

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

Importance of quality of life:

The quality of life of a population is an important concern in economics. The concept of quality of life broadly encompasses how an individual measures the 'goodness' of multiple aspects of their life. These evaluations include one's emotional reactions to life occurrences, disposition, sense of life fulfilment and satisfaction with work and personal relationships (Lucas and Smith, 1999).

The Ontario Social Development Council(1997) and Social Planning Network of Ontario, Canada have defined quality of life as the product of the inter-play among the social, health, economic and environmental conditions which affect human and social development. Clark (2000) noted that quality of life for an individual is affected significantly by the social environment. There is a strong collective or public dimension to quality of life to complement the private individual dimension and the social environment is closely connected to the built environment.

Quality of life is measured by many social and economic factors. A large part is standard of living, the amount of money and access to goods and services that a person has and these are fairly easily measured. Others like freedom, happiness, environmental health and innovation are far harder to measure.

Many key indicator systems are bringing into the mix measures that give a more humanistic interpretation of what constitutes well-being, satisfaction or desirability, i.e., the quality of life (QOL). In this sense, QOL indicators are measures that are non-monetary, socially-oriented and qualitative in context. They manifest the pervasive agreement or general consensus of a population on what is valued and desired.

According to Diener and Suh (1999) "Quality of life indicators or well-being measures are necessary since their aims are to evaluate society and add substantially to the rigorous economic indicators that are now favoured by policymakers". As such, QOL indicators explore and identify what factors are important to the good life, which do not rest solely on wealth or Gross Domestic Product.

Felce and Perry (1995) and Kekic (2005) stated that these quality of life factors are varied and extensive and cover the wide range of life domains. These include, material comforts, health conditions, recreational opportunities, social interaction, educational status,

creative expression and diversity, cultural values, work environment, compensation and finance, professional development, leisure activities, safety, housing and freedom of expression. These factors, when placed within a common frame of reference, give an alternative and expanded comprehension as to existing external influences and life conditions, i.e., a more complete assessment of the quality of life.

Components of quality of life:

Quality of life has both objective components –i.e., components external to an individual and measurable and subjective components – i.e., personal assessment of one's own life or of particular aspects of life using measures of satisfaction, happiness or other self-assessment scales (Campbell et al., 1976).

Quality of life indicator systems have established themselves as useful and insightful ways of determining the status and position of select populations. They provide another facet to assess the progress of the economy, education, health and other commonly used categorizations of people within a specified geographical area from the community level to much larger spheres such as regions, states and nations.

Scheduled tribes in India

The quality of life of scheduled tribes is unique since they are the socially excluded population. According to Nayak (1988) "A tribe is a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous with no specialization of functions, united in language or dialect following tribal traditions, beliefs and customs and conscious of a homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration".

Mehra (1988) derived the following characteristics to identify a tribal group in Indian situation.

- Their roots in the soil date back to very early period
- They live in the relative isolation of the hills and the forests
- They have a low level of techno - economic development and
- In terms of their culture, language, institution, beliefs and customs they stand out from the other sections of the society.

The birth of the Constitution of India on 26th January 1950 marks the origin of the term 'Scheduled Tribe'. Article 366(25) refers to scheduled tribes as those communities who are scheduled in accordance with Article 342 of the Constitution. This article says that only

those communities who have been declared as such by the President of India through an initial public notification will be considered as scheduled tribes.

The essential characteristics for a community to be identified as scheduled tribes were first laid down by Lokur committee (1965).The characteristics are: primitive traits, distinctive culture, shyness of contact with public at large, geographical isolation and backwardness - social and economic.

India had the largest tribal population in the World. Indian tribes constituted 8.6 percent of the nation's total population and 1042.8 lakhs people were scheduled tribes as per 2011 Census. In some States and Union Territories they constitute an overwhelming majority; e.g. Mizoram (94.75 percent), Lakshadweep (93.15 percent), Nagaland (87.75 percent) and Meghalaya (85.53 percent).

In terms of geographical location, the distribution of tribal population is classified into the following zones:

North-Eastern region	: Comprising Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura
Eastern region	: Comprising Bihar, Orissa, Sikkim and West Bengal
Northern region	: Comprising Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh
Central region	: Comprising Madhya Pradesh
Western region	: Comprising Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Gujarat, Goa, Daman and Diu, Maharashtra and Rajasthan
Southern region	: Comprising Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu
Island region	: Comprising Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep

In India, the need for improving quality of life of scheduled tribes becomes more pronounced in all the States since the States have significant proportion of scheduled tribes population. Table 1 represents the State wise scheduled tribe population in 2011.

Table 1**State wise scheduled tribe population in India - 2011**

S.No	States	Scheduled tribe population	Percentage to total population
1	Andhra Pradesh	14,93,299	7.0
2	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	28,530	7.5
3	Arunachal Pradesh	951,821	68.8
4	Assam	38,84,371	12.4
5	Bihar	13,36,573	1.3
6	Chattisgarh	7,822,902	30.6
7	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	178,564	52
8	Daman & Diu	15,363	6.3
9	Gujarat	89,17,174	14.8
10	Goa	149,275	10.2
11	Himachal Pradesh	3,92,126	5.7
12	Jammu & Kashmir	1,493,299	11.9
13	Jharkhand	8,645,042	26.2
14	Karnataka	42,48,987	7.0
15	Kerala	4,84,839	1.5
16	Lakshadweep	61,120	94.8
17	Manipur	902,740	35.1
18	Mizoram	1,036,115	94.4
19	Meghalaya	2,555,861	86.1
20	Madhya Pradesh	1,53,16,784	21.1
21	Maharashtra	1,05,10,213	9.4
22	Nagaland	1,710,973	86.5
23	Orissa	95,90,756	22.8
24	Rajasthan	92,38,534	13.5
25	Sikkim	206,360	33.8
26	Tripura	1,166,813	31.8
27	Tamil Nadu	7,94,697	1.1
28	Uttar Pradesh	11,34,273	0.6
29	Uttara khand	291,903	2.9
30	West Bengal	52,96,953	5.8
	India	10,42,81,034	8.6

Source: Primary Census Abstract, 2011, Registrar General, Government of India

In India for the welfare of scheduled tribes, the strategy of development has been drawn up combining the twin elements of protection and development. In pursuance of the constitutional provisions contained in Articles 16(4) and 335³, reservation in service has been provided for scheduled tribes. As a result of the implementation of the reservation policy, there has been considerable increase in the representation of scheduled tribe employees in all Departments of Government of India. Provisions relating to economic development of scheduled tribes are mainly contained In Articles 275 (1) and 339 (2)⁴. In Article 275 (1), the first provision envisages, provision for grants in aid for meeting the cost of tribal schemes as may be undertaken by a State with the approval of the Union Government for the purpose of promoting the welfare of its scheduled tribes. As per the provision, the grant is to be made against such specific schemes as necessary for the welfare of scheduled tribes and are undertaken with the prior approval of the Union Government.

In spite of various welfare programmes, the scheduled tribes are characterised by low educational status, poor health status and economic status. The literacy rate of the tribals is 59 per cent. This is lower than that of the general population (73 percent) (Primary Census Abstract of India, 2011) .It is not easy for them to send their children to schools, as they are considered extra helping hands. The formal schools do not hold any special interest for the children. Most of the tribes are located in interior and remote areas where teachers would not like to go.

The health status of the tribals is inferior compared to that of the general population. In many parts of India, tribal population suffers from chronic infections and diseases out of which water borne diseases are life threatening. They also suffer from deficiency diseases. Leprosy and tuberculosis are also common among them. Malnutrition is common and has affected the general health of the tribal children as it lowers the ability to resist infection, leads to chronic illness and sometimes leads to brain impairment.

The scheduled tribes believe that disease is caused by supernatural powers and wrath of their deities and ancestral spirits and therefore they can be cured by sacrifices of animals, religious rituals, sorcery and the witchcraft. Despite their upper natural beliefs, the tribals have an indigenous medicinal system based on herbs.

Moreover tribal areas have not received their fair share of potential benefits from the mainstream of development effort (Shah, 2002). The tribes have suffered from economic devastation due to ecological changes brought about by development measures in their areas making their survival extremely difficult. Majority of tribal people in India are engaged in agriculture and allied activities. They hold land of very poor quality which forces them to work additionally as agricultural labourers to feed their families.

Economy of the tribe is a projection of tribal society. Production is based on the exploitation of the locally available resources with a crude technology largely for consumption. Family is the unit of production, with little specialization and division of labour. Distribution of goods is regulated by the consideration of reciprocity. The ideal state of primitive economy is thus described as self-sufficient though at a subsistence level.

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

At the State level in Tamil Nadu there are 7, 94,697 scheduled tribes accounting for 1.1 percent of total State population (Primary Census Abstract, 2011). There exists difference in scheduled tribe population in various Districts of Tamil Nadu. Table 2 represents District wise scheduled tribe population in Tamil Nadu.

Table 2

District wise scheduled tribe population in Tamil Nadu - 2011

S.No.	District	Scheduled tribes male population	Scheduled tribes female population	Total scheduled tribes population	Percentage of scheduled tribes population to total population
1	Chennai	5,207	4,854	10,061	0.2
2	Kancheepuram	20,605	20,605	41,210	1.0
3	Thiruvallur	23,692	23,551	47,243	1.3
4	Vellore	36,663	36,292	72,955	1.9
5	Tiruvannamalai	45,956	44,998	90,954	3.7
6	Cuddalore	7,943	7,759	15,702	0.6
7	Villupuram	37,570	37,289	74,859	2.2
8	Thanjavur	1,466	1,822	3,561	0.1
9	Nagapattinam	1,847	1,909	3,756	0.2
10	Thiruvarur	1,466	1,568	3,034	0.2
11	Salem	60,489	58,880	119,369	3.4
12	Namakkal	29,383	27,676	57,059	3.3
13	Dharmapuri	32,130	30,914	63,044	4.2
14	Krishnagiri	11,419	10,969	22,388	1.2
15	The Nilgiris	16,091	16,722	32,813	4.5
16	Tiruchirappalli	9,414	8,784	18,198	0.7
17	Karur	297	278	575	0.1
18	Perambalur	1,292	1,292	2,584	0.5
19	Pudukkottai	647	636	1,283	0.1
20	Coimbatore	14,245	14,097	28,342	0.8
21	Erode	11,024	10,856	21,880	1.0
22	Madurai	5,622	5,474	11,096	0.4
23	Theni	954	881	1,835	0.1
24	Dindigul	4,095	3,969	8,064	0.4
25	Ramanathapuram	559	546	1,105	0.1
26	Sivaganga	394	396	790	0.1
27	Virudhunagar	1,182	1,112	2,294	0.1
28	Thirunelveli	5,109	5,161	10,270	0.3
29	Thoothukkudi	2,466	2,445	4,911	0.3
30	Kanniyakumari	3,554	3,728	7,282	0.4
31	Ariyalur	5,274	5,448	10,722	1.4
32	Tiruppur	2,740	2,718	5,458	0.2
	Tamil Nadu	401,068	393,629	794,697	1.1

Source: Primary Census Abstract, 2011, Registrar General, Government of India

Based on the characteristics of certain primitive tribes, distinctive culture, geographical location etc .the Government of Tamil Nadu has so far identified 36 communities as tribes of Tamil Nadu. They are Adiyar, Aranadan, Eravallan, Irular, Kadar, Kammara, Kanikaran, Kanikkar, Kaniyan, Kanyan, Kattunayakan, Kochu Velan, Konda Kapus, Kondareddis, Koraga, Kota, Kudiya, Melakudi, Kurichchan, Kurumbas, Kurumans, Maha Malasar, Malai Arayan, Malai Pandaram, Malai Vedan, Malakkuravan, Malasar, Malayali, Malayekandi, Mannan, Mudugar, Muduvan, Muthuvan, Palleyan, Palliyar, Paniyan, Sholaga and Todas.

The approved Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) in Tamil Nadu are;

- Todas.
- Kotas
- Kurumbas
- Irulas
- Paniyans and
- Kattunayakans

They are characterized by;

- a pre – agriculture level of technology
- a stagnant or declining population
- extremely low literacy and
- a subsistence level of economy

Scheduled tribes of Nilgiris District

In Nilgiris District there are 32,813 scheduled tribes accounting for 4.5 percent of total District population as per 2011 census. The main tribal groups in the District are Todas, Kotas, Kurumbas, Irulas, Paniyans and Kattunayakans. These tribal communities are not evenly distributed in the six taluks of the District. There is heavy concentration of about 50 percent of the tribes in Gudalur taluk followed by Kotagiri taluk with 25 percent of the tribal population. Udhamandalam and Coonoor taluks respectively have 16 percent and 9 percent of the tribal population. This geographical distribution has invested the different tribes with distinct characteristics and mode of living.

Todas:

Todas are found only in the Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu State. Todas are nomadic pastoral people, moving from one place to another on the hills in search of grazing lands along with buffaloes and family members. Todas are allowed to cultivate their patta lands on the basis of an annual permit issued by the District collector. The occupational activities of Todas are: pastoral activity, buffalo herding, milk and ghee selling, manufacture and sale of shawls in the market, cultivation and modern employment

The Toda women, besides doing their domestic duties, do embroidery work in their leisure hours and make the famous Toda shawl on puthukuli. The puthukuli is a thick white cotton cloth with red and blue strips which is further embellished with embroidery by the Toda women; it is thrown around the body by Toda men and women. The women do not have the legal rights to share the property of their parents except for allowing their husbands to accept dowry in the form of buffaloes.

Kotas:

The Kotas are the only artisan community on the hills of the Nilgiris. Kotas have been gold smith and silver smith. They are carpenters, blacksmiths, potters and musicians. Every Kota settlement has one or two traditional musicians with their traditional musical instruments.

In Kota society, the family is the basic social, commercial and economic unit. It is the family within which children get socialized into customary behaviour and imbibe social and family ethics.

Every Kota settlement had one forge and work-shed, where all the Kota blacksmiths used to keep their native, pincers and hammers. Their traditional staple food consists of items prepared out of grains namely ragi and also wheat. Kota traditional garment is known as varad - a white bed spread like cloth is thrown around the body by men and women. The Kota women are traditionally able potters. The Kota women are also involved in potato-cultivation, in plucking, weeding and cleaning the fields.

Kurumbas:

The Kurumba name is said to be originated from their early occupation of tending Kuru (Sheep). At present the principal occupations of Kurumbas are wood-cutting and the collection of forest produce. As most of them are working as elephant riders, each village is having an elephant tying hut.

Most of the Kurumba huts consist of only one room with verandah and the entire house is erected at high level and usually their houses stand on a high plinth ranging between two to five feet. They have plinths in order to reduce the effect of humidity. The speciality of Mullu Kurumba house is that it has verandah on all four sides. The walls of the house and the floor inside are plastered and levelled with clay.

Irulas:

The name Irula is supposed to be derived from the Tamil word 'irul' or darkness, which may refer either to the gloomy jungles in which they live or to their very swarthy complexions. They live chiefly on the eastern lower slopes in rude hamlets called mottas made of bamboo plastered over with mud. They cultivate patches of dry grains. They are small in stature, very dark-skinned and broad-nosed.

They are called Pambu Pidikkaran or Pambukkaran" because they are experts in catching snakes. Irulas are hunters and gatherers. The traditional house of the Irula has one room with a thin mud wall partition for the cooking place, a slightly raised platform opposite to the cooking place to keep the vessels and a trunk box to accommodate the personal belongings.

Paniyans:

The word - Paniyan literally means worker or labourer. They are a daring tribe famous for hunting tigers and panthers. They are short and their complexion varies from dark to dark shades of brown. The Paniyans do not have the concept of property. They have agricultural implements, households materials, livestock, ear rings or olai. The paniyans are mostly landless labourers. They are mostly illiterate, unorganized and therefore generally unable to demand the minimum wages fixed by the Government. The Paniyans as a whole are the poorest of the poor among other tribal communities.

The dress of the Paniyans is very simple and remarkably distinguishable. The Paniyans males wear a long cloth (mundu) which is wrapped around the waist and a small mundu cloth worn on the shoulders covering the body. The Paniyan female wears a long cloth on the loins and a smaller one is wrapped above the breast through the arm-pits. Both

sexes wear ear-rings and women use nose-rings, bangles, chains, coloured beads and rolled palm leaves in their dilated ear-lobes.

Paniyans are non-vegetarians. They are addicted to drinking alcoholic beverages. The Paniyans speak a debased form of Malayalam language mixed with Tamil language.

Kattunayakans:

They are mainly hunters and gatherers for forest produce. The Kattunayakans are in the third phase of their economic transformation in the history of the community from a self sustained group who lived in the forest by foraging and hunting to a stage of agriculturists and agricultural labourers through an intermediary phase of bonded labour under landlords. Now they are involved in occupations like hunting, honey collection, fishing and crab catching, basketry, agriculture and horticulture, labour work etc.

The Kattunayakans are non-vegetarians. Kattunayakan food is based on local ingredients and forest produce besides a few items that are available in the market. Traditionally men wear a dhoti around their waist and a shirt and thundu on their shoulders.

Need for the study

A large number of studies are available, having conducted particularly after independence, to assess whether the conditions of tribal societies of India have changed or not. Some of the studies have concentrated on their traditional economy, land, agriculture, employment and asset conditions of the tribes. Some other studies have focused on the effects of the tribal development programmes like Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP) and Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) on the tribal societies and implementation and evaluation of such programmes.

There have been a number of attempts to examine the socio-economic conditions of the tribal population of Nilgiris District. However efforts to integrate the multifaceted aspects of tribal life and to analyse quality of life of tribals in the Nilgiris District are limited.

In India researchers like Pramod Kumar (2001), Palanisamy (2002), Beck and Mishra (2010), etc have analysed the quality of life of single tribal group. But there had been no effort concentrating on the analysis of quality of life of different tribal groups. Hence the research study on “**Inter-tribe variation in quality of life in The Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu**” is expected to fill up the research gap.

The **objectives** of the study are:

- To analyse the socio economic characteristics of the selected tribal households;

- To find out the extent of variation in different components of quality of life of different tribal groups;
- To estimate the quality of life index for different tribal groups - Todas, Kurumbas, Kotas, Irulas, Paniyans and Kattunayakans;
- To identify factors causing inter tribe variation in quality of life ;
- To examine the link between quality of life and poverty of tribals ;
- To identify the problems faced by different tribal groups and
- To recommend measures to improve the quality of life of tribal groups.

Scope of the study

The study was related to the analysis of quality of life of different tribal groups. The study would unfold the socio- economic status of selected tribes who are largely at the grass root level. It would help in identifying the determinants of quality of life and also understanding the variation in quality of life among the tribal groups. The study would help to evolve policies and support programmes to improve quality of life of scheduled tribes and identify the suitable intervention programmes for improving the educational status, health status and economic status of tribals. The recommendation emanating from the study can form a guideline for future tribal welfare programmes.

➤ **Limitations of the study**

The study was related to the Nilgiris District only and hence adequate care must be exercised when generalization is to be made for the whole economy.

The information were obtained from the selected respondents by administering an interview schedule and hence information is subject to recall bias.

The nutrition status of the households was analysed in terms of type of food intake only.