CONCEPTS AND REVIEW
CHAPTER - II

CONCEPTS AND REVIEW

This chapter gives a brief account of concepts used in this study and certain empirical studies conducted on different aspects of the levels of living, viz., distribution of assets, income, pattern of consumption and the extent of indebtedness of the tribal population. Studies on tribal communities are too vast in their coverage to attempt a comprehensive review. Hence, the researcher has limited to highlighting the studies directly connected to the aim of this research work, instead of presenting an exhaustive review of all tribal studies published so far in India. The various aspects of levels of living of tribals could be viewed as, studies on meaning and definition of tribe, the social stratification among tribes, the distribution of asset, income consumption and tribal poverty, the extent of indebtedness, and tribal development.

2.1. Concepts

This section of the chapter aims to define precisely the concepts used in the study.

2.1.1. Household

A household was defined in one of the studies undertaken, (NCAER, 1965)\(^1\) as a group of persons related by blood, marriage or adoption and who normally prepare meals in the same kitchen.

Batchelder (1971)\(^2\) defined a household as one comprising of all persons who occupy a housing unit, namely, a house, an apartment or other group of rooms or a room that constitutes separate living quarters.
The National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER, 1975) redefined household as a unit of all persons who are related to each other by blood, marriage or adoption and are living in the same dwelling unit continuously for not less than six months during the reference period, sharing the same kitchen.

A similar view expressed by the Census Commission (1991), states that household is a group of persons who commonly live together and would take their meals from a common kitchen unless the exigencies of work prevented any of them from doing so. The definition of NCAER was used in this study.

2.1.2. Levels of Living

The concepts of levels of living include the scale of preferences and satisfaction of wants of individual members in a family as also the collective wants of groups and communities. Different classifications of the component levels of living have been proposed, some by the United Nations and the specialized agencies and some by others (Ganguli and Gupta, 1976). The main components recommended by the report of the committee on measurement of standard of living are: (i) occupation, (ii) consumption, (iii) health, (iv) education, (v) income, and (vi) human freedom. In this study also the above components were used to define the levels of living.

2.1.3. Occupation

The definition of occupation used by the Government of Tamil Nadu (Report of the Govt. of Tamil Nadu, 1976) was adopted in this study. All the households were classified on the basis of occupation. The head of the household’s occupation was taken into consideration. The occupational distribution provides index of participation of the population in the economic activities. Primary occupation was taken as the one among the listed occupations, from which the household received maximum percentage of income.
The following procedure was adopted for the selection of beneficiaries in agricultural sector by the Government of India for IRDP (Programme Evaluation Organisation, 1979). The same procedure was adopted in this study to identify the households in agricultural sector.

2.1.3.1. Agricultural Sector

2.1.3.1.1. Landless Agricultural Labourer

Agricultural labourer is a person who has homestead and derives more than fifty per cent of his income from agricultural wages and who has no land of his own.

2.1.3.1.2. Marginal Farmers

Marginal farmers are those cultivators, having dry land holding below 2.5 acres and 1.25 acres in the case of wet land.

2.1.3.1.3. Small Farmers

Small farmers are those cultivators, having dry land holding between 2.5 acres and 5 acres. In the case of wet land, it is between 1.25 acres and 2.5 acres.

2.1.3.1.4. Medium Farmers

Medium farmers are those cultivators having dry land holding between 5 acres and 7.5 acres. In the case of wet land, it is between 2.5 acres and 3.75 acres.

2.1.3.1.5. Large Farmers

Large farmers are those cultivators having dry land holding between 7.5 acres and above. In the case of wet land, it is above 3.75 acres. In this study, there was no large farmer category as there was no sample household with 5 acres and above.
2.1.3.2. Non-Agricultural Labourers

Persons who derive their income partly from agriculture and partly from other sources can also be brought under this category, provided, more than 50 per cent of their income is from non-agricultural sources. They need not have a homestead but must be residents of the village in which they are identified. The households, who are in the non-farm labourers category, are classified into industrial sector labourers and service sector labourers.

2.1.3.2.1. Industry Sector

(i) **Small scale industrial sector workers:** The head of the household who is employed in the registered small scale industrial units is classified in this category.

(ii) **Large scale industrial sector workers:** The head of the household who is employed in the classified large scale industrial sector units is called a large scale industrial worker.

2.1.3.2.2. Service Sector

(i) **Government servants:** The households who are employed in the Government of India departments and State government departments other than industrial sector are called government servants.

(ii) **Other Service Labourers:** The head of the house who is engaged in unorganised activity, other than agricultural activity and getting income is called other service labourer.

2.1.4. Education

The Census of India (1991) defined a person as literate if he/she read and wrote with understanding in any language even if he/she did not possess minimum education. A person who can read but cannot write is considered illiterate. Similarly, ability to sign one's name is not adequate to qualify a person as person literate. In this study, education of the household refers to the average number of years of schooling attained by the head of the household.
2.1.5. Asset

Batchelder (1971)\(^9\) considered asset as physical properties like house, land, bonds, bank accounts, ornaments, etc.,

According to Khare (1973),\(^10\) asset comprises capital goods which help in the generation of further income and consumer durables, which do not help to generate further income. Sundaram (1995)\(^11\) defined asset as everything that the household owns and which has a money value. He further added that the assets of the households are those items from which he hopes to get an income or which he keeps to protect his interest.

In this study the assets of the household are defined as those items from which he hopes to get an income or which he keeps to protect his interest. The household assets were divided into two categories, viz., (a) productive asset, and (b) consumer durables.

2.1.5.1. Productive Asset

All those household assets such as land, livestock, poultry, agricultural implements, household industries, machineries, commercial vehicles, rented out buildings, etc., have been termed as productive assets, which provide gainful employment to the family labour and directly add to the household income.

2.1.5.2. Consumer Durables

The consumer durables constitute those assets that have no direct effect on household income and/or employment but they indirectly help to raise the efficiency and skill as well as the level of living of the households. They are such as household articles, electrical appliances, furnishing articles, beddings, utensils, buildings, etc.,
2.1.6. Income

NCAER (1961)\textsuperscript{12} refers to the income of the household as the earning both in cash and kind that accrue to and are realised by members of the household during the reference period. Later, the Council redefined the household income as the total of earnings of all members in a household during an agricultural year. Sources of income are self-employment in family and non-farming business, crafts and profession, agricultural wages, non-agricultural wages, salaries, interests, dividends on financial investments, rents from land and house property, pensions, regular contributions, imputed rental income of own labour put in for investment and asset creations in agricultural business and housing. Thus, the gross income and household income are synonymous.

The International Labour Organisation (1979)\textsuperscript{13} estimated the household income from salaries, wages and other related receipts from employer, net income from employment, business profit, income from personal investment, rents, interests, dividends, royalties and commission, periodic payment received regularly from all inheritance or trust fund, pension, amenities, scholarships, transfers and other cash.

Shapiro (1984)\textsuperscript{14} defined household income as income which includes current income of all members of the household from all sources. It consisted of both farm and non-farm income.

In this study, household income is the total income, which includes net income of agriculture, after deducting all costs including own labour, self-employment income from own farm, share cropping income, and wage from allied activities, non-farm income, self-employment income from business, salaries and services, net income from livestock and garden produce, sale of agricultural and non-agricultural assets, income from rent, interest on loans, dividends and other transfer incomes. The sources of income are identified from following sources.
2.1.6.1. Farm Income

It includes net income in crop production and includes wage receipts by the household members in return for their supply of labour in agricultural sector.

2.1.6.2. Income from Livestock

It includes net income from livestock products and returns from traded livestock (cattle and poultry) plus bullock traction power.

2.1.6.3. Income from Forest Produce

It includes income from selling and collection of minor forest produce and imputed values for home consumption.

2.1.6.4. Income from Service Sector or Organised Sector

The head of the household who is employed in service sector or organised sector getting wage earnings for his labour in the form of salaries.

2.1.6.5. Income from Unorganised Sector

Income which is received by the household from business, arts, crafts and seasonal non-farm employment.

2.1.7. Income Distribution

Income distribution, in this study, is the distribution of income across the entire occupation which is a reflection of the level of individual's welfare. A structure of income owned by the occupational categories is called income distribution. Factors as of income and certain other earnings reach the ultimate recipients, persons or households and
the amounts received by them give rise to size classes. Highly unequal structure of income, 
as characterized by concentration of major part of income in the hands of a few privileged 
occupational categories, is called skewed income distribution (World Bank, 2000).15

2.1.8. Per Capita Income

Per capita income is the ratio between the total income of the household and the 
size of the household.

2.1.9. Wage Rate

Agricultural wages are paid in different forms. Some workers are paid in cash or 
kind or both. The payment of wages in kind is one of the most important features of 
agricultural sector.

Monly (1969)16 defined wages, as the income of a man who relied entirely on his 
own labour, to provide for himself and for his family with a living.

Nayyar (1979),17 while studying income distribution in agriculture stated that 
wages of agricultural labourers are determined by productive labour and many other 
factors namely customs, habits, degree of dependency on land owner especially in the 
case of attached labourers, etc.,

The remuneration received for one man-day was treated as wage rate per day for 
agricultural and non-agricultural worker. For average income, one man-day was taken as 
wage rate for self employed, business people and government servants. The imputed 
value of one man-day work of the farmer, in their own farm, was considered as the wage 
rate for farmers. Wage received in kind was converted into money value, using local 
prices of the commodities and added with money wage to find the wage rate in this study.
2.1.10. Consumption Expenditure

Expenditure on food grains, milk, milk products, edible oils, meat, egg, fish, sugar, salt and non-food items such as clothing, fuel, light and miscellaneous items were said to constitute consumption expenditure.

The International Labour Organisation (1971)\textsuperscript{18} considers consumption expenditure as one which comprises all money expenditure incurred by the household and individual members on goods and services required for consumption including rent, sales tax, education, health, legal services and license fee for radio and television. It includes income-tax and other direct taxes on gifts, savings, gambling and investment.

A comprehensive and detailed definition of consumption expenditure provided by NCAER (1975)\textsuperscript{19} includes expenditure on cereals, pulses, milk and milk products, sweetening agents, biscuits, confectionery, intoxicants, fan, cigarettes, tobacco, etc., fuel and light, cotton and woollen clothing including ready-made garments, rent for domestic purpose, amusement and sports, education, medicine, toiletry, sundry goods, services of domestic servants, washer-men, barbers, conveyance, ceremonial gifts, contributions and miscellaneous current expenditures. Besides, it also includes expenditure on consumer durables, semi-durables such as furniture, kitchen equipments, insurance expenditure (except that of life insurance), license fees paid, expenditure on maintenance and repairs and various durables and semi-durables. It also includes expenditure on meat, fish, egg, services and dhotis and other miscellaneous items.

Jaganathan (1988),\textsuperscript{20} in his study, defines that consumption expenditure consists of expenditure on all food items, clothing and foot-wears, fuel and lighting, intoxicants, education, house rent, medicine, health care, payments for domestic and other servants, social and religious functions and other miscellaneous items such as recreation, periodicals and interest paid on loan.
In this study, consumption implies utilization of goods and services to satisfy the human desires and wants. The pattern of consumption varies from place to place and may be influenced by socio-economic and psychological considerations. But, for the purpose of this study, consumption expenditure implies all expenditure incurred by a household exclusively towards its non-productive domestic consumption, thus excluding all expenditure towards the enterprise activities of the household, transfer payments in kind, loans advanced, charities, gifts and other payments in kind. This definition was used by the NSS organisation in 1995 (Vinita, 1998).  

2.1.10.1. Consumer Units or Size of Household

The size of household was measured in terms of adult equivalent units or lusk coefficients. The differences in the family size, age and sex among the households were taken care of, when the consumption unit criterion, namely, per consumption units was used and compared. The adult equivalents were calculated on the basis of occupation as suggested by the Indian Council of Medical Research (1980).

2.1.11. Inequality

Inequality may be defined as an unequal distribution of income, irrespective of what the income level or the corresponding state of deprivation of the people at the bottom end of income scale might be. This definition was used in this study and this was supported by Sen (1976a, 1976b, 1992), Ahluwalia (1974, 1976a, 1976b) and Anand and Kanbur (1993).

2.1.12. Poverty

The definition of poverty is a subject of continual debate. Mark (1966) defined the people below poverty, as those who get a bare sustenance but are not able to obtain those necessities which will permit them to maintain a state of physical efficiency.
Appu (1977)\textsuperscript{27} states that the term poverty refers to a person's lack of command over adequate goods and services to satisfy his basic needs relating to food, clothing, housing, medicine and education. Yadav (1980)\textsuperscript{28} opined that a person is poor, if he is living in conditions of insufficiency of basic needs, namely, food, shelter and clothing. Poverty, according to Oscar Altimir (1982)\textsuperscript{29}, is a situational syndrome in which the following are combined: under-consumption, malnutrition, precarious housing conditions, low educational levels, bad sanitary conditions, either unstable participation in the production systems or restriction to its mere primitive strata, attitudes of discouragement, little participation in the mechanisms of social integration and possible adherance to a particular scale of values different to some extent from those held by the rest of the society. Sukhatme (1982)\textsuperscript{30} defined poverty as the condition of the people, who, for want of income, could not meet their minimum energy needs. Thimmaiah (1983)\textsuperscript{31} viewed poverty as the inadequacy of income or a low level of consumption of either the whole population or a part of the population. Varadarajan and Ayyasamy (1983)\textsuperscript{32} considered poverty as an attribute of families that reflect deprivation, not only in nutrition, but also in health, education, sanitation, clothing and opportunities for women to acquire independent economic status.

Vasant Desai (1988)\textsuperscript{33} defines that the term poverty, in the absolute sense, refers to a condition of acute physical want, starvation, malnutrition disease, want of clothing, shelter, education and an almost total lack of medical care. The intuitive understanding that poverty is a measure of deprivation belies the complexity of determining formal criteria of a definition. Most poverty definitions rely solely on income for ranking welfare. Poverty is related to what a society considers a decent standard of living (Sampat 1990, Wooden 1997).\textsuperscript{34}
In order to minimise the problems of comparability, this study defines poverty in terms of per capita household income at current price. Although, using single dimension of income as a welfare criterion fails to take into account the importance of benefits received through non-income sources, it is the single most identifiable factor for assessing welfare levels across the selected tribals. This study also included non-income factors to identify the poor through quality life index.

Using monetary income or consumption to identify and measure poverty has a long tradition. The Rowntree Method (1899) was used to conduct a survey, covering nearly every working class family in York, to collect information on earnings and expenditures. He then defined poverty as a level of total earnings, insufficient to obtain the minimum necessities for maintenance of merely physical efficiency, including food, rent and other items. The same definition was used to estimate poverty by the World Bank (1999).

The study group set up by the Planning Commission (1963) in 1962, came to the conclusion that the minimum consumption expenditure for a household of five persons would work out to Rs.20 per capita, per month at 1960-61 prices. Minhas (1974) estimated the per capita consumption expenditure per month and per head, for minimum food and non-food requirements in monetary terms, as Rs.16.70. Bardhan (1973) and Ahluwalia (1977) estimated the minimum per capita consumer expenditure as Rs.15 per head per month in rural areas at 1960-61 prices. Panikkar (1972) estimated that Rs.37.80 per capita consumption expenditure was needed to have reasonable food items at 1970-71 prices. Thakur (1985) fixed the per capita consumption per month of minimum food and non-food requirements in monetary terms, at Rs.77.61 and Rs.52.93 respectively, at 1980-81 prices.

Aggregating all the minimum physical consumable quantities, including, a figure expressing per capita consumer expenditure, is determined. The population whose level of income or expenditure is below this figure is considered to be below the poverty line.
This poverty line is the cut off line demarcating the poor and the rich, and has been fixed on the basis of food consumption in terms of calorie intake, which in turn is expressed in terms of money. The Indian Planning Commission has defined poverty line as consumption level of 2,400 calories per person per day for rural people (Kurien, 1977). Advanced

According to Jayantnuja Bandyopadhyaya (1988), the word poverty line was used by Rowntree for the first time, and the quantification of poverty in terms of caloric consumption originally devised by him was subsequently adopted by others like World Bank economists, Indian planners and Government Commissions. Vasisht and Krishnan (1984) indicated that there were different approaches used to define poverty line, like basic needs approach, income level approach and physical quality of life index which was based on infant mortality, illiteracy and life expectancy.

The Sixth Plan document (1978) defined the poverty line as the mid-point of the monthly per capita expenditure class having a daily caloric intake of 2,400 per person in rural areas. At 1979-80 prices, the mid-point was Rs.76 and poverty line was fixed at an annual net income of Rs.3,500 per annum from all sources at 1970-71 prices in an average family of five members. The Seventh Plan (1986) made an upward revision and a family having an annual income of Rs.6,400 or less, was considered to be below the poverty line.

In the Ninth Five-Year Plan's Swarnajayanthi Gram Rozgar Yojana Programme (1999) the poor families were identified on the basis of the annual household income of Rs.11,460 for five members, (i.e.) the per capita (poverty line) income used in this programme was Rs. 2,292 at 1991-92 prices. This poverty line income was adjusted, on the basis of consumer price index suggested in the 38th N.S.S. Round Survey to the reference period (June 1999 to May 2000) of the data collection. It was worked out as
Rs. 4,160. This poverty line income was used in this study to classify the households into poor and non-poor. This poverty line satisfied the basic needs with respect to nutrition, housing, clothing, education and health.

2.1.12.1. Absolute Poverty

Closely related to the issue of income distribution is that of absolute poverty. It is a measure of those individuals whose welfare is less than absolute standard.

The United Nations Organisation (1975)\textsuperscript{47} defined absolute poverty as a condition generally reflected mainly in inadequacy of food intake, and the consequent under-nourishment on a mass scale. The definition of subsistence, appropriate to such developing countries, might also include other essential minimum needs like clothing, housing, education and health.

According to Ahluwalia (1977)\textsuperscript{48}, a person living below the fixed poverty line in terms of real per capita income, is said to be under absolute poverty.

According to Varadarajan (1977)\textsuperscript{49}, poor are those who have insufficient resources but have achieved some fixed standard of living (defined in terms of physical minimum needs of food and clothes) below which physiological efficiency could not be sustained. According to Galbraith (1979),\textsuperscript{50} absolute poverty is one when people are devoid of the basic nutritional requirements. Bhalla (1981)\textsuperscript{51} defined it absolute poverty, when the absolute deprivation levels result from the prevailing inequalities, on the basis of norms as to the minimum requirements, considered adequate for the satisfaction of basic needs. According to Subramaniam (1982)\textsuperscript{52}, poverty is based on the concept of absolute poverty. Accordingly, a household is considered poor when it is unable to provide itself with minimum subsistence usually defined in terms of a nutritional standard.
In this study, absolute poverty is defined as the condition of people, who are unable to achieve the minimum standard of living prescribed for the study group, in terms of economic and social factors. The magnitude of absolute poverty is determined by the point at which the value of the absolute poverty standard intersects the income distribution.

2.1.12.2. Relative Poverty

According to United Nations Organisation (1975), relative poverty is the inequality in income distribution which changes with time, and is invariably different for each society.

Varadarajan (1977) argued that relative poverty implies the extent of poverty in a society, which can be estimated in terms of the degree of general inequality.

Jain (1981) defined relative poor as a person who is above the poverty line with income above the absolute level, but below the income level required to meet the national average consumption expenditure. According to Altimir (1982), relative poverty is based on norms that attempt to take account of actual deprivation with respect to average levels of needs of satisfaction in the society in question, which are thus taken as representative of the predominant lifestyle and at the same time attempts to reflect the average availability of resources in the society.

Sen (1983) defined relative poverty as one determined by the relative availability of commodities, income and capabilities in a society. Relative poverty is defined, in this study, as the person's standard of living compared with the minimum standards prescribed for the study group and is used to measure the intensity of poverty. It takes into account actual deprivation with respect to average levels of needs of satisfaction in society. It implies the extent of poverty in a society which can be estimated in terms of the degree of general inequality. The above said definition was used by Varadarajan, Altimir and Subramaniam.
2.1.13. Earner, Earning Dependent, Non-Earning Dependent

The Ministry of Labour Employment and Rehabilitation, Government of India (1960)\textsuperscript{58} defined earners as all such household members who contribute financially towards the total family income, and earner as one whose income is sufficient for his or her maintenance.

Rethinapandy (1994)\textsuperscript{59} in his study defined earner as one who depends for livelihood on either income from self-employment or employee compensation or property income or a combination of such incomes.

Earning dependent is defined as one whose income is not adequate for his or her maintenance, and non-earning dependent as one who earned no income at all and is dependent for his or her maintenance on others. These definitions are used as such in this study.

2.1.14. Female-Earners

The female earner, [Fernandes, Menon (1987), Kynch (1994), and Sharma (1994)]\textsuperscript{60} is one who is contributing towards household income and her income is sufficient for maintenance. The same is used in the present study.

2.1.15. Dependency Ratio

Dependency ratio in this study refers to number of dependents for an earner.

2.1.16. Morbidity

Morbidity in this study refers to the relative frequency of occurrence of a particular disease in a particular area. This definition was given by Encarta World English Dictionary (1999).\textsuperscript{61}
2.1.16.1. The Incidence of Morbidity

The incidence of morbidity (Johansson, 1991) measures the proportion of total population, which regards itself as having become sick or diagnosed as sick, during the reference period.

2.1.17. Indebtedness

Indebtedness includes, in this study, hereditary debt, short and long term loans borrowed by the head of the family for various purposes like socio-cultural activities, economic activities, viz., improvement of land, purchase of land and livestock, construction of house, purchase of other movable and immovable assets, crop loan, household consumption expenditure, etc. The indebtedness does not include the loan settled within the period of the study.

2.1.17.1. Extent of Indebtedness

Extent of indebtedness refers to the percentage of families indebted. The extent of indebtedness varies with different occupational categories. The total amount of loan borrowed by the household is taken into consideration.

2.1.17.2. Purpose and Utilisation

Purpose and utilisation of loans indicate how utilisation of loan was planned and used by the borrower.

2.2. Reviews

2.2.1. Meaning and Definition of Tribe

The meaning of the word 'tribe' according to the Oxford Dictionary is "any primitive or barbarous people under a chief". In the Encyclopedia Britannica, the families or small communities that constitute a tribe are said to trace their descent from a common ancestor.
Eminent scholars like Rivers (1932), Dube (1967), and Naik (1968) relied upon the Western writers' definition. They defined tribe as an ethnic group, geographically isolated or semi-isolated, identified with one particular territory and having distinct social, economic and cultural traditions and practices.

The Constitution of India (1950) neither defines nor lays down any specific criteria for specifying the tribes. As per Article 366 (25) of the Constitution, the Scheduled Tribes means such tribes or tribal communities or parts or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of the constitution.

Verma (1990) in his study defined tribe as the highest political unit, comprising several distincts, which in turn were composed of clans. It occupied a definite geographical area and exercised effective control over its people. Permanent settlement in a particular area gave geographical identity to a tribe. The testimony under the domain of a tribe was generally named after it.

The concept of a tribe in anthropological literature was summarised by Chaudhari (1992) as a group which lives in a common territory, has a common dialect, uniform social organisation and possesses cultural homogeneity, has a common ancestor, political organisation and religious pattern. However, he added that many tribal groups in India do not possess all these characteristics. Further, to quote Sharma (1994), there is no neat impermeable demarcation of tribal identity. Incidentally, of late, the more acceptable usage to substitute the word 'tribe', namely, 'indigenous people' emerged. In this context, Sharad Kulkarni (1994) in his article analysed the procedures laid down for drawing up lists of Scheduled Tribes. He complained that Government never fixed any specific criteria for considering a tribe as Scheduled Tribe. Parliament appointed committees from time to
time, to fix the criteria, but this was to prolong the difficult task of laying down criteria and to include or exclude tribes not satisfying the criteria. He concluded that the game would go on in the present political atmosphere and no final decision would be taken.

Virginius Xaxa (1999)\textsuperscript{71} in his article, expressed concern over the definition of tribe. Defining tribe has conceptual as well as empirical problems for the academician. But this term of administrative convenience was adopted by the tribals themselves to mean disposed and deprived people of a region. There is no claim to being the original inhabitants of that region, but a prior claim to the natural resources is asserted vis-à-vis the outsiders and the dominant castes. He argued that tribes were studied in relation to features and characteristics of the larger society. The focus was on how tribes were getting absorbed into the larger society, the so-called mainstream by becoming caste, peasant class and so on. With such conceptualisation, the identity of the tribal groups or community was indeed put at risk.

Singh (1997)\textsuperscript{72} remarked that, on the face of the definition, a tribe in India is essentially a political concept, its membership being administratively determined, with the objective of uplifting the backward communities to a new standard of life in consonance with the provision of the Indian Constitution. However, in the official and constitutional report, the term in vogue is still 'tribe' and the present study retained it.

2.2.2. Social Stratification

Functional approaches to the question of social stratification was developed by Davis and Moore (1945)\textsuperscript{73}, Tumin (1953)\textsuperscript{74}, Wesoloswski (1962)\textsuperscript{75}, Hanco (1970)\textsuperscript{76} and Gupta (1991).\textsuperscript{77} All the above authors referred that the arrangement of various tribal groups is a hierarchy indicating relations of superiority and inferiority with respect to property, status and power. It provides differential status and role of individuals and
groups that constitute basis for human behaviour in relation to each other. It confers differential possession of goods and services, differential access to resources, differential utilisation facilities and opportunities.

But Pradeep Kumar Bose (1985) questioned the validity of observing stratification pattern among Indian tribes. In the tribal society, the social stratification was present on the basis of the occupation and caste hierarchy or ‘sacred’ hierarchy or division on class basis. The above said stratification was observed in Gujarat Tribes, according to Bose. The transition was occurring in the tribal society. The variations in occupations created stratification among tribes in Gujarat.

Heller (1969) and Kopparty (1994) defined that social stratification in tribal society was a system of structured inequality, with respect to assets that count in a given society.

In assessing the tribal economy, researchers focussed attention on various aspects of tribal economy, i.e., social condition, demographic characteristics, economic structure, income distribution, poverty, indebtedness and the process of tribal development.

2.2.3. Distribution of Asset, Income and Consumption

2.2.3.1. Asset

The scientific study of tribal economy in India was first undertaken by Nag (1958). Nag made an extensive study on Baiga economy in the context of general economic theories laying emphasis on the sources of economy of the Baiga. He surveyed 350 Baiga families covering ryotwari and forest villages in Madhya Pradesh. He found that the average income per family was higher in the forest villages as compared to ryotwari villages. The income status in general was not high, as most of the families had only deficit budgets.
Saxena (1964) studied the economy of five tribal groups of Western Hills in Madhya Pradesh. He found that the economy of the tribals was subsistence type and generally their standard of living was below the level of subsistence.

Roy Burman and Sharma (1970) conducted a study on asset structure of tribal people in Central and Western India. They found that in the tribal villages, the average holding size varied from one acre to eight acres, but in the majority of villages, it was found to be below five acres. The distribution of holdings among various size groups shows that the majority of households have holdings up to five acres, barring the tribal villages of Rajasthan and Gujarat, where their dispersal was also observed among holdings exceeding five acres.

Aram (1972) conducted a study on Nagaland tribes and stated that Naga society emerged from the traditional tribal farm and moved into the modern agro-industrial phase. Over a period of time, disparities have developed between different sections of the population in both rural and urban sectors. Some Naga tribals had become very rich, whereas, bulk of population was still on the old standard of living. As a result of it, gap was increasing among the tribals.

Dhir (1972) conducted a study on North-western tribes and result was different from others. He stated that the tribes of Western Himalayas lived in different environment surroundings from other tribes of India. He remarked that the tribes of Western Himalayas were economically better off than the tribes in the rest of the country.

Agro-Economic Research Centre (1973) conducted a comparative study of Tanjangi Tribal colony and six tribal villages in Andhra Pradesh and found that 86.29 per cent of the sample households in Tanjangi Tribal colony were cultivators as against 75.95 per cent in the six villages. There were 214 holdings with a total operated area of 1099.71 acres in the Tanjangi colony as against 142 holdings with 780.74 acres in the six villages. The per capita
operated area among cultivator household was 0.99 acres in both the regions, which was inadequate and uneconomic for meeting out the basic requirements of the tribal farmers, because of the peculiar agro-climatic and geo-physical conditions of the area.

Agro Economic Research Centre (1975)\(^87\) conducted an empirical investigation of eight tribal villages in the two blocks of Madhya Pradesh in Chhindwara district, with a view to study the problems and prospects of tribal farmers, as well as to investigate the functional gaps that had hindered the overall economic growth of the tribal area. In this study, an attempt had also been made to analyse specifically the characteristics of the tribal farmers in terms of resource structure, production pattern, employment and income. The results indicated that about 97 per cent of the workers among tribal farmers worked on their own farms. About 51 per cent of tribal workers and about six per cent of non-tribal workers belonging to all size of holdings worked as casual labourers.

Apte (1976)\(^88\) conducted a study of 15 villages in Kolaba district of Maharashtra in 1975-76 with a view to study the existing resources, pattern of employment earnings and institution in the sample area. He concluded that agricultural labour was the main occupation for primitive tribal groups. The sources of livelihood were income from forest produce and agricultural wages.

Shashi (1977)\(^89\) conducted an empirical investigation of 100 families in Bharmaur Teshil of Chamba district of Himachala Pradesh to study the occupational structure. He stated that the main occupation of the tribals was agriculture, but they could be considered good agriculturists, the reason being the shortage of land and their migratory habits.

Alok Kumar (1979)\(^90\) was using the per capita income as measurement of standard of living since it seemed to be an index of economic growth. According to him, it was a very useful variable to measure the well being of the people for a stipulated period. He measured the standard of living of malpaharias. He pointed out that about five per cent of
tribals were enjoying good standard of living and nearly 65 per cent of people have less than the average per capita annual income, because of the differential asset structure.

2.2.3.2. Income

Bhati and others (1972)\(^9\) conducted a study of 40 tribal and 25 non-tribal farms scattered over four tribal and two non-tribal villages of Nainital Tarai, to study the levels of income and savings of the tribal and non-tribal farms. The average size of tribal and non-tribal farms was worked out to 11.97 and 10.61 acres respectively. They concluded that agricultural income constituted a minor part of total household income on both types of farms. The disposable income was about three times higher on non-tribal farms than that of tribal farms. The tribal farms saved about 0.27 for every additional increase of one rupee in their disposable income, but in non-tribal it was 0.39. It was also suggested that marginal propensity to save on the non-tribal farm was about 50 per cent more than the tribal farms.

Pathy (1984)\(^9\) conducted an empirical investigation of 1047 sample tribal households in Gujarat. He concluded that in tribal groups income distribution among all the communities in the selected villages was quite uneven. But he added that per capita annual household income was roughly Rs.2,426 considered minimum requirement for subsistence.

Rayappa and Muthurayappa (1986)\(^9\) conducted a study in ten districts of Karnataka with a view to analyse the sources of household income among the scheduled groups. They stated that the scheduled groups in social structure are placed at the bottom. This made them to earn less, due to their social stratification. About 90 per cent of the households belonging to Scheduled Tribes earned less than Rs.50 per month. This happened mainly due to lower wages received by them for wage work as well as due to inadequate and inferior assets owned by them. The main sources of household income were wage work including agriculture and allied activities. The households with small holdings were better-off than the landless agricultural labourers.
Basu (1987)\textsuperscript{94} conducted a study of Chotanagpur region of South Bihar, with a view to analyse the magnitude of per capita income of the tribals. He stated that South Bihar with a habitat of more than six million tribals, is rich in mineral resources and forests. The average per day per capita income of the tribal family did not exceed one rupee and fifty paise. Facilities for pure drinking water and communicable roads in tribal areas are a far cry even today in Bihar. The levels of living of tribals was very low by any standard. Yet, a small group among them was emerging as the middle class, which was educated and was in contact with modern ways of living.

2.2.3.3. Consumption

Khosla (1984),\textsuperscript{95} on the basis of empirical investigation, concluded that the staple food of 75 per cent of sample households in the tribal areas of Spiti was coarse grains, mainly barley, which was indicative of rampant poverty and under-nutrition in the area. The diet of the majority of households was of a poor quality, which was further supported by the low consumption of protective foods like milk, meat, eggs, fruits, etc., Low levels of living of the sample households also got reflected in the meagre possession of consumer durables.

Nayak and Prasad (1984)\textsuperscript{96} conducted a study of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of Karnataka, based on NSS data of 28\textsuperscript{th} and 32\textsuperscript{nd} round, with a view to examine the inequalities in the levels of living of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the Non-Scheduled Castes and Non-Scheduled Tribes during 1973-74 and 1977-78. By using the Lorenz curve, they concluded that the inequalities in income and real consumption was relatively less within the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. They concluded that a well recognized hierarchy exists among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes both in terms of social and economic status.
Guleria (1986) conducted an empirical investigation to study the income inequalities in the tribal areas of Spiti. Out of the 113 sample households, 26 (23 per cent) were landless. Both marginal and small households accounted for 65.5 per cent of the total number of holdings and possessed 68.6 per cent area in the sample households. The Spiti area was also having unequal distribution of land holdings, thus reflecting income disparities.

Thakur (1986) conducted a study on Santhal tribes of Bihar and stated that the income of the general population was so little that there remains hardly any room for additional expenditure after meeting the basic needs. He remarked that there were some rigid social and cultural conventions which compelled even the poorest tribals to spend money on marriage, birth and death ceremonies. He further remarked that per capita expenditure on intoxicants was quite high among tribals, whereas, contrary to it, the non-tribals spent double the amount on education in comparison to tribals.

Swarap and Singh (1988) conducted an empirical investigation of 47 sample tribal households in Kinnur district to analyse the socio-economic aspects of the area under study. They found that per capita quantity of cereals, pulses, edible oil and sugar consumed in the village was positively related to the size of holding. The food items accounted for 61 per cent of the family budget, and cereals alone accounted for 15 per cent. Non-food which included clothing, foot-wear, fuel, light, education, medicines, social and religious functions, etc., accounted for 38.75 per cent of total household expenditure. Among the non-food items clothing and foot-wear was the major component accounting for 16.75 per cent of total expenditure. They further concluded that on an average, a person consumed 403 grams of cereals per day. The per capita per day consumption of vegetables had been worked out to 77 grams. The average availability of cereals in case of marginal farmers was 391 grams per capita per day. They concluded that the consumption pattern of tribals was above the required level.
A study by Dobhal (1989)\textsuperscript{100} shows that the total annual consumption expenditure per household at 1977-78 price level was worked out to Rs.6,217 or approximately Rs.518 per month. The expenditure on food items constituted 69.20 per cent, and the expenditure on non-food items 20.79 per cent. He made an inference from the study, they were spending more for food items rather than non-food items.

Given the low economic opportunities available for income, the existing differential wage rate acted as a major constraint on their income earning capabilities in Kerala. The discrimination affected the households where the head of the household was female. Such families were therefore poorer than their counterparts with a male head. This conclusion was arrived at by Vergeese (1994)\textsuperscript{101} in his study.

2.2.4. Tribal Poverty

Ravallion (1992)\textsuperscript{102} study showed that the general standard of living was judged not by observation of its short run income, but by the size of food expenditure per capita. The behaviour of consumers becomes much easier to explain, including the observed chronic dissaving of the poorest sections of the people, classified in terms of per capita income or per capita total consumption expenditure.

Sharma (1994)\textsuperscript{103} in his study found that the percentage of poor tribal households came to 32.06 per cent. The poorest amongst the poor came to 9.91 per cent. He concluded that the estimate of tribal poverty, so arrived with the help of ‘normative approach’ and Sen’s measure of poverty, was more accurate and reliable from the policy point of view.

Nadkarni (2000),\textsuperscript{104} in his article, presented the relationship between poverty, environment and development. It is quite complex and not amenable to easy generalisation. He developed a vicious circle (poverty–environment–degradation–more poverty). In a country like India, the environment is a source of livelihood for many, particularly for the poor.
Environmental degradation has tremendous human costs. It hits the poor most and directly too. He concluded that environmental degradation was the main reason for the poverty among tribals.

Meenakshi et al. (2000) presented a paper on poverty estimates for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes at the state level and for rural and urban areas separately. Their findings indicated that poverty rates were uniformly higher for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities irrespective of the deprivation measure used.

2.2.5. Extent of Indebtedness

Agro Economic Research Centre (1973) conducted a comprehensive study of Tanjangi colony and six selected villages in Andhra Pradesh with a view to study the extent as well as incidence of indebtedness. This study revealed that 87 per cent and 51 per cent of the households in the colony and six villages were found indebted respectively. The incidence of indebtedness appeared to be relatively high among the cultivators as compared to the non-cultivators in both the regions. The private credit agencies like traders and moneylenders generally exploited the borrowers. The credit supplied by government as well as co-operative agencies was inadequate, untimely and flowed to a few selected villages at the cost of others.

Chandra (1977) conducted a study of rural indebtedness at five tribal villages in Cumper block of Orissa. He found that tribals themselves preferred to take loans from the money-lenders as they were easily approachable and always ready with the money and they looked upon the tribals not as a foe but as a friend.

Mahapatro (1987) conducted an empirical investigation of 373 tribal households in Korapul district of Orissa, with a view to study the sources, purposes and extent of indebtedness among the sample households. He concluded that the problem of tribal
indebtedness was a product of primitive existence, social extravagance and market inadequacy. In spite of expansion of co-operatives, the money-lenders constitute an important source of borrowings in the area under study.

Bhatt (1990)\textsuperscript{109} critically examined the implementation of the institutional and other legal provision, presetting reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Parliament and State legislatures as well as in the administration services. He felt that these reservations themselves are indicative of a deep rooted evil in our society, the evils of inequalities in terms of socio-economic growth owing to historical reasons. He also scanned other measures like land reforms, education policy, public distribution system, health care, etc.

Bibuthi Mahapatro (1990),\textsuperscript{110} in his study, identifies indebtedness as the permanent cause of their bondage which was the result of low wages and distressed selling of their produce to moneylenders. It can be solved with a greater degree of sincerity. According to the author, many studies revealed that the laws and programmes related to the abolition of the system of bonded labour suffer from various leakages and lack of proper implementation. Many anti-poverty programmes and anti-exploitation programmes have remained on paper, in the absence of political will to implement them and therefore, the programmes in this area remain tardy.

Fernandes et al. (1998)\textsuperscript{111} analysed the relationship between improvishment caused by deforestation and indebtedness. They found that once a tribal is indebted, it continues for generations. They remarked that percentage of people below the poverty line in rural areas of Orissa was more due to hereditary indebtedness.
2.2.6. Tribal Development

Hussain (1987)\textsuperscript{112} analysed the socio-economic inequalities caused by the development process among the tribals of Assam and concluded that the present socio-economic structure and pattern of development that we had adopted after independence had sharpened not only the caste, religious, linguistic and ethnic distinctions, but also increased the regional disparities and feelings of deprivation, negligence and insecurity among various ethnic tribal groups. Liberation of tribals from oppression, exploitation, under development and dependency, depended fundamentally on a radical transformation of the socio-economic structure, which at present permitted, inequality, exploitation and oppression.

Subah Singh and Mahabilesh Raj (1989)\textsuperscript{113} made a study on planning for tribal welfare. They opined that there was a greater disparity in the economic standards of tribals living in the areas of their concentration, compared to the people in the surrounding areas. This disparity was mainly over the per capita income, productivity of agriculture, receptivity of modern techniques, size of land holdings, etc., In some tribal regions, unemployment was quite serious. The major problems experienced by the tribals were, exploitation by middlemen, procurement of minor forest produce by commercial forces, money-lending, land alienation, indebtedness, bondage and forest policies. These were mainly due to their illiteracy, ignorance and also isolation from the non-tribals.

Heredia (1995)\textsuperscript{114} in his article found fault with state administration. Tribal development extends an internal colonisation by the state authorities which was no less oppressive than before. He suggested that if India's tribals were to regain their true identity, it was necessary that their oral history, which was suppressed by the history by outsiders is reconstructed.
Mahadeva (1998)\textsuperscript{115} in his study revealed that by and large, government intervention, through targetted programmes, has not been able to bring the desirable extent of change in the socio-economic condition of the tribes in the district under study. More particularly government efforts failed to meet the total requirements of the tribal community on both economic and social counts. Thus, in order to ensure any improvement in tribal society, there was need to re-emphasize government’s commitment to bringing the tribes into the mainstream of development. Towards this end, governments have to initiate stringent measures.

Before concluding this section, one could record that most of the studies were conducted in different parts of the country and they were in the descriptive nature. Government is obvious from the above discussion that there were no indepth studies in Tamil Nadu on the levels of living of Tribals except few studies evaluated the impact of Tribal Welfare Programmes. Hence, the studies made so far have not depicted the tribal economy of Tamil Nadu in a comprehensive manner.
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