

Tribal Welfare officer Biseswar Das and other staff working in Tirrur, Middle Straits and Kadamtalla concurred with Prof. Pandya and tried to explain the extent of this illicit trading network that was hard to track or breach. They suggested that a research team comprising workers from all these three areas be constituted and the trade network, the objects exchanged, the terms on which the women and poachers/ settlers communicated etc. be studied in depth. Prof. Pandya a possible way to wean away these women from this illicit trade by involving them in the school at Pottatang once it gets going on a more regular basis.

One of the important problems that were discussed in this context was of developing an effective communication protocol when approaching these women as well as others within the community. Both Prof Pandya and other researchers that women both within the Ongee and the Jarawa community were unwilling to communicate in Hindi even if they understood the language have observed it over several years. They were also less keen to allow any conversation that went beyond their demands for things from the welfare workers. To overcome this problem Prof. Pandya directed the workers and the Research Associates at ANTRI to address PVTG men and women through kinship terms rather than just their names. Communication he argued would be possible only if we were able to treat them as human beings and not just as subjects of research. Communication on sensitive issues such as gender violations would only be possible once we are able to earn the trust of women.

Lecho, a woman member of the Great Andamanese community who also joined the proceedings of the workshop pointed that the most important problem facing women in their community was keeping their husbands or family members in Strait Islands and curing them from the debilitating habits of alcoholism. She pointed out how women were helpless in coping with the problem and were mute spectators to the illicit trade-taking place between their men and local fishermen who entered the territory