

EXPERIENCES OF RESETTLEMENT: THE CASE OF THE ARALAM FARM

MSW DISASTER MANAGEMENT

2024-2026

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COURSE CODE: SWDM 547

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ABSTRACT

Resettlement is an important rehabilitation strategy aimed at improving the lives of displaced and landless communities by providing land, housing, and basic facilities. However, successful rehabilitation involves not only physical relocation but also the restoration of livelihoods, social relationships, and overall well-being. The Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Programme in Kannur district, Kerala, was introduced to rehabilitate landless tribal families by providing agricultural land and housing. Even after more than two decades, many families continue to face challenges in their daily lives.

The present study, "Experiences of Resettlement: The Case of the Aralam Farm," explores the lived experiences of tribal families after resettlement. A qualitative case study design was adopted for the study. Four tribal participants were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and non-participant observation. Secondary data were collected from books, journal articles, government reports, and other relevant sources. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis.

The study found that although the rehabilitation programme provided land and housing, many families continue to experience livelihood insecurity, irregular employment, poor housing conditions, and inadequate access to drinking water, electricity, healthcare, transportation, and other basic services. Human-wildlife conflict is one of the most serious problems, as elephants and wild boars frequently destroy crops, making farming difficult and affecting the safety of residents. The study also found that resettlement has weakened traditional social relationships, reduced community interaction, and created feelings of loneliness and isolation among many participants. Despite these challenges, the families continue to preserve their cultural traditions and adapt to their new environment.

The study concludes that rehabilitation should go beyond providing land and housing. It should ensure sustainable livelihood opportunities, quality infrastructure, accessible public services, protection from human-wildlife conflict, and stronger community support.

Keywords: **Resettlement:** *Tribal Rehabilitation, Aralam Farm, Lived Experiences, Human–Wildlife Conflict, Livelihood.*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Resettlement is a planned process of relocating people who have been displaced from their original place of residence due to development projects, environmental conservation programmes, natural disasters, or other unavoidable reasons. The primary objective of resettlement is to improve the living conditions of displaced people by providing land, housing, livelihood opportunities, and access to essential services. However, resettlement is much more than the physical relocation of people from one place to another. It is a long-term social process that influences people's economic conditions, social relationships, cultural identity, psychological well-being, and overall quality of life. The success of a resettlement programme depends not only on providing physical assets but also on restoring livelihoods, social security, and community life (Cernea, 1997).

In India, several tribal rehabilitation programmes have been implemented to provide land and housing for landless tribal families. One of the most significant initiatives is the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Programme in Kannur district, Kerala. The programme was launched by the Government of Kerala to rehabilitate landless tribal families by providing one acre of agricultural land and housing facilities. Around 1,200 tribal families from different districts, particularly Kannur and Wayanad, were resettled under this programme. It is considered one of the largest tribal rehabilitation projects in India and has often been described as one of the largest tribal resettlement in Asia. (Kumar, 2019)

Although the Aralam rehabilitation programme was introduced with the objective of improving the socio-economic conditions of tribal families, several studies have shown that many resettled families continue to experience serious challenges. Employment opportunities remain limited, income is often irregular, and many households continue to depend on daily wage labour and employment schemes such as MGNREGA. Government-provided houses in many areas are incomplete or have deteriorated over time. Basic services such as drinking water, sanitation, electricity, transportation, healthcare, and waste management remain inadequate in several parts of the settlement.

Another major issue affecting the Aralam resettlement area is its location near the Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary. Frequent human–wildlife conflict has become a serious challenge for the residents. Wild animals such as elephants, wild boars, and deer regularly destroy agricultural crops and threaten the safety of families. Many residents are unable to use the land provided for cultivation because of repeated crop damage. Fear of wildlife also restricts movement

during the evening and night, making it difficult to travel for work, or medical emergencies. These conditions have reduced the livelihood benefits expected from the rehabilitation programme. (Kumar, 2019)

Resettlement has also influenced the social and cultural lives of tribal families. Before relocation, many families lived in close relationships with communities where neighbours and relatives supported one another during times of need. After moving to Aralam, families have reported weaker social relationships, reduced community interaction, and feelings of loneliness and isolation. The scattered settlement pattern, distance between houses, and fear of wildlife have further limited social participation and community cohesion. (Vysakh, 2022)

Most previous studies on Aralam have mainly examined rehabilitation from socio-economic and policy perspectives, focusing on issues such as land distribution, employment, housing, and infrastructure. However, only a limited number of studies have explored the lived experiences of tribal families after resettlement. Understanding these lived experiences is important because it provides a deeper understanding of how people themselves experience livelihood changes, housing conditions, social relationships, access to services, safety, and everyday life after relocation.

Therefore, the present study, "Experiences of Resettlement: The Case of the Aralam Farm," aims to explore the lived experiences of tribal families living in the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Area. The study focuses on understanding their experiences related to livelihood, housing, basic infrastructure, healthcare, human wildlife conflict, and social relationships after resettlement.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Displacement and resettlement have become significant concerns in the context of tribal development, particularly when rehabilitation programmes are implemented as solutions to landlessness and social marginalization. The Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Programme in Kerala represents one of the largest tribal resettlement initiatives in India and is often regarded as one of the largest tribal rehabilitation settlements in Asia. Established under the Tribal Resettlement and Development Mission (TRDM), the programme aimed to provide land, housing, livelihood opportunities, and improved living conditions to landless Adivasi families who had historically experienced land alienation and socio-economic deprivation (Mullassery Sathiamma, 2010; Kumar, 2019).

The underlying assumption of the programme was that access to land and housing would contribute to the socio-economic development and social inclusion of tribal communities. However, more than two decades after its implementation, evidence from previous studies and field observations suggests that the outcomes of rehabilitation remain contested. Research indicates that many resettled families continue to face persistent challenges related to livelihood insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, poor access to healthcare, unemployment, water scarcity, housing deficiencies, and social marginalization (Sebastian, 2016; Kumar, 2019; Vysakh, 2022).

The present study's preliminary findings reveal that despite receiving land, many families are unable to utilize it productively due to frequent human-wildlife conflicts, particularly elephant and wild boar intrusions, which damage crops and threaten human safety. The proximity of the settlement area to the Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary has transformed rehabilitation into a complex process where livelihood security and physical safety remain uncertain. Consequently, the very resource intended to improve the economic condition of tribal households has become difficult to access and utilize effectively (Kumar, 2019).

Furthermore, resettlement has significantly altered the social and cultural lives of many families. Participants reported the loss of traditional support networks, weakened community relationships, emotional isolation, and reduced social cohesion following relocation. Elderly residents, in particular, expressed feelings of loneliness and disconnection from their native communities. Such experiences suggest that rehabilitation cannot be evaluated solely through the provision of physical assets but must also be examined in relation to social well-being, cultural continuity, and community integration.

Although several studies have examined the socio-economic conditions of the Aralam resettlement area, much of the existing literature focuses on policy implementation, land distribution, and economic outcomes. Limited attention has been given to understanding the lived experiences of resettled tribal families and how they perceive rehabilitation in their everyday lives. Moreover, the long-term impacts of resettlement on livelihood security, access to basic services, social relationships, cultural identity, and human-wildlife conflict remain insufficiently explored.

This gap is particularly significant because Aralam is widely recognized as a landmark rehabilitation project intended to serve as a model for tribal development. If substantial challenges continue to exist within one of the largest and most ambitious tribal rehabilitation

programmes, it raises important questions regarding the effectiveness, sustainability, and inclusiveness of rehabilitation policies. Therefore, there is a critical need to examine the resettlement experiences of tribal families in Aralam to understand whether the objectives of rehabilitation have been achieved and to identify the structural, social, and environmental factors that continue to affect their quality of life.

The present study seeks to address this gap by exploring the lived experiences of resettled tribal communities in Aralam and examining the extent to which rehabilitation has contributed to sustainable livelihood development, social well-being, and improved quality of life.

1.3 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Resettlement is a planned process through which individuals, families, or communities are relocated from their original place of residence to another location because of development projects, environmental conservation programmes, natural disasters, conflicts, or other public purposes. The main objective of resettlement is not only to move people to a new place but also to improve their standard of living by providing land, housing, livelihood opportunities, and access to essential services. An effective rehabilitation programme should ensure that displaced people are able to rebuild their lives with dignity, security, and equal opportunities. However, in many situations, resettlement has created new social, economic, and cultural challenges for affected communities. Simply providing land or housing does not guarantee an improved quality of life. Long-term rehabilitation requires sustainable livelihood opportunities, strong social support systems, adequate infrastructure, and active participation of the affected people in the rehabilitation process (Scudder, 2005).

Resettlement has been widely recognised as one of the most challenging aspects of development planning. Around the world, governments implement resettlement programmes while establishing dams, industries, highways, mining projects, wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, and urban development projects. Although these projects contribute to national development and economic growth, they often require people to leave their homes and traditional living environments. Researchers have pointed out that resettlement may expose displaced communities to several risks, including unemployment, income loss, food insecurity, social disintegration, marginalisation, and reduced access to public services if rehabilitation is not implemented properly (Cernea, 1997). Therefore, modern rehabilitation programmes increasingly focus not only on physical relocation but also on restoring the social and economic well-being of displaced populations.

Among the various groups affected by resettlement, tribal communities are considered one of the most vulnerable. Tribal people have a unique relationship with forests, land, rivers, and other natural resources. Their livelihood, cultural identity, traditional knowledge, religious practices, and community life are closely connected with their natural environment. Unlike many other communities, land is not merely an economic resource for tribal people but also an important part of their history, culture, and identity. Therefore, displacement often causes much deeper consequences for tribal communities than the loss of physical property alone. It may affect their traditional occupations, weaken social relationships, reduce access to forest resources, and influence their cultural practices and emotional well-being.

In India, displacement and rehabilitation have become important issues because of rapid economic development, infrastructure expansion, conservation projects, and land acquisition. Tribal communities have been disproportionately affected by these development processes. Many Scheduled Tribe families have experienced land alienation and displacement over several decades, resulting in poverty, livelihood insecurity, and social exclusion. To improve their living conditions, both the Central and State Governments have introduced various tribal development and rehabilitation programmes aimed at providing land ownership, housing, education, healthcare, and livelihood support. However, research has shown that the success of these programmes varies considerably depending on the quality of implementation and the extent of post-resettlement support available to beneficiaries (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2014).

In Kerala, tribal communities continue to face several developmental challenges despite improvements in social development indicators. Historical land alienation, poverty, unemployment, and inadequate access to productive resources have affected the socio-economic conditions of many tribal families. To address these problems, the Government of Kerala introduced the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Programme in Kannur district. The programme was established with the objective of rehabilitating landless tribal families by providing one acre of agricultural land, housing facilities, and other welfare measures. Approximately 1,200 tribal families, mainly belonging to different tribal communities from Kannur and Wayanad districts, were resettled under this programme. The Aralam project is widely recognised as one of the largest tribal rehabilitation programmes in India and has been considered an important model of tribal rehabilitation in the country (Kumar, 2019).

The primary objective of the Aralam rehabilitation programme was to improve the socio-economic status of tribal families through secure land ownership and sustainable livelihood

opportunities. The programme also intended to improve housing conditions and increase access to education, healthcare, drinking water, roads, electricity, and other basic services. It was expected that providing agricultural land would help families achieve economic independence while improving their overall quality of life. However, several studies conducted in the rehabilitation area indicate that the expected outcomes have not been fully achieved. Although families received land and housing, many continue to experience serious challenges in their everyday lives (Vysakh, 2022).

One of the major issues reported in previous studies is livelihood insecurity. Agriculture was expected to become the primary source of income for resettled families. However, farming has become increasingly difficult because of poor productivity, inadequate irrigation, limited financial support, and frequent destruction of crops by wild animals. Consequently, many families have shifted to daily wage labour, construction work, plantation work, and employment under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Since these employment opportunities are often irregular and seasonal, household income remains unstable, forcing many families to experience continuous financial hardship (Sebastian, 2016).

Another major concern is the inadequate availability of basic infrastructure and essential public services. Previous studies have reported that several government-constructed houses have deteriorated over time and require repair or reconstruction. In some parts of the settlement, families continue to experience problems related to drinking water, sanitation, electricity, roads, transportation, waste management, and healthcare facilities. Poor access to these services directly affects health, education, employment, and the overall quality of life of the residents.

The geographical location of the rehabilitation area near the Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary has created another major challenge for the resettled families. Human-wildlife conflict has become one of the most serious problems experienced by the residents. Wild elephants, wild boars, deer, monkeys, and other animals frequently enter agricultural fields and destroy crops. Many families have gradually reduced or completely stopped cultivation because repeated crop damage has made farming economically unviable. Wildlife movement also creates constant fear among residents, especially during the evening and night. Many people hesitate to travel after dark because of the risk of elephant encounters. Access to emergency healthcare and

transportation also becomes difficult during such situations. Thus, wildlife conflict has affected both livelihood security and the physical safety of the community (Kumar, 2019).

Apart from economic and environmental challenges, resettlement has significantly influenced the social and cultural life of tribal families. Before relocation, many families lived in close-knit settlements where neighbours and relatives supported each other during times of illness, financial hardship, festivals, and community activities. Traditional knowledge, customs, cultural practices, and collective decision-making were maintained through strong community relationships. After resettlement, many families have experienced weaker social networks, reduced interaction with neighbours, and feelings of loneliness and social isolation. The scattered settlement pattern, increased distance between households, and fear of wildlife have reduced opportunities for regular community interaction and collective participation (Vysakh, 2022).

Existing literature on the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Programme has mainly focused on socio-economic conditions, land distribution, infrastructure, and government welfare measures. While these studies provide valuable information about measurable indicators such as income, employment, housing, and access to services, they provide comparatively limited understanding of how tribal families themselves experience life after resettlement. Exploring lived experiences helps researchers understand people's perceptions, emotions, coping strategies, expectations, and everyday realities. Such understanding is essential because rehabilitation cannot be evaluated only through physical assets or economic indicators; it must also consider people's sense of security, belonging, dignity, and well-being (van Manen, 1990).

Understanding the everyday experiences of tribal families can help identify existing gaps in rehabilitation programmes and contribute to the development of more inclusive, participatory, and culturally sensitive interventions. The findings of such studies can support government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and policymakers in strengthening rehabilitation policies that address both material and psychosocial needs of tribal communities.

Therefore, the present study, "Experiences of Resettlement: The Case of the Aralam Farm," seeks to explore the lived experiences of tribal families residing in the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Area. The study focuses on understanding their experiences related to livelihood, housing, access to basic infrastructure, healthcare, human-wildlife conflict, and social relationships after resettlement. By documenting these experiences from the perspective of the participants themselves, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the

realities of life after rehabilitation and to contribute towards improving future tribal rehabilitation programmes in Kerala.

1.4 RELEVANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is important because it helps to understand the lived experiences of tribal families resettled in the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Area. The Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Programme was started to improve the living conditions of landless tribal families by providing them with land and housing. It is one of the largest tribal rehabilitation projects in India and is widely recognized as one of the largest tribal rehabilitation settlements in Asia (Mullassery, 2010). However, even after more than twenty years, many resettled families continue to face different problems in their daily lives. Therefore, this study is important for understanding the actual results of rehabilitation from the perspective of the tribal families.

One of the major contributions of this study is that it focuses on the everyday experiences of the resettled tribal families. Earlier studies on Aralam mainly discussed land distribution, rehabilitation programmes, and the socio-economic condition of tribal communities (Sebastian, 2016). However, only a few studies have examined how tribal families experience rehabilitation in their daily lives. This study gives importance to their own views, feelings, and experiences. It helps to understand how rehabilitation has changed their lives after moving to the settlement.

The study is also important because it explains the major challenges faced by the families after resettlement. Many families continue to experience livelihood insecurity, unemployment, poor housing conditions, lack of drinking water, limited healthcare facilities, poor transportation, and inadequate basic services. These problems directly affect their quality of life. By understanding these issues, the study provides a clear picture of the present living conditions of the resettled tribal families.

Another important area of this study is human-wildlife conflict. The Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Area is located close to the Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary. As a result, wild animals such as elephants and wild boars frequently enter the settlement and destroy crops and property. These incidents reduce family income, create fear among the people, and affect their daily lives (Kumar, 2019). This study helps to understand how human-wildlife conflict influences the rehabilitation experience of tribal families.

The study is also important because it looks at the social life of the resettled communities. After moving to Aralam, many families lost their traditional social support systems and community

relationships. Some families, especially older people, experience loneliness and social isolation. Understanding these changes helps to explain how rehabilitation affects not only economic life but also social and emotional well-being.

From an academic perspective, this study adds to the existing knowledge on tribal rehabilitation and resettlement. It provides qualitative information based on the lived experiences of tribal families. The findings can also be useful for future researchers who are interested in tribal rehabilitation and community development.

Finally, this study shows that the success of rehabilitation cannot be judged only by providing land and houses. It is also necessary to understand whether families have secure livelihoods, access to basic services, social support, safety, and a good quality of life. By documenting the real experiences of resettled tribal families, this study provides a better understanding of the strengths and challenges of rehabilitation in the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Area.

1.5 CHAPTERIZATION

CHAPTER 1: Introduction, Statement of the problem, Background of the study, Relevance and Significance of the study.

CHAPTER 2: Review of literature, Introduction, Research gap.

CHAPTER 3: Title of the study, Research question, Definition of concepts, Pilot study, Research design, Sampling strategy, data collection, Data analysis, Ethical consideration, assumptions, limitations & scope.

CHAPTER 4: Case description.

CHAPTER 5: Analysis and discussion.

CHAPTER 6: Findings, suggestions, conclusion.

References, Annexures.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Resettlement is not simply an administrative process of moving people from one place to another. It is a complex process that brings long-term changes to their social, economic, cultural, and psychological lives. This is especially true for tribal communities, whose lives are closely connected with land, forests, traditional livelihoods, social relationships, and cultural practices. Therefore, resettlement affects many aspects of their everyday life. To understand the real impact of resettlement, it is important to review previous studies on the subject.

The Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Programme in Kerala was started with the aim of improving the living conditions of landless tribal families by providing them with land and housing. However, several studies show that there is a gap between the objectives of the programme and the actual experiences of the resettled families. Many families continue to face problems such as lack of regular employment, livelihood insecurity, poor basic infrastructure, limited access to healthcare, human–wildlife conflict, and weakening of social relationships. These challenges continue to affect their daily lives.

Previous studies on resettlement have helped in understanding different aspects of the rehabilitation process and the challenges faced by tribal communities. Many researchers have focused on such as land alienation, changes in livelihood, rehabilitation policies, health problems, and the social and economic conditions of tribal people. These studies provide valuable knowledge about both the achievements and the limitations of resettlement programmes. They also provide issues a strong theoretical and practical foundation for the present study.

DISPLACEMENT AND RESETTLEMENT

According to Sebastian (2016) displacement and resettlement have become important issues with the expansion of large development projects. From the end of the eighteenth century onwards, these issues gained global attention, especially in developing countries. Displacement is not only a physical movement from one place to another, but a process that deeply affects the social, economic, and cultural life of people.

One of the main effects of displacement is the loss of land, jobs, and housing. When people lose their land and livelihood, their income becomes unstable and their living conditions worsen. Many displaced families become socially and economically weaker than before. This situation also leads to food insecurity, as people lose access to farming land and regular sources of income.

Health conditions often decline after resettlement. Poor housing, lack of clean water, inadequate sanitation, and limited access to healthcare increase the risk of illness and death.

Displacement also damages social relationships. When communities are moved, traditional social networks, cultural practices, and systems of mutual support are disturbed. This weakens community life and creates social separation among people. Over time, these problems reduce the overall quality of life of displaced populations.

According to Thomas (2018) displacement of tribal people is a serious and continuing problem in India. From the British period onwards, tribal communities were removed from their traditional lands. After independence, large development projects such as dams, mining, roads, and power generation further increased displacement. As a result, many tribal families lost their land, homes, and traditional sources of livelihood.

He explains that resettlement refers to the physical shifting of people from one place to another, whereas rehabilitation means restoring their livelihood, income, and overall living conditions. Rehabilitation is a long-term process. However, many studies point out that government policies often focus more on relocation than on proper rehabilitation. Therefore, many displaced tribal communities continue to live in poverty and face social and economic difficulties.

In the context of Kerala, tribal people form a small percentage of the total population, they are highly affected by land alienation and displacement. Districts such as Wayanad have a significant tribal population. Due to development activities, many tribal families in these areas lost their land. To address these issues, the government established programs such as the Tribal Resettlement and Development Mission (TRDM). However, research findings indicate that these initiatives have not been fully successful in improving the living conditions of displaced tribals.

Furthermore, several tribal leaders organized protests against displacement, which drew government attention to their concerns. Despite these efforts, many challenges still remain. Landlessness, low income, and lack of basic facilities continue to be common problems among resettled tribal families.

Robert Muggah (2011) explains that resettlement is one of the most misunderstood concepts in forced migration studies. While displacement has received considerable academic attention, resettlement has been less systematically studied. According to Muggah, resettlement is a

planned and controlled process in which individuals or communities are relocated from one geographical area to another because they are unable to remain in their original place due to coercion or other unavoidable circumstances. Thus, displacement is considered a necessary condition for resettlement.

The author argues that resettlement is more than a physical relocation; it is a process of planned social change involving population movement, selection, and administrative control. Governments and development agencies often use resettlement as a strategy to achieve economic development, infrastructure expansion, environmental conservation, or conflict resolution. Therefore, resettlement has frequently been viewed as an instrument of social engineering intended to transform people's livelihoods, social organisation, and relationship with land.

Muggah further highlights that although development-induced, conflict-induced, and disaster-induced resettlement occur under different circumstances, they share common features such as displacement, loss of livelihood, disruption of social networks, and the need for rehabilitation. He suggests adopting a unified approach to understanding resettlement by recognising the similarities in its causes, consequences, and rehabilitation processes across different contexts. Such an approach can help policymakers and researchers better understand the long-term impacts of resettlement on affected communities.

Cernea (2008) examined the limitations of compensation in development-induced displacement and argued that compensation alone cannot ensure successful resettlement. According to Cernea, large development projects such as dams, mining, and industrial projects often force people to leave their homes and lose not only their land and property but also their livelihoods, income sources, social networks, and cultural ties. Therefore, monetary compensation for lost assets is not sufficient to restore the overall well-being of displaced families.

Cernea argues that the primary goal of resettlement should be to restore and improve the living standards of displaced people rather than simply compensating them for their losses. He explains that effective resettlement requires additional financial investments beyond compensation. These investments should support livelihood restoration, employment opportunities, access to land, housing, education, healthcare, infrastructure, and other essential services. Such measures help displaced families rebuild their lives and achieve long-term economic and social stability.

The author also introduces the concept of benefit sharing, which suggests that people displaced by development projects should receive a fair share of the economic benefits generated by those projects. Instead of limiting support to one-time compensation payments, governments and project authorities should allocate part of the project's profits or revenues to improve the welfare and development of resettled communities. Cernea argues that benefit sharing should become a key principle of resettlement policies and legislation.

Furthermore, Cernea highlights that the failure of many resettlement programmes is mainly due to inadequate financial planning, underfunding, and weak political commitment. Drawing examples from countries such as China, Brazil, Canada, and Japan, he demonstrates that additional investments alongside compensation have contributed to better livelihood reconstruction and more sustainable resettlement outcomes.

Landlessness

Landlessness is one of the most critical and enduring consequences of mining-induced displacement and resettlement. According to Theodore E. Downing, the acquisition of land for mining projects removes the primary productive asset on which displaced households depend for agriculture, livestock rearing, and other livelihood activities. The loss of land extends beyond the physical transfer of property; it disrupts livelihood systems, social identity, and long-established economic relationships. As a result, displaced families often experience a process of decapitalization, where productive assets are lost and households become increasingly vulnerable to long-term poverty.

Downing (2002) explains that landlessness occurs not only because land is acquired for mining operations but also because displaced households frequently fail to obtain suitable replacement land. Compensation payments are often insufficient to purchase equivalent agricultural land due to rising land prices in nearby areas. In many cases, families are compelled to spend compensation on immediate consumption needs, debt repayment, or temporary housing rather than investing in new productive land. Consequently, compensation alone rarely restores pre-displacement livelihoods or economic security.

The study further identifies four major forms through which mining-induced landlessness creates impoverishment. These include: (1) the direct loss of land acquired for mining, (2) reduced productivity of surrounding agricultural land because of mining activities, (3) environmental degradation such as pollution, flooding, and soil contamination that diminishes the value of remaining land, and (4) the inability of displaced households to gain access to

alternative agricultural land after resettlement. These interconnected processes significantly weaken livelihood opportunities and increase dependency on insecure wage labour or informal employment.

Empirical evidence presented by Downing from resettlement projects in Odisha demonstrates the severity of this problem. Across six development projects, the proportion of landless households increased substantially after displacement, with some projects recording landlessness rates of more than 80 percent. These findings indicate that involuntary displacement frequently transforms previously self-sufficient farming households into landless populations with limited opportunities for sustainable livelihood reconstruction.

Joblessness

Joblessness is one of the most serious problems caused by mining-induced displacement and resettlement. Although the loss of agricultural land is often seen as the main impact of displacement, Downing (2002) explains that the economic effects go beyond the loss of land. Rural and Indigenous communities depend on different sources of livelihood, such as farm labour, sharecropping, leased farming, forest-based work, and other local jobs. When mining projects force these communities to move, these livelihood opportunities are lost, leading to unemployment and underemployment. As a result, the local economy is weakened, and it becomes difficult for displaced families to rebuild their livelihoods (Downing, 2002).

Also he states that the employment benefits of mining should be assessed throughout the entire displacement process, including recruitment, relocation, mine operation, and mine closure. Although mining companies often claim that mining creates jobs, these employment opportunities are usually limited and are not easily available to displaced people. Modern mining depends more on machines and skilled workers, which reduces the demand for local unskilled labour. Therefore, many displaced families are unable to find jobs in the mining industry even after losing their traditional sources of income and livelihood.

ARALAM TRIBAL RESETTLEMENT AREA

The selection of land is one of the most important steps in any resettlement programme. In 2004, the Government of Kerala selected the Aralam farm area for the resettlement of tribal communities. This area later came to be known as the Aralam Tribal Resettlement Area.

The Aralam resettlement area is located between the Aralam Farm on one side and the Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary on the other. The remaining two sides are surrounded by rivers. The entire

land was originally purchased by the Tribal Development Department for the purpose of tribal resettlement. However, the land was later divided into two parts: one part was retained as a farm, and the other part was allocated for tribal resettlement.

Studies point out that the farm area had better basic facilities such as electricity, transportation, drinking water, and access to markets. In contrast, the tribal resettlement area lacked many of these essential facilities. As a result, resettled tribal families faced several social and economic difficulties.

Moreover, the resettlement area is located very close to the Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary. Because of this close proximity, a higher risk of human wildlife conflict, which has affected the safety, livelihood, and daily life of the resettled tribal population (Kumar 2019).

According to Vysakh (2022), the resettled Paniya families in Aralam face serious livelihood problems. Before resettlement, they worked in agriculture, plantation labour, and construction work in Wayanad. After moving to Aralam, they were unable to find regular and stable employment. Their income is not enough to meet their daily needs, and their economic condition has not improved significantly.

Before relocation, the government promised permanent jobs in the Aralam Farm. It was stated that one person from each family would receive employment. Because of this promise, many families agreed to move, hoping for a better life with a steady income. However, after resettlement, most families did not receive permanent or even temporary jobs, which led to disappointment and financial difficulties.

At present, most families depend on daily wage labour. These jobs are low-paid and often risky. Men mainly work in plantation and construction sectors, and some climb tall trees to collect pepper, which is dangerous work. Women mostly depend on MGNREGS employment and small farm related jobs.

Kannur district has around 200 Adivasi colonies, but unlike Wayanad and Palakkad, it was not considered a major Adivasi area. Most of the people belong to the Paniya community, which is one of the most backward tribal communities.

After the 1990s, the Adivasi movement in Kannur gained attention from the government and political parties. The demand to return the Aralam farm land to Adivasis brought their struggles into public discussion again.

In June 2004, the Kerala government took over the Central State Farm at Aralam by paying Rs. 42.09 crore from the Tribal Sub Plan Fund. The government decided to use half of the farm land to resettle landless Adivasis and keep the remaining half as a farm. Blocks 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 were planned for distribution. One-third of the land was meant for Adivasis from Kannur and two-thirds for Adivasis from Wayanad.

The land transfer was done through the Tribal Development and Resettlement Mission (TDRM). Since the land was bought using tribal welfare funds, it was expected to be used only for tribal development. The Adivasi organizations opposed the decision to keep half of the farm land unused for rehabilitation. Priority was also promised to landless Paniya families from Wayanad.

However, the rehabilitation process was delayed for more than two years, and many Adivasis from Wayanad did not receive land. This led to protests in 2006, when thousands of Adivasis entered the farm land demanding land rights. Under pressure, the UDF government distributed land titles to 840 families.

The rehabilitation plan promised houses, drinking water, farming tools, financial support, and job opportunities. Believing these promises, more Adivasis moved to the area. Later, in 2007, the LDF government decided to give land titles to 1,517 more families in two phases. (Mullassery Sathiamma, S. 2010).

According to Haseena, (2014) after the Muthanga protest agreement, the Kerala government bought 3,060 hectares of Aralam Farm from the Central Government in 2004 for the welfare of the Adivasi community. It was decided that half of the land would be used to rehabilitate landless Adivasis, while the remaining land would continue as a farm.

Later, the government planned to change the remaining farmland into a company and develop it as an ecotourism project. This showed that the government had different priorities. In August 2009, the Kerala Government decided to create a government controlled company at Aralam Farm. This decision came after the Kerala High Court stopped an earlier plan to convert the farm into a private limited company.

The leaders of the Adivasi movement opposed this decision, whether the company was private, public, or government-controlled. The issue of Aralam Farm is important because many landless Adivasis and Dalits in Kerala are still denied their basic rights and the promises made to them.

LIVELIHOOD

Over the decades, the economic system and livelihood patterns of tribal communities have undergone significant changes. Traditionally, tribal people depended on forests and natural resources for their survival. Therefore, the depletion of natural resources brought major changes to their way of life. In the post-independence period, rapid urbanization and industrialization reduced their access to traditional natural resources, forcing them to search for alternative sources of livelihood.

The increase in population among some tribal groups, the decline in the availability of food resources, and their separation from their natural habitats further increased their dependence on urban markets. As a result, many tribal people migrated from their villages and forest areas to urban centres in search of employment and income. However, in these unfamiliar urban environments, they often faced exploitation, marginalization, and various forms of discrimination. At the same time, those who continued to live in their native areas diversified their occupations and adopted new livelihood strategies to sustain their lives (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2014).

The study by Tripathy, (2018) highlights that the livelihood of tribal communities is closely connected with their rights over land, forests, and natural resources. Since the 1990s, increasing attention has been given to the violation of tribal rights, particularly the loss of access to land and forests due to development interventions. The study argues that these interventions have significantly affected the traditional livelihood systems of tribal people and have weakened their economic security and cultural identity.

The author explains that tribal communities have traditionally maintained a sustainable relationship with nature through their indigenous knowledge, cultural practices, and community institutions. Village councils regulated the use of forests and other natural resources, ensuring their conservation and sustainable management. These traditional systems enabled tribal communities to protect biodiversity while meeting their livelihood needs. However, external interventions and changes in land ownership have disrupted these practices and reduced their access to natural resources.

The study further discusses the Sustainable Livelihood Approach, which emerged during the late 1990s as a broader framework for understanding poverty and development. Unlike earlier approaches that focused mainly on income, the sustainable livelihood approach considers multiple dimensions of well-being, including access to natural, financial, human, physical, and

social resources. It also recognises that factors such as vulnerability, social exclusion, and institutional support influence people's ability to sustain their livelihoods.

2.2 RESEARCH GAP

A review of the available literature shows that many studies on tribal communities in Kerala have mainly focused on issues such as poverty, health, education, land rights, and livelihood. Although a few studies have discussed the Aralam Rehabilitation Settlement, most of them have concentrated on the implementation of the rehabilitation programme or on specific issues such as housing or employment.

Very few studies have examined the overall living conditions of rehabilitated tribal families by considering multiple aspects together, including housing quality, access to basic facilities, education, healthcare, livelihood opportunities, and government welfare schemes. There is also limited qualitative research that explores the personal experiences, perceptions, and everyday challenges of tribal families after rehabilitation.

The present study attempts to fill this gap by providing an in-depth qualitative case study of rehabilitated tribal families living in the Aralam Rehabilitation Settlement. It explores their real-life experiences and assesses how far the rehabilitation programme has improved their quality of life. The study also identifies the existing gaps in rehabilitation services and provides practical recommendations for strengthening future tribal rehabilitation programmes and improving the well-being of rehabilitated tribal communities.

CHAPTER- 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the research methodology adopted for the present study to explore the lived experiences of tribal families in the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Area. It describes the systematic procedures followed to achieve the answer the research questions. The chapter begins with the statement of the problem, which explains the need for the study.

The chapter further explains the research questions. It describes the qualitative research approach and the case study research design adopted to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of the participants. The study area introduces the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Area in Kannur district, Kerala, where the study was conducted. It also explains the purposive sampling technique, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and the selection of participants. The chapter further describes the methods used for data collection, including in-depth interviews and observation. Finally, it explains the method of data analysis, ethical considerations, assumptions, scope of the study, and limitations of the study, providing a clear understanding of the overall research process followed in the present study.

3.2 TITLE OF THE STUDY

EXPERIENCES OF RESETTLEMENT: THE CASE OF THE ARALAM FARM

3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

MAIN QUESTION

What are the lived experiences of tribal families living in the Aralam resettlement area?

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

- How do resettled tribal families in Aralam Farm experience economic challenges?
- How do resettled tribal families experience access to basic infrastructure and essential services in Aralam?
- How does human-wildlife conflict influence the everyday lives of resettled tribal families?
- How has resettlement influenced social relationships and community life among tribal families?

3.4 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

RESETTLEMENT

Conceptual definition

Resettlement can be defined as the planned process of relocating and rehabilitating individuals or groups of people, usually displaced due to conflicts, natural disasters, development projects, or persecution, into a new area where they can rebuild their lives with access to housing, livelihoods, and essential services (UNHCR, 2011).

Operational definition

Resettlement refers to the systematic process of relocating and rehabilitating landless tribal families under the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Program. This includes providing agricultural land, housing, livelihood opportunities, education, healthcare, and other basic facilities. In this study, resettlement is assessed in terms of how it affects the social and economic conditions of the families.

LIVED EXPERIENCE

Conceptual definition

Lived experience refers to the way individuals perceive, interpret, and make meaning of their everyday life situations within personal, social, and cultural contexts. It emphasizes how people experience and understand events in their daily lives rather than simply describing external or observable facts. (van Manen, 1990).

Operational definition

In this study, lived experience refers to the personal experiences of tribal families living in the Aralam resettlement area after relocation. It is understood in terms of their life after resettlement, including livelihood, income, health conditions, social relationships, and housing facilities.

3.5 PILOT STUDY

Before the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted in the month of December 2025 to test the suitability, clarity, and effectiveness of the interview guide. As part of the pilot study, the researcher visited the Aralam Farm Office and the entire Aralam Rehabilitation Settlement to become familiar with the study area and the living conditions of the tribal families.

The pilot study was carried out among a small number of tribal families in the Aralam Rehabilitation Settlement. The participants included in the pilot study were not included in the final sample.

The pilot study was conducted to check whether the interview questions related to resettlement experiences, livelihood, housing conditions, basic facilities, access to healthcare, human–wildlife conflict, social relationships, access to government welfare schemes, and quality of life after rehabilitation were clear and easy for the participants to understand.

During the pilot study, it was found that some participants needed further explanation for a few questions. Based on their responses and suggestions, minor changes were made to the wording and order of some questions to make them simpler and easier to understand. These changes improved the clarity of the interview schedule.

The pilot study also helped the researcher better understand the social and cultural background of the tribal families living in the Aralam Rehabilitation Settlement. It helped build trust with the participants and improved the researcher's interviewing skills. Overall, the pilot study increased the reliability and validity of the research tool and helped the researcher conduct the main study in a more organised and effective manner.

3.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study follows a qualitative case study research design. A case study research design is a qualitative research approach used to gain an in-depth understanding of a specific case within its real-life context. It enables the researcher to explore the experiences, perceptions, and realities of individuals or groups through detailed investigation. This design is particularly suitable for studying complex social issues, as it provides rich and comprehensive information from multiple sources such as interviews, observations, and documents. A case study design was selected because it helps to understand a particular issue in detail. Since the study focuses on the experiences of resettled tribal families in the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Area, this design is suitable for understanding the experiences of resettlement at Aralam farm and the way in which the residence of Aralam farm navigates the challenges. For these purpose total of four cases for identified to explore in detail the resettlement.

3.7 SAMPLING STRATEGY

The present study used a purposive sampling technique to select the participants. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate because the study aimed to explore the lived experiences

of resettled tribal families in the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Area. The participants were selected based on their knowledge and experiences of life after resettlement.

A total of four participants were selected for the study, including three women and one man. All the participants belonged to different tribal communities and had been resettled under the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Programme. They were selected from different parts of the rehabilitation area to understand different experiences and challenges after resettlement.

- Inclusion criteria- Tribal people from different parts of the state who have relocated to Aralam Farm.
- Exclusion criteria- Tribal and other people who were living in Aralam prior to the setting up of the Aralam Farm.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION

- Primary data were collected directly from the participants in the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Area. In-depth interviews and observation were used to collect detailed information about the lived experiences of the resettled tribal families.
- Secondary data were collected from books, journals, research articles, dissertations, government reports, policy documents, official websites, and other published and unpublished sources.

3.9 TOOL FOR DATA COLLECTION

An interview guide was used as the main tool for data collection. The interview guide included questions based on the research questions.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face in a friendly and informal manner. The researcher used open-ended questions and probing questions to encourage the participants to share their experiences and opinions in detail.

In addition to the interviews, non-participant observation was used during the field visits.

3.10 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process of arranging, reviewing, and interpreting the information collected during the study. It helps the researcher understand the experiences shared by the participants, identify common ideas and patterns, and draw meaningful conclusions. In this qualitative case study, data were collected through an interview guide and non-participant observation among tribal families living in the Aralam Rehabilitation Settlement.

The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis. After the interviews were completed, the responses were carefully read and reviewed several times. Similar ideas, experiences, and issues shared by the participants were identified and grouped into different themes based on the objectives of the study. These themes were then examined and interpreted in detail to understand the experiences of resettlement among the tribal families.

3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The researcher explained the purpose and process of the study in simple language. Consent was obtained before the interview.

Participation was voluntary. Participants could refuse or stop the interview at any time.

Participants' personal information was kept confidential. Names were not used in the report.

Permission was obtained from the concerned authorities before collecting data.

The researcher respected the customs, traditions, and culture of the tribal community.

The study did not cause any physical, emotional, or social harm to the participants.

Interviews were conducted in a private and comfortable place.

The researcher recorded and reported the data honestly and accurately.

The collected data were used only for academic research.

All participants were treated with dignity, respect, and equality throughout the study.

3.12 ASSUMPTIONS, LIMITATIONS, & SCOPE

Assumptions

The study assumes that the rehabilitation of landless tribal families plays a significant role in improving their overall well-being.

The study assumes that if rehabilitation is not implemented effectively, it may negatively affect the overall well-being of landless tribal families.

The study assumes that the experience of rehabilitation is unique and differs from one individual to another.

Limitations

The study was conducted only in the Aralam Rehabilitation Settlement. Therefore, the findings may not represent the living conditions of tribal families in other rehabilitation settlements or tribal regions.

The study depended mainly on the information shared by the participants. The accuracy of the findings was influenced by the participants' willingness to share their experiences.

The study was completed within a limited period, which restricted repeated visits and long-term observation of changes in the families' living conditions.

Limited financial resources and time constraints also affected the scope of data collection and documentation.

Scope

The study focused on the living conditions of rehabilitated tribal families residing in the Aralam Rehabilitation Settlement.

It examined different dimensions of their living conditions, including housing quality, access to drinking water, sanitation, electricity, roads, education, healthcare, livelihood opportunities, and government welfare schemes.

The study explored the experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by tribal families after rehabilitation and assessed whether the rehabilitation programme has improved their quality of life.

The study identified the major gaps in the implementation of rehabilitation services and the difficulties that continue to affect the daily lives of the tribal families.

The recommendations of the study may support the planning and implementation of more effective rehabilitation programmes, improve service delivery, and enhance the overall well-being of rehabilitated tribal communities. The findings and recommendations of the study may contribute to future research and support government departments, social workers, and policymakers in strengthening tribal rehabilitation programmes.

CHAPTER 4

CASE DESCRIPTION

ABOUT ARALAM REBABILITATION PROGRAM

The Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Programme is known as the largest tribal rehabilitation programme in Asia under the government sector. It was started to rehabilitate landless tribal families and improve their living conditions. To implement this programme, the Government of Kerala established the Tribal Resettlement and Development Mission (TRDM) under the Scheduled Tribe Development Department (STDD) in November 2001. TRDM was given the responsibility to plan, coordinate, and implement the rehabilitation programme by following a Multi-level Developmental Approach. The programme was carried out with the support of different government departments, banks, local self-government institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The main aim of the programme was to provide landless tribal families with secure livelihoods, improve their quality of life, and support their long-term social and economic development.

The Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Programme is located in the Aralam Farm, which is situated in Ward 6 of Aralam Grama Panchayat, Iritty Block, in Iritty Taluk of Kannur district, Kerala. The programme mainly focuses on the rehabilitation of landless tribal families from Kannur and Wayanad districts. The beneficiaries belong to different tribal communities, including Kurichiyan, Paniyan, Mavilan, Karimpalan, Adiyan, Uralikuruman (Bettakuruman), and Kattunaikkan.

Aralam Farm is located about 60 kilometres from Kannur town. Earlier, the farm was managed by the State Farms Corporation of India under the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. It was established in 1970 to produce quality seeds, planting materials, and commercial plantation crops. The farm covers a total area of 3,060 hectares (7,558.2 acres), out of which 2,623 hectares are cultivable land. For easy administration, the farm is divided into 13 blocks. In 2004, the Government of Kerala took control of the farm and decided to allocate about 50 percent of the land to landless tribal families while keeping the remaining area for agricultural farming.

The tribal families were resettled in six blocks of the Aralam Farm, namely Blocks 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13. Among these, Blocks 9, 10, and 13 share their boundary with the nearby reserve forest. By 2015, a total of 3,375 tribal families had received Record of Rights under the rehabilitation programme. However, by October 2023, only 1,834 families continued to live permanently in the rehabilitation area. Many other families returned to their original settlements because they faced several difficulties after resettlement, including problems in

adjusting to the new environment, lack of livelihood opportunities, and different forms of developmental challenges. (Manojkumar and Gregory, 2024)

4.1 CASES

CASE A

A 35-year-old woman is the wife of Shibu, a daily wage labourer, and the mother of two children. She previously worked under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). However, although the scheme promises 100 days of work, she receives only about 50 to 60 days of employment in a year. Around fifteen years ago, her family migrated from Odanthodu in Kannur district to the Aralam Rehabilitation Settlement after receiving one acre of land through a government rehabilitation programme. The main reason for migration was the shortage of land in their native place and the hope of owning land in Aralam. Some of their relatives also settled in different blocks of Aralam, while others continue to live on their own land in their native village.

At present, the woman and her family live in a house provided by the government. However, the house has very limited facilities. Even after many years, the construction of the house has not been completed. Before moving to Aralam, they lived in a thatched house in Odanthodu. According to the woman, that house offered better living conditions and facilities than their present house. The current house consists of two small rooms, a small hall, and a very narrow kitchen. The condition of the house is poor, with cracks on the floor and walls. The kitchen does not have a proper door; instead, a sack is used as a cover. The doors of the rooms are damaged, and the windows are broken and covered with pieces of cloth.

The family has very few basic household facilities. They do not have chairs to sit on or beds to sleep on. Since there are no cupboards to store clothes, they keep them on the floor. For cooking, they use a traditional firewood stove instead of a gas stove. The family collects firewood from their own land and builds a small shed to store it during the rainy season. The woman prefers cooking with firewood because she believes food cooked on a wood stove tastes better than food cooked with gas. At the same time, she feels that cooking with firewood in a closed kitchen may create health problems because of the smoke.

Another major problem faced by the family is the lack of electricity. When electricity connections were provided in the area, their house construction had not been completed, so they did not receive a connection. Although they later submitted applications to different authorities, they have still not received electricity. As a result, the children study at night using

candlelight and kerosene lamps. This negatively affects their education. They also depend on neighbours for charging mobile phones and using other electrical devices. The absence of electricity keeps the family away from modern facilities and contributes to their social and economic disadvantages.

Water scarcity is another serious issue faced by the family. Since they do not have a well of their own, they depend on neighbours for drinking water. Although the house has a toilet, it does not have a bathroom. Therefore, they use a nearby river for bathing and washing clothes. The woman says that they did not face such water-related difficulties while living in their native place. During summer, when water levels become low, they dig small pits near the riverbank to collect water. Water is carried home on their heads. As they do not have enough containers for storage, they can keep only a small quantity of water in a few buckets. These conditions increase the workload of women in the family and create hygiene-related difficulties.

Financial difficulties have also greatly affected the family. According to the woman, her husband no longer gets regular work as he did before migration. Earlier, he used to find work regularly in construction, carpentry, and quarry-related jobs. However, such employment opportunities are limited within the Aralam settlement area. As a result, the family income has decreased significantly. The earnings from daily labour are not sufficient to meet household expenses. To manage their children's educational expenses and other needs, the family has borrowed money. During the reopening of schools, they often take loans to purchase books, uniforms, and study materials. Repaying these debts has become a major burden. At times, the family struggles even to meet their basic needs.

For daily necessities, the family depends on a small local shop. However, they must travel outside Aralam to purchase many essential items. This requires spending around ₹200–₹300 on auto-rickshaw transportation, which increases their financial burden. For minor illnesses, they visit the hospital located in the Seventh Block of Aralam. However, serious health conditions require treatment in hospitals outside the settlement. The costs of transportation and medical care place additional pressure on the family's already difficult financial situation.

The family's food habits also reflect their economic limitations. They are unable to afford nutritious food regularly. At present, they mainly depend on the public ration system for their food needs. During periods of low income, they survive by purchasing only basic food items such as green chillies, onions, and tomatoes. The woman worries that this may negatively affect

the health and growth of her children. The imbalance between family income and household expenses has created a constant state of uncertainty in their lives.

Adjusting to the new social environment in Aralam was not easy for the woman. Since people from different regions had settled there, she initially found it difficult to build close relationships with neighbours. Over time, she developed friendships and became familiar with the community. Nevertheless, she still misses her friends, neighbours, and relatives from her native village. She values the social unity and mutual support that existed in her former community. The emotional loss of being separated from her old social environment continues to affect her.

Despite these difficulties, the family continues to preserve its cultural traditions. Rituals and practices such as “Kakkappattu,” which is performed during death-related ceremonies, are still followed both before and after migration. These cultural practices form an important part of their identity and social life. The woman believes that following traditional customs and beliefs provides emotional strength and helps the family adjust to new circumstances.

The woman also expressed disappointment regarding the decision to migrate to Aralam. Although the family received land, they have been unable to cultivate it because of frequent disturbances caused by wild animals. Wild boars, elephants, and monkeys often destroy crops, making farming unproductive. The family migrated with the expectation that owning land would improve their living conditions. However, because the land cannot be used effectively, many of these expectations have not been fulfilled. The lack of income from agriculture has increased their disappointment.

The inability of both the woman and her husband to secure regular employment has further worsened the family’s financial problems. As the children grow older, educational expenses and other household needs continue to increase. The woman constantly worries about her children's future education and employment opportunities. Debt, irregular work, lack of basic facilities, and the rising cost of living have affected her mental well-being. She stated that on many nights she is unable to sleep because of worries about these issues. Feelings of uncertainty about the future and disappointment over not achieving the expected standard of living are frequently expressed by her.

According to the woman, rehabilitation should not be limited to providing land and housing alone. It should be a comprehensive development process that addresses the social, economic, educational, and health needs of the people. Her experiences highlight the importance of

ensuring basic infrastructure, livelihood opportunities, access to services, and social support systems for families living in rehabilitation settlements.

CASE 2

A 59-year-old woman, has been living in the Aralam resettlement area with her family for the past 19 years. Before resettlement, she was a native of Mananthavady in Wayanad district. The lack of sufficient land and the hope of finding better livelihood opportunities were the main reasons for migrating to Aralam. In her native place, she worked as a daily wage labourer and had access to various employment opportunities, including domestic work and construction work. On some days, she would work at construction sites until noon and then continue with domestic work in the afternoon. However, after moving to Aralam, opportunities for domestic work, construction work, and other forms of employment reduced significantly.

At present, she mainly depends on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme for her livelihood. However, work under this scheme is not available regularly. She receives only about 72 days of employment in a year. As a result, the family's income is unstable and insufficient to meet their daily needs.

Her husband suffers from serious health problems, particularly heart-related diseases and high cholesterol. Due to his poor health condition, he is unable to engage in any form of physical labour. This has further worsened the family's financial condition. Although health workers visit their home twice a week and provide medicines, any specialized treatment related to his heart condition requires visits to private hospitals, leading to significant medical expenses. According to the family, government health facilities are not always adequate or effective in meeting their healthcare needs.

Her children also live with the family. Their primary sources of support are the income earned through MGNREGA and government ration supplies. However, these resources are not sufficient to meet all household expenses, particularly medical costs.

Health issues among the grandchildren are another major concern. The children frequently suffer from illnesses such as fever and cough. Initially, the family sought treatment at the nearby hospital located in the 7th Block of Aralam. However, as the children did not recover completely, they were forced to seek treatment from private hospitals, which increased the family's financial burden.

Housing is another serious challenge faced by the family. When they were resettled in Aralam, they were provided with a house by the government. Over time, however, the house became severely damaged and unsafe for living. Considering their poor living conditions, the family applied again for housing assistance and received approval for the construction of a new house. The construction work is currently in progress.

Meanwhile, the family continues to live in their old house, which is very small and lacks basic facilities. Since there are six family members, space is extremely limited. The kitchen itself is being used as a bedroom. Cooking is carried out in a temporary shed outside the house. The walls of the house are cracked and damaged, while doors and windows are absent and have been replaced with pieces of cloth. This creates serious safety concerns, especially for young children.

The situation becomes even more difficult during the rainy season. Water leaks into the house, making it hard to sleep and carry out daily activities. The family lacks basic household furniture such as beds, study tables for the children, and cupboards for storing clothes. Drying clothes during the rainy season is also a major challenge.

Water scarcity is another significant issue faced by the family. They do not own a well and therefore depend on the Panchayat well for their water needs. To collect water, they must walk long distances, sometimes several kilometres. Carrying heavy loads of water places considerable physical strain on them, especially considering their age and existing health conditions.

Since the family consists of many members, their water requirements are high. She reported that they need to fetch water more than five times a day to meet their daily needs. During the rainy season, they collect rainwater, which reduces their dependence on the well to some extent. However, they still have to fetch drinking water from the Panchayat well.

There are also safety concerns regarding the Panchayat well. Although the water is considered clean, the protective nets installed around the well are frequently stolen. Ropes and buckets used for drawing water are also often stolen during the night, creating additional difficulties for the family.

Sanitation facilities are inadequate as well. Although the family has a toilet, they do not have a proper bathroom. As a result, they depend on a nearby river for bathing and washing clothes. This is inconvenient and poses safety risks, particularly for women and children.

Waste management is another issue in the locality. Members of the Haritha Karma Sena do not regularly collect plastic waste from their area. Consequently, the family is forced to burn plastic waste. Although they are aware that this practice is harmful to both health and the environment, they have no other option. They try to store plastic waste in bags, but eventually end up burning it.

Cultural beliefs also influence the family's way of life. Menstruating women are considered impure within their community. During menstruation, women are isolated in a separate room and are not allowed to enter the kitchen or touch others, especially elders. Separate utensils are provided for them to eat. These practices are still strictly followed in the household.

Traditional cultural practices such as Theyyam continue to exist within the community, but according to her, they are gradually disappearing. Many elders who possessed knowledge about these rituals have passed away, and the younger generation shows little interest in continuing them. As a result, these cultural traditions are slowly fading away.

Agriculture is another area where the family faces difficulties. Although they were provided with one acre of land as part of the resettlement programme, they are unable to utilize it effectively. The main reason is the frequent destruction of crops by wild animals. In the past, they cultivated crops such as banana and cashew, but increasing wildlife intrusion has made farming extremely difficult.

She expressed regret about moving to Aralam. She stated that life in her native place was better, as there were more employment opportunities and stronger social relationships. Due to the non-payment of land tax, the family has lost access to the land they owned in their native place.

Social connections have also weakened after resettlement. Although some families from their community also migrated to Aralam, only a few remain in their native village. Since she is unable to visit them frequently, she mainly maintains contact with them through phone calls.

CASE 3

A 46-year-old woman is originally from Chedikulam in Kannur district. She has been living in Aralam for about 20 years. She moved there believing that she would get better living conditions and more opportunities. In the beginning, she worked as a temporary agricultural labourer in the farm and earned her livelihood through that work. Later, she developed a minor eye problem and was no longer able to continue working. This health issue greatly affected her ability to earn an income and pushed her family into financial difficulties.

She has two children, but both of them are currently unemployed. One of her children used to work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA). However, the work is not available now, and it is not regular enough to provide a steady income. At present, goat rearing is the family's only source of income. The government ration is also very important for their survival. She said that without ration support, it would be difficult for the family to meet even their basic food needs.

When they first came to Aralam, they were given land in the 13th Block. However, because of severe elephant attacks and wildlife disturbances, they later moved to the 7th Block. The situation in the 13th Block was very dangerous. People were afraid to step outside their houses even during the daytime. The constant fear of elephants affected their daily life and livelihood activities. Because of these problems, the family decided to relocate.

She said that many families living near her in the 13th Block had already left the area because of elephant threats. Even vehicles were reluctant to travel through the roads there because of the danger from wild animals. She heard about an empty house in the 7th Block from other people and moved there.

However, the land where she now lives in the 7th Block does not have official ownership documents (pattayam). Because of this, she cannot do large-scale farming or make permanent improvements to the land. Wildlife disturbances still occur in the 7th Block, but they are less severe and mostly happen at night.

The house where she currently lives is very small and lacks basic facilities. Since it is not her own house, she does not have electricity, a bathroom, or a private well. She depends on a nearby house for water. Carrying water home in buckets on her head is physically exhausting, she said.

Since there is no electricity, she mainly uses candles for lighting at night. After 6 PM, she is afraid to step outside because of the darkness. She said that if an elephant comes near the house, they may not even see it because there is no proper lighting. For many years, she has requested local promoters and ward members to install a street light near her house.

Recently, a street light was installed, but it worked only for two days and then stopped functioning. She questioned whether such facilities are installed only for namesake rather than for actual use. This shows her frustration with the lack of accountability in local development activities.

There is no gas stove in her house, so she cooks using a firewood stove. Collecting firewood from the forest is difficult and risky because of the presence of wild animals.

She also explained that there is no proper hospital service available in the farm area during the night. Although there is a hospital, it mostly functions only during the daytime. If someone needs emergency medical care at night, reaching a hospital becomes very difficult. She said, “Even if someone is seriously ill at night, vehicles will not come when called because people are afraid for their own lives. Even ambulances do not operate at night.”

In such situations, they must first inform promoters or local representatives. These officials then contact the forest department, and only after that may a vehicle become available. Until then, patients have to wait helplessly. She pointed out that such delays can be life-threatening. She strongly felt that reaching a hospital during emergencies is a major struggle.

Although there is a small shop nearby, it does not provide all the necessary items. Therefore, they have to travel outside the area for many essential goods, usually spending around ₹300 on auto-rickshaw charges. This creates an additional financial burden. Similarly, they must travel to hospitals outside Aralam for some medical treatments, which increases their expenses further.

Some of her relatives still live in her native place. She occasionally visits them and stays there for a few days during family functions and other occasions. However, her relatives are afraid to visit her current home because of the wildlife threat and lack of facilities. This causes her emotional distress, as she worries about losing family connections.

Since there are very few houses near her residence, she often feels lonely. She does not have people nearby to talk to or share her problems with. The lack of social interaction negatively affects her mental well-being and creates a feeling of emotional emptiness.

While speaking about local governance, she said that promoters and ward members visit the area mainly during election periods. According to her, they are not available when people genuinely need help. She criticized them by saying, “The people in the office are only there to receive their salary. They sit comfortably under a fan, but they do not care about the struggles of the tribal people living here.”

She further added that filing complaints is often useless because no action is taken. She said, “Whether we live or die does not matter to them. If someone dies because of an elephant attack,

there will be discussions and protests for two days. After that, everything is forgotten.” She expressed these feelings with deep disappointment and frustration.

CASE 4

A 67-year-old man, has been living in the Aralam resettlement area for more than twenty years. Before resettlement, he lived in Kanichar in Kannur district with his wife and three children. During that period, their life was relatively stable and was characterized by strong social relationships and community support. Their family was relocated to Aralam after being allotted one acre of land.

After moving to Aralam, all three of his children got married and now live separately with their own families. However, they continue to maintain a relationship with their parents by visiting during holidays and providing essential items and financial assistance whenever possible.

Previously, he worked as a carpenter and this was the main source of livelihood for his family. However, after experiencing three severe stroke-like health attacks, he became physically unable to continue working. This brought a major change in his life and pushed the family into financial hardship. His wife, who had previously worked under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), is also unable to work now following a gallbladder stone surgery. As a result, both of them have not a regular source of income. Their main source of survival is his pension of ₹1,600 per month and the limited support provided by their children. The children themselves depend on irregular daily wage work and therefore cannot support their parents consistently. This financial instability makes it difficult for the family to meet even their basic needs, including food and medicines. Both Velli and his wife require continuous medical treatment and medication.

Access to healthcare is one of the major challenges in their lives. The nearest hospital is located in the Seventh Block, which requires at least a thirty-minute journey. The area is surrounded by dense forest, and the presence of wild animals, especially elephants, makes travel to the hospital frightening and risky. During emergencies, particularly at night, transportation becomes a serious problem. There are no reliable ambulance services available, and even when they try to arrange a vehicle, drivers are often unwilling to come because of safety concerns. In such situations, they have to depend on the Forest Department and wait for its vehicle to arrive. He expressed concern that such delays could even put lives at risk.

When the family first arrived in Aralam, they lived in a temporary shed. Three years later, they were provided with a government-built house. Over time, however, the condition of the house

deteriorated and it is now on the verge of collapse. A new house is currently being constructed under government housing scheme, but until it is completed, they continue to live in the old house with inadequate facilities. They do not face any major difficulty in accessing water because they dug their own well. However, waste management remains a serious issue. The Haritha Karma Sena has never come to collect plastic waste from the area. As a result, plastic waste accumulated over the years has been stored in sacks. Since they have no other disposal option, they are forced to burn the plastic, even though they are aware of its harmful effects.

Although there is a small shop nearby, it does not provide all the essential items they need. Therefore, they have to travel outside Aralam, often for at least an hour, to purchase certain necessities. This increases their expenses and adds to their financial burden.

One of the most painful aspects of life in Aralam is the absence of social relationships and community support. In their previous settlement, people shared strong bonds and helped one another. They would visit nearby towns in the evenings, spend time with friends, and engage in conversations. During illness or emergencies, neighbors would immediately come forward to help and arrange transportation to hospitals. In contrast, he describes his current life as one of isolation and social disconnection. He stated that it feels like living in a prison. In fact, he remarked that even in prison people can at least see and talk to others, whereas here even that is not possible. No one visits them or offers support. The mutual assistance that existed in their previous community is completely absent in their current environment. Because of this emotional isolation, he and his wife sometimes feel the need to visit their native place simply to meet familiar people and share their feelings.

In the past, whenever they faced financial difficulties, they could rely on their neighbors for support. However, in their current settlement, most people are themselves economically disadvantaged and therefore unable to provide any assistance.

The one acre of land allotted to them has brought no economic benefit. The area is surrounded by forest, and frequent disturbances from wild animals such as elephants and wild boars make farming nearly impossible. Consequently, they are unable to cultivate crops or earn any income from the land. When they first arrived in Aralam, they cultivated crops such as cocoa, banana, rubber, and cashew. However, due to continuous destruction caused by wild animals, they are no longer able to cultivate any crops. As a result, the land generates no income. He expressed dissatisfaction about being relocated to such a forest area and stated that the land is practically useless because of the constant threat posed by wildlife.

He also reflected on the changes that have occurred in his personal life and behavior. In the past, he was actively involved in social interactions within the community. His close association with Christian communities had influenced his way of speaking and communicating. He mentioned that alcohol consumption was common in his previous settlement and that he was also part of that culture. However, after his health problems, he completely stopped drinking alcohol. Although some people in his current locality continue to engage in drinking and conflicts, he chooses not to involve himself. He believes this is largely because he has not been able to develop meaningful relationships with the people around him. Earlier, he used to take an active role in resolving community issues, but now he remains distant and uninvolved in social matters.

CHAPTER 5
THEMATIC ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the thematic analysis and discussion of the findings derived from the four case narratives of tribal families residing in the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Settlement. The purpose of this chapter is to explore and interpret the lived experiences of the participants by identifying the major patterns and meanings that emerged from their narratives. Since the study adopted a qualitative multiple case study design, thematic analysis was employed to systematically organise and interpret the rich qualitative data obtained through in-depth interviews.

Although each participant had different personal backgrounds and life histories, the findings revealed several common issues that consistently appeared across all four cases. These recurring issues were organised into four major themes: (1) economic Insecurity, (2) Inadequate Housing and Basic Infrastructure, (3) Human-Wildlife Conflict (4) Loss of Social Relationships, Weak Community Support, and Changes in Cultural Continuity. Together, these themes provide a holistic understanding of the multidimensional challenges experienced by tribal families after rehabilitation and demonstrate that rehabilitation outcomes extend far beyond the provision of land and housing.

The findings indicate that the experiences of the participants are shaped by the interaction of multiple structural and contextual factors. Economic insecurity was closely linked with unemployment, reduced agricultural productivity, health-related limitations, and increasing household expenses. Similarly, inadequate infrastructure, poor housing, poor access to healthcare, water supply lack of electricity and frequent human–wildlife conflict collectively affected the safety, well-being, and quality of life of the participants. The weakening of social relationships and community support further contributed to emotional distress and social isolation, highlighting that rehabilitation involves not only physical relocation but also profound changes in people's social and cultural lives.

Overall, this chapter seeks to move beyond a descriptive presentation of participants' experiences by providing an analytical understanding of the long-term impacts of rehabilitation. Through thematic analysis and theoretical interpretation, it highlights the strengths and limitations of the rehabilitation programme and provides a foundation for the recommendations presented in the subsequent chapter. This analysis contributes to a broader understanding of tribal rehabilitation by demonstrating that sustainable rehabilitation requires integrated interventions that address livelihood security, infrastructure, healthcare,

environmental safety, and social well-being, rather than focusing solely on land distribution and housing provision.

5.2 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Economic insecurity

Economic insecurity emerged as the main and most common theme across all four case narratives. Although the rehabilitation programme provided one acre of agricultural land to each family, the findings show that land alone was not enough to restore their livelihoods. Instead, participants explained that their financial condition gradually became worse after rehabilitation. Displacement led to the loss of stable employment, reduced agricultural production, greater dependence on government welfare schemes, and continuous financial uncertainty. These findings show that rehabilitation failed to restore the productive livelihood systems that families had before displacement.

Loss of stable employment

Across all four cases, participants compared their lives before rehabilitation with their present economic situation. In their native villages, they had access to different types of work throughout the year, including construction work, carpentry, domestic work, quarry work, and agricultural labour. These jobs provided more than one source of income and helped families meet their daily expenses. However, after moving to the Aralam Rehabilitation Settlement, employment opportunities became very limited because of the area's geographical isolation and lack of local economic activities. The main source of employment was the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). However, instead of the promised 100 days of work, participants reported receiving only about 50–72 days of employment each year.

The lack of employment affected more than just household income. Families also lost their financial independence and became increasingly dependent on government welfare schemes. Ration supplies, old-age pensions, and MGNREGS wages became the main sources of livelihood. However, participants said that these forms of support were not enough to meet even their basic household needs. This shows that the rehabilitation programme did not create stable and sustainable income opportunities.

Unproductive agricultural land

Another major reason for economic insecurity was the inability to use the land given through the rehabilitation programme. In all four cases, participants reported that elephants, wild boars,

and monkeys regularly destroyed their crops. Many families initially tried to grow crops such as banana, cocoa, rubber, and cashew with the hope of earning a living from agriculture. However, repeated crop destruction caused heavy financial losses, forcing many families to stop farming. As a result, the one acre of land provided to each family became an unproductive asset that could not improve their economic condition.

These experiences show that land ownership alone cannot restore livelihoods. Land can provide economic security only when it can be used productively. Participants expressed disappointment that the agricultural land promised through rehabilitation did not become a reliable source of income. Therefore, the success of rehabilitation should not be measured only by the amount of land distributed, but by whether the land helps families earn a stable income. In Aralam, human wildlife conflict made agricultural land unproductive and weakened the goal of economic rehabilitation.

Health related loss of income

Health problems further increased economic insecurity. As family expenses increased, illness reduced people's ability to work and earn an income. Older participants and those with chronic illnesses had very limited employment opportunities in the rehabilitation area. This directly reduced household income while increasing medical expenses.

Financial difficulties also forced many families into debt. Because their income was low and irregular, they often borrowed money to meet essential needs such as children's education, medical treatment, and travel expenses. One participant explained that loans were needed at the beginning of every school year to buy uniforms, books, and other school materials. Another participant described how expensive treatment in private hospitals increased family debt. Since families did not have a stable income, they found it difficult to repay these loans. As a result, borrowing money became a regular part of their lives rather than a temporary solution.

Food insecurity and poor nutrition

Food insecurity was another important outcome of economic insecurity. Many families depended mainly on ration supplies and low-cost vegetables. Because they could not afford nutritious food, mothers expressed concern about their children's health and physical growth. This shows that economic insecurity affects not only household income but also nutrition, child development, and long-term human development.

The findings also show that economic insecurity was caused by several interconnected factors. It was not only the result of unemployment. Limited job opportunities, crop loss due to wild animals, health problems, geographical isolation, transport costs, and increasing household expenses all worked together to create long-term poverty. These problems did not exist separately. Instead, they reinforced each other and pushed families into deeper economic hardship.

Some differences were found between younger and older families. Younger participants tried to earn income through MGNREGS and other daily wage work, while older participants depended mainly on pensions and financial support from their children. However, because their children also had unstable employment, this support was limited. Therefore, although economic insecurity affected families at all stages of life, its impact differed depending on age, health condition, and family structure.

Overall, the rehabilitation programme succeeded in physically relocating families but failed to restore their economic security and livelihoods. Providing land alone was not enough. Without productive livelihood opportunities, stable employment, protection from wild animals, and access to markets, many families continue to live in long-term poverty. These findings suggest that successful rehabilitation should focus not only on land distribution but also on comprehensive economic rehabilitation that supports sustainable livelihoods.

Inadequate housing and basic infrastructure

Housing and basic infrastructure emerged as one of the major themes across all four case studies. Although all participants received a house and one acre of land through the Aralam Rehabilitation Programme, the findings show that providing a house alone has not ensured safe and decent living conditions. Participants described poor housing, lack of electricity, limited access to safe drinking water and sanitation, poor transport facilities, and weak public services. These problems affected their health, education, livelihood, safety, and overall quality of life. The findings suggest that the rehabilitation programme focused mainly on relocating families rather than creating a safe and sustainable place to live.

Poor housing conditions

A common issue in all the cases was the poor condition of government provided houses. In Case, the participant explained that even after fifteen years, her house was still unfinished. The walls and floors had cracks, the kitchen had no proper door, and broken windows were covered with cloth. She said that the thatched house in her native village was more comfortable than

her present house. This shows that rehabilitation did not necessarily improve housing quality. Participants judged their houses not only by ownership but also by their safety, comfort, and usefulness.

Similar problems were found in Cases B and D. In Case B, six family members lived in a very small house where the kitchen was also used as a bedroom. Because there was not enough space inside, cooking was done in a temporary shed outside. During the rainy season, rainwater leaked through the roof, making daily life and sleeping difficult. In Case D, the participant said that the government-built house had become unsafe and was close to collapsing. Although approval had been given for a new house, the family was still living in the damaged house while waiting for construction to begin. These findings show that poor maintenance and lack of follow-up support have reduced the long-term benefits of rehabilitation housing.

Many families also lacked basic household items such as beds, chairs, cupboards, and study tables. Clothes were kept on the floor because there was no storage space, and children did not have a proper place to study. This shows that housing problems are not limited to the building itself but also include the lack of essential household facilities needed for a decent life. These conditions negatively affected children's education and the dignity of everyday living.

Lack of electricity

Lack of electricity was another major problem. In Cases A and C, families had no electricity even after submitting several requests to local authorities. In Case A, the participant explained that her house did not receive an electricity connection because it was incomplete when electrification work was carried out. Later applications were also ignored. As a result, children studied using candles and kerosene lamps, and the family depended on neighbours to charge their mobile phones. The absence of electricity limited education, communication, and access to modern household facilities.

Case C also showed that the lack of electricity created safety problems. The participant explained that darkness at night increased the fear of elephant attacks because family members could not see wild animals approaching. Although a streetlight was installed, it worked for only two days before becoming unusable. She questioned whether such infrastructure projects were carried out only to show government action rather than to provide lasting services. This reflects concerns about the quality, maintenance, and accountability of public infrastructure.

Water scarcity

Water shortage was another common problem. Only one family had its own well, while the others depended on neighbours' wells, rivers, or Panchayat wells for drinking water. Women walked long distances several times a day carrying heavy buckets of water. During summer, when rivers dried up, they dug small pits near the riverbank to collect water. These experiences show that water scarcity increased women's workload and reduced household hygiene and sanitation.

Inadequate Sanitation facilities and poor waste management

Sanitation facilities were also inadequate. Although some houses had toilets, many did not have bathrooms and therefore depended on nearby rivers for bathing and washing clothes. Participants said this was inconvenient and unsafe, especially for women and children. The lack of private bathing facilities also affected privacy and dignity. These findings suggest that rehabilitation addressed sanitation only partly and failed to provide complete household facilities.

Waste management was another neglected issue. Participants in Cases B and D said that the Haritha Karma Sena rarely came to collect plastic waste. As a result, families stored plastic waste in sacks or burned it, even though they knew it was harmful to health and the environment. This shows weaknesses in environmental service delivery within the rehabilitation settlement.

The study also found problems with public infrastructure. Local shops sold only a limited number of essential goods, so families had to travel outside the settlement to buy basic items. Each trip by auto-rickshaw cost around ₹200–300, which increased the financial burden on already low-income families. The remote location of the settlement made everyday living more expensive.

Access to healthcare was also difficult. Although basic health services were available within the settlement, specialised treatment required travelling to hospitals outside Aralam.

The findings also show that these infrastructure problems are closely connected. Poor housing, lack of electricity, water shortage, poor transport, and weak public services together create multiple disadvantages. For example, the lack of electricity affects children's education, reduces communication, and increases the risk of wild animal attacks at night. Water shortage increases women's workload, reduces hygiene, and contributes to health problems. Poor

transport raises healthcare costs and limits access to jobs and markets. Therefore, infrastructure problems should be understood as interconnected rather than separate issues.

Overall, the findings show that the rehabilitation programme has achieved physical relocation but has not provided adequate living conditions. Even after many years, participants believed that rehabilitation remains incomplete because many essential services are still lacking. The study suggests that successful rehabilitation should go beyond providing land and houses. It should also ensure reliable electricity, safe drinking water, proper sanitation, transport, waste management, healthcare access, and regular maintenance of public infrastructure. Without these basic services, rehabilitation cannot fully improve the wellbeing and quality of life of displaced tribal families.

Human Wildlife Conflict

Human wildlife conflict was one of the most important themes found in all four case studies. In many rehabilitation programmes, livelihood problems are mainly caused by economic factors. However, the experiences of families in the Aralam Rehabilitation Settlement show that environmental risks have become a major part of their daily lives. Frequent encounters with elephants, wild boars and monkeys have affected farming, employment, travel, access to healthcare, mental wellbeing and social relationships. Therefore, human wildlife conflict is not only an environmental problem but also a major barrier to successful rehabilitation. Although families received land through the rehabilitation programme, they are unable to use it safely and productively because of wildlife attacks.

Crop destruction

Participants in all four cases said that wildlife was the main reason why farming failed. Every family received one acre of land, but repeated crop damage by elephants, wild boars and monkeys prevented them from using the land as a source of income. Families started growing crops such as banana, cocoa, rubber and cashew with the hope of becoming financially independent. However, repeated crop losses caused serious financial problems, and many families eventually stopped farming. As a result, the land given under the rehabilitation programme did not help restore their livelihoods. Instead of becoming a valuable resource, the land became a source of frustration and disappointment.

The findings also show that wildlife conflict affects not only farming but also the safety and movement of residents. Participants said they live in constant fear, especially during the evening and at night. In Case C, the participant explained that she avoids going outside after

sunset because there is a high risk of meeting elephants in the dark. The lack of electricity and working streetlights makes the situation even more dangerous. This shows how poor infrastructure and wildlife threats together create an unsafe living environment.

For some families, wildlife attacks forced them to move to another place even within the rehabilitation settlement. Case C clearly shows this situation. The participant first received land in the 13th Block but later moved to the 7th Block because elephant attacks made life very difficult. She said that people were afraid to leave their houses even during the daytime, and many neighbouring families had left the area. Vehicles also avoided travelling through the locality because of elephants. Although wildlife problems continued in the new place, they were less severe than before. This shows that moving within the settlement became a way for families to protect themselves.

The case studies also show that wildlife conflict makes it difficult to access healthcare. Participants in Cases C and D said that during medical emergencies it is very difficult to reach hospitals. At night, ambulances and private vehicles are often unwilling to travel through forest roads because of elephants. Families first have to contact local promoters, who then coordinate with the Forest Department before transport can be arranged using a Forest Department vehicle. Participants said that these delays can be life-threatening during serious emergencies. This shows that environmental risks affect not only safety but also access to timely medical care.

Unsafe living environment

Wildlife also affects everyday activities. Participants said that collecting firewood, going to nearby shops, visiting neighbours and travelling after dark have all become risky. In Case C, the participant explained that collecting firewood is dangerous because it requires entering areas where wild animals are often seen. These experiences show that wildlife conflict disrupts daily life and increases both physical and emotional stress.

The findings also show that wildlife conflict leads to social isolation. Participants said that their relatives from their native villages are often unwilling to visit the rehabilitation settlement because they fear elephant attacks and the lack of basic facilities. As a result, human–wildlife conflict weakens family relationships and reduces social interaction.

The findings further show that wildlife conflict has influenced how participants view the rehabilitation programme. Many participants said they regret moving to Aralam because the land they received cannot be used properly. They believed that the rehabilitation programme

did not fully consider the environmental risks of settling people close to forests. Therefore, they feel that the rehabilitation programme is incomplete.

Participants also said that there are no effective systems to protect crops, ensure safe transport or manage wildlife problems. Although they reported these issues to the authorities many times, they felt that no meaningful action was taken. The lack of proper fencing, working streetlights and effective wildlife control measures has increased their feelings of insecurity and neglect. These experiences suggest that rehabilitation policies have not given enough attention to environmental risks.

Overall, the findings show that human wildlife conflict is not just another problem after rehabilitation. It is a key factor that determines whether rehabilitation is successful or not. Giving land alone is not enough if families cannot farm because of repeated wildlife attacks. Likewise, housing, healthcare and other basic facilities cannot fully improve people's lives if they continue to live in fear. Therefore, successful rehabilitation in forest-edge settlements requires livelihood support, effective wildlife management, safe transport, easy access to emergency healthcare and long-term environmental planning. Without addressing these environmental risks, rehabilitation cannot fully achieve its goal of improving the living conditions and socio-economic wellbeing of displaced tribal families.

Loss of social networks

Loss of social relationships and reduced community support emerged as one of the major themes across all four case narratives. Although the rehabilitation programme successfully relocated families to the Aralam Rehabilitation Settlement, it disrupted the close relationships with neighbours, relatives and the sense of community that had developed over many years in their native villages. All participants compared their present social life with their previous place of residence and explained that social interaction, mutual support and community life had reduced after rehabilitation. While some cultural traditions continue to exist, the findings show that displacement has weakened informal support systems and reduced opportunities for community participation. Therefore, rehabilitation is not only a process of physical relocation but also one that changes social relationships, community identity and cultural life.

A common pattern across all four cases was the loss of strong social networks after displacement. Before migration, participants lived in villages where neighbours, relatives and friends shared close relationships and supported each other during difficult times. Daily life included regular social interaction, collective activities and mutual help. However, participants

explained that it was difficult to build similar relationships in the rehabilitation settlement. Although many families belonged to the same tribal communities, they came from different villages, making it difficult to adjust to the new social environment.

Case A clearly shows the challenges of adjusting to a new social setting. The participant explained that it was difficult to make friends with neighbours because families had come from different places. Although she gradually became familiar with her neighbours, she still missed the friendships, social unity and emotional support she had in her native village. This shows that even after many years, the feeling of belonging to her old community had not been fully replaced.

Weak community support

The weakening of informal support systems was more visible among older participants. In Case D, the participant compared life before and after rehabilitation. In his native village, neighbours immediately helped during illness or emergencies by arranging transport and providing emotional support. Daily conversations and social gatherings were an important part of life. However, in Aralam, he described life as "living in a prison" because there were very few opportunities for social interaction. This shows that displacement resulted not only in relocation but also in the loss of everyday social relationships that supported emotional wellbeing.

The findings also show that economic hardship has reduced people's ability to help one another. Participants explained that neighbours in their native villages often provided financial help during difficult times. In contrast, most families in the rehabilitation settlement face similar financial problems, making it difficult to support each other. As a result, the traditional system of mutual support has become weaker.

Social isolation and loneliness

Geographical isolation and human wildlife conflict also contributed to reduced social relationships. In Case C, the participant explained that relatives were unwilling to visit because of elephant threats and the lack of basic facilities. Although she occasionally visited her native village during family functions, visits from relatives had become very rare. She felt sad that wildlife threats had affected family relationships. Similarly, because travelling outside the settlement is difficult after dark, opportunities for social interaction within the settlement are also limited.

Loneliness and emotional isolation were another important finding. In Case C, the participant explained that only a few houses were located nearby, and she often had no one with whom she could share her worries or daily experiences. The lack of regular social interaction made her feel lonely and affected her emotional wellbeing. This shows that social isolation is not simply the absence of relationships but an important psychosocial effect of rehabilitation.

Despite these changes, participants continued to preserve parts of their cultural identity. In Case A, the participant explained that traditional funeral rituals such as Kakkappattu are still practised after migration. She believed these customs give emotional strength and help families maintain their cultural identity. Similarly, Case B showed that traditional practices such as Theyyam still continue. However, participants expressed concern that these traditions are slowly disappearing because younger generations are showing less interest in learning them.

The findings also show that some traditional beliefs continue to influence everyday life. For example, in Case B, the participant described cultural practices related to menstruation, where women are temporarily separated and restricted from certain household activities. This shows that traditional customs continue even after displacement. At the same time, participants recognised that social change, migration and differences between generations are gradually changing these practices.

Overall, the findings indicate that rehabilitation has disrupted long-standing social relationships but has not created enough opportunities to rebuild community unity. Although participants have tried to adapt to their new environment while preserving some cultural traditions, they continue to experience loneliness, reduced social support and a weaker sense of belonging. Therefore, successful rehabilitation should not focus only on providing land and housing. It should also strengthen community participation, rebuild social relationships, protect cultural heritage and create opportunities for collective activities. Without addressing these social aspects, rehabilitation cannot be considered complete.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of the study titled "Experiences of Resettlement: The Case of the Aralam Farm." The findings are based on the experiences of tribal families who were resettled under the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Programme in Kannur District, Kerala. The data were collected through an interview guide and non-participant observation and analysed using thematic analysis. The findings are presented according to the research questions of the study.

6.2 FINDINGS

The study found that the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Programme has brought both positive changes and challenges to the lives of the resettled tribal families. The programme provided land and houses to the families. However, many participants still face problems related to livelihood, basic facilities, healthcare, education, and human-wildlife conflict. The findings show that although rehabilitation has improved some aspects of their lives, many challenges still remain, affecting their overall quality of life.

Research Question 1: How do resettled tribal families in Aralam farm experience economic challenges?

LOSS OF LIVELIHOOD AFTER REHABILITATION PUSHED FAMILIES INTO LONG-TERM ECONOMIC INSECURITY.

A major finding of the study is that all participants experienced a decline in livelihood opportunities after resettlement. Before migration, they earned income through different occupations such as construction work, carpentry, domestic work, agricultural labour, and quarry work. After moving to Aralam, these employment opportunities became very limited because of the isolated location of the settlement. Most families became dependent on MGNREGS, old-age pensions, and ration supplies. However, these sources of income were irregular and not enough to meet household expenses. The findings show that the rehabilitation programme improved land ownership but failed to restore sustainable livelihood opportunities. As a result, financial insecurity became a permanent part of everyday life.

ECONOMIC INSECURITY AFFECTED EVERY AREA OF FAMILY LIFE

The findings show that low and irregular income created many other problems within the family. Participants struggled to buy nutritious food, pay school expenses, meet medical costs, and manage daily household needs. Many families borrowed money for children's education,

healthcare, and transportation. Because they had no regular income, repaying these loans became difficult. As debt increased, families experienced continuous financial pressure and uncertainty about the future. Therefore, economic insecurity was not limited to income alone but also affected children's education, health, nutrition, and overall family well-being.

Research Question 2: How does human-wildlife conflict influence the everyday lives of resettled tribal families?

HUMAN–WILDLIFE CONFLICT AFFECTED BOTH PHYSICAL SAFETY AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

The study found that human wildlife conflict influenced much more than agriculture. Participants reported living with continuous fear of elephants and other wild animals. Many were afraid to leave their houses after sunset. Some participants explained that vehicles, including ambulances, often refused to enter the settlement at night because of wildlife threats. This delayed emergency medical treatment and increased the risk to life. Living under constant fear also caused stress, anxiety, sleeplessness, and emotional insecurity. Therefore, human–wildlife conflict became both an environmental and psychological challenge for rehabilitated families.

Research Question 3: How do resettled tribal families experience access to basic infrastructure and essential services in Aralam?

HOUSING SUPPORT ALONE DID NOT PROVIDE A SAFE AND DIGNIFIED LIVING ENVIRONMENT.

Although all families received houses through the rehabilitation programme, the study found that many of these houses were incomplete, damaged, overcrowded, or unsafe. Cracked walls, leaking roofs, broken windows, and lack of proper doors were common problems. Some families used the kitchen as a bedroom, while others cooked in temporary sheds outside the house. Basic household items such as beds, cupboards, chairs, and study tables were also absent in many homes. These findings show that housing quality is not determined only by ownership but also by safety, comfort, privacy, and access to basic household facilities.

LACK OF BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE REDUCED THE QUALITY OF DAILY LIFE.

The study found that many families continued to live without electricity, safe drinking water, proper sanitation, reliable transport, and regular waste management services. In some houses,

children studied using candles and kerosene lamps because there was no electricity. Women spent several hours every day collecting water from wells or rivers. Poor transportation increased the cost of reaching markets and hospitals. Waste collection services were either absent or irregular, forcing families to burn plastic waste. These findings show that inadequate infrastructure affected education, health, hygiene, safety, and everyday living conditions.

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE REMAINED DIFFICULT DESPITE REHABILITATION.

The study found that healthcare services available inside the settlement were limited. Basic treatment was available, but specialised medical care required travelling outside Aralam. Because of poor roads, high transport costs, and wildlife threats, many participants delayed treatment or depended on private hospitals, increasing their financial burden. Older participants with chronic illnesses faced even greater difficulties. This finding shows that physical relocation without adequate healthcare access cannot ensure improved well-being.

Research Question 4: How has resettlement influenced social relationships and community life among tribal families?

REHABILITATION WEAKENED TRADITIONAL SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT.

Another important finding is that rehabilitation changed the social life of tribal families. Participants frequently compared their present social life with their previous villages, where neighbours helped one another during illness, financial problems, and emergencies. After resettlement, these relationships became weaker because families were scattered across different areas and had fewer opportunities for social interaction. Older participants especially described feelings of loneliness, isolation, and emotional distress. These findings suggest that social relationships are an important part of successful rehabilitation and should receive greater attention.

CULTURAL IDENTITY CONTINUES, BUT CULTURAL CONTINUITY IS SLOWLY CHANGING.

The study found that many participants continue to practise traditional rituals, beliefs, and customs even after rehabilitation. These cultural practices provide a sense of identity, belonging, and emotional strength. At the same time, participants also reported that some traditional practices are gradually disappearing because younger generations show less interest

in preserving them. This finding suggests that rehabilitation influences not only people's economic and social life but also their cultural continuity.

THE REHABILITATION PROGRAMME ACHIEVED PHYSICAL RELOCATION BUT DID NOT ACHIEVE COMPLETE REHABILITATION.

The study found that the Aralam Rehabilitation Programme successfully relocated tribal families by providing one acre of land and government-built houses. However, the experiences of all four participants show that rehabilitation ended mainly with physical relocation. Although families received land and housing, many important aspects of life such as stable livelihood, quality housing, healthcare, safety, public services, and social support remained inadequate. Participants expected that rehabilitation would improve their living conditions, but most of them reported that their present life is more difficult than before migration. This finding shows that rehabilitation should not be measured only by the number of houses or land distributed, but also by the improvement in people's overall quality of life.

6.3 SUGGESTIONS

Strengthen Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities

The government should create more regular employment opportunities for rehabilitated tribal families instead of depending mainly on MGNREGS. Skill development programmes, vocational training, self-employment schemes, and small-scale income-generating activities should be introduced according to the needs and skills of the tribal community.

Ensure Basic Infrastructure

Every rehabilitation settlement should have reliable electricity, safe drinking water, proper sanitation facilities, street lighting, good internal roads, and regular waste management services. Basic infrastructure should be maintained continuously instead of only during the initial stages of rehabilitation.

Improve Housing Quality

Government agencies should regularly inspect rehabilitation houses and repair damaged buildings. Incomplete houses should be completed without delay. Housing support should include proper roofing, doors, windows, flooring, and enough living space for all family members. Housing programmes should focus on both quality and long-term safety.

Improve Healthcare Services

Primary healthcare services within the settlement should be strengthened. Mobile medical units and regular health camps should be organised, especially for older persons and people with chronic illnesses. Emergency ambulance services should be available at all times, including during the night. Better coordination between the community promoters and Forest Department is needed to ensure safe transport during emergencies.

Reduce Human-Wildlife Conflict

Effective measures should be taken to reduce human–wildlife conflict in the rehabilitation area. Solar fencing, elephant-proof trenches, early warning systems, watch towers, and rapid response teams should be strengthened. Compensation for crop damage should be provided quickly and fairly. Farmers should also receive technical support to cultivate crops that are less vulnerable to wildlife damage.

Strengthen Social Support Systems

Community-based organisations, self-help groups, youth groups, and elderly support groups should be encouraged to rebuild social relationships within the settlement. Community programmes, cultural events, and group activities can reduce loneliness and strengthen mutual support among families.

6.4 CONCLUSION

The present study, "Experiences of Resettlement: The Case of the Aralam Farm," was conducted to understand the life experiences of tribal families who were resettled under the Aralam Tribal Rehabilitation Programme in Kannur district, Kerala. The study examined how resettlement has affected their daily lives, especially their livelihood, housing, access to basic services, healthcare, social relationships, and overall quality of life. By listening to the experiences of the participants, the study tried to understand whether the goals of the rehabilitation programme have been achieved and what challenges still affect the lives of the resettled families.

The study concludes that rehabilitation is not a one-time activity of giving land and houses. It is a long-term social process. Although the Aralam Rehabilitation Programme was started to improve the living conditions of landless tribal families, the experiences shared by the participants show that the programme has been only partly successful. The families have received land and houses, but many of them still struggle to live a safe, secure, and dignified

life. This shows that providing physical assets alone is not enough to ensure sustainable development and social well-being.

The study also found that the different problems faced by the participants are closely connected. Economic problems, poor infrastructure, limited public services, health issues, human–wildlife conflict, and weak social support are not separate problems. They affect each other and together reduce the quality of life of the resettled families. Therefore, rehabilitation should be understood as a complete process that addresses the economic, social, physical, environmental, and psychological needs of people.

Another important conclusion is that the success of rehabilitation should not be measured only by the number of houses built or the amount of land distributed. A successful rehabilitation programme should help families use the resources provided to them, earn a stable income, access essential services, and live in a safe and supportive environment. It should also improve their confidence, dignity, and opportunities for a better future. From the experiences of the participants, it is clear that these goals have not yet been fully achieved in the Aralam Rehabilitation Settlement.

The study also shows that the location of the settlement has greatly affected the success of rehabilitation. The continuous threat of wild animals has reduced the benefits that families were expected to receive from the land given to them. This shows that environmental factors should be given greater importance while planning and implementing rehabilitation programmes. Rehabilitation policies should not only provide resources but also ensure that people can safely and productively use those resources.

The study also recognises the strength and resilience of the tribal families. Even though they face many hardships, they continue to adjust to their situation with courage and determination. They try to provide a better future for their children while preserving their traditional customs, cultural values, and community identity. Their experiences show not only the challenges of rehabilitation but also their patience, hope, and determination. Therefore, rehabilitation programmes should strengthen the abilities and capacities of tribal communities instead of treating them only as beneficiaries of welfare schemes.

From a social work perspective, the findings highlight the need for a rights-based, participatory, and people-centred approach to tribal rehabilitation. Tribal communities should be actively involved in identifying their needs, planning development programmes, implementing rehabilitation activities, and evaluating their results. Their opinions, experiences, and

traditional knowledge should be respected while making policies that affect their lives. Community participation can improve the effectiveness, sustainability, and acceptance of rehabilitation programmes.

The study also adds to the existing knowledge on tribal rehabilitation by presenting the experiences of the beneficiaries themselves. While many earlier studies mainly focused on policy implementation, land distribution, and socio-economic conditions, this study explains the everyday realities of life after resettlement. Understanding these experiences can help policymakers, government officials, social workers, and development professionals identify the weaknesses in existing rehabilitation programmes and develop better interventions in the future.

In conclusion, rehabilitation should not end with relocation. It should continue until families are able to achieve sustainable livelihoods, better living conditions, access to essential services, social security, and an improved quality of life. The experiences of the participants clearly show that real rehabilitation is achieved only when people can live with dignity, safety, equality, and hope. Therefore, future tribal rehabilitation programmes should follow a holistic and sustainable approach that addresses not only physical rehabilitation but also the economic, social, cultural, and environmental needs of tribal communities.

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ANNEXURES

INTERVIEW GUIDE

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Access to basic services and difficulties encountered therein- Access to drinking water, electricity, sanitation, health and education, transportation

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