

## **SPECIAL SECTION: Ecological Distribution Conflicts in India**

# **Relocation from protected areas as a violent process in the recent history of biodiversity conservation in India**

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**Abstract:** In the last two decades conflicts due to biodiversity conservation projects have been rising all over the world. This is due to the interest at the global level towards environmental protection. It is often implemented at the expense of communities living within and around important biodiversity spots. This paper analyses the violent processes of relocation and displacement from the protected areas of India. Its purpose is to document the illegal relocation of indigenous communities and forest dwellers from such areas. It examines the specific laws and regulations that legalize relocation of inhabitants from their ancestral land in contravention of legal recognition of the community's forest rights under the Forest Rights Act. The paper argues that these results from non-recognition of tenure rights, and mirrors the contradictions embedded in the environmental protection policies not only in India but at the global level as well.

**Keywords:** biodiversity conservation conflicts, ecological distribution conflicts, environmental justice movements, Forest Rights Act.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Conservation of biodiversity is going through a significant challenge as the cost and benefit for the creation of protected areas are not equally shared, bringing the issues of displacement and dispossession at the pick of the problem. Although displacement and relocation from protected areas is undertaken throughout the world since the pre-colonial era,<sup>1</sup> in the last two

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<sup>1</sup> As of October 2017, there are about 200,000 protected areas around the world as per The World Database of Protected Areas (WDPA). The 11 Aichi Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have the objective to cover by 2020 at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas.

decades the increasing number of protected areas around the world and the continuous restrictions put on the local communities have created a situation for which “conservation has become the number one threat to indigenous territories”, as declared by one indigenous delegate at the United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP 2004) (Dowie 2009). The creation of protected areas for the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem has been valuable for the public who benefits from the common sharing, while the cost is almost entirely borne by the local communities living within those spaces who risk losing their access to land, forest resources and other development opportunities (Krueger 2009).

The notion of biodiversity and forest as pristine and wilderness comes from a classical western idea of conservation. It sees tribal people as “encroachers”, “poachers” and responsible for the decline of biodiversity. It considers relocation and displacement as a possible solution, if not the only strategy to save the environment (Dowie 2009). However, as observed by many thinkers and scholars, displacement of people from protected areas become risky both for the people who live out of natural resources and for the biodiversity itself (Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau 2003). In general, the complex literature of displacement due to conservation shows a picture of the loss of livelihood, income, and impoverishment of the affected communities and loss and degradation of the wildlife (Brockinton and Igoe 2006). Besides, conservation based on exclusion influences the behaviour of conservationist NGOs, forest officials and administrative authorities who continue to deny the access to the local communities to their land and forest resources, looking at them as the enemy rather than possible co-operators in the conservation management process. All these take place despite recognition of community conservation management approach and indigenous land rights at the policy space, at both national (vis. Forest Rights Act 2006 in India) and international (Convention of Biological Diversity, COP7, IUCN) levels—to ensure the rights of habitat and use of the forest resources to the indigenous. According to the estimates, worldwide, from the Masai and Ogiek in Kenya, the Batswa in Uganda, the Ashaninka in Peru and the Adivasis in India, conservation efforts has displaced about 10 to 20 million people (Agrawal and Redford 2009, 4), who formerly lived, farmed, fished and hunted in the protected areas.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This paper provides an overview of conservation conflicts in India. It uses legal framework to explore the relocation policy as a mean to environmental protection, and also as a source of violence. It is the result of one-year

research conducted in India, working with Kalpavriksh,<sup>2</sup> a non profit organization working on environmental and social issues. The data on this particular category of ecological distribution conflicts (EDCs)<sup>3</sup> mainly came from five sources: (i) English language newspaper report, (ii) reports available in the Forest Rights Act website, (iii) secondary information shared by the Community Forest Rights – Learning and Advocacy (CFR-LA) group, (iv) primary data directly observed and reported from the field, and (v) data shared by activists, reporters, journalists, etc. The primary data have been gathered through interviews, group discussion and documents collected in eight protected areas visited from March to September 2017. The secondary data have been gathered for 30 protected areas through journal articles, reports, and documents collected by civil society organizations working on the ground with local and forest communities, as well as from testimonies of socio-environmental activists and *sanghatanas* working on advocacy for the just recognition of the Forest Rights Act. The study areas were chosen based on 4 criteria: a) political sensitivity, b) geographical area, c) accessibility and contacts, and d) presence of forest dwellers and indigenous communities.

Some of the biodiversity conservation conflicts in India are recorded and explained in the EJAtlas, a project at the ICTA UAB with which the author has been working. The EJAtlas has registered nearly 300 ecological distribution conflicts in India as of December 2018. Of these, only about 15 are classified as “biodiversity conservation conflicts”, including some such as Save Silent Valley Movement in Kerala against building of a dam (EJAtlas 2018a) and the Bhitarkarnika wildlife sanctuary (EJAtlas 2018b) in Odisha (preserving a mangrove forest) showing a degree of confluence between outside conservationists and local people.

However, many other biodiversity conservation conflicts pitch the conservationists, the Forest Department and the State against the local people. These include conflicts in Jaldapara National Park in North Bengal (EJAtlas 2018c) and Kaziranga (EJAtlas 2017a) and Manas National Parks (EJAtlas 2018d) in Assam. This article focuses on this second type of conflicts.

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<sup>2</sup> The study was carried out with the support of Kalpavriksh in India as a National Report on the implementation of Forest Rights Act within protected areas in India, funded by Rights and Resources Initiatives (RRI).

<sup>3</sup> EDCs are defined as conflicts over the distribution of environmental benefits and impacts associated with economic growth (Martinez-Alier 2002).

### 3. THE INDIAN SCENARIO

In India, the first relocation drive started in pre-independence time, when two small villages were removed from the Kaziranga reserve in Assam in 1908. This was followed by relocations in Kashmir from Shikar reserve, and then the Baigas were relocated from the Kanha National park in Madhya Pradesh. Soon after gaining independence in 1947, there were some displacement in the Sariska Wildlife Sanctuary in Rajasthan, in the Gir Forest in Gujarat (Langerscoix and Kothari 2009). But the relocation from Protected Areas (PA) became common only during the 1970s, after the enactment of the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) in 1972, and the launching of Project Tiger in 1973; the Act prescribed the procedures for setting up and managing the protected areas and regularizing the biodiversity activities (Kothari 2009). The numerous regulations of biodiversity activities under the WLPA had a direct impact on thousands of Adivasi and forest dwellers whose traditional practice and lifestyle got directly affected, all these while urban tourism activities and hunting practices of elite sportsmen were indeed sanctioned (Dowie 2009). Then, there were about 67 national parks and 336 sanctuaries, which made up about 2.59 per cent of the entire India land mass, which has today nearly doubled to 4.88 per cent (Wildlife Institute of India 2016). As of 2018, the protected areas in India have increased to 771, including 544 sanctuaries, 104 national parks and 200 conservation areas, including 50 Tiger Reserves, making up to 4.88 per cent of India's landmass.<sup>4</sup>

The number of people relocated from Protected Areas in the entire Indian subcontinent—according to a study conducted in the mid-1980s—was estimated to be around 100,000 (Langerscoix and Kothari 2009). According to Langerscoix and Kothari (2009), the estimated number of people relocated from protected areas in the last 10-15 years is about 60,000. Many of these relocations remain unaccounted for, with millions more slated to be displaced forcefully.

#### 3.1. The Forest Rights Act: a legal protection only on paper

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA) was enacted to counterbalance the historical injustices propagated under forest and conservation laws, policies and practices against the forest communities. This legal instrument recognizes the scheduled tribes and other forest dwelling communities' rights to inhabit, use and manage their traditional forest. As per FRA, these

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<sup>4</sup> More details can be accessed here [http://www.wiienvis.nic.in/Database/Protected\\_Area\\_854.aspx](http://www.wiienvis.nic.in/Database/Protected_Area_854.aspx).

rights have been recognized also within the limits of a sanctuary or a national park. In this regard, the provision establishes the declaration of “critical wildlife habitats” as important wildlife areas that are to be kept as inviolable, i.e. no human activity that is scientifically and objectively may damage wildlife is permissible in these areas (Broome and Fanari 2017). This means that the FRA recognizes the possibility of resettlement of forest communities from this area, only if it is scientifically determined that their activity causes damage to wildlife.

The FRA was born as a result of the peasant struggles for the recognition of forest land rights, and the attention drawn to protection for the indigenous communities at the international level. One such international recognition in relation to protected areas is the World Parks Congress in Durban in 2003, which highlighted its commitment to involve local communities, indigenous and nomadic peoples in the creation, proclamation and management of protected areas.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the ‘Free Informed Consent’ as a prior requirement for the notification and management plan of the PAs has been extensively addressed in treaties such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Article 8(j) in its and related provisions note that “the establishment, management and monitoring of protected areas should take place with the full and effective participation of, and full respect for the rights of indigenous and local communities consistent with national law and applicable international obligations”.

The Indian Government recognizes the rights to the forest dwellers living within the PAs through the FRA, stipulating that relocation can only take place if scientifically determined that co-existence is not possible, and only after the free informed consent of the Gram Sabhas.<sup>6</sup> However, the milestone Act is continuously challenged and contested not only by mining companies and builders of infrastructures all across India (as shown in the EJAtlas), but also by classical conservationists and forest officials who do not acknowledge the law within the limit of the protected spaces. Indeed, while these policies gave hope to the local communities and strengthened their identity and unity, new conservation “necessities”—based on the need for ensuring protection of the wildlife—have developed new paradigms which are often in contrast with the necessities of the communities. These

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<sup>5</sup> The Vth IUCN World Parks Congress was held in Durban, South Africa in 2003. The Congress represented the largest and most diverse gathering of protected area experts in history.

<sup>6</sup> The term Gram Sabha is defined in the Constitution of India under Article 243(b). It is the primary body of the Panchayati Raj system. It discusses local governance, development, and make need-based plans for the village.

are reflected in strengthening the measures to enhance environmental security through creation of new borders, measures of control such as militarization and biodiversity offsets programs.

### **3.2. In the name of Tiger Conservation**

The global attention to Tiger Conservation has further added to the number of conservation conflict refugees in India. In this regard, the government of India has strengthened its measure to protect the tigers, and since 2008 the number of such reserves has shot up from 28 to 50 in 2018. New funds have been promised for the relocation of people from the critical tiger habitat, under the section 38V of the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006 (WLPA), also called Tiger Amendment. It specifies the possibility of resettlement of communities to make protected areas inviolate. Although the WLPA Amendment acknowledges the existence of the FRA and the recognition of the informed consent of the Gram Sabhas, the new guidelines for relocation from the Critical Tiger Habitat (CTH) strengthen the measures adopted for the protection of tigers. One of the issues is that many of these reserves have been notified with little public outreach, with no consultation with the communities living in the area, and no consideration of their livelihood and cultural rights (Kothari 2011). Consequently, in the last years the situation on the ground has aggravated, and numerous communities living in and around the protected areas continue to remain excluded, and their rights and dignity violated (Broome and Fanari 2018). Moreover, as criticized by many authors, this “exclusion” based “fortress conservation model” has failed in positively contributing to the protection of tigers. This has been called by Bijoy (2011) as the “same old stale wine in a new bottle”. This keeps the forest and its inhabitants in a state of insecurity, which recall the colonial attitude of control and domination upon resources. More than 37 years after the launch of Project Tiger in 1973 with 1,827 tigers (as per the first tiger census of 1972), the tigers are today down to 1,411 in 28 tiger reserves (Bijoy 2011). This shows that the Tiger Project has only benefitted the tourist industry letting down both the community forest dwellers as well as the wildlife. According to some research, the eviction drive from the PAs, and especially from the core of the Tiger Reserves, is significantly increasing, undermining the law and denying the recognized land rights to the community forest dwellers.

### **3.3. Relocation as a violation of FRA**

According to the FRA and WLPA, relocation can take place only from the CTH or Critical Wildlife Habitat (CWH) and can happen only when co-existence is absolutely not possible; that too after obtaining the free and informed consent of the gram sabhas in writing and after ensuring that the

resettlement package has been prepared to the satisfaction of people being relocated. However, in my own research for Kalpavriksh, which consisted of fieldwork in 8 protected areas, interviewing various stakeholder in each site, and review of secondary data for a number of other protected areas (for a total of 22 Tiger Reserves and 8 Wildlife Sanctuaries), it was observed that many irregularities have marred the process. The 2016 Report of the UN Special Rapporteur (Rights of Indigenous People) on Conservation and Indigenous people's rights stated that "[d]isplacement from protected areas continues across India through a combination of misinterpretation, coercion, and inducement".<sup>7</sup> As per the UN, the Forest Rights Act continues to be almost inexistent within the protected areas, and testimonies of relocation have been observed both from tiger reserve and wildlife sanctuaries, repeatedly violating the national and international legal provisions.

According to the analyses, evidences of relocation being planned were found for 23 PAs, either in Tiger Reserve management plan or in local newspaper reports. Of these, in 22 there was evidence of relocation already being carried out for last 10 years. These included 17 Tiger Reserves (TRs) and 5 Wildlife Sanctuaries (WLSs) (details in the table in Appendix). Available information clearly shows forced, coerced and dissatisfactory relocation in violation of various required steps specified in section 4(2) of the FRA, and section 38(V) of the Wildlife Protection Amendment Act (WLPA) 2006, and reveals a large-scale violation of various provisions of the FRA in the considered PAs. Among the numerous violations of the law in each studied site, 4 major types of violations were identified: (i) no prior informed consent from the local community; (ii) misuse of the FRA by the forest department; (iii) absence of scientific studies for the creation of "involute area"; (iv) relocation from the buffer area.

### 3.3.1. Prior informed consent

One of the major points discussed concerns the bypassing of the "prior informed consent" of the Gram Sabhas mandated in section 4.1(e) of the FRA that represents a precondition for every relocation. This was reported from Tadoba TR in Maharashtra, from which 608 families were moved out since 2012 and from Kanha TR in Madhya Pradesh, from which more than 20,000 families were forcefully displaced (refer to table). In many official documents, the relocation is often described as "voluntary". However, the field research revealed that when consent was taken, it was mostly under

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<sup>7</sup> The full report can be accessed here <http://unsr.vtaulicorpuz.org/site/index.php/documents/annual-reports/149-report-ga-2016>

pressure or threat, or induced in other ways. This included taking signatures of the individuals on blank papers as it happened in Simlipal TR (as per fieldwork data). Violation of human rights, physical threats and use of force were typically used to effect displacement; denial of access to basic health and education facilities, and schemes like MNREGA, children immunization programmes like *angawadi* were some of the ways in which consent for relocation was induced.

### 3.3.2. Misuse of FRA

Available evidence points to not just the forest department's rejection of the community rights under the FRA, but also its misuse for the purpose of relocation. For instance, in Simlipal TR, where the Community Forest Rights (CFRs) were recognised in 2015 to all the 43 villages living within the PA limits, the community leaders said that the distribution of land titles were used to further “legalize” the relocation. This, according to the forest officers, took place in a voluntary manner after the forest rights were settled.

Indeed, the villages of Jamungarh and Kabathgai were relocated in 2015 just after receiving the CFRs. The families in the core area continued to face coercion, harassment and obstruction of activities (Deo 2016). This clearly shows the lack of commitment in implementing the FRA in its true spirit and confirms the priority for relocation in the agenda of the Forest Department.

### 3.3.3. Absence of scientific studies

While the communities continue to be discriminated from the conservation management activities, no studies and no expert-committee reports were available with the forest officials. This means that at the time of our field research there were no scientific documents to prove that co-existence cannot be an option or that communities were leading to degradation of the environment. In addition, in November 2007, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) notified<sup>8</sup> the states with critical tiger habitats to set up the expert committees to “finalise and delineate core or critical tiger habitats of tiger reserves, within 10 days of the receipt of the notification” (Broome *et al.* 2014). This shows that even the time given for scientific or consultative process prior to CTH notification was not sufficient. In general, the lack of scientific research was reported from all the study areas.

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<sup>8</sup> NTCA was created by the MoEF in 2005 and notified under the 2006 amendment to the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 to oversee the tiger reserves.



#### 3.3.4. Relocation from tiger reserve buffer areas and wildlife sanctuaries

According to available evidence, relocation has been taking place not only from the CTH, as it should be per law, after the free and informed consent is obtained by the gram sabha, but also from buffer areas, where co-existence is expected to be prioritised over relocation. Relocation from buffer zone was reported from many TRs such as Simlipal and Kaziranga, etc. (refer to table). This showed that no co-existence in buffer areas was practiced in violation of the FRA and WLPA. Moreover, relocation was also carried out from the Wildlife Sanctuaries, even in absence of any guidelines.

### 3.4. The threat of the NTCA

Since its enactment in 2005 NTCA has supervised the entire management of the protected areas, including expansion of the tiger reserves. As described above, the displacement has mostly affected people residing within the TRs, which continue to be notified at a high speed by the NTCA. Indeed, the 25,551 sq km of tiger forests in 2007 (Bijoy 2011) were expanded and almost doubled to 40,340 in 2018, and as stated above the notified tiger reserves have jumped from 28 to 50 in past 10 years (as of July 2018, ENVIS). To add to this, in October 2016, at an international conference held in Johannesburg, the Indian government representative Bisha Singh Bonal announced the decision to further expand the protected areas in the country to create another 10 Tiger Reserves in the coming years (Indian Express 2016). On the ground, this has led to more people being pushed away from their ancestral land and more conflicts between the local people and the authorities.

In many places, the CTH was illegally notified and implemented against the wishes of the community. One example is Bilgiri Rangaswami Temple Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka that was converted into a Tiger Reserve in 2010 against the wishes of the Soliga indigenous community inhabiting the area (Madegowda 2017). This process was carried out in violation of the Section 4.1 of the FRA, which since January 2008 override the Tiger Amendment.

These high-speed illegal evictions were made possible through NTCA funding availability since 2008. The capital has scaled up from INR 30 crore and INR 41 crore during 2007-08 and 2008-09 to INR 114 crore in 2009-10 (Tiger Link 2009). As per the information available on the NTCA website,<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> More information can be accessed here [http://projecttiger.nic.in/content/144\\_6\\_VillageRelocation11thPlan.aspx](http://projecttiger.nic.in/content/144_6_VillageRelocation11thPlan.aspx)

from 2007-8 to 2011-12 an amount equal to INR 435.46 crores (USD 66 million) was released. Moreover, between 2013-14 another tranche of INR 4,964 lakh was spent by the NTCA for the rehabilitation of other families from Tadoba TR in Maharashtra, Dampa TR in Mizoram and Ranthambore and Sariska TR in Rajasthan.

The disposal of money instead of supporting people has created a situation in which plans of “voluntary relocation” were prioritized and cautiously planned in every state instead of implementing Forest Rights Act for the benefit of the forest communities. The funding is used to evict forest communities without the consent of Gram Sabha and without conducting proper scientific assessment as discussed above. One Jenu Kuruba tribal from Nagarhole National Park said, “the availability of this funding has only increased the violence and the coercion for relocation by the authority, which using the money card has induced numerous families to relocate from their ancestral space”. Moreover, the distribution of money without a rehabilitation plan is detrimental for the development of the communities as they get into the consumption of alcohol, leisure activities and other harmful practices and squander away their compensation package in just a few months. This mostly happens because of poor monitoring, lack of effective relocation program, or simply because of their poor understanding of the value of money.

Besides not facilitating the implementation of the law, NTCA has shown an antagonist attitude against its enactment; this was manifested in the illegal administrative order issued on 28 March 2017, stating that “no recognition of rights” should be granted within the limits of the core of Tiger Reserves (Order No 1-7/93.PT). The order had a negative impact on the ground, such as the rejection of claims of 61 families belonging to the Nakesia Adivasi – an indigenous community inhabiting the core area in the Palamau Tiger Reserve, Jharkhand. The order had captured the attention of many civil societies, which had asked for its immediate withdrawal. However, on 29 May 2017 the Ministry of Tribal Affairs merely issued a letter to the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) stating that it considers the NTCA order as a “temporary measure” and requests the Minister to initiate the due process of issuing the guidelines for notifying CWH at the earliest (Broome and Fanari 2018). This shows a lack of concern for protecting the forest rights of the forest-dwelling communities, and the perpetration of a fortress model of conservation, which continues to be based on the notion of exclusion in opposition to co-existence.

### 3.5. Relocation from Wildlife Sanctuaries

As explained above, the relocation guidelines are regulated by the NTCA, which has the task to manage the voluntary relocation from the tiger reserves. While in respect to the Wildlife Sanctuaries, the guidelines for the relocation were not yet approved till March 2017. However, repeated threat of relocation and eviction from wildlife sanctuaries were recounted during the year of research (2017). For instance, eviction was reported from the wildlife sanctuaries of Wayanad in Kerala, Barnawapara and Bhoramdeo in Chhattisgarh, and Chandaka-Dompara and Debrigarh in Odisha, among others. Considering that the guidelines for CWH, has been issued only on February 19 2018, it is unclear how and why these relocations were being carried out.

As per MoEF website, between 2011 and 2014 a total of INR 2,838 lakh was released under the “Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats” scheme for the relocation from Wayanad and Malabar WLS in Kerala, Barnawapara WLS in Chattisgarh and Thoranghtlang WLS in Mizoram.<sup>10</sup>

It was reported that the forest authorities were using the same NTCA package for the relocation of people from these non-Tiger reserves. This brings leads to evictions which are coerced and denigrating for the affected people, often evicted without any rights of compensation and rehabilitation. Considering the arbitrary decision of every local forest department in the distribution and allocation of money to the affected communities, the local people got less informed about the relocation procedures and excluded from any decision-making. For example, it was observed in the study that in Wayanad WLS the affected communities were relocated without following the due process. Indeed, as per NTCA guidelines, the compensation was based on a) INR 10 lakh per family or b) complete relocation with all basic facilities and land. However, in Wayanad the compensation of INR 10 lakh was used to purchase the homestead land for the families evicted, leaving the people without agricultural lands and no money; this option was decided without any consultative process with the communities, who now seek to move back to their ancestral land.

On the one hand, the funding availability with NTCA is pushing up relocation of the forest-dwelling communities, on the other, the lack of funding for the relocation from WLS and mostly the absence of the guidelines from MoEFCC has led to a series of denial of rights to these communities. The use of force and violence has become justified and less criticized as was seen in Amchang WLS in Assam. In November 2016,

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<sup>10</sup> More details can be found here <http://www.moef.nic.in/division/introduction-19>

more than 1000 families living within and outside the WLS were evicted without considering their rights, and with no plan of either relocation or compensation (refer to table in Appendix).

#### 4. WHY RELOCATION IS NOT DESIRABLE?

But what happens to the life of people once they get relocated? Do they get better facilities, development and education, or better opportunities for their future? These promises, often used to justify relocation, are not fulfilled. Ground reality show a very different picture. Indeed, the camps (yes, camp is the exact word!) where the affected people live have poor housing besides lacking toilets and electricity. This was observed among others in Achanakmar TR in Chattisgarh where six villages relocated in 2009 are still living in pathetic condition with no alternatives in sight (Bera 2015). The international and national policies on relocation, which should guarantee an alternative livelihood for the affected people, continue to be inappropriate or unobserved at the local level. The lack of monitoring and the unfair distribution of compensation packages has fated people with enormous risk of impoverishments both economically and socially forcing them in a state of desperation and hopelessness (Cernea 2009). Although there has been some improvement in their recent relocation assistance, this was still not appropriate to compensate for the loss; also, a series of discrepancies and anomalies are reported in the distribution of compensation packages. Rampant corruption and ambiguities were reported in Panna TR where a fake package of INR 1 lakh as per previous agreement was distributed to many, while a few “lucky ones” received crores of rupees (INR) (notes from field study). In addition to this, false promises of land were also made to induce people to leave their place, such as in Simlipal TR (EJAtlas 2018e) in Odisha where the promised land was never given; or, in Achanakmar TR (EJAtlas 2017b) where the distributed land was barren, unfenced, full of stones and unfit for farming. This is not rehabilitation but pushing the displaced people into a state of poverty. This was the result of the lack of a monitoring system and a culture of denigrating the socially marginalised. Indeed, many studies have found that relocation not only leads to joblessness and poverty, it also increases morbidity and mortality, social disintegration and further marginalization (Cernea, 2003; Mathur 2013). Not just this, relocation also risks the loss of biodiversity. It was found that the most damaging impact of the forced removals from the protected areas is the resource degradation from unsustainable consumption owing to increased demand (Cernea 2003). This means, as argued by Cernea, that “displacements result in environmental degradation through increase in permanent settlements and that soil erosion tends to be

higher in permanently used agricultural plots than under shifting cultivation regimes". This brings us to the dual loss of the community and the environment. Cernea argues that alienation of forest communities from the forest areas brings them afar from their conservation objectives, causing a set of degrading effect on forest ecosystem, calling them "second generation" degrading effects. This, he argues, is because the presence of residents in parks has, under certain circumstances, some "first generation" effects.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The general conflict in the idea of "relocation" is born from the contested nature of the problems and solutions. Indeed, as Sundar (2012) argues, "while the forest department defines the problem in terms of the villagers' use of forests as the cause of forest degradation, villagers define the forest problem in terms of a lack of their rights". This paper reveals the violence of relocation in India as a consequence of a lack of recognition of communities' forest rights and a lack of support from the Forest Department. This contradicts with Forest Rights Act (FRA) as well as with several measures adopted by UN and ILO.

However, if we look at the international eco-political context this would not appear so surprising. But in India, the discourse around biodiversity has moved from "protection" to "offset", a compensation measure that portrays nature as something measurable in money value that can be exchanged and replaced (Spash 2015). In this way, nature, which has become valuable for the public and not for the local community, can be exchanged as a commodity, leaving the people out of the discourse. This idea of nature as equivalence, based on replacing an anthropogenic landscape with another, does not leave space for traditional human activities, raising the questions of power, territorial rights, violence and inequality. In this perspective, the conflicts at the local level portray the contradictions embedded in the political discourses around nature and its protection.

Moreover, in a socio-cultural milieu as in India, which is already ruled by a strong hierarchical power, the neoliberal policies have contributed in reaffirming this power of submission by redefining the power of violence, which continues to be based on the government dominance of the natural resources. Indeed, the 2006 amendment of the WLPA represents this imposition of power by the government in opposition to the democratic tool represented by the FRA. This is the reason why the FRA is still struggling to be applied under the legal system, as a hope and a weapon in

the hand of the communities. The numerous conflicts emerging in the country need to be read as a transformative process. These conflicts not only represent hope but also strength of the movement which is trying from below to overthrow the political contradiction of environmental protection, asking both for the recognition of their rights (under the FRA) and redefinition of nature as a source of livelihood and a living spirit.

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## APPENDIX

Table 1: Relocations in Protected Areas						
No	Protected Area	State	Status of Relocation	Planned Relocation	Other information	Sources
1.	Nagarjunsagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve	Andhra Pradesh	By 2010 1000 families were already relocated. 200 more families were relocated since 2011 - in Shanti Nagar and Gandhi Nagar near Yerragondapalem plain in Prakasam district (Local sources).	Plan to relocate (a) two (Vatrapalli and Telangana) out of 27 villages located inside the CTH (Monitoring Evaluation and Economic Report 2014) and (b) from the core area about 1,100 families, respectively from the villages of Nekkanti, Ishtakameshwari, Paalutla, Vattivarlapalli, Chinnarutla Penta, Tummalabailu and Peddacheruv (NTCA report).	/	1; 2; 3; 4, 5.
2.	Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve	Assam	22 families evicted from Bonse Sapori in 2012-13; in 2016, 348 families evicted from Deuchur Chang and Banderdubi, in the elephant corridor.	In 2016, the Guwahati High Court, ordered the eviction of 666 families living within the notified limited of the 2nd, 3rd and 5th addition.	2 people were killed in 2016. In the last 10 years about 62 local people were killed by forest guards in name of conserving the Rhinos; In July 2016, seven-year-old Okash Orang, was shot in his leg by the FD, now handicapped.	6; 7; 8, 9.

3.	Manas National Park and Tiger Reserve	Assam	700 villagers evicted from Betburi village, Kokracachar, in Manas NP (December 2016 and February 2017).	1000 families living in Chirang and Kokrachar districts were threatened of eviction by the Forest Department.	/	10; 11.
4.	Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary	Assam	37 villages, with more than 1000 families in total, were evicted on 25 August 2017.		The families were evicted without any compensation and in a very brutal manner.	12; 13.
5.	Achanakmarg Tiger Reserve	Chattisgarh	6 villages, 245 families, were relocated in 2009 from the core area.	Plan to relocate 16 villages from the core. On April 2015, the NTCA declared that 5 other villages of the remaining 19 in the core area will be soon relocated from the ATR. Until now these villages have not been relocated but two villages, Tilaidabra and Ranjaki have already signed the relocation papers. However, no “prior free informed consent” was taken and no information on the forest rights was given to the forest dwellers.	The relocated villages did not receive proper rehabilitation as per FRA and WLPA, 2006.	14; 15; 16; 17.
6.	Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary.	Chattisgarh	3 villages are entirely relocated from the WLS, Rampur, Latadadar and Nawapara. In 2010, 135 families of Rampur were	There is a plan to relocate other 22 villages. Six of them in the first phase, namely Bafra, Gudagarh, Mudpaar, Bhimaauri, Dheba and Akaltara.	Since November 2017, the 22 villages living within the limits are protesting against the relocation plan.	18; 19; 20; 21.

			rehabilitated 58 km away, in Mahasamund forest division, and settled in a compartment No 500 and 501, Vijaymaalin Forest Compartment. Latadar and Nawapara (628 people and 139 houses) were resettled in 2014, and shifted respectively in Vijaymaal Gram panchayat, Compartment no. 795 and 796 of Sinodha Gram panchayat and Compartment no. 507 and 509 in Mohgaon.			
7.	Nagarhole National Park and Tiger Reserve.	Karnataka	As many as 3400 families were displaced during the '70s and '80s. 487 tribal families were moved out of the Park and relocated in Nagapura and Sollepura between 2000 and 2007 for a compensation of INR 1 lakh and 5 acres of land. Other 250 people have been relocated since 2006.	Families are continuously induced to relocate.	The relocation programme was supported by WCS. The people relocated as of 2006 have received only some barren land and no money and are living in a miserable condition.	22; 23; 24; 25; 26.
8	Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary	Kerala	4 entire village, vis. Goloor, Ammavayal, Arakunchi, and Kottangara were relocated	1,388 people (880 families) in 14 settlements (total 800 families) inside the sanctuary are to be	From 2011 to 2014, the MoEF allocated an amount of INR 18	27; 28; 29; 30; 31.

			with 182 families in 2012.	relocated in the first phase at a cost of INR 88 crore. A total of 10,604 people (2,613 families) residing in 110 settlements inside the Wayanad WLS are to be relocated.	crore rupees for the relocation project. Other funds are awaited.	
9.	Kanha National Park and Tiger Reserve	Madhya Pradesh	In 1973-74, 24 villages (around 650 families) were displaced outside the boundaries of the TR. Threat of eviction started again in 2010 (just after availability of NTCA funding for relocation from TR). Relocation started in 2013, and about 450 families were evicted in June 2014. A total number of 22,000 people got evicted.	There are only 3 villages that still need to be relocated, viz. Linga, Jholar and Sukudi. In Jholar process of relocation has already started.	Number and data remain uncertain. All the evictions were forced, in complete violation of the FRA. Roughly 7 villages still exist in the core of Kanha TR.	4; 32; 33; 34; 35; 36; 37.
10.	Panna Tiger Reserve	Madhya Pradesh	In 2015, two village viz. Umrawan and Jardhoba were forcefully evicted.	According to the MEE 2014, there are only 3 villages and 180 families remaining in the core area of the TR, and they are planned to be relocated.	200 Gonds from Umrawan have been fighting and filed petitions against the eviction, however they got relocated. An area of 600 hectares has been proposed inside the core area for an irrigation project.	4; 38; 39; 40.

11.	Pench Tiger Reserve	Madhya Pradesh	Between 1973 and 1990 more than 10.000 people were evacuated and resettled. Recently, in May 2017, it started the relocation of Fulzari village.	A plan of relocation was presented in 2008, and since then it is being contested by the local people.	Fishing within the PA is considered illegal by the MLA, in contrast with the FRA.	41; 42; 43; 44;
12.	Tadoba National Park and Tiger Reserve	Maharashtra	Eviction started in 2007. In first phase about 116 families were relocated - 45 landless families from Botezari and 49 from Kolsa are rehabilitated in compartment number 524 in Tolewahi in Mul forest range. In 2013, 200 families of Navegaon (Ramdegi) were moved out, and other 222 families of Jamni were moved out in March 2014. A total of 608 families were moved out.	There are remaining in the TR only Palasgaon and Rantalodi. Other families from Kolsa village are given notice to relocate, but they are resisting against it in 2017.		45; 46; 47; 48; 49; 50; 51.
13.	Dampa Tiger Reserve	Mizoram	287 tribal families evicted from Dampa in 1989. In 2010, 227 families were to be evicted from Dampa. In 2010 12 settlements were relocated, possibly forcibly and with poor rehabilitation, affecting already marginalised	61 villages are still located inside the reserve and are threatened with eviction.	The 287 tribal families were not provided relief and rehabilitation.	4; 52; 53.

			ethnic minorities Chakma and Reang.			
14.	Melghat National Park and Tiger Reserve	Maharashtra	A total of 1360 families got displaced after 2008. This including 141 families from Dhargad and 37 families from Barukheda; during 2013-14 & 2014-15 relocated families included 158 families from Gullarghat village, 176 families from Somthana (Bk.) and 248 families from Somthana (Kh.). In June 2017, nearly 600 villagers from Rohinkhidki village in Akot wildlife division were relocated.	About 21 villages remain to be relocated from the core areas.	In 2007, many villages were coerced to sign for their relocation.	54; 55; 56; 57.
15.	Sariska Tiger Reserve	Rajasthan	The first relocation of villages from Sariska dates back to 1966-67 when village Slopka and Kalighati were relocated. Thereafter, relocation of village Karna Ka Bas and Kiraska took place in 1976-77. Relocation drive started again in 2005. Bhagani (2008) Umri (2011) and Rotkyala (2012) were	There are 29 villages inside the CTH, and a total of 2,409 families, which are all planned to be relocated. As per first plan 12 villages will be relocated by 2021-22.	In 2005, a report showed the extinction of the tiger in the area, attributing the loss to the people. A new relocation phase started to take place just after this.	58; 59; 60.

			relocated. According to information shared by the activists, 9 villages were relocated from Sariska.			
16.	Ranthambore Tiger Reserve	Rajasthan	Relocation started in 1973-79, when 11 villages, 681 families, were evicted from the core of the tiger reserve. In 2002, relocation started again from the core area, and among the 5 villages (Pathra, Mordungri, Indala, Khatoli, Bhir), Pathra, with 110 families was relocated. The other 4 villages, comprising 700 people, were relocated from 2007 to 2014.	The park was extended, englobing 65 villages. It plans to relocate 53 villages. In 2016, 5 villages, vis. Talda Khet, Kala Khora, Gadhi, Maharo and Kiradki, comprising of 260 families, were identified by priority for relocation to secure the Ranthambhore-Kaila Devi corridor.	The villages were relocated forcing them to sign the papers.	61; 62; 63; 64; 65.
17.	Rajaji Tiger Reserve	Uttarakh and	Massive threat of relocation of Van Gujjars for past 15 years. A total number of 1,393 families have been relocated. Of these, 512 families were relocated to Pathari in 2000, 721 families to Gaidikhatta in 2002-03, 181 to Sambalgarh in 2013 while three families were relocated under a high court	Villagers face continued threat of eviction.		66; 67; 68; 69.

			order. In 2015, 800 people were relocated. In 2017, 200 families were relocated from Gohri range.			
18.	Corbett Tiger Reserve	Uttarakh and	Among the villages residing inside the Tiger Reserve, 4 have been displaced since 1994 namely Laldangh, Kothiraw (300 families), Jhirna (70 families), and Dhara (50 families). In 2014, 157 Van Gujjar families were relocated from Sona River Wildlife Sanctuary, situated in the core area.	In December 2016, the Uttarakhand High Court ordered the eviction of the Van Gujjars settlers in the zone for the firings; The National Green Tribunal (NGT) ordered the eviction of 800 settlers in the Kalagarh area, among which 398 are to be rehabilitated while 566 are to be evicted.	On December 19, 2016, Uttarakhand High Court issued an order prohibiting the constructions of buildings in 10 km range around the park.	70; 71; 72.
19.	Satkosia Tiger Reserve	Odisha	On September 30, 2017, 70 families of Raiguda village, with more than 200 acres of land within the TR, were relocated to a new site in Saruali in Angul District, Bantala Range about 12 km from their existing village.	/		73; 74.
20.	Simlipal Tiger Reserve	Odisha	Since 2013, 4 villages, vis. Bahaghar and Uppar Barakhamundato (2013) Jamunagarh (2015) and Kabathgai (2016) have been	There is a plan to relocate 2 more villages from the buffer area (Kejuri and Badhakasaira). One village remains in the core area (Bakua) and 4 (Bohra,	The villages were illegally relocated after they had received the legal titles under FRA.	75; 76; 77; 78.



			relocated from the core area. In December 2016 another village from the buffer area of Simlipal was relocated without consent.	Jorjori, Jamboni, Asuracol) are in the fringe area.		
21.	Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary	Odisha	8 families have been relocated in April 2017.	/	/	79.
22.	Chandaka-Dompara WLS	Odisha	85 families from 3 hamlets were relocated in 1995. In 2008, 32 other families were relocated from the village Bhuasuni of Daruthenga G.P.	/	/	79.

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