhere.

In Prakasam District 8.98 per cent of the respondents face the problem of irregular supply of items through the PDS, 18.42 per cent find the quantity and quality of the goods are not satisfactory, sometimes impossible to consume. For 14.46 per cent of the respondents the prices of goods are high, for 29.07 per cent the absence of a proper reporting mechanism for their grievances is the problem. But most of the tribals are afraid to report their problems to the officials. Even they do not know to whom they should. And for the remaining 29.07 per cent respondents the lack of a proper redressal mechanism is the problem.

The same situation exists in Nellore district also. It resembles Prakasam in almost all respects. In this district for 10.42 per cent of tribals improper supply of goods is the problem. For 18.37 per cent it is the poor quality of the goods supplied, for 12.52 per cent it is the high prices of the goods, for 29.55 per cent the absence of a proper reporting system, and for 29.55 per cent of the respondents the lack of proper redressal mechanism is the problem.
Causes of dissatisfaction

Regarding causes of dissatisfaction with the PDS in Prakasam, for 14.02 per cent of the tribal respondents low quality of the items supplied is the cause for dissatisfaction, for 18.69 per cent it is the high price, for 0.47 per cent adulteration is the cause, for 10.75 per cent it is irregular supply, and for 56.07 per cent of the respondents it is the insufficient quantity is the cause for their dissatisfaction with the Public Distribution System.

In Nellore, the tribals expressed more or less the same views. In the district for 9.50 per cent of the respondents low quality is the cause for dissatisfaction, for 4.52 per cent exploitation is the cause, for 27.63 per cent improper supply is the cause, for 54.30 per cent insufficient quantity is the main cause, and 9.05 per cent of the respondents the improper information etc., are responsible for their dissatisfaction with the Public Distribution System.

Further they have some problems of marketing their forest produce. They complain that they do not get the just price for their products. There is delay in getting money. The involvement of middlemen, lack of proper marketing facilities etc. for their forest produce have complicated matters for them. They also say that they do not have any faith in the GCC.

Some respondents wanted the following steps to be taken to improve the present supply system.

In Prakasam, 41.74 per cent of the respondents wanted that more quantity of food items should be supplied to them. 15.13 per cent suggested that the quality
of food items should be improved. Some respondents (5.74 per cent) demanded more subsidised food items. And 11.13 per cent wanted that the Fair Price Shop dealers should supply the ration items with correct weighment. 8.00 per cent wanted a prompt supply of ration items, 13.91 per cent of the respondents wanted the ration items to be supplied at the price prescribed by the Government. And 4.35 per cent of the respondents suggested that correct information about the distribution of essential items should be given to the beneficiaries.

Even in the Nellore also the same views were expressed. 18.97 per cent of the respondents wanted the quantity of food items to be increased, 5.38 per cent for more quality. A very small percentage (1.34 per cent) wanted the subsidised price on the rationed items to be raised. 18.97 per cent of the respondents demanded correct weighment of items, 17.39 per cent wanted prompt supply of items. The supply of ration items on par with prices fixed by the Government without any extra cost was suggested by 18.97 per cent. An identical percentage of respondents demanded correct information about the supply of ration items.

SUGGESTIONS

Basing on the observations made during the study, and the problems confronted by the Tribals, the following suggestions are offered to improve the situation and to raise the standard of living of the tribals.

The tribals in India live in isolated forest and hilly areas. They have to face many hardships relating to their socio-economic life, health, housing, education,
sanitation, cultivation, transport, food requirements and so on in India. These are also the problems of the tribals in Andhra Pradesh. They arise because of their ignorance, lack of awareness, poverty, illiteracy etc. Many changes have been taking place in our country and elsewhere in technology, human development, economic development etc. These advancements have not made any impact on the living conditions of tribals. No doubt the Government of India and the State Governments have been taking measures for the development of the tribals by earmarking specific funds and many packages. But they have not brought as yet any positive change in the life of the tribals. Further they are in the grip of exploiting middlemen, moneylenders and landlords. In this context it is suggested that the Government should ensure that their socio-economic conditions are improved by educating them in all respects and bring them into the mainstream of general public. Separate packages for the overall development of the tribals in education, housing, health, transportation, food and other infrastructure facilities have to be announced and implemented. Appropriate machinery has to be devised to make sure that these facilities do reach the tribals to bring about the desired improvement.

Acute poverty is the major curse of the tribals, the root cause for all their illness and backwardness. Therefore it is suggested Pool-proof income generation and development programmes have to be devised and they should be target-oriented to ensure generation of income for the tribals. The Government may earmark separate works for the tribals under the
'food for work' programme which would provide work in the off seasons for tribals and enable them to meet their food and other basic needs. At present this programme is being implemented successfully only in plain areas. The living conditions of the tribals would certainly improve, if their income levels were improved.

The other development programmes in the ITDP areas should be reframed and strengthened so that there is no leakage of funds. To make a positive impact on the tribals, all these programmes should be implemented wholeheartedly. The official machinery should act promptly and efficiently in implementing them so that the benefits of these programmes reach the needy. Then only there can be economic improvement among the tribals. The implementation mechanism has to be strengthened, so that all the funds earmarked for development would reach the beneficiaries. Those who violate the rules and regulation and corner the benefits of the programmes at the cost of tribals should be severely punished.

The progress of the programmes have to be constantly motivated to make their implementation more effective than at present. A vigilance team needs to be appointed to check the misuse of funds. The presence of such a team would keep the official machinery alert and careful.

The various studies of tribal life reveal that problem of food is primary. Most of the tribals do not have sufficient food. Even the food, they take does not have adequate nutritional values. Hence their malnutrition,
chronic illness, starvation etc. Therefore it is very essential to focus mainly on provision of adequate and good food to the tribals. Therefore the Ministry of Civil Supplies and Public Distribution has to devise a new package of food programme which meets all the nutritional requirements. There must be a package of food programme exclusively for the tribals without mixing it with the general programmes until their economic lot improves. The Government can increase the subsidy on the food earmarked for the tribals and make sure that all the tribal people have a full meal every day. Nutrition experts in fact may be requested to devise a wholesome meal specially for the tribals which is both nutritious and cheap utilising the sources of food available in tribal areas.

The PDS, despite its efforts is not meeting the food requirements of the tribals. Therefore the Public Distribution System should be improved so that all the food requirements of the tribals are provided regularly with correct weighment, quantity, quality, price, purity etc. This should be on a continuous basis and those who are in charge of distribution should be men who discharge their responsibilities sincerely. They must be made to understand that it is their duty, and not charity what is legitimately due to the tribals.

To receive all the benefits due to them the tribal themselves should be aware of all of them. Unless they informed, educated properly, they can not understand and utilise the benefits meant for them. The tribals themselves
should be educated about their rights and privileges and the advantages of the tribal development programmes including the PDS, all meant for them. The food items supplied through PDS, their quality, quantity, price, place of supply, name of the dealer etc. should be informed clearly to all the tribals to all those who are living in remote hilly areas. Thereby they would know where to go, when, whom to meet, and what to get. As all the tribals are illiterate and ignorant, the government should arrange for personal door to door awareness campaign. The revenue officials of tribal areas should be assigned this task, as they are likely to be in constant contact with them.

As the items supplied by the PDS are not adequate the tribals are forced to go to middlemen and moneylenders and thus get into debt and bonded labour. Therefore the Government must increase the quantity of food items, preferably double their quantity in view of their rank poverty. The adequate items should be supplied to them at subsidised prices.

The price structure of Public Distribution System clearly shows that there are frequent changes in it. In doing so the State Government has to keep in mind the inflation rate and other economic conditions, since upward revision of prices of essential items is unavoidable. There must be a clear distinction between prices meant for tribal people and those for others.

As the income of the tribals is very low, they can not afford to buy in the open market the items other than those supplied through the PDS. Therefore it is suggested that in addition to the essential food items, other
essential commodities be also supplied to the tribals through the PDS at concessional rates.

As most tribals depend on wage employment, they are busy during the daytime. But the Fair price shops are open during the daytime only. Therefore it is suggested that the Fair Price Shop dealer is instructed to supply the items during the hours convenient for the tribals. Further it is also necessary that the dealers should sell the articles through out every month.

The profit margin on various essential items given to the dealers is very low and not at all enough to meet their day-to-day expenses. It is one of the chief reasons for their malpractices. Therefore it is necessary to enhance the profit margin to the FPS dealer without disturbing the price structure of essential items earmarked for the tribals. The government can fix a consolidated remuneration to the FPS dealers of tribal areas and fix the responsibility on them for fair distribution of essential items.

It is highly desirable that the dealership of Fair Price outlets are given only to tribal people who have some education. This would facilitate fair distribution of essential items, and the tribals can feel satisfied. It is good that they are made responsible for the distribution of food items, free from corrupt practices. The Government is advised further to give some relief in the amount to be deposited before lifting the stock. As they can not afford a huge investment, they may be permitted on condition that they pay the
amount after selling the items. The Government may also arrange for financial assistance to them through commercial banks. This facility may be given in the name of tribal cooperatives registered in that particular area.

It is advisable to involve the GCC more actively in the distribution of essential items. In fact the GCC may be preferred to start outlets of distribution in tribal belts of all items and products at reasonable and affordable prices. If such involvement is not possible in some areas, the tribal cooperatives can be entrusted with this task. Thereby tribals can be encouraged to become members of co-operative bodies and share the responsibilities of serving their community. The GCC should also be encouraged to undertake the distribution of essential items in all tribal areas irrespective of its profitability.

To meet the additional expenditure incurred to offer all tribal requirements at subsidised rates the Government should make the required budget allocation in advance.

Transporting food items to remote areas has been a real problem to the dealers. The Government should provide vehicles for this purpose to facilitate regular supply of food items, even in the rainy season.

The transport facility should be improved to make it accessible to the tribals who are living in interior hilly areas. This would facilitate them not only to get their essential things but also to mingle with the general public. This will enable them to be more aware of the outside world and the
developments taking place there from time to time. Mobility certainly would bring about the necessary change in their outlook and style of living, because of improved contact.

The range of essential food items should be increased to facilitate the tribals to get their food items only under one roof. In addition to the supply of rationed items, other essential items as well as some consumer durables may also be included in the public distribution system.

As the tribals live in isolated places, in the rainy season they find it difficult to get their rations. It is suggested therefore that during the rainy season the items are delivered at the doorsteps of the tribals without extra cost. For this purpose some more funds should be released by the government.

In rural and inaccessible tribal areas the Fair Price Shop dealers face many problems in lifting and supplying essential items. Therefore it is suggested that the commission due to them be raised and made attractive and at the same time they must be made to understand that they should not play any mischief in the distribution of rationed items. The FPS dealers must be warned seriously against malpractices like adulteration, under-weighment, etc. and the penalty for the malpractices should be sufficiently high to deter them from such practices.

The tribal people are usually exposed to many health problems and hazards in particularly during the rainy seasons. The continuous rain, stagnation of
Rainwater in and around the tribal villages, lack of drainage, lack of awareness of health care are common in remote tribal areas. Many tribals get malaria, diarhhea etc. There is evidence that during such seasons some tribal people have died for want of medical facility. Traditional medicines are not adequate. Many of them are averse to modern medical treatment due to their ignorance. Therefore the Government should take proper measures and direct the Health department to extend medical facilities to all tribal areas and periodically check their health. Qualified doctor should be deputed to tribal villages to treat those who are ill at free of cost. It is also suggested that a separate package of free medical facility is offered to the tribals and steps are taken to educate them about health and hygiene.

As malnutrition is a constant problem for the tribals, it is suggested that those who implement the ICDP Department thoroughly investigate the cases of malnutrition and provide nutritional supplement to their diet. Of course this programme is already there in operation, but further improvement is essential, for which the Government has to find the necessary funds.

How important is education for all, for the tribals in particular has to be recognised by all. Compulsory education which has been there nominally should be made real and regular. Appropriate educational methods for the tribals have to be evolved and they should be educated in all aspects of
health including the importance of taking nutritional food and about food items which contain nutritional value.

The Government should protect marketing the products of the tribals without the interference of middlemen. Those who illegally indulge in the marketing activities of the tribals they should be properly dealt with. The economic independence of the tribals should be protected and improved by extending a cooperative hand by the Government and the society so that they never become victims of moneylenders.

It is suggested to allow the tribals liberally to collect forest produce and sell them in the market freely. In this context the Government of India should provide Market guarantee for their products. There should be a mechanism, which provides all facilities to the tribals to buy forest products directly from the tribals at prices advantageous to the tribals. Of course there is the Girijan Primary Cooperative Marketing Federation in Andhra Pradesh for purchasing the Forest produce from the tribals. But in operation it is also facing some obstacles and problems. It should be given total freedom to adopt development programmes for the upliftment of the tribals. Such societies should be given help including continuous financial support so that it promotes the standard of living of the tribals. They should be encouraged to sell other nutritional food items in addition to the ration items to the people.
While the tribals are educated and helped to gain the mainstream, it is equally important to educate people in general about the tribals and their ways of life so that they would learn many a useful lessons from them, and learn to treat them with dignity and respect as fellow human beings. Social integration of all sections of people can take place only when all endeavour for it.

Moving the tribals close to nearby town areas with their consent may be considered. It may help them to get their food items without default and also to sell their forest produce. Auctions of their produce may be arranged through government agencies to involve the tribals in trading activities. It may also help the tribals to mingle with others, apart from selling their products. The tribals may become better aware of the social changes taken place at present. This goes a long way to mingle the tribal with the general public.

Owing to the dramatic, technological developments, fast changes are taking places globally in the living conditions of people. To cope with them has not been easy even for urban societies. While attempting to bring the tribals out of their long isolation for make them to join mainstream of nation life, special care has to be taken not to subject them traumatic shocks. Therefore intelligent and purposeful programmes have to be devised to help them to adjust themselves to the special changes smoothly. The tribal development programmes should be continued as long as their standard of living rises to
the level of general public. It is most important to make sure that the tribal feels psychologically secure and their joining hands with the rest of the society does not compromise their self-respect and dignity, and independence.

In view of all the changes and issues that exist in tribal communities, special attention has to be given to the health of the tribals who have chronic problems of health. With the help of World Health Organisation (WHO) determined efforts must be made to eradicate the chronic problems of Malnutrition and ill health among them.

Many of the programmes of tribal development, especially relating to food have not succeeded considerably because of the non-cooperative attitude of those in the implementation mechanism. They must change their attitude and with the trust and confidence of the tribals. Resistance to change, which is natural to the tribals, can be overcome only by human and humane treatment.

The suggestions given regarding the PDS are experience-based and they are all viable. They are implemented with great care and commitment, surely the performance of the Public Distribution System would certainly improve. The Public Distribution System and food requirements of the tribals are inter-linked. If the services of PDS are regular and reliable certainly the standard of living of the tribals would improve. For finding inadequate food is the main problem they face. It is equally important to regard the tribals on par with the general public and help
them to join in to the mainstream of life. In case of food, the tribal should be given an advantage until they develop and become self-reliant and self-sufficient. Statements and slogans whether of political leaders or the government would do little for the benefit of the tribals. What is required is committed effort to better the lot of the tribals.

As long as the developmental programmes meant for the tribals not implemented properly, their living conditions will not improve. Neither the Government nor its representatives and agencies can afford to shirk this responsibility. A sizeable section of the nation's population cannot be neglected and allowed to perish. While efforts are made by the Government to improve the working of the public distribution system among the tribals, since on its success depends the general well being and health of the tribals depends. The Government should also take necessary steps to improve the employment generation and food for work programmes in tribal areas all through the year. During the rainy seasons in particular, the Government should provide wage employment under the programme of food for work to meet the tribals' food requirements. The present study has focussed on the Role of the Public Distribution System in the Economic Development of the Tribals in the Prakasam and Nellore Districts, and the lapses and failures in its functioning have been underlined. The improvement in the system is not an isolated activity. It is an integral part of the overall tribal development. Therefore the food problems of the tribals and regular supply of essential commodities to them have to be viewed in the largest context of tribal
development and all agencies, governmental and non-governmental involved in it should work in coordination. Only then the desired and hoped for change and betterment can be achieved. Unrelated and uncoordinated packages for their development do not serve any purpose. It should be a continuous activity for years to come. But if there is commitment to honest work, certainly the ultimate goal can be reached without any difficulty. It is a matter of time. It is hoped that tribal people will find a bright future in the years to come.