

## **Proactive Measures towards the Minimization of Distress Migration among the Tribal Groups of Uriyampetty Tribal Village**

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### **Abstract**

The official statistics shows that tribal communities have been getting scattered, moving away from their native places and groups. At the same time, remarkable growth has not been observed in their tentative fields of employment and earnings figures. According to the government data, majority of the tribal groups are engaged in low wage and daily wage works in comparatively unskilled fields. Sevakiran charitable trust focused on the Mannan tribal village of Uriyampetty village located in kothamangalam Taluk and conducted a survey and series of FGDs in the community. In response to the findings of the study; after analyzing the data sets, Sevakiran identified the need of drinking water among the priority needs of the community and arranged provision for supplying drinking water on a voluntary basis. Water tanks were installed and connected to the adjacent stream through pipe lines and the community was trained to maintain the system and utilize it wisely. Community participation was ensured from the first step onwards to ensure sustainability. Periodic evaluations were conducted to monitor the programme. This has opened a two way channel of communication between the organization and the service users, providing room for discussing and planning towards the fulfillment of further unmet needs.

**Keywords:** Tribal community, distress migration, monitoring, service users, communication channel, unmet needs

### **Introduction**

Distress migration is seen to be evident in tribal communities and various research works are seen to approach it with a problem focused view; discussing its dimensions. A solution focused approach is discussed in this paper; viewing distress migration in light of theories to understand it in an unbiased manner and thereby; planning and implementing sustainable solution in collaboration with the community. This paper; being a reflection of field experience, do not stick on to the strict adherence to procedures; but is built upon its underlying pragmatic paradigm and resultant quest for proactive solutions which could immediately benefit the community.

### **Research questions**

- 1 What theories explain the characteristics of tribal communities?
- 2 What are the characteristics of tribal communities that differentiate them from the external world?

- 3 Does distress migration influence the wellbeing of tribal communities?
- 4 What distress factors are being faced by tribal community of Uriyampetty??
- 5 How far are they able to identify distress factors?
- 6 What are the practical solutions towards distress minimization that could be initiated in collaboration with the community?
- 7 In what aspects of implementations can the community collaborate?

Questions 1 to 3 are answered in the literature review part and is planned to be verified during the course of study, through observation, which is stated in the discussion part.

Questions 4 to 7 are planned to be answered with the research and stated duly in the results part.

Questions 1 to 3 is verified comprehensively with questions 4 to 7 in the discussion chapter and summarized in the findings chapter with points of observation made during the study.

#### **Aims of the study**

1. To identify a solution for the present problems faced by the villagers of Uriyampetty in collaboration with the residents
2. To conceptualize and prepare an implementation plan and action strategy in collaboration with the community towards a sustainable solution for the identified problems

#### **Review of literature**

Distress migration has been observed to be high among various tribal groups of Kerala. (Nithya, 2013)The causative factors have been found to be diverse in nature. (Castles, 2015)Various researches focusing on separate tribal groups have found out various reasons; which no significant relationship could be drawn in common. (Haseena, 2014)Combined to this, tribal groups are found to be most affected by development induced displacement. (Guide, 2005)Their wandering habit, changing habitats with respect to climate and availability of resources is found to have role in putting them always on the wedge of displacement.(Pathways & Access, 2008) Factors of distress migration, wandering and development induced displacement are found to have equal significance in the lives of tribal communities of India.(Srivastava, 2003) Out of these varying reasons, this study focuses on the distress migration among tribal and factors leading to distress, compelling them to move; with focus on practical remedial measures.

It is difficult to draw some generalizations regarding tribes. Though many tribal groups resemble in many aspects, all of them are marked for distinct features and socio-cultural dimensions.(Ghurye, n.d.) The degree of relationship with outside world differs between tribal groups of India and other continents. Major occupations of Indian tribes are hunting, fishing and collection of forest produces or a combination of these. (Rao, 2012)There are about 461 different tribal groups living in various parts of India. Some remain original, isolated and alienated while many others live amalgamated with the adjacent societies. The word 'tribe' is generally used for a "socially cohesive unit, associated with a territory, the members of which regard them as politically autonomous". Often a tribe possesses a distinct dialect and distinct cultural traits. (Srivastava, 2003)The Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1911, defines a tribe as a "collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous though originally it might have been so".(Rao, 2012)

### **Indian context**

Forest has been central to the tribal life and the tribal have been marginalised by various power groups for their vested interests and profit motives. (Skeldon, 1986) Combined to this, the need of land for development has been always pushing them out of their habitats. (Rao, 2012) According the 2011 census, tribal constitute 8.2% of the total population of the country. (Weekly, 2012) The tribal people of India are called "Scheduled Tribes" in the Indian Constitution. In India, 461 ethnic groups are recognized as Scheduled Tribes, and these are considered to be India's indigenous peoples. There are, many more ethnic groups that would qualify for Scheduled Tribe status but which are not officially recognized. Estimates of the total number of tribal groups are as high as 635. According to the Anthropological Survey a total of 4,635 communities are now to be found in India. (Rao, 2012)

Tribal women have been worst affected by gender discrimination and violence. More than half of the tribal people don't have land and those who have land, have only marginal amounts; that too, in worst of locations. (Nithya, 2014) Poverty, deprivation and the reduction of government expenditure on basic medical health facilities is reflected in the absolutely poor health condition of tribal women and children. (Barbora, Thieme, Siegmann, Menon, & Gurung, 2008) India has several laws and constitutional provisions, such as the Fifth Schedule for mainland India and the Sixth Schedule for certain areas of north-east India, which recognize indigenous peoples' rights to land and self-governance. There are shortcomings that restrict the effectiveness of the laws to put tribal people at loss. (Rao, 2012)

According to the National Crime Records Bureau's report (NCRB), a total of 5,885 cases of atrocities against indigenous peoples/tribal were reported in the country during 2011, as compared to 5,425 cases in 2010, showing an increase of 8.5% over the year. (Nithya, 2014) Indigenous women and children continue to suffer from various forms of violence, including killing, rape and torture by non-tribal, security forces and members of the armed opposition groups in armed conflict situations. (Nithya, 2014)

Since the adoption of New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1991 the control of World Bank in many of the projects and schemes concerning forests is very obvious. (Barbora et al., 2008) These have the sole aim of gaining unrestrained access to the natural resources though it is disguised under attractive names like Joint Forest Management (JFM), restoring forests, preserving bio diversity etc. (Nithya, 2014) The forest 'Protection Committees' to be formed under JFM are in effect controlled by the forest department for their secretaries have to be forest rangers. Moreover forests are being opened to private entrepreneurs in the name of promoting tourism. Eco tourism is promoted in the tribal areas by the state governments. This is not only posing threats to ecology and destroying indigenous cultures but is also increasing the danger of sex tourism. Tourism too plays a role in alienating tribal from their lands. (Nithya, 2014)

### **Kerala context**

The tribal communities in Kerala have been historically marginalized and oppressed by various development factors and forces. (Haseena, 2014) The policies and schemes implemented by successive governments at the Centre and the state have further worsened the situation. The challenges to their rights have been critical today, leading to extreme form of deprivation in many ways. (Rao, 2012) Their customary rights over natural resources such

as forests, cultural identity and traditional knowledge including intellectual property rights, cultural heritage and traditional wisdom have been continuously at stake.(Rao, 2012)

**Table 1 Details of Primitive Tribal Groups**

Name of PTG	Total population	Number of families
Kattunaikan	18576	5055
Cholanaikan	363	82
Kadar	1695	486
Koragas	1572	422
Kurumbas	2079	478
Total	24285	6523

(Rao, 2012)

**Table 2 Percentage of population below poverty line**

Sl.No	NSSO Rounds	India		Kerala	
		Total	ST	Total	ST
1	38thRound(1983)	45.6	63.8	39.1	NA
2	50thRound(1993-94)	37.1	52.2	25.5	37.3
3	55thRound (1999-2000)	27.1	45.8	9.4	24.2

(Rao, 2012)

The Planning Commission of India in its ‘Kerala Development Report (2008)’ states that:

... rural poverty among adivasis in Kerala persists and comes to more than two-and-half times that of the rural population of Kerala in general. Adivasis constitute only around one per cent of the state’s population, nearly one-fourth of them still live below the official poverty line; the actual incidence of poverty among them could be even higher, this high incidence of poverty among adivasis points to the various dimensions of social inequalities prevalent in the state ....(Nithya, 2013)

A study by the Health Department as well as AIIMS, New Delhi, shows the pressing poverty among the tribal in the state, about 2402 families take meal one time in a day and amongst them half are agricultural laborers and 34,092 families only have two meals a day and the number of family members who are having malnutrition is 13,960.(Nithya, 2013)

### **Employment/Category of Workers**

The highest proportion of tribal workers in the state is that of ‘ agricultural labourers’ (47.1 percent) as against the national average of 36.4 percent; ‘other workers’ form 38.6 percent, and this proportion is also significantly higher than that recorded among the total STs at the national level (16.3 percent). According to the 2001 Census, 25.87 percent of the total population was under the category of ‘main workers’ and the percentage of females in the category of ‘main workers’ among STs is almost 20 percent. (Rao, 2012) The decline of ‘main workers’, both male and female from 1991 to 2001 is substantial among the STs, which is an indication of growing unemployment, underemployment and deprivation among the ST communities. There is an excessive dependence of STs on agriculture for their

livelihood. It is revealed that 54.79 percent of the ST population depends on agriculture whereas in the case of general population, the corresponding figure was only 19.52 percent. Hence, it is observed that the ST population lags far behind in the changing occupational structure of the Kerala economy.(Rao, 2012) Again in Kerala, as per Rule 14(a) of the Kerala State Subordinate Service Rules 1958, two percent reservation in public service is provided to the STs, but this has not yet been achieved. However, as regards the STs, the number of Government employees in gazetted posts, non-gazetted posts and last grades is more than their population percentage. (Rao, 2012)

### **Poverty Ratio**

In Kerala poverty is more concentrated in certain segments of the population mainly belonging to the Scheduled Tribes and other marginal communities (Aiyer, 2006) Increase in wages of rural labourers, a range of anti-poverty measures undertaken by the Central, State and Local Governments, and the growth of the general economy are the major factors that brought about a decline in poverty among the tribal population. However, rural poverty among the STs remains more than two and a half times that of all of Kerala's rural population living below poverty line, which stands at 9.4 percent. The overrepresentation of STs in the population below poverty line in the state is a matter of serious concern which needs special targeted attention.(Rao, 2012)

### **Deprivation Index**

Deprivation index can be used as a tool to capture the shortfall in the quality of life. UNDP's deprivation index measures the shortfall based on four deprivation criteria in: the quality of housing, access to water, good sanitation, and electrification. The relative asset deprivation is also co-related to the housing conditions and lack of facilities in the households among all districts, though there is a wide disparity in the 'unmet basic needs' across the districts. (Rao, 2012)

### **Vulnerabilities in the Tribal Community**

A quick analysis of the tribal situation by the State Planning Board, Government of Kerala, has identified 17 alarming issues in the tribal community. They are : (i) Extreme levels of poverty, deprivation and vulnerability; (ii) High levels of exclusion both developmental and social; (iii) Extremely low levels of empowerment (political, social and economic); (iv) Rapid marginalization due to unfair, unequal and exploitative relations of production and exchange between tribal communities and others; (v) Low level of access to entitlements; (vi) Practically zero participation in development matters with no autonomy in any form of decision making; (vii) Abnormally huge siphoning of developmental resources and benefits meant for tribal people by middlemen; (viii) Poor human development with low levels of literacy and access to health care; (ix) Rapid alienation of assets like land; (x) Alarming depletion of social capital especially traditional forms of organization and leadership; (xi) Quick deterioration of traditional knowledge systems and cultural attainments; (xii) Fast increasing tendency to use tribal people as cat's paws in criminal activities such as illicit distillation, cultivation of narcotic plants, stealing of forest wealth, etc.; (xiii) High levels of exploitation of women by outsiders; (xiv) Weak delivery system of public services; (xv) Dependency-inducing developmental programmes relying on distribution of benefits rather than building up capabilities; (xvi) Implementation of ad hoc and stereo-typed developmental programmes in the absence of proper planning; (xvii) Very weak monitoring systems.(Rao, 2012)

### **Main approaches used to understand tribes in India.**

These are **Isolation approach** of Verrier Elwin, **Assimilation approach** of G.S Ghurye and **Integration approach** of Jawaharlal Nehru.(Ghurye, n.d.)

Theory of isolation states that; national parks must be established and its authority must be handed over to tribes with no external interventions. Their culture must not be destroyed or modified and they must enjoy full autonomy over their lives. Indian tribes are in various stages of development of their culture. Verrier Elwin has classified it in to four distinct groups. Anthropologists have supported this theory widely. Though it has not been practiced anywhere in fullest of its sense, it is commonly agreed that tribes must not be forced with external intrusions which could destroy their culture. (Ghurye, n.d.)

### **Theory of Integration**

This concept is mainly influenced and drawn from *Panchsheel* principle. Nehru rejected both isolation and assimilation approach of tribe. Instead of other approaches, Nehru favoured policy of integrating tribal people in Indian society to make them an integral part of Indian nation without hampering their distinct identity and culture. (Ghurye, n.d.) Integration consisted of two types of measures for tribal development. These are Protective measure and Promotional measure. After independence, he laid down a Panchsheel principle for tribal development in India, which held five fundamental principles for tribal development. For ensuring overall development there should be proper communication, medical facility, education and better agriculture. These avenues should, be pursued within broad framework of following five principles.(Ghurye, n.d.)

1. People should develop a long line of their own genius and nothing should be imposed on them. Their own traditional art and culture must be encouraged.
2. Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected.
3. Tribal teams must be developed to do works of administration and development with limited external help in the beginning.
4. Their areas should not be over administered or overwhelmed with a multiplicity of schemes; but should be developed through their own social system.
5. Judge result, not by statistics of amount of money spent, but by quality of human character evolved.(Ghurye, n.d.)

### **Distress migration: effects**

**Loss of human capital**, highly skilled workers and agricultural labour may affect crop production and food availability.(Srivastava, 2003)

**Migration of young men** may cause ageing and feminization of rural populations and increased work burdens on those left behind.(Srivastava, 2003)

**Remittances may be used towards consumption** rather than productive investments.

**Remittances may lead to changes in land use and titling.** Conversion of agricultural land to land for housing may lead to rising land prices and falling agricultural production, which may affect food security.(Srivastava, 2003)

**Irregular or distress migration may be dangerous for the migrants themselves.** Low skilled migrants are more vulnerable to precarious jobs, unsafe working conditions, and weak access to social protection.(Srivastava, 2003)

Though extensive skimming was carried out to find leads to the causative factors that lead to distress migration among tribes in Kerala, no specific reason was found unfortunately. It was observed that every research was trying to draw generalisations that are applicable to the maximum majority of people, not going in to details of any particular tribes or their communities. Since a wide data set and theories is available on the tribes of India, this study was planned to be focussed towards describing the significance of theory of isolation and theory of integration with special reference to the tribes of Uriyampetty.

### **Procedures**

This study was planned to be conducted in qualitative method since distress is more viable for qualitative form of enquiry; which could vary from person to person, though for the same situation. (Creswell, 2013)A “pragmatic world view” has been underpinned with this research that arises and changes out of situations, actions and consequences rather than antecedent conditions. “What works” policy, not stipulating to proven tracks; but, following the identified needs of the service users is followed in course of action. (Creswell, 2013)

This study describes the significance of isolation theory and integration theory regarding Indian tribes with reference to the tribes of Uriyampetty.

### **Qualitative research approach**

Qualitative method of enquiry was used for this research for this research. Observation schedule was used parallel to the data collection exercises and outcome of observation is used to describe the learning points from review of literature. Further to this, FGDs were conducted to collect data on the distress faced by the service users and checked for patterns during data analysis and reported duly.

### **Use of theories**

Theories were used to understand the context and community to the best possible level since none of the researchers belonged to the community; leaving the gap of lack of essentialism and due level of understanding. This was planned to be crossed with including the aboriginals in course of the research. The study in return to the use of theories; tried to describe the level of applicability of the theories in the specific research context in the broadest sense.

### **Role of the researcher**

Researcher was an outsider in the beginning phase. In course of time, researcher got amalgamated with the community by actively participating in their discussions and thus, establishing good rapport with the community. A researcher-subject relationship was thus, brought down to the level of a good friend and advocate and the tasks of setting venues for FGDs and participating actively in the discussion was handed over to the service user population.

### **Data collection procedures**

**Type of research:** descriptive (describing the theories focused in the research context)

**Universe of the study:** Uriyampetty tribal village (72 households)

**Sample size:** 72 households

**Sampling plan:** focused group discussions including all the samples. Five FGDs are planned for groups as follows

- 1) Youngsters (up to 40)
- 2) Elders (41 and above)

- 3) Joint group (for the entire village)
- 4) Women
- 5) Men

**Sampling method:** participatory method of FGDs, covering all the households

**Tool of data collection:** semi-structured FGD guide, consisting of questions in connection with the research questions, supported by unplanned probing questions to facilitate discussion.

**Data analysis:** using qualitative method, setting themes and explaining it, and using it to describe the theories focused.

**Reporting:** using computer, typed and printed and referencing with Mendeley, in APA format.

Collecting the data was planned to be completed with the support of the people. In this phase, the community was given full freedom in planning questions for the discussion, in moderating the discussion and in recording the process. This system was adopted from the basics of action research. It was found effective since all were free and less reluctant to express their views during the discussion. The discussion was recorded and drafted later in the form of narrative.

Data analysis consisted of finding patterns in the drafted narratives and then, compiling these patterns with quotes from the narrative. Though full recorded narrative was wrote down, only patterns were chosen from it towards the final report. Each pattern was directly cross checked with the theory statements to describe the significance of the quoted theory in the research context. Combined to this, observations made in course of the research also was reported and used during the analysis to establish meaningful relationship between theories and its level of significance in the research setting.

### **Ethical considerations**

Confidentiality was guaranteed and informed consent was sought well in advance to the research. The community was given freedom to participate or abstain from the data collection procedures. Working with tribal communities was a volatile field since negative outcomes could destroy their air of freedom. This was planned to be crossed by ensuring their participation in all stages of the study, from conceptualising up to the stage of data collection so that, the process would not harm their preferences and choices. After analysis, the findings of the study was shared to them and cross checked for disparities. Similar strategy was used in the stage of project implementation as well.

### **Justification**

The significance of this study, using qualitative method, conducted in a closed group is made evident through the literature review since the problems faced by different groups are totally different from others and unique in features with specific reference to their geographical location, cultural patterns as well as pattern of life. However, distress migration is found to be evident in all the groups though in diverse in rates. This signifies the fact that distress factors vary from group to group and how they perceive and react to it is still diverse. Since distress migration is not highly desirable for the group (though it could bring individual benefits at times), this study is significant in knowing in detail; the distress factors that compel the mannan community of Uriyampetty to move to the downtown, leaving their habitats and culture towards a practical solution.

### **Pilot findings**

Observing the movements of people and patterns of their life and work, basing on kuttampuzha, it was found that working men and women of tribal villages around the place had been coming down to work in farms and daily wage jobs. Their wages are similar to that of native workers, which come about rupees 500 plus meals per day for males and rupees 300 plus meals for the females for farm and daily wages jobs. This amount combined with the plush availability of tobacco and liquors makes these workers spend all their income over liquor and tobacco. External intrusions from the downtown to the accessible tribal villages for buying their products for cheapest prices makes them at loss and starving for majority of the seasons, compelling them to come down to engage in daily waged jobs. These situations discarded the existence of both the theories summarily in practice. It was yet to be found out how these theories would work if practiced with some tribes in their natural environment. This study was conducted, observing all the points specified in the theories and carefully documented to measure the applicability of these theories in the universe of the research. The theories were found be ideal for the universe and was immediately brought in to the best practices of the organization (Sevakiran)

### **Results**

Isolated location was found to be desirable for the protection and enrichment of indigenous culture, traditions and pattern of life regarding the residents of Uriyampetty, since the influence of external culture was found to be affecting their indigenous ways adversely. This was signified during a FGD, by the elderly groups of the community. This is contrary to their movement initiated during early 2000's, trying to give back their lands, ready to move over to the down towns. At the same time; movement of people towards the down town in a huge rate (95% of the productive youth) was observed. Though the protest of 2000's towards availing land in the downtown didn't work, they started moving towards the down towns. This; when pointed out during an FGD and personalized interview; was mentioned to be for reasons as follows

*X/male/youngster:*

*‘‘Though we wished to move to the lower planes, the places suggested for our re village was too bad and neglected. One of it was in a teak plantation and the other places were not good enough for living’’.*

*A/female/youngster:*

*‘‘we happen to walk half day long way to collect water. This is not resolved by anyone in any manner. This becomes difficult when we are not well. There will be wandering wild animals during summer; near all streams which makes our journey still difficult’’.*

*B/male/elder:*

*‘‘we have been engaged in collecting forest products for a lifetime. We have never received amounts sufficient to purchase supplies for even a week with what we get on selling the entire collection of a season’’.*

*D/Female/elder:*

*‘we have daily wage jobs in the valley villages. It needs a walk of half day one side or we happen to pay huge amount for jeep fare. This makes our effort worthless since we happen to return home empty handed’.*

*E/female/elder:*

*‘men who are working in the valleys do not bring any money or supplies back home. All of them are eating drinking and enjoying and returning empty handed. We happen to walk long distance for drinking water in a dangerous environment. Attack from wild animals can happen even in the glimpse of eyes. Thus, we also get forced to move to the valley with the males for the protection of our lives’.*

- a. Lack of drinking water (which was restated to be seasonal on discussion) and
- b. Lack of income generation scope in the community (which was re-stated to be lack of getting paid for indigenous products on discussion) were the major patterns drawn from the narratives of FGDs.

Another significant fact that evolved during both FGD and interviews were the high rate of prevalence of substance use among the male population and a remarkable percentage among the female population as well. It was reconfirmed to be a result of being in contact with the downtown for jobs, trades as well as for other purposes for long.

Point that precipitated during all FGDs was that, the community is not able to identify distress factors on their own, and hence, the solutions. They; due to the wandering habit formed through generations, choose to move from one place to the other when they find it difficult to continue in one place. Mannans are originally from Tamilnadu and their main settlement in kerala is Kozhimala. If this group travelled about 120 kms through the dense forest; changing habitats and occupations within a course of less than 100 years, that itself shows their lack of resistance to distress.

Uriyampetty; being situated in dense forest, cannot be networked with the downtown easily for practical solutions for their day to day life issues. The solution that could be identified by the groups during FGDs included scarcity of drinking water and an urge for the provision of water on a priority basis. The indigenous way of highlanders to store and utilize water is to dig ponds or use large storage tanks and connect it with the adjacent stream with pipeline. This has been found effective throughout the eastern ghats of kerala. When they were asked of such a provision; they expressed their helplessness in investing money for the erection. At the same time; they were willing to help through manual labour that might involve in the process.

In this juncture, Sevakiran decided to help the community on a voluntary basis and included the scheme in the annual budget as approved in the executive committee. The community helped in the erection works and implementation process by handling the management and maintenance of the water supply system. Thus, with a cost of 1,10,000/- to the agency and manual labour worth 40,000/- to the community and a recurring cost estimated per maintenance labour worth 10,000/- per year, the community got a permanent solution for their long persisted drinking water shortage. Workers were paid a groceries kit worth 1200

for voluntary work; which all households received in return to their volunteering in some form for the erection work.

### **Discussion**

The research questions focused were as follows

- What theories explain the characteristics of tribal communities?
- What are the characteristics of tribal communities that differentiate them from the external world?
- Does distress migration influence the wellbeing of tribal communities?
- What distress factors are being faced by tribal community of Uriyampetty??
- How far are they able to identify distress factors?
- What are the practical solutions towards distress minimization that could be initiated in collaboration with the community?
- In what aspects of implementations can the community collaborate?

### **Theories and its significance in the research population**

The theories being focused were theory of isolation and theory of integration. Theory of isolation proves true with the evil effects of external intrusions listed by the community as substance use, exploitation by not paying enough for their products and lack of supply of drinking water. If the community was left with full autonomy over their location with no external intrusions, they could have gained better scope for their skills and products.

Theory of integration also is proved. The tribal community is not given with dignity as specified in the Panchasheel principles of the theory. If they were treated with due dignity, they would not have been exploited and subjected to the social evils by the world outside. By introducing water supply system with minimum external help and maximum community participation; it was observed that the community is able to take ownership and responsibility on its own.

Both the theories stand relevant for the community. The only variation observed is that, both are clearly being violated by the world outside.

There are contradicting views between the proponents of these theories. But; in a pragmatic point of view, it was observed that both theories are complementary to each other. In the present day context; isolation is relevant since the community is getting polluted with persistent interaction with the world outside since they lack discretion to choose between desirable and undesirable choices. Minimum interventions at the same time; helps them in making choices. This signifies the acceptance of both the theories in this specific context.

### **Characteristics of the community that differentiates them from the external world**

Similar to the other tribe groups, this community also is keeping a wandering habit that makes them move when subjected to distress out of their level of tolerance. This solution method has kept them moving far away from their motherland, which is at Kozhimala; approximately 120 kms from their present location. This habit of wandering has kept them out of the need for a permanent solution for their problems.

### **Effects of distress migration on the community**

They are unaware of the fact that a good portion of productive youth have fallen apart; leaving the parent community once and forever in this course of migration. Thus, they are deserted of the fruits of efforts and earnings made by their productive youth and still remain completely dependent on the down valley for their day-to-day existence.

### **Distress factors faced by the villagers of Uriyampetty**

Lack of drinking water and lack of good prices for their products combined with substance use and related issues subsequent to the process of being in constant touch with the downtown were stressed by the villagers among their evident distress factors.

Theory of isolation and theory of integration are clearly violated regarding the residents of Uriyampetty. At the same time, sustainable solution for their long persistent problems lies directly in the immediate introduction and invariable practice of these theories only.

### **Aspects of solutions that the community can collaborate**

The community is flexible, anxious, timid and at the same time; open towards the external world. They, though not aware; are willing to work towards practical solutions for their problems. Being people living close to the nature; they have high levels of flexibility and adaptability to change. At the same time, they are unaware of the losses being faced by generations long constant outflow or migration that has been happening with their community. Drinking water; being one of the basic needs of existence, was targeted for the primary intervention. The community remained helpful throughout the planning and implementation steps. They were unable to find monetary resources on their own. They do not have sufficient modesty on spends and savings or money management skills if they were handed over with funds necessary for the implementation of the project. So, Sevakiran bought the necessary items and transported it to their place. The community helped in manual labour; for which food and ration of groceries was provided for the community in return. Thus, the project got rolled out with an initial 50:50 ratio of agency: community participation. This has been raised up to 40: 60 on completion of the first year.

### **Findings**

The major findings of the study are as follows

- a. The theories of isolation and integration are violated. But, these theories can provide sustainable solutions for the problems faced by the community.
- b. The downtown business focus largely upon the tribes; availing all tobacco products and liquor without any restriction.
- c. The local vendors purchase forest produces from the tribes at cheapest prices and make them at loss for continuing in their traditional way of earning. In return, the downtown landlords offer farm and agricultural jobs on daily wage and exploit their helplessness in a deeper manner.
- d. For engaging in downtown jobs, they happen to travel pretty long way, leaving behind their elderly parents, women and children in the mercy of god. This compels women and even elderly persons to join the groups moving to the downtown.
- e. The jeep services and shop owners empty their pockets with pretty high charges and quiet unwanted products like tobacco and alcohol. Even hotels provide meat and chicken meals only, making them spend remarkable part of their income on daily meals.
- f. Eat, drink, enjoy and return empty handed is the only possible way for them to push on with their highly uncertain lives.
- g. Though they could choose to live in the same place if basic infrastructure is provided; there are no active provisions for minding these aspects of their life.
- h. The community needs to master money management skills and earning habits to sustain in the contemporary world.

- i. The community is not aware of their losses on being constantly in migration. They are ignorant of the developments; the migrated persons could have brought to them if remained in contact with the parent community.

### **Planned and implemented course of action**

Sevakiran Charitable trust is a Non-profit Organization; working in Ernakulam Dt, specifically; at Kothamangalam Taluk conducted a research among the Tribal Group of Uriyampetty village and initiated a project entitled VAIBHAV towards the empowerment of the residents and to prevent distress migration thereby.

**Location:** Uriyampetty village of kuttampuzha Panchayat, KOTHAMANGALAM Taluk  
**Service user group:** Mannan Tribal, 72 households

**Service selection:** through research, as initiated and conducted by the group with minimum external help

**Service provided:** sustainable drinking water supply by erecting pipeline and storage tank to store water from the adjacent stream

**Service user involvement:** in planning, they helped in conducting the feasibility study. In implementation, they helped with voluntary labour and Cooperation. In continuing with the project, they volunteered to take necessary training to maintain the pipeline and trained to protect and use the system so as to benefit all.

VAIBHAV focus on non-monetary provisions mainly. It supplies drinking water by erecting storage and piping facilities in the community itself. Regarding the readdressal of other precipitating problems, it provides training to the youngsters in various areas like healthcare, legal awareness, agriculture and marketing of products. It has been evaluated to be 95% successful on first year of evaluation. The project is currently handled by the community by maintaining the infrastructure by themselves and distributing the supply for everyone in the community.

The specific objective of the programme was to minimize distress migration and help the community to continue in the same place so that they could be motivated towards self-dependent life style as well as to practice self-managed levels of health and hygiene. On evaluation, the project is planned to be extended with livelihood support by helping them find better markets and prices for their indigenous products and also through supporting them to keep up their traditional agriculture, medicines and art forms.(Lund & Stolen, 2015)By helping them to settle in their habitat, external intrusions which pollute their lifestyles and culture is expected to be brought down to a minimal level, helping them to stand on their feet.

**Future plan:** the tribal group has been residing in the same location for the past two years. Now, livelihood support and support to preserve their native art, culture and heritage are being planned.

### **Limitations of the study**

1. The study was limited to only one tribal village of kothamangalam Taluk.
2. The study happened to restrict to the level of a feasibility study since this was not externally funded or towards the publication of scholarly papers.

3. No strict compliance to methodological aspects was kept for the reason of being conducted on the basis of “pragmatic” world view.

### Suggestions

1. Research in practice and practice in research is the best bilateral way to enrich both knowledge domains and practice.
2. The colonial way of finding deficits in the culture of aboriginals must not be practiced when working with tribal groups and researchers must come out of the view that development is the stage that the researcher is in and others are underdeveloped.
3. Future research on the aboriginals must focus on micro level groups towards sustainable solutions for their development.

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