EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ON

UGC- MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT
(MRP (H)/13-14/KLCA027/UGC-SWRO dated 15-Feb 2014)

TITLED “A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY DISADVANTAGE
ON THE BEHAVIOUR OF ADOLESCENTS”

By

TREESA T PULICKAL
Assistant professor
Department of Social Work
Vimala College, Thrissur
Kerala - 680 009
IMPACT OF COMMUNITY DISADVANTAGE ON THE BEHAVIOUR OF ADOLESCENTS IN DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES.

INTRODUCTION
The interaction between the individual and his/her context influences the behaviour of the individual. Since community is one of the dimensions of social context which is closer to families and individuals it is most likely to play an important role in individual’s development. It promotes values, goals and identities that are conducive to adaptive or maladaptive behavior in them. Living in a context characterized by widespread deprivation, few educational and livelihood opportunities, high rates of violence, and weak social ties increases the chances that children will have poor academic and behavioral outcomes. These features can be seen in socially and economically disadvantaged communities. In Kerala, despite the general improvement, such kinds of pockets of deprivation are visible in all the cities and villages of the state in the form of concentrated colonies and slum-like human settlements. Though behavioural issues have been part of all communities, adolescents and young people who live in the socially and economically disadvantaged pockets are more vulnerable and at high risk in developing deviant behaviour which needs genuine attention.

The study was conducted in disadvantaged communities of Kerala. It attempted to understand the behavior of adolescents in disadvantaged communities. The study tried to find out how the community disadvantage influences the adolescents and their behavior.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1. To understand the socio-economic context of the disadvantaged community
2. To measure the level of community disadvantage
3. To assess the behavioural issues of adolescents in the disadvantaged community
4. To understand the implementation and utilisation of welfare programmes and schemes available for adolescents
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Quantitative research method was used to understand the community disadvantage and its impact on the behaviour of adolescents living in disadvantaged areas. The study is descriptive in nature. It described socio demographic profile of the adolescents, level of community disadvantage, risky behavior among the adolescents and the availability of welfare services to them.

Universe of the study was both male and female adolescents in the age group of 12 to 19 in the disadvantaged communities of Kerala. Unit of the study was single adolescent in the age group of 12 to 19 who reside in the disadvantaged community of Kerala. In this study, stratified random sampling was used for data collection. Here, concentrated colonies declared as slums and slum like areas by Municipal Corporation of Thrissur in Kerala were considered as each strata. The selected communities included SC/ST colonies, concentrated colonies with mixed castes rehabilitated areas. Adolescents in the age group of 12 to 19 were selected for the study.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS
Majority (68.3%) of the respondents were within 15-19 age group and 41 (68.3%) were within 12-14 age group. About 45 percent of the respondents were studying in class 7-10 and 50 percent of them were studying in plus two. About 5 percent of the respondents were school drop outs. Among the respondents, majority of them were Hindu (70%) followed by Christians and Muslims. 75 percent of the respondents had both parents and 25 percent of them were with single parent. Majority of the respondents’ fathers were working for daily wages. 38.3 percent of their mothers were home makers. 28.3 percent of them were working for daily wages. About 15 percent of the respondents’ mothers were working under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme. Most of the respondents had family monthly income below Rs. 1000/-. Majority of the children reported that they are not availing any welfare services from the government or any other organisations. Others were getting benefits from government in the form of E- Grant and scholarships.
Descriptive analysis revealed average level of risky behaviour among adolescents (Mean score=.36). Risky behaviours such as skipping schools, use of alcohol and tobacco, stealing, lying, teasing and bullying, involvement in physical fights with others and gangue activities were observed in the adolescents. The main factors of community disadvantage consist of community safety, family and economic disadvantage and education. Mean score of the community disadvantage was .54 with S.D of .15. The analysis revealed high level of community disadvantage in the area where study was conducted.

T-test was used to test first hypothesis (H1) comparing gender and behaviour of adolescents. As there was statistically significant difference between boys and girls in their behaviour null hypothesis was rejected. It indicates that risky behaviour was more among boys than girls. The t-test result of second hypothesis (H2) showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the behaviour among early and late adolescents. But the mean score showed that risky behaviour is more among early adolescents than late adolescents.

ANOVA revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in the behavior of adolescents with different category of educational qualification. In the result of Chi-Square test, there was a statistically significant association between education and their risky behaviours such as use of alcohol ($\chi^2 = 10.516$, P=.005), use of tobacco $\chi^2 = 13.73$, P=.001), use of drugs $\chi^2 = 25.66$, P=.000), staying out overnight $\chi^2 = 19.44$, P=.000) and fighting with others $\chi^2 = 6.96$, P=.031). It was also found that there is an association between family income and low academic achievements ($\chi^2 =6.125$ & P= .047).

The third hypothesis (H3) of the study was that there is a relationship between community disadvantage and behavior of adolescents. In the bivariate analysis, it was found that there is no statistically any relationship between community disadvantage and behaviour of adolescents. So the null hypothesis was accepted. But it was found that behaviour of adolescents is positively correlated with educational disadvantage showing the direction that as educational disadvantage increases risky behavior among adolescents also increases ($r = .293$, P =.023). It was also found that involvement in gangue activities
among adolescents is positively correlated with alcohol use, which shows a direction that as the alcohol use increases gangue activities\( (r = .571, p<.01) \) and physical fights\( (r = .434, p<.01) \) among adolescents also increase.

**SUGGESTIONS**

- Public health interventions to improve adolescents’ wellbeing must take the neighbourhood environment into account.
- There is a need for prevention efforts involving family-based interventions targeted to the most disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- Evidence based prevention strategies are needed for reducing psycho social risks and consequences.
- Deliberate and focused public policy is required, along with economic development, to fulfill and protect the rights of every child.
- There is a scope for further research in the field of children in disadvantage communities;
  - It is necessary to understand the psychological well being and other mental health aspect of the children from disadvantaged communities.
  - Qualitative research on protective factors in the community and its influence on adolescents can be studied.
  - An intervention study is also possible among disadvantaged adolescents.

**CONCLUSION**

Society at large, are responsible for providing children with equal opportunities and resources to fulfill their potential throughout life. The strategy to improve the wellbeing of the children who belong to marginalized communities should go beyond conventional methods. It must be based on policies which achieve the objective of inclusiveness in its many dimensions.