SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

9.1. INTRODUCTION

The present chapter concludes with the major research findings arrived after a thorough study about the Todas social and cultural pattern. An attempt was made to put forth suggestions so as to improve their social and economic conditions, to provide a better standard of living without disturbing their traditional cultural life style and to enable them lead a better life on par with the other people of the main stream.

The first section studies about the social structure such as types of houses, family size, availability of water resource, etc., and demographic characteristics like age sex compositions, sex ratio and literacy level among the study sample. The second section, deals with the social organization like Toda family, marriage and kinship. In the next section the Toda life cycle ceremonies are presented in an elaborate manner. In the background of this descriptive analysis the economic conditions of the Todas are presented with the research data. This section is followed by analyzing the social structure like the social organization, socio-political functionaries and social control mechanism. The last section examines the religious and ritual practices of the Todas.
9.2. SAMPLING DESIGN

The Toda Primitive tribe of the Nilgiri hills in Tamil Nadu was taken for the study. This Toda tribe is a pastoralist tribe community by occupation. 25 villages are chosen as the study area in four taluks where the Toda tribes are inhabited in the Nilgiri district. In these selected villages, 151 households with 675 individual are selected for the study of the socio-cultural, ecological and health conditions of the Todas.

The systematic study on tribal socio-economic and cultural characteristics seems potentially quite useful, as they provide important insights into larger issues of how different patterns of social behaviour can be attributed to economic differentials. With this objective in mind, it was decided to study the socio-economic conditions of the Toda primitive tribes.

9.3. FINDINGS

9.3.1. Ecosystem and the Toda Life style

The Todas lead a well adapted life to their habitat characterized by higher elevation topography with pleasant climatic condition. They lead an isolated life away from the main stream of life. Their traditional hut is constructed in an arch shape with a small entrance of two and half feet height, the huts are thatched with a special variety of grass. The Toda women have unique way of dressing and hairstyle. Both men and women cover themselves with a unique shawl which are designed and embodied by themselves. Their primary occupation is pastoralism with secondary occupation as agriculture.
They claim that they were the descendants of Pandavas, and it is expressed by their polyandry system of marriage.

9.3.2. Social conditions

The Toda tribal society is generally considered as egalitarian. This aspect is examined in the context of the present study and there are evidences to prove that about 87 per cent of the Todas are dwelling in tiled houses and that too 56 per cent of the houses were constructed and donated by the government and 43 per cent of the houses were only constructed on their own. About 66.23 per cent of them lead a nuclear family and around 32 per cent joint family. Regarding their educational status about 44 per cent of them were literate and 27.70 per cent of them had under primary education, 28.30 per cent of them were illiterate. It is notable to find that around 1.63 per cent of the Todas had undergone graduation.

The Toda hamlets were provided with basic amenities like electricity, drinking water, transportation etc. It was observed from the study that about 93.38 per cent of houses were electrified, and it was noted that about 80.79 per cent of the Todas can fetch their drinking water from their street municipal tap. The Toda villages were not provided with connecting road, because of this reason the frequency of transportation is very poor, the buses ply only two to three time in a day.

With regard to the social status of the Toda women about 50 per cent of the women were not consulted in the public matters but, at the same time
around 77 per cent of them were consulted in their family matters. This shows that since the role of women traditionally is confined to home their opinion are given due respect at family level and they are given equal status with men. Regarding the social integrity, they maintain distance with other tribal communities, but at the same time they attend the rituals of non-tribal communities and allow non-tribals to attend their rituals and ceremonies.

9.3.3. Health seeking behaviour

Even though the Toda tribal people are inhabited far away from the mainstream of lifestyle they have moderate knowledge and awareness about the modern medicine. It is supported with evidences that about 73 per cent of them take allopathic treatment and it was noted that about 72 per cent of the Toda child deliveries are done in government hospital and only 21 per cent of them delivered in private hospitals and very few of them had delivered their babies at home and that too because their villages were highly isolated from the town limit. Even though there is a norm that the primitive tribes should not limit their family size, due to economic crises they tend to adopt for family planning. The study had identified that about 94 per cent of them had undergone tubectomy method of family planning and 5.43 per cent of them had adopted temporary methods. The study reveals that 72 per cent of them were motivated by the husband to limit the family size. The Todas are well aware of immunization for their siblings and it was estimated that 91 per cent of their children were immunized. The Todas not only take immense care for their own health but also adopt modern method of treatment to the cattle. The
statistics shows that 88.08 per cent of them provide modern treatment to their cattle but at the same time they are against the method of artificial insemination.

9.3.4. Demographic conditions

With respect to the demographic profile of the Toda tribe in the study area it was accounted that there are about 1027 females against 1000 males. It shows that the females out number the males. The age wise distribution shows that the highest of 32 per cent of the population falls under the age group of 15-29 and about 66 per cent of them live in a medium size family consisting of 4-6 members in the family. The child women ratio which helps to assess the crude indication of the fertility levels of those children ages 0-4 against the women in the age group of 15-49 shows that nearly one fourth (28.50) of child population was found against the reproductive women population. The age child ratio which indicates to identify the community is young or aging proves that the aged old tribes are very less in number against the children and so purposive health care facilities have to be provided to safeguard and extend the life span of the elder Toda tribal population. The Age dependency ratio among the Toda indicates that the dependant population is very high by 46.10 per cent In short it is observed that there are near about half of the dependent population on the working age population among the Toda tribal community.
9.3.5. Marriage pattern

Marriage is a socially sanctioned and legally ratified union of sex relationship between two or more people of opposite sex for sexual gratification and procreation with socially sanctioned sex-relationship and economic co-operation.

The Todas used to arrange the marriage when the child is 2 or 3 years old and the girl is brought up under the parental care. When she attains puberty and if she crosses the age of 15 to 16 years she is taken to the engaged boy's house without out any marriage. Then they will be having their sexual relationship. If the girl is found pregnant their formal marriage is arranged during her 7th month of pregnancy. The Todas usually conduct their marriage ceremonies during new moon days around 12 to 12.30 p.m. (62 per cent marriage are held), The study reveals that about 83 per cent of the brides are selected from the mother side relation mostly from mother's brothers daughter. The age at marriage depends upon the pregnancy of the bride, and it was noted from the study that majority of them got married before they are 23 years old around 55 per cent of them got married in the age group of 16-19, 23 per cent in the age group of 20-23 and it is specific to note that the early marriage also took place among Todas, in the age group of 12-15 around 19.21 per cent. But it was noted that around 60 per cent of younger generation Toda were against the early marriage. Thanks for the informative education provided by the government through mass media and school education.
Traditionally the Todas do not entertain inter-caste or inter-religion marriages. So as to seek their opinion about this concept the researcher had framed a questionnaire and it was found that about 27.15 per cent and 13.19 per cent of younger generation Todas are of the opinion that the Inter religion and inter caste marriages can be accepted. Traditionally the Todas used to take bride price for their marriage but now-a-days the bridegroom family insists on gold ornaments, house wares etc. as dowry. But at the same time 77 per cent of the Todas agree to take and give dowry.

The Todas used to celebrate pre-puberty ceremony which they call as *putkuli-iazdr-utiti* ("which means mantle over he puts"). A man from opposite clan visits the girl's house and lying down beside her puts his mantle over her so that it covers both and remains there for a few minutes and then he goes back. They believe that after this ritual takes place, the girl attains puberty.

The marriage regulation of the Todas is very peculiar, traditionally the Todas adopted polyandry system of marriage, but due to education, knowledge and awareness now-a-days they prefer monogamy system of marriage. The study found that 99.34 per cent of the marriages were arranged by negotiation and only one love marriage was reported. There is a strict prevention of marriage between Tartharol and Teivalion clan Todas because these groups are endogamous. The data supports that among the married couples around 97 per cent of them say that their married life is happy and they are leading a peaceful life.
9.3.6. Organization of family

Family is a group of persons united by ties of marriage, and constituting a single household creating a common culture for a social role. When a Toda gets married the couple first live together with the bridegrooms family as a joint family extending the family further or sometime they live as an individual family, which is called as a nuclear family. The study found that about 68 per cent of the Todas in the study area are leading a nuclear family system. The role of male Toda is to look after his herds and diary besides his primary occupation, the female takes care of the house and siblings, and during her leisure time she engages herself in embroidering shawls. The new born baby and the mother are moved to the shed till the new moon day, after then only the child will be kept out of sight by conducting the naming ceremony. The naming ceremony takes place near the temple buffalo pen, where the father takes the baby and salutes the temple and names the child, then they seek the blessings of the gathered elders. Thus the Toda family is flourished in the social band.

9.3.7. The Toda kinship

The Todas have a well planned kinship which has got some interesting features. The important feature of the Toda is the system of existence of two well-marked groups of terms expressing bonds of kinship, the one is with speaking of relatives and another one is speaking to relatives. Another interesting pointing that the Toda system has two set of kinship terms, those
used in direct address and those used when speaking of relative who do not correspond closely with one another. This system distinguishes widely between elder and younger member of the family and clan. The Todas never mention the name of the elderly persons and dead relatives in case if they want to mention that particular person they will mention the mund name is such a way they observe it as kinship taboos.

The Toda salutation is called *kalmel pudithti*. It is like one person kneels (or) bows down before another, while the later raises each foot and touches the fore head of the others. The youngers always seek the blessings of the elders and new visitors to their village. The law of descent falls in favour of the male Toda, the child belongs to the clan of the father.

9.3.8. Life cycle ceremonies of the Toda

The Todas perform very few ceremonies during their life time. For the girl a pre-puberty ceremony is performed and when she attains puberty she is secluded and after celebrating a puberty ceremony with their relatives, by giving a purification bath, she is allowed to enter the house to do her routine work. The Todas perform the marriage ceremonies during day time around 11.00 am to 1.00 pm with the gatherings of friends and relatives. The Todas conduct marriage after the girl attains pregnancy; usually their marriages performed in the 5th or 7th month of the pregnancy. The highlight of the marriage is the bridegroom gives a *pisitt* (bow and arrow) to the bride under the *naga* tree where ghee lamp is lighted. After the marriage the Todas do

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their traditional dance and dine together. The new born boy and girl are treated equally till the naming ceremony but, naming the boy is a grand function with a feast but for the girl, it is done in a simple way. Mostly the girls’ naming ceremonies and ear-piercing events are carried in the temples at Ooty. The Toda funeral ritual is performed in a unique way. They are of the belief that the deceased body should be accompanied his sacrificed buffaloes so that the soul of the body will rest in eternal world. Therefore more than two buffaloes are sacrificed for male and a single buffalo for the female Toda.

9.3.9. The Toda economy

Traditionally the Todas belongs to the pastoral community, but the present study reveals that they had come forward to engage themselves in agricultural activities apart from their traditional occupation. The present study further shows that about 25 per cent are engaged in primary sector. It was reported in the study that all the Todas were employed within their district, and only 3 per cent of their siblings has gone outside the district for their higher education.

Regarding the asset position of Todas, the study found that 98 per cent of the households posses their own land. It is remarkable to note that 80 per cent of the Toda households were the owners of the buffaloes and that too 87 per cent of them have the buffaloes worth of rupees 50,000 and above.

The annual income of the Todas in the study area shows that about 63 per cent of the family annual income runs between Rs.25,001 to 50,000 and with regard to the annual expenditure 54 per cent of them incur an annual
expenditure of Rs.25,001 to 50,000 and 24 per cent of the Todas by Rs. 50,001 to 1,00,000. Their maximum saving pattern shows that the highest amount of Rs. 20,000 was saved by the high income group, but at the same time 80 per cent of them express that their saving was much less than Rs. 20,000. Almost all of the Todas try to meet their expenditure within their earning only about 38 per cent of the Todas are in debt and that too the highest of 65 per cent of them are in debt within the range of Rs. 10,000 to 20,000.

The study inferred that about 41 per cent of the Todas family budget was maintained by the male, 32 per cent by the couple of the family and rest 27 per cent by the female member of the family. It shows that the right of maintaining the family was under the control of the male Toda. The Todas’ dairy products are sold direct to the consumers without middle men but at the same time it is peculiar to note that they do not sell their buffaloes to any outsiders, as they worship the buffaloes as god. Besides, then tend to acquire more and more buffaloes to empower their economic status. Their handicraft items like shawls are sold through Toda Multipurpose Welfare Society, while their agricultural produces were sold to the market agents.

The government of India had launched various tribal development programmes for the upliftment of the downtrodden tribes. So as to study the facts of beneficiary in these programmes an attempt was made by the research and it was found that about 80 per cent of the Todas had been benefited through various government tribal development programmes. Inspecific to say about 65 per cent of them were benefited through midday meals scheme to
school children and balawadi and rest 35 per cent through DWCRA. Almost 75 per cent of the Todas were the members of the Toda Multipurpose Co-operative Society and normally they seek any financial assistance through this co-operative society and the data shows that only 37 per cent of the Toda had taken financial assistance ie. through bank directly.

In short it can be stated that the Toda tribal economy is only to the mark of subsistence level. It has been inferred from this study that the major source of income of the Toda comes from their diary products and the agricultural produces. The district manager for Avain co-operative milk society says even today there is more demand for the Toda buffalo milk, but the Todas are not willing to extract required amount of milk from their buffaloes as they allow the calves to suckle. The Toda women support the family by embroidering the shawls which have a unique and traditional value. Their major part of their earning goes to alcohol consumption by the male Todas, to their dress and ornaments. The Todas are very poor in saving money but at the same time they do not like to give up their traditional customs and practices and then by and large lead a peaceful life.

9.3.10. Social control and political organisation

In order to maintain the social harmony or solidarity among the Toda tribal population the Todas are controlled for many generations by their own traditional government called naim. This naim is headed by a Toda tribal head-man who is called as monegar. He has the full power to control the Todas and he also dispenses justice in the Toda Community. Even the elected
panchayat members are not empowered to control over them but at the same time the Toda local panchayat had more power to control the Todas. The Toda traditional panchayat has five council members in which one is from Badaga community but he will not play any important role in decision making except suggesting ideas for social control.

In the court of Toda panchayat if any Toda commits offence they will be punished by three kinds of offering and they are irnortiti, tuninortiti and pilinortiti ie., a buffalo calf, a piece of the cloth called tuni, and a silver ring. But now-a-days the Todas are made to pay a sum of money as fine.

The hereditary of property rights is given only to the male Toda, the women have no rights to claim over it. The female Toda can carry only the dowry which is offered by the parent. The women were not allowed to take part in temple dairy works and even prohibited to walk in the passage of temple buffaloes the reason behind it is to maintain the purity of sacred complex of the temple.

9.3.11. The religious customs

The religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices related to the sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden. The Toda believed that both men and buffaloes were the creation of God. The Toda believe that their first god was Puthi, who was born in a cave and his son was 'On,' his wife was the creator of the Todas and their buffaloes. Toda are on the belief that after on it was followed by puv to the god leads to eternal world which called Amnodr. Even though the Todas have more faith on their traditional god
in present days they used to worship the Hindu god and goddess, it was observed from the evidence of daily worship of Hindu gods in their house with the photos of Hindu and Christian gods.

The Todas are in faith of immortality and they believe that death in this world is not the end of life but there is another life after death. Toda believe in transmigration of soul or body. The funeral service favour the idea of transition of soul is the dogma. The Toda are having faith and belief on witchcraft and demons and they have also have fear on witchcraft and the demons.

Since the Todas are the pastoral community tribes they maintain the dairy as the sacred place, they call the dairy as ti in which there are two kinds of buffaloes, the one sacred buffaloes called persinir whose milk and milk products are used only by the temple priest or dairy-man polul and other ordinary village buffaloes are called punir the milk and milk products of these buffaloes, are used largely for personal consumption.

As we aware the dairy and buffaloes are closely linked the life of Toda. The rituals of dairy are religious nature and milk of the dairy treated as scared. Thanking ceremony, irpiluvsthi is one of the most important ceremony in which a feast will be arranged. For these feast alone dairy milk is used and it is not used by Toda ordinarily in other days. There are many ceremonies in regard to buffalo which starts with the birth of calf irpalvusthi performed in the fifteenth day after the calf born. The salt giving ceremony will be carried out both for scared and ordinary buffalo the salt is mixed with buttermilk and
given to the dairy buffaloes but in case of village buffaloes the salt is mixed with the water. This salt giving ceremony takes place twice a year, especially on Sundays or Tuesdays following of new moon day.

The priest is called *palol* or *poojan* he can be the priest as long as he wishes, normally the duration will be two to three years. At present many *palol* are vacant in many dairies since people are disinterested due to they wish to employ themselves in outside the villages and settled nearer to their work place. But at the same time each and every Toda male wish to holed the post atleast for a month in their life.

Owing to their poor economic conditions, in olden days the Todas had developed the custom of performing very few rituals. The present Todas are of the opinion that without giving up their traditional customs, rituals and practices they can celebrate a few renowned festivals of the Hindus and the Christians.

9.3. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the research study, a few suggestions and recommendations were listed below. Immense care was taken in such a way that without affecting their traditional cultural practices and at the same time the Todas has to be developed to cope up with the current life style of the economy.

✓ Since, it was found that the Toda literacy level, especially the female literacy is very poor. Education awareness programme has to be
conducted and the Toda tribal people have to trained as teachers and posted as teachers among their own tribal people. This will motivate the tribes and will accept them as the role model.

✓ Early marriage to girls has to be avoided and this will help to increase the education level of the girl children.

✓ Frequent monitoring and self assessment of the quality of Government Tribal Residence (GTR) school education have to be made. This will help to know their stand and to improve their standard.

✓ The school education curriculum should be designed in such a way that it should focus on Tribal culture, dialect and local environment which will motivate and facilitate the tribal children to acquire the educative knowledge.

✓ More emphasis has to be given to provide practical and informative education, instead of providing theoretical education.

✓ Tribal talents have to be recognized and should be motivated in such way that they learn the present technology can be imparted with their unique art of talents.

✓ There was very poor response to the ideology of Government Tribal Residence (GTR) schools, because the tribal students are not willing to stay in the school. Providing food, cloth and study material will not

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help in creating interest in the students. Therefore scholarship has to be provided to the tribal students who are studying in the GTR schools and vocational skill development programme also has to be implemented.

✓ Adult education programme should be started in the Toda villages, and this will provide more informative and practical knowledge to their life style.

✓ The bad habit of the intake of alcohol and tobacco consumption among the male Toda has to be curtailed by conducting de-addiction campaign programme.

✓ All Toda houses should be provided with electricity facility under the government one light scheme.

✓ The Toda villages should be provided with connecting roads and frequent transport facilities, so that their dairy products can be marketed in time.

✓ Health awareness programmes have to be conducted so as to educate them about the nutrition of the foods that are available in their local markets and forest areas in abundance.

✓ Nutritional and health education should be imparted in the Toda tribal dialect using preferably audio-visual materials.
✓ It was observed from the study that the visit of health workers to the tribal area is totally absent. In such case, the best suggestion is to give health training for the educated unemployed Toda girl by paying a reasonable honorarium.

✓ The Primary Health Centres in the Tribal areas have to be strengthened by providing with sufficient doctors, staff and medicine.

✓ It has been found from the study that the senior citizens among the Toda is very less. So periodic health camp should be conducted in the Tribal areas and special attention has to given in order to sustain the tribal population.

✓ The Todas have began to involve in the agricultural production, Therefore, to encourage the Todas, the government has to educate the modern techniques of cultivation and has to provide farm implements at the subsidiesed price.

✓ The Toda women are good at designing hand made embroidery works which take much time to complete one shawl. So the modern technology of sewing machine embroidery training has to be given to them.

✓ The Toda women are designing embroidery only to shawls; this can be extended to pillow covers, bedsheets, cell phone covers, curtains etc.
✓ Assistance should be provided to encourage their traditional art of handicraft items, by establishing cottage industries, providing raw materials in subsidised price, and this will help to increase their income level.

✓ The Toda tribal headman should be educated with government Tribal Development Programmes (TDP), which can be spread through him to his community people.

✓ The government should take initiative to safeguard the Toda tribes from the exploitation of the intruders by extending the penal code of law.

✓ Before implementing any tribal welfare programme, an appropriate committee should suggest development strategies to preserve the traditional and cultural value of the Todas.

✓ Since the Todas are a pastoral community tribe the animal husbandry department can provide them required number of buffaloes so that they can achieve a white revolution.

✓ The Todas are not aware of artificial insemination to the buffaloes. The animal health inspectors should visit the Toda villages and create awareness on it. At the same they can give treatment and suggestion to the Toda buffalo health care.
There is more demand for the Toda buffalo’s milk in Ooty. Since the Toda buffaloes are grazing in the forest areas, the non tribal people are of the opinion that the Toda buffalo’s milk is tastier and better; and it has medicinal value also. Therefore, the Todas can be given bank loans to invest in purchase of more buffaloes.

The concept of Toda Milk co-operative society can be established in the Toda tribal villages.

Through this Milk co-operative society the government can supply cattle feeder in subsidy price and can sanction loans for the purchase of buffaloes.

Fifteen Self Help Groups started by Toda women and supported by the government have proved to be a failure because of the inadequate funding. So more number of Self Help Groups (SHG) can be started among the Todas rectifying the financial constrains faced by the previous SHGs.

Participatory tribal appraisal is needed by the planners to develop strategies for formulating programmes to uplift them in all aspect of the life.

The services of the non-governmental organization should be channnelized in a way that it does not form an encroachment into the services of the government.