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Corollary of Migration of Tribes in Tamil Nadu, India: Boon or Bane?

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Migration is a global issue that is rightly attracting more and more global attention. In the context of migration in India, internal migration is far greater than international migration. India's total population, as recorded in Census 2011, stands at 1.21 billion. Internal migrants in India constitute a large population. Of these, the tribes occupy a significant proportion. The consequences of migration of tribes are innumerable when compared to others. Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu was sampled for the study owing to its enormous migration rate. Four forest ranges, inhabited by the Kanikaran tribes were considered for the study. From each forest range, the tribal settlement with maximum tribal population was sampled and the respondents were selected by adopting proportionate random sampling technique. The sample for the study consisted of 100 respondents. The data were collected with a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule and examined using factor analysis. It was evident from the results that though moving out from their locality is positively influencing the development of tribes, it is also severely affecting the forest resources. The tribal migrants were recorded higher in socio-economic indicators than the non-migrants. The policy implications drawn out of the findings of the research study such as fencing of tribal settlements, encouragement of self-employment among tribes, introduction of successful agricultural technologies, implementation of forest act, 2006 and formation of migrant labour unions can be considered for limiting the distress migration of tribes and hence retain them for the betterment of traditional agriculture.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Humans are known to have migrated extensively throughout prehistory and human history. The movement of populations in modern times has continued under the form of both voluntary migration within one's region, country, or beyond, and involuntary migration which includes trafficking in human beings and ethnic cleansing. Human migration, initiated for whatever reason, have affected the grand epochs in history, changing the demographic nature of landscapes forever. In some occasions, they stimulate innovation and mutual benefits, and on others, destruction and suffering [1].

In today's increasingly interconnected world, international migration has become a reality that touches nearly all corners of the globe, often making distinctions between countries of origin, transit and destination obsolete. Modern transportation has made it easier, cheaper and faster for people to move [2]. At the same time conflict, poverty, inequality and lack of decent jobs are among the reasons that compel people to leave their homes in search of better futures for themselves and their families. The number of international migrants worldwide has continued to grow rapidly over the past fifteen years, reaching 244 million in 2015, up from 222 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000 [3]. In 2015, India had the largest "diaspora" in the world (16 million), followed by Mexico (12 million) (United Nations Organisation, 2015).

In the context of migration in India, internal migration is far greater than international migration. The Constitution of India (Article 19) gives the right to all citizens to "to move freely throughout the territory of India; to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India". India's total population, as recorded in Census 2011, stands at 1.21 billion [4]. Internal migrants in India constitute a large population: 309 million internal migrants or 30 per cent of the population [5], and by more recent estimates 326 million or 28.50 per cent of the population (NSSO 2007–2008) [6]. This far exceeds the estimates of Indian emigrants (11.4 million) (The World Bank 2011) [7].

Tamil Nadu, the sixth populous state (Census, 2011) with 72.10 million people, is among the states with negative net interstate migration. Although the net interstate migration is negative for Tamil Nadu, migration inside the state (between the districts) and influx of migrants into and out of the state has set the state with different characteristics [8].

1.1 Tribes in India

Tribes are indigenous, have their own distinctive culture, geographically isolated and are low in socio-economic conditions. For centuries, the tribal groups have remained outside the realm of the general development process due to their habitation in forests and hilly tracts. After independence, Government of India has scheduled the tribal groups in the Constitution and provided special provisions for their welfare and development as in the case of Scheduled Castes. There are about 654 tribal communities across the states in India and 75 of the tribes are most backward and are termed as Primitive Tribal Groups. Most of the tribal areas are hilly, inaccessible undulating plateau lands in the forest areas of the country resulting in the bypassing of general developmental programmes. Due to this, infrastructure and development facilities in tribal areas for education, roads, healthcare, communication, drinking water, sanitation etc. lagged behind compared to other areas which has resulted in further widening the gaps of development between the tribals and the general population for a long time.

Although the Census of 2011 enumerates the total population of Tribes at 10, 42, 81, 034 persons, constituting 8.6 per cent of the population of the country, the tribal communities in India are enormously diverse and heterogeneous. There are wide ranging diversities among them in respect of languages spoken, size of population and mode of livelihood. The number of communities that find their place in the list of the Schedule of the Indian constitution is reflective of this diversity. The Government of India, in its Draft National Tribal Policy, 2006 records 698 Scheduled Tribes in India. As per the Census of India 2011, the number of individual groups notified as Scheduled Tribes is 705.

Displacement and enforced migration has also led to an increasing number of tribes working as contract labourers in the construction industry and as domestic workers in major cities. Over 80 per cent of tribes work in the primary sector against 53 per cent of the general population, primarily as cultivators [9]. However, the number

of tribes who were cultivators, declined from over 68 per cent to 45 per cent in 2001 whereas the number of tribal agricultural labourers increased from about 20 per cent to 37 per cent, demonstrating increasing landlessness among tribals. It is further estimated that, in the last decade, about 3.5 million tribal people are leaving agriculture and agriculture-related activities to enter the informal labour market (Tribal Committee Report, 2014) [9].

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Kanyakumari district was selected for the study, owing to the following feature. Though it is the smallest district in Tamil Nadu by area (1672 sq. km.) next to Chennai, it is the most urbanised district according to the 2011 census report. The district has recorded second largest urban population of 82.30 per cent to the total population among the districts. District decennial growth also shows that the total population growth rate from 2001 – 2011 is 11.17 per cent, of which the growth rate of rural population has declined by 43.89 per cent and urban population has grown by 40.46 per cent [10].

Out of the 36 tribes in the state, there are six tribes in Kanyakumari district. Of these the Kanikaran tribe dominates three – fourth of the tribal population with 5571 Kanikkars (Pechiparai Gram Panchayat office, 2015 - 2016) [11], out of the total tribal population of around 7282. (Kanyakumari district Statistical handbook, 2015). Hence, the Kanikaran or Kanikkar tribe was selected for the study of migration.

Since the demographics of Kanikaran tribes was available only in forest range – wise, tribal mother settlements in each forest range is considered as a sampling unit instead of villages. Out of the five forest ranges in Kanyakumari district, four forest ranges namely, Kulasekharam, Kaliyal, Velimalai and Azhakiyapandipuram forest ranges are inhabited by Kanikaran tribes. From each of these four forest ranges, one tribal mother settlement with maximum population was selected for the study. The total sample size fixed was 100 and by following proportionate random sampling technique, the migrant respondents are sampled as follows - 40 from Thachamalai, 39 from Arukani, 15 from Puravilai and 6 from Vellambi malai tribal settlements.

Data collection was carried out by structured interview method. In this study, factor analysis was used to analyse the consequences of migration which consists of 21 statements under social costs, social benefits, economic costs and economic benefits as given in Table 1.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the perception of migrants on the consequences of migration are determined by factor analysis. There are totally 21 reported consequences of tribal migration and the perception of migrants on each statements are investigated in a five point scale. The results of factor analysis are given under along with relevant discussions.

To test the sampling adequacy, Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was calculated as 0.579. Bartlett's test of sphericity was also determined to be 0.045. It indicates that the sample was good enough for sampling. Principal Component Analysis was employed for extracting factors and orthogonal varimax rotation was applied. The variables whose communalities were greater than 0.50 were retained and the factors with Eigen values greater than 1.0 were considered.

The mean and standard deviation of the variables were analysed and listed in Table 2. The overall mean and overall standard deviation of the variables are 3.41 and 0.15 respectively. By following mean +/- standard deviation, the variables are categorised into three categories namely High, Medium and Low.

From the Table 2, it can be inferred that the tribal migrants perceive the deviation from traditional occupation, increased dependence of family members on migrants, increase in the skills, savings and purchasing power of migrants, influencing of other tribes to migrate, loss of tribal culture and tradition, better understanding of other cultures and scaling up literacy level as the major consequences of tribal migration.

The rotated component matrix along with communalities (h^2) are presented in Table 3. Rotated component matrix presents the reduced form of variables in 9 factors.

It can be interpreted from the Table 3 that the factor 1 consists of 3 variables, factor 2 consists of 5 variables, factor 3 consists of 2 variables, factor 4 consists of 2 variables, factor 5 consists of 2 variables, factor 6 consists of 2 variables, factor 7 consists of 2 variables, factor 8 consists of 2 variables and factor 9 consists of 1 variable of the total 21 variables. These variables are the consequences of migration in real terms.

The scree plot of factor analysis representing the 9 factors is shown in Fig. 1. The graph has been plotted with the variables in X – axis and its corresponding Eigen values in Y – axis. It can be interpreted from the scree plot that there are only 9 factors with Eigen values greater than 1.

Table 1. List of statements with its notations

S. No.	Statements	Notation
1.	**Economic costs**	
a.	Loss of young adult labour force	LYAL
b.	Deviation from traditional occupation	DTO
c.	Incurs more debt for migration	IDM
d.	Increases the dependence of family members	IDFM
2.	**Economic benefits**	
a.	Reduction in underemployment and unemployment	RUEM
b.	Hike in the skills of tribes	HST
c.	Less pressure on resources	LPR
d.	Increase in annual income	IAI
e.	Increase in purchasing power	IPP
f.	Increase in savings	ISS
3.	**Social costs**	
a.	Exploitation by others in the destination	EOD
b.	Difficulty in socialisation	DIS
c.	Influences peer tribes to migrate, thereby changing the social structure	ITMSS
d.	Non return of migrants causes imbalance in population pyramid	NRMPP
e.	Loss of tribal culture and tradition	LTCT
4.	**Social benefits**	
a.	Improvement in the education and health facilities	IEHF
b.	Increase in social expectations in the community	ISEC
c.	Increases the social respect of the migrants	ISRM
d.	Helps in understanding of culture and customs of others	HUCC
e.	Increases social security of the migrant	ISSM
f.	Hike in literacy level	HLL

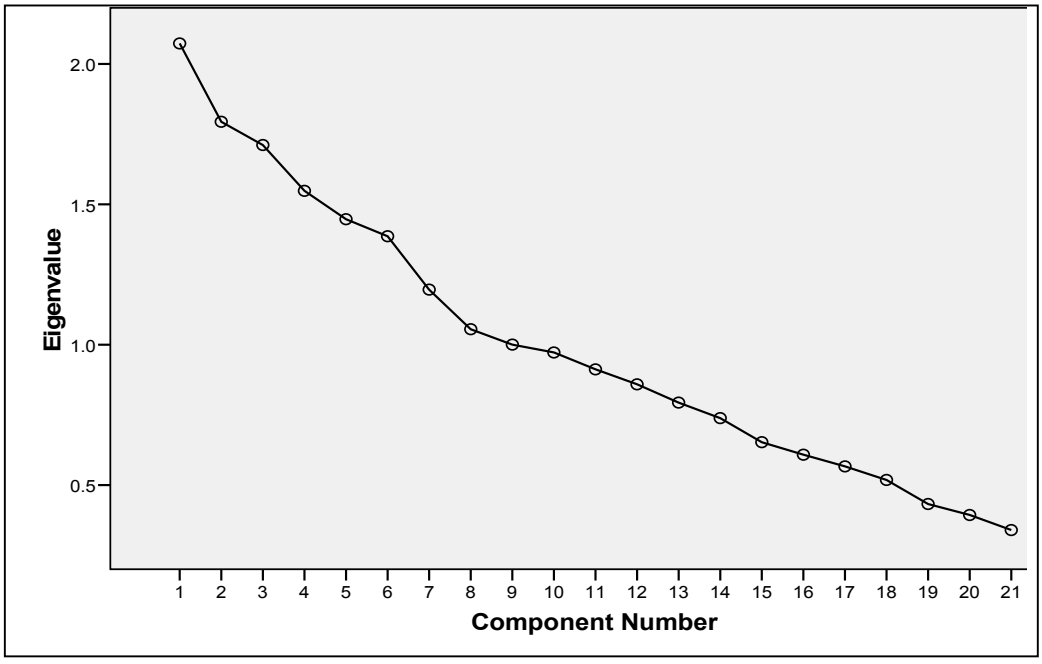

Fig. 1. Scree plot of factor analysis

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of variables

S. No.	Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	Category
1.	Loss of young adult labour force	3.28	0.740	Medium
2.	Deviation from traditional occupation	4.38	0.801	High
3.	Incurs more debt for migration	2.33	0.792	Low
4.	Increases the dependence of family members	3.79	1.057	High
5.	Reduction in unemployment and underemployment	2.31	0.825	Low
6.	Hike in the skills of tribes	3.96	0.887	High
7.	Less pressure on resources	2.04	0.864	Low
8.	Increase in annual income	3.10	0.835	Low
9.	Increase in Purchasing power	4.28	0.740	High
10.	Increase in savings	4.15	0.783	High
11.	Exploitation by others in the destination	4.23	0.763	High
12.	Difficulty in Socialisation	2.50	0.882	Low
13	Influences peer tribes to migrate thereby changing the social structure	4.63	0.580	High
14.	Non return of migrants causes imbalance in population pyramid	2.20	0.752	Low
15.	Loss of tribal culture and tradition	4.68	0.530	High
16.	Improvement in the education and health facilities	3.48	1.059	Medium
17.	Increase in social expectations of the community	2.40	0.682	Low
18.	Increases the social respect of the migrants	2.34	0.755	Low
19.	Helps in understanding the culture of others	4.38	0.632	High
20.	Increases the social security of migrants	2.49	0.959	Low
21.	Hike in literacy level	4.79	0.433	High

Table 3. Rotated component matrix

S. No.	Variables	Factors									Communalities (h^2)
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1.	ISRM	.768	-.016	-.072	-.038	.028	-.057	.019	-.025	.120	0.690
2.	RUEM	.641	.032	.061	.092	-.191	.113	-.051	.162	-.094	0.755
3.	IDFM	-.564	.084	-.095	.271	-.078	.105	-.358	.193	.149	0.495
4.	LTCT	.037	.743	.085	.181	.025	.180	.119	-.004	-.093	0.612
5.	HUCC	-.124	.571	-.091	.154	-.040	-.248	-.195	.151	.295	0.511
6.	IDM	-.034	-.529	-.094	.255	.177	.043	.300	.061	.111	0.586
7.	LPR	.094	-.501	.199	.108	.098	.244	-.127	.292	.184	0.516
8.	HST	.207	.379	.212	-.024	.341	.150	.238	-.139	.373	0.643
9.	ISS	.055	-.043	.848	.074	-.039	.107	-.063	.023	-.146	0.698
10.	ISSM	.059	-.123	-.698	.181	.065	.207	-.152	-.115	-.274	0.768
11.	ISEC	-.020	-.064	.157	.738	.018	-.132	-.075	-.003	.070	0.488
12.	HLL	-.026	.187	-.290	.727	.051	.124	-.009	.019	-.103	0.749
13.	ITMSS	-.204	-.078	.091	.168	.679	-.120	.189	.031	-.065	0.601
14.	EOD	-.034	.062	.153	.042	-.650	-.054	.128	.028	.126	0.559
15.	LYAL	-.064	.044	.081	-.102	.216	-.766	-.157	-.050	.082	0.650
16.	DIS	-.154	.021	.068	-.231	.252	.698	-.164	-.160	.251	0.713
17.	IEHF	.247	-.030	.056	-.085	.130	-.040	.751	.237	.053	0.602
18.	NRMPP	-.335	.028	-.028	-.010	-.271	.169	.557	-.173	.050	0.616
19.	IPP	-.028	-.101	.149	.100	-.113	-.005	.107	.793	-.024	0.585
20.	IAI	-.167	-.100	.157	.291	-.387	.133	.047	-.559	.120	0.697
21.	DTO	-.025	-.122	.000	.007	-.224	.049	.049	-.053	.826	0.678

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis (9 factors extracted)
Output: SPSS

3.1 Variance Explained by the Factors

The factors with Eigen values greater than 1 are considered for interpretation and it can be found that there are 9 factors with Eigen value greater than 1. These 9 factors contributes to 62.91 per cent of cumulative percentage as shown in Table 4.

In the Table 4, the percent of variance represents the percent of total variance caused by each factor and the cumulative percentage represents the variance caused by the present and previous factors. The Table 4 clearly shows that factor 1 accounts for 9.87 per cent of the variance, factor 2 accounts for 8.54 per cent of the variance, factor 3 causes 8.14per cent of the variance, factor 4 contributes to 7.37 per cent of the total variance, factor 5 contributes to 6.89 per cent of the variance, factor 6 causes 6.60per cent of the variance, factor 7 contributes to 5.69 per cent of the variance, factor 8 accounts for 5.02 per cent of the variance and factor 9 accounts for 4.76per cent of the total variance of 62.91per cent.

Each of the factors along with its variables are summarized in Table 5. The significant consequences of migration are also highlighted along with its factor loadings.

3.1.1 Factor 1: ISRM, RUEM and IDFM

Out of the total variance of 62.91 per cent, factor 1 explained the largest variance of 9.87 per cent and hence it is considered as the 'prime factor'. Factor 1 comprises of 3 variables, namely increases the social respect of the migrants (ISRM), reduction in underemployment and unemployment (RUEM) and increases the dependence of family members (IDFM). The factor loadings of these three variables are 0.768, 0.641 and 0.271 respectively. Of these three variables, the variable ISRM greatly describes the factor 1 since its factor loading is greater than 0.70.

3.1.2 Factor 2: LTCT, HUCC, IDM, LPR and HST

The factor 2 contributes to 8.54 per cent of the total variance 62.91 per cent and it comprises of five variables namely, loss of tribal culture and tradition (LTCT), helps in understanding of culture and customs of others (HUCC), incurs more debt for migration (IDM), less pressure on resources (LPR) and hike in the skills of tribes (HST). The factor loadings of these five variables are 0.743, 0.571, 0.300, 0.292 and 0.379. In this, the variable LTCT highly describes the factor 2 with its factor loading of 0.743.

3.1.3 Factor 3: ISS and ISSM

Factor 3 contributes to 8.14 per cent of the total variance and it is comprised of two variables. They are increase in savings (ISS) and increases social security of the migrant (ISSM) with the factor loadings of 0.848 and 0.207. The factor loadings clearly projects the importance of ISS over ISSM.

3.1.4 Factor 4: ISEC and HLL

Increase in social expectations in community (ISEC) and hike in literacy level (HLL) are the two variables under factor 4 with the factor loadings of 0.738 and 0.727 respectively. This factor contributes 7.37 per cent to the total per cent of variance. In the case of factor 4, both the variables are of equally importance since both are greater than 0.70.

3.1.5 Factor 5: ITMSS and EOD

Factor 5 contributes to 6.89 per cent of the total per cent of variance and it is comprised of two variables. They are influences peer tribes to migrate, thereby changing the social structure (ITMSS) and exploitation by others in the destination (EOD) with the factor loadings of 0.679 and 0.153 respectively. Here, both ITMSS and EOD are not much significant since its loadings are lesser than 0.70.

3.1.6 Factor 6: LYAL and DIS

Out of the total variance of 62.91 per cent, the factor 6 accounts for 6.60 per cent of the variance. It has two hidden variables – loss of young adult labour force (LYAL) and difficulty in socialisation (DIS). The factor loadings of these two variables are 0.216 and 0.698 respectively. Hence, it is understood that both the variables are not significant.

3.1.7 Factor 7: IEHF and NRMPP

The factor 7 contributes to 5.69 per cent of the total variance of 62.91 per cent. Also, it comprises of two variables namely, improvement in the education and health facilities (IEHF) and non-return of migrants causes imbalance in population pyramid (NRMPP) with the factor loadings of 0.751 and 0.557 respectively. Here, the variable IEHF is highly important because its factor loading is more than 0.70.

Table 4. Variance explained

Factors	Initial Eigen values		
	Total	Percent of variance	Cumulative percentage
1	2.073	9.872	9.872
2	1.794	8.543	18.416
3	1.711	8.149	26.565
4	1.548	7.373	33.937
5	1.447	6.891	40.828
6	1.386	6.601	47.429
7	1.196	5.697	53.126
8	1.055	5.024	58.150
9	1.000	4.764	62.914

Table 5. Summary of the factors

Factors	Variables under factors	Factor loadings
Factor 1	Increases the social respect of the migrants	0.768
	Reduction in underemployment and unemployment	0.641
	Increases the dependence of family members	0.271
Factor 2	Loss of tribal culture and tradition	0.743
	Helps in understanding of culture and customs of others	0.571
	Incurs more debt for migration	0.300
	Less pressure on resources	0.292
	Hike in the skills of tribes	0.379
Factor 3	Increase in savings	0.848
	Increases social security of the migrant	0.207
Factor 4	Increase in social expectations in the community	0.738
	Hike in literacy level	0.727
Factor 5	Influences peer tribes to migrate, thereby changing the social structure	0.679
	Exploitation by others in the destination	0.153
Factor 6	Loss of young adult labour force	0.216
	Difficulty in socialisation	0.698
Factor 7	Improvement in the education and health facilities	0.751
	Non return of migrants causes imbalance in population pyramid	0.557
Factor 8	Increase in purchasing power	0.793
	Increase in annual income	0.291
Factor 9	Deviation from traditional occupation	0.826

3.1.8 Factor 8: IPP and IAI

Factor 8 accounts for 5.02 per cent of the total variance and it has two variables namely increase in purchasing power (IPP) and increase in annual income (IAI) with the factor loadings of 0.793 and 0.291. This indicates that the variable IPP greatly contributes to the factor 8.

3.1.9 Factor 9: DTO

The factor 9 accounts for 4.76 per cent of the total variance of 62.91 per cent. The hidden variable in factor 9 is deviation from traditional occupation (DTO) with the factor loading of 0.826.

The Table 5 shows that out of 21 consequences of tribal migration, 8 consequences are perceived to be wider among the Kanikaran tribes by the tribal migrants. They are increase in savings, deviation from traditional occupation, increase in purchasing power, increase in social respect of the migrants, loss of tribal culture and tradition, improvement in the education and health facilities, increase in social expectations in the community and hike in literacy level.

4. FINDINGS

The results of the study clearly shows that though the tribes are migrating forcefully from their forest tribal settlements, their movement is ultimately leading to their personal development greatly while it is also causing enormous destruction to the natural resources, which are protected by these tribes for ages.

The tribal migrants, being the victims of distress migration had suggested countless interventions to be made to minimize distress migration of their people. All their suggestions are consolidated and presented below.

- Implementation of Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers (Recognition of forest rights) act, 2006 with its complete spirit. This law opposed the historical injustice done to the tribes and forest dwellers and called for the transparency in conservation of forests. When this law is implemented, all the tribes can claim ownership to the forest land they cultivate at present and legalise it in documents. With this, they can avail benefits from agriculture sector.
- Encouragement of traditional occupation of Kanikaran tribes like honey gathering, medicinal plants collection and making of tribal artefacts by various group approaches.
- Ensuring that the tribes get fair price for their products in the market by the formation of a monitoring mechanism.
- The forest department should develop policies and programmes that are in line with both the wishes of tribes and environmentalists to have a win – win scenario. All interventions in the forests by the government must be implemented after consulting with the native tribes.
- Man-animal conflict is the vital reason behind the distress migration of tribes. Intrusion of wild animals causes major threat for tribal agriculture and leads to the shifting of farming patterns in tribal settlements. This can be minimized by fencing the tribal settlements from forests.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study undertaken in this district among the most disadvantaged sections of the society clearly outlines the rampant crisis faced by them. Hence, the researcher, being very much familiar with the local conditions of the district observes that there is immense regional disparities within the district. There is an urgent need to balance this intra-district disparity on the part of the government. Also, guidelines of certain development programmes can be amended by the concern departments, so that all the tribes can be equally benefitted; irrespective of their population.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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